

DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA

FALL REGIONAL MEETINGS
October 16 to December 8, 1973

A G E N D A

1. DIOCESE

- a. Budget (10 year review)
- b. Stewardship
- c. Plan for payment of clergy stipends from Diocese
- d. Programs
- e. Unity
- f. Diocesan staff
- g. Plan for Archdiocese
- h. Endowment Fund

2. PARISHES

- a. Assessments
- b. Membership listings and uniform reporting
- c. Programs

3. MISCELLANEOUS

11 OCTOBER 1973

SECOND INTERIM REPORT - STIPENDS COMMITTEE

There are two basic issues involved in stipends for clergymen how much will they be compensated for their services and how will the compensation be effected.

The "how much" is perhaps more critical to our church life than the average laymen realize. Most clergymen, because of the very fact they are clergymen, are very reluctant to discuss this issue, yet there obviously is considerable frustration on the part of many clergymen who compare their financial lot to others in their own community and to fellow clergymen and especially to fellow professionals, i.e. persons with equal schooling, training and experience. Consider a clergyman who has completed a bachelor's degree requirement, attended a seminary for three, four, five years and perhaps has gone on to a master's degree and is getting a salary of \$9,000. Although the example presented is a hypothetical one, this set of conditions can very possibly exist in one of our churches. A lawyer upon leaving law school today can expect to get a salary of from \$15,000 to \$18,000 immediately. Certainly many arguments can be presented, e.g. there are some priests who do not have extensive schooling, etc. but such arguments cannot be used to rationalize a low scale of remuneration for all clergymen. There are various factors to be considered in arriving at an adequate stipend for a pastor, some of these are:

- a. The size of the congregation.
- b. The prevailing median income of the community.
- c. The education and experience of the pastor.
- d. The family of the pastor.
- e. Whether or not the church owns a home which can be used by the pastor.
- f. The cost of owning and operating a car.
- g. The cost of retirement insurance, hospitalization insurance, etc.
- h. And finally, how is an adequate stipend for each clergyman determined.

Our questionnaire earlier this year directed to parish councils resulted in some very interesting information and comments. The effort expanded by each of the respondents is appreciated by the Committee and these responses will be very carefully weighed when we submit our final report.

Let us assume that the present system of compensation is continued with each parish and clergyman arriving at a stipend figure independently. It seems as a very minimum there should be a comprehensive guide, approved by the Primate, which should be used in the negotiation. This guide would be used by the parish councils in a thorough discussion of the stipend with their pastor at the beginning of his pastorate as well as at periodic intervals.

The second basic issue is how will the stipend be paid. Should the Diocesan office pay the stipends from the operating funds of the Diocese with a commensurate increase in parish dues? Should parishes pay a base salary with additional stipends for experience, education, etc., paid from a special Diocesan fund? Should Diocesan assistance be considered only for parishes whose resources are limited?

In order for the committee to arrive at its conclusion so that firm recommendations can be made, it would be helpful if the regional Diocesan meetings consider this vital matter and develop comments and recommendations for the committee.

It is suggested that the following elements of the problem be discussed:

- a. To what scale should our clergymen's stipends be adjusted - teachers salaries in the community, the median income of the parish or community (the median income can be determined for an area from the Bureau of the Census) to the size of the parish, etc.
- b. How should we pay for the use of a car - should a mileage allowance be paid (so many cents a mile, etc.)? Is it the obligation of a parish to furnish a car and to pay for its operation and upkeep? Should there be a separate scale for operation and maintenance if the clergyman owns his own car and uses it for church work?
- c. Should there be a Diocesan fund to either supplement a base salary paid by the parish or to pay the complete stipend and how will this fund be maintained?
- d. What are the housing obligations of a parish towards their pastor? What difference should there be in this allowance if the pastor has a family?
- e. What part do and should personal gifts from parishioners to pastors play in the overall determination of parish obligations toward the pastor?
- f. Do we want firmer guidelines that will be applied throughout our Diocese?

Comments and recommendations may either be given to the Diocesan representative at the regional meeting or mailed to:

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