Meinardus Traces Past Relations Between East and West Christianity

By RICHARD BEST

A comprehension of the spirituality of the East is a prerequisite for an understanding of Christianity itself. This was the thesis of Dr. Otto Meinardus, Professor of Religion at The American University in Cairo as he spoke in the Rice Chapel on November 29.

MEINARDUS, who will speak again tomorrow night on "Christianity" and Islam in the 20th Century, traced the recent confrontation of eastern and western Christianity.

Occident and orient, he pointed out, were divided before the time of the Reformation. Thus modern Protestants and Orientals are frequently in complete ignorance of each other.

Easterners rarely have knowledge of Luther, Calvin, and Barth; a deficiency equaled only by the Protestant's unfamiliarity with the thought of the ancient Egyptian Fathers.

THE SEPARATION and hostility of the past is now being overcome as Presbyterians and Methodists meet Orthodox and Copts at the World Council of Churches.

In the West, emphasis has usually been placed on the social implications of Christianity, whereas the East is most frequently concerned with the contemplative life.

As an illustration, Meinardus stated that the American will visit the Holy Land to be reminded of the past, while the Egyptian will go to worship at the elaborate shrine.

Dr. Meinardus, who has done considerable research on the Coptic Church, briefly reviewed the history of the Egyptian body.

According to legend, St.