

In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; One God. Amen.

Our Lord Jesus Christ prayed for all believers, “that they all may be one” and “that they may be made perfect in one” (John 17:21, 23). St. Paul beseeches us to bear with one another in love and to endeavor “to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians 4:1-3). As such, it is our calling to be united in Christ, in love, in spirit, in faith and in prayer. Therefore, in this Christian spirit of love and unity, we are pleased to announce the establishment of the English Hymns Committee of North America.

The English Hymns Committee of North America was established by all the Diocesan and General Bishops in North America and the General Bishop/Papal Exarch in the Archdiocese of North America. Currently, the Diocesan and General Bishops throughout North America and the General Bishop/Papal Exarch of the Archdiocese include: HG Bishop Serapion, HG Bishop Youssef, HG Bishop David, HG Bishop Michael, HG Bishop Mina, and HG Bishop Karas. Each Diocesan and General Bishop and the General Bishop/Papal Exarch of the Archdiocese selected one deacon from their respective diocese/archdiocese to represent their diocese/archdiocese concerning the composition and unification of the Coptic Hymns in English. Collectively, this group of deacons makes up the English Hymns Committee of North America (the “Committee”).

The mission of the English Hymns Committee of North America is to unify and standardize the Coptic hymns in English throughout North America so that all the Coptic churches therein “may be one” in spirit, one in prayer, one in worship. This Committee is entrusted to research the Coptic sources for all hymns, to compose and record those hymns in English in accordance with a set criteria, and to dispense and unify those hymns throughout North America.


It is understood that each Coptic hymn may have multiple English renditions and that opinions concerning what may be right, wrong, good, or better are somewhat subjective. Therefore, in order to compose the “best” possible English rendition, the Committee has established a set of criteria to be followed in order of importance.

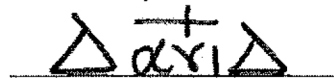
- i. The first criterion is English Pronunciation. The English pronunciation and accentuation of each word, phrase, and sentence is of the utmost importance.
- ii. The second criterion is the Coptic Melody. The Coptic music must be the base that is used to standardize the English hymn so that the English hymn accurately conveys the same feelings intended by the Church in the Coptic tunes.
- iii. The third criterion is that of Removal of Redundant Notes. Sometimes the notes in the Coptic hymn are repeated solely because of the number of syllables in a Coptic word, phrase or sentence. Therefore, if the English translation of a Coptic text has fewer syllables than that of the Coptic, then the redundant notes of the Coptic chant would be removed in the English composition.
- iv. The fourth criterion is the Original Music Theme. The English composition should represent an understanding of the nature of the Coptic music. For example, if the Coptic hymn has no elongations in any of its syllables, the English composition should likewise seek to reflect the same.
- v. The fifth criterion is the English Sense. The English composition should not only correctly pronounce each word, but should also stress and accentuate the key word within that phrase or sentence.
- vi. The sixth criterion is that of Consistency and Symmetry, whereby all English compositions must follow that same criteria indicated above in the order of importance detailed above to ensure consistency, symmetry, and harmony throughout all English compositions. In the future, the Committee will publish an article describing these criteria in more detail and giving examples of each.

The Committee may, in the future, establish subcommittees to assist them; however, all subcommittees must adhere to the established criteria in order of importance, must work with at least one member of the Committee, and must submit all proposed compositions to the Committee for approval. We encourage all deacons and congregants in all churches to speak with their respective diocese/archdiocese deacon representative regarding any suggestions for pending and future projects.

Finally, upon the completion and finalization of each project by the Committee, each Diocesan and General Bishop and the General Bishop/Papal Exarch, in the spirit of love and unity, agrees to adopt and implement that project in his respective diocese/archdiocese. Each deacon of the Committee will work with his respective Bishop to distribute an audio CD or an online link with the hymns to each Priest/church within that diocese/archdiocese. Each Priest within that diocese/archdiocese is responsible to distribute those CD's or an online link to his head deacons and congregation for teaching and implementation.

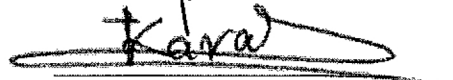
We pray that one day, we may all pray in English in unison, in one voice, like the priests and the singers who "stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps" who "were as one" and who "made one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord" and then the "glory of the Lord filled the house of God" (2 Chronicles 5:13, 14). Please pray for this service.


H.G. Bishop Youssef


H.G. Bishop David


H.G. Bishop Michael


H.G. Bishop Mina


H.G. Bishop Karas

