

ANCIENT AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
IN THE COPTIC CHURCH OF EGYPT

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Princeton, New Jersey
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER ONE - A SHORT HISTORICAL SURVEY

- I. The Copts
- II. Egypt before Christianity
 1. The Ancient Egyptians
 2. Invaders
- III. Christianity in Egypt
 1. Jesus visits Egypt
 2. After Pentecost
 3. Mark in Alexandria
 4. The Spread of Christianity in Egypt
 5. Progress under Persecution
- IV. The Catechetical School
- V. Monasticism
 - Spiritual Basis
 - Is it an escape from Persecution?
 - Is it of non-Christian Origin?
 - Spread of Monasticism
- VI. Missions
 1. In Lybia
 2. In Nubia and Sudan
 3. In Ethiopia and Eritrea
 4. In India
 5. In Arabia
 6. In Europe
 7. In Ireland
- VII. The Ecumenical Councils
- VIII. After Chalcedon
- IX. The Arab Conquest
- X. Turks
- XI. The New Regime
- XII. Conclusion

CHAPTER TWO - DOCTRINAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND

Faith

The Incarnation

Monophysitism

The Sacraments

Rites

The Creed

The Clergy

The Coptic Community Council

Benevolent Societies

PART II

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE COPTIC CHURCH

CHAPTER THREE - DURING EARLY CHRISTIANITY

- I. A Teaching Church
- II. The Catechumenal Schools
- III. The Catechetical School
 1. A School of Advanced Studies
 2. The Curriculum
 3. Methods
 4. Students
 5. Administration
 6. Famous Teachers
 7. Conclusion

CHAPTER FOUR - DURING MIDDLE AND MODERN AGES

- I. Monasticism
- II. The Graeco-Roman Period
- III. During the Arab Rule
 1. The Kuttab
 2. Higher Education
- IV. During the Nineteenth Century

PART III

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CHAPTER FIVE - AGENCIES OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Introduction

- I. The Church
 1. Preparing a Secured Family
 2. Care from Childhood to Adulthood
 3. Education through Worship
 4. Education through Pastoral & Social Work
- II. The Home
- III. The School

CHAPTER SIX - THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

- I. History
- II. Curriculum
- III. Administration

CHAPTER SEVEN - YOUTH & ADULT ACTIVITIES

- I. Youth Christian Education
- II. Adult Work
- III. A Sample Programme in a Local Church

IV. Leadership Training

V. Theological Training

CONCLUSION & PROPOSALS

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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PREFACE

The history of a nation records periods of flourishing and renown as well as epochs of depression and decline.

The aim of this thesis is to study the stages and development of Christian education in the Coptic Church from the first century till the present.

The first part serves as a background giving the reader a birdseye view of some aspects of the Coptic history which affected the social and educational attitudes of the nation. Some of these historical factors have been misunderstood by Western writers because "All the available books on the history of the Church of Egypt... have been written by men alien in race or hostile in creed - generally both."¹

In trying to correct these conceptions, the writer mainly depends upon the witness of ancient authorities and foreign writers.

The sources of data about the Copts and education in the middle ages are very limited. The contemporary situation is not yet reported in books, yet the curriculum and its Arabic materials have been shipped to the writer from Egypt.

1. Butcher, The Story of the Church of Egypt, Vol. I, P. IX

With the deepest sense of gratitude the writer wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Professors J. D. Butler, D. C. Wyckoff, and E. J. Jurji, for through their guidance the study was accomplished.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL BACKGROUND

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER ONE - A SHORT HISTORICAL SURVEY	1-54
I. The Copts	1
II. Egypt Before Christianity	3
1. The Ancient Egyptians	3
2. Invaders	5
III. Christianity in Egypt	9
1. Jesus Visits Egypt	9
2. After Pentecost	11
3. Mark in Alexandria	12
4. The Spread of Christianity in Egypt	14
5. Progress under Persecution	17
IV. The Catechetical School	20
V. Monasticism	24
Spiritual Basis	25
Is it an Escape from Persecution ?	27
Is it of Non-Christian Origin	29
Spread of Monasticism	31
VI. Missions	32
1. In Lybia	34
2. In Nubia and Sudan	35
3. In Ethiopia and Eritrea	35
4. In India 5. In Arabia	36
6. In Europe 7. In Ireland	37
VII. The Ecumenical Councils	39
VIII. After Chalcedon	43
IX. The Arab Conquest	45
X. Turks	50
XI. The New Regime	51
XII. Conclusion	52

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER TWO - DOCTRINAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND	55-74
Faith	57
The Incarnation	58
Monophysitism	61
The Sacraments	63
Rites	67
The Creed	68
The Clergy	69
The Coptic Community Council	73
Benevolent Societies	74
PART II	
THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION IN THE COPTIC CHURCH	
CHAPTER THREE - DURING EARLY CHRISTIANITY	75-95
I. A Teaching Church	76
II. The Catechumenal Schools	78
III. The Catechetical School	83
1. A School of Advanced Studies	83
2. The Curriculum	85
3. Methods	87
4. Students	91
5. Administration	92
6. Famous Teachers	93
7. Conclusion	94

	<u>Page</u>
CHAPTER FOUR - DURING MIDDLE AND MODERN AGES	96-115
I. Monasticism	96
II. The Graeco-Roman Period	101
III. During the Arab Rule	103
1. The Kuttab	106
2. Higher Education	108
IV. During the Nineteenth Century	110
PART III	
CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	
CHAPTER FIVE - AGENCIES OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION	116-147
Introduction	116
I. The Church	118
1. Preparing a Secured Family	118
2. Care from Childhood to Adulthood	121
3. Education Through Worship	123
4. Education Through Pastoral and Social Work	130
II. The Home	135
III. The School	141
CHAPTER SIX - THE SUNDAY SCHOOL	148-163
I. History	148
II. Curriculum	151
III. Administration	159
CHAPTER SEVEN - YOUTH AND ADULT ACTIVITIES	164-177
I. Youth Christian Education	164
II. Adult Work	168
III. A Sample Program in a Local Church	171

	<u>Page</u>
IV. Leadership Training	172
V. Theological Training	174
CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS	178-181
BIBLIOGRAPHY	182-186

PART I
HISTORICAL AND DOCTRINAL BACKGROUND

CHAPTER I
A SHORT HISTORICAL SURVEY

1. The Copts

The name Copt is a Europeanized form of the Arabic Kibt (or Kubt) which in turn is derived from the Greek Αἰγύπτιοι "Egyptian".¹ The word has been taken from the Hieroglyphic name "Ha-Ka-Ptah", the Houses of Ptah, the ancient religious name for Memphis the capital of Ancient Egypt.

The name in the Coptic language is "Ρεμνημι" "Remonkimi" People of Kimi, People of the black land, Egypt, the Egyptians.

The old Semitic name of the country was Mizraim (Gen. 10:6) from which the Arabic name "Misr" was derived.

Professor Worrell states "The Copts are the native Christians of Egypt and the direct descendants of the ancient Egyptians... They are important because they are surviving indigenous Egyptians, a people with the longest of recorded histories, and because they are an early Christian community, preserved by secession and oppression."²

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1. Encyclopædia Britanica 11th ed. Vol. 7 P.113
 2. Worrell, A Short Account of the Copts P.viii

The racial origin of the Copts is summarized by Westermann:

Much has been made by the Egyptologists, Gaston Maspero, Breasted, and others, of the surprising recurrence of bodily features of the Pharaonic Egyptians in the inhabitants of the present day.. Astonishing somatic likenesses undoubtedly occur. Occasionally these survivals are to be seen among the Coptic Christians, who are supposed to be the truer representatives of the old Egyptian stock... There was never an invasion of an alien race into the Nile Valley which was so large that the intruders could not be assimilated readily into the native stock.. Invasions in such numbers as to change the physical type, or such as to cause any tremendous shock to the old culture, are not recorded. 1

The Egyptians are considered from the same origin as the European races. "No doubt that the Egyptian races were of the same origin as the European, both came from Asia. This is because of their features and the analogies of their language.²

Worrell traces these features to some specific origins:

The Egyptians are white men of the Mediterranean race. With the drying-up of the Sahara in the present geological age some of these fled to the edge of the Nile valley and gradually descended into it and cleared it of its jungles.

The people of the valley proper, as far north as Memphis are distinct from the people of the Delta. The former have connections with Hamitic lands beyond the southern limits of Egypt, the latter have connections with Hamitic lands along the Mediterranean coast, westward.

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1. Westermann, W.L., Coptic Egypt P. 8-9
 2. Singleton, E., Egypt, by Villiers Stuart P.28

Though all these people are African in a geographical sense, they are not Negro; and there is no evidence of Negro blood in Egypt in early times. Even the modern Copt often has brown hair and that not kinky. 1

II. Egypt Before Christianity

Herodotus the historian defined Egypt as "the gift of the Nile".²

Egypt is simply a groove worn by the Nile in the desert. The fertile area is comparatively a narrow strip surrounded by deserts from east and west. The natural boundaries in the south are the First Cataract near Aswan and the Mediterranean Sea in the North.

1. The Ancient Egyptians:

In this narrow Nile valley these monuments of the Pharaohs were built, these inscriptions written, the religion and philosophy developed, where by Egypt gave the impetus and direction to much of the art and science and thought of Europe.³

The ancient Egyptian civilization stayed for a long time marvelous and unique. Stuart says:

Egyptian history resembles the Nile, in its solitary course. As the river flows on all alone, unaided by a single tributary for hundreds of miles through the desert, imparting life and fertility to its arid sands, so for a

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1. Worrell, A Short Account of the Copts, P.pl-2
 2. Herodotus, II.5
 3. Lane People, Egypt, P.3

long tale of centuries did the current of Egyptian history flow on its lonely course without a contemporary developing on its way the arts of civilized life including that gift peculiar to man of recording thoughts and events in writing and painting and sculpture, while other races were yet enveloped in the night of barbarism and savage ignorance and passed away without trace or record. ¹

Worrell resumes their characteristics saying: "Of their own might, intelligence and imagination, the Egyptians had built their pyramids and temples, the material symbols of physical stamina, administrative ability and engineering skill. They possessed sharp powers of observation, great skill of hand and great love of beauty, and with all great joy of life."²

As to their religious beliefs, they began their search for God by worshiping different gods. This did not satisfy their religious feelings, so there gradually developed acceptance of the idea of unity between gods, monotheism. "At the end of the 18th Dynasty a real monotheism as exclusive as that of Judaism or of Islam, was adopted as a state religion of Egypt."³

They also have a sort of trinity and a virgin birth. They believed in life after death. "The Egyptians differed from other nations of antiquity in that

1. Singleton, P. 28

2. Worrell, P. 2

3. Encyclopedia Britannica (11th ed.) Vol. 9, P.51

they believed in a continuation of life after death, concerning which they have very clear and definite ideas." ¹

~~We~~ ^{Who} reads the Book of the Dead and other pieces of their religious literature can observe the depth of their spiritual standards. "Some Egyptians at any rate, still rated the outward observances of their religion as nothing compared to the right faith of a righteous life." ²

2. Invaders:

The geographical position of Egypt as placed between three continents made it accessible to foreign invasions. In their long history they were invaded by many peoples. The Greeks found a good opportunity to live in Egypt under the prosperity of the 26th dynasty (from the 7th century B.C.). They formed Greek cities and colonies. The Persians ruled Egypt from 525 to 332 B.C. Alexander the Great conquered Egypt in 332 B.C. The Romans occupied it in 30 B.C.

From 525 B.C. to 1922 A.D. except for one brief interlude in the fourth pre-Christian century, the native Egyptians have been constantly under the control of foreign rulers, or of Egyptianized alien dynasties. This is a

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1. Scott-Moncrieff, Paganism and Christianity in Egypt, P. 100
 2. Butcher, E.L., The Story of the Church of Egypt P. 5

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1. Scott-Moncrieff, Paganism and Christianity in Egypt, P. 100
 2. Butcher, E.L., The Story of the Church of Egypt P. 5

long lesson in patient endurance for a people which still remained uniquely and distinctively Egyptian. The changes from one foreign control to another have taken place without appreciable military resistance from the natives. This means that their power of resistance...has been internal and spiritual, not external and physical." 1

During the Roman rule in Egypt, all the conditions of the country were accumulating to prepare the way to welcome the new faith respectfully.

The inhabitants of the country were at that time of three classes, Greeks, Jews, and Egyptians. "For the influx of Greeks and Jews during the previous centuries had been so large that they formed, as it were two distinct foreign nations settled in the country, speaking their own language and living under their own laws." 2

A-The Greeks:

"Under Alexander and his successors a rapid Hellenization of Egypt took place, not only were Greek literature and learning cultivated in Alexandria; the Greek language seemed to replace Egyptian. Native Egyptians bore Greek names or Hellenized their Egyptian ones. Native Egyptians wrote documents and letters in Greek." 3

It would be entirely wrong to suppose that all Egyptians used Greek exclusively, or habitually, or even oc-

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1. W.L. Westermann. P.9
 2. Butcher, P. 2
 3. Worrell, P.4

asionally. The truth is that from Alexander onward the use of Greek increased and the use of Demotic decreased.¹

The spread of the Greek language made it easy for the Egyptians to receive the Gospels written in Greek when they were preached to them a few years later.

The Greeks mostly gathered in the famous cities of the country. "The principal city of the Greeks was Alexandria - the Paris of the ancient world. Heliopolis, the ancient university of Egypt, where the wisest men of ancient Greece had gladly come to study, was already a deserted city; where one or two ruined houses were pointed out as these in which Plato and his compatriots had lived."²

Religiously, the Greeks became by this time practically atheists, and thought as little of their gods as of their emperors.

B-The Jews:

There was a large Jewish population in Egypt. The learned Jew Philo, says that the Jews in Alexandria and all Egypt totalled a million.³

In Egypt the Jewish Scriptures were translated more than two hundred years before Christ, and this Greek version (the Septuagint) used even by Christ and the apostles,

1. Ibid, P. 6

2. Butcher, P. 3

3. J.E.L. Oulton & H. Chadwick, Alexandrian Christianity
P. 15

spread Hebrew ideas throughout the Roman world.¹

Alexandria the home of Hellenistic Judaism, was one long scene of riot between the Jews and the Greeks.

"The schools of Alexandria, though of far less repute than they had been under the Ptolemies, or than they afterwards became under the Christians, were still, renowned throughout the civilized world, but the names of their great philosophers were Hebrew. The chief glory of the Alexandrian school in the first century was the Jewish Philo." ²

C- The Romans:

In the year 30 B.C. Egypt became a Roman province; but Roman cultural influences were always negligible. The ancient gods of Egypt continued to be worshipped sumptuously in newer and greater temples; but their priests were now Greeks, and they themselves had become mysteries. The greater god of this period was Sarapis, a purely political invention of Greek times.³

The Roman occupation of Egypt contributed much to the preparation for the Spread of Christianity. By connecting Egypt with Palestine and Europe under one empire, the means of communication between these countries facilitated the travelling of the evangelists.

"As the Greeks had their Museum, and the Egyptians their Temple library, so the Jews prided themselves on

1. Schaff, History of the Christian Church

2. Butcher P. 8-9

3. Worrell P. 7

their great central synagogue built in the shape of a
1
basilica."

Briefly these were the conditions of Egypt during the Roman conquest, preparing the country to receive the King of kings.

III. Christianity in Egypt

1. Jesus visits Egypt:

"Out of Egypt have I called my Son" (Mat. 2:15)

Egypt was a fortunate land to be chosen as a shelter for His Son. As escaping aliens the Holy Family did not stay in one place all the time, they kept moving from place to place.

Tradition records some sites in Upper and Lower Egypt upon which churches were built to commemorate this visit. The most famous of those sites is Babylon, the Roman fortress of Old Cairo. It embraces within its walls the Ancient Church of "Abu Sarge" St. Sergius built on a crypt in which our Lord dwelt during his sejour in Babylon. Tradition says that the earlier church of the crypt was built in the apostolic age.

Butcher says:

It was the Jewish quarter of Babylon, and there is no reason to doubt the tradition which brings Joseph and Mary to settle there during the greater part of their stay in Egypt. A period the length of which is variously estimated by

1. Butcher, P.10

Western and Eastern controversialists. Some reduce it to six months others extend it from two to four or even six years.¹

The visit of Jesus to Egypt was a blessing to the people, a reconciliation between them and God after the plagues of the Exodus. It is an inspiration which prepared them to accept easily the dawn of the Christian light.

Morton describes one of the frescoes which shows the Holy Family entering Heliopolis saying: "This illustrates an ancient Coptic legend which says that as the Holy Child entered Heliopolis, the noise of a rushing of a mighty wind was heard, the earth trembled, and idols crashed from their pedestals."²

The visit is considered as the fulfilment of Isaiah's prophesy "Behold the Lord rideth upon a swift cloud and shall come into Egypt and the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence, and the heart of Egypt shall melt in the midst of it. (19:1) As a result of the visit the same chapter records; "In that day shall there be an altar³ to the Lord in the midst of the Land of Egypt." (19:19) "Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless saying, Blessed be Egypt my people." (19:25)

1. Butcher, P.18

2. Morton, H.V., Through Lands of the Bible, P. 141

3. Isaiah does not speak about a Jewish altar which could not be held except in Jerusalem; then it must be the new altar of Christianity.

The Coptic Church celebrates the feast of the "Coming of Jesus to Egypt" on the first day of June every year.

2. After Pentecost:

The Christian faith was carried to Egypt early after the day of Pentecost.

"Both the nearness of Egypt to Palestine and the large population of Jews settled there make it highly probable that Christian activity began quite early, for we know that the pioneer Christian missionaries went first to the synagogue." 1

The Book of Acts records that there were dwellers "in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya about Cyrene" (2:10), they were present at Jerusalem at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost. They must have preached the tidings in Egypt when they returned.

St. Mark as a native of Cyrene, was the only evangelist to identify Simon the Cyrenian, who bore the cross; as the father of Alexander and Rufus. (Mark 15:21) Lucius of Cyrens was among the prophets and teachers at Antioch when the Holy Spirit commanded to lay hands on Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:1). Again among those who were scattered abroad, upon

1. C.P. Groves, The Planting of Christianity in Africa, P.36

the persecution that arose about Stephen, preaching the word were men of Cyprus and Cyrene. (Acts 11:19-20)
Cyrene (Kiruan) was a city on the west borders of Egypt on the north coast of Affica, "which for more than two hundred years had been subject to Egypt, and reckoned as part of the country."¹

These Cyrenians also have probably preached Christianity in Egypt. Neale says "It is hardly likely that so many natives of Egypt should, in their labours for the sake of Christ, have entirely neglected their own country."²

3. Mark in Alexandria:

The history which says that St. Mark the evangelist was the founder of the Church of Alexandria, is a "constant and unvarying tradition of both the East and the West."³
It is also a history proved by the writings of early historians such as Eusobius the father of Church History. "Antiquity agrees in bestowing on St. Mark the title of the Apostle of Egypt."⁴

"Mark himself; according to Egyptian tradition was a native of Pentapolis, which since the days of

1. Butcher, P.3 - About Cyrenaica, see also; Hardy, Christian Egypt, P. 21

2. J. M. Neale, A History of the Holy Eastern Church P.5

3. Neale, P. 3

4. Ibid, P. 4

Ptolemy I, had been an outlying province of Egypt."¹

Mark's family migrated to Palestine and settled near Jerusalem. His mother Mary is the sister of Barnabas (Col. 4:10). Mark was early instructed in the Christian faith. He was appointed as one of the Seventy chosen by Christ and accompanied the Apostles in preaching the Nord. (Acts 12:25).

Eusebius Bishop of Caesarea says in his Eccllosia-
stical History: "Now it is said that this Mark journeyed to Egypt and was the first to preach (there) the Gospel, which also he had written; and that he was the first to form churches at Alexandria itself."²

In the Chronicon, Eusebius says, under the second year of Claudius, (i.e., A.D. 42 or 43). "Mark the Evangelist preaches Christ in Egypt and at Alexandria." His first convert in Alexandria was one Annianus, a Shoemaker by trade."³ When Mark returned to Palestine before the end of the year 49, he consecrated Annianus as first bishop of the Church of Alexandria with seven priests and seven deacons. Eusebius says "Now when Nero was in the eighth year of his reign, Annianus succeeded, first after Mark the evangelist, to the ministry of

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1. Butcher, P.20
 2. Eusebius (II.16)
 3. Butcher, P. 21

the community at Alexandria."¹

After attending the Council at Jerusalem, Barnabas took his nephew Mark with him to Cyprus. Mark went thence to Cyrene, where he established the churches of Pentapolis, through his way back to Alexandria. He built the first church in Alexandria at a place called Baucalia near the sea-shore.

When they noticed the spread of Christianity a riot of pagans seized Mark. Tying him with a rope, they dragged him through the principal streets of the city for two days till death ended his sufferings. His followers buried him in the church of Baucalia which became the headquarters of the Coptic Church in Egypt for centuries. The martyrdom of St. Mark was probably in the year 62 A.D.²

4. The Spread of Christianity in Egypt:

Christianity became appealing to the Egyptians, because their ancient religion had prepared the way.

"As Osiris had been a man and had become a god, so Christ was God and man. As Osiris judged the dead, so Christ would one day judge the dead."³

In reference to the factor of their belief in future life Groves states:

"This centered faith and practice in the

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1. Eusebius II, P. 24
 2. Butcher, P. 23
 3. Worrell, P. 7

hope of a future life and preparation for securing it through Osiris who, though slain by evil, had triumphed in a resurrection. That Christianity, with its proclamation of a Savior who had conquered death, should therefore find a sympathetic hearing was to be expected. 1

On the whole "The ancient Egyptian creed was worn out, and they found in Christianity a doctrine of the future life for which their old belief had made them not unready; while the social teaching of Christianity came with special fitness to a subject race."²

The historical, political and social factors working beside the zeal of the Christian converts, led to the spread of Christianity on a wide scale among native Egyptians. Judaism and Hellenism had paved an open way for Christianity in Egypt.

By the year 200 A.D. the Delta was full of converts.³ In 202 A.D. Eusebius mentions Christians also in the whole Thebais⁴ (Upper Egypt, 500 miles up the Nile).

Unfortunately very little is known about the early expansion of Christianity in the first and second centuries.

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1. Groves, P. 37
 2. Encyclopedia Britanica, (11th ed.) Vol. 9, P. 89
 3. Worrell, P. 7
 4. Eusebius, Eccl. His. VI 1

During which we know about:

- a) A local Gospel described by Clement of Alexandria as "the gospel according to the Egyptians" which was dropped from use by the end of the second century.¹
- b) That the Palestinian church had exchanged letters with the church of Alexandria in reference to the celebration of Easter on the same date.²
- c) An Alexandrian list is extant which gives the bishops of Alexandria from Mark downwards.³

From the writings of Clement of Alexandria (153-217 A.D.). "We learn that the church and its school already played a not insignificant role in Alexandria, that the school was frequented by pagans as well as by Christians, that presbyters, deacons, and "widows" were to be found in the church, that it counted members from all classes and ranks, and that many Christian heretics disquieted the Alexandrian church."⁴

Demetrius (Bishop from 188-231) was the first bishop to consecrate other three bishops for the country. His successor Heraclas consecrated twenty.⁵

1. Harnack, Expansion of Christianity, Vol. II P. 305
2.-3. Ibid, P. 308
4. Ibid, P. 309
5. Ibid, P. 309

Christianity spread even to the heart of the desert, "According to the prelude of the festal opistles of Athanasius there were Christians in the small and the large oasis by 329 A.D."¹

As to the number of Christians Harnack says "The fragments of correspondence of Dionys. Alex. and the record of the persecutions, give one the impression that the number of Christians in Alexandria was large and the spread of Christianity throughout the country, in town and villages alike was considerable."²

5. Progress under persecution:

The progress of the Christian faith among the native Egyptian population went on under severe kinds of persecution.

Eusebius recorded the story of martyrdoms during the persecutions of the third and early fourth centuries. He was an eyewitness of the suffering of Christians, and in addition draws upon valuable contemporary sources for his narrative.

The outbreak of persecution under the Emperor Septimius Severus occurred with the edict of A.D. 202, whereby fresh conversions to both Christianity and

1. Ibid, P. 314
2. Ibid, P. 315

Judaism were forbidden.¹

Eusebius testifies to the faithful witness of Egyptian Christians "This was especially the case in Alexandria, to which city, as to a most prominent theater, athletes of God were brought from Egypt and all Thebais according to their merit, and won crowns from God through their great patience under many tortures and every mode of death."²

In the later persecution when Maximum ruled Syria and Egypt, Eusebius was himself an eyewitness of martyrdoms in the Thebais "We also, being on the spot ourselves, have observed large crowds in one day; some suffering decapitation, other torture, fire.. As soon as sentence was pronounced against the first, one after another rushed to the judgment seat, and confessed themselves Christians."³

Eusebius names bishops and others as leaders of the church in Egypt who suffered deaths illustriously at Alexandria and throughout Egypt and Thebais. Egyptian Christians also suffered outside their country; some were taken to labour in copper mines in Palestine; others suffered in Phoenicia; some who had been sent to minister to

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1. Groves, P. 37

2. Eusebius "Eccl. History" VI. I (Mc Giffertstrans)

3. Eusbius, VIII, IX 4-5

the confessors in Cilicia, received the same sentence as those whom they had gone to help, being mutilated in their eyes and feet.¹

Many methods of torture were invented to stop the progress of Christianity in Egypt, but all failed in front of the deep faith of the Copts. Eusebius mentions a few kinds of these ways used in Egypt saying:

... Countless numbers, men, women, and children, despising this passing life, endured various forms of death for the sake of our Saviour's teaching. Some of them were committed to the flames after being torn and rocked and grievously scourged, and suffering other manifold torments terrible to hear, while some were engulfed in the sea; others with a good courage stretched forth their tortures, or perished of hunger on the gibbet...they had the entire body torn to pieces with sharp sherds instead of claws... omen were fastened by one foot and swung aloft through the air, head downwards...Others, again, were fastened to trees and trunks, and so died. For they drew together by certain machines the very strongest of the branches, to each of which they fastened one of the martyr's legs, and then released the branches to take up their natural position, thus contriving the rending asunder all at once of the limbs of those who were the objects of this device.

And indeed all these things were done, not for a few days or for some brief space, but for a long period extending over whole years - sometimes more than ten, at other times above twenty persons being put to death; and at others not less than thirty, now nearer sixty, and again at other times a hundred men would be slain in a single day, along with quite young children and women, which followed one on the other.²

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1. Eusebius, Martyrs of Palestine XIII, 1-3
 2. Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. VIII 8-9

In relation to this, Groves states:

"No section of the hard-pressed Christian fellowship held a prouder record than did the Egyptian Christians under their fiery trial. As in apostolic days, so now dispersio^g through persecution led to the further expansion of the Church." ¹ "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of faith."

Their fortitude in the time of Diocletian introduced a new reckoning of time, the "Era of the Martyrs" which dates from the common year 284. Every year the Copts still celebrate the feast of the martyrs on their New Year's day which occurs on September the eleventh.

These persecutions figure very prominently in Coptic literature, and the development of the cult of the martyrs occupied an important place in the history of the Church at an early date.

IV. The Catechetical School

The spread of Christianity in Egypt met two obstacles. The external conflict of the Roman persecutions and the literary struggle with the ancient world of the Greek and Jewish philosophers.

1. Groves, Planting of Christianity in Africa, P. 38

"Alexandria still possessed its three great royal foundations, the Museum, the Serapeum and the Sebasteion; its three libraries." (1)

The Egyptians, even after their conversion to Christianity, were still interested in philosophical and scientific studies. They attended the ~~Heathen~~ or as it was called the "Neoplatonistic" school of Alexandria. Professor Bigg explains the conditions in Alexandria saying:

"A large and rich community, existing in the bosom of a great University town, could not long submit to exclusion from the paramount interests of the place. Their most promising young men attended the lectures of the heathen professors. Some like Ammonius, relapsed into Hellenism; some drifted into Gnosticism, like Ambrosius; some, like Heraclas, passed safely through the ordeal, and as Christian priests still wore the pallium, or philosopher's cloak, the doctor's gown we may call it of the pagan Academy." (2)

"Gnosticism was strong in Egypt, and the struggle against it may have been largely responsible for the formation of the first Christian university, the Didascalion or Catechetical School." (3)

The fame of that School made of it an international center of Christian studies.

Alexander Roberts says:

"The Alexandria of Apollon and of St. Mark has become the earliest seat of the Christian learning... Alexandria becomes the brain of Christendom; its heart was yet beating at Antioch, but the West was still

1. C. Bigg, Christian Platonists of Alexandria 1.26
 2. Ibid p. 68-69
 3. A.A. King, the Rites of Eastern Christendom, 1. 341

receptive only, its hands outstretched
stretched forth towards the sunrise for
further enlightenment. 1

Bigg adds:

The first systematic attempt to harmonize the tradition of faith with the free conclusions of human intellect was made neither at Rome nor at Athens, but in Egypt. 2

Groves speaks lightly of the school saying "... the world-famous Catechetical School of Alexandria, a center of Christian Scholarship without rival in the then Christian world." (3)

Neither the date of its foundation nor the name of its first principal is undisputed. Tradition states that St. Mark established it as a school to prepare the catechumens for baptism. When the struggle with the philosophers started, the school began to be the center of learning, debating and writing apologetical works. This tradition could find credit in the words of Bigg when he says.

"Hence the catechetical instruction, which in most other communities continued to be given in an un-systematic way by Bishop or Priest, had in Alexandria developed about the middle of the (second) century into a regular institution. This was the famous Catechetical School." (4)

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1. The Anti-Nicene Fathers, Vol. II, Introductory
 2. Bigg, I. 25. note to Clement of Alexandria,
 3. Groves, I. 37 p. 165.
 4. Bigg, I. 69.

One of the earliest names related to the school is Athenagoras.

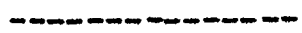
He filled one of the professorial chairs in Alexandria. He was much interested, like all Platonic philosophers of his time, in Christianity, and desiring to expose its fallacies and presumptions, he set himself seriously to study its writings. The very natural result was his own conversion to that religion. He still wore the garb of the philosopher, and did not forsake his former studies; but he became one of the great champions of Christianity. His Apology is addressed to Marcus Aurelius and Commodus., and its probable date is 176-177A.D. (1)

One of the pupils of Athenagoras, became the first known head of the Catechetical School; Pantaenus, a converted philosopher. His pupil and successor Clement of Alexandria writing in the Stromata I ii about his education describes his teachers:

After I met the last (who was first of them in importance) I abandoned further search, having discovered him hiding in from the flowers in the meadow of the apostles and prophets, and implanted in the souls of his pupils pure knowledge.

The identity of Clement's last teacher is not in doubt. He was Pantaenus, described here as "a truly Sicilian bee". The best honey come from Sicily, so that this is Clement's way of complimenting him upon the brilliance of his lectures. (The phrase gives us no compelling reason for supposing, as had been thought by many writers on Clement, that Pantaenus was a Sicilian). (2)

Great scholars headed the school succeeding



1. Butcher, I. 43
2. Dulton, J.E. Leonard, Alexandrian Christianity p. 16, Vol. II of the Library of Christian Classics.

Isidoreus. "The School continued such signs of theological learning as Clement of Alexandria (215) the Isopostolic Athenians (375) and St. Cyril (444). (1)

The educational and literal talks of the School, as well as, the works of its great teachers will be discussed in a proceeding Chapter in "Part II" of this thesis.

V. Monasticism

Egypt was the Motherland of Christian monasticism. It sprang into existence there at the beginning of the fourth century and in a very few years spread over the whole Christian world. Thus the Catholic Encyclopedia introduces monasticism and says "The simple teaching of the first Egyptian monks and hermits fixed once and forever the broad outlines of the science of the spiritual life." (2)

Groves looks to it as: "An outstanding contribution was made by Egyptian Christianity to the whole of Christendom in the development of the monastic life." (3)

As monasticism became a great force in the history of Christianity, it effected the life,

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1. King, Rites of Eastern Christendom, I. 341
 2. The Catholic Encyclopedia 8, New York 1911
 3. Groves, 1.42.

attitudes and teachings of the church. So it is good to discuss briefly its origin. Those who are hostile to it claim that it has no biblical nor spiritual basis, others try to trace its roots to the pagan types of asceticism. Misunderstanding its motives led some to consider it as an escape from persecution.

The following pages are an attempt to throw light upon these problems, depending mainly upon the writings of famous non-monastic scholars.

Spiritual basis:

Ascetics are people retired from society voluntarily, renounced marriage and property, devoted themselves wholly to fasting, prayer and religious contemplation, and strove thereby to attain Christian perfection. Their motive was that faith must exhibit itself in a Christ-like life.

The life of our Lord Jesus was itself an appealing example to asceticism. Hennek says:

Monasticism may fitly be called the climax and the crown of His (Christ's) ideals. Alone among all the great religious teachers of the world He never was married. He was heralded by the Baptist hermit. He spent much of His time in lonely contemplation among the deserts. He declared that the man that did not hate his father and his mother could not be His disciple; He told a rich young man who

wished to be perfect that he might sell everything he had and give to the poor. His teachings are full of exhortations that are admirably appropriate to monks and yet in some cases very hard sayings to those whose lives are in the world. (1)

Celibacy is exalted by Jesus and highly esteemed by St. Paul, not as a rule for all people but only for those who are able to receive it. (Matt. 19:12, 22:30. I Cor. 7:7,32). Poverty is honoured (Luke 6:20, 9:58, Matt 19:23). Prayer vigils and fastings were practiced and taught by Jesus and the Apostles.

This Christian tendency towards renouncing the world for the sake of spiritual perfection, shown its earliest reflection from the life of evangelists, who began without property, and traveling from place to place.

As Christianity began to spread, those who were seeking peace of the soul wished to escape the world's spiritual evils and terrors. "An ascetic element in the Christian ideal present from the Apostolic Age and developed in the Christian reaction to the sensual pleasures of pagan cities, was encouraged from the philosophic side by the view of spirit as opposed to sense,

1. C.Hennrich Christian Monasticism a Great Force in history I. 2-13.

so that, as liberation from the thralldom of sense was achieved a growing spiritual experience could be released. (1)

Thus the spiritual motive was the main factor in appealing to the ascetic life.

Speaking about this tendency in the early Christian thought Meekes says:

From the second century Christianity itself was colored by asceticism... Christianity spread from the Alexandrian Church, whence missionaries went forth and could hardly fail to preach a gospel that was colored with asceticism... The way in which Christianity was presented to him (the native Egyptian), tended to read the life and teaching of our Lord and the Apostles, and indeed the Old Testament also, through ascetic eyes. (2)

A sceticism was considered by the earnest Egyptian as the highest ideal in Christianity.

Is it an escape from persecution?

No doubt monasticism is a kind of escape from the world. Not every escape is a wrong one. Monks did not escape persecutions afraid from pain or suffering, but they escaped the evil worldly temptations to preserve their spiritual life. No one can imagine that the Copts who were welcoming the Roman persecutions in great numbers and indurable patience, will escape it one day. Many monks were recorded as martyrs, when they voluntarily went to

1. Grofes, p. 42

2. W.H. Meekes, Christian Monasticism in Egypt, 11.51-52

declare their Christianity. Those who began their monastic life by a funeral service, to declare their death from the world, would not escape the glorious death of the martyrs.

Spiritually minded, when the Copts realized the infiltration of worldly thoughts into the church they began to escape it. Harnack explains this motive saying: "We know the original ideal, and we can measure the extent of the renunciation. The idea was an undisturbed contemplation of God; ... Not only was the world in every sense of the world, to be avoided, but the secularized church as well." (1) They fled not the world only, but worldliness in the church, yet they did not therefore flee from the church."(2)

The secularization of the church began from the time of Constantine, since the establishment of a State Church. Mackean says:

Thus at a time when the most virile element was considerably reduced, great numbers of nominal Christians entered the Church, lowering further the standard of her life; ... This worldliness of the Church would naturally be felt with keen sorrow and disappointment by the more earnest; and monasticism represented the desire to return to the lofty ideals of the New Testament and was a protest against the worldliness of the church, from which men turned away to life

1. Harnack, Monasticism, p. 44
2. Ibid, p. 36

the Christian life in the desert. (1)

The storm of Gnostic controversy in the fourth century and the fifth, deeply disturbed the peace of the Church. So people again, the peace of the soul turned from the City of Destruction to realize the City of God in the desert and the cell,² where they could, in contrast with luxury, sensuality and disorder of the world live peaceful lives of poverty, chastity, and prayer.

Is it of non-Christian origin?

Before Christianity history records the existence of ascetic systems among the Indians, Greeks, Jews, or Ancient Egyptians, some writers believed for a time that these non-Christian systems may have inspired the zeal towards Christian monasticism. Through the historical evidence given by Meckeen, it became obvious that the Christian monasticism is a genuine Christian inspiration.

is-not Indian:

The Alexandrian interest in India seems to have disappeared many years before the arrival of monasticism. Very little was known of India and its religions by Christian writers. (3)

1. Meckeen, PP. 61-62

2. Ibid. I. 64

3. Meckeen, I. 17

b- Not Greek:

Thus neo-Platonicism had the tendency to withdraw from the world to an ascetic and contemplative life, yet its spread was to the few and only to those of Hellenic education. On the other hand, monasticism was originally a Coptic movement, adopted by men often ignorant of Greek. It is impossible to suppose that the rural population of the Thebaid was so affected by neo-Platonic thought as to inaugurate the monastic movement.(1)

c- Not Ancient Egyptian:

The aim and mode of life of the Egyptian ascetics were clearly different from those of the Christian monk.

They were not celibates, nor were they characterized by religious fervour. Indeed the general attitude of Christian monks was very antagonistic to paganism. (2)

d- Not Jewish:

The ascetic Hellenistic Judaism of the Essenes separated from the Christian monks in time by more than two centuries, but its strongly marked Jewish features, their inclusion of women, their interest in philosophy, and absence of manual work manifest the wide difference in creed and con-

1. Ibid, p. 18
2. Beckson, p. 20

duet between it and the Christian monasticism.

It became clear that esoteric tendencies were very prevalent in the Church of Egypt. The Copts with their intense interest in the future life were desirous of inward parity in this world as a preparation for the next. The earnest laymen desired to follow closely in the steps of Jesus Christ in a worldly age.

There was a growing tendency towards the desert, in a country which was possessed of a wonderfully equable climate; this may be said to form the fuel of the monastic movement. The match was supplied by the example and influence of the great St. Antony.(2)

Spread of monasticism:

The movement spread quickly and appealed to many lovers of the spiritual life. Harnack estimates the number saying "There must by that time (340 A.D.) have been thousands of hermits."(3)

King says:

By the 5th and 6th centuries their fame had (gone out into all lands)..... Travellers also came from countries as far distant as Spain and Ireland in order to visit the monasteries, and an Irish guide book for visitors to the Holy Land of Egypt is still preserved in the Bibliothecus Nationale in Paris. (4)

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1. Ibid, P. 23
 2. Ibid, II. 69-70
 3. Harnack, Monasticism, I. 43
 4. A. A. King, I. 345

Early in the fourth century monasticism was imported from Egypt into Syria and the Oriental lands. St. Basil adapted it to Greek and European ideas and needs. St. Athanasius carried it to Western Europe. (1)

The affect of monasticism

Harnack says:

He who understands it will recognize how much there is to learn from it. May, he will be able to learn from it not as from an opponent but as from a friend; not only not to the injury of his evangelical standpoint, but rather to its advantage. Let us then seek to gain a true appreciation of monasticism." (2)

"Art, poetry, science, have found in it a foster-mother, may the beginnings of our civilization are a chapter from the history of monasticism." (3)

The Egyptian anchorites even in the West were reckoned at all times as the fathers and models of true Christian life." (4)

"Even to-day, to certain hearts weary of the world, monasticism may indeed bring peace." (5)

The last few centuries of hard striving to live during dark ages; previous to the Egyptian modern

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1. Encyclopaedia Britannica (11ed) Vol. 18 p. 688
 2. Harnack, I. 14
 3. Harnack, I. 12
 4. Ibid, I. 67
 5. Ibid, I. 115

renaissance, have led some writing to state that the Coptic Church is not interested in missionary enterprise. Such writings would only prove unjust judgements based upon ignorance of church history and lack of studying the situation in the Middle East during the Medieval Ages.

The following paragraphs are only a few samples of the Coptic missions, when conditions permitting them. The missionary zeal did not die when circumstances changed. When it was impossible to go outside the borders the efforts continued in the fields of national missions to preserve the faith. Further research would throw more light upon the fields of Coptic missions.

Early missions:

The missionary movement began in Egypt early in the first steps of Christianity through the first converts. The book of the acts of the Apostles records the mission of one among the first evangelists, an Alexandrian man called Apoollos. He worked in Ephesus and Corinth as a missionary preacher (Acts 18:24, 19:1).

Clement of Alexandria describes the missionary attitudes in those days saying:

The word of our teacher did not remain in Judea alone, as did philosophy in Greece, but was poured out over the whole universe, persuading Greeks and barbarians alike in the various nations and villages and cities, winning over whole households,

and by bringing to the truth each individual of these who had believed, as well as not a few philosophers." (1)

Organized missions:

It was not only a personal zeal which motivated some individuals to go on missions. But, the following words of Eusebius prove that it was an organized movement in the church and its Catechetical school appointing the missionaries and the mission fields.

"Now at that time there was a man of great renown for learning named Pantaenus.. He displayed such ardent love and zeal for the divine word that he was appointed as herald of the gospel of Christ to the nations of the East." (2)

Trinichev adds "It was this school which sent out missionaries who carried Christianity to pagan tribes in Lybia, Phrygia, Sinai, Arabic Felix, the Thebaid, and Upper Egypt." (3)

1 - In Lybia:

As Mark was born in Pentapolis (Cyrenais-Lybia). the tradition records also that he preached there. His successors must have sent Missionaries to their neighbors on the North East borders. Even we do not know its early history, Harnack says: "But the fact of Basilides being (Egyptian) metropolitan of

1. Clement of Alex. Stromata, Vi. 13
2. Eusebius, V. 10
3. Trinichev, Islam in the Sudan 1.50

Pantopolis in the days of Dionysius of Alexandria,

2 - In Nubia and Soudan:

John of Ephesus writes in his history:

"Among the clergy in attendance upon pope Theodosius, 2 was a presbyter named Julianus, an old man of great worth, who conceived an earnest spiritual desire to Christianize the wandering people who dwell on the eastern borders of the Thebais beyond Egypt, and who are not only subject to the authority of the Roman empire, but even receive a subsidy on condition that they do not enter nor pillage Egypt. The blessed Julianus, therefore, being full of anxiety for this people, went and spoke about them to the late Queen Theodora, in the hope of awakening in her a similar desire for their conversion. 3

John of Ephesus records this story in details and Trimmingham concludes: "Christianity was introduced into the Sudan in the sixth century as a definite missionary endeavour of the Church of Egypt and was the first contact of Christianity with the Negro race.(4)

3 - In Ethiopia and Eritrea:

"Christianity was first introduced into Axum from Egypt by merchants through the commercial and

1. Harneck, Expansion of Christianity, 1. 322
2. Patriarch of Alexandria (536-38) he was at this time in exile in Constantinople.
3. John of Ephesus, Ecclesiastical Hist. Part III (trans. R.L. Smith) 1. 251
4. Trimmingham, 1. 49

writing relations which existed between the two countries..."(1)

St. Athanasius, ordain Ambrosius as a bishop for Ethiopia in A.D. 330 . The Ethiopians called their first bishop "Abba Selama Keshete Berhan" the "father of peace revealer of light". It became a title for every succeeding bishop.

At the beginning of the sixth century A.D. Cosmas Indicopleustes the Egyptian navigator confirms that the court and country of Axum were mainly Christians. (2)

4 - In India:

Eusebius says:

For there were, yes, even still at that time, many evangelists of the word desirous to contribute an inspired zeal, after the manner of the apostles for the increase and building up of the divine word. Pantaenus also was one of those, and is mentioned as having gone to India.(3)

5 - In Arabia:

Harnock refers to Eusebius in summarizing Origen's visit to Arabia, saying:

Origen was known personally by that time to the Arabian bishops, for about 215A.D. he had travelled as far as Arabia at the request of the Roman governor, before whom he laid his views.(Eus. H.E. VI. 19) Eusebius further relates that a synod was held at Caesarea 4, to which

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1. Trimincher, p. 49
 2. The Christian Topography, ed. McCrindal, Heklyut Society I. 120.
 3. Eusebius, I. V. 10
 4. In Irak.

Origen was invited and of which he was the intellectual leader. (1)

6 In Europe:

Europe was not too far from Egypt. Many Copts were reported traveling to Europe on religious affairs to attend the ecumenical councils, or to meet the Emperors and governors. During persecutions many were sent there for torture or exile.

"Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word." (2)

Among those, Harnack says:

Certainly in Belgium the church was still in a very humble way about 300 A.D. Even by the opening of the fourth century, the number of members in this Church was small. One little building sufficed for their worship down to 336 A.D., nor were steps taken towards the erection of a new edifice till Athensius stayed there, during his banishment. (3)

More research work has to be done to trace the steps of the Egyptian missionaries in Europe. Professor Atiya (4) lectured last year about some Coptic antiquities in St. Mor of France, and three Coptic martyrs in Zurich of Switzerland.

7 - In Ireland:

The traces of Coptic missionaries in Ireland could be followed easily through the statement of

1. Harnack, p. 301

2. Acts, 8:4

3. Harnack, pp. 406-7

4. Professor Aziz Sourial Atiya is the President of the Institute of Coptic Studies at Cairo and formerly chairman of the department of history, University of Alexandria.

S. I. Poole:

Monasticism was a potent force in Egypt from very early days... We do not know how much we owe to these remote hermits. Some have held that Irish Christianity, the great civilization agent of the early middle ages of early Ireland that reminds one of still earliest Christian remains in Egypt. (1)

From the previous examples and citations, some characteristics of the Coptic missionary enterprise could be concluded:

1. It was a natural outcome of the Christian personal commitment and deep spiritual witness of the Copts. It reflected their love of sacrifice.
2. It developed to an organized movement sponsored by the institutions of the church.
 - a. The Catechetical School of Alexandria.
 - b. The monastic groups.
3. Its aim was the spread of Christianity itself and not the establishment of Coptic churches abroad. No attempts to use the Coptic language or Coptic music, could be traced in these mission fields. Manuscripts prove that the vernacular language and national music were used even in the nearest fields of Nubia, Sudan and Ethiopia.
4. Missionaries were not sent only to Africa, but also to the continents of the known world, Asia and

1. Stanley Lane Poole, the Story of Cairo 1. 62

Europe.

5. They did not try to preach the Gospel, "where Christ was named":

- a. Origen did not visit Arabia - where there was already an established church - except when then he was invited to help the bishops there.
- b. Athanasius, even so famous and able personality, did not consider the weakness of the church in *Belgia* as a good opportunity for him to weaken it more by establishing a new church of his own, but rather helped the weak to progress and to erect a new edifice.

6. Internal troubles did not hinder the promotion of missions when it was possible. Weeley says:

"It should be recorded that in the very bitterest period of the doctrinal controversies, in the sixth period of the doctrinal century, the Egyptian Church was capable of missionary enterprise, for in 575 Longinus converted to Christianity the peoples of Nubia.(2)

VII - The Ecumenical Councils

By the beginning of the fourth century the Christian Church faced crucial dogmatic problems. A series of great theological controversies which

1 Romans 15:20.

2. R. Maxwell Woolley, Coptic Offices, p. XIV

Shook the church to its foundation. The greatest of these was the heresy of Arius, who was a priest of Alexandria. But, "The Arian party was essentially Greek, the Athanasian group Egyptian." (1)

Alexandria as a great center of theological studies, at that time, was able to discriminate the falseness of the heresy. It became evident that the Church is in need of a clear definition for the true doctrine.

In 320 Alexander the Patriarch of Alexandria summoned a local council and Arius was excommunicated, but the heresy was not yet defeated but spread in other countries.

1. On the request of Alexander, the first Christian Roman Emperor Constantine decided to call a common council of bishops to seek a solution for all matters in dispute. Then the first ecumenical council was held of 318 bishops at Nicaea in A.D. 325. The council accepted a creed proposed to the whole Church as a standard of doctrine.

The contribution of the Coptic Church to this famous council seems unique, because:

a - The most conspicuous controversialist on the

1. Worrell, 1. 17.

Orthodox side of the issue. Alexandria, and others
Athanasius, who returned here to evade prohibitions of
Alexandria (335) (1)

b. The native Egyptian bishops were chiefly remarkable
for their manly protest against enforcing celibacy on
the clergy.(2) Butcher also says: "The Egyptian Bishop
Kephyrotius, who was a monk... made an earnest protest against
such an interference with Christian liberty. (3)

c. The council assigned the Coptic Patriarch of
Alexandria to determine the date of Easter yearly
according to the rule resolved by the council.
and to announce the date to the other churches.
"As the most learned body present at the Council of
Nicaea, it was given authority to determine the
exact day for the celebration of each successive
Easter." (4)

The followers of Arius continued to propagate
their heresy, but Athanasius consecrated all his
efforts to preserve the Orthodox faith. He suffered
exile and banishment many times. As hero and
defender of the faith the terms "Nicene" and
"Athanasian" became equivalent.

Scheff introduces him saying:

1. Encyclopedic Britannica Vol. 9 p. 90
2. Ibid. p. 90
3. Butcher, p. 146
4. Torrell. p. 17.

Athenasius is the theological and ecclesiastical center... about which the Nicene age revolves... his greatness was intellectual and moral, and proves itself in suffering and through years of warfare against mighty errors and against the imperial court. (Athenasius contra gentes, et unicus contra Athenasius) is a well-known sentiment which strikingly expresses his fearless independence and immovable fidelity to his convictions. (1)

2. The second council was held of 150 bishops at Constantinople in A.D. 381. It enlarged the Nicene confession of the Holy Spirit, in opposition to the heresy of Meceidonius.

3. The third council of 200 bishops, was held at Ephesus, to condemn the teaching of Nestorius in A.D. 431. There Wooley says. "The champion of Orthodoxy being the great Patriarch of Alexandria Cyril. (2)

4. The fourth council was summoned by the emperor Marcian A .D. 451 at Chalcedon. Unfortunately it was concluded by the schism of the Church as a result of political factors motivating the prejudice of the two parties. The case was the result of faithful loyalty to the words of the previous councils and their heroes Athanasius and Cyril. It began by misunderstanding the meanings of words, but developed afterwards to some complicated theories. Wooley says: "The Copts clung to Cyril and his

1. Schaff, Vol. III Pt 835-6

2. Wooley, P. VIII

together, refused to accept the Council of Chalcedon, and by their loyalty to Cyril's memory, were committed to monophysitism without intending it. (1)

The Copts were accused as followers of Eutyches, and Monophysitism was described as the denial of the humanity of Christ. Really the two accusations have no basis in the Coptic theology. (2)

"They (Copts) have always condemned Eutyches. Dioscoros (the Patriarch of Alexandria) was also condemned and deposed at the council, but it is to be noticed that it was not for a heresy, but because he had disobeyed the canons of the holy fathers. (3)

So from this time forward the coptic Church has always refused to recognize the Council of Chalcedon.

VIII After Chalcedon:

The deposition of Dioscoros and the imposition of a Melchite (Greek) patriarch upon Egypt, caused many troubles which led to the development of a nationalistic movement. Again the Copts fell under severe persecutions, but this time, from the imperial Christians.

1. Ibid, P. XII

2. As many writers still misunderstand Monophysitism as the Coptic Church believes it, chapter two of thesis will deal with it.

Trinichev says:

Justinian had called on the Egyptian Patriarch Theodosius to give public adherence to the Chalcedonian formula. But he had refused, therefore Justinian chose another Patriarch named Paul (A.C. 451). The Egyptians, however, would not recognize him, and from this time until the Arab conquest (A.D. 639) there were two Patriarchs in Egypt, the Melkite (i.e. imperialist) who occupied the throne in Alexandria, but whose authority over the people was a dead letter, being recognized only by the remnants of the Byzantine Church; and the Monophysite, Theodosius and his successors, who lived at the monastery of Nitria. (1).

Persecution of Coptic Christians by the official Orthodox (Greek) party, with the Emperor's power behind them, both in the reign of Justinian and of his successors, left a rankling resentment that persisted for many generations (2)

From that time onward the church of Egypt tried to be independent from every Greek impact even the cultural. As a result of this nationalistic movement the Coptic literature flourished in religious as well as secular fields.

It should be mentioned here that some writers wrongly use the term Jacobites to identify the Copts. The Jacobites are the Syrian Monophysites who are called so after their bishop Jacobus Baradaeus

1. Trinichev, Islam in Sudan. 1. 52.

2. Groves, 1. 46

(5th cent). Butcher says. "But to call the
 Egyptians or Coptic Church the Jacobite sect... is
 unmeaning and incorrect. (1)

IX. The Arab Conquest:

The fifth and sixth centuries made of Egypt a
 battle field as a result of the doctrinal controversy
 between the Byzantine governors and the native Copts.
 This was followed by important events.

1. Persian conquest:

In the early years of the seventh century the
 Persians invaded Egypt A.D. 619. It fell without
 a conflict. After 10 years of Persian dominion the
 success of Heraclius restored Egypt to the Roman Empire,
 and for a time it again received a Greek governor.
 As a revenge the Greeks persecuted the Copts severely
 and expelled their Patriarch.

Griffith explains the reasons of this decline
 saying. "The decline of Egypt was due to the purely
 military government of the Romans, and their sub-
 sequent alliance with the Greek party of Alexandria
 which never represented the country. (2)

2. The Arab invasion:

Towards the end of 639, an army of 5000 men
 was sent by the second caliph Omar from Syria to

1. Butcher, Vol. I, p. 331.

2. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. IX, p. 90.

of the prophet; and offered them the usual choice - to embrace Islam or to pay the special pool tax - (giziah) levied by the conquerors on all non-Muslims.

In the treaty he wrote...."this is the amnesty which "Amr-Ibn-El-As" granted to the people of Misr, as to themselves, their religion, their goods, their churches and crosses, their lands and waters; nothing of these shall be meddled with or minished."(1)

This promise was kept strictly during the time of Amr. He dealt his justice alike to the Melkites and Monophysites. So the native Egyptians were ready to acknowledge that they were better off under the non-Christians than they had been under the Chalcadonians. (2)

The capital of Egypt was transferred from Alexandria to Misr, (Fustat-The-Tent), close to the fortress of Babylon and not far north from the old Egyptian capital Memphis.

Conversions of Copts to Islam were at first rare, ... In order that the Arab element in Egypt might be strengthened a colony of North Arabians was sent for and planted near Bilbeis.(3) From 634 to 656 Arab tribes settled in the valley.(4)

1. F. Petrie, ed., A history of Egypt in the Middle Ages, Vol. 6, by Stanley Lane-Poole, P. 5
2. Butcher, P. 376
3. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 9. P. 93
4. Worrell, P. 31.

Egypt under the command of Amr Ibn Al As. In 642 Bahylor, the Roman fortress of Memphis surrendered through a treaty with Cyprus.

Some writers mention Cyprus as the Patriarch. The readers think that he is the Coptic one. To make clear his historical reality, Butler identifies him as: "Cyrus, the Hukeukas, the Viceroy of Egypt and imperial Patriarch of Alexandria. (1) As to his attitudes towards the Copts the same authority says "Cyrus had not changed his character as arch-enemy of the the Coptic faith.(2)

3 - The role of the Copts in the conquest:

The eagerness of the Arab conquest led some observers to accuse the Copts assuring that the Hukeukas was a Copt-sided with the Arabs and that the Copts hailed them as deliverers and rendered them every assistance.

In reply Poole and other says, "The notion that the Arab invaders were welcomed and assisted by the Copts, driven to desperation by the persecution of Cyrus appears to be refuted by the fact that the invaders treated both Copts and Romans with the same ruthlessness." (3)

1. Alfred J. Butler, The Arab Conquest of Egypt. I. 217
 2. Ibid, I. 251.
 3. Encyclopeda Britannica, Vol, IX, I. 90.

Arabs... At the best he (Cyrus) could only expect that the Copts should watch in sullen aloofness the struggle between two alien and equally detested powers."(1)

Butler also adds "Finally the charge is in direct antagonism to the statement of the nearly contemporary John of Nikiou, who says that the Copts did not lend only any aid to the Muslim forces until the enemy had taken possession of Fayum and all its territory."(2)

The real reaction of the conquest upon the Copts, who just suffered ten years of hopeless misery under the sword of Cyrus, could be as Butler interprets saying "... and they regarded the advent of the Muslims as a plague sent by divine vengeance upon their persecutors."(3)

4- Under the Arabs:

Amr the Arab leader and conqueror of Egypt, showed the Copts a good will; enlarged on the friendly disposition of the prophet Mohammed towards the Copts, in virtue of their traditional kinship through Zagar, the Egyptian mother of Ismael, the ancestor

1. Butler, PP 52-3

2. Butler, Arab Conquest, P. 211

3. Ibid, P. 192.

of the prophet; and offered them the usual choice - to embrace Islam or to pay the special pool tax - (giziah) levied by the conquerors on all non-Muslims.

In the treaty he wrote...."this is the amnesty which "Amr-Ibn-El-As" granted to the people of Misr, as to themselves, their religion, their goods, their churches and crosses, their lands and waters; nothing of these shall be meddled with or minished."(1)

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1. F. Petrie, ed., A history of Egypt in the Middle Ages, Vol. 6, by Stanley Lane-Poole, P. 5
 2. Butcher, P. 376
 3. Encyclopedia Britannica, Vol. 9. P. 93
 4. Worrell, P. 31.

But in the long run of time the nature of the Arab occupation had changed from what had originally been intended. The competition of tax collectors and the greediness of rulers for money made the burden unbearable for the Copts, until they revolted many times. Few examples could reveal the conditions under which the Copts lived in the Middle Ages.

Under the Umayyads in the 7 and 8th centuries the Coptic monks were branded on the hand for taxation purposes, and deprived of one hand if caught unbranded. Churches and their contents were destroyed. Later on all Copts were branded on the hand.

In the 9th century all Copts were required to place six wooden gargoyles outside their doors, and to wear special yellow garments.

In the 11th century the insane governor "Al Hakim" ordered all Christians to wear a five pound wooden cross. Meantime he ordered the Moslems not to eat certain kinds of food which he liked.

The Mamluks in the 14th century ordered the Christians to wear blue turbans. Fanatics destroyed most of the principal churches of Egypt. Christians were forbidden to ride horses or mules, or even asses unless they sat facing backward. A bell had to be worn about the neck when entering a common bath.(1)

During these centuries there were also periods of tolerance under some rulers such as the Fatimids

(983-1171). Arnold says:

There were times when they (Copts) rose to positions of great affluence and importance in the state. They filled the posts of secretaries and scribes in the government offices, farmed the taxes and in some cases amassed enormous wealth. The annals of their church furnish us with many instances of ecclesiastics who were held in high favor of consideration by the reigning princes of the country, under the rule of many of whom the Christians enjoyed the utmost tranquility. (1)

X- Turks:

During the rule of the Turks 16th-18th centuries conditions in Egypt went from bad to worst.

In 1798 Napoleon occupied Alexandria and moved to Cairo and Upper Egypt. But in 1801 the French evacuated Egypt. The native Christians became known in Europe as "Copts". The expedition of Napoleon was the beginning of scientific investigation of the Egyptian past.

Mohammed Ali was an adventurer from Albania, who joined the Ottoman campaign in Egypt in 1803. As an ambitious officer, he had himself named the Ottoman representative in Egypt. In 1805 he gained control of Egypt, succeeded by members of his family, for 150 years. The last of the Dynasty was ex-king Farouk.

"When Mohammed Ali first took the reins in Egypt he found that the man who was in charge of

I. Arnold, The Preaching of Islam, P. 107

all the state affairs was Ibrahim al Gohary a copt. and he made this man his chief secretary or grand Vizier." (1) After his death, he was followed by another Copt. Later in time of Said and of Ismail, the Copts continued to fill similar posts.

The British occupation (1882-1922) changed this policy by the exclusion of Copts from high government positions and creating enmity between Copts and Moslems. Butler the famous British author wrote. "But it is humiliating and sad to reflect that friendly union of Copts and Moslems was practically an achieved result before the British occupation of Egypt, and that it has been destroyed by the policy of the British Government." (2)

When the nationalist movement was awakened after the first world war to gain independence for Egypt, the Copts shared in it enthusiastically rendering efforts and sacrifices alike to those of the Moslems.

XI- The New Regime

On July 23, 1952, Egypt started a new revolution towards "Unity, Discipline and Work". The revolution carried out by a handful of army officers, was a

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1. Leeder, Modern Sons of the Pharaohs. P. 333
 2. A. Butler, School and Society in the Valley of the Nile. P. 40.

blow against the corruption of political parties and the social injustice. New laws have been introduced to improve social and economic conditions in the country, especially the Agrarian Reform Law which ended the feudal system.

To secure unity and cooperation of the elements of the Egyptian nation, the government is trying to eliminate religious fanaticism and replace it with a sense of equality and love for all religions. To educate the masses in this spirit, posters in streets and other means of publicity are propagated every where. One of the posters is a picture of a church standing beside a mosque, with the words "Religion is for God - and the Country is for all", (all inhabitants of any religion).

The Government is establishing friendly relations with the church in every opportunity. In the academic year 1953-54 Christian education became compulsory in public schools for Christian students. A great progress and reform is expected for Egypt from this promising revolution.

XIII. Conclusion:

Christianity had spread rapidly in Egypt as a result of historical, geographical and social factors. It developed uniquely under torture and persecution that deeply influenced the people's inner religious life.

They studied Christianity spiritually as well as philosophically and in scholarly. Their remarkable "Catechetical School" has contributed too much to the whole church.

Their love of practicing virtues and desire for perfection led them to the life of meditation and asceticism, the effect of which cannot be denied.

The same zeal of practical Christianity motivated them towards a mission enterprise, national and foreign.

Their church quickly became indigenous, an integral part of the Egyptian life, developing a vernacular Christian literature.

The role played by their fathers in preserving the faith during persecutions or during the general councils made them very loyal to those Fathers, clinging to them to the degree that they were misunderstood and accused for their Monophysitism.

Again for their loyalty to their church and their country they suffered great pains in a chain of persecutions which lasted till the 19th century. This secluded them from the world as they were striving to preserve their suffering church for abolishment.

This is the Coptic Church which comes today out of its shell of pains unchanged, unmodified, as a hidden pearl or a living museum of genuine Christianity.

Chronology of Egypt

Ancient Egyptians	3400-332 B.C. (1)
Persians	525-332 B.C.
Greeks (Ptolemaic)	332-30 B.C.
Romans	B.C. 30
Christianity in Egypt	40 A.D.
Schism	451 A.D.
Persians	619-626 A.D.
Arab Conquest	630-
Early Caliphs (of Arabia)	640-656
Umayyads (of Damascus)	656-750
Abbasid (of Baghdad)	750-868
Tulun and Ikhshid	868-969
Fatimid	969-1171
Saladin	1171-1193
Ayyubids	1193-1250
Mamlukes	1250-1517
Ottoman Turks	1517-1798
French (Napoleon)	1798-1801
Mohamed Ali & Dynasty	1805-1952
British occupation	1882-1922 (2)
New Regime	1952

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1. Breasted, reaches back to date of the 1st Dynasty to 3400 B.C. , but Petrie, reaches it to 5510 B.C. For details see Encyclopedia Britannica, 11th ed. vol. 9, P. 79.
 2. Egypt was granted independence on 2/28/1922; but the British army stayed to protect the Suez Canal until 1954 when evacuation began.

CHAPTER II

DOCTRINAL AND ECCLESIASTICAL BACKGROUND

The aim of this chapter is only to give a brief and general idea of some doctrines of the Coptic Church, as a background to what will be mentioned of it in dealing with the history and program of Christian Education.

A book of Coptic catechism begins with the following statement:

"It is demanded of the Christian to believe sincerely, within his heart and outwardly, in Jesus Christ, following His teachings and avoiding His prohibitions, according to the guidance of His Holy Church entrusted with His excellent Evangelical Law, therefore becoming the depository of His teachings given through His faithful Apostles."(1)

Simply it records the words "believe in Jesus Christ" without details, because it is obvious through all the prayers, hymns and lections of the Church that we believe in Him as the Son of God our Lord and Savior. For example every litany in the liturgy and other sacramental services concludes by the following prayers.

1. Hegoumenous Philotheos Ibrahim, Translated by Miss Iris El Mari.

... by the power and the mercies and the love
for men. Therefore, with our Lord and our
God and our Saviour Jesus Christ through whom the glory
and the honour and the dominion is due unto Thee,
with Him and the Holy Spirit the giver of life
and consubstantial with thee, now and ever and unto
the ages of the ages. Amen."(1)

The sources:

There are three sources for the belief of the
Coptic Church, and these sources are also those for
the belief of all churches of Apostolic foundation:

1.- The Holy Scriptures:

a) The Old Testament which was translated into Coptic
from the Septuagint. It includes also the
Wisdom, Baruch, Maccabees, together with the Deutero-
canonical Books of Tobit, Judith, and the additions
of Daniel and Ester.

b) The new Testament.

2. Tradition

3. The Canons of the Ecumenical and Local Councils
which were held before the Council of Chalcedon.

The Coptic Church did not change its theology
and doctrines received from the early Fathers and
the Councils. In an article on "Copts" in the

1. The prayer of Thanksgiving. "Coptic Offices"
by R. M. Wolley, P. 2

encyclopaedia Britannica, ed. J. F. Sisker has pointed out that "Since the seventh century the Catholic Church has been so isolated as to be little influenced by changes affecting other communions. Consequently it remains in many respects the most ancient monument of primitiverites and ceremonies in Christendom."

Faith:

Faith means to believe with the heart and confess with the tongue all that was revealed in the Heavenly Scriptures, and although its revelation is beyond our natural comprehension, yet we believe it, convinced of its truth, because it comes from God, who is absolute Truth.

God-Trinity:

We believe in God the Most High, the eternal (i.e. without beginning), the Everlasting (i.e. without end), who alone is absolute perfection. That means He alone is completely perfect, and has no associate in this perfection. He is self-existent, and absolutely Holy. He is All-Goodness, All-Giving, All-Mighty, Omnipotent, All-Wise, Omniscient, Transcendent, whose will is supreme, unto whom all Glory, all Majesty, and all Dominion, the Simple and the Incomprehensible, the Near-unto-everyone, and the Origin of all life.

He is One Being in Three Godheads. He is of One substance, One Essence in three Hypostases: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

They are only One; if they are God, His Eternal Word, and His Holy Spirit; and these though they be three, each having definite attributes, yet are they one, there can be no separation between God, His Word, and His Spirit, in essence.

The creation:

God created all things out of nothingness by His own will and by the Majesty of His power. He regulated them by His Unsearchable wisdom, and bles ed them in His Goodness. He created them to no end unto Himself, for He is not in need of anyone or anything; only His Infinite Kindness necessitated His creation of them. He ever watches them, guides them, and cares for them with His Infinite Wisdom, regulating their cycles, and distributing His manifold gifts among them.

The incarnation:

The Eternal Son, the second Godhead, became Incarnate, of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, becoming Man, for our salvation.

God sent His Angel Gabriel to the Virgin, elected for the fulfilment of this Mystery, announcing to her the Good News of the birth of the Eternal,

Son from Her, without human agency. And no sooner did she accept this Annunciation, than the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, preparing her for the Sacred Childbirth. Thereupon the Word came down into her sanctified womb, taking a stainless and pure body, completing it with an understanding soul, uniting His Divine Nature with both this body and soul, in a mysterious way, altogether incomprehensible to us. He was borne in Her womb for nine months, while she was a virgin and she remained a virgin.

"Uniting His Divine Nature with both body and soul" means, that the Son of God took human form, i.e. human body and soul, and made it one, in a complete and integral oneness, without mixing, nor fusion, nor change. And this integral union He made into a complete entity, in a very special manner, with one nature, one will, and one action, i.e. the Only Begotten, Incarnate, Son.

This honourable union can be likened to the Union of soul and body, because the soul is an impalpable, spiritual element, while the body is an earthly, material element, and by their union without commingling, they form one person, with one nature and one essence. This union of body and soul in every human being, is only a faint picture of the union between the divine and human in the

person of the Christ, our Lord.

In this concern St. Athanasius says. "This is the One who is God, He is the Son of God by the Spirit and the Son of Man by the flesh, not that the One Son has two natures: one worshipped and the other not worshipped but One nature to the Word of God Incarnate, who is worshipped with His body in singleness of worship."

While St. Cyril says, in his epistle to Eulogius, the priest of Constantinople: "For we join the two natures in unison, and confess One Christ, One Son, One Lord, One Incarnate Nature"
"Where a real unity is effected, there can be no separation, thus there is one Christ, with One nature, which is the Nature of the Word made Flesh."

It is sufficient to mention what the Father Himself said concerning the Son, on Two occasions: The first at the Baptism, and the second at the Transfiguration, (Matt. 3:17) (Matt. 17: 17) when He proclaims: "This is my beloved Son". And the Apostle declares: "But to us is but One God, the Father. . . and One Lord, Jesus Christ . . ." (I Cor. 8:6), and it is evident that the Christ was not baptized, nor transfigures, except while in flesh, and the Father's witnessing cannot be but for one person, not two.(1)

1. Father Philotheos Ibrahima A book of Coptic canonism

Monophysitism:

In the fifth century, discussions arising from a difference of opinion with regard to the Dogma relating to the Two Natures of Jesus Christ, unhappily separated the Church in Egypt from the Greek Church. The former Church accused the latter Church of separating the Two Natures of Jesus Christ. While the latter Church accused the former Church of denying His Humanity and holding that the Divine Nature absorbed the Human Nature according to the heresy of Eutyches. The Coptic Church however also condemns the heresy of Eutyches while she considers at the same time that Dioscorus is a saint.

All the Coptic Mediaeval Theologians are agreed that Eutyches was a heretic. Among them for example, Severus Ibn Al Kuquaffa (Histoire des Conciles, P.O.T. VI. Fasc. 4:49,93) and Abu Ishaq Ibn Al Assal, in chapter 9 of his work (Fundamental Doctrine and Dogma) he mentions among the names of the heretics and their heresies the name of Eutyches of Constantiniople.

Dioscorus followed the teaching and doctrines of his predecessors SS. Athanasius and Cyril who confessed "One Nature of God the Word made flesh". He followed also the teaching of the Gospel, where it is said "And the Word became flesh" (John 1:14) and "Great is the mystery of piety; God was manifested,

In the 1904" (Ibid. 3:14).

Dr. Durmaster states in this concern, that the Copts in the Council of Chalcedon "they were committed to a form of monophysitism without intending it, though not to that form of a monophysitism as taught by Eutyches whom, indeed, they condemn." (1)

The Archimandrite Yuhanna Hazbun Dean of the Greek Orthodox Church at Tanta 1904 wrote under the title "The Relation of the Coptic and Greek Orthodox Churches" stating that "... the difference between the two churches is in words and not in meaning". He concludes saying "Therefore their belief is our belief and there is no disagreement between us in dogma and substance but in accident." (2)

I mean by these quotations to correct some misunderstandings mentioned in some books about the Monophysite belief saying: that the Copts accept only the Divine Nature of Christ and deny the Human Nature, which is obviously not right.

In summarizing the Monophysite Belief of the Coptic Church, I quote the words of Dr. A.J. Butler "... not however denying either the humanity or the divinity of our Lord, but alleging that out of the two natures arose a single nature." (3)

1. "Rites and Ceremonies of the Coptic Church", in The Eastern Churches quarterly, Vol. VII., No. 6. p.p. 375-6
2. Yas a Abd El Massih, The Faith and Practices of

100.
The Librarian of the Coptic
Museum states:

The Coptic Church professes that whilst the Two Natures are united in One Person without fusion or absorption, nevertheless no separation must be made between the Two Natures and that being united in complete oneness, the actions of the one Nature pertain to the other Nature, and that what befall the one Nature befall also the other Nature. This dogma will be best understood from the following example. If a piece of iron heated to white heat be struck on the anvil, it is the iron which receives the blow, but not the white heat, though the iron and the white heat form an indivisible whole. And so also at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ though the Divine and Human Natures were indissolubly united in the One Person of Jesus Christ on the Cross, yet it was the Human Nature alone that suffered and in no wise the Divine Nature. (1)

The Sacraments:

"Continuously since the dawn of Christianity the Copts seem to have acknowledged seven canonical sacraments, namely baptism, confirmation, eucharist, penance, orders, matrimony and unction of the sick." (2)

"A church sacrament is defined as a holy act through which the believer receives an invisible grace under the form of an outward sign, visible or audible; instituted by our lord Jesus."

"The sacraments of baptism, confirmation, penance, holy communion are necessary for every

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1. The Faith and Practices of the Coptic Church. P.17
 2. Butler, Vol. II, P. 262.

61.
believer, yet matrimony and orders are very necessary
to the church."(1)

Three things are necessary in a sacrament,

- a) its proper matter (e.g. water in baptism)
- b) a properly ordained priest or bishop.
- c) the invocation of the Holy Spirit with the form of words, whereby the priest consecrates the sacrament by the power of the Holy Spirit, "if he have the definite intention of consecrating it."(2)

1 - Baptism: is the sacrament through which a person is born again and accepted into the membership of the church after being immersed in water three times in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (John 3:5) Matt. 28:18.

It is the first sacrament; therefore it must be received by believers before they can receive any other sacrament. It is one baptism so it could not be repeated again to the same person. (Eph. 4:5) The church baptises the infant. Every child who is baptised must have a god parent, male or female, to help the parents in nurturing him in the Christian life.

2. Confirmation: is the sacrament through which the

1. Father Marcus Deoud, Memiographed notes on the Sacraments
P. 3
2. Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics. VI. X. P. 902.

believer is granted the gift of the Holy Spirit who alone can confirm him in the new life given to him through baptism.

Confirmation is administered directly after baptism. The laying on of hand was replaced in the early church by the unction of the holy oil (Chrism). (John 2:20, 27)

3- Penance or repentance: The believer returns to God after confessing his sins to the priest truly repending from all his heart. According to the power given by Christ to His ministers to absolve all sinners who truly repent and believe in Him. (John 20:22-23) the penitent receives forgiveness of sins when he comes repenting and confessing.

Penance is called a "spiritual medicine", so it is achieved through personal relations-face to face - between the priest and the believer, in order that the penitent can get his spiritual counseling to conquer his temptations, solve his problems and lead a holy life. It takes place normally in the church, but could be anywhere if the need arises.

4- The Holy Communion:

Through this sacrament we eat the blessed body of our Lord and drink His precious blood under the form of bread and wine. (Cor. I, 11:23-25)

The second part is performed through the prayers of the liturgy. Infants and children partake of the Holy Communion.

5-The Unction of the Sick:

The priest anoints the body of the sick, asking for divine grace to cure both body and soul.

There is no fixed time or season for administering this sacrament. It may be administered whenever any of the faithful falls sick. The priest is called to the house to perform the mystery. (James 5:15)

6-Matrimony:

Matrimony is the service through which the bridegroom and the bride are united together and given the divine grace which sanctifies their matrimonial union, makes it perfect and spiritual like the unity of Christ and the Church. It requires the full consent of the man and the woman to be joined together for life.

7-The Holy Orders:

It is the sacrament through which the clergy are consecrated to celebrate the various church services. This mystery confers the grace of God upon the candidate through the laying on of hands and prayer by the bishop that he may perform the duties of the ministry to which he is ordained and to guide and teach the believers.

Rites:

Every sacrament is performed by certain prayers and ceremonials. These rituals are based on Biblical and spiritual bases, which enriches the life of the church. Through which the members of the church are educated, nurtured and inspired to achieve the Christian growth.

In this regard Dr. Butler states "No fairminded person who has any regard for the teachings of the early church can make a careful comparison of our present liturgy and ritual with an unchanged liturgy and ritual like the Coptic without regretting the reckless abandonment of such that we have abandoned."(1)

Fasts and feasts:

Fasting is disciplining one's self by abstaining from eating and drinking for a certain length of time then breaking the fast by a frugal meal which consists of no animal products.

The object of fasting is to subdue the body to spirit that is why the church prescribed frugality during the fasts.

Fast and feasts are seasons of inspiring power in the spiritual life of the church members. The church commemorates the feasts of the saints and

1. Butler, Vol. I, P. Xi.

...praising their struggle and sacrifice for
the reliefment of righteousness and preservation
of the faith. This inspires the zeal of the believers
to follow their blessed example. Asking the help of
the intercessory prayers of the saints, we feel that
"we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of
witnesses" (Heb. 12:1) for the prayers of the saints
have great power.

The Coptic Church believes that the Mother
of God was a virgin before, in and after childbirth.
We praise her according to the Scriptures: "...
for behold, from henceforth all generations shall
call me blessed." (Luke 1:48).

The Creed:

The Coptic Church has always used the Creed
which was formulated in the First and Second
Ecumenical Councils:

We believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, of things and visible
and invisible.

We believe in one Lord Jesus Christ.
The Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten
of the Father before all the worlds, Light of
Light, Very God of Very God; He is a be-
gotten, not a creature; He is of the same
substance with the Father; through Whom all
things were made. Who for us men and for
our salvation came down from heaven, took
flesh of the Holy Ghost and of Mary the virgin,
and was made man, and was crucified for us
under Pontius Pilate. He suffered, and
was buried, and rose again from the dead on
the third day according to the Scriptures,
He ascended into heaven, He sitteth on the
right hand of His Father, and again He
cometh in His glory to judge the quick and

the dead, whose kingdom hath no end.
 Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit,
 the Lord and giver of life, who proceedeth
 from the Father. With the Father and the
 Son He is worshipped and glorified, who
 spake by the prophets. In one holy
 catholic apostolic Church, we
 acknowledge one Baptism for the remis-
 sion of sins. We look for the resur-
 rection of the dead, and the life of the
 worlds to come. Amen.

The Clergy:

The Church is the society of the Christian believers who are served by the clergy. The clergy are ordained to perform the spiritual needs of the congregation through pastoral ministry and the different means of grace given by the Holy Sacraments.

The clergy are of three main orders-- the bishop, the priest, and the deacon. There are other subdivisions forming seven orders, namely, that of the reader, subdeacon, deacon, archdeacon, priest, hegoumenos (archpriest), and bishop.

The Patriarch:

In the canons in force in the Coptic Church the (title Patriarch) is not given to the head of the church, but simply that of bishop of Alexandria. Ibn Al Assal says "He is called in Canons, the senior bishop, the first (bishop) and the archbishop.(1)

From this it follows that the functions of the patriarch are the same as those of bishop, except

1. Al Magmu' us-safawi, by Ibn Al Assal. "An Arabic collection of canons - Thirteenth century.

except that the ordination of bishops and the consecration of the Christ (Myron) is now reserved for the patriarch alone.

The prayer of the consecration of the Patriarch says, "He has become highpriest and a shepherd and teacher, since he has received the power from God."(1)

The Coptic Patriarch never claimed infallibility. He is elected by an assembly of bishops, priests, and elders from among the laity, representing all the congregations. After the election the bishops celebrate his ordination. It is a life-time office.

Usually he was elected from the righteous learned laity or monks. The last three patriarchs of the twentieth century were chosen from the bishops.

His title is "Pope and Patriarch of Alexandria, Egypt, Nubia, Ethiopia, and the Pentapolis." The present patriarch Abba Joseph (Anba Yousab II) is the 115th successor of St. Mark in direct line.

The collaborators of the patriarch in the administration of ecclesiastical affairs are the bishops. They form the "Holy Synod" which deals with the general policy and spiritual affairs of the church.

1. Yasa Abd Al Masih, The faith and Practice of the Coptic Church. P. 2.

The Bishop:

The congregations of the diocese choose one or more monks and presents them to the patriarch, who ordains him. The ordination of a bishop must be performed with the collaboration of two other bishops, at least to form the minimum of three bishops.

The functions for the bishop are the same as those of the patriarch, but only in the limits of the diocese. The bishop presides the council of the priests of his diocese.

The number of the dioceses in Egypt is not fixed, and it varies according to the population of the country. At one time there were about one hundred dioceses and at another time, only four dioceses.(1) Now the Coptic Church has twenty-six bishops in Egypt two in Sudan, one in Jerusalem and ten Ethiopian bishops in Ethiopia.

In 1950 the Patriarch of Alexandria ordained an Ethiopian Metropolitan and granted him the right to ordain other bishops for Ethiopia, after the Patriarch's approval.

The Priest: (Presbyter)

Every parish has one or more priests

1. Ibid, P. 3

according to its membership. The candidates to the priesthood are selected by the congregation and presented to the bishop to ordain them.

The priest must be married before ordination, according to the rule issued by the Council of Niceae (325 A.D.). The Coptic Bishops defended this rule against the claim of Rome at the Council. (1)

The functions of the priest are the performance of all the pastoral, educational and ritual services which could meet the needs of the congregation, through the help of the deacons and church members.

Deacons:

Deacons are ordained to help the priests and bishops in their pastoral work. Some of their functions are stated in one of the prayers of their ordination: "To visit the people of the Lord, the widows and the orphans and those who are afflicted, following the bishop or the priest to inform him of those who are afflicted that he may visit them." (2)

It was a full time job. According to financial and social difficulties, deacons now volunteer for the service of the church during their leisure time.

1. This thesis, Part I, P. 41

2. Yassa Abd Al Masih, P. 4.

The Coptic Councils Council:

It is called in Arabic "Majlis Milli" which was established in 1973. It is a council of laymen to collaborate with the clergy in dealing with church affairs. Their functions are:

- a- Administrative: To help the clergy in planning, controlling, and supervising the various activities of the church.
- b- Educational: To provide theological, general, and Christian education to the Copts.
- c- Financial: To plan the budget and general expenses.
- d- Jurisdictional: to form courts which deal with the personal status problems concerning the family life of the Copts. (marriage - divorce - alimony...)

The judges of these courts are the members of the councils. The sessions of the courts are held in the buildings of the Patriarchate or of the diocese. It applies laws constituted by the Church and approved by the state.

There are two kinds of these councils:

1. The general council, located in Cairo, is composed of twenty-four laymen elected by the church members. It is headed by the Patriarch. Beside its general functions for the church as a whole, it acts also as a court of appeal.

2-The Diocesan Council:

There is a special council for each local diocese composed of five elected laymen headed by

the bishop.

Benevolent Societies:

The activities of the laity cover a wide field of educational and social welfare for the Copts. They establish schools for boys and girls of all grades. Benevolent societies are establishing hospitals, clinics, orphanages, child welfare organizations, and other different activities.

Every town or city have one or two coptic societies but Cairo alone has more than 350 Societies.(1)

Conclusion:

This system of church government shows:

1- The concern of the church about education and how the prayers of ordination urge the clergy to perform their educational responsibilities as a main factor of their ecclesiastical duties.

2- The democratic way of electing the clergy. Higg says:

The fidelity with which the Alexandrines adhered to the ancient democratic model may have impart to the social standing and intelligence of the congregation. The same reason may account for their immunity from many of the ecclesiastical storms of the time. 2

3.- The participation of the laity in church government and activities.

1. A del Sami, Al Dalil Al Am Yukafoot (Arabic)

2. Higg, 1. 66

P A R T I I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION IN THE COPTIC CHURCH

PART I
THE EARLY CHURCH
(First through Fifth Centuries)

Introduction:

Christianity spreads through teaching, in the wide meaning of the word. So education becomes the basic responsibility of the church. It could be stated, also, that the church itself is a continuous educational process.

Every church activity, even ritual or social, could not fulfill the real objectives of the church unless it includes at the same time an educative factors.

Church activities develop through the ages different kinds of institutions, or as it is also called, agencies. Some of these church institutions achieve their task in a direct and clear educational way. Others try to fulfill their ends through an indirect way of education.

Part II is an attempt to demonstrate, as the limits of reference and time could permit, some of the educational tasks of the Coptic Church through the Centuries as performed in its institutions.

I. Preaching Church.

It is evident from Chapter I that Christianity was introduced to Egypt in the first century. It must have followed at first the primitive way of education popular in the early church.

The mission of Mark and his followers began by personal teaching for individuals, and then was followed by preaching for groups of new converts in their homes and in the catacombs of Alexandria.

The central message of the preaching was the "Kerugma", and the Kerugma was the Gospel, emphasizing the Resurrection of Jesus as in (I Cor. 15:4-3) "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ dies for our sins.... and that He rose again..."

General preaching to appeal and call for Christianity must be followed by specific teaching of the details of the new religion to those who accept the message.

The books of the New Testament show that teaching was a familiar aspect of primitive

L. I. J. Sherrill, The Rise of Christian Education

...themselves ready to
... Mark says "We began
to teach them" (8:31). (1)

Before His ^s ascension Jesus ordered them to
teach "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations..."
(Matt. 28:19-20). Immediately after Pentecost,
they "continued steadfastly in the Apostles'
teaching (didache)...." (Acts 2:42). Among the
different kinds of ministry in the primitive church
there were teachers.

During the first century this teaching remained
informal but of high effective quality. Graves
says:

While the earliest Christians were
without schools of their own and were
largely illiterate, their religion itself
served as an education. They received
moral training of a very high order.
The very dishonor and unpopularity of
the Christian religion, and the segregation
of their church membership, gave the
Christian life itself all the effect of a
species of schooling. [2]

The deepness and seriousness of this teaching
could be observed in the life of those early
Egyptian martyrs, who rejoiced in their painful
persecutions.

1. See also, Matt. 4:23, 7:29, 9:35, Mark 1:21, 6:2, Luke 4:15, 6:6, 13:10, John 6:59
2. F. I. Graves, A Student's History of Education
1. 43

17.
11. Catechumenal Schools:

As the church began to extend itself rapidly in the second century and the number of candidates for Christianity increased, it seemed necessary to start a sort of formal instruction as preliminary to church membership, thus the catechumenal schools began to function. This term is from the Greek katechoumenos which means instructed. Its verb means to teach orally.(1)

Students: The catechumens were the Jewish and ^{other} ~~Hebrew~~ proselytes who wished to accept Christianity. They were primarily trained in things needful for their souls and salvation.

The catechumenal school "was, on the one hand, a bulwark of the church against unworthy members, on the other, a bridge from the world to the church. The catechumens were people from all ranks, ages, and grades of culture, even philosophers, statesmen and rhetoricians."(2)

So Christian education began as uniform and universal, without discrimination between classes or conditions, slaves or masters.

Teachers: The teachers of the catechumens were

1. Encyclopaedia Britanica, Vol. 5, p. 507
2. Scheff, Vol. II, p. 256

generally presbyters and deacons. They were called "catechists".(1)

Curriculum: The instruction was carried on in the church building. It consisted of moral and religious teachings, reading and memorizing the Scriptures with training in early psalmody.(2) Also the Didache contained in the first six chapters a moral catechism based on the Sermon on the Mount.

Athanasius mentions in his (1st Epistola, 39) that they were taught also the Didache. He says "It was appointed by the Fathers to be read by those who are just recently coming to us, and wish to be instructed in the word of godliness.(3). The Didache served as a manual and as a model for other textbooks.

Shepherd of Hermas is another book which has been used for this purpose, for Eusebius mentioned that it was deemed "most essential ... especially for those in need of an introduction of an elementary kind."(4)

Duration: In the earliest period of the church, persons were often admitted after very brief preparation; but in the second century a period of

1. Scheff, Vol. II, I. 256

2. Greves, II. 43-4

3. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 5, I. 507

4. Eusebius, H.E., III, 3

... instruction began to appear.

Generally the candidates apply for baptism at the beginning of Lent and look forward to baptism at Easter.

By the Middle of the third century there arose the system of discipline commonly lasting three years as is stated in the Apostolical Constitutions.

(VIII:2)

Stages: The catechumens were classified into three divisions or groups. But there is little ground for supposing that the schools were divided into actual classes.⁽¹⁾ These classification were only stages in the process of instruction:

1-The Inquires--Those whose interest in Christianity had been sufficiently aroused to make them desire further information. They received private and individual instruction from the teacher before they were admitted into the second class.⁽²⁾

2-The Hearers (3) (Audientes) ^{are} -- Those who were admitted into the church to listen to the Scriptures and the sermons. They were allowed to attend the part of the Mass which is called the "Mass of the Catechumens". They were dismissed immediately after the sermon.

3-The Competentes ^{are} -- Those who were qualified for

1. Graves, P. 44
2. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 5, p. 508
3. Benson, History of Christian Education, P. 41

baptism and could attend a part of the prayer. They could not partake of the sacrament.

The Coptic Church followed this rule in the early centuries, as it is obvious from the following evidence:

- 1- The first part of the Coptic liturgy is called the "Liturgy of the Catechumens".(1)
- 2-The catechumenal plan was reflected in the buildings of the early Coptic Churches. A description of an ancient Coptic Church states.

The principal nave.... is divided into two parts and separated by means of trellis-work which is about 2m45 high. the first part from east to west, is reserved for the choir and the deacons who read the lessons. The second part is for the congregation. The narthex which was generally separated from the nave by trellis-work in wood, was reserved for catechumens. (2)

Education for Children and Youth:

Although the catechumens were mostly adults in the early ages, the church did not neglect the education of children. In the writings of Celsus (second century) against Christianity, a passage calls the attention about the interest and effort the church gave to educate children. Celsus says:

1. Burmester, CHE., Rites and Ceremonies of the Coptic Church, the Eastern Churches Quarterly, Vol. VIII, P. 9
2. Marcus H. Simaika, "A Brief Guide to the Coptic Museum and to the Ancient Coptic Churches of Cairo, P. 54

That they (the Christians) alone
 know how to live and that if the
 children obey them, they will both be
 happy themselves and will make their home
 happy also. While thus speaking, if they
 see one of the Instructors of youth
 approaching, or one of the more intelligent
 class, or even the father himself, the more
 timid among them become afraid; but the
 more forward incite the children to throw
 moroff the yoke, whispering that in the
 presence of father and teachers they neither
 will nor can explain to them any good thing...
 but that if they (the children) wish to
 avail themselves of their aid, they must
 leave their father and their instructors... (1)

Eusebius describes the education of Origen
 himself when he was a boy saying, "Besides giving
 him the usual liberal education" Origen's father,
 "kept urging him, before inducting him into the
 Greek sciences, to drill himself in the sacred
 studies, requiring him to learn and recite every day."
 So Origen, "had already laid down a good foundation,
 having been trained in the divine Scriptures from the
 time that he was still a boy." (2)

Beside these references, there is almost
 complete silence about the methods of the education
 of children and youth in the second century. The
 Social status of most Christians and the hostile
 scrutiny of their pagan neighbors would account
 sufficiently for this silence.

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1. Couche, PP 41-2 (Origen, Contra Celsum III, 55)
 2. Ibid, Eusebius, H. L., VI.2

It is only when we go to the last quarter of the second century and the beginning of the third that we are in a position to know how deeply the Church was preoccupied with the subject of education.(1)

III. The Catechetical School:

Chapter I shows how the catechetical school of Alexandria flourished with great reputation in the church universal. This chapter deals with its educational system.

1. A School of Advanced Studies:

The catechumenal schools furnished the candidates of baptism and believers with the elementary Christian education. But Christians in Alexandria were:

- a) anxious to grow in the Christian knowledge and experience.
- b) to struggle scientifically and philosophically against the attacks of the pagan philosophers, and to compete with the pagan school of Alexandria (the Museum).

So the Church of Alexandria as a living and progressing society prepared herself to meet the demands of the environment and the individuals. So one of the catechumenal schools developed its courses into higher ones to meet the developing needs. The process advanced gradually until it

1. Caughe, P. 47

2. Cauche, P. 36

became a distinct and separate institution at the end of the second century.

Gauche says, "In Alexandria... higher education had assumed a direction and a form more nearly approaching our modern university system than could be found in any other part of the Graeco-Roman World.(1)

It became an independent institution capable of offering courses in various branches of sacred and profane learning.

The church was aware of the problems facing its members and believed in the effectiveness of education in solving these problems. This educational concern was the secret of the vitality and progress of the Church of Alexandria.

One of these problems, was that the Christians who were desirous of advanced education found that the doctrines of the Pagan school in conflict with their faith. So the church provided in her school the same subjects and courses in a way which agrees with Christianity."It made it possible for students to obtain under Christian teachers all the instruction which the great pagan school had offered."(2)

"So the Catechetical School may likewise be regarded as the climax of Christian education effort.... It merely supplemented and crowned the general

1. Gauche, P.36

2. BIGE, P. 67

educational activities which existed in the church of Alexandria from the very beginning."(1)

2-The Curriculum

The higher branches of learning which the Catechetical school provided were together religious and secular. But religion was considered the center of correlation in the curriculum, and the end towards which all the efforts of the teachers were directed. Their ends were, "The attainment of virtue, conduct and morals and the pursuit of high ideals."(2)

The curriculum was well-prouded and full. Bigg says "it may be doubted whether any nobler scheme of Christian education has ever been projected than this, which we find in actual working at Alexandria."(3)

The students' power of reasoning and exact observation were strengthened by a thorough course of scientific study embracing geometry, physiology, and astronomy. After teaching science, they teach philosophy, Philosophy culminated in ethics.

Eusebius describing the study of Anatolus (an Alexandrian Christian, about 250 A.D.).
enumerates courses in: Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy,

1. Gauche, P. 37
2. Gauche, P. 64
3. BIGG, P. 71

logic, physics, philosophy, and arts of rhetoric.
Clement of Alexandria adds to these subjects, grammar,
natural sciences and dialectics.(1)

Clement, adopting an attitude of friendliness
to profane learning by bringing it to the service
of the Gospel, says:

He who brings everything to bar on a
right life, procuring examples from the Greeks
and brabarians, this man is an experienced
teacher after truth.. and can distinguish
sophistry from philosophy.. and the other
sects, which are according to the
barbarian philosophy, from the truth itself.(2)

Clement's main preoccupation was to rehabilitate
philosophy, not as the final arbiter and guide of
life, nor as the ultimate statement of truth, but
as something which "cooperates in the discovery of
truth."(3)

Origen gives nearly the same reasons: "The
children of the philosophers speak of geometry, music,
grammar, rhetoric and astronomy as being ancillary
to philosophy, and in the same manner we speak of
philosophy itself as being ancillary to Christianity."(4)

Origen urges his student Gergory to extract
from the philosophy of the Greeks what may serve as

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1. Gauche, P. 55
 2. Stromateis, I. 9
 3. Gauche, P. 57 and (Stromateis VI 15)
 4. Ibid, and (Origen, Letter to Gregory)

Rites:

Every sacrament is performed by certain prayers and ceremonials. These rituals are based on Biblical and spiritual bases, which enriches the life of the church. Through which the members of the church are educated, nurtured and inspired to achieve the Christian growth.

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Fast and feasts are seasons of inspiring power in the spiritual life of the church members. The church commemorates the feasts of the saints and

1. Butler, Vol. I, P. Xi.

a course of study or a preparation for Christianity, and from geometry and astronomy what will serve to explain the sacred Scriptures."(1)

So the curriculum of the school was planned to fulfill the ends of Christian virtue and morals and the study of the Scriptures and theology through preparatory courses of profane knowledge.

3-Methods:

The school emphasized mainly the lecture method followed by discussion and research. But the success of the school was due to the inspiring personalities of the teachers and their methods:

1- The teachers were dedicated to the job, a) spiritially through their good examples, b) professionally through their honest and deep research work.

Gregory, one of the students says "like some spark lighting upon our inmost soul, love was kindled and burst into flame withing us - a love at once to the Holy Word, the most lovely object of all, who attracts all irresistibly toward Himself by His unutterable beauty.(2)

Origen the young teacher whose words had the

1. Ibid

2. Cauche, P. 58.

char. of magic whose persuasive eloquence touched the hearts and whose genuine tenderness won the souls. He was not satisfied with teaching about temperance, justice, and love; he believed that without good works, all teaching is sterile. And he offered in his person the living example of all the virtues which he preached, thus inspiring his students to follow in his footsteps. His very life was the magnet which inspired people to come and study under his guidance.(1)

Eusebius confirms this, saying:

" For in his practical conduct were to be found to a truly marvellous degree the right actions of a most genuine philosophy; for as the saying goes - as was his speech, so was the manner of life that he displayed, and as his manner of life, so his speech, and it was especially for this reason that, with the cooperation of the divine power, he brought so very many to share his zeal.(2)

2- Sympathy of the teachers toward the students.

Clement lifted his hearers to the heights he proclaimed with all his patience and his constant smile(3) Thus he succeeded in making the rich Alexandrians into Christians.

3- Personal relations and counseling:

The good relationship between Origen and his students was a continuous cooperation and help even out of the school activities. So during persecutions the young teacher visited

1. Kyrillos Mgr. II Reconstitution de la Synthèse Scientifique d'origene
 2. Eusebius Ecc. Hist., VI 3
 3. G. Bardy, Clement d'Alexandrie, P.12.

his student in prison, accompanied them to the tribunal of their persecutors, and followed them to the very spot of their martyrdom. Then under the very eyes of their executioners gave them the kiss of peace, remaining by their side until they commended their spirits into the hands of the Father. (1)

4- Scientific guidance and research work.

In addition to the lectures students were encouraged to refer to the manuscripts and literature on the subject under the guidance of the teachers.

Gregory says about his teacher Origenes:

He deemed it right for us to study philosophy in such wise that we should read with utmost diligence and that has been written, both by the philosophers and by the poets of old, rejecting nothing (for, of critical discernment), except only the production of the atheists.. he introduced us to all (schools of philosophy) and determined that we should be ignorant of no kind of Grecian doctrine. And he himself went on with us preparing the way before us.. and he helped us like a skilled expert who has had long familiarity with these subjects. (2)

5- A method for teaching the blind.

Didymas (309-395), one of the famous heads of the school, lost his sight at the age of four years. (3) But his eagerness to learn encouraged

1. Jean Danielou, Origenes: So Genie du Christianism
P. 27

2. Gauche, P. 62

3. Wace, Dictionary of Christian Biography. P. 251

him to overcome this obstacle. "Lorenzo says that he taught himself how to read in spite of his blindness. He carved the letters of the alphabet deeply into a tablet of wood." (1) (H.E., III, 15) So he invented a method for the reading of the blind fifteen centuries before Braille. (2)

c- The studies were given in a graded system:

a- The teachers start by training their students in the proper methods of study.

b- This is followed by a course in dialectics and logic by which that capacity of our mind which deals critically with words and reasonings was educated in a rational manner" states Gregory. (3)

e- Then comes studies in natural science, illustrating and distinguishing the various divisions of created objects.. "discussing the multiform revolution and mutation of things in the world filling our minds with a rational instead of an irrational wonder at the sacred economy of the universe and irreprovable constitution of all things. This is that sublime and heavenly study which is taught by natural philosophy - a science most attractive to all. (4)

1. Gauche, PP 13-14

2. Louis Braille invented his method in Paris in 1834 (Ency Brit., VI. 4 P. 69)

3. Gauche, P. 60

4. Ibid.

- d- Then they go forward to ethics.
 e- After furnishing them with the basic subjects which deepens their faith and broadens their minds, they are introduced to philosophy in the full extent.
 f- Finally, they came to achieve their ends by studying theology.

These are the gradual steps on which they climbed to reach the real knowledge of God and the truth.

4- Students:

1. The number of the students was large.
- 2- They were from all classes "Clement opened his school to all comers, people came to him from all strata of life; there were the rich and the learned aristocrats; and young men of the leisurely workless class, coming for sheer curiosity." (1)
- 3- ~~They were converted afterwards as a result of the teaching of the School.~~
 were converted afterwards as a result of the teaching of the School.
4. They accepted heretics also. Eusebius says. "And numbers of the heretics, and not a few of the most distinguished philosophers, gave earnest heed to him (Origen), and one might

92.

almost say were instructed by him in secular philosophy as well as in divine things"(1)
Students were of both sexes, and of very different ages. (2) Clement says, "Both bond and free must equally philosophize whether male or female. "(3)

This shows that the students were not equally prepared; so they were divided into groups. But we do not know if there was a definite period of years for study. But it seems that the duration of study differed from group to group according to their previous preparations.

G-Administration

The school had no buildings of its own. The teachers were conducting their classes in their own homes or in hired halls.(4)

Origen was obliged to move his classes from place to place because of persecution. Eusebius says "Day by day the persecution against him blazed, so that there was no longer any place for him in the whole city; from house to house he passed, but was driven from all sides on account of the numbers who through him came over to the divine

1. Eusebius Ecc. Hist., VI, 18

2. Bigg, P. 69

3. Stromatōis, IV, 1

4. This kind of theological teacher is still existing in Ethiopia. The writer saw them (1944-46) in Addis Ababa teaching in their homes students (priests, deacons and laymen) coming from far provinces to study under their guidance for years.

teachings."(1)

It is probably doubtful that teachers received salaries. But from time to time wealthy generous Christians who admired those famous teachers, granted them gifts. Eusebius mentions the help rendered by Ambrose to Origen saying:

" He (Origen) dictated to more than seven amanuenses who relieved each other at appointed times. And he employed no fewer copyists, besides girls who were skilled in elegant writing. For all these, Ambrose furnished the necessary expense in abundance, manifesting himself an inexpressible earnestness in diligence and zeal for the divine oracles, by which he especially pressed him on to the preparation of his commentaries. "(2)

6- Famous Teachers:

The fame of the School began during the teaching of Panteanus (A.D. 180), but some writers mention Athenagoras (176) as his predecessor. The following list is only of the most known teachers. Further research may reveal the rest of the chain.

Panteanus	180 A.D.
Clement	200
Origen	202
Heracles	230
Dionysius	232
Theognostus	247
Pierius	300

1. Eusebius, Ecc. Hist. , VI 3
2. " " " " VI 23

Serapion	
Peter (the Martyr)	311 A.D.
Iacarius	
Didymus (the blind)	395
Rhodon	412 (1). A.D.

It cannot be said that the Catechetical School had discontinued all its activities, for Eusebius states that, "This school had lasted to our time and we have heard that it is managed by men powerful in their learning and zeal for divine things."(2)

Probably the Scholl lasted till the beginning of the seventh century. Prof. Sobhy says. "There is the clearest evidence that an independent school of theology flourished in Alexandria just before the Persian Invasion."(3)

After the Persian Invasion we do not hear about the School. Historians preponderate that its activities were carried on to the monasteries.

7. Conclusion:

The catechetical School of Alexandria made a great influence upon the life of the Coptic Church as well as the Church Universal by:

1. P. Monroe, Enc. of Education, Vol, I, P 546
2. Eusebius, E.H V. 10
3. G. Sobhy, Education in Egypt, Bulletin De la Societe d'Archeologie Copte., Vol. 9 p. 117

- a) Establishing a common awareness about the importance of education as a basic institution in the church.
- b- preparing for the church, well educated and spiritual leaders, with a conviction in the use of education to the church. The Patriarchs of Alexandria were chosen from its professors and graduates.
- c) Emphasizing the equality of classes, races, nationalities and sexes.
- d) Encouraging higher studies and research work in secular and religious fields.
- e) Contributing to the world, the first systematic theological studies. Harnack states: "... Clement and Origen, who made the theology of the Church the theology of both Testaments." (1)
- f) Winning to Christianity many souls in national and foreign fields through its missionary zeal.
- g) Encouraging, in an ecumenical spirit, students from other nations to come and study together, many of whom became leaders and bishops of their churches.

This historical fame of the School is one of the inspiring factors for the educational revivals of the Coptic Church.

1. Harnack, Bible Reading in the Early Church, P135

PART IV

EARLY MIDDLE AND MODERN AGES

(Sixth Through Nineteenth Century)

I - Monasticism:

When persecutions and troubles affected the power of the Catechetical School, the educational forces began to shift to the monasteries. Admirors of virtue and knowledge found in monasticism more appeal than in the School of Alexandria. The fame of Anthony, Macarius and Pachom attracted many zealous persons to follow them and become their disciples. There is in the writings of the Egyptians monastic Fathers a general consent that the monk must devote his time to three basic duties:

- a- Prayer and meditation.
- b- Study and reading.
- c- Manuarl work.

This rule was so encouraging that monasticism became a great educational force in the life of the church.

The spiritual desire for perfection and for achievement of virtues led them to vast studies of the Bible. Commentaries, concordances, translations, and theological applications became their interest and concern.

Schaff says "The cloisters began as early as

the fourth century to be most fruitful seminaries of clergy, especially in the East."(1)

It was an excellent school of meditation, self-discipline, and spiritual exercise. Some of the profoundist theological discussions, and some of the best books of devotion, were written in the monasteries. Sacred hymns were conceived by monks.(2)

About the program of education for the monks themselves, Mackean refers to the order of the Pachomian institutions called "the monks of Tabennesis" in Upper Egypt saying:

On the bi-weekly fast days instruction was given to his monks by the head of the house, at which attendance was obligatory, and to all by the superior of the monastery. Pachomius used to instruct his monks on Christian doctrine and the Scriptures, and for a long time Theodore was in the habit of going daily in the evening to Pabau to hear him. Great emphasis was laid on the study and the learning by heart of the Scriptures. Those who could not read had to learn, and received lessons at the first, third and sixth hours; and books could be borrowed. Discussions of a spiritual character were also held by the monks, especially on fast days, 3 after morning prayer, and in the evenings when work was ended. 4

During the three year's probation of candidates for monasticism Cassian says: "Moreover.

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1. Schaff, Vol III, P. 174
 2. Schaff, Vol. III, P. 176
 3. Fast days are Wednesdays and Fridays, besides Advent, Lent and others.
 4. Mackean, P. 103.

newcomers, were instructed in the rules, had to learn twenty psalms and the epistles of the New Testament and were required to be able to read. (1)

Monasticism promoted the education of the people by its industrious transcriptions of the Bible, the works of the church fathers and the ancient classics. (2)

G. Sobhy says "Monasteries were therepositories of all the knowledge, whether religious or profane. They were the prototype of all universities which directed education in Egypt during the Middle Ages." (3)

These are the factors which put the educational program in the hands of the monks during the medieval period, especially in Egypt where the people respected monasticism.

Monks were admired and revered for their sanctity; ... miracles were a common happening amongst them. An enormous hagiographic literature fostered in the credulous spirit of the Copts, the belief in the sanctity and supernatural powers of these monks. It is not therefore astonishing to know that these monasteries controlled all the systems of education in the whole country, either directly or by the smaller village Kuttabs. (4)

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1. Ibid, P. 97
 2. Schaff, Vol. III., P. 176
 3. G. Sobhy, P. 113
 4. Ibid P. 114.

At the time of the Arab conquest most of the monasteries in Egypt were flourishing. "If we add up all these numbers we may without exaggeration consider the total number of monks as surpassing half a million in the land of Egypt.(1)

The monks were divided into groups. Each group was entrusted with a different occupation. One of the occupations was the education of others as well as the small children of the surrounding villages. Delegates from among the monks were sent to the villages to give elementary education to the sons of the laity. This consisted in teaching them how to read and write the Coptic language, and mathematics and the necessary elements of religion. advanced learning was inside the monasteries.

Students wrote their texts upon either papyrus, or fragments of pottery called ostraca; leather was exceedingly rare. Paper did not exist at all at that time, and parchment came into use about the fifth century.

Important texts on papyrus were discovered, having transcribed on them religious matters, receipts letters, boy's exercises, tables of accounts, extracts from the Holy Scriptures.(2)

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1. G. Sobhy. P. 112
 2. Ibid, pp. 1140116

In every monastery there was a scriptorium. There were also certain schools of calligraphy all over Egypt.

"We find the Syriac Scholars newly translating the Septuagint Bible into Syriac. They did this in the Ennaton Monasteries near Alexandria."(1)

The monastic institutions of Egypt received the reputation of the Catechetical Schools welcoming candidates and monks from Africa, Asia, and Europe.

G. Sobji says:

Numerous contingents from the neighbouring countries were attached to the monasteries and when they grew too numerous, they build their own monastery after their name and annexed it to the parent one. We read in a parchment in the Monastery of Abba Makarius in the Wady El Natroun, the different accounts of the different Riwaks (2) of foreigners attached to the monastery. There were the Riwaks of the Syrians, Armenians and the Ethiopians etc.(3)

Conclusion: To summarize--monasticism in Egypt led the Christian and secular education of the Coptic nation during the middle ages through:

1. Feeling its importance for themselves and for the church (local and universal).
2. Establishing schools for the congregations in the villages and sending teachers to

1. G. Sobhy P. 117

2. Riwak is an Arabic word means a lecture hall annexed to a church, mosque or temple. The English word for it is Porch. (Acts 3:11)

3. G. Sobhy, P. 115

them

3. Being cultural centers for higher education.
4. Preparing church leaders, especially when bishops and patriarchs began to be chosen from the monasteries.
5. Publishing the Bible, the Patristic teachings, and their literature.
6. Their personal Christian example of sanctity and virtue.

II. The Graeco-Roman Period (sixth century)

The period between Chalcedon and the Arab conquest was marked by the decline of Greek emphasis under the rise of Egyptian nationalism and the flourishing of the monastic institutions.

But in some cities where the Greek culture was still alive, the discovery of a collection of papyri of 6th century throws light upon the attitudes of education at that time.

"In the towns intellectual interests and educational centers were still more common.(1)

A letter, on the papyri was sent from a student to his parents, expecting them to come and see whether his tutor is paying sufficient attention to him.

1. G. Sobhy P. 107.

Another Byzantine parent writes to withdraw his son who had proved an unsatisfactory pupil. The father says:

You have written to me about the little Anastasius...except that he is stupid and a child and foolish. He wrote me a letter himself quite in keeping with his looks and empty wits, and since he is a child and stupid I will fetch him home... chastise him; for ever since he left his father, he has no other beatings and he likes getting a few, his back has got accustomed to them and needs its daily dose. 1

Those two letters reflect a) the concern of parents for the education of their children. b) There existed educational centers, probably in cities, to which families used to send their children. c) Teachers and parents were still following the ancient methods which emphasized physical punishments.

For higher education in the same period, there is another letter on the papyri, written by a young man who was probably in Alexandria to complete his education. He expatiates to his father on the difficulty of finding good tutors. "He has also persuaded the sons of Apollonius to attend Didymus' School, for they and he, since the death of Philologus₂ have been looking for an able tutor right up till now."

1. G. Sobhy, PP. 107-8

2. Ibid, P. 108

At the end of the sixth century the Copts had already began to neglect the study of the Greek language, as a result of the nationalistic movement.

"It was possible to reach high positions in the Church without a knowledge of Greek; thus in the will of Abraham, Bishop of Ermont about the end of the sixth century we are told that the bishop, not understanding Greek, had the will translated to him in Coptic."¹

III. During the Arab Rule:

The Medieval historians who wrote about Egypt under the Arabs, were mostly interested in recording the events of persecution or tolerance of the Moslems towards the Copts. These were the famous characteristics of these centuries. So they neglected to write about the educational efforts.

Fortunately some social and political events could help in detecting their educational significance. From such events it is obvious that.

The Copts did not cease their intellectual activities after the Arab conquest, because they remained the majority for a long period afterwards. Not till the fifteenth century were they reduced to a minority. Under the Fatimites in the ninth and
1. g. Sobhy, P. 109

tenth centuries they reached a state of influence that was never equalled again.

For about two centuries, or even longer, the Coptes continued their ordinary life under their new masters; and they carried on the education of their children either in the monasteries, or in the small village schools which were either dependent on the nearest ¹monastery or were run by the bishop of the diocese.

Most of the historians state that the offices of clerks, secretaries, accountants; and architects were held by Copts even during periods of persecution, because they were generally esteemed more skillful than others.

"The Copts were excellent scribes and accountants and were continued in their posts under the Arab rule, the government offices were full of them, sometimes even the wazirate (minister) was held by a Copt, and that too in a time of persecution of the Christians."²

Those who built the mosques of Egypt were Coptic architects. Lane-Poole writes about the excellence of the Coptic architect who built the

1. G. Sobhy, P. 119

2. Encyclopaedia Britanica, Vol. 7, P. 113

mosque of Ibn Tulun in 877 A.D.: "It is remarkable... for being the earliest dated example of pointed arches throughout the building - earlier by at least two centuries than any in England." ¹ And about their mathematical abilities he says: "Most of the financial posts of government were then, as always, in the possession of Copts. They were the farmers (damin) of taxes, and the controllers of accounts; ^u and their ability made them indispensable." ² ^A

All these examples could prove one reality -- the Copts were interested in educating their children. Periods of persecution did not cause them to cease their educational efforts. It only compelled them to hold it in secret places, or in remote quarters ³ of the cities.

There is a famous narrative which is orally retold among the Copts, that one of the persecuting governors compelled the Patriarch to choose either closing the churches ^f of the schools. The Patriarch preferred keeping the schools by which he would establish a strong faith and worship in the heart of every Coptic child. To the extent of sacrificing church buildings, the Coptic emphasis upon education as the important means of building the real church

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1. S. Lane-Poole, A History of Egypt. Vol. 6, PP. 64-5
 2. Ibid, P. 170
 3. Dor, L' Instruction Publique en Egypte. Paris

was carried on.

The Kuttab:

It was the custom during the middle ages to establish a school beside every church building. These church schools were called during the Arab's period the "Kuttab" or "Maktab". The term is an Arabic word which originates from the word writing, or the place where writing and subjects related to it are taught.

Pupils:

Chabrol states that all Coptic boys went to small schools where they learnt the elements of their religion and how to read and write and that girls could not attend without the consent of their mothers, who sometimes objected. Generally speaking, however, the girls did not attend in Cairo, but in Upper Egypt they attended regularly with the boys until they reached the age of eight or nine years." 1

Lane states "The Copts have numerous schools; but for boys only; very few females among them can read; and those have been instructed at home." 2

This statement shows also that homes carried a part of the responsibilities of education, when social or political events hindered the use of the school.

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1. Heyworth - Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Modern Egypt, PP. 85-6
 2. E. W. Lane, Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians, P. 641

Teachers:

The kuttab was usually led by church leaders, a deacon, a teacher, or a monk. Afterwards, the choir leader shared in teaching hymns, psalms, and the Bible. The teacher was called Arif or monitor, also "El Moalem" means teacher.

Curriculum:

These schools were for religious and secular education in the same time.

The earliest account states that the children were taught religion, good manners, the reading and writing of Arabic and Coptic. They were also made to commit to memory the Psalter and St. Paul's Epistles and were taught geometry and arithmetic because "these two sciences are very useful and necessary on account of the overflowing of the Nile, whereby the limits of the fields are lost; so that it becomes necessary for them to measure out their land; and by the benefit of the first of these sciences they compute the yearly increase."¹

According to Lane "The students were taught the Psalms of David, the Gospels and the Apostolical Epistles in Arabic and then the Gospels and the Epistles in Arabic and then the Gospels and the Epistles in Coptic."²

¹: Dunne, P. 85
²: E. W. Lane, P. 541

The exercises in Coptic seem to have been limited to the mere learning by heart of the Scriptures and the Prayers for the sake of the Church services and other rituals; the language was not taught grammatically and was not used for anything outside religious practice. Even the Scriptures had to be explained in Arabic.¹

Thus the curriculum of these schools, while mainly religious, also provided the students with a special training that would enable them to find a career in life.

Higher Education:

After the Coptic boy had passed out of the elementary school, he usually followed his father or male relation to his office or place of work where he would serve as an apprentice. Eventually he would either take over the post of his father or relative or would seek work elsewhere.² The system of handing on a trade or profession from father to son was an important feature of the old Egyptian social system which broke down in the nineteenth century.

Those who wished to serve the church as deacons or clergy mostly continued their higher education

1. Dunne, P. 86

with the "Arif" studying with him personally while they continued their religious training in the church. This system is still followed in some parts of Ethiopia.

Beside the Kuttab there were other informal educational agencies during the middle ages; such as the:

Craft Education:

The Copts were employed as clerks and accountants either in government offices or at private estates. Some were engaged in industry and commerce. The preparation for these jobs required a period of apprenticeship after the studies at the Kuttab.

After the Coptic boy had passed out the elementary school, he usually followed his father or male relation to his office or place of work where he would serve as an apprentice and eventually would either take over the post of his father or relative or would seek work elsewhere.¹

The adult tutee usually acts as the spiritual and moral sponsor of the apprentice. He takes him to church on Sundays, tries to let him recall the psalms which he has recited in the kuttab, and asks

1. Heyworth - Dunne, Education in Egypt and the Copts, Bulletin de la Société d'Archeologie Copte. Vol. 6, P. 94

1. A. P. 94

him to exercise his Arabic reading by reading Bible stories and retelling them to him or to his family.

"Moallim" was the title by which the male Coptic adult was usually called. The dignified Copte in rural areas are still called by the same title now. The term means teacher. Probably this educational title was given to them because of their respectful cultural standard.

IV. During the Ninteenth Century

The traditional school "El Kuttab" continued acting as the major educational institute. In the beginning of the minteenth century Mohammed Ali (1805) began his reforming projects by establishing civil schools to improve the system of the government.

Dunne says, "Mohammed Ali did nothing for the education of the Copts as a community; his reforms were of a military nature and in his schools, we never come accross the name of a Copt. nor do we meet with the name of a Copt on the education missions¹ to Europe."

When the Copts found that they have no place in the new schools and the kuttab became inadequate to compete with modern languages and sciences, they

1. Dunne, Vol. 6, P. 100

decided to establish special modern schools for the education of their children.

The leading figure in this movement was the young monk, Daoud, "who can be rightly considered as one of the foremost men in the cultural history of Modern Egypt."¹

Rev. Daoud began a religious and literary center where his friends could discuss their problems. In the center of the monastery's private properties at Bush he opened a school for young Copts.

As soon as he was ordained Patriarch Cyril IV, he began to establish schools on up-to-date lines. His first school was called the Coptic Patriarchal College which he began to build in 1853, and which was opened in 1855.

This school accepted students from all creeds. The number of students was one-hundred and fifty. The stationery and books were distributed free of charge.²

The curriculum included arithmetic, geography, sciences, Arabic, Coptic, Turkish, English, French, and Italian. Christian education was taught to Christians with emphasis upon Bible studies.

1. Ibid, P. 102
2. Ibid, P. 103

The Patriarch himself was encouraging the development of the school by visiting it daily. He used to attend some lessons and speak to the students on moral and religious subjects. He invited the Europeans to visit the school and to criticise it.¹

For students living in far quarters of the city of Cairo, he established three other schools--two for girls, and one^e for boys. He used to inspect the school of Haret El Sakayeen twice a month. Dr. Sobhy states that the girls school was the first of its kind in the ^u ² contry.

To form a choir for the Patriarchal Church he selected some of the students of the schools and appointed Kommos Takla the priest of Cathedral to train them for the correct chanting of the Coptic hymns. This first choir caused a revival in the spirit of worship in the church and became the seed of many other choirs for every church. It gave the young men an opportunity to share in the service.

His second step in the reforming program was printing the essential books for the churches and schools. At that time there were no printing the essential books for the churches and schools. At that time there were no printing

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1. Menassa El Kommos, History of the Coptic Church. (Arabic) PP. 666-7
 2. G. Sobhy, P. 122

presses in Egypt, except the official one of the government. So he imported from Europe the first private Arabic press in Egypt. Appreciating its great benefit for the revival of the church, he ordered that it ought to be received with great ceremony on its arrival at the port and the station¹ of Cairo.

In relation to the governmental schools the Patriarch tried to persuade Said Pasha (the ruler) to allow the Copts to enter the higher technical schools, which were, the military, the medical and the engineering schools.

The first Copt to be sent on an official mission to Europe was sent by Said Pasha in 1855 to France to study law and civil administration.² His name was Wasif Azmi.

Cyril V also was interested in education and began to establish many schools in other cities in Upper Egypt. As a result of this movement, the number of modern schools established during the period 1873-8 reached twenty-three schools, In Cairo fourteen schools were opened--one in Giza, two in Alexandria, and two in Akyut.³ Ismail Pacha helped these schools by a gift of land.

1. Dunne, P. 103
2. Ibid, P. 104

Fifteen years later there was an increase of over 100 percent in the number of schools, all because of the public Spirit of enterprise of the Coptic community--a really praiseworthy effort.

The Copts were very eager to educate their children. The following statistics show their percentage to the total number of all students attending schools in Egypt:

	<u>1875</u>	<u>1878</u>
The total number of students in private schools	9009	12.539
The total number of Copts in these schools	1212	3.012
The total number of Egyptians in government schools	4998	4.445
The percentage of Copts to the total number attending private schools	13%	24%
The percentage of Copts to the total number attending government schools 2	24%	66%

Before the nineteenth century came to its end, the Copts had schools dispersed all over the country whether owned by the church or by private enterprise.³

The Coptic Theological School was reopened in
4
1875.

- 1. Dunne, P. 107
2. Ibid,
3. G. Sobhy, P. 122
4. Heyworth-Dunn, P.444

All these successful efforts show how the Patriarchs have built their entire reforming program upon an educational basis, and how educational efforts caused the revival of the church when the social and political circumstances permitted the achievement of those goals.

PART III

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

CHAPTER 5

AGENCIES OF CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Introduction:

During the twentieth century, Egypt was progressing rapidly. The Egyptian began to enjoy the light of civilisation. Education, social welfare, and economical abundance, all cooperated to raise the standard of living.

The Copts contributed a great deal to this program through their many schools which they established everywhere. Their efforts in the governmental as well as the private fields were remarkable.

But Western civilisation carried with its merits some effects which were misunderstood by the Orientals.

To some people, modern science meant apostasy; to others neglect of traditions. To those, religion meant retardness, which could only be practiced by the ignorants.

Those who understood the sound meaning of civilisation, were able to adapt its merits to

their Oriental heritage without feeling severe conflicts between religion and the modern life.

These groups of educated church members began to feel that the church must meet the needs of the changing society by new ways of approach adequate to the modern generation. So they started a movement of revival and progress within the church.

The history of the Coptic Church inspired the zealous church members. They planned their projects of revival upon the basis of returning to the essential principles which caused the success of the ancient church. So they began to apply the same principles through modern adequate means.

Their study of the Coptic past convinced them that the secret of the success of the church was its great concern about the importance of education and the wide educational program the church has performed through the ages.

Part III is a demonstration of some aspects of the educational progress in the church. Or how the ancient principles are applied in modern

days.

I. The Church:

Christian education is the first responsibility of the church. So it tries to achieve its educational ministry through all its activities. The church's responsibility is to secure the necessary sound education to every member from the cradle to the grave.

The direct educational institutions and church schools will be discussed in later chapters. These pages show how the church services, liturgies, and sacraments are planned to perform the educational task of the church through:

1. Preparing a secured family:

The family is the nucleus of society. It is the smallest social cell in the structure of our world. It shapes and affects the environment.

The family is the first natural and effective school in which individuals grow. The seeds of faith and morals are planted and watered in the home.

As the family has this unique effect upon the

education of individuals; the constitution of the church gives great care to the building of secure, successful families:

A. The church consecrates the sacrament of Matrimony and blesses its unity.

B. It is the duty of the priest to ascertain that both parties to the marriage are acting of free will and not of compulsion.¹

C. The engagement has a certain religious celebration. The interval between the engagement and the wedding is made to give an opportunity for the orientation of the couple to each other. It is considered as a period of preparation for the new home. So if they discover during this period that they are disagreeable, the contract of engagement could be cancelled.

The laws of the church claims that "A notice of the marriage must be affixed to the church door for the space of two weeks."² So if any member of the congregation has any objection he can declare it to the priest. Unfortunately this rule is neglected these days.

D. The church does not encourage divorce. It does

1. Butler, Ancient Coptic Churches, Vol. II, p. 323.
2. Burmester, The Eastern Churches Quarterly, Vol. IX, p. 6.

not permit it, except for the reason of adultery. There are special church courts to look after family affairs.¹

The real function of these courts is to help the reconciliation and solving the problems of the family, and not to act as mere civil courts to judge and apply laws. Some years ago these courts began to grant divorces to some cases other than adultery. As a result of this tendency. The rate of divorce began to increase. It reached two percent of the marriage contracts of 1950. This is a dangerous spiritual and social symptom which ought to be cured.

E. Before the wedding the engaged couple ought to confess to the priest and partake of the Holy Communion. It is an opportunity for premarital counseling, during which the priest could help the couple to understand the responsibilities of marriage.

These are some ways through which the church tries to use its sacraments and rituals to secure, with God's grace, successful families, able to rear their children toward Christian maturity.

1. This thesis Chapter 2, p. 73

2. Case from childhood to adulthood:

The church's program of Christian Education begins with the child early in his first week of life; through:

A. The Christian Name:

The impact of the name upon the personality is well known especially in countries where names could easily discriminate the religion of the person.

It was God's concern to give some people names, "Adam--John--Jesus", and to change the names of others "Abram, Saray, Jacob, Simon and Saul".

To create the feeling of the Christian impact and responsibility, as well as the thanksgiving to God for his gift of the newborn child; the church celebrates in the home a special prayer on the seventh day, called the "Prayer of the Basin". This service was neglected for some years, but it is now returning to be practiced again.

B. Baptism:

Baptism is given to the children directly after the recovery of his mother, that is forty days after the birth. Because baptism is necessary for salvation "John 3:5".

The confirmation is given directly after baptism. This is to enrich the life of the child with the help and power of the Holy Spirit as he grows. This also admits him to be a partaker of the Holy Communion, which will lead the family to take the child frequently to the church, where the atmosphere can affect him even before understanding the meaning of the words.

C. Godparent:

The church appoints a godparent (male or female) to sponsor every baptized child. The word sponsor in its Syriac origin means guardian. He acts as the church delegate to help the parents in the responsibilities of the Christian nurture of the child. The godparent continues his job until another church agency takes charge of the child. Godparents are usually chosen from the deacons or the righteous members of the church.

D. The Church School:

When the child reaches the school age, the responsibility of his Christian nurture is carried to the church school.

The church school was called in the early days of Christianity, the "Catechuminal School". During the middle ages it was replaced by the "Kuttab"

which developed in the nineteenth century into the modern schools established by the church. Now the Sunday Schools and the youth organizations complete the work of these schools.

E. Spiritual Father:

When the student ends his school life he becomes a nature church member. Then the priest becomes his direct; responsible church officer. The priest is called in this case the spiritual father, who receives his confession and affords guidance and counseling through personal relationships and visitation.

The previous steps show how the church cares for the Christian growth of its members in every stage of life.

3. Education through worship.¹

The church made, of its worship and different services, a continuous educational program. Every time the congregation attends the church service, the members receive an educational impact. The following points are some aspects of the educational impact of the Coptic worship:

A. The church building itself is considered as a school well equipped to make clear, in its structure, illustrations of its message.

1. An article by the writer in the magazine of World Christian Education, Vol. X, no. 1, January 1955,

The atmosphere of the church raises the heart and mind to God through the senses. Pictures on the walls, or glass windows² serve as visual aids. They teach the life of Christ and the good example of the saints who are "subject to like passions as we are", yet struggled to achieve righteousness by God's grace. In the ancient church of St. Mark^orious in Old Cairo there are 65 pictures all round the walls illustrating the whole life of Christ and some events from the Old Testament.²

Candles and lights are symbolic of the shining virtues of Christian sacrifice. Music deepens the meaning of hymns and prayers. Censing compels the heart to raise its prayers up, as the "smoke of the incense rose with the prayers of the saints from the hand of the angel before God" (Rev. 8:4).

B. Another aspect is found in the readings of the Coptic services. During the first part of the liturgy called "The Catechumenal Liturgy" a series of Biblical lessons are read. They are selected to form a united whole on which the sermon is based. In this liturgical service; the congregation hear 1) the Gospel; 2) St. Paul's letters; 3) the Catholic epistles; 4) the Acts of the Apostles; 5) a

1. No statues are permitted in the Coptic churches.
2. Butler. A.J., Ancient Coptic Churches, Vol. 1, p. 97.

second Gospel lesson (each Gospel lesson being preceded by four verses from the Psalms); ⑥ the Old Testament, during periods of fasts and feasts.

The lessons are chanted, to give opportunity for meditation while hearing them. Certain litanies are prayed before the reading of the lessons asking God's blessing and the gift of understanding: The litany of Paul's lessons says:

...O Christ our God; Thee also we now entreat O Thou good and that lovest man, graciously grant unto us and unto all Thy people a mind without wandering and a clear understanding that we may learn and understand how profitable are Thine Holy teachings...

The litany of the Catholic Epistles says:

...Graciously grant unto us always, to walk in their footsteps, and to imitate their wrestling; and to have communion with them, in the sweat, which they had for godliness...

C. Directly after reading the lesson from the Acts of Apostles, a portion from the history of the church is read. This is called the "Synaxary". The book contains daily historical readings in a form of a biography of one of the martyrs, or saints, or patriarchs of the church. This teaches the congregation how did they receive, the Christian faith, through tortures and severe persecutions. And how other people like them, had applied Christianity in their life.

Week after week the congregation be- ^{come}

1. But, The Coptic Morning Service for the Lords

come aware of their historical and traditional heritage.

D. In the second part of the liturgy, "the mass", the priest recalls and symbolizes the important events of the life of Jesus from the Nativity to the Resurrection.

The congregation, being thus reminded of the great work of redemption, sings in response; "Amen, Amen, Amen. We show forth Thy death, O Lord, and we confess Thine holy resurrection and ascension..."¹

There are special occasions which dramatize the events and their meanings. Even the most ignorant, can receive a lesson, as, for instance, when on Maundy Thursday the priest, washes the feet of members of the congregations, following the words of our Savior "If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet." (John 13:14)

Further, in Holy Week, the church is decorated in black, and hymns of grief and sorrow are chanted. Everynne feels the effect of the great redemptive work of the Cross, as great portions of the Bible

1. Bute, Joh, The Coptic Morning Service for the Lords Day, p. 72.

are read with interpretations and sermons. But after Easter the atmosphere is transformed. There is given through decorations, music and prayers, an impact of triumph, glory, and joy of the resurrection.

E. The liturgy furnishes a practical school of prayer. Prayers of the Psalms used by the church in the "Book of Hours", "Horologion" and prayers of the Holy Fathers of the early centuries, give a great variety for every occasion of our social life. Children develop the ability to use these through imitating their parents and through the examples thus provided.

The liturgy includes prayers for the sick, the dead, those who are travelling, in trouble, in prison, for the needy, for widows and orphans, for kings and rulers, for sinners and righteous, for unbelievers, and pagans. Prayers are made even for the weather, the winds and rivers, the trees and crops. Thus all spiritual and material needs of men are mentioned in every liturgy.

E. Partaking of the Holy Communion is another educative process; as the partaker prepares himself by repentance, prayers, and confession. The latter is an opportunity for pastoral guidance and counseling. It helps in solving many personal problems.

G. Among the vast varieties of church music there is a kind of long hymns used during the fast and feast periods, which forms Bible stories in details.

There is also a kind of religious folklore through which the people learn much about the Bible and the church history. Blackman says.

It should be explained that it is the custom among the Copts for men and boys to gather together every evening during the month of "Kiyahk", which begins on December 9 or 10, to recite from memory (and books) special prayers and passages from the Bible (and hymns) in Coptic (and Arabic).

He describes the celebration of the season of advent, during which the church rejoices for the Nativity and Redemption. Children and adults look forward for this month to enjoy these happy hymns which teach all the prophecies and stories in the Bible concerning the events of the Christmas season.

H. Besides the foregoing points, the church has other avenues for leading to an experience of worship. Money offerings teach stewardship and the sharing of the God's gifts and grace with others. The meeting of the congregation gives a practical lesson in the equality of classes and races, when the poor stand beside the rich, and when white and black worship together.

1. Blackman, W.S., The Fellahin of Upper Egypt, p. 234.

1. Further, the prayers of the church, impacts an ecumenical spirit. The litany of peace prays: "Remember, O Lord; the peace of the one catholic apostolic church, which exists from end to end of the world; bless all the nations and flocks..." In another litany there is the petition "Put an end to the divisions of the church".¹ Amen.

Experience has proved that this kind of educational worship leaves a deep spiritual impact upon the lives of many adults and children. The writer saw illiterate men and women who know most of the Biblical events and their spiritual significance as a result of mere frequent attendance of the church services.

Modern education in the twentieth century has rediscovered the effect of visual aids to help people learn through seeing. Dr. Vieth says:

The Christian church has not been unmindful of the value of the visual in worship. Great church architecture is designed to arouse a spirit of worship. Graceful church spires are fingers pointing to God. The great masses and the high vaulted ceilings of cathedrals speak to men's souls of the majesty of God. In the mellow half-light of candles, a man even while in the midst of a congregation may feel himself alone with his Creator. Stained glass windows

1. The Coptic liturgy of St. Basil.

yield a filtered light to subdue the spirit; while the figures and symbols with which they are inscribed stimulate the mind of the worshipper to thoughts of God.

Moods are influenced by the place in which persons are. It is important that the place where services of worship are to be held should aid the spirit in seeking communion with God.¹

The historical story of the boy Athanasius illustrates the educational effect of church rituals and worship. Schaff says: "On a martyrs' day in 313 the bishop Alexander of Alexandria saw a troop of boys imitating the church services in innocent sport, Athanasius playing the part of bishop, and performing baptism by immersion."²

4. Education through pastoral and social work:

The church aims to teach that religion is not isolated from every day life. It is not a duty to be performed on Sundays inside the church buildings. It is life in the society. It is our daily relation with God and with the community.

So the responsibility of the church follows its members to their homes; offices, neighborhood; social activities, and recreation.

The Coptic Church has been aware of this principle and applied it from its early days. The canons,

1. Paul Vieth and W. Rogers, Visual Aids in the Church, pp. 64-52
2. Schaff, Vol. III, p. 886. referring to Rufinus (H.E.I.1.c.14)

the buildings of ancient churches and the traditional practices which still exist, prove the wide program of pastoral and social work planned to achieve the educational task of the church.

This is a wide field which could not be covered in such a limited thesis; The following are some examples of this attitude:

A. Pastoral visitations:

The priest's visitation to the Coptic home is considered by the family as a great blessing for being worthy of the entrance of one of God's disciples to their house. "And when ye come into an house salute it. And if the house be worthy let your peace come upon it" (Matt. 10:12).

The priest ought to visit the home at least two or three times a year, except when it is in need of more care; or in a difficulty. During every visit he usually reads a lesson from the Bible and holds a prayer. Counseling and guiding, he urges the members of the family to attend the church regularly and practice the means of grace.

Also he ought to visit the home on certain occasions such as the dedication of a new house by a certain prayer of blessing and thanksgiving.

Such pastoral visits makes the family feel that

the church is interested in them and reminds them of their Christian commitments. The lesson will not be forgotten easily as it meets the personal needs and situation. Usually the priest leaves a pamphlet, and for the children, a picture or a small cross. Recently some priests began to keep a census for the congregation, and register the pastoral needs of each family.

B. Ministry of the sick:

The church responds to illness according to the concern of its Christian love. As members of one body the persons in this community are so deeply interrelated that when one suffers, all are affected. Illness does not affect the body only. "Illness is always a spiritual crisis, of patience in adversity, of hope against despair, and of the will to live or die. And these emotional attitudes are as decisive as any other causative factors in whether the person gets well, or fails rapidly, or becomes a chronic invalid. In the face of spiritual needs as crucial as these, the pastor has work to do that urgently justifies his place at the bedside of the ill."¹

So it is a great educational duty through sharing the pains, sympathy and raising the heart

1. P. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care. p. 194.

to the only source of hope, strength and healing, Lord Jesus Christ. The effect of such care may lead the patient and his whole family to a deep Christian commitment for the rest of life.

It is the duty of the deacons and other church members to inform the priest about the sick cases. When the priest visits a sick person he prays for him and reads certain lessons from the Scriptures and anoints the patient with oil (James 5:14).

In the Coptic Church the unction of the sick could be performed at any time even for simple illness and not only before death.

C. Pastoral care of the bereaved:

The Coptic Church gives great care to the needs of the bereaved. Through the process of rituals a sound manifestation of grief can take place.¹

During the periods of grief the priest and deacons preach for the bereaved people who gather in the home of the deceased on the traditional days of lamentation.² On the third day of death the priest ought to hold a special prayer in the home. This is followed by many visitations by the priest and his helpers.

1. See J.L. Liebman, Peace of Mind, Chapter 6 and P.E. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care, Chapter 8.

2. Acts 8:2.

Families which have no sufficient space in the home to receive the people who are coming to console, usually hold these funeral receptions in the social hall of the church.

D. Social services for the needy:

In the buildings of the ancient Coptic Churches the sanctuary was only a part, beside it were other social halls, a school building attached to the church and sometimes an orphanage.

Among these a nexes; the canons of the church speaks about a room called "The Deacony" or the room of service. It ought to be located on the right hand side of the sanctuary to enable the church members to give their offering before entering the church, so that no one would know who gave and who did not give.

As Egypt is an agricultural country most of the offerings were from the crops of the field; clothes, and money. These were distributed weekly to the needy persons of the congregation.

In the social room of the church, all the activities and meetings of the Coptic community were held. Especially on occasions such as feasts, weddings, funerals and conferences.

All the congregation used to take lunch together

on Sundays after the church service in these halls. It was called "Banquets of Charity" of Agapy", where the rich serve the poor.

History records that the Patriarch Matthew I (1375 A.D.), used to buy great quantities of wheat and corn to distribute to the needy during periods of famine or persecution.

These social activities were only means to achieve the great educative ends of the church, and to reach the largest number of people to benefit from the Christian message.

For thirty years these activities have been organised in the form of Benevolent Coptic Societies with a wide variety of modern social work.

II. The Home:

The social structure of the Coptic home is changing very quickly during the twentieth century. It is not easy to find the same patterns of life in all homes. Coptic homes could be classified into three main categories:

A. The Traditional Home:

The majority of the Coptic families are still preserving many traditional customs and attitudes. Even some of those who are living in large cities, still respect many of the patterns of their fore-

fathers, especially the religious ones.

Most of these traditional customs have a Christian educational impact upon the members of the family and the children. They keep the atmosphere of the home Christian. The last few pages showed some aspects of the services rendered by the church to the home, which share also in creating the Christian atmosphere of the home. Moreover, the following customs are educationally effective:

1. Family devotions:

One of the early Christian practices was the devotions of the Christian family. In Egypt, where persecutions did not enable the believers to assemble easily in church buildings, the homes became centers of worship.

The Fathers of the Church of Alexandria urged the families to practice home devotions and frequent study of the Scripture.

Clement (of Alexandria) advised that married people should read the Holy Scriptures together. It is evident that we have here a rule of long standing for Christian families. Clement writes that married people should spend the day in prayer, reading (i.e. of the Holy Scriptures) and good works. Clement also mentions the most fitting time for Bible reading--namely before the chief meal of the day.

1. Harnack, Bible Reading in the Early Church, p. 56.

"The Apostolic Constitution (vi-11) gives the comprehensive direction: 'Teach your children thoroughly the Word of the Lord...and place in their hands every book of Holy Scripture.'"¹

About the private use of the Bible Harnack says,

Almost all that we have hitherto written concerning the private use of the Holy Scripture receives ample support from the works of the great Biblical scholar Origen.... Origen speaks pretty frequently of the reading of Holy Scripture at home, and strongly commends it. It should be read every day."²

The effect of these teachings about the spiritual benefits of reading the Bible privately and with the family, led many individuals study it by heart. Harnack mentions: "Many of the laity could console themselves for the loss of their Bible (during persecutions) for many passages were fixed firmly in their memory."³

Eusebius speaks about a blind Egyptian called John that "he had written whole books of the divine Scriptures not in tables of stone, as the divine apostle says, nay not even on skins of animals nor on paper which moths and time destroy, but in tables that are truly hearts of flesh."⁴

1. Ibid, p. 123

2. Ibid, p. 68

3. Harnack, p. 83

4. Eusebius, Mart. Pales., 13.8.F.

So it became the habit in the traditional home to gather and have family devotions together.

2. Grace at meals is a Coptic custom usually said by the father if he is present. It is mostly asking for the blessing of God as He has blessed the five loaves and two fishes, then followed by thanks and remembering the needy. It always starts and ends by the sign of the cross on the food.

3. Religious pictures. The Coptic house is usually decorated with many religious pictures about the life of our Lord and the famous Saints and Martyrs of the district. Some homes consecrate a small room or a corner for private and family prayers. Some homes keep a lighted lamp of oil in front of the collection of religious pictures, to give the atmosphere of a chapel, which helps in appealing for prayer and meditation.

4. Fasts. During days and seasons of fasts, the family changes the kinds of dishes and practices fasting together. This creates a feeling of religious awareness and need for spiritual food. The hymn of the fast is always reminding them, that fasts mean hunger for spiritual food, virtue and repentance.

5. Fests of Saints. It was the custom that every

family celebrates the feast of its beloved saint by distributing offerings of food, clothes, and money to the needy, and invite them to dine in the home. They read the biography of the Saint and praise his virtues and the pains he suffered for his Christianity.

In cities where people live in small apartments, charitable gifts are given to the church and its benevolent societies to do the distribution. Many families still make special kinds of cakes which they give to the needy on certain feasts.

6. Banquets of Charity (Agape). It was the responsibility of one or two families to prepare and provide the food of the Agape meals for the congregation on Sundays. Unfortunately, this custom is diminishing now because of the social changes in cities. In rural churches it is still performed during certain seasons. In Ethiopia it is widely practiced.

The traditional home helps the church in its recent educational revival in many ways:

- a. It responds easily to the teaching of the church leading it to understand the spiritual assets of these customs, and look to them as means aiming towards the sound Christian way of life.
- b. It shares in the church activities and organizations.

c. It urges its children to attend the Sunday school and Youth Fellowship. Besides trying to furnish for them a religious atmosphere at home.

B. The home imitating Western civilisation:

It looks to modernism as an escape from traditions, especially from the customs which seem to them apparently Oriental. They are afraid to be called retarded people performing ancient manners. They wish to appear Western in every way.

But still many such homes respect religion, and the church, even though they do not practise all means of grace in the same way performed by the traditional family. They need more care and understanding from the church to deal with their problems in a sense of awareness of the changing society, using methods which can appeal to their modern patterns of life.

C. The secular home:

The secular home is the home which is not aware of its need of God. It is worldly minded and nominally Christian. It is the result of the lack of Christian education in childhood and pastoral care in adulthood. It needs new evangelism and an adequate program which can deal with such problems.

The potentialities of the Coptic family are still great in their educational effect. They need only to be reorganized and directed toward the adequate ways of facing social modern problems.

III. The School:

The third agency of Christian education in the school. Schools could contribute a great deal of Christian Education to complete the efforts of the church and the home in building integrated personalities. This depends upon the kind of the school and its general policy toward religion.

The educational system in Egypt met many changes during the twentieth century. With every change, the system gained some progress. But the authorities in Egypt still look forward for better developments in the existing system.

When the government promoted education widely in the country, the governmental schools exceeded the private ones. The later became unable to compete financially with the governmental recourses. Meanwhile the State began to supervise the private schools, and grant them some funds on the basis that they would follow the same governmental curriculum. This system eliminated all differences between public schools and private or church schools. They follow the same

curriculum, pass the same public examinations and receive the same public certificates. The two are opened to all religions: Moslems, Christians and Jews.

The only difference is the name of the school, and its ownership. Except that some of the church schools have been able to keep the Christian atmosphere prevailing in the school activities.

Most Coptic elementary schools did not receive funds, preferring to keep their preliminary responsibilities as church schools. Accordingly the program of Christian education differs in each of the two systems:

A. Schools following the governmental system, either public or private:

As religious instruction was given to the Moslem students since the governmental schools started, the principle of teaching Christianity to the Christian students was accepted in the public schools later in the twentieth century.

But the principle stayed unapplied in many schools, because no special teachers were appointed to teach Christianity. Also it was only permitted when the number of Christian students in each class exceeded a certain limit. So it did not find its

way for achievement except in large schools in the cities.

The curriculum was planned by a Committee of Coptic educators presided over by the president of the Coptic Seminary. It was mainly Bible centered; with applications and example from church history, church life and doctrines, and few social topics. It was planned for one or two sessions a week.

The president of the Seminary at that time (nearly 1920) prepared ten textbooks for the ten grades of the public schools, beginning from the elementary, the primary and the secondary schools. These books were admitted by the government and delivered to the students in the schools which permit Christian education.

The teachers were chosen from the ordinary teachers of the different courses. Some of them were uninterested in teaching religion, others were unqualified. So the efficiency of such teaching was poor and inadequate.

The government of the New Regime, wishing to build the revival program of the Egyptian nation upon strong morals, found it essential to give religious education more care and seriousness. So in 1953, the government issued a rule for making

religious education a required course in all grades in public and private schools.

An ecumenical committee was selected to plan the curriculum. It represented the Coptic Orthodox Church, the Presbyterian, and the Roman Catholics. Then the committee prepared the textbooks which were printed by the government and distributed to the students. Gradually the government will appoint teachers of theological preparation.

These new steps are promising to give better results of comprehensive Christian education.

According to the official statistics of the academic year 1945-46 there were:¹

Schools		students
33	of the Coptic Patriarchate having	7,191
90	of the Coptic Benevolent Societies	
	having	21,439
<u>109</u>	Private Coptic Schools having	<u>19,920</u>
<u>232</u>	Total	<u>48,550</u>

B. Elementary Coptic Schools:

The condition of the Copts in the villages was an important factor in motivating the new educational revival in the Coptic Church.

Small groups of Coptic families lived in villages which have no churches. Spiritually and socially neglected they felt isolated from the church. Their

1. The Egyptian Government, Annuaire Statistique, published 1951.

children grow up without any Christian Education. To build a church and provide a pastor for a small congregation is an impractical solution.

Thus the churches of the towns near by felt the responsibility of taking care of their brothers in the villages. They sent to them the Sunday School succeeded and created an awareness of the great need for continuous care; which could not be sufficiently fulfilled in one or two hours of the weekly Sunday School session.

So the church began to establish rural elementary day schools to replace the ancient church school "Kuttab", but on the lines of modern education. They are planned to serve the spiritual, educational, and social needs of rural areas.

Slums in crowded cities faced the same problem. So the church began to promote the same kind of schools in ^{rural} slum areas with different methods to meet the industrial problems of the zone.

As full time elementary schools, they followed the general elementary curriculum. But as they accept only Christian children they have the freedom to indoctrinate all the courses with the Christian attitudes.

Christian education is not given only during the messions sche duled for it; but through every activity and every course dominating the whole school life. The Christian atmosphere of the school begins with the morning devotion and continues the entire school day.¹

The curriculum aims toward cultivating integrated Christian personalities. So it caters for the physical, mental and spiritual needs.

These schools meet in different places according to the condition of the village:

- A. If the village has a church, then the school is annexed to it, and sometimes the classes are held inside the church itself.
- B. If there is no church in the village, the building of the school is considered as the center of Christian activities of the village. The school holds many social and religious activities for the adults on the evenings in the school building. Some of these meetings are for:

1. Devotional services.
2. Bible classes.
3. Literacy campaigns.
4. Youth fellowship.

1. Society of Coptic Education, The Message of the Coptic School, 1950 (Arabic pamphlet).

5. Sunday School classes.
6. Recreational, cultural and social activities.

Really the teacher of the school acts all the responsibilities of the pastor except officiating the sacraments, because he is not an ordained priest. He performs the duties of a deacon:

1. The teacher makes evangelistic calls and visitations to the homes.
2. He cares for the spiritual needs of the adults.
3. As most of the inhabitants of the villages are poor he tries to help them to solve some of the social and economical problems of the Coptic community in the villages. There are now nearly two hundred schools.

Some of these schools are run by local societies, but most of them are established and supervised by three Coptic societies. Two of them are women's organizations, namely: a) "Women's Association for Christian Education", and b) "Women's Friends of the Bible". The third society is run by Sunday School leaders and alumni. It is named "The Society of Coptic Education at Giza" and has established 43 schools

These church schools are creating a great revival in the villages and city areas. The efforts of many Copts are now promoting new schools in every village in need of this work.

CHAPTER 6

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

I. History:

The previous chapters showed how the coptic church gave great emphasis to the Christian education of her members during the different epochs of her history. When circumstances compelled an educational institute to decline or to stop its activities, it was obvious that a new institute would arise to carry on the responsibilities of the former even under a different name of form.

The development of Christian education in Egypt started by the catechumenal schools, progressed to the catechetical school, then shifted to the monastery schools which became afterwards the Kuttab progressing to the modern school.

When this last kind followed the State system, the church felt that there was a need for an institute to complete its educational responsibilities, and to integrate the different efforts of all the agencies together--the school, the home, and the church. So the Coptic Sunday School was established in Egypt in 1908.

It started by special classes for school students in the church after the Sunday morning service. For some

years the lesson was given in the form of a lecture for all attending students without dividing them into classes or age groups.

Finding that the students of the public schools could not attend the lesson on Sundays because their official vacation is on Fridays, the church decided to hold another worship service on Fridays. This was followed also by a Sunday School lesson.

The teachers, at that time, were from the leading members of the church and from the zealous Christian teachers of public schools.

More churches established Sunday Schools, and the number of students increased. So the leaders felt the need for grading the students and classifying them according to their school grades.

A general committee for Christian education was established, taking its headquarters in the Coptic Seminary. For the office of the general secretary, the Patriarch appointed the president of the Seminary, Archdeacon Habib Girgis, a co-founder of the movement and one of the leading forces of the educational revival in the church.

The committee prepared printed lessons weekly. It imported from Germany colored pictures of Bible stories to be used as illustrations for the lessons, These were

distributed to the students every week.

From 1930 the Coptic Sunday School started a great revival in the whole program of Christian education in the church. A wide spread of Sunday Schools with a new curriculum and methods based on principles of modern education took place.

In 1941, a promotion movement organized a campaign for establishing a Sunday School in every church, every town, and every village. These campaigns traveled the country from north to south, especially during summer vacations. The result was that the numbers of Sunday Schools exceeded the number of churches. Because many Sunday Schools were established in homes and in the meeting rooms of benevolent societies, where the church building is not too close to the area. Conventions and conferences were held in many cities to help the spread of Sunday School and to urge parents to send their children frequently.

Since then the central committee of Sunday School began to keep statistical records for the enrollment and attendance of Sunday School in different areas of the country; but they were not complete for the lack of workers. At any rate it could give approximate numbers to the existing status of the work of Christian education in the fields of Sunday School, youth fellowship,

and adult activities.

statistics (approximate round figures).

The population of Egypt	20,000,000 ⁶
The Copts	2,000,000 ⁶ ¹
Coptic Orthodox Church buildings	700 ²
Ordained Coptic Priests	1,000 ³
Sunday Schools and Youth Fellowships	1,500 ²
Sunday School teachers and youth leaders	7,000 ⁴
Enrolled students	50,000 ⁹⁰

The Church considers this existing status of religious education only as a beginning of the work, hoping that the efforts would be organized; and the workers increase to provide every child; youth, and adult with adequate Christian education.

II. Curriculum:

A. Its development:

The leaders of Christian education were longing all the time to make the Sunday School efficient in the life of the church members. So the curriculum passed through many stages of continuous development and progress.

1. Not including the Copts in Sudan nor Palestine. The Church of Ethiopia is nearly 8,000,000.
2. Not including churches in monasteries, nor ancient church buildings unused for worship.
3. Not including the monks; who number 250 living in 8 monasteries and 100 nuns in 4 nunaries..
4. Most of the teachers and leaders teach more than one class at different times and places.

In the first stage, the Sunday School followed the uniform system. The lessons were chosen from the church "Lectons" read during the liturgical services.

In the second stage, they used the closely graded system, following the same divisions of school grades; and the same curriculum planned for Christian education in public schools.

The third stage began with the wide-apreading of Sunday School in different areas; It faced a variety of conditions. Small schools of one or two classes with students from different ages; which could not apply the closely graded system. So the recent curriculum was planned to face all circumstances by the possibility of applying any one of the three systems: uniform, or closely graded, or group graded (cycle of years) according to the situation.

From 1939 until 1948 a yearly curriculum was issued developing new adequate objectives and correcting what proved unsuccessful.

On 1946, a committee on the curriculum started to evaluate the previous curriculums. Members of the committee made field trips to different provinces to examine the situation. Conferences were held in many areas to discuss its problems. A questionnaire, filled by the local superintendents, helped in giving a picture of needs of the fields. The findings were studied and a new.

curriculum was planned to serve for five years, during which the committee would continue its research for better developments. So the last curriculum was issued in 1953.

B. Its Objectives:

The book of the ^ooutline of the curriculum states the following objectives of Christian Education.

Christian education aims:¹

1. To foster a consciousness of God as the creator and ruler of life; and the importance of personal relationship to him.
2. To develop an understanding of the sound Christian life and the practical training to achieve it. Developing the ability to endure the sufferings of life and to face its problems with faith and hope.
3. To develop an understanding and appreciation of the personality, life and teaching of the Savior of our souls, our Lord Jesus Christ.
4. To train the personality to behave in a Christ-like character.
5. To develop an awareness of the importance of the Christian

1. The general Curriculum of the Coptic Sunday School (Arabic) Prospectus of 1948, p.5.

behavior in social relations.

6. To develop an understanding and appreciation of the Coptic Orthodox doctrines. To develop the feeling of responsibility, to participate as an active member in the church, and to follow its teachings, canons, rites, and traditions received from the Fathers.

7. To develop the ability of continuous study, understanding, and application of the word of God recorded in the Holy Bible, and to feel its importance to our life.

These objectives are similar to those issued by the International Council of Religious Education with adaptations to the Coptic situation.

C. A survey of the curriculum:

The curriculum according to the closely graded system, is divided into the following departments:

Kindergarten	4-7 years old.
Primary	8-11 years old.
Preparatory	12-13 years old.
Secondary	14-16 years old.
Youth	18-24 years old.
Adults	25-

The calendar of the academic year of Sunday School is divided into three main terms or semesters:

1. The first term begins from Christmas January 7th, and

lasts until the feast of the martyrdom of St. Mark on May 8th.

2. The second term lasts until the new years day of the martyrs on September 11th.

3. The third term ends with the close of the advent season just before Christmas.

Curriculum materials:

1. An outline of the curriculum for all departments. A prospectus.

2. Teacher helps: a guide book for teachers. A special guide for every semester; that means three guides for every grade.

3. Leaflets for the pupils with the Scripture text and a picture for all grades of the kindergarten and primary departments.

4. The primary, preparatory and secondary departments usually use the Bible in the lesson.

5. A hymnal for every department. Contains hymns, chants, and responses which are chosen for the age groups according to the specific lessons of the unit.

6. A lesson planning book with introductory notes about lesson preparation.

7. Class rolls of attendance; with helps for the teacher about the use of checking the attendance; home work, worship, fetching the absent pupils and reciting the psalms and verses.

The guide book of the teacher helps contains: Introductory articles about the psychology of the age group, the nature and objectives of its curriculum, some specific methods, and the use of visual aids. Helps for preparing the lesson of the week, under the subpoints of: the unit, the lesson, Biblical reference; the chosen varce, the aim of the lesson, meditations for the teacher's personal use, suggested visual aids, the lesson plan, suggested hymn, application, home work and assignments.

D. Its organising principle:

The general aim of the curriculum is to lead every person to a fellowship with God which will help him to live a real Christian life.

In few words; to develop Christian experience; This aim is developed through the fields of:

1. Relationship with God.
2. Relationship with Jesus.
3. Fellowship with the church.
4. Bible study.
5. Personal relationships.
6. Social relationships.

The application of the organizing principle in every department of the Coptic curriculum:

Kindergarten: (4-7 years)

To develop a sense of fellowship with God through

discovering the world He had created; and to have a joyous experience in His house, the church. To love His Son Jesus Christ and the stories of His childhood and kindness with the people. To develop a Christian character toward others in the child's environment;

The units of the department are: The child and God --and the home--and the church--and the school--and the Sunday School--Feasts.¹

Primary (8-11 years):

To develop increasing interest and love toward the heroes of the Bible and the Saints of the church trying to follow their example. Training their skill in handling the Bible. To introduce the church to them.

The lessons cover the fields from; The Old Testament, the life and teaching of Jesus, the Acts of the Apostles, Church heroes, Primary Church doctrines; Social relations as applications to most of the lessons.²

Preparatory department (12-13 years):

(N.B.--This department has become a separate one since 1953-54, when the public school started this division. Before, it was considered a part of the secondary department.)

To develop the Christian character as the successful life. Personal commitments to the Christian life.

1. Coptic Curriculum Prospectus, pp. 10-15.
2. Ibid: pp. 17-26.

Biographies.¹

Secondary department (14-16 years):

To develop a growing Christian personality with life surrender to Christ. More emphasis on Biblical studies in details. Discussing social problems and the Christian attitudes toward them.¹

Generally speaking, this curriculum is Bible-center one, and in most departments follows the chronological system.

Theologically it has a well balanced Biblical material and sufficient church doctrine and history. Its main emphasis is upon the practice of the Christian ideals and teachings in daily life.

E. Its Methods:

The curriculum suggests teaching its lessons by different methods:² Story, play, rhythms, biographies, lectures, discussion, research, fellowship, audio-visual aids: (Diagrams, charts, maps, posters, pictures, flannelgraph, projector, slides, film strips, motion pictures, models, dioramas, objects, puppets.) Dramatisation, field trips, picnics, projects; creative activities, committees for fetching new and absent pupils, children library, and the club.

1. Ibid, pp. 28-40.

2. Ibid, pp. 16 and 31.

The curriculum as it is planned includes the essential experiences of guided study, action in social life, fellowship and recreation and worship.

But the sound application of all these principles depends upon the teacher's personality and preparation. Also it depends upon the facilities of the school and the environments

III. Administration:

To demonstrate the administrative system in the program of Christian education, a local church will be given as an example of the work in most churches. This local church is namely the Giza church, where the writer worked for years as teacher and director of Christian education. So the administrative responsibilities are carried on by the following persons and committees:

1. Priests:

One of the priests of Giza is in charge of the agencies of Christian education in the city. He teaches the training courses of the volunteer teachers and cares for their spiritual growth. Most of them confess¹ to him and consult him. He is the chairman of the committee on Christian education.

2. Director of Christian Education:

He organizes the whole program of Christian education

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1. In the Coptic Church every member is free to choose his spiritual consultant "father" even if he is the priest of another parish.

in the church, helps the committee members and superintendents on their work.

There are very few churches which could pay for a full time director, so most of the directors are volunteers.

3. Superintendents:

Every department is headed by a superintendent who:

- a. Keeps the machinery of the school operating by overseeing the work of the secretary and the treasurer concerning the enrollment of new pupils, checking up absent students, and ordering and distributing teaching materials and supplies.
- b. Keeping the time schedules of the department.
- c. Oversees the teachers: in their educational work in classes and in revising the lesson preparations in the teachers book. He visits the teachers in their homes helping them in the achievement of their spiritual growth, and the practice of Christian character in their daily life
- d. Replaces any absent teachers.
- e. Presides at the subcommittee meetings to study and measure the degree of fulfilling the aims.
- f. Represents the department in the committee on Christian education.
- g. Receives new students and distributes them to the

relevant classes.

h. Solves the problems of discipline caused by abnormal behavior of some students and tries to guide them through personal counseling.

i. Develops church and home cooperation.

4. Subcommittees:

Every department has a subcommittee of all the teachers of the department headed by the superintendent. It meets weekly:

a. To pray for the work of the department.

b. To study the situation of the department during the week, the faults; the good results and the improvements of methods.

c. To plan the work based on the lessons for the coming week.

d. To plan new activities needed.

It may be divided to smaller subcommittees to study or prepare a certain project.

5. General Superintendent:

a. He supervises the work of the departments.

b. He keeps the big aim of every department before their superintendents.

c. He is the link between the departments to keep them cooperating towards the general aim.

d. He is the link between the departments and church authorities and other educational agencies.

e. He plans to secure enough teachers for every department.

6. Committee on Christian Education:

It is composed of the director of Christian education, general superintendent, secretary, treasurer and superintendents of the departments headed by the priest.

a. It seeks to build a united program to serve all the educational aims of the church that will make avital impact upon the behavior and ethical standards of children, youth and adults.

b. Setting up the objectives and making plans for reaching them.

c. Studying the new needs of the community and improving the program in the light of these needs.

d. Planning the budget of the educational program.

e. Supervising the standard of the teachers to build the training courses according to their needs.

f. Keeping a program calendar for every semester.

g. Keeping in touch with the Board of Christian Education.

7. Board of Christian Education

This board is not a local one, but it is the Central Committee of Christian Education in the Coptic Chruch.

Its headquarters is in Cairo.

a; It is in charge of the general policy.

b. It plans the curriculum and improves it every five years.

- c. It prepares and publishes the curriculum materials.
- d. It supervises the work of Christian Education in all dioceses.

CHAPTER 7
YOUTH AND ADULT ACTIVITIES

I. Youth Christian Education:

The youth movement in the Coptic church was the result of the wide spreading of the Sunday School. Most of the churches now have special departments for youth work. Some of them call it Coptic Youth Fellowship "Gameat Al Shabab Al Kipy" others simply call it "youth department" or "youth meetings".

The activities of young men are carried separately from the activities of young women who have their special meetings and organizations.

The main aim of youth work is to develop a challenge to full commitment to the Christian life and to achieve the integral Christian personality. They accomplish this through the activities of worship, study, and experience.

a. Worship:

The church celebrates a special mass on Friday mornings for young people and those who work on Sundays. The young people usually have their choir and they arrange the program. They have also an informal service of prayer on Thursday afternoon. Nearly every two months they have

a watch-night prayer. Many of the students from prayer special meetings in their homes or hostels for groups of friends.

b. Study:

On Thursday evenings, youth meetings follow the worship service with a Bible class for the attending youth. Then they are divided into different groups for specific studies and activities.

The special curriculum of youth covers the fields of Biblical studies; beliefs and doctrines; spiritual growth, the History of the Coptic Heritage, The Social and Contemporary Problems.

They perform these studies through lectures, discussion groups, debates, and research work. Every Youth Fellowship has a special library to encourage reading, personal study, and research. Some of the churches have a book agency to help young people to buy books and to form a private library. Coptic publishing houses provide text books, adequate literature, and magazines for young people.

c. Experience:

To help the development of Christian experience a wide program with a variety of activities is planned for youth. The Youth Fellowship has five departments of activities.¹

1. Coptic Curriculum Prospectus, p. 41.

1. The religious department:

Its main activities are evangelism and outreach to the Coptic young people in different areas. There are groups which specialize in the work among university students. They use different methods of personal and group relations on the campus and home visitations. Letters, pamphlets and useful literature are good means used to reach the educated youth.

Other groups form teams to do evangelistic work among the industrial laborers. There are special outreach teams for rural areas.

Stewardship is one of the main activities of the youth. A very telling witness is made through the dedication of time, talents; and money. They practice and learn the meaning of giving from the heart for the projects they plan and perform.

2. The social department:

Studying the social problems and the needs of the different classes and try to share in solving them, especially in the slums and rural areas. Also they discuss and study the responsibilities of the Christian citizen.

3. The cultural department:

Planning studies and series of lectures to keep a continuous cultural interest especially for those who have finished their studies. They also lead illiteracy

campaigns in the surrounding neighborhood.

4. Department of Arts:

Learning by doing affords an opportunity for different groups interested in fine arts, music, manual work, and different projects of activities. They encourage the utilization of good hobbies to fill the leisure time. A special group is interested in religious drama.

5. Recreational department:

They build fellowship and character through recreational activities: Sports, games, social recreations, outdoor activities; picnics and travel. Recreation is not an end in itself, but a means for building the personality, and a blessed way of being a Christian citizen in home, church, and community.

Most of the Youth Fellowships have established special clubs for their activities; either near the church building (if there is a place) or by renting a playground from any school or institution for certain days every week.

There are few summer camps relatively, but they increase every year.

In the university cities; Christian Hostels were established to provide for Coptic students a Christian environment. These hostels have a religious program of Bible studies and devotional services every night.

These are some of the activities which the church.

sponsors for the Christian nurture of young people. The church still looks forward to wider programs and effective means to reach all the young people of the church.

II. Adult Work:

Usually most of the churches hold a special meeting on Sunday evening. Others hold it more than two evenings a week. Its program is an informal service followed by a Bible class or a sermon, which keeps them spiritually nourished.

During the seasons of faste; which are plenty in the Coptic church, series of spiritual revivals are held for a complete week. This includes a great evangelistic revival.

The church emphasizes personal contacts when dealing with adults. The priest's counseling and visitations are responsible for the spiritual progress of adults.

Men form many societies for spiritual and social activities. Women's associations are spreading all over the country. They usually meet on Wednesdays? Some churches hold a special mass on Wednesday morning for women. Women themselves go for outreach visitations and lead their private meetings.

Special programs for groups of adults:

As responsible for every member, the church tries to develop a special program adequate to the needs of every group of people, according to the varieties of their environment, or their professions. So there are programs for:
1. Industrial areas.

The industrial laborers suffer from poverty as a result of periods of unemployment. The nature of their work creates in them a material outlook to life. Their environment indoctrinates them by fatalism. Illiteracy keeps them in the darkness of ignorance and retardness. So they do not appreciate the right meaning of responsibility toward their personal behavior or toward their families and the society. This develops many serious religious and social problems.

The curriculum of their Christian education aims at developing the sound Christian attitudes toward life, work, responsibility, family, fellowship and Christian character.¹ These studies are held on different days of the week according to the weekly vacation of every group. Beside the classes, a social office offers counseling, financial helps, vocational guidance and tries to solve their problems.

2. Rural areas:

On the contrary, peasants are naive, simple, have a deep belief in God. But he also suffers ignorance, poverty, and fanatic attitudes and superstitions.

When he finds some care; he progresses quickly. So the church is trying to spread a wide program of Christian education² among the villages since 1935. Their special curriculum of Christian education is usually accompanied by

1. Coptic Curriculum Prospectus, pp. 45-52.

2. Ibid, pp. 42-44.

social welfare and illiteracy campaigns. The movement of Coptic elementary schools,¹ previously discussed, gave good results and still promising more.

3. Prisons and reformatories:

The government permits the priest to visit the prison of the area once a week and give a lesson to the Coptic prisoners. He could serve for them the Holy Communion when needed.

4. Among the military forces:

For the first time, the prosperous Government of the New Regime is building this year 1955 a church in the main barracks of Cairo to provide worship and Christian education to the Copts in military service. This may lead to appointment service of chaplains for troops in other camps.

5. Social welfare institutions:

There is a growing tendency to consider the social welfare projects as adequate means for spiritual and Christian educational activities.

Many churches established special spiritual programs for the needy. Beside the material help, they receive Christian education. Some clinics established a system of a visiting deacon to visit the homes of those who come to the clinic and to evangelistic work.

The orphanages and children's homes are mainly educational institutions where there are many opportunities

1. This thesis, Chapter 5-B, pp. 144-147.

and facilities for adequate Christian education. Some of them are very successful in achieving their Christian objectives.

There are other fields which are still in need of special programs of Christian education among the adults.

III. A sample program in a local church:

Again the Giza Church will be taken as an example of the program of Christian education in the local church during the week. The Sunday School sessions are not held on the same time of the worship service. The activities of the program are held on the following times:

Sunday	7-8 A.M.	First worship service with a sermon.
	8-10 A.M.	Second service with a sermon.
	3-4:50 P.M.	Sunday School classes for pupils having their vacation on Sundays.
Monday	6-7 P.M.	Adult's spiritual meeting.
	5-6 P.M.	Different meetings of benevolent societies and choir training classes.
Tuesday	5-6 P.M.	Women's association.
	6-7 P.M.	Prayer and administrative meeting of workers among women.
Wednesday	4-5 P.M.	Young Women Fellowship and Bible class.
	5-7 P.M.	Activity and study groups of young women.
Thursday	5-6 P.M.	Young Men Fellowship and Bible class.
	6-7 P.M.	Youth spiritual lesson or ethical lecture.
	7-8 P.M.	Teacher's training classes.
	8-9 P.M.	Electives (Music-Coptic language).

Friday	8-10:30 A.M.	Worship service with youth lecture.
	3-4:30 P.M.	Sunday School classes for public school pupils and villages.
	5-6 P.M.	Villages adult lesson.
	6-7 P.M.	Vespers worship service with an adult lesson.
	7-... P.M.	A chance for pastoral counseling and confessions.

As the church buildings are not sufficient for all Sunday School classes; many classes meet in other buildings distributed in different quarters of the city near the homes of the pupils. This is to give every body an opportunity to benefit from the program of Christian education.

IV. Leadership training:

The Sunday School teachers, the youth leaders, and the workers with the adults are all volunteers. They are helping the clergy in the wide work of the church. The church considers the work of Christian education as having great effect upon its life; so the teachers and leaders must be well selected among righteous church members; and continuously trained for spiritual and educational progress. "What every teacher teaches is himself"¹ is a rule which puts the emphasis, in character training, upon the teacher's life as a good example.

1. Journal of Modern Education, issued by the American University at Cairo (Arabic) Vol. XIV, p. 92.

To select teachers, usually a call is given during the Bible classes to the devoted young people. Those who accept the invitation must promise to fulfill the minimum spiritual requirements:

1. Attending the church services and prayer meetings.
2. Reading the Bible daily.
3. Fasting.
4. Partaking the Holy Communion once every month at least, after repentance and confession.
5. Sacrificing some of the time, money and effort for the service of the Lord.

These items are checked weekly through a record sheet, and monthly through the visitation of the superintendent.

The new teacher attends a preparatory course for one year, during which he works as an assistant teacher, to obtain a practical experience in the art of teaching. The course lasts for 6 months for three hours weekly. The curriculum is Biblical, spiritual, and educational studies.

After completing the preparatory course, they are given the responsibility of teaching a class or a village. But they continue their training courses. A four-year course is given. One of the schools follows certain divisions such as a:

1. Class of education; to study advanced education,

psychology, and visual aids.

2. Class of doctrines: offers studies in the main doctrines of the church, the rites and a short church history.

3. Class of homiletics: a training course in elementary preaching to practice it in rural areas for adults.

4. Class of social work: studying the social problems of the Coptic community and the responsibilities of the church toward them.

The Biblical and spiritual courses are required yearly. Teachers of every department have a weekly meeting to prepare the units and lessons of the next week.

V. Theological training:

The first established theological seminary in the Christian Church was the Catechetical School of Alexandria.¹

During the middle ages theological education was given on a traditional system by the church school teacher as a private course to those who are preparing themselves to the ministry.² From time to time, certain groups of candidates formed theological schools in the dioceses' centers.

1. P. Monroe, Encyclopedia of Education, Vol. I, p. 546.
A.A. King, the Rites of Eastern Christendom, p. 341.

2. See p. 108 of this thesis.

When modern schools began to be established in Egypt, the church reorganized these private traditional efforts into a school system. So it reopened its catechetical school in 1875 at Cairo.¹ It marks the first steps of the modern Coptic revival.

In the twentieth century a second seminary was opened in Alexandria for the theological education of the monks. It was transferred later in 1930 to Helwan near Cairo. The third Coptic seminary was established at Alexandria in 1954, for university graduates.

In 1944 a modern seminary was established in Addis Ababa for the education of the Ethiopian Clergy.² Some of its graduates are completing their studies in the Coptic Seminary at Cairo.

The main seminary at Cairo has four departments:

- a. A department for rural ministers studying a five year course.
- b. A department for urban ministers studying a four year course.

1. H. Dunne, An Introduction to the History of Education in Egypt, p. 444.
2. The Emperor of Ethiopia Haile Selassie I, charged Prof. Murad Kamel; the vice president of the Coptic Institute, who was at that time the Counsellor of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education, to provide the school with Coptic teachers. The first president was the Coptic priest Father Narcus Daoud. The writer of this thesis, was privileged to be among its first faculty from 1944-46.

- c. A department for university graduates studying a three year course.
- d. A department for choir leaders studying a six years course.

It teaches varieties of courses of the fundamental fields; all of which are required courses:

Hebrew, Greek, Coptic, Arabic, English, Old Testament, New Testament, Introductions and Exegeses, Systematic, Doctrinal, Ritual, and Ethical Theologies, Homiletics, Church History, Christian Education, Psychology, Pastoral Work, Church Music, Field Work Practicum, Ecclesiastical Canons. A new department for missionary studies was recently established.

The educational revival motivated the zeal of some educated young men to resign their high vocations and consecrate themselves to the ministry of the Lord. Some worked as directors of Christian education, others were ordained parish priests; and the rest were ordained monks. Among those were formerly engineers, Lawyers, university teachers and pharmacists. It is a promising movement by God's grace.

The interest in theological and higher studies led to the establishment of the Institute of Coptic Studies at Cairo in 1954. It comprises some twelve departments embracing the whole field of Coptic and allied studies:

Linguistic, History, Social Studies, Archaeology, Art, Canon Law, Church Music, Theology, Ethiopic Studies, Semitics and African Studies. Though a post-graduate school, the Institute is pre-eminently intended as a research center.

The year 1954 became remarkable by two other events in the ecumenical attitudes of the Coptic Church. It sent delegates to:

- a; The First "Moslem-Christian Convocation" held at "Bahamdoun" Lebanon in April 1954.¹
- b. The second assemble of the World Council of Churches held at Evanston, Illinois, U.S.A. in August 1954.²

1. The delegates were: Prof/ Atiya the president of the Coptic Institute, Mr. Kasabgi, a member of the Coptic Community Council and the writer of this thesis.
2. The delegates were: Father Saleeb Sourial, paster of the Giza church, Prof. Atiya and the writer of this thesis.

CONCLUSION AND PROPOSALS

Christian education was and still is the focal ministry of the church, which keeps feeding its members with the adequate nourishment to live abundantly as Christians.

The previous chapters proved that the Coptic church emphasized the educational program and gave it the first place in its life over all the centuries. The teachings, the canons, the doctrines; the rituals, the fathers and the clergy of the church encouraged the progress of education, promoted it, and protected it.

The great reputation of the Coptic Church in the early centuries was mainly due to its flourishing educational program. On the other hand, when political and social circumstances did not give sufficient facilities to promote the educational program in the same ancient manner, the relative decline of education affected and weakened the church. But as soon as conditions improved, the church renewed its program and built its revival upon an educational basis like the example of the revival led by the Patriarch Cyril IV in the nineteenth century.

The contemporary program by its varieties shows how the church could admit all progressive methods of education because the basis and principles are rected in its teachings and encouraged by its traditions.

The church does not need to build new foundations for its education, but only needs to keep adapting its present methods to meet the needs of the changing world? A good program of Christian education aims to share in solving the ethical and social problems of the surrounding environment to the extent of its abilities.

The existing program is efficient in many fields, but the leaders of Christian education are not satisfied with the situation. They feel that there are many items not yet fulfilled. But their powerful faith in God who helped them to progress so rapidly, gives them a hopeful enthusiasm to go forward toward the ultimate goals of their wide program.

The activities which need to be added to the program are:

1. Establishing a nursery department in every church during the same time of the morning worship on Sundays.
2. Some city areas are in need of a day church nursery, especially where there are working mothers.
3. Establishing "Vacation Church Schools" during the summer.
4. Holding summer camps for children.
5. The primary department curriculum could be based on units instead of single chronological lessons.
6. The curriculum should include lessons on missions and

- studies about peoples of other countries.
7. The elementary church schools could give more care to vocational training and guidance.
 8. Coptic rural communities need a touring priest to celebrate the liturgy to them at least once or twice a month.
 9. Holding special evening courses, summer institutes, and conferences for training public school teachers in Christian education.
 10. Providing these teachers with educational literature and periodicals to keep them informed and interested.
 11. Campaigns must be held for recruiting more workers for Sunday Schools and youth activities.
 12. Providing more courses for leadership training and methods of teaching by holding workshops.
 13. Establishing a special committee for family life to study and plan:
 - a. An integral program for reaching the family as a unit and not as individuals only.
 - b. Classes and studies dealing with family responsibilities and problems.
 - c. Recreational programs for families and family nights in the church.
 - d. Celebrating special days for parents and mothers... etc.
 - e. Establishing Parent-Teachers Associations to lead the

cooperative work between the home and the church.

f. Classes for premarital counseling and studies.

g. Meetings and activities for young couples.

14. Special programs and institutions for the aged.

15. Chaplains for hospitals.

These and other local needs for particular areas are in need of continuous efforts, prayers and workers, because "The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few". (Matt. 9:39)

To the Lord of the harvest, the Church raises her prayers to bless His work and grant it abundant fruits.

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Pages 14-54 (inclusive) Part of Chapter I

Pages 55-74 (inclusive) Chapter II

Pages 141-181 (inclusive) Part of Chapter V.