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LIGHT FROM THE EAST

NOVEMBER, 1948

Vol. 1

Published Monthly by The Patriarchal Council, Inc.
6346 N. Sheridan Road, Chicago 20

No. 1



THE PATRIARCH

(Story of MarShimun's epoch-making trip on pages 8, 9, 10)

Patriarchal Blessing

It is more than mere coincidence that "LIGHT FROM THE EAST" with its almost prophetic title should appear at this time. The purpose of the paper, as you will see from its contents, is the following:

1. To be the organ of the Church of the East all over the world.
2. To keep the Assyrians everywhere in touch with each other, and to guide them to the policy of peace and friendship with their neighbors.
3. To acquaint all those that are of the Assyrian race with the glorious history and accomplishments of their Christian forefathers.
4. To acquaint non-Assyrians with the history, the teaching and Aramaic literature of the Church of the East.

We, therefore, strongly commend "LIGHT FROM THE EAST" to all members of the Church of the East, and the Assyrians in general, irrespective of creed or dogma. We pray for its success and that the Lord may bless and guide all those connected with its publication, with our Apostolic and Patriarchal blessing to them and the readers alike.

—Eshai Shimun

Catholicos Patriarch of the East.

Latest News on Foreign Affairs

With regard to the much rumored offer said to have been made by the Brazilian government for immigration and settlement of Assyrians of Syria in Brazil, the following letter has been received by the Patriarch from the Brazilian embassy in Washington, which denies the existence of such an offer.

His Holiness
Mar Eshai Shimun XXIII

Brazilian Embassy
Washington, Oct. 26, 1948

With reference to your letter of Oct. 18, 1948, I wish to inform you, in the absence of the ambassador, that the Embassy has not yet received directly from governmental sources in Rio de Janeiro a reply regarding the situation in Syria concerning the immigration of Assyrians into Brazil.

However, I beg to advise as to the contents of a communication received from the Brazilian Legation in Beirut, Lebanon, according to which the Legation affirms its complete unawareness as to any measure or resolution taken by the Brazilian Government in that respect.

A. DE MELLO FRANCO,
Minister Plenipotentiary,
Counsellor of the Embassy.

Some fifteen years ago, twelve Assyrian families from Urumia emigrated to Brazil, under the leadership of Babajan, son of Shamasha Babu, of Gulpatalikhan, of Urumia district. But as the result of the mosquitos, reptiles and malaria which abounded in that section, they were compelled to flee. Some went to France, others to various parts of Latin America. None remained in the Brazilian location.

Iran Frees All Assyrians on Plea of Patriarch

At the first meeting of the Patriarch with the ambassador of Iran, on June 20, he asked the ambassador to use his good offices with his government to have all the Assyrians imprisoned as a result of the disturbances in Azerbaijan released forthwith.

In consequence of this, all the Assyrians thus held were later set free.

IRAQ OPENS GATES

Official information from Iraq states that an article appeared in Sot-al-Shaid, government organ in Baghdad, No. 3, dated Sept. 21, stating:

"We learn that the Iraq government has granted permission to Patriarch Mar Shimun to return to Iraq, if he should wish to do so."

TIGRIS IRRIGATION

In conference with the Iraq delegate to the United Nations, His Holiness was informed that the Iraq government would be favorably inclined to consider the return of the Assyrians in Syria to Iraq.

In connection with this, the delegate also mentioned an irrigation project on the upper reaches of the Tigris River.

DAM ON KHABOUR

The Patriarch is in communication with the Syrian minister in Washington, and with the Assyrians on the Khabour, with regard to the question of building a dam on the Khabour River, to irrigate this region.

ACT NOW!

In every community, three persons should represent LIGHT FROM THE EAST, one to provide news, another get subscriptions, the third obtain advertising. Form committees immediately; report names to the Patriarchal Council.

Light is Breaking in the East

As the result of the three months' visit of the Patriarch, Mar Eshai Shimun, to Washington and New York during the past summer, a new day is dawning for the Assyrian People and the Church of the East—a day of hope and peace.

By direct negotiations with the embassies and governments of Syria, Iran and Iraq, His Holiness has broken through the Iron Curtain of misunderstanding and suspicion that divided the Assyrian Christians from their neighbors.

Through this courageous and diplomatic action, it can be asserted that the terrible perils which so long hung over the race and the Church of which he is the head have been averted, and the way opened for steady progress out of the mist and darkness into new eras of prosperity and peace.

His Holiness made direct contact with the Shah of Iran, and obtained from his government assurances of its desire for the peace and happiness of the Assyrian people living in Iran.

He established direct contact, amounting to warm personal friendship, with the envoys of the Republic of Syria, the Kingdom of Iraq and the Empire of Iran.

He was successful in getting the International Red Cross to act in obtaining help and guidance for the Assyrians in the Khabour Valley, hitherto ignored or excluded from the Red Cross ministrations. An emissary of the Red Cross is on his way to them.

The Patriarch is now in communication with Church World Service, which also has promised to give the situation most sympathetic consideration.

A plan is under discussion for the building of a dam on the Khabour River, for irrigation of lands now occupied by Assyrians, so that terrible famines such as those of the past two years will be things of the past.

The visit of His Holiness to the Eastern seaboard marks a turning point in the history of the nation.

Details of what has been accomplished and what is being planned will be published in this magazine, in future issues. The change in world outlook is so tremendous that many issues will be occupied with presentation of what is taking place. It can be summed up in the words of an ancient hymn:

Nuhra dinakh!— The Light has Dawned.

* * * VISITS TO PARISHES

Besides visiting the political and diplomatic centers, the Mar Shimun visited the parishes of the Church of the East in New Britain, Conn.; in Philadelphia; in Yonkers; and in Flint, Mich. He has visited Gary, and plans to visit Turlock, Calif.

In all of these places wonderful progress is being made. New property is being bought, churches improved and money placed in the bank.

The Church of the East is beginning to assume its rightful place in this new land. From the Middle East to the Middle West its members have come, bringing the ancient Gospel. There is great need for their message.

A new generation is growing up; a generation of young Americans firm in their devotion to their new land, but strong in their fervent faith, unchanged through all the centuries since the days their forefathers accepted it in the towns of Galilee. The Patriarchal Council calls to them—
"Go Forward!"



THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL IN TELL TAMER, SYRIA

Patriarch's Plan to Raise Funds for New Schools

Of all the vast educational institutions which once belonged to the Church of the East, only two schools remain: the theological school and the grade school in Tell Tamer, Syria. A similar school is being started in Urumia, Iran.

With the newly won permission from the governments of the Middle East for the reopening of the church schools, it is imperative that support be given from this country.

Support of one student in the theological school, for one year, costs \$100.

A school of 200 children, with five teachers, can be maintained for \$2500.

It is planned to open scholarships, for these schools. The first objective

is to build up the school at Tell-Tamer.

LIGHT FROM THE EAST appeals to the youth of the Church of the East to aid in filling up these scholarships.

Can the young people of New Britain, of Yonkers, in Philadelphia, of Gary, of Flint, of Chicago, and of Turlock, agree to raise \$200 a year in each place for the schools?

This can be done easily through Pence offerings. The Patriarch has provided small banks, to be placed on the table of every family, wherein one penny is to be deposited for each person sharing every meal. This is all to go for education in the Old Land.

The fund is to be known as the Patriarchal Pence. In every community, the young people are asked to take this as their particular charge.

New Policy Seeks Peace, Justice, Freedom

BY MAR ESHAI SHIMUN, PATRIARCH OF THE EAST

The situation of the Assyrians reminds me of a stone rolling down a mountain side such as I often saw in the mountains of Kurdistan. It has to run its inevitable course. Likewise the Assyrian question, which dates in its present aspect from the events of the First World War and through the Second, had to run its course.

That course has been a long one—thirty-four years in all. Yet this tragic universal drama of social and political downfall, which culminated in the worst catastrophe in the history of our church and nation, is but another link in the chain of events through which the unbreakable spirit of our people has been forged, like gold, with ever increasing purity.

Heroic deeds were performed, sacrifices made, and untold sufferings endured. The losses in life and property thus suffered, in the destruction of ancient churches and irreplaceable manuscripts, are beyond computation.

Yet, in all this seemingly dark and dismal future, there shines a gleam of light and hope. Although far and uncertain, it is very real. That light is the common bond which exists between the peoples of the Middle East, without distinction of race or religion. They are all of the same stock, and speak languages that are identical or close akin. Their religions, the three monotheistic religions, of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, all spring from the same source. They have the same history and the same civilization, namely, the Semitic, classically known as the Syriac Civilization.

The Church of the East within the Persian Empire remained for centuries the sole champion of that civilization, and fought heroically against the onslaught of the Hellenic civilization, with its stronghold in the Roman Empire. That torch of Syriac civilization was handed over by the sorely afflicted Christian Church of the East to Islam, which today constitutes the chief bearer of that torch, and the champion of the Syriac civilization.

When the events of history are more fully understood, this common bond will serve as the greatest factor in uniting the peoples of the Middle East. They all now realize that they have been exploited by foreign interests, much to their own detriment—a realization that has sprung from bitter experience.

With these facts in view, we recently visited Washington and had long discussions with the Ambassadors of Iran, Iraq and Syria, the countries where Assyrians now live. They were all most gracious in their response, and important results already have been achieved.

The rolling stone thus has run its inevitable course. It is our earnest prayer to Almighty God that a brighter future may dawn for the Assyrians in the Middle East, where they can live as loyal subjects and citizens of the various countries, contributing their best as peace-loving Christian citizens, and receiving in return justice, freedom and equality of opportunities, from their respective governments.

GEORGE S. ALEXANDER

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801 Madison St.

GARY, IND.

Phone 22017

LIGHT FROM THE EAST

Published Monthly by
**THE PATRIARCHAL COUNCIL,
INC.**

6346 N. Sheridan Road,
Chicago
Phone, HO llycourt 5-2037

Subscription rates\$2 per year
Single copies, 20 cents

The Patriarchal Council, Inc.
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Adam Benjamin, treasurer
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Memorial for Assyrian Vet Slain in Italy

Services for Pvt. Albert Peters, 19, of Chicago, Illinois, who was killed in action somewhere in Italy, in 1943, were held at 1:00 P. M. Saturday, Oct. 9, 1948, in the Assyrian Congregational Church. He was laid to rest beside his father, Yonan Peters of Goolpashan, in the Elmwood Cemetery.

Rev. Paul S. Newey officiated. Miss Frances Eshoo sang "I Found a Friend" and "The Lord's Prayer." John Joel gave a brief history of Pvt. Peters.

During the services, the body of the dead soldier was guarded by a four-man honor guard of the Assyrian American Veterans Post No. 57. After the service, the coffin was led out by twelve men in uniform who were formerly friends and relatives of Albert.

Returning from the cemetery, everyone gathered in the A. N. A. to express their sympathy to the bereaved family. Coffee was served by the Assyrian Veterans of Post No. 57.

Pvt. Peters is survived by his mother, Maryam, and a sister, Grace.

Father Neesan's Visit to Turlock Full of Activity

The Church of the East has built a beautiful edifice in Turlock, which will seat about three hundred people, with a basement of the same capacity. The congregation desires to put in an adjoining kitchen and wash rooms.

The Rev. S. D. Neesan arrived on Sunday, August 1st, and conducted many services: four marriages, six baptisms, one service of Sacred Offering (Holy Communion) and one service, as follows:

On August 5, marriage of Zaia, from Akron and Batishwa Thomas of Turlock.

August 7, Joseph Yonan and Alice Pera.

August 12, Sapharo and Mariom Yonan.

August 13, Wilson Baba and Lillian Pera.

On Sunday, August 8, morning service.

August 14, baptism of six infants.

Sunday, August 15, Qurbana Gaddisha. There were about one hundred participants.

Turlock and vicinity is a thriving community. Most of the Assyrian families settled there since World War I. Although at present they are small in number, they surely are doing more than could have been expected of them, because they are zealous church members and adherents to their forefathers' faith. Although they have no priest now, they are doing their utmost to keep the fires burning.

We hope they will have an able man to lead their congregation in the near future.

"Be Loyal Citizens of Iraq"

Patriarch Writes to Metropolitan

Extracts from the Epistle of His Holiness, the Patriarch of the East, dated August 9, 1948, addressed to His Grace, Mar Yosep Khnanishoo, Metropolitan of Rustaqa, in Iraq.

After the epistle has dealt at some length with the historical events of the Assyrian question from the first world war to the present day, His Holiness states:

"Our nation was not the only one that suffered as the result of the two World Wars. All nations, big and little alike; each according to its own circumstances and in various ways, have suffered great hardships, and the many hopes given to them by the great powers have not been fulfilled."

Recalling the centuries long history of the Christian Assyrians under the enlightened and progressive rule of the Khalifs of Bagdad, comparing it with the present tragic situation of his people and the chaotic state of the world, the Patriarch quotes the holy command of our Redeemer "Render therefore unto Caesar that which is Caesar's, and unto God, that which is God's", and again the words of St. Paul: "Let every soul be in subjection to the higher powers, for there is no power but of God."

He continues: **"Therefore, we ask you as Metropolitan and our representative in Iraq, to make it known to all the children of our nation and our holy Church of the East, that we, as fathers in spirit, and by the Patriarchal authority bestowed on us from above, though unworthy,—that we ask of them to be loyal and faithful to His Majesty the King of Iraq and his exalted government, and to fulfill every duty that is expected of them as loyal subjects and men of peace, the peace unto which we have been called by our Christian faith.**

"We believe that when His Exalted Majesty and his government, see the good fruits of the good works of our people, they will also do for them that which is right and just.

"May the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all, Amen."

The epistle was written by His Holiness, following his discussion with His Excellency Naji Al-Asil, Iraqi delegate to the United Nations, and His Excellency, the Iraqi Ambassador to Washington. The epistle already has been made known to the Assyrians of Iraq, with the approval of the Iraqi Government. His Grace, the Metropolitan, recently met Naji Al-Asil in Baghdad. His Excellency asked him to remember him to His Holiness.

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THE PATRIARCH'S ITINERARY

His Holiness, Patriarch Mar Shimun, left Chicago for New York on Monday, July 10, driving his own car, and accompanied by George Lamsa.

On the way they visited the Chautauqua Institute at Jamestown, N. Y., and met the directors of the Institute, including the Rev. Roy L. Smith, editor of the Christian Advocate, national Methodist journal. Dr. Smith had given a dinner in honor of the Patriarch before leaving Chicago, at which a number of leaders of the Methodist Church were present.

While in New York, the Patriarch made his headquarters at the Mc-Alpine Hotel.

On July 22, he had a lengthy personal conference with His Excellency Naji Al-Asil, representative of Iraq at the United Nations.

IN WASHINGTON

On July 26 he went to Washington, and dined with His Excellency Noury Esfandiary, Iranian ambassador to the United States.

On July 27 he had tea with Dr. Henry Field, of Chicago, an official of the Library of Congress.

On Wednesday, July 28, he met the Syrian minister to Washington, and discussed with him the condition of the Assyrians on the Khabour River.

On Thursday, July 29, Mr. Aram, first secretary of the Iranian Embassy, came to visit the Patriarch at the Hotel Shoreham, which was his headquarters while in Washington.

On the same day the Patriarch called at the State Department. The same day, at 5:30, the Iranian Ambassador called to pay his respects.

On Friday, July 30, Mar Shiman called again at the State Department accompanied by Dr. Henry Field.

GUEST OF HONOR

On Saturday, July 31, he attended a farewell party at the Iranian Embassy, given in honor of the Iranian Military mission to the United States. About 200 persons were present, including ambassadors of foreign nations, members of the state department, senators, and others.

The Iranian Ambassador focussed the whole attention of the gathering on the Patriarch, whom he treated with very special consideration.

On all these occasions, Mar Shimun was accompanied by George Lamsa. J. J. Durna was also invited by His Holiness to join him for this reception. Mr. Durna accepted, and attended.

During this stay in Washington, the Patriarch received much favorable attention from the Washington press.

Before leaving the capitol he met—on Friday, July 30—with representatives of CARE, the Commission on American Relief for Europe, and discussed with them questions of help for the Assyrians on the Khabour.

Direct communication was established by the Patriarch with His Imperial Majesty, the King of Iran, which will profoundly affect the destinies of all the Assyrians living in that country.

\$1,000 FOR KHABOUR

During his stay in New York, a number of meetings were held with the Assyrian National Federation of America, and with various representatives of the Church of the East.

After one of these meetings with officials of the Federation, the sum of \$1,000, given by the Assyrian Association in New Britain, was sent at the Patriarch's request for the relief of Assyrians on the Khabour.

On August 20, Mar Shimun arrived in Bar Harbor, Maine, for the consecration of the Rev. Russell Sturgis Hubbard as bishop coadjutor of the Episcopal diocese of Michigan.

At this consecration the Patriarch was the guest of honor, and met a number of bishops, to whom he gave vital information regarding the problems of the Church of the East.

Among them were Bishop William T. Manning of New York and Bishop Malcolm Peabody, of Central New York.

He also attended numerous social functions, making contacts that will prove, if it is believed, of increasing value.

IN NEW BRITAIN

His Holiness arrived in New Britain, Conn., Wednesday, Sept. 1, remaining there until Sept. 7.

On Saturday the Assyrians of New Britain held a meeting. The Patriarch informed them of the work accomplished in Washington, which pleased them greatly.

On Sunday, Sept. 5, at 8 A.M. he celebrated the Qurbana Qaddisha in the Episcopal Church of St. Mark, the building of the Church of the East there being too small. The Holy Offering was very well attended, the church being filled.

After the Qurbana, the Daughters of the Church of the East gave a breakfast in honor of the occasion. Mar Shimun spoke about church activities, including the formation of the Patriarchal Council, the theological school on the Khabour, and the projected new school in Urumia. He urged the people to raise their quota for the support of these enterprises.

At this breakfast, substantial numbers of bonds were sold for the launching of the monthly periodical, LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

The Church in New Britain is very active, especially the St. Thomas Youth Organization, which was instrumental in raising a considerable sum of money for the parish.

IN PHILADELPHIA

From New Britain the Patriarch went to Philadelphia, arriving there on the 18th. On Sunday, Sept. 19, he celebrated the Qurbana in St. Simeon's Episcopal Church, with good attendance.

On Sunday, Sept. 26th, he celebrated in Yonkers, with excellent attendance. St. Andrew's Episcopal Church was placed at his disposal for the occasion. The Patriarch was especially pleased to see the number of young people who attended the service.

The Yonkers Youth Organization of Mar Addai (St. Thaddeus) which was only started last spring, is very active, and recently gave a dinner at which the sum of \$500 was raised for the church.

Breakfast was served at the Assyrian National Association club by the Daughters of the Church of the East in Yonkers. A general meeting of the Assyrians of Yonkers was held in the evening, at 8 p.m.

Mar Shimun told them of his visit to Washington, and of the vitally important events which transpired there. Bonds were sold for LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

VISIT TO BISHOP SHERRILL

On Monday, Sept. 27, he visited the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, the Right Rev. Henry K. Sherrill, in New York, and discussed with him the question of the Assyrians on the Khabour. The Presiding Bishop suggested a visit to the Rev. Almon R. Pepper, representative of the Episcopal Church on the national board of Church World Service. Following this visit, at which a lengthy discussion was held, correspondence is now in progress.

On Sept. 28 the Patriarch left again for Washington. On the 29th the Iranian Ambassador called on him, at the Hotel Shoreham.

QUESTION OF BRAZIL

Thursday, Sept. 30, the Patriarch called on the Brazilian Ambassador,

and had an extended conversation in relation to possibilities of settlement in that country.

At 5 p. m. he left Washington for Flint, Mich., accompanied by Deacon Isaac Nona. George Lamsa remained in Washington.

They arrived in Pittsburgh at 11 p.m., spending the night there.

IN FLINT, MICH.

On the following morning they left Pittsburgh at 8 a.m., and arrived in Flint at 9 p.m., Friday, Oct. 1.

On Oct. 2 he received a number of persons from the Flint parish, the Church of Mar Shimun Bar Sabai.

On Sunday, Oct. 3, he celebrated the Qurbana before an excellent congregation. The church was packed, so that many were compelled to stand outside.

After the Qurbana the Daughters of the Church of the East in Flint gave a breakfast in the basement of the church.

The Patriarch again spoke on his trip to Washington and the varied activities of the church.

That evening, a mass meeting of Assyrians was held. His Holiness told them fully concerning the events that had occurred in Washington and New York. Bonds were sold on that occasion for the support of LIGHT FROM THE EAST.

While in Flint, His Holiness ordained two deacons, John Benjamin (Barnyas) and Eshaya Thomas.

While in Flint, he received from the Syrian Ambassador in Washington a statement of negotiations with the International Red Cross, including correspondence from their world headquarters that an agent of the Red Cross already was on his way to Syria, in connection with the question of the Khabour.

He returned to Chicago on Monday, Oct. 4. That evening he held a conference with the Patriarchal Council.

Since his return, he has carried on active correspondence in relation to the new policy developed during this trip to the East coast.

FOR WORLD FUND

During the whole trip, the Patriarch asked each parish to give 25 per cent of its annual income for the General Fund, which will be used at his discretion wherever it is most needed, all over the world.

On all these occasions the Patriarch also asked the various parishes to raise without delay their annual quota for the Khabour Theological School, and one soon to be started in Urumia.

In summing up the results of this visit, the Patriarch said:

"Instead of begging the British or American governments, or any church or combination of churches, to intercede for us, we have now come to the conclusion that we shall speak for ourselves. The results accomplished in this brief time through direct approach between ourselves and those with whom we must deal have been one hundred times greater than we could have accomplished by correspondence or by intervention of others. That policy of direct approach will be followed in the future."

LIFE OF MAR SHIMUN

Story of the Patriarch of the East

(Publication Date Dec. 10)

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Church of the East Honors Anglican, Presbyterian Leaders

On the night of May 23, 1948, the Patriarch of the Church of the East conferred golden crosses of honor on eminent leaders of two Western Churches, Anglican and Presbyterian.

Bishop Sumner Walters, of San Joaquin, California, received the Cross of St. Thomas. The Rev. John Timothy Stone, former moderator of the Presbyterian Church, U. S. A., received the Cross of Mar Mari, one of the Seventy.



BISHOP SUMNER WALTERS

Both men had aided greatly the Assyrian Christians of the Middle East; Dr. Stone by leading in the collection of more than \$30,000 for Urumia, and Bishop Walters for leading the Bishops of the Episcopal Church in a protest to the President of the United States against continued massacres of Assyrian Christians.



REV. JOHN T. STONE

The Rev. Dr. Stone told of his experiences during World War I and subsequently, when the Assyrians in Chicago knelt to pray for their kinsmen, then undergoing terrific hardship. They made of the little Presbyterian chapel on Huron street a holy shrine, he said, for the devotion and sincerity of their prayers.

Bishop Walters told of his discovery of the plight of the Christians of the East through contact with one of the clergy of his diocese, an Assyrian by birth.

Both crosses were made in the shape traditionally called Nestorian, the same as was engraved on the Speaking Stone in China, more than 12 centuries ago. This cross has, at its top, a crown with three prongs, denoting the Holy Trinity.

Around the four edges of the

cross are nine small circles, denoting the nine orders of angels. These are cherubim and seraphim; thrones, dominations, principedoms, virtues, powers, archangels and angels.

They correspond with the nine orders of the ministry recognized in the Church of the East; patriarch, metropolitan, bishop, archdeacon, chorepiscopa, priest, deacon, subdeacon and reader.

Similar crosses of honor will be presented occasionally by His Holiness.

Music was rendered by the Assyrian Choral Society.

Addresses were made by Dr. Melchior Palyi, of the University of Wisconsin; Attorney David Perley; the consul-general of the Netherlands, Dr. Van der Mortel; and by Attorney Schatenhamel, one of the attorneys at the German war guilt trials in Nurnberg.

The Rev. Irwin St. John Tucker, president of the Patriarchal Council, toastmaster, spoke of his deep interest in the Church of the East since, 35 years ago, he received an invitation to go to India as head of one of its schools. He added:

"Other nations have their symbols of unity; a flag, a crown, a throne.

"A flag is only cloth on a pole, a crown is only a jeweled metal hat, a throne is only a chair. But you As-

syrians have a living link of unbroken unity with the past, a living symbol of immemorial sanctity, your Patriarch."

THREE BISHOPS JOIN COUNCIL

Three bishops of the American Protestant Episcopal Church have accepted honorary membership on the Patriarchal Council.

These bishops are: The Right Rev. Sumner Walters, of San Joaquin, California; the Right Rev. Frederick Budlong, of Connecticut, and the Right Rev. Malcolm Peabody, of Central New York.

In addition, the Hon. William R. Castle, former ambassador to Japan and also former assistant secretary of State, has agreed to act as honorary adviser.

The Presiding Bishop, Right Rev. Henry K. Sherrill, expressed to the Patriarch great sympathy, but said that because of the manifold burdens of his high office he could not accept the post. However, he urged the Rev. Almon Pepper, representative of the Episcopal Church on Church World Service national council, to give all aid to the Assyrians. Dr. Pepper took up the matter with Church World Service, which is now studying the situation.

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