

**The Testimony and Ministry Record of the Reverend Hanna Ibrahim, Pastor of
the Arabic Evangelical Baptist Church, West Roxbury, MA**

“I wish I had one thousand years to serve the Lord”

“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.” Matt. 20:26-28

I was born to conservative Coptic Orthodox parents in the Town of Samaloot, of the Governorate of El-Menya, Egypt. During my High School years in El-Menya I was invited to attend a revival meeting at the El-Menya Pentecostal Church. During the worship service I received salvation and the new life by faith in the crucifixion, death, and resurrection of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. After six months in a true joyful life and studying the Word, on November 13, 1928, the Lord poured on me His Holy Spirit as I prayed and asked for the filling of the Holy Spirit as written in the Word of God (“...how much more will your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!” Luke 11:11-13). I immediately began to speak in new tongues as written in Acts 2:4 “All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them”. The Lord gave me also the gift of interpretations of tongues and spiritual revelations according to 1Cor.14: 4,6,26,30. And because Jesus is the same Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow, these gifts of the Holy Spirit continued with me until the present time. Thanks be to the Lord for it is written;” But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” Acts 1:8.

I felt great power and zeal in my heart pointing me not only to study the Word of God but also to visit the surrounding towns and villages and serve the Gospel. During these visits I was assured that the Lord was calling me to the ministry as the Holy Spirit convinced me. I stayed in my hometown until I was invited to serve in a new ministry field that needed a minister. I started to serve the Lord there and the Lord opened the door for the ministry fully by pouring His Spirit on the people who came to the services causing great wonder in that city. The Church asked me to be ordained and I became the youngest ordained minister in Egypt at that time.

After that, I ministered in the City of Giza for one full year and started a small Christian School in El-Giza and the Lord opened a great field of ministry among the people and the University students. Later, I moved to the City of Bani-Suef (120 Km South of Cairo) where I settled there and started a new church. The Lord blessed the ministry and the new church grew in numbers and many people were saved, many sick people were healed, and the lord used me in casting out demons from many possessed persons whose relatives brought them to the church believing that the Lord will deliver them. The Lord continued to open new doors for the ministry in the neighboring towns of Beba, and El-Wastta where my wife Faiza and I visited weekly to minister, encourage, and serve the brethren there. The Lord blessed the work in these places; many people

were saved and joined the church. Some of my layman friends came to visit with me and ministered also in the church and by the grace of the Lord they were encouraged and were called to join the ministry. They are Rev. Farag Sorial and Rev. Samy Labib who were from my hometown.

In 1939 during the Second World War time, I married Marriam (Faiza) Ghali Bishara of Bani-Suef whom I met in the new church. We have two sons (Sinote and Samy) and two daughters (Sonia and Sylvia). Sinote married Marcelle Faried Bishay of Helliopolis, Egypt and Samy married Hana Shawki Tarazi of Gaza, Palestine. Sonia married Bashir Doss of El-Fayoum, Egypt and Sylvia married Dr. Ashraf Selim of Helliopolis, Egypt. Sinote was later ordained a layman minister on December 3, 2000 in a special service at the Arabic Evangelical Baptist Church, West Roxbury, Massachusetts.

The living conditions during the Second World War were very difficult for everyone but by the grace of the Lord my family and I were blessed greatly. I participated and ministered in large church conferences held frequently in the city of El-Menya where 500 to 600 people attended the conferences. The Lord blessed me with the power of the Holy Spirit and opened the hearts of many people and many homes for the Gospel. One conference in the town of Abo-Teag, about one thousand people attended the service in last night of the conference.

Recognizing the great importance of water Baptism as the first ordinance commanded by the Lord to the believers, I baptized the believing persons in the Nile water or at the churches. "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age" Matthew 28:18-20. The local authorities also certified me to conduct and officiate weddings in the city of Beni-Suef.

In 1958, I invited Br. Mourice Gerges from Lebanon to lead spiritual revival meetings for two months. The attendance increased nightly and reached 200 to 300 persons in the church that used a rented house for these services. There was opposition who complained about the services causing the local authorities to close the church claiming that they need a permit to conduct church services in that location. Subsequently the church purchased a piece of land and successfully obtained a permit to build a church from the authorities. The Lord changed the bad circumstances into something good granting the church a permit for worship and construction of a new building owned by the church for expanding the ministry further. "And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose" Romans 8:28. The Lord helped the brethren to finish the new church building as many participated in this great work including Brothers Hindy Nessim, Mourice Daniel, and Youssef Nessim and many others. As a result of the revival some of the believers started a new ministry "Gamiette Khalas El-Nefous" in Beni-Suef.

In 1962, we visited Gaza as I was invited to minister at the Baptist Church and the Baptist Hospital of Gaza. The Baptist Church and the Baptist Hospital in Gaza were associated with the Southern Baptist Convention of the USA. They subsequently selected me for pastor after my visit to Gaza. It was a difficult decision but I had to accept the invitation and obey the Lord. I traveled with my family to Gaza on February 2, 1963 during the winter school vacation leaving my son Sinote in Cairo as he was studying Engineering at Ain-Shams University. The Lord caused a great revival and many people were saved and accepted the Lord. I ministered in the Hospital Chapel every Friday morning to the Doctors, Nurses, Hospital Staff, and the patients and the attendance reached 70 to 80 persons. The Governor of the Gaza Strip and the key Government leaders came and attended the Christmas and Easter Services where the salvation message and the Deity of Christ was presented. My sons came to Gaza during school vacations and worked with the brethren to start a youth meeting. The youth meeting grew and reached 80 persons. My wife Faiza worked diligently with the women and young ladies in their weekly meetings. The church in Gaza grew and increased in numbers by the grace of the Lord and ministry opportunities were opened for the Egyptian teachers who were teaching and working in the Gaza high School until the 1967 War.

As we ministered in Gaza, many people were jealous because of the success of the church ministry and the Sunday school activities. The accusers complained to the local authorities that interviewed me and found no bases for the accusation. They went further in their accusations and wanted me to go back to Egypt but the Lord did not allow that to happen and changed many things according to His plans and not the works of humans. How Great and Able our Lord is.

During the 1967 War, the people became very distressed and started to inquire about the end-times and we started to teach them from the Word of God about the Revelations and the War of Armageddon leading them to Christ's salvation message and their need to be saved. Many people including the doctors, nurses and others were saved because of these circumstances. The Church also housed many injured and distressed people and the Hospital was filled with people in the corridors and patient courts. There were more than 500 people housed in the hospital during that time fleeing from the dangerous circumstances outside of the Hospital. Our daughters volunteered to help in the Hospital work until the War ended. We immediately opened the church again for the worship services.

The Baptist Hospital was a fairly safe place during wartime and many people came to find safety and I had a great opportunity to preach the Gospel to them. As the Egyptian workers were leaving to go back to Egypt after the war we gave them Bibles to read. A revival was ignited after the war as people had fears and uncertainty of the things to come. Church attendance increased and reached 120 people who filled all the seats. The Lord gave me special power to minister as well as my wife Faiza who was ministering the women who attended the meetings.

After the war we returned to our house, which was on the main street in Gaza. The living conditions after the war was becoming difficult as we were allowed only two hours

every day to be outside the house to purchase our necessary food and things. Our daughters joined private schools in Jerusalem and Ramallah as the roads and communications were opened between Gaza and the rest of the West Bank cities and towns. The Lord gave us the great honor of visiting and ministering in these areas too, which was totally closed to us before. The church distributed clothing and financial aid to the needy families and the families who were impacted by the war in Gaza and El-Arish.

After that we were invited to visit the Baptist Church in Nazareth and we ministered there for a week and the Lord blessed the meetings and the attendance exceeded 300 people every night. The Lord gave us a great revival and the revival continued for six months after we left. We also held meetings for the High School, which had 1000 students daily and taught them the Egyptian Gospel songs. These songs became very popular among all the people in Nazareth. Afterwards we held the Beth Gala conference in association with other ministers in a local school and 250 persons attended. I spoke at the conference for five years following the first one and also in many other local churches in the West Bank. We also ministered in Galilee, Tiberius, and the British Hospital for all the Arabic nurses in the occupied land. We also taught the Christian faith curriculum for the Senior High School students as directed by the School Committee for five years. We thank God as all the students passed their examinations and it was a great opportunity to witness and minister to those students.

The Lord sent us to Boston, Massachusetts, USA and the Baptist Convention of New England arranged for our move to the Arabic Evangelical Baptist Church in Boston as the previous pastor Rev. Samy Ammary was moving to Atlanta, GA. We ministered in the small Chapel in the basement of the Emmanuel Episcopal Church. The church grew and we asked to use the church's main sanctuary and they agreed by the grace of the Lord. The church continued to grow and we fellowshiped with many families in the Greater Boston Area as people asked for us to visit and minister. We met many Arabic speaking people and they came to know more about us and our faith, our principals and our doctrine which is based on the full Gospel that teaches repentance, faith in the salvation of the Lord Jesus Christ, water baptism for mature believers, the fullness and baptism of the Holy Spirit according to the promise of the Father confirmed with the signs and miracles according to the New Testament teachings for the church and without any omissions. And the Lord is continuing His work by saving many souls and healing the sick. We are continuing our labor for our Lord as the work of the Lord is great and large, and there are still great fields to serve in and grounds to take.