

MINUTES OF THE ST. MARY'S ARMENIAN CHURCH, WASHINGTON, D.C.  
PARISH ASSEMBLY -- SESSION I

On Saturday, February 6, 1993, at 7:00 PM, Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian convened the St. Mary's Armenian Church Annual Parish Assembly, Session I. Rev. Kalayjian led the parishioners in prayer and Mr. Stephen Ohanian, Chairman of the Parish Council, chaired the meeting. Mr. Ohanian asked Dean Shahinian, Esq., to moderate the meeting's discussions. Thirty parish members attended the meeting.

Mr. Shahinian announced that the Assembly would discuss important issues of parish life: (1) parish building renovations, (2) parish finances; (3) strengthening our families; and (4) youth and education. The discussions would have two goals: to identify the current parish situation, parish goals and ways to achieve the goals, as well as to build relationships among parishioners by discussing common concerns in a positive and relaxed manner.

Mr. Shahinian moderated the overall discussion, inviting senior members of the parish to chair the discussions on each topic. The discussions were congenial and fruitful.

Parish Building Renovation

Mr. Richard Hatchik, Parish Council Assistant Treasurer, and Mr. Vartkes Keshishian, Parish Council Vice Chairman, led the discussion on a proposed building renovations and the proposal to appropriate \$20,000 for architect's drawings. They explained the repairs needed for the existing building and showed the architects drawings for a major renovation, which could be completed in three phases. During the discussion, parishioners offered many suggestions for additions to the parish in connection with any renovation. Mrs. Rita J. Bush suggested adding a security system. Mr. Kajak Balekjian suggested expanding the library. Several parishioners suggested a ramp for the handicapped and adding a third floor over the new classrooms.

Mr. Hatchik moderated a discussion by parishioners on how the building would be changed, the cost of the proposal, alternatives such as selling this church and building a new church elsewhere, and enlarging the downstairs hall. Mr. Ohanian asked for a show of hands and the large majority supported the concept of the proposal, which would be discussed at Session II of the Assembly.

Proposal for Increased Women's Involvement

Ms. Sonia Missirian Crow asked to insert a new item on the agenda. Rev. Kalayjian permitted her to speak on another proposal to be presented at Session II of the Assembly. She stated that a need exists for women to become more involved in the leadership of the Church and that the climate must be changed to promote this. Rev. Kalayjian provided background information on the Church's position on this proposal.

Parish Finances

Mr. Hagop Safak, Parish Council Treasurer, described the parish

financial statements as contained in the 1992 Annual Report. He also explained the new computerization of the parish's accounts that has been organized by Mr. Onnik Janjigian. Mr. Ohanian, Parish Council Chairman and member of the Finance Committee, described the work of the Finance Committee and its current search for income producing property. Mr. Shahinian noted that the parish's assets are held in many different places, including the accounts of the Parish Council, Finance Committee, Armenian Church Endowment Fund, Ladies Guild and other organizations.

During the discussion, Mr. Armen Garabedian suggested investing in common stocks, and Mr. Ohanian said that the Finance Committee was open and he was welcome to attend to present his suggestions. Yeretzgin Anahid Kalayjian suggested contacting Giant Food about selling supermarket gift certificates to earn commissions.

#### Strengthening the Family

Mr. Stephen Ohanian, Parish Council Chairman, led a discussion on the importance of strengthening the families of parishioners. He noted that the family is the foundation of our church and our nation. During the discussion, Rev. Kalayjian encouraged people to greet the newcomers to church and invite them home for a meal. Many parishioners suggested ways to inform the community of the arrival of newcomers, including putting their names in the Shnorhali or on a bulletin board with their picture downstairs; asking over the microphone at Fellowship Hour whether anyone is a visitor; and having trustees stand by the front door after church and invite people to join for fellowship hour.

Mr. Ohanian noted that when children participate in activities with their friends, sometimes their parents meet each other and become friends also. Mr. Balekjian suggesting starting a Social and Family Affairs committee to help families when they have difficulties. Mrs. Bush suggested that during Lent, parishioners undertake to call a few elderly or infrequent attendees each week. Yeretzgin Anahid Kalayjian noted that Christian faith and devotion was the key element to strengthening our families and is the responsibility of parents as well as children.

#### Youth and Education

Yeretzgin Kalayjian described the many activities and programs that the parish has organized for youth, teenagers and young adults, through the new Shnorhali School of St. Mary's, ACYOA Juniors, ACYOA Seniors, Young Adult Sundays, 3M Fellowship and other organizations.

During the discussion, Mrs. Jenel Moosakhanian suggested that the Choirmaster teach the students Armenian sharagans. Der Hayr asked the staff of the Shnorhali School to discuss with the Choirmaster, Dr. Socrates Boyajian, and Deacon Vartkes Keshishian the possibility of teaching sharagans to the children.

The Assembly decided to report on these discussions at Session II of the Annual Assembly, scheduled for February 7, 1993. Session I concluded at 9:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Vertanes Kalayjian  
Pastor

Mr. Stephen Ohanian  
Chairman

Dean Shahinian, Esq.  
Secretary