

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Sunday, February 7, 1982

The Annual Parish Assembly of St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church of Washington, D. C. convened in the Sanctuary at 12:45 p.m. The meeting was called to order by Parish Council Chairman, Dr. Edward Onanian, who asked our Pastor, Father Vertanes Kalayjian, to offer the opening prayer. The roll call of voting members was then read by the Parish Council Secretary, Tom Magarian. Out of 143 dues-paying members, 55 were present, thus constituting a quorum.

Mr. Jerry Hekimian and Mrs. Oghda O'Gulian were then elected to serve as chairman and secretary, respectively, of the Assembly Tivan.

The first order of business was the Minutes of the 1981 Assembly, which had been mailed out to parishioners. As there were no questions, it was moved and seconded that they be accepted.

Dr. Onanian moved that Item 5 (Election of Parish Council, etc.) be moved ahead to follow Item 4A (Pastor and Parish Council Report). The motion was seconded and carried.

REPORTS.

Pastor's Report. Der Hayr prefaced his remarks by asking for a show of hands of those present who had opinions - positive or negative - on the proposals set forth at the end of his report, namely, The Endowment Fund, Canvassing, Cultural and Educational Committee, and Social Service Committee. There were eleven responses. He then elaborated on several items in his report, in particular Item E (Some Thoughts Along the Way), which he read in full with emphasis on Religious Practices and Programs, Social and Cultural Concerns, Our Priorities and Commitments, and Proposals. He stated that he wished, if time permitted, to go into detail on the latter subject when New Business was brought up on the agenda.

Mr. Casey Kazanjian stated that he shared Father Kalayjian's concern regarding the negative attitude of some of our parishioners in assuming responsibilities. He offered to meet with Der Hayr and others to make an in-depth study of the problem in an effort to remedy the situation. Several others voiced opinions regarding conditions that inhibit their serving, i.e., transportation problems, night driving, etc. There being no further discussion, the Pastor's report was accepted.

Parish Council Report. Dr. Onanian reviewed the report, mentioning the completion of the new wing and summarizing what remains to be done (renovation of the old social hall, the kitchen and, later, the Sanctuary; the unsuccessful search for a choir director; the Endowment Fund; the computerized mailing list; the financial picture of the Church. He stated that we incurred an operating deficit of \$1,200, part of which was an indirect cause of the new construction, for example, loss of revenue from the parking rentals for approximately ten months while construction was underway. He referred to the continuing escalating budget due to higher costs over which we have no control, such as, among other things, higher Diocesan dues.

In response to a query as to whether the lower number of dues-paying members this year was attributable to the higher dues assessment voted upon last year, Dr. Onanian stated that, although we presently have 143 members as compared to 167 last year, more people are contributing than in the previous year. He added that every consideration was given to those who were unable to meet the higher dues assessment, and no one was denied the status of a voting member for that reason.

Dr. Onanian expressed the necessity of a community-wide effort to encourage those who attend Church occasionally to assume greater financial responsibility. He stated that we cannot - and should not - rely on the bazaar proceeds for the day-to-day operations of the Church. In response to a question on the distribution of the bazaar proceeds, Dr. Onanian explained the formula used to disburse the bazaar income. The report was accepted.

Nominating Committee Report. Mrs. Margot Hekimian presented the slate for Parish Council (Jack Arzoomanian, Norig Asbed, Nora Gibson, Raffi Karahissar, Tom Magarian and Hratch Semerjian). Auditing Committee candidates were Casey Kazanjian, Leo Torokhanian and Jerry Hekimian. Candidates for the Nominating Committee were Rita Balian, Isabelle Goshgarian, Sirarpi Channessian and Valentine Stahl. One additional name - Vaughn Sayian - was added to the Parish Council ballot by nomination from the floor, and the nominations were then closed.

Diocesan Delegate Report. Mr. Vartkess Balian offered to answer any questions. There were none, and the report was accepted.

Women's Guild Report. Mrs. Queenie Avedikian, the Treasurer, represented the Women's Guild in the Chairlady's absence. There were no questions, and the report was accepted.

Church School Report. Yeretzgin Anahid addressed her remarks primarily to the parents of the children. She informed them that she had made a detailed comparison of our Sunday School curriculum and other activities with other Church schools and found that we compared favorably. The only problem, she said, was parental attitude. She announced that Dr. Charles Kumkumian has assumed the role of Superintendent.

Mr. Casey Kazanjian at this point made a suggestion that the Superintendent conduct a fire drill for the children in the new wing and that evacuation procedures (in case of fire) be posted in each of the classrooms. He also recommended that smoke and fire detectors be placed in several areas in the new wing. In that regard, he offered to underwrite the cost and installation of the detectors with the assistance of Jack Andonian, Jack Hananian and Vaughn Sayian. Mr. Andonian made a suggestion that the D. C. Fire Department be contacted to determine what facilities are needed to conform to the fire code. Dr. Onanian replied that we obtained a Certificate of Occupancy for the new wing following the Fire Marshall's inspection and verification that we had complied with the fire code. He said that fire extinguishers had been installed and that smoke detectors would also be installed as a part of the "finishing touches" part of the construction project.

Mrs. Anna Derderian then rose to remark on the dedication and outstanding work of Yeretzgin in the Sunday School. She commented that Yeretzgin has been an inspiration to the students, teachers and parents. Her words were enthusiastically endorsed by all present. The report was then accepted.

Armenian School Report. Dr. V. Adrian Parsegian referred to a few points in his report. He stated that there are more students this year, and he added that, although the school hours have been curtailed (the cultural program was sacrificed to the shorter hours), the present arrangement appears satisfactory to all. He mentioned the positive impact of the concerts by Armenian artists on the youth and expressed the hope that they will be continued by some group in the Church. The report was accepted.

Choir Report. Dr. Hratch Semerjian voiced his concern that some members have dropped out of the Choir and there is a real need for more members. Mrs. Avedikian, a veteran choir member, also made an appeal for more choristers. The report was accepted.

ACYOA Report. Susan Manian presented an oral report. It was accepted on condition that it be submitted in writing to accompany the ACYOA Financial Report.

Hye Club Report. Mike Tashjian offered to answer any questions regarding the report. Dr. Ohannes Sahakyan commented on the highly successful New Year/s Eve dinner/dance sponsored by the Club, and the enthusiastic applause reflected the views of many others. Mr. Tashjian responded to a query on the Soccer Club. Responding to another question, he outlined the purpose of the Club stating that members are available to assist young Armenians with their problems. In response to a question by Dr. Hratch Semerjian, Mr. Tashjian stated that the Hye Club would be happy to sponsor cultural events similar to those recommended by Dr. Parsegian. The report was duly accepted.

Ararat Avak Society. Mrs. Elizabeth Kevorkian reported that the group, averaging forty people) meets monthly for luncheon and a social afternoon. They have contributed \$500 to the Church (an increase of \$300 from last year) and \$372 remains in their treasury.

Building Fund Committee Report. Dr. Onanian reviewed the report and updated the figures up to February fifth. He stated that we have spent \$208,000 for construction since October 1980; there is a \$12,000 outstanding balance of bills and anticipated expenses (which includes some furnishings); and the ultimate cost of the new wing will be about \$220,000. He compared this figure to bids we had received in excess of \$300,000 and stated that we realized quite a savings by utilizing our Construction Management approach. We have \$26,000 on hand (including the \$12,000 referred to above), and expect to spend \$7,000 to cover mortgage payments and other expenses at the parish house. There remains then a balance of \$7,000 for debt retirement, leaving us with a net loan outstanding of \$17,000. He said that we have \$36,000 in pledges receivable. However, he estimated that we will need another \$50,000 over what we have to complete the construction downstairs (the renovation of the old social hall and the kitchen). Regarding a question on the collection of outstanding pledges, he responded that many of the 1979 pledges have been paid; some subsequent pledges have not been paid but the time period on these pledges has not lapsed. There are few delinquencies per se. The report was accepted.

Construction Committee Report. Jerry Hekimian stated that his report in a nutshell was "the building has been put up," and his remarks were met with a resounding round of applause. In a more serious vein, he stated that by working resourcesfully, we were able to erect the building for \$200,000 rather than the \$300,000 estimate which had been submitted initially; the building occupancy permits were all obtained prior to the dedication; and the responsibility for the finishing work on the building had been turned over to the Parish Council. He observed, however, that the work of the Construction Committee is not finished in that it must now follow through on the renovation of the kitchen and old social hall and the Sanctuary which remains its responsibility. Mr. Hekimian's oral report was accepted.

Election of Parish Council, Auditing Committee and Nominating Committee. Ballots were distributed by Mrs. Hekimian and George Semerjian who then collected them and retired to an adjoining room to count the votes that had been cast.

Treasurer's Report. Dr. Onanian had prepared the report due to the recent illness of our Treasurer. One item in the report, the \$700 Scholarship Fund, was clarified by Der Hayr's explanation that \$200 of the monies in the Fund should be referred to as the Simonian Annual Scholarship Fund. Mr. Hekimian referred to the bazaar figures in the report and stated that additional distributions would be made as the final net figure will be in excess of \$25,000. The report was then accepted.

OLD BUSINESS. None

NEW BUSINESS.

1. Col. George Juskalian submitted a resolution with regard to Miss Astrik Aznavorian, a long-time choir member and parishioner of St. Mary's, as follows:

"In recognition of a noble lifelong aspiration, and in appreciation for her many years of selfless service and devotion to the Armenian community in general and to the Armenian Church in particular, the parishioners of St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church of Washington, entreat His Eminence Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate of the Armenian Church of America, to honor one of their fellow parishioners, Miss Astrik Aznavorian, by conferring on her the office of Stolebearer (Ooragir)."

The motion was seconded. In the ensuing discussion, it was noted that a similar request had been made by the Parish Council three years ago and that the Primate did not wish to make a decision at that time. Dr. Semerjian, the Choir Director, offered an amendment to the motion to the effect that it be prefaced with a citation of historical precedents, which will be prepared by Miss Sirarpi Ohannessian, to insure a favorable reception by the Primate. The motion and the amendment thereto were unanimously carried.

2. Mr. Casey Kazanjian spoke of the recent assassination in Los Angeles of a member of the Turkish diplomatic corps by a young Armenian and upon its negative impact upon the Washington Armenian/Americans. He referred in particular to a recent article in the Baltimore (Maryland) Sun which mentioned that unidentified Washington Armenians had called the Washington Post and claimed credit for the killing. He expressed his reaction of total rejection of the dastardly act and of those persons who condoned such acts of terrorism, a feeling shared by all present, and he submitted the following resolution for consideration of those assembled:

"(1) Propose that the Parish Council of St. Mary's, through various channels and American/Armenian publications, disavow and disassociate this Church and its parishioners from the acts of terrorism and vengeance that are being committed against people of Turkish descent and representatives of the Turkish nation.

"(2) That our Diocesan Delegates be instructed to propose at the Diocesan Assembly that the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Church issue a strong public statement condemning the terrorist acts by persons of Armenian descent against the Turkish people and representatives of the Turkish Government."

A number of those present (35 parishioners remained at the time) expressed their abhorrence of the terrorist act committee in Los Angeles. It was the consensus of the group, however, that any action of this nature should be taken at the Diocesan level and not at the Parish level. It was also the consensus that the delegates to the upcoming Diocesan Assembly should bring up this matter at that time for an expression from that body. A motion was made, therefore, to table the motion, and it was carried by a vote of 17 ayes and 6 nays.

3. Der Hayr referred to the four proposals in his report and requested that the Parish Council, any parishioners the Council may call upon, and any volunteers meet to consider them. Miss Sirarpi Ohannessian offered to participate in any deliberations aimed at the stated objectives.

Auditing Committee Report. Mr. Vaughn Sayian reported that all the accounts were in order as reflected in their written statement. His report was accepted.

Proposed Budget. The proposed budget and the Memorandum of Understanding with the Pastor, which constitutes part of the budget, were accepted as submitted.

ELECTION RESULTS.

Parish Council (5)

Jack Arzoomanian	49
Norig Asbed	26
Nora Gibson	16
Raffi Karahissar	37
Tom Magarian	39
Vaughn Sayian	43
Hratch Semerjian	43

Auditing Committee (3)

Jerry Hekimian	49
Casey Kazanjian	49
Leo Torokhanian	49

Nominating Committee

Rita Balian	44
Isabelle Goshgarian	35
Sirarpi Ohannessian	49
Valentine Stahl	25

A motion was made and seconded to adjourn, whereupon Der Hayr offered the benediction. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian
President

Jerry Hekimian
Chairman

Oghda S. O'Gulian
Secretary