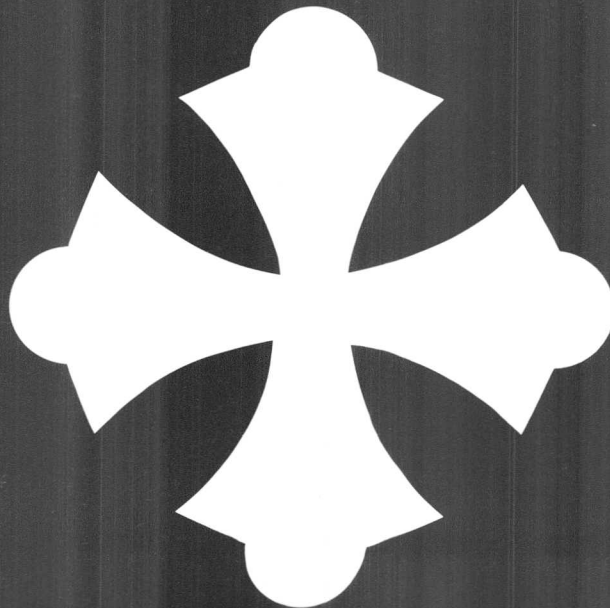


COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 9, Number 4 Winter 1988

- *THE CHURCH: VISIBLE PEOPLE OF GOD*
- *ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION AND THE COPTIC CHURCH*
- *FATHER IBRAHIM LUKA: A PIONEER OF COPTIC RIVIVAL*



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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

The Church: Visible People of God is translated from a recent book, ‘*Church without a Wrinkle*’, by *His Grace Bishop Isaac*. The book was published in Arabic in 1987. Abba Isaac, a member of the editorial board of this *journal*, is chorepiscopus of Quesna, in the Nile Delta. In this article, he elaborates on the biblical teaching of the Church as the visible Body of Christ, which is based upon Word, Sacrament and *Koinonia* (or fellowship) and in which the responsibility or position of each member is needed for the harmony of the whole body.

At the request of the Journal, *Professor Boulos A. Ayad* describes in this issue ***The Influence of the Ancient Egyptian Civilization on the Coptic Orthodox Church***. This extensively referenced article reflects the background of Dr. Ayad who is an archaeology professor, a Coptic scholar, as well as a faithful Christian who is well versed in the beliefs and rites of the Coptic Church.

The article that appears in the section of *Currents in Coptic Church Studies* is an outline of a recent biography of one of the pioneers in the Coptic Church revival in this century. The biography of ***Father Ibrahim Luka*** (1897-1950) has been written in Arabic by his son-in-law, Fayez Riad, who writes about a personality whom he knew very closely. We are grateful to the author as well as to the reviewer, *Dr. Boulos Ayad*, for keeping alive the memory and achievements of one of the most learned and highly spiritual Church leaders in this century.

Editor

THE CHURCH: VISIBLE PEOPLE OF GOD

Bishop Isaac of Quesna

The Body of Christ and the People of God

The Body of Christ does occupy space on this earth; this is one of the outcomes of the Incarnation. At his birth, Christ was given a manger, “because there was no place for him to lay his head” (Luke 9:58). At his death they threw him out (Matt. 27:32; Mark 15:10; John 19:17; Hebrews 13:12-13) and they hung his body between heaven and earth on a cross. Despite all this, the Incarnation entitled him to occupy space on this earth. Everything that occupies space on this earth is visible to the eye. Therefore, the Body of Christ has to have a visible existence or it would not be a real body. The human presence of Christ, or the natural body of the man Jesus, was visible to all. His divine sonship is what can be seen only through the eyes of faith. Again, this body cannot be viewed as God made man except through the eyes of faith. The body of Christ was a visible truth. As for saying that he bore our body (i.e. all humanity) it is a view that results from faith. You refer to this man saying, “Here is God.”

Values, truth, belief, and religion are all abstract issues that need nothing more than to be heard, understood and comprehended. These are not entities that need to occupy a specific space on earth; but the Incarnate Son of God does not only need ears and hearts but also needs individuals who follow him. *He dwells within them, walks among them, and helps them in all good deeds (from the prayers of Holy Baptism)*. The Church that is made up of the followers of the Lord Jesus is a shining light and a city on a mountain top. It is clearly viewed by the world as a real and visible congregation. *The glorified body of the Lord is now a visible body in the form of the Church.*

The Teaching of the Apostles

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2:42). Teaching (*Didache*) means preaching the firm issues such as the fundamentals, the principles and values that do not change. There is a need in the Church to have others partake of the knowledge of the Christian truth, which they may have not heard of before and which gives of itself in abundance to all. What is unusual is that the early Church used to continue in the teaching of the apostles. The regular following of the apostles’ teaching does take place over and over again in the Church. Definitely, there is a need for this, “For the time is coming when people will not endure sound

teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own likings, and will turn away from listening to the truth” (2 Tim. 4:3-4). We have to note here that the teaching referred to in the Book of Acts is the teaching of the apostles. The apostles are those chosen by God to witness to the facts about the life of the Lord Jesus Christ on earth, and to proclaim this to the world. They are the men who lived in the company of Jesus. They saw the Incarnate Messiah with their own eyes, they heard him with their ears and their hands have touched him. (1 John 1:1). They are the witnesses appointed by the Holy Spirit of God to proclaim the word (the word here is the Word of God=Gospel=Christ Himself). Therefore, the apostles and the prophets are the foundations on which the Church was built and Christ Jesus himself is the cornerstone. (Eph. 2:20). From the time the Church began and up to the present time the teaching of the Church has to be apostolic - i.e., it should have the same basis. Thus, we sense our unity with the early Church and the continuity of its strength within us.

The Word of God and its Effect on Man

The sayings of the Apostles carry the same power as the word uttered by God...“You received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men, but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers” (1 Thes. 2:13). It is God the Word who seeks man and joins him to himself. Christ the Word of God has the innate power to attain his objective and take a church unto himself. The presence of God the Word in the Church is an act of precedence on his part. It is wrong to believe that the laws, traditions, beliefs and rituals of the Church are separate from the Word of God. It is the Word of God who established the Church. Moreover, it is wrong of those who serve in the Church, whether they be bishops, priests, or deacons, to assume that they carry the word of God and bring it into the Church as through they were the ones who move it and make it fill the needs of the age. The Divine Word moves by his own will while those who minister and serve have only to respond and aid the Word by not becoming a hindrance to him.

Jesus, God the Word, comes forth to take humanity unto him; and the apostles knew this. They have seen how the Word became flesh and dwelt among them. He who wishes to truly witness simply has to proclaim that the Word became flesh (John 1:14), and that this body carries in him the new creation of all humanity. The Word has come to take sinners unto himself, to forgive and sanctify. The Word cannot be without the new creation He has taken unto himself (i.e. without the Church).

Moreover, wherever the Word of God is, there also will be the Holy Spirit of God.

*The Holy Spirit gives faith to those who listen so they can comprehend the presence of Jesus Christ with them during the ministry.

*He opens their ears to understand the books and their eyes to be able to see Christ coming among them in the flesh to let us know that He has taken us unto him and will take us again today.

*He reveals Christ's gifts to the Church as a body, and to each individual as a member.

In summary, the main topic in the teaching of the Apostles and Apostolic Evangelism is *Christ in his Church*. This teaching is neither fabricated nor is it a result of some intuition, but it is the teaching that creates and forms the Church and keeps it firm; and the Church having received the Word grows stronger in faith every day. This is the teaching of the visible Church.

The Sacraments in the Church

Preaching is not the only means which forms the visible Church. There are also the Holy Mysteries (1 Co. 14:2; Deut. 29:29) which the Holy Spirit performs in the Church. In each of the seven Sacraments the Holy Spirit offers to us the person of Christ filling a spiritual need, and preparing us to be filled of Him who fills all. In every Sacrament we encounter Christ and we experience a holy fellowship with him. His Divine Body proceeds from all the sacraments.

- In *Baptism*, we become members of the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 6:15; Col. 2:12).
- In *the Lord's Supper*, we are joined with Christ and we abide in him and He in us. (John 6:53-56).
- In *Penance*, sins are forgiven through the suffering of his body, and his blood cleanses us from all sin. (1 John 1:7).
- In *Holy Orders*, members are consecrated to serve the Body of Christ, the Church (Acts 13:2,3).
- In *Matrimony*, the family is blessed and united as Christ is united to the Church. (Eph. 5:31, 32).
- In *the Anointing of the Sick*, we touch the glorified Body of Christ and draw a healing power from it. (Mark 5:27-29 and 6:5).
- In *the Holy Chrism*, the members of the bodies are blessed and thus we become temples of the Holy Spirit and suitable vessels to the Lord. (1 Cor. 6:19).

Through the blessings we gain from the Holy Sacraments we sense the communion and fellowship we share with the members of this wonderful and divine Body, who are entitled eternal life in heaven. "There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all who is above all and through all and in all" (Eph. 4:4-6).

Performing the Sacraments in the Assembly of the Church

It is necessary for all believers to gather around the Lord Jesus who is present in the Sacraments. Sermons and preaching of the word is not restricted to the assembly of the Saints. The apostle Paul has preached the word in market places and squares, on the shores, in houses, factories and prisons. Preaching the word is for both believers and nonbelievers. Whereas the Sacraments are primarily the sharing of the Body of Christ, and this belongs solely to believers. The true concept of the assembly of the Church is that it is a liturgical assembly, a gathering for the Eucharist, Baptism, Ordination, Matrimony, etc. Sermons, teaching and evangelizing come next. We have said that the Body of Christ (the Church) is entitled to occupy a place in the world and from this place it would spread the divine word which new creation and new members in this Body. The people who make up the Church are the Body of Christ visible to the world in the assemblies of those who gather around the holy Sacraments and the teaching of the word.

The assembly of the Church is then a membership in a body knit together through its joints and ligaments (Col. 2:19) in order to fulfill the divine message in the world.

Life of Fellowship (Koinonia) in the Church

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers... And all who believed were together and had all things in common.” (Acts 2:42, 44) Christ, to whom all glory is due, has taken upon himself to fill the needs of his followers. The life of every member in the Church is part of his brethren’s lives and this fellowship bears the solid living testimony to the actual presence of God in the Church.

A life of love and heartfelt fellowship is the true path for the visible Church and it is the duty of every Christian to have his daily life marked with fellowship for the sake of God and with God. In the Christian life, the behavior of the disciple and the existence of the church as a divine body are interrelated.

In the previous verse (Acts 2:42) - ‘fellowship’ was mentioned between two factors - ‘adherence to the teaching of the apostles’ and ‘breaking of bread’ (the Sacraments). This was not by coincidence because fellowship always springs from the Divine Word and finds its goal and perfection in the Lord’s Supper. In the past, the *agape* feast which was an expression of the life of fellowship used to be one of the basic traditions in monastic and church assemblies. The whole life of Christian fellowship is stretched between the Word and the Lord’s Supper, and is always looking forward to the heavenly banquet in the Kingdom of God. Any group of people who bind themselves to the word of God immediately start living a life of fellowship and look forward to the sacraments in the Church. Among a group such as this, everything takes its appropriate place even the material goods. We then see the pic-

ture of fellowship at its most perfect and wonderful level, “No one said that any of the things which he possessed was his own, but they had everything in common...There was not a needy person among them” (Acts 4:32, 34). They are all filled with the joy, freedom and power of the Holy Spirit. It is a fellowship that proceeds freely from the heart, not dictated by outside social laws. By this Gospel they have truly become one heart and one spirit.

The natural outcome of the Church’s faithful teaching, fellowship, love, Sacraments and prayer, is an abundant divine blessing.

**From within:* “The Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.” (Acts 2:47).

**From without:* They found grace with all people.

It is the pure and perfect Church (perfect without a wrinkle) which is faithful to her Savior Jesus Christ that dazzles the world with its purity and beauty. It captures the children of this world who are drifting away and makes of them children of God and partakers of the eternal inheritance.

Members of the Church

A body that is not joined together with joints and ligaments is a loose body that is on its way to perish. “So we, though many, are one body in Christ.” The Apostle Paul also describes the unity of the Church, “For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ” (Roman 12:5, 1 Cor. 12:12). That is why we can never separate the true essence of the church from the behavior of its members. If this behavior is not up to the level of true Christianity, then how can we claim it to be the Church of Christ? How can we convince the world that this is the loving Church of God when it sees hatred and envy embedded in the hearts of the members? How can we make the world understand that it is a Holy Church when its members are drowned in the desires of the flesh? Wouldn’t the world doubt our credibility? What do we have to say when they see our cruelty one to another, when they see how worldly and materialistic we are, and when they see our vices that surpass those of the people of this age?

To separate between the essence of the Church and its outward appearance is to deny Christ’s Incarnation, i.e. deny that ‘Jesus Christ has come in the flesh’ (1 John 4:2, 3). The Church that is not careful to have her outward appearance pure and spiritual, reflecting the beautiful image of Christ, loses the position she should occupy in order to preach to the world. “And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony” (Col. 3:14).

Order and Discipline in Church Positions

So that no confusion would reign in the church assemblies and services "...God has appointed in the Church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, then healers, helpers, administrators, speakers in various kinds of tongues" (1 Cor. 12:28). "The Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two..." (Luke 10:1). From this it is clear that positions in the Church are a Divine arrangement and an apostolic legacy for the sake of order in the Church. The Bible, however, has set basic principles to control those positions so they themselves would not be a source of confusion in the Church.

**Those positions were created to serve and not to rule.* Positions in the Church are therefore called "serving positions", "and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord" (1 Cor. 12:5). This proceeds from the teaching of the Lord Jesus to his disciples, "You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you; but whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave; even as the Son of man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:25-28).

**Appointment in Church positions is directly through Christ* "And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11), and is guided by the Holy Spirit (Acts 20:28). There is no room in the positions of the Church for favoritism, politics or circumvention. The Church that lives for Christ knows the will of Christ in this matter, listens to the guidance of the Holy Spirit of God (Acts 13:2), and faithfully carries out the divine will of God. The Church, together with all the services she offers, flows from the Holy Trinity.

**It is not right for one member to be burdened with heavy responsibilities that cause him to neglect other aspects of his work, while on the other hand other members who have been endowed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit have limited duties.* This would be the same as if (in the human body) one day the eye decides to assume all the functions of the body; it would then grow in size at the expense of the other members and the body would appear frightfully out of proportion. This all comes as a result of excessive self-confidence and lack of trust that the Spirit of God can work through others, maybe even better than through our own vain selves. This is totally contrary to the divine course.

**These positions are not honorary jobs;* they should rather be based on the needs of the Church. The Church that is guided by the Spirit of God conditions the positions to suit the different needs, times and locations. For example, the services in the Church of Jerusalem may differ from those of the evangelical churches and these are dictated by the spiritual needs of the specific church.

Translated by Lily Soliman

THE INFLUENCE OF THE ANCIENT EGYPTIAN CIVILIZATION ON THE COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH

Boulos Ayad Ayad, Ph.D.

There is a very strong and clear relationship between the cultures of the Ancient Egyptians and the Coptic Church, a relationship which exists even today. The Copts and their church have preserved to a great extent the ancient Egyptian legacy which, combined with Coptic tradition, has played a large role in developing and preserving the culture of Egypt. Some examples of the influence of the ancient Egyptians on the Coptic culture and the Coptic Church are given below.

Language

The Coptic language is considered by scholars to be the same as the ancient Egyptian language.¹ In the second century A.D. the Copts wrote the Egyptian language using the Greek alphabet instead of the symbols previously used by the Egyptians. Even today although the Copts speak Arabic, they use the Coptic language in their liturgy, religious songs, prayers and church festivals. Some ancient Egyptian and Coptic words have been carried down through the years and are still used in the Arabic language today.²

Calendar

The Coptic calendar and the ancient Egyptian calendar (365 $\frac{1}{4}$ days) are identical.³ Each solar calendar divides the year into 13 months, with 30 days in each of the 12 months and 5 days in the 13th month. The Coptic Church uses this calendar as well as all Egyptians in planning the agricultural cycle.

Holy Trinity

The basic Christian belief is that Christ was born of the Virgin Mary and that the one God has been revealed in the Holy Trinity (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). After three years and a half of preaching, Christ accomplished his mission on earth. He was crucified on the cross, died, was buried, and after three days rose from the dead. The ancient Egyptians accepted Christianity because of its similarity with their literature, which included the story of Osiris, Isis and Horus.⁴ The story

of Osiris is similar to that of Christ. The Trinity is accepted in both the ancient Egyptian beliefs and the Coptic beliefs, although the Egyptian concept is totally different from the Holy Trinity of the Coptic Christian.

Paradise

Some similarities between Christ and Osiris are that Christ was crucified, and Osiris was killed and cut into pieces. Christ was hung on the cross, and the Egyptians had the sign "ankh" which had the shape of a cross. Christ was resurrected and Egyptian literature tells of the resurrection of Osiris. Copts believe in the paradise of Christ, while the ancient Egyptians believed in the paradise of Osiris.⁵

Soul and Spirit

The Christian faith, and the Coptic Church, believe that the soul and spirit of the human being are immortal. The ancient Egyptians also believed in the soul, called Ka, and the spirit, called Ba,⁶ which lasted forever, a striking similarity to the Christian belief that the soul and spirit live on forever.

Special Days

The Coptic Church celebrates special days and feasts dedicated to the saints, as well as feasts related to Christ. The Copts in Egypt celebrate a feast called Sham-el-Nissim, which usually follows Easter. Many scholars believe this was an ancient Egyptian feast, the practice of which was carried over into Coptic customs.⁷ The ancient Egyptians also had their feast days dedicated to their deities and their kings.⁸

Symbols

Many symbols are used in the Coptic church, some of which have been borrowed from ancient Egyptian signs.⁹

Temple and Church

Worshippers in ancient Egypt had many prayers in their temples;¹⁰ some prayers were long and others short, exactly as in the Coptic Church today. Then, too, there were different prayers to be used on various occasions.

The ancient Egyptians believed in purification,¹¹ especially for the priests. There usually was a pool at the temple where the priests had to bathe before beginning prayers.¹² Christians believe that children should be baptized with water; the water is the vehicle for purification by the Holy Spirit. This baptism takes place in the churches.¹³

Both the ancient Egyptians and the modern Copts believe in the power of the healing by water. In the Coptic church, the priest sprinkles water over the congregation after the liturgy, it is believed that those who drink from such water have a certain kind of blessing, provided their faith is strong. In the ancient Egyptian Temple of Dendarah there was a bath, or sanatorium, where people with diseases came to be healed.¹⁴

From drawings on the walls of ancient Egyptian temples, it is seen that the Pharaonic king wore the white crown of Upper Egypt or the double crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt.¹⁵ In the Coptic church, the pope, bishops, and priests wear, during a service, a crown which bears a strong resemblance to the crown of Upper Egypt.

Usually in the Egyptian temples there was more than one chapel so that the various deities could be worshipped side by side with the main deity of the temple.¹⁶ In Coptic churches of Egypt there is still more than one chapel, altar or sanctuary, with each chapel bearing the name of a different saint.¹⁷

In ancient Egyptian temples the chief priest offered prayers in front of statues of the deity where the animal sacrifice was placed as an offering to the deity. Egyptian church still uses the words "sacrifice" and "offering" for the bread which is offered on the altar. The Copts believe that after liturgical consecration the bread is converted to the body of Christ who died on the cross as a sacrifice for the whole world.

It was believed by the ancient Egyptians that the prayers in their temples helped the deity to awake and come to life, aided also by the pictures and inscriptions on the temple walls.¹⁹ The Coptic people believe that the priest or bishop praying in front of one of the icons of a saint is speaking to a saint who is alive and listening to his prayer.²⁰

Incense was used in the ancient Egyptian temples,²¹ palaces, villas, and the tombs of the Egyptians as well as in the Coptic Church. Originally incense was used as a means of keeping insects from the animal sacrifice; however, now the Copts believe that their prayers will reach the Lord as pure incense (Rev. 5:8).

As the ancient Egyptians carved scenes of various gods on the walls of their temples,²² so have the Copts put icons relating to Christ, Virgin Mary, Apostles and Martyrs on the walls of their churches. There are many scenes and pictures on the walls of the temples of Egypt and on boxes and other objects discovered in the tombs or villas.²³ Some scenes on the walls of the Egyptian temples tell of special consecration ceremonies for their temples²⁴ which bear a strong similarity to the consecration of a Coptic bishop or pope for the churches. From the scenes on the Egyptian temple walls showing the deities blessing the Pharaohs with outstretched hands,²⁵ we can see that the manner in which the Coptic Pope and bishops bless the people with outstretched hands close to the heads of the people is nearly identical to the method practiced by the Egyptians.

Usually in ancient Egypt the kings and the government gave land and many other gifts to the temples.²⁶ During the Byzantine Empire the kings and high officials made the same kind of offer to the Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt.

In ancient Egypt people offered many donations to their temples or holy places.²⁷ This is also true in the Coptic Church where people come from afar to visit a church



On the wall of the temple of Seti I one of the deities is blessing the god Osiris by an outstretched hand.



In the Coptic church, the bishop, here Anba Ignatius of Suez, is blessing one of the children by an outstretched hand during the deacon ordination ceremony.

and offer their donations of money, wax, candles, icons, pictures, textiles, clothing, and food.

The Copts followed the practice of the ancient Egyptians²⁸ and added schools and libraries to their churches. The schools were used to prepare young men for the priesthood and others to serve the society in various ways. As times have changed, so have the schools; Sunday School is now used to teach the Coptic children and young men of the church. Concerning the libraries, both the ancient Egyptians and the Copts have preserved their records and manuscripts in libraries.

In most of the ancient Egyptian temples we note that they had columns, colonnades and pillars,²⁹ and rarely do we find any of the old Coptic churches of Egypt without colonnades or pillars in their structure.

The lighting in the ancient Egyptian temples usually became progressively dimmer after leaving the first court until it became totally dark within the sanctuary of the deity, in the area of the Holy of Holies.³⁰ The old Coptic churches followed the practice of having the church dimly lighted, although not to the point of having the sanctuary totally dark.

In ancient times people who were being persecuted by a ruler fled to the temple and stayed there for some time because neither the ruler nor his soldiers could enter the temple to compel the people to leave.³¹ This practice continued throughout the history of Egypt.

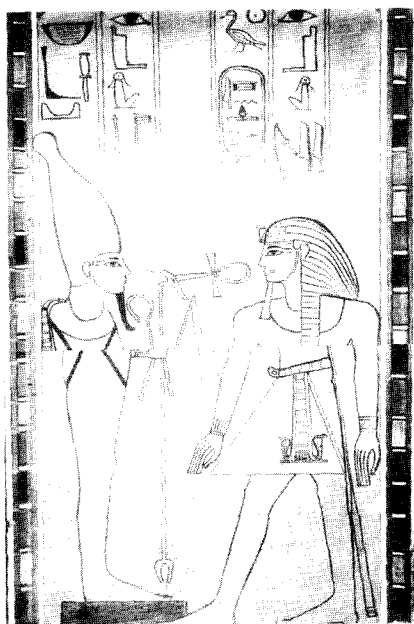
Priesthood

The ancient Egyptians had a system of priesthood with the high priest as the head of the system.³² In the Coptic Church the head of the church is considered the high priest. In addition to this, deacons help the priest in the daily services inside or outside the church. They are called in Coptic "*shamas*" and in the Egyptian language "*shmes*" which means the follower, the one who follows the priest and helps him. Definitely in the ancient Egyptian temples there were some of these "*Shmes*" who helped the priests in the service of the temple. Also, as in the ancient Egyptian priesthood,³³ there are different ranks for the priesthood in the Coptic Church.

The Egyptian priests also had to change their regular garments for white linen clothing when they entered the temple for prayer or for a service.³⁴ This ritual is followed today by the Coptic priests who always wear white during a service.

Usually the ancient Egyptian kings and their deities were depicted holding a staff in their hands.³⁵ In the Coptic Church you will find that the Pope of Alexandria, as well as the bishops and priests, normally holds a staff.

The priests, bishops and the Pope usually carry a cross in their right hand with which to bless the people. We notice from pictures on the tombs and temples that the ancient Egyptian deities carried the sign ankh (to live or to be alive) which had the shape of a cross and which they presented to the king or to other deities as a symbol of life.³⁶



The King Amenophis II standing in front of the god Osiris (the god of the judgement of afterlife) who holds the sign ankh, the hieroglyphic symbol of life, to the king's nose while the deity is holding the sceptre, the flail and the hook. (From the tomb of the King Amenophis II in Thebes, Egypt).



Here we see Blessed Bishop Andrews of Damietta (1969-1972) holding the cross by one hand and the sceptre by the other, as the Egyptian deities and kings were figured holding the sign of life and the sceptre.

Hymns

The hymns in ancient Egypt concentrated on their deities,³⁷ citing the goodness, faithfulness, sincerity and nobility of the gods. Hymns also were dedicated to the kings of Egypt³⁸ who were considered to be sons of the deities. The hymns in the Coptic Church honor and praise the Holy Trinity, Saint Mary the Virgin, the martyrs, the saints and the pious people.

Music

According to Professor Murad Kamil, there is no doubt that ancient Egyptian music influenced the music of the Coptic Church.³⁹ Various kinds of musical instruments were used by the Egyptians and are used by the Copts today. There is an ancient Egyptian painting on a wall of a tomb that shows a blind man playing a harp.⁴⁰ In the Coptic church many blind people are employed to sing the hymns during the liturgy and the prayers. They know the hymns, "alhan," by heart even though some of the "alhan" are extremely lengthy, lasting for several hours. It is my belief that the blind were used in ancient times as well as now because of their great concentration on listening and singing; also this is a source of income for them.

Stories

Most of the stories of ancient Egypt depicted their heroes as sincere, noble, faithful, helping and serving others, struggling for the benefit of mankind, hating to commit sin, and avoiding evil. Examples of this are the stories of Osiris, Isis and Horus;⁴¹ the shipwrecked sailor;⁴² Sinuhi;⁴³ and the two brothers.⁴⁴ When the Egyptians accepted Christianity, they still adhered to their principles which have also appeared in Coptic stories. As Christ suffered, they have to suffer; as Christ died for them, they should die for Him. Many Copts have given their lives in refusing to deny their faith and belief.

Funeral Practices

In the old Coptic cemeteries we find a church among the Coptic tombs. This was similar to the practice of the ancient Egyptians where the government built the funeral temple or temples for the king close to his pyramid or tomb in the royal cemeteries.⁴⁵ In these Egyptian cemeteries we also find tombs for other members of the royal families.

When a Copt died, the family and other relatives would cry aloud in the villages as a means of showing their grief.⁴⁶ Many years ago the Coptic women slapped their cheeks and put marks on their heads as a sign of grief, following the ancient Egyptian practice of mourning.⁴⁷ The body of the deceased would be washed and dressed following the manner of the ancient Egyptians. Usually the body was mummified in ancient Egypt,⁴⁸ especially if the family was wealthy, but no mummification took place in Coptic Egypt except for their popes.

The Copts are buried in a sarcophagus, as were the ancient Egyptians;⁴⁹ the rich Coptic people prepared a splendid tomb for their burial and decorated these tombs on the outside, placing statues of Christ and the different saints within the tomb, as did the ancient Egyptians who decorated their tombs with different scenes and statues.⁵⁰ At the present time the Coptic people put a stela at the burial site on which is written the name of the deceased, his date of birth and date of death. This follows exactly the practice of the ancient Egyptians who would also place on the stela information about the dead person's deeds.⁵¹

Following the funeral service for the Copt, the priest would follow the procession and go with the people to the place of burial, which is the same procedure as that followed by the ancient Egyptians.⁵²

Mummification

The ancient Egyptians practiced mummification,⁵³ and the Copts apparently were influenced by this for when the Pope of Alexandria died, he was embalmed by the church Bishops. This mummification lasted long enough that his people who came to see him believed that they were being blessed by him, even after his death.

World of the Dead

Three days after the death, the priest would go to the house of the deceased to pray and sympathize with the family, who believed that this prayer would allow the spirit of the deceased person to leave the house. This belief came from the ancient Egyptians.⁵⁴

Judgment

The pictures in Coptic churches of the Archangel Michael show him treading on Satan while he holds a balance in his hands. This follows the Egyptian belief that there will be a trial in the after-world and where the deceased person should be weighed through a balance.⁵⁵

Horus and Saint George

One of the ancient Egyptian scenes depicts the god Horus riding a horse and trying to kill a crocodile with his spear.⁵⁶ This scene is similar to the pictures which include Saint George riding his horse and trying to kill a dragon with a spear. You can notice the influence of the god Horus on the picture of Saint George.

The Art

Coptic art shows a definite Egyptian influence in many ways, such as the design of churches, topography of cities, painting style and colors, decorations on walls and doors, manuscripts and the figures on textiles.⁵⁷

Conclusion

By studying the relationship between the ancient Egyptian culture and the Coptic culture we find that the Copts inherited their culture from their ancestors and modified it in many ways, especially in their church, to fit their life in the Nile Valley. However, out of the many practices and beliefs of the ancient Egyptians, only those that are compatible with the Christian faith have survived in the Coptic Orthodox Church.

Notes*

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- 13 The Holy Bible, commonly known as the Authorized (King James) Version (The National Publishing Company, 1975), Matthew 3:11-17.
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- 15 Ruffle, *The Egyptians*, p. 110.
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- 21 T. G. H. James, *An Introduction to Ancient Egypt* (New York: Farrar Straus Giroux in association with British Museum Publication Limited, London, 1979), p. 140; Ruffle, *The Egyptians*, p. 194.

- 22 Ruffle, *The Egyptians*, pp. 71-72; Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 282-284.
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- 24 Ruffle, *The Egyptians*, p. 185.
- 25 Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 282.
- 26 *Ibid.*, pp. 299-303.
- 27 James, *An Introduction to Ancient Egypt*, pp. 144-145.
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- 29 Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 280-281; Margaret Murray, *Egyptian Temples* (London: Sampson Low, Marston and Co., Ltd.), pp. 8-10; *Les Temples Égyptiens*, vol. 7 (Cairo, Egypt: Anglo-Egyptian Bookstore, 1966), pp. 165, 197-198. Arabic.
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- 36 Budge, *Egyptian Religion*, p. 57.
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- 40 Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 250-252.
- 41 Budge, *Egyptian Religion*, pp. 41-83.
- 42 Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, pp. 370, 508-510.
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- 44 *Ibid.*, pp. 378-379.
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- 50 El Mallakh and Bianchi, *Treasures of the Nile*, pp. 25-34.
- 51 Ruffle, *The Egyptians*, pp. 206-207.
- 52 Erman, *Life in Ancient Egypt*, p. 320.
- 53 Budge, *The Mummy*, pp. 160-165.
- 54 Muharram Kamal, *The Influence of the Pharaohnic Civilization on Our Life Nowadays* (Cairo, Egypt: Dar el Helal, 1956), p. 35.
- 55 Budge, *The Egyptian Religion*, p. 137.
- 56 Kazimierz Michalowski, *Art of Ancient Egypt* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Ins.), p. 431.
- 57 Most of these items are discussed in Michalowski, *Art of Ancient Egypt*, pp. 341-343; see also Ruffle, *The Egyptians*, p. 146.

*There are no citations given for most of the topics related to the Coptic Church because if a person has been attending Coptic Church services for at least a year, this information is well know.

CURRENTS IN COPTIC CHURCH STUDIES

The Struggle of a Priest: From the Library of Father Ibrahim Luka.
By Fayez Riad. Dar- el- 'Alam el 'Arabi Press, Cairo, 1986, 182 pp.

The first chapter of *The Struggle of a Priest: From the Library of Father Ibrahim Luka* gives a brief history of Father Luka who was born into a religious family in Esna on January 19, 1897. He studied in Qena and obtained an elementary school certificate after four years. He then attended the Sa'idia High School in Giza, Egypt, and obtained the *Kafa'h* certificate in 1913 and the high school certificate in 1915.

On March 22, 1913 Ibrahim Luka gave his life to Christ and attended Coptic religious meetings at Sa'idia High School held by *the Society of the Friends of the Holy Bible*. He continued serving the Lord and many times acted as a preacher.

When he finished high school in 1915 he had excellent grades. His family expected him to pursue the study of Medicine. However, against the will of his family, Ibrahim Luka joined the Theological School. From October 1915 to May 1916 he studied the following subjects independently: interpretation of the Holy Bible, rules and laws of the Coptic Church, history of the Coptic Church, Islamic religion, teaching of the other churches, laws of other churches, general history, Greek language, Coptic language, and logic.

In April 25, 1918 Ibrahim Luka graduated from the Theological School, continuing to serve as a deacon in preparation for the priesthood. In 1920 he married, and in 1923 he was ordained as a Coptic priest in the church of Asyut and in 1924 he was promoted to *Qomos*. One of his great accomplishments during that time was the Journal of *al-Yaqzah* which he began in 1924, and although Father Luka died in 1950, the journal has been continued by his family.

Father Luka was instrumental in building the Church of Heliopolis in Cairo from its beginning in 1917 until he became a member of the committee in 1919. The committee began the building of the Church of Saint Mark in Heliopolis on June 16, 1922. On July 14, 1925 Pope Kyrollos V, the Coptic Patriarch, agreed that Father Luka should leave Asyut and serve in this new church, where he supervised the church construction and arranged for the icons and decorations. In addition he built a cemetery within which was a church that served the Coptic people in Almaza, a district of Heliopolis. Ironically, the first person to be buried in that cemetery was Father Luka.

Father Luka was instrumental in building other churches: the Church of St. George at Almaza, the Church of Manshiat el-Bakri, and the Church of St. George in Heliopolis. He tried to build a church at Saraya el-Koba, but the project failed. He also bought a villa near the Church of St. Mark, Heliopolis, which was added to the church property.

Father Luka's church and the Coptic Society were engaged in many activities such as a charity program, society for women, Christian preschool at which the children were fed, a Sunday library, services for workmen in Heliopolis, and a society for the general services, in addition to the regular religious services and special spiritual services held throughout the year which included services for Passion Week and the Feasts of St. Mary. Father Ibrahim was successful in both his religious and social services.

The author gives a short description of Father Luka's wife, Mrs. Rojina Potros, who died in 1953, telling of her many virtues and her activities. She was a very sincere person, modest, pious, an excellent mother, truth-loving, an ardent reader of the Bible who prayed and loved Christ. She was also a lady of high moral character and always interested in aiding the poor of the area. The Lukas' home life included Father Ibrahim gathering the members of his family together every evening for a Bible reading and time of prayer.

The author also writes about the publications of Father Luka, as follows: *Research in the reality of truth*, 1922; *Chosen religious songs*, 1919, reprinted five times until 1946; different pamphlets from the Moral Reformation Society, reprinted in 1922; *Flee for Your Life*, 1923, 1931; *Approaching the Holy Sacrament*, 1927, reprinted several times; *Dangerous Illness*, 1932; *The Purity*, 1932, 1933, 1935; *Spiritual Meditation in the Gospel of Matthew*, 1935; *General messages about the Coptic Church and its creed*, 1937, translated into English and reprinted several times; *Christianity in Islam*, 1938, 1948, 1952, (reviewed in Coptic Church Review Vol. 9, No. 1); *A Declaration to be Judged*, 1939; *Guide to united worship*, 1940; *To the Depth*, 1944, 1952; *The Popes, chosen from what group of people*, 1946; *Did You Return to Yourself*, 1947, republished more than once; *Guide to united worship and chosen songs*, 1946; *The Day of the Lord*, 1950; and *Awakening Bulletin (al-Yaqzah)*, 1924-present, which is considered one of the oldest Coptic bulletins. The author, a son-in-law of Father Luka, has found many manuscripts in the Luka library which he is preparing for publication.

The library of Father Luka was very valuable and included many books, journals and dictionaries, some of which are now out of print.

In the third chapter the author talks about the renaissance of the Coptic Orthodox Church. It appears that Father Luka struggled to save the church from anarchy and established many societies and committees to solve various problems facing it, especially in the manner of choosing Popes and clergy. He also attended many conferences within the Coptic Church as well as in other Christian churches both in and



Father Ibrahim Luka

out of Egypt. In these conferences he worked to establish a close relationship among the various Christian churches, hoping to allay the enmity which had existed for generations. Among the churches he aided was the Ethiopian Church which led to his becoming a close friend of the late Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia.

In the fourth chapter the author details the struggle of Father Luka with the renaissance in the Coptic Church. The attempt of Father Luka to bring strong programs to his church resulted in false accusations that he was trying to separate from the Coptic Church and unite with the English Church. This caused many church members to turn their allegiance from him, for they did not want to accept these programs. Some of his enemies believed he had a lack of faith and was not sincere in his acceptance of the Coptic Orthodox Creed. However, authorities of the Coptic Church following a short illness, and the honors accorded him at his funeral, which was attended by many important people. Many others sent telegrams or wrote articles in his memory to the newspapers. His death was noted in publications and in churches throughout the world. When the family held a memorial service one year later, there were many articles praising Father Luka which were published in newspapers, journals, and books.

The last chapter ends with three short articles written by his daughters--Mrs. Lucy (Youssef) Kamil, Mrs. Mary (Fayez) Riad, and Mrs. Suzanne (Farag) Nashid -followed by information concerning the opening of the Memorial Hall of Father Luka by the former Patriarch of the See of Alexandria, Pope Kyrillos VI.

The reviewer commends Mr. Riad for the excellent manner in which he presented the history of the Coptic Church from the middle 1920s until early 1950, and the full details concerning the life of Father Ibrahim Luka, one of the great personalities of the Coptic Church in the twentieth century. This book, written in Arabic, will be useful to future generations of Copts in teaching of the Church's struggles to succeed in the face of adversity. It would be most beneficial to Copts throughout the world if Mr. Riad would publish another book concerning Father Luka's projects and programs, which the Coptic Church now accepts.

University of Colorado, Boulder.

Boulos A. Ayad

BOOK REVIEWS

St. Peter of Alexandria: Bishop and Martyr

By Tim Vivian, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1988 (#3, "Studies in Antiquity and Christianity"). pp. 227. \$35.00

"St. Peter of Alexandria" is an achievement: a doctoral dissertation revised into a readable book for the interested but not technically trained reader.

Tim Vivian presents a careful review of the life and writings of St. Peter of Alexandria (bishop from 300 to 311), reviews these writings very precisely, then selects a single work for detailed study (*The Canonical Letter*). Why bother? Vivian's answer seems to be that St. Peter is a bridge figure in the development of theology (the legacy of Origen, eve of Arianism) and church governance (role of the bishop).

Vivian's method is a "user friendly" demonstration of how tradition can be scientifically and rigorously studied apart from a scoffing or "debunking" attitude. He offers many translations, sometimes the first available in English. His conclusions are cautious but clear: "St. Peter was most remembered in the Greek church as a martyr and heretic-fighter, but the Coptic church came to venerate him as a pastor also. His canons show that the respect accorded him was well-deserved" (p. 185).

"St. Peter" will be valued by those attracted to general patristics, the Coptic church, and the development of Christian moral discipline. It also illustrates how the Bible and the writings of saints were employed in the development of both tradition and Tradition.

St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Honolulu

James E. Furman

Nag Hammadi, Gnosticism, and Early Christianity

Edited by C.W. Hedrick and Robert Hodgson, Jr. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1986, pp. 296. \$14.95 (paper)

The sub-title of this book says it all: "fourteen leading scholars discuss the current issues in gnostic studies." If you would enjoy attending a party where guests talk with great animation and insight, you will enjoy this product of a working seminar held at Southwest Missouri University in 1983.

As in all collections, papers vary greatly in length, focus, and technicality. Authors represent the "cutting edge" of gnostic studies in Canada, Europe, and the

United States: Bentley Layton (Yale), H.M. Schenke (Berlin), Elaine Pagels (Princeton), James Robinson (Claremont), and PHEME PERKINS (Boston College).

C.W. Hedrick's introduction is intended to be a "beginner's guide." It is so well done that it makes all that follows very accessible. It introduces complex issues and definitions with clarity and without condescension.

Birger Pearson of the University of California (Santa Barbara) reviews Jewish Gnostic material in a very stimulating way. His important point may not yet be familiar: "The Nag Hammadi discoveries have decisively put to rest the old idea that Gnosticism is a Christian heresy in its origin."

Some essays are quite demanding and some will seem exotic. This level of exposure and challenge is part of the value of the book. Readers are included in the mood and process of the scholarly exploration of Christianity and its early environment.

Many accepted ideas about New Testament literature, sacraments, and church life will be superseded as research continues; others will be enriched and enlarged. This book suggests how and why this is true.

*James E. Furman (The Rev.)
St. Peter's Episcopal Church, Honolulu*

The Desert of the Heart: Daily Readings with the Desert Fathers
*Edited by Sister Benedicta Ward SLG, Darton, Longman and Todd, London, 1988,
(UK price one pound ninety-five pence, USA agents Templegate), 66pp.*

This inexpensive volume is the latest in the 'Enfolded in Love' series. These are beautifully presented booklets of readings selected from some great writers of Spirituality. The first two selections were from the English anchoress Julian of Norwich who lived in solitude in Norfolk in the late 14th Century and experienced a number of visions. The series, which had extended from St. Augustine of Hippo in the 5th Century to Methodist John Wesley who died in 1791, has now reached back to the Coptic Orthodox Fathers of the Desert. The selections are always short and are intended as springboards to reflection and meditation.

It cannot have been easy to select these passages from such large and spiritually rich collections of material but nobody is better equipped for the task than Sister Benedicta who has once again placed us in her debt. Any reader of this Review is likely to have a favourite story or saying from the desert but few will wish to quarrel with this excellent collection. "The Desert of the Heart" contains 131 excerpts and may be commended to any Christian as an invaluable *vade mecum*; it draws on five volumes of translations from the Desert Fathers by the Oratorian Fr. Norman Russell, Fr. Columba Stewart OSB and Sister Benedicta herself.

Special mention may be made of the prayer which introduces the selections and which can be used with the daily readings. This prayer may not be generally known;

it was certainly new to the writer. It is taken from Owen Chadwick's book "*Western Asceticism*" and, upon examination, is an invocation of the Holy Trinity in a somewhat unusual form which makes it attractive and appropriate in a volume of Orthodox writings.

Anyone who doubts the importance of the Desert Fathers in modern times should read the excellent four page essay with which Sister Benedicta introduces her selection. It often seems that the Desert Fathers were merely rejecting the life of the city and engaging in a selfish escape from the harsh realities of urban life. Sister Benedicta finds a positive element in everything for which the desert monks were famous; it was a positive desire for the Kingdom of God which drove these men into the desertlands, it was a positive listening to the Word of God which drew them into the realm of silence, it was the life of positive freedom which drew them from the faithless city where men are imprisoned by ownership. Because they positively embraced the values of another Kingdom these men provided illumination in the kingdoms of this world and for posterity. They became "like sunlight glancing off a rare oasis in the sands", says Sister Benedicta. For the person who will read these entries each day, there can be little doubt that the saving belief of these monks can become a healing presence now. With the editor of this collection, we will echo the words of the modern poet W.H. Auden:

*In the desert of the heart
Let the healing fountain start,
In the prison of his days
Teach the free man how to praise.*

There are obvious dangers in the presentation of these selections: it is too easy to isolate the individual, gnomic utterance as if it were an adequate summary of Coptic teaching from the Desert. A "purple passage" is not an epitome even when such a passage illuminates the present moment. But the real value of such selections is that they can stimulate us to wider reading. It would be good to think of a copy of this little book on the bedside table of every Copt and especially of the young Westernised Copts because it might whet their appetites for deeper reading in the Coptic Orthodox spiritual fathers. The Desert Fathers can provide the Coptic Diaspora with the authentic roots which are alone needed for contemporary Orthodox growth.

Sutton Valence School, Kent, England.

John Watson.

Salt of the Earth: The Russian Elder Isidore.

By St. Paul Florensky. Translated by Richard Betts. Platina, California: St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood, 1987. Pp. 151. \$6.50 (paperback).

Nineteenth-century Russia enjoyed a great monastic revival which influenced the religious life of the whole Church. This revival was ignited by charismatic spiritual

directors, many of whom were laymen, known as the *startsi*, or elders. The first of these, and probably the most famous, was St. Seraphim of Sarov. Exercising their gifts of discernment and wisdom, the *startsi* acted as guides and directors to many people who rushed to them for spiritual counsel. Some *startsi* had an influence far greater than any hierarch! Father Isidore of Gethsemane (c. 1814-1908) was one of the last representatives of eldership in Russia.

The life and personality of Elder Isidore have been vividly described by his spiritual son, the New Martyr Paul Florensky (1882-1943). Florensky was a unique genius who managed to master mathematics, physics, electrical engineering, philosophy, theology together with many languages. In 1911, he became a priest. He was imprisoned several times by the Soviet Regime because of his activities in defending the freedom of the Church. In 1933, he was confined to a concentration camp where he died ten years later. He was canonized with other new martyrs by the Russian Church Outside Russia in 1981.

Salt of the Earth is not a biography in the strict sense. St. Florensky combines the analytical approach of the scientist with his theological learning, deep piety, and mystic life in order to put the reader in a real encounter with the living Elder; actually most of the book is written in the present tense. The world of Orthodox Russia in the nineteenth century is felt throughout the book, aided by the many pictures of persons and places. The author starts his pilgrim with the reader by describing the cell of Elder Isidore which was in Gethsemane Hermitage, among the woods in the outskirts of Moscow. He then tells how the Elder greets his visitors, the refreshments he offers them, the way he talks and what he teaches them. In chapter after chapter he recites stories about the elder that depicts his Christian virtues such as his generosity, love for all especially the outcasts and guilty, kindness to every creature, forgiveness, asceticism, and a humility which did not hinder his independence nor his freedom of spirit.

This book makes good spiritual reading. Lives of modern saints are a challenge to us all, and both publisher and translator are to be commended for making the angelic stories of St. Florensky and Elder Isidore available in English.

Note

1 Timothy Ware: *The Orthodox Church*. Middlesex, England, 1963:254.

The Church at Prayer, Volume 3: The Sacraments.

By Robert Cabie', Pierre Jounel, Jean Evenou, A.G. Martimort, P.M. Gy, Adrien Nocent, and Damien Sicard. Translated by Matthew J. O'Connell. Collegetown, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1988. Pp. 331. \$14.95 (paper).

This book surveys the development of the sacramental rites from the early Church till the twentieth century, with extensive references to ancient historians, liturgical

books and practices, patristic writings and prayer formulae used by different churches. Although the main emphasis is on the Roman Catholic rites, yet the book includes a wealth of historical and liturgical material from the traditions of other churches, both Eastern and Western.

Due to the historical interactions between the various churches, in spite of their separation, the Orthodox believer will be interested in following the changes in the sacramental teaching and practices of the Catholic Church throughout the centuries. The recent changes in the names of some Sacraments reflect the return of the Church after Vatican II to their traditional theological basis. A striking example is seen in *Baptism* and *Confirmation* which are now included together under *Christian Initiation*, 'in which it has not always been possible to say where one aspect ends and the other begins. The word 'Confirmation' itself made its first appearance in the fifth century. The age at which children received Confirmation and Communion which was much delayed after the twelfth century has been pushed back to a younger age, early in the twentieth century. Vatican II has allowed for Confirmation by priests, using the *Chrism* consecrated by the bishops as the Orthodox churches have always been practicing.

The Sacrament of *Penance and Reconciliation* has also returned to a more traditional and liturgical shape. Instead of stressing the *Scholastic* words, 'I absolve you,' which have been started in the fourteenth century, the formula of the absolution used now emphasizes the role of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit in the reconciliation of the sinner.

Catholic theologians from the twelfth century, and Catholic rituals from the fifteenth century, have introduced the term '*Extreme Unction*' (last anointing), instead the traditional term of '*Anointing the Sick*.' Vatican II has preferred the original term, emphasizing a broader use of the Sacrament in the pastoral care of the sick, not only as a last rite.

The scope of the book goes beyond the Sacraments to provide information about monastic rites, consecration of virgins, Christian death, blessings, pilgrimages and other popular practices.

At a modest price, the book is a great resource for scholars, and Sunday School teachers as well as any reader who is interested in the history of the Sacraments.

The Eerdmans Analytical Concordance to the Revised Standard Version

Compiled by Richard E. Whitaker. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1988, Pp. 1548. Cloth, \$49.95

The completion of this analytical concordance to the Bible in the RSV took seven years of painstaking effort. While depending heavily on the computer, the compiler had to coordinate the work of a group of researchers at the Institute of Antiquity and

Christianity in Claremont, California with the work of scholars at leading universities in the US and Europe. This was necessary because of the lack of parsed texts in the original languages as well as in the RSV, and the lack of electronic texts. The result is the beautiful volume for which any Biblical student, whether lay person or scholar will be thankful to the publisher and compiler. It is noticeable that the book is a concordance to the *entire* Bible (the OT, including the books of the *Apocrypha*, which were considered Scripture by the early Church, and the NT). Another outstanding feature is the inclusion of separate sections for the proper names of persons and places, and for numbers. In spite of being analytical (i.e. different words in the original languages for each English word are listed, and to which each context is referenced), yet all the biblical citations for each word are given in sequence. Indexes of Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek and Latin words appear at the end of the volume. However, words in the original languages are not transliterated. This makes the indexes and the analytical component of the concordance of little value to those who cannot read Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

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1989 CALENDAR OF FASTS AND FEASTS

*THE SEVEN MAJOR FEASTS OF OUR LORD

**The Seven Minor Feasts of Our Lord

***Feasts of Virgin Mary

****Fasts

- *January 7 - **CHRISTMAS**
- **January 14 - *Circumcision of Our Lord*
- ***January 18 - Paramoni (1)
- *January 19 - **EPIPHANY**
- **January 21 - *First Miracle of Our Lord at Cana*
- ***January 29 - Dormition of Virgin Mary
- **February 15 - *Entrance of Our Lord into the Temple*
- ***February 20 - Fast of Nineveh (3)
- ****March 6 - Great Lent (55)
- March 19 - Feast of the Cross
- ***April 2 - Apparition of the Virgin at Zeitoun in 1968
- *April 7 - **ANNUNCIATION**
- *April 23 - **ENTRANCE OF OUR LORD INTO JERUSALEM (PALM SUNDAY)**
- **April 27 - *Holy Thursday*
- *April 30 - **EASTER**
- **May 7 - *St. Thomas' Sunday*
- ***May 9 - Birth of Virgin Mary
- **June 1 - *Entrance of Our Lord into Egypt*
- *June 8 - **ASCENSION**
- *June 18 - **PENTECOST**
- ****June 19 - Apostles' Fast (23)
- July 12 - Martyrdom of St. Peter and St. Paul
- ****August 7 - Fast of the Virgin (15)
- **August 19 - *Transfiguration of Our Lord*
- ***August 22 - Assumption of the Body of Virgin Mary
- September 11 - New Year's Day (Feast of the Martyrs)
- September 27 - Feast of the Cross
- ****November 25 - Christmas Fast (43)
- ***December 12 - Presentation of Virgin Mary into the Temple