

**THE COPTIC CHRISTIANS OF EGYPT TODAY:
UNDER THREAT OF ANNIHILATION**

By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to show the many human rights abuses by the Egyptian government and Muslim radicals against Coptic Christians, to expose the abuses to the American public and to encourage Americans to get involved in protesting and defending the rights of Coptic Christians in Egypt.

The method used in this study involves information from various human rights organizations in the United States, Europe and the Middle East. Books written on the subject and the agenda of Islam as a state-sponsored religion are further references.

This study finds that Coptic Christians are subjected to daily persecutions. Some of the persecutions include confiscation of property, discrimination and bigotry, the imposing of Islamic laws against them to further enslave them, murders in broad daylight with impunity, extortion, the siege of some towns, the bombing and burning down of churches, and ill treatment on a daily basis. Copts are considered to be second class citizens and have been deprived of their God-given inalienable rights. The West has been blind in the face of such persecution. Egypt has been able to elude world condemnation despite the grave situation of twelve million Coptic Christians in that country.

**THE COPTIC CHRISTIANS OF EGYPT TODAY:
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I

INTRODUCTION

The West regards Egypt as a moderate country, which is true regarding its foreign policy. The West, especially the United States, seems to ignore human rights violations in that country. The annual report of the U.S. Department of State on human rights is very mild in language concerning the severe human rights violations against Coptic Christians in Egypt.¹ The Department of State's annual report does not represent the truth

¹Notice that I have used both the word Christian and Copts. Both are synonymous, and mean the same thing in Egypt. When writing about the Copts, in fact, I am writing about Christians and vice versa. In defining the word Coptic, Gerard in his book *What is the Christian Orient* said:

Coptic is the last stage in the evolution of the language of the pharaohs which was deeply influenced by Greek. Coptic, here, is understood to be Egyptian. It is made up, principally, of two dialects which are Sahidic in northern [sic, southern] Egypt and Boharic in the Delta. Outside of the Greek cosmopolitan city of Alexandria, Hellenism had spread only superficially in Egypt where the mass of fellaheen [ordinary Egyptians] knew little or no Greek. As soon as Christianity was established in the country, translations of the Sacred Scriptures into Coptic began to appear.

See Gerard Guertin, *What is the Christian Orient* (Westminster, Maryland: The Newman Press, 1967), 64.

in that country.² The Subcommittee on International Organizations and Movements of the House Foreign Affairs Committee on human rights and the U.S. foreign policy, after extensive hearings reported the following:

The human rights factor is not accorded the high priority it deserves in our country's foreign policy. . . . The State Department has taken the position that human rights are a domestic matter. . . . When charges of serious violations of human rights occur, the most that the Department is likely to do is make private inquiries. The prevailing attitude has led the United States into embracing governments which practice torture and unabashedly violate every human rights guarantee pronounced by the world community. Through foreign aid and occasional intervention both overt and covert--the United States supports these governments

²In comparing the annual reports of the U.S. Department of State for 1986, 1987, and 1993, with the various documents published by Amnesty International, Christian Solidarity International, and other human rights groups, one comes to the conclusion that the U.S. Department of State reports do not represent the true condition of the Christian minority of Egypt and the violations of their human rights by the Egyptian government.

. . . . A higher priority for human rights in foreign policy is both morally imperative and practically necessary.³

On a daily basis, Christians in Egypt are subjected to persecution, harassment, threats, attacks, invasion of privacy, discrimination, confiscation of property, and murder.⁴ Christians in Egypt are considered outcasts. Muslims look at Christians as a burden and think that they must get rid of them or force them to accept the religion of Islam. Politics and religion are two sides to the same Islamic coin.⁵ Dean Curry in his book *A World without Tyranny* argues that:

. . . . Islam allows no "space" between the church and the state. The secular and the sacred are one and the same. The state exists to serve Islam; government is part of the sacred.⁶

The vast majority of laws are derived from Islam, disregarding the Christian's beliefs and culture. The same can be true in the judiciary system. All political parties and social acceptance are derived from Islam. Christians are prohibited from forming their own party, from establishing their own universities, from having their own radio or television stations, and seldom having their views heard in the media or newspapers.⁷ On

³David Heaps, *Human Rights and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: American Association for the International Commission of Jurists, 1984), 9.

⁴Shawky F. Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land* (Jersey City, NJ: The American Coptic Association, 1985), 136-143.

⁵John Eibner, ed., *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege* (Washington, D.C.: Institute for Religious Minorities in the Islamic World, 1993), 3.

⁶Dean C. Curry, *A World Without Tyranny* (Westchester, IL: Crosssway Books, 1990), 136.

⁷The author has observed and experienced the ill-treatment of Christians in Egypt, which has included himself and his family, having lived there for 26 years before coming to the U.S. seeking religious

the other hand, the government can issue orders which ignore or supersede the judiciary system, despite the fact that the judiciary system is pro-government.

asylum.

Islam is considered the driving force in all aspects of Egyptian society.⁸ Most government actions are influenced by Islamic law, which originates from the Koran. In fact, the Egyptian Supreme Court said that Christians are infidels and cannot testify in court against Muslims.⁹ According to Article Two of the Egyptian constitution, the main source of law comes from the Islamic jurisprudence.¹⁰

Coptic Christians in Egypt comprise more than 20% of the population of 59 million, which is 12 million. They are suffering in their own land and are trying to peacefully assert their God-given rights to live and worship in freedom.¹¹ Sadly, their peaceful efforts are met with little to no success. In compromising with militant fundamentalists, the Egyptian government subjects Coptic Christians to severe persecution and ill treatment. Christians in Egypt have to deal with two enemies: the Egyptian government, which engages in criminal activities against them, and is careless about their plight, and Islamic fundamentalists who are waging war against Egyptian Christians.

Any protest of ill treatment or complaint by a Copt can spell misery upon the Christians. Dr. Karas sums it up as follows:

The Coptic leaders are continuously reminded that any protest and complaint will endanger the safety of the Christians all over Egypt. The scheme and objectives of the Moslim [sic] regimes are to destroy the

⁸Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 7.

⁹Ray Saidel, "The Threat to Christians is Deadly," *The Union Leader*, 30 July 1985 [Manchester, NH], in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], December 1985, vol. 12, 21.

¹⁰Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 3.

¹¹Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 18.

Christians and the non-Moslms economically, socially, and educationally, or convert them by force to Islam.¹²

¹²Ibid., 1.

If we consider the dogma for Christians to be, "In God we trust," then the Islamic dogma would be, "In the sword we trust, and live by it."¹³

The word "annihilation" in the title of the thesis is chosen as a result of the information presented in Chapter II subtitle D ("Violence against Coptic Christians in Egypt"). While working on the thesis, the author continued to analyze the evidence from various resources, and it became clear that the title must be changed from human rights abuses to the present title to reflect the true intention of the Egyptian government. As we say, actions speak louder than words. The government of Egypt may deny and continue to mislead world opinion. However, the sad fact remains that the Coptic Christians are in fact under threat of annihilation by the Egyptian government and Muslim radicals. No other conclusion can be made in the light of the evidence presented throughout the thesis.

This thesis, and the nature of the subject discussed, makes it clear that the what and the why must be included in the thesis (meaning what happened and why it happened). In fact, the why is just as important as the what. If only the what is stated, the reader would raise many exclamation marks which would require an answer. Having said that, I shall proceed with both.

¹³Gamal Scharoubim, "The Islamic Dream: One Nation under Allah," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], February 1994, vol. 21, 15.

II

HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AGAINST COPTIC CHRISTIANS

A. THE SUFFERINGS OF COPTIC CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT

Coptic Christians¹⁴ have been suffering since the Arab invasion of Egypt in 642 A.D. There are stories which are widely known in Egypt among the Coptic Christian community which claims that when Muslims invaded Egypt, Christians were presented with three alternatives: Accept the religion of Islam, pay the poll tax (*jizya*) which was a punitive tax, or be murdered.¹⁵ In order to understand the present situation of the Coptic Christians, it is important and imperative to recall the past. By doing so, a parallel can be

¹⁴Copts are reckoned to be linked to Egypt's Pharaonic past, direct descendants of the original inhabitants of the country. The word "Copt" has its origin in a Greek word meaning Egyptian. Christianity came to Egypt in the year 41, and the Coptic Church was among the so-called Oriental churches that split with Rome in 451 in a theological dispute
.....

See Youssef M. Ibrahim, "Muslims' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," *The New York Times*, 15 March 1993, vol. 142, A8.

¹⁵In 642 A.D., Islam conquered Egypt by force, at which time many Copts were murdered by the sword. Others converted to Islam. The few Copts remaining managed to survive a holocaust against them. Now, the population of Copts of more than 12 million are facing a dilemma similar to when the Muslims first conquered Egypt in the seventh century.

easily drawn, since it appears that the shameful past of annihilation against the Coptic Christians is repeated again today. The results of the Islamic invasion of Christian Egypt in the 7th century as stated by Dr. Karas are

To pinpoint the effects of the different holocausts which the Copts had suffered under the different Arab and Muslim rulers, the Copts who were between 25-30 millions [sic] with 45,000 churches and monasteries at the Arab conquest were reduced to less than 150,000 with 250 partially destroyed churches at the beginning of the 19th century.¹⁶

In 1908, the Coptic Reform Society was established by Akhnukh Fanus, a wealthy Coptic Presbyterian. He thought to portray the Copts' hardship, from employment discrimination and advancement, to religious suppression. He went on a campaign to address these issues. Tension was heightened between Muslims and Christians, especially after the assassination in 1910 of the Prime Minister of Egypt, Boutros Ghali, a Christian who was the grandfather of Boutros Boutros-Ghali, now the United Nations Secretary General. The Muslim assassin was hailed by Muslims as a hero.¹⁷

A Coptic Christian congress was held in the province of Assiut on March 6-8, 1911, the purpose of which was to discuss the civil rights of Egyptian Christians, as well as to protest the assassination of the Christian Prime Minister of Egypt. Despite the many pressures applied against this congress from the government and from other Copts who were pro-government to cancel the conference, their efforts failed. The conference ended with several proposals presented to the government for action, which included:

1. The adoption of Sunday as a legal holiday for Coptic employees and schools.
2. Equal rights for Copts in leadership and high government positions.
3. Coptic schools, as a matter of policy, should be treated as equal to Muslim

¹⁶Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 17.

¹⁷Kenneth Cragg, *The Arab Christian* (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1991), 170-171.

schools, with financial aid rendered justly.

4. Equal representation in both local and national councils for Copts.

5. The government was to give financial support for councils and Coptic courts equal to that given to Islamic courts.

Because of the Coptic conference, Muslims held their own conference on March 8, 1911, in Cairo. They also reached a five point decision which in essence rejected all of the five demands proposed by the Coptic civil rights conference. Muslims claimed that Egypt is an Islamic country with Islam as its principal religion. "Their [Copts] existence depends on the good will and tolerance of the Muslims."¹⁸

From 1882 until 1952, Egypt was occupied by Great Britain. In 1914, Sir Eldon disregarded Coptic Christians' objectives for minority rights. Evidence shows that the British had favored Muslims over Christians since the Christians were typically called the "protected people" by Muslims. The British went on to assert that any effort to guarantee minority rights would be defeated from abroad by the British and at home by Muslims. The Copts, as a result, lacked unified political strength to make changes for themselves. The Copts needed this grass-roots support from which they could launch their campaign, as well as the political influence to force a change in their situation. Then came the Brotherhood movement which was a threat to Coptic Christians. A law was passed in 1934 which forbade the erection of a church in the proximity of a mosque. Coptic Christians were isolated by British rule and, with the rise of Islamic fundamentalism, could not find anyone to turn to for political liberation. Copts could not play a role at the level of national political life, as their situation worsened again, during the Nasser regime.¹⁹

¹⁸Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 20.

¹⁹Gilles Kepel, *Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (Berkeley, California: The University of California Press, 1986), 108-109.

The Dhimmi Status:

The term *dhimmi* comes into play when speaking about the Muslim invasion of the then-Christian Egypt in the seventh century A.D.²⁰ This term was used by Muslims after conquering a group of people to describe a non-Muslim, including a Christian or a Jew. There were obligations and duties for those who were the conquered no matter the size of their population. The *dhimmis* ("protected ones") were subjected to cruel and unusual punishments which included confiscation of their property, humiliation, discrimination, and murder, even though the *dhimmis* had fulfilled their obligations under the rules of *dhimma* (the *dhimmi* institution). Dr. Karas writes:

In theory, the lives and property -- as well as religious liberty -- were guaranteed to those who accepted this pact, on the condition that they did not transgress any of its stipulations; but very soon the interpretation and the application of its conditions transformed the *dhima* [sic] into a codified system of legal tyranny [enslavement], spiritual in theory, but which in practice often led to physical genocide and was at the base of the arabization and Islamization of the Christian orient. Its evolution, in the course of centuries, was governed throughout by the irrefutable belief in the superiority of Islam and in its universal supremacy.²¹

The *dhimmis* (Jews and Christians) were considered inferior to Muslims. For Christians in Egypt to be recognized, they had to shave their brows and they were denied the use of the green color, for example, since it was the color of the Prophet Muhammad. They were forbidden to wear clothes and other garments which were worn by Muslims. Because of their dress, which was prescribed by Muslims, Christians were subject to humiliation in public places. Christians were prohibited from riding camels and horses, only to ride donkeys. At times, they were forbidden to ride their donkey within town. At other times, they were obligated, under the rules of the *dhimma*, to face backwards when

²⁰The *dhimmi* is:

The tolerated status granted to them [Jews and Christians] on their own land, in return for submission, established for centuries a form of protection that was provisional and conditional upon the will of the ruler.

See Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1985), 52.

²¹Ibid., 8.

riding a donkey.²²

²²Don A. Schanche, "Egypt's Coptic Christians Fear Repression in Wake of Strife," *Newsfeatures: Los Angeles Times*, 26 August 1981, sec. I-A, 1-3.

In short, Christians were subjected to incredible burdens by their inferiority status to Muslims in every aspect of their daily lives. They were reduced to less than slaves. In 694-714 A.D., the heavy taxes imposed on the lands of Christian Copts left them destitute. They could not possibly cultivate the land, grow crops, and pay taxes. As a result, Copts abandoned their fields and many converted to Islam. This did not stop the army from bringing them back by force and again obligating them to pay the taxes imposed on them. Copts were also forbidden to sell their property to Muslims, which would result in non-payment of *kharaj* (land tax), which Muslims refused to accept. During the reign of Usame Ben Zaid, ruler of Egypt in 715-717 A.D., he wrote to Caliph Abdel Malik, "I draw milk; if it stops, I draw blood; if it clots, I press the skin."²³

²³Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 11.

The different forms of taxes were imposed on Christians were, *jizya* (the poll tax) and *kharaj* (land tax), as well as commercial and travel taxes. Apart from all of these taxes, at the ruler's will, large sums of money were extorted from Christians. If they failed to pay, he ordered women and children to be taken as slaves.²⁴ The system of taxation was based on the individual, as well as the population and harvest from the land.²⁵ To escape the ravage of plunder, Christians were forced to pay protection money to emirs (rulers) and sheikhs (chiefs). Whenever the central government had failed to apply law and order, the Muslim roving tribes took advantage of Christians. To secure their lives from danger, paying protection money was part of their existence.²⁶ In fact, Christians had to give their lands to the Muslim localities, but maintained the right to cultivate the land in return for the Muslim localities paying the land tax to the Islamic ruler.²⁷

In the Egyptian city of Tinnis, the burden of taxes put the Copts in a position of abandoning their children, who became slaves to the Muslims. The Copts could not escape the heavy-handed taxes imposed on them, and were thrown into prison and tortured if they refused to pay. During the Abbasid reign, Copts were thrown into cages with animals. The Coptic community, and also the church leaders, were held responsible for paying the taxes. When unable to pay, they were imprisoned and were subjected to torture. When the Copts tried to revolt against the state in protest of the heavy taxes imposed on them, their revolt was crushed. This resulted in the murder of thousands of Copts. Women and children fell victims to slavery by Muslims. In the year 830 A.D.,

²⁴Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi* (Cranbury, New Jersey: Associated University Press, 1985), 54.

²⁵Cragg, *The Arab Christian*, 239.

²⁶Bat Ye'or, *The Dhimmi*, 54. In fact this is what is taking place right now in Egypt during the writing of this thesis. Muslims radicals are imposing certain sums of money on Christians, especially in Upper Egypt. Failure to pay means execution, and some have died as a result of their refusal to pay, while many others are paying protection money to survive.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 52.

the Copts tried to gain their independence, but since they were not allowed to bear arms their efforts failed. This resulted in the murder of men by the sword, and women and children again were taken as slaves. For the first time, Copts became the minority in their own land. Coptic churches and homes were not allowed to be built higher than Muslim homes. Otherwise, such churches or homes were demolished.²⁸

Mrs. Butcher, an English author of "The Story of the Church in Egypt," writes that in 1300 A.D. Islamic laws concerning the Christians were cruel and inhumane, and were meant to humiliate and oppress them. When Coptic Christians tried to disregard these laws, the Muslim ruler ordered the following:

²⁸Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 13-14.

Once more the whole army of Christian clerks was dismissed from government service; once more the mob hooted and stoned inoffensive Christians daily in the street, or pulled down and savagely beat anyone who ventured to ride even on the permitted ass. In Alexandria and the Fayoum (two large cities) the popular riots against the Christians were particularly fierce, and the Government did not attempt to restrain them. The festival of the Nile--or the feast of the martyr, as it was by this time called--was forbidden, and the life and property of the Christian and Jewish populations were in hourly danger all through the country. Such was the state of things for three years, til [sic] an embassy from the King of Barcelona arrived [in Egypt]. . . . and the envoys were horrified at the state of things they found in Egypt.²⁹

In June 1320 A.D., rumors spread among Muslims throughout the country that their Islamic ruler favored the Christians, alleging that he refused to demolish a church that was standing in the way of constructing a channel to the Nile where he could get water. On Friday, when Muslims were gathered for prayer all across the country, someone rose from the crowd and with a loud voice cried out saying:

God is great! God is great! Oh my brethren, let us go forth and destroy the churches! . . . [T]he crowd flung itself upon these buildings (churches), and in an hour or so they were sacked from top to bottom, and the defenseless inhabitants beaten and despoiled. . . . [T]hey [Muslims] broke open the gates (of the Church of Maidens) dragged out more than sixty nuns who had hastily taken refuge within, pulled the very clothing off their backs, and pillaged everything they could find. Then they set fire to the Church of Maidens, and to another hard by which had shared the general wreck. Still unspent, the wave of destruction swept southward to Babylon.³⁰

On another occasion, four Coptic monks and scores of others were burned alive in front of a large crowd of Muslims for allegations of arson. The Muslims did not see the

²⁹E. L. Butcher, *The Story of the Church of Egypt* (London, England: Smith, Elder & Co., 1897), vol. II, 184-185.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 188-189.

punishment as sufficient. The writer recorded what happened next:

The Patriarch [Pope John IX, leader of the Coptic Church] was dismissed in safety and honor. . . . From this moment the excitement of the Mohammedans [Muslims] of Cairo and Fostat increased to such a frantic pitch that all pretence of law and order was abandoned. **Every Christian whom they met was murdered and plundered without remorse.**³¹

Despite the savagery of the crimes committed against Coptic Christians, as soon as the Sultan came down from the citadel to Meidan, he was surrounded by ten thousand Muslim men. They were shouting slogans against the Christians. When the Sultan heard them he was afraid of revolt by Muslims, and was afraid that he might lose his kingdom. Torturing and burning all those accused of arson was not enough for Muslims who were after Christian blood. The Sultan sent his Chamberlain to speak publicly to the Muslims saying:

³¹Ibid., 194-195. Emphasis added.

They [Muslims] were free to kill every Christian they could find and take his property! And when the multitude heard the proclamation, they rent the air with blessings on their sovereign, and departed to carry out his orders. The terrible scenes which followed on this capitulation of the Sultan to the maddened mob, **the wholesale slaughter and plunder of the Christian Egyptians in that reign of terror, are left to our imagination.**³²

Muslim historians confirmed what the author had recorded. Several laws were imposed on those Christians who were left to live after the carnage of massacring the Coptic Christians. While the Sultan was writing down additional new laws to be imposed on the Christians, bloodshed of Christians continued. Some of these are worth mentioning. In addition to the existing laws on the books, others were added such as:

They are [sic] the same as before--certain colours [were] rendered compulsory; a bell hung round their [Christians] neck when they entered the bath, to give warning to any of the 'faithful' who happened to be there, that they might avoid contamination; no Christian [was] to be employed in any public office, or in the household of any Emir, or in any post under the Government in the provinces. Any Christian seen in a white turban, or riding either [a] horse or [a] mule, might be slain by the first Mohammedan [Muslim] who cared to undertake the task, and his goods were taken by the slayer. The use only of the ass was permitted to them, and then on condition that they rode with their face to the tail.³³

³²Ibid., 198-199. Emphasis added.

³³Ibid., 199.

In 1327 A.D., there were new waves of terror against Coptic Christians. Saint Barbara Church was destroyed. Muslims claim that the Christians, even though they had permission merely to repair the church, partially enlarged it.³⁴ During a few periods, Copts enjoyed some freedom such as during the time of Muhammad Ali (a European with Christian heritage) who came into power in the eighteenth century. He had chosen Copts to work for government service. He found the Copts to be highly educated, intelligent, and trustworthy.³⁵

Samir Hakim summarized the status of the Coptic Christians today as follows:

To be born a Copt, a Christian of the ancient Orthodox Church of Egypt, is to be born as a stranger in one's land. To be born a Copt is to learn from childhood that you are a second-class citizen, who has to fight for even the most elementary rights in almost every field of life. As long as a Copt lives in Egypt, he will be an inferior person. The system teaches the Copts that they are like a servile creature; Copts are so taught in their homeland. The inferior status of Copts as "DHIMMIS," subjugated people, is accepted as normal in Egypt, as it is in other Islamic countries.³⁶

At the present time, reported David Alton, a member of the British Parliament in *The Tablet*, what concerns Christians the most is:

Insecurity and fear remains the most crucial and pressing concern. The same ugly phenomenon of ethnic cleansing as in Bosnia, the destruction of the culture and civilisation [*sic*] of minorities and their vilification, is to be found in the villages in Upper Egypt. Christian women have been raped; men and their families [were] induced or pressurized in their thousands to convert to Islam. Local police officers have either ignored the attacks or have collaborated.³⁷

B. OPPRESSION AGAINST COPTIC CHRISTIANS ON ALL FRONTS

Chris George, executive director of Human Rights Watch in New York, said:

The [Egyptian] state has sent a clear message that the Copts can be discriminated against They are treated as a second-class

³⁴Ibid., 201.

³⁵Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 16.

³⁶Samir Hakim, "The Appeasers and the Enemy Within," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1989, vol. 16, 21.

³⁷David Alton, "Copts under Siege," *The Tablet*, 16 October, 1993, 28.

citizens.³⁸

³⁸Sarah Gauch, "Egypt's Coptic Christians Endure Harassment by Muslims," *The Christian Science Monitor*, 24 February 1995, 10. Emphasis added.

Other Human rights groups say that "The [Egyptian] government's discriminatory practices have encouraged Islamic militants to use violence against Copts."³⁹

"Life for Christians here is over. . . . Now we must figure out how to get out," explained Daniel Samaan, a Coptic farmer in Sanabu, to *The New York Times's* Chris Hedges. **"He collected the bodies of his uncle and five cousins, who had been slain by Islamic militants."** Sanabu's population was 25,000 with a third of them Coptic Christians. As a result of violent attacks on them, many Christians were trying to leave the town.⁴⁰

1. An 1856 Law Requiring a Presidential Permit for Building a Church.⁴¹

A Muslim human rights advocate, Mr. Bahey el-Din Hassan, former Secretary General of the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, was perplexed about the government mistreatment of Copts, he said:

If restoration of church toilets requires a special decision by the president of the republic, and if Christians, having started to restore their churches after long years of waiting, find themselves confronted by Central Security [Forces] soldiers, why should we be surprised when the calls of some Islamic groups to attack churches are received positively by simple people, resulting in sectarian strife?⁴²

³⁹Ibid., 10.

⁴⁰Chris Hedges, "Heaviest Cross for Egypt's Copts: March of Islam," *The New York Times*, 27 July 1992.

⁴¹President Mubarak's explanation of why a presidential permit is required was so that "No one challenge the church." The question that could be raised is: Who is going to challenge a church's building? Any one who lives in the city or town where a church is being constructed knows that the appropriate permit was granted prior to the construction of the building. The other way of explanation would be his denial that such a law exists.

⁴²Human Rights Watch/Middle East, *Egypt: Violation of Freedom of Religious Belief &*

Expression of the Christian Minority, (New York, NY: Human Rights Watch/Middle East, 1994), vol. 6, no. 2, 2.

"Repairing Churches [painting, fixing a toilet, renovation, etc.] without a presidential permit, which is nearly impossible to secure, is a felony against the state."⁴³

An old Ottoman decree which dates back to February 18, 1856, which was declared by Sultan Abdel Medjid-Khan, called the "Hamayouni Decree," requires a presidential authorization when applying for a permit to build or even to repair a church.⁴⁴ Some churches wait for more than 10 years to get a presidential permit and sometimes wait as many as 30 years before getting a permit to build a church. From 1981 to 1990, the Coptic Church obtained 10 permits to build churches from among hundreds of applications, most of which were rejected or are waiting for a permit. The Church in the same period also secured 26 permits to repair churches. In the first six months of 1991, the Coptic Church⁴⁵ was granted two permits, one for building an office and the other for repairing a toilet.

Clergymen from the Coptic Church charge that

It can take years to paint a wall or build a bathroom. . . . [further] authorities close churches that have been open for decades and arrested people suspected of using their homes as places of worship.

In contrast, mosques can be built simply with a license from the local

official engineering department or without any government approval at

all.⁴⁶

⁴³The American Coptic Association, "Recent Attacks and Transgressions against the Christians in Egypt," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1988, vol. 15, no. 3, 18.

⁴⁴Anton Sidhom, "The Ugly Hamayouni [law] and the Battle of Al-Asafra in Alexandria," *Watany* newspaper, 23 June 1991, 1. See "The U.S. State Department Human Rights Report for 1993," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1994, vol. 21, 8. See also Roderick, "Testimony before: The Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights," 10.

⁴⁵Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 26.

⁴⁶Gauch, "Egypt's Coptic Christians Endure Harassment by Muslims," 10.

The Coptic Church at Dar-al-Salam in Upper Egypt, with a membership of 3500, was in need of repairs, especially new toilets. Father Boutros applied for the permit with the local city government. When he heard nothing from the city he inquired about the reasons for the delay. The Priest was surprised when he found that some Muslims in the town objected to his plan to repair run-down toilets and to build a community room. The pastor insisted that a permit should be granted since he had followed the rules and had sent the application for a permit along with a petition to Cairo. Now, the president of Egypt himself has to make a decision whether the church should get a permit to install new toilets.⁴⁷ The pastor in desperation secretly brought a plumber, who secretly brought the material at night. When the work was completed some Muslims filed a complaint with the police. The police brought the pastor to the station and threatened him with imprisonment. His valid argument, that four mosques in the same town were built that never required a permit, was futile. The pastor was fined a large sum of money and the new toilets were demolished.⁴⁸

In fact, the Coptic congregation of Alzanqur, Province of Sohag, was granted a presidential permit to build a church (St. Mary the Virgin), Decree number 51 of 1988. But the State Security Bureau, "El Mubahith," refused to allow the construction of the new church. On April 7, 1990, the Bishop in charge of the diocese wrote to the head of the Bureau and submitted to him a copy of all the legal documents for the construction of the new church. His letter and other petitions from the congregation went unanswered.⁴⁹

The Coptic Orthodox Church of Mayiet Bara, City of Qusina was granted, from

⁴⁷Think of it this way, this is a scenario of what could happen, and is in fact happening in Egypt. A petition is sent from a church to repair a toilet before the president of Egypt. The President asks his aide, What do you have for me to sign today? His aide answers, nothing much, just a permit to repair some toilets in a church. The president replies, let them wait. They can use the bushes behind the church until the year 2005, then a permit will be granted. For a church to wait on the President of the country for a decree for ten or more years to build a church or to repair a toilet (which may never come) is shocking and appalling. One can easily conclude that one of the Egyptian government's goals is to destroy the Coptic Church.

⁴⁸"Egypt: Do Toilets have a Religion?" *Open Doors/News Brief*, June 1992, 3.

⁴⁹Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 27-28.

President Mubarak, a permit to repair a church's toilet. This Presidential Decree was actually published in the semi-government newspaper "al-Ahram" on May 2, 1991. The decree reads as follows:

Considering the Constitution and Law no. 15 of 1927 which regulates the religious places, the appointment of the religious leaders and the questions related to the religious allowed by the State:

Considering Royal Decree no. 30, 1928 for the licensing of the establishment of the Church of the Coptic Orthodox denomination which is in Mayiet in the Qusan District of Manufiya Province:

It is decreed as follows:

Article One: The Coptic Orthodox Church is licensed to renew its toilet which belongs to the Church of Mayiet Bara of the Coptic Church denomination of the Qusna District of Manufiya Province

Article Two: This decree is to be published in the official daily newspaper and is to be effective from the date of publication. **Issued**

at the President's [Mubarak] Office on 6th Shawal 1411 which is April 21, 1991.⁵⁰

The publication of the Presidential decree above outraged Christians and rational Muslims. One prominent Muslim writer, Amina al-Sa'eed, wrote:

For what is the meaning and what is the justification for the existence of a law pertaining to places of worship for non-Muslims to the effect that no renovation of their lavatories may take place without the written consent of the Minister of the Interior? Do we have segregation between toilets of Muslims use and those for non-Muslims? And do toilets have religious affiliation such that we should discriminate between them? And if one should respond to this by saying that they are old laws dating from the days of the Turkish rule, isn't it to our shame that we maintain them until this present day without change appropriate to the spirit of the time in which we live.⁵¹

A Coptic Priest was showing a reporter the rundown peeling walls of the church which was built 120 years ago, and said: "I cannot even paint without the permission of

⁵⁰Ibid., 28. See also Anton Sidhom, "The Presidential Decree Number 157 for the Year 1991," *Watany* newspaper, 9 June 1991, 1. Emphasis added.

⁵¹David Alton/Jubilee, "Egypt Briefing Report," in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], January-June 1995, vol. 22, no. 1 & 2, 10.

Hosni Mubarak."⁵²

⁵²Virginia N. Sherry, "The Predicament of Egypt's Christian Minority," *The Christian Century Foundation*, 14 July 1993, vol. 110, 718.

In March 1990, an annual Book Fair was held in Cairo. A Muslim reporter asked President Mubarak, presumably during the opening ceremony, "When will he eliminate the law and the restrictions on building churches?" The President said, "We don't lack headaches."⁵³

in April 1993, then-Interior Minister Abdel Halim Musa was asked, presumably by a reporter, what he thought about the restrictions by the government on building and fixing up churches. He said,

This is untrue Copts are treated exactly as Muslims We do not restrict the building of churches. How can we do this to places of worship? The accusations these [human rights] organizations make are groundless.⁵⁴

The 1989 State Department annual report on Human Rights in Egypt said "Obtaining authorization can take years and is often not granted." In addition, the proposed church has to meet ten other strict requirements before the church's construction to begin.⁵⁵ The State Security Investigation also gets involved, which has the power to decide if:

work on a church building constitutes a threat to the security of the State [Egypt]. The State Security Bureau has been reported as often working outside of the law in obstructing the construction and repair of Christian churches.⁵⁶

Members of a Coptic Church in Assiut brought in small bags of cement over several days to repair a crack in the wall. Why? because they did not want the police or Muslim militants to know, since repairing a crack in the wall is considered illegal, and

⁵³"Imprisoning Christians for their Faith in Egypt," *The Coptic Cultural Center* [Jersey City], October 1990, 1.

⁵⁴Sherry, "The Predicament of Egypt's Christian Minority," 720.

⁵⁵Sa'ed al-Din Abraham, *Concerns of Minorities in the Arab Countries* (Cairo, Egypt: Ibn Khaldun), 549-550. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

⁵⁶Reported by David Alton, a member of the British Parliament and Jubilee Campaign. Alton/Jubilee, "Egypt Briefing Report," 9.

getting a permission normally takes years and may at the end be denied.⁵⁷

2. A Church for every 5,825 Coptic Christians.

⁵⁷Human Rights Watch/Middle East, *Egypt: Violation of Freedom of Religious Belief & Expression of the Christian Minority*, 14.

The Egyptian Ministry of Interior estimated the number of churches in Egypt at 500, but the Census Bureau put the number of churches at 1442.⁵⁸ Assuming the higher number of 1442 churches in the entire country for 12 million Coptic Christians, assuming the population of Coptic Christians is 20% or 12 million, and assuming 30% do not attend church or attend occasionally, would put the number at 8,400,000 Copts. Given that the size of the churches in Egypt would hold an average of 400 seats, means that the Coptic Christians are in need of 21,000 churches. Subtract 1,442 (existing churches) from 21,000, and the result is that 19,558 churches are needed. At the present time there is a church for every 5,825 Copts, which means that there are 7,823,200 Coptic Christians without a church to go to. The Coptic Church is in need of a minimum of 19,558 new churches.

Contrast the above figure to Muslim mosques (places of prayer). In the past ten years 80,000 mosques were built by the government alone. Add to that 125,000 private mosques build by Muslims.⁵⁹ This adds up to 205,000. Add to that the previously existing mosques at the conservative estimate of 175,000. This produces a total of 380,000 mosques or more in Egypt. The population of Muslims in Egypt is 47,000,000. If we deduct 30% from the total population of Muslims, as we did with the Coptic population, this comes to 32,900,000. This means there is one mosque for every 87 Muslims, as opposed to one church for every 5,825 Christians. While these are not scientific data or figures, the author believes that they are very conservative figures, and represent the true condition of the Coptic Christians as opposed to their Muslim counterpart. In addition:

⁵⁸Ibid., 12.

⁵⁹Ibrahim, "Muslim' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," A8.

1. The government builds all the public mosques in Egypt, while Christians build their own churches with no help from the government. In fact some Christians actually skip one or more meals a day and go on hungry to give from their basic needs to build a church.⁶⁰

2. The government pays the salary for all sheikhs employed in their public mosques and the salary for workers to maintain each mosque. The Coptic priests get no salary from the government, and they maintain their own churches.

3. Muslims can choose a piece of land and build a mosque with or without permission from the government. Christians wait for ten or more years for a permit to build a church, and many times they do not get it. In the past ten years 80,000 public mosques were build, while approximately 40 churches were either build or repaired at the same period. And the Egyptian government keeps telling the whole world that Muslims and Copts are treated exactly the same.

3. Religious Oppression

During the rule of Mohammed Ali, Ruler of Egypt in the eighteenth century, the following decree was required for Coptic Christians to obtain before burying their dead.

Order to Bury a Christian

Infidel son of infidel, cursed son of cursed, the dead son of Jacob, from whom the cursed has perished and suffocated - and for entering his disgusting dead body to the earth [ground], so it will not be a cause for spoiling the air We allow the burial in the special trash dump

⁶⁰A church is a second home to Coptic Christians, where they find comfort and strength through their persecution. One Egyptian agent from the State Security Investigation once said to Samuel Bistawros: "The state fears two groups of people: (1) A priest; and (2) A teacher." Why a Priest? Because he challenges his people to be strong and feeds them spiritually from the Word of God to reject any attempt to enslave them. A teacher also has influence over his students. For this reason, the government wants to make it impossible to build a church, even to repair existing ones. When Millions of Coptic Christians have no church to attend, the government thinks that it can pressure and force them to accept Islam as a religion. But its efforts are failing, because Coptic Christians are living in the light of Jesus Christ and prefer to suffer for their Christian faith than to turn to any other religion.

according to your infidel [agnostic] religion, straight to hell

This document dated 16 of Gamad the Second in the year 1205 Higriah [1205 in Islamic calendar, equal 1815 AD].

Magistrate of Splendid Forensic
Signed⁶¹

At the Saint Mar Girgis Coptic Church in Bahgora, City of Naga Hamadi in Upper Egypt, during the hot weather in summer, the board of the church decided to put up an umbrella to keep the sun out. Once the chief of police knew about it, and while the members were worshipping, he immediately arrived at the place of the crime and took the umbrella by force and ripped it apart by his hand.⁶²

Once a church is built, it is not the end of persecution, but the beginning. During church services, Christians are interrupted by loud noises, with people making noises outside the church to interrupt the service or by stones thrown at the windows. In most of the Churches I have worshiped at, the pastor could not open the windows during Sunday service or any other service. The windows were closed, at all times, because of stones thrown at the windows and the danger of broken glass.⁶³

Two towns in Assiut province (Izbit Antoun and al-Habalsa), where Coptic Christian live, had no churches, and the government would not give permission for building one. When the Bishop of the district sent several laymen to attend to the needs

⁶¹This information was taken from an Arabic information sheet which was sent to the author by Atef Jacob, and was translated by the author. Emphasis added.

⁶²Rifaat al-Sa'id, "What Happened to Egypt?" *al-Ahaley*, 29 May 1991, in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt/Newsletter* [Jersey City], June 1991, 1. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

⁶³Karas, *The Copts Since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 99.

of the Copts, they were attacked by Muslim radicals who warned them not to come back.⁶⁴

⁶⁴Jubilee Campaign, "Stranglehold on Egypt's Christians," in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July-December 1995, vol. 22, no. 3 & 4, 4.

At the town of Timshiya, the Coptic Orthodox Church is in need of repairs. For ten years, the church has been waiting for a permit from the President of the country. The church is 100 years old and has lost its title deed. But the government insists they produce the deed, which tactic is meant to obstruct the repairs. There are about 3,000 Coptic Christians there, while the church holds only 75 people.⁶⁵

In 1975, the Coptic Church in Monera, a city of Kanater about 30 miles north of Cairo, obtained permission to build a church. When Muslims radicals discovered this, they constructed a mosque close to the property where the church was to be constructed, thus preventing the construction of the church. The law provides that a church cannot be build close to a mosque, "not less than 100 meters [approximately 100 yards] from a mosque."⁶⁶

In the Imbaba district in Cairo, there are 200,000 Coptic Christians with only seven churches to serve them, and only one is legal. This means one church for every 28,571 Coptic Christians. If the government decided to close down the six churches built without a permit, as it did in many cities across Egypt, then one church would be left to serve 200,000 Coptic Christians.⁶⁷

Murkadem Medhat Kamal, an intelligence officer from the State Security Investigation, has been persecuting Christians in his District of Giza. He closed three churches at El Monira, Imbaba, and Giza belonging to the Coptic Orthodox, Coptic

⁶⁵Ibid., 5.

⁶⁶Ibid., 5.

⁶⁷Alan Sipress, "Egypt's Christians Severely Curbed by Society and 139-year-old Edict," *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, 23 June 1995, in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July-December, 1995, vol. 22, no. 1 & 2, 16.

Catholic and Coptic Pentecostal. Some of his excuses for closing the churches was that these churches were provoking Muslims.⁶⁸

4. Torture of Coptic Christians who Share their Faith with Muslims.

⁶⁸Jubilee, "Stranglehold on Egypt's Christians," 6.

Rania, a young Coptic Christian college student from Cairo, was subjected to harassment and threats from the State Security Investigation in 1992-1993. The reason was she was suspected of talking to Muslims about her Christian faith. In February 1993, she was threatened with rape, if she declined to give information about communication and relationships between Christians and Muslims at the university she attended. Upon her refusal to cooperate, the officer reminded her of an accident that took place in Ain el Shams (presumably the government planned the accident to get rid of her). The officer ended the conversation with her by a warning, "We could easily get rid of you." She said to Human Rights Watch that in May 1992, she was struck twice by two different cars. A police car hit her, and another car, but in both cases she escaped uninjured by falling on the ground. Rania converted a daughter of a Sheikh to the Christian faith. One day while she was home, a man knocked on her door and made up a story to get inside her home. Then he entered into her home, grabbed her and said to her, "What do you think you are doing to Sayida [her friend who converted to Christianity]?" Two weeks after the first incident, the same man grabbed her while she was in the street near her home, and warned her that he would kill her if she did not sever ties with Sayida. On February 23, 1993, while she was walking in front of a university building a car sped very fast, pulled out of the lane of traffic, and hit Rania, knocking her to the ground.⁶⁹

In May 1991, Bahaa Fuaad Bukter Hanna, a Coptic Christian suspected of converting Muslims to Christianity, was arrested, detained at police custody, and went through interrogations and torture. While in custody he was threatened that his wife would be raped, if he refused to cooperate and sign a confession. They also threaten him

⁶⁹Human Rights Watch/Middle East, *Egypt: Violation of Freedom of Religious Belief & Expression of the Christian Minority*, 23-24.

by saying that **they will give his name to an "extremist Islamic group."**⁷⁰

5. Muslims Take Christian Lands by Force.

⁷⁰Ibid., 29. This clearly shows that the government knows the whereabouts of the various Islamic radicals groups. By threatening to give his name to one of these radical groups means that they use them to accomplish their goals, one of which is murdering Christians. Emphasis added.

At the First Coptic Evangelical Church of Assiut, a Muslim militant group took by force 1320 square feet of property belonging to the church. The Muslims, after taking the property, built a clinic, a Muslim school, and a center for spreading Islam. The authorities failed to stop the Muslims from taking the property of the church. When the Pastor complained, he was told that he should be grateful that the Muslims did not take the church itself. In return, the Interior ministry had approved the church's applications for building new toilets which was submitted in 1974.⁷¹

In 1982 at Ein Shams, a suburb of Cairo, a lot of land belonging to two Christian brothers was seized by force by a Muslim militant group. The 3564 square feet of property was used to build the El Tawhid mosque. The two brothers, who owned the property, received no restitution for their property.⁷²

6. Discrimination against Coptic non-Profit Organizations

The governmental Social Affairs Department is designed to coordinate the various activities of social charitable organizations and to offer financial and other assistance for relief purposes of communities. The Department has been prejudiced against Christian charitable organizations, while providing funds and facilities to Muslim charitable organizations. The Department has deprived Christian organizations of funds, and applies tougher laws and regulations, which are different than those applied to Muslim organizations. This makes it virtually impossible to operate Christian charities under such circumstances.⁷³

7. Assault against Coptic Culture

⁷¹Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 30.

⁷²Ibid., 31.

⁷³Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 114.

When the Arabs invaded Egypt in the seventh century, the center for learning in Alexandria was destroyed by Muslims. Churches, as a result, became a place of learning. When persecution intensified against Coptic Christians, many of the churches were destroyed, with monasteries thus becoming vigorous in maintaining the Coptic culture and heritage. Now Coptic Christians are under attack by the government. Their values, traditions, and culture are threatened. While the market is saturated with Islamic books attacking Christian culture, Christians who are trying to publish books to educate their people and the public about Coptic heritage and culture have to go through tough scrutiny. Most are not allowed to be published or are revised to restrict certain items from the book. Censorship against Christian books is wide-spread. The government confiscates books that were published abroad, as well as books published in secret.⁷⁴

8. Oppression against Coptic Christians in Education

Christian students at universities are systematically discriminated against, in classrooms as well as in examinations. Victor Bistawros, an engineer, was failed in an examination in 1973 because of his Christian name, which forced him to repeat an entire school year according to the educational system. In 1994, a highly educated Coptic Christian claimed that he had been discriminated against in an examination when he had stated his Christian name, and had to repeat his examination more than once in order to get his license to practice in his field. The same is true for Christian students who have studied in government-owned public schools. When the time comes for a religious class lesson, Christian students in the public educational system are required to leave the classroom while Muslim students are allowed to make insulting and degrading remarks against the Christians. As a rule, Christian students who must leave the classroom look for an empty classroom. If none is available, they go outdoors wasting the hour. Muslim teachers are assigned to teach the Koran to Muslim students in a classroom setting.

⁷⁴Ibid.,117.

Coptic Christian students in medical schools stated that during

[T]he oral examinations at the university's medical faculty--where all revealing family names have to be given--regularly lead to candidates being failed because of their faith. **One young woman, on admitting her Christianity, was told that the examination was over and she should leave the room.**⁷⁵

The Coptic Church has been trying for years to establish their own Christian university, without funds from the government, with their request denied repeatedly,⁷⁶ while Muslims can establish an Islamic university any time and without any restriction from the government.

In an Arabic class, during a written examination, a question was asked: "What do you do when you get up in the morning?" The correct answer was to recite the Koran. If a Christian student answers "I read the Bible," or says, "I do not recite the Koran," his answer is marked wrong, as if he failed to answer the question.⁷⁷

Anton Sidhom, editor of *Watany* ("my country"), a weekly newspaper, published an article on March 22, 1993 on a required text-book for all third year College of Education students. This book was designed to degrade and insult Christianity, a new assault on the Christian faith. Here are some of the statements in the book:

- (1) Christianity is founded on Judaism, which is not a religion;
- (2) Christianity is similar to Judaism, and both are Egyptian and Jewish fabrications;
- (3) Christianity is embedded within paganism;
- (4) The Christian Trinity was affected by the Pharonic trinity and Hindu trinity;
- (5) Christianity's concept of the cross was affected by the Hindu, Greek, and pagan religions;
- (6) St. Paul pretended to be a Christian to distort Christianity;
- (7) Christianity made Jesus Christ holy, and is similar to Marxism;

⁷⁵Alton, "Copts under Siege," 28. Emphasis added.

⁷⁶Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights for 1985* (Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1986), 1214.

⁷⁷Warren Cofsky, "Copts Bear the Brunt of Islamic Extremism," *Christianity Today*, 8 March 1993, vol. 37, 46-47.

- (8) Christianity was transformed to a pagan religion;
- (9) Sexual activities in Jewish and Christian thinking is an evil which should be resisted;
- (10) Christianity has been corrupted;
- (11) Christianity has been distorted by human beings and became a combination of Judaism and paganism;
- (12) The author questioned the existence of Jesus Christ⁷⁸

9. Economic Oppression

Christians have been faced with hardships in employment. Some jobs specifically state that non-Muslims need not apply. The famous Islamic University of Al Azhar accepts only Muslim students from all over the country. Once graduated, they acquire available jobs, leaving Christians economically desperate. The University has branches in different parts of the country, in order to expand education for Muslims, and to make jobs available to them once they graduate.⁷⁹ Muslim students have an advantage in that they are accepted at the university with low grades from high school. Since universities such as the university of Cairo will not accept Muslims with low grades to study, they turn to al-Azhar for education. The university violates the rights of Coptic Christians to equal opportunity and would not accept any Christian regardless of grades.⁸⁰

⁷⁸The title of the book is "Principles of Education," taught at Sohag College, a branch of the University of Assiut, and is published by the Egyptian Ministry of Education. Anton Sidhom, "A Cry to the Ministry of Education," *Watany* newspaper, in *The Coptic Cultural Center*, April 1992, 1.

⁷⁹Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 119-120.

⁸⁰The Educational system in Egypt is different from that in the United States. The high school grade point average determines what college a student can enroll at (normally medicine and engineering schools require the highest Grade Point Average or GPA), leaving those with low grades with few options or none. Muslim students on the other hand have more options available to them. Even though their grades are low, they still can enrol at al-Azhar University.

Using the economic oppression as a bargaining chip, Islamic radicals are coercing poor Coptic Christians to convert to Islam. They are offering them money, employment, a spouse and other attractions. Many from the Coptic Christian community believe that the funding for this campaign is coming from Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.⁸¹

10. No Coptic Christian Appointments to Leadership Positions

On the national level, no Copt is appointed to a leadership position as governor, police chief, university president, or college dean. Christians, prior to the 1952 Nasser Revolution, were in high governmental positions as foreign ministers, ambassadors, presidents of parliament, and had dominated medical as well as engineering schools. Christians ran the country's economy in the first half of the twentieth century, from 1900 to 1950 A.D., because of higher education and skills. Muslims, at that time, concentrated on the police academy and aviation schools, which had fewer Christians and more Muslims, while Christians concentrated on the academic side which included, as mentioned, medicine, engineering schools, schools of education, schools of the arts, as well as pharmaceutical schools.⁸²

No senior leadership positions are now allowed for Christians in governmental or political parties.⁸³ Christians are allowed to attend naval schools, police academies, arms schools, and aviation schools, but in very limited numbers, which does not correspond to the 20% or more estimated Christian population.

11. Discrimination against Coptic Christians in Governmental Jobs and Promotions

⁸¹Jubilee, "Stranglehold on Egypt's Christians," 3.

⁸²Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 84.

⁸³Department of State, *Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 1993* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1994), 1164-1175.

On August 19, 1985, 37 Muslims were appointed to various governmental positions across the country. None were Christians, reported *al-Ahram* (an Egyptian semi-government newspaper).⁸⁴ On November 3, 1985, the government through *al-Ahram* announced the appointment at the University of Cairo of 74 professors, assistant professors, and teachers. None of the appointees were Christians. Christian students at the University account for 30% of the total students attending Cairo University.⁸⁵

There is evidence that the majority (estimated as high as 80%) of Coptic Christian students graduated from universities since 1983, have no job. The Egyptian government is in charge of hiring university students once they graduate according to the system.⁸⁶ The results of this excessive cruelty of the government is

that from 1988 to 1990, 50,000 Coptic University graduates converted to Islam. Church leaders have pointed out that one major reason for conversion is economic. Due to widespread unemployment and discrimination against employing and promoting Christians, conversion to Islam is a way to improve one's economic prospects. This is a reflection of the unequal employment prospects which Christians in Egyptian society face.⁸⁷

A priest from the Coptic church said, "Because of the lack of churches, there is a lack of Christian education for Copts, which makes them less strong to withstand pressures to convert".⁸⁸

The American Coptic Association sent a telegram to the then-President Bush upon its knowledge, from *al-Ahram* newspaper, that the government of Egypt permits employment of Muslims only in government, commerce and Islamic corporations. The Telegram states:

⁸⁴"Transfer of 37 Leaders of Local Governance," *al Ahram*, 8, in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], December 1985, vol.12, 22.

⁸⁵The Board of the University of Cairo, "Appointment of 74 Professors and an Assistant Professor," *al Ahram*, 8, in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], December 1985, vol.12, 22.

⁸⁶"Christians Persecuted in Islam," *Human Rights Preview*, 14.

⁸⁷Jubilee Campaign, "Stranglehold on Egypt's Christians," 3.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, 3.

President George Bush
[The] White House [Washington] DC 20500
The Egyptian and Saudi Arabian governments
have been conspiring to deprive the Christian
Egyptians from employment in governments,
business, and Islamic companies. Both
governments have been forcing Christian
Egyptians to Islam by making employment and
housing conditional on adopting Islam. The
American aid to Egypt is used in many cases to
achieve such objectives

Your intervention is requested.
The American Coptic Association⁸⁹

12. Discrimination against Coptic Students in Scholarship Programs

When applying for a job or scholarship at any university, an I.D. card or other type of identification is required by officials, including the police. The name of the individual is asked, in order to identify whether the name is of Muslim or Christian origin. The first thing they wish to know is the individual's religious affiliation. This determines what follows. When the time comes for a job promotion, it should be based on the performance of the individual. Unfortunately, a Muslim, even if his performance is poor, will get the promotion even though a Christian's performance may have been superior. This is not to say that Christians do not get promoted in their jobs, but to make clear to the reader that promotion does not come to a Christian as often as it does to a Muslim. Since Christians in Egypt are called the "infidels," many of the Sheiks, who are the leaders of mosques, call upon Muslims not to appoint Christians to leadership positions, because they say, "It will be a shameful sign on the face of Islam." The fallout of these discriminatory and hateful statements is that qualification and superior performance do not count.⁹⁰

⁸⁹"A Telegram to President George Bush," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1989, vol. 16, 7. The entire telegram in the original was in capital letters.

⁹⁰Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 98.

Most assistantships at Universities go to Muslims regardless of past achievements. As Christians with superior records are disallowed, grants to study abroad are severely restricted for Christians. The system for selection changed from competing for a scholarship to study abroad according to performance to one that guaranteed that Muslims would get the majority of grants, since a higher percentage of Christians, according to the old policy, were receiving grants. Openings are, at times, cancelled when universities find that Christians only have applied for available financial resources.

13. No Freedom of Expression for Coptic Christians

In Egypt, Christians cannot march peacefully or demonstrate in any form, nor do they have any one to represent their suffering except through the Coptic Church. Christians in Egypt simply have no voice in government.

The Egyptian government banned a weekly Christian magazine, *al Keraza* ("the preaching of the Gospel") at one time and limited the number of issues to be printed, while giving money at the same time to many Islamic institutions. Furthermore, the government, which owns the media, denies the Copts equal time, leaving Muslim leaders to attack, humiliate, and insult Christians on prime time television. If Christians tried to respond in defense of their faith through tapes or newsletters, they would be jailed. The government is telling Coptic Christians to take the insult and shut up. *Christianity Today* compares Coptic Christians to those in Eastern European countries who were behind the Iron Curtain, under Soviet domination.⁹¹

A Christian book print shop in Cairo was suspected by the police of printing Christian material. Twelve policemen came to his shop, arrested him and took him into custody. He was detained six times from 1990 to 1992, his machinery also was seized by the police. While in detention, the interrogators continued to ask him questions such as

⁹¹James K. Hoffmeier, et al., "The Church in Egypt: Confessing Christ in the Heart of Islam," *Christianity Today Institute*, 17 June 1988, 34-35.

who gave him the money to do his printing? Who told him to print his religious books? And who was going to distribute the books? Refusing to provide the police with any names, he "was beaten and tortured with electric shocks."⁹²

14. No Justice for Coptic Christians in Court

⁹²Gauch, "Egypt's Coptic Christians Endure Harassment by Muslims," 10.

In a move to make Egypt entirely Islamic, legislators are making the various bills presented to be in conformity to the Koran. The court is moving in the same direction, where Christians are being gradually forced to be in the position of *dhimmis* again, as in the early era of Islam.⁹³ The court decisions often reflect the bigotry that is spreading in the country against Coptic Christians. Rather than upholding the law and apply it to all citizens regardless of religious affiliation, Coptic Christians are treated as second class-citizens.

When a Christian judge presided in a case where the defendant was a Muslim, and made a judgment, the Court of Appeals in Alexandria in 1978 ordered the judgment vacated and invalidated the lower court's decision. The reason, according to Abdel Hamad Soliman, a jurist was that "According to Islamic rules, the Christian should not be a judge in which a Muslim is involved."⁹⁴

15. Falsifying the Census of the Coptic Christian Population

⁹³Ishak Ibrahim, *Black Gold and Holy War* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc., 1983), 105.

⁹⁴Abdel Hamed Soliman, "Justice in Islam," *The American Coptic Association*, Spring 1989, 8.

The government underestimates the population of Christians, for political and public relation reasons, in order to manipulate world opinion that there is a small population of Copts in Egypt. This is done to discriminate and deprive the Copts of higher governmental positions, of senior status, and to put them on the back burner, so to speak, as if they do not exist.⁹⁵ On April 4, 1977, *al-Ahram* newspaper published a report from the census bureau, which indicated that the total population of Egypt was 38,250,000, with 2,315,560 Christians, while in 1966, ten years earlier, the census bureau reported that the Egyptian population was 30,083,419, with 2,316,560 Christians. In ten years the number of Christians, rather than increasing, declined by 1,000.⁹⁶ Assuming that both Muslims and Christians were increasing at the same rate, we can conclude that the estimate is false and misleading. During Pope Shenouda's visit to the White House in May 1977, then President Carter mentioned that there were at least 7 million Christians in Egypt and he accused the Egyptian government of deliberate falsification. The Egyptian Ambassador who attended the meeting admitted that "There was an error in reporting the census."⁹⁷

From 30,083,419 in 1966 to 38,250,000 in 1977, the population increased by 27% in ten years. Again assuming that Muslims and Coptic Christians were increasing at the same rate, that means the population of the Coptic Christians should have been increased by 625,471, which would bring the population of the Coptic Christians to 2,942,031 million.⁹⁸ The Egyptian population now is nearly 60 million, an increase of 57% from

⁹⁵Shawky F. Karas, "A Plan towards the Future of the Copts," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], September 1993, vol. 20, 42. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

⁹⁶The government explains the decline of the Coptic population due to immigrations of Coptic Christians to the West. However, the estimated number of Christians in that ten year period who left Egypt were between 100,000 to 150,000. What explanation can the government offer for over half a million Copts missing from the statistics?

⁹⁷"Despite Government's Claims to the Contrary, Egyptian Christians Today Suffer Religious and Cultural Persecution and Constitutional Blacklisting," *The American Coptic Association/Fact File*, Spring 1989, 5.

⁹⁸Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 88-91.

1977 to 1995. Accordingly, the population of the Coptic Christians should be 4,619,428 million. The author does not agree with these figures, since the government started with a falsification about the true population of the Coptic Christians previously, so that eventually one ends with a false count about true population now. When it comes to the Coptic Christians, the Egyptian government lies about almost everything.

To give the reader additional evidence that the government in fact falsified the population of Coptic Christians, in 1986 the Egyptian government put the statistics of Christians at about 3 million: one million Coptic Evangelical (protestant) and Catholic, and 2 million Coptic Orthodox.⁹⁹ This means that the Protestants and Catholics comprise 33% of all Christians in Egypt. In reality, the Protestant and Catholics represent only 10% of the total Christian population, and this is a well-known fact to the author and to the organization Middle East Concern.¹⁰⁰ If all other denominations were only one million, as the government reported, then the Coptic Orthodox should be 10 million. Such would bring the number to 11 million for 1986.¹⁰¹

In September 1981, *The New York Times* published an article entitled "Coptic Church is Ancient and Isolated." The paper stated that "The church's membership is more than six million and possibly as many as ten million." In April 15, 1983, in an English newspaper, *The Daily Telegraph*, under the title "Copts Go in Fear," it was stated that "Copts constitute up to 20% of the Egyptian population." Other newspapers, around the United States and Canada agree that in the 1980s Copts ranged from eight to ten

⁹⁹Human Rights Watch/Middle East, *Egypt: Violation of Freedom of Religious Belief & Expression of the Christian Minority*, 4.

¹⁰⁰Alton/Jubilee, "Egypt Briefing Report," 8.

¹⁰¹The government wants to weaken the Coptic Orthodox Church more than any other denomination in the country, since the Coptic Orthodox Church is the backbone of all Christians. Weakening it would ultimately make all Christians in Egypt vulnerable. For this reason the government underestimates and falsifies the Coptic population. Further, the ten million Coptic Christians receive one permit a year to build a church, while one million Coptic Evangelical and Catholics receive two permits each a year to build a church. If permits were distributed correctly according to population, the Coptic Orthodox Church should receive 40 permits a year, not one.

million.¹⁰²

C. COPTIC CHRISTIANS DENIED POLITICAL REPRESENTATION

The Copts have participated in the Egyptian political process since the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1919, Copts and Muslims were hand in hand fighting for the independence of Egypt from Great Britain. When England proposed a new constitution for Egypt, it thought to protect the human rights of the Copts, as part of the constitution. The Copts refused and rejected this proposal in good faith, because they wanted to have one identity with the Muslims, rather than having their own, which was naive. The Copts also thought that their enemy was Great Britain not the Muslims. Together, with their fellow Muslims, they were able to construct a new constitution and parliament. When King Foad rejected the constitution and tried to close down the parliament, the president of the parliament, Mr. Wessa Wasif, who was a Copt, along with other members, broke the chain of the gate leading to the parliament. During World War II, the minister of foreign affairs, Mr. Salib Sami Pasha, was a Copt, as well as the ambassador to the U.S., France, Greece, Romania, and Russia.

Today Coptic Christians have no political representation in government, have no voice to address their grievousness, and complaints to the government mostly fall on deaf ears. The only source of help the Coptic Christians have is to turn to the Church. The Church merely presents complaints to the government. However, the government sees any complaint by the Coptic Christians as rebellion and does not tolerate it. Defending one's basic rights is considered an act of insubordination by the Egyptian government.

¹⁰²Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 90.

An appeal was made by the leaders of the Egyptian Christian community to President Sadat in July of 1972, when they presented their grievances in a letter to him. Despite the peaceful efforts of Christians to address their grievances through appropriate channels, no action of any kind was taken to alleviate the sufferings of Christians.¹⁰³

¹⁰³Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 38.

The Egyptian People's Assembly (parliament) has 444 seats, of which the majority belong to the National Democratic Party, the party of President Mubarak.¹⁰⁴ This parliament does not reflect the existence of Copts. Only one Christian member is elected and several other Christians are appointed by the president. The reason is that, if a Christian ran for office against a Muslim, he would be threatened to withdraw his nomination or to face death. As a result, Christians who are well qualified for parliament are forced not to run. For this reason, the President appoints several Copts to parliament. If Christians were allowed the freedom to run for office and to have a fair election, perhaps as much as 100 legislators would be elected, which would represent the true population of Christians.

Under Law number 40 of 1977, Christians in Egypt are denied the right to establish their own party to represent their own interests. No party can be established on the basis of religion. Even if Christians tried to establish their own party apart from religion, the government would pass another bill to deny them that right. Article 1 of the Constitution, makes Islam the primary basis for legislation, and the charters and all programs of any party must be in line with Islam. This makes establishing a party by Christians impossible.¹⁰⁵

On October 17, 1991, President Mubarak announced the assignments of government posts, of which 480 individuals were appointed. Among them only 5 were Christians, which is 1% of the total appointed. None of the five Coptic Christians were appointed as governor, city mayor, chief of police, ambassador, or university dean.

Some Christians have found that, during an election, their names were removed

¹⁰⁴Associated Press, "Campaign against Muslim Group may Shake up Egyptian Election," *The Virginian-Pilot*, 29 November 1995, A9.

¹⁰⁵Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 17.

from the voters' list and they were not permitted to vote. The Egyptian government has obstructed the registration of new Christian voters.¹⁰⁶ Some of the places of voting close two or three hours after opening for voting.

Since Coptic Christians do not have political representatives in the People's Assembly, or any other representatives before the government, the burden of representing the Copts falls on Pope Shenouda III. When Christians are faced with a problem or the church confronts evil against it from the government or Muslim militant groups, they voice their concern through the Pope who, in return, writes a letter of protest to the government. So far, little to none of the valid complaints and grievances of the Christians have been answered by the government. Worse, it has become routine that when a complaint is submitted to Egyptian authorities, the victim becomes doubly victimized by the person(s) who committed the offense against him to begin with, and by the government, which either places the victim in jail or ignores his complaint. It has become an intolerable situation for Christians.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., 17.

If Muslims want to live by Koranic rules, then Christians should be allowed to live by Biblical rules. This should be equally true in making laws. Since both religions have vast differences, as wide as an ocean, then each should be governed by their own book. Muslims and Christians can only coexist together if each respects the other's beliefs and values. Christians indeed do, and 50% or more of Muslims in Egypt respect or tolerate the Copts' beliefs. Traditionally, this has been the case for many years, with mutual respect for each other's religious beliefs, partially because Muslims and Christians live and work together.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁷In Egypt, Muslim homes are along side of Christian homes, sharing the same neighborhood in most places. All across the country, for example, you can find one or two homes of Muslim families next to each other, and a Coptic family next to that of a Muslim family. The same is true in the work place, the armed forces of Egypt, department stores, and in the use of transportation. Both Muslims and Christians are identified by their name, as well as from an I.D. which is issued by the government, which requires the individual to state his/her religious affiliation. Other than by these means, no distinct difference in appearance between a Muslim or a Christian can be easily made, except for clergymen from both sides. Muslims and Christians work together, live together in the same neighborhoods, have contact with each other, and shop at both Muslim as well as Christian stores. This, by no means, indicates that discrimination, harassment, and many other types of mistreatment do not exist. This tolerance in relationship with one another reduces the tension between both sides, and makes it possible to co-exist.

D. VIOLENCE AGAINST COPTIC CHRISTIANS IN EGYPT¹⁰⁸

Once a group of non-Muslims, Christians and Jews, are conquered by Muslims, they are at their mercy.¹⁰⁹ There is no quarrel with the fact that Islam is spread by force and by the sword, with violence used to conquer the so-called enemies of Islam. Once Muslims have the upper hand over their enemies, the result can be catastrophic. Since this thesis seeks to concentrate on the Coptic Christians of Egypt, it will not go into great detail regarding the history of Islam in this regard, except when it is necessary to clarify and document a particular point. There is a fundamental issue that should be understood by the reader, namely, that when Muslims attack Christians and murder some of them, burn out churches, or seize some of their lands, the Egyptian government, in the name of national unity, appeals to the Copts to withhold protest or attempts to seek justice. The Copts out of their concern and loyalty to their country, accept the situation until further incidents or crimes take place. The government again appeals to the goodwill of the Copts. These lies and deceit from the government have led Copts to their present situation, where they are now unsafe in their land and unable to assert their rights. This circle of violence continues daily throughout the country. Muslims and the government slap Copts in the face, and ask Copts to forgive for the sake of peace in the city or town where the crime takes place. Not only that, at times, if a Copt complains, the authorities

¹⁰⁸It is important to note that the incidents that follows are only a few from hundreds of violent acts against Christians that occur daily. Most are not reported to the police, or to any other legal entity in the country, because those attacked fear being victimized again by these entities.

¹⁰⁹The Koran refers to Christians and Jews as "the people of the Book," but also as the "infidels," the enemies of Allah, as well as other terms mentioned throughout this thesis. It is, therefore, fair to conclude that the expression "infidels" refers to both Christians and Jews alike. For example, Surah 9:29, 36 states: "fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture [referring to Jews and Christians] as believe not in Allah nor the Last Day. . . . And wage war on all the idolaters. . . ."

turn on the individual. Over time, Copts, who have been victimized, have learned that it is best not to protest or present their grievousness to the authorities.

Sinabu, a town in Upper Egypt of 25,000 people,

[H]as suffered some of the worst violence, including the burning of 64 Christian shops and houses after the shooting by security forces of the town's militant leader in June [1992].¹¹⁰

The Los Angeles Times wrote an article about the new era of repression against Coptic Christians after the newspaper interviewed some of the residents in Cairo. A frightened 22-year-old woman described the situation in Egypt as "an atmosphere of horror and terror among all the Copts." A fifty-year-old woman said, "I have never felt as frightened as I feel these days."¹¹¹

A Coptic salesman in Imbaba interviewed by Sarah Gauch of *The Christian Science Monitor*, said: "**We are afraid. . . [sic] Everyone of us feels we can be killed at any moment.**"¹¹²

The following examples of persecution and violence against defenseless Coptic Christians have been selected in chronological order from 1952 to 1995.

In 1952

On January 4, 1952, after the Muslims' Friday prayer at the city of Suez, Muslims formed a mob that went after Coptic Christians in the city. They were able to capture five of them, dragging them through the street with butcher hooks, and brutally burned them alive at Saint Antonius Coptic Orthodox Church. This occurred three days before Christmas, which is celebrated in Egypt on January 7th of each year. The massacre outraged the Copts in Egypt. Despite the savagery of the crimes, none was apprehended or brought to justice. The Patriarch of the Coptic Orthodox Church, Pope Yousab II, met with King Farouk to protest the

¹¹⁰Reported *The New York Times*. Ibrahim, "Muslims' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," A8.

¹¹¹Schanche, "Egypt's Coptic Christians Fear Repression in the Wake of Strife," 1-3.

¹¹²Gauch, "Egypt's Coptic Christians Endure Harassment by Muslims," 10. Emphasis added.

massacre. To calm the situation, the government promised the Coptic Church that it would remove restrictions on building churches, that a more secure environment for the Copts would be formed, and that they would be treated equally. To the dismay of the Copts, the government failed to abide by its promises.¹¹³

In 1956

Many Christian homes and buildings were marked by crosses in the major cities in order to identify them for attacks.¹¹⁴

In 1967

During the six day war with Israel, the Deputy Prime Minister Ali Sabri handed arms to Muslims and told them that today is Saturday and tomorrow is Sunday. Meaning, kill the Jews on Saturday which is their holiday and on Sunday, the holiday of the Christians, kill the Christians.¹¹⁵

In 1971

At the city of Sinhour, Province of Boihaira, in Northern Egypt, a Muslim group along with the Sheikh (the head of the mosque) damaged the Coptic Church. The group also attacked the bishop of the District during his visitation to his Christian flock.¹¹⁶

In 1972

In November 1972, Muslim fundamentalists burned down a Coptic

¹¹³Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 86, 87.

¹¹⁴Ibid., 188.

¹¹⁵Ibid., 188,189.

¹¹⁶Ibid., 109.

church at the town of Khanka, near Cairo. On November 12th, Christians gathered for a mass at the site of the damaged church. Muslim fundamentalists went on a rampage destroying homes and stores of Christians. No arrests were made, and no investigation was conducted. It should be clear to the reader that, unlike the majority of towns in the United States, towns in Egypt are small and people know each other well. It would have been an easy task for the police to have apprehended the suspects to bring them to court to answer for their deeds. In fact, the police often know very well who the perpetrators are, but either do nothing or are at times involved with the suspects against Christians.¹¹⁷

In 1977

Christians in Assiut comprise approximately 40% of the population and have a strong Christian influence. Assiut is the third largest Province in the country after Cairo and Alexandria. With strong Christian leadership in this city, headed by Archbishop Mikhail and other leaders, it has been possible for Christians to enjoy more religious freedom there than in other parts of the country. The city is also well known for its Protestant mission center. It has an American college, a hospital, and the Lillian Trasher Orphanage, which is the largest private Christian orphanage in the country. Muhammad Ossman was the governor of the province in the 1970s and was a close associate and advisor to Sadat. The governor was a radical Muslim who made hateful remarks about Jews and Christians, thinking of them as enemies of the country. Giving this background is important in laying the ground for what occurred with Christians in that city.

The Coptic Community Council made a report available about the incidents of attacks on Christian lives and property which took place on August 7 - 22, 1977, as follows:

On August 14, 1977, which fell on a Sunday and on the beginning of the official celebration of the month of Ramadan, which is considered the holy month

¹¹⁷Ibid., 109.

for Muslims, some Muslims went on a rampage in attacking Saint Mikhail Coptic Orthodox Cathedral and the Second Coptic Presbyterian Church, by throwing stones. The attack was pre-planned since there were no stones in the street prior to the attack. After the attack on both churches, the Muslims went to downtown Assiut business district and destroyed some shops which included a Christian-owned pharmacy. They then destroyed some of the homes in the adjacent vicinity of the business district. No intervention from the police or other action was taken to protect the lives and property of Christians, and no one was brought to trial. When the Bishop of the Coptic Church complained to the authorities, which included President Sadat, Prime Minister Mamdough Salem, and the Governor Muhammad Ossman, to the Bishop's and other Christian leaders' surprise the authorities were angry at their complaint. The Governor of the province fabricated a different story to cover up for the attacks on Christians by claiming that the Archdiocese was planning a march to the Virgin Mary's shrine on a nearby mountain and inform them to refrain from marching. He warned that if such a march were to take place he had given an order to the police to fire on the crowd. The Diocese had no planned march at the time, and even if there were, it would have been the same as if Christians were going to church in groups.

In 1978

In May, 1978, at the University of Assiut, a group of Muslim radical students went to the dorm of Christian students and attacked them. They took 50 students, holding them hostage for two days.

In May of 1978, at the town of Toukh Delka, in the province of Monifia, a Muslim rabble attacked and severely destroyed two churches.

In June, 1978, at al-Minya, a group of Muslims attacked Saint Anthony Coptic Church and damaged church property.

On July 31, 1978, at the town of Minshiet Demillo, Province of Kaliobia, a group

of Muslims that had formed a mob attacked and murdered by means of machine guns two Sunday school teachers and threw their bodies into the river. The name of these two victims were Dr. Emad Barbari and his brother Boushra Barbari. The suspects were later captured and confessed to the murders, but no formal charges were ever brought against them.

On September 2, 1978, at the town of Tawfikia, in the province of Minya, Father Gobrial Abdel-Mitgali was trying to counsel a Christian who was thinking of becoming a Muslim. The Priest succeeded in convincing the individual to not to abandon his Christian faith. When some Muslims found out about the priest's attempt to change the individual's mind through counseling, a mob formed among them which attacked Christian homes. When Christians tried to protect themselves, the police came and disarmed the Christians. Once disarmed, the mob of Muslims again attacked the Christians and killed father Gobrial, and slaughtered a Christian child. The child's name was Badari Naguib Rafallah. This incident was investigated by three lawyers at the request of Pope Shenouda III. No action was taken by the Egyptian government in apprehending the suspects.¹¹⁸

In Aswan, Upper Egypt, Father Tadros Dawood suffered stab wounds following Lenten services at his church.¹¹⁹

In Isna also in Upper Egypt, Muslim radicals carried an assault on Fakoury monastery, wounding the priest and killing a deacon.¹²⁰

On September 3, 1978, Muslim radicals murdered Father Gabriel Mutagalli and

¹¹⁸Ibid., 141-143.

¹¹⁹Ibid.,

¹²⁰Ibid., 1.

his wife was paralyzed.¹²¹

In 1979

¹²¹Ibid., 1.

On March 21, 1979, Muslim militants burned down the historical Coptic Church of the Saint Mary the Virgin at Old Cairo, which was built in the fifth century.¹²²

In 1980

On January 6, 1980, during the Coptic Christmas Eve, a bomb was about to explode where several thousands Coptic Christians were attending mass. Maher Karas tried to extinguish the bomb, but it went off and exploded, shattering the church's windows. The explosion was felt over a mile away. Maher lost three toes, eight people were injured, but by God's Divine intervention no one lost his life in the blast.¹²³ The same Christmas Eve, another Muslim radical group tried to plant a bomb in a church in Cairo. The bomb went off before it was planted, killing the suspect. Homes nearby were damaged in the blast, but the church again was left untouched by the blast. During that time some Coptic Christian homes were marked by painting crosses on them for threats. Seventy Muslim radicals had been arrested by the government, but it was not clear if they received any punishment.¹²⁴

¹²²"Terrorism against the Coptic Historical Churches," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], December 1985, vol. 12, 14. See also *ibid.*, 1.

¹²³*Ibid.*, 1.

¹²⁴*Ibid.*, 1.

In April 1980, at the University of Minya, Upper Egypt, some Christians were accused in the death of two Muslims. Muslim fundamentalists, including al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya, staged violent demonstrations seeking vengeance. They rioted against Christians, where some died in the riot and many Christian-owned stores were destroyed. When the police arrived, arresting both Christians and Muslims, the families of the Muslims who had been detained set the police station on fire and insisted that the detained Muslims be set free. The Interior Minister appraised the situation and met with the leaders of the al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya terrorist group, cutting a deal with them. He promised to release the Muslims. In return, the leader of the group agreed to appease the community where the deal was accepted.¹²⁵

At the University of Alexandria:

1. On January 1, 1980, at the University of Alexandria, members of a university Muslim organization stormed the dorm of a senior medical school student, Mr. Abo Sammah, smashing his belongings, which included Christian religious pictures, and attacked him physically. It was only when the university security police intervened that he was able to get away. No charges were brought against the suspects by the university officials or the police.

2. On January 7, 1980, a Muslim mob from the university entered Victor Abdel-Messih's room attacking him and damaged his belongings. University officials were notified, but no action was taken.

3. At the same university campus, a Muslim mob attacked the following students: Zakria Habib, Wageh Gamel, Kamal Zareef, Kamal Agib and many others. These waves of attacks on Christian students from militant Muslim students forced fifty-eight Christian students to leave the university campus, and find shelter at the Coptic Orthodox Cathedral. Despite the fact that these crimes had been reported to the police by four priests from the church, who requested protection for the victims, the police refused to

¹²⁵Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 20.

take steps toward arresting the suspects or in making the campus safer for Christians.

4. On March 18, 1980, at the university campus, Muslim students threatened Mr. Edmonds who was a Christian student, to denounce his Christian faith or face death. When he refused, he was beaten and knocked unconscious and was left with a broken arm.

5. Two other Christian students were attacked in another building but were able to escape by running to the university's police security office. The militant Muslim students forced themselves into the office and began to hit them on the head where both received concussions. When the ambulance arrived to take the students to the hospital, these militant Muslim students tried to block the ambulance from leaving the campus. Upon leaving for the hospital, two priests from the Coptic church arrived. A high ranking police officer was also present. Again no action was taken.

6. On March 25, 1980, Reda Essa, at a school of engineering was confronted by the same mob who had beaten him, who now tried to force him to renounce his faith. He refused. He was severely wounded in the head.

A number of Christian female students were abducted by militant Muslims. Some were pressured to renounce their religion, but they refused. There was no report available as to their condition or whereabouts.

A father and son were attacked at their dry-cleaning store, suffering stab wounds. They were treated at the hospital. The suspects were known to the victims and were identified, but no action was taken.¹²⁶

At Abou Teig, a city in Southern Egypt, the police were trying to close down a church which had been open for five years. The priest was asked to sign a form promising not to conduct any services in the church. Upon his refusal the police, which had a 300-member force, threatened him by saying that they have no responsibility towards his safety. Thereafter, militant Muslims set the church on fire in which one

¹²⁶Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 148-151.

Christian died and six others were injured.¹²⁷

¹²⁷Ibid., 152.

At Abou El-Matameer, a town in Southern Egypt, the Coptic church owned 13 acres of land. Some Muslims made a claim that they owned 1320 square feet of that land. Christians filed a claim in court in which the judge sided with them and against the Muslims. This land was designed for a church building and other church activities. When Christians started their project of building a church, they were attacked by militant Muslims. During this attack, the Chief of Police was injured. No charges were filed against the suspects, but rather, the city council ordered the church to transfer the 1320 square feet of land to the city for the city's own use.¹²⁸

In 1981

¹²⁸Ibid., 152-153.

On June 17, 1981 at al-Zawya Alhamra, a district of Cairo where there is a large Coptic population, a Coptic businessman bought land from the government directly across the street from his home. He had plans to build a factory as well as a church on the property. When the Muslim radicals knew of his plans, they tried to take the land by force to build a mosque. The owner went to court to evict them from his land by asserting his legal ownership. The court agreed, upholding his legal right to the land. Despite the court order, Muslim fundamentalists attempted to take the land by force. The Coptic owner of the land resisted their forceful attempts. At midnight of the same day, a Muslim militant group armed with machine guns, knives, crowbars, and other weapons, rushed to the streets of the district. They shouted slogans calling for the killing of the infidels, the Copts.¹²⁹ For two days the militant Muslims engaged in the systematic destruction of the property of Christians, including their homes, stores, and shops. Some properties were reduced to rubble while others were set on fire. Thousands of police officers were called to the location, arriving late. After their arrival, they stood by watching the devastation, but did nothing to prevent it. More than 150 homes and shops were destroyed. More than 100 Christians were murdered and more than 200 were injured, some seriously. When two Copts tried to defend themselves by firing at the militants, killing three of them, they were overcome by hundreds of militant Muslims. By June 19, property damage was estimated at millions of dollars. After two days, the fire company was given permission to enter the scene to put out some of the fires which were still burning. The police then, after the militant Muslims had left, moved in to arrest at random more than 100 men, women, and children that were in the street at that time. Some of the available names of the murdered victims are: Father Maximous Girgis; Mr. Aiad Awad; Mr. Sabri Fahim; Mr. Maher, a carpet store owner; Mr. Mina, a furniture store owner; Mr. Boushra Tawfik Jad; Mr. Kamel Marzouk and his family who

¹²⁹There were stories circulated that the Coptic Christian owner was trying to evict them from his property following the court order, using force.

were burned alive; Mr. Sobhi Al Feel, an owner of a shop; Mr. al-Raies Nazeen Sidarous; Dr. Girgis, an owner of a pharmacy who was burned to death. Five Coptic churches were either set on fire or badly damaged as a result of the rampage of these militant Muslims.

The Egyptian government had forbidden foreign correspondents from entering the district or interviewing the relatives of the victims, as well as eyewitnesses. Foreign journalists were not allowed to photograph the scene. Only information provided by the Interior ministry was given to the foreign press. The information provided by the Interior Minister, Mr. Nabawi Ismail, to the press was a distortion of the facts which was designed to mislead the public and world opinion.¹³⁰

An eyewitness to the massacre of the Christians described the scene as follows:

. . . . Men and women were slaughtered; babies were thrown from windows, their bodies crushed on the pavement below; there was looting, killing, and arson. At the same time, leaflets were distributed elsewhere in the city urging each community to take up arms. The neighborhood was finally sealed off by the police, who according to most witnesses intervened only after irreparable damage had already been done.¹³¹

¹³⁰Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 21-22.

¹³¹Jon Ruthschild, *The Prophet and Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt* (London, England: Al Saqi Books, 1985), 166.

Sheikh Omer Abdel-Rahman, the Muslim leader of the al-Jihad group, "called for attacks on Christians."¹³² During the summer of 1981, he issued what is called in Arabic a *fatwah*, an Islamic judgment, which in this instance was directed against Christians who supported the church financially. Looking for rich Christians, the al-Jihad group went to Naga Hammadi in Southern Egypt to prepare for the violent mission that followed. They were charged up by messages from the Koran that they would gain a place in Paradise if they joined the mission. They murdered six Christians and stole more than twelve pounds of gold and \$1,500. They bought firearms with the money for holy war against Coptic Christians. Karam Zuhdi justified the murders by reminding the Muslims of the bizarre and unsubstantiated claims which President Sadat had made that the Copts wanted to turn Egypt into a Coptic country with Assiut as the capital.¹³³

On August 1, 1981, at Saint Mary's Coptic Church, located on Massara Street in the city of Shoubra, Cairo, a box containing dynamite exploded during a wedding. Miss Nancy Mounir Farag and Mr. Matta Salama were killed along with others.¹³⁴

On May 9, 1982, the Egyptian newspaper *Ahkbar Al Yaum* published some of the names of the Christians who were murdered by *Jihad* ("holy war") organization during 1981. The following are some of the names: Captain Reda Shoukry Al Khouly; Mr. Shafik Attallah Al Mankabadi; Mr. Fawzy Massoud and his son Girgis Fawzy Massoud; Mr. Shareif Bashir Shenouda; Mr. Fouad Ghali; Nalih Massoud Iskarous; Mr. Mefet Shoukry Ragheb; Mr. Abdo Farag-Allah Abdel-Messih.

¹³²Ibrahim, "Muslims' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," A8.

¹³³Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 21.

¹³⁴Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 189.

In 1985

On July 1985, Father Biniameen Ayoub was murdered by Muslim radicals while travelling on the Ismailia road near the town of Salam in Ismailia Province.

On August 1985, Muslim radicals tried to burn down historical Coptic Churches in Old Cairo. There were a number of churches which were built between the fifth and ninth century. The fire was ignited in a lumber yard near the old churches. The fire was put out by the authorities.¹³⁵

In 1986

On April 16, 1986, a police force of approximately 600 members attacked a large crowd of Coptic Christians who were standing outside Saint Demiana Coptic Church. They were watching the appearance of the Virgin Mary. The attack resulted in injuries to some women and children. After this event had occurred, the Egyptian government refused to allow the Copts to stand outside of the church.¹³⁶

In 1987

In the spring of 1987, violence against Christians had been reported in Sohag, Southern Egypt; Beni Suef, 50 miles south of Cairo; and in Kafr El-Sheikh, north of Cairo.¹³⁷

In 1988

¹³⁵"A New Martyr," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], December 1985, vol. 12, 4.

¹³⁶"Police Force of 600 Attacks Coptic Christians," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt/Newsletter* [Jersey City], June 1986, 2. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

¹³⁷Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 22.

On November 6, 1988, Mr. George Kamel, who was a Copt, owned a shop at Shoubra, Cairo precinct. His shop was destroyed through explosive devices by Muslim radicals.¹³⁸

In 1989

¹³⁸"Christians Persecuted in Islam," *Human Rights Preview*, 14.

Father Rueis Fakhir, priest of the Coptic Church at Duena, a town near Assiut Province, was murdered outside of his church. He refused the demand of Muslim radicals who were trying to interfere in church services by ordering him to hold one church service a week. The suspect, Muzhur Abdallah, who allegedly murdered the priest, was released.¹³⁹

In 1990

The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) followed incidents where large scale attacks on Coptic Christians in several cities and towns in Upper Egypt occurred.¹⁴⁰ The report indicated some of the names of the cities which included El-Menya, Abu Qurqas, Beni Mazar, and the towns of Beni Ebid and Al Berba. The human rights organization said:

These events constitute a new wave of escalation of religious communal hostility, which as a phenomenon, has its fairly recent origin in the early seventies, and which, during the events of last month, developed into acts of wholesale religious violence. . . . EOHR condemns the actions of the organization known as "Gammaa Islamyia" [sic] which has persisted in its recourse to violence, in its advocacy of the hatred of citizens of the Christian faith, in its incitement to various forms of discrimination against them and in actively taking part in such acts of discrimination.¹⁴¹

On March 2, 1990, at the city of Abu Qurqas and the towns of Beni Ebid and al-Berba, some Christians were subjected to physical attacks. In addition, five churches were severely damaged and more than 40 properties belonging to Christians were badly damaged.¹⁴²

¹³⁹Hakim, "The Appeasers and the Enemy Within", 21.

¹⁴⁰The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) is headed by moderate Egyptian Muslims.

¹⁴¹"A Statement on Recent Incidence of Communal/Religious Violence," *The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights*, 3 April 1990, 1.

¹⁴²Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 22.

In March, 1990, Gammaa Islamiyya's extremist group ran a propaganda campaign in which they made false accusations against Christians. They accused Coptic Christians of running a prostitution ring with Muslim women and of having subversive influence in a children's clinic. This inflammatory propaganda touched off a riot in the city of Minya. Muslims were encouraged to seek revenge against Christians. The Muslim rioters went after Christians and their shops, stores, churches, causing property damage which included the burning of cars. During this attack on Christians, Muslims used knives, sticks, and chains, injuring fifteen Christians.¹⁴³

On May 12, 1990, a militant Muslim group attacked and murdered six Christians at the El Nobarria district of Alexandria. Among the dead were: Father Hanna Awad; Teresa, the wife of Father Hanna; Dr. Gamal Rushdy; Samy Abdo; Botrous Bishai; a 9-year-old altar boy, Michael Sabri. After the funeral, police officers fired shots and assaulted the mourners with clubs. Twenty-three mourners were arrested and imprisoned for fifteen days and were physically assaulted while in police custody.¹⁴⁴

In June 1990 at Aswan, Upper Egypt, a Christian liquor-store owner was attacked when 15 members of an Islamic group forced their way into his store with swords and chains. As a result of the attack, he suffered injuries to the head and fractured bones. He stayed in the hospital for a week. No suspects were apprehended or accused of the crime. The police told him not to open the store again since there was no guarantee for his safety.¹⁴⁵

In October 1990, four Muslims converted to Christianity were arrested in Cairo.

¹⁴³Ibid., 20.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., 22.

¹⁴⁵Sherry, "The Predicament of Egypt's Christian Minority," 720.

Their names were Mustafa Said al-Sharkawi, a young engineer. Ahmed Selam, a 25 years old book-keeper. Hassan Ismail, 21 years old and Ahmed Mustafa Hammada, a 20 years old. The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) reported that the four were:

. . . severely tortured for many days immediately after their arrest. They suffered electric shocks, cigarettes were put out on their skin and they were beaten.¹⁴⁶

In 1991

On February 16, 1991, Coptic Christians gathered to dedicate a temporary place of worship for the two towns. On Sunday, February 17, 1991, seventeen large vehicles with armed police officers came to the location. They entered the church and began to physically assault the priests and deacons, hitting them on their heads and tearing apart the church's robes. The police then proceeded to destroy Bibles and icons. The police went to the priest's home and destroyed everything in sight. The following day, the police came back and seized some of the church's contents including doors, windows, a generator, blankets, gas cylinders, books, blankets, musical instrument and desks.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴⁶Sylvia Wahling & Robert Chambers, eds., "Religious Fanaticism against Coptic Christians," *International Society for Human Rights*, July 1991, no. 3, 2.

¹⁴⁷Sidhom, The Ugly Hamayouni [law] and the Big Battle of Samalot: Total Victory for the Police Force," *Watany* newspaper, 16 June 1991, 1.

The story was repeated again in another Coptic church. Christians decided to build a church at al-Asafra in Alexandria, where they were in desperate need for a church. On June 9, 1991, the State Security Investigation sent an armed police force to the location. The worshipers refused to come out. The police then threatened them by weapons and tear gas. To avoid the shedding of blood by the State Security force, the church leaders asked the worshipers to leave the church. The worshipers left the church crying and in mourning for this incredible injustice they just witnessed.¹⁴⁸

On June 6, 1991, *al-Ahram* reported about the murder of two Coptic Christians. Dr. Zaher Kamel and his brother Maher, a high school teacher, were gunned down by a Muslim radical group headed by Mohammed Abraham Awad, in the city of Qena, Upper Egypt. After the murder of the two Copts, a gun battle took place between the murderers and the police. The police were able to capture the gunmen responsible for the murder. The prosecutor in charge was investigating. The author did not have a follow up on the story, except the information provided.¹⁴⁹

On June 30, 1991, Father Morks Khaliel Fanous Priest of Mar Boctor at the town of Mosha, Assiut was slain. The elderly Coptic Priest was 80 years old, reported *The Telegram* newspaper of Amsterdam, Holland.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸Sidhom, "The Ugly Hamayouni [law] and the Battle of Al-Asafra in Alexandria," 1.

¹⁴⁹*Al-Ahram*, "A Gun Battle to Capture the Leader of al-Jihad in Qena for his part in the Murder of a Pharmacist and his Teacher Brother," in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt/Newsletter* [Jersey City], June 1991, 2. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

¹⁵⁰*The Telegram*, "Martyr of Elderly Priest in the Assiut Province," in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt/Newsletter* [Jersey City], June 1991, 1. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

On September 20, 1991, at the Imbaba district of Cairo, militant Muslims destroyed and burned down Christian churches, stores, homes and pharmacies. The riot continued for two days. They were shouting "God is Great and the Copts are the Enemies of Allah . . . Islam should be the only religion." These extremists went into a rampage, entered into Coptic Christians apartments, and threw their belongings on the street, destroying them with flammable materials. Three churches in the area also suffered considerable damage. More than ten stores and forty apartments were destroyed or damaged in the riot. Fifteen Christians were critically injured and a 10 year old girl was kidnapped. The wife and daughter of a Methodist minister had to flee the rampage by leaping out of the church's window. Property damage was estimated to be over a million dollars. The Police arrived after the damage had been done.¹⁵¹

On November 7, 1991, at Assiut, Mr. Aziz Abdel Masih was murdered by a Muslim militant group. His body was butchered and left in the street for nine hours before the police recovered the body. When his wife, who was married two months earlier, went to the police to recover her husband's body, she was ridiculed by the police and investigating officers. The victim lived at Manfalot (a few miles away) and travelled to work as a teacher at Assiut Mubarak Primary School.¹⁵²

On December 17, 1991 at Manshiet Nasser, Province of Assiut, militant Muslims of al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya entrapped Mr. Beshara Khalel, after which they hit him repeatedly with iron pipes. As a result, he was knocked unconscious with two legs and one arm severely broken. The group alleged that he failed to pay them \$1000 for his offensive remarks about the leader of the group. He was later threatened into dropping the charges against the militant group or else his brother would face similar retribution.¹⁵³

¹⁵¹*Al Ahaly*, "Destruction of a Coptic Community in Egypt," in *The Coptic Cultural Center*, October 1991, 1.

¹⁵²*Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, 23.

In 1992

In May of 1992 in Mansheit Nasser, Dairut, province of Assiut, 13 Christians were massacred and scores of others were injured by al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya. The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) reported to the authorities both at the local and national level of an imminent danger to the lives of the Christians in the town. All complaints went unanswered by the Egyptian authorities, including the Interior Minister. A delegation from EOHR had even gone to Assiut to discuss the matter with both the militant Muslim group and the District Attorney. However, all of their pleas had fallen on deaf ears.¹⁵⁴ The militant Muslims started a new wave of terrorism against the Christians. They blocked the road leading to the town to prevent Christians from leaving without first checking with the terrorist group. The EOHR learned that the local authorities knew of the activities of this extremist group against Christians, but never discouraged them or took any action to prevent them from attacking Coptic Christians.

On December 17, 1991, in the same town, the militant Muslim group al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya purposefully blocked the main road to the town and used gunfire to threaten Mr. Boushra Khaliel, a Coptic Christian, who was then captured by the group. They then proceeded to beat him with pipes on both arms until he lost consciousness. The reason for doing so, as the EOHR had reported, was that the group ordered him to pay \$300 as booty or *jizya*. When he refused their request, he received the punishment promised. He was taken to a nearby hospital. The medical report from Dairut Hospital indicated that he was seriously hurt and required surgery, after which his right arm was paralyzed because of severe injuries from the attack. After he had left the hospital, he was warned that if he refused to drop the charges, his family would suffer the same. Under the threat of force from this militant Muslim group and for the safety of his family, he dropped the charges

¹⁵⁴"Urgent Report of Sectarian Massacre in Dairut," *The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights*, El-Geza, Egypt, May, 1992, 1-4. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

on January 26, 1992.

On December 21, 1991, at the same town, Mr. Kamel Azmy Samaan, a married man with six children, was on his way home when he saw that the road was blocked by militant Muslim group al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya. Using the same method as previously mentioned above, they continued to attack him with pipes until he was unconscious. He suffered massive injuries and his left arm was paralyzed. The EOHR reported that after their visit with him at the Dairut Hospital, he could not walk or even move without help from others.

By employing extortion methods, al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya ordered Christian-owned stores to have all of their business transactions directed through them for the purpose of collecting *jizya*.

In Sinabu, a town in Upper Egypt, Daniel Samaan lost six relatives who had been slain by a Muslim militant group. As a result of the murder of his relatives, he did not leave his mud shack for three months to attend to his field. He lives with his blind father, his mother and eight members of his family. All are afraid to go out, except for few minutes, for the fear of getting killed, and have no money to find another place to live. His three brothers decided to abandon their village.¹⁵⁵

Again in Sinabu, Younis Zaki Ashamalla, a Coptic farmer, while at his field, Muslim militants broke into his home, battered his wife and burned his house down. They were calling Jews and Christians infidels. Upon his arrival to the house, they slashed him with a knife before they left. He said he lost everything, even his chicken. While he is trying to pick up the pieces he is living with a neighbor. He wants out of the area once money is available to flee for his life.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵Hedges, "Heaviest Cross for Egypt's Copts: March of Islam."

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

On March 9, 1992, at Manshiet Nasar, a Christian was trying to sell his home to a Muslim. A militant Muslim group tried to block the sale and ordered the sale to another Muslim for a lower price. The first prospective buyer withdrew his offer for fear of retaliation from the group. When the Christian man stood his ground refusing to pay them \$200, the militant Muslims moved to occupy his land by force, using guns. When the Christian man went with his family to inspect his property, they were threatened with firearms. The police were notified and a battle took place. Three were dead including one Christian, a Muslim bystander, and a member of the militant group. The Ministry of Interior was notified. They denied that it was religious persecution, but rather a land dispute.¹⁵⁷

On April 4, 1992, the Muslim militant group al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya gunned down Mr. Badr Abdel-Allah Masoud during daylight hours at Reiad Street in the city of Assiut. Witnesses said that after Mr. Massoud was gunned down, they went after him and slashed his body using knives. The reason was his father refused to pay monthly extortion money imposed on the family by the Muslim extremist group.¹⁵⁸

Despite all pleas and cries from the town's Christians and the many efforts by the EOHR in sending letters, faxes, and telegrams, all went unanswered. The EOHR believes that the militant Muslim group had infiltrated the Ministry of Interior to the degree that if any complaint were filed with the department, a militant Muslim would be able to intercept it, rendering the complaint invalid. The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights blames the Egyptian government for looking the other way and for its involvement in the criminal activities of such terrorist groups. **The organization further**

¹⁵⁷"Urgent Report of Sectarian Massacre in Dairut," 1-4.

¹⁵⁸Caryle Murphy, "Copts Become Target of Muslim Militants," *The Washington Post*, 18 May 1993, A22.

argues that the government encourages, directly or indirectly the spread of militant Muslim groups across the country.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹"Urgent Report of Sectarian Massacre in Dairut," 1-4.

On April 29 at Imbaba, a poor section of Cairo, militant Muslims traveled to the Assembly of God Church and proceeded to destroy the church with stones. Two guards of the church fled after the militant Muslims went after them. When the police arrived, Chief Burhan Abu Bakr was among the officers at the scene. When one of the attackers tried to kill the chief, the attacker was killed. Two days later, on May 1, 1992, several hundred mobs rushed on the Assembly of God Church after attending Friday prayer at the mosque. They were chanting, "Salute the martyr of Islam in Imbaba," referring to the militant Muslim who was killed by police after trying to murder the chief of police. The church, with a membership of 300, had suffered extensive damage in the previous year as a result of a fire set by the same group. Two other Christian churches in the area were destroyed in September of 1991 by a similar riot initiated by Muslim Militants.¹⁶⁰

On June 8, 1992, the famous Muslim writer Farag Foda, was gunned down outside of his office in Cairo. He was known for his opposition to militant Muslim groups and was considered, by many, to be an advocate for the rights of Christians.¹⁶¹ During the trial, a well known Muslim Sheikh, Mohammed al-Ghazali, said in his testimony in court on June 22, 1993, "The presence of an apostate inside the community constitutes a threat to the nation and should be terminated." This was reported by David Alton, a British Member of Parliament. Another Muslim leader said, "While the State considers murder a crime, it is not a crime before God [Allah] to kill an apostate from Islam."¹⁶²

On June 20, 1992, at Dairut, Assiut, militant Muslims gunned down two Christian businessmen. When the police responded, two police officers were also murdered when their police car was sprayed with machine gun bullets.¹⁶³

¹⁶⁰Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 23.

¹⁶¹Ibid., 25.

¹⁶²Alton/Jubilee, "Egypt Briefing Report," 7.

¹⁶³Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 25.

On August 9, 1992, Mr. Zareef Moreed Iskander, a building contractor from Beni Khalid, a town in the Province of Sohag, was murdered by militant Muslims. He was accused of taking part in the building of a church that was alleged to have had no permit.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴Ibid., 25.

On October 15, 1992, in the city of Tema, Province of Sohag, five Christians were murdered by militant Muslims. They also set Saint George Coptic Church on fire and a Coptic Presbyterian church and a number of stores owned by Christians.¹⁶⁵

On November 9, 1992, in the city of Assiut, militant Muslims from al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya stormed into a Christian owned pharmacy, stabbing and wounding the pharmacy's manager. That same day in the evening, the same group proceeded to another Christian's video shop and a clothing store and threw bombs inside. With a fight breaking out between the police force and the militants, the group bombed the police station. The situation brought about panic among the residents until the police were able to take control of the city.¹⁶⁶

Foreign Affairs columnist for Business Week in Cairo, Stanley Reed, said about Egypt:

Some local Gamaa [sic] leaders have been ruling areas of upper Egypt as virtual fiefdoms [like an open field with total control], forcing the Christians to pay taxes and robbing them to finance Gamaa activities. In the past two years there have been numerous killings of Christians in upper Egypt, including the massacre of 12 people in an upper Egyptian village in 1992.¹⁶⁷

In 1993

In 1993 James Gaffnely of America Press reported on the plight of Christians in

¹⁶⁵Ibid., 25.

¹⁶⁶Ibid., 25-26.

¹⁶⁷Stanley Reed, "The Battle for Egypt," *Foreign Affairs*, Sept-Oct 1993, vol. 72, 4.

Upper Egypt where militant Muslim groups operate. "[T]hey had driven Coptic residents from ancestral homes and left others in constant dread of renewed harassment."¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸James Gaffnely, "Among the Copts: Egyptian Christianity," *America*, 9 October 1993, vol. 169, 2.

In July, 1993, two Christian Egyptians were imprisoned and tortured in a maximum security prison. Ms. Nemat Ahmed Moustafa's crime was leaving Islam and becoming a Christian. As for Mr. Kamal Soliman, who was a Coptic Christian, his crime was distributing a book with the testimony of a Muslim who was converted to Christianity.¹⁶⁹

In December, 1993, in al-Mataria, district of Cairo, three Muslim radicals stormed a jewelry store owned by two Christian brothers. They killed three people with automatic machine gun fire, the two owners, and a Muslim security guard. After looting the store, they fled by car.¹⁷⁰

On March 6, 1993 in Aswan, Southern Egypt, a man opened fire on two police officers outside a Coptic church, killing one of the officers.

On May 9, 1993, at Qusiyah, Province of Assiut, militant Muslims shot two guards. In the same city, a sergeant at the Catholic church was shot. Half an hour later, a policeman was shot at the Coptic Church.¹⁷¹

A Coptic priest in a town in Southern Egypt was confronted with 30 Muslim youths. They were screaming, "Pope Shenouda, we will make him fall! Islam! Islam!" The Muslim students broke down the church door, took Bibles and prayer books, and destroyed them outside the church. They threw stones and bricks at the priest's residence and shouted, "Come down, so we can kill you!" The police came 30 minutes later and

¹⁶⁹"News and Prayer Update," *International Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity* (I.I.S.I.C. Bulletin) London (October/November 1993): 1,3.

¹⁷⁰George Kanany, "Jihad for the Sake of Murder and Mayhem: The Free Enterprise of Looting the Booty," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1994, vol. 21, 10.

¹⁷¹Sherry, "The Predicament of Egypt's Christian Minority," 717.

after receiving information from the priest, they left.¹⁷²

In 1994

¹⁷²Ibid., 720.

On March 2, 1994 in the town of Bebla, Mr. Sa'id Aziz, who was a Coptic Christian, was murdered in the presence of his mother by a militant Muslim group. The militants imposed *itawa*, which is a form of extortion on the family.¹⁷³ Since his father was out of town, Mr. Aziz could not afford to pay the *itawa* by himself and by the date specified by the extortionists. This militant group was well known to the police and to other security forces. Despite his murder, no one was apprehended and subsequently brought to trial. The suspects are at large and are free to strike again against Coptic Christians.

In the town of Rizket al-Dair al-Moharrak, Coptic farmers were subjected to terrorism by a Muslim radical group from a known family. These radicals kept breaking

¹⁷³*Itawa* is money imposed on Copts by militant Muslim groups to protect the Coptic Christians. From what? From the very people who are using extortion methods to get the Copts to pay. This may sound preposterous to some, but this truly occurs, and is a fact of life in Egypt at the present time. Copts are either forced to pay, face death, or to flee for their lives. It is very difficult for a family to have to, in one day, leave all of their belongings, including their home and land, never to come back. If they do return, the result would be an execution-style murder for all members of the family. Even if a family agreed to pay a certain amount of money, this money would be paid to the militant Muslim group on a regular basis. The family must produce this money by the date expected, or else the family would be threatened again. Coptic Christians are faced with new and different options as opposed to those which were presented to them during the early invasion of Egypt in the seventh century A.D. Now, Christians either have to live as second class citizens, accept Islam, or leave the country. A senior Christian leader in Southern Egypt explained that the Islamic strategy, ". . . is to drive Christians out of the Middle East." See Naguib Khalil, "Two Coptic Christians Slain in Upper Egypt," *News Network International--News Service*, Santa Ana, CA (18 October 1994): 9.

The difference between *jizya* and *itawa* is that *jizya* is a punitive poll tax imposed on Coptic Christians, when Muslims invaded Egypt in the 7th century and continued for centuries, while *itawa* is a "mafia-style protection money" imposed on some Coptic Christians by militant Muslim groups at the present time.

into Coptic Christian homes, reported Anton Sidhom of the *Watany* weekly newspaper, who added that the Muslims were

looting their money under the threat of automatic guns, attacking women and threatening to murder whoever refuses to hand them the cash or gold on hand. The police are quite aware of this dangerous situation, but no measure has been taken to restore the order and security necessary to protect the poor Copts. This is a typical model of criminal terrorism.¹⁷⁴

In addition he said,

¹⁷⁴Anton Sidhom, "The Agonized Copts in the Villages of Assiut," in *The Coptic Cultural Center*, June 1994, 1.

This is the sad situation in most of the villages of Assiut, and in particular in the borough of Dairut and Qouseya where the Christian Copts live in an environment of terror, abasement and abuse. Tribute is imposed on the produce of their land and cattle and on everything they raise; those who do not pay are exposed to torture and death within the earshot and sight of the police who slackened the reins to such sabotaging elements so long as aggression and tribute are being inflicted on the Christians alone.¹⁷⁵

On March 3, 1994 in the town of Mair, Assiut Province, al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya fired at four persons which resulted in the death of Mr. Adel Boushra and Rafeek Atef Ibrahim, and two women were also injured. Although the incident took place in front of the Coptic Church and less than half a mile from the police station, the police did not make any effort to capture the gunmen, who subsequently fled the scene of the crime.¹⁷⁶ Bishop Thomas, in charge of the Coptic Churches in his dioceses, told *News Network International*: "Police do not respond to requests for help from Copts threatened [with death] if they refuse to pay the *itawa*."¹⁷⁷

On March 2, 1994, in front of Dair al-Moharrak Monastery, al-Qousya, six Coptic Christians were murdered by a hail of gunfire after boarding their mini-bus. They were: Seif Shafik Seif, Safwat Fayez Meshreky, Anwar al-Kommos Benyamin, Nagiub Sa'eed Younan, Magued Mahrouss Makary and Ananios al-Moharraky. No criminal charges

¹⁷⁵Ibid., 1.

¹⁷⁶Essam El-Din Mohamed Hassan, *The Human Rights Situation in Egypt/The Annual Report for 1994* (Cairo, Egypt: The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, 1994), 114.

¹⁷⁷Naguib Khalil, "Two Coptic Christians Slain in Upper Egypt," *News Network International--News Service*, Santa Ana, CA (18 October 1994): 8-9.

ever brought against the suspects.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸Hassan, *The Human Rights Situation in Egypt/The Annual Report for 1994*, 113.

On March 12, 1994, a militant Muslim gunned down two priests, and three other Christians were also murdered by the same Muslim gunman. The murder took place at the gates of Dair al-Moharrak Monastery.¹⁷⁹ A spokesman from the Coptic Church said, "They have killed us in the past, but the attack on the monastery is a deviation from their usual methods. All of us are frightened and worried." The Muslim radicals also burned the monastery. Despite the fact that no Muslim lives in the area, Muslims built a mosque in front of the monastery. The monastery is over 15 miles away from any city or town.¹⁸⁰

During 1994, a Muslim police officer murdered two Coptic Christian policemen at the City of Assiut, reported *The New York Times*.¹⁸¹

On October 4, 1994 in the town of Dair, Province of Assiut, Mr. Ageeb Sami and his brother Ameer Sami were ambushed by a militant Muslim group. Despite pleas for their lives and their paying of *itawa*, the militants refused to let them go, murdering them. The militant group then proceeded to steal cash and gold and other valuables as they fled the scene. Ageeb was married a week before his life was taken. His brother Ameer was survived by his wife and six children. The same group in 1987 took the life of their father, Mr. Sami Yacoub Mikhail, an affluent Copt.

On November 11, 1994, al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya shot and killed Nady Naguib

¹⁷⁹After Jesus' birth in Bethlehem, Joseph, Mary and Jesus were believed to have stayed at the monastery of Dair al-Moharrak for six months and ten days, to escape the wrath of Herod the King of Israel. Thousands of Coptic Christians visit the monastery each year. Matthew 2:14.

¹⁸⁰Human Rights Watch/Middle East, *Egypt: Violation of Freedom of Religious Belief & Expression of the Christian Minority*, 13.

¹⁸¹"Mideast Newswire," *Bet-Nahrain*, May 1994, vol. 21, 10.

Shenouda. Their reason was that the victim had provided information about them.¹⁸²

On November 13, 1994, in the town of Rostom, Mallowy, al-Gamma Islamiyya fired and killed two Coptic Christians, Samy Kamel Naguib and Ossama Kamel Nagiub in front of their home.¹⁸³

¹⁸²Hassan, *The Human Rights Situation in Egypt/The Annual Report for 1994*, 115.

¹⁸³*Ibid.*, 115

On November 15, 1994, at the town of Nawei, Mallawy, al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya fired at a Coptic Christian store owner, Atallah Labib Atallah.¹⁸⁴

In 1995

On February 18, 1995, in the City of Malawy, two Coptic Christians were murdered, they were Nabil Selwanis and Lotfy Hafzy. On February 26, Mahfouz Rashid Bacilious, a Christian, was murdered. On April 26, 1995, Azmy Mokhtar Aziz, a Christian, was murdered. On June 3, 1995, the following were massacred in Malawy and Houre, Province of Minya: Maher Saleh, Nabel Zakher Saleh, Elia Naguib Demitri. On June 9, 1995, at the town of Nikahalaa, Assiut Province, the following Coptic Christians were massacred: Alam Tadros Khair, Lotfy Nikhla Tadros, Yousef Ameen, Saed Atta Saed, Esmat Saed Alta, Ebaad Yousry Fahim, and Khalil Tadros Boutros. In al-Helmia, the house Shoukri Ishak, a Christian, was burned down. The police were involved, apparently in burning down a Coptic Church close by.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸⁴Ibid., 115.

¹⁸⁵"Massacring the Christians is continuing in Egypt," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July-December 1995, vol. 22, no. 1 & 2, 28.

August 21, 1995, the following were murdered: Zaki Abdel Aati Attit Allah in the village of Ashmonein; Zarif Anwar Matta of Dir Mawas; Samy Shehata Kamel of Dir Mawas. On August 22, 1995, they murdered Farouk Ibrahim Morshid in Mallawi; and Imad Danial Wasef. On September 9, 1995, the radicals killed Sabri Labib Seifin of Farshout, and another Coptic jewelry store owner at Sahel Saleem, Assiut. On September 13, 1995, a pick up truck stopped over at the Jewelry District of Malawy. Four men dressed in a police uniforms came out of the truck. Pretending that they are from the police, they started to search people and then entered three Coptic jewelry stores and started taking jewelry, and no body resisted. Then they arrived at Imad Raouf Aiad's jewelry store, the intended target, and stole everything in his jewelry. Then they murdered him, dismembering his body. They also murdered Sharif Shawky Nageib, and injured others in the store. Why did they murder Imad? Because he refused to pay "extortion money" imposed on him by these Muslim radicals. Security forces supposedly were patrolling the area and had personnel stationed for the purpose of enforcing law and order. Some believe that the police conspired with these radicals for the murder of Imad.¹⁸⁶ On September 15, 1995, they killed Dr. Khirey Fahmi al-Dubah, owner of a pharmacy and a farm at the City of Malawy.¹⁸⁷

News Network International confirmed the incidents cited above. In an article published by *Roz Al-Yousef*, an Egyptian Magazine, on September 25, 1995, Eassam Abe al-Gewad, a Muslim journalist, stated that from Mid-August to Mid-September more than a dozen Coptic Christians were murdered in Upper Egypt. The writer stated that this time the murder of Coptic Christians was well organized, with more defined goals, followed by a cover up from the government. The Muslim radicals moved from one

¹⁸⁶Isam Abdel Gewad, "The Killing of Christian Copts in Upper Egypt," in *The Coptic Cultural Center*, October 1995, 1.

¹⁸⁷*Ibid.*, 1.

target to the next in a well-planned operation.¹⁸⁸ *News Network International* also said that: "**Since the attacks in Upper Egypt started, tens of thousands of Christians have tried to escape the violence by migrating to Cairo . . .**"¹⁸⁹ As a result the Coptic Christian population is decreasing fast in Upper Egypt, a Coptic Priest said, and he added: "One day, the government might find an Islamic republic in Upper Egypt, just South of Cairo, right in its own backyard."¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁸Essam Abd Al-Gewad, "Magazine Reports Rise in Murders of Christians," *News Network International--News Service*, Santa Ana, CA (6 October 1995): 14.

¹⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 14. Emphasis added.

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*, 14.

In all of the above reported cases of murders, violence against Christians, churches being burned, property being destroyed with others severely damaged, various acts of terrorism, extortion, hostage taking, towns under siege, theft of money and gold from Christian jewelry stores, and the taking of church property by force, the author knew of no suspect who was ever indicted or brought to trial, and of no judgment or imprisonment which was handed down for any of the crimes reported above. The thousands upon thousands of crimes which were reported by well-respected human rights organizations went unanswered.¹⁹¹ In fact in many incidents the Police and the State Security Investigation have collaborated with these Muslim radical groups in attacking the Coptic Christians and their property. These are only some of the atrocities in a long chain of a well-planned strategy which is directed at the defenseless Coptic Christians for elimination.¹⁹²

III

ISLAM AS STATE-SPONSORED RELIGION

A convert from Islam to Christianity said to Human Rights Watch:

We want the right to be recognized as Christians, but if we tried to fight [by peaceful demonstration] for this right publicly, the Islamic groups would kill us. Anyone should be allowed to change his religion and speak

¹⁹¹"The Recent Massacre of the Christians in Egypt," *The Coptic Cultural Center*, May 1992, 1.

¹⁹²One of the most astonishing explanations of the government of all the atrocities cited against the Coptic Christians is that each was a "family dispute." The questions which can be raised against such absurd explanations are : (1) Assuming that each was a family dispute, is murder in a family dispute not punishable under Egyptian law? (2) Why all of a sudden are disputes all over the country? and (3) Why are Coptic Christians always the victims?

openly about his faith, but this is only a wish. It is very difficult to realize this in Egypt. **There is a saying here: either Islam or execution.**¹⁹³

¹⁹³Coptic Christians are not allowed to hold any peaceful demonstrations to express their grievousness, and when they complain to the government in writing, it falls on deaf ears. Any complaint is considered a challenge to the authority of the state and therefore is not tolerated. See Human Rights Watch/Middle East, *Egypt: Violation of Freedom of Religious Belief & Expression of the Christian Minority*, 7.

It has been said that the Prophet Muhammad declared that "**Two religions shall not remain together Slay them [Jews and Christians] whenever you encounter them.**"¹⁹⁴ The Koran confirms this very fact in Surah 3:85 where it says: "If anyone desires a religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted of him. . . ."

In an article published in *Al-Nofir*, a Muslim magazine, the writer Sheikh Asad al Tamimi of the al-Jihad organization, said regarding the infidels:

. . . . burn everything that you can touch Take of their money. There is no sanctity for an infidel's money or blood [Jews and Christians]. Kill them where you find them.¹⁹⁵

A. THE INTENTION OF ISLAM

The typical Western individual perceives Islam simply as a religion. This misconception is faulty, perhaps for lack of understanding and ignorance of what Islam really is. Islam is more than a religion. Islam has a direct influence on governments, individuals, communities, economies, judicial systems, social life, and in all structures and aspects of society. It is impossible to separate government from Islam. But, ordinarily, Westerners are not alone in this lack of understanding. The danger is that Western governments, with no exceptions, have displayed this ignorance as well.¹⁹⁶

The intention of Islam is to subjugate the whole world and to convert it to the religion of Islam. This may sound impossible to accomplish, but Muslim radicals believe it is only a matter of time. In 1978, a statement made by Abd-al-Qadir-As-ufi ad-Darqawi, a Muslim fundamentalist, his article published in *Diwan Press*, said:

¹⁹⁴Steven L. Snyder, "The Truth Regarding Islam," *Christian Solidarity International*, in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], January 1991, vol. 18, no. 1 & 2, 4.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., 5.

¹⁹⁶John Laffin, *The Dagger of Islam* (London: Sphere Books Limited, 1979), 4-5.

We are at war. And our battle has only just begun. Our first victory will be one tract of land somewhere in the world that is under the complete rule of Islam. . . . Islam is moving across the earth. . . . Nothing can stop [it] from spreading in Europe and America.¹⁹⁷

Dr. Ali Issa Othman believes in the same dogma. He was quoted by Charis Waddy in *The Muslim Mind*, by saying:

The spread of Islam was military. There is a tendency to apologise [sic] for this and we should not. It is one of the injunctions of the Koran that you must fight for the spreading of Islam.¹⁹⁸

An Algerian woman journalist, Fadela M'rabet [sic], said that "Islam's passion for the past, reveals a fear of the future." Ms. M'rabet made the statement from her home in France since criticism of Islam is virtually nonexistent. Islam is simply closed against any form of criticism, even the most constructive in nature. In Islam, there is no place for conceptual deliberation.¹⁹⁹ This can be seen clearly in the case of the Indian-English writer, Salman Rushdie, who was a Muslim by birth, but left Islam in his book, *The Satanic Verses*. Khomeini of Iran on February 14, 1989, issued a *fatwa* which is equivalent to the religious judgment of the death penalty for the English writer and posted a reward of more than three million dollars for anyone who would murder the English writer.²⁰⁰ Because Khomeini called his work a blasphemy of Islam, Mr. Rushdie went into hiding for fear of his life.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., 1.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., 2. Emphasis added.

¹⁹⁹Ibid., 6-8.

²⁰⁰John L. Esposito, *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, Inc., 1992), 191.

Jihad is a familiar word for Muslims. Western media translate it as "holy war." The exact meaning in Arabic is "struggle," which basically carries the same meaning as struggle for the sake of Allah or Islam. It means fighting, and fighting normally involves war. "In this regard, the idea of *Jihad*, or holy war, is central to Islamic fundamentalism and has profound implications for contemporary international politics."²⁰¹ Notice that the quotations in the previous segment were from people who were knowledgeable in the Koran, or leaders in Islamic thinking. One of those Islamic leaders was Sheikh Abdullah Ghoshah, Supreme Judge of Jordan. He made the following disclosure:

Jihad is legislated in order to be one of the means of propagating Islam. Consequently non-Muslims ought to embrace Islam either willingly or through wisdom and good advice or unwillingly through fight and jihad. Scholars lay the foundation of the foreign policy of the Islamic states on the following bases:

1. It is unlawful to give up jihad and adopt peace and weakness, unless the purpose of giving up is for preparation, whenever there is something weak among Muslims and their opponents are strong.
2. War is the basis of the relationship between Muslims and their opponents unless there are justifiable reasons for peace such as adopting Islam or making an agreement with them to keep peaceful.
3. The abode of Islam is the homeland which is subject to the rules of Islam. . . . The abode of war is the nation which is not subject to the rules of Islam.
4. Muslims are free to break their covenant with enemies if they are uneasy lest the enemies should betray them²⁰²

Mr. Ray Saidel, a journalist, said on July 30, 1985, that:

THE SCHEME OF the Muslim Arab countries is the destruction of all the non-Muslim people in the Middle East. They, with other Muslim countries, are trying to subjugate all Africa and the Middle East under Islam, and then move to Southern Europe. Their ultimate objective is world domination using newly discovered wealth.²⁰³

Saudi Arabia where Islam was established, was involved in financing

²⁰¹Curry, *A World Without Tyranny*, 139.

²⁰²Laffin, *The Dagger of Islam*, 54-55.

²⁰³Saidel, "The Threat to Christians is Deadly," 21.

individuals and groups to destabilize countries and uproot Christianity. Take for example:

In Lebanon

The Lebanon Act²⁰⁴: Some 10 years ago they [the Saudis] embarked on a plan to destabilize Lebanon. Overnight they withdrew their funds from Lebanese banks leading to the crash of some of the financial institutions. They then financed the very terrorist group under the pretense that they are working for the liberation of Palestine. They encouraged them to expand the Civil War to overthrow the "Christian" regime. . . .²⁰⁵

A report was done by the Archdiocese of Saida on two regions in Lebanon, which were Iqleem-Kharrub and Saida. **In two months, only March and April 1985**, what happened to the Christians in Lebanon was incredible. Here are the evidence of what the Muslims had done to the Christians in Lebanon:

Christian villages devastated	57
Christian families forced out of their homes	10,747
Christian persons displaced	60,184
Christian houses pillaged and ransacked	9,395
Christian homes burned	8,402
Christian churches pillaged, burned or destroyed.....	82
Christian academic and technical schools pillaged, burned or destroyed	24
Monasteries and religious Houses pillaged and ransacked	17
Villages deserted by Christians for fear of massacres	25
Christian families from these villages [deserted the 25 villages]	2,008
Christian persons from these villages [deserted the 25 villages].....	11,250
QUESTION: IS IT A RELIGIOUS WAR OR NOT? ²⁰⁶	

In the U.S.

Saudi Arabia is trying to foster Islam through the Nation of Islam. Here is what the Saudis are doing:

The Black Moslems Act: Despite their animosity to Gaddafi they do support "The Nation of Islam" and its leader Louis Farrakhan. They do contribute "donations" to the organization and are bound to use it as a

²⁰⁴The word "Act" is a figure of speech for government involvement.

²⁰⁵"From Jefferson to Al-Saud," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], December 1985, vol. 12, 17-18.

²⁰⁶Archdiocese of Saida, "Is it a Religious War in Lebanon?" *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], December 1985, vol. 12, 17. Emphasis added.

domestic power base to mutate the country's policies through the use of pressure groups. Their plan is that Mr. Farrakhan being a black may polarise [sic] the black masses behind him. . . . Their strategy of propagating Islam in America follows their tried and proven method in Africa. **A pattern of penetration through hate development and fostering against the religion of the white man. With the suspicion and anger in place the stage is set for the riots.**²⁰⁷

²⁰⁷Ibid., 18. Emphasis added.

Abdullah Al Araby, a Muslim converted to the Christian faith, wrote an article about how deceived the black people in America are to think that Islam is the religion of the blacks. He used references from the *hadith*, which are the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad as recorded by his followers. Providing evidence from the *hadith*, he argues, that the Prophet Muhammad was never a black man, but in fact was a white man. In the *hadith*, it says: "While we were sitting with the prophet, a man came and said, who amongst you is Mohammed? We replied, this white man relining on his arm" In fact the Prophet owned black slaves. He further argued that the Prophet Muhammad denigrated blacks by saying, for example, "Blacks will steal when hungry, when cloy [full] they are promiscuous." He further referred to blacks as "raisin heads." In another *hadith*, he said "You must obey the Imam (leader) even if he was a pug-nosed slave [referring to blacks]."²⁰⁸ He urges the blacks to understand that Islam is never a haven for freedom or equality between people. And as such, given that Islam is anti-freedom, and that African Americans had suffered in the past for liberty, then Islam is not the religion for African Americans.²⁰⁹

In Egypt:

The Egypt Act: They [Saudi Arabia] stirred the extremists and fanatics of Egypt to call for the imposition of the Shari'a on the residents of the Land.

The end result was a sectarian strife the [that] took the life of Sadat, brought the country to the brink of collapse literally. Their employment ads [sic] in Egypt's newspapers specify that "**ONLY MOSLEMS NEED APPLY.**" Their legacy in Egypt is despicable; garconieres [sic] [garcons or servants], call girls and an instable [sic] desire for prostitution. These

²⁰⁸References in support of his statements can be found in, vol. 2 *Hadith* no. 122 and vol. 2 *Hadith* no. 141; Sahil al Bukhary vol. 1, no. 662 and vol. 9, no. 256; and Sahil Moslem vol. 9 pages 46-47.

²⁰⁹Abdullah Al Araby, "Neither Black nor African," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], January 1991, vol. 18, no. 3, 6-7.

are the very people who are trying to force the Shari'a rules all over the world.²¹⁰

In Uganda:

²¹⁰"From Jefferson to Al-Saud, 17. Emphasis added.

The Uganda Act: They [Saudi Arabia] financed Idi Amin's barbaric savagery against some reportedly 400,000 [Christian] Ugandans whom he threw to the crocodiles in Victoria Lake to devour. Their only crime is that they rejected Islam as a faith. Incidentally this fine gentleman (Idi Amin) is the guest of Al-Saud right now.²¹¹

While the subject matter of this thesis is about the Coptic Christians of Egypt, it is worth noting how other Muslims are operating especially in the predominately Christian country of the Philippines. The Abu Sayyaf Islamic group wants to establish an Islamic nation inside the Philippines. This group uses terrorism to establish its goals. On Tuesday April 4, 1995, the Islamic group raided a Southern town of Ipil in Southern Philippines and murdered 49 Christians, and wounding 44, which left the community in ashes, reported the Associated Press. The Philippine Secretary of the Interior, Rafael Aluman, said about the group's objectives:

"Extremists want to re-establish Islam in this part of the world, especially since the Philippines is the only Christian country in Asia."²¹²

In July 1994, Abu Sayyaf Islamic radicals stopped a bus on Basilian and murdered 15 Christians passengers and took 36 hostages. The hostages were released after money was paid to the kidnapers by the local officials. Other attacks on Christians include kidnapping, and the bombing of a cathedral in City of Davao, where 7 were killed and 130 injured in the attack.²¹³

²¹¹Ibid., 17-18.

²¹²Associated Press, "Violent Abu Sayyaf Extremists comes from the Sidelines to Limelight," *The Virginian-Pilot & The Ledger-Star* [Norfolk], 8 April 1995, A6. Emphasis added.

²¹³Ibid., A6.

When President Fidel Ramos visited the ravaged city of 50,000 Christian residents, he was cheered by residents carrying signs which read: "Ramos, Save Us From Hell, and if you cannot protect us, arm us, if you cannot arm us, pray for us."²¹⁴

Why is the author mentioning the Abu Sayyaf Islamic radical group of the Philippines? It is mentioned to show the reader that if Muslims are in the minority as in the Philippines, they rebel against their government (even though they are treated with the same rights and freedoms like any other Filipino), murdering Christians and causing civil unrest. They also want to establish an Islamic nation in the Southern Philippines as a first step toward full domination of the entire country. When Muslims are in the majority as is in Egypt (where Coptic Christians once were in the majority) they crush Christians in every way possible and enslave them, as this thesis clearly reflects.

B. LAWS DERIVED FROM ISLAM

Al-Azhar is the center for Islamic policy based in Cairo, an ancient center and university dating back to 969 A.D. Islamic countries pay attention to the policies and laws from al-Azhar. Muslim scholars gather at the center to conduct Islamic research and to formulate policy decisions for Islamic governments and for Muslims in general. All documents presented by scholars of al-Azhar are stern in tone, aggressive, fundamental in content, definitive, and absolute in intent.²¹⁵

²¹⁴Associated Press, "Filipino Gunships Fire on Separatist Muslims," *The Virginian-Pilot & The Ledger-Star* [Norfolk], 9 April 1995, A13.

²¹⁵Laffin, *The Dagger of Islam*, 53.

A number of Muslim fundamentalist groups lobby through political channels, as well as use violence and propaganda speeches, to implement the Shariah law as the source of legislation. Shariah law, if implemented, would greatly affect Christian minorities and women. The fundamentalists' main objective is for the state to fulfill the Koran and Shariah, which means a sudden resurrection of the era of the Prophet Muhammad and the four caliphs. An Islamic state based on these two sources of law, would create a tyrannical dictatorship, wiping out what little freedom is left in Egypt.²¹⁶

Bethanie Ward of Norfolk, Virginia, wrote a letter in the Editorial Page of *The Virginian-Pilot*, in which she explained the status of women in Muslim countries and how they were treated. Under "An Oppressive Religion," here is what she said:

I recently read a book written by a Saudi Arabian woman about what life is like for women in Islamic countries. The stories are horrifying: A teenage girl executed by her father as the family looked on (no legal repercussions), a 13 year-old girl stoned to death for the crime of having been gang-raped (she asked for it, they said), a woman walled up alive in a tiny room to slowly die in darkness, silence and solitude (she fell in love with an American), a 9 year-old girl starved for weeks by her father and brother (to teach her what her proper place was). All of these punishments were upheld with verses from the Koran.²¹⁷

To confirm the stories mentioned by Ms. Ward, *The Virginian-Pilot* reported of Samar Imad Eddim Yousef, a 13-year-old Egyptian girl who was regularly battered and **strangled to death as a punishment for exposing her face in public**. This Islamic extremist group which murdered the 13 year old girl is called "Ancestors Group" led by Mohamed [sic] Aqil who was called "prince."²¹⁸

Daniel Pipes, an expert in Middle Eastern affairs, said that "In the Islamic view... female sexuality is thought of as being so powerful that it constitutes a real danger to

²¹⁶Barry Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics* (New York, NY: St. Martin Press, 1990), 144.

²¹⁷Bethanie Ward, "An Oppressive Religion," *The Virginian-Pilot* [Norfolk], 31 October 1995, A12.

²¹⁸National & World News, "Religious Leader Held in Girl's Fatal Punishment," *The Virginian-Pilot & The Ledger-Star* [Norfolk], 11 July 1995, A4.

society."²¹⁹ According to the Shariah which governs the "traditional social behavior" of an Islamic society, women are considered inferior or granted a lower position to that accorded to men, and this results in discrimination against them in individual rights and liberty.²²⁰

Here are some examples of the value of women according to the Koran: 1. Women are not equal in value. If a man kills another man he can be executed, but will not be executed if he kills a woman (Surah 2:178).

2. Women are not equal to men in inheritance. A woman's inheritance is half of that of a man (Surah 4:11).

3. Women are not equal to men in court. Two women are equal to one man, meaning a testimony of one man equals the testimony of two women (Surah 2:282).

4. A wife is a possession according to Islam (Surah 3:14), and a sex object (Surah 2:223).

5. Women are unclean. If a man touches a woman before praying he is considered unclean (Surah 4:43, and Surah 5:6).

6. Islam also teaches that a husband can punish his wife with beatings, or he can refuse to have sex with her as a form of punishment (Surah 4:34).

²¹⁹Mitchell G. Bard and Joel Himelfarb, *Myths and Facts: A Concise Record of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (Washington, D.C.: Near East Research, Inc., 1988), 195.

²²⁰Ibid., 195.

7. A man can divorce his wife orally by uttering the words "I divorce you" three times, and the divorce is done (Surah 66:5).²²¹ The wife also cannot be allowed to remarry her former husband again until she has married another man. This is called *el mohalil*, which translates into the legalizer (Surah 2:230).

8. A Muslim can marry up to four wives at the same time, but a woman has no such right (Surah 4:3).

Other laws and teachings derived from the Koran and Shariah law include:

1. Muslims consider themselves superior to other people according to Islam (Surah 3:110).

2. Minorities, in Islam, specifically Christians and Jews, are considered infidels and are subject to killing (Surah 9:29).

3. Some non-Muslims were transformed into apes and swine.

²²¹Hisham S. Kamel, *Arab/Muslim Awareness Seminar*, Pasadena, California, 1993, 21.

4. Islam condemns non-Muslims (Jews and Christians),²²² and instructs Muslims not to be friends with Jews or Christians (Surah 5:51 and 57).

5. Non-Muslims, Christians and Jews, have no right to own property, including land. If a Christian owns land, the Shariah law does not concede it. 6. If a Muslim accepts any other religion such as Christianity, he is not considered a citizen and all of his rights will be taken away from him, and become subject to death as an apostate (Surah 4:89 and 9:12). Note the following law of apostasy, "Any person who apostatizes from the Islamic religion and does not repent of his apostasy within 30 days will be hanged."²²³

7. If a man is caught stealing, his right hand can be cut off.

8. Adultery is punishable by public flogging, 100 stripes (Surah 24:2).

9. Resisting Islam is punishable by death, crucifixion, or the cutting off of both hands and feet (Surah 5:33).

10. Minorities such as Christians and Jews with different beliefs and values are not accepted in Islam as they are losers (Surah 3:85).

11. Opposition parties are not allowed in Islam, since the ruler receives his rule from Allah and Allah cannot be opposed (Surah 4:59).²²⁴

²²²It is important to point out to the readers that when the Koran speaks about non-Muslims, it is most often referring to Jews and Christians.

²²³Virgin Mary Coptic Orthodox Church, *The Islamic Laws and the Copts of Egypt* (Longueuil, Quebec, Canada: 1982), 38.

²²⁴Kamel, *Arab/Muslim Awareness Seminar*, 16-28.

12. Drinking is punishable by 80 lashes according to the *hadith*²²⁵ and Islam forbids wine (Surah 5:90).

13. God (Allah) may guide and misguide as he wishes (Surah 6:126 and 14:4).

Islam and Slavery:

²²⁵Muslims believe in three traditions: (1) The Koran, which is the message revealed to the Prophet Muhammad from Allah; (2) The *Hadith*, which is what the Prophet Muhammad said; and (3) The Sunnah, which is the rules and regulations of Muslims' way of life. See Kamel, *Arab/Muslim Awareness Seminar*.

In parts of the Middle East, the slave trade persist to this day. The Arabs, who ran the world's black slave markets for centuries, appeared to end the practice in the early 1960's, when most of the Arab states formally abolished slavery.²²⁶

Eldridge Cleaver, leader and former Black Panther, after living in Algeria said the following:

Having lived intimately for several years amongst the Arabs, I know them to be amongst the most racist people on earth. This is particularly true of their attitude toward black people Many Arab families that can afford to keep one or two black slaves to do their menial labor. Sometimes they own an entire family. I have seen such slaves with my own eyes.²²⁷

On July 30, 1993, in an interview with Egyptian Sheikh El-Ashrawy on his weekly show on state-owned TV, a question was asked. "Does Islam permit slavery?" He answered:

Islam allows slavery during war, and the families of war including men and women are slaves. And God allowed it to encourage the warriors not to kill the infidels after conquering them. In fact, slavery is saving the lives of infidels from death. Therefore, those who attack Islam should contrast between slavery and killing. As for taking wives of the infidels as their own, this should be considered an honor to them, to sleep with their master as their husbands sleep with them.²²⁸

²²⁶Mitchell G. Bard, et al., *Myth and Facts: A Concise Record of the Arab-Israeli Conflict*, 197.

²²⁷Ibid., 197-198.

²²⁸"Does an Islamic Government Allow Slavery?" *The Way Magazine* [Germany], in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1994, vol. 21, 22. The information taken from the Arabic article was

The Shariah law permits slavery, although the freeing of slaves is recommended as a good deed.²²⁹

translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

²²⁹Arnold Hottinger, "How Dangerous is Islamism?" *Swiss Review of World Affairs* [Zurich], January 1994, 4.

The State Department in its 1991 Annual Report on Human Rights indicated that slavery was still practiced in the Sudan as of 1991.²³⁰

C. ISLAM AS A POLITICAL FORCE

To say that Islam is a political force is an understatement. Islam generates mass support from the people. Support from the masses generates power. Such power can be political, influencing the policies of government, society, and culture, by setting up rules and guidelines that society is required to live by. It is easy to manipulate people to the cause of Islam. Some use Islam as an umbrella for political ambition or other personal motives. Each individual's motive must be studied carefully to determine the validity of claims.²³¹ This is why most, if not all, governments in Islamic societies monitor the activities of persons who actively try to rally support from people through Islam. As a result, democracy cannot be implemented in an Islamic society. **"With the exception of Israel (a nation with a Western religious and cultural tradition), democracy is nonexistent in the Middle East,"** said Dean Curry.²³² In Islam we see the perfect setting for influencing people, the message, and speakers. Mass participation in politics by the people can be easily generated through Islam. We have seen this in Iran in 1979, and in Sudan in 1989. In Algeria, the government is struggling to curb the influence of militant Muslim groups. They generate considerable power and are capable of causing instability,

²³⁰Ibid., 198.

²³¹Muhammed Ayob, ed., *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion* (New York, NY: St. Martin Press, Inc., 1981), 30.

²³²Curry, *A World without Tyranny*, 156. Emphasis added.

if not the overthrowing of a regime.²³³

²³³Ayob, *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion*, 30-32.

Islam has a tremendous affinity to power, and to the use of force. Thus they [Muslims] are always in search for sources to provide them with the muscle they want, to enable them to overthrow any opponents.²³⁴

Women are yielding to pressures from Islamic teaching as a result of their attendance at mosques adjacent to the university campuses, especially to wear clothing that covers the entire body. Feeling excluded from the political system, women are joining Islam to protest their exclusion from the system, while in fact they oppose the structure and goals of this system. It seems that Muslim women believe that by joining Islam they can increase their share of political influence as have men. However, in the long run, their ambitions to acquire political influence that is rooted in their religious aspirations may be difficult to accomplish.²³⁵

Events in the Middle East can change rapidly, often from day to day, as in the case of Iran. The Iranians rallied behind the Shah one day, and the next day they rallied behind Khomeini and against the Shah. During the revolution in Iran from 1905-1911, religious leaders were in charge of Iran, as is so today. Power slipped from their hand and a competing ideology emerged which changed the political scene in Iran. One can say with a great deal of certainty that nothing is certain in the political arena of the Middle East.²³⁶

²³⁴Scharoubim, "The Islamic Dream: One Nation under Allah," 19.

²³⁵Ayob, *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion*, 31.

²³⁶*Ibid.*, 31-32.

Every leader, including the now President Mubarak, has allied himself firmly within the Islamic legacy, leaving no room for political opposition by maintaining that they have a better road linking them to Allah.²³⁷ When a president's base of support is collapsing or diminishing, he must often use the divide-and-rule type strategy to overcome those who are trying to undermine his regime. King Farouk of Egypt used these tactics when he supported individuals as well as organizations in tackling the influence of the Wafd party. Nasser used the Muslim Brotherhood to strengthen his power base. Once he accomplished his goal, he jailed many of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood organization, and some fled the country into exile.²³⁸ Sadat also had to deal with a number of problems, and took bold action in creating enmity with the Brotherhood and other radical groups. Sadat by loosening the grip on the Brotherhood caused them to come back into existence. Sadat, himself a devout Muslim and former member of the Brotherhood organization in the early 1940s, intentionally allowed the Brotherhood and other Islamic leaders to get involved in business and government ventures. In return, Sadat needed the support of these Muslim leaders within the country when he was faced with domestic and foreign policy issues. These Muslim leaders rallied behind him and explained to the masses what was justifiable under Islamic law.²³⁹

²³⁷Ibid., 33.

²³⁸On October 26, 1954, The Muslim Brotherhood had supposedly made an attempt to assassinate Nasser. The results were heavy-handed repression, concluded in the arrest of the organization's leaders and more than 4,000 members. A trial was held by the Revolutionary Command Council, which Nasser established for his revolution against the British and the King. Strangely enough, Sadat was one of the officers who tried the Brotherhood leaders, where six of the Brotherhood were sent to death. Sadat was assassinated by "al-Jihad" (which branched out of the Brotherhood) on October 6, 1981. See R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1985), 83.

²³⁹Ayob, *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion*, 37-38.

There is a danger, however, of using the Brotherhood in the area of policy. The Muslim Brotherhood may be hard to contain if given the green light to operate. If undermined by the regime, other organizations are more likely to be less inclined to work with the regime or to cooperate with it.

D. CHRISTIANS ARE OUTCASTS ACCORDING TO ISLAM

A book was published in 1972 the author of which was Dr. Abdel-Halim Muhammad, the Grand Sheikh of Islam in Egypt.²⁴⁰ He was recognized as an influential Muslim religious leader in Muslim countries. The following summarizes the stand of Islam in relation to non-Muslims (Christians and Jews):

They [Christians] should not have any presence in a pure Islamic society. It is enough that they should be isolated as a contagious disease so that they should not corrupt others - whether they are students, farmers, or workers. They should stay in their isolation until they turn to Islam. . . . If a person becomes an infidel he is degraded to such a low level that it is not worthwhile to spit on his face or spank him as one does a child, but he deserves to be an object of disgust to the degree of vomiting at [sic] his sight. The only reward he should have according to the teaching of Islam is known: when encouraged to repent, if he refuses he should be killed.²⁴¹

In the July-September, 1979 issue of the *Journal of the Administration of Government: Judicial Cases* which was published by the Egyptian government, Muslim jurists agreed that non-Muslims should not be appointed judges. A portion of the article reads

The majority, except for the hanafi, agreed that it is forbidden for a non-Muslim [Christians] to be a judge, according to many tenets, one of them being, according the Koranic verse: "that there is no authority of the infidels [Christians] over the Muslims." Judgement is considered authority. Therefore, there should not be authority of non-Muslims over Muslims or even any non-Muslim, because judgement should be based on Islamic principles and the infidels are ignorant of those principles. Also, judgement requires that the person should be just; the justice is satisfied only if the person is a mature and wise Muslim. In addition, an infidel should not be a judge, because he is ineligible to be

²⁴⁰Dr. Abdel-Halim Muhammad was considered to be the head of the Islamic religion in Egypt, just as Pope John Paul II is the head of the Catholic Church, or Pope Shenouda III, head of the Coptic Church. His teachings had a far reaching impact among Muslims in the Arab countries.

²⁴¹Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 101-102.

a witness and because he should be humiliated as an infidel; whereas, the position (of judge) [sic] requires respect.²⁴²

In the Koran, Surah 48:16,19 and 21, it says:

You will be called against a folk of mighty prowess, to fight [kill] them until they surrender; and if you obey, Allah will give you a fair reward; but if you turn away as ye did turn away before, He will punish you with a painful doom. And much booty that they will capture. . . . and other (gain), which ye have not been able to achieve, Allah will compass it.²⁴³

Other references from the Koran which affirm the above are from Surah 33:26,27 which say:

²⁴²Ibid., 231.

²⁴³Mohammed Marmaduke Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran* (New York, NY: Penguin Group), 366.

And He [Allah] brought those of the People of the Scripture [Jews and Christians] who supported them down from their strongholds, and cast panic into their hearts. Some ye slew, and ye made captive some. And He [Allah] caused you to inherit their land and their houses and their wealth, and land ye have not trodden.²⁴⁴

In the Koran, Allah turns non-Muslims into apes and swine, referring to Christians and Jews. In The Koran, Surah 5: 59-60, it says:

Say: O, people of the Scripture! Do ye blame us for aught else than that we believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us . . . and because most of you are evil-livers? Shall I tell thee of a worse (case) than theirs for retribution with Allah? Worse (is the case of him) whom Allah hath cursed, him on whom His wrath hath fallen! worse is he of whose sort **Allah hath turned some to apes and swine**²⁴⁵

The Koran in another Surah urges Muslims to fight (kill) Christians and Jews. Surah 9: 29, 36, 73 and 123 says:

Fight against such of those who have been given the Scripture [referring to Jews and Christians] as believe not in Allah nor the Last Day. . . . And wage war on all the idolaters as they are waging war on all of you. . . . O, Prophet! Strive against the disbelievers and the hypocrites! Be harsh with them. Their ultimate abode is hell, a hapless journey's end. O ye who believe! Fight those of the disbelievers who are near to you, and let them find harshness in you, and know that Allah is with those who keep their duty (unto Him.)²⁴⁶

In a sharp tone, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran told a group of army officers from Pakistan while in a visit to Iran, the following:

²⁴⁴Ibid., 303. Emphasis added.

²⁴⁵Ibid., 102. Emphasis added.

²⁴⁶Pickthall, *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*, 146-156.

We are at war against infidels. Take this message with you - I ask all Islamic nations, all Muslims, all Islamic armies and all heads of Islamic states to join the holy war. **There are many enemies [Jews and Christians] to be killed or destroyed. Jihad must triumph.**²⁴⁷

It is clear from reading through various verses of the Koran that Christians are considered to be outcasts. They have no rights in an Islamic society, and as such should be treated as a burden on Islamic society. The only solution for Christians is to embrace Islam, or be killed.

²⁴⁷John Ladin, "Holy War: Islam Fights," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], January 1991, vol. 18, no. 1 & 2, 26. Emphasis added.

Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam in America is well known in the U.S. for his teachings, which are full of hatred to both Jews and Christians. He once described the Jews as "blood suckers"²⁴⁸ and described Judaism as a "gutter religion." Bethanie Ward said about his remarks, "Big talk from a man who practices one of the most oppressive religions in the world."²⁴⁹ Frank Rich of *The New York Times* described Farrakhan as follows:

Louis Farrakhan is a hate-filled demagogue with a divisive, separatist ideology and an appalling record on racism, sexism, anti-Semitism and homophobia.²⁵⁰

Having described Farrakhan, imagine having 10,000 Farrakhans in the U.S. preaching the message of hate and division between people. How much damage would be caused by his hate message to the American people? The author believes much damage has been done by rioting and destruction of property, causing chaos and disorder. Having absorbed what was said so far, this is what the Coptic Christians in Egypt have to endure everyday. More than 10,000 Farrakhan-like individuals are spreading the message of hate and violence against the Coptic Christian community. In fact, Coptic Christians cannot even open their mouth to respond to the distorted truth and messages of hate and violence directed at them. Using the government-owned mass media, and from the roof top of thousands of mosques, they bombard Coptic Christians with malicious attacks, calling them the infidels, the outcast, the enemies of Allah, hell-bound, and citing Muslims to attack them.

I am neither Jewish nor Muslim, said Ms. Ward, but she added:

²⁴⁸William Safire, "Three Opportunities to Talk about Race," *The Virginian-Pilot* [Norfolk], 22 October 1995, J5.

²⁴⁹Ward, "An Oppressive Religion," A12.

²⁵⁰Frank Rich, "Leadership Vacuum Allows a Farrakhan," *The Virginian-Pilot* [Norfolk], 21 October 1995, A11.

If I could say anything to Louis Farrakhan it would be: Louie, old boy, if I had to choose, I'd rather be a Jewish beggar than a Muslim princess.
And if Islam were the only way into heaven, I would gladly fry.²⁵¹

It has been alleged that Dr. Fo'ad Jirjis, a Coptic Christian professor at the University of Cairo, had written a provocative letter to a public Muslim figure in Egypt. The Muslim fundamentalist group, al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya, took advantage of the letter and circulated it among Muslims for the purpose of inciting violence against Christians. Subsequently the professor was jailed by the government for writing the alleged letter. Assuming that the professor had written the letter, is it not justifiable to write such a letter under the circumstances of Christians? Let the reader decide. Here is what his supposed letter said:

²⁵¹Bethanie Ward, "An Oppressive Religion," A12.

The ridiculous Islamic religion, which represses women and sexuality, is murder and destruction through and through. . . . It is the cause of the Middle East's backwardness and of all the calamities that have occurred there, the cause of the terrible backwardness of the Muslim countries. It is the religion of deafening noise and forced night-time wakefulness,²⁵² of loudspeakers, of *tabbal*,²⁵³ . . . [T]he religion of theft, corruption, key-money, and violation of frozen prices. Such is Muslim society, and you demand the application of the *Shari'a*! May you know that your masters the Copts view you with contempt and ridicule you every time they see a sheikh striding along in his turban, swaying from left to right, as though his head bore an unbearable weight. But will the by-product of this contemptible religion last much longer? Now that the Camp David accords have been signed, I believe that the extinction of Islam is near, as is the return of Egypt to Christianity. It is you, corrupt men, who have corrupted both this world and the next!²⁵⁴

E. THE RISE OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS IN EGYPT

"Muslim militants committed acts of violence in full view of the authorities - in some cases "even with their complicity," so reported The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights.²⁵⁵

"In Egypt, Coptic Christians provided the largest single group of victims of assassination, 66% by al-Gamma'a al-Islamiyya group," said Keith R. Roderick, Secretary General of *The Coalition for the Defense of Human Rights in Islamic Countries*.²⁵⁶

The entanglement of the Muslim awakening movement goes back to the era of the

²⁵²This is referring to the call of dawn prayer which is announced over loudspeakers daily at 5:00 a.m.

²⁵³The *tabbal* is:

a tambourine player who passes through the streets to awaken Muslims, and their neighbors, during the nights of Ramadan, so that they can take their last licit meal before the start of the fast, or *imsak*, which begins when the sun comes up.

See Ruthschild, *The Prophet and Pharaoh: Muslim Extremism in Contemporary Egypt*, 167.

²⁵⁴*Ibid.*, 167.

²⁵⁵Sam Seibert with Carol Berger/World Affair, "The Day of the Devil: Egypt's Extremists Target the Christian Copts," in *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], January-June 1995, vol. 22, no. 1 & 2, 14. Emphasis added.

²⁵⁶Keith R. Roderick, "Testimony before The Subcommittee on International Security, International Organizations and Human Rights," *The Coalition for the Defense of Human Rights in Islamic Countries*, October 1993, 6.

Prophet. As a historical movement it harks back to Ibn Khaldun, but is also dictated by the self-and-world view of the present Islamic movement. In fact some Muslim fundamentalists perceive themselves as directly related to and followers of previous leaders and their movements of renaissance and rejuvenation. It is a cycle that is related to phases of enormous turbulence, when they perceive Islam as being under threat or that it does not have the influence which corresponds to its nature.²⁵⁷ Accordingly, fundamentalists are not new to Egypt or any other Islamic country.

²⁵⁷Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 9.

In each crisis or period of decline, one can see a pattern of energizing response from dynamic individuals to rekindle the Islamic movement back to its original roots. Some of these individuals try to rejuvenate the Islamic faith through speeches, while others use radical methods, demanding social and political change. Claiming that they are sent by Allah, they must be obeyed, or they will use force and violence to achieve their goals. In the pursuit of their goals they have to rationalize their movement. How? It is by authority from the Koran, by the Prophet's Legacy (*Hadith*),²⁵⁸ and by using historical documents of past Islamic leaders. This is how they rally the masses behind them.²⁵⁹

Some of the conditions that trigger Islamic resurgence are: identity crisis, legitimacy crisis, misrule, class conflict, military defeats, and culture crisis.²⁶⁰

The Muslim Brotherhood organization was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hasan al-Banna, an organization known in Arabic as *Ihkwān al-Muslimīn*. Al-Banna relied on the Koran for his teachings and the six known treatises of the *hadith*.²⁶¹ He took advantage of social and political problems to establish a Muslim society where Shariah law would be the basis for all functions of Egyptian society.

²⁵⁸*Hadith* is the sayings, works and various rulings of the Prophet Muhammad.

²⁵⁹Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 12.

²⁶⁰*Ibid.*, 162.

²⁶¹*Ibid.*, 80.

Egypt is considered the root of the radical Islamic movement in all the Islamic countries. In all the Arab and Muslim countries, there are 91 different Islamic radical organizations, 29 of which operate in Egypt alone. This means about 32% or a third of all the Islamic radical groups in the world operate in Egypt.²⁶² Many of these Muslim militant organizations are direct descendants of the Muslim Brotherhood. They emerged during the 1970s, and all of them got established after the 1967 defeat of Egypt in the "six-day war" with Israel. In fact President Mubarak said in an interview with the *New Yorker* that the problem of terrorism in the Middle East "is a by-product of our own, illegal Muslim Brotherhood."²⁶³ The estimate regarding the al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya militant organization alone is now at more than 10,000 armed men.²⁶⁴ All operate in Egypt to destabilize the present regime and to attack Coptic Christians as infidels who have no place in a purely Islamic society.²⁶⁵

In analyzing the various Muslim radical groups, the following trend emerges:

Islamic fundamentalist organizations follow two patterns of development:

1. New fundamentalist organizations are generally: (a) small in size; (b) high in military; (c) led by charismatic leaders; and (d) operate clandestinely.
2. Older, more established Islamic societies generally are: (a) large in size; (b) low in military; (c) led by bureaucratic leaders; and (d) operate openly.²⁶⁶

Why has the Muslim Brotherhood in the past been successful in appealing to the Egyptian people with their message? Some of the reasons were:

1. Islamic conservative leaders were active only at al-Azhar, the great institution for Muslim scholars, with the result that their influence in the society, by and

²⁶²Ibid., 179-182.

²⁶³"Turn Back Mubarak," *The Economist* newspaper, 2 April 1995, vol. 334, no. 7900, 1.

²⁶⁴MacLaren, "Religious Freedom in Egypt: Does it Exist?" 2-6.

²⁶⁵Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 90.

²⁶⁶Ibid., 201.

large, was limited. The Muslim Brotherhood Organization wants to have more Islamic influence in the lives of the people. **This is called a spiritual crisis.**

2. A lack of understanding on the part of political leaders regarding the social problems facing the people had been present. Class distinction, with a wide gap between the rich and the poor, was also present.²⁶⁷ This wide vacuum was advantageous to the Brotherhood, in that they preyed on the ills of society. **This is called a social crisis.**

3. Due to economic concerns of the people, which the government failed to address, the Muslim Brotherhood wants Islamic influence to govern the economic aspects of the society. **This is called an economic crisis.**

4. When political leaders go after aspirations of their own away from the path of Islam, this creates a problem for them. Muslims believe that Islam should govern the political arena as well. **This is called a political crisis.**

5. Fighting for the sake of Allah is mandated in the Koran. All true Muslim believe they must fight to the bitter end if he sees Islamic nations and their swaying away from the true path of Islam. **This is called Islam in crisis.**

Shukri Ahmed Mustafa, one of the leaders of Muslim militants which branched out of the Muslim Brotherhood, said that the essence of his ideology is founded on "sacred hatred" of all Muslim nations who have abandoned the true path of Islam. He further asserted that "Spilling the blood of heretics is the sacred duty of all Muslims."²⁶⁸

Nasser was able to deal with the Brotherhood with ferocity. His charisma and popularity among the masses enabled him to crush the Brotherhood's movement during his presidency. The Brotherhood movement during Nasser's rule was practically dead. Nasser dealt the Brotherhood a blow when he jailed many of them, which resulted in their inability to influence public policy, removing them as a factor in the political arena. When Sadat became President after Nasser's death, however, the situation was different.

²⁶⁷Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 123.

²⁶⁸Ibrahim, *Black Gold and Holy War*, 96.

Sadat was faced with major problems, which included:

1. The struggle for power between Sadat and some of his comrades from the Revolution of 1952 who were pro-Soviet Union leftists.

2. Sadat had an image problem and low standing among the Egyptians, lacking the charisma that Nasser had. It has been said that Nasser remarked that "Sadat is interested only in two things: a big American car and gasoline paid for by the Government."²⁶⁹

3. Economic problems were facing the country, including inflation.

²⁶⁹Thomas W. Lippman, *Egypt after Nasser* (New York, NY: Paragon House, 1989), 193.

After Sadat took office, the struggle for power intensified between Sadat and the leftists who tried unsuccessfully to overthrow him in 1971. In order to find a solution to this power struggle, Sadat decided, instead of keeping the Brotherhood in jail, to release them from jail. On October 15, 1972, he released some of them, releasing the last detainee in 1973. The purpose was to obliterate Nasser's popularity with the masses, as well as to use them as a tool against the leftists. He also needed the support of the Brotherhood, a right wing group, for other ulterior motives. He had a secretive relationship with the Muslim Brotherhood which allowed them to operate secretly under another name, which Hassan el-Hudaibi, head of the organization, refused to do. In his book *In Search of Identity*, Sadat reveals that he was a friend of Hasan al-Banna, the head of the Muslim Brotherhood organization. In fact he said that he attended the Tuesday weekly sermon of al-Banna at the Brotherhood headquarters in al-Hilmiah al-Gadidah. In the late 1930s and early 1940s, Sadat acknowledged that al-Banna's lectures had a political tone to it, and that he recruited some officers from the armed forces presumably to achieve his goals of an Islamic Society.²⁷⁰ To rally support towards the right wing, he ordered thousands of Soviets to leave the country and set the stage for a new relationship with the West, especially the United States. He further clamped down on the leftists. This was fertile ground for the message of the Muslim Brotherhood to spread. Sadat in his early years was also pro-Hitler. In 1940, he was a member of the rightist, pro-German Egyptian Youth Organization.²⁷¹ On September 18, 1953, a number of news agencies ran a story that Hitler was still alive. On that basis *Al Musawar*, a weekly Egyptian magazine, asked several prominent Egyptians this question. "If you wished to send Hitler a personal letter, what would you write to him?" Sadat was one of those asked, and he wrote the following letter:

²⁷⁰Anwar el-Sadat, *In Search of Identity* (New York, NY: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1978), 22-23.

²⁷¹Laffin, *The Dagger of Islam*, 70.

My Dear Hitler,

I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart. Even if you appear to have been defeated, in reality, you are the victor. You succeeded in creating dissensions between Churchill, the old man, and his allies, the Sons of Satan. Germany will win because her existence is necessary to preserve the world balance. Germany will be reborn in spite of the Western and Eastern powers. There will be no peace unless Germany once again becomes what she was. The West, as well as the East, will pay for her rehabilitation - whether they like it or not. Both sides will invest a great deal of money and effort in Germany in order to have her on their side. . . . We will not be surprised if you appear again in Germany or if a new Hitler rises in your wake.²⁷²

In 1972 Sadat in a speech said the following about the Jews:

The most splendid thing the Prophet Muhammed did was to drive them out of the whole Arabian peninsula. . . . They are a nation of liars and traitors, contrivers of plots, a people born for the deeds of treachery I promise you we shall send them back to their former status, . . . as the Koran said of them condemned to humiliation and misery.²⁷³

In 1956, Sadat attacked the West for its ignorance and materialism. Here is what he said:

Western civilisation and its heritage, for which Europe and America fear so much, live only on the debris of the East and would not flourish if they

²⁷²"Hitler is a Model for Sadat," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1989, vol. 16, 8.

²⁷³Ibid., 8.

had not sucked its blood. . . . Democracy is a Western system designed to ensure Western authority and domination over the people of the East.²⁷⁴

²⁷⁴Laffin, *The Dagger of Islam*, 70.

The above reflects what Sadat believed, and from the heart the mouth speaks. What the individual thinks is what he is. In fact, one Coptic Priest in Egypt said the following about Sadat and his relationship with Muslim radical groups: "He [Sadat] had contact with extremist groups, thinking he could dialogue with them, but ultimately, by entertaining them, Sadat gave rise to the extremists."²⁷⁵

Sadat, the Copts believe, played a crucial part in the grave situation that the Coptic Christians face today. This is by no means gives the Mubarak regime any excuses. To fuel and incite Muslims in Egypt to attack the Coptic Christians, Sadat made an explosive and unwarranted statement to rally the Muslims against the Christians in Egypt:

You are heard me speak on 14 [of] May about the story of the Christian state they wanted to establish at one time. My friend Kirillos [sic, Kirullos who was the Pope of the Coptic Church], God bless his soul, was a noble Egyptian. After getting wind of the plan, he broke off his visit to Ethiopia, [and] returned to Egypt, and did not open his mouth to anyone. He nipped this plan in the bud. A Christian state here [!].²⁷⁶

Sadat further stated that a foreign power in their dismay of Nasser's policies, had approached Pope Kirullos VI, the head of the Coptic Church at that time²⁷⁷ and wanted to establish a Christian state to undermine Nasser's regime. However, the Pope had nothing to do with the idea. In fact in the words of Sadat, Pope Kirullos "After getting wind of the idea, he broke off his visit to Ethiopia, [and] returned to Egypt."²⁷⁸

²⁷⁵"Magazine Reports Rise in Murder of Christians," 15.

²⁷⁶The American Coptic Association, "Response to President Sadat's October 1, 1980 Speech," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt/Newsletter* [Jersey City], December 1980, 2.

²⁷⁷Pope Kirullos VI died in 1970.

²⁷⁸The American Coptic Association, "Response to President Sadat's October 1, 1980 Speech," 3.

Sadat then dished out a different story about the Coptic Christians again to incite hostility against them, by saying,

. . . . you know the war in Lebanon is continuing. For 7 years Lebanon has been disintegrating. Lebanon is now partitioned. A Christian state will be established in Lebanon headed by Pierre al-Jumayyil. Al-Jumayyil's aim is not only a Christian state in Lebanon alone. He wants to gather the Christians of the Arab nation [sic] in his state so as to take their revenge on the Arab nation's [sic] Muslims.²⁷⁹

It is clear from the above segment of his speech that Sadat was telling Muslims in Egypt that once Christians from all the Arab countries gathered in Lebanon, they will take revenge and attack Arab Muslims. Sadat was urging Muslims to take the initiative by attacking Coptic Christians first. All of his attacks on Christians and his strange allegations and stories, which were the invention Sadat's imagination, was as a result of protest abroad by Coptic Christians of human rights violations. They staged a peaceful demonstration against him while he was visiting the U.S. in 1979 by demanding respect for human rights for the Copts. By his own admission, Sadat said:

The regrettable thing is what happened with our Coptic brothers I want to say that the subject used to be discussed within Egypt. However, it was shameful to talk about it outside Egypt. Nevertheless, this subject got out of Egypt [the peaceful protest of Copts in the U.S.] to the outside world I warn my sons, the Copts, because, regrettably, the sons abroad--whom the Patriarchate said do not represent Egypt, and so forth, and do not represent the Copts of Egypt--and [are] still going on with their plan. They even shamelessly approached our embassy in Australia. I sent the embassy a message, saying: break your relations with them as Egyptians and withdraw their passports, because I do not like impudence.²⁸⁰

Coptic Christians abroad represent freedom for those who are under oppression. One does not need permission to ask an innocent prisoner if he wants to be free or not, this would be ludicrous. In addition, the Coptic Church in Egypt is forced to say that the Copts abroad do not represent the Christians in Egypt. If they did, the government would

²⁷⁹Ibid., 1.

²⁸⁰Ibid., 5, 7.

devastate the church and its leaders, and enslave them even the more.

The economy in Egypt during Sadat's rule was in shambles, with foreign debts of more than fifteen billion dollars. The Armed Forces alone in Egypt's budget accounted for more than 30% of the national budget. Inflation ran high by as much as 35% annually. Production of goods was 50% below consumer consumption. The majority of Egyptians' standard of living dropped substantially. Sadat's policy of attracting foreign investment to create capital and jobs failed. A gap between the rich and poor was further widened. This resulted in resentment and discontent among the public. The Brotherhood played on these resentments and fears of the future by using propaganda campaigns to tell the masses that the solution to the economic crisis was in Islam and Islam alone. They claimed that once Shariah law was implemented, impoverishment would disappear and abundance and morality would rule.²⁸¹

The Brotherhood proved to be a valuable asset to Sadat, in that he was able to manipulate and utilize the Egyptian poor to fight the communist atheistic system and, at the same time, clamp down on leftists in the country. Sadat gained the valuable allies he needed to calm the fear of the people in the economic crises at hand. While the Muslim Brotherhood was a religious organization in form, its members were deeply involved in the political system of Egypt. They joined the various political parties existing at that time. It was only a matter of time before the Shariah law would be implemented, they asserted.

²⁸¹Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 129-130.

The Brotherhood organization also infiltrated the various universities, using intense propaganda campaigns, especially among university students.²⁸² The Brotherhood also infiltrated various government apparatuses, either through propaganda campaigns, or by working as employees holding governmental positions. Thus, the Muslim Brotherhood organization, after establishing itself within the country, came out as a powerful political party.

For this reason, a state of emergency has been imposed in Egypt for more than forty years. The government is disconnected from the people and fundamentalists take advantage of the crisis at hand in order to build support for their political ambitions.

The Shariah law does declare that possession of land by Jews and Christians as illegitimate. What is done with the land owned by Jews and Christians? The first Muslim who gets hold of it is the principal owner, since Allah made Muslims masters and inheritors of the whole world.²⁸³ To confirm what has been said about the Shariah law, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran announced:

The governments of the world should know that Islam cannot be defeated. Islam will be victorious in all the countries of the world, and Islam and the teaching of the Quran will prevail all over the world.²⁸⁴

In 1993, Diane Sawyer, who was working with CBS, went to Iran for an interview with the President of the Parliament of Iran, Hashemi Rafsanjani. One of her questions asked was, Do you want to see the United States become a Muslim country like Iran? He smiled and said, yes.²⁸⁵

In September 1971, the People's Assembly (Egyptian Parliament) passed a new Constitution. One of the most important parts of the Constitution reads:

Islam is the religion of the state; Arab [*sic*] is its official language; and the principles of the Islamic Sharia are a principal source of

²⁸²Universities in Egypt are very large in student enrollment, from 50,000-150,000 students enrolled in some of the universities, such as with Cairo University.

²⁸³Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 96.

²⁸⁴*International Herald Tribune*, Aug. 17, 1979, was included at the end of the quotation, presumably it is the primary source.

²⁸⁵CBS's "60 Minutes," an Interview by Diane Sawyer, 1993.

legislation²⁸⁶

²⁸⁶Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 128.

This was not acceptable to the Brotherhood organization, since the Shariah law was not made the *only* source of legislation. After the war in 1973, the Egyptian economy was in crisis. Hardship was felt across the country. Sadat thought to implement a more liberal economic policy to attract foreign investors for the purpose of generating capital. Unfortunately, this policy did not work. In 1976, the economy worsened even further and inflation was out of hand. Debts in the billions of dollars were unpaid, as well as there being not enough food to feed the population. Revolt, as well as violent mass demonstrations, would have brought the country and the government to the brink of collapse. Sadat had to find a way out. One solution was to allow the Brotherhood to indoctrinate the masses and to stir them with the message of Islam. The Brotherhood message reached many homes and spread rapidly. Chapters in many cities and towns were established to further their political agenda. Using the nation's crisis as a springboard, their message of the promise of prosperity was what the masses were waiting to hear. The Brotherhood again stressed that the country was in bad shape, that reform was essential, and that this could only be done through Islam. By gaining more political muscle in the country, the Brotherhood succeeded in working with the Islamic organizations and the judiciary. This resulted in a conference held at the al-Azhar University in Cairo. The main focus was to achieve the immediate implementation of Shariah law. Draft copies of the Shariah law were submitted to the Ministry of Justice for evaluation and approval. Once approval was obtained, Sadat had to review it before sending the final draft to the People's Assembly (Egyptian parliament) for argument and vote. To the dismay of the Brotherhood, the government would not submit the new measurement for a vote. There was much opposition from moderate Muslims as well as Coptic Christians. The influence of the Brotherhood continued, and in 1978 the President's party, which always has the majority, made the following statement: "Islamic laws are not merely guiding principles for social contents, nor do they represent only a moral obligation, but they are a constitutional, social and political prop."²⁸⁷ On April 30, 1980, the People's Assembly, or Parliament, passed an amendment by overwhelming majority which states: ". . . the principles of the Islamic Sharia are **the** principal source of legislation."²⁸⁸ This clearly shows the influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in the amending of the Constitution to include the word "the," meaning no other principal source of legislation is allowed except from the Shariah law. In Egypt, as perhaps in many third-world countries, it is very difficult to change laws on the books which have been applied for years, especially when they are working. Even with the passage of the Shariah law comes the hard part. How do legislators translate the Shariah law so as to implement it in all governing aspects of the society? For the Brotherhood and other militant Muslim groups the battle is far from over. It should be noted that the term of the President in the Constitution was limited to two six-year terms. In the amendment to the Constitution this changed, allowing the President to hold office for an indefinite period of time.²⁸⁹ Dr. Sabri Abdallah argues that President Mubarak and his party have no principles and shelter those who want to make money off the backs of the people and take advantage of their positions, and he added:

²⁸⁷Ibid., 132.

²⁸⁸Ibid., 134.

²⁸⁹With no opposition to the then-President Sadat, if he had lived, he could have stayed in office for as long as his natural life. The president normally wins with more than 90% of the vote. With no advertisements or commercials to run, or money to spend, all the president has to do is seek the office for another term. And the rest, as we say, is history. In fact when President Mubarak was seeking office for a third term in October 1993, he won by 96.3% of the vote, with 84.2% turnout. The results of the one way election, as Caryle Murphy put it, ". . . were viewed with open contempt by many Egyptians. Some said they felt "insulted." See Caryle Murphy, "Egypt: An Uneasy portrait of Change," *Current History*, February 1994, 4-5.

The perception in the country is that the ruling party will never permit a transfer of power. Therefore elections becomes quite meaningless. So the people's hope for change is not linked to the ballot box.²⁹⁰

It is interesting that Sadat was always pictured in the newspaper as a man of prayer, going to the mosque on Friday, the day of prayer for Muslims. He wanted to give the impression to the average Egyptian that he was a faithful follower of Islam. Despite his many compromises made with the Brotherhood, they felt that a Muslim president must not seek peace with Israel in the way that he did. This extending hand was against the honor and pride of Islam, and any true Muslim would not have done what Sadat had done. They finally assassinated him in 1981. Foreign correspondent to *Time Magazine*, Stanley Reed, stated:

²⁹⁰Mark Nicholson, "Egypt," *Financial Times* [London], 22 April 1993, Section IV, 6.

It is worth noting that Sadat encouraged the Islamic movement until he realized his mistakes in the late 1970s. Sadat viewed the Islamists as a useful counterweight to the left. He also thought making a show of his own personal piety would raise his stature.²⁹¹

Sadat, many observers argue, was the reason for the revival of Muslim fundamentalist groups. While he was trying to balance between the left and right, meaning the Nasser legacy and communist party on the one hand, and the Muslim Brotherhood on the other, it back-fired. When the Brotherhood acquired enough power, they started to confront the government face-to-face. After Sadat's death these groups grew rapidly. Given that the government had failed in its attempts to resolve the economic crisis and that youths had no way to express their grievances, their only alternative was found through these Muslim fundamentalist groups.²⁹²

There are a number of lessons to be learned from Sadat's playing with fire that he could not contain:

1. Never underestimate the power of Muslim militants, in its increasing control, dedication to its ideology, and structural ability.
2. Refrain from using a religious game which is not in line with their ideology, for the purpose of achieving political gain.
3. Conduct foreign and domestic policies according to both religious and cultural-social values, to meet the needs of the public.
4. Cultivate practical alternatives to fundamentalism by dealing with social, political and economic improvement, and supervise openness.

²⁹¹Reed, "The Battle for Egypt," 3.

²⁹²Mordechai Nisan, *Minorities in the Middle East* (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1991), 233-235.

5. Implement the new doctrine by blending it to meet the needs of the poor masses with little influence from aristocracies and their sinister ways.²⁹³

A current study on Islam found that

One thing is certain. The emergence of a revolutionary fundamentalist Egypt will shake the Muslim and non-Muslim worlds even more than did the 1979 Iranian revolution.²⁹⁴

If this happened, as some believe it might, this revolution ". . . will take a fearful toll on the non-Muslims [Coptic Christians] at hand before it burns itself out in bigotry and failure."²⁹⁵

Private security firms in Egypt were directly engaged in various forms of terrorism. Security firms have sheltered, hid, and smuggled many of the most-wanted men of the well-known al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya. These security firms have more than 2400 files on Egyptian politicians and public figures. These files contain all of the details of each individual's life. The results of the security firms are as Elam Ministries has stated

Naturally they have infiltrated the police, and the intelligence forces and have managed to establish almost another ministry of Interior parallel to the official one for ulterior purposes.²⁹⁶

Muslim radicals have a rudimentary perception of right and wrong. If someone

²⁹³Dekmejian, *Islam In Revolution*, 89-90.

²⁹⁴Herbert Schlossberg, *A Fragrance of Oppression* (Irvine, CA: Crossway Books, 1991), 49. Emphasis added.

²⁹⁵Edward Norden, "America's Oldest (and Newest) Christians," *The American Spectator*, June 1993, 28

²⁹⁶"Private Security Firms Facilitate Islamic Terrorism," *Elam Ministries* [Surrey, United Kingdom] (24 March 1994): 1-3. Emphasis added.

disagrees with them, on any ground, he is wrong and they are right. They believe that they know the truth of Allah and, therefore, no compromise can be made. They are hostile to the liberty of expressing one's own views. Nasr Abu Zeid a professor at Cairo University was denied a promotion which was due him on the grounds that his writings and views were against Islamic teachings. Not only that, but an Egyptian court dissolved his marriage with his wife:

Muslim fundamentalists lawyers succeeded Wednesday in persuading a court to annul the marriage of a university professor, arguing his writings are an insult to Islam. Nasr Abu Zeid and his wife insist they want to stay married but the appeals court ruled against them and declared Abu Zeid an apostate, a person who has forsaken his religion²⁹⁷

The English-Indian writer Salman Rushdie had his head sought by Muslims because they believed that he insulted Islam in his book "*The Satanic Verses*".²⁹⁸ For fundamentalist Muslims there are no territorial boundaries in reaching their goal under the cause of justifiable reason. If an individual or government is perceived to be a danger or threat to Islam, then that individual or government is subject to the jurisdiction of Muslim radicals. They will seek revenge. The support of violence is justified on religious grounds according to Islamic fundamentalists.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁷World News, "Egyptian Court orders Muslims to get Divorce," *The Virginian-Pilot & The Ledger-Star* [Norfolk], 15 June 1995, A17.

²⁹⁸M.H.A. Reisman, "Some Reflections on Human Rights and Clerical Claims to Political Power," *The Yale Journal of International Law* (Summer 1994): 9 YJIL 509, 10.

²⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 11.

The rise of Muslim radicals can also be traced to secularism. Secularism is not an illusion. Almost always Islamic resurgence resurfaces as a result of internal decline or external danger or both.³⁰⁰ It originated as a result of global changes that took place over the long run. One of those changes was the growth of the capitalistic system in the West, and the second was centralized big government, which does not deliver to the people the service that they so desperately need. Muslim radicals seek an Islamic identity which is contrary to both, since they are perceived as unworkable solutions to the society's economic and political problems.³⁰¹ This is why Islam cannot endorse capitalism or adopt it as a system, writes Bryan Turner of the University of Flinders, Australia. Mr. Turner argues:

Islam could not provide the social leverage whereby the Muslim Middle East could be lifted out of feudal stagnation. At this level of argument it would be all too easy to interpret [Max] Weber³⁰² as postulating that Islam did not produce capitalism because it had a culture incompatible with the spirit of capitalism. . . . When Weber turned to an analysis of Islamic law, it appears that his argument was constructed in terms of a string of prerequisites which are necessary for capitalist development.³⁰³

Sadat failed to educate youth and to fill the ideological vacuum that was created by Nasser's death. Subsequently, the Muslim Brotherhood took advantage of the ideological vacuum with tenets of their own, and created confrontation with the regime, especially in the area of economic problems. The problem with the Egyptian regime is summarized by Dekmejian, as follows:

The tragedy of Egypt was that neither Sadat nor his associates were principally concerned with the indoctrination-socialization process to educate the youth in becoming loyal citizens. Thus, Sadat's tactical move to let loose the Brotherhood against Nasserists proved dysfunctional The periodic arrests, executions of militant leaders were not useful in promoting long-range stability, in view of the regime's lack of ideological-

³⁰⁰Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, 19.

³⁰¹Edmund Burke III, and Ira M. Lapidus, eds., *Islam, Politics, and Social Movements* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1988), 18.

³⁰²A European scholar who studied the relationship between religion and capitalism.

³⁰³Bryan S. Turner, *Capitalism and Class in the Middle East* (London, United Kingdom: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd, 1984), 35.

spiritual and material incentives to capture the loyalties of the people
Despite his best intentions, however, the new president [Mubarak]
possesses neither the ideological tools nor the dedicated cadres to address
comprehensively the ills of [the] Egyptian society.³⁰⁴

³⁰⁴Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 107.

After Sadat's death in 1981, Egypt began to witness some political influence on the populace of ordinary Egyptians. Writers, politicians, political parties, lawyers and others, flocked to the camp of those wishing to influence the masses to their side. In trying to understand the policies of Mubarak at the beginning of his presidency, they went along with him for his first term in office. Mubarak could not establish himself as a separate and unique politician away from Sadat's legacy and could not assert a legacy as this for himself. This resulted in a power struggle, where every political or religious party now claims that they have the answer for Egypt's ills after years of neglect. Mubarak, writes Mr. Shoukrallah, has no clear political scheme. The opposition claims that they have a well-defined strategy for the country. Two major political parties emerged, and have infiltrated the ranks of the Egyptian government, with a strong political base from which to launch their campaign. The two opposition parties are the Wafd and the Muslim Brotherhood, of which the Brotherhood is more powerful. The growing concern is that ordinary Egyptians think that they can express themselves in the state mechanism through these various parties.³⁰⁵

³⁰⁵Charles Tripp II and Roger Owen, *Egypt under Mubarak* (Worcester, NY: Billing & Sons Ltd., 1989), 97-99.

The government permitted these Muslim radical groups to operate against Christians as long as these groups did not cause problems for the government. Sadat thought that by satisfying the Muslim militant groups, by allowing them to attack Christians, he was safe, as well as his presidency. It was later that the world knew Sadat had dug his own grave, when he was assassinated by an Islamic militants (al-Jihad) dressed in military fatigues during a military parade in Cairo on October 6, 1981. These were the very people to whom Sadat had given freedom to declare their beliefs in the country.³⁰⁶ During the trial against the defendants from al-Jihad organization, one of the defendants, Islambuli, revealed their plan as to why they decided to kill Sadat:

1. Egypt's secular laws are not in line with Islamic Law, which he contends brought misery on Muslims, and is considered social and economic oppression;
2. The peace accord of 1979 is considered against the honor of Islam;
3. The detention and jailing of the Muslim militants in September 1981, which is considered oppression from the state.

This is why *The New York Times* in 1994 **described the rise of Muslim militants as a "threat to world peace and security, similar to Nazism and fascism in the 1930s and communism in the 1950s."**³⁰⁷

In addition to the mere presence of Christianity in Egypt and the Coptic Church, there is another major reason why the Islamic militant groups are on the rise in Egypt: despair among young people since most of them have no employment. Mubarak keeps repeating the same slogan in his speeches "Nasser liberated Egypt; Sadat gave it peace; I wish to rebuild it." However, the task is awesome. To give the reader an idea about the situation in Egypt, one must look at the population issue. After years of neglect and no sufficient planning for future generations, problems obviously accumulate to the degree that it becomes impossible to handle. As World Press Review reported:

³⁰⁶Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 122.

³⁰⁷Fabio Altman, "The Muslims are Coming," *World Press Review*, May 1994, vol. 41, no. 5, 1-2.

To build a country where a baby is born every 30 seconds, where millions of people live in cemeteries because there is no housing for them, where 60 percent of the population is younger than 20 and seeks in vain to work, where the average per-capita income does not rise above \$500 a year, is a hopeless enterprise.³⁰⁸

³⁰⁸Igor Man, "The Rifts in Egypt's "Village," *World Press Review*, July 1993, vol. 40 no. 7, 1.

Mubarak, however, is making the same mistake Sadat did, in that he has allowed these various Islamic groups to operate against Coptic Christians as long as the government or the tourism industry is not in danger. At times the government even joins in as collaborators with Muslim militants in attacking Coptic Christians. The money from the tourist industry is more important than the lives and property of the Coptic people. It was only when the tourism industry in Egypt started to suffer by as much as 40%, with a loss of between \$800 million to \$2 billion a year (the average family's income is \$500 a year), that the government moved in to crack down on these Islamic militant groups.³⁰⁹

Many Christians took this response as a chilling message. It is as if the Government is telling everyone, it's O.K. if you munch on little Copts [Christians], but don't touch the tourists."³¹⁰

Some additional perspectives on why Islamic fundamentalism is on the rise:

1. Because of the defeat of nationalism in Arab countries, Muslims are looking for another way for unity to establish an Islamic empire, and Islam seems to them as the ideal for such unity.

2. Muslims in Egypt see other Muslim brothers being attacked, such as in Bosnia, and in Chechnya, the former Soviet Union republic, and they cannot stand by idly when their brothers are under attack. Muslims in Egypt and elsewhere believe that attack on Muslims in another country is an attack on them, and as such they are willing to fight the attackers. This is why Iran is sending military equipment to Bosnia to fight the Serbs in the three-year-old war in the former Yugoslavia. In fact Jordan raised more than six million dollars on their public television to help Bosnia in the summer of 1995, *The*

³⁰⁹When Muslim militants murdered a British tourist, the tourist industry suffered. Immediately after, the government started to crack down on thousands of suspected militants.

³¹⁰Anton Sidhom, editor of the weekly newspaper *Watany*. See Ibrahim, "Muslims' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," A8.

Virginian-Pilot newspaper reported.

3. The Iranian revolution of 1979, in which Iran became a Muslim republic, and where the West has little or no influence regards Western influence as corrupt and bad for their people, and continues to spread these ideas.³¹¹

4. Egypt is a friend to the West, especially to the United States, which is against Islam, and Muslims see this as an evil friendship, with the United States having the upper hand in the relationship. They also look at the U.S. as a Christian nation, and according to the Koran Christians are inferior to Muslims, which is not the case in the U.S.-Egyptian relationship.

5. The defeat of Saddam Hussein during the Gulf war of 1991 was a cause for alarm. A defeat of Saddam, Muslims believe, is a defeat for Islam.

6. Attempts have been made to eradicate Coptic Christians in Egypt because Muslims believe that there is no place for other religions to co-exist with Islam, especially Christianity. One way to eradicate the Coptic Church in Egypt is through Islamic unity.

7. It is seen as a golden opportunity to use oil as a bargaining advantage against the West, and to consolidate powers financially for the spread of Islam and for purchasing weapons to reach this same goal. Since the Arabs are divided on mostly everything (the Arabs often have to agree to disagree), Muslims think that Islam would be the force to unite them.

8. Secular Islamic governments are going after aspirations that are contrary to or not related to Islam. Forsaking Islam is a crime according to the Koran.

9. With the defeat of communism as an ideology and a system, Muslims see that a vacuum has been created. None can stand up to the United States, they assert, unless the Muslims are united. An Islamic superpower is the only way to curb the influence of

³¹¹The Shiite Iranian Revolution provided the incentive and thrust for radical movements by Sunni fundamentalist organizations in the Arab countries. See Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution*, 19.

the United States.³¹²

³¹²Most Muslims think of the United States as a Christian nation and find it disturbing to see Christians with so much military power, economic strength, social and political influence in the world. It is inconceivable for Muslims to think of Christian America as powerful, and Muslim countries are unable to stand up to this challenge. Muslims consider Christians and Jews inferior and outcasts and the enemies of Islam. This is how life is for Coptic Christians in Egypt around Muslims, especially militant Muslim groups. It should be pointed out that not all Muslims agree with these Muslim militants and many do not wish to implement the Shariah law. But for these moderates to voice their opinion can be taken as opposing Islam, declaring them to be enemies of Islam.

10. The Muslims' main objective, in the end, is to rule the whole world as masters, since Muslims believe according to the Koran that they are superior over all non-Muslims. The Koran urges Muslims to fight the Jews and Christians in particular, and to conquer them. To them, it is only a matter of time before they conquer one country at a time, as they did in the early days of Islam in the 600s A.D. The submission of the whole world, then, will be achieved.³¹³

11. Saudi Arabia contributes money for Islamic causes, from both government as well as private funds. One of these causes is Islamic fanatical groups operating all over the world.³¹⁴ They also receive training in the Sudan.

The strategy of the Muslim radicals in the Islamic world, including the Middle East and North Africa, is both a simple and complicated one. After consolidating their power a bloody confrontation with the West will emerge, especially the United States. The confrontation will first be over the oil fields in the Middle East. This was actually what Saddam Hussein tried to accomplish in 1991 and failed. The second is that Islamic radicals are committed to the destruction of the State of Israel. The third and final confrontation will involve coming onto the shores of America, seeking blood.³¹⁵

³¹³This list is by the author, who has lived in Egypt for 26 years, and who feels he has gained insight into the Islamic mind and goals of Muslim fundamentalists.

³¹⁴Reed, "The Battle for Egypt," 3.

³¹⁵Israeli, *Fundamentalist Islam and Israel*, 46.

The U.S. in the hope to dialogue should not try to find the so called "moderate" as opposed to "extremist" fundamentalists, because there are none. In the final analysis, all fundamentalists have the same final goal. In the words of the President of Tunisia (a Muslim) in North Africa, the fundamentalists want "the construction of a totalitarian, theocratic state."³¹⁶ Instead, Mr. Pipes urges the U.S. to implement a firm policy toward the fundamentalists, by terminating their operations inside the U.S. The President of Tunisia claims that the U.S. unfortunately is "the rear guard headquarters for fundamentalist terrorists." Mr. Pipes added in regard to their operations inside the United States, "They collect and launder money here, provide communications links and spew out propaganda."³¹⁷

F. ISLAM AND THE WEST: CAN THE WEST LEARN FROM HISTORY?

In the beginning of the 5th century, Christianity was thriving in North Africa. Great saints came from North Africa, such as Augustine and Athanasius. In the seventh century A.D., Muslims stormed into North Africa, forcing Christians to accept Islam, and murdering millions of them. Now, North Africa is in the hands of Muslims. Today, the mission field is harder than ever. Some missionaries call North Africa "the bloc of the unconvertible."³¹⁸

The Koran considers the killing of Jews and Christians as service to Allah and that Muslims will be rewarded for murdering them. Islam is against Christianity and Judaism. Regarding their ideology, Michael Youssef states:

The ideology as a whole is dedicated to dominating the allegiance of all mankind. . . . The questions are being echoed from coast to coast here in the United States: Is oil worth the spilling of American blood? Can we not bite the bullet and develop our oil reserve through off-shore drilling's

³¹⁶Pipes, "Islamic Fundamentalists are the New Big Threat to the West," 22.

³¹⁷Ibid., 22

³¹⁸Richard Wurmbrand, *Tortured for Christ* (Westchester: Crossway Books, 1987), 63.

shells instead?³¹⁹

³¹⁹Michael Youssef, *America, Oil & the Islamic Mind* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 98-99.

This is why it is essential for the West to understand the way of thinking of the Muslim radicals. Even though their idea of the West is distorted and does not represent the truth, using the West's ideas might prove effective. Idea is fought by a counter idea, so to speak.³²⁰

In fact, in *The Economist* newspaper it was said:

The future war that many people are now talking about, though, is bigger than any of these. It is a general war between Islam and the West. Such a war, it might seem, has three sorts of potential ignites [*sic*, ignition]: Ideology, skin colour, conflict of interest. . . . **This will be the due result of a collision between Islamic passion and Western miscalculation.**³²¹

The Muslim Brotherhood organization believes that all other religions except Islam are either apostate or fraudulent. No other view is accepted. They also believe that all countries must come under the banner of Islam.³²²

In May 1985, Muammar Gaddafi of Libya said while in Rwanda: "Africa must be Muslim. Christians are intruders in Africa and are agents of colonialism. We must wage a holy war so that Islam will spread in Africa."³²³

Khomeini made his point clear about the intention of Islam, when he said:

Holy war means the conquest of all non-Muslim countries. Such a war may well be declared after the formation of an Islamic government worthy of that name, at the direction of the Imam or under his orders. It will then be the duty of every able-bodied adult male to volunteer for this war of conquest, the final aim of which is to put Koranic law in power from

³²⁰Hottinger, "How Dangerous is Islamism?" 7.

³²¹"The Fundamental Fear," *The Economist* newspaper, 6 August 1994, vol. 332, no. 7875, 1-2. Emphasis added.

³²²Ibrahim, *Black Gold and Holy War*, 97.

³²³Schlossberg, *A Fragrance of Oppression*, 35,36.

one end of the earth to the other.³²⁴

³²⁴Ibid., 36.

The atrocities being committed against Coptic Christians would occur in any other country in the world, if Muslims consolidated their power and fought to conquer "the enemies of Islam." The U.S. and other Western countries have already been targeted.³²⁵

What the West can do to plan for the future?

1. We must seek to understand the nature and goals of Islam. The West is ignorant in understanding what Islam is. This is why it is essential to be informed. The media can play a vital role in informing the public.

2. The West must find an alternative to relying on the oil from the Middle East. What if Saudi Arabia used an oil embargo against the U.S.? Does the U.S. have an alternative? We cannot measure everything with dollars and simple calculation, for the issues at hand are much more complicated than that. Never underestimate the religious magnitude of the Muslim countries. In Iran, one day the people were with the Shah, and next day they were against him; Khomeini moved in and the Shah moved out.

3. Modify the foreign investment laws in the light of the issues at hand. Withdrawing billions of dollars overnight could adversely affect the U.S. economy and the financial institutions across the country. Protection of the economy from dangerously careful calculation by foreign investors is a must for securing the future of Americans.

4. Tighten the laws pertaining to leasing of federal land and other real estate investments. Trade and commerce is one weapon Muslims can use against the U.S.

5. Insure the protection against human rights abuses in Islamic countries. Egypt, for example, the subject of this thesis, is committing atrocities against the Coptic Christians, with the U.S. ignoring the grave violation of human rights.³²⁶

³²⁵Ibrahim, *Black Gold and Holy War*, 107.

³²⁶Ibid., 121-128.

6. Islamic laws are in direct contradiction with Western and Christian laws, and as such, the West has to safeguard against implementation of any Islamic laws that might jeopardize the freedom enjoyed by Americans.

7. The challenge before the West, and before Christians in particular, is a religious one. The West must be firm and uncompromising in standing up for what they believe. Muslims at times misuse the teachings of Christ and try to manipulate Christians to forgive their offense. Christians should not be fooled by such manipulation.

8. Foreign policy should be based on principles, justice and commitment to values, and not on political and economic interest alone.

9. The West must display the values that made the West what it is today. Often the most insignificant and frivolous features of the West's culture are displayed in television and cinema. Muslims and others get offended, and think this is what the West stands for. Hollywood does not represent America or the West, yet that is what the Muslims are watching and cursing at the same time.

10. The Christian foundation of the West should be explained in terms of how the U.S. Constitution came about, namely from the Declaration of Independence. The Biblical teaching on such matters as civil government, individual self government, family, man's free will and freedom of thought must be retaught to our people and to the people of the world.³²⁷

³²⁷The author heard the following argument many times from Muslims while in Egypt: "Allah had brought about Judaism, and when it did not work, he brought about Christianity, and when it did not work, then came Islam as a working formula for society." If God thinks this way, according to the Bible, he cannot be God, since he does not know what works or doesn't work. God, as Christians know Him, does not play games, nor is He limited. God is sovereign, omnipresent and all-knowing. Nothing is hidden from the sight of God. God also knows the problem of human nature, which is sin. Human beings failed and could not overcome sin. God's salvation plan through Jesus Christ is the only formula for the salvation of man from his depravity. Man has a choice and a responsibility. At the appointed time God will judge man

IV
THE ROLE OF THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT

according to his deeds. Hell will be the final destination to those who refused Christ, but heaven to those who accepted Him and lived a godly life.

In the face of these assaults [against Coptic Christians] the Government's reaction was always coming in too late after the people are killed, after the houses have burned down and the churches sacked They [the government] never offer to pay compensation or provide credible comfort to their Christian citizens.³²⁸

When integrity is gone, honesty at work is gone, speaking the truth is gone, lack of character is epidemic, and hypocrisy is rampant (and add to that bribery and the black market), then what have we got here, but the end of a nation? Such is a true description of the Egyptian government and the political leaders in that country today.³²⁹

A. U.N. DOCUMENTS GUARANTEEING UNIVERSALITY OF HUMAN RIGHTS

The meaning of human rights is self explanatory. They are the rights that an individual has because he is human. These rights are pervasive and universal, and are indistinguishably held by every human being. This is why the United Nations reached consensus among its member states to achieve a standard by which nations treat their people as human beings with full rights. For someone to affirm his rights in a country is to correct the political system. If there is an absence of compliance in upholding human rights in a country, the U.N. should expose the violations of a particular nation through the media and writings as appropriate to achieve the goals of the Declaration.³³⁰

³²⁸Anton Sidhom to *The New York Times*. Ibrahim, "Muslims' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," March 15, 1993, A.8. Emphasis added.

³²⁹Zaky Shenouda, "Country of Hypocrisy," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July-December 1995, vol. 22, no. 1 & 2, 56. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

³³⁰Jan Berting, et al., eds., *Human Rights in a Pluralist World* (Westport, Connecticut: Roosevelt Study Center Publications, 1990), 19-21.

The United Nations was created after World War II when representatives from many governments around the world met to discuss ways to maintain international harmony and peace between nations through solving problems in a civilized manner, before resorting to war. To save following generations from the sufferings of the calamities of war, the United Nations was formed in San Francisco, California in 1945.³³¹ The first declaration on human rights was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted by the General Assembly Resolution 217A(III), on December 10, 1948. The member states, including Egypt, adopted these historical documents.

The author selected articles from the declaration which pertain to the plight of the Coptic Christians in Egypt as follows:

Article 1

All human beings are born free and equally in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everybody is entitled to all rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of persons.

Article 5

None should be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. . . .

Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

³³¹Ian Brownlie, ed., *Basic Documents on Human Rights* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Clarendon Press, 1981), 3-4.

Everyone has the right of freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in the community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by free voting procedure.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right of education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental level. . . . Higher education shall, be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.
2. Education shall be directed to. . . . strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all the nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.
3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.³³²

In Article 40 of the Egyptian Constitution it reads:

All citizens are equal before the law, as they are equal in respect to the general rights and duties; there is no discrimination between them in that regard on account of sex, origin [lineage], language, religion or belief.³³³

³³²Ibid., 165-168.

³³³MacLaren, "Religious Freedom in Egypt: Does it exist?" 3.

Article 46 of the Constitution reads: "The nation guarantees freedom of belief and freedom to practice [one's] religious rites."³³⁴

Egypt has signed the Declaration of International Covenants on Civil and Political Rights as well as the U.N. Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. In the last Declaration, under Article 4, governments are required to "make all efforts to enact or rescind legislation," in order to prohibit discrimination on the basis of religious beliefs. Article 7 states:

[t]he rights and freedoms set forth in the present declaration shall be accorded in national legislation in such a manner that everyone shall be able to avail himself of such rights and freedoms in practice.³³⁵

Despite Egypt's signature that it will abide by the Universal Declaration and other declarations, in practice Egyptian Christians have no religious freedom nor do Muslims have a right to convert to another religion or belief. The Egyptian Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, al-Ashmawi, confirmed that there is a double standard existing in Egyptian society between Muslims and Christians when applying the Constitution. The Constitution, he said, must be interpreted according to Islamic law.³³⁶ This makes the Universal Declaration in relation to Egypt meaningless.

³³⁴It should be clearly noted that the articles cited, among others, of the Egyptian Constitution, do not apply to Coptic Christians in practice. The Egyptian Constitution may conform to the world's standard, but it is meaningless when it comes to Christians. At times parts of the Constitution do not apply to all Muslims either. The arbitrary arrest and torture of some of the detainees and jailing them without formal charges, is just one example, even though it is against Egypt's Constitution. See MacLaren, "Religious Freedom in Egypt: Does it exist?" 3.

³³⁵Donna J. Sullivan, "Advancing the Freedom of Religion or Belief through the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Religious Intolerance and Discrimination," *American Journal of International Law* (July 1988): 82. *Am. J. Int'l L.* 487, 1.

³³⁶MacLaren, "Religious Freedom in Egypt: Does it Exist?" 3-4.

B. DOES DEMOCRACY EXIST IN EGYPT?

An Egyptian pastor, when asked during a conference in Lebanon what he thought about democracy in Egypt replied, "**Democracy in Egypt is ink on paper.**" When the Egyptian Intelligence Agency learned of his statement, he was barred for several years from traveling abroad.³³⁷

The government can issue injunctions which ignore the legal system, as if the legal process and the rule of law have no authority over the government. In other words, the government is above the law.

Ahmed Maher El Sayed, the Egyptian Ambassador to the U.S., in response to an article published in *The Washington Post* dealing with the truth and undisputed facts regarding the situation of the Coptic Christians, wrote:

. . . The Egyptian cabinet has two Christian members--Maurice Makramallah, minister of International cooperation, and Youssef Boutros-Ghali, minister of state in the prime minister's office. The Egyptian parliament also has many Christians members, both elected and appointed as in any democracy, [who] are not elected on a religious basis, but according to the free will of the electorate.³³⁸ It also is untrue that anti-Christian discrimination exist in the public sector, police, government agencies or medical schools. These organizations and all others are open to all Egyptians equally without discrimination³³⁹

³³⁷The author knows this pastor personally. Emphasis added.

³³⁸The Ambassador unfairly compares the so called democracy in Egypt, which does not exist, with the democracy of the West, which is the true democracy. The elections are just as autocratic as Egypt itself.

³³⁹Ahmed Maher El Sayed, "Letters to the Editor," *The Washington Post*, 26 May 1993, A18. This thesis responds to the Ambassador's distorted truth in most of what he stated. However, there are two points that needed to be made: (1) The government appoints two Christians in the cabinet in positions relatively less important than other cabinet members. It is also more likely that they have no authority for making policy, let alone implementing it to alleviate the suffering of the Copts. All government appointments of Coptic Christians is more symbol than substance. In fact in the late seventies, Sadat created a cabinet called "Immigration ministry" and appointed a Christian to head the cabinet (in response to the large number of Copts immigrating to the West, especially the U.S. and Canada), part of whose job was to travel to the U.S. and Canada and meet with immigrant Copts to insure that they are "good boys and girls" and will not protest any mistreatment of the Copts; (2) Regarding the Egyptian parliament (People's Assembly), it is very unusual that a Christian is elected, for he must be living in a predominately Christian district. Christians cannot run for office, as stated in the thesis. They will be threatened by death if they dare run let alone win. Normally the president appoints four or five Christians, some of whom do not represent Coptic Christians, but rather the wishes of the government. All five Christians also represent about 1% of the total members, while the Coptic Christians represent 20% of the population. For the Ambassador to compare random acts of violence in the U.S. with acts of violence against Coptic Christians is rather absurd. The difference is clear. In the U.S., these are just that, random acts, while in Egypt the Coptic Christians are targeted for extermination by both the government and Islamic radical groups with careful and calculated plan to annihilate them in their home land. The U.S.

government does not target specific ethnic or religious groups in the U.S. for extermination, while the Egyptian government does, and that is the difference. The author is reminded of the Iraqi ambassador to the U.S. during the Gulf crisis in 1990, when Iraq invaded Kuwait. He was eloquent in defending Iraq (just as the Egyptian Ambassador has done in his letter to the Post) and tried to display a good picture of his country. Any one who was not familiar with the Gulf crisis or Saddam Hussein would believe that the ambassador was telling the truth. However, as soon as Iraq ordered him to leave the U.S. at the height of the tension, he went to Canada seeking asylum.

C. RELENTLESS ATTACKS AGAINST COPTIC CHRISTIANS BY THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT

Copts from all walks of life are being attacked, robbed and killed by roving bands of fundamentalists. Churches are regularly vandalized and sometimes burned, promoting the Government to place virtually all of them under police guard.³⁴⁰

Last October in the village [city] of Tema, about 90 miles south of El Minya, 4 Christians were killed with axes in their homes by Muslims. The fundamentalists returned in greater numbers the next day and burned 64 houses and dozens of stores owned by Christians as well as a church before the police and firemen showed up.³⁴¹

Some fundamentalists preachers went so far as to issue religious edicts

justifying the shedding of Christian blood as "halal." The Koranic

expression roughly translated as "fair game."³⁴²

The Egyptian government uses militant Islamic groups as an umbrella to cover up its brutal and heartless treatment of Christians on a daily basis. While the government continues to deny human rights violations against Christians, evidence of atrocities against the Coptic Christians is all around us.³⁴³

President Mubarak and his government are able to escape world condemnation despite the atrocities being committed against Coptic Christians in his country. "So far the Mubarak regime has escaped scrutiny and criticism for its lapses in the protection of

³⁴⁰Reported Youssef M. Ibrahim, correspondent to *The New York Times* in Cairo on March 15, 1993. See Ibrahim, "Muslims' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," A8.

³⁴¹Ibid., A8.

³⁴²Ibid., A8.

³⁴³MacLaren, "Religious Freedom: Does it Exist?", 2-3.

Christian rights."³⁴⁴

³⁴⁴Middle East Watch, a human rights organization. See Sherry, "The Predicament of Egypt's Christian Minority," 720.

On April 6, 1993, during a joint press conference with President Clinton in Washington, President Mubarak, when asked about the Coptic Christians, deluded the reporters by saying: "The Copts and the Muslims are very good friends, and I can tell you the best friends I had all my life were all Copts." It seemed that this ended the questioning about the Coptic Christians. Apparently there were no hard questions asked by any reporter about specifics which would bring out the truth about the grave situation of the Copts.³⁴⁵ The media have failed to address the anguish of the Coptic Christians and bring about a solution to the crisis at hand. They are delinquent in their reporting and are guilty for not hammering the Egyptian government for answers.

The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights (EOHR) accused the government of obscuring its obligation to protect Christians in the face of attacks from militant Muslim groups. The government ignores Christians' complaints. Crimes against Christians are being committed in the presence of state security forces and the police. At times, these government security forces join in as an accomplices with Muslims to attack Christians. As long as militant Muslim groups do not threaten the political system, the Egyptian government will not intervene to protect Christian lives or property, charged the EOHR.³⁴⁶

The Christian Century Foundation magazine reported the following testimony of an Egyptian Christian after some of its staff went to Egypt to examine the plight of Copts:

³⁴⁵Ibid., 720.

³⁴⁶MacLaren, "Religious Freedom: Does it Exist?", 3.

There is evidence that officers from the police and SSI [State Security Investigation] have shielded militants from investigation and turned on Christian victims. . . . Christians who complain to security forces about violence have been ignored, harassed and threatened with arrest. . . . Do not complain to us. If you come again [police threatened] we will hold you for a month. . . . [T]he extremists firebomb our churches, and then the authorities do not allow us to rebuild. . . . If the authorities knew that you were here tonight, they would be at my door.³⁴⁷

Mr. Anton Sidhom of the weekly newspaper *Watany*, described the Egyptian Government as accessory to murdering Coptic Christians as follows:

After the 1992 and early 1993 waves of relentless attacks against the Copts - during which the police played the role of the spectators witnessing the slaughter of the Copts in Dairut, Sanabu and Tema, leaving the assassins free - we cautioned the government that such a negative attitude was just a prelude to more aggressive attacks on the sovereignty of the State and its order. The authorities lent us a deaf ear until the danger of terrorist activities exacerbated and Egypt realized how the abhorrent offensive was detrimental to the national economy and the real danger of claiming increasing losses in the lives of heroic policemen. However, the momentum of terror experienced by the Christians of Assuit Governorate [province] remains accelerated since the Copts are still subjected to the payment of tribute, looting of their subsistence income, and the unceasing murder of their family members. The Police stance has continued to one of indifference.³⁴⁸

In 1991, a Coptic Christian owned a sporting goods store in Imbaba, a district of Cairo. A Muslim approached him at his store and warned him not to play Christian music at his store. He refused his demand. The same day, a group of Muslims came to the store, where they destroyed the cassette player and all tapes in the store. He went

³⁴⁷Sherry, "The Predicament of Egypt's Christian Minority,"717-719. Emphasis added.

³⁴⁸Sidhom, "The Agonized Copts in the Villages of Assiut," 1.

immediately to the State Security Office to complain about their threats and the destruction of his personal property. He was arrested and spent five months in jail. His cousin, a Catholic Priest, said "**Imagine! You have property, someone comes and destroys it, you go to the police, and they arrest you!**"³⁴⁹

The U.S. State Department in its 1992 annual report on human rights confirmed that "The (Egyptian) government does not always prevent attacks and does little to correct nonviolent forms of discrimination--including its own."³⁵⁰

Dr. Farag Ali Foda, a Muslim scholar who was considered a proponent of Coptic Christians' human rights in Egypt, and in support of secular government, described the scheme of the Egyptian government as follows:

There is no greater shame for a society than when it discovers how remote it is from the values of human rights, constitutionalism and civilization as a whole. It is also shameful for a society to know that its departure from these values is not new to its fabric but rather entrenched. The mob in Imbaba is the echo of those who beat the drum, the Egyptian media; the one who holds the drum, the Egyptian regime; and the owner of the drum, the leaders of political Islam in Egypt.

Yes, they are the dirty expression of a regime that passes a law to prevent people from building churches without direct permission from the President; a regime that even prevents the repair of church bathrooms without a presidential decree; a regime that keeps a quota system for Christians entering the police college, war college, naval college, and aviation college.

The regime also casts a blind eye on discriminatory practices that are clearer than the light of the sun in many university departments--a regime that opens a university that is exclusively for Muslims, Al-Azhar University.

The mobs of Imbaba are also the violent expression of the words of religious leaders who curse Christianity day and night. The mobs of Imbaba are the expression of our ignorance of the values of human rights that are currently sweeping the globe. The first human rights principle is the freedom of belief. But freedom of belief here means only to be faithful to Islam. Our freedom of belief means that people pay with their lives because they express a differing opinion.

If you need evidence of this, remember the censorship of books and be ashamed. Remember the trials of authors for their ideas and be

³⁴⁹Sherry, "The Predicament of Egypt's Christian Minority," 719. Emphasis added.

³⁵⁰Cofsky, "Copts Bear the Brunt of Islamic Extremism," 46.

ashamed. Remember the flames, the funerals, the objection and the arrests when a Muslim converts to Christianity, and contrast it with the happy nights, congratulations and advertisements if a Christian converts to Islam.

In the light of our splendid freedom of belief, Bahai temples were closed, churches were burned and synagogues, before the 1979 peace treaty, were closed. . . .

Where is the state in all of this? . . .

All that Egyptian intellectuals and their government do in the face of all of this is nothing more than empty words: wonderful slogans on the outside, and the inside in ruin. The present and the future are dark. All of this must change.³⁵¹

About the policies of the government toward the Coptic Christians, Dr.

Foda added: **"Official discrimination against Christians encouraged an atmosphere of intolerance that led to attacks on Christians in Imbaba, a poor**

³⁵¹Farag Foda, "A Murdered Writer's Prophecy," *The New York Times*, November 1993, A27.

section of Cairo, in 1991."³⁵²

On June 9, 1992, Dr. Foda was murdered at the hand of Muslim radicals as a result of his stand on the defense of human rights of Christians.³⁵³

Another reporter, who lived in the Middle East, said:

Moreover, the [Egyptian] government willingly participates, through acts of both commission and omission, in various forms of discrimination and persecution of Egyptian Christians and the Christian religion. The brutal treatment of prisoners of conscience is borne out by indubitable accounts of torture at the hands of the State Security Forces, the use of which has become routine procedure in Egypt's prisons and jails

Commonly reported forms of torture in Egypt's prisons include: beatings

with sections of hose pipe, rifle butts, leather belts, fists, electric

batons, whips, kicks with heavy army boots and electric shock.³⁵⁴

D. ANTI-CHRISTIAN SPEECHES AND PROPAGANDA

The Socialist Labor Party charged some elected officials of the National Democratic Party (President Mubarak's party)³⁵⁵ of circulating flyers at al-Zawya al-Hamra, a section of Cairo, which contained provocative information prior to a massacre which took the lives of more than 100 Coptic Christians. Hundreds of injuries and huge property damages occurred, reported the Institute for Religious Minorities in the Islamic World, which organization added that

³⁵²Ibid., A27. Emphasis added.

³⁵³Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 25.

³⁵⁴MacLaren, "Religious Freedom in Egypt: Does it Exist?" 2. Emphasis added.

³⁵⁵This is the main party which has the majority of seats, approximately 90% of the seats in the People's Assembly (Parliament). It is also the party of the President.

The government controlled press, universities, mosques and Islamic associations engage in anti-Christian propaganda calculated to cast Christians in the light of dangerous alien elements within society."³⁵⁶

³⁵⁶Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 19.

The government is giving Muslim leaders time on Egyptian television and radio to attack Christians and their beliefs. Instead of teaching about their own religion, they seek to create hostility and hatred towards Christians. Sheikh Mohammed al-Ghazali said on television that the Bible is full of pornography. Blasphemy against the Christian faith by Muslims is widespread. Sheikh Mitwalli al-Sharawi, has called Christians, the infidels (a murderously loaded word in Islamic society). In his TV Program, Sheikh Sharawi, refers to Jews as monkeys and Christians as pigs.³⁵⁷ Sheikh Omar Abdel Kefia instructed Muslims "not to greet or acknowledge Christians on the street."³⁵⁸

A Senior Coptic official of the Church said, "Christianity is defamed on prime-time television and we have no means of responding." The media in Egypt, including radio and television, are state controlled.³⁵⁹ When Father Basili from the Coptic Church tried to respond to some of the allegations against Christianity he was imprisoned. There are many Muslim religious leaders and Islamic organizations that attack Christians through the media as well as incite violence against them. All are operating freely in the country and Christians cannot have the means to answer false allegations directed at them.³⁶⁰

As a result of the hate campaign waged against Coptic Christians in the media and from the mosques, Priests who go out for visitation to their people have been stoned by

³⁵⁷Paul Magnelia, "Islamic Surge Threatens to Engulf Egypt," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1989, vol. 16, 16.

³⁵⁸Alton, "Copts under Siege," 1.

³⁵⁹Cofsky, "Copts Bear the Brunt of Islamic Extremism," 47.

³⁶⁰Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 19.

Muslim children, and insulted when walking on the streets.³⁶¹

The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights has substantial evidence that militant Muslim groups, al-Gammaa al-Islamiyya, is spreading lies against Christians, by

³⁶¹Ibid., 6.

spreading proactive rumors in which an [sic] unsubstantiated charges [sic] against certain persons is extended as an indictment against all citizens belonging to the Christian faith. [EOHR continues by saying that such rumor] is accompanied by strong incitement to various forms of vengeance, killing and destruction directed against the lives and property of citizens of the Christian faith.³⁶²

On the streets of Cairo, Muslim broadcasts blast with loud noise in front of government security forces with messages such as, "O, God, may you bring their houses to ruin" (referring to Christians). "Amen." "O God, make their children orphans." "Amen."³⁶³

Pope Shenouda III,³⁶⁴ the head of the Coptic Church, was asked this question by a reporter: "How is the church is responding to the mounting of persecution?" He replied, "Christianity without the cross isn't Christianity." The Coptic church in seeking justice and protection by means of complaint, falls on deaf ears by the Egyptian government.³⁶⁵

E. MANIPULATION OF PUBLIC OPINION USING SOME COPTIC LEADERS

³⁶²Ibid., 19-20.

³⁶³Cofsky, "Copts Bear the Brunt of Islamic Extremism," 47.

³⁶⁴"[Pope] Shenouda is, by Coptic tradition, patriarch in the line of Saint Mark, just as the Roman Catholic pope is believed to be in the succession of Saint Peter." See Hoffmeier, et al., *The Church in Egypt: Confessing Christ in the Heart of Islam*, 35.

³⁶⁵Cofsky, "Copts Bear the Brunt of Islamic Extremism" 47.

Before President Mubarak's visit to the United States in January 1988, a delegation of Coptic Christian laity were sent by the Egyptian government to the U.S., the purpose of which to manipulate Americans and public opinion about freedom of religion in Egypt. These Coptic Christians indicated that the leadership of the church had a good relation with President Mubarak's government. During their President's visit, another delegate from the Coptic Church came to the U.S. to confirm that Christians in Egypt, including the leadership of the church, has a good relation with the government. When asked about the many difficulties faced when building or repairing a church from the authorities, they said that there is no need to build new churches. One from the delegation said, "if we build one church, the Muslim militants groups would build ten mosques." In fact, the Coptic Evangelical Church made an agreement with President Mubarak that it will get two permit a year to build two churches. The Coptic Evangelical church is about 5% of the total Coptic Christian population, and the Catholic church is also about 5%. This means the Coptic Church is 90% of the total Christians in Egypt, yet the Coptic Church is allowed to build only one church a year with permission from the government, which permission as indicated before, takes ten or more years. In compromising with the government the Coptic Evangelical Church is endangering the Coptic Christians as a whole. The government is using "divide and rule" tactics to destroy the Coptic Church. Only those who are evil compromise with evil.³⁶⁶

F. ILLEGAL SEIZURE OF COPTIC ENDOWMENTS, SCHOOLS, AND HOSPITALS

³⁶⁶"One and a Half Words," *The Copts: Christians of Egypt* [Jersey City], July 1988, vol. 15, no. 3 & 4, 40. The information taken from the Arabic article was translated into English by Baheg Bistawros.

In the last two hundred years, affluent Coptic Christians in Egypt have given lands to many churches and Christian organizations. The lands were to be used for the function of churches and Christian non-profit organizations. Christians made wills (endowments) to help churches and the poor within both the Christian and Muslim populace. The government in 1961 passed a ruling restricting donations beyond 200 acres of farmland and 200 acres of buildable land. The government, after passing the law, confiscated any other property beyond the 200 acres that was allowed by law. During Sadat's term in office, the government seized most of the trust lands from Coptic Churches, and handed them to the Ministry of Islamic Affairs. After many complaints from the Church, the government promised that the trust lands would be returned to the Church, yet nothing happened. The church is forced to hand the government what it wants.³⁶⁷ The little the church has is taken away from her.

A government letter, dated May 21, 1972, sent to one of the Christian organizations explaining its position, declares that since the original owner of the land stated that Christians and poor Muslims were entitled to use the trust land, its decision was that the entire land will be used to help the Muslim poor. The Supreme Court of Egypt concurred with the government in this 1969 ruling.³⁶⁸

Many Coptic Hospitals have been nationalized by the government, which means the government gave the order to take these Christian hospitals. It was not clear if any compensation has ever been given to the church. Many Coptic Schools also have been nationalized by taking them away from the Coptic Church. Additionally, there were

³⁶⁷Think of it this way. A gunman enters a Seven Eleven store and points a gun at the clerk and orders him to hand the money over. The clerk immediately hands the money to the gunman, no questions asked. He cannot resist, or use any rational argument, or he will end up dead. This is exactly the position of the Coptic church against the savagery of the Egyptian government. The only difference is that the church can complain, but all complaints are kept on file, safe and secure. In fact, complaints are considered a challenge to the authority of the state, and could add up to more persecution from the Egyptian authorities. The government seeks to keep the Coptic church destitute at all times. See The Egyptian Organization for Human Rights, "Proposal for the Preservation of the Rights of Christian Citizens in a Society where Islam Fundamentalism is on the Upsurge," *EOHR* [Cairo], December 1994, 2.

³⁶⁸"The Egyptian Government Seizes Christians' Trust Lands," *The Coptic Cultural Center* [Jersey City], January 1994, 1. See also Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 226.

fifteen historic Coptic churches in Old Cairo (a suburb of Cairo), which were taken by the government. These historical Coptic Churches are centuries old.³⁶⁹

Mr. Ray Saidel of the *Union Leader* newspaper of Manchester, NH, reported the following in an article published on July 30, 1985:

³⁶⁹Hoffmeier, et al., "The Church in Egypt: Confessing Christ in the Heart of Islam," 34.

[T]he Ministry of Islamic Affairs [government ministry] has seized most of the Church Trust land and the government has seized historic churches, schools and hospitals; Christian properties have been taken by Muslim fundamentalists and converted to mosques without protection from the regime (or retribution against the terror); the Christian era of Egypt has been erased from history courses--2000 years put out of sight; Christian monuments and remains have been removed from the Coptic Museum; and, no one who attacked or killed Christians has been prosecuted since 1970.³⁷⁰

In 1967 in Alexandria, a Christian woman made a "will" where she instructed that half of her estate be donated to a Christian charity and the other half to several relatives. One of her nephews became a Muslim and went to court to claim that she designated all of her will to him. He provided the court with no evidence or documents to substantiate his claim. The charity, through its priest, nuns, and others, testified that the woman remained a Christian until her death and that the will was valid. The court, however, rejected their testimony and awarded the will to the nephew. The judge's ground was based on the belief that non-Muslims have no right to inherit any property from Muslims (case number 29/1970).³⁷¹

The Egyptian regime was described by a human rights organization as follows:

When the [Egyptian] regime is autocratic, is supported by a brutal state security system that the Government cannot or will not control, and is imposing yet another measure curtailing civilian autonomy, then international condemnation should follow.³⁷²

G. FALSE ACCUSATIONS AGAINST THE COPTIC CHURCH LEADER POPE SHENOUDA III

³⁷⁰Saidel, "The Threat to Christians is Deadly," 21.

³⁷¹Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 16.

³⁷²Peter Hall, "Human Rights and Doctors in Egypt," *The Lancet, Ltd.*, 24 April 1993, vol. 341, 2.

Pope Shenouda III³⁷³ was consecrated on November 14, 1971 as the leader of the Coptic Orthodox Church. Pope Shenouda is very popular, not only because of his position in the Coptic Church, but because of his stand against injustice and acts of terrorism against the Christian minority in Egypt. He is a man who does not compromise with Christian principles which are in accord with the teachings of the Bible.

The Pope, as head of the Coptic Church, was chosen by God and the Lord Jesus Christ, as head of the Church under the leading of the Holy Spirit. During the selection of the Pope in 1971, the author was standing on the side walk in front of Saint Mark's Cathedral waiting for the announcement. Heavy police security forces were present for the fear of a disruption of the meeting by Muslim fanatical elements working against the church. There were also rumors that the government favored the selection of Bishop Samuel,³⁷⁴ while Bishop Shenouda at that time was known to be a tough and strong spiritual leader. While the author was a Coptic Evangelical, which is from another denomination, he was hoping that Bishop Shenouda would be chosen. Why was he interested? Because Christians from all denominations are the responsibility of the Pope. While each denomination has its own spiritual leader, Pope Shenouda still represents all Coptic Christians. If Muslim radicals and the government do not know the difference between one Christian denomination and another in their efforts to destroy the church, we as Christians should be united regardless of our denominational background. We all have one Lord and one God.

John Padwick describes the Pope as:

A man of humility and clarity of vision who spent six years as a hermit in the Western desert. . . . To most Copts, His Holiness is a great folk hero. He has done something more for them than lead a spiritual and cultural renewal. He has restored Coptic dignity. He has dared to stand up for the

³⁷³The word Shenouda is a proper noun from two Coptic words (*she-noute*), probably of hieroglyphic origin, meaning "child of God." This has been explained by Dr. Joseph N. Kickasola, Professor of Public Policy at Regent University.

³⁷⁴Bishop Samuel was a rival of the Pope, who died during the October 1981 parade with Sadat, when Islamic radicals murdered him while on the reviewing stand.

human rights of Christians in the Islamic World. In many fields he has enjoyed success.³⁷⁵

³⁷⁵Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 190-193.

Sadat in his speeches in 1980 on public television and radio accused Pope Shenouda III of trying to establish a Christian country within Egypt, of which Assiut would be the capital. Sadat, furthermore, accused the Pope of sedition. Since that time, Muslim fundamentalists have been on the rise and are trying to either drive Coptic Christians out of the country or to annihilate them in their homeland. This is why Sadat decided to place Pope Shenouda III under house arrest, and arrested several bishops, a large number of priests, and Coptic leaders. In all of his speeches against the Pope he failed to provide any evidence to substantiate his claims. Since the Copts did not have the freedom to respond, Sadat's account of the story was accepted as true.³⁷⁶

The U.S. State Department had the English translation of Sadat's speech of May 14, 1980, which was thirty-seven pages in length, most of which Sadat dedicated to attacking the Coptic Church and Pope Shenouda III.³⁷⁷ It never occurred to the Christians in Egypt that Sadat would remove the Pope from his papal duties and put him under house arrest at Saint Bishoy's Monastery. A total of 160 Christians, including bishops, priests and large numbers of lay Coptic leaders were also arrested under Executive Order 143, of 1981.³⁷⁸ Amnesty International considered Pope Shenouda a prisoner of conscience while under house arrest.

In fairness to both sides, a portion of Sadat's speech relating to his allegations of sedition by Coptic leaders is presented below in the hope that readers will know the allegations presented by Sadat against the Coptic Church, and in particular Pope Shenouda III. On May 14, 1980, Sadat addressed the nation in the People's Assembly.

³⁷⁶Ibid., 194-199.

³⁷⁷Ibid., 157-178.

³⁷⁸Eibner, *Christians in Egypt: Church under Siege*, 18.

Here is a portion of what Sadat claimed to be charges of treason and insurrection by the Coptic Church against his government:

[T]hose who were responsible for the 1972 sedition, the period which followed and up to this moment, are continuing their work. Regrettably they are church leaders.

Through its history, Egypt has never been a country with sectarian discrimination. . . . I am not a fanatic and am well known for not being a fanatic. If the ruler were a fanatic, reaction might be possible. But I am not a fanatic³⁷⁹

Further, Sadat charged that through all of these years sedition has continued by church leaders. In 1972, he sent the then-Prime Minister Mr. Mamdouh Salim to meet with Church Leaders. Here are Sadat's words:

Contact the church leaders and tell them this is shameful. He contacted them, but I saw that instead of calming down, the situation was being escalated. Strange!³⁸⁰

Sadat decided to meet with the Coptic leaders himself to find out the problem. He said:

I asked what the problem was. They said that the problem was one of churches. I said: How many churches do you want? They said 30-35. I said no, let it be 50 adding that anything built before then without a permit would be considered as licensed. . . . At the patriarchate I said: don't do this again³⁸¹

Sadat then proceeded to tie the sedition's claims to the demonstration of Coptic Christians in the U.S. against human rights violations of Christians in Egypt:

³⁷⁹Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 159-160.

³⁸⁰Ibid., 160.

³⁸¹Ibid., 160-161.

Sedition continued from 1972 and was still going on when I left for Camp David in 1978. The new leaders of the church as I said, were going ahead with sedition. . . . the expatriate Copts therefore, demonstrated in front of the United Nations and the White House because the Copts in Egypt do not enjoy human rights. Not only that: Telegrams were also dispatched to President Carter. Why? Why should we do such a thing in Egypt? [sic]. To what purpose and in whose interest? Leaflets were to be circulated outside Blair House. A demonstration was to be staged in the street outside the guesthouse in which I would be staying. A demonstration was to be staged outside the U.N. building. And this is exactly what happened. Half a page was to be reserved in the *Washington Post*.³⁸² This also happened. **I knew of all these things before I left here .**
...

He compared Egypt's democracy (which does not exist) with other democracies in the world, yet refused to accept the peaceful demonstration of Coptic Americans in the U.S. He said:

How do I describe these things that have happened?
Why does someone with a complaint escalate matters and then attack his country? They set the Christians of the world against the Muslims in Egypt. Why do they do this? You know, by God, all the Christians of the world cannot move one stone from its place in Egypt. This is because the matter is in the hands of the Egyptian people. I describe these things by summing them in one word. Extortion³⁸³

Sadat then sent a challenge to the Coptic Christians about his true intentions, when he said:

Well, if Article 2 [in the amended Constitution]³⁸⁴ is the reason for all this, then I tell my Coptic sons, who are hearing me now, and I tell you and our people that since I assumed power in Egypt, I have been ruling as a Muslim president of an Islamic state.³⁸⁵

If Sadat had any evidence to support his claims that the Coptic leadership was involved in sedition, then the most natural thing to do was to bring action in court against the Pope and other Christians leaders, so that all Egyptians and the entire world would

³⁸²Ibid., 161-162. Sadat alluded to the fact that he knew what Coptic Christians were up to in the U.S. before leaving Egypt. How did he know? Could it be through the Egyptian Intelligence Agency which also oppresses Christians in the U.S.? Emphasis added.

³⁸³Ibid., 163.

³⁸⁴Article 2 of the Egyptian Constitution states, in part, that the president must be a Muslim and that Egypt is a Muslim country.

³⁸⁵Karas, *The Copts since the Arab Invasion: Strangers in their Land*, 176.

witness whether he really had evidence or whether he was trying to destroy the church from the top. While he kept repeating the word sedition in his 37-page speech delivered in 1980, not one single piece of evidence was presented, nor facts, to justify his claims.

On May 24, 1980, ten days after Sadat's speech, an Arabic Journal *Al-Mostakbal*, made the following comments:

If the Egyptians take the words of Sadat seriously there should be a civil war in Egypt now, after his strange address against the Egyptian Copts and what he accused them of.³⁸⁶

Following Sadat's death on October 6, 1981, it became evident that Sadat had been giving support to militant Muslim groups such as the Brotherhood Organization. *Newsweek* magazine published an article on October 26, 1981, in which the magazine stated that the government in Assiut province had supplied Muslim students at the university with arms in order to attack Christians.³⁸⁷

A judiciary review concluded that Sadat's decision was against the Constitution and in violation of the decree of November 2, 1957, which set up the rules of the election of a Pope. His decision to remove the Pope was an infringement upon the internal operation of the Church. By appointing a new committee to oversee the affairs of the Church, Sadat thought that they might remove him from his duties. But the house of Bishops made it clear, on April 16, 1983, that Pope Shenouda is the Patriarch of the Coptic Church for his natural life on earth, which is according to Church canons.³⁸⁸

Sadat, it seems, was trying to tie up peaceful demonstrations of Coptic Christians in the U.S. who were seeking moral support and understanding from Americans

³⁸⁶Ibid., 197.

³⁸⁷Ibid., 197-198.

³⁸⁸Ibid., 205.

concerning the plight of Copts in Egypt. Sadat had perceived that as sedition. Sadat could have easily met with the groups' leaders in person, asking them to present their grievances while visiting the U.S. in 1979. He refused to acknowledge their true grievances. He made a most dramatic move by placing the Pope under house arrest. The message, it seems, that Sadat was trying to convey was that any protest from Coptic Christian immigrants in the U.S. about the plight of the Copts would have severe consequences for the Christians in Egypt. If Sadat's intention were respect for all Egyptians regardless of religious background, then why did he propose to the People's Assembly to amend the Constitution, to reflect that Shariah law would be the basis for all laws that were to follow? This not only places the Coptic Christians in the category of second class citizens, but also oppresses, isolates and humiliates them further in society. Sadat further claimed that religion and politics did not mix. At the same time he said that he was a Muslim president to an Islamic country. While Sadat claimed that Christians in Egypt were protected, it seems that he was hanging a sword over their heads at the same time, not for protection, but to silence them if they ever complain. Copts were puzzled by the fact that when they complained through peaceful channels, they received no response. If they demonstrated peacefully to point out the grave situation that the Copts were under, they risked retaliation by the Egyptian government.

In 1983 after the Coptic church and other human rights organizations requested from President Mubarak's government to spell out the charges against the Pope, why he was detained without charging him with any crimes. The Egyptian government to justify its detention of Pope Shenouda III spelled out the charges as reported by *Time Magazine*. Here are the charges of the Egyptian government against the Pope:

- 1. Emphasizing a Coptic identity**
- 2. Urging Churches to teach the old Coptic language**
- 3. Encouraging hostility toward the regime, by asserting Coptic political grievances**

4. Resisting legislation aimed at making Egypt more Islamic³⁸⁹

It is not a crime under any law anywhere for someone to voice his concerns for the welfare of his people, or to teach them the Coptic language. Do these charges stand in any court of law? The author lets the readers decide. After more than three years of house arrest, Pope Shenouda III was released on January 6, 1985 after pressure applied from the international community. He is currently 71 years old.

H. SAMUEL BISTAWROS UNDER SIEGE BY THE EGYPTIAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Samuel Bistawros was asked by the author to write a summary of his experiences with the Egyptian Intelligence Agency while in Egypt. See the Appendix for a summary of what Sam was up against in his own words.

V

BIBLICAL FOUNDATION FOR GOVERNMENT IN CONTRAST

The Biblical concept of covenant makes it possible to frame a foundation of

³⁸⁹"Coptic Pope Shenouda Freed," *Time Magazine*, 14 January 1985, 65. Emphasis added.

government that is built on law and not on a ruler or group thereof. A covenant is a treaty between two people where promises are made and accepted by both parties involved, thus making them bound by the agreement. They must answer to each other once the covenant is signed and accepted. If a government is viewed as established by covenant, then the ruler is bound by his commitment to his people. If a ruler, on the other hand, is obligated by nothing, then his rule becomes subjective and tyrannical. Those of covenant relationship and those of arbitrary subjective rule cannot exist together. One must defeat the other. One must also distinguish between a covenant with God and one of men. God's covenant, which is considered theological in nature, has legal structure built into it by God. This is why, when man comes to God, man can claim what is rightfully his. This is how a relationship with God works.

In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word *berith* is used to mean a covenant of God with man as well as a covenant of man to man. In a sense, both are obligated to God and to the rule of law. This is what legitimizes one government from another. A government is either covenantal or despotic and oppressive. God is the author of covenant with man. He is the guarantor. The nature of God in dealing with man throughout history, according to the Old Testament, reveals His faithfulness. It was man who transgressed against God and violated the established covenant with God. No other agreement or compact can affirm the legitimate assurance of security, harmony, and personal devotion, as can a covenant. To verify this point about a covenant with God, Gary Amos states:

In Yahweh worship this theoretical ordering of the relationship between God and man is developed³⁹⁰ into a comprehensive system which finally has universal implications.

In the case of God and His relationship with Israel, God secured Israel to Himself, as opposed to the gods idolized by their predecessors. This made Israel bound by the

³⁹⁰Gary T. Amos, *Biblical Principles of Government: America A Case Study*, vol. 1, Unpublished course manuscript (Virginia Beach, VA: Regent University, 1987), 80.

covenant to recognize God and to set Him apart from all other gods. This recognition must be based on accountability and obligation on the part of Israel. Joshua presents a good example of the relationship between God and Israel. Joshua called on leaders of the Israelite tribes to make a resolution. Whom would they serve? God, or Baal? After explaining the covenant that God had with their forefathers, he proceeded to pose a choice for them. Choose this day whom you serve (Joshua 24:15), to which the people of Israel shouted, we shall serve the Lord our God! This resolution meant that the people confirmed their decision to abide by the covenant. There are many other references for the covenant that God established with His people. Some of these Scripture references are found in Genesis 6:18, 9:11, 9:16, 17:21, Exodus 6:4, 19:5, Leviticus 24:8, 26:42, and Psalms 74:20, 78:37, 89:28.

If people can understand the basic relationship with God, and keep their commitment to Him, then the world will become a better place. Harmony and peace would reign instead of disharmony and war. Man is guilty of sin and has transgressed against God, which results in spiritual death. God shows man the way to have a clean relationship with Him. Paul explained the revelation of God to man as follows:

For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, the just shall live by faith.³⁹¹

There is no means by which man can obtain or receive this salvation, except through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Man searches desperately for God in different ways, which is an attempt to escape from the presence of God. Since God created man, it was He that gave man authority and responsibility.

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

³⁹¹Romans 1:16,17. All Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version, published by Harper & Brothers of New York.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.³⁹²

1. Individual self-government.

The first form of government, according to the Scriptures, begins at the individual level of self-government. God created man after He created a suitable life for him, and crowned man with authority as well as responsibility. Man has the ability to ponder, sense, love, and labor, because man was created in the image and likeness of God. Man was also created free to choose life not death, and good over evil. At first, God was the only ruler over the earth. Then He created man, and gave to him authority over the earth. Man can take charge and govern the earth. God prepared man for the task of ruling over the earth by giving to them intelligence, dexterity, abilities, and qualities, appointing them over the creation mandate. Despite man's sin, God still bestowed on man the authority to govern the earth, just as He intended. However, man must pay for his sin for there is no escape once sin is committed.³⁹³

If God gave man such authority, he has to govern himself according to the laws of God. In the book of Ecclesiastes, it says;

Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil.³⁹⁴

In the New Testament, Peter the Apostle said:

For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:
Let him eschew [refrain from] evil, and do good; let him speak peace, and ensure it.
For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are* open unto

³⁹²Genesis 1:26-27.

³⁹³Amos, *Biblical Principles of Government*, 109-113.

³⁹⁴Ecclesiastes 12:13-14.

their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil.
And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is
good?
But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye*: and be not
afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;
But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to give an
answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you
with meekness and fear:
Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of
evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good
conversation in Christ.³⁹⁵

With authority, man has responsibility. Both go hand in hand. Responsibility is to apply fairness and impartiality and to demonstrate justice towards others. We are to humble ourselves before the Lord, to show caring love for our neighbor, to watch what we say and do, and to submit our minds and hearts to God, refraining from evil thoughts and deeds. God does not distinguish between the rich and the poor, His standards are the same when God deals with us. The same applies to the white and black man. Both are equal before God. Male and female are on the same scale before God, as well. These social differences, prejudices, biases, and discrimination, are the creations of man because of his sin. God grieves when He sees his own creation acts in violation of His covenant. God has given us life and liberty and no man can or has the authority to take either from us. This is why murder, suicide, assisted suicide, or other means of ending one's life is evil before the Lord God.

Man has the right to his possessions, such as land, personal goods, his home. None has the authority to take what God has given to us as a right. God is the One who gives us opportunities. Man does not have the right to distribution of wealth, for example. If someone worked hard to own, say 1,000 acres, someone else with a few acres cannot claim part of the other individual's possessions. God will give all people opportunities. God wants man to be a good steward of what He gives him. Man also has a responsibility to protect the rights of others, even to the degree of having our rights

³⁹⁵1Peter 3:10-16.

taken away or waived in the process.

Our leaders, who have authority over us, should be abiding by the same laws that govern society. It is therefore, our responsibility to see to it, that our leaders uphold the law and live by it. If they transgress, we are obligated to remind them and teach them.³⁹⁶

2. The Family Government.

The second form of government is family, which is also what God mandated in His creation. The creation of the family took place in the Garden of Eden. In Genesis we read:

And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.
And Adam said, this *is* now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.³⁹⁷

Once God created the family, which is represented in Adam and Eve, He said:

And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.³⁹⁸

Men or women, by themselves, cannot achieve God's purpose in creation. God planned for man and a woman to marry in devotion to one another, and to raise devout children to populate the earth, children who will honor God in the same way as their forefathers did. God's plan for the family is declared in these words:

³⁹⁶Amos, *Biblical Principles of Government*, 109-114.

³⁹⁷Genesis 2:22-24.

³⁹⁸Genesis 1:28.

And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.³⁹⁹

Family is a very important form of government, as God intended it to be. When a family divides or deteriorates, obstruction to the completion of the creation mandate takes place. God has wisdom in all of this. By looking around us, we can see that divorce is on the increase, families are falling apart, children are not being taken care of, and they do not learn about God's plan for their lives. Families are destroyed because of their failure to carry out God's creation mandate. Having a family does not mean in itself that an individual husband or wife is not responsible for his or her own actions before God. Having a family does mean that decisions and choices are made within the framework of the family, since any decision or choice will directly affect the family in its entirety. Within the structure of the family, each can practice his or her obligation of self government, including children (Genesis 3:13-17 and Ephesians 6:1-3). This is why the family is the corner stone of a society. Family comes first, no matter how busy our jobs or social life might be. We are to take care of the family, especially the children. Families tend, when faced with a problem in marriage or with the children, to go to a specialist without first working things out by knowing each other's responsibilities before God. The fact is that if the husband and wife understood their duties and obligations to God as well as towards each other and their children, only then is a family able to function well. Sending our children to professional psychologists does not relieve us from our duty and responsibility towards them. In the Epistle to the Ephesians we read:

Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.
Wives, submit yourself unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.
For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the savior of the body.
Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing.

³⁹⁹Malachi 2:15.

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it, that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word.⁴⁰⁰

Christians, as well as non-Christians, misinterpret this Scripture. A husband must honor the authority God granted to his wife. The same is true as to the wife, who should honor the authority which is bestowed on the husband. The wife has the added responsibility of honoring her husband as the head of the family. The husband is responsible to fulfill God's creation mandate.⁴⁰¹

Family came first before civil governments even existed. This is why family government is the cornerstone of a nation. Families are the starting point that constitutes a society, town and city. Cities encompass states and states constitute a federal or civil government.

3. The Civil government.

⁴⁰⁰Ephesians 5:21-26.

⁴⁰¹Amos, *Biblical Principles of Government*, 118-119.

Civil government is the third form of government according to God's creation order. To rule is to be fair. Otherwise, it is evil and against God's order for a ruler of civil government to stay in power. God made a covenant with Noah. He also ordered the creation of rulers who have been invested with power and civil authority. They must execute punishment according to the laws of God. The human race was divided into nations and tribes. To understand the function and existence of civil government, one needs to understand individual self government as well as family government. Civil government, accordingly, is the unity and cooperation between each individual person to assume their responsibility in the creation mandate declared by God in the book of Genesis. Each has the responsibility to see to it that civil government carries out its duties according to the creation mandate. According to the scriptures, governments are of the people and function by the people. Therefore, we are individually responsible for the welfare of our nation. For this reason, a civil ruler does not have absolute authority independent of the people. This is what occurs with a government ruler who was never elected by the people, who dictates what each should do. He is a tyrant, and is violating God's order according to Genesis. In these cases, a ruler may have the power to govern but does not have the authority given by God. His position, as head of a nation, is illegitimate. Most leaders of third world countries fall into this category as illegitimate rulers.⁴⁰² Samuel, the Prophet, declared the following to Saul, the king of Israel, when telling Saul that he had abused his office:

And Samuel said to Saul, Thou has done foolishly: thou has not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee.⁴⁰³

The duty of civil government is to execute justice for all, and to apply the law

⁴⁰²Ibid., 127.

⁴⁰³1 Samuel 13:13-14.

equally, regardless of the individual's skin color, ethnic background, gender, or age. Wrongdoers should be punished. As for those who uphold and honor the law, they should be praised (1 Peter 2:14).

God chooses for a nation a ruler who upholds the law, honors God, and treats the people justly and impartially. A ruler, however, should not use his office for self gain, selfish motives, or to augment his power. The people, then, should be wise in their selection process to make sure that the ruler will not abuse the use of his office. The Old Testament shows us the selection process during Israel's time, when the people were looking for a king to rule over Israel.

And Abner said unto David, I will arise and go, and will gather all Israel unto my lord and king, that they may make a league with thee, and that thou mayest reign over all that thine heart desireth. And David sent Abner away; and he went in peace.
THEN came all the tribes of Israel to David unto Hebron, and spake, saying, Behold, we are thy bone and thy flesh.
So all the elders of Israel came to the king to Hebron; and king David made a league [covenant] with them in Hebron before the LORD: and they anointed David king over Israel.⁴⁰⁴

Anyone who violates the creation mandate given in Genesis in his role as a civil servant is committing fraud and is illegitimate, swindling his way to the throne. God's approval and the consensus of the people before the Lord are essential in choosing a leader.⁴⁰⁵ Civil government must enter into covenant with the people. This covenant or contract verifies their right to rule the people. This contract could be the constitution of a nation. The ruler must affirm his intentions to honor and protect the constitution, simply because this document represents the wishes of the people on how to be governed. God must have a part in the choice that citizens make in electing a ruler. He will give to the people, the freedom to make a decision before any ruler is elected. Here is what Samuel said to the people of Israel in this regard:

And Samuel said to all the people, See ye him whom the LORD hath

⁴⁰⁴2 Samuel 3:21, 2 Samuel 5:1,3.

⁴⁰⁵Amos, *Biblical Principles of Government*, 127-128.

chosen, that *there is* none like him among all the people? And all the people shouted, and said, God save the king. Then Samuel told the people the manner of the kingdom, and wrote it in a book, and laid *it* up before the LORD. And Samuel sent all the people away, every man to his house.⁴⁰⁶

It is clear from our understanding of civil government that "no one is above the law." There are many governments at the present time that act as tyrants, violating the law that they are supposed to protect and uphold. This can result in civil unrest, strife, civil war, chaos, and hardship. These governments do not have a contract with the people, or even if one did exist, they have failed to honor it.

Separation of church and state:

The term separation of church and state is familiar to all of us. The State cannot run the Church and vice versa. According to the laws of God, this is the way that it should be. Each of us has duty to civil government as well as to God. Religion is a personal relationship between an individual and God. God set rules and laws for man to obey, and man only may answer to God in regard to those matters that are set by God. Civil government may not come to an individual and force him to worship God or to not, nor tell him how he should conduct his personal life. Adam and Eve received from God a set of rules when they sinned. They answered to God and paid for their sins according to God's judgment. Each was individually punished according to his or her sin, not jointly (Gen 3: 3, 16-17). When we stand before God on the day of judgment, each has to answer to God individually and cannot make excuses for his or her actions on the basis of other people's behavior or influence.

Man has a duty towards God and Him alone. This duty involves the whole man, involving his thoughts, acts, body, mind, beliefs, creed, and even what he or she eats or drinks. Notice, also, that when God instituted civil government and empowered it with legal authority, he never gave supervision of religion to the government. This is a very

⁴⁰⁶1 Samuel 10:24,25.

important point for the reader to understand, since what we see in our world is confusion between the duties of civil government and the private relationship of individuals toward their Creator. This is clearly seen in Muslim countries where civil government is influenced by religious leaders. If not directly run by religious leaders, where the laws of the government are dictated from and through the Koran. Islam, the judicial system, the religious lives of individuals, and what one is permitted to do or not to do are all thrown into one pot. No boundaries exist. All of these aspects of civil government function as one. Civil government and religion are one and the same thing. Mixing religion with politics makes for a terrible price to pay. Plenty of examples are around us. Looking at the situation in Lebanon, we can see that Christians and Muslims have fought each other for years, because Muslims have wanted to control the government. They use religion as their guide for war. Many have joined in the fight, and Lebanon, at one time the most free Arab country in the Middle East, is now paying a high price. When God's laws are broken, problems arise and a terrible price is paid. The same can be seen in Egypt where Muslim radicals are practically taking over civil government. Coptic Christians are the victims, with no fault of their own, and are paying a terrible price for the mix between religion (Islam) and civil government. They are fighting for their survival and their very existence.

None, including civil government, has authority over man's thoughts or beliefs. Civil government cannot have authority to persecute or punish one's religious beliefs. Take, for example, hate and murder. Hate can only be judged by God, but murder by civil government. God alone judges the thoughts of man.

Civil government's duties include, but are not limited to the following:

1. To protect the individual's inalienable rights, which include freedom (Psalms 72:1-5).
2. To recognize legal marriage.
3. To establish courts that provide relief for breaches of contract.

4. To uphold justice and render fair and impartial justice for those who have been wronged.

5. To punish criminals who break the law (Psalms 101:8).

6. To enforce laws that are on the books.

7. To create an atmosphere of peace and harmony in society.

8. To uphold freedom of religion with no interference from government.

9. To honor God and obey all aspects of the creation mandate given in Genesis.

10. To honor those who obey the law and encourage people to do right.

11. To trust in God (Psalms 21:7).

The following are three biblical examples of civil government's interference in religious practice in dictating religion or in forbidding the freedom to exercise one's beliefs:

1. Pharaoh's interference with the Israelites from worshipping. Moses told Pharaoh, "let my people go," to make offerings to their God. Egypt was destroyed as a result, for forbidding the Israelites from worshipping (Exodus Chapters 7-11). This passage of Scripture shows us the interference of civil government (Pharaoh) in the worship of God by Israel, and his refusal to let the people of Israel go. "The free exercise of religion was at stake."⁴⁰⁷ Here is the conversation that took place:

And afterward Moses and Aaron went in, and told Phar-aoh [sic], Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness.

And Phar-aoh [sic] said, Who *is* the LORD, that I should obey his voice to let Israel go? I know not the LORD neither will I let Israel go.

And they said, The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the LORD our God; lest he fall upon us with pestilence, or with the sword. And the king of Egypt said unto them, Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let the people from their works? get you unto your burdens.

And Phar-aoh [sic] said, Behold, the people of the land now *are* many, and ye make them rest from their burdens.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷Amos, *Biblical Principles of Government*, 136.

⁴⁰⁸Exodus 5:1-5.

2. Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, made a golden image of himself and ordered everyone in his kingdom to worship the idol. God saved Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego from being burned in the fiery furnace, because of their vows to worship God alone. The king later honored the God of the three Israelites, but was later punished for his pride (Daniel 4).

3. Darius the king signed a decree to prevent anyone from freely exercising his religion for thirty days. Daniel was a victim of this decree, but God saved Daniel from the hungry lions. Punishment was executed against those who instigated the trouble against Daniel (Daniel 6).⁴⁰⁹

To have a separation between church and state does not mean that the civil government has to be atheist. On the contrary, civil government ought to acknowledge the authority, dominion, and the power of God. God the Creator should be acknowledged and honored by civil government, but Jesus Christ the redeemer should be acknowledged and honored by the Church.⁴¹⁰

The American system of government is Biblical, even though some may not acknowledge this as true. Based on the information provided, it is clear that America's system passes the test. Furthermore, God intends for the separation between the three branches of government which are:

1. The executive branch, vested in the President of the United States.
2. The legislative branch, vested in the Congress of the United States.
3. The judicial branch, vested in the Supreme Court of the United States.

Let us examine the three branches of the American system of government in the light of the scriptures. The Bible teaches that no one individual should have the power to do all three. Only God can be judge, lawgiver, and king, as we read in Isaiah 34:22, "For the LORD *is* our judge, the LORD *is* our lawgiver, the LORD *is* our king; he will save

⁴⁰⁹Amos, *Biblical Principles of Government*, 135-136.

⁴¹⁰Ibid., 140.

us."

The nation of Israel in the Old Testament demonstrates the way in which this separation is to be made in these three areas of government.

1. The executive power:

Deuteronomy, chapter 17, sets forth the terms and conditions of a king or chief executive of Israel as follows:

1. He must be a citizen and native of Israel, not a foreigner or immigrant. He is elected by the people and confirmed by God.

2. The misuse of office was prohibited. He cannot misuse this office to make money.

3. He was forbidden from having many wives.

4. The law was applicable to him as with any ordinary Israelite citizen. He was not above the law, but rather under the law. He was to oversee the function of the offices of government.

5. He could not abuse his office by using force as he chose, but only as the law prescribed. He was to uphold the law, and to serve God and his people.

His power was limited, because limited authority was vested in him under the law.

6. He ruled within the boundaries set by God and His sovereignty, to honor the covenant entered into with the people. If he breached either, he lost his right to govern.

2. The legislative branch:

One of the privileges of Israel's government was that it had permanent and fixed laws which people could not change, because God was the author. This meant that the legislative branch of government did not make laws. The legislator's job is to work within the framework of existing laws, or the laws of God, and to make general rules which apply to people in specific circumstances in social settings. The eternal law of God is applied to certain settings, problems, and situations, and the new rule or law

established conforms to the laws of God. Moses was the "law bearer." He never created laws.⁴¹¹ He had to pass the law to another man who passed the law to other men. Society cannot exist without rules to govern its different aspects. If everyone were to create his own rules, society would not survive. The legislator's job is to analyze peoples' relationships, to verify God's divine laws, and to apply them to common rules. Rules must be created with total impartiality and fairness to all people. No lobbying or special interest groups were allowed (Deuteronomy 25:16).⁴¹² In Deuteronomy 12:28 and 32, we read:

Observe and hear all these words which I command thee, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee forever, when thou doest *that which is* good and right in the sight of the LORD thy God. What things soever I command you, observe to do it: thou shalt not add thereto, nor diminish from it.

3. The judicial branch:

We read in Exodus 18:25-26:

And Moses chose able men out of all Israel, and made them heads over the people, rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

And they judged the people at all seasons: the hard cases they brought unto Moses, but every small matter they judged themselves.

Deuteronomy 16:18-20 reads:

Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment

Thou shalt not wrest judgment; thou shalt not respect persons, neither take a gift: for a gift doth blind the eyes of the wise, and prevent the words of the righteous.

That which is altogether just shalt thou follow, that thou mayest live, and

⁴¹¹Ibid., 150.

⁴¹²Ibid., 150-151.

inherit the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

It is important to know that Moses, as judge, did not judge from his own understanding of what was fair and impartial. God was the judge, and Moses merely upheld the law of God, who had the absolute authority of the government of Israel in transition (Exodus 18:15-16).

Moses' role as judge, was to weight the evidence, to know the facts, to explain them to the parties involved, as well as the laws applicable to their situation, and to explain how and why he had arrived at the judgment pronounced. The judge in his duties is never to make or create the law, but to apply the laws that are on the books. In cases where the death penalty is applied, two or three witnesses in Israel were mandatory before the death penalty could be executed. Minor offenses were judged differently than serious crimes, as the law provided (Leviticus 24:18-21). Rules of evidence and rules for due process were written and explained (Numbers 35). The individual suspect had to be found guilty through the process of a trial and the evidence of guilt had to be presented before any conviction was made (Numbers 35:12). Before an individual was brought before the court to answer, a complete investigation had to be conducted (Deuteronomy 19:18). If the suspect was found to be guilty, the judge had three judgments to apply, a fine, whipping, or the death penalty. In civil cases, the guilty individual(s) had to make restitution for the damage caused, plus pay 20% or more of the value of the item or property (Leviticus 6:5 and Numbers 5:6-7). Judgment had to be consistent and compatible to the crime committed. Also, the courts in Israel had several levels, such as with our system of lower court or municipal court, superior court, and court of appeals (Deuteronomy 17 and Exodus 18).

In contrasting the Biblical foundation of government with the Islamic foundation of government, the conflict is clear and wide. The Biblical foundation makes clear, as previously explained, that separation of church and state is Biblical. Each is an independent entity, and each should follow the creation mandate of Genesis. The same is

true in regards to separation of power. The executive branch is vested in the president, the legislative branch is vested in the congress or parliament, and the judicial branch is vested in the supreme court. In Islam, the story is different. Islam has no boundaries. It crosses all lines, whether political, economical, social, or cultural. Reisman made this very fact clear when he said:

The notion of church and state as distinct and independent institutions with their own laws is essentially a late Christian development. Islam views life in its totality and purports to provide guidance for every aspect of human life. It recognizes no division among the spiritual, social, economic, and political sectors of life. . . . **Islam thus cannot leave outside its domain the affairs of the state and the exercise of official power.**⁴¹³

⁴¹³Reisman, "Some Reflections on Human Rights and Clerical Claims to Political Power," 509. Emphasis added.

A famous Scripture that makes a clear distinction between church and state is "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's."⁴¹⁴ This is considered outlandish by Muslims. In fact, a Muslim political ruler has to first qualify as a religious leader before leading a country. Muslims believe that constitutional authority has descended from Allah and, thus, people have no say. Religious leaders have enjoyed greater power and influence as a result of their interpretation of what is revealed from Allah, and what is not. This paradigm of legality and authority is crucial to understanding the political theory and operation of Islamic fundamentalism. After Islam conquered countries around the Middle East, some of these countries tried to break away from the strong hold of the Caliph.⁴¹⁵ These countries could not fight for independence or gain power, because of Islam's use of force to crush any form for independence. They had to have a claim against the Caliph that he is not loyal to Islam. Islam, as a result, becomes the mediator in conflicts in all Islamic countries.⁴¹⁶ Muslim clergymen think that their involvement with the state and their influence to change policy is a fundamental right. The fact is that religious leaders use their status to undermine the state's ability to function. Muslims, on the other hand, tend to trust religious leaders rather than political leaders. They see government as isolated from them, and this isolation creates suspicion as to government plans, motives, and actions. For this reason, propaganda campaigns spread rather rapidly in a Muslim society. Aytollah Khomeini and his supporters have insight into what a true Islamic government should be. The Iranian Constitution institutes a "Vali-Faghih," or supreme leader. The supreme leader is not selected by the people through majority vote, but has authority in all three divisions of government. His authority is real and not symbolic.

⁴¹⁴Matthew 22:21.

⁴¹⁵"A successor of [the Prophet] Muhammad as temporal and spiritual head of Islam." See Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary, 1980, 155. The Caliphs constructed and presided over the Islamic empire after the departure of the Prophet.

⁴¹⁶Reisman, "Some Reflections on Human Rights and Clerical Claims to Political Power," 509.

The Constitution gives religious leaders authority in many aspects of Iranian society as well.⁴¹⁷

⁴¹⁷Ibid., 509.

In the case of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was signed by Egypt, the Egyptian government ties individual rights to the Islamic laws. Any application of the universal Human Rights, therefore, must be interpreted from Islamic perspectives, which makes the U.N. declaration of no value according to the purpose intended. On the other hand, Muslim radicals defy tactics which give non-Muslims equal rights already granted to Muslims. Muslims, therefore, reject the Universal Declaration of Human Rights substance, but accept it in form. This is why most Islamic countries signed this declaration. This, in itself, does not force them to abide by it. It is meant as a public relations ploy, designed to muffle any attacks from the West against violations of human rights in those countries.⁴¹⁸ Men and women in Islamic countries do not enjoy equal rights. One Islamic leader of the Islamic Salvation Front⁴¹⁹ from Algiers was quoted as saying that **the basic function of women is to "bear good Muslims."**⁴²⁰ Ali Belhadi, of the Islamic Salvation front in Algeria said: "Woman is a begetter of men. She does not produce material goods; she produces that most essential item: Muslims." And the author of the article added,

A woman who resists that vision and thus challenges the commingling of the civil and religious that characterizes virtually all Muslim states can be condemned to death.⁴²¹

In conclusion, the difference between the Biblical foundation for government and the Koranic foundation is the difference between the teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ and those of the Prophet Muhammad, or the teaching of the Bible and those of the Koran. The Biblical foundation of government is represented in the West, and the Islamic foundation of government represented in the Arab and Islamic countries.

⁴¹⁸Ibid., 509.

⁴¹⁹The Islamic Salvation Front is a fundamentalist group which has been trying for years to overthrow the Algerian government in order to establish an Islamic state.

⁴²⁰Reisman, "Some Reflections on Human Rights and Clerical Claims to Political Power," 509. Emphasis added.

⁴²¹"Islam's Veiled Threat," *World Press Review*, January 1995, 2. Emphasis added.

VI

PROPOSALS:

WHAT CAN CHRISTIANS IN AMERICA DO?

Why do so few people know about the atrocities being committed against Coptic Christians by the Egyptian government in Egypt? The answer can be summarized by the following:

1. In a dictatorship such in Egypt, the Egyptian government has full and complete authority over all information and news. It releases what it sees fit and prevents any information as it pleases. The public and foreign journalists get their information from the government. It murders Coptic Christians and tells the whole world this is not true, while blood is on its hands. Journalists can verify the truth by going out and searching

for the facts by speaking to the public, which results can be seen in this document;

2. The Egyptian government denies any wrong doing when it comes to Coptic Christians;

3. It suppresses all information which casts Egypt in a negative way, including the truth;

4. The Egyptian Intelligence Agency is operating all over the world, and does whatever it can to suppress the truth about Egypt regarding its atrocities against the Coptic Christians, and yes, many agents are operating here in the U.S.;

5. The Egyptian government uses some Coptic Christian leaders to make false and misleading statements, such as "Christians and Muslims have a good relationship," or "Coptic Christians are treated well in Egypt." Such statements are a betrayal, and injurious to the Christians in Egypt and the church at large. When outsiders hear such statements, they think that Coptic Christians are treated well, while in fact their situation is grave.

6. The Egyptian government lies about almost everything when it comes to Coptic Christians.

7. The government shows hospitality towards foreign journalists and are sometimes thoughtful toward foreigners in order to win them over. Such hospitality and courtesy can be very deceiving and, in fact, is. Once a person leaves a government office into the streets of Cairo, he immediately discovers that he was deceived by the government and that everything that he heard is nothing but lies.

8. Because of the U.S.-Egypt relations, the U.S. ignores the atrocities against Coptic Christians and pays no attention to the plight of the Copts.⁴²²

The above points are very important in helping the reader to understand how the crafty government of Egypt operates.

⁴²²In fact, in 1995 on CBS evening news, the author saw a State Department spokesman in a press conference where he was condemning the murder of a pastor in Iran. Why? Because Iran is not a friend to the U.S. But at the same time, Christians in Egypt are being massacred and no one hears any news about it.

To help the suffering church in Egypt is a cause worthy of our utmost attention and time. The Lord never promised us that following Him would be an easy task. In fact, Jesus said that we must take up our cross and follow Him. The Coptic Christians are carrying a very heavy cross of Jesus Christ everyday. Their pain and sufferings are great. At the same time, we must be firm in our convictions and stand up for the suffering church in Egypt. Remember the words of the Bible. We are the body of Christ: if one member suffers, the whole body suffers together. Knowing this, we must act.

1. Pray, since without prayers all our efforts will be fruitless. Spiritual battles can only be fought with spiritual weapons, by the power of God manifested in Christ Jesus. We must destroy the devil's strong-holds, especially in the Middle East. If we do not fight evil now, we will be confronted with it at our own doorsteps.

2. Support Christians in their struggle for survival by writing to the government Foreign Ministry and the Egyptian Embassy in Washington, D.C. Be aware of their statements, which are almost always misleading when it comes to the Christians' situation. The readers of this thesis will understand the deceitful tactics and the immoral ways that the government uses to brush aside the fact that Christians are being persecuted.

3. Publicize and debate the issue of persecution of Coptic Christians in a group setting. Make decisions as to what the group will do in this regard. Act on suggestions made, and forward them to appropriate officials or organizations.⁴²³

4. Legal aid is needed. Lawyers especially need to help in preparing legal action against the government for its carelessness in enforcing the law and in its failure in protecting Christians from the savagery of terrorism that befalls them. Use international documents signed by Egypt, such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, to establish the abuses of the Egyptian government toward Christians.

5. Write to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and ask that they monitor the situation in Egypt carefully and bring their results to an international body.

⁴²³Vartislav Pechota, *The Right to Know One's Human Rights* (New York, NY: The American Jewish Committee, 1983), 24.

6. The U.N. Commission on Human Rights should undertake a comprehensive study of the grave situation of the Coptic Christians for an action.

7. Voice your concerns to your representatives, senators, congressmen, the State Department.

8. Write to American companies doing business in Egypt, whose names can be obtained through U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

9. Join human rights organizations. The following are the names and addresses of some of the human rights organizations that the reader is encouraged to write to or join:

The U.N. Human Rights Commission
The United Nations
The U.N. Plaza
New York, NY 10017

Amnesty International USA
322 Eighth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10001
Tel: (212) 807-8400

Human Rights Watch/Middle East
485 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017
Tel: (212) 972-8400
Fax: (212) 972-0905

Christian Solidarity International
1101 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20036

International Christian Concerns
12600 Billington Road
Silver Spring, MD 20904
301-989-1708

Lawyers Committee for Human Rights
330 Seventh Avenue, 10th Floor
New York, New York 10001
Tel: (212) 629-6170
Fax: (212) 967-0916

Others are:

Chairman
The Sub-Committee on Human Rights
and International Organizations

House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman
The Foreign Affairs Committee
The House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Chairman
The Foreign Relations Committee
The U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

In Conclusion

The author is reminded of a statement made by an African American in the fall of 1994 at the WHRO (Public Broadcasting) Station in Norfolk when he said, "Oppression does not destroy people, acceptance of oppression does."⁴²⁴ While the Egyptian government, along with militant Muslim groups, is trying to annihilate the Coptic Christians in their own homeland, the Coptic Christians have been resilient in the face of persecution, injustice, discrimination, and murders. For the Coptic Christians in Egypt, "life under siege goes on."⁴²⁵ The Coptic Christians are powerless to do anything to assert their rights as human beings, and such helplessness is one of the most crippling types of human suppression. This is why the time has come for the world community to speak out and stand up for those who are oppressed, who cannot speak for themselves, and are unable to assert their human rights or address their grievances in any form to the Egyptian government. The grave situation of the Coptic Christians should arouse the world community's conscience to condemn the barbaric acts of the Egyptian government before the threat of annihilation of the Coptic Christians turns into a genocide.

There is a saying in Egypt which goes like this: "a lie does not have legs," which means that lies cannot endure forever. The Egyptian government, however, has been lying, deceiving and manipulating the world community with disinformation for a long

⁴²⁴WHRO Channel 15, Hampton-Norfolk [Public Broadcasting Company], fall 1994.

⁴²⁵Ibrahim, "Muslims' Fury Falls on Egypt's Christians," A1.

time, while the Copts suffer everyday. The truth is coming out, and Egypt will be discredited before the world to see.

We all should remember what one of America's best known presidents, Abraham Lincoln, once said: "Those who deprive others of liberty do not deserve it for themselves, and under the just rule of God, they will not keep it for themselves for long."⁴²⁶

APPENDIX
SAMUEL BISTAWROS AND HIS ENCOUNTERS WITH

⁴²⁶Source unknown.

THE EGYPTIAN INTELLIGENCE AGENCY⁴²⁷

The Egyptian Intelligence Agency (EIA) is an evil force. Its agents are fanatics and anti-Christian. The EIA targets Christians in Egypt and in the U.S. as well. Some of its goals are to harass, persecute, threaten, oppress, and murder Egyptian Christians. The Egyptian government to counter the peaceful protests of Coptic Christians in the U.S. and to silence them, unleashed an army of spies into the U.S. from the EIA scattered throughout the U.S. where Egyptian Christians live. I have been persecuted by the EIA since 1967, when I graduated from the Evangelical Theological Seminary in Cairo, Egypt. Here are the facts:

In Churches:

1. In June of 1967, at Tanta, Egypt, the EIA instigated Muslim neighbors to play a stereo very loud during Sunday worship services at the Coptic Evangelical Church. They occupied the corner of the church's yard to sell food. They placed advertisements for secular movies on a billboard in front of the church.

2. In October of 1967, at el-Sinbelawain, el-Mansoura, the EIA instigated Muslim neighbors to throw stones at the church while the members were worshipping on Sundays, and during the week.

3. In October of 1968, at Shobra el-Khima, near Cairo, the EIA instigated a Muslim neighbor to throw dirty paint on the Cross at the top of the door of the Coptic Evangelical Church.

4. In November of 1968, the EIA hired Kamal Girgis, a rail road worker to spy on me and my church at Shobra el-Khima. He used to attend all meetings such as Bible studies, Sunday worship services, and conferences at Alexandria. After that, the director of the local EIA began to send his agents to the church during worship services to watch

⁴²⁷This is an account of Samuel Bistawros's own experience in his own words, which was abridged by the author.

us, and for questioning. Some church members were afraid to attend Sunday worship services after they saw that the EIA agents were at the door of the church. Mr. Wilson Kurulis, a social worker, was working with me to counsel with Christians working in the factories. Both of us confronted Mr. Girgis about his activities against the church. From that time, he never showed up at the church.

5. In July of 1970, at Dekernes, al-Mansoura, an EIA agent incited a Muslim neighbor to throw a dead animal and trash inside the Coptic Evangelical church's yard. He also encouraged other Muslims neighboring the church to make loud noises by beating a drum during worship services in front of the church.

6. In August of 1972, at Sanabu, Assiut, the EIA sent four Muslim men to the church, who broke down the Cross from the top of the Church's door. When I spoke to the police chief, he confirmed the damage but did nothing, not even write a report. During church worship, Muslim neighbors insulted members of the church by using profane language mocking their Christian faith. The EIA coaxed some sellers of vegetables and butchers to occupy the church yard and to make loud noises in order to disturb the Sunday worship service.

7. In November 1975, the government took 3 acres of land which was owned by the Coptic Evangelical church in Sanabu. This land was leased at one time to farmers, which brought income to the church to help in its ministry. The government, further, took thousands of acres of land over the years from the Coptic Orthodox church. Such lands were donated by Christians to help the church and its ministry.

8. In July of 1980, at Sanhour al-Keiblia, al-Fayoum, the EIA started to create problems for myself and my Church. The facts are:

A. The EIA induced some Muslim neighbors to insult me with offensive language. Mr. Abo Ali, the EIA agent, attempted to befriend me while at the same time, inciting, behind my back, Muslim neighbors to be hostile against me. These Muslim neighbors had been friendly with me before he had come on the scene.

B. The EIA encouraged some Muslim boys to throw stones inside the Church while the worship service was in progress. One stone injured a lady member. C. In October of 1982, the EIA instigated a Muslim neighbor next door to the church to demolish a part of the church wall in order to create tension between Christians and Muslims in the area. When I went to the police station to complain to a police officer, he brought the Muslim neighbor to the police station. After we left the station, the Muslim neighbor made mockery of me. No arrest was made, no report was written, and no trial was conducted.

D. The EIA tried to set me up, by sending individuals to the church I visited. They asked me questions about Islam and the government. If I had spoken my mind about any of these issues, the EIA would have jailed me. That was the purpose of their inflammatory questions. The EIA deposited a listening device at my residence at the Church, to monitor any conversation.

9. At Sanhour Coptic Evangelical Church, the EIA instigated some Muslim neighbors to bring in animals inside the church, while we were worshipping. Some of the animals were dogs, sheep, and a small donkey. The animals could not have strayed by themselves. Some one must have done it intentionally, since also the threshold was high enough as to prevent some of these animals from getting inside the church by themselves. The church service was disturbed. This was an insult to Christians.

10. The window of the church that opened outside to the street had to be replaced with bricks, because of the disturbance of the Muslims neighbors during church services.

11. The EIA instigated someone to burn the church's front door of the Coptic Church of Saint Mary the Virgin. The EIA spread false stories that someone from the Christian community did it.

Attempted Murder:

In July of 1982, at Khozam, Mallawy, Upper Egypt, I went to visit Mr. Youssef M. Zakhary, who was my brother-in-law, who claimed that he was injured in a car

accident. While I was there, I did not notice any injuries. He insisted that I stay for dinner. At about 8:00 p.m., four men knocked at his door and took him outside the house. According to tradition in this village, the host keeps the cooked meat until last, after the guests have eaten other dishes, and then he personally gives each of the guests a piece or two of the cooked meat. The host is responsible for serving the meat from his own hand. After I ate the meat which he had given to me, I started to feel strange. Immediately after that, I vomited the food from my stomach, which came out white, despite the fact that I had eaten green vegetables. This piece of meat handed to me was poisoned. God saved my life by vomiting the food. His story of a car accident and injuries had been fabricated in order to entice me to stay for dinner and to carry out this criminal act instigated by the EIA. During this time, he had asked my sister to go away, which is why she was staying at her parents' house.

When the operation failed, this was not the end, by any means. On July 11, 1982, the EIA sent a Christian man to meet with me, who insisted that I travel with him in a taxi to visit a sick friend in Cairo. But I refused. The next day, at 7:00 a.m., he knocked at my door and asked me again to come with him, but I refused again. I had traveled on this road in a bus before. It is a desert road and the EIA was planning a car accident to kill me in the desert.

Monitoring Church Worship Services:

EIA agents were staying at the church premises daily, sometimes 24 hours a day, claiming that they were protecting us from Muslim radicals who were anti-Christian. The truth is that they were monitoring the church's members, and listening to the sermons or Bible studies. A number of times, the EIA agents asked members of the church what the sermon was about. Why: (1) In order to evaluate the sermon to see if there is a talk about politics even though this almost always never happened; (2) To evaluate the person's personality in the light of his delivery of the sermon; (3) To know who were attending the church; and (4) To infiltrate the church and use the divide-and-rule

strategy, if necessary.

Other Incidents:

1. In 1977, during the re-election of then-President Sadat, at 10:00 a.m., at the town of Beni Kora, Mr. Mubarak Ibskahrion, an elder at the Coptic Evangelical Church, and I, went to vote. When we arrived at the voting center, the man in charge told us they had closed the ballot. The voting center should have been open until 5:00 p.m.

2. In July 1973, I attended a Christian conference in Geneva, Switzerland, which was sponsored by the World Council of Churches. There were representatives from more than 80 countries. While in Geneva, I visited a group of Christians called "The Children of God," who live by faith, and whose doctrine was similar to those of the Assemblies of God Churches. Most of the people in the group were from the U.S. In August 1973, after returning to Egypt from the conference, I received a letter from the Children of God. The letter was traced by the Egyptian Intelligence Agency. In September 1973, I was asked by an State Security Investigation (SSI) in Assiut, Upper Egypt, to meet with one of its agents, which I did. He asked me a number of questions about the group, and whether I am planning to establish a new denomination for the group, to which I answered no. He further asked me if I have books or any material about the group. He said I watched you for a while, you are a good person. While in his office, he turned to another subject. He asked me about Mrs. Zaher Hanna, a member at the Coptic Evangelical Church in Dairut, about her Christian activities. When I told him I do not have any information to give to you about her, he became angry, rang a bell, and another agent came in. He asked him to bring the file about the Presbytery of Mallowy; it was a big file, inches thick. He said to me I have all the information here. Then he ordered me to call him by telephone before going anywhere out of town, which I refused to do; then he said I can know what food you ate for breakfast. Since that time, the EIA caused trouble for me in every church I went to as a minister. One of the churches wanted to elect me as a pastor, but the EIA discredited me, which I learned later from one of the

elders of the church.

3. In July 1976, I received another letter from the Children of God, and the EIA again traced the letter. On Sunday evening service, an agent came to the church, and asked me to go to Assiut to meet with his boss at the State Security Investigation. The following day I went to Assiut, and met with an agent from the SSI, who asked me again about the letter and the children of God group.

4. In January of 1980, I met with Dr. Gamal al-Eteifi, Ph.D., an attorney and member of the People's Assembly. I asked for a consultation to solve a problem I was facing. He said to me, "Convert to Islam and I will help you."

5. In July 1982, at Zamalik, a suburb of Cairo, the EIA planned and executed a car accident against the youngest daughter of Dr. Faiek Iskander, who was from a wealthy family and an elder at the Coptic Evangelical Church at Minya al-Kamh. A big truck hit her on the driver's side while she was driving her car, which left her left leg broken.

6. In the Summer of 1982, Adel al-Nahass, director of the State Security Investigation in al-Fayoum, murdered Attia Girgis, a member of the Virgin Mary Orthodox church. Mr. Girgis was invited to a wedding ceremony. At the reception, an Egyptian agent put poison in his wine, where Mr. Girgis died. At his funeral, Mr. al-Nahass went to the victim's family offering his consolation. The victim was an affluent Christian and a potential leader in the Christian community.

7. The same year, Adel al-Nahass, planned and executed a car accident to get rid of Ms. Amalia Khalil, director of Madrasat el-Salam Christian School for girls in al-Fayoum. While she was riding in her friend's car from al-Fayoum to Cairo, she had a car accident, was injured, and lost her right eye. Ms. Khalil was very active in the ministry.

8. In 1982, Mr. al-Nahass, jailed the priest and an elder of the church of the Virgin Mary in Sanhour al-Keiblia, al-Fayoum, without any reason. Two months later, they were released.

9. In 1973, the director of the State Security Investigation told me that a pastor from the apostolic church went to Beirut, Lebanon, studying at the seminary, and that when he returns he would become the director of Lillian Trasher orphanage in Assiut. He further asked me if I had any information about him, to which I answered no. I learned later that the pastor indeed became the director of said orphanage.

10. In October 1987, my daughters Vivian and Hanna went to buy some vegetables from the market nearby at Shoubra, in Cairo. In their way back to the house, a big truck hit my daughter Vivian while she was walking on the sidewalk. Her left foot was broken and swollen. She had two surgeries on her left foot, staying in the hospital 30 days. She went several times afterward, where she stayed 28 more days. According to the doctor who treated her, her foot was severely infected. He told her mother that if she had waited a day longer, her daughter could have died. She was rushed to the hospital for an immediate operation. Thank God that her life was saved through this doctor.

My Father Was Murdered by the EIA:

On July 29, 1993, my father had a fever. My brother Mamdouh went to Dr. Nashat El-Zokom, M.D., who came to the house and examined my father, giving him an injection which killed him after two hours. It is very unusual in the medical history of Egypt that a physician carries with him syringes during a visit to a patient's home. A physician visiting a patient at home writes a prescription for the patient. Before his death, yet after life became impossible, and I became a target for murder by the EIA, I left Egypt for the U.S. in January of 1983, seeking asylum and freedom. To my astonishment, I discovered that the Egyptian Intelligence Agency was operating in the same way in the U.S. as in Egypt. However, the situation was even worse.

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