

## MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL PARISH ASSEMBLY

Sunday, February 5, 1984

The Annual Parish Assembly of St. Mary's Armenian Apostolic Church of Washington, D.C. was called to order by the Parish Council Chairman, Mike Tashjian, at 12:28 p.m. in the Sanctuary. Father Vertanes Kalayjian offered the opening prayer. The Parish Council Secretary, Raffi Karahisar, called the roll of voting members. Out of the 143 members eligible to vote, 54 were present, thereby constituting a quorum.

At the invitation of Mike Tashjian, the Nominating Committee Chairman, Abraham Bodurian submitted the names of the following candidates for the Assembly Tivan:

Chairman: Norig Asbed and Col. George Juskalian

Secretary: Valentine Stahl and Esther Kirkorian

In addition, Raffi Karahisar was nominated from the floor as secretary. The nominations were closed and Col. George Juskalian and Raffi Karahisar were elected chairman and secretary, respectively, through a secret ballot. Col. Juskalian thanked the Assembly for the honor bestowed upon him, and proceeded with the next item on the agenda, the minutes of the 1982 Assembly, which were approved as submitted. (For the election results see the attached sample ballot - Addendum #1)

### REPORTS

Pastor's Report: Der Hayr offered two additional items omitted inadvertently from his written report. See Addendum #2.

Under special acknowledgments, he thanked Yeretzgin Kalayjian for her loving patience and endurance, and Jerry Hekimian, for his dedication during the renovation work. Mrs. Bush suggested that these two missing items be published in the next issue of Shnorhali. In his comments beyond his report, Der Hayr deplored the lack of input from the parishioners and appealed for more feedback. Dr. Kumkumian stressed the importance of strong leadership and the need for new direction in getting the community involved and growing. Der Hayr's report was accepted as amended.

Parish Council Report: Mike Tashjian presented the highlights from his written report, thanking publicly the following individuals and groups:

- Der Hayr for his dedication and his leadership;
- The Parish Council members for their support;
- Jerry Hekimian, for the long hours he spent during the renovation;
- The Ladies, for their dedication and hard work during the Bazaar, despite the on-going construction;
- Raffi Karahisar, for chairing the two picnics;
- Berj Koukeyan, for the countless hours he spent on church maintenance;
- Gary Avedikian, for managing the Bookstore and overseeing the rental of the parking lot;
- Armenak Boyadjian, for the fine job he has done with the Choir as the Choir Director;
- Hratch Semerjian, for his role in furnishing the library and Patrick Garabedian for his donation of the Video Recorder;
- Ann Kavookian for handling the hall rentals;
- Alenoush Varoujanian and Alice Tashjian, for their role in reorganizing the A.C.Y.O.A. Junior group, with assistance from Souny Kodjanian.

Der Hayr made the point that two sections in the Annual Report titled "Young Adult Discussion Group on Christian Faith" and "St. Mary's Church Bookstore" should be considered as an addendum to the Pastor's and the Parish Council reports. With no additional comments, the Parish Council Report was accepted as rendered.

### Elections

At this point, the Assembly Chairman proposed to change the order of the agenda, moving up the following items:

Item 5 - Election of Parish Council, Auditing Committee and Nominating Committee members

Item 8 - Parish Council Treasurer's Report

Item 9 - Auditing Committee Report and Proposed Budget

Item 4J Building Project [a] Building Fund Committee and [b] Construction Committee.

and adding a new item, ACEF Report, after the Avak Society Report. As the proposal was accepted, the Chairman called upon the Nominating Committee Chairman Abraham Bodurian to proceed with the elections. The name of Andre Peltekian which appeared on the sample ballot was removed due to ineligibility and the nominations were closed. As the Nominating Committee withdrew to count the votes cast, Col. Juskalian thanked the Committee members for their diligent work in securing a broad slate of candidates, and proceeded with the agenda.

Treasurer's Report. Dr. Edward Onanian gave explanations for the various expenses and receipts, pointing out that the operating budget was essentially balanced for 1983. Responding to questions from the floor, he stated that [1] First class postage is used on membership notices to assure that they will be received on a timely basis. [2] A VCR was purchased during 1983 to be used for the Schools and other activities, from a donation made in December 1982. The report was accepted as rendered. Der Hary thanked Mr. Jack Kojabay Dilanian for granting us access to his Xerox machine, and noted that it had been used extensively on several projects.

Bazaar Committee Report. Dr. Edward Onanian reported a net return of \$23,865 for the 1983 Bazaar, down \$800 from the previous year, but a minor miracle considering the circumstances. The report was accepted as presented.

Auditing Committee Report: Blanche Manian, on behalf of the Auditing Committee, reported that the books of the Sunday School, Armenian School, Choir, Women's Guild, Building Fund and Parish Council had been audited and found to be in order. The Hye Club books were unavailable for auditing, but will be reviewed at a later date. The Committee recommended that a significant portion of the "unusually large cash balance" in the Armenian School Savings Account be made available for debt reduction and that efforts be made to control the escalating utility costs through conservation measures. Dr. Onanian and Hratch Semerjian offered the explanation that these sums of money in the Savings Account were raised a few

years ago through the active fund-raising efforts of the Armenian School Committee, for the purpose of purchasing books and furnishings for the School, and to provide a reserve against any short-falls in income. A motion was made by John Gueriguian who accepted an amendment suggested by Der Hayr, that the Parish Assembly recommend that the Armenian School Committee loan a part of the money in its savings account to the Parish Council and the Armenian School Committee. The motion and the Auditing Committee's report were accepted.

Proposed Budget. Dr. Edward Onanian went over the budget, pointing out that an expense side item for the Church utilities amounting to \$8,200 had inadvertently been omitted. He emphasized there was no fat in the budget, and the only room for expansion in receipts is in the pledges. However, he continued, even a 10% increase in pledged will still leave us short by \$8,000 from the targeted amount. Dr. Onanian discussed the Parish Council's proposal to establish two new committees, a Stewardship Committee to increase membership support, and a Ways and Means Committee to generate revenue. He pointed out, we should be able to get a minimum of 250 voting/supporting members, starting with the offspring of our active parishioners. Dr. John Gueriguian commented that once we bring in these new members we have to develop the projects to keep them involved. Dr. Onanian and Der Hayr responded that previous efforts to actively recruit volunteers for different projects, or children for the A.C.Y.O.A./Sunday School, carried out in the form of letters or questionnaires, had mostly fallen on deaf ears. Dr. Onanian pointed out that the current average membership contribution is around \$200, and that an additional \$1 a week from each member would bring us close to our target. Der Hayr commented that our membership dues are well below the average for the other denominations. Responding to a question about the anticipated increase in telephone rates due to the AT&T restructuring, Dr. Onanian stated that the Parish Council is looking into the matter of alternative long-distance services and buying our own equipment.

Memorandum of Understanding: Dr. Onanian briefly explained the contents of the Memorandum of Understanding between Der Hayr and the Parish Council, with regard to stipend, allowances and vacation. He brought to the Assembly's attention that Der Hayr will be allowed to take his vacation in view consecutive weeks if he so desires. Responding to questions from the floor, he stated that [1] Visiting priests would be considered for at least two of the weeks Der Hayr will be away and [2] Bishop Varajabedian has been approached in the past as a guest celebrant and hopefully he will be able to accept our invitation this summer. Der Hayr explained that it is Diocesan Policy not to have guest priests of other denominations without the presence of the local pastor. The motion was made and accepted to approve the budget and the Memorandum of Understanding as presented.

Election Results. At this point, the Nominating Committee Chairman, Abraham Bodurian announced the results of the elections. Those elected, in alphabetical order are as follows:

Parish Council

Jack (Kodjabay) Dilanian, Nishan Dulgerian, Krikor Ekrek, Vaughn Sayian, Mike Tashjian

Auditing Committee

Levon Garabedian, Blanche Manian, Dean Shahinian

Nominating Committee

Esther Krikorian, Siran Levonian, Grace Shahinian

For the complete results of the voting see addendum #1.

Dr. Edward Onanian requested that the ballots be retained and not discarded. It was noted that the complete results would be submitted to the Parish Council.

Building Committee Report

Dr. Onanian gave the Building Committee Report, on behalf of Committee Chairman Jerry Hekimian who was unable to attend. He went over the details of what has been done in the downstairs hall and in the sanctuary. He discussed the proposed plans to install air-conditioning in the sanctuary, and an A/C and heating unit for downstairs, for the additional sums of \$1000

and \$7000 respectively. He reported that the A/C ducts for the downstairs hall were already installed for \$6000 to avoid the cost of redoing the ceiling. He pointed out that with the new arrangement we will be able to heat upstairs and downstairs separately, and that further energy savings will be achieved through the use of a newly purchased 7-day timer-thermostat. He also announced that plans are being developed for the next phase of the renovation, which will involve the altar area. The Building Committee Report was accepted as presented.

Building Fund Committee Report, Building Fund Committee Financial Report

Dr. Onanian explained the highlights of the Building Fund Committee reports, pointing out that (1) The total cost of the renovation, including the proposed A/C and heating work, is estimated to be \$130,000; (2) We have borrowed \$50,000 to meet our obligations. He stated that the Parish Council has recommended that the Committee raise \$60,000 over the next two years [over and beyond bazaar proceeds, and other anticipated incomes]. Responding to a question about the total costs incurred since our property was purchased some 30 years ago and its current value, Dr. Onanian explained that getting yearly appraisals would be too costly, and it would be meaningless to keep score of the total cost of the buildings over the years. Der Hayr added that for tax purposes with the D.C. Government, the original building is assessed at around \$400,000, which figure has appeared in our yearly Diocesan Report. It was also pointed out that the members of the Parish Council are the officers of the Corporation, and this information is kept up-to-date with the D.C. Government. At this point a motion was made to accept the Committee's report and the proposed \$17,000 expenditure on the A/C and heating work. The motion carried.

Diocesan Delegates. The written report of the Diocesan delegates was accepted as rendered as there were no questions or comments from the floor.

Women's Guild. Mrs. Queenie Avedikian announced that another \$500 was donated by the Guild to the Building Fund, after the report was submitted. The report was accepted with a minor correction for the date of the 1983 Bazaar [changed from November to October]

Sunday School. The Sunday School report was accepted as presented.

Armenian School. Responding to questions from the floor, the treasurer of the Armenian School Raffi Karahisar explained that, [1] Financially, the Armenian School is barely breaking even, and it is dependent on the Women's Guild and other donations to meet its operating costs, such as teachers' stipends and school supplies. [2] There will be a concerted effort to collect tuition payments which are in arrears. Dr. Onanian commented that the yearly \$1000 donation from the Women's Guild to the Armenian School on the occasion of the Christmas Hantes was the result of an understanding reached between the Parish Council and the two organizations, to resolve scheduling problems that had occurred in the past. In response to another question, Der Hayr reported that the graduates of the Armenian School are currently enrolled in an Advanced Studies Program, and are not in a position to serve as teaching assistants in the School. The Armenian School Report was accepted as presented.

Choir. John Krikorian, the Choir Chairman, thanked his Executive Committee consisting of Queenie Avedikian and Clara Andonian, and his advisors, Jean Babashanian and Jack Andonian. He pointed out that St. Mary's will be hosting the Annual Choir Assembly this September [28-30] and the Choir will be needing the community's support. Seventy-five delegates [plus guests and family] are expected to attend the event. Mr. Armenak Boyajian, the Choir Director, thanked the community for its support, and discussed his future plans which include a larger choir to render the Komitas Badarak, and the training of the male choir members as Uraragirs. Socrates Boyajian commented about the opportunity we may have in breaking in one of the six new badaraks never performed publicly. Dr. Onanian mentioned that the Choir room renovation will be tied in to the Altar renovation. Col. Juskalian

thanked Armenak Boyajian for the new spirit and the high-degree of perfection he brought into the choir, and commended John Krikorian for his articulate presentation of the Choir Report which was accepted as rendered.

A.C.Y.O.A. Jrs. Alice Tashjian, on behalf of herself and Alenoush Varoujanian, thanked Der Hayr for his help and support. Der Hayr in turn thanked the A.C.Y.O.A. Jrs. and Souny Kodjanian for organizing the pre-meeting luncheon. The Assembly Chairman commended the group for their dedication.

HYE Club. On behalf of the Hye Club, Mike Tashjian gave a verbal report in lieu of a written one. He mentioned a few Hye Club activities which included a slide presentation, a dance at the beginning of the year, and the New Year's Eve dance which raised \$4,500, the most financially successful event so far, thus enabling the Hye Club to fulfill a \$10,000 pledge made to the Building Fund. He also reported that the Hye Club is still looking for a Chairman.

AVAK Society. There was no written report submitted by the Avak Society. Dr. Onanian reported the \$300 was donated by the Society to the Building Fund. Der Hayr in his brief remarks, commented about the monthly gatherings averaging 25 attendees, and thanked Mrs. Kumkumian, Mrs. Avedikian, Mrs. Gueriguian, Yeretzgin Kalayjian and Mrs. Kevorkian for their dedication.

Armenian Church Endowment Fund. Col George Juskalian submitted the ACEF report, acknowledging the name of past benefactors of the Fund, and urging more support from the parishioners. Dr. Onanian, responding to a question, explained that plans for a special board with plaques displaying the names of donors to the recent Building Fund Campaign had been temporarily delayed. Mrs. Perkins reported in this regard that we will be receiving the board soon from a friend of St. Mary's now residing in Massachusetts.

New Business. Under new business, Col. George Juskalian read two letters submitted by George Armen and Rita Bush, proposing to (1) discuss the issue of discouraging smoking in church build-



ings, (2) restrict smoking to specially designated areas only. During the discussion that ensued, Dr. Ohannes Sahakyan emphasized the health hazards caused by smoking. Der Hayr stressed the role of educating the people about the dangers of smoking through special signs. Col. George Juskalian proposed that the matter be referred to the Parish Council for consideration. The proposal was accepted. He then entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting, after thanking Der Hayr and the secretary for their assistance. A motion to adjourn was accepted. Der Hayr thanked the outgoing members of the Parish Council, Nominating and Auditing Committees, congratulated the newly elected members and offered the benediction before the meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian*

Fr. Vertanes Kalayjian  
President

*Col. George Juskalian*

Col. George Juskalian  
Chairman

*Raffi Karahisar*

Raffi Karahisar  
Secretary