

OPENING ADDRESS

I feel doubly happy for being with you today; firstly, because it is a pleasant feeling to be surrounded by dynamic youth; its vitality is contagious; and secondly, because in your midst I sense a brighter future, in this country, for our church, our community, our people and our traditions. I am happy and proud, as acting head of the Armenian Church in the United States, to greet you and welcome you.

The Armenian Church Youth Organization of America has been the embodiment of the growth, the development and the increasing maturity of the Armenian Youth in America.

The Armenian community in this country is in dire need of rejuvenation. The A.C.Y.O.A. is the source for that new blood and energy.

Your heritage, as the sons and daughters of the Armenian people, has a distinct and unique place in the family of nations. It is not chauvinism to cherish all our qualities of past greatness. It is indeed honesty and a service to know these qualities and to translate them into the lives we live today in the great and free land as this is.

Yours is a Church whose torchbearers, time and again, have shown their devotion to the great founder of the Christian brotherhood.

Yours is a Church which has borne its trials resolutely in times of stress, and which has known how to weather violence and survive.

And only in the knowledge and understanding of your selfless duty to your Church can you honestly dedicate yourselves to its perpetuation. You are all young and full of vitality, that is with you but once - and youthful vitality, with dedication and vision can, if properly used, perform no less than miracles.

Unity of purpose and unselfish devotion to its ideals are in themselves fundamental to any collective achievement.

As members of the A.C.Y.O.A., you are united to better serve your God, your Church, your people and finally yourselves.

Our Church is almost as old as Christianity itself. And God's Church is eternal. Seven years in the life of a Church Organization constitutes only a beginning. Therefore, the glorious work begun by your Organization should be forward-looking, dedicated to sublime principles, devoted to the glory of God and the prosperity of His Church and people.

You have not failed us in the faith that we have had in you, and have given us every assurance, too, that we will not be

wrong in our expectations of your future.

We live in an age that is fraught with trials and tribulations. The understanding and the willingness to put one's faith above one's self and to honestly devote one's self to the service of the Lord and His people should be the paramount motivation of our lives.

Faith in the Lord and an honest willingness to be guided by selfless good are the concomitant requirements for harmonious and fruitful fellowship and spiritual and moral satisfaction.

Your Assembly, motivated and inspired by these principles, is destined to be of significance.

I have no doubt that your deliberations will be forthright, wholesome and fruitful- all for the glory of God and the prosperity of our Church and community.

I welcome you all and invoke the blessings of the Holy Spirit upon you and upon your God pleasing work.