



[Return to front page](#)

NILE HARVEST: PREFACE

This book is written chiefly for Egyptian and Sudanese members of the Episcopal Church, that they may see the Church to which they belong in the perspectives of history. I hope that it may become a book of reference for the ordinary church member, in which he or she may discover the origins of Christianity in the Nile Valley and the traditions which he or she has inherited. I hope that this will give to the Episcopal Church in Egypt and the Sudan a sense of strength and permanence which will enable them to withstand, with the other Christian Churches in the Middle East, the pressures of the modern world and to make a positive contribution to the life of the communities in which they exist.

To the Western reader, much of the earlier part of the book may be considered ‘old hat’, and he may find it more profitable to begin reading at Part II. “Many other writers have undertaken to draw up an account of the events that have happened among us ... And so I in my turn, as one who has gone over the whole course of these events in detail, have decided to write a connected narrative for you, so as to give you authentic knowledge about the matters of which you have been informed.” (Luke 1.1-4 NEB)

For Parts II and III I have had access to the archives of the Episcopal Church in Cairo, the archives of the Church Missionary Society at Birmingham University, the Sudan Papers at Durham University and the Jerusalem and Middle East Mission Papers at St Anthony’s College, Oxford. In addition, I have had my own records of service in both Egypt and the Sudan, and the benefit of consultation with many who have participated in the events here recorded.

Inevitably, one’s interpretation of history is coloured by one’s own position and outlook. My own stance could be neatly summed up in George Appleton’s words quoted in Part III, chapter 2:

All glory be to the Eternal God,

The Lord of the Worlds,
The Compassionate, the Merciful,
The Ruler of History, and the Lover of
men,
The God and Father of Jesus Christ,
For ever and ever.

It will become evident that I have been greatly influenced by four great Christian leaders with whom I have been privileged to work – Max Warren, John V Taylor, Kenneth Cragg and Hassan Dehqani-Tafti. To them I pay homage.

For encouragement to undertake the task of writing the book I could name many, but would wish to single out Oliver Allison, friend and bishop who ordained me, and for whom this book attempts to give expression to a whole life given in the service of the Church in the Sudan.

For encouragement to complete the task, I owe much to the gentle persistence of Lady Ghislaine Morris, Chairman of the Egypt Diocesan Association and formerly of the British Embassy in Cairo, Addis Ababa and Jiddah.

I realise I am indebted most of all to my family, who have been staunch companions of a way which has not always been easy, but which we have trodden together. To them I dedicate this book.

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