

DIOCESE BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE  
Subcommittee on Attitudes  
October 3, 1987

Discussion Outline  
Dean V. Shahinian

I. Current Attitudes

- A. What attitudes and behaviors make young adults want to attend group activities?
1. Feeling welcome and accepted unconditionally
  2. Being among happy people
  3. Doing something one believes is worthwhile, interesting, or enjoyable
  4. Being able to participate individually
  5. Joining with others with similar purposes
- B. What attitudes and behaviors make young adults want not to attend group activities?
1. Being ignored
  2. Being told to work
  3. Being criticized
  4. Associating with critical or hostile people
  5. Being gossiped about
  6. Engaging in meaningless or dull activities

II. Young adult attitudes towards each other

- A. Identify attitudes of existing ACYOA members towards newcomers.
1. What is a newcomer likely to experience when attending a meeting/social function/service?
  2. During the meeting how will he be treated by the officers? other members?
  3. After the meeting, during the week(s) between meetings, how will he be treated by the officers? other members?
- B. Identify attitudes of existing ACYOA members towards other members who are not their friends or in their clique during and after the meeting (e.g., jealousy, avoidance, effort to make friendship, etc.)?

III. Attitudes of adult parishoners towards young adults

- A. How do they respond to the ACYOA (help, discourage their children from participating, etc.)?
- B. In what ways do the adults serve young adults or meet their needs (e.g., social, job, wisdom, etc. needs)?

- C. In what ways do the adults ask or demand that the young adults serve the community or them?
  - D. How do the adults respond young adult suggestions on the community (e.g., accept, reject, feel threatened, feel jealous, welcome suggestions)?
- IV. How can attitudes become more positive towards young adults?
- A. Describe the process of attitude change
  - B. Attitudes of existing ACYOA members towards each other
  - C. Attitudes of ACYOA members towards other young adults
  - D. Attitudes of older adults towards young adults
  - E. Attitudes of parents towards the Armenian community
- V. Who are the primary agents of attitude change? What could they do to promote more positive attitudes?
- A. Priest
  - B. Primate
  - C. Parents
  - D. Sunday School teachers
  - E. Parish council members

## ACYOA WORKING PAPER

by Dennis R. Papazian

The purpose of this working paper is to concretize specific ideas and recommendations for use by the Blue Ribbon Committee in reaching a decision.

### 1. Age.

It is recommended that the young adult group be targeted for young people from age 18 - 25.

### 2. Goals.

It is recommended that the young adult group have the following goals:

2.1 Fellowship

2.2 Witness

2.3 Service

2.4 Worship

2.5 Education

**Fellowship** means being together, learning to know one another, playing together (sports), love (divine and human), courtship and marriage. People who play and work together stay together.

**Witness** means learning the faith through study and practice and by showing our faith through our way of life and by specific acts of love, help, concern, sharing, and teaching.

**Service** means working for the church and church organizations, social service organizations, and the church youth movement.

**Worship** means participation in church services, church attendance, and unique forms and patterns of liturgical practice developed for the young.

**Education** means learning the faith, the Bible, the liturgical services, the origin, aims and goals of Christianity, and the unique way that the Armenian church serves our people and the international Christian community.

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3. Means.

- 3.1 Internships at the Diocese.
- 3.2 Internships in the Parishes, including office work, social work, teaching, and liturgical work.
- 3.3 Internships in the Sunday Schools.
- 3.4 Working with younger children.
- 3.5 Working at St. Nersess Seminary.
- 3.6 Local meeting and activities.
- 3.7 National meeting and activities.
- 3.8 International meetings and activities, including conferences and trips to Armenia.
- 3.9 Study groups--personal faith and development, liturgy, doctrine, history, language, and church structure.
- 3.10 Sports activities at the local and regional level

4. Structure.

A national organization headed by a Central Council consisting of chapter chairmen and an equal number of members elected at large, presided over by its own chairman under the presidency of the Primate.

Local chapters in the parishes and in universities under the presidency of the local priest, aided by representatives of the parish council, the church school board, or the young married group members.

A national executive director to help implement programs decided by the Primate, the Central Council or the National Assembly.

A National Assembly which meets annually and which has worship services, business meetings, study and panel groups, minor sports activities, art exhibits, performances, and social activities--field trips, dinners and dances, picnics, etc.

Governed by By-laws which should be drawn up by the Blue Ribbon Committee.

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5. College Chapters.

Attempts should be made to have college chapters, related if at all possible to a local parish. These chapters would have all of the above purposes and activities, but would concentrate on education and fellowship in order to bring their Armenian and church tradition to the college level and in order to keep them together as a group.

6. Implementation.

Dealing with life is not a static thing; we learn best by doing, profiting from both our successes and failures. Thus the Blue Ribbon Committee should immediately look at the ACYOA constitution with an eye towards making the specific structure of the organization fit the program we have in mind. We should also persuade the Diocesan Council to find the funds to hire an executive director very soon.

Then we should supervise, under the guidance of the Primate, the implementation of the programs, learning from our experience as we go along, and changing programs as our experience dictates. After about a year of trial and error, and hopefully successes, we should make our final report to the Diocesan Assembly.

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Finally, we must keep in mind that we are part of a continuum from the past into the present and on to the future. The different age brackets should be brought together as much as possible into common work. The "youth" should not always be a generation apart, but a part of the total family of the church.

We must remember that the best and most permanent learning is through doing something under the supervision of a more advanced person. This system formerly was an apprenticeship, but now we use the form of internships.

Young people should be integrated into the whole fabric of the church's life, but with more supervision and attention paid to them.

Attempts should be made to bring our parish priests into the movement by having young people attend the clergy conferences and having priest involved in the Annual Assembly.

Representative of the youth should be invited to parish council meetings, the diocesan assemblies, Sunday School board meetings and Armenian school meetings.

August 8, 1987

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE  
NOVEMBER 1968 - JANUARY 1969

SUMMARY OF ISSUES AND OBSERVATIONS

- (1) ACYOA is neither what it used to be nor what it should be.
- (2) ACYOA Central Council: Should it be abolished? or Should it be modified?
- (3) Hire Diocesan Youth Director.
- (4) ACYOA in NJ should be on statewide basis. Only 10-25 members attend local meetings which is not attractive to participants.
- (5) Organization should be operated on a regional basis and on college campuses.
- (6) Central Council members are not communicating with chapters. Either too young, under-trained, or too busy with schoolwork.
- (7) ACYOA Seniors do have time for extra-curricular activities. If they don't use this time for the ACYOA, then their interest has not been aroused.
- (8) ASA appeals to 22-30+ age group. ACYOA needs to attract this group. Young adults will support the organization that offers the best activities. ACYOA lacks the appeal it had in the 1930's and 1940's.
- (9) ACYOA Jrs. should be under the supervision of the Parish Priest and the Parish Council. Ages up to 18 should be supervised on the parish level.
- (10) Separate juniors and seniors. Juniors on parish level, Seniors on regional level.
- (11) Consensus: Need for structural change.
- (12) Youth programs should be parallel to the school system by giving young people increasing freedom and responsibility as they grow older.
- (13) The nature of an organization is determined by its programs.
- (14) ACYOA: Should the name be kept or changed? Should the juniors and seniors go under the same name?
- (15) Abolishing the existing organization in order to form a new one will not be meaningful. It was agreed that getting to the heart of the problem...the drastic reduction in senior members... by finding corrective solutions and putting them into effect would produce the desired results.

## SUMMARY OF SOLUTIONS

- (1) The following comprise the needs the ACYOA should fulfill:
  - a. Religious Training
  - b. Social Fellowship
  - c. Athletic Activities
  - d. Intellectual Development
  - e. Service
- (2) National Youth Department: Executive Secretary and Staff  
Professional Youth Director
- (3) Elimination of Central Council
- (4) Creation of Regions based on parish locations. Creation of National Advisory Board (national programs) and Regional Advisory Boards (local programs and projects)
- (5) Junior groups would be under the supervision of a parish committee comprised of the following: Parish Priest  
Parish Council Member  
Women's Guild Member  
Men's Club Member  
Trained Youth Director
- (6) Parishes should hire a youth director, either full time, part time, or shared with two or at the most, three parishes.

## ROLE OF THE CLERGY

- (1) Creation of "Idea Kits" for instructional programs or presentations.
- (2) Hire professional creative director.
- (3) Creation of Audio-Visual Library for lectures and presentations.

## PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

- (1) Publish instructional books for use during church services.
- (2) Organize retreats for development of religious instruction.
- (3) Develop leadership training programs with emphasis on producing future parish council members. Establish Junior Parish Councils.
- (4) Develop performing arts training programs.