

July 15, 1994

His Eminence
Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America
President of the Diocesan Council
630 Second Avenue
New York, New York 10016-4885

Your Eminence:

Following the Diocesan Assembly, held recently in Houston, Texas, several delegates voiced mutual concerns about the events that took place at the Assembly and the direction in which the Diocese seems to be heading. They agreed that a meeting of the delegates was necessary in order to review and critique what transpired at that Diocesan Assembly.

On May 25, 1994, at the invitation of the Holy Trinity and St. James Parish delegates, a meeting took place at the Holy Trinity Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Invitations were extended to the Pastors, Parish Council Chairmen and Diocesan Delegates of the following local parishes: Holy Trinity, Cambridge; St. James, Watertown; Church of Our Saviour, Worcester; Sts. Vartanantz, Chelmsford; Holy Cross, Lawrence; St. Gregory the Illuminator, Haverhill; and Sts. Sahag and Mesrob, Providence. A list of the delegates in attendance follows at the end of this letter.

Each of the attendees at the meeting was given an opportunity to express his/her particular concerns regarding the recent Assembly and the administration of the Diocese. After lengthy discussion, it was the unanimous wish of the group to share the following five areas of concern with you and the Diocesan Council:

1. Accountability/administration;
2. The Department of Youth Ministry;
3. Fiscal responsibility;
4. Assembly Format; and
5. The New England Region

1. ACCOUNTABILITY/ADMINISTRATION

In the area of Administration, there seems to be an overall lack of accountability by staff personnel, including some Diocesan department heads: for example, unauthorized increases in spending, unauthorized additions/deletions of programs and an apparent lack of control relating to staffing levels. The Diocesan Council Report as presented was an inadequate and abbreviated series of meeting notes often lacking comments as to the decisions made. The Diocesan Council admitted that they did not review the report prior to printing. This demonstrates to the delegates an attitude of indifference and perhaps arrogance on the part of the Diocesan Council. The By-laws stipulate that the Diocesan Council submit annually a detailed report of its activities and financial status to the Diocesan Assembly. The wording is clear. Indifference and attitude have no place at the Assembly.

2. DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH MINISTRY

The Department of Youth Ministry seems to lack proper guidance and direction. It appears internal problems prevail and it lacks leadership and cooperation with the ACYOA, the organization with which it should be most closely allied. As you are aware, the Diocesan Assembly approved a 1% assessment to fund the DYM at full staff. However, the Diocesan Council in its attempt to reduce the overall Diocesan Budget, made staffing cuts in this department compounding the situation.

The very existence of this department is now questioned, since some parishes report that they receive no substantial benefit therefrom. Furthermore, some delegates feel the assessment should be abolished and the responsibilities of the DYM merged with another department within the Diocese.

3. FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY

In the area of Finances, the absence of fiscal responsibility is apparent. A steady increase in expenditures with no commensurate source of income, has led to consistent budget over-runs, a growing deficit and no definitive plans to address the problems. The added burden of the 1% DYM assessment on the parishes is, in reality, an added tax to support the general Diocesan expenses.

4. ASSEMBLY FORMAT

A Panel Format for future assemblies was adopted by the 91st Diocesan Assembly in Chicago. However, one year later, the Diocesan Council chose to ignore the approved mandates under the guise of budgetary restraints and did not include the panels in the agenda for the 92nd Assembly. A letter from the St. James Parish, Watertown, called your attention to the oversight and subsequently the Panel Format was reinstated in the agenda at the Assembly. However, much to the disappointment of the delegates, the Panel Format utilized in Houston did not comply with the previously approved proposal. First, there was no panel addressing finances and administration. Second, the format which was to have allowed an in depth question/answer dialogue by the delegates was replaced by a staff-prepared informational monologue. Third, there were no reports from the panels back to the Diocesan Assembly.

We strongly urge that the 93rd Diocesan Assembly in 1995 adhere in all respects to the format approved at the 91st Diocesan Assembly.

5. NEW ENGLAND REGION

A proposal to dissolve the New England Region in its present structure was presented at the Assembly in Houston. Before the discussion was completed, an emotional response was made by the Chairman of the New England Regional Council distorting certain facts and accusing two parishes of plotting to abolish the New England Region. The proposal presented stated that after 10 years, no substantive or beneficial results have been derived from the Region to help the parishes. Furthermore, a lack of a quorum at some Regional Meetings indicates that Parish support for a regional structure is waning.

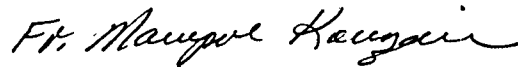
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At the Houston Assembly, under new business, a proposal was submitted whereby, the present regional structure would be replaced by a modified version focusing on a few specific programs rather than the all encompassing and cumbersome structure as originally intended under Regionalization. Needless to say, the emotionalism of the moment took precedent over the proposal to abolish the regional structure along with the new recommended version, and both of these were tabled.

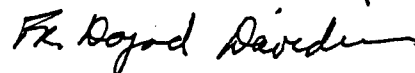
In summary, Your Eminence, we feel these concerns represent not only the views of the delegates participating in this letter but others as well. We anticipate that you and the Diocesan Council will accept this letter in its constructive spirit and join us in giving these concerns the serious attention they merit.

If we in the Parishes can be of any assistance, please feel free to call on us.

Respectfully yours,



FR. MAMPRE KOUZOUIAN and



FR. DAJAD DAVIDIAN

DELEGATES IN ATTENDANCE MAY 25, 1994:

Fr. Mampre Kouzouian, Pastor,
Holy Trinity Cambridge
Fr. Dajad Davidian, Pastor,
St. James, Watertown
John Amboian, Delegate
St. Vartanantz, Chelmsford
William Aznavourian, Delegate
St. Sahag & Mesrob, Providence
Sara Bejoian, Delegate
St. James, Watertown
Karen Dederyan, Delegate
St. James, Watertown
Daniel Dorian, Delegate
Holy Trinity, Cambridge
Crosby Goshgarian, Delegate
St. James, Watertown

Charles Guleserian, Delegate
St. James, Watertown
George Haroutunian, Delegate
Holy Trinity Cambridge
Aram Hintlian, Delegate
Holy Trinity, Cambridge
James Kalustian, Delegate
Holy Trinity, Cambridge
Sahag Sahagian, Delegate
Holy Cross, Lawrence
Aetna Tashjian, Delegate
Holy Trinity, Cambridge
Michael Yapchaian, Delegate
St. James, Watertown