

New Period of Religious Freedom Begins in Irak for Christian Chaldeans

By Dr. Alexander Mombelli
(Jerusalem Correspondent, N. C. W. C. News Service)

Jerusalem, July 6.—One of the most interesting phases of the recent difficulties between England and Turkey over the Mosul region has been discussed but little in Western countries.

It is that upon the outcome hinged the fate of one of the most ancient and glorious Christian groups in the world. With the happy solution of the difficulties, these historic people are now assured of freedom to develop under a Christian power. A new era of peace and religious liberty smiles upon them.

This group, in Mesopotamia (Irak, for which England holds the mandate) and Kurdistan, is made up of descendants of the glorious Chaldean race, which has had a brilliant history since earliest antiquity.

Originally, of course, of the Catholic faith, great numbers of these people, unfortunately, became Moslem when the Arabs occupied their country. A sturdy minority, however, retained their Christian belief. At present the Christian elements are divided into three groups, as follows:

Three Christian Groups

The Chaldean Catholic group, which in 1914 had five archbishops, eight bishops, 296 priests and 102,000 faithful, under the authority of a patriarch who resides at Mosul.

The Chaldean Schismatic, or Nestorian, group, which in 1914 had 10 dioceses and nearly 150,000 adherents.

The Malabar group, with 400,000 Catholics and 300,000 schismatics.

Inasmuch as the third group resides in South India, it is only the other two which are affected by the present developments. These two groups are in North Irak, in Persia and in the region of Ourmlah. Before the World War some of them also were in Turkish Kurdistan.

While their numbers may seem relatively small, these faithful represent one of the most distinguished races in Christian history. They are particularly proud of their ancient faith for three reasons:

First, it is known that the Saviour used the Aramaic language, which, with slight modification, became the Syrian. This early tongue is preserved in different Oriental liturgies, as in the Syrian, the Maronite and the Chaldean. But as a living language, even though much changed, it exists now only in Christian villages in North and South Mosul. It is a source of pride to these people to speak the same language which their Lord spoke.

Second, they are proud of the ancient history of their Church. The ecclesiastical tradition of Mesopotamia and Chaldea goes directly back to the Apostle Thomas and his fellows. The Gospel has been taught in the region since the very beginnings of Christianity. With the setting up of the great Persian dynasty of the Sassanides in 226, the kingdom officially embraced the religion of Christ. Thus it may be considered the first Christian state in the world. Since the second century Syrian literature, which incidentally, was the first native Christian literature, has developed alongside the Greek, and in the fourth century offered to the world some remarkable writers, including the Deacon of Edessa, Saint Ephrem, who has just been proclaimed a Doctor of the Universal Church by the Holy See.

Converts from the Nestorians
Third, the Chaldeans are proud of their present-day Church. While, unfortunately, many of the flourishing Christian community separated from Rome in the fifth century, and while some Oriental Christian confessions are still profoundly hostile toward Rome, the faithful are staunch and the Nestorians, for instance, readily accept the Catholic apostolate. Because of the disinterested zeal of the Latin missionaries, the anti-papal prejudices of these later people are weakening. This, has been particularly true since 1900. The Catholic Church now receives into its fold people, priests, and even bishops, who are converts from the Nestorian schism.

In the World War, the Chaldeans had their martyrs, who died gloriously for the faith of Christ, under Turkish persecutions. It is known that in 1915 there were in Asia Minor about a million Christian victims of this furious persecution, of Chaldean, Armenian and Syrian groups. Following the general massacre of that year the Chaldeans, exiled from Turkey, took refuge in great numbers in the Mosul region, where they were fraternally received by their co-religionists. The Christians of Mosul and its environs are now again enjoying a normal religious activity.

It is the Christian people which, happily freed from the threat of falling again into Turkish slavery, is now facing a new era of religious liberty and development.

Irish Language Urged As Means Of Aiding Church

Catholic Writers Asked To Call Attention Of Clergy To This Aspect Of Gaelic Revival

Dublin, July 12.—Cormack Walsh (known to his fellow Gaelic-Leaguers by the Irish form of his name "Cormac Breathnach") asks the Irish Guild of Catholic Writers to impress upon the Catholic clergy the immense utility of the Irish language from the purely Catholic standpoint. Mr. Walsh points out that the ordinary daily salutations in the Irish language contain to the present day the names of the Divinity and the Saints. "Good morning" says Mr. Walsh is an abbreviation of the old-time phrase "God give you good morning". In the Irish language that salutation is to the present day the full literal equivalent of "God bless you," or "God and the Blessed Virgin be with you according to the district of the speaker."

A Great Disaster
"The foundation of Maynooth College early last century on a purely English-speaking basis" says Mr. Walsh "the greatest disaster that ever befell the Irish tongue."

On the foundation of the College a prayer book was published in English, with a short collection of Irish prayers at the end. "For the use of the common people who may not understand English."

The Rev. Stephen Browne, S. J., of Milltown Park, Dublin, founder of the Catholic Writers Guild, points out that the original Maynooth professors received their education in France and Spain, and so were unable to instruct students of philosophy and theology save through the medium of Latin. English, as Father Browne points out, was in the early part of last century becoming the general language of the country, and the Church was obliged to move with the times.

Father Browne agrees with the President of the Gaelic League that the cultivation of the Irish language with all its attendant culture, is a better barrier against low class literature than any Board of Censorship that the Government could set up. On that as well as on national grounds, Father Browne is confident that the Church will foster the Irish language revival even more sympathetically than at present.

Mr. Walsh points out that the late Cardinal Logue was a native speaker of Irish. "In his successor, Cardinal O'Donnell," said Mr. Walsh, "we have a great gael, who sets a noble example of devotion to a Gaelic language and culture, which breathe only the spirit of devotion to God and to His Church."

Scotch Presbyterians Planning Bible Study Center In Holy Land

By Dr. Alexander Mombelli
(Jerusalem Correspondent, N. C. W. C. News Service)

Jerusalem, July 6.—Scotch Presbyterians are going to establish a center of Biblical learning in the Holy Land for their student ministers. The institution also will serve as a hospice for Scottish visitors to Palestine, and will be a memorial to Scotchmen who laid down their lives in the deliverance of the Holy Land.

The General Assemblies of the Church of Scotland and the United Free Church of Scotland have appointed committees which will work conjointly on the project.

In olden days there were Scots colleges in Paris and Rome where the Scottish priesthood obtained a wider outlook than their isolated country afforded. These have long since passed. Before the World War many Scottish divinity students went to Germany to study theology. For half a century, however, the Presbyterians have entertained the idea of establishing a center for divinity students in Palestine.

A term in such a center of Biblical learning, it is believed by those promoting the project, would bring a breath of new life to the pupils, as they learned Christianity's history in the very scenes of its greatest triumphs and tragedies, and increased their devotion in Gethsemane.

According to the plan, scholarships which previously enabled Scottish Presbyterian student ministers to go to Germany to study would become available for study in Palestine. Thus, say those in charge, every Scotch Presbyterian ministerial student, after completing his studies in Scotland, might come to the Holy Land to supplement and confirm them.

Servite General, Once Chicago Priest, Joins St. Columba Knights

London, July 8.—The new General of the Servite Order, Father Austin Moore, was initiated as a member of the Knights of St. Columba Order here Sunday July 4. Father Moore, who was formerly Provincial of the Servite Order in England, worked for several years in Chicago.

Another member of the K. S. C. Order well known in the States is Bishop Kelley of Oklahoma, who was initiated during his recent visit here.

Priest Leads Revival Of Industry Campaign For The County Mayo

Dublin, July 10.—The Venerable Archdeacon Fallon has founded an Industrial Revival Association for Mayo County. With the assistance of the Right Rev. Monsignor Macken, P. P., Dean of Tuam diocese, the Archdeacon has united clergy and laity in Mayo County into a body pledged to support local industries and to develop by all legitimate means the industrial possibilities of the county. All the Dalí deputies of the county of every shade of opinion have entered the organization.

Archdeacon Fallon points out that the solution of the land problem in Ireland, and especially in Mayo, can never be the solution of all economic difficulties. Although large estates have been divided into small holdings there is not enough land in the county, or in Ireland, to support in prosperity all the agricultural population.

"Even if all the land of Ireland were divided up," said Archdeacon Fallon, "it would only touch the fringe of the problem of unemployment. There would still be thousands of boys and girls who get a secondary education and who would clear off to some other country where they would have some prospect of climbing higher on the social ladder. We must therefore start industries to keep the people at home."

Mayo County is a large and bleak region on the Atlantic coast. Most of the land is of the poorest quality and the greater part of the population can subsist only by unremitting toil and extreme frugality. One of the principal towns of Mayo, Belmullet, is separated from the nearest railway station by 40 miles of arid bog and mountain. No land division and no intensive cultivation can make good land where nature has placed such bad, raw material. On the other hand, the Sisters of Mercy in Foxford, in that country, have maintained for many years a thriving cloth industry. The new organization intends to develop and extend this manufacture. It is also intended to utilize the barren hills for reforestation.

It has long been evident to students of economics that the land, when divided up, must be used to provide raw materials for industries and not merely for the fattening of beef. This can be done by the manufacture of sugar from beet and of cloth from wool, locally grown. It is evident that success will attend the new industrial revival in Mayo. Every profession and trade has sent its representatives to assist the organization.

"Mayo," says Archdeacon Fallon, "was the birthplace of the Land League which has distributed the soil of Ireland among its rightful possessors. We believe that this campaign of industries for the people will bring to Mayo the proud privilege of initiating a second league that will be as successful in industries as the old league has been in land."

Catholic College Club Federation Now Has 84 Units

Philadelphia, July 16.—The Federation of College Catholic Clubs, which has just closed its eleventh international conference here, has 84 member-clubs in 53 cities of the United States and Canada and is seeking to organize students in more than 150 other college centers. The purpose of the Federation is to organize the Catholic students and non-Catholic universities and colleges, that they may give each other help and present a united effort in the promotion of their religious, intellectual, moral and social standards.

The conference was formally opened with a Mass celebrated by Cardinal Dougherty, Archbishop of Philadelphia. The sermon was preached by the Rt. Rev. Bishop Thomas J. Shanahan, Rector of the Catholic University of America.

Addresses to the conference were made by the Rev. John W. Keogh, chaplain general of the Federation, and Dr. Josiah H. Penniman, provost of the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Penniman said:

"The Newman Club here at the University is one of the strongest factors in establishing a sane and well-balanced campus life. Men and women in the great trials of life turn to religion as a means of salvation. The Newman Clubs afford refuge for young people who find the troubles of their younger years too difficult to bear alone."

To Dedicate Replica Of Chapel at Assisi

(By N. C. W. C. News Service)
Washington, July 16.—A replica of the chapel in Assisi, Italy, in which the Order of St. Francis was founded, has just been erected on the grounds of Mount St. Sepulchre, the Franciscan Monastery, here. It is to be dedicated August 1 by Bishop John Carcaterra, of Naples, Italy, who came to this country for the Twenty-eighth Eucharistic Congress and since its close has been in New York.

Porziuncola Chapel, as the new edifice is called, marks the erection in this city of the features of a structure 800 years old.

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