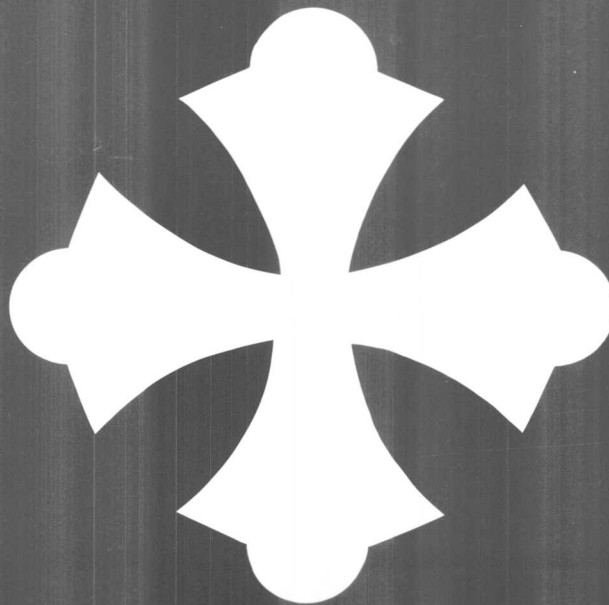


COPTIC CHURCH REVIEW

Volume 6, Number 3 Fall 1985

- *THE CROSS: STUMBLING
BLOCK, FOLLY AND POWER*
- *MINISTRY IN THE ORTHODOX
CHURCH*
- *MODERN COPTIC SAINTS*



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ABOUT THIS ISSUE

Feast of the Cross

The Coptic Church has two days in her calendar when she celebrates the feast of the Cross-Tut 17 (September 27) and Barmahat 10 (March 19). The article by the late *Father Bishoi Kamel* (1931-1979) on ***'The Cross: Stumbling Block, Folly and Power'*** is translated here from *St. Mark Monthly Review* (October 1971). Many articles by Father Bishoi appeared in English in the *Journal* and a short account of his life and service was given in volume 2, number 1 (Spring 1981). The Crucifixion was a central theme in the life and spirituality of Father Bishoi. An icon of the Crucified was always set before him and was in front of him when he died. Meditations on the Cross were frequent on his lips, in his sermons and conversations. His numerous articles on the subject were collected in two books.

Ministry in the Orthodox Church

What role has the laity in the ministry of the Orthodox Church? *Gameel K. Agban*, B. Sc. (Hons), M.Sc., B.Ed., who is a member of St. Mary and St. Athanasius Coptic Orthodox Church, at Mississauga, Ontario, studies this question in detail in his article, ***On the Temporal Serving of the Church of God Through Cosharing the Ministry and Enhancing the Priesthood***. From the teaching of the Bible and the early Fathers he finds that Church ministry is not restricted to the ordained clergy. There is a lay ministry in the Church which can help to enhance the vocation of priesthood, by supporting the priests, freeing them from temporal concerns, and enabling them to be real pastors. This lay ministry is not an option, but flows directly from the baptismal commitment of every believer. He concludes that more people should be involved in the daily affairs of the church, devoting their time and talents where they are needed and where they really belong. This article was originally an introduction to *A Proposed Constitution for the Coptic Churches Outside Egypt*, which the author presented to His Holiness Pope Shenouda III in 1984. In it he proposes that a Church Council, chaired by the priest, be made of two boards: *Board of Deacons* and *Board of Trustees*. The Board of Deacons is chaired by the priest and consists of various committees for worship, Christian education, altar service, publications and outreach. The Board of Trustees is chaired by a lay president and consists of different committees for finance, property, ladies' auxiliary, personnel and social activities. Members of the Board of Trustees are elected into the special committees where their gifts will be used, and where all the diver-

sity of the secular affairs are represented; thus offering the temporal support for the services of the Board of Deacons.

Fasting

Christmas Lent starts on November 25. The importance given to fasting in the Coptic Church reflects its traditional role in Christian spirituality. ***Fasting in the Writings of the Church Fathers*** is an anthology of the writings of various Fathers, who lived in different times and places, meant to answer two commonly asked questions, 'Why do we fast?' and 'How do we fast?'

Modern Coptic Saints

Many people have been struck with the life of a simple contemporary monk who lived in an old Coptic monastery, ***Father Justus of Saint Antony***. He died on December 17, 1976. But the fragmented story of his life as told by his fellow-monks and by his visitors was gathered and collected in a book, *Saint Justus the Antonian*, published in Arabic by the *Sons of Pope Kyrillos VI* (Cairo, 1983). The material in this issue about this saintly monk as well as his picture and the picture of the Monastery of Saint Antony (on the back cover) are taken from this book.

Editor

THE CROSS: STUMBLING BLOCK, FOLLY AND POWER

Blessed Father Bishoi Kamel

The Cross has three aspects in relation to man, which are revealed by St. Paul the Apostle in his First Letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. 1:18-25)

(1) The Cross - A Stumbling Block

Lord you have said, “Woe to the world because of its stumbling blocks” (Matt. 18:7; NAS version). How can the Cross be a stumbling block? The Cross in itself is not a stumbling block but it is so to the Jews. Judaizing is an evil quality in the subconscious of man, to which the Cross is a stumbling block. Love of leadership, wealth, self, formalities and public appearance on the street corners-all are Jewish traits to which the Cross always stands as a stumbling block.

My soul, when you look forward to the love of leadership, Jesus tells you, “I came not to be served but to serve” (Matt. 20:28).

The Cross is a stumbling block to you my selfish soul as you behold the crucified Jesus willingly offering himself on the Cross.

It is a stumbling block to you my soul when you participate with the Jewish money-changers and those who sold pigeons while you behold Jesus on the Cross stripped even of his clothes.

It is a stumbling block to you my soul that loves to be conspicuous, while seeing Jesus, rejected and crucified, warning you against praying in the lanes and on the street corners.

It is a stumbling block to you my soul when you cannot bear to have someone hurt your pride, neither at home nor at work nor even in the service of the church, while you see Christ despised and rejected on the Cross.

A stumbling block to you when you seek the places of honor while the Lord calls you to sit in the lowest place (Luke 14:7-11).

A stumbling block to you my soul when you give parties to your friends and rich neighbors while you do not invite the lame, the maimed and the poor (Luke 14:12-14).

My soul, you are daily threatened by a Judaizing relapse, and the Cross of the Lord will always be a stumbling block whenever you stray from the life of love and

perseverance and whenever you give in to the life of hatred, tiredness and shunning the narrow gate.

My Lord Jesus, truly you have commanded me to take up my Cross daily and follow you (Luke 9:23), and without doubt you wished to protect me from the ills of Judaizing that threaten my miserable spirit.

As for the Church, Judaizing has remained a threat, but she avoided the relapse into Judaism through the folly of the Cross. And this is what the Apostle frankly proclaimed when he said that if he submitted to the judaizing thought and to circumcision, the stumbling block of the Cross would have been removed. (Gal. 5:11). The Church opposed the earthly millenarianism and the School of Alexandria struggled in this regard confirming that 'here we have no lasting city' (Heb. 13:14), but we have a Cross to take up and a narrow gate to enter by. The return to an earthly millenium of Christ in the twentieth century is a Western belief that is mixed with the venom of Judaizing. The councils of churches that have come to agreement with the Jewish thought, away from the call to repentance, have in fact put down their weapon, which is their Cross, because 'the stumbling block of the Cross has been removed.' They emerged from the meetings in agreement but without a Cross.

(2) Folly of the Cross

My Lord Jesus, you have proclaimed that the Cross is God's wisdom, holiness and salvation, "We impart a secret and hidden wisdom of God . . . for if they had (understood it), they would not have crucified the Lord of glory," (1 Cor. 2:7 & 8). When man is unable to comprehend the greatness of a matter he tries to belittle it. Thus the mystery of incarnation and salvation is a lofty divine mystery which man cannot comprehend unless the Holy Spirit declares it to him. When man can comprehend a topic, a philosophy or an invention, he becomes master of it. Man thought he can comprehend God and thus become his master, not knowing that 'the wisdom of this world is folly with God.' (1 Cor. 3:19)

When St. Paul the Apostle spoke about Christ's suffering and resurrection, Festus, the governor, said in a loud voice, "Paul, you are mad; your great learning is turning you mad." (Acts 26:23, 24). As for the Greek philosophers in Athens, they said about him, "What would this babblers say?" (Acts 17:18).

In this twentieth century of ours the Cross will remain folly. The Cross will remain the difference between Christ and the world with its philosophies and religions. The belief in the Trinity, Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection will always remain a folly to others. You will be unable to convince an apostate who does not believe and who will accuse us of ignorance. Moreover, the Christian who adheres to truth in his life and at work is accused by his colleagues of not being open-minded. The woman who behaves and dresses as a Christian is accused of being old-fashioned. The forgiving Christian is accused of foolishness. The man of faith is accused of being unrealistic, and he who deserts the world to worship God in

a monastery is accused of running away. He who spends his time and wealth in the service of Christ is asked, "Why this waste?" (Matt. 26:8)

My Lord Jesus, from the beginning you have taught me that my Christian life should start by carrying the Cross every day. I shall carry it and witness for you against the Hellenism of the world in spite of their calling me foolish, because the Cross is folly.

As for the Church, the world today imposes on her a social and an ethical Gospel instead of making morals and social activities the fruits of a spiritual life. Many churches have slipped and fallen into the snare of secularism. They establish colleges and hospitals but they do not talk about repentance. Some Christian groups have allowed pre-marital sex while others have permitted dancing even among monks and nuns.

My Lord Jesus, do not ever allow our Church to throw down its Cross, following in the steps of the Western churches, in her attempt to assume progress and to keep in pace with the advancing world. My Lord Jesus, you know that our Church is accused of foolishness and lack of progress because the Cross is folly to many . . .

(3) Power of the Cross

1 - The Cross in its Nature is Strength, Not Weakness and Defeat.

Herod, who is a type of the Church that is mingled with the world, wished to hear a word from Jesus. But Jesus strongly refused because the powerful truth and the cunning and deceiving fox are not compatible. Pilate asked Jesus about truth and Jesus did not answer because truth is always obvious and clear. Pilate then threatened Him with the Cross but Jesus told him, "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above." (John 19:11)

The priests and Pharisees wished that Jesus would share in their hypocrisy but He likened them to white-washed tombs which are full of all uncleanness. (Matt. 23:27)

The money-changers wished He would accept a bribe and not drive them out but He was zealous for the holiness of His house and overturned their tables. (Matt. 23:12)

Hence, the world from all walks of life plotted against Him and threatened Him with the Cross. But He carried His Cross with power and did not give up any of His principles. The Cross was a proof of the victory of His principles over them. The Cross was a proof of the weakness of the world. The Cross was a proof of the power of Christ.

The children of Jesus should be strong and the proof of their strength is the Cross. The Cross is not merely a form of spiritual meditation but it is also perseverance in suffering in order to stand against the world. The Cross in the life of the Lord was not the result of His actions but rather it was a part of His ministry when he said "that he must . . . suffer many things . . ." (Matt. 16:21)

Jesus, my God, teach me, when I am in distress in this world, not to feel defeated but victorious through the power of Your Cross.

II - The Nature of the Cross is the Highest and Most Profound Form of Love.

Love to those who crucified Him . . . Love of the sinners . . . Love to give without expecting anything in return . . . The Cross is the defeat of hatred; there is no trace of hatred in the Cross.

III - The Cross is the Strongest Form of Victory Over the Devil, Death, Hell and the World.

The Cross has crushed Satan . . . I have seen this with my own eyes when the bishop or the priest places the Cross over a person possessed by an evil spirit. I have seen and heard the devil cry out and leave, terrified by the Cross.

How great and awesome is the Cross. Sin is the cause of death and, on the Cross, the Lord Jesus condemned sin in the flesh. (Rom. 8:3)

When Queen Helena wanted to find out which cross was the Lord's she placed a dead body on the first and second crosses and nothing happened. But as soon as the coffin touched the third the corpse instantly came back to life. Hence she was assured that it was the Cross of the Lord.

The Cross is victory over hell where Christ went through the Cross, "in which he went and preached to the spirits in prison," (I Peter 3:19) and restored the captives.

The Cross is victory over the world. The Lord conquered through it - He was born in a manger so no one boasts about his place of birth, He fled and lived off the contributions of the generous, He worked as a carpenter, thus He blessed work and labor, and humiliated the pride of the rich. In His ministry He bore the Cross until He fell under its weight. Through the Cross, He granted us purity, "And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires." (Gal. 5:24)

My Lord Jesus, remove the veil from my eyes so I can discover the power of Your Cross in my life and "deliver my mind from the recklessness of insubstantial works and worldly lusts, to the remembrance of Thine heavenly judgments."¹ Grant that I do not complain from laboring in Your service but rather make me a Cyrene coming in from the country (Luke 23:26). Let me, my Lord, no longer live but you live in me (Gal. 2:20), and grant that I have a share with the victorious, and that I stand beside the sea of glass, with those who had conquered the beast and its image and the number of its name. Lord Jesus give me your spiritual harp so I can sing the song of the Cross, the song of Moses, the servant of God and the song of the Lamb (Rev. 15:1-4). Through the intercession of Virgin Mary who shared the suffering of the Lord on the Cross, (cp. Phil. 3:10; I Peter 4:13), grant that I carry Your Cross, a stumbling block and folly to others, but God's strength to me. Amen.

Notes

(1) From the Prayer of the sixth hour.

Translated by Lily Soliman

ON THE TEMPORAL SERVING OF THE CHURCH OF GOD THROUGH CO-SHARING THE MINISTRY AND ENHANCING THE PRIESTHOOD

G. K. Agban, B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., B.Ed.

INTRODUCTION:

“I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head.” (Ezr. 9:6).

What more iniquities is there today than the present state of affairs in the Coptic Church in the western world:

I. We are very factious and most keen when we deal with our temporal affairs, as when we choose our family homes, and when we look after our children’s well being. For our health problems, we choose the best physicians; for our financial woes we consult investment specialists; for educating our kids, we look for the best available education facility. Always, the best is for us and for our families.

II. When it comes to the temporal affairs of the House of God, we treat them as a second priority, and consider mediocre solutions and decisions as good enough. Expertise and specialization are not important, although among the membership of the church, “There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit.” (I Cor. 12:4). Have we forsaken that “God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.” (I Cor. 14:33)? Did we forget that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Corinthians: “Let all things be done decently and in order.” (I Cor. 14:40)? Going back to the Old Testament, we find: “The house which I build is great: for great is our God above all gods.” (II Ch 2:5). Also: “I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.” (Ex. 20:5).

I: Why We Should Care For The Well Being Of The Church:

a. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it . . . That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having a spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.” (Eph. 5:25-27). Is not that a reason good enough that we should show our

concern about the well being of the church? One has to define what is meant by the “Church”, whose well being we have to look after, and which we have to keep without a spot, or wrinkle, or blemish. This definition is coming in a next section.

b. We should care for the House of God for the same reasons stated in the Introduction under item (II).

II. The Bible, The Doctrines And The Orthodox Church:

Bishop Athanasius of Beni-Sweif and Bahnassa (1977), in his booklet on the “Doctrines of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria” states the following:

“ . . . On one hand, its theology is based on nothing outside the scriptures. On the other hand, the doctrines agree in all parts with those of the Early Church i.e. the tradition which has the proper interpretation and application of the teachings of our Lord and the Apostles as understood and practised by the Christians and the leaders of the Church during the period of the One Universal Church until the division of 451 A.D.”

III. What Is The Church?

1. The English word “Church” (derived from the Greek *kyriakon*) can be rendered simply as “the Lord’s house.” In the Bible, the word used in Greek for “Church” meant the “assembly of people”, and in most cases, a grouping of believers, not the building itself, as we use the word today.

2. The Church is the “People of God”, those who are “one body, one Spirit . . . one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all.” (Eph. 4:4-6). “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” (I Cor. 10:17). Also, “For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body . . .” (I Cor. 12:13).

3. The People of God are: “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people . . .” (I Pe. 2:9). That this verse refers to all the Christians, and not only to the ordained priesthood, I refer to the writings of the early Fathers. The following excerpts are taken from the series on “*The Ante-Nicene Fathers*”, and “*The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*”:

- a . In Chapter IX of the *Epistle of St. Ignatius to the Ephesians* “Blessed, then, are ye who are God-bearers, spirit-bearers, temple-bearers, bearers of holiness, adorned in all respects with the commandments of Jesus Christ, being “a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people.” “That Epistle is sent to the “Church which is at Ephesus”.
- b. In Chapter IV of the *Epistle of St. Ignatius to the Philadelphians*, “. . . it behoves you also, therefore, as “an holy nation, a peculiar people”, to perform all things in harmony of Christ”. St. Ignatius was writing to the people in the Church at Philadelphia.
- c. In “*Origen against Celsus*” Book V, Chapter X, “The Hebrew people, then, being called by God a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy na-

tion, a peculiar people". Origen does not refer here to the Levites alone, but to the "Hebrew People".

- d. St. Victorinus, the Bishop of Petau towards the end of the third century, wrote in Chapter I of his "*Commentary on the Apocalypse of the Blessed John*": "and he made us a kingdom and priests unto God the Father" that is to say a Church of all believers as the Apostle Peter says: "a royal priesthood, an holy nation."
- e. In the "*Constitutions of the Holy Apostles*", we find the following:
 - i. In Book II, section IV: "Hear this, you of the laity also, the elect Church of God. For the people were formerly called the "the people of God", and "an holy nation." You, therefore, are the holy and sacred "Church of God, enrolled in heaven, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people."
 - ii. In Book II, section VII: "Let the Bishop pray for the people, and say: "save Thy people, O Lord and bless Thy inheritance. . which Thou hast obtained with the precious blood of Thy Christ, and hast called a royal priesthood, and an holy nation."
 - iii. In Book III, section II: ". . . .; but only in the laying of hands the Bishop shall anoint her head, as the priests and kings were formerly anointed, not because those which are now baptized are ordained priests, but as being Christians, or anointed, "A royal priesthood, an holy nation the Church of God, the pillar and ground of marriage chamber," who formerly were not a people, but now are beloved and chosen, upon whom is called His new name, as Isaiah the prophet witnesses, saying: "and thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name." (Is. 62:2)
 - iv. In Book VIII, section II, ". . . We further offer to Thee for this people, that Thou wilt render them, to the praise of Thy Christ, "a royal priesthood and a holy nation;" . . .

4. The Church is the People of God who are "graced" with Christian dignity and freedom.

5. Authoritarianism has no place in the House of God, as it would be demeaning to the dignity and status of the People of God.

IV. The Ministry In The Church:

The ministry in the Church of God is not done exclusively by ordained priests. The Apostle Peter said: "As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God." (I Pe 4:10). The child Samuel ministered to the Lord, he had not been ordained as a priest yet: "The child did minister unto the Lord." (I Sam. 2:11)

The meaning of the word "Ministry" evolved during the period of time covered by the Bible: from the days of Moses to the days of the Apostles.

(A) IN THE OLD TESTAMENT:

During the early days covered by the Old Testament, the word “minister” was used to designate someone attending a high ranking person: “And Moses rose up, and his minister Joshua . . .” (Ex 24:13). This ministry of Joshua to Moses was also stated in (Jo 1:1). Other ministries of the same type are mentioned in the Bible (I Kg. 19:21).

In later times, ministry was to royalty as the ministers of King Solomon (I Kg. 10:5) and the ministers of Ahaziah (II Ch. 22:8).

A most characteristic identification of the ministry is with the Levite priests in the Temple: “At that time the Lord separated the tribe of Levi, to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister unto him, and to bless his name, unto this day.” (Deut. 10:8). With the same designation: “But ye shall be named Priests of the Lord: men shall call you the ministers of our God: ye shall eat the riches of the Gentiles, and in their glory shall ye boast yourselves.” (Isa. 61:6). The same identification as ministers of the Lord is stated several times in the Old Testament (Ezk. 44:11; Joel 1:9, 13; Ezra 8:17; Neh. 10:36).

(B) IN THE NEW TESTAMENT:

In the New Testament, the word ministry was used to cover a wide range of activities. In Paul’s letter to the Romans, the public servant was looked at as a minister: “For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil . . . For he is the minister of God to thee for good . . .” (Rom. 13:3-6). Later in Romans, the ministry takes its religious meaning: “That I should be the minister of Jesus Christ to the gentiles . . .” (Rom. 15:16).

The identification of the minister with a personal attendant or helper showed again in Acts: “And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister.” (Acts 13:5). The same use is stated in Luke 1:2 & 4:20 and in Acts 26:16.

The most noticeable use of the word “minister” is as “diakonos” or “servant”, which is usually associated with Christian ministry: “But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.” (Mat. 20:26-27). These same two verses are repeated in Mark 10:43-44.

(C) THE MINISTRY OF THE APOSTLES:

The apostles themselves and their helpers are referred to as:

a. *ministers of God*: “But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, . . .” (II Cor. 6:4). “and sent Timotheus, our brother, and minister of God, and our fellow-labourer in the gospel of Christ . . .” (I Thes. 3:2)

b. *ministers of Christ*: “Are they ministers of Christ?” (II Cor. 11:23).

c. *ministers of the gospel*: “That the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel; whereof I was

made a minister . . ." (Eph. 3:6-7); also "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister . . ." (Col. 1:23).

d. *ministers of the new covenant*: "Who also hath made us able ministers of the new covenant; . . ." (II Cor. 3:6).

e. *ministers of the church*: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church, whereof I am made a minister." (Col. 1:24-25).

We can thus define the first type of ministry as the ministry performed by the ordained priests. This hierarchical priesthood, started with the ministry of Christ, and was followed by the ministry of the Twelve Apostles. At the time the Apostle Paul terminated his ministry, the local churches had bishops, elders and deacons.

(D) THE MINISTRY OF LAY PEOPLE:

By "lay people", is meant all the faithful, except those ordained to the sacred priesthood. The Apostle Peter in his letter to the "strangers scattered throughout Pontus . . ." (I Pe. 1:1) speaks of each believer functioning as a priest, "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood . . ." (I Pe 2:5). Also: "But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood . . . : (I Pe. 2:9) The People of God share in one priesthood of Christ, by virtue of one baptism, regardless of sex, experience, social status, degree of education, or ecclesiastical rank. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus . . ." (Gal. 3:28, and Col. 3:11). The Risen Lord may use any baptized person as an instrument of salvation for all, like Prisca and Aquila whom the Apostle Paul called "helpers in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 16:3). By reason of their secular vocations, it belongs to the lay people to serve the temporal affairs of the Church, and direct them according to God's will, while seeking His kingdom. It belongs to the lay-people in a special way to highlight and organize all temporal things with which they are so closely related in life, so these faculties may be affected and grow in everyday activity to the glory of Christ.

We can thus define the second type of ministry as that ministry of the lay people.

V. On Sharing The Ministry:

It is thus apparent that in the Church of God, and according to God's plan, although there is a unity in mission, there exists a diversity of ministry.

The distinction which the Lord has made between the ordained clergy and the lay people involves plurality in unity, because "unto every one of us is given grace according to the measure of the gift of Christ." (Eph. 4:7). "And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God." (Col. 2:19). Also "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that body, being

many, are one body: so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body . . .” (I Cor. 12:12-13).

By their competence in secular affairs, by their free will, and by the grace of God, may the way be then paved for the lay people to share diligently and positively, according to their given gifts, in the running of the temporal affairs of their Church. The two ministries, that of the priests, and that of the lay people, must then be harmoniously united, recalling that in dogma, as well as in secular affairs, we should not get out of God’s plan.

The priesthood in the Orthodox Church should then follow in the steps of the early Fathers by acknowledging the dignity and responsibility of the lay people in the Church, according to the Scripture and the Tradition of the Apostles as shown in their epistles. They should voluntarily use their prudence and their confidence in the lay people to help them run the temporal affairs of the local church, giving them freedom and scope of acting. The clergy, as shepherds of the flock, should expose their parental love and encouragement and attention to the initial moves or suggestions of the lay people. The Church would accordingly benefit from this co-operative co-sharing of the ministry of the Word of God: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law . . . Let us not be desirous of vain glory . . .” (Gal. 5:22-26).

The Apostle Paul in his First Epistle to the Corinthians said: “God is faithful, by whom ye were called unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord.” (I Cor. 1:9). The word used in the original Greek for “fellowship” is “koinonia”. It means “partnership and sharing”. The Christian community is a sharing community:

- a. We share in the Lord’s supper: “For we being many are one bread, and one body: for we are all partakers of that one bread.” (I Cor. 10:17).
- b. We share in the Gospel: “for your fellowship in the gospel.” (Phil. 1:5).
- c. We share in the “ministry to the saints” in various forms: “Then the disciples, every man according to his ability, determined to send relief unto the brethren which dwelt in Judea: which also they did, and sent it to the elders . . .” (Acts 11:29-30).
- d. We share in one church: “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers.” (Acts 2:42).

The Apostle Paul did not claim that he was competent in all sorts of ministries, nor that he could minister without his helpers. He acknowledges many examples of plurality in his ministry:

- a. “Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow-soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.” (Phil. 2:25).
- b. More than once, Paul refers to Timothy, Titus, Stephanas and Apollos as “fellow-workers”.

c. "And I entreat thee also, true yoke-fellow, help those women which laboured with me in the gospel, with Clement also, and with other my fellow-labourers, whose names are in the book of life." (Phil. 4:3).

d. "Greet Prisca and Aquila, my helpers in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 16:3).

The need to share in the ministry by working together in harmony is very well illustrated by Paul's comparison between the Church and the human body: "For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." (Rom. 12:4-6). The brain controls the voluntary body functions, but a lot other involuntary functions take place without control of the brain, and without them, the body will be dead. The same, if the body is alive and the brain is not functioning, we have a vegetative human being, a comatose individual. This similarity between the body and the Church leads us to the belief that the message is there: the ordained priesthood and the lay people should work in harmony for the good of the whole body. Every one has a certain role and function that is essential to the healthy existence of a "glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy without blemish." (Eph. 5:25-27).

Another example of the Church of God given by Paul is that of a building: "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." A church is built when every member is using his skill: "According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon, but let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon." (I Cor. 3:9, 10). A building is a concerted effort by a group of specialists and skilled labour. No one is a bystander, every one shares. Also, no one person alone can build a house. The sharing of the skills of others is essential. So the House of God should be built using the skills of all the ministries in the Church.

The building of a house resembles the working of a human body: In a living organism, no member plays a passive role and stays strong. It dwindles and dies away. What has the appendix done in the human body? It is doing no specific function, it dwindled away. It can be removed without a noticeable effect on the human body. Compare that to the appendix in the rabbit, where it is being used, and is much stronger and bigger. Every organ in the living body should do his share of the activity, for the full healthy growth of the whole body. This is also true for the body of Christ which is the Church: "From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto edifying of itself in love;" (Eph. 4:16).

VI: A Plan Of Action For Sharing The Ministry Of Temporal Service At The Local Level:

A Proposed Constitution for the Coptic Orthodox Churches outside Egypt should aim at fulfilling three criteria of prime importance:

Firstly: The ordained priests would be able to follow in the steps of the “Apostles” to give themselves continually to the ministry of the word: “And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples . . . , and said: *It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.*” (Acts 6:1-4).

The administrative and temporal responsibilities of the priests would inadvertently burden them, besides their main time-consuming and unique mission as ordained priests. This overburden is expected to result in:

- i. Lack of time to attend to the spiritual needs of the congregation, or if this is well attended to, lack of time to efficiently care for the temporal affairs of the Church.
- ii. Tending the flock of emigrant Copts is a very time consuming job that the priests are doing by nature of our community. This tending cannot be done by lay people. The temporal affairs of the Church can be cared for by the lay people.
- iii. Outside Egypt, it is a very open society, that leads people to ask more and not accept what we normally accept in Egypt without question. This leads to unnecessary confrontations with the priest. The priest, having the image of Christ, better not get involved in these temporal discussions with the members of the congregation. The priest is expected to take the role of a holy father, above all personal differences, and gathering all the flock around him, no matter how far their opinions may be. The priest is over and above any confrontation.
- iv. Lack of time to attend to the priest's own spiritual progress. The following are examples of endeavors that I believe are a cornerstone in the life of a priest, and those need a lot of time that otherwise will not be available:

- a. Devoting more time for soul-searching, meditation and readings. This results in deep spirituality, which in turn leads to gathering the people around their priest.
- b. Pastoral visits become more frequent.
- c. More in-depth preparation of the sermons.
- d. Writing relevant Coptic articles treating contemporary issues in the Church's local magazines and bulletins that would emphasize the Orthodox dogma and prevent our teenagers and adherents from drifting with other denominations.
- e. More time for the priest's own family, they too have the same needs of any emigrating Egyptian family, and more.

Secondly: A group of lay people serving formally the temporal affairs of the church, will provide counsel to the priest and congregation of the faithful:

- a. “Where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counsellors there is safety.” (Proverbs 11:14).

- b. "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes: but he that hearkeneth unto counsel is wise." (Prov. 12:15)
- c. "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom." (Prov. 13:10).
- d. "Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord." (Is. 1:18)
- e. "We took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company." (Ps. 55:14)

Thirdly: (A) Being in charge of the temporal affairs of the church offers lay people a rare opportunity to discover all new talents in the congregation of the faithful: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." (Eph. 4:11-12). By co-sharing the ministry of the temporal affairs of the church, "So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness." (Rom. 12:5-8).

(B) Involving more people to care for the daily temporal affairs of their own church in turn results in:

- i. Jobs being better done.
- ii. Jobs being done faster.
- iii. Optimum use of the "talents" in the church. When jobs are delegated to a layman in authority, he normally feels more responsible, and does the job even better than he normally does.
- iv. Most important, is the laity's feeling of selfworth and belonging to the congregation.
- v. A wider official participation of women than heretofore. Among us are women of special gifts and talents, who should be contributing to a greater degree and with full recognition in the life and welfare of the temporal affairs of the Orthodox Church.
- vi. Enlarging the number of the Board members is a means of increasing the active participation of the congregation, and shouldering more responsibility for the secular affairs of the Church.

(C) Back home in the Fatherland, we have less distractions away from the church. We know we are a minority and we stick together. In the Western World, Christians are a majority, we are losing that feeling that keeps us together in the homeland. Especially for our youth and children, the attractions and lack of morals outside the Church are so strong. By applying the principles of pedagogy, and by keeping the members of the congregation responsible for the secular work of the Church, we

keep them busy, proud of the achievements and give them one self-esteem that will keep them within the Church's grasp.

NOTE

Scripture texts in this article are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

FASTING IN THE WRITINGS OF THE CHURCH FATHERS

Role of Fasting in the Spiritual Life

All strife against sin and its desires is to be preceded by fasting, especially if one is combatting inward sin . . . Fasting is the strengthening of all virtues, the beginning of the struggle, the beauty of virginity and sanctity, the preservation of chastity, the beginning of the way of Christianity, the father of prayer . . . , for as soon as man begins to fast his mind will be desirous of intercourse with God. Fasting is a storehouse of all virtues, and he that despises it makes all virtues totter . . .

As the first commandment imposed upon our nature in the beginning was against the tasting of the food, and in this point the head of our race fell, therefore those who strive for the fear of God begin the building where the first injury originated . . . Also our Savior began from this point . . . He fasted forty days and forty nights, and all those who follow His steps base the beginning of their struggle upon this action. That weapon was polished by God, who should despise it without being blameworthy?

St. Isaac the Syrian

When the body is weak by fasting and mortification, the soul is spiritually strong through prayer.

St. Isaac the Syrian

A full stomach shrinks from examining spiritual questions . . . A mind full of the world cannot approach the investigation of divine service. Fire cannot burn fresh wood; the love of God cannot be kindled in a heart that loves comfort.

St. Isaac the Syrian

Just as the most bitter medicine drives out poisonous creatures, so prayer and fasting drives away evil thoughts.

St. Syncletica

He who prays and fasts is more disposed for almsgiving. He who fasts is light and winged, and prays with wakefulness, and quenches his wicked lusts, and propitiates God, and humbles his soul when lifted up.

St. John Chrysostom (On Matt. 57:5)

We seek solitude and submit to fastings, vigils, toils, reading and all other virtues that through them we may be enabled to prepare our heart and to keep it unharmed

by evil passions; and resting on these steps to mount to the perfection of charity which is purity of heart.

St. John Cassian (Conferences 1:7)

Desire of the belly is the most ungodly passion because through it all other passions enter. It is the door which if closed all sins stay outside.

St. Philoxenus of Mabbug

Fasting is considered the strait path for the Kingdom, which leads to life.

St. Philoxenus of Mabbug

How to Fast

We fast by abstaining from wine and flesh, not because we abhor them as abominations, but because we look for our reward; that having scorned things sensible, we may enjoy a spiritual and intellectual feast.

St. Cyril of Jerusalem (Catechetical Lectures 4:27)

A brother came to see Abba Poeman in the second week of Lent. He told him about his thoughts and obtained peace through his words. He then said to him, "I hesitated to come here today." The elder asked him why, and the brother said, "I thought that you would not let me in because it is Lent." Abba Poemen then said, "We have not been taught to close the wooden door, but the door of our tongues."

From the Apophthegmata Patrum

You have taught me, good Father, that to the pure all things are pure (Titus 1:15); but that it is wrong for anyone to make others fall by what he eats (Rom. 14:20); and that everything created by You is good, 'and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving' (I Tim. 4:4); and that 'Food will not commend us to God' (I Cor. 8:8); and that no one should pass judgment on us in questions of food and drink (cp. Col. 2:16); and that we 'let not him who eats despise him who abstains, and let not him who abstains pass judgment on him who eats' (Rom. 14:3) . . . It is not any uncleanness in the meat that I fear but the uncleanness of my own appetite. I know that Noah was permitted to feed upon all kind of flesh which was fit for food (Gen. 9:3); that Elijah also did feed on flesh (I Kings 17:16); that John the Baptist, being endued with rare abstinence, was not polluted by the living creatures (that is the locusts) which were granted to him as food (Matt. 3:4). I know also that Esau was deceived by the inordinate desire of lentils (Gen. 25:34); and that David took the blame on himself for thirsting too inordinately for a draught of water (II Sam. 23:15-17); and that our King was tempted not by flesh but by bread (Matt. 4:3); and that the people in the wilderness deserved to be rebuked, not because they desired meat, but because in their desire they murmured against the Lord (Num. 11).

Placed then in the midst of these temptations, I strive daily against the lust of eating and drinking . . . For the bridle of the throat is to be held in moderation between slackness and tightness . . .

St. Augustine (Confessions 10:31)

Do not think that you have conquered if you abstain only from delicious food . . . It is better for you to eat meat which you have no desire for, than to eat lentils with concupiscence. We are not blamed for the food but for the passion.

St. Philoxenus of Mabbug

Moderation in Fasting

On the form of fasting a uniform rule cannot easily be observed because everybody has not the same strength, nor is it like the rest of the virtues acquired by steadfastness of mind alone . . . since it has to do with the possibilities of the body and the difference of condition, age and sex.

St. John Cassian (Institutes 5:5)

Fasting and sleeping on the ground are advised for us because of our sensuality. If illness weakens this sensuality then these practices are not needed.

St. Syncletica

I do not lay on you as an obligation any extreme fasting or abnormal abstinence from food. Such practices soon break down weak constitutions and cause bodily sickness before they lay the foundations of a holy life . . . All extremes are of the nature of vice . . . You must not go on fasting until your heart begins to throb and your breath to fail and you have to be supported or carried by others. But while curbing the desires of the flesh, you must keep sufficient strength to read scripture, to sing psalms, and to observe vigils. For fasting is not a complete virtue in itself but only a foundation on which other virtues may be built.

St. Jerome (Letters 130:11)

Fasting of the Soul

Let us not believe that the external fast from visible food alone can possibly be sufficient for perfection of heart and purity of body unless it is united with a fast of the soul. For the soul also has its foods which are harmful- . . . slander, . . . anger, . . . envy, . . . vainglory, . . . lust. If then, with all the powers we have, we abstain from these in a most holy fast, our observance of the bodily fast will be both useful and profitable. For labor of the flesh, when joined with contrition of the spirit, will produce a sacrifice that is most acceptable to God, and a worthy shrine of holiness in the pure and undefiled inmost chambers of the heart. But if, while fasting as far as the body is concerned, we are entangled in the most dangerous vices of the soul, our humiliation of the flesh will do us no good whatever, while the most precious part of us is defiled . . . For it is the clean heart which is made a shrine of God and a temple of the Holy Spirit (cp. Eph. 3:16, 17).

St. John Cassian (Institutes 5:21)

It is better to eat meat and wine rather than eat the flesh of one's brother through slander.

*Abba Hyperechios
(From The Apophthegmata Patrum)*

Fasting of the body is hunger for nourishment and the avoidance of food . . . Fasting of the soul is hunger and thirst for righteousness and avoiding evil deeds and thoughts.

St. John of Lycopolis

Fasting and the Eucharist

Go to the table on which recline the faithful, the diligent, and those who keep their vigils and their fasts. Among them the Beloved sits. He purifies their table and changes the bitterness of their food by His sweetness. Receive from it the Medicine of Life in order to revive your dying soul . . . Blessed is the man who eats only from the table of the Most High Who Himself is the nourishment of the powers of light. Happy is he whose food is that Bread which came down from heaven to give life to the world. Happy is he who looks at the drink of life which came to us from the bosom of the Father.

St. John Saba

If His Spirit speaks inside us what need do we have for any other conversation? If those who stand in white robes, with palm branches and olive leaves in their hands, are among us, what need do we have for the company of people? If we have inhaled the fragrant odor of the Beloved, why do we have to breathe the foul odor of the world?

Who has ever tasted the delicious fruit of the Ocean of Life and would run toward the rotten fruit of the world? Why do you suffer the lack of a resting place? Are you not satisfied to dwell in God Who builds our homes and guards our village? . . .

Those who eat the Bread of Life never die. They are intoxicated by His love and in their drunkenness, they forget all what they have. They are beaten but they do not suffer pain. They do not eat but they do not feel hungry. They do not drink and are not thirsty. They work and do not get tired. They weep but they are joyful. They die while they are smiling, because the face of their God shows them life hidden in death.

St. John Saba

Modern Coptic Saints

FATHER JUSTUS OF SAINT ANTONY

Rodolph Yanney, M.D.

In December 1976 when the monks of St. Antony attended the funeral service for Father Justus they knew that an angel had departed from their monastery.

For more than fifteen centuries the monastery, which was named after the great Saint and built near his cave, has been standing at the bottom of a high mountain looking over the Red Sea. In its long history it has seen many saints, and it gave the Church a number of its Patriarchs and bishops. But here we do not see a man who trod the road of sanctity through a life of heroic virtues. He was not a bishop, nor an abbot, nor even a preist. He did not preach, and he left no teachings, no writings and had no disciples.

Early Years

Father Justus was born about AD 1910 in the village of Zarabee, a few miles from the ancient Coptic Monastery Al Moharraq in the province of Assiut. He was given the name Naguib at his birth. His father Shah-hat was a tailor, and this was the trade Naguib was trained in his early years. In his childhood he learned to read both Araibic and Coptic. He was chosen to be a reader in the church, and thus he assisted in the liturgy.

About the year 1939 he answered the desert call and stayed as a novice in the Monastery of Saint Paul the hermit. In 1941 he moved to the neighboring Monastery of Saint Antony where he became a monk.

A Life of Simplicity and Poverty

During his thirty-five years as a monk the only sermon Father Justus gave to his fellow-monks and to the visitors of the great monastery and actually the only legacy he left for the whole Church was his simple life. Poverty has been always one of the primary vows of monasticism everywhere, but it reached a new dimension in Father Justus; he simply owned nothing. He used to carry no money; the small monthly allowance he took from the monastery, he held with one of the brethren who kept the money and gave it all to the abbot a short time before the death of Father Justus. The money was used later to buy carpets for the monastery.



Blessed Father Justus

All the clothes of Father Justus consisted of a worn-out tunic, a cap that became colorless through age, and an old shoe which he even rarely used. During the cold winter months he covered his shoulders with a blanket which a poor man would hesitate to keep in his house. These same clothes were later treasured by pious people who wanted to get the blessing of the man of God after his departure.

One day a wealthy lady visited the monastery to meet Father Justus. When she saw him she was repelled by his dress and could not bear looking at his ragged clothes. She later saw him in the church, this time transfigured with spiritual glory, and she smelt the fragrance of beautiful incense emanating from him. The amazed lady tried to meet the Saint after church, in order to confess her guilt and declare her sorrow. But he fled and she never saw him again.

The cell of Father Justus reflected his character. It consisted of two rooms built of clay and roofed with palm branches with no windows. Anyone could peep through or go inside because it had no door. There was nothing in it but the bare floor, covered with tiny gravel for lack of care, a small old mat and a pitcher for water. There was no bed, no mattress or pillow, no chair, nor even a plate or a cup. Everything there was placed on the floor- the hard bread, the dry tomatoes, dates and onions. There was nothing of importance in the cell except the volumes of the *Psalmody*, the Church books for the Divine Office.

In fact Father Justus did not consider that the cell was his. He used to wander in the monastery, day and night. When he needed rest, he sat under a tree or next to a wall. In his early years he slept on a tree block fallen on the ground.

He ate his meals mostly sitting under a tree in the garden of the monastery. He used to fast for long hours after which he ate the bread fallen from the common table, which the monks used to throw away to the sheep. Sometimes he ate boiled beans. He had also a recipe of his own composed of bran, dried leaves, bread and onions. He never ate meat. His daily portion of food he gave to the workmen in the monastery or offered to the cats which used to follow him when he took his share of the cooked meal.

Silence and Humility

Father Justus kept his silence most of the time and when he spoke he had one question to ask, "What time is it now?" He was never tired of asking the same question again and again in the same day. It was not the worldly time he was inquiring about because more than once he proved that he knew the exact time when someone gave him the wrong answer. The monks thought he knew the time through the sun, but he also knew it on cloudy days. Probably by his question he was calling attention to the hour of the Coming of Christ (Matt. 25:13, Mark 13:32-37).

In spite of his life of silence he was always happy to meet the visitors of the Monastery. Especially during his last years, he hurried to meet all visitors as soon as he heard the sound of the door bell. He welcomed them with joy and sat with

them in silence. When the visitors left he bade them farewell one by one, blessing them.

His humility appeared in the way he treated others. He kissed the hand of anybody who kissed his. Once he was told by another monk to leave the place. He obeyed and left in peace. A few moments later, a second monk dismissed him and he left at once without uttering a word or feeling unhappy about the repeated insults.

Miracles and Clairvoyance

Strange tales began to spread in the monastery about this simple and poor-looking monk. A prior of a convent once saw him inside his cell, and intense wonderful light was emanating from him. Others beheld him carrying a live coal. Once he took a scorpion and killed it with his hand. The ancient spring of the monastery dried out after Father Justin was insulted by a soldier in a neighboring barrack. A brother was annoyed to be waked up by the man of God after midnight, asking him about the time, to find when he went back to sleep, to his great amazement, a scorpion on his bed.

Monks and visitors told many stories about the Saint who could read what passed in their minds, or know what they were speaking in his absence. He could tell what happened in far away places. When the Abbot of St. Paul's monastery died he informed the monks about the sad event. He told the Abbot of St. Antony when he was suddenly called by the Patriarchate that he had been chosen as a bishop.

His prayers were a source of healing for many. People looked at anything that belonged to him as having a miraculous power: his clothes, the loaves of bread or fruit which he gave or the water which he blessed. Some were cured when Father Justus visited them in their dreams.

Spiritual Sources

For Father Justus Scripture was his constant companion. He could recite long portions of the Epistles of Saint Paul. He had deep knowledge of the personalities of the Bible. His answers to questions were mostly by verses from Scripture.

He loved the Church, its liturgy, its saints, even its building. He used to be seen kneeling in prayer in front of the church during the night. When the bell called the monks for the Daily Office, he was the first to enter the church. When time came for departure he did not like to leave; many a time the brethren had to use force to get him out of the church. During the worship he stood with his gaze fixed toward the icon of Christ. He sang the psalmody in beautiful tunes, in the Coptic tongue which he spoke fluently. He approached the Holy Mysteries in reverence and fear. When he served in the altar during feast days he used to be dressed in the splendid tunic of the deacon, something totally in contrast to his usually poor clothing.

He prayed for hours every day. Having no place of his own, one could see him praying anywhere in the monastery, in the church, or the garden, or his cell.

He spent most of his prayer time on his knees. Frequently, when overpowered by sleep he slept while kneeling. In his cell he did numberless prostrations on the ground which, for lack of care, was paved with sand and fine gravel; kneeling on these was an agony by itself.

For the prayers of the hours he used no book as he memorized all the psalms by heart.

To Heaven

Father Justus died as simply as he lived. He was sick for a few hours before his death. One day he was found lying down with a fever in front of the guest house. A brother carried him to one of the rooms in the monastery where he gave up his spirit.

One of the monks later saw a light shining around the place where Father Justus was buried. Troops staying near by stated that a brilliant light had been flashing from the monastery for several successive nights. Also they saw the figure of a man in white clothes who carried a strong light and walked along the high wall surrounding the monastery. The monks of Saint Antony believe that Father Justus who used to walk inside the monastery during the night has not left and is still, after his departure, touring the place where he has lived for so many years, and which he still loves.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Durham Affair

By William Ledwich. Stylite Publishing Ltd. 15, Woodlands Avenue, Hanwood, Shrewsbury, Salop SY5 8NG England. Paperback Illustrated. £4:95 Sterling. Postage and packing: Air £1:50 Surface 0:80 pence.

This is a book of critical importance for all Orthodox Christians who wish to understand the destructive effect of the “Liberal Movement” in Western Theology. It is not a book for specialists though it abounds with apposite quotes from the Fathers. In the opinion of the present reviewer, who is in the thick of the present struggle, Orthodox will ignore the pitfalls of Western Modernism at their peril. This book demands the attention of all traditional Christian believers. Now is the time for Ancient Oriental Christians to ask themselves the question: “Why do we lose most of our young people?” The book under review provides two important parts of the answer to that question.

The author, William Ledwich, was chaplain of Hereford Cathedral School. He was an Anglican priest and the son of an Anglican priest. In 1984 Ledwich resigned from the Church of England after failing in a heroic, but unsuccessful fight against the consecration of David Jenkins, a heretical theologian, as a bishop. Ledwich has been received into the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Great Britain which already has a former Anglican as a bishop and several ex-Anglican clergymen in holy orders. It should be understood that most Anglican priests who leave, and the present rate is over one per week, become Roman Catholics. The Roman Catholic Church is similar to many Anglican churches. The move to Rome is relatively common and simple. William Ledwich has chosen a more difficult path. One of the saddest observations in this book is: “Within the Anglican Church I fought for the Faith alone, and was never more lonely than when doing so. There were, of course, others fighting for the Faith in their corner, but they too were isolated from the mainland of the Anglican establishment, harrassed, denounced, and patronised.” The reviewer recognises this picture. It is not exaggerated. Orthodox Anglican-Catholics, who have always existed, are now persecuted in their own church. The book also reveals the dead hand of the State resting on the State Church where orthodox Christian bishops are drawn into a complex web of collusion and corruption. Only after the consecration of the heretic bishop did the confessing bishops decide to speak out and that was too late.

William Ledwich has his personal solution: "In the Orthodox Church one is never alone in defending Orthodoxy. We are surrounded by supporters."

What is at issue? Professor David Jenkins, now Bishop of Durham, has denied the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection of Our Lord but he has done this in an extremely cynical manner by saying that he believes that they have some "spiritual meaning" though they were not historical events. Jenkins has also said that it is not necessary to believe that Jesus is God-made-Flesh to be a Christian. The Orthodox Christian may well say that this is not new. Indeed it is not. But it is communicated in crude, modern, terms adopting Television as a media for Modernist propaganda and it needs to be answered in a blunt modern manner. Those of us who have not yet taken Ledwich's logical step are grateful to him for his crystal clear defence of traditional Christian Faith.

The Christian who was born in the Middle East, or raised in an Orthodox family, will do well to notice some points in this book. The most important point is this: All children, including all Orthodox children, who are educated in the Western educational systems are drilled in the belief that there is no objective truth. This is more or less the only reason why Muslims are demanding Muslim schools in England. From the Christian point of view it is quite pointless to even attempt to persuade Modernists that their opinions are heretical simply because they do not recognize the concept of heresy. They refuse to speak the language of the Bible and the Fathers regarding both as products of an age which has passed and has no relevance. In the Western Churches private opinion has been glorified above all the thought of Christian History: the new bishop has brought this into the open: one may believe what one wants to believe. Orthodox Christians believe a Doctrine because it is revealed in Scripture and given exposition by the Fathers and Councils of Undivided Christianity. Such a notion is alien to the bishop, which is not to say that he has not studied the Fathers. He believes that he has come to know better than the Bible and the Fathers and he is a heresiarch who is using every modern means of communication to spread his new religion.

A further falsehood exposed in this book is a commonplace in Western lecture halls and classrooms, in which the present writer has spent many years. This is the assertion that there have always been divisions and disagreements in Christianity which should be tolerated in a healthy, liberal air of modern debate. Anyone with a cursory knowledge of the work of St. Athanasius the Apostolic, to name only one, knows that there were two "Christians" in the Patristic Church: those who maintained the unbroken Tradition with the Apostles, like Athanasius, and those who taught the opposite, like Arius, or others who taught strange, bizarre novelties, like the Gnostics.

It can be said that the new bishop of Durham lacks the stature of Arius: it says something for Arius that he has his lesser ventriloquist's dummies in the 20th Century. But it is fair to say that "new heresies" are no more of this Century than the pyramids.

This book is a warning: It recalls us to Holy Scripture, to Patristics, to the Faith delivered to the Apostles. The longer the Ancient Oriental Christians live in the West the more seriously they must study its wayward churches and theologians. The reviewer has been a priest for nearly 20 years in the same church as the Bishop of Durham. I am sorry that William Ledwich has gone, though each passing day confirms the correctness of his judgement, but for the moment we are grateful that he left us with this book as a sword. It is a sword which should also be raised by the Orthodox.

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John Watson

The Pauline Circle

By F. F. Bruce. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985. Pp. 106. Paper, \$4.95.

This small, but very instructive book deals with some seventy people mentioned in the New Testament who were associated with St. Paul. Some, like Barnabas, Timothy, Luke and Titus, are familiar to us. But others appeared only once or twice in the whole Scripture. However all of them attract us as they appear, each in his own place, during the journey of the great Apostle. Paul called some of them, both men and women, 'his co-workers', but many just lent him a helping hand in time of need. In them we see the true faith, the kindness, the courage, the self-sacrifice, the hospitality and the service to the early Church.

Bruce, the British Pauline scholar whose extensive writings on the Apostle include one of the most recent and most comprehensive biographies, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, is noted for his deep insight, his clear and engaging style and his ability to simplify complex subjects.

Through the study of the lesser personalities of the Bible included in this book, the interested reader can gain a deeper insight into the word of God and he can enrich his knowledge about the life of the Church and society in the earliest Christian centers in the first century. However, although the author stresses the important part that the church of Alexandria played in the history of early Christianity, yet he refuses to accept the tradition (mentioned by Eusebius and other Church Fathers) associating its foundation with St. Mark. The evidences he gives for this view are unconvincing and rather absurd.

The Apostolic Church

By Everett F. Harrison. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. W. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1985. Pp. 251. Paper, \$12.95.

This is a current and comprehensive study of the first century Church written by a noted New Testament scholar. He starts by two introductory chapters on the

political, cultural and religious background of the Apostolic Church and on the historical value of the Book of Acts. Chapter III deals with the *External History of the Apostolic Church*—its growth and missionary activity and its relation with the Jews, state and society. Chapter IV describes the *Internal Development of the Church*—Concept and Organization, Theology (gleaned mainly from the speeches in Acts), Creeds, Sacraments, Worship, Life, Ministry, Teaching (*Didache*), Tradition (*Paradosis*) and Discipline (*Paideia*). Chapter V focuses on eight NT churches (Jerusalem, Antioch, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse and Rome) providing information on the foundation, growth and social life of each and the problems it faced.

With its many references and selected bibliography for every chapter (restricted to the study of the Book of Acts and the NT Epistles, as well as the history of the early Church.

Beginning to Read the Fathers

By Boniface Ramsey, O.P. New York / Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1985. Pp. 280. Paper, \$9.95.

Many people who have never tried to read the writings of the Church Fathers do not know how much they are missing and how shallow their Christian knowledge and spirituality are till they read this book. Out of intense love for the Fathers that has deepened through years of study and teaching, Boniface Ramsey, O.P., who teaches patristics at the Catholic University of America, writes with the aim of giving the reader a taste of the great writers and preachers of the early Church.

The first chapter works as an introduction to the study of the Fathers; who are they and what can they teach us? To know the Fathers is to grasp the essentials of Christianity with their combined moral and theological integrity as well as their profound scriptural thrust.

The author then quickly carries us deep into the mind and spirit of the Fathers. In the next five chapters he gives the patristic concepts of the main articles of faith: the Fathers' reflections on Scripture, God, Christ, Man, Church and Ministry. In the five last chapters he discusses the teaching of the various Fathers concerning the different aspects of the Christian life in the world. There are separate chapters on Martyrdom and Virginité, Monasticism, Prayer, Poverty and Wealth, The Christian in the World, and Death and Resurrection.

Each chapter follows the progression of the Fathers' teaching on the subject from the beginning till the fifth century, accompanied by numerous selections from their writings in an attractive modern translation.

The book is a nice reading material and is very informative both to those who know the Fathers and to those who think they are not interested in them. For those

who wish to pursue a more in-depth study of the Church Fathers or of the problems summarized in this book, the author has provided a patristic reading program, and a selected bibliography. The former is a short chronological list of important works by the Fathers available in English, with a brief description of each. The latter includes the editions of the Fathers in the original languages, their English translations in series and in selections, and a bibliography to each chapter.

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