

THE COPTIC BISHOPRIC FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS  
MEMOIR FROM AFRICA

COME ACROSS...



AND HELP US

(Acts 16:9)



*THE STORY OF THE COPTIC  
ORTHODOX CHURCH IN AFRICA  
IN OUR PRESENT TIME*

By  
HIS GRACE BISHOP ANTONIUS MARKOS  
THE COPTIC BISHOP OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS

**BOOK TWO**

IN KENYA, ZAIRE, SOUTH AND WEST AFRICA

COME ACROSS AND HELP US

BOOK TWO

HIS GRACE BISHOP ANTONIUS MARCOS

THE BISHOPRIC OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS  
MEMOIR FROM AFRICA

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AND  
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THE STORY OF THE COPTIC CHURCH IN AFRICA  
AT THE PRESENT TIME

**Book Two**  
**In Kenya, Zaire, South & West Africa**

THE BISHOPRIC OF AFRICAN AFFAIRS  
MEMBER FROM AFRICA

# ... COME ACROSS ... ... HELP US

BY HIS GRACE  
BISHOP ANTONIOUS MARKOWS  
COPTIC BISHOP FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS

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*HIS HOLINESS POPE SHENOUDA III  
POPE OF ALEXANDRIA AND PATRIARCH OF THE  
SEE OF SAINT MARK THE 117TH SUCCESSOR OF  
SAINT MARK.*



*HIS GRACE BISHOP ANTONIUS MARKOS  
COPTIC BISHOP FOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS*



*THE HEAD QUARTERS OF ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES AACC ON TOP APPEARS THE COPTIC CROSS BECAUSE THE COPTIC CHURCH IS THE MOTHER CHURCH IN AFRICA. IT WAS PRESENTED AS A GIFT FROM THE COPTIC CHURCH AND MOUNTED ON THE TOWER IN 1984.*

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### The Cover Picture

African Independant Church Leaders from 19 African Countries gathered in Nairobi, Kenya for the second organization of African Independant Churches Conference in October 1982



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## PREFACE

### To The Story Of The Coptic Church In Africa

**This story begins in the first Christian century.**

St. Mark, the Apostle, established the Church of Alexandria and the Church in Libya which was the first among the Pentapolis Churches (the 5 cities in North West Africa) which extend from Barka eastward to Tunisia westwards. That was the first stage.

In the 4th century (325 AD), in the time of the Council of Nicea, the Coptic Church had two Bishops in Libya. Nowadays, we have two Churches, one in Tripoli and one in Beni-Gazi.

**In the time of Saint Athanasius, the Apostolic, the Coptic Church established the Church in Ethiopia.**

In the year 329 AD Pope Athanasius, the Apostolic, consecrated the first bishop to serve her. That was St. Fremontious (his name means the man of God). The Ethiopians call him Abba Salama.

**Our Church also established the Church in Nubia.**

It continued under the pastoral care of the Coptic Church until the eruption of the revolution in the 19th century.

Nubia was included in the title of the Alexandrian Pope as well as Libya, Ethiopia and Pentapolis. These are the areas of his jurisdiction. All these regions (in addition to Jerusalem) are known as the See of St. Mark.

Ἀλεξανδρίας Λυβίας πενταπόλεως

ἠθιοπίας ἡμ Ἀφρικιά κε πασης γης.

In the middle of the twentieth century the work extended to South Africa.

That was in the time of Pope Youssab II. (Joseph) who consecrated Anba Morcos, a Metropolitan for South Africa, to shepherd those who joined the Church there. However, this service did not last except for few years. After Anba Morcos' departure from our present world, the proto-priest Father Isaac El-Anba Bishoy continued for sometime then returned to his monastery.

**This book which is in our hands records the story of the service of the Coptic Church in our times since the mid-Seventies.**

It narrates the struggle of Bishop Antonius Markos in the service of Africa, from the time he served there as a lay medical doctor, his ordination as a monk and priest, then his consecration as a bishop in 1976 AD and the spread of his services in Kenya, then Zambia, Zimbabwe and the regions of the Equator until he reached South Africa.

**His Grace wrote the book in a biographic style.**

He narrates the incidents that happened during his services, in an attractive way and sometimes he enters into minute details. He draws a picture of the characters of the people, the nature of the land, the dangers to which he was exposed, and the work of the Grace with him and also his relations with the other Churches.

**No doubt what you are reading is only a part of the story.**

Bishop Antonius Markos is still working and his story is continuing in Africa. The Lord has granted him an outstanding gift in learning languages, so that he learned the Tigrenia and the Amharic in Ethiopia and the Kiswahili in Kenya, with other dialects of some African tribes, beside his efficiency in the English language, in which he gave many lectures in America and Australia.

He is also distinguished by activity and intelligence which supported him in many of his travels.

**I pray the Lord to grant him success in his services, which he**

**started from nothing, without any material or human resources. But the Lord was with him and that is enough.**

Dear reader, I leave your now to this book. No doubt you shall find in it enjoyment and important informations about our present history in some African countries, from the centre to the south of the continent.

May this book become an incentive for the servants to join this mission service in Africa.

Fare Yee well in the Lord.

**Pope Shenouda III**

August 1993

(The Virgin Mary's Fasting)

## **PREFACE TO BOOK TWO COME ACROSS AND HELP US**

To the members of the Living Body of Christ, the Sons and Daughters of the Holy Church.

It is my pleasure to present the second volume of this story of the Coptic Church in Africa.

The first edition of Book One went out of print in a short time, due to the great eagerness of many readers to follow the Lord's work in this vast continent.

And such a story does not end with a second or third book, according to the saying of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III in the preface by which he blessed the first volume of this book : "*No doubt that what you are reading is only a part of the story*".

The work is still going on and the Church is still expanding and adding everyday the lines of a new story which is right to put on record, and this story will be completed by those whom the Lord will choose to continue the work after us.

The blessed land of Africa is very fertile and the field for the Lord's work is wide.

Here I would like to affirm that the rumours spreading about the dangers of epidemics and famines in Africa are highly exaggerated and inflated. It is very wrong to generalise, to deepen or focus on these rumours, as there is nothing fearful in serving or working in the African continent. You may read in this book about threats by the sword or an attempt to kill by putting poison in food. Such were the wars of the enemy of righteousness which we faced at the beginning in our

services. This does not mean that all the challenges of the service in Africa are of the same type or that they may be repeated.

These were devilish fights of a very special kind. As it is the case in the beginning of each new work for the Lord, such are the Devil's efforts to drive fear in the hearts of the missionaries and God's servants.

The beloved Church is being led by the wisdom of the Holy Spirit and chooses the peaceful, quiet countries to start her services and send her missionaries.

**For the fruits of righteousness are sown in peace by those who make peace (James 3: 18) .**

I dare say that the Church in those countries became a source of many blessings and a source of peace and development. No disturbances or serious unrest happened in any African country where the Church exists.

Wherever you visit our Churches in Africa, you will find many Coptic families, amounting to hundreds, have lived in Africa for many years to work in the field of medicine, engineering and teaching. Serving them are the blessed priests who reside in Africa with their families.

Dear Blessed, ... the expansion of the Coptic Church from nothing to its present services in six African countries reveals to us the reality of the fertility of such blessed lands and the great eagerness in the hearts of the millions to know and follow the truth within the pure holy life through the Orthodox Christian Faith.

**Truly, the harvest is plentiful but the labourers are few (Math9: 37) .**

Truly, the love and encouragement of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, who gives his fatherly love and support to our services in Africa, encouraged me to write this story. To His Holiness from us all, our thanks and gratitude.

May the Lord keep him a leader and father for the Church for many years and peaceful times.

My thanks to His Grace Bishop Dioskoros and Mr. Nadi Gerges Fahim and the family of workers in the Anba Rouwes printing press for their great efforts to print this book.

Many thanks also to Professor Zaki Shenouda of the High Institute of Coptic Studies for revising the book and Dr. Angele Botros for revising the English version and Ms Angela Lutz for typewriting the book.



The Lord's blessings be with us all.

**Amen.**

**Bishop Antonius Markos**  
**Coptic Bishop for African Affairs.**

The Feast of the Lord's                      15th Barmuda 1711

Resurrection - Easter                      23 April 1995



**CHAPTER  
XVIII**

**CEREMONIAL WELCOME FOR  
THE COPTIC BISHOP FOR  
AFRICAN AFFAIRS**

*MY SON, IF YOU CAME FORWARD TO SERVE  
YOUR LORD, PREPARE YOURSELF FOR  
TEMPTATIONS. STRENGTHEN YOUR HEART AND  
ENDURE, DO NOT BE DISSOLUTE IN THE TIME OF  
YOUR TRIBULATIONS, CLEAVE TO GOD, DO NOT  
GET FAR FROM HIM SO YOU MAY BE DELIVERED  
IN YOUR ETERNITY. ACCEPT ALL THAT COMES ON  
YOU (Jesus, Son of Sirach 2:1-2)*

After taking the blessings and the advice of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the Pope of Alexandria and all Africa, the Bishop for African Affairs returned to Nairobi in early July, 1976 only a few weeks after his consecration at Pentecost to find a ceremonial welcome which contained :

- |                 |                  |                |
|-----------------|------------------|----------------|
| I - Welcome.    | II - Challenges  | III - Longings |
| IV - Objections | V - Summons      | VI - Responses |
|                 | VII - Beginnings |                |

## **I - THE WELCOME**

**Not more than six people from the sons of the Coptic Church in Nairobi were receiving him at the Nairobi Airport.**

Mr. Sabet Ayad Thomas, who was working at the Egyptian Embassy had arranged that the reception should take place in the VIP lounge of the airport.

The Bishop went to reside in a furnished house, rented temporarily, on Haile Sellasie Street in Nairobi.

## **II - THE CHALLENGES**

**I should take the Hand Cross, the Staff and the Head Gear of the Bishop.**

The Kenyan Copts heard about the return of the Monk Father who had become a Bishop. They started visiting him at his residence to express their joy for the new responsibility bestowed upon him.



**The Father changes his uniforms according to the situation and he sticks to nothing**



Once the false father, the Head of the Holy Ghost Church, heard the news, he came with more than twenty elders of his Church, his Archbishop and Bishops. He sat down and said to the Bishop :

*"You have deceived me and travelled to Egypt and took the ordination which was prepared for me. No problem, I shall be ordained as Patriarch but you are going to stay only a Bishop".*

Then he asked if there was any difference between the uniform of the Patriarch and the Bishop. He was told that there was no difference.

Time passed talking. The false Father's words were not void of attacks against the new Bishop, accusing him of spending the Church's funds on himself instead of distributing them to him and his followers and he also accused the Bishop of hindering him from going to Egypt to be ordained a Patriarch. As time went on, the Bishop took off his hat and put his hand cross in it and put his staff in the corner of the room.

Suddenly the false Father stood up and took the staff, the Bishop's hat and the hand cross and sat down, saying : *"These things are mine, I took them and I shall take them"*. He repeated what he had said, in determination and affirmation.

Panic ... People exchanged looks with each other ... What is going on ? ... *"I take ... I have taken them, these things are mine"*, said the false Father.

In the heart of the Bishop were mixed feelings. He knew the problems which could arise if the false Father insisted on taking them, using aggression and strength. He could use them to pretend to the personality of a Coptic Patriarch among people who do not know the difference.

The Bishop broke the silence to say : *"Such things will not be useful to you because Bishopric or Patriarchate is not a uniform or hat or staff or a hand cross - but it is an apostolic ordination by laying of hands of the Great Father, the Successor of Saint Mark, the Pope, with the Members of the Coptic Holy Synod"*.

The false Father shook his head in a sign of refusal, putting the Bishop's properties in his lap, holding them tightly. One of his elders

(Archbishops??) (now Rev. Father "Antony Otieno", the Kenyan Priest ordained in 1981) felt the embarrassment of the situation and started to speak with the false Father in his language. It was clear that he was trying to persuade him to return those things to their owner. Other elders present shared in his efforts. For more than an hour they talked until the false Father asked the Bishop : *"How did you get those things?"*.

The Bishop answered : *"We do not get them, but they are handed to us by the Pope during stages of the rite of the consecration of the new Bishop"*.

The false Father said : *"You have received them from the hands of the Pope ... But what about me, I received nothing"*.

The Bishop had an idea. He brought forth a small metal hand cross and gave it to the false Father. He took it and asked : *"What shall I put on my head ?"* So the Bishop gave him an old monk's head dress. He took it and put it on his head. Then, very reluctantly, he returned the head dress, the hand cross and the staff to the Bishop, amongst sighs of relief from all. It was about 2.00am.

After a short prayer they left the place, whilst the Bishop gave thanks to God that he had not lost his things. As he was in a foreign land, it was not easy to replace them from Egypt. He had also feared that the false Father would use them to pretend to the personality of a Coptic Bishop or Patriarch and as such could lead the people into great confusion.

### **III THE LONGINGS**

**Many pure Hearts are longing for the Truth, the Word of God and the Apostolic Orthodox Teachings.**

Among all these dealings and meetings, the Bishop discovered many souls which were longing for the true Church and its Apostolic Teachings.

These souls had many questions about the behaviour of those who claimed to be church leaders, who were self-made and who depended more on pretence by using external features such as names, titles, uniforms, processions or claims of having thousands of followers.

The Bishop exerted himself greatly to discover them and bring them to the correct teachings. He found spiritual souls and simple hearts as well as primitive wisdom. They were victims of the leaders of the local churches, who dominated them psychologically.

The Bishop invited all the elders of the Kenyan Holy Ghost Coptic Church living in Nairobi (Archbishops, Bishops, Pastors, Deacons) to meet with him in his flat. They responded well and he encouraged them to continue attending the Bible and theological studies conducted twice a week.

He also used to listen to their speeches about their spiritual life and their experiences in that church with the false father.

Their Care to avoid the Curse of the False Father and their full Submission to him to gain his Blessings was clear from their comments

The Bishop discovered that the followers of the false father were terrified of him. He had convinced them somehow that he had a blessing he would bestow on those who obeyed him blindly and fulfilled all his wishes, whatever they would be. The fruits of such blessings would be prosperity, large families, big estates, cars and luxurious lives.



**The false father in one of his offensive attacking speeches**

But his curses were many and very harsh and were publicly poured on those who did not follow blindly whatever they were ordered to do, even as far as handing over their full salary at the end of the month or handing over any piece of furniture or a television or even a family member.

They revealed to the Bishop that the eight nuns residing at the new coptic home were his wives, those that he had taken from their husbands and children, to stay with him, claiming that they were in need of much prayer for physical and spiritual healing.

All that while they were totally submitting themselves to the false father, obeying him in all things! They must have been completely dominated by him and possessed by his sensual personality.

Why would they not leave him and liberate themselves from such humiliation to their humanity? Because they were terrified of him, for he would harm their wives, their children, and remove them from their jobs.

They believed his claims of healing by the laying of towels, handkerchiefs or by drinking or sprinkling water.

The Bishop felt much pity and sadness for those souls which had not yet been brought to the spiritual Christian service which leads to the salvation of the human soul from many bondages of the world and the flesh and which liberates from sin and the devil.

**The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor .**

**He has sent me to heal the broken - hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and the opening of the prison to those who are bound.**

**To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord ... to comfort all who mourn. (Isaiah 61: 1- 2) .**

Those were the words of prophecy which our Lord Jesus read in the synagogue when the scroll was given to him to read.

Then he said : Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing (Luke 4: 2) .

The details about the false father were reaching the Bishop from many sources. He used to listen to them patiently for many hours.

He did not listen to them only with his ears but also with his heart and feelings. He was deeply touched by such a sad story happening where ? ... in a false church carrying the name "Coptic".

When these victims had left, after he had greeted them warmly in sympathy, he closed the door of his flat. Many deep feelings were storming in his soul.

He knelt on the ground and wept bitterly and prayed earnestly with many tears : *"Where are you O Lord in all that ? You are Christ who is anointed to preach the good news to the miserable, to set free, liberate and heal. You came to proclaim salvation to all those souls and to comfort those who mourn. Who am I, O Lord, facing such difficulties !... What can I do ? Nothing, O Lord, if your Holy Spirit does not guide me."*

He was alone in his service, he could find no man to share his feelings, to give him support, guidance and encouragement.

His only consolation was to read the Bible and to speak to God, because The Lord exists and He is near.

**When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take care of me (Psalm 27: 10) .**

**Organising Meetings for Bible Study, Doctrine, Theology, Church History and Spiritual Subjects.**

The response of the Kenyan Copts to attend such meetings was very good and their eagerness to learn was great. More than twenty of them regularly attended the prayer and study meetings twice a week, in the evenings of Tuesdays and Thursdays.

The hourly Prayer of the Agbeya was new to them, but they loved it and knew it well. The Bishop did not have any printed English Agbeya, the Coptic Churches in the land of immigration not having yet developed the English Agbeya.

He found some translated Absolutions and he photocopied them to produce printed prayers.

Such meetings were conducted very regularly for more than ten years. The subjects of study varied until it contained the curriculum of the Theological College. This was good enough to prepare the Kenyan priests who were to be ordained on the 1st of November 1981.

#### **IV THE OBJECTIONS :**

The False Father strongly objected to the Attendance of his Church Elders at the Study and Prayer Meetings.

Once the false father knew that his elders were regularly attending these meetings, he grew very angry and tried by means of pressure, threats and terror to stop such meetings or to stop his men attending them. He used to say that they were not in need of any teachings, as he had taught them all things through the Holy Spirit in him ?!

They used to answer him in true determination that they were Kenyan Copts and that they were very willing to know the true Coptic Church, the Church of Alexandria. They were witnesses of his application of affiliation to the Church of Egypt through the hands of His Grace Bishop Bakhominos, during his visit to Nairobi in 1976.



**The leader of the Holy Ghost Hermetic church (the false father) in one the African dances .**

The Bishop took much care in his teachings, so as not to discuss the character or the behaviour of the false father. He used to give them a complete picture of the Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ. Then he talked about the character of the godly priests who serve and sacrifice themselves for the sake of their people. He studied with them the prophecy of Ezekiel (Ezek 3: 33- 43) and the Gospel of Saint John (10) and much of the Epistles of Saint Paul, about ministry and from where comes the offence.

He also talked with them about the Church, her character, sacraments, services and pastoral care, the monastic life, celibacy and also the history of the lives of the heroes of faith and saints of monastic life.

In all that he used active teachings, not pointing, from near or far, at the false father.

Gradually their minds and hearts were opened. Day after day, prayer after prayer, study after study, so much so that after almost one year they started to ask that if those were the characters of the true Christian Church and the true Christian Shepherd, what about the false father and his authority, papacy, miracles, curses and blessings ?

The Bishop answered : *"You must discern this yourselves. The Lord will give you wisdom and enlightenment and He inspired them to be liberated from his domination."*

Therefore, if the son makes you free, you shall be free indeed. (John 8: 36) .

### **The False Father requests a Reply Letter to his Application for Affiliation to the Church of Alexandria.**

The Bishop received a telegram commanding him to come to the "Coptic Home Kisumu", signed by "His Holiness".

It was discovered later that the Church Elders in Nairobi received the same order, to come to Kisumu, to put themselves into his hands.

They agreed to travel together on the following Saturday. On their arrival they were received by a great number of people, waiving green tree branches, beating drums and singing in the Luo language.

Such an event was a very good opportunity to spend the whole evening in teaching the people, as they were gathered and asked the Bishop to speak to them. But the false father became angry and left the place in his car. It was said that he returned very late that night, completely drunk.

On Sunday the people gathered in great numbers. There were approximately six hundred and the false father began the service. But suddenly he stopped the service and started to attack the Bishop over the loud speakers. He said :

EAST AFRICAN POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

**TELEGRAM**

B or C

PREFIX	OFFICE OF ORIGIN	WORDS	DATE & T.H.I.	SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS
63KSM 23	Kisumu	17	3rd 1220	
RECEIVED AT: 1410		BY: f		SENT AT: BY:
TO: Bishop Markos Box 21570 Nairobi		OFFICE		DATE STAMP 3 76 KENYA
FOLD		FOLD		
You are requested to report Coptic				
home Kisumu Friday 5th				
His Holiness				
ANY ENQUIRY REGARDING THIS TELEGRAM SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THIS FORM AND IF POSSIBLE THE ENVELOPE.				

TAI



*"Do you see this Bishop who came from Egypt ? He is a liar, do not accept him or deal with him. He promised to give me money which he brought from Egypt to distribute to you all. He also promised to build a basilica for us in our land and to buy a ticket for me to go to Egypt to be ordained patriarch because I am Coptic. Because he promised and did not fulfil, I am requesting him in front of you all to give me a written reply to my application for affiliation which I handed to the visitor Bishop from Egypt."* He was speaking in Luo and one of his men was translating.

Then he invited some of his people to stand and church recite his own story about his serious disease and how he was healed by a touch from the false father or his shadow.

The Bishop asked one of the people if this was true and, after a period of silence, his answer was that the false father put those words in the mouth of the people to say so .... and if they did not ...!

Then the false father tried to stir up the people against the Bishop, saying : *"Ask him why he did not send me to Egypt, why he did not give me an answer to my application to affiliate to the Church of Egypt ?"*

The Bishop found support from the Church Elders who knew him well from the prayer and study meetings in Nairobi. They assured him, saying : *"Fear not, we shall not allow anybody to harm you. But try to answer his questions."*

The Bishop stood, took the microphone and said : *"As for the affiliation application, it has been carried by His Grace Bishop Bakhomious to His Holiness Pope Shenouda. We had a meeting with His Holiness Pope Shenouda before my return to Nairobi and His Holiness has instructed that the way of spiritual, theological and doctrinal education is the only way of affiliation to the Coptic Church. All aims of affiliation should be spiritual and for the sake of service to the people and preparing them for the eternal life. The Church can also establish development projects to help the jobless in the vocational training to make them productive and self-supporting in an honourable way."*

*But concerning the other matters (which the false father claims), truly, we have never promised any of such things and we have repeatedly asked him for full examination and thorough study of all these matters in good time."*

The false father asked for a written reply to his application which the Bishop promised to send.

## **V THE SUMMONS :**

**The Secretary of the National Council of Churches of Kenya summons the Coptic Bishop.**

Only a few weeks later the Bishop received a message from the office of the National Council of Churches of Kenya, summoning him for consultation on an important subject. The Secretary asked him to write a full report on his activities, movements and services. He mentioned that he knew about his teachings among the pastors of the African Independent Pentecostal Church and also about his visits among the African Independent Churches.

The Bishop asked about the importance of this report and was told that he was residing in Kenya due to a work permit issued by the NCKK and that the Council should therefore know everything about his services in monthly reports.

The Bishop answered that he was sending regular reports to the Head of the Coptic Church in Egypt, but the Secretary insisted that they should receive monthly reports, otherwise they would be considering cancelling his work permit.

The Bishop left the meeting, praying to the Lord for means to register the Coptic Church in Kenya, as this was the only way of settling the Church and its services.

To avoid aggravating the situation, the Bishop presented a brief report about his services, mainly to the Copts, and about his teachings among the African Churches.

**An Evangelical (Protestant) Mission is looking for a Preacher and a Medical Doctor in a Desert Mission Station.**

Four months later the Bishop received another summons from the Secretary of the Kenyan Council of Churches which said : There is a Protestant foreign mission in the area of Turkana (a desert area in the extreme north of Kenya, towards the Ethiopian border, and it would take two days or more by car to reach the mission) and they are looking for a preacher and a medical doctor. They offer him a house and a car to cover the area for his preaching and to run the clinic. They are going to pay him a nominal monthly allowance, such as for missionaries, which amounts to 600 Kenyan Shillings (about \$60).

The Bishop was astonished at such an offer and asked for whom this job should be. The Secretary answered : "*For you... I advise you to accept this offer. You are able to preach and you are a doctor.*" The Bishop asked for some time to think about the offer as well as to seek the approval of the Head of the Church in Egypt, His Holiness Pope Shenouda. The Secretary objected, saying that there was no need for this as he was serving Kenya and that he should receive instructions from Kenyans.

The Bishop understood that the Council of Churches wanted to see that he had to serve the Kenyans according to their wishes. It also was clear that the residence permit, issued by the Council to the Bishop, was used as a means of pressure to send him away from Nairobi and from the fields of mission opened by God for him ..

**VI RESPONSES :**

**Who will harm you if you become followers of what is good ?**

**But even if you should suffer for righteousness" Sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled, but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you with meekness and fear (1Pet 3: 13 - 15) .**

A few days later the Lord, in his miraculous ways, opened the door for the registration of the Coptic Church in Kenya. Joshua Kiarei (who was working with the Bishop in translating the Liturgy into Kiswahili)

arrived late for an appointment to work on the translation. When asked for the cause of this delay he answered : *"I was helping an African Church Leader to register his Church with the Kenyan Government."*

The Bishop became very excited and asked : *"Is it possible to register the Coptic Church officially with the Government nowadays ?"* and he answered : *"It is difficult but possible."* He added that he had close relations with the officers at the Registrar of Societies.

The Bishop decided to go with him immediately to begin the formalities of registration.

### **In the Offices of the Registrar of Societies**

The officer welcomed them warmly and explained to them that the formalities were quite complicated. Among other things the approval of seven ministries of different Government departments was needed if the Church was originating in a foreign country. Also necessary was a constitution for the Church.

The Bishop did not possess any legal knowledge, but the formalities were progressing with God's power.

He received the application forms and an example of a constitution. Then the Bishop was summoned by some official Government departments and questioned about the purpose for the establishment of a Coptic Church in Kenya. The Lord gave him grace in the eyes of the officials who recommended the registration. One of the officials was fascinated by the story of St. Mark and asked for books about the life of St. Mark and the history of the Coptic Church.

### **The Registration of the Coptic Orthodox Church**

#### **The Apostolic See of St. Mark**

In March 1977 the Bishop received an official certificate from the Kenyan Government, acknowledging the Coptic Orthodox Church as an official Church in Kenya and it was published in the official Kenyan Gazette.

The Bishop applied for a work permit on the strength of the registration of the Coptic Church and obtained a five - year permit,

only a few weeks before the expiry of the permit through the Kenyan Council of Churches.

Form C

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE SOCIETIES RULES, 1968  
(Rule 4)

CERTIFICATE OF REGISTRATION No. 8245.

I, **JAMES ALLAN**, **ASSISTANT** Registrar of Societies, hereby

certify that I have this day registered the **COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH**

**THE APOSTOLIC SEE OF SAINT MARK**

under section 10 of the Societies Act.

Dated at **NAIROBI** this **21st** day of **MARCH** 19 **77**

  
Assistant Registrar of Societies

Opk 1012-50-4/75

He praised God, who had guided his steps for the establishment of the Coptic Church, for her progress and growth, without hindrances.

## VII - NEW BEGINNINGS :

**The Start of the Services in Ukambani Area :**

Archbishop Joshua Kiarei organised a visit to the area of Ukambani

and the village of Kinyui, where he was leading an African Church called "The Holy Church of Apostolic Evangelistic Faith".

The road to these areas winds through mountains and is tarred for the first 60 kms, up to the small town of "Tala". Then the road becomes no more than a dirt track. During the dry season cars can travel along at about 5 km per hour a round mountain road, but during the rainy season the road is impossible.



The wooden church and H.G. bishop Morcos beside church Members as well some visitors from Egypt and South Africa

The Bishop found a small wood and mud church and next to it a new church building growing, made out of stone, with walls one foot high. The land allocated to the church was extensive.

The first encounter with the people of Ukambani was joyful and comforting, the people of the Akamba tribe being simple, peaceful, spiritual and humble. The small church was filled with elders, men, women, youth and children. Those who did not find any place inside

were watching and listening from the doors and windows.

The Bishop spoke to them about the Coptic Church which is also holy and based on the evangelistic faith through the Apostles. He told them the story of the Apostle and evangelist St. Mark and they were deeply touched and clapped their hands. One of the elders of the church stood up to lead the people in clapping their hands and stamping the ground with their feet, in what is known as "kilo", whilst shouting "Alleluia". Then they requested that the Bishop from Egypt should come again every Sunday. They collected the offerings (sadaka) and Joshua Kirei took them and put them into his pocket.

The second, third and fourth meetings were even more joyful, due to the good response of the people to the teachings and their joy in them.

They listened to the teachings about the seven sacraments of the Church with great eagerness and happiness. They expressed their belief that the teachings that came from Egypt were truly apostolic and original. They had not been baptised by immersion and many of them had not been baptised at all, but their heart's desire was to be baptised by immersion, according to the Bible.

When they heard about the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord, they said: "*We have been deprived of the true Communion for many years, for Joshua did not do anything but conduct preaching and singing meetings.*"

During a later visit the Bishop brought with him some Holy Bread (Kourban) which he had made himself, as he had nobody to help him. He explained to the people the meaning of the Bread, the symbols and drawings stamped on it. They were touched to know about the five holes in the bread, which symbolise the wounds in the Body of Christ on the Cross. They requested to be given chances to confess and to partake of the Body and Blood of the Lord. The Bishop told them to be patient, so that their teachings and instruction in the doctrine and history of the Church should be completed.

He used to visit them on Saturday or Sundays, two to three times every month. He started the Liturgy Service by praying with them,

parts of the Catechumens Liturgy in Kiswahili.

In spite of the difficult roads to reach these areas, the joy and comfort in working with these people gave much encouragement, power and continuity.

### **The African Independent Pentecostal Church requests the Continuation of teaching its Pastors.**

The National Chairman of that church (who is also a Parliament Member) came to extend his congratulations to the Bishop and asked him to resume his lectures to the pastors of this church, as it had been before the Bishop's admission to hospital and his travels to Egypt. He stated that the elders and the administration of the church were requesting this as well.

The Bishop used to travel to Kinyoho (a town about 50 km from Nairobi) four times a week to lecture to more than fifty pastors of this church.

### **The African Orthodox Churches in Maseno request a share in the Teaching.**

When still alone, the Bishop gave the area of Maseno of his time to teach and prepare them for baptism. As it is more than 400 km from Nairobi, he used to spend one full week at a time there, for the Catechumens Liturgy and to lecture to the youth.

**Your Handwriting is Protestant ...**

**Your Handwriting is Catholic ...**

During one of the Bishop's lectures to the youth class in Maseno it happened that one of the youths said to the other : "*Your handwriting is Protestant.*" and the second youth said to the first : "*But your handwriting is Catholic.*"

The Bishop was surprised and asked them what they meant by that and where the difference was. He was told that the Protestant teaches writing letters upright whilst the Catholic teaches writing letters bending to the right.



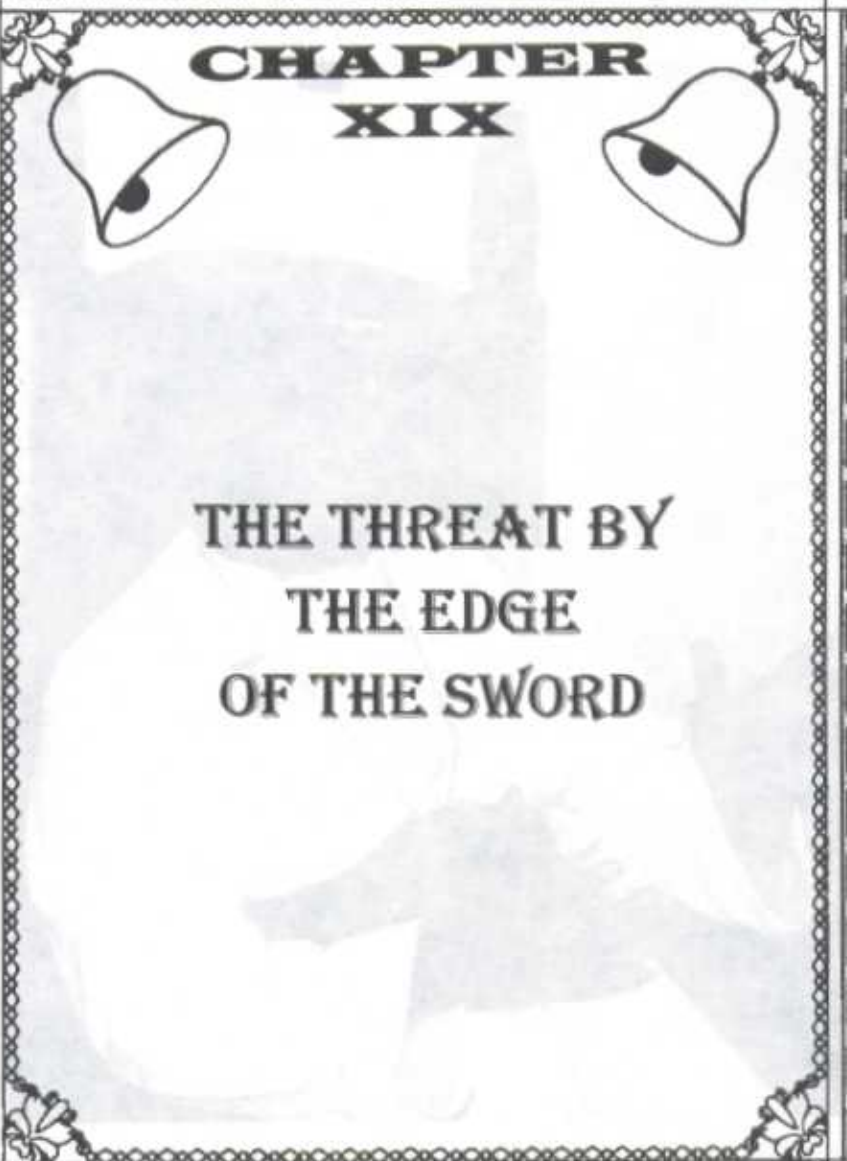
The Bishop examined this issue carefully and knew that confrontations between the different denominations in Africa was strong and everyone was trying to convert as many as possible to his own doctrine. Thus they used to try and detect the denomination of a Christian solely by looking at his handwriting.

The Bishop laughed at this and thought : *"We do not think that we will enter the continent with a third kind of handwriting. But rather through God's grace shall we enter with the spiritual way of service to these people, which is also the correct orthodox way."*

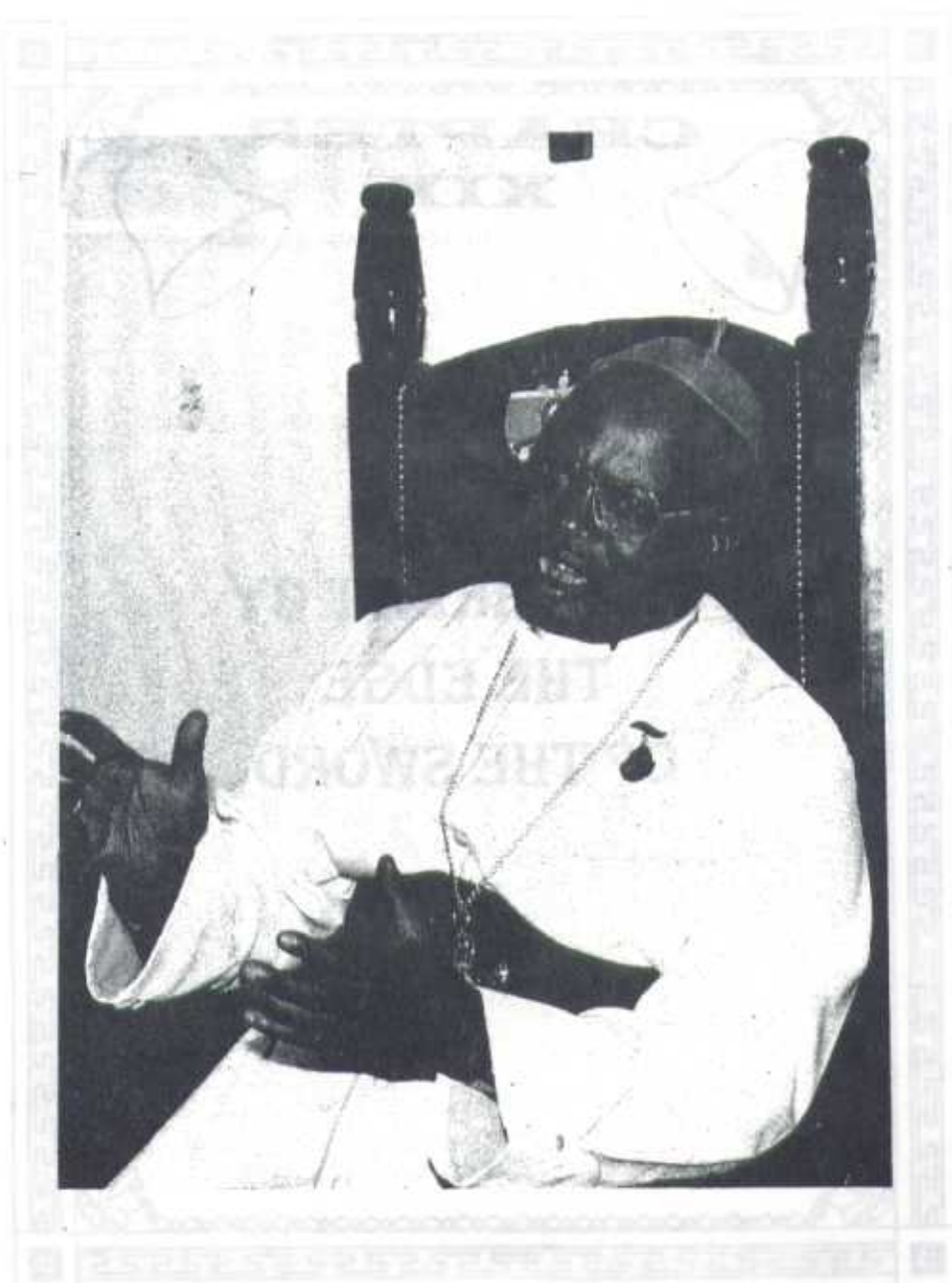




**CHAPTER  
XIX**



**THE THREAT BY  
THE EDGE  
OF THE SWORD**



**The False father in fornt of the T.V. cameras**

**But not with your sword or with your bow .. Now therefore, fear the Lord serve Him in sincerity and in truth ... (Joshua 24: 12- 14).**

The prayer meetings and spiritual gatherings for theological education and Bible studies continued to be well attended on a regular basis at the residence of the Bishop.

There were twenty from the leadership of the Holy Ghost Coptic Church as well as five from the pastors of the African Independent Pentecostal Church.

This caused many problems with the false father who tried by all means to hinder his men from attending these studies. However, all his attempts failed, as the elders were most eager to learn as they had found life and spirit in the Words of the Lord.

The false father even tried to provoke the wives of the elders into hindering them from attending, but the wives themselves were interested to hear what was being taught. Although they presented regular reports to the false father, they loved the prayers and the way of the Coptic teachings and became regular attendants. Later they revealed that the false father prefers to lead ignorant and blind people more than learned and educated people who can see their ways clearly.

The false father began to launch many attacks and plots against the Coptic Bishop.

He invited the Bishop and all the elders from Nairobi to attend the services he organised at his Kisumu headquarters on the first weekend of October 1976. He also ordered them to attend a meeting to discuss what he called "important matters".

The Bishop found that this was a suitable time to spend a week in Maseno so he drove there on Saturday.

Then, when he arrived at the new Coptic home in Kisumu, he was welcomed and given a room to rest and spend the night.

The false father came to see him in that room, angrily shouting :

"Where is your God? Is He present? You say God, God, God, but God for us is money. If he is present, we should have money!" Then he left the room.

The Bishop sat in the room, waiting for the rest of the Church leaders to arrive. But time went by and none came. He was given some food and then read his Bible by the light of a kerosene lamp, as it was now 9.00pm.

Suddenly, with a great noise, his door was opened forcibly and the false father entered the room, totally drunk and agitated. He asked the Bishop to follow him. The Bishop hesitated and said that he was alright where he was and that he did not need to go anywhere else. The false father's voice became harsher and louder, repeatedly ordering the Bishop to follow him.

The Bishop stood up, making the sign of the cross and uttering the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whilst walking, he kept mentioning the names of the miracle makers, St. George, St. Mina, St. Mark, Abu Sefein (the saint of the two swords). He continued to follow the false father, who led him to his private residence, consisting of a reception area and a bedroom.

The false father locked the door and put the key into his pocket. Then he ordered the Bishop to sit in the reception area.

The Bishop sat and prayed, knowing that he would be facing a difficult situation.

The false father, together with his deacon, entered his bedroom and locked the door. The Bishop could hear them talk in the Luo language and then some noise from above the ceiling.

A short time later the door opened again and the false father appeared, carrying a big sword. He took it out of its sheath, raised it and pointed it towards the neck of the Bishop.

There was no movement and a period of silence. Then the Bishop took his key bunch out of his pocket and started to move them, whilst raising his heart in prayer to God: **But you, O Lord, do not be far from me. O my strength, hasten to help me! Deliver me from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. Save me from**

**the lion and from the horns of the wild oxen. You have answered me (Psalm 22: 19 - 22) .**

Then the Bishop said : "*What are you doing ?*" and the false father answered : "*You have not obeyed me in what I have ordered. Someone like you, who disobeys my orders, should not live.*"

The Bishop tried to explain that he did not "disobey", but that these orders were beyond his capabilities. But the false father said : "*You are lying. You refuse to send me to Egypt to be ordained patriarch and you refuse to build the basilica in my land. And you did not give me the millions of shillings which were sent to me by Pope Shenouda. I have killed already three people and you will be the fourth. Your body will be put in a secret place where nobody will ever find it.*"

The Bishop began to recite the names of the Lord Jesus Christ and of the Saints and became confident and peaceful. He said : "*I am not afraid of your threats or of this sword.*" The false father became angry and shouted : "*This sword is very sharp and one stroke on your neck is enough to kill you ...!*"

*"I am not afraid. If it is truly the Will of God that I should repose from this world today, then I thank you for helping me to go to Heavens. But if it is not the Will of God then, before you can harm me, he will cut the arm with which you hold this sword."*

The false father was shaken and became afraid. It seemed that he believed what had been said. During all this, his deacon was standing motionless in one corner of the room. This deacon, by the way, later became an active sub-deacon in our Church in Nairobi.

The false father lowered the sword, sat on a chair facing the Bishop and asked the Bishop to repeat what he had said. The Bishop did not clearly remember what he had said and what exactly the false father wanted. The false father said : "*Say what you said, say it now ! ... You said that if it were not the Will of God that I should kill you ...*"

The Bishop suddenly remembered what he had said and repeated with determination : "*Truly, if it is not the Will of God that you should kill me, then the Lord will cut your arm like this,*" and he hit his left arm with his right hand.

"It is true then ?"

"Yes, it is true, it is written in the Holy Bible."

**Do not Fear Those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul .  
(Math 10: 28).**

and also

**Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature ...  
These signs will follow those who believe. In my name they will  
cast out demons, they will speak with new tongues, they will take  
up serpents and if they drink anything deadly, it by no means  
hurts them. (Mark 15: 15- 18) .**

The false father said : *"I do not remember having read such words !  
Do you mean to say that nobody can harm you ?"*

*"No... Nobody can harm those who go out to serve the Gospel and  
whose mission is to proclaim the Kingdom of God."*

The false father changed the subject, saying : *"Do you not see that  
this sword is beautiful and decorated, even my name is carved on its  
handle."*

*"I do not see anything beautiful in this sword."*

*"How can you say that ? It is a gift from an Indian friend, who  
brought it specially for me from India !"*

The Bishop said : *"You say that you are a holy man and you give  
yourself the title of 'Holy Father' (Baba Mtakatifu) . Certainly your  
friend has chosen the wrong gift for you. The sword is a tool of  
killing, it is truly unsuitable for you to use it to threaten or to kill.  
You, as a church leader, should serve the people and lead them to the  
salvation of their souls and not kill them. Your biggest mistake is that  
you do not read the Holy Bible. Because God's servants use another  
kind of sword, which is the Word of God. For the Bible says :*

**For the word of God is living and powerful and sharper than  
any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and  
spirit and of Joints and Marrow and is a discerner of the thoughts  
and intents of the heart. (Hebrews 4:12)**

*"You are very talkative, enough, enough !"* and with that the false father put the sword back into its sheath, gave it to his disciple and opened the door, setting the Bishop free. The Bishop went out, praising God with all his heart, his mind and soul.



The False father looking at the pictures in the Keraza magazine 1976 .

**We, the Africans, strongly shake the closed Box to know what is Inside**

The next morning, Sunday, the false father started his service as usual and did not attack the Bishop, but said : *"I have shaken the Bishop terribly and have found that he does not fear and he was not shaken. This Bishop is equal to those Bishops I ordained. But he may be a little higher than them, and I will be ordained patriarch and all of us are going to be higher than him in rank !"*

The Bishop heard all this, but did not answer. He did not take part in the service, neither with his mind nor his senses, as he was only waiting for the moment when he could leave this place where he had had such bad experiences just the day before.

The Bishop enquired about the Church Elders from Nairobi and was told that none of them had come because the false father forbade it, so that he could be alone when threatening the Bishop with his sword.



## KENYA POSTS AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

## TELEGRAM

B or C

PREFIX	OFFICE OF ORIGIN	WORDS	DATE & T. H. I.	SERVICE INSTRUCTIONS
KSM	MASENO	14	1/16/65	
RECEIVED AT: 0835		BY: G	SENT AT: BY:	
TO: ANTON MARKOS Box 21570 NAIROBI.		OFFICE DATE STAMP KENYA POSTS BOARD NAIROBI J NO KENYA		
FOLD				
FATHER JOHN PESA COPTIC CHURCH DEAD TODAY NIGHT COMP.				
ANY ENQUIRY REGARDING THIS TELEGRAM SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY THIS FORM AND IF POSSIBLE THE ENVELOPE.				

CPD

TAI

The false father uses all means to summon anybody up to claiming his own death as it appears in this Telegramme

The Bishop could not continue to stay in the area of Maseno, but returned to Nairobi trying to forget the painful experiences.

The Elders of the Kenyan Coptic Church show sympathetic Feelings.

The Bishop spent a few days alone in his residence, not being able to find anybody to share his feelings with or who would listen to his complaints. He did not dare to talk about what had happened to any of the Egyptian Copts, as they would be scared and frightened. He spent

his time in prayers and meditation and with the Bible, to forget and find comfort.

He received a phone call from one of the Kenyan Coptic Elders, showing his surprise at the Bishop's presence in Nairobi earlier than expected. The Bishop answered that it was due to some unpleasant events which had happened in Kisumu.

The Elders gathered for prayers and Bible study and when they heard what had happened to the Bishop at the hands of the false father, they said as if with one voice : *"He did that to you as well ? We feel very sorry and ashamed to have let you go alone."*

*"Do not be disturbed,"* they added, *"every one of us went through similar experiences, even though it did not go to this extent. We know that he keeps a number of swords under the roof of his bedroom. We never imagined that he would treat you like this."* Thus they encouraged the Bishop, showing him sympathy and love.

#### **The Archbishop of the African Independent Pentecostal Church prohibits the Coptic Teachings .**

The leaders of this Church had organised a large gathering in Guthunguri, a town about 70km away from Nairobi, in the Kikuyu land.

They invited the Secretary General of the National Council of Churches of Kenya to open the meeting. They also invited the Coptic Bishop. Once the Secretary General and the Bishop, who travelled together, arrived, there were some who began saying : *"We do not want this Bishop to be here !"*

There was a clear rift between the religious leadership and the administrative management of the Church. The Pastors of the Church and many of the Elders strongly defended the teachings they were receiving from the Coptic Bishop, whilst the Bishops and Archbishops insisted on immediate prohibition of his teachings. Also, several of their Bishops decided that he should leave their meeting.

The Secretary of the Council of Churches took the Bishop aside and told him : *"For the sake of peace as well as for your own safety you should leave this place immediately."*

"How can I go back without a car?"

"I will give you my car to go to Nairobi and you will leave the keys in my office."

"I do not know the way back!"

"I will draw a map for you so that you will be back before sunset."

The Bishop was given the keys of the car and returned home. Whilst driving he recited in his heart the words of the Lord Jesus through which he warned us: "You, O Lord, know that I do not deserve your words which you said in the Sermon on the Mountain:"

**Blessed are you when they revile and persecute you and say all kinds of evil against you falsely. For my sake, rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Mathew 5:11-12)**

Once the news of these happenings reached those who received the Bishop's teachings, they came to offer their apologies and they regularly attended the prayer meetings and the Bible studies at his residence.

### **A large African Independent Church in Zaire invites the Bishop to visit**

The Bishop received the visit of an old Swiss friend, whom he had known in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, many years ago, whilst still practising medicine. This friend, Rev. Wilfried H. Flade, was from a Swiss missionary family that greatly loves the Coptic and Ethiopian Churches. Rev. Flade's late grandfather was the scholar who translated the Bible into the Amharic language early in the century, through the encouragement and support of Emperor Haile Sellasie I.

The Bishop's Swiss friend was overjoyed at the ordination of the former doctor as a Bishop. He also passed on messages of congratulation from the spiritual head of the Kimbanguist Church (the Church of Jesus Christ on Earth through the Prophet Simon Kimbangu). The spiritual head of this Church was His Eminence Joseph Diangienda Kuntima.

The relationship between the Coptic Bishop and this Church had started at the time that he was working in Ethiopia and his friend Flade was teaching at the Kimbanguist Theological College in Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire.



**The spiritual head of the Kimbanguist church H.E. Joseph Diangeonda next to him his wife and the Bishop in the church celebration 1977.**

At that time, in 1973, Flade spent a holiday in Addis Ababa and expressed to the Bishop the need of the Kimbanguists to learn about the Holy Communion, as they knew nothing about the sacrament and did not practice it.

The doctor then wrote a few pages covering the establishment of the sacrament and its biblical references, the rite and its importance. Rev. Flade translated this into French and, on his return to Kinshasa, handed it to the spiritual head of the Church. Since then the Church there organises and practises this sacrament regularly.

The head of the Church did not forget this contribution and when he learnt of the ordination of the doctor as Bishop for African Affairs in

Nairobi, he invited him to come and be introduced to their Church.

The Bishop felt that the Hand of the Lord was leading him to other new places in Central Africa, so that he may give witness of the first Apostolic African Church.

He sent his thanks and acceptance to the spiritual head and proposed January 1977 as the time for his visit.

### **The Kenyan Deacon Joseph leaves the Services of the Coptic Church**

One night very late, towards the end of 1976 the Bishop received a telephone call from the Deacon Joseph Omanyo, who lived in Maseno, near the Equator. The Deacon spoke of his fear of the people of the area, claiming that they wanted to attack him and that he would leave the mission, leave the keys with the watchman and go to the house of his parents in Bussia, close to the Ugandan border. He requested his certificate of graduation from the Theological College in Anba Ruwes, Cairo, which the Bishop had brought with him from Egypt.

Later the Bishop learnt that the Deacon had caused much harm to some of the people in his area, due to his irresponsible behaviour. He therefore preferred to escape instead of facing the people who would hold him until he corrected his mistakes.

Joseph used his certificate to obtain employment with the Kenyan Government as a primary school teacher, in the town of his parents and is still working as a school teacher until now.

He very seldom visits the Coptic Church in Nairobi or one of its branches, and only for short visits but not for prayers or Holy Communion.

### **Concentration on the Catechumens Classes in three Areas**

After Joseph had left the service of the Church, the Bishop found himself alone in the vast country of Kenya. He used to divide his services between three areas, the Equator 'Maseno' area, the Ukambani area and Nairobi, where he taught the Elders of the Kenyan Coptic Church and the African Independent Pentecostal Church.

He also took care of the Coptic Egyptians by visiting them, organising Bible studies, Sunday schools and liturgies.

He felt lonely and longed to be able to share with other servants of God the many tasks and the hard work necessary to make the service fruitful.

However, he continued alone for nineteen months, from January 1976 to July 1977, when the first group of monks arrived to assist him in Kenya and Zaire.

### **A precious Lesson in handling the Head of the Church's official papers with Care**

The men of the African Orthodox Church realised that the Bishop had cancelled the work permit issued on behalf of their Church and that they no longer had any hold over him. They fought between themselves and one accused the other for severing the relations between the Bishop and their Church.

They started to use tricks and crooked means to obtain money and authority from the Coptic Church in Kenya. For these purposes they handed many forged documents to the Bishop. The Bishop became extremely careful in handling these people.

The late Bishop Samuel used to correspond with some of those who claimed to be Copts or Orthodox and tried to open the way for many young Africans to go to Egypt on scholarships, to come back to Kenya or Uganda as servants of the Church.

They used the official letterhead of the Patriarchate or the Bishopric of Ecumenical and Social Services. When receiving a letter from Bishop Samuel, they covered the contents of it and photocopied it, thus selling scholarships at high prices. Such forged letters were used in many instances on behalf of Kenyan and Ugandan youth who went to Egypt for studies which they never completed.

Since that time the Bishop has been taking care as to whom he sent a letter on the official Church's letterhead and he used blank sheets of paper when writing to people whom he does not completely trust.

## **Using the Method of writing to the False Father in the Hope that the Lord may change Him**

After the experience of the sword, the Bishop did not think it wise to continue dealing closely with the false father, but rather tried to avoid contact with him as he continued to request enormous amounts of money, using pressure to achieve his goals.

However, the men of the Kenyan Coptic Church earnestly requested the Bishop to keep their relations intact, even at a distance. This would make their dealings with the false father easier whilst hoping that he would change morally and spiritually. The Bishop shared these feelings and hopes and decided to consecrate a period of two weeks for fasting and praying for the salvation of the false father's soul and repentance.

The Bishop recited the story of the repentant saint Moses the Black, who was changed through the Holy Spirit and became a saint after having been a notorious thief.

Twenty of the Coptic Elders (former bishops and archbishops) shared in this fasting and praying.

The Bishop started to frequently write to the false father, sending him spiritual messages, inviting him to know the Lord Jesus Christ and to change from the old to the new and to be renewed in the image of his Creator.

**But be transformed by the reviewing of your mind, that you may prove what is good and acceptable and the perfect will of God (Rom 12:2)**

**Pray for us brethren, that the word of the Lord any run swiftly and be glorified just as it is with you. and that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, for not all have faith. But the Lord is faithful who will establish you and guard you from the evil one. (II Thessalonians 3:1-3)**

Many months passed and the Bishop and many of the Kenyan Copts

were hoping to see a sign of improvement in the behaviour of the false father.

The Bishop wrote many spiritual messages, speaking of love, encouragement and hope in his repentance, but for this man it was clear that : "*Faith is not for all*".

The Kenyan Copts organised a visit to the false father in Kisumu, imagining that they saw signs of improvement in him. They begged the Bishop to accompany them, promising that they were all going to speak to the false father, boldly rejecting his means and ways and his dealings with people. And should he refuse to listen, they would leave his church and join the true Coptic Church.

The Bishop hesitated, but after persisting requests and the hope of saving the false father, he agreed to accompany them.

When the Bishop arrived in Kisumu, he knew that the Elders were delayed (Later the Bishop was to learn that the false father had again hindered them from travelling so as to have the Bishop on his own).

The Bishop was received very warmly and given a room to spend the night with them in teachings. There were about 200 women, youths and children. The false father stood up and delivered a long speech which the Bishop could not understand as nobody translated for him.

### **The Poison in the Food**

They brought boiled fish for the Bishop's supper. When the Bishop tasted the fish he detected a metallic and bitter aftertaste and, upon lifting the fish from the plate, discovered a quantity of yellow Arsenic powder, which he recognised from his toxicology studies. The bread that he was served was not poisoned, so he ate some, read the Bible, prayed and went to bed.

In the yard, the people started to beat the drums, to dance and to sing loudly. The songs they sang were unfamiliar to the Bishop and they continued until the early morning as if celebrating a certain occasion.

In the morning the Bishop left his room to find the false father



coming to ask about his health and about his stomach. The Bishop answered that he was well and wondered why the false father should be interested in his stomach. The false father said : "*Nothing, nothing. But I was told that you did not eat well yesterday.*" "*No, but I ate well enough. Did I not tell you that the Lord Jesus told his disciples who went for Evangelism :*"

**And if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them (St. Mark 16:18)**

The false father answered : "*Do you mean that we poisoned your food ? No, no, I do not like such rumours !*" The Bishop said : "*Even if it was so, it would not harm me, as it is said in the Bible.*"

Then the false father ordered to open the big gate of the Coptic home to receive the people for the Sunday service.

During a quiet moment the Bishop took his small bag, went into his car and drove out of the gate to the main road. The false father and his followers ran after him, shouting : "*Father, Father, come back, we want you, come ... !*"

But the Bishop never came back again. Later he learned that that night the false father had stood among his people, telling them that this Bishop was disobedient and that he had poured all his curses on him and that he would surely die during the night and he also asked his people to pray and sing the funeral songs. So that was the reason behind their singing and dancing...

When the people realised that the Bishop was not going to be harmed, they stopped their singing, knowing that the false father's prophecy would not be fulfilled.





**The people started to gather in the new coptic home to attend the Sunday services under the leadership of the false father - 3 of his wives appear on the lefthand side of the picture .**



## CHAPTER

## XX

# THE WORD'S POWER

O God of knowledge and Giver of wisdom, who uncovers the deep things from darkness and gives the word to the preachers of the Gospel with great power; Who, out of Your goodness, called Paul - who was a persecutor for a long time - to be a chosen vessel. With this You were pleased, that he be an Apostle, one elect, and a preacher of the Gospel of Your kingdom, O Christ our God. Now also we entreat You, O God, Lover of mankind, grant us and all Your people an unoccupied mind, a pure understanding, that we may learn and understand how profitable are Your Holy teachings, which have now been read to us.

(From the Secret prayers of the Pauline Epistle in the Holy Liturgy)

## **The Word's Power**

The Bishop experienced the power of the Word of God on the people of three tribes of Kenya whom he served, as well as on the men of the Kenyan Coptic Church and on the "archbishop" Joshua Kiarie.

He needed tremendous energy to prepare spiritual subjects and sermons, he needed time for prayers, for concentration and meditation, and for the study of the Word of God from the Bible and many other sources.

The library of the Church in Kenya was very limited and he added to it as much as he could but it was small, compared to the large libraries of the Mother Church in Egypt.

He was troubled by many thoughts : were there any results for his continuous travels, his teachings and sermons, his lectures, youth meetings and Sunday schools?. He was on the verge of despair and wanted to turn his back on all this, but mainly because there was nobody to share his hopes and beliefs with. However, the words of Isaiah inspired him :-

**So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth. It shall not return to me void but shall accomplish what I please and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:11)**

**For as the rain comes down and the snow from heaven and do not return there but water the earth and make it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower and bread to the eater. (Isaiah 55:10)**

## **Within the Bush**

Whenever the Bishop drove the Church car for many hours, over mountains, through forests full of thorns and thistles, over lands stretching to the horizon, he often felt bored and fatigue invaded his soul. At those moments he returned home, to be disciplined by Isaiah the Prophet :-

**For you shall go out with Joy and be led out with peace. The**

**mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you and all the fields shall clap their hands. (Isaiah 55:12)**

Whenever the Bishop arrived at the tribal churches, in the mountains, he found simple Africans, full of happiness and joy, receiving him with songs and drums and waving their hands, so that he forgot his heavy soul and his thoughts about the hardness of the way and the difficult service and he found himself clapping his hands and waving to them happily. He often thought to himself that not only mountains and hills were breaking into songs but also the innocent and simple people of Africa. Is it not true that :-

**Instead of thorns shall come up the cypress tree. And instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree. And it shall be to the Lord for a name for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off. (Isaiah 55:13)**

He started to find many beautiful and spiritual fruits growing amongst the thorns. Fertile soil in the hearts of many men and women, girls and boys. Their comments, their questions and their spiritual ambitions clearly showed that they could bring forth fruit thirty, sixty and hundredfold.

In particular the lives of the Church Saints were touching these people. They were stirring their hearts, moving them to walk in the Saints' ways. They started to attract new members to join the Church for the Catechumen classes although many of those were non believers who did not know anything about Christ or who followed other churches. This showed that these new green shoots were witnessing Christ and that the Lord was adding to the Church everyday those who were saved. (Acts 2:47)

The Bishop realised that the thought of withdrawing from service was sinful and that he should not think about it, neither with his ears nor with his heart. He knew that he could not abandon such simple and pure souls and look for easy service.

He knew that he had to continue on the narrow way despite the difficulties, the obstacles and tribulations.

**Because it is the Hand of the Lord which guides and opens**

these Doors and points at the Place and Time and His Grace which leads, encourages and strengthens and gives Patience and Endurance. But Jesus said to him “no one, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62).



The leaders of the african independant churches, every one of them chooses his dress style and also his own title.

**A true Coptic Deacon is better  
than a false Archbishop**

Almost one year after the beginning of his service among the African church leaders the Bishop started to think about those who surrounded him : patriarchs, popes, archbishops, bishops, ... many of whom gave themselves titles (or were given titles without realising their importance). He asked guidance from God and found the courage to discuss this issue with them, gradually, gently and sensibly, lest he should provoke their anger. His approach being soft, it found

acceptance in their hearts. They started to believe that any true ordination, through the hands of the Bishop, however small, would be more important and more true than any other title or rank obtained without the necessary apostolic succession of the laying of hands.

The greatest response was among the Elders of the Kenyan Holy Ghost Coptic Church, especially the educated ones. Archbishop Kiarie, however, was hesitating and afraid about his position with the people. But later on, after his baptism, he was ordained as a Subdeacon (Reader).



In one of his lectures about the service of the Church in Africa, His Holiness Pope Shenouda said : *"Those people were convinced that a bank note of one dollar is more valuable than a false note of 100 dollars."*

There were wonderful moments, when those patriarchs accepted baptism through immersion in the Coptic Church and thus abandoning their false titles to be ordained as Singer (Psaltos) or Reader (Anagnostis). After five years of theological studies three of them became priests in the Coptic Orthodox Church 1981

### **The Lord sends the Stencil Paper at the proper Time**

**Because your heavenly father knows that you need all these things before you ask for them (Mathew 6:32)**

After one year of teaching, the people of Ukambani were eager to be baptised and to receive Holy Communion. The Bishop promised them a time for the Baptism and to pray the Liturgy in Kiswahili with them in the wooden church in Kinyui. The people were happy and promised to prepare food (Agape) for all to celebrate this occasion.

The Bishop had almost finished typing the Liturgy in Kiswahili. He was typing the last ten pages the day before the Sunday of Baptism and Liturgy when, in late afternoon he discovered that he had run out of stencil paper, with five more pages to still be completed. He called on one of the sons of the Church who worked at the University of Nairobi, Professor Raouf Rostom, but he was unable to help. He suggested to postpone the Baptism and Liturgy but the Bishop did not have the heart to do so as the people were spiritually prepared for this important step in their Christian lives and had also prepared everything for the meal of Agape.

The Bishop went into the garden and raised his heart to God : *"O Lord, all this is because of my weakness and deficiencies. I did not realise the lack of paper at the proper time. Please O Lord, fill my emptiness and correct my mistake so that it should not offende your people who are eagerly waiting for your sacraments."*



Then the Bishop returned to the house, entering through the back door. He noticed a cupboard in the hall, close to the kitchen, which he had never opened before. Full of curiosity he now did so and found some tools and a very high shelf which looked empty. He stretched his hand to find out what was at the bottom of the shelf and felt something. He stepped onto a chair and found a full box of the very same stencil paper that he needed. He also found some electrical equipment which seemed to have been left behind by the previous tenants, also missionaries.

He could barely believe his eyes when he saw the paper, much more than was needed. He praised God who had stretched his hand to give the service what it needed at the appropriate time : "*It is true O Lord, You know our need before we ask for it.*" This Act of God gave him the necessary encouragement to finish typing the Liturgy in Kiswahili. He then prepared all that was necessary for the Ukambani Church Baptism.

### **The Visit to Zaire**

#### **The Coptic Bishop visits Zaire for the first Time**

When the Coptic Bishop accepted the invitation to visit a 20th century African Independent Church in Zaire like the church of 'Kimbanguist', he did not realise that the Lord was opening a door for strong relations between the oldest African (Independent) Church, namely the Coptic Church, and the most recently established Independent Church and one of the largest ones. This is a church following a black prophet called Simon Kimbangu. He was ministering to his people in the Congo during the 1920's, when he was accused by the Belgian colonial authorities of leading a rebellious movement for political independence. He was arrested and tried in front of a military court and sentenced to death. His death sentence however, upon a plea of mercy presented to the King of Belgium, was commuted to life imprisonment.

### **Simon Kimbangu**

Simon Kimbangu was no politician and did not know anything about politics. He had heard a voice telling him to comfort and

shepherd the people. These were his Congolese people who were living in great misery, suffering from the brutality of the Belgian colonialists who humiliated and exploited the people.

This simple and inspired man used to stand on the shores of Lake Nakamba (his birth place) in Lower Zaire, to pray for the people and preaching the Word of God to them. He tended their souls, strengthened their weaknesses and sprinkled them with the water of the lake to heal those who believed in his healing powers. His ministry amongst them was a great blessing and inspired the hearts of thousands.

### **Persecution of Simon's Family and his Followers**

The Belgian authorities put Simon in jail in the Shaba province, a remote area in the east of Zaire. They scattered his three sons, Charl, Joseph and Solomon as well as their mother, 'Mama Mwilu', in the wide lands of Zaire and waged war against his followers everywhere, to such an extent that they almost disappeared.



**The three brothers Charl, Solomon and Joseph the sons of prophet Simon Kimbangu on the stage in the Sunday service 1977. The Bishop sitting next to them and next is the Interpreter Mr. Bena - Silu**

From 1923, when Simon Kimbangu was locked in jail, until 1953, when he died a natural death, he was not seen by any of his family or followers. However, his 30 year imprisonment became a deep inspiration for all those whom his simple preaching had reached.

### **The Followers of Kimbangu**

In 1958, when Zaire obtained its independence, the followers of Kimbangu became an important popular power and established one of the biggest African Independent Churches of our times.

The Kimbanguist Church now is present in seven African countries, namely Zaire, Congo, Angola, Central African Republic, Rwanda, Burundi and Zambia, embracing more than six million followers.

### **Knowing the Establishments and the Activities of the Church**

The Bishop's visit was scheduled for January 1997 and he received a most cordial welcome from the Church, demonstrating their eagerness to get to know the representative of the greatest and oldest Church of the continent.

The spiritual leader of the Church received the Bishop in his room and after they embraced the leader knelt and asked that they begin the relations between their two Churches with prayers. After taking off his shoes, his watch and rings, the spiritual leader prayed deeply in French, also using some words which the Bishop, who prayed in English, could not understand.

After prayers the spiritual leader introduced the members of his family, his "wife" and his children and his protocol men and all sat down for something to drink, as the weather in Zaire is very hot and humid.

The tribal languages of this country are the Kikongo and the Lingala.

### **In the Kimbanguist Theological College**

At that time the Kimbanguist Church did not have a guest house.

Therefore the Bishop was accommodated in one of the residences of the Theological College, situated in the district of Lutendele, about 20km from Kinshasa, on the shores of River Zaire. This river runs between Kinshasa, the capital of Zaire, and Brazzaville, the capital of the Congo.

### **The River Nile is a Twin of the River Zaire**

Geographic scientists affirm that those two rivers are twins, as their waters originate from the same tropical rains that fall in the mountains west of Lake Victoria in Burundi and Rwanda.

The waters running to the east of these mountains gather in Lake Victoria or Lake Albert and are the main sources of the White Nile. They leave Lake Victoria at the town of Jinja in Uganda and from there are called the Victoria Nile. Leaving Lake Albert, the river is called Albert Nile and where both rivers unite, they become Bahr-el-Jabal which, further north is called the White Nile. In the town of Khartoum, in Sudan, the White Nile joins the Blue Nile coming from the Ethiopian source of the river (from Lake Tana, near Bahr Dar), and forms the River Nile which runs north until it empties into the Mediterranean.

The waters running to the west of these tropical mountains form three lakes, Lake Edward, Lake Kivo and Lake Tanganyka. These lakes are connected to each other by a river which becomes River Lualaba, flowing towards the north west. In Kinsangani this river changes direction to the south west and becomes River Zaire (Congo River) which runs south until it empties into the Atlantic Ocean.

### **Warm Feelings from the Students of the Kimbanguist Theological College**

The students and staff of the Theological College showed the Bishop a most unusual welcome, singing beautiful songs in the Kikongo language, saying: *"Such are the honest and true feelings of the heart towards the gathering of the African believers."*

The teaching staff comprised eight members, most of which were from Europe and America. The Dean of the College, a woman from

the Monrovia Swiss Mission, was also the founder of the College which, at that time, had 65 male and female students.

The Bishop was asked to give a lecture about the Coptic Church and their reception of the story of St. Mark, the African Apostle, Evangelist and Martyr was warm.

About his martyrdom they said that both Churches were sharing in the gift of pain and suffering, both had offered and sacrificed for the sake of Christ.

The students brought all sorts of food and fruit to the Bishop, asking him to eat or even to taste it. He welcomed them and visited them in their residences and partook with them of their simple meals, often made of the Kasava plant, called "Manioc" in French. All parts of this plant can be eaten, the roots tasting like potatoes, the leaves like spinach and the stems like green beans.

From the students the Bishop learned the Kikongo and Lingala terms of greetings, thus pleasing them and they became very friendly towards him.

### **The Spiritual Head of the Church requests Coptic Professors to Teach in the College**

His Eminence, Joseph Diangienda Kuntima, organised a visit to the Theological College to welcome the Bishop. This visit was to be a spiritual, ecclesiastic and academic celebration. The Bishop was asked to speak about the Coptic Church in Egypt in front of the Head of the Church and many of the guests.

His Eminence was very moved and stood up, saying : *"We are in great need to learn from the Mother Church in Africa, the Church of Alexandria. Therefore I would ask the Coptic Bishop to send us two Egyptian Coptic professors to teach our students. We shall welcome them to live among us and to bring to us the original spirituality of the first African Church"*.

The Bishop promised to raise the matter with His Holiness, Pope Shenouda III, whom he trusted to respond in the best way.

### **Face to Face with the Large Cobra**

One evening the Bishop was walking alone in the grounds of the College when suddenly, on the same level as the Bishop's face and very close, a large cobra started waving its head, its tongue protruding. The cobra was hissing and its eyes were focused on the Bishop. The Bishop made the sign of the cross on himself and on the cobra and started backing off slowly. Then he turned and quickly went to inform the students who came and killed the snake. They cut its head, rejoicing, for they were going to roast and eat the snake, as it is a delicacy among them.

### **Huge Gatherings of the Kimbangust People**

The Church arranged for a car, a driver and an escort so that the Bishop could visit all the areas in Zaire where there were huge gatherings of Kimbangusts.



Thousands of the Kimbangust follows Gather under sheds serrounding the vast area of land. In the centre a stage for the preaching . The people proceed in raws to offer thir gifts being money or even in kind, a dove or some fruits.

They travelled to Boma and Matadi, on the shores of the Atlantic Ocean. The people received the Bishop very warmly as the representative of the oldest Church in the continent. They gathered around the Bishop, sitting on seats made of split trees, and listened to the sermon coming from loudspeakers standing on a stage in the centre.

The Bishop spoke at many gatherings, each counting over ten thousand people.

After songs and prayers came the preachings and then, to the sound of the brass band, the people began to dance forward, to put their offerings into large boxes and containers.

The Bishop also visited the mausoleum of Simon Kimbangu and Lake Nakamba. It was on the shore of this lake that the prophet had preached to the people and healed them with its waters.

### **A Speech about Saint Mark in "the Voice of Zaire"**

The Kimbanguist Church organised for the Bishop to give a speech of 40 minutes on the radio, during which he spoke about the Coptic Orthodox Church, its Founder the Apostle St. Mark and its present revival under the present leadership of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III.

The speech was translated into the two main vernaculars and the spiritual leader of the Church commented on the speech, saying that it was an important speech, rich in knowledge, far reaching and inspiring for many, everywhere.

### **Why did the Western Churches hide such an original African Church and its Teachings from Us ?**

The Bishop was invited to give a lecture on the history and theology of the Coptic Church in a Protestant Theological College in Kinshasa which belongs to the Church of Christ in Zaire.

The lecture was attended by hundreds of students and staff, foreign and local. The lecture was comprehensive and explained the Coptic Church and its links with the African continent since old times, through the links of blood and water and the African belonging. The Bishop also answered many questions coming from the students as well as from the teachers.

One of the great African professors stood up, saying : *"We are very happy today and feel enlightened to hear about the Mother Church in Africa, we are happy and proud of such an original Church. My question is : why did the Churches of the colonialists and the Western Churches hide such a Church from us for all these centuries. We need to learn much from this Church about the African Theology. Why did you not come earlier ?"*. This comment found much acceptance amongst the listeners who expressed this by clapping their hands for a long time.

The spiritual head of the Kimbanguists commented on this lecture to the Bishop, saying : *"I would like to congratulate and thank you because on each occasion you give us very rich and suitable teachings"*.

### **Liturgies, Visits and Bible Studies with the Coptic Christians in Kinshasa**

During a visit to the Egyptian Ambassador, the Bishop learned that there were many Coptic families working in the fields of medicine, education and engineering.

There were many spiritual gatherings and they prayed two liturgies, and the Roman Catholic Church allowed them to use one of its smaller churches. The Liturgy was also attended by many of the foreigners living in Kinshasa and the head of the Kimbanguist Church sent many of his choir members to sing at the end of the Liturgy.

### **Farewell Parties for the Bishop**

Many farewell parties were organised for the Bishop, all of them filled with warmth and expressing great love. There were parties organised by the theological group, the theatrical group, the nursing



schools, the choirs, the youth groups and men and women groups.

The Bishop received many gifts made of copper, malachite, ivory and ebony. He gave them in return pictures of St. Mark and Coptic leather crosses.

The Kimbanguist Church is considered to be one of the most organised African Independent Churches and its commitment to spiritual and organisational disciplines is strong.

They are strictly monogamous and no divorce is allowed except for biblical reasons. They do not smoke or drink alcohol and are committed to giving the Tithes to the Church regularly.

All this gives the Church strength and allows it to progress steadily.

**The Spiritual Head welcomes the Idea  
of an Organisation to care for the  
Independent African Churches**

When the Bishop presented the idea of organising a conference for the leaders of the African Independent Churches, His Eminence welcomed the idea and expressed his interest in getting to know the leaders of independent Churches from the East, West, South and North of the continent. He promised to be personally present at any such conference to be organised.

When the Bishop sought his opinion about the venue for such conference, His Eminence said : *"Egypt, of course. We should meet in the place where the Holy Family has stayed and we should take the blessing of the land which was blessed by the feet of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Patriarch Abraham and Sara, Jacob, the Twelve Tribes of Israel, Moses, Jeremiah and St. Mark the Evangelist"*.

At that time the Bishop did not realise that this was God's plan, that is to establish the Organisation of the African Independent Churches in their first Cairo conference in November 1978.



**The Mosolium of prophet Simon Kimbangu in the area of Nakamba in Zaire.  
The Bishop with the Dean of the Kimbanguist Theological College.**



**CHAPTER  
XXI**

**THE FALSE  
FATHER**

## Attempts to save the Reputation of the Coptic Church

The Bishop returned to Nairobi, giving thanks to God for the success of his visit to Zaire and glorifying the Lord in the new relation between the Coptic and Kimbanguist Churches.

However, on his arrival in Nairobi, he was faced with disturbing news and he knew he would need the Lord's wisdom and guidance to deal with it.

The Kenyan newspapers carried news of more offensive actions by the false father, giving the Coptic Church a bad reputation.

For example :

*A Coptic Pastor .... (probably the false father) spent the night in a Nakuru hotel and, in the morning, was arrested by the police at the bus stop for he had stolen the towels and bed linen from the hotel. The items were found in the bag of the pastor.*

## Pastor jailed for stealing a towel

By GEORGE MUHOHO,  
SUNDAY  
NATION Correspondent

A pastor of the Africa Coptic Apostolic Church was jailed for one year yesterday for stealing two bed-sheets and a towel.

The Bishop tried to convince the officials of the Kenyan Government, such as the Registrar of Societies and the Attorney General, to save the reputation of the true Coptic Church of Egypt from this false father. Some officials said that there was not much they could do and suggested that the Bishop file a court case and use the legal channels. But he preferred to put the whole matter into God's Hands, to save the newly established Church in Kenya from offenses.

**But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing. (James 1:4)**

The Bishop decided to be patient and let time work its way, because such difficult matters can only be solved through quiet praying, fasting and waiting for the proper moment for action, which is much better than offensive actions. All the more because the false father was using offensive weapons, influencing the Kenyan officials to believe that he is a Kenyan prophet and the founder of a Kenyan Church.



## **THE REST OF THE STORY**

The struggle against this false father and his actions lasted for full ten years as we shall mention it in its totality, until God's Will saved the Coptic Church from the evils of this man who claimed to be a Coptic Church leader.

### **More offensive Actions from the False Father**

A few months after the news of the robbery of the hotel in Nakuru, the newspapers published articles of a big moral scandal in which the men of the false father's church attacked the Coptic Home in Kisumu and stoned it to save their wives from captivity. The police had to be called to release the women who were locked away under the pretence that they needed prayers and psychological healings.

Even our Churches in Nyanza were reporting that the false father's followers attacked some of the Churches, chasing away the congregations and causing much confusion and damage.

### **All these Churches are Mine**

In the early Eighties began the construction of the Coptic Church of the Holy Virgin Mary in Nyamasaria, near Kisumu (the capital of Nyanza), and Saint Mina's Monastery in Maseno, in the Equator area, was completed.

The false father used to arrive in these places in his luxury car, walk around surrounded by his men and say : *"Let Bishop Markos build and when it is ready we will take it. All these Churches are mine ... my own property ... under my own authority. Let him spend and let him know that I will take all of them from him"*.

These threats incited the Bishop to register all the land in the name of the Coptic Orthodox Church and obtain title deeds before starting to build.

## **A Demonstration against the Bishop during Prayers**

One day the Bishop was leading a spiritual meeting in one of the Coptic Churches in the Kisumu area when the congregation was shocked by the arrival of a big demonstration, led by the false father. He came amidst a crowd carrying loud speakers and they came into the Church shouting loudly and causing much confusion.

The false father spoke over the loud speakers, saying that he was the true Copt and that the Church coming from Egypt was the false one. He said that he was the true Coptic Pope and leader of all the churches ! and that he had to get rid of the false Bishop from Egypt ! He told the Kenyans not to deal with the Bishop and not to receive him. Then he addressed the Bishop, telling him to leave quickly otherwise he would know how to get rid of him.

The Bishop very calmly looked at what was happening and at the angry looks of the false father and his followers. He made the sign of the cross and raised his heart to God to seek wisdom, guidance and patience, as he stood, looking at them breaking the simple wooden chairs, carrying away the pictures of the Saints, the Bibles, Song Books and a box containing gifts and candies, brought by the Bishop for distribution to the people.

The false father threw many insults and accusations against the Bishop in front of everybody, but the Bishop addressed him, saying : *"Can we pray together in this Holy House of God which is established to reconcile man with God and man with man ?"*

The heart of the Bishop was reciting the words of St. Paul to the Hebrews :

But recall the former days in which, after you were illuminated, you endured a great struggle with sufferings: partly while you were made a spectacle both by reproaches and tribulations, and partly while you became companions of those who were so treated: for you had compassion on me in my chains, and joyfully accepted the plundering of your goods, knowing that you have a better and an enduring possession for yourselves in heaven. Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise: for yet a little while, and he who is coming will come and will not tarry, now the just shall live by faith: but if anyone draws back, my soul has no pleasure in him. But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the saving of the soul. (Hebrews 10:32-39)

It was clear that the peaceful stand of the Bishop and the power of the Holy Cross made the false father withdraw with his men, but all the same saying to the Bishop: *"We shall get rid of you. We shall inherit all these buildings. They are ours, in our land!"*

The Bishop said: *"It is the House of God!"*

Once the situation had cleared, the Bishop realised that all the Coptic people had escaped, leaving behind only a few old men and women who were very unhappy with the situation.

They were very sympathetic towards the Bishop. The priests and all the deacons expressed their support and insisted on filing a report with the police. The police however, took the matter lightly, stating that the false father was a magician, a witch doctor, aggressive, and that officials avoided him because he had caused much harm to many of them.



## **Fear in the Life of Gods's Servant**

**For God has not given us the spirit of fear but of power and sound Mind. (2 Timothy 1:7)**

**Fear in the life of the believer or the minister :**

**May Lead to denial of Christ as it happened in the life of the apostle peter in front of a female slave . (Math 26:69-75 - John 18:17+25 - Mark 66:72 - Luke 22:55-62)**

**Or lead to self-centredness, the escape of the believers from facing the world - as the disciples locked themselves for fear of the Jews. (John 20:19)**

**Or lead to the contextualisation of the wrong doctrine, such as the confrontation between St. Paul and St. Peter in Galatia. (Galatians 2:11-15)**

**Out of the eater came something to eat and out of the rough came something sweet . (Judges 14:14)**

Such an accident in the life of the Church was a good occasion for the Bishop to organise spiritual meetings for the deacons of the area and to teach them about the harm of fear in the life of the believer and the minister.

He strengthened them and asked them to continue boldly in their services because the Lord told us in the Holy Bible : **FEAR NOT** 365 times.

Truly, the services continued, many new churches were opened and the Grace of God lead to many new branches due to the eagerness of many Kenyan Groups to have the Coptic Church among them.

**The gradual Revelation of the Truth leads to the Declaration of the Falsehood of the Magician**

The false father did everything he could to publicise himself. He intruded into some television broadcasts, but all who saw these

programmes could easily understand how false he was and the distorted lies he uttered.

He also used to wait for the visit of the President of the Republic and the passage of his escort in front of the Coptic home, pay many people to gather, throw flowers at him and the President used to respond by stopping to salute them and to give money to the false father.

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Telephone: "Dartleswa", Kisumu  
Telegrams: Kisumu 1341-1346-1348



OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT COMMISSIONER  
KISUMU DISTRICT

P.O. Box 1921

KISUMU

When replying please quote

Ref. No. 52/A/17/35  
and date

20th JANUARY 1962

H.H. Pro. Rev. Father John Pesah I,  
The Holy Ghost Coptic Church of Africa,  
P.O. Box 1162,  
KISUMU.

Dear Rev. Pesah I,

CHURCH NOMENCLATURE

My attention has been drawn to the use of the name "COPTIC CHURCH" and "HOLY GHOST COPTIC CHURCH OF AFRICA" in reference to your Church at Dela Mission Kisumu. I suppose the latter is your church registered name and the former refers to another church. I would advise you to use the registered name of your Church in all correspondences and sign posts just to avoid confusion. In particular the sign post on Bika-Machakora road is confusing.

Yours sincerely,

M. S. M. MARIYAND  
(H.S.C. 1111111)

C.O.  
District Commissioner,  
Kisumu District,  
P.O. Box 1921,  
Kisumu.

The D.S.D.O.,  
KISUMU.

10/1/62

## Office of The President

Telegrams : Districter, Kisumu Office of The District Commissioner

Telephone : Kisumu 2341-2205-2209

Kisumu District

P.O.Box 1921

When replying please quote

Rev. No. ED, 4/17/(38)

18th. January, 1982

H.H.Pro. Rev. Father John Pesah I.

The Holy Ghost Coptic Church of Africa,

P.O.Box 1162,- Kisumu.

Dear Rev. Pesah I,

### Church Nomenclature

My attention has been drawn to use of the name "coptic" and "Holy Ghost Coptic "Church of Africa" in reference to your church at Dela Mission Kisumu. I suppose the latter is your church registered name and the former refers to another church. I would advise you to use the registered name of your church in all correspondances and sign posts Just to avoid confusion. In particular the sign post on Kisumu-Kakamega road is confusing.

Yours Sincerely

**M.S.M. Makhau**

**(M.S.M.Makhau)**

**District Commissioner**

**Kisumu**

C.C. Bishop/Chairman,

Coptic Orthocox Church,

P.O.Box 21570 - Nairobi, Kenya

The D.S.B.O., Kisumu

Thus he managed to obtain an audience with the President, during which he told so many lies and false stories to accuse the Egyptian Coptic Church and to put pressure on the Church to accept him as the Kenyan national Pope and to hand over to him all her lands, buildings and properties and to leave Kenya.

**No weapon that is formed against you shall prosper, and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgement you shall condemn. (Isaiah 54:17)**

God's care brought about a meeting of the President of Kenya with his Foreign Minister (late Robert Ouko) and the Kenyan Church Leaders, for a working lunch.

The President wanted to know how it could be that the Coptic Church of Egypt refuses the leadership of a Kenyan hero such as the leader of the Kenyan Copts? Could it be because he was Kenyan?

The Lord opened the mouths of all present to give testimony of the falseness and corruptness of this leader. They explained to the President that the name Coptic means Egyptian and so there should be no church carrying the name Coptic except the one which belongs to the Egyptian Church.

They told of many of the crooked ways of the false father and how much harm he had caused to many people. They also told of his irresponsible and irrational behaviour, his drunkenness and his witchcraft and how he claimed to have gone to heaven through a hole in the roof, when praying as a child, and how he entered paradise and received an order from God to establish his Independent African Church.

The Foreign Minister and the Anglican Bishop, Henry Okulu, who strongly defended the Coptic Bishop and spoke much of his sacrificial services to the Kenyan people, convinced the President to change his opinion. He ordered an investigation of the false father's activities and his pretensions to be a church leader.

It happened that the Anglican Bishop met the Coptic Bishop and informed him of the investigation.

The Bishop stood, glorifying God, saying: O Lord, your words are

true, saying

**The Lord will fight for you and you shall hold your peace.**  
**(Exodus 14:14)**

The years passed and the Coptic Bishop together with Kenyan fathers, priests and deacons, expanded their services without hindrance or obstacle and many of the followers of the false father joined the Coptic Church, seeing the true face of the false father.

### **The Visit of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III to Kenya exposed more of the False Father**

The visit of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III to Kenya in October 1979 was a big blessing and brought great joy to all who love the truth and the glory of God more than the glory of man.

It was fear, tension and sadness for the false father, his officers and followers.

The presence of the true Pope of the Coptic Orthodox Church, on an official visit to Kenya, was an exposure of the one claiming the same position.

The people and the Government of Kenya wanted to know what the real position of the false father was, he who claimed to be pope and falsely used the name "Coptic".

### **The Preparations to receive His Holiness in Nairobi**

The Coptic Bishop and the monks with him started to make the necessary contacts and the programme for the visit.

It was planned that the Pope would visit the All African Conference of Churches, the National Council of Churches in Kenya and the Head of State and many Kenyan church leaders.

The Bishop decided to invite the false father to attend the Church's celebration for the arrival of the Pope. He wanted to give him and his men more than one chance to meet the Pope - they might wake up

from their pretensions and false ways once they saw the true Pope of the true Church.

### **The Power of Truth**

The Bishop knew that his invitations had reached the false father when he and his men started rumours that the Pope would never come to Kenya. The rumours said that Pope Shenouda could not visit a country in which dwells another African Pope. But these rumours only reflected the fear of exposure of the false father and his men.

The media started to publish many articles about the Pope a few weeks before his arrival. The articles talked about the origin and the history of the Coptic Church and about its founder, the Apostle St. Mark and they were published in English and Kiswahili newspapers.

In October 1979 His Holiness and his entourage arrived in Nairobi, where they stayed three days, then travelled, together with the Bishop, to Zaire for a week and back to Nairobi for two more days before returning to Cairo.

The programme was filled with gatherings, speeches, prayers, preaching and teaching, but the false father did not appear once, although the visit was covered fully in the newspapers, on the radio or on television.

### **A red Bird stopped me from completing the Journey**

Once the visit was terminated, the Coptic people, especially the followers of the false father, started asking for the reasons which stopped him from meeting the true Pope of the true Egyptian Apostolic Coptic Church.

The false father told them a funny story, when he was on the road to Nairobi to meet the Pope, a red bird descended from Heaven and started beating its wings against the front of his car. When he stopped, the bird repeatedly flew in the opposite direction of Nairobi and the false father, becoming pessimistic about completing the journey and considering this to be a sign from Heaven, turned around and went

back to his residence in Kisumu.

His behaviour and the story led many of his followers to doubt his genuine Coptic links and they left him and joined the true Coptic Church.

### **New Stages of Growth**

The visit of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III to Kenya in 1979 was a great help for the newly established services of the Coptic Church in that country. It also made the Coptic Church of Egypt, its size, history and position in the world and Africa known to the people of Kenya and the visit of the Coptic Pope gave power, acknowledgment and support to the services of the Bishop and his monks.

All this led to the opening of new branches for services and an increase in the catechumen classes everywhere. The Bishop started to prepare new ministers to serve all these people from different tribes.

During the years 1980 to 1982 there were many verbal threats, attacks and rumours launched by the false father. He started to always carry a picture of Pope Shenouda, claiming that the Pope had appointed him Patriarch of Kenya, deceiving many simple people.

All this put a great burden on the Bishop who tried to explain that the Coptic Church did not accept the crooked ways of this man.

The Church, at that time, was looking for a larger place in Nairobi to increase its services for the people of Kenya.

### **Amidst all these Difficulties and Tribulations the Hand of the Lord gave the Church a Great Gift**

At the beginning of 1983 the Coptic Church felt it necessary to place advertisements in the local newspapers in English and Kiswahili, dissociating itself from the false church of the false father.

The advertisements were published and, in the same issue, the Bishop noticed advertisements for properties for sale by auction.

God's Will pointed to a hotel to be auctioned. What struck the Bishop was that this hotel was very close to the Monastery in which they were at that time.

The Bishop hesitated to participate in the auction, not having any experience but, praying to the Lord, he felt no longer hesitant. In April 1983, when he went to the auction, he found himself to be the only bidder for the hotel and, through God's Will, was able to purchase the hotel at only one third of its real price, ie. the reserve price, which is the rest of the loan and its interest.

This hotel became the main Bishopric of African Affairs and the Head Quarters of the Coptic Church in Kenya. The hotel's restaurant and bar were transformed into a beautiful cathedral in the name of St. Mark the Apostle and Evangelist.



The coptic centre and the church head quarters in Nairobi Kenya. It was established in 1983. His Holiness Pope Shenouda III consecrated the alters of the church in 1994.



## **The Nyanza District Officer invites both Churches for a Public Hearing**

Throughout 1983 there was unrest between the Kenyan Copts in Kisumu and the followers of the false father, especially after he erected a sign at the gates of his compound, bearing the word "Coptic" in large letters, thus exaggerating his pretensions.

Everywhere the false father went, he used to affirm loudly that he was Coptic and so provoked the Kenyan Copts who filed a complaint with the Nyanza provincial commissioner. The commissioner instructed the district officer to conduct a public hearing of the people of both Churches, to be held at the end of 1983 in an open area of Kisumu.

The Bishop attended the meeting, accompanied by his monks and the Kenyan deacons and many of the Church followers.

The false father came with his followers who carried a big high throne and who had to lift up the false father so that he could sit on it.

The meeting was chaired by the district officer and all the speeches were in Luo which was translated for the Bishop.

The district officer stated that the mission of the Churches is to lead people to live a moral life and to let them live in peace and make peace so that the Church can accomplish its ministry.

The Coptic Kenyan deacons and the people openly stated that the Church of Egypt had done many good services for the people of the area in a peaceful and very constructive way, without interfering in the affairs of others.

When the false father heard these statements he became very angry. He started to shout and pointed at the Bishop and the monks. He attacked them bitterly, claiming that they came from Egypt to steal his church from him. He claimed to be the "Coptic Pope" who took his authority from Heaven and thus registered his church many years before the arrival of the Egyptians and therefore considered himself to be truly "Coptic", whereas the Egyptians were not true Copts. He also claimed that the interpretation of the word "Coptic" meant "Black

Christian".

The district officer could do nothing to control the false father's insults and threats against the Bishop and the Egyptians. Therefore all had to wait until he became tired and stopped his shouting and then lifted him off the throne.

The Bishop requested the district officer to keep record of the minutes of this meeting in the Government files for future reference.

When the Bishop and his deacons and people came back they held a Bible study and the Bishop read for them from the Book of Acts, referring that what happened that day to the Apostles :

**So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple and in every house they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ. (Acts 5:41-42)**

And the Bishop used to mention all these matters in his prayers, asking God's power, comfort and guidance and his Divine intervention to give victory to the truth over the evil.

### **The Arrest of the False Father**

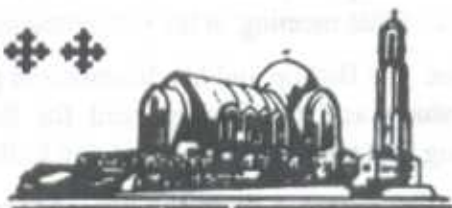
A few months later, in January 1984, the Kenyan media published news of the arrest of the false father by the Kenyan police, at the order of the Prosecutor General. He was accused of immoral acts of sodomy with five men amongst his followers, as well as beating someone so severely as to cause permanent bodily harm.

The public kept following the news about the trial and prosecution of the false father and heard his victims and the witnesses in the High Court in Kisumu.

The false father however denied all these accusations, putting all the blame on the Coptic Bishop and claimed that they were trying to smear him so that they could lay their hands on his Church.

The Court was not convinced by these claims, as the victims stated criminal acts had been committed, but the false father continued to claim his innocence.

# COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH SEE OF SAINT MARK



## KANISA LA COPTIC

Kanisa la Coptic lililoandikishwa kulingana na sheria katika Kenya kwa jina la "COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH, makao ya Tume la Mtakatifu Mariko", ndiyo kanisa halisi la Coptic (Misri) iliyoanzishwa na Mtakatifu Mariko mtume na mwinjilisti katika mji wa Alexandria katika karne ya kwanza mwaka wa 50 A.D.

Kiongozi wa sasa wa kanisa la Coptic katika, Misri, Mashariki ya Kati, Ulaya, America, Canada, Australia, na nchi zote za Africa ni mtakatifu "Papa Shenouda III" Papa wa Alexandria na Baba Mkuu wa makao ya Mtakatifu Mariko, na ni mrithi wa 117 tangu Mtakatifu Mariko.

Mtakatifu Papa Shenouda alimpa uwezo mwakilishi wake katika Kenya na nchi zote za Africa ambaye ni "Askofu Antonius Markos" aliye askofu wa mambo ya Africa, yeye ndiye Makamu wa Rais wa Chama Cha Makenisa katika Africa — "All Africa Conference Of Churches" na yeye ni mwana Kenya.

Maswali yote yanayohusu mambo ya kanisa la Coptic inafaa kwandikwa kwa anwani hii: "H.G. Bishop Markos, S.L.P. 21570, Simu 567849, 567649, Nairobi, au Simu 3375 Kisumu, na S.L.P. 419 Luanda.

Kanisa halisi la Coptic halina uhusiano na kanisa lolote linalotumia jina hili humu nchini Kenya.

# COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH SEE OF SAINT MARK



## THE COPTIC CHURCH

The Coptic Church registered in Kenya under the name "Coptic Orthodox Church, The Apostolic See of Saint Mark", is the true Coptic (Egyptian) Church established by Saint Mark the Apostle and Evangelist in Alexandria in the first century about the year 50 A.D.

The present head of the Coptic Church in Egypt, Middle East, Europe, U.S.A., Canada, Australia and all African countries is His Holiness "Pope Shenouda III, the Pope of Alexandria and the Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark and the 117th successor of Saint Mark.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda, as authorised in Kenya and all African countries is His Grace Bishop Antonious Markos, The Bishop for African Affairs. He is currently a Vice-President of All Africa Conference of Churches and a Kenya citizen

All enquiries concerning the affairs of the Coptic Church should be addressed to H.G. Bishop Markos, P.O. Box 21570, Telephone 567849, 567649, Nairobi, or Telephone 3375 Kisumu, P.O. Box 419 Luanda.

The true Coptic Church should not be confused with other churches that use similar names.

**BISHOP ANTONIOUS MARKOS,**  
Bishop for African Affairs

8 THE STANDARD, Saturday, March 24, 1984.

# CHURCH HEAD ON ATTACK CHARGE

THE head of the Holy Ghost Coptic Church of Africa in Kenya, His Holiness Reverend Father John Juma Pesa, has appeared in a Kisumu court charged with assault and causing actual bodily harm.

Father Pesa, whose church is based in Kisumu, denied the charge. He was remanded in custody until March 30, for renewal of his bail application.

The accused, who was before Kisumu Senior Resident Magistrate, Mr. V. D. Shevde, had been charged that on January 28, 1984, at 9 a.m. at Holy Coptic Church, in Kajulu Location, Kisumu District. He

Standard Reporter

assaulted Thomas Onyango, occasioning him actual bodily harm.

A Kisumu advocate, Mr. Naphtaly Hawala, is holding brief for Mr. Lewis Menezes, who is representing the accused. Chief Inspector J. N. Ndolo leads the prosecution case.

Chief Inspector Ndolo objected to the accused being released on bond and asked the court to mention the case on April 5, this year.

Mr. Hawala said that the alleged offence was committed over two months ago and it could not be possible that the investigations were not yet complete.

In his ruling, Mr. Shevde said the police had to be given time to investigate the case thoroughly.

# Daily NATION

## Bishop remanded on assault charge

From ONYIA OMOIYO

In KISUMU

The head of the Holy Coptic Church of East Africa, Bishop John Juma Pesa, was remanded in custody yesterday after denying an assault charge.

Bishop Pesa, who was dressed in a robe, appeared before the Kisumu Senior Resident

Magistrate, Mr. V. D. Sheride. He denied assaulting Mr Thomas Unyango at the church on January 22.

Chief Inspector J. Ndolo, prosecuting, opposed a bail application by the bishop. He told the court that the assault charge was just a holding one. "More charges are likely to be preferred against the accused," he said.

The prosecutor told the court

that several premises were going to be searched and that instructions had come from Nairobi to the provincial CID office in Kisumu to consider the matter seriously.

A Kisumu lawyer, Mr. Dan Omuoko, holding brief for Mr. L. M. Mwanza, told the court that Bishop Pesa was a religious head who should not be held if released on bond. He would not interfere with investigations if released, the lawyer said.

Rejecting the application, Mr. Sheride said: "I consider that notice must be given more time to investigate the case without possible hindrance. I will defer this application for further consideration on March 30 this year."



### **The Coptic Bishop summoned to give Evidence**

In July 1984 the Bishop received the visit of an officer from the Criminal Investigation Department. For three hours he took a full report of the aggressive actions of the false father against the Bishop. He also saw documents stating that the false father had presented an application for affiliation to the Coptic Church, which was rejected due to his immoral behaviour.

Then the officer handed the Bishop an official summons to give evidence personally in Kisumu in early August 1984.

The Bishop took with him many important documents and refused

the assignation of an advocate, as he trusted in the promises of the Lord Jesus who said to his disciples :

**Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves.**

**But beware of men, for they will deliver you up to councils and scourge you in their synagogues.**

**You will be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them and to the gentiles.**

**But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak, for it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak for it is not you who speaks, but the spirit of your father who speaks in you. (Mathew 10:16-20)**

### **In the Witness Box**

It was on 7 August 1984 that the Bishop stood in the witness box in the High Court of Kisumu.

The magistrate asked him if he knew the false father, how, when and where he was introduced to him and what their relationship was.

The Bishop answered with what he thought suitable. Then he was asked about the repeated claims of the false father that the Egyptian Copts were trying to smear him, to get rid of him and to take his Church.

The Bishop answered that they were not in need to do this because these were not the Christian principles which they followed and taught. He also stated that the false father had put his church in their hands, requesting affiliation to the Church of Egypt. He presented an application signed by the same person now under arrest, but the application had been rejected totally because the false father did not have in him the Christian character which should be found in any minister of the Coptic Orthodox Church as an ancient Apostolic Church.

The Bishop presented to the Court a copy of the application for affiliation, dated 1976 and a copy of the rejection by the Coptic Church of this application as well as other documents proving the falsehood



and pretensions of the false father and the innocence of the Egyptian Coptic Church.

The defending advocate was an Asian, harsh in his questions to the Bishop and trying to confuse him about dates and times.

But the Bishop, before answering, raised his heart in prayers, asking God's wisdom and guidance.

## Affiliation rejected, court told

By OKEYO ONG'YO and  
NDIRANGU

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt rejected an application by Holy Ghost Coptic Church of Africa for affiliation.

The leader of the Orthodox Church Bishop Antonious said the Holy Ghost Coptic Church in Kisumu had refused to accept the conditions given.

He said, his church wrote back to the leader of the Holy Ghost Coptic Church, Rev. Father John Pesa advising him to accept and introduce the Orthodox teachings before affiliation was granted.

Bishop Antonious, had flown from Egypt to testify in a case in which father John Pesa is charged before a Kisumu Resident Magistrate, Mr Salim Machio for assault.

The Bishop denied his church had intended to take over the Holy Ghost Coptic Church.

The Holy Ghost Coptic Church leader's request for affiliation was read and produced in court as an exhibit after a hot legal argument by the defence counsel, Mr L. G. Menezes.

The court ruled against the defence.

The letter which was signed by Father John Pesa said inter-alia:

"I have been meditating serious points in my sleep and I have fully decided that our church would like full affiliation to the St Mark's Church of Alexandria.

The Holy Ghost Coptic Church  
P. O. Box 73973  
NAIROBI (or P.O.Box 1162, KISUMU)

2nd June 1976

Your Grace Bishop Bakkenios  
Coptic/Orthodox Church  
P. O. Box 55  
Damanhour  
Egypt.

Your Grace,

I greet you in the name of the Lord whom we are on earth to serve.

Following our meeting with you on Saturday the 29th May at Father Antonious's residence it is my inspired desire to confirm all the points we discussed with you in the presence of Father Antonious and senior members of my church.

Before doing that I would like to express my deep gratitude to you for having come all the way to see our dear brother Father Antonious whom we have heartily welcomed in Kenya particularly as one of us in the Holy Ghost Coptic Church of Africa.

During my speech with you, I called you our FATHER and we all knelt down to greet you. I would like to confirm that our church has been like the lost sheep which has now been found by the savior. We have been like a baby without parents - born by the Holy Ghost but we have now found a parent - the Coptic/Orthodox Church of Egypt. I have been meditating all these points in my sleep and real moments and I have fully decided that our church would like a full affiliation to the Saint Mark Church of Alexandria and we would like to forthwith follow Saint Mark's teachings in all our church services as opposed to the Catholic way we have been using.

These sentiments should be passed on to His Holiness Pope Shenouda through your Grace. As agreed when my time for visiting Egypt comes, I shall be pleased to meet His Holiness and discuss these points with him. In the meantime, we are desirous of urgently changing our service order to that of Coptic Church rather than Catholic one. Here we seek your guidance.

In conclusion, I most thank you for all you have done for us through Father Antonious and praise the most High God for having arranged our meeting with you. Please rest assured that through the help of the Lord Jesus Holy Ghost Coptic Church of Africa is left in your hand (our church) for guidance and assistance.

May the Lord be with us all and unite us for ever.

Your brother in Christ

Rev. Father John



The Holy Ghost Coptic Church  
P.O.Box 73923  
Nairobi (or P.O. Box 1162, Kisumu)  
2nd June 1976

Your Grace Bishop Bakhomios  
Coptic Orthodox Church  
P.O. Box 55  
Damanhour - Egypt.  
Your Grace ,

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May the Lord be with us all and unite us for ever .

**Your brother in Christ**

**Rev. Father John**

## **The Application of Affiliation defines clearly the Situation**

The defense felt the danger of the Bishop's evidence on the situation of the accused as well as the documents he presented at the trial. He struggled with the magistrate to refute the photocopy of the application for affiliation and insisted that the original should be brought and the copy rejected.

The judge asked the Bishop where the original was and if it could not be presented to the court. The Bishop told him that the original had been sent to Egypt, to His Holiness Pope Shenuda III and that it would take a long time to obtain it.

After many debates the judge ruled to accept the copy as an exhibit to be attached to the case file and the prosecution supported the ruling.

## **A Member of Parliament throws serious Accusations against the Bishop**

At the end of September 1984, in the early hours of the Friday before the Feast of the Appearance of the Holy Cross, the phone rang and the Bishop woke up to hear the voice of a British friend who told him that his name was on the front page of all the newspapers. *"Is it good news?"* asked the Bishop. *"No, sorry, it is bad news. Accusations have been launched against you by a Parliament member during yesterday's session, asking the Attorney General for an investigation"*.

These allegations were very similar to those made by the advocate of the false father some six weeks earlier, in the High Court of Kisumu.

It was clear that the false father and his followers had persuaded a Parliament member to put the Bishop and the Egyptian Coptic Church into such a dilemma as to get rid of them once and for all.

The Bishop and the monks spent the whole day fasting, praying and meditating the Word of God. This renewed their confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ who conquered and will conquer, saying :

**These things I have spoken to you that in me you may have peace in the world. You will have tribulations but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world . (John 16:33)**

They prayed the Liturgies on Saturday and Sunday and felt a great comfort and the heart of the Bishop was invaded with a strong feeling which he shared with the others : that these accusations were going to be for the good of the Church. The Lord would turn all into a blessing because the Lord who examines the hearts and minds knows how faithfully the Church had served for eight years in Kenya.

The Bishop and his team continued their work with joy and hope as if nothing had happened.

### **The Kenyan Church Leaders took a firm Stand to defend the Bishop and the Coptic Church**

The Bishop was one of the Vice Presidents of the All African Conference of Churches since 1981. He played an active role at its head quarters, in Nairobi, and had intimate relations with the Archbishop of the Anglican Church, the Moderator of the Presbyterian Church and the Bishop of the Methodist Church.

In the course of the first week after the attack by the Parliament member, the Bishop received visits or phone calls from all of them, assuring him of their support and acknowledging the role of the imprisoned false father in this plot.

They also affirmed their knowledge of the crooked behaviour of the Parliament member. They requested the Attorney General to go ahead with this investigation to reveal the truth, but not to arrest the Bishop, or touch his honour or the dignity of the Coptic Church.



**ALL AFRICA CONFERENCE OF CHURCHES**  
**CONFERENCE DES EGLISES DE TOUTE L'AFRIQUE**

Nairobi, November 9, 1984

The Hon Attorney General  
P O Box 40112  
Nairobi

**PRESIDENT:**

The Most Rev. W.P.K. Makhulu  
P O. Box 709,  
Gaborone, Botswana.

Dear Hon Mull

As a follow-up of our conversation during our last call with Rt. Rev Gatu and Bishop Markos, I would like to introduce to you the Coptic Orthodox Church (Egypt) which is a founding member of the AACC.

**CHAIRMAN  
OF THE GENERAL COMMITTEE:**

Pasteur Harry Y. Henry  
B.P. 34, Cotonou,  
Benin.

The Coptic Orthodox Church is the oldest Church of Africa, founded in Alexandria by its first Patriarch St Mark who was one of the disciples of Christ our Lord and author of the second gospel named after him. This Church survived the moslem invasion of North Africa from the 7th century and today comprises the largest Christian community of Egypt with its eight million members.

This Church gave birth to the Ethiopian Orthodox Church which is also a member of the AACC and which comprise today over fifteen million members, by far the largest individual national Church of the continent.

His Eminence Bishop Antonius Markos belongs to the Clergy of the Coptic Orthodox Church in charge of relationships with the other African Churches of the continent and he is also one of the Vice Presidents of the AACC and Chairman of the Personnel and Finance Committee.

Bishop Markos is leading a Coptic Monastery and a Coptic Centre in Nairobi and ministers the Oriental Orthodox community of Kenya composed

**GENERAL SECRETARY:**  
Rev. Maximo V. Rafranco.

...../2

General Secretariat: Walyaki Way, P.O. Box 14205, Westlands, Nairobi, Kenya.  
Cable: CHURCHCON, Tel: 628012/1/4; Telex: 22175 AACC

Page 2  
November 9, 1984  
H.E. The Attorney General

of Egyptians, Ethiopians and Kenyans.

Please find enclosed some informative documents about this Church so that you get acquainted with the mother Church of Africa.

May I draw your attention to the fact that the word "Coptic" which is synonymous to, "Egyptian" is meant to characterise the original African population of Egypt before the Arab invasion of the 7th century of North Africa and yet this word has become a source of misunderstanding because of its misuse by some Independent Churches of Africa. But I repeat again, Coptic is to be related only to Egypt. It derives from the Greek word "egyptos" which was shortened by the Arabs as "kuptos" meaning today "copt".

I hope these few remarks will help you understand better the background of that Church and its involvement with the AACC since its inception.

With my respectful regards



Maximo Rafransoa  
General Secretary

c c Rt Rev J Gatu  
Bishop A Markos

encls

NB: Because of the indigenous character of the two Orthodox Churches of Africa mentioned above, they joined the other African Churches to form the Organization of African Independent Churches of which Bishop Antonius Markos is the Organising Secretary.

MVR/mao





## The Week of Investigation

The investigator came to the Coptic Church centre in Nairobi and requested a private meeting with the Bishop.

The Bishop was full of hope and peace. He invited the officer to have something to eat or drink, but with a surprised look the officer said : *"Are you taking this matter lightly ? The situation is really serious !"*

The Bishop Responded that it is not that he is Mis-estimating the seriousness of the situation, but he feels the confidence in the protection and support of the Lord Jesus Christ whom they came to serve in Kenya for many years.

The officer tried to get to know the Bishop well, to learn about his former services in Ethiopia, for nine years, and then was introduced to the Egyptian monks. He examined all the files and documents of the Church as well as the bank statements. He entered the Monastery of St. Anthony and the offices of the Coptic centre and even the offices of the Organisation of African Independent Churches.

He could not hide his astonishment at the fact that all the Egyptian missionaries were qualified, every one had his degree and profession and he admired their commitment to consecrate their lives to serve the Lord and the Kenyan people.

The investigation took a full week and at the end the officer looked at the Bishop, smiled and said : *"I am happy indeed to have been given the chance to be introduced to Christian missionaries like you. You are lucky to be accused so that your innocence and your charity works can be made known to all. Now the Kenyan Government knows well who you are and nobody will dare make false accusations against you again."*

*I shall write a detailed report to the Attorney General, confirming your innocence from all the allegations mentioned.*

*This case will be closed because it is a "Fitina". (Fitina in Kiswahili means slander).*

## **The Attorney General declares the Bishop's Innocence in Parliament**

The Church leaders organised a meeting with the Attorney General in his office and he extended congratulations about the result of the investigation to the Bishop and offered apologies for any pain and suffering he had to go through until the truth had been revealed. The Attorney General promised to declare the innocence of the Bishop and of the Coptic Church in front of Parliament.

The Bishop took this occasion to point out that the origin of the slander was the false father and requested the Attorney General to strike the name "Coptic" off the registered name of the false father's church. All the Church leaders present supported this request and explained to the Attorney General that Coptic means Egyptian and that any leader leading a Coptic Church should be linked to the Church of Egypt.

They also added that such a false leader is a shame to all the Christian Churches because of his behaviour and crimes and that he should not be considered as a Christian Church leader - some even asked for the deregistration of his church.

The Bishop promised to prepare a full research about the word "Coptic" and its uses and also a formal application to the Kenyan Government to delete the word "Coptic" from the name of the false father's church.

## **Sentenced The False Father**

Early in 1985 the High Court in Kisumu announced that the false father had been found guilty on all the criminal acts that he had been prosecuted for. He was sentenced to three and a half years of imprisonment and five strokes with the cane. The High Court also cleared the Coptic Orthodox Church from all accusations.

The news of this sentence was carried all over the world.

## The News of the False Father Everywhere

The Bishop received newspaper cuttings from the sons of the Coptic Churches in Australia, Canada, England, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Newspapers all over the world talked about the sentence of three and a half years for the false father.

### Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

FROM H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

Deir Anba Bawiq, Ramess Avenue, ABBASSIYA,  
CAIRO, EGYPT.

CABLE: ELANBARUEISS, CAIRO.



Honourable Justice Muli

The Attorney General

Nairobi - Kenya

Your excellency

It was our pleasure to visit your beloved country in October 1979 and be introduced to the peaceful life you are living under a wise leadership. And we were happy to have a Coptic Church and a Coptic center in Nairobi.

The Coptic Orthodox Church is an apostolic Church - established by St. Mark the Evangelist in the 1st century of Christianity. It was the mother church of monasticism in the whole world and it had a great role in the ecumenical councils held in the 4th & 5th centuries. And now we have tens of parish churches in U.S.A., Canada, Europe, Australia and the Middle East. We have also churches in Sudan and the Coptic Church was the mother church of Ethiopia.

The words Copt & Egypt are derived from one origin and have the same meaning. But the word Copt was used for the Christian Egyptians. The Coptic Church was used through all generations and till now for the Church of Alexandria i.e. the church of Egypt.

The University of Utah in America is about to publish the Coptic Encyclopedia of many volumes about the Coptic history, the Coptic language, the Coptic art, the Coptic saints, the Coptic archeology etc...

Our only representative in Kenya is Bishop Antonius Markos and the priests working under his hierarchy.

Coptic Orthodox Patriarchate

FROM H.H. POPE SHENOUDA III

Deir Anba Bawan, Bawana Avenue, ABBASSIYA,  
CAIRO, EGYPT.

CABLE: ELANBARUBISS, CAIRO.



The use of the name Copts and the word Coptic for a local church in Kenya under John Juma Pesa, brought much confusion and much misunderstanding in view of the behaviour and accusations against the leader who falsely used the name of the Coptic Church without any link with the Coptic Church of Egypt.

Therefore we request your esteemed government to advise the leader of the church so called " the Holy Ghost Coptic Church of Africa" to exclude the word Coptic from its name. The name applies with any other churches in Kenya with such title ( Coptic) without being a branch of the original Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt.

May Our Lord Jesus Christ bless the people of Kenya, its government and all its leaders and officials.



*Shenouda III*

Pope Shenouda the 3rd  
Pope of Alexandria and  
Patriarch of the see of  
St. Mark

## The End of the False Use of the Name "Coptic"

His Holiness Pope Shenouda III himself wrote a strong but gentle letter to the Attorney General of Kenya, requesting the Kenyan Government to delete the word "Coptic" from the name of the false father's church. The Bishop also presented a paper researching the use of the word "Coptic", as well as many documents proving the distortion of the word "Coptic" by the false father.



The sign board of the church of the false father after the change of title of his church 1986.

Telegram: "Sunna", Nairobi

Telephone: Nairobi 27461

When replying please quote

Ref. No. .... CONF/SOC/100

and date



ATTORNEY-GENERAL'S CHAMBERS

P.O. Box 40112, NAIROBI

KENYA

18th July, 1985

Bishop Antonius Markos,  
Bishop of African Affairs,  
Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt,  
P.O. Box 21570,  
NAIROBI

Dear Bishop,

Thank you very much for your letter of 17th July, 1985 forwarding another letter from His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, The Pope of Alexandria and Patriarch of the See of Saint Mark. I am very honoured to receive such a nice letter from the Pope and I am replying to him direct.

With regard to the removal of the word "Coptic" from the name of the church "Holy Ghost Coptic Church of Africa" we have already taken action and I hope to be able to tell you the outcome in the very near future.

Yours Sincerely,

*Matthew Muli*  
(Matthew Muli)  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

IM/AN

The Kenyan Government responded to these applications early in 1986 and gave the false father two choices : either to deregister his church or to accept to change the name of his church, not including the word "Coptic" and to respond within two weeks.

The false father applied for a change of name, including the word "Koptica", but this application was rejected. He then tried to apply, using the word "Koptico", also unsuccessfully. Finally he applied for the name of "The Holy Ghost Hermetic Church" and this name was accepted and officially registered.

The Bishop and all the Coptic Church were full of joy and gave thanks to God and glorified him for saving the reputation of the Coptic Church and for crowning with success a ten year struggle against the powers of evil.

When the false father came out of prison, he tried to gather new followers for his church, because many of his people, who had been affected by his wrong doings, had joined the true Coptic Church.

Telegrams: "SOCIETY", Nairobi  
Telephones: 71461  
Please address all communications  
to the Officer, Societies and  
Gene. No. SOC/13118  
and date



DEPARTMENT OF THE REGISTRAR-GENERAL,  
OFFICE OF THE OFFICIAL RECEIVER  
P.O. Box 30091, NAIROBI

26th February, 1990

Bishop Antonus Narkos,  
Coptic Orthodox Church of the Apostolic -  
See of Saint Mark,  
P.O.Box 21570,  
NAIROBI.

Dear Sir,

THE SOCIETIES ACT (CAP.108)

I refer to your letter of 17th January, 1990 and would advise you that your views have already been communicated to those concerned. I would emphasise once again that the word Coptic shall not be given to another society other than yours.

Yours faithfully,

  
J.K. MULLI  
FOR REGISTRAR OF SOCIETIES



**CHAPTER  
XXII**

**IN JOURNEYS  
OFTEN,**

**In perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of own countrymen, in perils of the gentiles, in perils of the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren . (2Cor. 11:26)**



## **From North to South**

Having narrated the struggle with the false father, that God's care has saved the Coptic Church in Kenya and in Africa, even in the whole world from him and from the evil reputation that stuck to him, let us leave him in jail to spend three and half years and go back to talk about the story of service in Africa and to follow the train of events from March 1977.

### **To Swaziland**

A few months after His successful visit to Zaire, the Bishop received an invitation from the League of African Independent Churches in Swaziland, to participate with them in the Easter celebrations in Manzini. Such an invitation shows their knowledge of the Coptic Bishop's concern to get to know these Churches and to participate in joint activities with them.

The name of this Kingdom, Swaziland, means the Land of Swazi, as its inhabitants are a South African Tribe called Swazi. Swaziland is one of several independent states that are situated within the Southern African Sub-Continent. These are the Kingdom of Lesotho in the south-east, the Kingdom of Swaziland in the north-east, the Republic of Botswana in the north. The Republic of Namibia is another Southern African State in the north-west which achieved independence in 1990. There is also the Republic of Mozambique on the south-east coast which gained independence from Portugal in the seventies.

### **A Visit to South Africa**

The visit to Swaziland was arranged through a professor at the University of South Africa (UNISA), Reverend Canon Trevor Varayn, who was happy to know that the Bishop had accepted the invitation to visit Swaziland. Reverend Varayn invited the Bishop to stop over in Johannesburg to give some lectures about the Coptic Church at the

University of South Africa "UNISA" and to visit the African Independent Churches in the Republic of South Africa, promising to take care of all the necessary arrangements for this visit such as the entry visa, reception, accommodation, transport...etc. When all this had been arranged, the Bishop felt that God's Will has declared that it was the right time to visit the sons of the Coptic Church in South Africa, who had joined the Church in the beginning of the fifties through the work of His Grace Bishop Morcos, the Metropolitan of South Africa and Nigeria.

The Bishop remembered some files handed to him at the time of his Consecration, which contained letters, addresses and information about the Church of Johannesburg. At once, he wrote letters to members of the Church telling them about his visit and asking them to arrange times and places to meet. This may have been the first contact with the Coptic Church since 1969 when Protopriest, Father Isaac El-Anba Bishoy left Johannesburg 19 years after his arrival in 1950.

### **Did we have a Church in South Africa or People only?**

In 1948, His Holiness, Pope Youssab II, the 115th Pope of Alexandria, sent Father Ayoub (Job) El-Anba Bishoy to visit various groups of South Africans, who wrote to His Holiness asking to join the Mother African Church and the first in the Continent which is the Church of Alexandria. Father Ayoub arrived in South Africa on 31 August 1948. He spent ten months moving around to get acquainted with the people of South Africa who were longing to join the Coptic Church. When he returned, he wrote a detailed report anticipating great success if the Church started servicing in South Africa.

H.H. Pope Youssab consecrated Father Ayoub as Anba Morcos, a Metropolitan for South Africa and Nigeria. Bishop Morcos left for South Africa on 6 September 1950, accompanied by Father Shenouda El-Anba Bishoy, Father Isaac El-Anba Bishoy and Deacon Aziz. They carried with them the Church books, large quantities of the Holy Myron, Galilean Oil and all the equipments needed for the service.

About 5000 people joined the Church. The Liturgy was prayed in Coptic and Arabic, but all the readings were in the local languages. Bishop Morcos did not consecrate any Deacons from among the South Africans. He stayed in South Africa until September 1951 during which time, he tried to register the Coptic Church so as to have an official status there. He made an agreement to buy a piece of land and a house in Alberton and he paid a deposit, but he could not complete the purchase price due to several reasons and he had to go back to Egypt after twelve months of service, leaving Father Shenouda and Father Isaac behind. Father Shenouda stayed for one more year during which, he translated the prayer book of the seven Canonical Hours (Agbeya), into the Khosa language and had it printed.

Bishop Morcos returned to his Monastery and, suddenly, departed from our world on 2 July 1952. Father Shenouda, then, had to return to his Monastery leaving Father Isaac El-Anba Bishoy who continued with his services to the best of his abilities until 1969. He prayed the Liturgy once a month while visiting and teaching the members of the Church. He is now residing in his Monastery of El-Anba Bishoy. He is in his seventies and we wish him good health and a long life. As for all the Coptic Africans who joined the Church, they are still waiting for the day on which the Coptic Church comes back to serve them once more.

### **Clicks Languages of the South**

Listening to the South Africans speaking, one notices that they click when they speak. Their languages have musical names, similar to those of their tribes. Some words or expressions sound as if coming from the nature surrounding them. When they speak rapidly, it seems as if the words are a chain of clicks from their lips, tongue and throat and it is therefore necessary to make a perfect pronunciation.

The main languages in South Africa are Zulu, Sesotho, Khosa (pronounced krossa), Sutu, Ndebele, Venda, Shangani and Pedi. The people of Swaziland speak Siswati and the people of Lesotho speak Sesotho, the people of Botswana speak Tswana and the people of Namibia speak Ovambo and Hereru.



**The main entrance of the Coptic Church Centre in Parkview , Johannesburg established 1992**



**A side view of the Coptic centre in Johannesburg showing the great size of the building .**



**His Holiness Pope Shenouda III during the Epiphany Liturgy in Johannesburg  
1994**



**General inner view of the Coptic Church in Parkview, Johannesburg  
His Holiness was delivering a lecture to the African Orthodox Church leaders .**

There is also a tribe living in the Kalahari Desert who are called Bush Men, or Desert Men, who speak a primitive language that expresses what they mean through lots of clicks and imitations of natural sounds.

In general, the languages of the south contain many strong sounds and letters such as the K and the KH, for e.g. in Sesotho you may hear the following conversation :

Khotsu Ndadi	:	Peace unto you my father
U Pela Jouang	:	How are you
Ke Pela Huntle	:	I am well
Huntle Hahulu	:	I am very well

### **Going South for the first Time**

As H.H. Pope Shenouda III was about to visit America after the Easter of 1977 for the first time, it was arranged that the Bishop would be joining Him. So he decided to start his visit to South Africa and Swaziland on 1 April 1977 and to stay there for two weeks, then from there fly directly to America to receive H.H. the Pope at his arrival in New York.

The Bishop arrived in Johannesburg on 9 April 1977. He was received at the airport by Prof. Rev. Canon Varayn and his wife who had arranged a visit to the South African Council of Churches (SACC).

The Bishop was warmly welcomed by the Secretary General of the Council, Rev. John Rees. The people working in the Council gathered to learn about the beloved Christianity of the North of the Continent. They expressed their happiness over the meeting between the extreme north and the extreme south of the huge African Continent.

### **In the South African Theological College for the Independent Churches (SATCIC).**

The arrangements were that the Bishop would spend the week end among the African Independent Churches in South Africa which has a centre and a small college by the name of The South African Theological College for the Independent Churches (SATCIC). The

Bishop stayed in a wooden hut within the college campus. He spent three days with the students and professors and joined them in praying and singing hymns. He gave three lectures on the Coptic Church, its history and theology and on the principles of the Church service. He also visited some of the African Independent Churches Leaders in their homes, shops or Churches, always wondering about the clicks and big words they used in their languages.



The buildings of the south African theological college for independent churches in Roodepoort Johannesburg.

During that time, several conversations took place about the first Apostolic African Church. One thing dominated all conversations, the hopes of the black people of South Africa for independence from the white man's domination which is represented in the racist government of South Africa which denied the black man's right in many aspects of life.

### **A Visit to the University of South Africa in Pretoria**

After the weekend, the Bishop accompanied the professor to Pretoria, the Capital of South Africa, to visit the university there. It is one of the largest universities in the world as more than 5000

professors teach there. In the university, the Bishop had several meetings during the whole day with groups of professors, students, scholars and researchers. The talks were about Christianity in Africa. The Bishop was asked to talk about the Egyptian Church, its history and its present condition. The Bishop discovered the high education and knowledge levels of the university which is, without doubt, considered the largest university in Africa. It depends mainly on teaching by correspondence, so that there is no difference between one scholar and another regardless of colour, tribe or language.



The university of south Africa in pretoria it is considered as one of the largest universities in the world in the number of professors and students .

### **In the Anglican Convent**

Arrangements were made for the Bishop to stay in a guest house that belongs to an Anglican Convent by the name of Irini Home. The Bishop was surprised by the presence of Monasticism in a Protestant Church, which is the Church of England, but the professor explained that the Anglican Church has three degrees of rites and Apostolicity, the High Anglican Church, the Moderate Anglican Church and the Low Anglican Church.

As the Church of England was established through the first Apostolic Churches in the early centuries of Christianity, they received



a high rite in practising worship. It is known that the Coptic Church was the first to bring Christianity to Ireland through the Monks of the Monastery of St. Mena. From Ireland Christianity spread to reach the rest of the British Isles, Wales, Scotland and England.

For centuries the Church there followed the high rites similar to those of the Coptic Church until they changed to the rites of the Catholic Church which began to gradually lessen the high rites to their present low worship rites.

The Church of England had also been affected by all the above until the arrival of Protestantism, there after the great schism in Europe. Many adhered to the principles of the doctrines of the first Apostolic Church such as the Holy Sacraments, Liturgy, Priesthood, Celibacy, Incense, Rites, Monasticism, Icons and the Cross. They continued to follow the Church of England, but it was called the High Church. They are very close to the rites of the Coptic Church and they have monasteries for Monks and Nuns, Priesthood and Liturgy.

Those who followed Protestantism reduced their Church rites of worship simply to hymns, prayers and spontaneous preaching. They denied the Holy Sacraments, Incense, Liturgy and Icons. They even removed the altar and replaced it with the Pulpit as the centre of their Church. They abandoned the sign of the Cross and refused even the use of candles. They called themselves the Low Church.

A third group adhered to some of the rites of the first Apostolic Church such as the Cross, Icons or the use of incense and candles. They called themselves the Moderate Church.

The Bishop discovered that his host, the professor, was also a Priest and that he went to the Convent to listen to the Nuns' confessions and also that the Anglican Church of South Africa is a High Church.

### **Amidst the Nuns**

It was Passion Week, a time when all denominations celebrate together. The Nuns were fasting and they invited the Bishop to eat with them after sunset. They expressed their desire to spend some time with him talking about the Coptic Church. The Bishop asked them if they practised the Sacrament of Confession and they responded in one

voice that they believe in the Seven Holy Sacraments. They then had a long talk comparing the beliefs and the rites of the Coptic Church and the High Anglican Church. The Bishop found out that the Nuns follow the order of Saint Antony of Monasticism and the order of Kanonia set by Saint Bakhomious. They also have a system of prayers similar to the Seven Canonical Hours (the Agbeya) and the Rite of the Passion Week is similar to that of the Coptic Church. The Bishop then presented Irini Home with some books about the history of the Coptic Church and the Holy Sacraments as well as pictures of St. Mark The Apostle.

### **Meeting the Members of the Coptic Orthodox Church in Johannesburg and its Suburbs**

Arrangements were made for the Bishop to spend two days with the members of the Coptic Church who were baptised in 1950 by H.G. Bishop Morcos, and to visit those who live around Johannesburg, especially in Soweto, (the South West Township). The meeting was very warm as they expressed mixed feelings, gladness to see the Bishop, but also sadness about the fact that the Coptic Church had stopped serving them. They showed the Bishop a big banner, made of red velvet, and on which was written:

#### **COPTIC ORTHODOX CHURCH SEE OF ST. MARK DIOCESE OF SOUTH AFRICA AND NIGERIA**

They also showed him a big copper Censor and Procession Cross, a carved throne of the Chalice and large empty bottles in tins on which are written the words Holy Myron and Galilawn Oil. They also showed Him a copy of the Agbeya, printed in the Khosa language. They told the Bishop that all the other books were handed over to the Archaeology section of the University of South Africa by Father Isaac El Anba Bishoy before he left for Egypt in 1969. As for the Altar utensils, the Paten, the Chalice and the Dome, nobody could give any information.

The Bishop visited four Congregations of Copts and he discovered that one of their elders, Mr. Simon Khobi, led them in meetings which comprised preaching, singing hymns and spontaneous prayers. Mr. Khobi also trained preachers to serve the congregation, but they were

still waiting for the day they would pray the Liturgy in Zulu, Sesotho and Khosa.

The Bishop understood how much English speaking priests and deacons were needed to serve the hundreds of people who belong to the Church. He longed for the day to come in which the Coptic Church would return to serve the South Africans, so that the candle that H.G. Bishop Morcos lit in the fifties could once more be lit in H.H. Pope Shenouda's time. The Bishop took many photographs of the South African Copts, but on his return he discovered that the camera was not working so that all these meetings passed without being recorded. The Lord, no doubt, had a wisdom that is unknown to us.

### **The Precious Metals in South Africa**

South Africa is famous for its many mines for various precious metals, but it has no petrol. Because of the abundance of coal, they succeeded in producing petrol from coal in huge quantities for both local use and export. They called it SASOL (South African Synthetic Oil). Visitors to the mines have to go more than 1000 meters underground using a special elevator. They have to put on boots, special overalls and a metal helmet with a flash light fixed on to it to see the way. The light is supplied by a battery carried on the back. Gold is extracted from the mines and sent to factories to be refined.

### **Zionist Christian Churches**

On the way to the mines they visited large churches which had millions of followers in South Africa called Zionists, which is not a political but a biblical name given to these big Christian Churches which had been established by the great ancestor of the Lekhaniani family. The name Zionist has more of a spiritual meaning than a political or Jewish one as written in the Psalms:

**If I forget you, O zion, let my right hand forget its skill. (Psalm 7:5-6)**

The members of these churches are known to follow the Bible. They are on a high level of morality and they adhere to the law of monogamy. They are faithful to their work and new employees or

labourers are preferably selected from among the Zionists. After its founder passed away, the Zionist Church was divided into three churches, each led by one of his sons. The first took the symbol of the Star, the second took the symbol of the Dove and the third took the symbol of the Cross as their emblems.



**A Zionist Christian Church in South Africa**

Coming out of the church after the visit, the Bishop saw a big TABOU emblem on the front of the church. He took a photograph of it, but the members of the church became agitated as they considered photographing their emblem an insult and they were insisting on taking the camera or destroying the film. The Bishop had not realised these sensitivities, but his host was able to control the situation and also to save the Bishop from the people's hands.

### **To Swaziland**

The Bishop flew from Johannesburg to Manzini, the largest city of Swaziland, in a small, twin-engine airplane on Tuesday of Passion Week, 15 April 1977. He was received at the airport by the secretary of the League of the Independent Churches in Swaziland and an American Mennonite missionary. The capital of Swaziland is a small

city built in the mountains, surrounded by greenery on every side, and is as called Mbabane. It's weather is as fair as a continuous spring.

From the airport, the Bishop was taken to the home of the American missionary, who, as soon as they were rested, asked the Bishop if he preferred to stay among his children with all their noisy games, or to stay in the maid's room, as she was away for the Easter holidays. He told the Bishop that the room was clean and quiet, and had a clean bed, a table and a chair. The Bishop felt that his host preferred to accommodate him in the maid's room. The Bishop asked if it was possible that he could stay in a hotel, but he was told that any hotel was too far from the city centre, and that the programme did not allow for long-distance travel, to and from the hotel.



**The American missionary and the Bishop with the Bishop of the Anglican Church in Swaziland, 1977**

The Bishop then agreed to stay in any place that was comfortable to all and so his bags were put in the maid's room, which had very simple furniture, but was clean.

On the same day, members of the Independent Churches came for a

meeting at the American's house. They discussed their Churches' need for education and training, though they asked for a lot of money. The Bishop invited them to attend the conference of the leaders of the Independent Churches, soon to be held in Egypt.

### **At the University of Swaziland**

Arrangements were made for the Bishop to visit the University, and to give some lectures on the Coptic Church, and so he went. He gave a lecture to the students and professors of the University before they started their Easter holiday. Then he visited Mbabane which is about 20km from Manzini. There he met with a Swazi elderly man by the name of J.J. Nkuqo which is pronounced with clicks. If it was not pronounced properly, he would express his indignation and displeasure, and would repeat his name with the clicks several times until the Bishop managed to pronounce it the right way, and it was only then that he expressed his joy and gladness.



**Mr. J.J. Nkuqo and his wife. They were over eighty years old at that time. (He had a photograph taken of him with H.H. Pope Kyrellos VI during the sixties in Egypt)**

He showed the Bishop some photographs taken for him in Cairo with H.H. Pope Kyrillos VI and he was very happy at the Bishop's visit, expressing his joy at the fact that a representative of the Coptic Church of St. Mark was treading the soil of Swaziland. From there, they visited the Anglican Bishop who asserted that his Church followed the high order and that it was in many ways similar to the Coptic Church with respect to the Holy Sacraments, Liturgy and Priesthood.

**I like your Headdress,  
I want You to send me one**

On Monday Thursday, The Bishop had a meeting with the Pastors and Leaders of the Independent Churches at the Royal Palace. They were walking around the palace gardens, when many showed their surprise and wonder when they saw a Coptic Bishop for the first time. There were frequent inquiries about the Coptic Church. One of them admired the Bishop's headdress and asked Him for a white one from Egypt. The Bishop however, could not promise to send him one.

**The Meeting on the Green Grass**

Hundreds of church leaders met in the palace gardens and sat on the grass. They asked the Bishop to talk to them about Pastoral care and service. Although many of them understood English, there was a need for interpretation to the Siswati language, sentence by sentence. The Bishop stood among them talking about Pastoral care and service. They asked about the Coptic Church and the Bishop answered, and while he was talking the crowd started to stir, they stood up and made room and the Bishop was surprised to see the king entering, followed by his entourage. The king sat down on the grass in front of the people while the Bishop was asked to continue with his teachings. The king was dressed in grey clothes and he had a cloth turban on his head on which there were three feathers.

## **His Majesty King Sobhuza agrees with the Coptic Teachings**

The people present were in their thousands, and they sat spreading over the wide area of the green grass. Loudspeakers were used so that everyone could hear. The king asked the Bishop to continue his teachings.

The Bishop spoke about the service and how the servant should give himself and sacrifice for the success of the service and for the Lord's name to be glorified. He read from the Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians :

**LET THE MIND BE IN YOU WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS. WHO, BEING IN THE FORM OF GOD, DID NOT CONSIDER IT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD, BUT MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION, TAKING THE FORM OF A BONDSERVANT, AND COMING IN THE LIKENESS OF MEN, AND BEING FOUND IN APPEARANCE AS A MAN, HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF AND BECAME OBEDIENT TO THE POINT OF DEATH, EVEN THE DEATH OF THE CROSS. THEREFORE GOD ALSO HAS HIGHLY EXALTED HIM AND GIVEN HIM THE NAME WHICH IS ABOVE EVERY NAME. THAT AT THE NAME OF JESUS EVERY KNEE SHOULD BOW, OF THOSE IN HEAVEN AND OF THOSE ON EARTH AND OF THOSE UNDER THE EARTH. (Phil 2:5-10)**

He spoke to them in simple understandable English (which was still being translated sentence by sentence into the Sesotho language) about the harm of vanity in the servant's life and how it hinders God's work. He also spoke about the blessing of self denial in the servant's life and his service and how it works for the spread of the Kingdom of God. The king often nodded his head expressing his joy with the teaching which was suitable for the memory of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. The listeners would ask questions which the Bishop answered and then they would ask him to continue with his teachings while he was standing in their midst in front of the microphone.

The meeting continued for almost three hours, and suddenly there was a disturbance and agitation and loud voices in one corner of the big gathering and some people started to run away. It was as if they had been fighting. Then however they became calm again and sat to



listen. The Bishop learned afterwards that a big snake had appeared suddenly among them and they had killed it before settling down again. At the end of the meeting, the king stood up and asked one of the leaders of the Independent Churches to pray. The leader prayed with great fervour and in a loud voice. Everyone shared in the prayers by saying loudly : "*Amen, kya leboha*", which means : "*Amen, thank you*". Afterwards, the king warmly shook hands with the Bishop, praised his teachings and said that they would meet again.

The Bishop was invited to attend the evening service at the Anglican Church. It was Good Friday eve. They blessed the water and washed the feet of one another and then held the Last Supper's mass which the Bishop found to be very similar to that of the Coptic church.

### **Good Friday with Swaziland's Churches**

The Bishop was also invited to deliver a sermon on Good Friday to tens of thousands of people in the Royal Gardens which started in the morning and continued right through into the afternoon. Thousands of the African Churches leaders came in their bright colourful clothes carrying crosses of different sizes, shapes and colours around their necks. Everyone was dressed in his own style. The celebrations were a chain of sermons with hymns and prayers in between, which were said warmly and loudly.

At noon, a large number of women, old and young, dressed in similar clothes, arrived in several large luxury buses. The oldest woman among them sat in the centre on a high chair, while the others sat around her on smaller chairs. The Bishop was told that this was the Queen Mother, while the others were King Sabhuza II's wives, and that there were many of them, almost ninety as a matter of fact. That is because the tradition of these tribes is that the King marries a young wife every year on the occasion of his birthday.

The Bishop was then asked to deliver his sermon which was interpreted from English to Siswati. He spoke about the Cross, its strength, honour, respect and reverence. He also told them about the power of the Cross in the lives of faithful Christians.

**For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are**

**perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (1Cor. 1:18)**

Celebrations continued into the afternoon, after which the Bishop was surrounded by hundreds of people and Independent Church members, who asked him many questions, such as "Are you from Egypt?" and "Is Egypt on earth?" They told him that they had thought Egypt was Heaven as they had read in the Bible that God's Angel said to Joseph, "Arise, take the young child and his mother, flee to Egypt." as a result, is very blessed, even though it is on earth as we are.

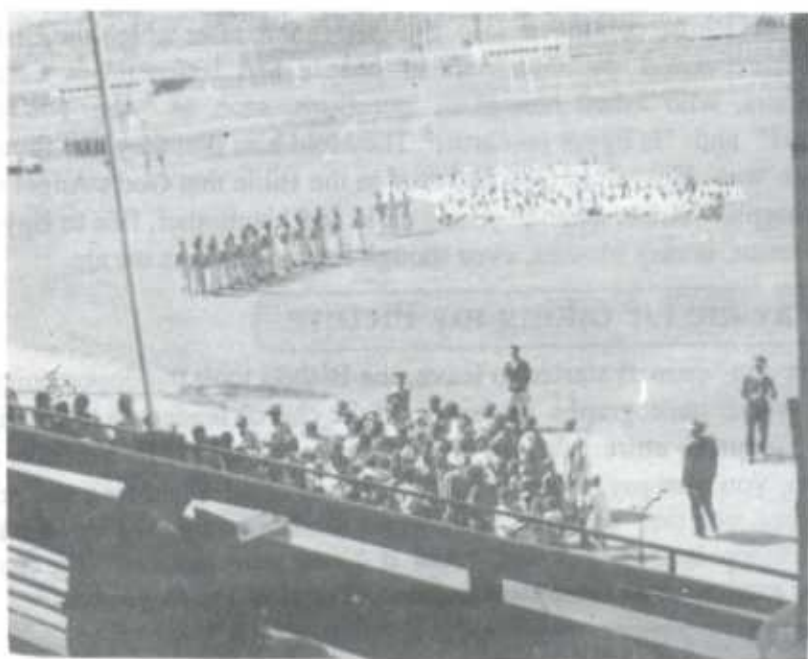
### **Pay me for taking my Picture**

When the crowds started to leave, the Bishop took the opportunity to take some photographs of some of the church leaders in their bright and colourful attire. One of them, however, said, "If you take my photo, you must pay me the price." The Bishop asked why there was a price, and was told that when one's photograph is taken, so a part of him is taken. The Bishop laughed and said, "And if I take many pictures?" The church leader answered with complete conviction, "Then I will no longer exist."

### **Easter Celebration**

The celebration took place in the Manzini Stadium, where thousands of people gathered. They came in processions from every direction in very beautiful, colourful and decorated clothes. They carried musical instruments and sang in loud voices while walking in groups until finally, taking their places in the stadium. All in all there were about 25000 persons gathered, including government civil servants, ministers and diplomatic corps members from all nations.

At last, the King arrived in his luxurious car and sat down on the central platform, followed by his wives, who arrived in their buses and who sat on a platform prepared especially for them. The celebrations started with the singing of hymns and prayers, and suddenly, while the Bishop was sitting among the people, the minister of the palace, Mr. Makhalela came and told him that His Majesty the King was requesting that he deliver a sermon, limited to thirty minutes. He was led to the microphones and was told that his sermon would be translated into both Siswati and Khosa.



Manzini Stadium where members of the Independent African Churches started to gather to celebrate the Easter of 1977.

The Bishop spoke about the power of resurrection, the spirit of resurrection and the life of resurrection with the Lord. It was very hot, but even so the people began singing and praying. They then applauded the King, and began to leave at around 2.00pm.

### **The Meeting with King Sabhuza II**

The minister, Mr. Makhalela, came again to where the Bishop was sitting and asked him to join him in his car to meet the King in Parliament, at the request of His Majesty. As soon as he arrived, the King said : *"I welcome you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ."* The Bishop answered : *"And I, too, greet your Majesty and the people of Swaziland in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and I feel happy and joyful that the Lord gave me this chance to celebrate the biggest Christian Occasion among you and to be talking to Your Majesty."*

The King : *"I welcome you in our country Swaziland, and we are happy with your visit."*

The Bishop : *"I have felt your warm welcome and the hospitality of the people of Swaziland since the moment of my arrival. I thank the Lord who gave me this chance to visit my brothers of the Independent Churches and to invite them into mutual cooperation."*

The King : *"We will be very happy indeed if you do something to gather these churches, to work together for this, though it is difficult, is very important. We will pray to the Lord to help you succeed in your work. But how will you start ?"*

The Bishop : *"Through spiritual work, the Word of God, teaching, training and exchanging visits."*

The King : *"I would like to express our joy with your spiritual words that stimulated our people, and we hope they will bear fruit."*

The Bishop : *"I trust in the work of the Holy Spirit in the people who are the sons of God. It may move their hearts."*

The King : *"Indeed this is the work of the Holy Spirit in us."*

The Bishop : *"Allow me, your Majesty, to introduce you to the first African Church, established by the Apostle St. Mark, the writer of the Gospel of Mark in the New Testament. I also extend to your Majesty the greetings and blessings of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the Pope of Alexandria and the 117th successor of the Apostle St. Mark, as well as the love of ten million Coptic Christians in Egypt and the rest of the world."*

The King : *"This is new information, and we feel joy and wonder to hear such news about ancient Christianity on the continent of Africa and in the land of Egypt."*

The Bishop : *"In truth, Christianity in Africa is original and genuine and not, as some imagine, imported from abroad. It has been present in Egypt since the first Christian Century, and it gives me pleasure to present your Majesty with a book about the history of the Coptic Church, written in English. I hope you will have the time to read it."*

The King : *"I would like you to know that I read a lot, and am eager to know the history of Christianity in Africa. Therefore, this book will have priority in my readings. Thank you for this book."*

The Bishop : *"Your Majesty, allow me to also present you with an Icon of the first African Apostle who established the first church in the continent in the first century of our Lord, St. Mark the Apostle, who was born and wrote his Gospel in Africa and established the first African church, the Church of Alexandria. He was also martyred in Africa, where his relics are still kept."*

The King : *"Is this a true picture ? Was it possible to take pictures at that time ?"*

The Bishop : *"It is an Icon, painted by Christian artists from the first century and it expresses the depth of their studies into the history of the life of the martyr. Don't you see, your Majesty, that his features are African ?"*

The King : *"We are happy to know that one of the four gospels was written in Africa and that one of the apostles was born in Africa. We will study this book very carefully. Your present is accepted. Who wrote the book ?"*

The Bishop : *"One of the Coptic Church historians in the present time. These are writings about nearly 2000 years of the Church's life. I would also like to present your Majesty with some pictures about ancient Christianity in Egypt. This is a picture of the Tree of the Virgin Mary. It is the tree under whose shade the Holy Family sat during their stay in Egypt."*

The King : *"Indeed, the Bible speaks to us about the arrival of the Holy Family to the land of Egypt. Is this tree still green until now? What happens to it in winter ?"*

The Bishop : *"Yes your Majesty. It is very old, but it is still alive. Many people from around the world are blessed by visiting it."*

The King : *"This is very valuable knowledge. I thank you for it and am very happy to have met you. I wish you a happy trip and fruitful work in all your travels".*



**A general view of Saint Antony monastery and saint Mark Church in Harare Zimbabwe established 1988, His Holiness Pope Shenouda III . Consecrated the Church Alters in 1994.**



**A General view of the monastery in Harare with all its Fences and Christmas trees .**



**One of the gatherings of Kimbanguists on the mountains, while they are playing music on their brass instruments in 1977.**



**CHAPTER  
XXIII**

**THE HARVEST TRULY  
IS PLENTIFUL, BUT THE  
LABOURERS ARE FEW.**

**(MAT. 9:37-38)**



## **The Search for Servants to serve in Africa**

Joining His Holiness, Pope Shenouda III on his first journey to America and Canada in 1977 was not only a blessing to the Bishop in that He gained a useful lesson from the masses, sermons and many meetings, but it was also a good chance for the new Bishop of African affairs to explain, for the first time, to the Coptic churches abroad, his discoveries and meetings during his travels in Africa, his new service, the possibilities and hopes of the church and also the necessities. His Holiness, through his fatherly love, often gave the Bishop the chance to speak about the service in Africa.

His Holiness Pope Shenouda continued to give this service all His spiritual, moral and meaningful backing and support. He kept an eye towards the needs of the service. After his successful trip, His Holiness returned to Egypt with his entourage, a few days before the Pentecost. The Bishop also returned to Egypt to look for and to approve of servants to serve with him and to share God's work with him in the huge continent.

## **The Fathers and the Monks of St. Makarius Monastery**

His Holiness made many contacts concerning the service in Africa. Despite his many commitments, he gave complete help to accomplish the job. The Bishop visited St. Makarius Monastery to arrange the travels of the monks to Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, as soon as possible.

The two monks who spoke French were to serve in Zaire and were to teach at the Kimbanguist Theological College, in response to a request made by the Head of the Church.

## **Fathers for Kenya first**

Two monks, Father Serapion and Father Philemon, arrived in Nairobi, Kenya in mid July 1977. By then, the Bishop had already spent 19 months in the African service entirely on his own. The Bishop

took into consideration that some of his time was to be spent with the new fathers, to move around visiting and travelling to get acclimatised and to be introduced to the life and service in Kenya. It was necessary to practise the use of biblical and theological English so as to be able to convey their message to the people. They also had to get used to the service among strangers and also to drive cars on the left hand side of the road.



**Father Jeremiah El Makary, Father Philemon El Makary and Father Serapion El Amba Bishoy. The first to start the service with the Bishop in Zaire and Kenya in 1977.**

Their Training continued for nine months, after which Father Serapion was able to start the service in the Ukambani region and Father Philemon in the Maseno region and Lake Victoria in Nyanza. The church had prepared suitable housing and all that was needed such as a car, service equipment, slide projectors, loudspeakers and large quantities of pictures and presents for each of the two regions.

### **Fathers for Zaire second**

Father Jeremiah and Father Kornileos arrived in Nairobi 18 September 1977, to spend some time in Kenya to get used to the

service among Africans after which they were to travel to Kinshasa in Zaire at the beginning of the academic year in the Kimbanguist College in October 1977. The Bishop took on his own responsibility to introduce the new fathers to the branches of service, the way to serve among the African people. They travelled to different regions and met many people. They also organised meetings with the Bishop, to talk to them about his expectations for the future of the service in both Kenya and Zaire.

Because their service would be in French, they revised, printed and bound 200 copies of the St. Basil Liturgy in French. The Bishop also bought the necessities of life in Zaire, such as a water filter, medicines, etc., in preparation for travel.

### **A warm Welcome for the Bishop and Fathers in Zaire**

The Bishop travelled with the Fathers to Zaire on 29 September 1977. They arrived in Kinshasa in the evening to find the church elders, missionaries and the Coptic families in Kinshasa waiting for them at the airport. When they arrived at the campus of the Kimbanguist Theological College, they discovered that a newly furnished house had been prepared for the Coptic monks. This house had running water, electricity and all other utilities to ensure a comfortable stay. They then went to the assembly hall where a warm reception was held by all the staff and students of the college.

Everyone stood up shouting and applauding when the Bishop and the Fathers entered. Then they started to sing in unison, some beautiful spiritual hymns which moved the Fathers' hearts although they did not understand their meanings but the way they were sung and the beautiful strong voices with which they were sung, had a powerful effect. Then the Dean of the college, Marie Louis Martin (a Swiss national), stood up welcoming them. She said that the Coptic Bishop Markos had promised to bring them Coptic teachers and he had fulfilled his promise. The students started shouting again, saying this is history in the making.

## with the Copts and th Kimbanguist Leaders in Kinshasa

The Bishop and the Fathers held a Holy Mass with the Copts in Mr Farid Kamel's house. At that time there were ten Coptic families working in the fields of medicine, engineering and education in universities and schools. The Copts expressed their great joy meeting the Fathers and getting to know them. They were also happy with the start of Church Services for them and their families after having been deprived for a long time in a strange country.



With the Copts in Kinshasa - Zaire 1977

At another meeting with the leaders of the Kimbanguist, in the presence of their Spiritual Head, The Bishop and the Fathers were welcomed with love and hospitality that were indeed coming from the heart. The Head of the Church said : *"The presence of the Coptic professors among us is a great event and fulfilling your promise to us is a voice from God. We are all very happy with your presence among us."*

The Bishop conveyed the blessings and love of H.H. Pope Shenouda III to all of them. He told them that H.H. the Pope praised them for what he had heard about their spirituality and their adherence to our Lord Jesus Christ's Commandments in their private and public lives.

They asked about the Holy Sacraments in the Coptic Church, and announced that they were preparing a Doctrinal and Theological Formula and that they had accepted four Sacraments, one of them being Communion (the Bishop had written about in the sixties when he was a doctor in Ethiopia). Then the Head of the Church stood to ask the Bishop to convey their profound thanks to H.H. Pope Shenouda III who granted them their request for teachers. He expressed strongly the willingness of everybody to place all the church's facilities at the disposal of the fathers so as to ensure their comfort in their accommodation and at work, so that they may be enriched by the spirituality of the Mother Church in Africa and its ancient history which they bring to them.

The Bishop stayed in Zaire for two weeks, until He was completely satisfied with the arrangements for the fathers' needs. He then flew to the countries of the west of Africa.





**CHAPTER**

**XXIV**

**AND TO THE WEST  
ALSO ..... GO**



## **The first Visit to Nigeria**

The Bishop arrived in Lagos, the capital of Nigeria on Friday, 14 October 1977. He was received by many of the Coptic families living in Lagos. At that time, there were about four hundred Coptic families working in the fields of medicine, engineering, communication and secondary and university education. They were spread all over Nigeria in groups of twenty to thirty families in each city. Many of them were working in the remote rural areas. Nigeria is a very vast country and is considered the largest African country in area and population which is over one hundred and twenty million people.

## **Is it possible to establish a Coptic Church in Nigeria?**

The Bishop had to arrange a programme to visit all the Coptic families all over Nigeria, so he stayed for five weeks, during which he prayed seventeen masses, delivered sermons, held many spiritual meetings and other meetings to administer the Church affairs.



October 1977 with the Coptic families after a mass in one of Nigeria's towns

He had to visit the Copts in Lagos, Ibadan, Benin, Kadona, Zaria, Kanu, Jos, Maidugri and Sokoto, where he held masses and also baptised children in all of them.

Everywhere he went people requested the establishment of a Coptic church in Nigeria to serve the Copts, and the Bishop not only studied this request very carefully, but also took action. He went to government offices, met the officials and presented many documents for the registration of a Coptic church in Lagos. Any resident priest would have to travel from one town to another, despite the long distances and the difficult transportation either by air or by land, so as to serve the Copts of every region.



With the Coptic families in Sokoto, north-west Nigeria in 1977

But there appeared another problem. The authorities stipulated that the church must possess land and buildings to be recognised. As the church had none in Lagos, one of the Copts offered a piece of land in Benin on which to build a church. But until 1979, the Copts in Nigeria were not able to collect enough money to build the Church on the land that was offered by Mr. Ghazouli Gabra.

In October 1979, His Holiness The Pope appointed archpriest Bejimi El Soryani to serve the Copts in Nigeria under the supervision



of the Bishopric of African Affairs. He arrived in Nairobi during His Holiness The Pope's visit to Kenya and Zaire. Father Bejimi started his service in February 1980, and stayed there for one year until February 1981, after which he returned to Egypt because it was impossible to renew his temporary residence permit in Nigeria. And so, the Copts could not register the church officially in Nigeria. A few years later, the Copts working in Nigeria started to leave at the end of their contracts, returning home or emigrating. The number of Copts there decreased markedly and now there are only very few doctors and no more than four families.



1977 with the Aladura Churches in Lagos. Seen is the Head of the Church, The Primate Adejobi.

### **With the Churches of the Cherubim and Seraphim and the Aladura**

There was much correspondence with the African Independent Churches in Nigeria a few months before the Bishop's arrival there. He received many invitations to visit them and to get to know them and to join them in studying their Churches' needs. So, the Bishop gave part of his time to visit these Independent Churches in Lagos, Ibadan, Kanu, Kaduna and Zaria.

The Independent Churches in Nigeria greatly differ in their nature from their sister Churches in East, Central and Southern Africa. Here,

in West Africa, they are characterised by loud music using Jazz instruments and lots of drums. They dance in circular movements dressed in bright coloured, loose garments with square hats on their heads.

The largest of these Churches are the Church of the Lord Aladura, the Christ Apostolic Church and the Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim.

The Bishop's reception among those Churches was characterised by shouting in loud voices : "Alle...Alle...Alle...luia," singing and lengthening the tunes accompanied by the drums and music from many musical instruments. They wanted to place one of their square hats on the Bishop's head as a sort of honour, but the Head of the Church told them not to do so explaining that the Bishop is already crowned with a hat according to the order of his Church. The people were content with this explanation and continued to applaud and shout in joy. Many Copts attended these meetings, and the Bishop gave them books about the history of the Church and Icons of St. Mark as presents.



1977, The Most Elder Apostle Abiola,, the Head of the Church of the Cherubim and Seraphim in Ibadan, Nigeria.

The Bishop was then invited to visit their theological schools and there he delivered lectures on the Coptic church. He was asked to send teachers to teach theology on condition that the expenses were to be taken care of completely by the Coptic church. The Bishop promised to consider the request.

In order to visit all these churches, the Bishop had to travel long distances by car and had to spend many nights among them too, so that he could meet the leaders of the committees of these churches. They agreed to send their elders to the meeting of the Independent African Churches, which the Bishop was organising. The most important meetings were with Primate Adijobi, the head of the Aladura and the head of the Church of Cherubim, the most elder apostle, Abiloa. They represented Nigeria's churches in the first conference for the Independent African Churches which took place in Cairo in November of 1978, hosted by His Holiness Pope Shenouda III.



1977. Members of the Aladura, Cherubim and Seraphim churches on the mountain in front of the Land of Mercy where water was found that can be used to cure the sick.

## To Accra, the Capital of Ghana

The Bishop did not imagine the people of Ghana (an Anglophobe country in the west of the African continent) to have so much knowledge of the Coptic church, and he did not discover this fact until he arrived there on his way back from Nigeria on 21 November 1977 responding to an invitation from the Independent African Churches and to visit the Coptic families living there. He spent eight days there after which he travelled to Cameroon.

Due to the hard work he accomplished in Nigeria for five weeks, the Bishop became so exhausted that he arrived in Ghana very tired and in need to rest, but because of the longing he found in the hearts of the Ghanians and Egyptians towards the Coptic Church, he forgot all his exhaustion and worked hard to respond to everybody's request and to cover all their needs.

His arrival in Ghana was delayed for a few days because the flight he was supposed to have been on was cancelled, so the Bishop did not expect to find anybody waiting for him. He carried with him the address of one of the Independent Churches that had invited him. He found the Ghanaian people to be very cooperative, gentle, helpful and they generally had a quiet nature. They looked after him and helped him to arrive at either one of his hosts representing the Copts or the Independent Churches. It was easier to get to one of the Independent Churches, whose people welcomed him and took him to the campus of the University of Accra to stay there. He noticed the presence of many fruitful trees everywhere. When he asked about them, he was told that they were the Cocoa trees. Ghana is considered to be one of the biggest Cocoa exporters in the world. The cocoa fruit is very similar to but bigger than the fruit we have in Egypt, known as the Custard Apple. The cocoa is extracted from the seeds of this brown fruit.

During his visit, it was made possible for the Bishop to visit a cocoa and chocolate factory. The Bishop wondered about the quantity of vegetable fat extracted from the cocoa which is called the cocoa butter. He saw the manufacturing of the white and normal chocolate and they presented him with some chocolate and cocoa tins to take with him back to Nairobi.

## **With the Widow of the late President Kwami Nkuruma**

After some enquiries, the Bishop discovered that Mrs. Fathia Nkuruma was living in Accra with her two sons and daughter in a Government owned house which gave her all the facilities needed as she was the widow of the most popular president since Ghana's independence. The Bishop also found out that there were only two Egyptian families, Mr. Rushdi El-Hadidi, the regional manager of Egypt Air and Mr. Fadel who taught Arabic at the University of Accra.

The Bishop visited the Copts in their homes where he prayed and held Bible studies with them. Then he started to arrange for a Liturgy to be held in one of their homes. When the Egyptian Ambassador received the Bishop together with the Copts, he insisted on having the Liturgy prayed in his home as it was regarded as the only Egyptian land in Ghana. Mrs. Nkuruma and Mr. El-hadidi also expressed their desire to have the liturgy prayed in their homes. To satisfy all of them, the Bishop prayed the Liturgy once in every house.

## **The Liturgy in the House of the Egyptian Ambassador in Ghana**

The eight days that the Bishop spent in Ghana and its Capital Accra, were full of prayers and meetings with the Copts, the Egyptians and the leaders of the Independent Churches which were not void of critical situations which needed God's guidance for strong observation and quick action.

The Egyptian Ambassador held a reception to which he invited the Vatican Ambassador, the Lebanese Ambassador and some other African Ambassadors. He introduced the Bishop as having come on a Pastoral visit to Ghana, for the first time. They talked about the revival of the Coptic Church in the time of H.H. Pope Shenouda III who established a Bishopric to serve the African countries, something that the Church had not thought of for centuries.

The Liturgy prayed in the Egyptian Ambassador's house was on the last Sunday in November 1977. The Bishop was welcomed with joy and love by His Excellency the Ambassador and his wife. They had invited him to spend Saturday night in their house, so that he would make the Bread of Offering, (Kourban), in the early hours of Sunday. Every thing was arranged to pray the Liturgy in the reception room. The Copts, many of the Egyptian Embassy's staff, the Lebanese Ambassador, who was a Christian Maronite, and the Lebanese Embassy's staff who were mostly Catholics, and Protestants attended.

The Bishop prayed the Liturgy in both Arabic and English. It was very moving indeed to see the reverence of every one present during the Liturgy, every one was bowing when it was time to bow, and standing when it was time to stand up. All were following the Prayers attentively, having even taken off their shoes.

When it was time for the Holy Communion, all the Christians stood in a long que with their different denominations to share in the partaking of the Body of the Lord. The first in line was the Lebanese Ambassador, and the Bishop felt awkward, but quietly he told the Ambassador that Copts do not take Communion unless they had been fasting for at least nine hours. The Ambassador told him that he had already had his breakfast and the Bishop lovingly apologised to him. Then the Copts came forward for the Communion. When the Bishop saw a long line of no less than fifteen Nationals who were not baptised, he quietly brought some bread (Kourban) that was not of the Offering Bread, he cut this and gave them to eat, then he gave the Blood to the Copts only and he drank the rest. He then dismissed them after distributing the Blessed Bread, (Kourban). Then he distributed the Bread of the Offering only to the Copts. He felt that he had not angered anybody and he gave thanks to the Lord for having passed this awkward situation.

Two other Liturgies were prayed in the houses of Mrs. Fathia Nkuruma and Mr. Rushdi El-Hadidi for the Coptic families only.

## **Mrs. Fathia Nkuruma arranges a Meeting with President Atchampong**

Mrs. Fathia Nkuruma was very popular in Ghana since the time of her late husband, President Kwami Nkuruma, whom she married in Egypt, in the days of President Gamal Abdel-Naser. Nkuruma, as the liberator of Ghana, had a special place in the hearts of his people, and so, Fathia had the same special place in their hearts too. She established many charitable projects. She would go to visit the people in the poor regions, helping the sick and the deprived and providing them with medicines, food and clothes.

While President Nkuruma was out of the country, a military coup against his rule took place. It was God's Will to save the President's wife and his two sons and daughter from a dangerous situation. Because of the Lord's Providence Fathia and her children were able to leave Ghana on an Egypt Air flight that arrived and left on a Sunday, the day of the coup. And so Fathia arrived in Egypt with her children without any possessions. A few months later, President Nkuruma passed away due to a serious illness. Some years later, another coup, pro-President Nkuruma, took place. The new Government asked Nkuruma's widow and her children to come back to live in Ghana. The Government extended to them every hospitality and care.

Mrs. Fathia Nkuruma arranged an appointment for the Bishop to meet the President of Ghana, in his office who was a Christian. He welcomed the Bishop warmly and with love and respect. He asked many questions about Egypt and its Church and he expressed his desire to visit Egypt and the Coptic Church. The President asked the Bishop to pray in his office, for him, for the Government and for Ghana. He insisted that the Bishop should lay his hands on the President's head to pray and bless him.

## **Zaire once more, on the Way back to Nairobi to enquire about the Welfare of the Monk Fathers**

As soon as his visit to Ghana had ended, the Bishop felt so exhausted due to his continuous travelling for more than two months since he left Nairobi on 29 September 1977. He left at midnight on 3 December 1977 to Kinshasa, where he arrived at 4.00am. Nobody was expecting him, so he took a taxi from the airport to Mr. Fareed Kamel's house. At sunrise, he was on his way to visit Father Jeremiah and Father Kernilios at the Kimbanguist Theological College. He was satisfied with their accommodation and their work. He made sure to deal with any problems that disturbed their mission. He also arranged a programme of spiritual Church services and Liturgy. Finally He held a Liturgy with the Fathers in Mr. Fareed Kamel's house.

**who is he who will harm you if you become followers of what is good? But even if you should suffer for righteousness's sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats nor be troubled. but sanctify the Lord God in your hearts and always be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. (1 Pet 3:13-15).**

The Bishop felt that the Fathers wanted Him to stay longer with them in Zaire, so that they could become more settled. So he spent some time with them, assuring them that there is a big need every where in the wide African Continent. He studied with them the words of Peter the Apostle and prayed with them, asking the Lord to make them fruitful, as the Lord has put us among new nations to bear witness to the truth in us. He also arranged a meeting with the Head of the Kimbanguist Church in the presence of the Fathers. The Church leader promised to take care of all their affairs and also that they would always be in his mind and that he would have more regular meetings with them.

The Bishop bid everyone farewell, and left for Nairobi. He arrived there on 8 December 1977 to find many other responsibilities awaiting him every where.



## **It is Time for the Church to have permanent Premises in Nairobi**

The rented house in which the Bishop and the Fathers were living was situated on Haile Sellasie street in the Upper Hill area of Nairobi. This house was becoming too small, as the number of people attending the Liturgy and the Bible study which were prayed in the reception hall, had increased, while the dining room had to be changed into a bed room for one of the Fathers to reside in. As the Fathers of Zaire stayed in Nairobi in a house whose Coptic owner was away when they were in Kenya, they learnt that the Coptic Church as a registered organisation, has the right to possess land from the Kenyan Government to build a Church, development centres, etc... The Bishop started a long series of visits and meetings with the Ministry of Land and the Municipality of Nairobi. He continued his efforts for a whole year but in vain, until one of the officials advised him to try to acquire the land and the buildings privately by buying them.

It was the Lord's guidance to remember the good idea that H.G. Bishop Bakhomios suggested during his visit in 1976. The best thing was to buy a house built on a big piece of land. They could live in the house while they build the Church on another part of the land. As the Bishop had no financial means to buy a house and land, he put this matter in the Lord's Hands who takes care of all the Church's needs, while he continued his attempts to get land from the Kenyan Government.

## **The Need for special Means of Transportation**

The Sunday Liturgy was arranged among the people of Ukambani and it was a rainy day. They used the small Toyota, the only car they had and which was used for all purposes of services. They passed Tala on the tar road and reached a mountainous area with bad roads where the car got stuck in the mud. They tried, with the help of the people in the area, to continue their journey, but they did not succeed because of the muddy roads. With great effort they managed to move the car only to go back to pray the Liturgy in Nairobi at midday. The Bishop

studied this matter and he discovered that there were four wheel drive vehicles, but the cost of buying one was more than they could afford. They then thought of buying a pick-up which is strong and high, and since then, it has become the kind of car mostly used in serving the Coptic branches until now.

### **The Mennonite Church invites the Bishop to lecture on the Coptic Church**

The Mennonite Church organised an educational seminar for all their missionaries and staff serving in East, Central and Southern Africa for a whole week, held in a conference centre in Limuru, a suburb of Nairobi. They invited the Bishop to deliver three lectures on three different days about the Coptic Church as it is considered the Mother Church in Africa. The subjects of the lectures were, The history of the Church, its doctrines and its service and testimony to the world.

There were about 120 participants mostly Americans with their families. The lectures raised a lot of questions. Many discussions went on with the Bishop during which the people expressed their surprise at a Church that is deeply rooted, Biblical, Apostolic and African, and also at its great history and its revival in present times.

### **Visiting the Ethiopian Refugees at the Border with Ethiopia**

In June 1978, there appeared a new need to take care of the Ethiopian refugees who escaped to Kenya where they were accommodated by the Kenyan Government in Marsabet Camp in the extreme North of Kenya near Moyale in the extreme South of Ethiopia.

Mr. Hugh Pilkington, a descendant of a famous English family, owners of the biggest glass factories in the world, asked the Bishop for his spiritual and medical help to take care of these refugees.

Mr. Pilkington, through his financial abilities and charitable heart, used to take care of them socially and financially. He made many efforts to resettle many of them in Western countries.



**The Bishop with Mr. Pilkington preparing his plane to fly from Marsabet on the Ethiopian border on the way to Nairobi after visiting the Ethiopian refugees in 1978.**

They travelled to them every six weeks in his small one engine aeroplane, which he used to fly personally. The Bishop used to carry with him the Bible in Amharic and medicines. Once they arrived, the Bishop would pray with them, conduct a Bible study for them, listen to their complaints and confessions and give them the necessary advice and medicines for their ailments.

ESTABLISHMENT OF  
AN INTERNATIONAL  
ORGANISATION FOR  
THE AFRICAN  
INDEPENDENT  
CHURCHES.



CHAPTER  
XXV

## **Introduction**

The phenomenon of the Independent Churches started in the whole world towards the end of the nineteenth century. It is spread throughout Africa, Asia and Latin America. Most of these churches were established by Christian nationals as an expression of their independence from the chains of colonialism that robbed those nations of their freedom and exploited all their resources. The people withdrew from the Sunday services and started to meet around their homes, in the open fields, under the shade of a tree, on the sea shores or in the elders huts to pray. Their prayers, hymns, music and uniforms suited the environment and their taste, and these meetings attracted thousands of nationals who loved and enjoyed these meetings more than the services held by the westerners who imposed their music and language. Another factor that helped the spread of these churches was the ease with which the Holy Bible was obtained in their native language and at a cheap price. These groups were led by any literate person from amongst them, who could read and speak clearly and thus they found themselves free from the ties of the colonialists in this field, and got rid totally of their leadership in their spiritual life of worship and prayer.

This gave them great comfort, especially when they discovered that the colonialists were not practising what they were preaching about virtues, morals and the obedience of God's word. The people of these countries never forgot the huge boats with which the colonialists arrived at their shores carrying the soldier, the officer, the gun, the tank and the ammunition and all the coercion and destructive weapons, and, with all that, came the missionary, his people, his books and his instruments.

The land was and still is fertile and the atmosphere was suitable for the appearance of new religious independence movements. Self-made leaders arose and gave themselves titles and priesthood ranks of no legal or apostolic ordination. Among them were Patriarchs, Archbishops, Bishops, Priests, Apostles, Prophets, Prophetesses, or spiritual heads. They gave themselves resounding titles, some of which

quite humorous, such as the Great Vigilant Shepherd.

As for Africa, the first independent church was established in Ghana in West Africa in the Kumasi region, north of Accra, the capital. That was around the year 1859. The movement of local independent churches spread to the rest of West Africa followed by Central and East Africa, and then Southern Africa.

The number of Independent Churches on the African continent is estimated at more than six thousand. About forty percent of these churches are in Southern Africa. The size of these churches ranges from big churches with millions of members (such as the Kimbanguist church which has a congregation of about 6 million) to small churches with no more than 30 members. The smallest of these churches is constituted by one polygamous man's family who would have many wives with many children and grandchildren. He would appoint himself their Father of Fathers (Patriarch), and he would appoint his eldest sons as Heads (Bishops). His older grandsons would be pastors and the youth among them would be Deacons and so on.

Some of these churches were established by gathering the nationals around a unique personality who claimed performing healing miracles, solved problems by prophecy or comforted people crushed under the pressure of colonization, such as Simon Kimbango who appeared a little before the 1920's. Millions of the Congolese believed in his prophecy at that time. Following and believing in this black prophet became a strong and united movement known as Kimbanguism.

The Coptic Orthodox Church, established in the first century of our Lord and the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, established in 330 A.D., are considered to be African Independent Churches because of their Apostolic roots and because they have never been under the leadership of any other Church from Rome, Constantinople or elsewhere.

That is why some of the African Independent Churches look at the Coptic Orthodox Church as an orphan would look at who would adopt him, and as the prodigal son looks at his father who waited for him with open arms, to receive him with joy and happiness on his return.

## **Inviting the African Independent Church Leaders to their first Meeting in the Continent**

The Bishop's travels and meetings in many African countries were occasions to get to know and to talk to the leaders of the African Independent Churches, spread throughout the Continent and especially in the Southern African Countries. Their's was a strong and clear desire to know about the first Apostolic African Church. When the Bishop asked them where they would want to have the meeting, their answer would be : "Naturally in Egypt, to know its Christianity and to see the places where the Holy Family arrived and stayed." Also of interest to them was what was mentioned about Egypt in the Old Testament concerning the forefathers Abraham, Jacob and Joseph coming and residing there, as well as the birth and youth of the Prophet Moses, and the other Prophets who came to Egypt, such as Jeremiah.

Towards the end of 1978, such encounters took place in nine African countries, and the Bishop arranged for them to meet in Egypt for the first time in the history of these Churches since they were established in 1860, one hundred and thirty years before.

## **A special Help from the Lord to prepare for this Meeting**

At that time, the Bishop had no knowledge of how to organise international conferences or seminars. Nor did he have enough financial means to cover the expenses of a conference such as this, inviting the Church Leaders from nine African Churches. Expenses included air fares, accommodation and all their needs during the duration of the conference. The Bishop thought that, in addition to the conference, it would be a good occasion to invite them to participate in celebrating the seventh Enthronement Anniversary of Pope Shenouda III in November 1978, and also attend His Holiness' weekly Bible study lecture which is attended by about 7000 people on Friday evenings.

So, the Bishop put all these matters in his prayers, and he felt the Lord's Hands lead and open doors to organise the conference, the first of its kind in Africa's history.

The Bishop had many meetings and correspondences with different Church Organisations that agreed to cover the varied expenses. For example, one organisation could cover the air travel costs, while another would cover the expenses of those who would stop over in Nairobi coming from Southern, Central or East Africa, as well as travel expenses within Egypt.

In generous and fatherly love, H.H. Pope Shenouda III welcomed the opportunity to host the conference in Cairo. This special help from the Lord was the main factor in making it possible to hold this conference despite the lack of facilities.

### **Making a Film about the Independent African Churches**

The experiences of the Bishop acquired during his journeys, meetings and visits to the Independent African churches were wonderful and strange at times. With a lot of events that deserve to be recorded so that people around the world would know the phenomenon of the Independent Churches in Africa.

It was God's Will that an American (Mr John Ankele who was working in the All Africa Conference of Churches was an expert in film production. He showed his willingness to volunteer to work on that film.

### **The Conference Delegates in Cairo**

The leaders of the Independent African Churches arrived from seven African countries, Kenya, The Republic of South Africa, Swaziland, Lesotho, Zaire, Nigeria and Ghana in Cairo on Friday 3 November 1978. They were joined by the Egyptian delegates from the Coptic Church. The church organized the accommodation in a hotel in Ramses Square. In the evening, H.H. Pope Shenouda III welcomed them in the great St Mark Cathedral in El Anba Roweiss in the weekly bible study meeting which is attended by more than 7000 Christians. His Holiness greeted them warmly and expressively amid the people's applause. He then delivered a beautiful speech about the ancient and original Christianity in Africa. He then wished them a happy stay, enjoyable visits and fruitful meetings.





**H.H. Pope Shenouda III with the leaders of the Independent Churches from Zaire, Nigeria, Kenya, Swaziland, South Africa and Ghana in the Papal Residence in Cairo in November 1978.**

## **H.H. Pope Shenouda III receives the Leaders of the African Churches in the Papal Residence**

On Saturday 5 November 1978 in the Papal Residence in Anba Roweis, Pope Shenouda received the delegates very warmly. He expressed his deep love for Africa and its people. The meeting with His Holiness continued for three hours. They all spoke to His Holiness who talked to them about the Apostolic nature of the Coptic Church and its authentic African character. Then His Holiness led them himself in visiting St Mark's Shrine under the principal altar in the St Mark Cathedral. They were told the story of St. Mark, his mission in Africa, his establishing of the Church of Alexandria and his martyrdom in the year sixty eight of our Lord. Then they visited the new Papal residence, the printing press and other establishments in the El Anba Roweiss area.

## **Important Visits to the Ancient Biblical Sites in Egypt**

On Saturday 5 November 1978, the delegates started a tour to visit the holy places in Egypt. They started with visiting the St. Mary Church (the Church of the Virgin) in Maadi where the Holy Family crossed the river Nile from its eastern to its western banks, and where the baby Moses was found in the River Nile where his mother put him, fearing the brutality of the king of Egypt. They also saw the contemporary miracle of a copy of an open bible found on the surface of the River Nile waters. It was opened at the Book of Isaiah where the Lord says :

**In that day there will be an altar to the Lord in the midst of the land of Egypt and a pillar to the Lord at its border: and it will be for a sign and for a witness to the Lord of hosts in the land of Egypt, then the Lord will be known to Egypt and the Egyptians will know the Lord in that day and will make sacrifice and offering, yes, they will make a vow to the Lord and perform it, whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying : blessed is Egypt my people. (Is 19: 19-25)**

They then visited the convent of Abu Sefien in Masr el Kadiema (the Old Cairo) and the sound and light show of the pyramids in Giza.

On Sunday morning, they attended a liturgy in English in St Stephanus the Martyr, in the old cathedral, where His Grace Bishop Morcos, Bishop of Shobra El Kheima, took part. One of the delegates from Zaire delivered the sermon in French, which was translated into English and the delegates expressed their strong desire to take part in the Holy Communion.

They spent some time visiting the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the Coptic museum and the sites of the Holy Family, such as Abou Sirga, St. Sergious Church and the churches of Old Cairo.

On Monday 6 November they travelled to the monastery of St. Paul in the Eastern Desert of Egypt. The monks welcomed them in a very spiritual manner with songs and incense. As soon as the leader of the Kimbanguist Church entered into the cave church in the old monastery, he bowed down in front of the Saint's relics in awe and reverence. He stood there silent with his hands on his chest, meditating for a very long time. Then he expressed his feelings by saying, "I have never entered any other place in the whole world that has the dignity, reverence, simplicity, originality and spirituality that this place has." After a lengthy prayer in French, the Zairian delegation sang and praised the Lord. Then they visited the monastery's miracle which witnessed the Lord's power for many centuries, that is the well that abounds with sweet water from the rocky hills to give life to the Monastery since St Paul the first Hermit lived there during the third century.

They then went to the monastery of St. Antonios, where they were received warmly by a procession of crosses, candles, incense and songs, after which they prayed the prayer of thanksgiving, and then spent the night in the monastery. Very early the next morning they got up to join in the midnight prayers and the raising of the incense. Then they started their journey, climbing the mountain to the cave of St. Antonios, the great father of all monks. There, they were greatly moved by the spirituality of the place. One of them expressed his feelings by saying : *"Is this suitable for a man to live in, it is only a crack in the*

mountain?" The Bishop answered him by saying : "That is what the Apostle Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, expressed about the men of faith and the saints of the world who became angels of the earth, such as Antonios, the father of monks, when he said :

**Of whom the world was not worthy, they wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of earth. (Heb. 11:38-40)**

They prayed the Thanksgiving prayer and the Bishop led them in meditation on the saints in the cloud of witnesses surrounding us. Those are the saints who struggled in faith on earth until they joined the victorious church.

These visits were filmed, and the material was used to make a whole film about the Independent Churches. On the way back, they passed the shores of the Red Sea and asked to stop, so as to put their feet in it's water and take with them some of it's water back home, to tell the people that they had touched the sea that the people of Israel crossed with the strength of God's arm, many centuries ago.

### **To Luxor and Aswan by Plane**

At dawn, on Wednesday, 8 November they flew to Luxor. They were received by the priests from the bishopric, who took them to visit the monastery of El Anba Bakhomius Al Shayeb, the Temple of Karnak, the kings tombs, and the many ancient Egyptian monuments.

They crossed the river Nile and spent the whole day in Luxor. The priests' reception and their hospitality was so beautiful, welcoming and generous, that the Africans sat in the evening at the doors of the metropolinate and started singing with much joy and happiness.

At dawn on Thursday, they flew to Aswan, where they were received by His Grace Bishop Anba Hedra, the priests and the congregation, who joined the delegation to the High Dam and the electricity plant.

They then crossed the Nile, to visit the monastery of St. Hedra, and in the metropolinate of Aswan, His Grace the Bishop welcomed them with immense fatherly love and kindness.

The priests, the congregation and the women's committees made a

big effort to welcome the guests at the lunch table which expresses the hospitality of the Egyptians and their love to host strangers. Once more, in the church, they prayed the prayer of Thanksgiving, then there were some welcoming speeches expressing the love of the people of Aswan to the people of the Independent Churches in Africa. Then, the same evening, they flew back to Cairo.



The Bishop and His Grace Bishop Thomas with a group of Copts, visitors from Egypt in front of the entrance of the Organization of African Independent Churches, 1988.

### **The Establishment of the Organisation of African Independent Churches**

The meetings of the leaders of the African Independent Churches started for the first time in history in the conference hall of the Bishopric of Social and Ecumenical Services, at El Anba Rouweis, in the afternoon of 10 November 1978. His Grace, Bishop Samuel, His Grace, Bishop Yoanis and His Grace, Bishop Morcos, (Bishop of Shoubra El Kheima), took part in the conference.

The conference continued through Saturday, Sunday and up until Monday, 13 November 1978, in the evening. It was decided to establish an organization to work for the welfare of the African Independent Churches on the African continent and it was to be called the "*Organization of the African Independent Churches*".

As the Lord had used the Coptic Bishop of African Affairs to organize this conference, he was unanimously elected to be the organizing secretary for this newly born organization. The leader of the Aladura Church, Primate Adejobi, was selected to be the chairman and the rest were members of the organization. They also decided that its official headquarters would be in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. The organization was to be spiritual, educational and for training purposes only and had no political purposes or activities in the whole African continent.

### **The Leaders of African Independent Churches Participate in the 7th Anniversary Celebrations of Enthronement of H.H. Pope Shenouda III**

On the evening of Monday 13 November, they took part in the seventh enthronement celebration of H.H. Pope Shenouda III.

His Holiness invited them to visit the monastery of Anba Bishoy. He led them to visit the monastic life and the projects of constructions in the monastery. His Holiness then invited them to lunch in the papal residence in the monastery.

In the afternoon they returned to Cairo to attend a farewell party at the Virgin Mary Church at Zamlek which was attended by Bishop Samuel and Bishop Morcos.

The African leaders expressed their profound Gratitude and Happiness for their visit to Egypt. They mentioned the great blessing they have taken in visiting many of the Holy Places in Egypt and also they mentoued the great impression His Holiness Pope Shenouda III has made on each of them. They admired all the Bishops and fathers they met.



**H.H. Pope Shenouda III in Al Anba Roweiss with the delegates from the Independent African Churches on their way to the St Mark Cathedral to participate in H.H. the Pope's enthronement in November 1978.**

### **The Spiritual Head of the Kimbanguist Church seeks an Audience with H.H. Pope Shenouda III**

The Bishop arranged a special meeting for His Eminence Joseph Diangienda Kuntima, the spiritual head of the Kimbanguist church with H.H. Pope Shenouda III at his request a day before he left Cairo with his delegation.

It was a very interesting talk, in which the spiritual leader of about five million members in his church in five African Countries, expressed his admiration of the big Bible study meeting which H.H. the Pope holds and which is attended by thousands. He also admired the Coptic Church activities in the fields of pastoral care (ministry), education of youth, Sunday schools and theological education. He invited His Holiness to visit Zaire as soon as possible, expressing how millions of

people in Africa and in Zaire especially, were waiting to be blessed by H.H. the Pope, not only in Kinshasa but also in the capitals of other provinces and the interior of the country where there are huge numbers of church members. His Holiness accepted the invitation depending on his time limitations due to His many commitments.



The former spiritual head, His Excellency Joseph Dianginda speaking in front of H.H. in the Papal residence in 1978.

### **The Heads of Churches from Kenya ask to stay in Egypt to spend some time in the Monasteries**

Originally, the arrangements were for Isaac Dilamini from Swaziland to stay in Cairo to finish his studies which he had started a few months before the conference. However, he asked for two other members of the Kenyan delegation to stay with him. They were, (the so-called Archbishop) Joshua Kiarie and Joel Kamau, who were interested in spending some time in meditation in the Coptic



monasteries as well. They wished to learn about monastic life as they were not satisfied with the quick visits they made to the monasteries during the conference. The Bishop arranged their accommodation in the students dormitories at Anba Roweiss. He also arranged with the clerical teaching staff to give them a lecture on the Church's faith, its history, its fathers and saints as they were interested to know that.

**The Bishop returned to Nairobi towards the end of November,** to find many tasks waiting for him. He was loaded with a new responsibility, he was to take care of the African Independent Churches which needed much education, training and lots of organisation in all aspects of-church administration. We hereby find it suitable to narrate the whole story of the Coptic Church service among the African Independent Churches, the establishment of the official headquarters of the African Independent Churches organization and also the second conference for the church leaders which was held in Nairobi in 1982.

### **The Organisation of the Independent Churches finds a permanent Residence in Nairobi**

Since the establishment of the organization in 1978, during that first meeting in Cairo, it had continued to carry out its activities from Saint Antony Coptic Monastery in Nairobi. The Bishop had given its staff three rooms on the Monastery's premises to be used as offices, a place to print the theological education by correspondence programmes (T.E.E.) which were used to teach churches' leaders the principles of faith from the Holy Bible. It had been agreed that the curricula was not to touch only one particular doctrine, as the leaders and members of the participating churches were from different denominations. Among them were the Catholics, the Protestants, the Independents, the Orthodox and the Copts. For this reason it was considered as an ecumenical organization.

The curricula was revised carefully so as not to be siding with any extreme opinion but was only Biblical and according to the Bible's teachings. By the end of 1982, the organization had enough money and facilities to rent a residence in the Ngong area, the same area where the Saint Antony Monastery is in Nairobi.



The Bishop and H.G. Bishop Thomas and a group of visitors from Egypt led by Dr Nabila Michael and Dr. Thomas in 1988 in front of the headquarters of the organization of African independent churches in Nairobi.

### **Preparations to hold the second Conference for the Leaders of the African Independent Churches**

It was towards the end of 1982, four years after the establishment of the organization in Cairo in November, 1978, that the work of the organization had extended and the number of member churches had increased to reach more than 300 churches from 22 African countries. There was insistence from the church leaders to have a second conference on a wider and deeper basis to study the needs and problems of the member churches.

With God's blessing and His good will, the Bishop, as the organizing secretary, found good responses from Christian organizations to donate towards the expenses of the second conference to be held in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya. He also found a great welcome from the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC), which

extended an open hand in helping to provide rooms to accommodate a number of delegations at nominal prices and also provided its conference hall for the plenary meetings.



**Honorable David Mudavadi, the minister of the local government with the Members of the conference in the A.A.C.C. Nairobi Kenya 1982**

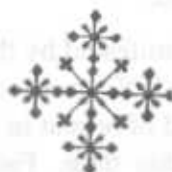
Without this help, the conference would not have been possible due to lack of financial means and helpers who could stand by the Bishop to prepare for this conference.

God's help was also manifested by the return of Father Serapion El Anba Bishoy in October 1982, one month before the conference. He had left Kenya for a period of retreat in Saint Makarios Monastery in December 1979. During this time, Father Philip El Anba Bishoy and Father Bishoy El Antouni were serving in Kenya.

## **The Minister of the local Government of Kenya opens the Conference on behalf of the President of Kenya**

The Bishop invited President Danial Arap Moi to open the conference which was held in Nairobi on 12 November 1982. The President appointed Mr Mudavadi, the Minister of local government to represent him in opening the conference in the main conference hall in the All Africa Conference of Churches.

The conference was attended by 56 delegates representing the independent churches in 19 countries, Egypt, Sudan, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Lesotho, Botswana, Swaziland, South Africa, Zaire, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroon, Malawi, Ivory Coast, Madagascar and Congo Brazaville. Princess Mampoi Seiso, sister to the King of Lesotho, attended the conference representing the Independent Churches there. The conference continued for four whole days during which a new Executive Committee was elected. The Coptic Bishop was re-elected as the organizing secretary with the added responsibility of Executive Secretary. The three Coptic monks fathers exerted great effort to help the Bishop in the success of the conference.

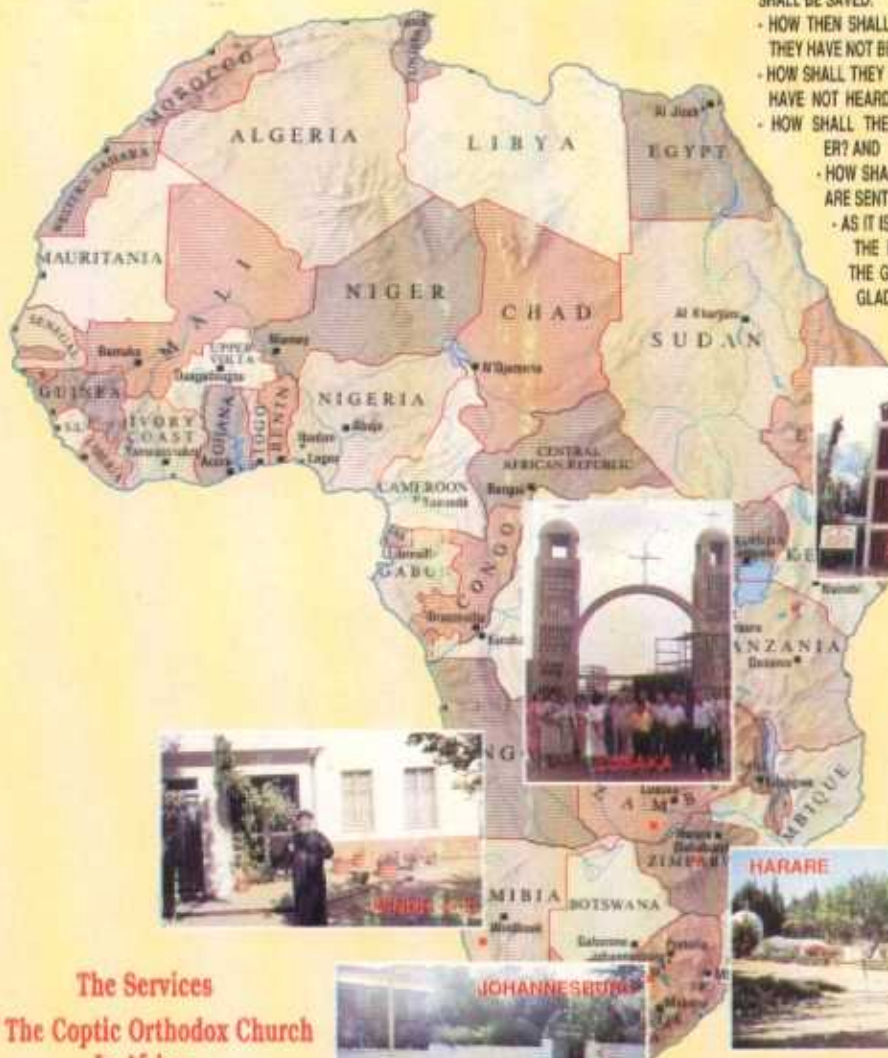




**Some of the Independent Churches' delegated from Lesotho, Tanzania, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Botswana, Kenya and Uganda.**



- FOR WHOEVER CALLS ON THE NAME OF THE LORD SHALL BE SAVED.
  - HOW THEN SHALL THEY CALL ON HIM IN WHOM THEY HAVE NOT BELIEVED? AND
  - HOW SHALL THEY BELIEVE IN HIM OF WHOM THEY HAVE NOT HEARD? AND
  - HOW SHALL THEY HEAR WITHOUT A PREACHER? AND
  - HOW SHALL THEY PREACH UNLESS THEY ARE SENT?
  - AS IT IS WRITTEN HOW BEAUTIFUL ARE THE FEET OF THOSE WHO PREACH THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, WHO BRING GLAD TIDINGS OF GOOD THINGS.
- (ROM 10:13-15)



## The Services of The Coptic Orthodox Church In Africa

### + IN KENYA

Started in January 1976, The Coptic Monastery was established in 1979, The Coptic Centre was established in NAIROBI in 1983, it embraces the Saint Mark Cathedral, The Coptic Medical Clinic, The Coptic Nursing home, Guest House, Vocational training centre. 14 Branch churches exists among 4 tribes, the Akamba, Kikuyu, Abaluhya and Lou, served by 5 ordained preists and large number of deacons.

### + IN ZAMBIA

Started in 1984, The Coptic

Centre in LUSAKA was established in 1990, it embraces Saint Mark Cathedral, Chapel guest house, Vocational training centre, Medical clinic, and Residences.

### + IN ZIMBABWE

Started in 1988, Saint Antony Monastery was established in HARARE in 1988, Saint Mark Church was completed in 1993, The Monastery contains Residence, guest house, and Vocational training class.

### + IN NAMIBIA

Saint Antony Monastery was established in 1990 in WINDHOEK, while the church is officially registered, the service started in 1994.

### + IN SOUTH AFRICA

Saint Mark Coptic Centre was established in JOHANNESBURG in 1992.

It contains Saint Mark church, Residences, Guest House and Convention centre.

One church buildings exists in Cape Town and another in Parys, while 12 parishes are present in the branches of the Republic.