 Reading time: 7 min.

From time to time, Divine Providence would reveal the future before the very eyes of Don Bosco, thus revealing the progress the Salesians would make in future times in the vast field of missionary work. Again in 1885, a revealing dream informed him of God's design for a remote future. Don Bosco told of this dream and commented on it to the assembled Chapter on the evening of July 2nd. Father Lemoyne hastened to write down what he heard:

It seemed that I stood before a high mountain. At the summit, a magnificently radiant angel who lit up the remotest corners of the horizon stood. A giant crowd of unknown people had gathered all around the mountain.
The angel held a sword that blazed like a flame in his right hand, and he pointed out the surrounding countryside to me with his left. He said, "*Angelus Arphaxad vocat vos as proelianda bella Domini et ad congregandos populos in horrea Domini* [The Angel of Arphaxad summons you to wage the battles of the Lord and to gather all peoples into His granaries.]" He did not utter these words in a commanding voice, as he had done on other occasions, but instead as if he were making a proposal.
A wonderful crowd of angels, whose names I did not know or cannot remember, surrounded him. Among them, I saw Louis Colle, who was surrounded by a crowd of younger people. He was teaching how to sing the praises of God, which he himself was singing.
A great number of people lived all around the mountain and on its slopes. They were talking among themselves, but I did not know their language and could not understand them. I only understood what the angel was saying. I cannot describe what I saw. There are things that you can see and understand, and yet they cannot be explained. At the same time, I saw isolated things all simultaneously, and these changed the scene that was before me to the point that it now looked like the plains of Mesopotamia.
Even the mountain on which the Angel of Arphaxad stood assumed a myriad of different characteristics at every moment, until the people living on it looked like mere drifting shadows.
Throughout this pilgrimage and in the face of this mountain, I felt as if I were being elevated above the clouds and that an infinite void surrounded me. Who could find words to describe that height, the spaciousness, the light, the radiance, or the vision before me? One could delight in it, but not describe it.
In this and other scenes, there were many people who accompanied and

encouraged me. They also encouraged the Salesians not to stop along the road. Among those who eagerly urged me onward were our dear Louis Colle and a band of angels who echoed the canticles of the youths gathered around Louis.

Then I thought I was in the heart of Africa in an immense desert. Written on the ground in gigantic, transparent letters was one word: Negroes. Here stood the Angel of Cam, who said, "*Cessabit maledictum* [the curse will stop] and a balmy salve and the blessing of their labor shall descend upon His sorely-tired children and honey shall heal the bites of the serpents. Thereafter, all the sins of the children of Cam will be covered." All of these people were naked.

Finally, I thought I was in Australia. Here, too, there was an angel, but he had no name. He shepherded and marched, urging the people to march toward the south. Australia was not a continent, but a number of islands grouped together, whose inhabitants varied in temperament and appearance. There was a big crowd of children

living there who tried to come toward us, but could not because of the distance and the waters that separated them from us.

Nevertheless, they held out their hands towards Don Bosco and the Salesians, saying, "Come and help us! Why do you not fulfill what your fathers have began?" Many held back, but others made every possible effort to push their way through wild animals to reach the Salesians, who were unknown to me, and they began to sing "*Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini* [blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord]." A little distance away, I could see groups of many islands, but could not distinguish any details. I felt that all this indicated that Divine Providence was offering part of this evangelical field to the Salesians, but for some future period. Their efforts will bear fruit, for the hand of God will be constantly outstretched over them, unless they become unworthy of His graces.

If only I could preserve some fifty of the Salesians we have with us now! They would be able to see the magnificent destiny Divine Providence has reserved for us within a five-hundred-year span from now, provided we remain steadfast.

Within 150 or 200 years, the Salesians would be the masters of the whole world. We shall always be well liked, even by malevolent people because our particular activity is one that arouses benevolence in everybody, good and bad alike. There may be a few hotheads who would prefer to see us destroyed, but these will only be isolated incidents and will not find any support from others.

It all depends on whether the Salesians will resist the desire for comforts and will thereby shirk their work. Even if we were only to maintain what we have already founded, we would have a long-standing guarantee, provided we do not become victimized by the vice of gluttony.

The Salesian Society will prosper in a material sense if we uphold and spread the Bulletin and the institution of the Sons of Mary Help of Christians. These we will uphold and spread. Many of these dear children are so good! The institution of the Sons of Mary will provide us with valiant confreres, who are steadfast in their vocation.

These are the three things that Don Bosco saw most distinctly, recalled best, and reported on them that first time. But as he told Father John Baptist Lemoyne later on, he had seen a good deal more. He had seen all the countries where the Salesians would be summoned as time went on, ut he saw them fleetingly, completing a rapid journey that started out from a given locality and returned to it again. He said it all happened just in a flash. Nevertheless, as he covered this immense distance in the blink of an eye, he had seen whole regions, inhabitants, seas, rivers, islands, customs and a thousand other things all interwoven. The scenes changed so rapidly that it was impossible to describe them all. But there was barely a distinct recollection left in his mind of this phenomenally fantastic itinerary. He was, therefore, not able to give any detailed account of it.
It had seemed to him that there were many people with him who encouraged him and the Salesians not to stop along the way. Among those who encouraged him to move forward with the greatest fervor was Louis Colle, about whom he wrote to his father on August 10th: “Our friend Louis took me on a tour through the heart of Africa, ‘*the land of Cam*,’ he called it, and through Arphaxad; that is, China. If Our Lord shall so dispose that we meet, we shall have a lot to talk about.”

The following is the description of Don Bosco’ s itinerary when he traveled through a circular area in the southern part of the globe, as Father Lemoyne declared he had heard it from his very lips:

He set out from Santiago, Chile. He saw Buenos Aires, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Cape of Good Hope, Madagascar, the Persian Gulf, the Banks of the Caspian Sea, Sennaar, Mount Ararat, Senegal, Ceylon, Hong Kong, Macao at the mouth of the infinitely vast sea and facing the gigantic mountain from which one could see China. Then, the Chinese Empire, Australia, and the Diego Ramirez Islands. He ended his trip by returning to Santiago, Chile, once again. In his lightning-like travels, Don Bosco distinguished islands, territories and nations scattered all over the different degrees of latitude and many areas that were barely inhabited or altogether unknown. He could not recall the exact names of many of the places he had glimpsed at in his dream. Macao, for example, was called “Meaco” in his narration.

He talked of some of the more southern latitudes visited in America with Captain Bove; but the officer had not rounded the Magellan's Cape for want of funds, and was obliged to turn back on his voyage for various reasons, and so he was unable to clarify matters for Don Bosco.

We would say something about the enigmatic Angel of Arphaxad.
Don Bosco had no idea of who he was prior to his dream, but later talked about it rather frequently. He instructed the cleric Festa to look for the word in Biblical dictionaries, history and geography books and periodicals, so that he might know with what people of the earth the presumptive person was connected. At last, he believed he had found the key to the mystery in the first volume of Rohrbacher, who states that the Chinese are descendants of Arphaxad.
His name appears in the tenth chapter of the Book of Genesis in the genealogy of Noah's sons, who divided the world amongst themselves after the flood. In Verse 22, we find: "*Filii Sem Aelam et Assur Arphaxad et Lud Gether et Mes* [The sons of Sem are: Elam, Addur, Aphaxad, Lud and Aram]." Here, as in other portions of the vast ethnographical panorama, the individual names indicate the ancestors of different races, and reference is made to the regions they inhabited. Thus, Aelam means "*highland*," and refers to Elam, which became a province of Persia with Susiana.
Assur was the ancestral father of the Assyrians. Exegetes do not agree about the population to which reference is made in the third instance.
Some, such as Vigouroux Gust to quote one of the better known names), held that *Arphaxad* should be connected with Mesopotamia. At any rate, since he is listed among the ancestors of Asiatic peoples immediately after two other people who occupied the most extreme eastern border of the land described in the Mosaic document, one may well believe that Arphaxad indicated a nation connected with the area of those preceding it, and which later spread still further east. It would not be improbable, therefore, to see that the Angel of Arphaxad stands for the Angel of China.
Don Bosco fixed his attention on China, and said he believed it would not be long before the Salesians would be summoned there. In fact, once he added, "If I had twenty missionaries to send to China, I am sure that they would be given a triumphant welcome, despite the persecutions." So, from that time on, he always took a keen interest in all that concerned the Celestial Empire.
He frequently thought about this dream and was always glad to talk about it, considering it as a confirmation of his previous dreams about the missions.

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