

Navigating Sacred Spaces: Coptic Immigrants in 1960s Toronto¹

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On June 21, 1967, Reverend Moore Smith's eighteen-year-old legal ward, Katherine Globe, died from a ruptured brain abscess in the rectory of Toronto's St. Matthias' Anglican church.² Katherine had moved into the rectory in February 1966 at the insistence of her brother, Alex, and her fiancé, David Smith (the Reverend's son), because she had long suffered from intense headaches. Katherine's death sparked widespread outrage that played out in local and national newspapers between September and October 1967. Rev. Smith, his assistant Rev. Douglas Tisdall, and principal witness Mrs. Margery Rogers were said to have led a faith-healing group in the church for at least the past three years. The ensuing inquest, held on September 28, found Rev. Smith and his wife Violet negligent for failing to seek appropriate medical care for their ward.³ Following an ecclesiastical inquisition held by the Right Reverend G. B. Snell, Anglican Bishop of Toronto, Rev. Smith resigned from the parish. The members of the faith-healing group left the church, but continued to meet under the direction of Mrs. Rogers in a house on Gloucester Street. Rev. Smith was reassigned to a curacy in the Diocese of Jamaica.

Katherine Globe's death coincided with the rise of a new charismatic movement in mainstream Canadian churches, which, according to Roberto Perin, was "unquestionably influenced by Pentecostalism's focus on the religion of feeling" and the individual experience of the gift (charismata) of the Holy Spirit.⁴ In response, ecumenically-minded Protestant clergymen, who saw a correlation between this rising charismatic movement and declining church attendance, stressed the importance of ritualism—emphasizing ritual and liturgical ceremony in the church. In need of buildings to hold social and spiritual services, recent Coptic Orthodox Christian immigrants from Egypt were able to rent space in Toronto's downtown churches because Protestant clergy sought to bolster parish income and to reaffirm the value of ritualism.

Though they are treated as two separate worlds that do not brush up against one another, these histories happened simultaneously and in the same place. This paper aims to situate Copts in the religious and social history of 1960s Toronto. It is concerned with several questions, but it mainly asks how immigrant groups with limited resources managed to navigate the city's sacred spaces. To that end, I consider the history of Coptic immigration in tandem with the responses of Protestant churches to declining attendance, rising Catholic immigration, and a thriving counterculture in downtown Toronto (from Bathurst Street to the Don River, south of Rosedale Valley). The successful development of vital social and spiritual services was a product of the unique character and timing of Coptic immigration.



Image 1: Congregants at St. Matthias' Anglican church shaking hands with Rev. Smith and Rev. Tisdall, 26 August 1967.

Photo by Richard Cole for the *Toronto Telegram*.

(York University Libraries, Clara Thomas Archives & Special Collections, Toronto Telegram Fonds, ASC41135).

This paper is also part of a digital exhibit currently in development for the Coptic Canadian History Project (CCHP), to engage “ordinary” Copts in Canada with their history. The CCHP is a non-profit community outreach organization which aims to identify, archive, digitize, preserve, and provide free access to source materials that reflect the knowledge, collective memory, and experiences of Egypt’s Coptic populations, Coptic immigrants in Canada, and their descendants. It emerged in response to a scarcity of records pertaining to this group in public archives and as a way to facilitate the preservation and dissemination of personal and institutional records at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, York University Libraries. In line with Craig Heron’s call for public history projects “to preserve and interpret particular elements of the past as embodiments of shared values and aspirations,” the CCHP offers a range of programming in the form of exhibitions, podcasts, conferences, and talks.⁵

Modeled after the Portuguese Canadian History Project (PCHP), the Greek Canadian History Project (GCHP), and the Toronto Workers’ History Project

(TWHP), and inspired by the tireless work of Craig Heron and many former and current York University graduate students, the CCHP hopes to bridge the gap between public archives, immigrant communities, and academic scholars. In the process of preparing the digital exhibit, Craig Heron's active engagement with public history and commitment to community outreach initiatives drew me to his article in *Labour/Le Travail*, "The Labour Historian and Public History." As he contends, historians can play an active role in contextualizing the often simplistic narratives of "the heritage community," and in this case, the clerical and lay leaders who finance commemorations and special events. By acting beyond the confines of academia, this work will produce "a wider dissemination of knowledge than academic channels normally allow."⁶ The Coptic Canadian History Project can thus serve to unite like-minded scholars who "can use their *critical lenses* to play an active role in helping to shape popular 'myths'" in the process of story-telling; to contextualize a past which continues to shape present realities.⁷

To date, most scholarly and popular literature on Coptic immigrant populations frames their new environments in diverse receiving societies as "empty" spaces, in which a static Coptic identity can be reconstituted.⁸ In the Canadian context, studies offer a cursory sketch of an idyllic atmosphere of inclusive pluralism, and then immediately proceed to describe immigrants' continued devotion to Egypt and to their faith.⁹ Coptic identity may be defined by this dual discourse of ethnic exceptionalism, rooted in a vaunted Egyptian cultural heritage and religious distinction as an indigenous Christian population. This social and historical construct hardened in response to escalating daily discrimination and marginalization in schools, workplaces, and the political public sphere after the 1952 Free Officers revolution, which displaced the monarchy and eventually brought General Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser to power.¹⁰

Publications by community intellectuals and the clerical hierarchy promote such filiopietism and have also reflected, since the 1940s, ongoing debates over the dangers of heterodox ideas entering the Church through close association with other denominations.¹¹ In addition, *aqbāt al-mahjar* (Coptic émigrés) became the target of mainstream Egyptian media after the 1970s, because of their criticism of the Egyptian government.¹² Clerical and lay leaders feared émigré Copts' challenges would threaten the Church's position as an intermediary for persecuted Christians in Egypt—reasonable fears given escalating church bombings and the torture and murder of Copts in Egypt for the past 45 years.¹³ Ongoing debates over the dangers of heterodoxy and of émigré activism have resulted in severe access restrictions being imposed on archival material by members of the higher clergy. Therefore, I rely predominantly on records from Library and Archives Canada, the Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, and the memories and photographic records of early Coptic immigrants to provide a glimpse of the Coptic experience in 1960s Toronto.

The unique character and timing of Coptic emigration was a product of a confluence of events in Egypt. President Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser's (1956–1970)

political and moral victory in the 1956 Suez Crisis propelled his power and popularity to new heights, and allowed him to seize and nationalize numerous properties to finance rapid economic and social development. For Coptic Christians in Egypt, Nasser's reign signalled a period of implicit social ostracism, economic precarity, and political marginalization. When the United States implemented the Educational Council for Foreign Medical Graduates in 1957—to counterbalance Soviet influence in the region—this student exchange program allowed an initial cohort of Coptic medical students and university lecturers to emigrate. They were encouraged to apply by Father Makari al-Suriani, their former Sunday school teacher in Giza, and a former graduate student in Religious Education at Princeton University (1954–1955).¹⁴

Coptic immigration to Canada was imperceptible until Nasser's nationalization project reached the Coptic Hospital and Coptic schools in 1962. After this, medical and engineering graduate students joined the University of Toronto and architects entered a thriving private sector. After 1964, former Shell Company Engineers began to arrive with their families when Shell's interests were nationalized by the Nasser regime and distributed among local companies such as Nasr Petroleum Company and Misr Petroleum Company.¹⁵ Shell was only allowed to return to Egypt in 1974, under President Anwar al-Sadat's (1970–1981) liberalization scheme, which combined a strong state sector with incentives for foreign investment and private enterprise.¹⁶ However, by then many Copts had emigrated and Sadat's liberalization scheme only added to the precarious position of those remaining in Egypt. He opened local markets to cheap foreign goods and opened the doors for Islamic fundamentalist movements, which turned implicit marginalization into explicit discrimination, acts of violence, and political exclusion.¹⁷

Egyptians constituted the largest component of post-Second World War Middle Eastern immigration to Canada.¹⁸ Between 1956 and 1976, 19,599 individuals reported Egypt as their country of last permanent residence.¹⁹ Up to the late 1950s, Egyptian society was comprised of groups from diverse ethnic and religious backgrounds. It is thus difficult to determine if those who listed Egypt as their country of last permanent residence were Egyptian Christians, Muslims, Jews, or nationals of Armenian, Syrian, Lebanese, or European descent. However, Canadian newspapers and records from the Canadian embassy in Cairo offer a tentative estimate of the total numbers of Coptic immigrants from Egypt.

According to the Canadian embassy, European and Christian groups in Egypt constituted the bulk of prospective immigrants in the 1960s. Muslim Egyptians only began to immigrate in small numbers in the 1970s—the Canadian ambassador in Cairo had predicted in 1963 that “it is to be expected however that the pool of qualified European and Christian candidates will eventually be exhausted which will then result in a significant relative increase in the importance of the Muslim group.”²⁰ Canadian immigration officials on the ground in Egypt retained significant purview in the selection process. Christian populations were, for them, a

target of aggressive recruitment strategies because they were “qualified immigrants who spoke both English and French,” and their immigration offered political significance for strained Canadian–Egyptian relations.²¹ Between 1961 and the end of 1963, approximately 2,700 of 23,000 individuals and heads of households were granted immigrant visas.²² Comparing embassy records with local news reports in the *Toronto Star*, the Coptic population in the City of Toronto and its environs most likely swelled from approximately 500 in 1966 to 3,400 by 1981.²³

Coptic immigration to Canada was a distinctly post-World War II phenomenon that reflects the changing character of Canadian society and of life in Toronto. Many of the initial single male graduate students, lured by an expanding post-secondary educational sector, moved to the Annex and around the University of Toronto St. George Campus. By the mid-1960s, engineers and architects entered the city’s thriving private sector and began to purchase apartments and townhouses for their families in the first planned “corporate suburb” in the Don Mills area.²⁴ Copts joined a large influx of postwar immigration that raised the country’s population from 11.5 million to 18.5 million between 1941 and 1962.²⁵ By 1962, immigration criteria that discriminated based on race or country of origin had been replaced by an emphasis on independent immigrants with desirable skills, training, and education.²⁶ For example, the total number of immigrants from Egypt increased dramatically from approximately a thousand by 1961 to 1,322 in 1962 alone.²⁷ While changing immigration criteria paved the way for the 1967 points system, which removed explicit traces of discrimination in Canada’s immigration policy, the final decision remained at the discretion of local immigration officials.

In that regard, Copts were the “right kind” of immigrants—presented as white, predominantly middle-class, and young professionals. Viewed in the broader scope of the developing language of cultural pluralism (later dubbed multiculturalism), Copts practiced a brand of cultural promotion that was non-political and unthreatening to the construction of the Canadian state.²⁸ Coptic clergy and intellectuals would vehemently latch on to the ideals of multiculturalism. In 1981, the first issue of a new academic publication, *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa*, included an article by Father Marcos A. Marcos, the first Coptic priest in North America, entitled: “The Copts of Canada: A Shining Star in a Galaxy of Diversified Celestial Bodies.” Identifying the Copts as an “ethnic group” with a rich history in Egypt, Father Marcos lists their “contributions” to Canadian society before alluding to the body of Christ when concluding that Copts became “a newly transplanted member of this body ... Canada.”²⁹

Among the new postwar immigrants were many Portuguese, Spanish, Italian, and Caribbean Catholics. Catholicism was so successful that Toronto, a city that was 80 per cent Protestant in 1941, had become 40 per cent Roman Catholic by 1971.³⁰ The prevalence of Catholicism in downtown Toronto was mirrored by waning attendance in Protestant churches. Protestant church attendance on Sundays declined considerably, from 60 per cent of parishioners in 1946 to only 33 per cent

by 1965.³¹ In contrast, the Catholic Church “remained a vital community institution for the huge influx of European immigrants ... and its activities transcended the purely spiritual and moral to encompass immigrant advocacy, language training, child care, leisure, and financial assistance.”³² By 1975, Catholic attendance dropped to 61 per cent, whereas for Protestants weekly attendance fell to twenty-five per cent.

To counterbalance low attendance and growing secularization, a vibrant ecumenical movement peaked in this period; it sought to bring ecclesiastical bodies of varying denominations into closer communion, and unite social and spiritual services. Prior to the 1960s, the ecumenical movement was deeply Protestant in both its leadership and contributing members. With rising immigration, the introduction of liberalizing reforms at Vatican II, and Eastern and Oriental Orthodox Churches’ growing contributions toward ecumenical dialogue, the president of the Canadian Council of Churches remarked in a 1969 Triennial meeting that the ecumenical movement in this period possessed a “revolutionary quality” to challenge the “status quo.”³³ The term “revolutionary” is, of course, an overstatement, but it reflects anxieties surrounding the perceived negative impact of ongoing social and cultural change in the city.

By 1965, Toronto became both an industrial and commercial hub and a vital cultural centre, as baby boomers entered an expanding post-secondary educational sector.³⁴ In the midst of a sexual and cultural revolution, social spaces in the city served as sites for “intentional communities, and alternative cultural life.”³⁵ For cultural historian David Churchill, both sacred and profane “alternative spaces” offered “sites for people to meet, share gossip, and exchange information on where to stay, find work, and debate politics.”³⁶ Just outside the downtown churches of Holy Trinity and St. Matthias’ was a growing sex industry on Yonge Street, rising crime rates, and the spectre of escalating drug use.³⁷ Yet, these spaces were also where Coptic immigrants held spiritual services, communal activities, and learned of available social services.

Father Marcos arrived in Toronto in late November 1964, and two weeks later, was invited to a lunch banquet organized by Rev. Dr. Ernest Howse, the Moderator of the United Church. In attendance were Bishop Henry Hunt of the Anglican Church of Canada, the general secretary of the Canadian Council of Churches, and representatives of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This banquet was one of a variety of events organized to bring the Anglican and United Churches into closer communion, with the intention of eventual union. In need of larger accommodations for his growing parish, Father Marcos took the opportunity to network with those present, and later contacted Bishop Henry Hunt and Rev. James Fisk of Holy Trinity, who invited the Coptic parish to use the church’s upper chapel. Father Marcos and his congregation worshipped in the chapel on Sundays until the spring of 1969, and during their time at Holy Trinity they often shared the space with hippies, leftists, draft dodgers, and social activists.³⁸ One parishioner,

then a young engineering doctoral student at the University of Toronto who had arrived in fall 1966, remembers constant protests on campus and in the streets. Escaping political turmoil in Egypt, he, like many other Copts, was sympathetic but disengaged from civil rights and anti-Vietnam activism in Toronto. Instead, he chose to focus on completing his degree and securing a career, and he recalls that he and his friends relied on the parish for spiritual services and to extend their social networks.³⁹

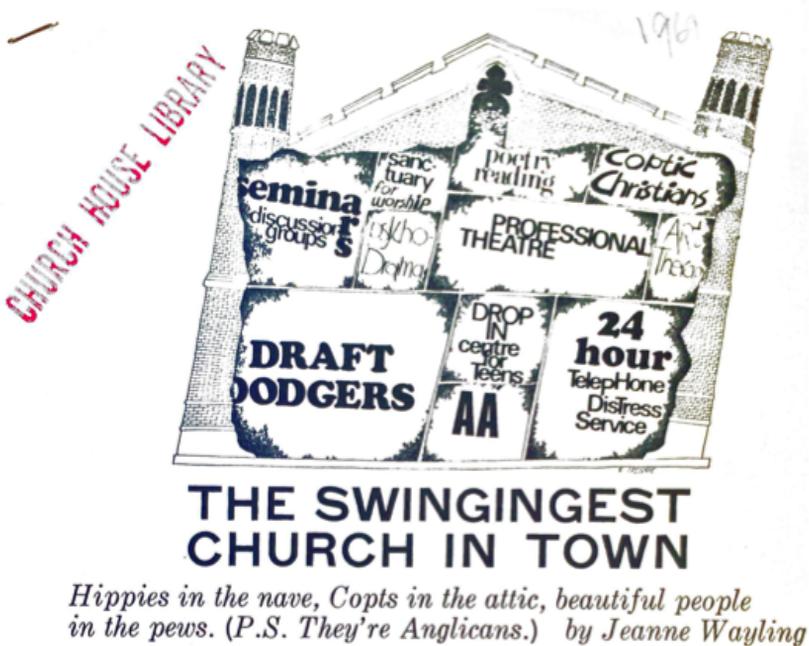


Image 2: Sketch of services at Holy Trinity by S. Mennie for *The Observer*, June 1969. Appears in “The Swingingest Church in Town: Hippies in the nave, Copts in the attic, beautiful people in the pews. (P.S. They’re Anglicans.),” by Jeanne Wayling (Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, Holy Trinity, Trinity Square parish history file).

Yet Father Marcos and his parish were not simply recipients of the goodwill of Protestant co-religionists. Protestant clergymen sought to draw back their dwindling congregations in response to perceived Catholic dominance, the spread of a charismatic movement, and a sexually permissive counterculture. Clergymen treated religious faith as a consumable product and, in the words of Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, they recognized that people were “shopping around for the right services.”⁴⁰ Catholic churches focused on issues including sex, birth control, marriage, divorce, Vietnam, and refugees, to serve the needs of their growing im-

migrant congregations. Facing declining attendance, Protestant clergymen in Toronto instead opened their doors to alternative cultural groups. Unlike Catholic clergy, Anglicans were active in the ecumenical movement and found an exotic appeal in an Oriental Orthodox group situated outside the history of religious competition in the city. Ecumenically-minded clergymen turned to this immigrants' church—with its elaborate rituals and ancient traditions—to revitalize their congregations. Father Marcos was routinely invited to deliver sermons at Holy Trinity and explain how his Church had maintained its traditions and survived under threat of persecution. Furthermore, Anglican and Coptic parishes engaged in joint social activities in the church and on excursions to Centre Island.⁴¹

Seen in this context, the actions of Rev. Smith's faith-healing group and the untimely death of Katherine Globe were the most immediate of several factors which coincided with the timing of Coptic immigration to Toronto. By March 1968, of the 100 names on the St. Matthias' parish roll, only 30 were still supporting the parish. Sunday attendance had fallen from 149 to 25 in the past year, and the average Sunday service income was \$50.⁴² The church had fallen into disrepair and operated at a deficit. In a *Canadian Churchman* article from March 1968, journalist Carolyn Purden described the parish hall as "a large well-lit room bearing the signs of respectable poverty: a water-stained ceiling, a dingy green curtain concealing a stage, a wooden floor scuffed to a dull grey, a cracked window pane."⁴³

On April 24, 1968, the Venerable G. H. Johnson, archdeacon of the diocese and acting chairman of the parish, presided over a Vestry meeting that appointed Rev. J. R. Roberts as Priest-in-Charge.⁴⁴ In the summer of 1968, Bishop Snell agreed to let Rev. Ronald F. Palmer help Rev. Roberts and thereafter, Rev. Palmer took over the care for St. Matthias' parish's services and pastoral work.⁴⁵ Rev. Palmer, a former youth leader at St. Matthias' and student at Trinity College, had joined the Society of St. John the Evangelist (SSJE), and returned to St. Matthias' to lead the congregation for a little over a year.

In June 1969, a reporter for *The Anglican* wrote an article on the Copts in Holy Trinity, asking, "in the changes that lie ahead in the inner city and elsewhere, is there by any chance a church building that could be offered to the Copts?"⁴⁶ Rev. Palmer had already reached out to former parishioners and encouraged recent Barbadian immigrants to join and contribute to the parish. After reading Turner's article, Rev. Palmer approached the Advisory Board of St. Matthias' for their approval to invite the Copts to rent the church. He then visited Father Marcos with Rev. Roberts to offer the use of St. Matthias' church and its facilities. Having already outgrown their current accommodations, the Coptic congregation readily accepted the offer.



Image 3: From left to right, Fr. Marcos, Rev. Roberts, Dr. Nasr Shenouda, Mr. J.A. Whittaker, and Rev. Palmer.

Photo by Micklethwaite for *The Anglican*, September 1969.

(Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, St. Matthias' Bellwoods parish history file).

The Coptic parish used St. Matthias' church for liturgy on Sunday evenings and the church hall for educational and social events on Thursday and Saturday evenings. The *Monthly Message*, a continentally circulated Coptic newsletter, began publishing during their residency and was used to communicate marriage and death notices.⁴⁷ St. Matthias' served as a transnational hub, connecting Coptic families scattered across Canada and the United States and, according to an account by Rev. Palmer, “[the Copts] gave a lot of help in restoring and redecorating the parish hall which they used for their social and educational activities.”⁴⁸ In addition, an October 1969 article in *The Anglican*, written one month after the Coptic parish took up residency in St. Matthias', noted that both congregations worked together to restore the basement, and redecorated a room that Father Marcos used as an office.⁴⁹ The two parishes shared meals in the church's basement and engaged in joint recreational activities—Rev. Palmer invited the Coptic parish to join his Barbadian congregants at a screening of a film documenting the activities of a church in Barbados.⁵⁰ The first Coptic parish festival in the city was held at St. Matthias'—a recovered advertisement stated in bold letters, “Saint Mark Club of the Coptic Orthodox church in

Toronto proudly presents the First Oriental and Pharaonic Bazaar.”⁵¹ This event moved from St. Matthias’ to Prospect Park United Church (rented to the parish 1971–1977), then to St. Mark’s Coptic Orthodox church (built in 1978). It continued annually as a venue for cultural celebration and social engagement. One of the last services Copts celebrated at St. Matthias’ was a commemoration for the passing of Pope Kyrillos VI in March 1971.

This story of inter-ethnic and inter-denominational cooperation and daily interaction may seem commonplace to those familiar with the history of Canadian immigration. Yet, such activities have been papered over by Coptic clerical and lay elites who seek to instead present a master narrative of a static and distinct Coptic identity, within an idyllic environment of Canadian multiculturalism. As Craig Heron has noted, “the heritage community tends to have a nostalgic, relatively uncritical view of the past—one that emphasizes harmony and such solid virtues as hard work and determination and one that assumes the past is closed and shut off from the present.”⁵² This practice of uncritical nostalgia animates the programming of the Coptic Canadian History Project, particularly as a Canadian-born generation is now growing up disinterested in developments in Egypt and unaware of their group’s history in Canada. It is thus vitally important to locate Coptic immigration within both homeland politics and changes in Canadian society. Middle-class, urban, and university-educated Copts left political and economic instability in Egypt to enter expanding educational and employment opportunities in Canada. Copts’ success in navigating Toronto’s sacred spaces in the 1960s also reflects a city that was in the midst of tremendous change. Declining attendance in Protestant churches, rising Catholic immigration, and a thriving downtown counterculture created opportunities for Toronto’s first Coptic parish to rent Protestant churches and to develop vital social and spiritual services to meet their needs. As Coptic Christians in Egypt and in Canada continue to navigate sacred—and increasingly scarred—spaces, the CCHP will offer new ways to tell the stories of Egypt’s Coptic populations, Coptic immigrants in Canada, and their descendants.

NOTES

¹ I would like to thank Professor Roberto Perin, Professor Gabriele Scardellato, Maximilian Smith, and the two anonymous readers for their invaluable feedback on earlier drafts of this paper. The Coptic Orthodox Church is one of the oldest Christian Churches and identifies St. Mark the Evangelist, said to have visited Egypt in the first century C.E., as its first patriarch. It belongs to the Oriental Or-

thodox tradition and rejects the ecumenical council in Chalcedon (451 C.E). Its adherents currently number approximately 10 per cent of Egypt's population.

² Carolyn Purden, "The Story of a Determined Congregation," *Canadian Churchman* (March 1968): 2.

³ Don Delaplante, "Inquest finds Canon, Wife neglected Ward," *The Globe and Mail*, October 5, 1967.

⁴ Roberto Perin, *The Many Rooms of this House: Diversity in Toronto's Places of Worship since 1840* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2017), 217.

⁵ Craig Heron, "The Labour Historian and Public History," *Labour/Le Travail* 45 (2000): 174.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 171.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 183.

⁸ Examples of this approach outside Canada include Anita Bingham-Kolenkow, "The Copts in the United States of America," in *Between Desert and City: The Coptic Orthodox Church Today*, eds. Nelly Van Doorn-Harder and Kari Vogt (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 1997), 266–274; Fouad Ibrahim, "The Egyptian Coptic Diaspora in Germany: A Study in Local Cultural Vitality," in *Religion in the Context of African Migration*, eds. Afeosemimo U. Adogame and Cordula Weissköppel (Beirut: Eckhard Breitingner, 2005), 301–313; Nora Stene, "Multiple Choice? Language-usage and the Transmission of Religious Tradition in the Coptic Orthodox Community in London," *British Journal of Religious Education* 20, no. 2 (1998): 90–101.

⁹ Examples in Canada include Ghada Botros, "Competing for the Future: Adaptation and the Accommodation of Difference in Coptic Immigrant Churches" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2005); Rachel Loewen, "The Coptic Orthodox Church in the Greater Toronto Area: The Second Generation, Converts and Gender" (master's thesis, McMaster University, 2008); Pishoy Salama, "Of All Nations: Exploring Intercultural Marriages in the Coptic Orthodox Church of the GTA" (D.Min diss., University of St. Michael's College and University of Toronto, 2012).

¹⁰ The topic of Coptic identity remains contested, and its adequate treatment is beyond the scope of this paper. For an introduction, see Vivian Ibrahim, *The Copts of Egypt: Challenges of Modernisation and Identity* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 2011); Elizabeth Iskander, *Sectarian Conflict in Egypt: Coptic Media, Identity and Representation* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012); Paul Sedra, "Class Cleavages and Ethnic Conflict: Coptic Christian Communities in Modern Egyptian Politics," *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 10, no. 2 (1999): 219–235.

¹¹ Debates between clergy, intellectuals, and prominent Sunday school teachers in Egypt played out in the pages of *Majallat Madaris al-Abad* (The Sunday School magazine) and *Majallat Al-Kiraza* (The Preaching magazine).

¹² *Aqbāt al-mahjar* routinely appeared as villains on the pages of state newspaper *Al-Abram* and *Ruḥ al-Yūsuf* magazine, plugging the Egyptian government's foreign relations. Émigré Copts became particularly vocal after sectarian violence erupted in November 1972, when a church, two shops, and six Christian houses were attacked in Khanka, twelve miles north-east of Cairo.

¹³ For more on Church-state relations, see Mariz Tadros, "Vicissitudes in the Entente between the Coptic Orthodox Church and the State in Egypt (1952–2007)," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 41, no. 2 (2009): 271–272.

¹⁴ Sami Boulos, *The History of the Early Coptic Community in the U.S.A. (1955–1970)*, (s.l.: s.n., 2006). Boulos, a former dean of Education for the State University of New York (SUNY), recorded the stories of a small group of immigrants who arrived in the United States in the late 1950s.

¹⁵ Mathew (pseud.) interviewed in Ontario, 25 January, 2017. This was a very lucid memory for Mathew, as he recounted the factors that motivated him and his wife to emigrate.

¹⁶ James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 254.

¹⁷ The changing nature of discrimination toward Coptic Christians in Egypt was a recurring theme in 37 interviews I conducted from January to November 2017 in northeastern cities in the United States (New Jersey and the New York Metropolitan area) and Canada (Ontario).

¹⁸ Baha Abu-Laban, *An Olive Branch on the Family Tree: the Arabs in Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1980): 64–67.

¹⁹ K.G. Basavarajappa and Bali Ram, *Immigration to Canada by Country of Last Permanent Residence, 1956 to 1976*, Statistics Canada Series no. A385-416, Ottawa, Ontario, 1999: 32. This total does not account for ethnic or religious background, population growth rates, or return migrations.

²⁰ Library and Archives Canada (LAC), "Immigration from the United Arab Republic - General File," RG 76-I-B, Vol. 830, file 552-1-642 pt2, Dispatch to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, Ottawa, Canada, from the Canadian Ambassador, Cairo, UAR, "Immigration to Canada From the UAR," November 27, 1963, 2.

²¹ *Ibid.* Canadian-Egyptian relations were strained by the continued presence of a UNEF contingent in Egyptian-controlled territory after the 1956 Suez Crisis.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Victor M. Parachin, "First Coptic Church in North America Planned for Toronto," *The Toronto Star*, 19 February 1977, Religion sec.: F4; William Bragg, "Church Boom in Scarborough," *The Toronto Star* 17 February 1981: E14.

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- ²⁴ Richard Harris, *Creeping Conformity: How Canada became Suburban, 1900–1960* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), 138.
- ²⁵ Ninette Kelley and M. J. Trebilcock, *The Making of the Mosaic: A History of Canadian Immigration Policy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1998), 311. While early immigrants formed the nucleus for future institutional and associational growth, Middle Eastern immigrants hardly factor into academic studies of Canadian immigration in the 1960s. For Kelley and Trebilcock, as for many others, immigration from the region only becomes important after it reaches significant numbers from 1981 onward.
- ²⁶ *Ibid.*, 315.
- ²⁷ Basavarajappa and Ram, 32.
- ²⁸ Franca Iacovetta, *Gatekeepers: Reshaping Immigrant Lives in Cold War Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006), 96. On the shift from cultural pluralism to multiculturalism, see Franca Iacovetta, “Public Spectacles of Multiculturalism: Toronto before Trudeau,” Podcast, *2013 History Matters Lecture Series*, February 28, 2013, <http://activehistory.ca/2013/03/podcast-public-spectacles-of-multiculturalism-toronto-before-trudeau-by-franca-iacovetta/>.
- ²⁹ Marcos A. Marcos, “The Copts of Canada: A Shining Star in a Galaxy of Diversified Celestial Bodies,” *Coptologia: Studia Coptica Orthodoxa*, 1 (1981): 65–75.
- ³⁰ Nancy Christie and Michael Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and their Peoples, 1840–1965: A Social History of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), 181–182.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 180.
- ³² *Ibid.*, 181.
- ³³ LAC, Canadian Council of Churches fonds, MG28 I327, Vol. 2, file 1, Rev. Reginald S. Dunn, “Resume of the Address by the President,” *First Triennial Assembly (Seventeenth Meeting) Record of Proceedings*, November 24–28, 1969.
- ³⁴ David S. Churchill, “American Expatriates and the Building of Alternative Social Space in Toronto, 1965–1977,” *Urban History Review* 39, no. 1 (Fall 2010): 32.
- ³⁵ *Ibid.*, 38.
- ³⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.
- ³⁷ Daniel Ross, “Sex on Yonge: Examining the decade when Yonge Street was the city’s sin strip,” *Spacing Magazine* (Fall 2014): 24–27.
- ³⁸ Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, Holy Trinity, Trinity Square parish history file, Jeanne Wayling, “The Swingingest Church in Town: Hippies in the nave, Copts in the Attic, Beautiful People in the Pews. (P.S. They’re Anglicans.),” *The Observer*, June 1969: 18–20.

³⁹ Peter (pseud.) interviewed in Ontario, 26 April, 2017.

⁴⁰ Christie and Gauvreau, *Christian Churches and their Peoples*, 182.

⁴¹ Marcos A. Marcos, *The Coptic Orthodox Church: Forty Year Journey to North America*, (Alexandria: St. Mina Monastery, 2004): 189–192. Original letters and invitations were scanned and placed in the book by the author.

⁴² Purden, “The Story of a Determined Congregation,” 2.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, St. Matthias’ Bellwoods parish history file, “Parish Looks Ahead, ‘Yes’ - Vestry,” *The Anglican* (Toronto) May 1968.

⁴⁵ Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, St. Matthias’ Bellwoods parish history file, Rev. Roland F. Palmer S.S.J.E, *History of St. Matthias’ Church, 45 Bellwoods Avenue, Toronto, Canada, 1873–1973* (Toronto: St. Matthias’ Church, 1973), 16.

⁴⁶ Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, Holy Trinity, Trinity Square parish history file, Warren Turner, “Visit to Fr. Marcos,” *The Anglican* (Toronto) June 1969: A7.

⁴⁷ LAC, Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic], 1963–1971, MG55.9-No22, “Special Day of the Month,” Sunday November 22, 1970.

⁴⁸ Palmer, *History of St. Matthias’ Church*, 16.

⁴⁹ Toronto Anglican Diocesan Archives, St. Matthias Bellwoods parish history file, “Anglican Helps Copts Find New Home,” *The Anglican* (Toronto) October 1969: A4.

⁵⁰ Marcos, 191.

⁵¹ LAC, Saint Mathias Church (Coptic Orthodox) [sic], 1963–1971, MG55.9-No22, “Oriental Bazaar,” Saturday September 12, 1970.

⁵² Heron, “The Labour Historian and Public History,” 179.