

**HOLY TRINITY ARMENIAN CHURCH OF NORTH PHILADELPHIA**

**MEETING OF ALL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES**

**DATE: November 2, 1951**

**TIME: 9:15 p.m.**

All the Executive Committee members of organizations of the Holy Trinity Armenian Church were invited to a special meeting Friday evening, November 2, 1951 in the Church Hall.

The meeting was called to order at 9:15 p.m. by the Chairman of the Parish Council, Dr. Hrant Marcarian, and Torkom Hyre Soorp presided.

Dr. Marcarian spoke with regard to the sudden manner in which Torkom Hyre Soorp was appointed Vicar of the Bishop for a period of one year. The Parish Council had not been consulted in this respect, and it was felt there was just cause for grievance.

This meeting was called by Hyre Soorp and only the Executive Committee members were invited because it was impossible to invite the entire Church membership on such short notice. Those present had been invited so they could be enlightened on all that had transpired.

Hyre Soorp was then invited to speak, and he remarked that this was the first time he had all the Executive Committee members present, and he had a few remarks to make with regard to Executive Committee members. He would then discuss his new appointment.

**DUTIES OF MEMBERS OF EXECUTIVE COMMITTEES**

Hyre Soorp explained that each member of the Executive Committee has specific duties, and each should be aware of his duties. It must be known the Chairman is the most important member of the Committee. All members should be briefed as to parliamentary procedure and their respective duties should be clarified.

Hyre Soorp mentioned the various duties of each member and also stated the correct manner in which minutes should be recorded.

**HYRE SOORP'S NEW APPOINTMENT**

Hyre Soorp explained that actually what happened was of a necessity very sudden. At a Diocesan Central Council meeting October 19, 1951 Arachnord Surpazan Hyre asked for a year's leave of absence effective November 1. He had certain things to do and it was imperative he attend to them without any delay. Therefore, he suggested that his Vicar be decided at that meeting so the one selected could assume the responsibility immediately.

The Diocesan Central Council, after due consideration, requested at least a week's time in which to think the problem over, and it was decided to hold a subsequent meeting October 26, 1951.

On October 26, the Diocesan Central Council again met for a special meeting and they agreed to the year's leave of absence for Arachnord Surpazan Hyre. It was then their responsibility to immediately elect someone to take Surpazan's place during the year. The one elected would have to stay at the Prelacy, and accordingly their election was held.

#### AFFECT ON OUR CHURCH - OBJECTIONS

Hyre Soorp stated that many questions and objections had arisen from our people on the validity of the move, and to each of the questions and objections there was an answer.

##### 1. ARACHNORD SURPAZAN HYRE

His Grace, Bishop Tiran, our Arachnord Surpazan Hyre has nothing to do with the move directly insofar as the one elected.

The Bishop merely makes his recommendations and submits names of various Priests who could qualify, and who would be approved by the Bishop if elected.

The Diocesan Central Council then by secret ballot elects the Vicar.

##### 2. SHNORK HYRE SOORP

The inquiries regarding Shnork Hyre Soorp also were discussed. He was selected by the Bishop inasmuch as he was near the Prelacy and such a move is in order. However, he is the Priest of the Newark Parish, the Visiting Priest, and the editor of the Hyastanyatz Yegeghetsee. Had he been elected, three vacancies would have resulted.

##### 3. NOTIFICATION TO OUR PARISH

The urgency of the situation made it impossible to inform our Parish any sooner. As explained, the meeting was held October 26 and the letter to Hyre Soorp was dated October 31, 1951.

##### 4. IS THE DIOCESAN CENTRAL COUNCIL EMPOWERED WITH THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE SUCH A MOVE, AND HAS THE PARISH A RIGHT TO PROTEST.

Hyre Soorp reminded us that each Church has a Parish Priest, Parish Council and other Committees. They have definite authority regarding activity in their own Parish. Their work directly affects their own local Parish, and their activities are confined to their Parish. Those problems which arise regarding

affairs, or activities may be duly settled within the Parish. However, we must remember there are certain things the Arachnordaran must sanction. As an example, the Parish Council election must be approved by the Arachnordaran.

The Arachnord and the Diocesan Central Council are empowered to settle, decide or bring any issue to a conclusion which affects all our Churches as a whole. The electing of a Vicar is an example, and the administration and editorship of the Hyasadanyatz Yegeghetsee is another example.

When the Diocesan Central Council has a problem, it weighs the matter carefully before rendering a decision. If the decision affects a Parish, the Parish is notified of the decision. The decision as sent is to be executed and not questioned. We must bear in mind they are carefully rendered, and we are committing an error in questioning the power or authority of the Diocesan Central Council.

The decision has been made, we have been notified, and the command must be executed.

5. DOES HYRE SOORP WANT TO GO OR DOESN'T HE WANT TO GO

Hyre Soorp went on to explain that at this period he thought he was actually starting with his work here. It never occurred to him that something like this would happen. He does not look on his new appointment as an honor because it is for a period of one year, and because it is only one year, it will be filled with hardship for him. A year is too little time to get adjusted to a job and hence time will be a handicap. He did not ask for the position, nor did he refuse it. The Central Council was faced with a problem, and he was obliged to help and not to hinder. He felt it was his duty to carry out what had been decided. He stated again there would be many hardships for him and confronting him. True, he likes changes, however, he never expected it to happen like this. He has a duty and he must perform it; if for no other reason than to set an example.

6. WHAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE PARISH SHOULD BE

If the people are grieved over the manner of the decision and how it was given, then our people are not justified.

Hyre Soorp feels that as our Priest, if after he leaves, we withdraw actively, then our Church is not organized. If the people stop coming because he is not here, then they do not like their Church. The Priest must not be

loved for his person, but for the work that he does. The work always remains, the Priest changes. Priests may die, but the Church continues. There are always hardships. The work here in our Parish is tremendous, and it must be done and we must continue even stronger than before. Of course the Parish Priest is important, however, the actual work is done by the parishioners. If we really love our Church and if we feel that when he leaves, he takes with him some of our strength, then we must increase in our strength and thereby fill the gap.

Hyre Soorp went on to say that it is so very important for us to first love our Church and to work together in harmony. Personal grievances must be cast aside and differences must be forgotten. We must have a feeling of love for each other and our work will then be an expression of that love.

Hyre Soorp feels there is much he should have done and did not do. He believes that if we truly love our Church and if we do not confuse the issues, and we let our true love come forth, then the work to be done will be easy.

The solution to our problem, if there is a problem, is entirely up to our people, to each of us. He is sure that whoever comes, the newcomer will do things he neglected to do and he will do things differently. Each person is different. Even in a change of this nature, there can be a good result. If we collectively do our work well, then the one who comes will do his best.

Hyre Soorp went on to say there isn't any Priest who being with us will not want to do his best. It is up to us to see what the newcomer wants and help him to do as he wants to do. He will do things which should have been done and which have not been done.

Our duty and responsibility is to accept this command and not to give way to our personal feelings. We must continue with our work, ever stronger, and ever firmer. We must help our new Priest.

After this explanation by Hyre Soorp, Mr. Bedros Semerjian spoke stating that he was satisfied with the explanation and is convinced we must abide by it. It was unfortunate that it had to be our Parish Priest who was elected, however, we must not question the Central Council.

Mr. Maloumian wanted to know who would be coming to assume the duties of the Parish Priest and whether Torkom Hyre Soorp would return after the year.

It was then suggested that Hyre Soorp read the letters which had been received and they would perhaps answer Mr. Maloumian's questions.

One letter was from Bishop Tiran dated October 31 addressed to Hyre Soorp which informed him officially of the decision and that he was to assume the responsibility immediately for a period of one year. The other letter was from Bishop Tiran addressed to Dr. Marcarian informing him that Papken Hyre Soorp would temporarily be assigned to our Church.

It was pointed out that Hyre Soorp would be free after the year and did not have a definite commitment with any other Parish.

A group of people voluntarily went to New York to consult with Arachnord Surpazan Hyre. The following just returned from New York at this time and submitted a verbal report of their consultation with Bishop Tiran:

Mr. Delemek Basmajian  
Mrs. Zarmen Alexanian  
Mrs. Yeghis DerOhanessian

Mrs. Kupelian  
Mrs. Elsie Parnagian

They impressed Surpazan Hyre that our Hyre Soorp was physically unable to assume the position of Vicar. They asked that the matter be given further consideration with a view to making a change in the decision. Surpazan Hyre was not aware of Hyre Soorp's ill health, and said such a problem was entirely up to Torkom Hyre Soorp and that it would be discussed further Saturday, November 3. Hyre Soorp was scheduled to go to New York and have a meeting with Surpazan.

Surpazan stated that in any event the matter is entirely in Hyre Soorp's hands, and outcome will be decided after the meeting on Saturday.

Many people then spoke with regard to what we can do officially in the form of a protest, but the futility of it was pointed out in view of what Hyre Soorp had said.

The problem could not be discussed any further and it was decided to adjourn the meeting and await the outcome of Hyre Soorp's meeting with Surpazan Hyre. If a change is made, the Diocesan Central Council will have to meet again and time is very limited, however, at this point there seemed nothing further to do.

Meeting adjourned at 11:15 p.m.

Minutes approved,

Torkom Vartabed Mancoogian

Respectfully submitted,

*Acabe Boornazian*  
Acabe Boornazian