



THE LINK

PUBLISHED BY AMERICANS FOR MIDDLE EAST UNDERSTANDING

Room 538, 475 Riverside Drive, N.Y., N.Y. 10027

Volume IV, Number 5

September/October, 1971

PEACE AND THE HOLY CITY

An approach to the religious factors affecting the problems and hopes of Jerusalem

(The current disputes over the commercial, political and military control of Jerusalem contain the seeds of war. Religion is also involved. Will it aggravate the conflict? Or can it play a peace-making role?)

Those were the questions the Middle East Institute (MEI) asked LINK editor L. Humphrey Walz to respond to at its two-hour session on "Jerusalem" at the Carnegie Endowment International Center, New York. He summarizes his answers in the accompanying article.

Further perspectives were provided by two other panelists and by Ambassador Parker T. Hart who presided. Professor John H. Marks of Princeton gave historic insights into the significance of the Holy City. The present-day political situation was delineated by the Hon. Evan M. Wilson, U.S. Minister-Consul General at Jerusalem (retired), and author of the comprehensive *Jerusalem, Key to Peace* (MEI, 1970, 176pp., \$5.95).

To a billion Christians, half a billion Muslims and 14 million Jews in virtually every nation on the globe, Jerusalem is a city of extraordinary significance.

The United Nations Palestine Partition Resolution of November 29, 1947 (181, II) recognized this when it recommended that Jerusalem and environs be set aside as a "corpus separatum" — a distinct political entity — "under a special international regime." At the same time, it charged the intended administrators "to protect and preserve the unique spiritual and religious interests located in the City of the three great monotheistic faiths throughout the world, Christian, Jewish and Muslim."

Common Ground

Many of those "unique spiritual and religious interests" are shared. All three faiths, for instance, look to Abraham as their spiritual progenitor (cf. Deuteronomy 1:8;

Koran XIV, 36; Galatians 3:7). And much of the Abrahamic tradition centers around Jerusalem.

It was also there that some of the greatest of the Hebrew prophets became aware of God's very personal summons to them to speak up for truth and right, for justice and mercy, courageously and persistently, in the face of popular and official indifference and resistance. For run-of-the-mill worshippers, too, Jerusalem was, as it continues to be, a place where pilgrimages and sacred festivals have been the occasion for mountain-top religious experiences. And it was here that a succession of Temples, of which the Wailing Wall is the chief relic, focalized and dramatized the faith for a scattered people.

These are but a surface scratch among the hundreds of references to Jerusalem in the Hebrew Bible, which Christians count as their Old Testament and which Muslims, too, revere as Holy Scripture (though Muslims believe that our present versions have been tampered with, at least insofar as they fail to agree with the Koran.) To appreciate the vastness of common tradition, one must study these passages in detail. But one needs also to remember the specific events and institutions which have added differing sacred overtones to the Holy City in the emotions of the different faiths.

Distinctive Interests

For Christians Jesus Christ's unique bringing of the divine reconciling power into the midst of the human predicament had its major impact in Jerusalem. This was not only through His teaching, preaching and healing but through His suffering, death and resurrection

there as well. It was there that the risen Christ bade the distraught disciples to tarry until power from on high could unite them into a warm and radiant fellowship. Their experience of the purifying and uniting power of the Holy Spirit on the subsequent Pentecost has led to that day's being looked to as the birthday of the Church, with Jerusalem as its place of birth (Acts 1 & 2). Here, too, the first Christian martyrs paid the price of their faith with the last full measure of devotion.

For Muslims, Jerusalem is *al-Quds* — the Holy — as sacred as Mecca and Medina. It was the original *qiblah*, or point toward which the faithful faced in prayer. Here, according to the *Hadith* (official Tradition), Mohammed had his vision of communing with the prophets of old, and ascended to the seventh heaven to receive the divine command for five prayer periods daily (cf. Koran XVII). The majestic Dome of the Rock shelters the reputed site of Mohammed's ascension (and, by another tradition, of Abraham's sacrifice) — a spot so rich in hallowed association that Omar II had his governors report to him there. In it, he was convinced, candor and integrity would find most natural expression. Hard by, the magnificent Seventh Century al-Aqsa Mosque, newly charred by religious fanaticism, recalls its calmer past as a major Muslim theological center.

And, while Mecca is the goal of the *haj* — the annual mass pilgrimage — Islam regards Jerusalem as the scene for more individual, less strictly scheduled, devotional jour-

(Continued on next page)

Peace & the Holy City (Continued)

neys. It is also stressed as an important stopover on the *hajj*, which the present political situation makes difficult, just as previous circumstances interfered with Jewish access to the Wailing Wall.

For *Judaism* there have not been as many post-Biblical events and institutions of significance in Jerusalem as Jews might have wished, the Old City having been under gentile regimes for some 19 centuries before June, 1967. Nonetheless, in the Middle Ages, European and North African Jews looked to their Jerusalem scholastics as religious mentors. The even earlier Jerusalem Talmud has also been influential. And in modern times the Hebrew University and philanthropic institutions in Jerusalem's environs have been foci for Jewish charity worldwide.

City of Peace?

The Midrash, the classic Jewish Bible commentary, made much of the similarity of the last two syllables of *Jerusalem* to the Arabic *salaam* and the Hebrew *shalom*, meaning *peace* (cf. Hebrews 7:2). *Jerusalaam*, *Jerushalom*, would then be the City of Peace. And indeed, as the scene of so many occasions for the drawing closer of man and God, it should be just that — for the God of peace (Romans 15:33; 16:20) grants true worshippers a peace beyond understanding (Philippians 4:7), counts peacemakers as uniquely His children (Matthew 5:9) and proclaims His Messiah as Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6).

Regrettably, however, what Lord Caradon told the United Nations Security Council on July 1, 1969, is all too true. "It is sad," he stated, "that we cannot speak of Jerusalem without also speaking of violence . . . (which) is specially offensive and contemptible in the Holy City."

Offensive? Contemptible? Yes, but natural, too! For it is a tragic fact that we fight hardest for, and over, the things that are most precious to us; and Jerusalem is precious to over a billion and a half people. There is, besides, that human proneness to use religion as a cloak or instrument for our acquisitiveness; this leads us to perpetrate the most god-awful deeds in the name of our faith.

The Bible's first mention of Jerusalem by name, for instance, is in Joshua 10. There we read of how the children of Israel, having marched out of Sinai and crossed

the Jordan, swarmed up the West Bank to massacre the original Jerusalemites — all in the name of the God of Sinai, of Moses and of the Ten Commandments (cf. Judges 1:8).

All too similarly, it was in the name of extending the Kingdom of God on earth by bringing the Holy City under the rule of the universal mother Church that the Crusaders besieged it in 1099. When they broke through on July 15, they slaughtered the populace right and left till the streets ran with blood through which they splashed their way to the Holy Sepulchre — for prayer!

Tolerance Plus

Nor have the Muslims, particularly in the Ottoman period, been free of this human tendency to do our worst in the name of the best. Still, in relation to Jerusalem, their record has set some outstandingly contrasting examples to challenge the rest of us: When the Caliph Omar received the surrender of Jerusalem in 638 A.D. from the Christian Patriarch Sophorius, he proclaimed full protection of Christian life, property and institutions. Later, Harun al-Rashid — aware that the Koran regards Jews and Christians as equally "People of the Book" — stressed similar safeguards for Jewry. And, in 1187, after his re-conquest of Jerusalem from the Crusaders, Saladin reiterated the same protection for all three faiths.

The *current* ominous situation there cries out for a revival of this kind of authoritative tolerance and enforceable even-handedness. But, if what Alford Carleton calls "the intensity, even ferocity, of the present Arab-Israeli conflict" is ever to move toward mutual understanding and reconciliation, much greater spiritual depths must be plumbed in every area from the personal to the governmental to the international. It was for this that Anglican Archbishop Appleton of Jerusalem was pleading in his 1969 Christmas Eve message:

"I had hoped," he declared among other things, "that the common religious inheritance from Father Abraham would make us more ready to put our faith in the God of Abraham as our first priority. I ask myself if in 1970 I can be a better Christian, not in aggressively defending the Christian interest and exploiting religion for political purposes, but in letting it dominate my thinking, attitudes and actions. Similarly, Jews may ask themselves the question of how far the Torah is the permeating influence of their lives, and what is the cost of being the first people of God, called by God to be a blessing

to other nations. Muslims will know how far they live out their faith in the sovereignty and providence of God, and participate in His compassion."

Earlier — on July 7, 1967, while the first fall-out from the June War was still settling — the Executive Committee of the National Council of Churches had further urged dialogue, both informal and official, "with representatives of Jewish, Christian and Muslim communities," to revitalize and apply their three faiths, separately and together, toward making peace with justice a possibility. As a concrete beginning in this direction, it recommended "an Inter-faith Center in Jerusalem that would be a place for encounter, study and action among Jews, Christians and Muslims."

Realism and Hope

The National Council committeemen fully realized the obstacles to any constructive outcome. In their *Resolution on the Crisis in The Middle East* they dealt with some of them in detail: the arms race, worries over secure frontiers, the problems of the Palestine refugees, territorial expansion through conquest, the need for an international peace-keeping presence, and the impenitence of Western Christendom for the disruptive part played by its inhumanity toward Jew, Muslim and Christian alike. Complicated as they are by fears, frustrations, pride, insensitivity, dislocations, grievances and grief on all sides, solutions seem all but impossible unless the three great faiths welcome the God they praise into the extremities they have proliferated without Him.

That such a spirit is already at work, albeit feebly, offers grounds for hope. The fact that the Israeli *Jerusalem Post* published Archbishop Appleton's entire, lengthy Christmas Eve message — complete with his evidence of the then-living Nasser's desire for an honorable peace — is both indicative and symbolic of this.

Heartening facts like these, of course — and there are more than most people realize — should not mislead us into easy optimism. *Nor* should their rarity paralyze us with pessimism! It *is* within the power of serious Christians, Muslims and Jews wisely, humbly, forgivingly and energetically to whittle away at the complex problems mentioned above — and others. This can be especially true if we take persistent and imaginative advantage of the modern communications media to interpret developments and en-

courage cooperation.

Blood, sweat and tears are inevitable in the process. Yet, shed in the right spirit, they can not only help fulfill on the spot the 122nd Psalm's prayer "for the peace of Jerusalem." They can also speed the dream of the prophets that the people of the entire world shall look to the Holy City for God-inspired leadership in the ways of peace (Isaiah 2, Micah 4).

—L. H. W.

U. S. Hearing on Jerusalem

The U. S. Government Printing Office is about to publish the testimony of this past summer's many witnesses before the house Sub-Committee on the Near East. It will cover various aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict and of the Persian (or Arabian) Gulf. Included will be Jewish, Christian and Muslim views on Jerusalem as presented by four witnesses on July 28.

Dr. Muhammad Abdul Rauf of the Islamic Center, Washington, told the Congressmen that, outside the Crusades, Muslims had held sovereignty over Jerusalem since 637 A. D. Citing the right of self-determination of the overwhelmingly Muslim majority of the Old City's population, he declared that "the practical and legitimate solution to the problem of Jerusalem is to restore it fully to Muslim rule." Arab dominance in Jerusalem, he declared, "has been much more ancient, much longer, more peaceful and helpful to all" than other regimes.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum of the American Jewish Committee, however, decried the possibility of Arab rule. "A viable Jewish people in the land of Israel, and the restoration of Jerusalem to its natural condition as a unified city, is essential to the survival of the Jewish spirit and ethos in our age," he indicated. He disparaged Catholic Archbishop Raya's account of the plight of Christians in Israel and attacked the U. N. report on Israeli practices in occupied territory.

"The Christian interest in the Holy Land . . ." he added, "involves religiously solely the question of free access to the holy places, and the security and stability of the Christian populations in Jerusalem and in Israel. Once these interests are satisfied, Christians go beyond their religious competence and enter into the realm of politics in which they have no standing as ecclesiastical bodies." Dr. James Kritzeck of Notre Dame University and Father Joseph L. Ryan of the Cambridge Center for Social Studies disagreed.

These latter, both of them "old Middle East hands," declared that world opinion opposes Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem and other territory occupied in June, 1967; that the Israeli government has violated human rights; and that the Pope and other Christian leaders were concerned over the exodus of Christians from Jerusalem and Israel's announced plans to intensify the "Judaization" of the city. They also favored international guarantees for a special status for Jerusalem.

On two basic matters all four witnesses agreed: Jerusalem should remain undivided. And justice to the claims of the Palestinian Arabs is a matter for major moral concern.

Gift Books for Libraries

The generosity of friends has made it possible for AMEU to re-

open its offer of September, 1970. This enables you, for \$20.00, to contribute to the college of your choice a selection of books list-priced at almost \$60.00 and normally sold by us at wholesale-cost-plus-postage: \$38.45.

If you wish to participate in this project, please send us, with your \$20.00 check, the name of the school library you have chosen. We will then add \$18.45 to your gift and send to that library in your name, postpaid, the following books.

Uri Avnery, *Israel Without Zionists*;
John Badeau, *The American Approach to the Arab World*;

Frank Epp, *Whose Land Is Palestine?*

Harry Hopkins, *Egypt the Crucible*;

Fred Khouri, *Arab-Israeli Dilemma*;

Kennett Love, *Suez, The Twice Fought War*;

Moshe Menuhin, *The Decadence of Judaism in Our Time*;

Maxime Rodinson, *Israel & the Arabs*;

Alan Taylor & Richard Tetlie, *Palestine, A Search for Truth*;

U. S. *Interests in the Middle East*.

For \$1.95 similarly contributed, public libraries may receive Elisabeth Elliot's \$4.95 *Furnace of The Lord*. Just let us know the name of the public library chosen to receive your gift. Since AMEU will supplement all gifts from funds set aside especially for this purpose, we announce that these offers are necessarily limited and will be withdrawn when our designated funds are exhausted.

Tours for Understanding

The response to AMEU's announcement of our 15-day "Tours for Understanding" has been most gratifying. For example, Bishop Najib Cuba'in of Jerusalem has written: "... I always felt that the contact of the local people with tourists and pilgrims was missing. Therefore I am glad for this undertaking (and happy) to contribute towards this good program."

Spaces are still available at \$849.00 for the Oct. 11, Nov. 15, and Dec. 13 tours to Greece, Lebanon, Cyprus, the Holy Land and Rome. If you would like to go on one of these, please let us know without delay.

Several persons have asked if the special people-to-people features of our trips make them too strenuous for older people. Not at all! The tours are designed to be informative, friendly and comprehensive, but due attention has been given to comfort and convenience. Others have asked if they can adopt AMEU's itinerary, outlined in our last issue, as their own. We hope,

actually, that it will be copied widely and will serve as a standard for all those interested in *knowing* as well as *going* to the Middle East.

AMEU's Special Projects

We think you will be interested to know of some of the projects which Americans for Middle East Understanding have just completed:

8,000 copies of *Twice in a Lifetime* sent to selected college teachers.

Von Horn's book, *Soldiering for Peace*, sent to approximately 1500 accredited college libraries.

Approximately 8,000 copies of *American Interests in the Middle East* sent to Americans in all walks of life.

A selection of special, scholarly books on the Middle East sent to college libraries accepting our offer.

The booklet, *Musa Alami - The Future of Palestine*, sent to a large group of contributors to AMEU.

100 copies of Michael Selzer's book, *Zionism Reconsidered*, mailed to leading seminaries in the U.S.A.

Offer to contributors of a free copy of von Horn's *Soldiering for Peace* to take to their local Public Library.

Expansion of *LINK* circulation to approximately 24,000.

YOUTH SEEK INTERFAITH UNDERSTANDING

The recent annual meeting in Cairo of the Consultative Committee of the Ecumenical Secretariat for Youth and Students in the Middle East discussed new approaches to interfaith appreciation. Participants outlined plans for a theological consultation at which Christians in the Middle East could reassess their historical and theological relationships with Islam, as well as with the Jews. They also proposed student exchanges between the Middle East and the Maghreb (Northwest Africa) to see the renewal of Islam and the effect of socialism in Algeria.

Christian education and training in an ecumenical perspective, the contribution young people can make to development, and a Christian's responsibility in the social and political spheres were among other themes confronted.

Established in 1962 by the World Student Christian Federation and the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches, the Middle East Secretariat with headquarters in Beirut coordinates the work of young Christians of the Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Evangelical churches.

Fall and Winter Speaking Tour

Last year, the Rev. John M. Sutton, executive director of Americans for Middle East Understanding, received more invitations to speak than he could accept. Responses to his numerous speaking engagements were enthusiastic and AMEU will continue this program during the Fall and Winter of 1971-1972.

Although the hosts provide hospitality and, in several instances last year, generous honoraria, AMEU bears the cost of transportation. It will therefore be necessary to limit the centers to be visited by Mr. Sutton. If you would like him to visit your community, please let us know at once as plans are being made now for his itinerary.

Mr. Sutton is prepared to speak on four subjects:

- Sadat, Leader of Egypt;
- Land of Yesterday and Tomorrow — The Trucial States;
- The Suez Canal — Link or Barrier?
- Who Are the Palestinians?

When you write requesting Mr. Sutton's visit, please indicate the subject on which you would prefer him to speak, to what groups, and the possible number of people who will attend.

(Groups in the Middle West will also be gratified to learn of the convenient availability of Rev. Wayne C. Hess of the United Methodist Central Illinois Conference, 1211 North Park St., Bloomington, Ill. 61701. Mr. Hess was in Jordan in 1967 before the outbreak of hostilities and returned to that area and Israel this year. He supplements these first-hand experiences with slides he has taken on the spot to make his lecture on "The Unholy Holy Land" more lively for religious and civic audiences.)

MIDEAST STUDY GROUPS

We'd like to add two addresses of regional groups who meet to share concerns about the Middle East and to promote better understanding of the issues.

In Southern California the Middle East Fellowship holds regular meetings which are open to inquirers. Information may be secured from its chairman, the Rev. Darrel Meyers, 4832 Cochran St., Santa Susana, California 93063.

In the Cleveland area, the mailing address of the research-minded Northeast Ohio Committee on Middle East Understanding is 577 Valley View St., Kent, Ohio 44240. One of its recent publications is Prof. John Trever's *On The Meaning of Biblical Prophecy*, 20¢ postpaid.

"HOUSEKEEPING" NOTES

Our office staff deserves special appreciation for the efficient way in which the following details are "automatically" attended to:

Changes of address are made promptly and such changes are generally reflected in the next *Link* distribution. Requests for information and other services are answered promptly. Receipts for all contributions over \$1.00 are mailed on the day the gift is received.

Book orders are filled and mailed, via Book Post, within 24 hours of their receipt in AMEU's office.

Mail service is slow. Sometimes mail does not reach its destination. If you expect a response from AMEU and it does not arrive, please let us know.

WOMEN IN THE MODERN MIDEAST

Risk magazine's recent issue on women's liberation includes an incisive and controversial article by Laila Khaled on a little-discussed phase of Middle Eastern life. Writing from Beirut, she claims "Women enjoy full equality with men in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP); within the Front a woman can reach the highest posts of leadership commensurate with her abilities".

Miss Khaled rejects the "sham image of freedom which the West is raining upon us day and night," maintaining that the "sexual dimension" has come to "preempt the true significance of the liberation we are fighting for". She says that, in the PFLP, women's liberation "is part and parcel of the total efforts being made to liberate society from all forms of repression and exploitation, politically, economically and socially, and to free it from obsolete customs and traditions, all of which form the roots of man's chauvinism".

Turning to her movement's specific contribution, she writes: "The Palestinian woman who has joined the revolution is daily giving an example to the Palestinian and Arab Woman of how women . . . can decide for themselves how they can be truly free without losing their 'honour' and how they can free themselves from man's tyranny and the tyranny of society in general".

Risk is published quarterly by an editorial group within the Program Unit on Education and Communication of the World Council of Churches. The opinions expressed in the magazine do not represent the official position of

NEW MONTHLY IN IRAQ

A new religious magazine, *Al Fikr Al Massihi* ("Christian Thought") has been established this year in Iraq. With publishing headquarters at the Mar Thoma Church, Mosul, it continues on a monthly basis the series of brochures initiated by Chaldean and Syrian Catholic clergy. The only official Christian periodical in present-day Iraq, it deals with contemporary issues, church news, Christian training and doctrinal matters. As foreign correspondent it has Father Louis al Dairany at the Chaldean Archbishopric, Ras el Nabaa, Beirut, Lebanon (phone 226339).

the Council. Its editors would doubtless welcome the suggestion of looking to the March-April *Aramco World* for supplementary perspectives.

That issue, devoted to the theme of "The Arab Woman", was written by four lady journalists, two new to the Middle East, two long resident there. Lavishly illustrated in color, it deals in passing with the Arab woman's role in past history but concentrates on the modern woman at home, at work, in business, the arts and professions, in defense and abroad.

The most publicized views of an Arab woman, however, have been those of the new Miss Universe, Georgina Rizk of Lebanon. "Beauty isn't enough for a woman", she insists. "If you lack intelligence and charm, you're a loser. Even an ugly woman, if feminine and gracious, can be . . . more interesting than a beautiful girl who lacks soul."

Following her into the North American spotlight is the celebrated Lebanese singer, Feiruz. One of the most popular stars of the Middle East, Feiruz is bringing 64 dancers and musicians of the Baalbek Folk Ensemble over with her for a month-long transcontinental tour. After their September 29 opening performance at Carnegie Hall, New York, they will appear in Boston Oct. 3, Montreal Oct. 5, Detroit Oct. 8, Cleveland Oct. 10, Houston Oct. 14, Los Angeles Oct. 23 and San Francisco Oct. 24. Sponsor of the tour, which will feature Arab folk songs and dances, is the non-profit Forum for Arab Art and Culture, 358 87th St., Brooklyn, N. Y. 11209.

PEACE CONFERENCE IN BOLOGNA?

"A historic peace conference; a meeting-ground—official and public for the first time—between the peace movements in Israel and the Arab states; an occurrence which will have a thorough effect on public opinion on both sides of the cease-fire lines".

That's what a congress slated for Bologna, Italy, in December could become if wisely planned and conducted. At least this is the opinion of Uri Avnery, maverick member of the Israeli Knesset. Writing in the Tel Aviv weekly *Ha'Olam Haze*, he gives these perspectives (translated from the Hebrew) on the proposed colloquy:

"The idea of calling a congress of men of peace from both sides of the cease-fire lines, for direct confrontation and talks, is not a new one. Various personalities - Israelis and others - have been working for years in this direction. I myself have brought up this idea thousands of times in talks with people who could do something to further its realization - not only Arabs, but also neutral politicians, editors and reporters, who are accepted in Arab countries, emissaries of international organizations, etc.

"This is the idea: There will be no real peace in the area unless the two nations will be convinced that each of them will accept the other's existence, will recognize its rights and does not plan to exterminate it or to steal its lands. This mutual recognition is necessarily a long-drawn out process. It cannot begin on the governmental level. It has to begin at a lower point - with the men of peace in both camps. This is why dramatic actions of face-to-face meetings are necessary, where it can be shown to both nations that it is possible to sit at one table, to discuss different ideas and to reach solutions acceptable to all.

"There are a number of pre-conditions for the success of such a meeting.

- (a) It has to be public.
- (b) On both sides, people who are recognized within their own nations as patriots must be allowed to take part.
- (c) The meeting will have to be founded on the basic positions of both sides: The sovereign existence of Israel on the one hand, and the recognition of the rights of the Palestinians and the return of the territories occupied since 1967, on the other.

"This idea has brought forward a number of actions - all of them abortive. One may recall the famous Congresses of Florence, which were convened under the auspices of Giorgio La Pira at the end of the 50's. After the first Congress had been torpedoed by Golda Meir, then Foreign Minister, the following ones suffered from inadequate Arab representation, and gradually petered out.

"Last year, after an effort in which many of us took part, the idea gave birth to another action: the historic invitation extended to Dr. Goldmann to come to Cairo. This initiative as well was torpedoed by Prime Minister Golda Meir . . . (who) insists that the first

Arab-Israeli meeting should be on a governmental level - something which is quite impossible. In order for government emissaries to be able to meet, many previous meetings of delegations of the Peace Movements will have to take place, to prepare the ground, to change the mental and public climate on both sides, and to get the nations on both sides used to mutual recognition."

Avnery insists, however, on the need to make sure that this particular peace initiative is not aborted through Moscow-dominated influences. Although the preparatory committee includes "representatives of various parties" in Italy, "the Communists have a decisive influence" in preparing the agenda and the list of invitees, both of which are to be decided upon in October.

Will the committee at that time encourage "full participation by the Palestinians—as equal partners," or simply offer "lip service to the Palestinian cause"? Will there be "a representative and trusted Israeli delegation . . . so that nobody would be able to question its loyalty to Israel's existence

NEW CURRICULUM BEING TESTED

This October, November and December will see the first 'laboratory' testing of the preliminary *Adventure in Faith* curriculum materials developed by the Protestant Churches of the Middle East. In selected parish situations, children, youth and adults will be exposed to new approaches to "realistic ways to respond through education to the need for man's liberation." This will include studies of how to "participate responsibly in the struggle for justice and peace, freedom and human fulfilment in the emergent world society."

If the test groups' responses to the trial lessons warrant it, writers will develop a complete set of teachers' manuals for wider testing in 1972. By 1973, if all goes according to schedule, manuals and supplementary student materials will be finally published and audio-visual aids readied.

The traditional emphasis of Middle Eastern Protestantism has been on personal commitment and Bible study. Detailed consideration of the bearing of Christian faith and ethics upon specific public issues is, apart from the individual's social responsibility, relatively new. Hence widespread consultations of pastors, teachers

and security"?

Amidst other questions—including doubts generated by Italian Communist support of a divisive rally on the Mideast also scheduled for December — Avnery voices hopes based in part on these facts: Peace-minded Jews and others he has interviewed in America and Europe agree with the pre-conditions he has listed. Also Khaled Mohei-el-Din — "a key man in Sadat's regime . . . one of the young officers who came to power with Nasser" — heads the Egyptian branch of the World Peace Movement. If such people are present — and allowed to be influential — at the Bologna conference, Avnery feels that the hopes voiced in our opening italicized paragraph will be justified.

For those who would like to know more of the background from which Avnery writes, his *Israel without Zionists — A Plea for Peace in the Middle East* (Macmillan 1968, \$5.95) may be ordered from Americans for Middle East Understanding, Room 538, 475 Riverside Dr., N. Y., N. Y. 10027, for \$3.70 postpaid.

and writers have been held in Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria and Turkey to examine issues to which the faith needs to be applied.

Dr. Fuad Bahnan, a Presbyterian-Evangelical, has been chairman of the Editorial Board, with the Rev. Shafiq Farah, an Episcopalian, as vice-chairman. Experts called in for consultation have included the Rev. Gerson Meyer, Deputy General Secretary of the World Council of Christian Education (WCCE), and Dr. Herbert Schaefer, Educational Secretary of the Lutheran World Federation.

The joint Educational Renewal Fund of the WCCE and the World Council of Churches has budgeted \$70,000 to help launch *Adventure in Faith* which is designed to serve 881 parishes distributed as follows: 677 in Egypt, 56 in Lebanon, 39 each in Syria and Sudan, 36 in Iran, 18 in Jordan, 6 each in Turkey and Iraq, and 4 in Kuwait. These are all affiliated with the Near East Council of Churches and/or the Sunday School Union.

Brochures describing *Adventure in Faith* may be secured from the Editorial Board, Division of Christian Education, P. O. Box 5376, Beirut, Lebanon.

Iran's Churches in the Light of 2500 Candles

On October 9, representatives of eleven Christian traditions will throng St. Joseph's Chaldean Catholic Cathedral in Iran's capital city of Teheran. There, along with prominent world churchmen and government officials, they will be joining the Interchurch Centenary Committee in an ecumenical service of thanksgiving for a noble heritage.

2500 years ago Cyrus — whom Isaiah 45 hailed as the Lord's Anointed — founded the Persian monarchy. Starting this October, Iran (as Persia is now called) will devote a 'centennial year' to celebrating its unique continuity ever since. And this service is to be one phase of church participation in it.

Iran's 204,000 Christians are barely 1% of its overwhelmingly Muslim population. Still, it's natural for them to play a significant role in their country's celebrations of 25 centuries of achievements. Their association with the land goes back beyond the Church's birth — to Daniel and Esther and to the Wise Men whose journey to Bethlehem we commemorate at Epiphany. Latterly, Christians have been intimately involved in what the London *Economist* calls "Iran's White Revolution" which has achieved sweeping social, economic and political reforms without bloodshed.

In the ages between, they have, with their fellow-citizens—through prosperity, plague and Mongol and Afghan invasions—contributed to the common good. Christian shahs filled the royal throne in the Fourth, Fifth and Sixth Centuries. And the present Shah's autobiography, *Mission for My Country*, extols the Christian colleges which began their cultural and scientific enrichment of Persian life as far back as the Third Century. The October 9 ecumenical worship, along with services in individual churches, will look back on this heritage with prayers for an even nobler future.

The Secular Setting

The material progress of that future will, of course, continue to depend heavily on oil. Ever since its discovery in 1908 at Masjid-i-Sulaiman, oil has fueled much of Iran's economy both literally and figuratively. Its American-British-Dutch-French Consortium has a daily production of over 3,000,000

barrels of crude, making it second only to Aramco, in neighboring Saudi Arabia, as the world's largest private-enterprise producer. This, combined with the stupendous output of the National Iranian Oil Co., helped the country's gross national product rise by 11.4% in the 1969-70 fiscal year — a growth rate exceeded only by Japan's.

But without ethical sensitivity and social responsibility, such riches can undermine individual character and weaken national unity. These dangers have, in part at least, been reduced by the royal family's example. The people now own most of the land, thanks to the Shah's liquidation of hundreds of thousands of his own inherited acres and insisting that feudal landholders follow suit. Oil income has gone for urban renewal, rural electrification, education and public welfare. The Queen has backed the education of women for service in the professions. And the Consortium has cooperated with a "campaign of Iranianization" which trains local citizens for every level of employment, including top management.

The Churches' Role

The churches see their part in these present and future developments as inseparable from their long tradition within the total framework of Iranian history. Hence the Centenary Christian Center on Avenue France, Teheran (P. O. Box 1505; phone 41610) has produced leaflets which call attention to the secular centennial events highlighting that history.

Such events, as its multi-lingual volunteer staff will tell you, will be numerous. The Congress of Orientalists at Shiraz, October 12-15, for instance, will delve into archeology. The sound- and -light production amidst the fabulous ruins of Persepolis will be preceded, on October 15, by a military spectacle featuring uniforms from the time of Cyrus to the present. On October 16, Teheran's vast new Shahyad Square with its museum complex will be officially inaugurated. And, as the centennial year advances, anthropological, industrial, agricultural, athletic and other exhibitions will cover the historical range from ancient struggles to future hopes.

In this setting the Centenary Christian Center, like the Inter-

church Centenary Committee, is focusing on the place of Christianity in the long life of the country. Its series of popular lectures beginning in late September will be on "*The Christian Tradition in Iran*". It is distributing Norman Horner's leaflet, *Christianity Is at Home in Iran*, and James Fennelly's *The Land of Cyrus and the People of God*. (It may do the same for Robin Waterfield's history of the Christian Church in Iran if it's off the presses in time.) Its tapes, slides and plans for a film all carry similar emphases.

Tradition can, of course, be a millstone around the neck of progress. And (to mix metaphors) the more glorious the tradition is the more comfortable a laurel it becomes to rest on! Therefore most Christian leaders share the convictions expressed by Armenian Orthodox Bishop Karekin Sarkissian. His cathedral's enlarged museum in New Julfa, Isfahan, is being rushed to completion by October to play its part throughout the centennial year. In preparing his people for the opening he urges them to relate to their past in a way that will "recover that dynamism which was an inherent part of Christian witness in the early centuries and which played such a normative role in the whole history of the Christian East, and, indeed, for the church as a whole".

Apostolic Beginnings

The Armenian Orthodox — whose 160,000 members make their church Iran's largest — frequently speak of themselves as 'Apostolic'. That's because they trace their origins to the missionary endeavors of two of the Twelve Apostles, Thaddaeus and Bartholomew. The Ancient Church of the East (popularly known as 'Assyrian' and often inaccurately called 'Nestorian') counts another Apostle, St. Thomas, who reputedly spent seven years among the Parthians, as its founder. And Parthians, Medes and Elamites — all of whom would today call themselves Iranians — were among those who heard, and must have brought home with them, the message of the Disciples on the first Pentecost.

That portion of Armenia which has not been annexed by Turkey and Russia is now part of Iran. It became, in 303 A.D., the world's first officially Christian country.

In 1606, Shah Abbas brought 40,000 Armenian merchants and craftsmen south to Isfahan. He needed them to build up his fantastically beautiful new winter capital there. It was there, too, that they introduced the art of printing to Iran.

All these are factors in that 'dynamism' to which Bishop Sarkissian would have his people plug in. So also is the Armenian heritage of martyrdom in adjacent countries. A history of persecution can, of course, make a people self-pitying or retaliatory. But not, says Sarkissian, if we let the martyrs' unflinching commitment to the faith and their forgiveness of their enemies "force us to see our lives on earth from the perspective of eternity".

Assyrian antiquities also afford dynamism for the present. It was from their church's bosom that the ancient shahs and colleges already referred to emerged. They had one of early Christian history's most vigorous missionary movements, reaching out to Arabia, India, China, Siberia, Mongolia, Korea and Japan. They still conduct their simple worship services in Aramaic, the language of Jesus and the Apostles.

The 'Western' Churches

The dynamism of Western Christianity is, by Iranian standards, relatively recent. Rome had no archdiocese here before the Seventeenth Century. Episcopalians and Evangelicals did not make their presence felt until the early Nineteenth. Despite their late arrival and small numbers, however, they are received as a vital, cooperative part of Iran's Christian community. Father William Barden, a Catholic, heads the Centenary Christian Center. For the Interchurch Centenary Committee, Anglican Bishop Hassan B. Dehqani-Tafti is chairman; Paul Seto of the Presbyterian Armaghani Institute is Secretary.

All are hoping that the centennial year will draw Christians of varied traditions closer together in developing a future worthy of the past. Meanwhile their separate service enterprises, when listed together, add up to a considerable joint Christian witness. As *Horn-er's Christianity Is at Home in Iran* reminds us:

"Just as their forefathers shared the historic events which brought this land to its present position in the family of nations, so the Christians of today make their

loyal contributions to its modern life. Numerous educational institutions are under Christian auspices: forty-five elementary schools throughout Iran, enrolling more than 18,000 pupils; sixteen secondary schools with a total enrollment of nearly 7,000; fourteen other schools and classes for specialized training and for the education of handicapped people; a newly established college for women, and several university-related programs. There are Christian bookstores, correspondence courses, and training centers for the clergy. The Churches also minister to the health of the Iranian people through five Christian hospitals,

five other clinics and dispensaries, and two schools for nurses and nurses' aides. Christian medical services include mobile clinics for the poor and popular instruction in hygiene and public health. To care for those who cannot help themselves, the Churches now maintain six orphanages and seven homes for elderly people.

In emphasizing the spirit of cooperation both with the government and between the various Christian communions, the centennial year should do much to strengthen and extend such undertakings.

—L.H.W.

Footnote on Iran's "Western" Churches

Although they are relatively new and statistically small, Iran's Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Protestant Churches afford a link with their fellow-Christians in the West which can be significant. The disproportionate space given them below is in the interest of increasing international understanding through enhanced awareness of shared religious loyalties.

Catholics

The Archdiocese of Isfahan, founded in 1632, ministers to the 5,000 Latin-rite Catholics — most of them foreigners — in Iran. The situation was more promising in the Thirteenth Century when itinerant Dominican and Franciscan missionaries were effectively active. But in the Fourteenth Century those who hadn't died of the plague were slaughtered by Tamerlane's conquering hordes. Later, the Seventeenth Century advances of the Augustinians, Capuchins, Carmelites, Dominicans and Jesuits were virtually eliminated by Afghan invaders.

Undiscourageable, the Catholic orders established new work which continues today. The Salesian Fathers are largely responsible for Consolata Cathedral in Teheran and a lively parish in Abadan. They maintain the Andisheh School and want to establish a trade school. Seven Lazarists operate schools in Teheran and Tabriz. Four Irish Dominicans serve the Forsat Student Center near the Teheran University campus. The French and Dutch Little Brothers of Jesus do remarkable work with lepers near Tabriz. Armenian, French, Hungarian and Lebanese nuns specialize in dispensaries and girls' schools. The little Sisters of Jesus work with lepers in Mashad (Meshed).

The "Latin" Catholics, whose nunciature is at 97 Avenue de France, Teheran, are enthusiastically involved in the Interchurch Centenary Committee. So are the 18,000 Chaldean Catholics in whose Cathedral the 2500th anniversary service is to be held, and the 3,000 Armenian Catholics.

The Chaldeans, though they maintain the rites of the Assyrian Church, left that body in 1552 to unite with Rome. Iraq is their main stronghold and their Patriarch, Mar Paulos II Chekho, lives in Baghdad. In Iran, three archbishops operate respectively out of Ahwas, Rezaieh and Teheran. They maintain eight schools and two small seminaries.

Like them, the Armenian Catholics are

Uniates. They observe the Armenian Orthodox liturgy but are answerable to the Pope. Most of them live in Teheran, where they have two schools and where Bishop Leonce Tchantayan has his headquarters.

Catholics have three orphanages and three dispensaries in Iran and are building a new hospital in Teheran.

Eastern Orthodox 'Westerners'

Greek and Russian Orthodox in Iran number about 1,200 between them. Many of the 450 Orthodox Russians in Teheran, Pahlavi and Qazvin are stateless refugees from the Bolshevik revolution and are thus ineligible for social security. They are helped by the World Council of Churches and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees. Their Father Alexei, like the vigorous, ecumenically-minded Archimandrite Victorin whom he recently succeeded, looks to the Russian Church in Exile (headquartered in New York) rather than to Moscow for policy leadership.

The little Greek Orthodox church on Roosevelt Ave., Teheran, is Greek classical on the outside, Byzantine inside. Archimandrite Damaskinos Georgakopoulos, being the only Greek priest in Iran, is also responsible for the little congregation in Abadan. There being no bishop, he is answerable to the Ecumenical Patriarch in Istanbul.

Anglicans

Some 2,000 Anglicans (half of them foreigners) belong to the churches in Abadan, Bushehr, Isfahan, Kerman, Shiraz, Teheran and Yazd. Their Bishop, Hassan Dehqani-Tafti, with headquarters in Isfahan, has already been referred to for his ecumenical leadership. His *Design of My World* and other writings are widely respected.

Their high-quality educational, medical and evangelistic work dates back to the early Eighteenth Century. In Isfahan they operate four schools (one for the blind), a 100-bed hospital, a bookstore, two youth hostels and, nearby, a remarkable farm for training blind boys in agriculture. They also have a new Diocesan Center and a vocational school for girls in Teheran and a hospital in Shiraz.

The Diocese of Iran is part of the Episcopal Church of the Middle East which has its headquarters in Jerusalem.

(Continued on back page)

Footnotes on Iran (Continued)

Presbyterian-Evangelicals

By agreement with the Episcopalians who concentrate in the South, the Presbyterians work mostly in the North — with churches in Hamadan, Kermanshah, Meshed, Rasht, Rezaieh, Tabriz and Teheran. With Congregational backing under the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, they established their "Mission to the Nestorians" in 1832. Their intent was to stimulate a revival within the Assyrian Church, but the ultimate result was a new body, now called the Evangelical Church of Iran, with 55% Assyrians and 21% Armenians among its present 3,000 members.

It has eight elementary schools. The School of Practical Nursing in Meshed, and Armaghan Institute — about which more later — continue to be operated by the U.S.A. Presbyterians. One girls' school in Teheran, the Iran Bethel, has been transformed methodically into the autonomous Damavand College for women in the years since 1963 when women's suffrage made such higher education more urgent. To facilitate this upgrading, the foreign Consortium oil companies have given \$200,000, and the national oil interests \$65,000 in matching contributions. The Shah has pledged some land for a larger campus once title clearance is secured. The Queen gives strong endorsement to its curriculum which, under President Frances Grey, Dean Mary Thompson and an interfaith Board of Trustees, interweaves Iranian, English and world cultures with an appreciation for both the Bible and the Koran.

In line with Presbyterian custom, the Evangelical Church of Iran was originally divided into geographical presbyteries — North, East and West. Practical considerations, however, have made a division by language — Assyrian, Persian and Armenian — more natural.

The Assyrian Evangelicals in Teheran are flourishing, with new members from Rezaieh and Tabriz where, in turn, the membership is declining through migration. (Resultant financial strains contributed to closing the Christian hospitals in Tabriz and Meshed in April, 1970.)

Persian Evangelicals have congregations in Hamadan, Meshed and Resht. The preacher in the 600-member Teheran church is Mehdi Abhari, a Bangalore Seminary graduate who earns his bread as an

official in the government's Development Plan.

The Armenian Evangelicals get supplementary help from French and Swiss Calvinists. They have an imaginative camp program and are on good terms with Armenian Catholics and Armenian Orthodox. The Armenian Missionary Association in America gives them considerable backing.

Cooperating but independent is the German Evangelische Gemeinde whose 400 members have a new church on Yakhchal St., Teheran. The English-speaking Community Church of Teheran, related to the National Council of Churches, U.S.A., has been frequently led by Presbyterian ministers.

U.S.A. Presbyterians continue an active presence, but in a modified role. They are seeking to be involved in mission in relation with the larger Christian community within the total context of Iran. They annually include their Iranian colleagues in special prayers from February 19 to March 3.

Ecumenical

The accomplishments of the individual communions are enhanced by the widespread spirit of cooperation among Christians. The Church Council of Iran, while primarily Anglican and Evangelical, also enjoys unofficial Catholic participation. Its major projects include literature development, youth programs, a correspondence course and Radio Voice of the Gospel. Also undergirded by Catholic and Protestant as well as Orthodox support is the Bible Society.

In Abadan and Shiraz, Catholics and Protestants worship in the same buildings. In New Julfa, the Armenian Orthodox visitors' map includes all the non-Armenian and non-Orthodox churches.

Dominicans and Little Brothers of Jesus study both Persian and English in Evangelical language centers. With some assistance from Welfare of the Blind, Inc., Washington, D. C., Anglicans and Lutherans have alternated in their responsibilities for the Christophel School for the Blind in Isfahan. Around Rezaieh, Protestants, Chaldeans and Assyrians enjoy the best of relationships.

The Centennial year will expand the opportunities for increased Christian fellowship, dialogue, mutual service and collaboration. —L.H.W.

THE LINK

aims at maintaining contacts among Americans who believe that friendship with the people of the Middle East is essential to world peace, who would contribute to this goal by spreading understanding of the history, values, religions, culture and economic conditions of the Middle East, and who would—in this context—press for greater fairness, consistency and integrity in the U.S. policy toward that area.

It is published by AMEU (Americans for Middle East Understanding, Inc.) whose directors are:

John V. Chapple, Ph.D. Candidate, Columbia University;

Bertram C. Cooper, Editor and Freelance Writer;

Dr. John H. Davis, Former Commissioner General, UNRWA; International Consultant;

Dr. Harry G. Dorman, Jr., former Director, Middle East and Europe Department, National Council of Churches (sec.)

Dr. Henry G. Fischer, Curator in Egyptology, Metropolitan Museum of Art (v.p.)

Dr. Helen C. Hilling, Professor of Public Administration, N.Y.U. (treas.)

L. Emmett Holt, Jr., M.D., Emeritus

Dr. Carl Max Kortepeter, Assoc. Prof. Middle East History, N.Y.U.

Msgr. John G. Nolan, National Secretary, Catholic Near East Welfare Association

David C. Quinn, former Asst. Attorney General, N.Y. State

Rev. Joseph I. Ryan, S.J., Cambridge Center for Social Studies

Jack B. Sunderland, President, American Independent Oil Company (pres.)

President Emeritus Henry P. Van Dusen, Union Theological Seminary, New York

Rev. L. Humphrey Walz, Near East Chairman, Presbytery of N.Y.C. (Link editor)

Charles T. White, former Financial Executive, Near East Foundation and AID

Rev. John M. Sutton, Executive Director
Mrs. D. Siddall, Administrative Assistant
All correspondence should be addressed to 475 Riverside Drive, Room 538, New York, N.Y. 10027.

Americans For Middle East Understanding, Inc.

Room 538, 475 Riverside Drive
New York, New York 10027
Return Postage Guaranteed

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U. S. POSTAGE
PAID
NEW YORK, N. Y.
PERMIT No. 1309

AMERICAN COMMITTEE FOR
JUSTICE IN THE MIDDLE EAST
P. O. Box 717
Carmichael, California
95608