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news:

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BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE EVALUATES ACYOA YOUTH PROGRAMS

"The primary purpose of the Blue Ribbon Committee is to strengthen the ACYOA organization by evaluating and clarifying its goals," explains Douglas Tashjian, the ACYOA Executive Secretary.

"We need to augment the organization's strengths, minimize its weaknesses, and give it the resources it needs to meet its objectives," he continues. "We must integrate current trends and professional techniques in youth ministry into the existing ACYOA structure and its programs."

Originally formed in 1968 by His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church of America, the Blue Ribbon Committee was re-established this past May. Out of concern for the future of the Church, the Primate and the Diocesan Council appointed as Chairmen the Reverend Father Karekin Kasparian and Edward Onanian of Washington, D.C., requesting that they reorganize the Committee to evaluate and strengthen the development of youth and young adult programs in the Church. The Committee is comprised of Church leaders and ACYOA executives from both past and present.

Since May, the Committee has convened three times, and meets again at Diocesan headquarters on December 19. In addition to Doug Tashjian, the members of the Committee are: the Rev. Fr. Mardiros Chevian; the Rev. Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian; Diocesan Executive Director, Syraun Palvetzian; ACYOA Junior Director, Nancy Basmajian; Shake Ajamian, Randy Daghly, Carol Der Boghosian, Daniel Dorian, Zarvin Kasparian, Scott Najarian, Arda Nazerian, Dr. Dennis Papazian, Greg Saraydarian, Stephen Sarkisian, Dean Shahinian and George Tashjian.

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The Committee brainstormed and analyzed the ACYOA's existing structure and programs at its first two meetings. On October 3, the most recent meeting, definitive reports and statistical studies were presented.

Dr. Dennis Papazian, Professor of Armenian and Russian History at the University of Michigan, and Mr. George Tashjian, secondary level educator from Rhode Island and past Executive Secretary of the ACYOA, presented a report on the 23 to 35 age group in the Armenian Church.

Doug Tashjian and Steven Sarkisian presented a report on the 18 to 22 age group. This included a statistical study of the seventy-five questions used as a test sample at the 1987 ACYOA General Assembly and Sports Weekend in Detroit, Michigan. The Committee plans to distribute this questionnaire to a much larger number of Armenian youth and young adults in the near future.

Nancy Basmajian presented a report focusing on the 13 to 17 youth age group of the Diocese. A report from Dean Shahinian, dealt with the attitudes of the Armenian Church Community towards Armenian youth and young adults.

The four reports stimulated much discussion among Committee members. At the December 19 meeting, the Committee will formulate specific goals, objectives, plans and suggestions for implementation.

"It's gratifying to see the priority being given to the different youth groups by the Primate, the Diocesan Council and all of the members of the Blue Ribbon Committee," commented Nancy Basmajian. "The Church wants to be secure in our youth's ability to lead, now and in the future. Hopefully, with the proper programs, and inspiration from other dedicated ACYOA members and community leaders, the enthusiasm will spread. It is very important for young people to grow within the Church. Our job is to keep them involved and fulfilled through their active participation in many vital programs."

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