

Build Your House upon a Rock, Christ Says

By Fred Aprim
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Certain voices on the net lately have begun to claim that it is few numbered individuals who are blackmailing bishop Sarhad Jammo and basically pushing him in the path of creating the Chaldean separate ethnic group. I wish for whoever were making such claims to explain to the readers how they reached to that conclusion so we would understand. Personally, I cannot agree with such claim because there is no justification or excuse for anyone, who considers himself/herself a leader but bend under blackmail especially when his/her people are in the balance. Assyrians remember the stand of Patriarch Mar Benyamin Shimun early in WWI, who refused to give in to the Ottoman Turkish government blackmail and how He subsequently sacrificed His own brother instead of jeopardizing the lives of His people; such is a true leader.

Why the bishops?

I personally believe that these few individuals are motivated and led by their bishops. Why? Commonsense tell us that since the Chaldean community is dominated by the church and its clergymen, therefore, individual members of the church cannot continue being accepted in the community without the blessings of their clergymen. I believe that any of the two bishops Sarhad Jammo and Ibrahim Ibrahim can easily disassociate such individuals from the majority of the Chaldean community if the two bishops desired or felt threatened. Therefore, to hint that very few numbered individuals, who can be counted with a single hand, could blackmail the bishops is a theory that lacks the logic for a reasonable argument.

In northern Iraq, we know today that the Kurds have been promoting this separate Chaldean ethnicity in order to weaken the Assyrian national movement. In fact, this has been the Kurdish policy since 1961 when the Kurdish movement began. There are plenty of examples from the past that substantiate the once hidden but today well known Kurdish policy. It became so obvious ten years back when the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP) established in 1992 a phony organization under the Christian umbrella for two purposes: one, to challenge the national movement, and two, to undermine the Assyrian national name. The KDP has continued for decades to use all means possible to present the Assyrians as Christian Kurds or at times as a Christian sect. Still, more recently, the KDP entered the December 14, 2002, Iraqi Opposition Group meeting in London flanked by two of their Chaldean agents, Abd al-Ahad Afram and Yousif Al-Qas Hanna (Abu Hikmat), both strongly associated with the KDP and in a matter of fact members in the said Kurdish organization. And we know that those very few individuals who are blamed for blackmailing the bishops are in continuous contact with Mr. Abd al-Ahad Afram.

In the United States, evidences are telling us that the bishops were leading this movement of the official separation of the Catholic sect from mother Assyria. It started in the early 1990s when we read bishop Sarhad Jammo's article to the Census Bureau justifying the name Chaldean as an ethnic title. This, amazingly, coincided with the rapid developments in north of Iraq as the Kurds began to secure their grip on the region and needed to eliminate any Assyrian and Turkoman future claims to lands or the demand for administration rights. This they figured possible by weakening the Assyrians through the process of divide and rule. Bishop Jammo's, then Father Jammo, justification for using the name was that the ancient Chaldeans, as he claims, were the last native political power that ruled Mesopotamia! Furthermore, the two bishops sent letters dated December 3, 2002 to President Bush and the State Dept. confirming this separatist path they have decided to follow.

If anyone were genuine in his/her belief why would he/she need to work for years in complete secrecy with the Census Bureau? A genuine person does not need to work in hiding; a genuine person comes out in the open and argues his/her concerns and offers solutions. In **Matthew 7:15-16** we read: *"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"*

This is not the time for division and the creation of new artificial nations among the one helpless and weak; this is the time for genuine concern for standing together to face these dangerous times. This stand, however, must be built on solid foundation in order to stand the test of times.

The Compromise; Constructive or Destruction

A tiny group of individuals are using the fear tactic and that the Chaldean political movement and the separate Chaldean nation drive are gaining support. This is nothing but a hoax. We know today that after bishop Sarhad Jammo's speech "The Chaldean Renaissance" in Detroit early in January 2003, a private meeting including the bishop and some 20 notables, mainly of Detroit, took place. In that meeting the bishop got the support of only three (3) individuals members of the so-called Chaldean National Congress for his ideas: Joseph Kassab, Ghassan Hanna and Hanna Qalabat. The other Seventeen (17) did not show any support for this movement as the bishop was overwhelmed by the negative response to his speech and plans. I believe that the majority of the Chaldean community is against this separate movement because all of us believe strongly that we are ONE Assyrian [(A)suraye] nation, separated only because of cosmetic differences due to church denominational disputes and because of foreign pressures and interference and due to struggle between certain clergy for church leadership.

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Others introduce compromises like the "Assyro-chaldean", because, as they put it, it was used in the League of Nations' deliberations in 1920. This term "Assyro-chaldean" is foreign to Assyrians: the French authorities re-introduced it at the time while relying on previous French Catholic monks who used the compound term around the turn of the 20th century. These same people rely on terms used by few native Catholic clergy decades back that have used the mythical term "Chaldo-Athur". Until about hundred years ago there was NEVER anything named Chaldo-Athur in history. Why invent something that has no historical foundation? Furthermore, history lessons have taught us that compound titles do not work. Raman Michael answers certain folks defending the compound title on the Assyrian Forum and states: "*Compound names of one nation cannot endure the test of time because they inherently reinforce the artificial differences between communities of the same nation.*" Oh how elegantly was that put?

I need to stress here what Jesus Christ said to the disciples and the multitudes: "*...Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it*" (**Matthew 7:24-27**).

We all desire to reunite our people. The question is why do certain individuals want to build the foundation of this wished reunited nation on the mythical Chaldean sand when we have all the means to rebuild it on a 4000 years Assyrian rock?