

## MINUTES OF ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Sunday, February 8, 1981

The Annual Parish Assembly of St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church of Washington, D. C. convened in the sanctuary at 12:45 p.m. following a light luncheon directly after worship services. The meeting was called to order by Dr. Edward Onanian, Parish Council Chairman, who asked our Pastor, Father Vertanes Kalayjian, to offer the opening prayer. The roll call was then read by Parish Council Secretary George Derderian, and, out of 164 dues-paying members, 72 were present, thus constituting a quorum.

Col. George Juskalian and Mrs. Oghda O'Gulian were elected to serve as Assembly Tivan chairman and secretary respectively, and they proceeded to the chair to carry out their duties.

The first order of business was the Minutes of the 1980 Assembly, which had been sent to the parishioners January 25th as part of a package of reports accompanying the invitation to the annual meeting. There being no questions or comments, the minutes were accepted as submitted.

### REPORTS

Pastor's Report. Father Kalayjian reviewed in Armenian his written report, which was submitted in both languages. He remarked that 1980 was a successful year and noted a change in the complexion of worshippers -- many new faces although the number of members remained substantially unchanged. He referred to his absence from St. Mary's last summer when he served as the Director of Camp Nubar and his desire to return there for the 1981 season, subject to the approval of the Parish. He appealed to the parents to take a more active interest in enrolling their children in the schools for the continued viability of our religious and ethnic heritage. With regard to the addition to the Church, he expressed his thanks to those participants in the construction and those who have pledged their financial support. He mentioned two outstanding examples of support: one, a totally anonymous donor of \$2,500; and the other, a young student, carrying a very heavy scholastic workload with limited funds from a part-time job, who approached a Parish Council member for the purpose of becoming a dues-paying member and making a weekly pledge of financial support for the Church.

Parish Council Report. Dr. Onanian referred to the written report and made a few observations, namely, the composition of the Parish Council -- nine members versus seven members -- which will be considered later in the meeting; and the Church finances. He explained that the Church operated with a deficit of \$6,000 in 1980 due in part to the lower proceeds from the Bazaar, no increase in dues-paying members, and escalating operating expenses.

He reported that we were able to meet the deficit from contingency funds, but he stated that we would be in serious straits should the deficit be repeated in 1981. There being no questions, the Chairman declared both the Pastor's and the Parish Council reports accepted as given.

Diocesan Delegate Report. Mr. Abraham Bodurian had nothing further to add to his comprehensive written report. Dr. Onanian, the second delegate, noted that the 1980 assessment figure in the Diocesan budget item should have been \$6,000 as it appeared in the Treasurer's Report. Prefacing his remarks about the Diocesan budget picture, he mentioned one bright note -- that the Cathedral mortgage will be paid off in three years. Dr. Onanian, who is now a member of the Diocesan Budget Committee, then announced that the Diocesan budget is "skyrocketing" and it is anticipated that the Parish assessments will be increased. If the higher assessments are too much for the Parishes to meet, he said that consideration would have to be given to curtailing the CRE and Language Lab programs. Der Hayr voiced his strong feeling that any reductions should be applied to projects other than the critical CRE and Language Labs, which he felt should remain untouched. He appealed to the Chairman that this be conveyed to the Diocesan Council, and Dr. Onanian stated that Der Hayr's views would be made known at the appropriate time in the Diocesan Budget Committee's deliberations.

Women's Guild Report. Mrs. Avedikian offered to answer any questions with regard to the written report in the absence of the Chairlady. She mentioned the effort of the Women's Guild members to conduct future meetings in Armenian in deference to their new Chairlady, Mrs. Hnazant Tahmazian. Her remarks were well received by the Assembly, and the report was accepted as submitted.

Church School Report. Yeretzgin reemphasized one statement in the written report to the effect that there was a need for more students. The report was accepted as submitted.

Armenian School Report. Dr. V. Adrian Parsegian reviewed the written report. He stated that, happily, the school's finances - thanks to community support - were in excellent condition, and funds had been set aside toward furnishings and equipment in the new classrooms. He then expressed his disappointment that, although the school was prepared to teach a larger number, there were only 25 students currently in attendance. Mr. Vartkess Balian stated that a 25-student enrollment is sad indeed, and he suggested that a committee be formed to contact parents in order to determine why their children are not being sent to school and to solve any problems that may exist in this regard. His remarks were loudly applauded. Several other opinions were expressed at this point, some of them being: the possibility of holding both schools on Sundays in view of the overworking of a small group who spend all day Saturday in Armenian school and thus give up Sunday School; the duplicating and mailing of the curriculum to those students who cannot attend Saturday sessions as another solution; the forming of car pools to get more children to school; the shortening of school

hours, which caused Dr. Parsegian to state that a minimum of three hours is a must for the school to function effectively; calling a special meeting to consider the amalgamation of both schools to which Mrs. Jean Jamgochian, one of the teachers, responded that her experience showed that, although Saturdays may be inconvenient, the results were well worth the trouble. A motion was then made by Mrs. Isabelle Goshgarian and duly seconded that "The Parish Council establish a committee to determine what the problems are regarding attendance to the Armenian School and to make recommendations for a resolution." One opinion expressed during the discussion was that the problem was not Saturdays or Sundays but that learning Armenian was a low priority in the children's lives. Another pertinent comment by Mrs. Rita Bush was that the school had canvassed the community as to a convenient time, and they had approved the status quo of the present arrangement. An amendment to the motion was offered by George Derderian that "the Sunday School be included in the motion," which was seconded. Both the amendment to the motion and the motion were carried. The report of the Armenian School was accepted.

Choir Report. Dr. Hratch Semerjian repeated the need for a choir director as shown in the report. Dr. Onanian responded that the two-year effort to find a choir director has proved unsuccessful thus far but the search is continuing.

ACYOA, Jr. Report. Accepted as submitted.

ACYOA, Sr. Report. Accepted as submitted.

Hye Club Report. Mr. Mike Tashjian thanked all who supported the Hye Club's activities, and the written report was accepted.

Ararat Avak Society. Mrs. Elizabeth Kevorkian reported that the Society, which was formed in 1977, aims to bring together senior citizens for a monthly luncheon. They accept donations, which provide funds to operate the program. Their treasury balance was \$678, but \$200 was given to the Church in June, and their current balance is \$478. She mentioned that they sponsored a visit to the Harlequin Theater, subsidizing one half the cost, as another activity of the Society. She thanked Yeretzgin and Father Kalayjian in particular for their efforts in providing entertainment to the group.

## BUILDING PROJECT

1. Building Fund Committee Report. The written report was reviewed by Dr. Onanian who touched upon the parish house expenses and the continuing effort to raise funds for our new building addition. He brought the Building Fund report up to date by stating that the figures show that \$45,000 has been spent for the construction to date, and the total of pledges receivable and cash available amount to \$135,000. Dr. Onanian stated it was desirable to pay off the project without a loan and that it would take an additional \$100,000 over and above the current pledges plus the cash on hand to do so. He informed those present

that, if success is achieved in raising the necessary funds, chances are good that everything -- the downstairs hall, kitchen and school -- could be paid off by the end of 1983. He referred to the invitation from the Primate and the Parish Council to the dinner to be held February 14th and the hope to raise additional funds through two-year pledges up to 1983 at the dinner. He mentioned a planned telephone-a-thon as another means of raising funds. There were no questions, and the report was accepted.

2. Construction Committee Report. Mr. Jerry Hekimian, the Chairman of the Committee, reported that the builders are now up to the roof, and they hope to have the roof on by the end of March. He informed the Assembly that Mr. Sarkis Satian has taken on the responsibility of Manager of Construction, at no cost to the Church, and he has been in daily attendance at the site supervising the work, scheduling, and the myriad of other activities related to the construction. He expressed his appreciation to Mr. Satian, and those present enthusiastically applauded Mr. Satian's very meaningful contribution. In response to a query by Der Hayr, Mr. Hekimian stated that the second level floor would indeed be safe enough for the Primate to perform the blessing ceremony upon his visit to the Parish the following week.

Armenian Adult School Report. Dr. John Gueriguian reviewed the English-written report on the School, which concentrated on both Armenian language and culture, and outlined the course of study for the 32 students presently attending. He stated that there is a considerable demand for their packets of study, which he and Dr. Parsegian have prepared. One packet was in fact sent to Paris and packets are being readied for distribution within the United States. The fee is \$50 per student/per semester via correspondence course and \$35 with an instructor in a classroom. No questions were posed; however, George Derderian made a suggestion, which was met with a hearty round of applause, to commend Dr. Gueriguian and Dr. Parsegian for their splendid program.

Election of Parish Council, Auditing Committee, Nominating Committee and Diocesan Delegates.

Prior to the elections, reference was made to the resolution of the motion accepted last year on the composition of the Parish Council -- seven members instead of nine. Dr. Onanian stated that, although seven is an ideal number, due to the lack of volunteers to carry out some of their chores, a nine-member Parish Council would be a more workable group. Accordingly, he made a motion that the Parish Council be comprised of nine members. For purposes of continuity, those first four who received the highest votes would serve two years, and those two who received the lowest votes would serve one year. The motion was seconded and carried.

Mrs. Margot Hekimian then submitted the list of candidates and announced that two names had been inadvertently omitted from the ballot for Parish Council

(Sarkis Satian and George Berberian). George Berberian's name was subsequently withdrawn at his request. The ballot for Auditing Committee also omitted some candidates' names (Raymond Babigan, Vartkes Broussalian and Albert Manian). Subsequently, Gary Avedikian withdrew his name. With regard to the Nominating Committee, one name, George Semerjian, was added from the floor to the slate. The ballot for the Diocesan Delegates was increased by three nominations from the floor, namely, Dr. Ohannes Sahakyan, George Derderian and Vartkess Balian. Mr. Bodurian withdrew his name, and the nominations were then closed. The results of the subsequent balloting are shown below.

Parish Council (6)

Norig Asbed	43
Dr. Harry Baker	52
Nora Gibson	41
Berj Koukeyan	62
Edward Onanian	61
Sarkis Satian	60
Mike Tashjian	65

Auditing Committee (3)

Raymond Babigan	35
Vartkes Broussalian	40
John Kavookian	33
Albert Manian	35
Vaugh Sayian	45

(Mr. Manian yielded to Mr. Babigan)

Nominating Committee (3)

Margot Hekimian	42
Elizabeth Kayaian	16
Siran Levonian	18
Virginia Sahakyan	41
George Semerjian	35
Grace Shahinian	19
Hripsime Zenopian	18

Diocesan Delegates (2)

Vartkess Balian	21
George Derderian	18
Casey Kazanjian	20
Charles Kumkumian	18
Edward Onanian	18
Dr. Ohannes Sahakyan	24

OLD BUSINESS. None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Membership Dues. Dr. Onanian reviewed the weekly pledge status of the parishioners as they relate to our operating expenses and stated that we fall short of our Church's needs. He stated that our annual budget is now over \$50,000, and we have had to rely on our Bazaar proceeds to underwrite part of our operating costs. He moved that the resolution, which was submitted in the Supplemental Report, be accepted. The resolution reads:

"Resolved: (a) that effective with the 1981 membership year, the annual dues for the voting membership shall be \$100 per member. (b) That parishioners currently contributing in excess of \$100 annually be urged to increase their pledge by a minimum of \$1 per week."

The motion was seconded, and approximately ten members expressed their views during the ensuing discussion. The resolution was carried by a vote of 44 ayes and 3 nays.

2. Col. George Juskalian submitted a resolution regarding a study made by Father Mesrob Semerjian. The resolution, which appears in the Supplemental Report, was carried as submitted. It states

"Whereas there continues to be a shortage of priests within the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America - a situation which has existed for many years and results in several parishes being without permanent pastors for months and even years at a time, and

"Whereas Father Mesrob Semerjian, in a recent study which appeared in the November 15, 1980 issue of the Armenian Mirror-Spectator and in the November 20, 1980 issue of the Armenian Reporter, proposes a solution whereby former celibate priests who withdrew from the priesthood in order to marry might be reinstated on an individual case-by-case basis;

"Be it resolved that the parishioners of St. Mary's Armenian Church of Washington, D. C. support the findings and recommendation of Father Mesrob Semerjian and request that the Primate give these findings and recommendation his urgent and favorable consideration."

Treasurer's Report. Jack Arzoomanian, the Treasurer, offered to answer any questions regarding the written report. In response to a question on visiting clergy expenses, he explained that Der Hayr did not receive any salary while he was at Camp Nubar last year and the funds were used instead for the visiting clergy. The report was accepted as submitted.

Auditing Committee Report. Mrs. Anahid Semerjian confirmed the written report of the Auditing Committee.

Proposed Budget. With regard to the proposed Expenses in the budget, Dr. Onanian explained that the Stipend figures are determined by the Diocese and reviewed the other expense items on a line-by-line basis. He gave a detailed explanation on the last two separate items -- church window (pigeon problem) and ceiling fan (exhaust system). Discussion followed on the latter two items, and a motion was made by Sarkis Satian, seconded and carried, that these items be considered separately from the rest of the budget. The balance of the budget of \$53,500 was accepted as proposed.

The church window and ceiling fan items were then brought up. Mr. Satian made a motion that "Mr. Vartkess Balian make a study of the possibility of renovating the existing sanctuary and downstairs hall and prepare a comprehensive renovating plan by the end of June." The motion was seconded.

Following a discussion period during which Mr. Balian, who accepted the responsibility, estimated the study would take approximately three to four months, the date was changed to September 1st. The motion was carried unanimously.

The Memorandum of Understanding with Der Hayr was reviewed. Dr. Onanian discussed Der Hayr's request for a leave of absence to again direct Camp Nubar this summer. During the discussion, Mrs. Jean Jamgochian stated her views on Der Hayr's work at Camp Nubar as she witnessed it and expressed her sincere belief that the sacrifice of the Parish in giving up Der Hayr for the summer was well worth the positive impact it had on the youth at the camp. A motion to accept the Memorandum of Understanding was subsequently carried.


The election results were then announced to the Assembly (see Elections).


There being no other business, Col. Juskalian called upon Father Kalayjian for his closing prayer. Der Hayr, prior to the blessing, thanked the Women's Guild for the luncheon and the ACYOA Juniors for their babysitting chores during the meeting. He also expressed the appreciation of the Parish to Mr. Bodurian and Dr. Onanian for the fine service they had rendered during their incumbency as Diocesan delegates; and voiced a similar expression of thanks to Dr. Charles Kumkumian and George Derderian for their valuable contributions to the Parish during their service as Parish Council members.

The meeting then adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian  
President

  
George Juskalian  
Chairman

  
Oghda S. O'Gulian  
Secretary