

THE TIME IS NOW!

Today we hear much ... we read much ... about the church. Some say the church is outmoded - out of date - and soon be a reflection on the pages of history.

Others say the church is good... and necessary ... but it's not relevant. "The church must change!" "It must change or it may die." The key word in their vocabulary is change! The world is changing, and therefore the church, too, must change.

There there are those Christians who are afraid of change. Change is threatening. Change is a bad word. Their thinking, attitudes and life style are firmly entrenched in the past. They have developed security in doing things in a certain way.

I believe there are only two options open to the Armenian Church left today: one is to struggle to retain all it can of traditional forms of worship, doctrines and customs and resist forces that demand change. Then see new generation abandon, where the church may die as gracefully as possible. The other option is to accept the challenge of change, and channel it - seek to build together (Clergy/Laypersons) a church which will be a true expression of The Church that God intended, yet uniquely suited to our 20th century world. We, the members of St. Leon are called to meet that challenge!

We the members of St. Leon what can we do to bring much needed changes so that be responsive to spiritual and cultural needs of her members. I believe we must evaluate ourselves whether the church is fulfilling its mission. I know the word evaluation is a threatening word, but it is a biblical word. St. Paul exhorted the Corinthians to "prove" themselves (II Co. 13:5): to put themselves to the test, examine themselves, scrutinize themselves. He was constantly anxious to get reports from various sources, as to what was happening in all the churches, regarding their problems, their needs, their concerns, and their progress.

Several things should be noted regarding the process of evaluation.

First, it should be constant. We must constantly search the Word of God to see if we have clearly focused on biblical principles. We must constantly determine current needs and refocus our objectives and goals to meet those needs. We must constantly look for resources to help us be a New Testament church in the twentieth century. And finally we must evaluate, evaluate, evaluate!

Second, evaluation should be carried out by the whole body of Christ. It is only as all are involved in this process that all will want to change. This is why it is important to help each member of the body to know what is and what is not a New Testament principle; what is and is not a tradition that must be kept; what is and what is not cultural. When every member of the body of Christ is involved in the process, it also provides assurance that we are arriving at a correct perspective on our problems. It is dangerous for one individual or even Parish

Council to evaluate alone.

After serving St. Leon more than two years, two characteristics of our parish are clear to me. (1) St. Leon is deeply a spiritual church. That is, the people are interested to fulfill their Christian Calling through worship, sharing and serving. (2) St. Leon has the God-given potential to be a dynamic church, a church that our forefathers dreamed. In order to be a growing church, we must determine current needs in our own congregation, formulate objectives and goals and use every legitimate resource to be a New Church.

I believe firmly that this Assembly to appoint a committee of the 80's in order to start the process of evaluation. Re-ordering of the church's life in response to the needs of the people and then underlying of what the Head of the Body, Jesus Christ, wanted us to be. Furthermore, I believe the committee of the 80's, help the church formulate immediate and long-range objectives and goals.

It is my joy and privilege to serve you and I hope in the years ahead we can grow together for the Glory of God.

February 12, 1978

Addressed to:
Annual Parish Assembly
Rev. Patee Metjian