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# *A Pastor from Egypt*

**Stories from the Life and Ministry  
of  
Dr. Rev. Menes Abdul Noor**

*Written by*  
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English edition edited and revised by

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## ***Foreword***

This is the story of a friend. Its words carry a few facts of happenings and portray some intrinsic personal details.

When the pages cannot contain all the deep facts of life, and the available space cannot possess all the details, the writer must control his pen to find enough space for his thoughts.

It is a story in which my feelings and mere words are mixed, and in which the emotions embrace the facts. Besides being a story about a friend, it is also a story about my church. It is not so much a documentation of happenings of the past as a perspective on the future.

***Naiim Atef***

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## *Preface*

The purpose of this book is to show God's work in the life of His vessel - we have the treasure in jars of clay. At the same time, just as much as the people of the Middle East study about men of God from the West, men of God from the West need to know that the Lord is also at work in the Middle East.

Christians emphasize the fact that God is love whereas Muslims emphasize the fact that God is great. Christians, however, say that the greatness of God is at the service of his love. We present Christ to our Muslim neighbors as a Healer, as a Savior, as the One who answers prayers. We are here as a small bit of yeast in a large portion of dough. We are here to be salt in the food, to preserve it and to give it taste. We are the light of the world and that is what we are supposed to be. Now, we are not always bright lights, we are not always good salt, we are not always effective yeast, but that is what we should be. We have a role to play as a minority. We have a ministry to carry out and a service to render to our society. We have schools to serve Christians and Muslims alike and we have Christian hospitals to serve the sick whatever their faith may be. We are here to serve - we are here to witness.

An Egyptian Christian is always being watched by his Muslim neighbor, simply because he is his neighbor. In Egypt, we live together in the same buildings, we go to the same schools, and we also look the same. Sometimes Muslims hold it against Christians saying, "They drink wine and eat pork", however, most of the Christians in Egypt do not drink wine or eat pork. We are exposed to one another, we know each other and we share each other's joys and sorrows. When a Muslim or a Christian dies, both Muslims and Christians see to it that he is buried properly and when there is a wedding, Muslims come to church to express their joy over the wedding. There are many good relationships between Christians and Muslims. There may be a difference in creed, but we do not always

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discuss this... because we are neighbors. According to 1 Peter 3:15-16, when there is a question raised by a Muslim, then in response, there should be an answer in the heart, mind and tongue of the Christian.

Pastor Menes says, “My vision is what I want to do. Mission is carrying out my vision and bringing it to life. When I accepted Christ as my Savior at the age of 15, I wanted others to know the Savior I had come to know because of the joy I received on that day. That vision has stuck with me ever since. In every sermon I preach there is a call for repentance - an invitation for those who are not yet born again to be born again – and there is also an explanation about the personal relationship with God, that God loves us and that we can have a personal relationship with him which stands the test of time.”

The reader of this book may be confused when he reads the names of the family members of Pastor Menes: this is due to the fact that Egyptians do not have family names. A woman does not change her name when she marries. Indeed, Egyptians have a first name and are known by it. They then bear the first name of their father, paternal grandfather and paternal great-grandfather. This is why in Egypt we say that Pastor Menes is Menes Abdul Noor Mikhail Abdul Noor. He is the son of Pastor Abdul Noor and the grandson of his grandfather Mikhail and the great-grandson of his great-grandfather Abdul Noor from the paternal side. His mother is Amira the daughter of Pastor Abul-Farag who is his grandfather, from the maternal side.

We hope that this book will bring glory to God who has been working in the life of someone who was willing to obey him.

***The Author***

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## Chapter One

### *Amira, the Princess*

On one sunshiny morning, in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the house of one of the pastors of Upper Egypt, Grandma Esther gave birth to a lovely daughter who was given the name of Amira Abul-Farag (Amira means “princess”). Pastor Abul-Farag, her father, was very specific when it came to naming his children. Even when his son was born, he said that this was a “grace” from God, and he therefore named him Abdul Monem (slave of the Gracious). The pastor had this special delight in naming his children and he used to defend his choices vigorously.

Let us go back to Amira, the fourth child in the house of Abul-Farag, the pastor of the Evangelical church in the city of Manfalut, 350 kilometers south of Cairo, which lies in the province of Assiut. Amira grew up in the pastor’s house. In those days it was not the custom for girls to receive an education. Indeed, it was believed to be generally sufficient to simply train them to prepare them for marriage (i.e. housework, some reading and writing etc.). But Pastor Abul-Farag raised his daughter like a princess. He enrolled her in the American school for girls, the Pressly Memorial Institute, as a boarding student. It is surprising that he was able to do that in those days - just before the Egyptian revolution in 1919, which affected the whole country, and especially the province of Assiut. However, the pastor was known for his firm decisions and determination, and that was why the princess went through primary education as well as four years of high school.

In those days the girls of elite families used to go to school until the “suitable groom” came along. When you wanted to wish a girl well, you would say to her, “May the suitable one come to you.” This was a good wish because it was God who brought along the “suitable groom”.

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And the “suitable groom” did one day come for Amira. He was a pastor just like her father. Was it not enough to have one pastor in the family? However, this was only the beginning, because the family later became “filled” with pastors.

The groom was a godly man. His name was Abdul Noor. He was pastor of an Evangelical church in Deirut al-Sharif, and came from the same province as the bride. Now who was Abdul Noor? This is what we will discover in the next chapter of this book, as his life deserves to be looked at.

Amira, the bride, gathered her few belongings and went to her new home. She left behind her the life of a pupil to take on the difficult task and heavy responsibility of a pastor’s wife.

Many may not know of the responsibilities of a pastor’s wife in an Egyptian village early in the twentieth century. She carried many of the same responsibilities as her husband, although without being paid for it.

Amira knew the role she would have to play as a pastor’s wife well, since she had seen Esther, her mother, play it before her. She also knew that a pastor’s wife is also a pastor of her husband’s flock:

She would have to visit the sick and counsel the needy.

She would have to share the joys and sorrows of her husband’s parishioners.

She would have to be a counselor to all the ladies and young women of her church.

She would need to do all she could in order to make her home comfortable for her husband and children.

She would always need to keep her home open to church visitors and guests, and the guests of a village pastor are many – be it from the village itself or from elsewhere.

She would have to take care of the financial situation of her home and to make both ends meet with the few pounds her

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husband earned.

It would be expected of her to humbly listen to the grumbling of the female church members without grumbling herself and to carry the burdens of others without asking anyone to carry her own burdens, as the villagers expected the pastor's wife always to be cheerful and strong!

Amira, the young wife, was able to fulfill all these expectations. She was deeply loved and respected by the members of the church as well as by the villagers and "Omm Menes" (the mother of Menes) as they called her, played her role wisely and efficiently.

Amira gave birth to her firstborn Menes Abdul Noor on the 22nd of October 1930. In this way she presented the church with one of its bright stars. It is however unfortunate that she did not live long enough to see her firstborn preach.

We nevertheless still have happy memories of the virtuous lady, Amira Abul-Farag, who became a mother, and what a mother!

Her daughter, Fadila Abdul Noor, the wife of Rev. Helmy Henein, one day said that her mother taught her to pray every night before she went to bed. Her mother once told her the story of a child who had been rescued from certain death as an answer to her prayer. Fadila says, "Since that day, I pray every night before going to bed, remembering my mother who put my feet on the right path."

Her son, Pastor Menes, says about his mother, "She loved the word of God and used to spend much time reading her Bible and meditating on it. When she became very sick she stayed in bed with her Bible beside her. She used to hold the Bible with both hands. And when her hands became too weak to hold it she would ask one of us to read for her. She drew her power and comfort from the word of God."

On August 8, 1946 rheumatic pains defeated her failing

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heart and her soul rose to heaven leaving behind her children: Menes, Abdul Masih, Yousef, Fadila and Sobhi. The first and the third became pastors and Fadila married a pastor.

Menes was shattered when his mother died at the age of 36. He was only 16 years old at the time. What does a teenager do in such a situation? Who can take the place of a mother? The broken-hearted son kept his mother's Bible and some of her school books in order to always remind him of her bright mind and her devoted heart.

*LORD*

*We thank you for Amira Abul-Farag.*

*We thank you for her mother Esther  
and her father Pastor Abul-Farag.*

*We thank you for her offspring,  
who are the fruit of her weak body  
and her fervent spirit.*

*We thank you for her open Bible.*

*We thank you for her life of devotion  
that is now with you in glory.*

*Amen.*

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## Chapter Two

### ***Three Patriarchal Fathers: Mikhail, Abul-Farag and Abdul Noor***

Amira, the mother of Menes, was a fruitful vine which brought forth good fruit just as good soil produces good crops. However, there were three patriarchal fathers who also had their influence on the life of Pastor Menes: his grandfather on his father's side, Mikhail Abdul Noor, his grandfather on his mother's side, Pastor Abul-Farag, and his father, Pastor Abdul Noor Mikhail. Let us start in the village of el-Gawli in Assiut Province (340 kilometers south of Cairo) where Grandfather Mikhail lived.

#### ***Mikhail: The Leader who Paid a Price***

Grandfather Mikhail's full name was Mikhail Abdul Noor Ghali Obeid. He was born in the second half of the 19th century when the Evangelical church was just at its beginnings in Egypt and lived in the village of el-Gawli in the province of Assiut.

His father was called Abdul Noor, and Abdul Noor was a rich Coptic Orthodox. He was a saraf - a man who collected the taxes for the government. Sarafs would usually get a good salary from the government. Mikhail was pampered as he was the youngest son. One day, as an adolescent, he heard the Gospel message from some missionaries who went from village to village in the district of Assiut, preaching the words of the Bible and the message of salvation. Grandfather Mikhail responded to the message and was one of the first members of his family to join the Evangelical church, but his spiritual birth obliged him to leave the church of his family, the Coptic Orthodox church.

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When he accepted Christ, as a consequence of the preaching of the missionaries, Mikhail was thrown out of his home. Even his horse was taken away from him and he was forced to go and find work. He therefore took on a simple job with the Egyptian Railways, but he later made sure that his children received their education at the American Mission School in Assiut, which was founded by the missionaries in Upper Egypt. The oldest child, Musa, became a postmaster in Mallawi and another son, Abdul Noor, became a pastor.

It was not easy for Mikhail to leave the belief of his whole family and ancestors' beliefs. To accept the Evangelical belief was to swim against the tide somehow and this required strong spiritual conviction, but Mikhail was a person capable of taking such a decision. He was willing to pay the price - which was very great. His family was very unhappy with him and reacted with sarcasm and rebuke, but far worse than that was the fact that his family disowned him. However, God compensated him with the love and solidarity of his wife Damiana, and his two sons, Musa and Abdul Noor, and the Evangelical church became his larger family.

In those days, a member of the Evangelical church knew that his new-found faith meant a strong attachment to the Bible, without which he could not bear the name of an Evangelical. This meant that his Evangelical wife had to learn how to read, so that she could also read the Bible. Grandfather Mikhail therefore started to teach her how to read. He did not, however, teach Damiana how to write, since living in an Egyptian village in the 19th century, he thought she did not have the need to write anything to anybody. Her husband was available a lot of the time since he worked for one of the government's most disciplined organizations and this enabled him to organize his time well and write any letters, if necessary.

He gave his faith the highest priority and sent his son Abdul Noor to study at the Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary.

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These studies were to equip him to be a pastor who would faithfully preach the message of the Bible. He later laid the foundation for Abdul Noor's service (as it was the custom in those days) by marrying him to the daughter of an Evangelical pastor. His wife, Amira, supported and helped him in his ministry.

Pastor Menes does not remember much about his grandfather Mikhail's life but understands the role he played in laying the foundation of his Evangelical family. He does, however, remember that his father, Abdul Noor, took him to visit Grandfather Mikhail when he was ten years old. His grandfather prayed for him and blessed him. A fat turkey was then killed and a big feast was prepared for them. Later, Abdul Masih, Pastor Menes' brother, commented that their grandfather's blessing was very significant. Fadila (who is quite witty) said that she remembers their grandfather had blue eyes and blond hair but that Pastor Menes took after their father, not their grandfather!

It is not easy to live as a Christian in Egypt because Christians are seen as second-class citizens. In almost every country where Christians are a minority, they seem to exhibit a lack of confidence, both in themselves and in what they believe. They act like the ten spies who returned to Moses from Canaan and declared that the proposed invasion should be called off (Numbers 13:28-33).

What is more, in Muslim states, the Christian's behavior is enforced by social attitudes dating back to the seventh century Covenant of Umar. A major purpose of the Covenant was to protect the life and property of Christians and Jews who were resident in Muslim countries, but it did so, on strict conditions. First of all, Christians were to put no obstacles in the way of any fellow Christian who desired to become a Muslim, and secondly, Christians were to make no attempt to convert Muslims to Christianity.

Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab used the Covenant to consolidate

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his conquests. He would present it to Christians in conquered territories, and demand that they sign it. The covenant came in different forms. One version reads as follows:

“In the name of Allah, the Merciful the Compassionate: When you arrived in our country, we asked you to protect our lives as well as of those of our family members and our brothers in the faith. We furthermore requested you to guard our property. In return for these services we pledge neither to build churches or monasteries, nor to repair those in areas in which Muslims reside.

We declare that we are not allowed to hide any spies or foreign envoys in our churches or monasteries, nor to withhold information from Muslims that could endanger their welfare. We vow neither to conduct our religious services outdoors nor to recommend this in our sermons. We agree not to hinder anyone in our religious fellowship from following Islam, if that be his wish. It is our duty to treat Muslims kindly and to stand when they sit. We will not build our houses higher than theirs and we will walk on the left side of the road. We will not deal in alcoholic beverages and we agree not to display our books or our crosses in Islamic areas. We impose these terms on our co-religionists and ourselves. He who rejects these terms is entitled to no protection.”

Nowadays, most people may not know anything about the Covenant of Umar, but its spirit is still very much present today. The Egyptian Christians used to pay a special tax according to Sura 9 of the Qur’an, verse 28, “Jews and Christians pay the tax out of hand in humility.” The Jew or Christian had to go to pay this tax in person. He could not send anyone else with the money, as he was to be humbled and humiliated as he paid his dues.

This was stopped when Muhammad Ali took over the leadership of Egypt and Egyptian Christians were considered

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to be equal under the law. Muhammad Ali was an Albanian soldier who came to Egypt and ruled over Egypt from 1805 until he died in 1849. He was the one who exempted the Christian Egyptians from paying the tax and gave them a chance to live as equal citizens.

However, the influence of the Covenant of Umar is still very much felt nowadays as far as the building, maintenance and restoration of churches is concerned but we can be very grateful that President Mubarak gave the authority to maintain and restore churches to the governors of the provinces. Thus, should the church in Assiut now need any maintenance for any reason, the permit could be obtained from the governor of the province. In the past, the permit had to be granted by the King himself or the President of the Republic, even if the flush in the toilet was all that had to be repaired. Nevertheless, should one want to build a church nowadays, one still needs the personal signature of the President of the Republic.

Today, Christians no longer walk on the left side of the road, like the Covenant of Umar requires, but they are still considered to be lower in status to Muslims. We see the same attitude in countries in which the majority are whites. In such countries there is a discrimination against the blacks, or vice-versa like in Zimbabwe. The majority always have more rights than the minority. But Christians in Egypt do not feel this as badly now as in the days of the early Muslim invaders, and our grandfathers' generation would not have felt the discrimination as badly as others did before Muhammad Ali.

### ***Abul-Farag: The Brave and Strong Grandfather***

Menes' maternal grandfather, Abul-Farag Saad, became the preacher of the Evangelical church in Manfalut after he spent several years serving in the Sudan as an evangelist and a pastor. Pastor Abul-Farag had many qualities, not only was he healthy but he was also a man of steel! Spiritually he was a man of strong faith - a very brave preacher full of enthusiasm

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for his faith. It is well known that when the Mahdi Revolution broke out in Sudan, and many Christians were obliged to convert to Islam, he immediately went to help bring back the lost sheep into the fold. He supported the strong, encouraged the leaders and helped the weak. God helped him accomplish this with courage, strength and success, and there are many stories that give a perspective on the full life of this servant of God.

### ***Abul-Farag and the Lion***

During one of his evangelistic journeys in the Sudan on a camel, Pastor Abul-Farag and Muhammad, his Sudanese guide, had to cross a desolate place. Not far off he saw an African lion on the side of the road. In such a situation there is no way to escape except by divine providence. The Sudanese guide said to the pastor, “You are a servant of God. Your life is more precious than mine. God shall preserve your life and keep you to serve him. Now let me first send my camel to move in front of the lion. If the lion is hungry he will eat him and then we can leave safely. If the lion is still hungry I will go towards him and he will eat me. Most probably he will then be satisfied. But if he is still hungry send your camel to him and I am sure then that you will be safe, because the lion is certain to be satisfied by then.”

That was the plan of the Muslim guide who loved the servant of God. But the love of God for his servant was greater. The pastor and his guide passed by the lion, and they found the latter to be fast asleep. Isn't our God the same yesterday, today and forever? He is the same God who closed the mouths of the lions in the Old Testament days so that they did not eat Daniel.

### ***Abul-Farag and the Church of Atbara, Sudan***

While serving in the Sudan, Pastor Abul-Farag needed

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money to purchase a piece of land in the city of Atbara to build a church. Neither he nor the congregation had enough money to pay for the land, but this obstacle did not cause this man of faith and courage, to lose hope. He went to meet the governor of the province and asked for permission to build a church. When the governor asked him where the land was on which he wished to build the church, the pastor answered:

“I shall choose the location and you will give me the land for free.”

“And why would I do that?” asked the governor.

The pastor answered, “Because this will help you keep law, order and security in the land. When people worship God they will return to the law and there will be no thief or murderer. This will save the government money.”

The governor admired the pastor’s zeal and courage and gave the land free of charge and this is the same land on which the Evangelical church in Atbara now stands!

Pastor Abul-Farag recorded his memoirs in three volumes, “*Al-Annat*”, which means “Groanings”. Indeed his groaning at night in front of his Lord for the salvation of souls brought forth much fruit. His grandson Menes said that his grandfather was a strong, well-built man. He had a very good memory and his spiritual strength was in answered prayers.

Menes remembers his visit to his grandfather’s home with all the cousins. They would gather around Grandmother Esther to hear a Bible story and pray before each aunt carried her children off to bed. Menes’ grandparents had seven girls and three boys!

Grandfather Abul-Farag used to visit Menes’ family regularly in Deirut al-Sharif. He would pray for his sick daughter, Amira, and encourage his broken hearted son-in-law.

After graduating from Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary and before his ordination, Pastor Menes wrote an

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article published in the church magazine, “*Al-Hoda*”. His grandfather read it and wrote him a letter to encourage him. The letter began with the words “To the respected evangelist Menes.” It was signed, “From Abul-Farag, a member of el-Gawli family, who loves you very much.”

A few months after he wrote this encouraging letter to his grandson he went to be with the Lord.

### ***Abdul Noor: the Shining Example of a Village Pastor***

Menes’ father, Abdul Noor, was at first an evangelist and studied evangelism in a school for evangelists, but later discovered that this would never lead to ordination. He, therefore, worked his way through high school at the American Mission School in Assiut and then joined the Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary where he graduated and was ordained as a minister. In those days it was rare to find someone who had completed high school and then went on to higher education.

Using Biblical language, Pastor Abdul Noor, was “the angel of the Evangelical church of Deirut al-Sharif.” He was the church angel who served that church for almost 60 years, from right after he graduated from seminary in 1927 until he went to be with the Lord in 1985. Pastor Abdul Noor Mikhail deserves a whole chapter to tell the story of his life. We sometimes do not really realize how precious our fathers in the faith are - may God forgive us. The life of this great man can be seen from three perspectives: the father, the servant and the man of prayer.

#### ***Pastor Abdul Noor, the Father***

Many pastors get so occupied with their ministry that they forget their family but Pastor Abdul Noor saw that he had to

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manage his own family before taking care of God's church. He did this well and saw to it that his children obeyed him with proper respect. He brought them up with the fear of the Lord in their hearts. During summer school vacations, Menes says that his father took the opportunity to lead the daily family devotions. He would ask his children to share in reading a chapter of the Bible and memorize a Bible verse by heart. He would gather them together to read from the Bible and to pray every morning - each in his turn. He used to take Menes to church with him and on the way back home, his father used to discuss the sermon he had preached with his son to see whether he had understood it. Menes' father practised what he preached.

The village pastor not only had to teach his children spiritual matters, but was also responsible to educate them. There were no schools in the village so Menes was taught at home until he reached the second grade in primary education at the age of eight.

When Pastor Abdul Noor's children were old enough to start going to school, the closest one was the Evangelical primary school in Deirut al-Mahatta but that was about four kilometers south of Deirut al-Sharif. At the time, the only suitable means of transportation was on the back of a donkey. The pastor did not own a car. In fact, in those days no pastor did - neither did the mayor of the village! Menes' father, therefore, had to buy a donkey to take his children to school. He would wake up at 5 a.m. to have his quiet time, would go and get the donkey from the nearby field and would then take his three children, Menes, Abdul Masih and Yousef to school on the back of the donkey. The same trip would be made in the late afternoon to bring them back home again. During the ride, which took about one hour, their father would tell them stories so that they would not become bored with the long ride. He would also tell them about the delicious food awaiting them at home. What a loving father! Except for clothing and food, this pastor deprived himself of everything in order to educate his children.

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### ***Pastor Abdul Noor, the Servant***

The life of the village pastor differs greatly from that of a city pastor, and so do his responsibilities. The village pastor must be a guide in all respects, and an attorney for all the village people. This is not strange because he is the trusted one and the keeper of family secrets. He is the one who has the last word in every dispute or counsel and he also witnesses all oaths and signs documents and contracts. He is also the peacemaker and judge when needed. Pastor Abdul Noor lived the life of an exemplary servant of the village. This left a strong impression on Menes and prepared him to be a successful village minister himself.

Abdul Masih mentioned that his father would not hesitate to leave the house at any time of night when he was needed. He used to take the sick to the doctor in the nearby town, and he would see to it that they took the right medicine at the right time. He used to go with simple peasants to government offices in order to defend their causes. He would also take positive steps in helping the village to develop. He also began literacy classes to wipe out illiteracy so that his church members could read the Bible.

He knew exactly what our dear Christ said; *“Anyone of you who wishes to be great among you must become your servant.”*

The church in Deirut al-Sharif had very high walls, and inevitably, the windows and seats would get dirty. So who cleaned the church of Christ? Some of the church members volunteered to do so, but who would do all the cleaning when they were busy? No other but Pastor Abdul Noor himself, and that often was twice a week! How great was Pastor Abdul Noor: he purified the minds of his congregation with the word of God and he cleaned the place of worship with his broom. The pastor dreamed of buying a bell for the church to call the members to come to the meetings, since they did not own any watches, but this wish of his was not fulfilled. Instead, God made the pastor’s sons living bells - they would call the

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passers-by to come to the house of the Lord!

***Pastor Abdul Noor, the Man of Prayer***

The secret of the holiness of Pastor Abdul Noor Mikhail was prayer, and his prayers were answered. Pastor Menes said that people used to stop his father in the street and ask him to pray for them! This he would always do and this touched Menes' heart immensely.

Fadila said that her father taught her that God was the first one we should contact when faced with a problem. When she used to come to her father with a problem he would first pray with her before discussing the issue. She sometimes got annoyed at that, but then she would become ashamed of herself when she experienced how the Lord answered her father's prayers immediately.

How can the Lord help but answer a man who sold his wife's gold - with her consent and approval - to a goldsmith in order to use the money to complete building the church? He asked the goldsmith to keep this a secret and did not even tell this to his own children! When the overwhelmed goldsmith made it known to some people, the pastor became very upset with him. Does not the Lord reward openly those who serve him in secret? *"Blessed are the pure in heart because they will see the Lord."*

The great majority of people in Upper Egypt are Muslims, but Pastor Abdul Noor used to go to their funerals to express his condolences and he was always well respected. Sick Muslims would come to him for prayer for their healing. This he would do and the Lord performed many miracles as an answer to his prayers. When he arrived at a Muslim funeral, the man who chanted the Qur'an at the funeral would begin chanting the story of Jesus from Sura Al Imran or Sura Maryam to show his appreciation that the pastor of the village had come to express his condolences toward the family of the

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deceased. Those were good days of good friendships between Muslims and Christians. They accepted each other as they were.

*LORD*

*Thank you for Grandfather Mikhail  
who opened the door of his family to the Lord,  
so that his home became the good soil for many pastors.*

*Thank you for Grandfather Abul-Farag  
who was powerful in truth,  
but submissive to you.*

*Thank you for Father Abdul Noor  
who was a light and an example.*

*Thank you for godly parents.*

*Thank you for children,  
grandchildren and great-grandchildren.  
Elders give us loving care while young ones give us hope.*

*Amen.*

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### Chapter Three

#### *From the Village Bus to the Donkey*

Pastor Menes' memories go back to the mid-thirties of the last century. When he reached the age of schooling, his peers in the big cities went to city schools, but he did not, because there was no school in Deirut al-Sharif. His father, therefore, decided that Menes would be "home schooled"!

At home, he was the only student. His teacher was his mother - a teacher in training – and the principal of the school was, of course, his father. It was a very successful school. Menes studied reading, writing, arithmetic and science besides English and Arabic. When he was eight, his father initially took him to Assiut to study at the American Mission School but because of his mother's poor health, his father moved him to the Evangelical Primary School in Deirut al-Mahatta.

At the beginning, his transportation was by village buses. They were very old, slow, broken down vehicles owned by a private company that charged half a piaster. The village bus also carried the farmers with their produce. Unfortunately, one day, the bus ran a child down and killed him. After that, Menes refused to travel by bus. His father, therefore, hired one of the villagers to take him to school and bring him back home on a donkey, but sometimes that villager would forget to bring him back! Why should he tire himself going back and forth? So, Pastor Abdul Noor bought a donkey and began taking his son to school and bringing him back himself.

After three years, Menes succeeded in completing his primary education - this was in May 1941. Being ten years old, his father considered him mature enough to take care of himself as a boarding-student in a secondary school and so he enrolled him in the American Mission School in Assiut, 60 kilometers south from his home, which was the same school

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Pastor Abdul Noor had attended years earlier. There, Menes spent five years in high school education, until May 1946.

He managed quite well being away from home for long periods of time, without the guidance of his father and loving care of his mother.

When Menes joined the American Mission School he was a very thin young boy with little experience. He had to face many changes and deal with things that he had never confronted in his previous “two Deiruts” (Deirut al-Sharif and Deirut al-Mahatta). Assiut was a huge town, completely different from where he had been brought up. The streets were wide, long, paved and lit with electric lights at night. At the school, the food was delicious, but lacked his mother’s special flavor. There, he met many teachers and several famous missionaries of the time. He also met many church pastors and elders and came to know a lot of pastors’ children. Many of his peers became pastors and lay church leaders. During the years he was at the school, many things changed in his life. The greatest change in his life was meeting the Lord Jesus Christ and opening his heart to accept Him as his Savior and Lord. Another significant event was when he received the heavenly call to become a minister.

#### *LORD*

*We thank you for childhood days and memories  
- days of innocence and sweet dreams.  
Thank you for your divine protection  
during the daily hustle and bustle  
and thank you for your protecting hands  
in the quietness of the night.*

*Thank you for our godly fathers  
who guided us as lamps to lighten our paths.  
Thank you for our godly mothers  
who served us to give us the water of life.  
We thank you for knowledge and enlightenment*

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*and thank you for our schools, teachers and books.*

*We thank you for the warmth of our homes  
and for the loneliness of separation.*

*We thank you for our mother's warm embrace, even if we lose it,  
and for the warm embrace of Jesus, who stays with us forever.*

*Amen.*

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Chapter Four  
*Childhood, Innocence  
And Mischief!*

Do the children of pastors and church leaders live normal childhood lives? Do they have all the freedom others of their age have? Does the profession of the father have a direct influence on the behavior of his children? Are they in any way repressed because they are forbidden many things? Does the community judge them as if they themselves were pastors? Must they be expected to walk in their father's footsteps or take on a position that does not fit them?

These are very important questions that must be raised, taking Menes as the example of a typical pastor's son.

The children of a pastor carry burdens that their peers do not. They face commitments greater than those usual for their age. Others judge them by higher standards, which cannot be applied to their young ages. The pressures can turn into very heavy burdens and the repression inside them can turn into rebellion. In a few cases this could turn into refusal to follow Christian moral standards, possibly lead to deviation and even cruelty.

However, in the house of Pastor Abdul Noor it was different. There was tranquility there, but also mischievous behavior. Even children who come from generations of pastors can get up to mischief.

*Chalk Thrown at the Head of Mr. Judson Allen*

Menes was only twelve years old in his second year of high school. He probably felt lost and left out in this big school and probably wanted to get attention from those around him. One

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day he got this bright idea of standing up in class and throwing a piece of chalk at the teacher's head. He thought that this would draw the attention of the teacher towards him and portray him as the brave boy in the eyes of his classmates! He chose his English teacher, Mr. Judson Allen, who was quite influential at school - this would make it even more daring!

The piece of chalk did hit the teacher's head and every student laughed but the punishment was worse than Menes expected because Dr. Russell, the school principal, called for his parents. Pastor Abdul Noor had to meet the principal, apologize for his son's bad behavior and promise that this would never happen again. Our pastor did nothing other than what kids of his age did.

However, the uncommon thing that happened later was that this mischievous action inflicted on the English teacher ended up becoming the basis of a deep friendship between the teacher and his student. The teacher later became the treasurer of the American Mission School in Assiut and the student became a pastor who was very influential in the church.

### ***The Son of the Pastor Goes to the Movies***

Our pastor spent his teenage years as a boarding student and lived among students from different upbringings and backgrounds. Back then adolescence also had its social pitfalls. The rich liked to show off that they were rich, while those in need experienced extreme embarrassment. One of the ways to show off was to be able to go to the movies. The son of the pastor did not want to go to the movies, but, in order to show that he was financially able to buy a movie ticket, he did go. He, however, did not enjoy much of the film because all throughout he was asking God to forgive him. He had gone against his family's guidelines by going in the first place and had been weak in not standing up against peer group pressure from his fellow students.

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### ***Menes' brother up in the Tree***

This is another story about the mischief of pastors' children. It was one of Menes' brothers who masterminded the plot and executed it. His third brother, Sobhi, climbed a tree in the churchyard beside a deep well, left some of his clothes on the ground and hid between the tree branches. Passing by, his father saw the clothes and thought that his son had fallen into the well. Hoping that he was still alive he called to him down the well. When he got no answer, he started to weep and lament thinking that his son had drowned, but suddenly he heard his son's laughter! This is the kind of mischief which pastors' children get up to. This son later became one of the pillars of el-Gawli Evangelical church when he was ordained as an elder of that church.

### ***The Neckties of a Seminary Roommate***

While at the Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary, Zikri Hanna, a student of the seminary's graduating class, was a roommate of Swailem Sidhom and Menes. Zikri was supposed to preach in one of the churches in Cairo on one particular evening. When the two seminarians (future pastors!) realised that Zikri was going to wear formal clothes, one of them hid all of Zikri's neckties. They then both stood and watched the poor Zikri searching frantically for his neckties. They couldn't help but laugh at the desperate Zikri, but at least they were kind enough to end up showing Zikri where they had hidden them.

***LORD***

*Thank you for your ministers.*

*Thank you for their homes.*

*Thank you for their children.*

*Fill their hearts with joy and their mouths with laughter.*

*Amen.*

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Chapter Five

***Pastor Against His Will:  
“I Did Not Want to Be a Pastor”***

***Friday December 14, 1945***

Menes Abdul Noor was 15 years old when Joseph Zaki el-Melihi invited him to go with him to the student meeting at the Soul Salvation Society in Assiut. That was on Friday December 14, 1945, in the evening. The speaker that night was Brother Rizk Jadallah. Brother Rizk was a well-known evangelistic preacher all over Egypt. He was a daring believer and preached salvation in Christ everywhere. He was a living testimony and God used him to bring thousands of souls to Him. He was a good example to many preachers.

That night, Brother Rizk asked the young Menes to give his life to Christ. He prayed with him and Menes experienced the new birth that night. Although Pastor Abdul Noor thought that Menes had been born again sometime before, Menes understood that night what it really meant. Pastor Abdul Noor believed that this experience was in fact only a deeper consecration to Christ. In any case, that night was the beginning of a great change. Menes believed it was a new beginning to a new life.

The “newborn” pastor’s son returned to his room, knowing that something new had started within him. Indeed, from then on, his life belonged to Christ. The Sunday that followed made it clear to him that this meant even more than he had thought!

***Sunday December 16, 1945***

Two days after his conversion, Menes walked to the football grounds to pray and meditate alone. The place was very quiet. When he reached the center of the football grounds

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he suddenly heard a voice say, “You will become a pastor.” The voice was so audible and clear that Menes thought that someone was standing behind him. He turned around to see the speaker, but there was nobody there. At the back line of the football grounds he heard the same voice again. This was when he knew for certain that the voice came from heaven. At the corner of the football field he heard the same message for the third time.

Pastor Menes had mixed feelings at that time. He did not like the idea of becoming a pastor. He actually hated it, because it went against all his previous hopes and dreams for his life. Now, what were his dreams and how did they all change?

### *The Way of Life in a Pastor’s House*

The lifestyle of Pastor Abdul Noor gave him neither the chance to discover the skills of his children nor see their dreams for their own lives. He wanted them all to be pastors and he saw that all their studies should be aimed at preparing them for this ministry. Interest in science, arts or literature was considered a luxury not to be found or given attention to in the homes of poor people. Menes and Yousef liked science, and Abdul Masih, Menes’ first brother, said that the two brothers used to carry out experiments in secret on the roof of the house. Once, they even tried to produce their own lemon tree! His brothers did not like having him around at the time, so he would work on his own inventions, one of which was boiling water in a kettle and having the steam move a fan, which his sister Fadila would hold, near the steam! His brothers and sister thought that he was a real genius. However, his father scolded him for wasting the kerosene needed for cooking!

Menes’ scientific tendencies were brought to light when he was in his third year of high school. His chemistry teacher, at the American Mission School in Assiut, Mr. Emile Rizkalla,

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influenced Menes greatly. Menes wanted to specialize in chemistry and to become a chemist. He dreamt of becoming a scientist like all other great scientists and to invent something to improve the conditions of the human race, but God had another plan for him.

### ***A Prayer of Submission***

It was 1:20 pm on Sunday December 16, 1945, when Menes received his calling to be a minister. While walking alone on the football field that afternoon, he was filled with incredible struggles because this calling went against everything that he wanted. He was not happy with it, but at the same time he was afraid to rebel against it.

He knelt down and prayed to the Lord, “I do not want to be a pastor but if you want me to, then I will say yes to you, and you will have to fill me with the joy of submissive obedience.”

Menes waited for two hours before going to knock on the door of the school chaplain, Rev. Tawfik Saleh. He told him that he wished to join Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary. Knowing that Menes was a mischievous student, and unaware of the fact that he had accepted Jesus as his savior, the chaplain thought that Menes only wanted to join the seminary in order to skip the difficult science studies. He therefore told Menes, “Go and finish your science education and then apply to join the seminary.” So, Menes continued his studies and received his certificate of science.

At the American Mission School in Assiut, mid-year vacation was always from December 24 until January 8. At Christmas time he went home and told his father of the divine calling and his father was very pleased. He knew that this was an answer to his prayers, for he wanted all his children to be pastors. However, Amira, Menes’ mother, was worried about the consequences of his decision. She feared that obeying this call would lay such a spiritual burden on him that he would be

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crushed under it. She quite possibly compared him with her own strong father who had gone through so much during the course of his service. She feared that the ordeals he would encounter in the ministry would oppress her young and slightly built son, so she discussed all the issues with him - the burdens and the heavy loads he would have to carry. However, once she felt that he was sure of his call and decision, she encouraged him and prayed for him. This was eight months before she died.

With his parents' blessing, Menes then joined the Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary.

*LORD*

*We thank you for blessing our vision  
and fulfilling our dreams.*

*Thank you for correcting our paths  
and guiding our wishes,  
for we only see the visible and the tangible,  
but you see the obscure, the mysterious,  
the hidden and the unknown.*

*We thank you for the glory,  
joy and blessings of serving you  
and we thank you for the ordeals  
and burdens of the ministry.*

*We thank you for our pastors.  
We thank you for the divine call,  
for how beautiful are the feet  
of those who bring good news.*

*Amen.*

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## Chapter Six

### *Pastors in the Making*

In September 1946, Menes applied to the Mallawi Presbytery to accept him as a seminary student. The responsible committee was about to refuse him because of his young age, but two members of the committee supported him and he was finally accepted.

In October 1946, the Upper Egyptian, Menes Abdul Noor, went to Cairo, the capital city of Egypt, for the first time in order to join the Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary. This seminary was and still is a respected institute, which has seen hundreds of capable preachers and sincere evangelists, graduate. It is a “pastor-producing factory”. It is the “potter’s house”, where academic studies are presented in an evangelical spirit and it has produced “instruments for noble purposes made holy and useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.” Who are nobler than the servants of the Lord, the soldiers of Jesus and the ambassadors of the King of kings?

The new student, Menes, and his colleague, Swailem Sidhom, arrived in Cairo at Bab al-Hadid railway station. Zikri Hanna, an older student of the seminary, met them at the station and took them to the seminary where they were to live and study. Zikri became their mentor and their guide for a whole year. He led them to their destination, but the two young men were so awestruck by the greatness and size of Cairo that they did not pay attention to the way. The only landmark that they noticed was the tramway station because near this station was a garden with a fence made of big jars which they nicknamed, *Mahattet al-Balalees* (the station of jars).

One day, Menes and Swailem went on their own to attend a

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youth meeting at Ezbekia church. However, without Zikri, they boarded the wrong tram and ended up totally lost in another suburb. They asked about the *balalees* but no one understood what they were talking about! Someone ended up telling them to walk east, so they did. They walked for a long time until they had no strength to walk anymore, but still they found no *balalees*. Back at the seminary, Zikri was beside himself and blamed himself for not having gone with them. The two students finally met an Upper Egyptian who knew the geography of Cairo better than they and he managed to guide them in the right direction. Had the Lord not taken care of them and provided them with the right advice from another Upper Egyptian, the church would not have heard about Menes or Swailem, nor benefited from their services! They later found that the *balalees* were not the only landmark which helped to remind them where to get off the tram. Indeed, they soon discovered there was a white tramway and a yellow one.

At the seminary, Menes learned from great theological teachers - Egyptian and non-Egyptian - such as, Pastor Ghobrial el-Daba'a, Pastor Ghobrial Rizkalla, Pastor Labib Mishriki, Dr. Botros Abdul Malik and Doctors Willis McGill, John Thompson, Willard Atchison and Everett Grice.

The years of study were combined with practical training for the ministry. Some readers may think that seminary students read the Bible half the time and spend the other half in prayer, or that they fast most of the days and rarely eat because they have a monastic spirit. But, seminary students live a completely normal life. The only difference is the calling on their lives.

*LORD*

*We thank you for the seminary  
because it greatly serves the church.*

*It is like a field that produces the best grain and a garden  
that presents each church  
with one of its flowers.*

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*We thank you for the old institute  
that produces pastors and men of God,  
and is the maker of your church pillars.*

*Thank you for the “feet of Gamaliel”,  
for the old and contemporary professors,  
the teachers of education  
and the guardians of your Word.*

*Please accept the efforts  
of the teachers who interpret your Word.  
Fill the minds of the students  
with the knowledge of your truth.  
Flood the hearts of the students with godliness.  
Amen.*

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## Chapter Seven

### *Diary of a Village Pastor*

The title of this chapter was borrowed from one of our esteemed Egyptian writers, Mr. Tawfik al-Hakim, who wrote a book entitled “*A Diary of a Procurator in the Countryside*”. In this famous Arabic book Mr. al-Hakim mentioned different village personalities, such as the farmer, the hireling, the village elder and the mayor. He even mentioned the “village idiot” to whom he dedicated a special chapter. Of course, Mr. al-Hakim did not touch on the lives of our pastors. We, however, cannot disregard the village pastor who represents the main pillar for the service of the church. We shall now visit one of these countryside churches and meet the young Pastor Menes Abdul Noor.

After graduating from Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary in May 1949 he was ordained in October 1950 as pastor of the Evangelical church of Nazlet Herz, 270 kilometers south of Cairo. Nazlet Herz is a small village in Minia province in Upper Egypt.

He was now officially a pastor. His voice was heard among his peers in presbytery meetings, and he had the same right to vote on church affairs that his father and grandfather had. He was now responsible for a church and a congregation but in reality, he had become a pastor a long time before.

Some people are born pastors, and Pastor Menes and his brother Pastor Yousef Abdul Noor (1933-1980) are among those. Pastor Yousef remembered how his brother Pastor Menes used to imitate his father by gathering his brothers and sister together and playing “pastor”. One day, his sister’s cat died and all of them were very sad. Menes took them to the church, made them sit down on the pews and gave a very touching sermon, the title of which was, “Don’t grieve like the

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rest of men who have no hope.” After that he went with them to bury the cat.

When Pastor Menes became the pastor of the Evangelical church of Nazlet Herz he was only 20 years old, but he had had more experience than other pastors older than him. This was due to four reasons: the first was his upbringing in an Upper Egyptian village. The second was due to observing his father’s ministry and what he had learned from that. The third was that as a member of the Evangelistic Committee of the American Mission School in Assiut he had preached in 15 village churches in the vicinity of Assiut. He had even spent one summer preaching in Hawatka, near Assiut when he was a seminary student. The fourth reason was the triangle consisting of his love for the Lord, towards His ministry and towards the village.

### ***The Mechanic at Hawatka Mill***

During the summer vacation of June-September 1947 Menes was appointed by Mallawi Presbytery to serve at Hawatka, 40 kilometers north of Assiut. There he spoke to the young people about the new life in Christ and four young people accepted Jesus as their Savior during the months of June and July.

During the last week of July 1947 there was a pastors’ conference to be held in Tanta, 80 kilometers north of Cairo. Menes and his friend, Swailem, from the seminary, decided to take that week off and go to the conference. There they met Rev. Marcos Abdul Masih, pastor of Zeitun Evangelical Church, and a convert from Islam. They asked him how to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He answered that there are two conditions for this filling: one is the willingness to obey the Lord with all one’s heart, for the Bible says, “*The Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey him*” (Acts 5:32). The second is to believe that the Holy Spirit filled you because of

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your vow to obey, “*So that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit*” (Galatians 3:14). He also said that the fruit of this filling is victory over sin, and a fruitful ministry (Acts 1:8).

Swaillem and Menes were both eager to obey the Lord with all their might and they therefore both believed that the Holy Spirit had filled them.

Upon returning to his field of ministry, Menes experienced new power in preaching and he saw much fruit. Sixty nominal Christian young people accepted Christ as their Savior during the two months of August and September 1947. Every night they would hold a two hour prayer meeting during which many others were touched.

At this time, there was a mechanic, a man by the name of Habib, who maintained the motor of a grain mill. He had his room behind the mill and some women, while waiting for their turn to grind grain, would go and sleep with him. He was also known to be a hired murderer and would kill people in the night when his work was finished. He was also a drunkard and the children would throw bricks at him because of his drunkenness. He lived a wretched life.

One day, Menes went over the names of the church members with Mr. Yassa, the church deacon, and commented, “We have not yet visited this lady.”

The deacon answered, “No, and we do not want to visit her either.”

“Why not?”

“Because her husband is an evil man.”

“This is exactly the kind of person that Jesus would go and visit” Menes replied.

“Alright, I’ll show you the house and I will stay outside while you go and visit,” the deacon finally said. He did just as he had said and Menes knocked on the door. The man, Habib,

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looked out of the upper window and said, “Who is there?”

“The evangelist!” Menes replied.

Habib came running down, opened the door and cried, “Never has an evangelist or priest wanted to see my face or to visit me. Please come in.”

Menes told him that Jesus loves sinners and told him the story of the Samaritan woman. He also told him the story of Zaccheus. Habib wept and accepted Christ that very day. Habib’s life changed so completely that he was the talk of the whole town.

When Menes had completed his four months of ministry, he and the church members celebrated Holy Communion together and wanted to add the new members to the church. The church session accepted everybody except Habib because of his terrible past. They said, “Yes, he has changed. Yes, he is a new person in Christ, but we don’t want a person like that to be a member of our church.” Menes was very saddened by that, but Habib accepted the fact that they did not want him. He said, “I do not deserve to be a member of the church even though I am a member of the body of Christ.”

Two years later, Menes passed by the same village and dropped in to see Habib. He found him sitting in his room behind the mill reading his Bible. Habib did not know that Menes would be coming to visit him, but his new life in Christ had stayed and that was a great encouragement.

### ***Charismatic?***

That summer, while Menes was still ministering in Hawatka, members of a nearby church would come and listen to him. This made their pastor very angry because he thought, “This little boy is taking my members.” He therefore wrote a complaint against Menes to the Mallowi Presbytery Evangelism Committee and they decided to hold a sort of

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church court. Menes spent that whole night praying, as he did not know what was going to happen to him.

The next morning he sat outside the door where the meeting was taking place until he was called in. Pastor Tanious Zakhary, one of the pastors said, “This gentleman is telling his young people to accept Christ as their Savior. Are we against that?” They answered, “No”. He then went on, “The complaint written against him says that he is a charismatic person while we are Presbyterian. Is the one who speaks about new life in Christ, charismatic? Then, we should all be charismatic!”

So Menes was affirmed in his ministry and the ‘church court’ did not proceed. Pastor Tanious, who had come to his rescue invited him to preach in his church at Nazlet Herz the last three days of September 1947. Menes accepted his invitation. When Pastor Tanious left Nazlet Herz, the church invited Menes to work there for the four summer months of June to September 1948, between his second and third year of seminary. The church then remained without a pastor until Menes graduated in May 1949 and finally became their pastor – all this, thanks to a man who defended him against the charge of being charismatic.

### ***The Pastor of Nazlet Herz***

Pastor Menes spent 11 years in Nazlet Herz (1949-1960), shepherding people who were as old as his father and grandfather. This is one of the wonders of ordination as a minister. In Egypt, as soon as someone is ordained he is called “Father” no matter how old he is. Usually God honors people’s expectations of their young pastor and God gave Pastor Menes the wisdom of the “elders”, which enabled him to serve the older community very well. But why are we so surprised? Didn’t God say to Jeremiah, “*Do not say, ‘I am only a child.’ You must go to everyone I send you to and say whatever I command you*”? (Jeremiah 1:7).

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At the beginning of his ministry it is common for a young pastor to be filled with mixed emotions of pride, fear, awe and worry and above all, a feeling of helplessness before such enormous responsibilities. Many questions could arise in his mind:

Where will I get the material for my sermons?

Where will I get the ideas, and how do I not repeat myself?

Where can I get interesting stories and illustrations so my sermons will not be dull or monotonous?

How can I be honest in facing my congregation with their sins and shortcomings, without negative remarks? How do I not provoke their pride?

How can I be accepted, especially by the elders and responsible people, while I am scolding them?

What language should I use to reach so many different levels of people – both educated and illiterate?

How can I talk to the young and old together?

How should I act and what should I say at funerals?

How should I perform the wedding vows?

How do I deal with people from different Christian denominations that are not Evangelicals?

How do I deal with those who do not accept the Christian faith?

How do I deal with government authorities?

How do I deal with old and young ladies in village culture? Should I disregard their needs to evade criticism, or should I talk and counsel with them even if this gets me into trouble at times?

How can I accept the simple and limited life in the village, and overcome the feelings of jealousy towards city pastors?

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Will the village be my final destination? How will I progress in my life?

If he is single, he could wonder:

Who will take care of me? What will I eat? Where will I find my future wife? Should she be from the city? If so, would she agree to live in the village? etc.

Pastor Menes, at some stage, had considered all these questions. When sleeping alone in Nazlet Herz with nobody to share his hopes, fears and dreams, he must have prayed till he was too tired to pray anymore! But, the Lord arranged the right person for him who would share his worries and hopes. Indeed, before his ordination he married one of his relatives - his cousin - the beautiful Nadia Arsanious Sefein, in July 1950.

These questions must bring worry to the heart and mind of every young pastor, but prayer is the best possible answer. God speaks to his faithful ministers and gives them peace of heart and mind - this is the experience of all devoted pastors. They come out of times of discouragement more courageous and willing to serve God.

### ***Possible Mission Work in Sudan***

In 1950, Pastor Menes and his wife wanted to go to southern Sudan as missionaries. His wife gave all of the gold she owned to the Egyptian Evangelical Mission of the Synod of the Nile towards this goal.

Rev. Swailem Sidhom, who was not married, also wanted to go - so the church mission board finally decided to send Swailem to the Upper Nile province as a missionary. They said that if Swailem succeeded, then they would send Pastor Menes and his wife as well. Swailem was to prepare the way. During ten years of his ministry in southern Sudan he led 3,000 people to the saving knowledge of Christ and he

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baptized 3,000. Then he moved to Limuru, Kenya as a professor of theology to train southern Sudanese to serve in the southern Sudan.

The vision of going to southern Sudan did not materialize because the borders closed against Christian mission activity.

Many years ago - 50 years ago or so - Christians used to share their faith, not because they wanted to bring the person to their faith, but just in order to witness to their faith because they were faithful. People used to listen because there was no goal of winning them to another faith. Also, Muslims did not try to win Christians to their faith. The modern Muslim propagation movement as such, actually began in late 1970.

### ***The Pastor Protected by Thieves***

One day, Pastor Menes found out that nearby churches did not have any pastors while he would preach seven nights a week in Nazlet Herz. He, therefore, came up with a plan to have one of the leaders of his church preach once a week in Nazlet Herz in order to give him the time to go to four churches every month. One of these churches was the Evangelical church in the village of Ja'weer, three kilometers west of Nazlet Herz. It was in a desolate area and he had to walk on a road in the middle of cornfields to get there. Traveling on such roads by night was risky and dangerous, just like the road going down from Jerusalem to Jericho. Thieves and highway robbers were everywhere in the fields and used these as their hiding-places. Some Ja'weer church members would therefore accompany Pastor Menes home after his preaching and as they were in a group, they would be safe. However, Pastor Menes thought that it was too much for them to work all day in their fields, attend church, then walk three kilometers from Ja'weer to Nazlet Herz and back again. He therefore ventured out alone one night, depending on the protection of the Lord and repeating to himself, "*He who*

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*dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.*” That night he reached home safe and sound.

But the next day some thieves went to the elder of the Nazlet Herz church and told him to stop his pastor from taking such risks. They said that they had seen the pastor walking alone and had recognized him. Knowing that there was a group of thieves in the area who did not know him they walked quietly in the fields parallel to the road to guard him and to see that he got home safely. The church elder thanked them, prepared a banquet for them and paid them for a job well done. When Pastor Menes heard this story a year later, he said, *“The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him and rescues them”* (Psalm 34:7). That night God did not use “the angel of the Lord” but the “devils of the earth” to protect his servant!

### ***Extra Laborers***

Pastor Menes soon discovered that many churches needed a pastor. He invited an American missionary, Mr. Charles Hoffmeier of the Egypt General Mission, to come with his family to work in Nazlet Herz. They came in 1954 and lived in the village. The pastor and the missionary planned to visit two churches every week in the provinces of Minia and Assiut. This gave the church leaders of Nazlet Herz the chance to preach twice weekly in their village, so as to give their pastor an opportunity to bring the good news to other villages. Mr. Hoffmeier had a car and this helped greatly in visiting many churches.

The Egypt General Mission also sent a missionary nurse to begin a clinic to serve the poor villagers in the area around Nazlet Herz. Soon she was treating more than 150 poor people a day, every Monday and Thursday. She would then visit her patients in their homes on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays.

This brought healing to the bodies of thousands and good

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news to the souls of thousands. This ministry continued from 1954 to 1964.

### ***Conflicts and Reconciliation***

Pastor Menes used to write a thank-you note to anyone who had been a blessing to him. One day, Pastor Menes wrote a letter to Mr. Glen Clark - care of the publishing house Clear Horizons in Minnesota - thanking him for the book he wrote. This particular book was about George Washington Carver, the black scientist who discovered 106 different uses for peanuts. Mr. Clark was so happy to receive a letter from Africa that he wanted to come and visit Egypt. Pastor Menes was pleased and invited him to come, which he did. Mr. Glen Clark came with a friend of his, Rev. Roland Brown and his wife Marcia. They built a good relationship with Pastor Menes over the years. Mr. Glen Clark went to be with the Lord in 1956, but Rev. Roland Brown kept visiting Egypt every other year from 1954 to 1966. Rev. Roland Brown used to preach to the synod and at the time Pastor Menes was the official translator for the Synod of the Nile. In the year of 1956 there were three big conflicts which were on the agenda to be resolved by the Synod. Reconciliation took place during the ministry of Rev. Roland Brown as he preached to the Synod. There were no conflicts in the Synod meeting that year.

In Nazlet Herz, there was a quarrel between two big families. One family was Coptic and the other was Evangelical. When both complained to Pastor Menes about the other family he would insist that the speaker say something nice about the other family. When he heard something nice he would go to the other family and say, "They are saying good things about you. They told me that which you have done."

"Did they really say that?" they would ask in astonishment.

"Yes! How would I know if they had not told me?" Pastor Menes would reply. So he contributed towards their

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reconciliation by bringing out the positive aspects and putting the emphasis on what was good. Before their reconciliation, these two families had each wanted to shoot the other. It was a lasting reconciliation and so Pastor Menes became the adviser to all the villagers.

***The Story of a Rabbit with Long Ears, saying “A”***

The pastor had a strong urge to teach all the villagers how to read and write so that they could read the Bible. He therefore asked the literate villagers to volunteer to teach the illiterate ones and thus the motto of the literacy campaign became “Each One, Teach One.” To motivate the literate villagers to volunteer to teach, the following theme was chosen, “I want Jesus Christ to use my body, mind, time and tongue in His service in Nazlet Herz.”

The campaign began on December 4, 1952, and Rev. Samuel Habib came in January 1953 in order to spend three months helping. On January 30, 1953, a celebration of joy and illumination was held in the main square of the village. After only six weeks of training, twenty-nine men and women who used to be illiterate were finally able to read in front of the village mayor and the chief policeman of the district.

The literacy work was so successful that Mr. Stanley High, the senior editor of the Readers’ Digest magazine, came to Nazlet Herz to see what happened. He wrote an article in his magazine entitled “*Revolution via the ABCs*” and published it in the October 1955 issue.

Dr. Frank Laubach, who was a missionary to the Philippines, invented the method used in teaching the illiterate. The American Mission in Egypt asked Dr. Laubach to come to Egypt to apply his method, and Dr. Davida Finney, a missionary to Egypt, initiated this great activity. She and her assistant, Miss Marjorie Dye, asked Pastor Menes to apply Laubach’s method in his village. Because of his dreams to

advance the spiritual and material welfare of the villagers he gladly accepted.

To teach the illiterate the alphabet, Dr. Frank Laubach would put the alphabet letter in a picture. For example, the letter “A” in Arabic is alef. It is written like this: ا. The ear of the rabbit stands up like the Arabic alef: ا. Rabbit in Arabic is “arnab”, so a rabbit is drawn and one of the ears is made to look like an alef. The student is asked, “What is this picture?”

He would say, “Arnab.”

“How does the word ‘arnab’ begin?”

“It begins with alef.”

“Here is the alef in the arnab’s ear. Anywhere you see this letter, which looks like the ear of a rabbit standing up, you can think of ‘arnab’ and alef. Then the letter ‘alef’ becomes an ‘a’.”

This method was used with the other letters of the alphabet.

The partnership between Pastor Menes and Rev. Samuel Habib was a meeting of two spiritually like-minded leaders and creative, enthusiastic souls. They were both born again at a youth meeting organized by the Soul Salvation Society and they had been part of a prayer team ever since seminary days. Moreover, they had the same objective of improving the spiritual and financial village situation.

The successful literacy campaign uplifted the morale of the villagers and they discovered that their brains were just as good as the literate people's. More of those who were reluctant at first became enthusiastic and also wanted to start learning. Little by little, they started to read their Bibles and to sing using hymnbooks.

But then a new need appeared. Someone was needed to write simple books for the new literates to continue reading, as more books would help to prevent them from falling back into illiteracy. Pastor Menes therefore began to write in simple

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classical Arabic. He soon became the pioneer of writing in simple language, preaching in simple language, presenting radio messages that everyone could understand and finding simple solutions to huge problems. He influenced his readers, listeners and viewers who understood him fluently and easily.

Pastor Menes spent eleven years serving Nazlet Herz and he gave that village all he could.

### ***From Nazlet Herz to New York City and Back Again***

Pastor Menes was astonished when one of the American missionaries one day informed him that he was to receive a scholarship to study at the Biblical Seminary in New York. On July 1, 1956 he boarded a Norwegian cargo boat from Port Said to New York City. Farid, his son, was only four days old then and Violet, his daughter, was four years old. It was difficult for Nadia and Menes to part for fifteen months because of his studies, but Nadia nevertheless encouraged her husband to make the effort to be better equipped in the service of God.

In New York, Pastor Menes studied full-time. He initially came as an auditing student but chose to do the homework set by the lecturers. When his professors noted the standard of his homework, the seminary dean asked him to work towards a Masters' degree, as he was meeting the requirements for it.

The dean gave him one week to choose the title of his thesis and after spending time thinking and praying, Pastor Menes felt an urge to write on, "*Evangelizing Muslims in Egypt*". He had this conviction for five reasons: First of all, he felt that this was what God wanted him to do; second, no thesis had been written on this subject by any Biblical Seminary graduate until then; third, the New York municipal library was on Manhattan's 42nd Street and had a great collection of Arabic and English books on Islam written by missionaries in Muslim countries as well as by Muslims themselves; fourth, Dr. Earl

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Elder, the Professor of Islamics at Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary when Menes was studying there, had retired and now lived in Philadelphia, Pa. and could be reached easily by phone as a mentor and advisor; and fifth, one of the Biblical Seminary professors, Dr. Cummings, had studied Islam and agreed to be his advisor on the subject. Dean Ahern and Dr. Cummings, therefore, gave approval to Pastor Menes to begin writing his thesis on that particular subject.

### *A Turning Point*

Pastor Menes' interest in reaching Muslims for Christ was actually not awakened until 1956 when he began writing his thesis on the chosen subject. Many books made him sympathetic towards evangelism to Muslims and enthusiastic about it. Among these were the writings of Samuel Zwemer, the apostle to Islam, which touched him subjectively and objectively. The subjective reason was that Menes' father, Pastor Abdul Noor, was one of the secretaries of Dr. Zwemer during 1924-1927 and the objective reason was the depth of his writings, dealing with Islam from an evangelistic point of view.

Three things struck Pastor Menes as he was writing his thesis: first, the necessity of evangelizing Muslims; second, the difficulty of the task; and third, the possibilities in spite of the difficulty. He asked himself: "Why did I not think of evangelizing Muslims before?"

At Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary from 1946-49, Menes had a great professor of Islamics. The latter had however only taught on the philosophy of Islam and the different sects of Islam and Menes had never seen or read a Qur'an before in his life. It had all been theoretical, academic study, not evangelistic study. However, from Manhattan's 49th Street, Pastor Menes visited the New York City library on 42nd Street, and found many books on Islam.

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He got the idea of putting together six pamphlets to give to Muslims. Pastor Menes wrote to his wife about this but the Egyptian authorities intercepted his letter. This got him into trouble with the authorities and when he returned to Egypt in September 1957 he was barred from leaving the country until 1970. Pastor Menes was on the black list and because he could not leave the country, he missed his chance to study for his doctorate.

Pastor Menes received many invitations to speak here and there but he had to turn these down, as he was not allowed to travel outside of Egypt. In 1970 he got his first chance to leave when he was offered a job with the Middle East Council of Churches as Secretary of Christian Education. It nevertheless took the police a month to prove that he could go.

While Pastor Menes was in New York, Dr. Frank Laubach asked his son Bob, a professor of journalism at Syracuse University, to get Pastor Menes a scholarship to study three summer courses on simple writing, news editing and short story writing - this equipped Pastor Menes to be a better writer and editor.

Pastor Menes returned home to Nazlet Herz on a Dutch cargo boat at the end of September 1957 and Nadia met him at Port Said. He was delighted to see his daughter who had turned five years old and his son who was fifteen months old. What a happy reunion that was!

### ***Was Menes' Preaching Understood?***

After ministering in the village for more than ten years, Pastor Menes was called to be a full-time editor of publications for the Synod of the Nile. For this, he had to leave Nazlet Herz to live in the city of Minia, but before he left he wanted to check if the villagers whom he served had understood what he taught and preached. He therefore visited a group of farmers in the field and after a little chat, he asked,

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“Who can explain to me what salvation is?”

One of the farmers said that he could. He collected some straw and made a circle of it. He then found a worm and put it in the middle of the circle. He set the straw on fire and watched the wretched worm trying to escape with no avail. He then stretched his arm down to where the worm was and pulled it out from the fiery circle, placing it safely away from the fire. He looked up at the pastor and joyfully said, “Pastor, this is salvation. A loving, mighty arm reaching down to where the perishing sinner is, to take him to safety.”

Pastor Menes’ heart was full of relief - he had explained the Gospel message well enough and he could now move on to another place.

*LORD*

*We thank you for the Egyptian village,  
the source of food production.  
We thank you for the simple good farmer  
who presents us with fresh food  
although we always forget to thank him.  
Today we pray for him and ask that you will bless his work.*

*We thank you for the Egyptian female farmer  
whose dress, faded from the sunlight,  
covers a compassionate heart.  
Bless her thin, exhausted body  
And fill her hands with goodness.*

*Thank you for village churches and their pastors.  
Write a “Scroll of Remembrance” of what they give  
sacrificially.  
Fill their lives with satisfaction,  
their hands with goodness  
and their ministry with much fruit.  
Amen.*

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## Chapter Eight

### *The Girl from Zeitun*

The title of this chapter could be the title of an Arabic novel written in the 1950s, but it is actually meant to affectionately describe the beautiful city girl, Nadia Arsanious Sefein, who lived in the district of Zeitun, a suburb of Cairo, and who became the life partner of Pastor Menes.

In his childhood, Menes used to play with his aunts' daughters at the house of their grandfather Pastor Abul-Farag. Nadia, however, was not among them because she lived in Cairo, not in el-Gawli. When he joined the seminary in Cairo Menes used to visit his aunt in Zeitun - in Egypt, the aunt is like a second mother to her nephews.

Alone in Nazlet Herz, Menes would think about his future bride. According to him, he had not been given the chance to court anyone, let alone live a love story! But, he says, that he was lucky to get married to Nadia at the age of twenty.

The story goes like this: During the Synod of the Nile meeting in March 1949 the two Pastors Abul-Farag and Abdul Noor stayed at the house of Mr. Arsanious Sefein, the son-in-law of the first and the brother-in-law of the second. There they saw Nadia and they both decided that she should wed Menes. They spoke to Nadia and her parents and asked Nadia if she would accept, which she did. It is not clear if she submitted to the wise choice of the elderly, or whether she accepted because she was emotionally convinced but, in any case, the grandfather and the father must have bowed down and worshipped the Lord when she did accept, just like Eliezer of Damascus did. They did not, however, give Nadia gold and silver jewellery or articles of clothing, nor did they give her family members, costly gifts (see Genesis 24:26, 53).

To the question whether Pastor Menes' strict father-in-law

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gave him a hard time during the engagement time, he answers, “No, never. However my aunt, who was also my future mother-in-law, feared that should her daughter marry a village pastor, she would meet the same fate of my mother who died at the age of 36.”

Nadia said, “Mother was cautious, but my father and my uncle, who was also a pastor, encouraged me to marry a bright promising servant of the Lord.”

At that time it was the custom of the groom to offer the bride gifts of gold and silver but because Pastor Menes had no money, his father took care of the matter for him. Nadia had just finished her schooling but did not have a job, yet nearly overnight a job dropped into her lap. She got the job of the wife of a village pastor, and she and Menes got married.

When she traveled to Nazlet Herz, it was the first time she had ever left Cairo. After five hours of travel by train they took a taxi from the train station to go to Nazlet Herz, 12 kilometers away. In the taxi to the village she saw mud huts and shacks and she immediately began to pray that her new home might not be like one of those! When they arrived, to her great relief, her young husband led her to a simple clean apartment above the church building. The Lord had answered her prayers even before she had uttered them - matters were not as bad as she had feared.

Granting that there was no electricity, no running water, no telephone and no transportation by bus or train, only a donkey or bicycle for the pastor to ride and a specially ordered taxi for his wife, the young bride turned this new home into a little paradise! It was unlike any other in the village. Days passed and Nadia became known as the “priestess” of the village and mother of the church.

Nadia had accepted Christ as her Savior before she got married and Menes agreed to become her counselor should she come to him for spiritual counsel. In this way he became his

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family's counselor before being the counselor of his church members. Even though Menes had been pastor of Nazlet Herz for a year before he married Nadia it took time for the people of the village to trust him as their confidant. Menes and Nadia used to go and visit people in their homes together. They would pray together or counsel families when they had problems with their children or between the husband and wife. Menes depended on her and referred cases to her to take care of. She was the mother of the church in spite of her young age when they began the ministry.

Today she is invited to preach several times a month and she speaks in different places throughout Egypt and the Middle East. In 1968, Nadia became the editor-in-chief of the churchwomen's magazine "*Cornerstones*" and still carries this responsibility up to the present day. Nadia was honored as a lady worker of the church in December 2002 in the city of Luxor. AWEMA - the Arab World Evangelical Ministers' Association - meeting in Cyprus honored her in March 2003 for her services.

In 1952, Nadia gave birth to a daughter, Violet, who became a dentist. In 1956, she gave birth to a son, Farid, who became a medical doctor. Nadia took good care of them and prayed for them. She was a fruitful vine in all the areas of her home. She was a good example to her family and she was also the pastor of her family.

Pastor Menes' children were happy for him to be a pastor because they saw their classmates come for counseling and leave the place in peace. They always respected his ability to share the reconciling message of Christ with others and they also saw the results. When they tried to reach others for Christ themselves, they saw how difficult it was. However, since they saw the fruit of their parents' ministry, they were content and enjoyed a good relationship with their father and mother. In 1976, Farid went to the Olympics in Canada and tried to reach people for Christ there, but he found it very difficult. He came

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back with a new admiration for his father, saying, “You are doing the most difficult job in the world and you are doing it successfully.”

Farid practices as a medical doctor in America and he is called to hotels when the guest gets sick. One time he was asked to visit Michael Jackson and he spent one hour with him, talking about his faith. He told him, “You take care of children? But you cannot take proper care of them until you have your own relationship with the Child of Bethlehem.” - it was around Christmastime. One of Jackson’s bodyguards was not happy that the doctor had stayed so long, but it was not he who wanted to stay - Jackson would not let him leave! How good it is that he is interested in reaching others for Christ.

As for Violet, she is married to a good Christian worker, Maher Fouad. He is the general secretary of AWEMA, Arab World Evangelical Ministers’ Association. She worked with Maher in Campus Crusade for Christ for many years. They both traveled to South Africa and Kenya together for training. Violet is the director of a tourist agency and also works as a dentist.

When Violet, gave birth to a daughter named Iman, nicknamed “Amy”, Nadia received the official title “Teta” (i.e. Grandmother). Iman graduated from the American University in Cairo in June 2001 and got married in November 2002. Nadia’s nickname was properly established when she had more grandchildren. Violet and Maher then had a son called Amir. Farid and his wife, Karen, had four children - David, Nadia, Nawel and Daniel. May the Lord bless the house of Pastor Menes and Nadia. May their children and grandchildren be like olive shoots (Psalm 128:3).

*LORD*

*We thank you for our contented wives who are the fruitful vines and shining lights in our homes.*

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*We thank you for our beautiful, gentle, tender daughters.  
Thank you for their smiling faces, gentle hands and pure  
hearts, for they are the sweet fragrance in our homes.*

*Thank you for our children and grandchildren,  
for they are like the flowers in our gardens  
and the fruitful trees around us.  
May their branches carry much fruit  
And give shade to those who need it.  
Amen.*

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## Chapter Nine

### *Pastor Menes, the Writer*

When you talk about a writer you also need to give proper attention to his readers since they are his audience. In the olden days in Egypt, readers used to be interested in reading, meditating on what they read and discussing this with other readers. They put just as much effort in their reading as the author had put into his writing. This encouraged the author to do his best to benefit and challenge his audience.

Writers did not gain anything from writing, yet they continued to do so. Pastor Menes was one of them. He wrote many books, the first one being “*Have You Received the Spirit of Power?*” which was printed in 1954. This may have been the first book which he actually wrote, however the first of his books to be published was “*Daily Meditations*”, which he wrote for the new literates from January to December 1953.

Pastor Menes wrote his first book because he was convicted by the necessity of being filled with the Holy Spirit. This book was later developed into “*The Fruit of the Holy Spirit*” which has three sections: how to accept Christ as your Savior, how to be filled with the Holy Spirit and the result of the fruit of the Spirit in the life of the believer. So, Pastor Menes developed his first book “*Have You Received the Spirit of Power?*” into “*The Fruit of the Holy Spirit*”.

In fact, to be very precise, his very first book ever written was the one which he wrote when he was in his last year of high school, right after his conversion. It was entitled “*Gracious Giving*”. This book was written by hand and never published. Its only reader was Menes’ father who already then felt that his son had the gift of writing and encouraged him to continue in this path.

### ***A Writer from Nazlet Herz***

Nazlet Herz was a quiet, tranquil place. It lay gracefully among the fields beside a river. Its population in 1949 was no more than one thousand people, which is less than the size of the congregation that attend the Sunday evening meeting at Kasr El Dobara Evangelical Church in Cairo! The great majority of those in Nazlet Herz were Christians.

Nazlet Herz was peaceful during the day and completely quiet in the evenings and it was in this environment, Pastor Menes would sit and write his sermons and books. This place gave him peace in his soul and the time for quiet prayers and in-depth studies of the Bible.

### ***The Chair under the Kerosene Lamp***

Pastor Menes had to write in the poor light of a kerosene lamp because there was no electricity in his house. For ten years four “companions” gave each other faithful company: the pastor, his pen, the paper and the kerosene lamp. Morning light would often find three of the four companions exhausted! It would find a weary pastor, a dry ink pen and a lamp without kerosene. The only real survivor would be the paper enriched by what had been written on it.

From the years 1950 till 1960, Pastor Menes wrote about eight articles per month. These were published in different Arabic and English magazines. These included “*Risalat al-Salam*” (The Message of Peace) published by the Nile Mission Press; “*Risalat al-Khalas*” (The Message of Salvation), published by the Soul Salvation Society; “*Al-Shark wal Gharb*” (East and West), published by the SPCK; “*Al-Hoda*” (The Guidance) and many others. He also wrote for “*The Upper Room*”, “*Moody Monthly*”, “*Together*” and “*Presbyterian Life*”. Some published his articles under his own name and others under the nickname “The Village Pastor”. In 1959, Pastor Menes, together with Rev. Samuel Habib and

Rev. Amir Gayed, launched “*Agnihat al-Nusur*” magazine (Eagles’ Wings).

### ***The Story of a Book and Five Egyptian Pounds***

Pastor Menes submitted his first book, “Have you Received the Spirit of Power?” as a hand-written manuscript to a Christian publisher in Cairo, the Nile Mission Press, which was one of the most respected publishing houses in the Arab World at that time. Pastor Menes waited for an answer but did not receive one. It is thought that the chief editor did not think that a beginner could write a book that would be worthwhile and the manuscript was subsequently misplaced.

However, two years later, the Nile Mission Press appointed a new director, Mr. Aubrey Whitehouse from Australia, who had been a missionary with Egypt General Mission and who knew Pastor Menes personally. He wrote Pastor Menes a letter stating, “You submitted a manuscript but we did not give you an answer. If you have another copy of this book, then we will look at it and see whether it is fit to be printed.”

As there were no photocopiers in those days and he did not own a typewriter, Pastor Menes had written the whole book by hand and had submitted his one and only copy. He located his few rough notes but realized he had to basically re-write the whole book from memory. Dreading the thought of re-writing the book a second time by hand, Pastor Menes decided to buy his first typewriter for 17 Egyptian pounds - a fortune in those days. He borrowed this money from a relative and paid it back in monthly installments of half an Egyptian pound. This time, he made a carbon copy of the book and his work was finally published in 1954. Once published, the pastor received a handsome amount of money for his book: five whole Egyptian pounds, which in those days amounted to twenty American dollars!

That experience taught Menes a few lessons: the

importance of a typewriter, how to use it, to make sure to buy carbon paper and to make more than one copy of his manuscripts in the future.

### ***The Writer***

After about ten years of successful writing, Pastor Menes decided to dedicate all his time to writing. He had grown to love two things: writing and serving the village, however, writing won over the other.

When he turned 30, the Coptic Evangelical Organization for Social Services, under the leadership of his close friend, Rev. Samuel Habib, asked him to be editor-in-chief of the Synod of the Nile Publications. He took on this job from October 1960 till January 1965. He was assistant editor of “*Risalat al-Noor*” (Message of Light), a monthly magazine for the new literates. He also took charge of publishing the magazine “*Agnihat al-Nusur*” (Eagles’ Wings). During those years he wrote on many subjects and translated many books from English to Arabic.

God blessed Pastor Menes and his golden pen and He enriched many hearts and minds with what he wrote.

On March 28, 2000 the Call of Hope office in Germany received a letter from Rev. Caleb Zung Kip Thang from Kalemmyo, Myanmar (formerly Burma) which read, “With thanks I received your books “*Study on the Psalms*”, “*Love Never Fails*”, “*Miracles of Jesus*”, “*The Fruit of the Holy Spirit*” written by Menes Abdul Noor. Thanks for your helpful literature. We have been praying for your publication ministries.”

Rev. Caleb Thang went on to say, “I would like to ask about Mr. Menes Abdul Noor. Is he still alive? If so, where is he? Could I say a word of thanks to him? Because of his books, he saved me from taking dangerous revenge upon those

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who hate me. His books helped me stand firm in the right way. I can say that Mr. Menes Abdul Noor is my beacon and my father. When I reach heaven I will first salute Jesus and second Mr. Noor. I would really like to see him face to face. Could you send him my greetings? In fact I want to invite him to visit me and give me a personal lecture... If God wills it, we will start a new seminary in Kalembo. Its name will be Aletheis Christian Theological Seminary.”

*LORD*

*We thank you for the written word.*

*Thank you for the words of wisdom that defeat ignorance.*

*Thank you for those who use their pens to publish the message of truth, for they carry the torch of light.*

*Thank you for the ink and paper.*

*Thank you for the authors, publishers and printers.*

*Have us understand what we read and make good choices in what we write.*

*Help us see you in the lines of knowledge.*

*Bless for us what we dare to write.*

*Protect us from making mistakes as we write.*

*Bless what we enjoy reading and keep us victorious over temptation.*

*Amen.*

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## Chapter Ten

### *Pastor in the Land of Goshen*

After spending more than four years serving full-time in the publishing arena, Pastor Menes started to miss the congregation for whom he had written all these articles and books. Naiim Atef worked with him from October 1960 till January 1965. Pastor Menes was the editor and Naiim the artist, arranging the layout and drawing the covers and illustrations for the books.

Pastor Menes said, “I have noticed that I am spending all my time in my study, editing and writing. I miss meeting people and listening to them. I think that I need to go back to pastoring a church. I could prepare a series of sermons that would touch the lives of the people, and then write them down as articles for magazines and I could later even write a book on the subject.” Naiim encouraged him to do this as in this way he would not need to give up any of his two loves – his pastoral ministry or his writing career.

When Pastor Menes failed to find a place in a village, he accepted the call of the Evangelical church of Zagazig to become their pastor.

The city of Zagazig is 80 kilometers northeast of Cairo and it is the capital of what was known in Bible times as “the land of Goshen”. Through that old city runs the river Muweis which means “the small Moses” and this is possibly the area where baby Moses was found in the bulrushes. Zagazig means “small fish” and the children of Israel used to fish from the river Muweis while living under the protection of Joseph and Pharaoh (Numbers 11:5).

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### ***Priority for Youth Ministry***

Pastor Menes served the congregation of Zagazig for more than eleven years from February 1965 to April 30, 1976. He spent the first few months studying the situation of the church in order to discover the best ways to minister to it. He visited the homes of all the members and came to know them as a pastor should. His wife accompanied him regularly when he visited the homes of members and church visitors.

Pastor Menes noticed that senior citizens made up the majority of the church membership, so he decided to give priority to and concentrate both in time and effort on the young people. A nucleus of born again young people was needed who could draw their peers to Jesus and the church. He therefore considered Sunday school ministry a priority.

The pastor believed that a church is blessed with its elders, but that it grows and is enhanced by its youth. He used to teach that a church that did not regenerate itself while it was young would grow old too quickly.

The beginning of his ministry among young people began with his two children - Violet, then 14 years old and Farid, 10. Farid was a musician, so he led the singing while playing a small organ. In the church, there were ten children as old as his own children and this was a good beginning. Pastor Menes built strong relationships with these twelve youngsters. He shared the good news of Jesus Christ the Savior with them and they understood what new life in Christ meant. He encouraged them to invite their peers to Friday rallies so that they could meet with some young people who came especially from Cairo in order to spend the day with the youth of Zagazig. These young people would witness to them and encourage the born again youth to be witnesses for Jesus Christ in their own schools. Many young people believed and became members of the church.

There was, however, a threat to the youth meeting. Indeed,

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there was no university education in Zagazig and all those who finished high school went to one of the three Egyptian universities at that time, in Cairo, Alexandria or Assiut. That threat, however, disappeared when a university was built in Zagazig. This meant that the 12-14 year-old age group could move on to high school (from age 15-17) and then still continue to stay in the church later when they were university students.

The plan of reaching the youth succeeded and three years later, sixty percent of the church members were young people. The little group of born again 12-14 year-olds bore fruit in bringing others to the meetings. Their vision for witnessing widened and when they became university students, they began to teach Sunday school classes in the church. Their ministry stretched to different villages and small towns around Zagazig and they went to different places in teams to hold meetings for children, using flannel-graph pictures to illustrate the Bible stories they told them. Young women held ladies' meetings in homes and young men held other meetings for young people and adolescents. They returned to Zagazig full of zeal and joy and were richly blessed by being a blessing to others.

### ***A Bible for every Believer and a Library for every Leader***

The 12-14 year-old group grew up to become the church leaders. The pastor decided to help every young person to own their own Bible and every leader to have their own library to study for themselves. These young people did not have enough money for this, so the pastor decided to help them to acquire the Bibles and commentaries by paying small monthly installments. He asked the Bible Society and the Christian publishing house Dar al-Thaqafa to consider the Evangelical Church of Zagazig as their agent in the area, as in this way the church could get the Bibles and books before paying for them. Both organizations accepted and they were offered a 25%

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reduction on the prices.

The young people got their Bibles and the leaders their Bible concordance, Bible dictionary, William Barclay's Commentary on the New Testament (translated into Arabic) and "*al-Kanz al-Jaleel fi Tafsir al-Injil*" (The Glorious Treasure in Interpreting the Gospel).

Pastor Menes wrote three books for this new young congregation, "*You and the Church*", "*You and Christ*" and "*Time Engagement*".

### ***The 1967 War***

In June 1967, war threatened the Suez Canal and the inhabitants migrated to cities further inside Egypt. Many Evangelical Christians from that devastated area fled to Zagazig. In doing so, they gave the Zagazig church both a privilege and a responsibility - the privilege to serve and enjoy fellowship with them and the responsibility of taking care of them.

When the son of an Orthodox priest from the Suez Canal area accepted the Lord as his Savior, he asked for a Bible, promising to pay for it in small installments. He received his Bible and was only able to pay what equals to five American cents at a time, but the pastor was happy that the young man owned his own Bible.

Later, this young man immigrated to the United States of America and after 30 years he met Pastor Menes again. He showed Pastor Menes his old well used Bible and gave him one hundred American dollars saying, "This is to thank you for the Bible I got from Zagazig church, 30 years ago. I am still using it and I really treasure it."

### ***The Young to Marry***

A member of Zagazig Evangelical church said that Pastor

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Menes had big dreams for the church. One of them was to have the young adults of the church marry one another, so as to establish good Christian homes. This would make them more committed to Jesus and his church and these families would be the next leaders of the congregation. This dream of Pastor Menes did come to pass and the church was filled with young Christian families.

### ***“Faith at Work” Sunday School Curriculum***

Besides the pastoral work, Pastor Menes spent four years (1970-1974) as the editor of the Sunday School curriculum “*Faith at Work*” published by the Middle East Council of Churches in Beirut. That curriculum served ages 4-5, 6-8, 9-11, 12-14 and 15-17. As an editor, Pastor Menes trained writers to write the Sunday School lessons, he edited what was written and supervised the layout and printing. This curriculum was translated from Arabic into English so as to make it possible to translate it into the Persian and Armenian languages as well.

Dr. Gerson A. Meyer, the General Secretary of the Education and Renewal of the World Council of Churches in Geneva, wrote to Pastor Menes on November 11, 1974 saying,

“I sincerely believe that you have given both yourself and the churches in the Middle East a significant birthday present – the accomplishment of the “*Faith at Work*” Curriculum! My congratulations to you for what you have done. “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Certainly you have done a remarkable job to meet the deadline and we surely appreciate your loyal contribution as editor-in-chief and writer. The interesting thing is that Christian educators from other parts of the world are contacting us for more details about your curriculum. An educator from Denmark told me that he was going to request copies of the English version and

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recently a lady from Finland also asked for copies of your curriculum. Great! Please convey my best regards to Nadia, Violet and Farid, and again my congratulations to you and I thank God for your excellent work.”

The Lord blessed Pastor Menes for his willingness to serve the whole of the Middle East, however, when he accepted this responsibility he was not permitted to leave Egypt, as mentioned before in chapter seven. He applied for permission to get exit visas to be able to take on his “new job”. After one month of waiting he finally received the clearance. His first trip was to attend the first Curriculum Committee meeting in Beirut, Lebanon on July 21, 1970.

### ***Lausanne 1974***

In 1974, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association invited Pastor Menes to attend the Lausanne conference. He was a part of the Middle East Group, which elected him to be their chairman. The delegates from Israel refused to be a part of the European group as they wanted to be a part of the Middle East. However, at that time there were no peace treaties between the Arab countries and Israel, and it was dangerous for Arabs to identify with the Israelis, so they debated the subject. Pastor Menes was in favor of accepting the Christian delegates from Israel to join them, explaining, “We are all part of the body of Christ.” There was nevertheless fear that upon returning home, the respective governments would interrogate the delegates who backed the decision of accepting the Israelis but no one was questioned.

The Lausanne Conference lasted ten days and Pastor Menes was invited to attend a ten-day conference afterwards at Le Diabrelet, Switzerland, together with a group from “Youth for Christ”. There he had the joy of personally meeting with Dr. and Mrs. Billy Graham. He was also very happy to listen to the Christian philosopher, Dr. Francis Schaeffer.

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### ***The Living Bible in Arabic***

Pastor Menes finished working on the “*Faith at Work*” Curriculum and in August 1974 he made his last visit to Beirut in order to add the final touches to his work. Mr. Terry Ascott, then working for the Living Bible in Beirut, asked Pastor Menes to help translate the latter into Arabic. The Pastor agreed and he dedicated a part of his time to this great job as a member of the translation team. He says that his life was deeply enriched as he meditated on the word of God so intensely. This helped him to preach Biblically saturated sermons. He said that the word of God is like a scrumptious piece of meat and that the preacher who only uses a small amount of it only presents his listeners with soup. The more we quote the Bible in our preaching the more we get mature believers, who by constantly being exposed to the word of God become trained to distinguish good from evil themselves (Hebrews 5:14).

### ***Ministering to Youth in Summer Conferences***

Pastor Menes benefited a great deal from his studies at the Biblical Seminary in New York. Indeed, this particular seminary taught a unique method in Bible study. One would first begin by taking a close look at the Bible text in order to distinguish similarities, contrasts, repetitions and questions in it. One would then move to raising questions about what had been observed. The next step was then to interpret the text, and finally one would apply what had been discovered to everyday life.

This method brought the Bible to life in the lives of those who listened to Pastor Menes’ teaching and he became the Bible study teacher at most of the young people’s summer conferences. His hour slot was generally the most popular throughout the whole conference.

His study of psychology and Christian education helped

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him to be a good counselor to young people and at conferences he would leave his room in the morning to return to it only at midnight. All day long he would counsel, pray with them or teach them.

### *Sugar Cubes*

During one of these summer conferences, a young lady asked for counseling. Weeping bitterly she shared her problem with him: for a whole year she had not won one single person to Christ, although the Holy Spirit had used her in the past in leading many to Him.

Pastor Menes asked her the typical questions for such a situation: Was there lack of prayer, unconfessed sin, laziness in witnessing or lack of following-up her new babes in Christ? The young woman answered all the questions with, "No". As her tears were still flowing and he was unable to help her, Pastor Menes turned to their Lord, asking Him to comfort His dear child, who was in tears for His glory. The Lord then inspired the pastor with an answer that comforted his counselee at the time, and which helped many others during the following years.

The pastor said, "Suppose one kilogram of sugar is divided into 100 cubes. Now, we are going to use an old-fashioned scale with two pans. On one pan we will put the metal weight and on the other one we will begin to pile up the sugar cubes. Cube one will not show much results, however cube 100 would not be able to complete the job if cube one was not there. Maybe you are responsible for cube number one or number two. You may not see any results, but God will honor what you have done. One day someone may come and say that he won a person to Christ, but you may have played a vital role in that person's life. We are only to lay the sugar cubes in the pan, but we need to leave the results up to God."

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### *A Call to move to Kasr El Dobara*

After this fruitful ministry, in October 1975 our Pastor was elected by the Kasr El Dobara Evangelical Church congregation to be their new pastor. There were however presbyterial objections to his moving to Cairo, as two leading pastors felt threatened by his coming lest he “take” their members.

During this time Pastor Menes sent off two letters: one to his father and one to his brother Yousef, who was the pastor of Kuwait Evangelical church. He consulted them about refusing to accept the call of Kasr El Dobara and explained that he was satisfied with his ministry in Zagazig. He added that if he accepted the new call he would lose his privacy and would most probably be unable to find time to write anymore. They both answered and advised him to accept the call. They promised to hold him up in their constant prayers and asked him to think of the need of Kasr El Dobara for a pastor. Pastor Menes considered the advice of his father and brother as God’s voice speaking to him as they independently had given the same advice.

In the next chapter we will see how God answered the prayers of his father, brother and many friends.

### *LORD*

*We thank you for the visions  
and wisdom of our pastors.*

*We thank you for the wisdom of our elders  
and their leadership.*

*We thank you for the new generation in our churches,  
for they are like the green shoots in the garden.*

*Thank you for your loving care to our families.*

*Thank you for bringing young men  
and young women together  
in the church to establish Christian homes,*

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*which are small churches.*

*Thank you for our children,  
our light and joy.*

*They are like precious gemstones in our homes,  
churches and country.*

*Fill our churches with them  
and gratify our hearts because of them.*

*Amen.*

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Chapter Eleven

***Kasr El Dobara,  
and the Journey Continues***

In January 1940, the Delta Presbytery of the Synod of the Nile planted a new church in Cairo. The place chosen for this church was a hall owned by the Nile Mission Press in their building in the center of Cairo. Rev. Ibrahim Said, an Egyptian preacher, was elected as its pastor in March 1940. He was called the “golden mouthed preacher”, a term given to St. John Chrysostom many centuries before, which referred to his eloquence. The Lord blessed the new church and the attendance grew in number and so the pastor and members of this new church felt a great need for a new building.

In December 1941, a palace was bought in what is now called “Tahrir Square”. The goal was to demolish it and erect a new church on the site. There was a beautiful park in front of the palace.

In Egypt, as we have already noted, churches could not be built without the approval and personal signature of the King of Egypt (nowadays one needs the signature of the President of the Egyptian Republic), so the new church had to get a permit signed by the king himself in order to demolish the palace and to erect a new church building. The members of the church fasted and prayed that they would receive the permit. In answer to their prayers, as well as in response to many requests, King Farouk of Egypt finally signed the needed permit on March 21, 1944 after his advisor personally asked him to do so.

God always plans ahead. The advisor of the King of Egypt, Ahmad Hasanain Pasha, had studied in England and while in London he had stayed in the home of Rev. Dr. Alexander

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White, a great preacher and a well-known author of several books on Biblical characters. When Dr. White died, his wife donated the books of his library to various mission fields. Some of these books were given to the Egyptian golden-mouthed preacher, Dr. Ibrahim Said, since he was the editor of the Nile Mission Press publications at the time.

After awhile, Mrs. White decided to tour the world, and she went to Egypt to be the guest of the Egyptian student who had stayed in her home several years before. There, she discovered that he had become the King's advisor. While in Cairo, she asked to visit the Egyptian pastor who had received some of her husband's books, so the King's advisor escorted her to visit Dr. Ibrahim Said. After drinking tea, the King's advisor - out of courtesy - asked whether he could be of any help in any matter. Dr. Said seized the opportunity to request for a permit to build the church. He also asked if Mrs. White could see the permit before she left Egypt. The King's advisor promised to take care of this matter and the permit was indeed signed. Mrs. White saw it and the pastor received it.

The cornerstone of the church was laid in December 1947 and the church was named Kasr El Dohara Evangelical Church after the name of that section of Cairo at the time. The building was completed in 1950.

When King Farouk saw the church steeple on the main square of Cairo he became angry. Apparently, he had not realized what it was that he had signed! At the time, he was hoping to become the Caliph of the Muslims, as the Islamic Caliphate in Turkey had been abolished in 1923. He, therefore, ordered that the steeple not be built any higher than it was on that day. The government then organized for a huge office building to be erected in such a way that it would hide the cross. It also ordered a beautiful new mosque to be built nearby with a minaret higher than the church steeple.

In 1992 a major earthquake hit Cairo. When this took place, Pastor Menes saw the church steeple sway this way and that

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and he later said, “Had it been ten meters taller, the results would have been disastrous.”

The nearby buildings have also benefited the church for several reasons. One of these is that electricity scarcely cuts out in this particular area due to the nearby government building. What is more, whenever a demonstration takes place, the police come to protect this area so the church is well protected. Thirdly, people who go to the government office building to get a visa etc. - which can take up to an hour or two to collect - can drop into the church and enjoy some quiet time, praying or reading the Bible. On Sunday mornings, they can even attend the service and then after the service they can pick up their papers. This therefore draws an unexpected audience.

In July 1952, King Farouk was deported to Italy. Mr. Nasser, the first president of what was called “The Arab Republic of Egypt” visited the church during Easter 1955. Pastor Said welcomed him and said, “King Farouk hated to see this one cross and God had him deported to a country where he sees nothing but crosses.”

### *A New Pastor*

Dr. Ibrahim Said pastored the church until he went to be with the Lord in May 1970. The church then looked for a new pastor. Six years later, May 1, 1976 was a very significant day for both Pastor Menes and Kasr El Dohara Evangelical Church as it was the first day for him as pastor of the church. The pastor had successfully practiced his pastoral ministry and he had fruitful experiences in preaching as well as in writing. The church also was very promising as it was the largest Evangelical church in the Middle East. It also had the most beautiful building of all. By some, it was regarded to be the daughter of the eloquent Evangelical pastor, Dr. Ibrahim Said.

The relationship between the church and the young pastor

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started like most traditional marriages in Upper Egypt, “Love will come later, after the marriage!” Actually, the love came faster than expected between the congregation of this church and the pastor. When Pastor Menes began pastoring this church, he was 46 years old, but the church building was only in her 27th year! The church loved its new pastor and was consoled by him for the departure of its founder, father and the golden-mouthed preacher, Dr. Ibrahim Said. Both the church and the new pastor gave their whole hearts to one another. This was similar to the love of our dear Lord Jesus Christ and his church.

Regarding Kasr El Dohara church, Pastor Menes says the following:

“This is a church without walls. It is not a church for the inhabitants of a certain area, but for all those who live in Cairo, other cities of Egypt and all over the world. This makes it very difficult for a pastor to serve and cell groups need to be formed.”

“Its strength from its very beginning has been evangelism. Every sermon of Pastor Ibrahim Said contained a message of salvation.”

“The founder of this church was anointed by the Holy Spirit. He was broad-minded, with no fanaticism. The church still welcomes all people from all backgrounds and we worship the Lord in the freedom which the Holy Spirit gives. It is the anointing of the Holy Spirit that gives success to the ministry.”

“The first four steps for church growth are: taking care of the youth, evangelism, building the church upon the foundation of prayer and letting the Holy Spirit act freely.”

“Many times the older generation are afraid of the young people and tend to restrict the activities of the young. The young, however, should see the need to listen to the older ones and the hearts of these two generations should be united in

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loving their church.”

“I was sure that the Lord would give success to the church. But when the ministry succeeded and the church grew in numbers, I became afraid of failure. I therefore asked experts to advise me. They said that a successful company, business or church always begins with a pioneer who draws the plans. The pioneer always needs to be followed by an organizer and then a new pioneer has to come along with a new vision suitable for the new changing situations. If a new pioneer does not appear, then a maintainer would come, followed by a ‘breaker’! I then said, ‘We must find a new pioneer.’”

“So I contacted some zealous young people in the church and asked them to work full-time in ministering to Kasr El Dohara but many apologized and declined. Only the medical doctor and general surgeon, Sameh Maurice, accepted the call of the Lord. I asked Dr. Sameh Maurice to work with me because I have known him ever since his childhood in the city of Minia. I had seen his steadfast love for the Lord and his strong desire to serve Him. His successful medical career, his ambition to succeed and his commitment to his marriage did not hinder his ministry among the youth of Kasr El Dohara. I was impressed by his devotion to the Lord, his great intelligence and his satisfied, fulfilled heart.”

“My vision for Kasr El Dohara church is that it will continue to train leaders and grow in doing this. That it will continue serving its network of 600 churches and expand this service. Also, that it will continue to plant schools of evangelism to train its leaders from different churches.”

“I love my co-pastor and assistant pastors - I wish that they would become greater and I become less.”

“I overcame the problem of lack of time in two ways. The first is by “multiplying” myself. The material I work hard to prepare for preaching, I revise as an article, then convert it into a radio or a TV program and later it could be transformed into

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a book. The second way was to delegate responsibilities to others and watch them carry out the responsibilities. I trusted that the Holy Spirit who entrusted this ministry to me would enable others to carry it out with even more success.”

“If I could turn back time, I would do the same all over again. I would give my heart to Jesus. I would obey His call to the ministry. I would serve wherever the Lord wished and I would marry my dear wife again!”

### ***Youth Work***

When Pastor Menes began pastoring Kasr El Dohara Evangelical Church, he decided to give top priority to youth work. This meant calling the young people to accept the Lord Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior and to train them to witness about the great crucified risen One.

The following letter sent to Pastor Menes from Heba Fathy Iskander, who was part of the youth in those early days, expresses how much was achieved in his youth work.

“Dearest Pastor Menes,

I will try to express part of my personal feelings and I am sure that every single member of the congregation holds a similar position. You mean so much to us all and we love you so deeply and owe you so much for what you have planted diligently in our lives by being a true example and representation of the loving, gentle, genuine and strong love of Jesus. Thank you for being such a faithful shepherd to us all. Thank you for praying for us, for challenging us, for encouraging us and for always giving us all inspirational messages full of hope and marked by the words of God.

You have impressed on us all, how to simply love Jesus and to walk every step in faith and holiness. You have painted a picture of heaven that exemplifies the throne of

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grace. You have always been able to depict God as reachable and accessible. You reach out and mingle with everyone – children, adults, simple people, wise people. You touch us all.

I thank you and Aunt Nadia for being such pure channels that allow the love, power, wisdom and Spirit of God to flow so easily to us all. May we walk in your footsteps, behind Jesus, so diligently.”

### ***Radio and TV Ministry***

In October 1974, “Youth for Christ” asked Pastor Menes to begin a 15-minute radio program for the young people of the Arab World. The first program was recorded in July 1976 and went on the air on Monday, September 4, 1976 under the title “*Kalima Ma’ak*” (A Word with You) and it continued for twenty years.

Later, the Middle East Television station, associated with CBN, asked our pastor to prepare ten-minute TV programs on the themes of Christian virtues, the life of Christ and His salvation, the Psalms and apologetics. These programs were recorded over a period of about ten years beginning in the early 1990’s.

Great results and fruit from these programs were disclosed as the listeners and viewers began responding by mail. The feedback alone from listeners to his radio ministry came by way of 2000 letters every week over a number of years.

Pastor Menes had the privilege of also reading the Bible on Trans World Radio. He believed what the British Baptist preacher Charles Spurgeon said, “The Bible is like a lion. You just sit at its feet and it defends itself.”

One day, Pastor Menes was at the Trans World Radio studios in Monte Carlo, Monaco where they recorded him reading the whole gospel of Matthew. He worked the whole

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day skipping lunch and was then taken directly from the studio to the airport in Nice, southern France, to fly to Germany. He was on a Swiss Air flight and he was very hungry and thirsty. When the crew began to serve the meal, it was served from the last to the front row. As Pastor Menes was sitting in the last row, he began to eat right away. At the time, they began experiencing a lot of turbulence and because the Alps were completely covered with snow, Pastor Menes thought that if the plane crashed it would be a nice place to be buried because it would be a natural refrigerator and Jesus would not have much work to do in restoring his body. The lady sitting beside him looked at him incredulously before commenting, “What an appetite! How can you eat when it’s so dangerous?”

Menes looked at her - he was happy that she spoke English because he didn’t know enough French to communicate with her - and said, “It is not appetite, but it is the peace of God and you do not have it.”

Later, when the turbulence had subsided he asked her, “Where do you worship?”

She answered, “I do not worship.”

Menes then asked, “What is your faith?”

She said, “I’m a Jew.”

Menes went on, “You have a great king who composed Psalm 23.” He recited it to her and added, “I cannot say this about my ancient kings, Ramses or Tut, but you can say it about your King David.”

As they approached Zurich airport she promised to buy a Bible and to read the Psalms and the story of the Messiah, as Menes had told her that He had already come.

### ***Kasr El Dobarra Expands***

There is now a great number of staff serving the church with forty-eight persons on the payroll. Pastor Menes is the

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senior pastor, and upon the request of the leaders of the Kasr El Dohara church session, he will carry on his ministry as long as his health permits.

Rev. Dr. Sameh Maurice was ordained in 1993 as assistant pastor at Kasr El Dohara and in 1997 he was elected co-pastor by the elders and members of the church. He has proved to be the “new pioneer” and has begun many ministries in the church. God continues to bless his ministry and in 2004 he was appointed the International Deputy Director of the Middle East and North Africa by the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism.

Rev. Atef Sami and Dr. Rev. Nagi M. Said are the assistant pastors who also contribute to the ministry of the church and assist Pastor Menes. Two senior staff members, Elder Dr. Ehab el-Kharrat, the leader of the “Freedom from Drug Addiction” ministry, and Elder Fayez Ishak, the Director of Missions, also help him. Pastor Menes is very grateful to the Lord for the pastors and elders at Kasr El Dohara.

At present, the church counts 1,175 registered members, but around 7,000 people worship weekly in the different meetings. Since Sunday is a regular workday in Egypt, meetings are also held on different days during the week:

500 attend the Sunday morning service,

1,500 attend the Sunday evening meeting,

1,000 attend the weekly prayer meeting on Mondays - this lasts three hours,

200 ladies attend the women’s meeting on Thursdays,

700 university students meet on Thursdays,

700 attend the Friday morning service,

500 children aged 5-10 attend either Friday School or Sunday School,

150 young people aged 11-13 meet on Fridays,

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450 young people aged 14-17 meet on Fridays,

500 people attend the new university graduates' meeting on Saturdays,

and there are other weekly meetings not listed such as for Bible Study, for families and the early Sunday service.

### ***Outreach through Evangelism***

Since Kasr El Dohara was founded, the vision has always been to evangelize not only the local church, but also all of Egypt and the whole region. This is very well expressed in the strong prayer movement that has been growing since the end of the 1970's and beginning of 1980's. The passion of its leaders is not only to see one strong church, but a revival that touches many churches and places in the community. Genesis 12 motivates this, when God told Abraham he had been blessed so as to be a blessing to others. In the same way, Kasr El Dohara has received many blessings. It has grown both spiritually and numerically and God has given it many opportunities for ministry. It has not kept these blessings to itself, but has shared them to bless others with the blessings it has received.

Missionaries came to Egypt from the West. They were willing to give up their security and the comforts of home to learn the language and the culture so as to meet the needs of the nationals. They made a positive impact and inspired many to look at the needs around them and their zeal was contagious - a good example to follow. Thus the Egyptian nationals, having been brought up in the culture, were inspired and encouraged to go to their fellow nationals. Knowing the questions which people ask and the answers which God provides, and the language, not only of Egypt, but also of most of the Arab World, Kasr El Dohara decided to share its blessings with others. To share is a blessing and a responsibility - an act of stewardship. Indeed, entrusted with

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so many gifts, the leadership of the church saw the entire country of Egypt and the rest of the Arab World as their field of service.

### ***Evangelism in Egypt***

At the end of the 1980's and the beginning of the 1990's, some of the young people in the church began to catch a vision for short-term outreaches. It began with a group of 10-15 young people who went to remote unreached Egyptian villages for a few days. They would spend a few days there, would start a small meeting, and would share something from the Bible with the people there. Many young people participated in at least one of these experiences and they were very excited about the fruit they observed! They would visit what is called a "Mulid" - the traditional religious festivals, where thousands gather in an open area of a village for a few days in order to celebrate the birthday or remember the martyrdom of one of its saints. The young people would do street evangelism and show the "Jesus film". At present, the church has been carrying out an average of seventy such outreaches every year in Egypt.

As a result of these growing outreaches, the leaders of Kasr El Dohara church understood the great need for discipling and training leaders. They thus grew from having evangelistic outreaches to add additional outreaches for discipleship purposes.

### ***Evangelism Outside of Egypt***

At the same time, the church saw the great need to reach out to other countries. By joining with work already going on in other parts of the Arab World, Kasr El Dohara learned that it could fit in well. In areas where there was no church, a church could be planted and in areas where there was an existing church, training and discipleship could be provided. The church, in unique ways, became a sender and not just a

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recipient of God's blessings. It became a servant and partner with other churches and agencies in Syria, Iraq and other areas in the Arab World. Long-term workers were provided in addition to the short-term outreaches in order to continue discipling and to encourage growth in these countries.

Kasr El Dohara found itself to be a part of one body with other agencies and churches. It discovered the excitement, opportunities and honor in serving others. As an opportunity to experience this, Luis Palau came to speak at Kasr El Dohara in 1998 for four nights. The church did not want to limit his teaching to the 3,000 attending its meetings each night, so it began a network with 600 churches which desired a videotape of each of the services so as to show it the following night. Luis' sermons were therefore videoed and six hundred videotapes were copied every night. The next morning, volunteers took cars, trains and buses to these 600 meeting places around the country, so that others could view them. Every night about 120,000 attended meetings in 600 churches. 25,000 came to know Jesus as their Lord and Savior through this ministry and hundreds of workers in different villages received training on how to provide the needed follow-up for these new believers.

This experience was repeated in 2001 with Dr. Michael Yousef. The leaders of Kasr El Dohara decided that they could not have a great event in their church without sharing it with others. God is continuing to bless the church with partnerships, programs and opportunities and the leaders want to see the Church of Jesus Christ expand and for more churches to be established through planting churches in unreached areas. They invest in evangelism, discipleship and leadership training.

### ***Drug and HIV/AIDS work***

In the 1980's, the church leaders became aware of a significant local drug problem and so established a ministry

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among drug addicts called the Freedom Program. In 1989, the program began with non-residential activities and in 1991 it started its urban residential services in Cairo - the first rehabilitation program in Egypt. Freedom Program is currently the largest drug rehabilitation program in the Arab World, being larger than any government, non-government organization or private program in any Arab country. It is also regarded to be the most credible and highly respected program in all academic and scientific circles.

The drug problem today, in Egypt, is estimated to consist of 400,000-600,000 heroin and codeine addicts and two million substance abusers. The overall aim of the project is to reveal God's love by reaching out to drug addicts, a group rejected and unloved by many and thought of as hopeless. It offers a Christ-centered rehabilitation program and a 12-Step based rehabilitation program. It also aims to alert the public to the dangers and pitfalls of drugs through drug awareness programs reaching tens of thousands of youth every year. Internationally recognized and accredited training is also provided to 40 Egyptian and 10-20 international addiction and substance abuse workers throughout the year.

In order to achieve self-sufficiency, Freedom Farm was established in 1993 in the Wady El Natroun area, 100 kilometers northwest of Cairo. The farm stands on 72 acres of reclaimed desert land. It has 6,500 olive trees, 150 date palms, 15 acres of seasonal crops and a small food production factory and shop.

Currently, 54 residents receive rehabilitation at the Freedom Farm centre. Besides the farm, Freedom Program runs three other Cairo based rehabilitation centers, a detoxification center, a follow-up center and a head office. The total number of beds offered by Freedom Program is 105. Freedom Program's records reveal that more than 800 addicts have been admitted to the long-term residential services. Ninety per cent of those who completed the program

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experienced a radical change in their lives and never relapsed into drug abuse again. Follow-up periods extend to more than 16 years and 70% of those who do not complete the program show significant improvement. The program maintains contact and offers support to almost all those who originally joined it.

Freedom Program partners with Family Health International (FHI), a USAID funded organization, to reach out to intravenous drug users in Cairo to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS among them. The high prevention rate has been documented and recognized by international experts.

Freedom Program also provides annual courses for a network of 40 different non-government organizations to train their members on HIV/AIDS and drug prevention work among young people. Projects started by Freedom trainees in providing treatment and prevention are impacting the lives of millions in the Arab World and worldwide.

Freedom Program's drug awareness efforts have received notes of gratitude and appreciation from schools, universities and community leaders. Freedom Program provided intensive training for workers from 47 non-government organizations on principles of prevention of substance abuse and sexual risk behavior to prevent the rising tide of HIV among young people at risk, for example, youth in extreme poverty, school drop-outs, young people experimenting with drugs and sex etc. Early indicators show that programs implemented by Freedom prevention trainees are effective but rigorous scientific evaluation to those still needs time.

The rehabilitation methods used by Freedom Program include a structured life for the whole residential period which lasts from three to six months. During the first four to six weeks, the addicts are not allowed to be left alone nor are they permitted to go home. After six weeks, they gradually enjoy increased intervals on their own. In the last phase, they spend only two days at the center and five days in their homes. Their daily routine includes 15 minutes of quiet time in the morning,

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a work therapy session for two hours (in the farm or in housekeeping duties), and a two-hour Bible or 12-Step study time. In the afternoon, they have two group activity sessions and a one and a half hour 12-Step meeting or Christian meeting. The group activities vary throughout the week and include group therapy sessions. Art and poetry sessions are held as well as prayer and praise meetings for all the residents.

The two rehabilitation methods used are:

1. *Minnesota Model*:

In the 12-step recovery approach, each client is appointed a therapist/leader and has to meet with him at least once a week. Spiritual and psychological progress are both monitored and enhanced in these sessions. The 12-step approach is spiritual in that it emphasizes surrender to a personal, loving and accepting God. Grace, and not will power, is the route to a closer knowledge of God. Fellowship and abiding by the traditions of the 12-step model are vital.

2. *Christian Rehabilitation (Modified Therapeutic Community Program)*:

The Christian 12-Step recovery approach speaks of the Lord Jesus Christ rather than a generic higher power or a loving and caring God which the regular 12-Step programs do. Teaching from Bible verses, worship and prayer meetings are part of this program.

***Sports Ministry***

The interest in Sports Ministry at Kasr El Dohara can be traced back to when several young leaders from the church attended a sports conference in Hong Kong in 1980. Then, in 1997, 220 people attended a Sports Ministry conference in Egypt run by the International Sports Coalition (ISC) whose aim is to have Sports Ministries set up all over the world. This was the beginning of a new era of sports evangelism in Egypt.

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The 1997 conference led to a network of over 500 Egyptian churches, as well as many others throughout the Middle East, working together for major sports events like the World Cup of Soccer and the Olympics.

In 1998, the Sports Ministry officially began when the leaders of Kasr El Dohara hired Maged Fawzy as a full-time staff worker to be responsible for it. From an original core of 12 leaders, the ministry has now grown to about 150 team members covering all of Egypt. In 2000, the Sports Ministry team pioneered and ran a program called “KidsGames” which has been adopted by the ISC. KidsGames includes opening and closing ceremonies, sports competitions and fun games, and lessons that tell children about God. That year, approximately 30,000 children in Egypt attended KidsGames at the Cairo National Sports Stadium. In 2002, about 25,000 children participated in Egypt and the program was also held in 120 countries. Kasr El Dohara’s Sports Ministry and Egypt’s Ministry of Youth have now signed contracts forming an official partnership in relation to KidsGames. The government’s endorsement has increased the acceptance of KidsGames in the wider community. KidsGames also has a number of international corporate sponsors.

The Sports Ministry team also runs TeenGames, FamilyGames and Wadi Sports Camps every year. TeenGames gives teenagers from orphanages, opportunities for training and competition in sports while hearing the message of Jesus. FamilyGames is a sports program reaching out to the whole family with an emphasis on building strong relationships with each member of the family. Wadi Sports Camps minister to children and young adults from 10 to 19 years of age in their appropriate age groups. They receive training in baseball, tennis, swimming, basketball, volleyball or soccer and then compete in tournaments. During the tournament, the Gospel is shared with people on and off the field.

Sports days and training clinics are other activities

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organized by the Sports Ministry. The children attending these sports days and training clinics learn about different sports and life skills. Some children, who show potential, will be given responsibilities to help in these activities and also receive training in leadership.

During the year, sports teams from abroad also come to participate in the activities of the Sports Ministry. They provide coaches, share the gospel and teach and disciple our sports teams.

When major sports events take place, the Sports Ministry arranges for them to be shown on a large screen in the church along with a videotape of a top athlete sharing his/her testimony. This gives an opportunity to reach out to those who come to church to watch the event. For most of them, this is their first time in a church.

God has given Kasr El Dobara a broad vision for opportunities to use sports for His glory. Pastor Sameh Maurice is a board member of the ISC and is the facilitator of the ISC Church Sports Council which is made up of senior pastors of mega churches throughout the world. Those on the council help local churches to see the importance of sports ministry in reaching out, discipleship and leadership development. Besides Maged's leadership of the Sports Ministry, he is involved in setting up Sports Ministries in North Africa and the Middle East and is the co-ordinator for KidsGames in the region.

### ***Support, Recovery and Emotional Awareness Ministry (Life Ministry)***

Personal, relational, marriage and family problems are becoming a huge pastoral burden on church members and the leadership team. Process addictions, especially sexual addictions, are becoming a real emotional, relational and spiritual problem in Egyptian society. Also, issues of sexual

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abuse, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) and domestic violence are starting to come to the surface as women are becoming more ready to speak up about these taboo subjects.

In 1999, Dr. Awsam Wasfy Hanna founded a church-based recovery ministry known as Learning Ideas for Emotional Health (LIFE) at Kasr El Dohara. This was a new ministry of Christian support groups where people felt they were able to talk about their hurts and struggles, receive sound spiritual and psychological teaching, and experience healing and growth. The support groups increased gradually in number and have become more and more specialized in content. For example, support groups for single mothers help them to face their particular challenging situations. Some of the other groups are for, men struggling with sexual addictions, men dealing with anger management issues, co-dependent women, men struggling with homosexuality, and survivors of sexual abuse etc. It is encouraging that other churches in Egypt, both protestant and traditional, have also adopted this support group model.

In 2003, LIFE opened a residential rehabilitation program for female prostitutes and sex addicts suffering from severe sexual and relationship addictions. The residents receive education about the dangers of addictive and promiscuous behavior.

In 2004, LIFE initiated a leading empowerment and life-skill promotion program for vulnerable female adolescents. This program is called “Smart Heart” and aims to prevent many gender discrimination practices like domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape, and FGM which are very common practices in this part of the world. It is worth mentioning also that these practices increase the incidence of contracting HIV/AIDS in women. “Smart Heart” has already reached about 1900 young women and is expected to reach 10,000 during the next two years, as the program will be presented in schools for both Christians and Muslims.

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The needs for specialized counseling and emotional healing are increasing tremendously in Arab society in general. The church is taking up the challenge in meeting those needs and witnessing to the society at large. This is either in a direct way, through significant relationships between Christians and non-Christians in recovery, or, in an indirect long-term approach, by building bridges of trust between church and society.

### ***Small Group Ministry***

Kasr El Dobara sees great potential in leadership teams and so the church therefore invests in individuals under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. Discipleship in small groups has been a main strategy and these small groups provide pastoral care, teaching and ministry opportunities. This implies investing efforts in training and equipping enough leaders to serve all of these small groups as well as producing teaching materials, tapes and videos.

The church is moving towards becoming a cell church, where each group is challenged to reach out to others through evangelism and to multiply by incorporating new members in its midst until it gives birth to a new cell. All of these cell groups reflect the same core values and principles as the Kasr El Dobara church.

### ***Timothy Institute for Leadership Development***

The church leaders started an institute which offers evening classes for the members of small groups as well as for people from other churches. These programs are in the form of workshops, seminars and conferences aimed at training the participants. This institute is intended to provide both basic and advanced training in twelve areas of ministry and skills. The Timothy Institute offers an average of 28 programs every year.

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### ***National and Regional Training Activities***

In 1998, the leaders of the church were challenged to organize a regional conference together with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association (BGEA) in order to present the International School of Evangelism to the Arab World. This was a major undertaking involving publishing 19 books in Arabic and organizing a conference for 1200 participants from all over Egypt and the Middle East. By the grace of God this was carried out successfully and new standards of efficiency and accountability were thus established.

This eventually opened the door for repeating this type of ministry together with other organizations, so as to introduce a number of very useful applications of ministry. Among these were a three-year plan with EQUIP with John Maxwell, Amsterdam 2000 with BGEA, and Beyond Conference in 2002 with BGEA, a program with Haggai Institute as well as one with the International Sports Coalition.

### ***Production of Materials***

The church of Kasr El Dohara has been blessed with a number of exceptionally gifted speakers and in order to multiply the fruit of this rich teaching ministry, the church has adopted an ambitious program of production and distribution of training and teaching materials.

Among these diverse products we have seen a growing ministry in the production of tapes, videos and CDs which extends to all Arabic speaking churches. A website under the name of [www.kdec.net](http://www.kdec.net) was launched with all these materials which are available to its visitors.

The church also sponsors the publication of many books on apologetics and discipleship, counseling and recovery ministry. The Karmel Mission in Germany has been a great support to Kasr El Dohara in that regard.

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### ***Networking and Timothy Ministries***

The church of Kasr El Dobara believes that the Lord has called her to serve other churches regardless of the denomination. The leadership team is therefore of one mind and one heart when their duty calls them to reach out to other believers and work together for the extension of the Kingdom of God. This is why, over the years, bridges of cooperation and partnership have been carefully built with more than 600 churches in Egypt as well as a number of churches in other countries.

The church leaders are committed to make available whatever resources they have to all brothers and sisters within this partnership or network. This includes sharing evangelistic resources, teaching and training material, prayer events, speakers and outreach teams. They aim to serve, affirm and empower others for the work of the ministry so as to usher in God's breakthrough into our nation for His glory.

### ***Satellite***

The satellite ministry of Kasr El Dobara began in July 2003, when SAT-7 broadcasted a one-hour program recorded from the Sunday evening service featuring the sermon and some praise and worship. Later, in September 2003, Life Channel, another satellite station, also began broadcasting the same weekly service. The church's media ministry prepares the program.

### ***Other Sheep which are Not of this Fold***

*“Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knows me even so know I the Father, and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold. Them also I must*

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*bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd”.*” (John 10:14-16).

Pastor Menes was inspired by this passage to reach out to the sheep “which are not of this fold” be they nominal Christians or non-Christians. This was a very costly commitment.

### ***Threats and Persecution***

On September 5, 1981 President Sadat of Egypt ordered the arrest and imprisonment of 1,500 radical Egyptians from all walks of life. Because of Pastor Menes’ evangelistic activities among Muslims his name was on the list and as he was waiting to be arrested, he remembered Jeremiah 18 when the Lord ordered His prophet to go down to the potter's house, “*and there I will give you my message.*” Jeremiah went down and saw the potter working at the wheel. The pot he was shaping was marred in his hands, so the potter formed it into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. Pastor Menes thought of the clay on the wheel. As the wheel spun fast the clay must have felt very dizzy. That was how he felt. The capable and trained fingers of the potter were pressing the “dizzy” clay from every side and Pastor Menes felt just as pressed that night.

“Lord,” he prayed, “Have thine own way. Shape me as it seems best to you.”

Pastor Menes was greatly comforted when he understood that the potter had to, in some way, hug the clay to control and shape it. Pastor Menes was against His bosom and God’s hands were surrounding him. His comfort increased when he remembered that the potter formed the clay into another pot, shaping it as seemed best to him. “This must be the best for Menes, too”, he thought.

The hours of the night passed more slowly than usual, but the policemen did not show up at his door and for a reason

unknown to him, his name was taken off the police list. The Potter had spared him the imprisonment, but Menes prayed that God would not stop shaping him as he judged best.

*“And the God of all grace, who called us to his eternal glory in Christ, after we have suffered a little while, will himself restore us and make us strong, firm and steadfast” (1 Peter 5:10).*

### ***The Man with Three Pistols***

On Tuesday May 16, 2000 a muscular Muslim carrying three pistols came to Pastor Menes and stood before his desk. He pointed the guns at the pastor’s head, one after the other, before turning them towards the wall, demonstrating an empty chamber in one of them and loaded chambers in the other two. When the first gun was pointed at him, Pastor Menes - as he always does in critical situations - sent up a telegraphic prayer to heaven, saying, “Lord, I am ready.” When the second one was pointed at him, another telegraphic prayer went up, “Lord, help him do a good job. I do not want to be a burden to my wife as she takes care of a paralyzed husband.”

After the third gun was pointed at him, Pastor Menes smiled at the man and said, “Please sit down. What can I do for you?” He just answered, “Tell me about Christ.”

The pastor said, “Believe me, you do not need three pistols to convince me to tell you about Christ. Tell me what you know about Him so that I can begin from there.”

“I will come tomorrow,” the man answered.

The man did come the next day and continued coming after that for some time. He heard a great deal about the Redeemer. The last time he was seen in church was October 22, 2000 when he took Holy Communion. He then said to the Pastor, “You have left your finger print on my life.” Pastor Menes very much hopes to see him in heaven.

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### ***If you are not scared***

Pastor Richard Wurmbrand, the Romanian underground Christian activist who founded “Voice of the Martyrs”, once preached in Kasr El Dohara church. Pastor Menes had read his book “*The Red Torture*” and had asked Pastor Wurmbrand to teach him a lesson.

“If you are fearful,” Pastor Wurmbrand said, “they will scare you.”

To this Pastor Menes answered, “But this is a great old wisdom which the Lord gave to Jeremiah in Jeremiah 1:17. Do you have a new lesson for me?”

“Yes,” Pastor Wurmbrand said, “If you are not fearful they will be scared of you.”

Pastor Menes said, “I practise this all the time and I am not afraid.”

### ***What “Christianity Today” said***

The American magazine “*Christianity Today*” put the emphasis on Egypt in its June 17, 1988 issue. It said the following about the ministry of Kasr El Dohara:

“Egyptian Christians can point to and participate in ministries clearly touched by the Holy Spirit. One such ministry is that of Menes Abdul Noor, pastor of Kasr El Dohara church in Cairo. At 57, the wiry Menes has an elastic face that one moment crumples into a frown, the next stretches into a full-toothed smile. He sits talking in the spacious parlor of his parsonage, directly joined to the tall, limestone church sanctuary. As Menes speaks, two or three young men and women drift into the parlor or out of the kitchen. Before disappearing to help them, Menes’ wife, Nadia, explains that the young people seek counseling; often some live with the Noors until their lives are straightened out.

Menes claims to be accomplishing so much by virtue of

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having read a book on time management, hiring secretaries, and leaving most of the household affairs to Nadia. And he confesses that his days stretch from seven in the morning until just past midnight.

Others have said that Menes' frenetic ministry is effective. His books sell rapidly. He has become one of the most recognizable "holy men" in the country, well known enough that later, at a restaurant, a waiter inquires of Nadia if her husband is the famous minister and if so, why isn't he wearing an ecclesiastical gown? In a fashion typical of both Noors, Nadia turns the occasion into an opportunity to share God's love, explaining the Protestant split from Catholicism and clerical garb at the Reformation, and going from there into a discussion of justification by faith.

Such behavior is typical of Nadia and Menes. He is a bold evangelist who has continued his ministry despite opposition and death threats. He is optimistic, moreover, because Egypt is now seeing the conversion of entire households and villages to Christ. There are now Bible studies in Coptic Orthodox and Catholic churches. And there are Bibles on the newsstands. All of this he says is unprecedented.

Finally, Menes is optimistic because of the faith of Egypt's next generation. He stresses how important it is to visit a Monday night prayer meeting of young university graduates. The meeting ends around half-past nine. Afterwards, we knock at the door of Menes' house. At the door he suppresses yawns and rubs bloodshot eyes. But soon he recovers his energy and loquacity. After all, he is busy translating a new version of the Bible into Arabic. And there are two-and-a-half hours left in the workday of the man whose name, translated, means "Servant of the Light."

*LORD*

*We thank you for Pastor Menes.*

*We thank you for his home, wife, children and grandchildren.*

*Thank you for his children in the faith and in the ministry.*

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*Thank you for Kasr El Dobara church.  
Protect it and grant it safety,  
and continue to manifest your presence in it.*

*Thank you for our founder, Dr. Ibrahim Said.  
Thank you for his son who serves us.*

*Thank you for our lay ministers, the elders,  
deacons and leaders.  
Thank you for our ministers: Sameh, Atef and Nagy.  
Bless their ministry and make it more fruitful.  
Give them dreams and visions and  
pour more of your anointing upon them.  
Amen.*

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Chapter Twelve

***Pastor Menes Abdul Noor:  
in a few words***

Pastor Menes was born in Assiut, Egypt, on October 22, 1930. Both his father and grandfather were Presbyterian ministers.

***Education***

He studied at the American Mission School in Assiut, Egypt (1941-1946).

He graduated from the Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary (1946-1949).

During 1948 to 1949 he studied four courses of Syriac and advanced Hebrew at the American University, Cairo.

He earned his MA in Religious Education at the Biblical Seminary in New York, 1956-1957 (now, New York Theological Seminary). His thesis was entitled “*Evangelizing Muslims in Egypt*”.

He studied three summer courses in 1957 on simple writing, news editing and short story writing at the Syracuse University School of Journalism. There, for two weeks, as a part of his training he became editor of the University Paper “*The Syracuse Summer Orange*”.

In May 1989, Wheaton College, Wheaton, Illinois, conferred on Pastor Menes an honorary doctorate degree acknowledging that he was, “about to enter his 5<sup>th</sup> decade of service for our Lord Jesus, as a pastor, teacher, scholar, and evangelist.”

### ***Ministry***

Starting in June 1949, following his graduation from Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary, he served as a pastor of the small village church of Nazlet Herz, 250 kilometers south of Cairo. There, in December 1952, a successful literacy campaign was launched in order to teach the village illiterates how to read and write, using Dr. Frank Laubach's method "Each one, Teach one". The remarkable success of this literacy campaign was reported in the October 1955 issue of the Readers' Digest under the title "*Revolution via ABCs*".

While in Nazlet Herz, and upon his invitation, the Egypt General Mission came in 1954 and began a medical and evangelistic ministry in Nazlet Herz and the surrounding villages which continued for about twelve years.

From 1960-1965, he became editor of the Synod of the Nile publications and lived in Minia, Egypt during that time.

From 1965-1976, he pastored a church in what was known in Biblical times as the Land of Goshen. It is now named Zagazig, and lies 80 kilometers northeast of Cairo.

In May 1976, he was called to pastor the largest Evangelical church in the Middle East, Kasr El Dobara Evangelical Church. It is located in the city center of Cairo. During his ministry the attendance has increased several times. The ministerial staff has grown from two to 48. Many, from all walks of life, have come to accept Christ the Savior in this church. Because of the expansion of the ministry a six-floor building was erected and hopefully another one is on its way to be built.

### ***Teaching***

From 1966-2000, Pastor Menes served as the instructor of Islamics and Chairman of the Department of Comparative Religion at the Cairo Evangelical Theological Seminary. He was Acting Principal of the Seminary from 1999-2000 and

President of the Seminary Council from 2001-2005.

He was also a faculty member of Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership Training in Singapore and Maui, Hawaii, from 1982-2005. There he has lectured to chosen Third World leaders several times a year.

### **Writing**

As editor of the Synod of the Nile Publications (1960-1965) he wrote a number of books and commentaries. During that time, he was assistant editor to two monthly magazines, “*Risalat al-Noor*” (Message of Light) for new literates and “*Agnihat al-Nusur*” (Eagles’ Wings) for educated readers.

From 1970-1974, he served as the editor of the Sunday School curriculum “*Faith at Work*” for the churches of the Middle East supervised by the Middle East Council of Churches. In this position he trained writers from across the Arab World. The curriculum was written in Arabic and later translated into English, Armenian, Persian and Turkish.

Throughout his life, Pastor Menes authored more than fifty books on many Biblical and Islamic subjects. He has written commentaries on the books of Ruth, Psalms, Jonah, Mark, 1 and 2 Corinthians, Ephesians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, James, 1 and 2 Peter, and 1, 2 and 3 John. He also wrote “*False Accusations against the Bible*”, “*The Names of God*”, “*The Miracles of Christ*”, “*The Titles of Christ*”, “*The Parables of Christ*”, “*Bible Quiz and Answers*”, “*Impressions of an Egyptian Christian about the Cross*”, “*The Resurrection of Christ - a Historical Fact and a Contemporary Experience*”, “*The seven mysteries of Christianity*”, “*My Evangelical Faith*”, and “*The Christian Sharia’ – the Sermon on the Mount*”.

He wrote on the following Biblical characters: Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, and Elisha; and also wrote on the lives of two famous saints: “*Francis of Assisi – The Saint of Joy*”

and “*St. Augustine – The Son of Tears*”.

Pastor Menes also translated 45 books from English to Arabic including William Barclay’s commentaries on Romans and Revelation, C.S. Lewis’ “*Basic Christianity*”, Josh McDowell’s “*Evidence that Demands a Verdict*” and Howard Klinebill’s “*Basic Kinds of Pastoral Counseling*”.

Pastor Menes has written over 1,000 Arabic articles for Christian magazines. In English, he wrote for “*The Upper Room*”, “*Moody Monthly*”, “*Presbyterian Life*” and “*Together*”.

In October 1974, he was engaged in the translation of the Living Bible into Arabic. He carried a big share of the editing of the final copy of the New Testament. Of the Old Testament he translated Genesis through Job, Isaiah and the Minor Prophets.

#### ***TV, Radio, cassette and video ministry***

Pastor Menes was the author and presenter of several Arabic TV programs, aired regularly from Middle East Television (CBN) and SAT-7 television station. He presented numerous series, teaching on “*Psalms*”, “*The Parables of Christ*”, “*The Miracles of Christ*”, “*The Titles of Christ*”, “*The Fruit of the Holy Spirit*”, “*Christian Values*” (based on 1 Corinthians 13), and “*The Fulfillment of the Times*” (based on Biblical characters).

He was writer and voicer of the Arabic radio ministry of Call of Hope, Stuttgart, Germany from 1979-2003.

For almost 20 years he was writer and voicer of the Youth for Christ weekly radio program “*A Word With You*” broadcasted from Trans World Radio in Monte Carlo, Monaco.

Out of his successful Arabic radio programs he wrote and voiced the following 15 minute programs:

312 programs of “*A Word With You*” (Programs for young people)

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312 programs of “*Hymns and Comments*”

156 programs of “*Life of Christ*”

156 programs of “*Questions and Answers*”

156 programs of “*Short Stories*”

156 programs of “*Verse, Comment and a Hymn*”

156 programs of “*Titles of Christ*”

156 programs on “*False Accusations against the Bible*”

156 programs on “*Bible Characters*”

156 programs on “*Meditation on the Psalms*”

His cassette and radio ministry of sermons (750 and growing) as well as his question-answer cassettes serve the whole Arab World as well as Arabic speaking people in the United States of America, Canada, Australia and Europe.

### ***International Involvement***

He has attended many important gatherings, such as:

- World Council of Christian Education, Lima, Peru, 1971.
- Lausanne Congress for World Evangelism, 1974 - he was elected chairman of the Middle East delegation.
- Conference on Muslim Evangelism, Colorado Springs, 1978.
- Conference of Dialoguing with Muslims, Mombassa, Kenya, 1979.
- General Assembly of Youth for Christ in Le Diabrelet, Switzerland 1974 and in Birmingham, England 1980.
- All Africa Conference of Churches in Nairobi, Kenya, 1981.
- World Alliance of Reformed Churches, Ottawa, Canada, 1982.

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- International Committee of the Living Bible, Lisbon, Portugal, 1983.
  - He visited Muskingum Valley Presbytery in Ohio, USA with his wife to speak to churches of the presbytery, 1982.
  - He spoke to several churches in the USA and Canada to raise funds for the Arabic Living Bible, 1985.

### ***Awards***

1. Haggai Institute Award for Outstanding Christian Service, 1994
2. Pro Fide Award, Finland, 1997
3. Religious Freedom Award, Washington, D.C., USA, 1999
4. AWEMA, North America Award, April 2003.

### ***Family***

Nadia, his wife, has been the editor of “*Cornerstones*”, the Arabic Christian magazine for women since 1968.

Violet, their daughter, is married to Maher Fouad, and is the mother of a daughter and a son. She works as a dentist in Cairo.

Farid, their son, is married to Karen, and is the father of two boys and two girls. He is a medical doctor in the United States of America.

Menes and Nadia have six grandchildren: Amy and Amir Maher Fouad and David, Nadia, Nawel and Daniel Noor.

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## **BACK COVER**

### ***Photo***

Dr. Rev. Menes Abdul Noor

This is a story about a man from Egypt. It is a story about faithfulness - Jesus' faithfulness to him and his faithfulness to Jesus. Many of those who read it will find themselves in the story. It does not matter if they are just beginning their walk with Jesus or if they are walking on a road on which they have traveled for some time because this story will help them learn about the rewards of faithfulness in difficult circumstances.

*“Menes Abdul Noor stands as a bright and shining light in the midst of one of the most difficult societies in the world.”*

Jim Groen, ex-President of Youth for Christ Int'l

*[\*\*\*Put in LOGO of Call of Hope at centre bottom]*

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