

DIOCESAN BY-LAW AMENDMENT PROPOSED BY DEAN V. SHAHINIAN, ESQ.

In devotion to God and the early traditions of our Church, the Diocesan Delegates should be permitted to elect as Primate the most worthy candidate from among the clergy. We propose to amend the By-Laws to reinstate the Armenian tradition to permit all clergy to be elected as Primate. This amendment has many benefits:

* Reinstates the early Armenian Church practice, where married clergy served as Primates, and is consistent with Armenian Church canons. For example, St. Gregory the Illuminator, our first Catholicos, was married. His son Vertanes, who was also married, became a Catholicos, as did his son Hoosik. St. Gregory of Narek, the famous mystic, was the son of a bishop. Revered Patriarch Malachia Ormanian states that "Formerly the bishops were recruited from among the archpriests" and that prohibiting married priests from becoming bishops "is altogether unsupported by canonical weight or old-established authority." He concluded that "there is nothing, therefore, to prevent the present custom, prevalent though it be, from being superceded by the usages of the [early] Church, and access to high ecclesiastical dignities being thrown open to the married clergy." Patriarch Ormanian recommended this, "Such a course would be highly beneficial to the nation, for the married clergy would escape from a position of inferiority which is in no way justified." (Ormanian, The Church of Armenia, pp. 125-126, 1955 ed.)

* Faithful to the early Christian Church, in which married men served as bishops. For example, the apostle Paul directed that "a bishop must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, temperate, sensible, dignified, hospitable, an apt teacher, no drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, and no lover of money. He must manage his own household well, keeping his children submissive and respectful." (RSV, I Tim. 3:2-4)

* Provides the Diocese with a larger pool of talent from which to select the Primate, enabling the best person from all available clergy to be elected;

* Provides our married priests with a new potential for job advancement, a significant incentive;

* Recognizes the extensive education of kahanas and eliminates unwarranted discrimination against married priests;

* Preserves the tradition of educated primates and the right of unmarried clergymen to be elected;

Proposal St. Mary's Armenian Church proposes to amend By-Law #79, or its successor at the time of adoption, by deleting the word "high-ranking" and inserting the word "Kahanas" to read:

"All clergymen (Kahanas, Vartabeds and Bishops) who recognize and accept the supreme authority of His Holiness the Catholicos -- Patriarch of All Armenians and of the Supreme Spiritual Council may be candidates for the office of the Primate of the Diocese."

PROPOSAL No. 1

TITLE: YOUTH MINISTRY DEPARTMENT AND BUDGETARY ALLOCATION

PROBLEM: Parish members within the Diocese acknowledge serious problems exist regarding youth retention within our church. These problems include: diminished religious and social activities, a general decline of attendance and a lack of interest in church sponsored functions.

Serious efforts regarding youth programs in other religious organizations have had positive effects. Youth programs were strengthened with a modest financial investment resulting in increased overall youth and adult attendance and expansion of several church facilities to satisfy the growing needs of larger congregations. Similarly, with heightened spiritual awareness, the threat of estrangement for this vital element in these other churches was greatly reduced.

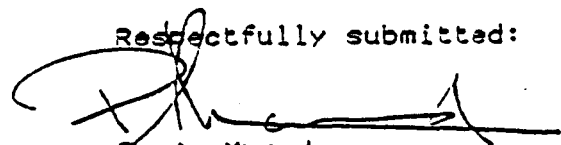
PROPOSAL: The Armenian Church in America is no longer an immigrant church where growth depends strictly upon the influx of Armenians from overseas; its own constituency can develop only through attracting youth, young adults and adults within the community. A renewed need for a serious commitment is required within the Diocese to resolve this issue regarding the lack of interest of future generations by creating programs designed to attract young people within each parish into the greater church's extended family. Furthermore, there is a need to create programs designed to counteract the negative aspects of life developed through peer pressure, drugs or other social problems that presently face our youth.

It is proposed that these programs include a spectrum of balanced religious, cultural, historical, social and athletic activities which will compliment existing church sponsored youth activities. These proposed programs would be structured in the context of an internal mission and college youth outreach activity for the following age groups: 13-18; 18-25, and above.

FUNDING APPROACH: To generate funds to support this youth ministry endeavor, it is suggested that the modest cost of these programs be funded at a level of no less than 1.0 percent of each Parish Annual Budget. These funds will be designated the Youth Ministry Department Funds (YMDF) and will be included in the annual dues paid to the Diocese.

The YMDF payments will be an addition to the Diocesan Youth Department Budget. In the event that the YMDF are not used by the Youth Department for the above cited purpose for a given fiscal year, the YMDF shall be placed in the Armenian Church Endowment Fund (ACEF) for the future support of the department. Once YMDF are placed in the ACEF, only income is to be used for Youth Department purposes and would be added to on-going Diocesan Youth Department budgets. If these funds are not used in any given year, the funds shall automatically revert to the ACEF.

Respectfully submitted:



P. A. Murad
Chairman
Youth Advisor Committee

Proposal No. 2

Amendment to Article 72 - proposed by Col. George Juskalian, member of the Board of Directors

Each member of the Diocesan Board of Trustees shall serve as many years as there are members of the Board and shall be limited to one term in office. Each year the term of office of one member shall terminate and his successor shall be elected from among three candidates whose names shall be submitted to the Diocesan Assembly by the remaining members of the Board and nominations may be made from the floor by majority vote. At the first election the term of office of each trustee shall be determined by the Diocesan Assembly.

RATIONALE:

As now constituted, the Board of Trustees is almost self-perpetuating, largely denying other equally deserving church members the opportunity of being accorded the honor of election to the Board.

The present term of ten years is more than twice as long as any other Diocesan level elective office and would appear to be a long enough time for a Board member to make his or her maximum contribution to the Board's deliberations and actions.

Proposal No. 3

Mr. Arut Koseian recommends that the Parish invest in commercial real estate in order to provide a regular stream of income as well as capital appreciation for the benefit and security of the church in the future.

He proposes that the Parish authorize the Parish Council to pledge up to 25% of the church assets to obtain financing for the purchase of commercial real estate, such as a strip shopping center, upon the recommendation of the Real Estate Committee and the voted approval of the Parish Council.