

Sunday, March 24, 2013

Coptic Missionary Churches (2)

In the previous article, we talked about the beginnings of the missionary churches outside Egypt. In this article we will talk about:

☆ **The Importance of the missionary churches:**

1- **Regaining the evangelistic role of the Coptic Church.**

There is a limited number of priests outside Egypt and they are overwhelmed by serving the large numbers of new immigrants coming from the homeland. This has always affected the missionary work of the church within the local communities; it has also affected the spiritual care for the second and third generation immigrants of the church. Thus, we can see the need for the missionary churches which mainly focus on serving the youths and the mission work in the society.

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3- **Harnessing the energy of the youths.** Pope Shenouda III said: "A church without youths is a church without future."

The missionary churches are the best venue to harness the energy of the youths where they can serve in unity being filled with the Spirit of God in liturgies, praises, bible studies. When the cultural and language barriers are removed, the youths can set out to whiteness, in a wonderful way, to Christ the redeemer and to the Coptic Orthodox Church, their mother which gives birth to the children of God and ministers to them with her holy sacraments and rich teachings.

Anchoring the youths in the Coptic Church and strengthen their sense of belonging towards her. In many older immigration churches, all the responsibilities of the church are still dominated by the elders of the church not leaving any room for the youth to be in leadership positions. Thus, the youths may feel marginalized and have a weakened sense of belonging and ownership, eventually, they begin to drift away from church and the Orthodox faith. Therefore, the missionary churches can help strengthening the ties of the youths with their mother church. Additionally this will increase their sense of responsibility as they feel that the church is for them and not just for their grandparents.

4- **Create an inviting environment for those who married, in the Coptic Church, to non Egyptians, and to provide a comfortable atmosphere where they can speak their own language without feeling estranged.**

When a non-Egyptian spouse joins the Coptic Orthodox Church through baptism and matrimony, they often times feel that they are strangers in a new community that mostly speaks Arabic. Thus, the missionary churches provide a comfortable setting for these Coptic families which were formed through intercultural marriages, and consequently gain them and their children to the Orthodox faith.

5- **Present the rich Coptic Orthodox tradition to the society in its own language,** whether in English, French, Spanish, German, Italian, Dutch.... Also, to invite everyone to enjoy the means of salvation through a living church that prays and preaches in the language of the society, all the while carrying a precious faith and a rich genuine tradition.

In the next article, God willing, we will talk about the reason behind the naming these churches as "missionary". We will also discuss the guidelines that should be taken into consideration to maximize the benefit of these churches

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