



Coptic Heritage: Traditions and Transitions Sixth Annual Coptic Studies Symposium (February 9, 2013)

The Sixth Annual Coptic Studies Symposium was held at the University of Calgary on 9 February 2013 with Professor Anne Moore as this year's Coordinator. Dr Moore is Director of the Graduate Programme in the Religious Studies Department and Vice-President of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies. The symposium was co-sponsored by the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies and the University of Calgary's Faculty of Arts' Department of Religious Studies and the Chair of Christian Thought. Over forty participants participated in the lively discussions.

The keynote speaker was Professor Nelly van Doorn-Harder from Wake Forest University, Winston, Salem, North Carolina. Her research and teaching is on Christians in Muslim countries and human rights. Among other publications she has authored: *Contemporary Coptic Nuns*. University of South Carolina Press, 1995. and *The Emergence of the Modern Coptic Papacy. Part III, (1800-2010)*, AUC Press, 2011. She is currently editing a volume on new horizons in Coptic Studies and writing about Mother Irini's spirituality.

Professor van Doorn-Harder's paper was titled "Returning to the Time of Teams: The Spirit of the Revolution within the Coptic Orthodox Church." Her presentation was an analytical reflection on a very recent research trip to Egypt where she had a forty minute audience with H.H. Pope Tawadros II and an hour with H.G. Bishop Pachomius, as well as meetings with other key clergy in *the Coptic and Protestant Churches* and youth groups. The concept of "team" in Professor van Doorn-Harder's presentation is drawn from one of H.H. Pope Tawadros II statements that "We need teamwork to serve the Church better:" She also met with key political leaders in the opposition. Professor van Doorn-Harder's forthright presentation set the tone for a very engaging day.

Papers that followed all took on the symposium's theme *Tradition and Transitions* covering over 2000 years of history. Below is the list of speakers and their papers in sequence of their presentations:

- Magdy El-Shamma, Assistant Professor, Department of History and Classics/Middle Eastern and African Studies, University of Alberta. *Politics, Religion, and Art: Egypt's Christians on TV.*
- Ihab Khalil, Independent Scholar. Canadian Society for Coptic Studies, Society for the Study of Egyptian Antiquities. *"I was not built up in the Womb, I was not knit together in the egg, I was not conceived." The Doctrine of the Eternal Generation of the Son in the Egyptian Context.*
- M. Goat Domeracki, PhD Student, Department of Religious Studies, Rice University. *Origen and the Possible Restoration of the Devil.*
- Heather Barkman, PhD Candidate, Department of Religious Studies, University of Ottawa. *The Church of the Martyrs in Egypt and North Africa: A Comparison of the Melitian and Donatis Schisms.*
- Lincoln Blumell, Assistant Professor, Department of Ancient Scripture, Brigham Young University and Thomas Wayment, Professor of Ancient Scripture Brigham Young University. *Some Unpublished Coptic New Testament Fragments at Brigham Young University.*
- Joseph Youssef, PhD Candidate, Department of Anthropology University of Toronto. *"Search the Scriptures." Entextualizing & (Re)contextualizing Biblical Texts and Coptic Monastic Sayings.*
- Helene Moussa, Volunteer Curator. St. Mark's Coptic Museum, Scarborough, Ontario. *Coptic Icons: Expressions of Cultural Identity and Social Agency?*
- Rachel Loewen, PhD Candidate, Department for the Study of Religion University of Toronto. *The New and the Old: The Introduction to the Coptic Orthodox Community in the Greater Toronto Area.*



Symposium Speakers and Volunteers

Symposium papers will be published in Volume 6 (2014) of the Journal of the Canadian Society for Coptic Studies.

Baptist Pilgrims Visit Sacred Spaces in Scarborough

On November 21, 2012 St Mark's Coptic Church and Museum hosted sixty-eight "pilgrims" from Yorkminster Baptist Church in Toronto. The leaders of the group were The Reverend John P. Holmes, Minister of the Congregation and Dr. K. Corey Keeble, Curator of European Decorative Arts, Department of World Cultures, Royal Ontario Museum.

This is the seventh year for the Yorkminster Baptist Church's pilgrimage to holy spaces around Toronto and beyond. Initially they visited a different church each week of Lent with the purpose to draw closer to Christ by learning to appreciate the way others within the larger church love, worship and serve Him. By the fourth year they conducted the pilgrimages by day and by bus seeing multiple sites in the course of the day. Over the years, they have traveled beyond Toronto to Hamilton, Buffalo (New York), and Pittsburgh (Pennsylvania). This year's pilgrimage' focus was on ecumenical and interfaith experiences. Together with St. Mark's they visited Temple Emmanu-El, The Nugget Mosque, St. Peter & St. Paul Ukrainian Catholic Church, St. Mary Armenian Apostolic

Church, Scarborough Chinese Baptist Church, and Immanuel Baptist Church.

At St. Mark's the pilgrims were first welcomed by Fr. Ammonius Guirguis. Dr. Corey Keebel gave a presentation on the particularity of Coptic Orthodox Liturgy. Dr. Helene Moussa followed with an introduction of the biblical, doctrinal and symbolic relationship of a Coptic Church's architecture and its icons. Father Ammonius then described historical and biblical symbolism in Coptic Divine Liturgy.

Museum volunteers Alice Hanna and Joseph Youssef were also present to answer questions and to welcome the visitors to the Museum.



Toronto District Board of Education Professional Development Day February 17, 2013

St. Mark's Coptic Museum offered a workshop at the Professional Development Day for History, Social & World Studies & Humanities teachers and Librarians, with the goal of showing how a field trip to the Museum and Church can be a learning site for their classes. Museum volunteers Alice Hanna, Joseph Youssef and Helene Moussa facilitated the workshop and Marina Fathalla was responsible for the publications table.

One of the teachers gave this insightful feedback to the workshop:

[The field visit to St. Mark's] would be a good way to extend learning about ancient civilizations and how change is continuous—students often think about Egypt as an ancient culture that existed once and doesn't occupy space in the "present"! I could see the Museum providing insights into the diverse nature of ancient civilizations and how they change and adapt throughout time.

