

CURRENT TOPICS

American University of Beirut New President

Dr. Stephen B. L. Penrose, Jr. will succeed Dr. Bayard Dodge as president of the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, Harold B. Hoskins, president of the Board of Trustees, announced at the offices of the Near East College Association, 46 Cedar St., New York City.

Dr. Dodge's retirement this June after twenty-five years of service as president of America's largest overseas university was made public last September upon his return to the United States to assist with the fund appeal for the Near East Colleges. The American University of Beirut is one of eight affiliated colleges providing American education in six Near East nations.

Dr. Penrose becomes the fourth president of the American University of Beirut, founded in 1866 as Syrian Protestant College. The University, with its preparatory school, International College, has an enrollment of 2500 students representing 40 nationalities and 30 religious sects.

In accepting the presidency, Dr. Penrose returns to the Near East, where he began his professional career in 1928 as instructor in physics at Beirut. Back in the United States he became instructor and later dean of men at Whitman College, Walla Walla, Wash. He then was appointed professor of philosophy and psychology at Rockford College, Rockford, Ill.

In 1938 he was named assistant director of the Near East College Assn., New York City, where he was editor of the "Near East Service" and was the author of "That They May Have Life," a history of the American University of Beirut, published by the Princeton University Press in 1941.

Medical Missionary Service in Arabia

During a tour of eight months in Riyadh and Taif of Saudi Arabia Dr. Harold W. Storm, of the Arabian Mission, and his associates treated a total of 29,559 cases, making 2782 outcalls and performing 1617 (527 major) operations.

In a circular letter dated November 30, 1947, Dr. and Mrs. Storm say: "Another milestone was added to the history of the Arabian Mission when we came over to Qatar and on November 22nd took over from Shaikh Hamid a lovely little hospital he had built for us right down on the sea. It has room for twenty patients, has an operating unit and good space for a clinic. The whole is built around a courtyard. We are tremendously pleased. Now the Shaikh is going to build a second story which for the present we will use as quarters for the doctor and staff and servants. Six years ago a frightful smallpox epidemic raged in Qatar. We vaccinated 1200 members of the ruling family, then asked for permission to go to the villages that were being decimated by the disease. The Shaikh replied, 'You have vaccinated the royal family; it is enough.' God still works miracles; we praise Him and go forward."

Government and Religion in Islam

From *The Light*, Lahore, of October 24, 1947, we quote editorial comment on an address by Muhammad Asad, formerly known also as Leopold Weiss. From the same issue part of the address mentioned is also quoted. The address and the comment reflect majority and minority opinion about the proper relationship of government and religion in Islamdom.

"While thoroughly realizing the need of the revival of true Islamic thought and life among Muslims, we doubt the wisdom of making a sacred cause like this the subject-matter of a regular Government Department, as done by the West Punjab Government with Allama Mohd Asad, the well-known Austrian Muslim and writer as its Director.

"Islam stands above everything—above Kings and Governments and potentates. It is for these latter to stand at the door of Islam to seek light and guidance. To make religion the hand maid of the State is a Christian idea. In Islam the Qazi has always been independent of the ruler and the mightiest of rulers trembled in their shoes at appearance in the Courts of Qazis.

"For a man of the scholarship of Allama Asad to take his religious inspiration from men like Mamdot and Shaukat and the rest of the team is a perversion of true values. As a Department of the Government, the Islamic Reconstruction Department cannot, by the very nature of things, be independent in spirit and must take note of the whims and vagaries of the ministries that come and ministries that go. . . .

"We believe Allama Asad can do much more for the reconstruction of the thought and life of Islam in Pakistan as an independent man, free from any official trammels. Besides, it is a dangerous precedent to tie up religion to the chariot wheel of the State. To departmentalize a thing of Divine origin is to stifle the very life breath of it."

"In the following broadcast speech from Pakistan Radio, Lahore, Mr. Muhammad Asad, Director, Islamic Reconstruction Department, West Punjab Government, explained the aims and functions of this newly-created Department.

"In view of the great changes, both physical and spiritual, which the Muslim Millat in our country is undergoing in these days, the Government have found it advisable to create a new department which would deal with certain problems arising from those changes. The ultimate aim of this department is, to help our community to reconstruct its life on Islamic lines, and therefore it has been named Department of Islamic Reconstruction. It is for the first time, I believe, that the word "Islam" has appeared in the designation of any Government Department in this country. The departure from all previous governmental traditions evident therein is so great that a few words of explanations are due to the public before we start our work.

"As all of you know, our struggle for the attainment of Pakistan has been fought on an ideological platform. We have maintained, and we do maintain today, that we Muslims are a nation by virtue of our adherence to Islam. To us, religion is not merely a set of beliefs and moral rules but a code of practical behaviour as well.

Contrary to almost all other religions Islam does not content itself with influencing the life of the spirit alone, but aims also at shaping all the physical aspects of our life in accordance with the Islamic world-view. In the grand scheme propounded to us in the Quran and in the life-example of the Holy Prophet, all the various aspects of human existence—moral and physical, spiritual and intellectual, individual and communal—have been taken into consideration as part of the indivisible whole which we call "human life." It follows, therefore, that we can not live a truly Islamic life by merely holding Islamic beliefs. We must do far more than that. If Islam is not to remain an empty word, we must co-ordinate our outward behaviour, individually and socially, with the beliefs we profess to hold.

"This peculiar aspect of Islam, well-known to everyone who has the slightest acquaintance with its principles, is the foundation on which we base our claim to an independent State of our own, for it is only within the framework of an independent State, endowed with all the paraphernalia of government, law and social organization that the scheme of Islam can be brought to practical fulfilment. It is because of this ideal that we have struggled for an independent Pakistan and have undergone and are still undergoing, sufferings greater than any other nation had to bear in modern times. And it may well be that our sufferings are so great because our aims were so high. Indeed, in a world ruled by concepts of nationalism on racial or purely cultural lines, the concept of an ideological State is so unique, so out of all proportion with what the rest of the world regards as "modern" and desirable, that we were bound to encounter the most formidable opposition. For, most of the people in our time have grown accustomed to look upon racial affinities and historical traditions as the only legitimate basis of nationhood: while we on the other hand, regard an ideological community—a community of people having a definite scale of moral values in common—as the highest form of nationhood to which man could aspire. We make this claim not only because we are convinced that our particular ideology, Islam, is a message from God Himself, but also because our reason tells us that a community based on ideas held in common is far more advanced manifestation of human life than a community resulting from accidents of race or language or geographical location.

"This, as I have said, is not a view commonly held in our days, for most of our contemporaries in other countries are still entangled in the old-fashioned, nationalist aspirations and prejudices evolved in past centuries—aspirations and prejudices which are largely responsible for the chaos in which the world finds itself today. It is not for us, the Millat of Islam, to follow this path of chaos, and so, obeying the eternal call of Islam, we have embarked on the great experiment of creating an ideological State.

"What we desire is a free society open to all who believe in our ideology, as well as to all those who do not believe in it from the religious point of view but are nevertheless willing to co-operate with us in giving it a trial. This is a very important point, and I would request our non-Muslim citizens to give it the consideration it deserves. We are an open society—that is to say, we do not restrict social co-operation, with all the benefits of full citizenship accruing therefrom, to members of the Muslim community alone. We shall

welcome the co-operation of every citizen, Muslim and non-Muslim, who is prepared to work with us on the basis of the Constitution which Pakistan's Constituent Assembly will be called upon to evolve in the near future. All that this State demands of its citizens is active loyalty towards the constitution; and loyalty will be the only criterion of a good citizen, whether it be the result of religious belief or of a commonsense acceptance of the social ideology agreed upon by the majority of the citizens.

"For, naturally, the main burden of framing our Constitution will fall upon the shoulders of the Muslims. It is they who form the overwhelming majority in this country, and it is they who are the torchbearers of the ideology for the sake of which Pakistan has been established. And it is the Muslim community as a whole, and not only the members of the Constituent Assembly, who will be ultimately responsible for the quality of our Constitution. There can be no greater mistake than to believe that a successful Constitution could be evolved in a vacuum, as it were, by a limited group of people chosen for this purpose by the Legislative Assemblies. Though, undoubtedly, it will be these representatives of ours who will be entrusted with the actual task of formulating the laws and clauses of which the Constitution will be composed, their endeavours cannot possibly bear the desired results unless they are supported and backed by the will of a united nation. And our nation cannot become really united, and cannot achieve that singleness of purpose so essential for the Muslim Millat, unless and until we overcome that shameful confusion and demoralization, that loss of faith and of social integrity, that moral corruption which seems to have become our portion during the recent weeks and months. And this is where the new Department of Islamic Reconstruction comes in.

"I should like to make it clear that this Department, of which I have the honour to be the head, does not arrogate to itself the right to intrude upon the deliberations of the Constituent Assembly. All that we are expected to do—all that we can legitimately do—is to help the community to co-ordinate its spiritual and intellectual resources, and to revive the moral strength of which the Millat must be capable by virtue of its being the Millat of Islam: in other words, to help the Millat to re-create the Islamic atmosphere so necessary for a revival of Islamic life in its practical aspects."

✻ Dean Edward Warren Capen ✻

1870-1947

Dean Capen, founder and dean of the Kennedy School of Missions, lived in two periods of modern missions. In his student days he felt the urgency of the great call, "Evangelization of the World in this Generation," which sent young men into many parts of the world with the gospel message. The World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh led him into the second period, which broadened the message and urged a special preparation for the messenger.

Dean Capen's preparation to be a teacher of missionaries began