window
view of the Armenian Church

The Church in Armenia

Putting the Pieces Together
Guest Editorial 3
by Hoovan Derderian

The End of the Beginning 5
by Hratch Tchilingirian

Conversations
The Price of Freedom 6
by His Holiness Vazken
Churchlovers Who Minister 9
The Fellowship
Cross & Gavel 12
Judge Martin Tadevosian
In the Disaster Zone 15
Father Sebouh Tchoundjian
Armenian Revolutionary Federation 17
Armenian Christian Democratic Union 19
Armenian Skinheads 21

Diary of an American Priest in Armenia 23
by Yeprem Kelejian

That You Love One Another 26
by Tateos Abdalian

Catholicos on Religion in Armenia 32

Even Here in America 36
by Vazken Movsesian

Compendium 37

Letters 38
PAINFUL CONCERNS

The slow revival of the Church in Armenia

Bishop Hovnan Derderian
PRIMATE OF THE DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF CANADA

Every time I return to Canada from a visit to Armenia, I am more distressed for having witnessed the grave state of affairs currently existing in our fatherland. The struggle is evident in the political, economic, social and religious realms of life.

The problems are very clear. Our newly independent Republic is experiencing severe difficulties in a political sense. The collapse of the former Soviet Union on the one hand, the strained situation that has arisen between Armenia and Azerbaijan on the other hand, have plunged our fatherland into a grave political situation. And as a result of this political situation, the country has been subjected to an undesirable blockade which has rendered Armenia, presenting an already bleak economic picture, into an even worse and unbelievable condition. Today various worrisome social issues are arising owing to the non-existent "normal life."

Obviously, as a clergyman, one of the most concerning problems in Armenia is the moral life of our people, both individual and collective. There is no doubt that the Armenian Church's first and primary mission is the spiritual welfare of the Armenian people and ultimately, the salvation of every human being.

Here, I would like to comment on a number of problems that are related to the current infrastructure of the Armenian Church.

Bishop Hovnan Derderian stands at a table with others, and Pr. Marzob Sunftan (Oakland) looks on.
Armenia today has a population of more than 3.5 million. It is also said that the Armenian population within the dioceses of the internal diaspora, i.e. Armenian communiti- ties throughout the former Soviet Union, runs close to 2 million. Con- sidering these numbers, we can pose the question: What is the picture of ecclesiastical life in Armenia today? Let’s take Armenia with her dioceses. The Armenian Patriarchal Diocese, headquartered in Yerevan, is Armenia’s largest. The population of the capital has reached 1.5 million. Yet unfortunately, Yerevan has only four churches which are not equipped to handle the population’s spiritual needs. It is quite a different matter that these same churches don’t have their own religious communities or parishes, rather they serve the needs of incidental visitors of a given area. More than twenty priests serve in these four churches and they are largely occupied with the performance of sacraments and rituals. The churches have their choir and, to a greater or lesser extent, an internal administrative set-up. However the question remains as to what extent the church is performing the mission entrusted to her. For example, while it is true that the majority of the churches that existed throughout Yerevan were totally destroyed during the dreadful reign of Stalin, nevertheless the absence of church buildings in no way justifies the absence of the development of parish or commu- nual life. The spiritual revival that began in 1988 has taken on a great impetus and yet Yerevan today re- mains in practically the same condition as before. While underscoring these serious concerns, at the same time I wish to reflect with appreciation on all those efforts and courageous un- dertakings which are being directed and carried out by Bishop Karekin Norestan, Vicar of the Armenian Pa- triarchal Diocese. Under his leadership, the Diocese has generated ex- cellent structures to the highest degree. Youth, adults and members of the newly established ladies guild are endeavoring to bring about a new atmosphere and life in the church.

Practically the same short-comings prevail in the dioceses of Shirak, Gugark and Siunik, each of which has a population of more than one hundred thousand, yet un- fortunately there is only one working church in each region. The same state of affairs exists throughout most of Armenia, sometimes worse. It’s clear that it was not possible to pic- ture the situation any differently in the past, during the Soviet era, but now there are no restrictions to improve the situation.

As far as the Internal Diaspora is concerned, during the Soviet period, the situation was ex- tremely desperate. The internal di- oceses were literally abandoned and disorganized as a result of the government’s position regarding reli- gion and the church. In effect there were only three churches in opera- tion: Russia, Georgia and Azerbaijan. These regions had their diocesan Pri- mates, who practically had no au- thority. Today their status is fortu- nately different. The spiritual renewal has taken on momentum within the internal dioceses as well. Churches are being reopened and the disposi- tion to become a community is being felt among the common people. How- ever, as a result of the destruction wrought by several decades, there are insufficient clergy and dedi- cated servants of the church with of ecclesiastical knowledge.

In this situation, regre- tably, various sectarian movements have found a fertile field in which to operate, particularly in Armenia. They have found various paths of entry into Armenia, particularly after the disastrous earthquake. In short, the various forms of assistance brought by them are becoming con- ditional gifts. The presence of sectar- ians in the streets of Yerevan and everywhere else has become inevi- table during the past three years. The presence of cults in the life of our people is not an authentic or genuine presence. They are disturbing the uniformity of the spiritual strength of our people. Historically, Christianity has experienced growth in Armenia not by sectarian movements, but through the true Christian faith of our forefathers who have been able to withstand numerous tense political moments. Today, we need to restore that orthodox faith of our church and people.

In view of these, one might ask the question: What sort of steps is the church undertaking in light of this grave situation? The truth is that currently no serious organized effort is being pursued in this direc- tion. Primarily, the administrative mechanism of Etchmiadzin needs fundamental and urgent reorganiza- tion. It is not functioning in any systematic fashion.

As for the Church State relationship, while during the Soviet era the relationship between church and state went through various stages, from an extremely strained situation to a relatively more tolerant policy—today, with the independence of Armenia, the church enjoys a new breath of air. The positive approach taken by the state toward the church is visible.

We should underscore that government representatives are also working. The governmental author- ities are somewhat dissatisfied with the church and the clergy, and how religious work is failing in its func- tion. Notwithstanding all this, it is evident however, that the state has given faith in the church and its functional role in the Armenian soci- ety. Last year, during a meeting, the President of the Republic of Armenia stressed the notion that today, be it in the Diaspora or in Armenia, the church represents the “most orga- nized institution.” If that is the case, then the church leadership must take its role and place very seriously, partic- ularly at this most painful mo- ment in the history of our people.

There are innumerable is- sues and problems facing the Ar- menian Church. I believe that as a first step in addressing the most urgent needs, the Synod of Bishops of the Armenian Apostolic Church—the highest ecclesiastical body in the Church—should reconvene as soon as pos- sible so that expedient issues are resolved. Today, the Armenian Apo- stolic Church faces two distinct situ- ations: Armenia and its spiritual re- birth, on the one hand, and the Diaspora, with its church adminis- tratively divided, on the other.

The spiritual obligation of each clergyman should be total devo- tion to the revival of the church, by making his body the will of the illuminator’s lamp and his soul, the oil for that light. At the threshold of the 21st century, every Armenian clergyman must act with vision and prepare himself through prayer, so that he truly becomes the pastor, the leader and prophet for the children of Christ’s church.

*
It is the end of the beginning—the euphoria that began with the freedom and independence of Armenia is over. Instead, hardship, struggle and anxiety have become part of everyday living in Armenia. For better or worse, a new era, a new “world order” has commenced in the history of the Armenian nation.

Against this backdrop, in the next few pages, I will present a series of conversations which I had in Armenia during a March 1992 visit. The conversations draw a wide perspective on the post-independence development of religious freedom in Armenia and its ramifications in the life of the Armenian Church.

Like the new Republic of Armenia, the dynamics and development of events in the Church are fascinating and yet at the same time depressing and hopeless.

Like every institution in the new Republic, the Church also finds itself unprepared and inadequate to serve the basic needs of the people.

However, the church is the only institution which has not collapsed. The irony is that unless it collapses, it will not revive. The old must fall in order to build the new one. The institutional church is the Berlin of Armenia—the Wall must come down if we ever want to see the light behind it.

While changes in political conventions and structures and uncertainties in a new country allow mistakes to be made, the incompetence and complacency of leadership are more harmful and devastating to an institution than any of its shortcomings. Leaders are only accountable to those who they lead, but they are accountable to history as well.

The conversations presented in the following pages speak for themselves. As a whole, they enumerate very concrete and specific problems. The voice of desperation could be heard in all of them and yet the question remains whether anything is being done?

While each institution in Armenia is attempting to tackle its daily problems, the church is dormant, except for some incidental or ad hoc panaceas dispensed to issues that are bound to recur, if not treated seriously.

Many would say that identifying the problems in the church is the easiest thing to do. I would add that finding solutions is even easier. The difficulty is accepting the reality, i.e. the fact that we have problems that need immediate attention. By problems I do not mean the Catholics and the Protestants or the cults. They are peripheral problems and will remain peripheral if we do our job. By problems I mean the apostolic mission of the church via a via the hierarchs, the clergy and the faithful.

Today, the urgency to move from a discretionary leadership to a participatory leadership cannot be underestimated. The deficiencies of individual shoosyacasy can and must be overcome by collective “team” leadership. Around the globe, the personality cult of the Cold War era is quickly changing into “team” effort. As the rapid changes in the world constantly redefine the variables of leadership, the success of leaders is being measured not by what they can do individually, but by what kind of a team and ministry they can create.

Perhaps, the beginning of this process is the resurrection of the Synod of Bishops and/or the National Ecclesiastical Assembly. Unless issues are discussed on the highest level of the Church, we will remain ill for a very long time. The Armenian Church is expected to cater to the needs of several million Armenians. As such, we cannot continue behaving as if we are running a parish or a small diocese.

The time to face our problems is next week, next month, in three months the most... not next year, next anniversary, next decade....
THE PRICE OF FREEDOM

Dr. HAKOB YOAK
HOLINESS VAZKEN I
SUPREME PATRIARCH AND
CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS
HOLY ECHMIADZIN, ARMENIA

Conversation with
His Holiness Vazken I
SUPREME PATRIARCH AND
CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS
HOLY ECHMIADZIN, ARMENIA

In Artzakh and he is the only clergymen who has
been allowed to remain in office in the monastery
of Kanzun—after which the time was the head-
quarters of the Diocese of Artzakh. Eventually,
that bishop was also arrested and imprisoned in
Tbilisi under false accusations and blames. They
released him after a short period of time on the
condition that he will never return to Artzakh.

After World War II the situation slightly im-
proved because some churches were reopened,
and that was the extent of it. Further improvement of
the situation occurred a little later during the time when
we were elected Catholicos and the subsequent years;
even though our rights were very limited, nevertheless,
20 churches were reopened. As for building new churches,
that was unthinkable.

Today, with the declaration of political independence
(in Armenia), the situation has changed drastically, not
only has the persecution of the church disappeared, but
also the issue of tolerance has been resolved. The church
today has become independent and self-governing and is
enjoying the auspices of the Government, which has
clarified and exacted the relationship of the church and
state through specific laws, freedom of conscience laws.
That law was examined during several sessions of the

DR. HAKOB YOAK
HOLINESS VAZKEN I
SUPREME PATRIARCH AND
CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS
HOLY ECHMIADZIN, ARMENIA

What is the relation-
ship between the Ar-
menian Church and the
Government?

His Holiness: Indeed, this is a very
appropriate question because we
need to clarify church and state rela-
tionships. It is evident that in the past,
during the Communist period until World War II—
throughout the Soviet Union, including Armenia—the
church was persecuted.

From 1938 to 1959, practically all monasteries and
churches were closed. In fact, in Artzakh, Karabagh, it
was even earlier than this. Here in Etchmiadzin, we have
a letter from the last Primate of Artzakh, Bishop Verlanus,
which is a significant document in this respect. The
author of the letter writes to the Catholicos of the time
that 16 monasteries and 105 churches have been closed

DR. HAKOB YOAK
HOLINESS VAZKEN I
SUPREME PATRIARCH AND
CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS
HOLY ECHMIADZIN, ARMENIA

What is the relation-
ship between the Ar-
menian Church and the
Government?

His Holiness: Indeed, this is a very
appropriate question because we
need to clarify church and state rela-
tionships. It is evident that in the past,
during the Communist period until World War II—
throughout the Soviet Union, including Armenia—the
church was persecuted.

From 1938 to 1959, practically all monasteries and
churches were closed. In fact, in Artzakh, Karabagh, it
was even earlier than this. Here in Etchmiadzin, we have
a letter from the last Primate of Artzakh, Bishop Verlanus,
which is a significant document in this respect. The
author of the letter writes to the Catholicos of the time
that 16 monasteries and 105 churches have been closed

Parliament, and thereafter put to a vote. We also participated in the discussions. In reality, this law is a public declaration of freedom of religion and conscience the way it is in all Western democratic countries. It is interesting, however, that in that law specific importance is given to the Armenian Apostolic Church as the national Mother Church. Accordingly, the Armenian Church has been granted privileges and as such, the church is a legal entity with all rights to all property and goods. This law has also accorded freedom to other church and religious organizations and denominations, particularly the Roman Catholic and Protestant churches. However, it should be mentioned that the freedom given to these denominations are limited. They are to practice it in their respective communities only. Acts of conversion and proselytization are forbidden.

The law also gives the right of operation to certain cults which were already established and were working in the country during the former system. Recently, in addition to these cults, various new movements have come to Armenia, such as the摩门, the Jehovah’s Witnesses and so on.

Dr. Hovsep: Do you think that these denominations, if not now, eventually will want and will try to expand their activities and demand more freedom?

His Honor: We do not think that it will reach to that point. Nevertheless, such tendencies are evident among these denominations, particularly in the difficult economical situation in Armenia is used as an advantage. For example, after the earthquake of 1988, a group of people came from America and proposed to build a large factory in Armenia. We ourselves welcomed this proposal, this humanitarian proposal. However, in time they had plans to build a church on the same site, it was obvious that these people were Mormons and they were pursuing other missionary goals through this benevolent act. Naturally, such an activity was not allowed to take place in Armenia. We are happy to state that when such incidents occur, the state and the church are cooperative in solving them. This is very important because the fulfillment of the cults in Armenia is very alarming. It is very sad to see these groups taking advantage of the difficult economic situation and the naiveté, the goodwill of our people.

Dr. Hovsep: This concern is also profoundly felt in the Diaspora, by both the clergy and the laity. One of the most effective ways of combating against these cults is to spread similar evangelical activities which the Armenian Apostolic Church should organize. What are your thoughts about this?

His Honor: There is no doubt, that is the accepted means of encounter. There are some programs in this regard, but on a very small scale. In reality, however, in order to fully address this issue, it is absolutely necessary to have preaching scholars who are prepared in this area, experts who are qualified and other individuals who have experience. Under the present circumstances, we need 50-60 preaching priests, yet in all practical terms, we only have a few as appropriate candidates for such work. We never anticipated that the freedom of religion that was granted would create such a situation for which certainly we were not prepared.

Dr. Hovsep: How about the Seminary of Holy Etchmiadzin, where preachers and individual who could do the work ought to be prepared? His Honor: It is so, naturally, and we’re happy that presently the student body has grown tremendously and the number has reached 110 students. However, in order for this group to start the work, they need at least three years to prepare themselves and acquire the knowledge that is needed to do such work.

Dr. Hovsep: Over the years, the diaspora Armenian communities have developed the parish system where each parish has its own pastor and church organizations, and through which the community come together under the roof of the church. Do you have any plans to create such a system in Armenia today?

His Honor: Already such a system exists here. All the churches have their pastors and the rules of the old system have been lifted. Each church has its Parish Council, Diocesan Council, just as it is in the Diaspora.

Dr. Hovsep: What are the needs of the church today in Armenia, first and foremost?

His Honor: Of course presently, the most concerning need is the lack of clergymen. We have to prepare servants for the church in a very short period of time and quickly. The next question is the issue of new churches. Today many churches are being reopened and new ones are being put under the disposal of Etchmiadzin. We have to provide clergymen and pastors to all these new churches. In addition, we should also think about the internal diasporan Armenian communities within the boundaries of former Soviet Union. During the Soviet period in the various republics of the Union-Armenian churches either did not exist or were destroyed. Today, when most of them are being returned and new ones are being...
...the most concerning need is the lack of clergymen.

built and there is a need to build more, serious work is expected. We are facing great difficulties, especially in finding building material which is scarce. It should be mentioned however, that despite these difficulties, the renovation of many churches has begun. Here in Echmiadzin, the complex of the old Revolian Seminary has been returned to us which needs renovation. The work will start probably sometime before the end of the year. We hope that the next academic year will start in the new building. The situation of the Armenian churches in the other republics is more difficult. We found out that in Russia, the Ukraine, Moldova, the Northern Caucuses and in the Baltic countries, there are more Armenians than we thought about. Two million. These communities now are in need of spiritual nourishment, cultural gatherings and other opportunities to bring them together as an organized community. In Middle Asia, benevolent and cultural associations have been organized, besides which other church bodies are being formed gradually. The needs are very clear. Today, in the Ukraine, there are four Armenian centers: Lvov, Kiev, Khargov, and Ghetm. For example in Ghetm, a large Armenian community existed in the past and until today there are eight 18th-19th century Armenian churches which have been preserved. These churches are in dire need of major renovations. Presently there is only one clergymen for that entire region. We need at least three or four priests to serve our people in that area. There is a beautiful Armenia church in Moldavia, in the capital city of Chishevni. Recently we visited the community there which is about 1500 Armenians and the church which resembles the Cathedrals of Echmiadzin. It also needs internal renovations which cannot be delayed if we want to preserve the building. This is the general picture of the church in the internal diaspora.

Dr. Hakob: In the present situation, what are the expectations of Your Holiness from the Diaspora? How can the Armenian diaspora help Armenia and the church?

His Holiness: As far as the Diaspora is concerned, we cannot be demanding. The Diaspora itself is in great need for clergymen. On the contrary, very often they apply to us to provide clergymen for various communities. Unfortunately, the monastery in Jerusalem, which could have greatly contributed in providing clergymen during the past 10-20 years, could not make a significant or even least contribution in preparing clergymen. Whatever we could have expected from the Diaspora, we received, truly, particularly the financial help and aid which came on time and continues to help in the disaster areas. In this respect, we would like to express our thanks and appreciation to Bishop Hovnan and Khajag, who did outstanding work in North America to help Armenia and continue to help with their wise efforts.

Dr. Hakob: Do you think the kally should also be involved in preaching?

His Holiness: Yes, absolutely, if they are appropriately prepared and educated. For example the newspaper Lososmorich (Illuminator), which is religious in nature, is published by the initiative and participation of the laity. In the beginning it had some political tendencies and it was under the auspices of the Armenian National Movement. However, when we had the opportunity to acquaint ourselves with the staff of the newspaper, we were pleasantly surprised. All of them are educated young men and women, they know Armenian well, they know their national literature, they read, they understand and they interpret the Holy Scriptures adequately. Through our suggestions, they have distanced themselves from the political currents and today they enjoy our auspices, including financially. It is such lay individuals that the church needs to utilize and encourage. We also have another group, the Yeghnyrgasgozoon (Fellowship) of the Armenian Church. We would like to select the members of our church councils, diocesan councils and other church bodies from such lay religious organizations.
“CHURCHLOVERS”

WHO MINISTER

THE FELLOWSHIP (BROTHERHOOD) OF THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

Conversation with
Hamlet Zakarian
CHAIRMAN OF THE FELLOWSHIP

Dr. Hamig: Can you tell us in general terms when, where and how the Fellowship came about? Hamlet Zakarian: [The Fellowship is a lay organization in the church.] The first written information about the Fellowship or more accurately, about the activity of lay persons devoted to the church in Armenian life, is known to us from the time of Mesrob Mashtots, but it was organized as a fellowship and experienced vigorous growth in the 13th century when Hovannes Yerzogats wrote the statute of the "Churchlovers" association (i.e., Fellowship). Subsequently, in the later Middle Ages, the movement assumed a rather instinctive nature. In the latter part of the 19th century, when different religious currents and sectarian movements had begun to make inroads and spread among the Armenian Apostolic Church and the people, a priest named Krikor Vardapet Voskeritchian reorganized the Fellowship for the protection of the Armenian Apostolic Church. During that period, the Fellowship's objective was to help the Mother Church and serve as a barrier against certain denominations and currents. Later on, the movement's devout moved to Beirut.
Erevan in 1947, during the period of repatriation. The movement experienced a major revival in 1960, after the death of Stalin. At that time, there were groups consisting of 50-60-80 persons who had prayer meetings in 12 locations. Today the Fellowship, with its approximately 4000 members, has 36 sites for prayer meetings in 21 cities and towns.

Our Fellowship took the initiative in formulating and organizing "Sunday Schools" which the church later on took under its sponsorship. Presently we have introductory courses for Sunday school teachers in Yerevan and in other cities, in which approximately 300 teachers are participating. On October 15, 1991, His Holiness Catholicos Vazken I sanctioned the Fellowship's activity within the church, permitted the singing of religious songs, for example, those newly composed spiritual hymns which are so essential in nature and are outside of the realm of church ceremonies and rites.

Dr. Haas: How did the process of that sanction occur? Did you submit a written document to His Holiness or did you simply make a presentation?

Zamanian: Through oral negotiations and meetings which lasted a few months. Let me explain the interrelationship between the Fellowship and the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Fellowship was revived and became more active, starting in 1986. At that time, young and new energetic individuals-intellectuals and scientists-joined the movement in place of those who were emigrating abroad, to the United States. His Holiness welcomed the Fellowship and accepted us-approximately 500 persons who were members of the original group. His Holiness also went a step further which was heroic for that time and donated approximately 160 pocket Gospels to us.

However, fearing governmental interference, shortly thereafter in 1981, the church completely severed its relations and ties with us. Nevertheless, certain individual clergymen, particularly those who were in the Diaspora, continued to infuse us with spirit and support. Starting in 1991, thanks to His Grace Bishop Karekin I, Primate of the Araratian Diocese, vigorous activity and work began anew. The active involvement of Khachig Stamolian and Dadik Babayan, President of the committee for the defense of human rights and a member of the church council, had major significance.

Certain agreements were reached, the most important of which being that the Catholics officially sanctioned and registered us-at that time we had approximately 3000 members. Let me say that this written authorization was a major accomplishment. There were numerous religious groups throughout the world at that time, but none in Armenia. The Armenian Church was in an extremely difficult and rutinous state, but we were a community, for that reason, our case went as far as Moscow and the order came back, instructing that our activity be curtailed and prohibited. The government meddled a great deal in church matters; the situation was terrible. In fact, if it weren't for the rituals (liturgical practices) of the church, she would have not endured or survived the persecution.

Dr. Haas: Presently, what is the nature of your relationship with the Mother See in Holy Etchmiadzin? Does it simply sponsor you, or are you a separate ecclesiastical organization?

Zamanian: We have an ecclesiastical administration consisting of 10 persons, which also includes one deacon, Father Kirik Harabedian of the United States. We also have bylaws, approved and certified by His Holiness. According to those by-laws, we are not authorized to examine ecclesiastical or doctrinal matters in our meetings, but we settle internal matters and questions completely independent and separate from the Church. Nevertheless, the Fellowship functions in each Diocese (in Armenia) with the knowledge and under the patronage of the Primate of the given Diocese. This, of course, is good and it facilitates our work in the sense that the Diocesan Council, having assumed patronage according to the by-laws, is obligated to take care of our needs; at the same time, however, certain complications do arise because the church itself is still not organized to the extent that it can overcome various difficulties.

Dr. Haas: Earlier you gave some data about your activities, are there also such data concerning the Sunday Schools? How many schools do you have and how many pupils attend those schools?

Zamanian: We have 21 Sunday Schools in Armenia, and 6 in Artsakh. We have over 4500 pupils, and its growing every week. Those schools have the qualification of "Christian Education Schools under the patronage of the Armenian Apostolic Church," and each Diocese has assumed responsibility for those within its jurisdiction. In this situation too, however, there are complications since the Dioceses are not in a position, presently at least, to fully provide for the expenses. The Glutton (Armenian Benevolent Association) and the Fellowship are coming through with considerable financial and moral assistance for the work. For example, the Araratian Diocese is able to pay only 15 of the 70 teachers involved in this work; "Glutton" is taking care of the rest.

Dr. Haas: Are the teachers full-time or only on Sundays?

Zamanian: There are two types. One segment is completely devoted to the work, whereas others come on a part-time basis, during their free time only. More than half of the teachers work for free; in the past, they all taught without pay.

Dr. Haas: How is your Fellowship growing in numbers? What means of propaganda do you utilize to attract people and, generally speaking, what is your method of operation?

Zamanian: At the outset, let me say that the Fellowship has never gone after people and/or paid them the sum of signing them up, although the RKB and related bodies have
accused us, saying that we are trying to mislead and corrupt people through religious propaganda. The main and principal aim of the "Churchowers" Fellowship is to explain the Bible, particularly the New Testament, to the people and make them familiar with the basic tenets of our church dogma. It interacts with the people through frequent visitations in individual homes and group get-togethers which are saturated with religious spirit, and the spread of our Fellowship, the popularity it enjoys is conditioned by this, as well. Of course we wish to further expand our activity and make radio-television broadcasts. There are among us competent individuals, ones who are literate in terms of religious Knowledge and well informed about general theology, who are capable of conducting those broadcasts. Television time segments have been put at our disposal, which we can utilize for that purpose. But the church is still very reserved with regard to us and doesn't trust us, whereas we, who consider ourselves, her faithful children, naturally don't even think about opposing it, hoping that we will undoubtedly win that trust. Commentaries prepared by these individuals have already been videotaped and submitted to the church for review, and we expect that they will be favorably considered. A 15-minute-long religious radio broadcast in Russian, which is to be made twice a day, has already been approved by His Holiness and received his blessing. It is to be called the "Voice of the Armenian Church" and is meant for the Russian-speaking immigrants who have settled in Armenia and adjacent regions as a result of the recent political turn of events.

Dr. Haich: Are there perhaps matters of incompatibility between you and the church?

Zamarian: In this connection, I can state the following two points. First, the church has a certain preconceived attitude and position regarding non-religious songs, whereby it rejects their use. For example, why should permission be denied to sing the spiritual songs of Archbishop Yeghishic Tarovanian, a Lay Patriarch of Jerusalem and/or other such songs? Of course, these are not liturgical hymns; they are not connected with the Divine Liturgy, but must they be rejected on that account? What's unfortunate is that they don't know a thing about the Seminary about spiritual life, true faith and the true believer, and that is understandable; it's no secret that, for decades, the believer clergymen have been persecuted and, in the true sense of the word, irreligious teachers have taught the students to the Seminary. Our young present-day clergymen have grown up with such a spirit as that, totally ignorant of our religious traditions and heritage.

The second point which I wish to address has to do with spontaneous prayer, which again is rejected by the church. If not by all clergymen then by many of them. It's clear that we have turned it any differently, because until quite recently, the church was carrying on anti-religious, instead of religious, propaganda. The Bulgarian, Roumanian and Slavonic Orthodox Churches have already admitted in the press that, during the period of Soviet tyranny, they cooperated with the KGB and carried out its proposals to shake and destroy the foundations of the Church. The Armenian Church, which likewise had a similar orientation during the period in question, unfortunately hasn't had the courage to date to come forth with such a confession and state the desires it had received, so that the matter could be closed once and for all.

Dr. Haich: What means are you referring to? Can you be more specific?

Zamarian: Well, the Armenian Church is a patriarchal (communal) church, yet there are no parishes, [in the true sense of the word] in Armenia at all. This situation was realized through a special decision made by the Commissariat in 1922. Other similar decisions were also carried out in later years. For example, in 1986, with the planning of the Central Committee and KGB in Moscow, it was decided to turn Armenia into an experimental field of activity for various sects. It was during that time that, owing to the KGB, the Jehovah's Witnesses penetrated Armenia via Poland and today they are flooding Armenia, along with other sectarians. This is truly a disturbing phenomenon, which is gradually expanding and spreading to the far ends of the country. For example, the Pentecostals, who are engaging in absolutely anti-church activities by downstream blaspheining the churches, have already become a powerful and organized community and their ranks include 12,000 members in Yerevan alone.

There's also another matter that is cause for serious contemplation. It's a known fact that, at the end of continued on p. 27
Dr. Mecok: Could you give us a brief, overall autobiographical sketch?

Judge Tadevosian: I was born in 1942 in the city of Gumri (Leninakan) to a family of workers. My father Chevont was from the village of Hartij in the Artik region whereas my mother came from Kars. I studied first in Gumri then at the School of Law, Yerevan State University. I graduated from the University in 1973 and immediately began working as a lawyer in Gumri. From 1979-1982, I was a post-graduate student at the Moscow Institute of Law and finished with a Doctor of Laws degree.

Upon my return to my birthplace, I continued working as a lawyer. In 1984, I moved to the Judge's office and in 1988 I was appointed Interregional Judge for Artik (south-east of Leninakan) and I have remained in this post until now. I am married and have four daughters. My wife works as a teacher.

In 1991, when Bishop Grigoris Buniatian was elected Primate of the Shirak Diocese, the church’s Diocesan Council was elected a few months later, consisting of five laymen and two clergymen. I was elected Chairman of the Diocesan Council. I have always been close to our church.
Dr. Harris: How was your relationship with the church cultivated?

Joshua Tovosian: As I said, I've always felt close to the church and that's in my blood; it comes from my parents. Our surname was Der Mardorian, because my grandfather's brother had been a priest; thus our home atmosphere was always filled with religious inspiration. Attending church was part of our lifestyle, despite my being a member of the [Communist] Party at my position. Obviously, the party wasn't favorably disposed toward the church at that time. Many associates have questioned how it is possible for someone working as a Judge to be a member of the church's Diocesan Council at the same time. My response, in turn, would be that it is precisely the Judges and those working within the legal system who need faith so that they can understand what's good and bad. And with the help of that faith, they can differentiate properly and issue just verdicts and decide on suitable punishments. Thus, these two jobs of mine don't contradict each other; on the contrary, they complement and supplement one another. It's unfortunate that, until recently, the government and church employees kept their distance from the church owing to the circumstances, whereas, in my opinion, it would have been much more proper and better if they had cooperated with it.

Dr. Harris: Can you explain further what you understand by the words "faith" and "believer."

Joshua Tovosian: By "believer," I don't mean praying or remembering God only in times of trouble. That is merely the partial manifestation, expression of faith. The true believer shall become fused with God and the church with all the essence of his soul; shall feel and understand what true faith is; and shall believe with all his heart and soul and without any reservation. As rooted, having grown up in a family atmosphere full of faith, it was always incomprehensible and sad for me to see that rupture that existed between the church and society. That of course was conditioned by the prevailing reality; and while it's true that punitive measures weren't employed as regards the church and faith in a legal sense, yet in reality the church was severely inhibited, its rights limited, and the people's religious feelings subjected to adversities.

Now, under the present conditions of freedom, the doors of the church have opened wide for all, and all can and do enter, regardless. Unfortunately, quite a few of those who go to church are far from being true believers. At the present time, faith among the vast majority of the youth is still a formalism; they don't even know what real faith is. Under such circumstances then, the question arises as to what our attitude should be and what we should do. In my opinion, our first and foremost task shall be to give impetus to religious preaching (evangelism) by putting that effort on the right track, and focus attentively, first of all, on our schools and other educational institutions. We said that faith must penetrate man's soul, must become part of his being and, for that to happen, religious instruction must begin at a young age. Little children must be educated with that spirit. In addition, using the press and other public media such as, for example, radio, television, etc., we must endeavor to present our church ceremonies, holy days, and other rites to the people, explain, tell about them, make them accessible and comprehensible. In that way, they will get to know and love our Mother Church. At the present time, considering this complex state of affairs that has been created, our people perhaps need such faith much more so.

The Seminary in Sevan, organized by the Vicar of the Amorian Diocese, Bishop Karekin Neresian, the four Sunday schools in Yerevan; the creation of a separate choir and dance ensemble; and the program to prepare teachers to implement the instruction of religion are all very wonderful means which serve the purpose of sowing the seeds of faith among the people. Similar attempts are being made in the Shirak Diocese, despite the extremely constraining and difficult conditions existing there. For example, a Sunday school is already in operation in the city of Gumri. Since there aren't any ready specialists or qualified teachers available locally, such individuals are coming from Yerevan every Saturday. The number of pupils is increasing daily; adults and even senior citizens are coming to participate.

The lessons are often accompanied by dialogue and exchange of views concerning various topics, always having religion and faith as a focal point. It also happens that, during the course of discussions, questions are raised which express doubt concerning our orthodox Christian faith. In connection with the movement in Artsakh, for example, upon seeing the tragic progression of events unfolding, certain people began to think that the Muslim religion has a greater influence and positive impact on the people. Unfortunately, I myself wasn't able to deny the fact that the entire Muslim world:
submit to the slightest movement of the Mollah's hand. In the current situation, we have to display such compliance with our Mother Church; for that reason, we have to come forth in greater union, a greater spirit of togetherness, in defense of our church and people. In my opinion, what is ruining the chances of such unity are the political parties, which are increasing in number daily and which are not at all beneficent; on the contrary, they are causing division. In my opinion, the present government of Armenia must seriously think about that and, temporally, let's say for a period of 5 years, restrict the free activity of political parties. Today, the main issue on our agenda is the existence of our nation, the defense of our rights, and not the hashing out of various views or ideas. Today, religion, the sacred faith of our forefathers shall unite us and help us so that we can struggle as a nation for our survival.

Dr. HAKOB: You say that the Muslim moloch is more powerful, has more influence and authority over his faithful than our clergymen and the Church has over us Christians? Why? JUDGE TANGAMPANG: Honestly, I myself haven't been able to come up with an explanation. Both Armenia and Azerbaijan had the identical political conditions during the years of Soviet rule; however, religious parties haven't become stilled as much among the Muslims and faith hasn't died in their souls. The reason is probably that the Armenians, being more educated, more intelligent, approach matters of faith intellectually, whereas blind, fanatical faith prevails among them.

Dr. HAKOB: Two years ago a law pertaining to freedom of conscience and religion was proclaimed in Armenia. Therein is mentioned that the Armenian Apostolic Church occupies a special and important place in the spiritual life of our people and, on that basis, the Armenian Church enjoys certain privileges. As a judge and a just, would you please comment? JUDGE TANGAMPANG: At present, the criminal code prepared and established in 1982 is in effect. According to the 141st and 142nd articles of that code, the laws pertaining to the separation of church and state, and school and church, have been violated, and that violation is subject to penalty. And to restrictions on performing religious ceremonies, it states that they are subject to penalties to the degree that they disturb the public order. That is to say, the celebration of religious rites won't be obstructed.

Dr. HAKOB: Nevertheless, don't you think that by forbidding these various denominations from preaching, we are violating democratic principles? JUDGE TANGAMPANG: I agree and it is true, that is a violation of rights. However, we must not forget that those subscribing to alien creeds are very powerful and pose a serious threat to us; therefore, in my opinion, we have acted prudenting in taking that step, which is temporary, until our present unstable and insecure situation is put in order. There are two courses, two forms of adjustment: either we become so strong, firm in our faith that external factors can no longer have an impact, or those foreign elements or creeds will gradually go away, leaving the field to the indigenous church of the Armenian Apostolic Church.

Dr. HAKOB: In various circles, there is talk of making the Armenian Apostolic Church a National church, as is the case in England, where the Anglican Church is referred to as the National Church (Church of England) and enjoys the patronage of the Queen. In Armenia, of course, such a situation doesn't exist. What do you think, is such a suggestion sensible or not? JUDGE TANGAMPANG: The population of our country is generally homogeneous. There aren't many different nationalities; there aren't only different creeds—Catholic, Protestant, etc. Of course, if it turns out such that foreigners begin to establish residence among us, it would be prudent to allow them to have their own places of worship. Churches. Today the Armenians are scattered and have established residence in 151 countries throughout the world, in which they enjoy the benevolent treatment of the governments of those countries. Natu-
THE CHURCH IN THE DISASTER ZONE

Conversation with the
Father Sebouh Tchoukjian
VICAR OF THE DIOCESE OF SHIKAR (LEVINNAYAN)

Dr. HATCH: Can you describe the extent of the physical and moral damage sustained by the church as a result of the earthquake?

Fr. SEBOUH: The physical damage has undoubtedly been very great. Numerous churches which were half-ruined or standing and whose need is so acutely felt by us now—came tumbling down in different regions. And, in a spiritual sense, the damage suffered by us consisted of the loss of some very lovely traditions that had served to connect the believers with the church. The people, particularly those who lost many of their family members—especially children—turned cold in terms of faith. Skepticism toward the church and God was manifested. These were people; forgive me for saying whose faith was somewhat lame. There were other persons as well who clung steadfastly to their faith, consoling themselves like the blessed Job: "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." To a large extent, they had seemingly adopted the notion of being the remaining ones and assumed the survivor mentality of carrying on with their existence, without of course knowing, understanding that only a few members of entire clans had been saved.

Dr. HATCH: How was the church able to take care of the needs of the people during the time of the earthquake and the succeeding few months?

Fr. SEBOUH: It is difficult for me to say anything definite about the immediate assistance provided by the church when the catastrophe hit because the blow had also struck the church and its clergymen down, it
weren't easy, actually it was practically impossible for us to find words to comfort the disaster victims because, honestly, we ourselves needed solace. It was inconceivable for us, altogether incomprehensible, as to why this had happened. We ourselves didn't have the answer in order to explain it to the people and thus soften the blow. There was needed to enable us to analyze what had happened with cold logic and explain things fortified with faith.

**Dr. Hakob:** Now that almost four years have already passed, by what means is the church endeavoring to cure the wounds caused by the catastrophe?

**Ps. Simour:** It must be said that we're trying our best to console the people through the liturgical and sacramental services of the church as well as the celebration of Divine Liturgy. For instance, at the conclusion of each service we try to explain the meaning and purpose of the worship to the people. We're also going to the schools, having discussions with the pupils, and preaching, if necessary. Both the Primate and I, as Vicar, are often invited to various institutions, establishments, and hospitals, where we have meetings with people from different classes and walks of life.

Of course, we don't have the manpower necessary to carry out the required pastoral work throughout the Diocese of Shirak.

**Dr. Hakob:** How about the other denominations or religious groups that are active behind the scenes?

**Ps. Simour:** There is a painful and regrettable fact of life and that is that the church too is in the same situation as the people. We must admit, this is indeed a very difficult situation. The church's financial means and capabilities are not sufficient to provide material comfort to the people. Something that the seculars, the Protestants and the Catholics are doing. They are blinding people with fine, attractive, beautiful objects, foodstuffs, material and other possessions. In a way, they're mesmerizing the people indebted to them and, in lieu of thankfulness, drawing them toward their faith. Thus they are conversion seekers to be reckoned with yet their influence over weak willed and the skeptical would come to naught if our church as well had the foodstuffs and financial means in dealing with them.

**Dr. Hakob:** Do you think that the Armenian Apostolic Church is in jeopardy, to a certain extent, of losing its predominance to the sectarians on account of the latter's capabilities?

**Ps. Simour:** It is unlikely that they will gain predominance over our church but nevertheless they can constitute a great and serious danger, not in the sense of saving the Armenian's soul, but in terms of weakening the nation's human resources. This is the danger threatening our people in the present state.

**Dr. Hakob:** Can you tell us about some of your plans? For example, what work is being done with the orphans and how is it proceeding?

**Ps. Simour:** In conjunction with the Diocese of Canada, we have taken charge of the care of the orphans, who have lost one or both parents, and needy children living in Gumri and the rest of the disaster zone, by making a monthly allocation to each one. This project was undertaken by the Diocese of the Armenian Church of Canada, headed by the Primate, Bishop Hovhannes Derderian, with the participation of the Canadian Armenian community. The basis of our cooperative effort with them is as follows: we prepare lists containing the children's names as well as information sheet containing all the necessary data about each one. We submit these to the attention of the Canadian Diocese and they, in turn, send us the corresponding appropriation.

**Dr. Hakob:** In connection with this project, how many children are there receiving financial assistance?

**Ps. Simour:** At the present time, we have 369 children (as of October 1992, the number has reached 400+) who are regularly receiving their monthly subsidy. In connection with these children, we have certain plans whose realization depends on our economic situation. If we're able to create the necessary conditions, we shall begin to provide them religious instruction, select some of them to form a choir, and draw them toward the church.

**Dr. Hakob:** As a clergyman, as a servant of the Armenian Apostolic Church, what are your thoughts concerning the conditions in Armenia at present, what with the Karabagh conflict roiling on the one hand, the multifarious complications linked with political independence increasing on the other, as well as the difficulties caused by the earthquake disaster?

**Ps. Simour:** Of course, as a clergyman we are not involved in politics but we very clearly see the state of affairs our people are in. My saying that our current situation is a very difficult one continued on p. 29.
A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE
THE ARMENIAN REVOLUTIONARY FEDERATION

CONVERSATION WITH
Masis Baghdasarrian
MEMBER OF THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF ARF
&
Khojog Megerditchian
ARF YEREVAN BUREAU STAFF
YEREVAN

Dr. Harout: As a political party, what is your present position regarding the church and religious matters? In your opinion, what must the church’s role be in the current state of affairs?

Masis Baghdasarrian: Our party has always considered religion a matter of individual conscience, while nevertheless maintaining an awareness of the great role played by the church. During the past 70 years, the Soviet regime had quite a deleterious effect on the spiritual development of the Armenian people. Now everything is changing and all the foundations necessary for religion, in its entirety, to serve the national interests, are already being laid.

Dr. Harout: At the present time, the Armenian (Apostolic) Church is divided in two in the Diaspora. What is your thoughts about the interrelations between Etchmiadzin and Antelias?

Khojog Megerditchian: There is an article in the ARF’s program in this regard, according to which religion is a matter of conscience; in other words, it was developed out of a definite regard for freedom of religious worship. However, the course of history was such that the church began to get involved in politics to a certain extent, under the influence of various changes and events. The political reforms that have been carried out during the current period created the opportunity for the two sees to draw closer to one another by engaging in a dialogue to find bases for unification. It is high time that the church become disengaged from politics, revert to its being a national church and a place of Christian worship, and provide an impetus to our national life through its religious substance. In this sense,
particularly in Armenia, the church has a very important role to play. To a certain extent, it has found its place and role as a stronghold of Armenian national preservation in the Diaspora, whereas in Armenia today, church and religious activities haven’t reached a sufficient and satisfactory level, considering the prevailing religious confusion and the presence of very dangerous elements leading to religious corruption, such as larcenous worship, tendencies to return to pagan roots, and various sectarian currents. In the first place, the Mother See must extend every effort to vitalize religious life, reestablish Christian values and, as quickly as possible, prepare qualified staff, experts, and servants of the church.

**Dr. Hovacik: Do you think in that case, harmony and unity will become possible between the two Sees?**

**Messaporos: Yes, because the cause of that division was non-religious. That cause, in turn, doesn’t exist anymore: that political difference leading to the separation between the two Sees no longer exists. Therefore, if the church confines itself to strictly religious matters and is diverted of political issues, there will no longer be any cause for division between the two Sees, even if they continue to maintain their separate existence. There is no conflict of interest if both cathedrals remain, so long as dissension ceases and the aspect of the church’s integral structure is maintained.**

**Boromnagoh: In this matter, the status of the three Sees, as the Church of Etchmiadzin sees it, is very important. It is a matter for the political authorities: depending on the policy they pursue with regard to the abovementioned question, they accordingly will either serve the fatherland’s best interests or, on the contrary, they too will become weakened, as a result of which the government won’t benefit either. The overall question is: What position will Armenia’s political authorities and spiritual center take with regard to the Armenian Diaspora?**

**Dr. Hovacik: What should that policy be?**

**Messaporos: If we suppose for a moment that the church is segregated of 2½ political involvements, then Etchmiadzin must bring its clergymen back in the fatherland and focus its extensive plans of action on the matter of revivifying Armenia’s religious life. If we accept for a moment that the dissensions between the two Sees are eliminated, then the Church in the Diaspora and its structures shall be entrusted to the Killician Catholicosate and the religious vitalization of Armenia shall be directed by the Etchmiadzin clergy, whose acute shortage is felt at present.**

**Boromnagoh: Presently the churches have been granted the right to function freely, but there isn’t a sufficient number of clergymen. The vast majority of the existing ones, in turn, don’t have the special calling, the education, and the manners and more that are unique to the clergy.**

**Dr. Hovacik: Do you think that those clergymen ought to actively participate in (political) organizations?**

**Messaporos: If a given individual has dedicated his life to the religious work, that means that he has already decided on his purpose in life, which is to serve his people through religion. Of course, it is not at all disruptive for that clergyman to also have definite political views, independent of his professional occupation, as the Etchmiadzin clergy have.**

**Dr. Hovacik: As a political party, what relations do you have on a practical level with the Catholicosate of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin?**

**Boromnagoh: Unfortunately, permanent ties haven’t been formalized but soon we may attempt to move in that direction. At present the ties that exist are of a purely formal nature.**

**Dr. Hovacik: In the Diaspora, we hear and read in the papers that there is apparently discord within the ARS in Armenia, that there are two different currents or groupings—the ARS of Armenia and the diasporan ARS. Is this perception well founded?**

**Messaporos: What you’re referring to is not the official ARS but rather these so-called “self-proclaimed” dashnaks, who constitute a totally different grouping, another party. The ARS has already been established in Armenia and is functioning. A self-proclaimed Armenian Revolutionary Federation, as you might have come to know in this manner, that party was also registered or organized in order to be called “dashnaks.” There is nothing different about the organization, about the party, except that there is self-dissolution but, unfortunately, it turned out that they were not the same party, but rather new appeals, with different people and issues, which are quite different from those that have existed to date. The state of affairs that has been created has produced questions that are cause for serious deliberations and which suggest (the need for) significant structural changes. These are matters which will be examined and served in the forthcoming general assembly, during which the relationship between the fatherland and the diaspora will be viewed in a totally different light.**
THE ARMENIAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION

Conversation with
Vardan Khachatrian
Aram Mkrtchian
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS
OF THE ARMENIAN CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION

VARDAN K: When was your party founded?

VARDAN: The party was founded in May 1989. The founding members were: Arat Arshakian (president), Oleg Papyan, Aram Mkrtchian, Vardan Khachatrian and Vardan Haroutiunian. Its objective was to focus attention on the spiritual dimension of politics; to work towards channeling politics along a more proper, nobler, more Christian-like course and, most importantly, to be a party of the people. The objective was further clarified and became distinct through a proclamation that was subsequently approved. The union considers itself a non-religious organization comprised of extremely devout individuals. Each party member must live according to the Ten Commandments, be knowledgeable in Christian ethics and apply them in all situations, both in politics and in life. Its main objective is to create a democratic system of government by making radical changes and making the defense of human rights—the constituent essence of democracy—its foundation.

Dr. Nahir: Do you have any church affiliation or declaration of faith?

K: The declaration of faith is the following: we accept as a base the Armenian Apostolic Church, considering it a national institution that is created by the nation. By the same token, we tolerate any other church, and seek mutual understanding with other churches, even non-believers. What is demanded of them all, regardless, is morality, and the acceptance of Christian values. Our objective and program is to create a true democratic government in Armenia, the foremost of whose basic underlying political principles shall be morality in politics, and to restore the lost faith and morality to the nation through propaganda. In all matters, including national issues as well—take Karabagh for example—the starting
point is the defense of human rights and we shall confront any issue in the event that human rights are being violated. The purpose of our Union is to create a link, serve as a bridge between the church and politics, the church and the people.

Dr. Haac: In Europe, for example in Germany, there exists the Christian Democratic Party. Is your party similar in form and principles to it or is it different?

Kacaruncin: Our organization is different and is not connected to any such organization currently in existence. We admit, however, that the basis is the same, since everybody's focus is on the economic issue. As in the case abroad, we too are in favor of private enterprise and private ownership, by means of which people will achieve material prosperity and develop wealth. The greater the number of wealthy individuals, the richer the government will be. The more people there are with property and wealth, the more they will be able to participate in the people's spiritual life, and they will be that much more useful to the people and the nation. In the past, such a thing didn't previously exist in our country. Apparently the church was quite strong and there was no need to create such an organization to defend religion, faith, morality and the national heritage. At that time, there wasn't the need for that. During the past 70 years, however, the church and its influence on the people were destroyed, and now people are feeling their detachment, their alienation from the church. That feeling has become so deep that they cannot consider themselves believers, despite the fact that they feel the need for faith. Therefore, our task, our objective is to restore the nation's perception of the church, its faith and the human traits which have characterized the nation and its morality.

Dr. Haac: In this regard, do you have any interaction with the Armenian Apostolic Church?

Kacaruncin: We approached both His Holiness the Catholicos Vazken II and the [Araratian] Diocese in Yerevan, proposing cooperation. Unfortunately, they declined; they didn't wish to cultivate relations with any political organization. It's possible that such a directive had been given to them and they couldn't be receptive.

Dr. Haac: What kind of cooperation had you suggested? Can you provide examples?

Kacaruncin: For example, when the mass baptism of the 150-200,000 Armenian emigrants from Azerbaijan was going to take place at Lake Sevan, we offered our assistance and support—not financial of course—since we're not at all in a position to provide that, not having such means. An agreement was reached but they assigned us only the task of keeping order, maintaining discipline: i.e., a policing role.

Dr. Haac: What sort of participation and support had you expected to provide?

Kacaruncin: We had anticipated participating in all the planned activities and all the organizational tasks, except the spiritual part—religious preaching—which belongs to the church. That's their job.

Dr. Haac: In the present situation in Armenia, when political and economic hang-ups have brought about a serious and critical state of affairs, do you think that the Armenian Church is in a position to perform its mission?

Kacaruncin: To tell the truth, the topic you've broached is rather complex and touchy. Our conviction, our official point of view is that the Church's role is too great and the scope of its activity has to be plainly limited. It is the Church which shall be at the head, leading the believers, and bring the word and message of God to them. We must confess, however, that such is not the case in reality. Under the present conditions of freedom, the number of churchgoers has increased disproportionately, there are more believers but the people are presently behaving inductively in matters of religion and faith. The force to assemble them, bring them together and organize them is lacking; that force can be the church and only the church. In this regard, regrettably, the church is quite remiss in its obligation. In fact, the Church has become the mouthpiece of the views of the political authorities. Sometimes there are governmental decisions which don't have a positive effect on the people. In such cases, you see, the church must definitely intervene in order to protect the interests of the believers. In reality, however, the church maintains silence or comes forth as the government's ideologist. Church sermons too are usually nothing more than an apology for this or that activity or policy of the government, without taking into consideration the degree to which they are acceptable and beneficial to the people. This circumstance is repulsive to the churchgoing believer who goes there to find explanations concerning faith, Christ, and our national religious beliefs and rites, and the elucidation of those sorts of matters that are of concern to them. The church has one calling: to bring the word of God to the

M ultiplicity of religions is inevitable in democratic countries. So why shouldn't it be the same in Armenia?
ARMENIAN
“SKINHEADS”

Conversation with
Artak Zakarian and Levon Krikorian
16-year-old students at Gumayr Academic School
Gumayr, Armenia

This conversation took place during lunch recess at Gumayr Academic School (High School level). While visiting the classrooms, I noticed swastikas drawn by chalk on the walls of two classrooms. I asked some of the students for explanation, their ages ranged from 15 to 17 years old. During the course of our conversation, I found out that they were Armenian racist or “skinheads” as we call them here in the United States. They use the term Tzaghagron in Armenian, which literally means “race as religion.” While their views were very controversial, the way they articulated their beliefs and ideas, with so much passion and conviction, was very impressive. It was hard to believe that they were only 15 or 16 year-old young men. Here is an excerpt from that conversation:

Dr. HATCH: What do you understand by the term Tzaghagron (devotee, follower of the race)?
ARTAK: As to the meaning of Tzaghagron, it is our understanding that man, as a divine being or creation, has to have his objects of worship; he must, in the first instance, worship his God and then the race to which he belongs, whose representative he is. Each individual must put his ideas into practice in real life and in every regard; that is, he must do everything to elevate the understanding of race.

Dr. HATCH: Where are those ideas presently being cultivated?
LEVON: The aforementioned ideas were advanced earlier in the 20th century by the well-known freedom fighter Nejdeh. It was he who suggested living racially, with the concerns and aims of the race, that is. The main objective of this ideology is the national rebirth of the Armenian people, the elevation of national self-awareness; the overriding issue is the defense of the interests of the race and the placement of
those interests above all other fac-
tors, above all.

Dr. Haxor: Do you think, though,
that that is dangerous? Take the case
of the Germans. Didn't the ideology
tend to their wrongdoing?

Leeve: It's true, since it is possible to
think that it's the same fascism. In
reality, however, there isn't such a
thing because our ideology doesn't
cloak our nation above all the oth-
ers, it does not disdain others, rather
it aspires to raise our own dignity, to
bring the nation to the point of self-
knowledge, self-awareness, to el-
imate the people's national spirit and
pride, without becoming haughty and
superior.

Dr. Haxor: Well, then what is the
place and role of religion and the
church in this ideology?

Leeve: Since our Apostolic Church is
a purely national church, it too must
play an important and defensive role
and contribute, in turn, to the awak-
ening and strengthening of the na-
tional self-awareness of the Arme-
nian people.

Dr. Haxor: Does that mean that reli-
gion must become race worship, or
the embodiment of race worship.

Leeve: Not at all. We simply wish to
stress that although religion stands
above all human affairs and above all
ideology people's race, inequalities,
the merits of the nation and the race
must never be forgotten, ignored and
scorned. In the word "taghkonr,"
race is lifted up, it is accepted as an
object of worship without of course
forgetting that everything on earth
has been created by the Heavenly
Father, and no ideology whatsoever
can deny, refute, or help but accept
that as an absolute truth.

Leeve: The main object of race devo-
tion is man; accordingly, the ideology
we profess is a humanistic ideology.
The Armenian Christian Church,
found by our Lord Jesus Christ and
handed down to us, is likewise a humanistic philosophy: thus this
race devotion ideology of ours also
follows its humanistic ethical and
God's commandments.

Dr. Haxor: Are you saying that there
is no antagonism or conflict between
your ideology and the church.

Leeve: Of course there isn't and there
can't be. Even going back several
thousand years, ever since the ear-
liest times, our people have had the
inclination to worship their own race.
That is the reason why we had a firm

stable governmental foundation in
the days of Tigran and Arshatas. Our
people had achieved a high level of
self-awareness; they felt and knew
that they were obligated to defend the
race against all kinds of hostile intru-
sions and attacks. Owing to that
noble concept, awareness of being a
nation, in turn, they were able to
overcome numerous adversities and
survive till the present.

Leeve: In losing their statehood, our
people also lost their national self-
awareness. The main purpose of our
present state and government in ev-
ery way and every respect in order to
protect and strengthen it.

Dr. Haxor: How widespread is your
current ideology? Does it exist only
within your school's confines or is it
being embraced more widely?

Leeve: The ideology has spread
throughout Armenia, even to the
two extent that two political parties
have emerged which are founded on
its basis.

Dr. Haxor: Why have you selected
the swastika as your symbol?

Ayvaz: The origin of the sign is very
old and it signifies eternity. There
was a period long before Christian-
ity when that sign was equivalent to
the cross.

Dr. Haxor: Nevertheless, the swas-
tika is a symbol of fascist Germany,
and it shall always be associated
everywhere with the ideology of
fascism and therefore, whether you
like it or not, you must clarify your
intention and purpose.

Leeve: As we said, the sign symbol-
izes eternity. It refers to an in very
old times and its cradle was the
Armenian Highland and its vicinity.
The true meaning, or essence, of the
sign is the concept of eternity, the
transquility and variability of na-
ture, as well as the natural order of
things. The German chauvinists
simply found it suitable to give form
to their aims and make it serve their
interests, characterized by super-
power ambitions and an insolence
of foreigners.

Dr. Haxor: Is your pimassec ideolog-
y essentially political or religious
in nature? And do many in your
school believe and follow that con-
cept?

Leeve: In Armenia, the ideology of
race devotion is represented by two
political parties: "The Armenian Race-
Worshiping Party," and "The
Njevelsian Race Devotees." The lat-
ter, particularly among the youth,
has begun to gain much popularity
and has become widespread. Quite a
few of both the girls and boys in our
school have now become followers of
the ideology of race devotion.
Diary of an American Priest in Armenia

Fr. Yeprem Kelegian

Earlier this year I was sitting in a village in Armenia, holding hands over a hot plate, trying to keep warm. I was really sick—but so fulfilled as I've ever been in nearly two decades in the ministry.

I was one of two priests chosen to go to the newly independent Republic of Armenia to preach in the villages. (Fr. Dejah Davidson of Watertown, MA, is the other priest I traveled with.) For more than 70 years, the communists had suppressed the church. Now Armenia, the earliest nation to embrace Christianity, is having its first exciting taste of freedom in years. Things were different now. In 1970, as part of my training for the priesthood, I spent a summer at the monastery in Echmiadzin. At that time, Armenians were repressed, and a person could be sent to Siberia just for preaching and practicing Christianity. However, today, people in Armenia are free for religion, even though they are still trying to recover from the devastating 1988 earthquake and are fighting to keep Armenians in neighboring Azerbaijan.

Our trip had been scheduled for January, but the Armenians urged us not to come until March because of the cold. Even so, we arrived early on the ground, and it was hard to stay warm. I have to confess that it took me a while until I fully comprehended our mission and the people who inhabit the land of my ancestors' birth. But once I did, it was hard to leave.

February 27

We arrive in Yerevan, capital of Armenia. There is applause when we touch down. People are happy to be in Armenia, but they probably also are relieved that the decrepit Soviet Antonov plane landed safely. No one is there to meet us at 3:30 am, but we find our way to Echmiadzin, the center of the Armenian Church worldwide. No one in authority seems to know what to do with us...

February 28

We meet with His Holiness Vazken I, Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians. Even after meeting with him, we find that nothing is firm about our mission, by chance we run into the bishop of Lensakan. He said he would arrange for us to visit some villages in the region struck by the earthquake. But we must wait four days. I am impatient. We are waiting too!

February 29

We are still doing nothing, but we have met the priest from Holdemianzantz and he takes us out to visit some of the 38 villages in his community. Because of the destroyed economy, the shortages, the lack of heat and electricity, the unemployment, everyone is in bad shape, but they all have courage and strength.

March 1

We are still in Holdemianzantz. I have the opportunity to do some blessing services. One is to bless a baby who has
been brought to church, along with two live pigeons (an ancient thanksgiving offering). I was never taught this in seminary.

The priest also asked me to perform a funeral. On the way to the village, I find out that the deceased is a 46-year-old woman. I am 45. God, she is young. When I look at the casket, I see a very old, weathered, and beaten blotted body. Life is hard here in Armenia. Because of the great hardships, anybody over 35 starts to look like a senior citizen.

After the funeral, we go to the poorest of the villages of Holokemberiantz to visit some of the Armenian refugees from Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. These were middle- and upper-middle-class engineers and teachers from Baku. They were forced out when the Azeris started murdering the Armenians. Now they are the poorest of the poor. Some left with only the clothes on their back. The tension between Armenia and Azerbaijan has brought more than 300,000 Armenians as refugees from Azerbaijan. We visit many of the families, trying to give them hope, leaving what money we could. The food shortage is severe in Armenia, but in places like this it is much more acute.

**March 2**

We get a chance to speak at an adult religious education class. I think it is easy to preach because they disregard my broken Armenia and are just interested in Christianity. It seems that faith has a language of its own.

**March 4**

We're in Yerevan. The largest city in Armenia is bustling with entrepreneurs selling clothing, radios, lighters, cigarettes and junk. But the food shortage is evident even here. Most of the factories are closed because there is little electricity and a scarcity of raw materials. Most of the workforce is unemployed and many of the men simply stand on the street corners smoking and discussing solutions to the problems of Armenia.

**March 5**

I track down a taxi to take us to Leninakan, now officially called Gumri but still referred to as Leninakan by most Armenians. The driver tells us that he has heard that American men take too many orders from their mothers-in-law. Not so in Armenia, he declares, the men call all the shots here. Later in the conversations, we ask him where we can get in touch with him in case we need him. He gives us his mother-in-law's number.

It is snowing and cold. It takes about three and a half hours to travel 75 miles. The roads are terrible. How does anything get done in this country?

**March 7**

We attend the Saturday Christian education school for children and have lunch with the teachers. They are part of the Armenian church. "Brotherhood" or "Fellowship" basically the former underground church. During the Soviet regime, they preached Christianity and held prayer meetings at great personal risk. They kept together a loose network throughout the country and kept up the Christian education of their youth. In a word, they kept the living church alive, while the institutional church was under great governmental pressure and restrictions.

There's no electricity or heat today. It's cold. I'm glad we didn't come in January.

**March 8**

I am with the other priests at the Leninakan Cathedral when a mother and daughter who had been in Hartford for medical care after the earthquake came up to me. We kiss each other on the cheek, which sent a shock wave through the old priest next to me. He said, "You don't kiss our Leninakan women in church!" To which I asked, "Where do you kiss them—outside?" Priests here don't seem to have a sense of humor.

**March 9**

We visit the village of the Sargsahjaur, near Leninakan. We first meet with village officials (all trying to keep warm around a potbelly stove) and then we visit the school. The children really know their facts about Christianity.

Some Armenian fedayin (man) who gives his life for a cause. When a fedayin dies, we do not say "merci" rather, "zhehturn" (alms) have attacked a Russian garrison near Leninakan and have taken hostages. They are seeking the liberation of Nagorno-Karabagh, an enclave populated by Armenians in neighboring Azerbaijan.
They will return the hostages for arms.

**March 10**

We are in Artik, a small city of about 40,000. After meeting with a few government officials, we visit the school. We also have the opportunity to meet with some fedayin who were captured during the attack on the Russian garrison. They were hanging around the district attorney’s office having coffee. Two of the five kiss our hand and ask for blessings.

**March 11**

I spend a couple of hours simply sitting in church to pray. Many people come up and ask religious questions. In a way, the Armenians are lucky. They have been stripped of everything—work, money, food, heat—they are forced to lead either a meaningless and hopeless life or seek meaning in God and family, the warmth and security that the family provides.

In America we have too many comforts that distract us from the reality of life. We have so much good that we cannot appreciate a good fragment of bread. We have heat, so we cannot detect our human frailty each moment of a cold winter. We have money so we don’t really need and appreciate friends and family. In Armenia, though they have nothing, they have the opportunity to have everything.

In the main square of Leninakan there is a huge pedestal where Lenin’s statue once stood high. No one approaches the pedestal any more, but it is the warmest part of the city and by midday there are a dozen dogs basking in the sun by the pedestal. Lenin still has his followers in Armenia.

**March 12**

We return to Saranghapur and speak to the classes we missed last time. We also conduct a prayer service.

Everyone in this earthquake-struck area has a sad story. The priest who is taking us around, Father Shirag, lost his daughter in the earthquake. She was at school, he found her body, almost unmarred, in the rubble. She was 10. They were very close. This reminded me of my relationship with my 10-year-old daughter. Although Father Shirag has a son now, nothing can take the place of his daughter. When he is playing with his son, he is happy one moment and then suddenly he is sad, and I know he is remembering his daughter.

The city, though in ruins, still is beautiful. The children playing in the rubble are a sign that this city will rise again. William Saroyan put it best when he said that you can do what you want to the Armenian, but when two of them come together, “see if they will not create a new Armenia.”

**March 13**

Today, I go to the Cathedral again. I pull out a prayer card to give to one of the people I was talking to. I am instantly besieged by people who want one. There is a hunger, a thirst for the spiritual. Back home there are people who say that food and other supplies should be sent before religious items. They should come here and visit and open up their eyes and ears before they say such things.

It is starting to get warm. Good news for a city with little heat.

**March 14**

I have a great time at the Chris- tian Education School. I can’t imagine getting such a group of enthusiastic and faithful teens like this together in America on a Saturday morning.

We have lunch with the teachers again. They will put us in contact with the Armenian Church Brotherhood (Fellowship) people wherever we want to go.

**March 15**

I give the sermon in the Cathed- ral today. The people occasionally yell out “Amen” or “Glory to God,” or they yell out answers to my rhetorical questions. It is not my skill but the people’s faith that makes the preaching.

In the afternoon I go to the city of Kirovakan to visit another person who had been in Hartford for treatment after the earthquake. Anna is doing well. She and her husband just had a baby, named Haroutune (resurrection). Anna lost two children in the earthquake. As she limps around on her artificial leg, there is a glimmer of a smile because of her child and a shadow of sadness she remembers what had been before the earthquake.

**March 16**

I visit Spitak, the epicenter of the 1988 earthquake. It is a broken city. Even the teenagers who had visited Hartford last summer had no humor and lightness I have seen in other places in Armenia. It wasn’t until last summer in Hartford that they even danced. Dancing simply is not done when you are in mourning, and these children had been in mourning for almost three years.

I meet with the priest of Spitak, Father Avedik (meaning “good news”). He is a melancholy young man. Certainly the ministry in this city has affected him.

**March 17**

On the way back to Yerevan, we visit the city of Tbil. We have to stop there because I named one of my daughters after this village. Tbil has been inhabited since 2000 B.C. It is a city of great patriots and great believers. More than 500 fedayin who fight in Karabagh are from Tbil. The church was reopened two years ago when residents collected 100,000 rubles (small fortune in these times) to refurbish it.

**March 18**

Before going to our next work site, we spend the evening at the Etchmiadzin monastery. We meet with the Yerevan bishop and the priest of Hrazdan, where we will be going next. The bishop jokingly asks if we want to stay with a rich family or a poor one. Father Davidian, my partner, goes for the rich and I the poor.

In the evening we attend a prayer meeting in Yerevan attended by more than 700 people. When we get there, we find out that we are the main speakers in the evening. By this point in the trip, I have nothing prepared. It is easy speaking to groups like this. They are not self absorbed and can therefore hear the word of God.

Late in the evening I suggest to the young North Americans who are here to distribute food that it would be fun to lift up Father Yezy’s car and put it somewhere else. Father continued on p. 30
Human nature is resourceful, especially in self-defense, and is no better illustrated than in the ego-defense mechanisms which we use to protect and/or insulate ourselves. Rather than expose a self which we imagine to be inadequate or ugly, we build walls, wear masks, act out roles. We do not trust or accept ourselves enough to be ourselves.

While it may seem to be a safer life behind these facades, it is also a lonely life. We cease to be authentic, and as persons, we strive to death because we have cut ourselves off from all genuine contact with the real world and with other human beings. When we resort to acting out roles or wearing masks, there is no possibility of human growth. We are simply not being ourselves but are merely performing on a stage. When the curtain falls after our performance, we remain the same immature persons that we were when the curtain went up at the beginning of the first act.

The process of maturation depends on how we react to the difficulties or challenges of life. The immature person sees only the difficulties and with his near-sighted eyes can see only the problem and pays very little attention to his own reaction, which in fact, the critical and definite thing. Difficulties will pass, but our reaction to them does not. Left to linger on in us, it becomes habit, defining our level of maturity. It is not the problem that is critical, but our reaction to it. The reaction of the Christian must always be insulated with a confidence nourished by the conviction that God and he are a majority, stronger than his own weaknesses. The process of maturation as a Christian (and of course as a human being) will inevitably be marked by failures. But the only real failure is to give up, to quit. The Christian must become bigger that his problem.

If then we are to tear down the walls, take off the masks, stop playing the roles, then we become exposed to the world. We take a chance at being accepted, rejected, hurt, loved... If one is to grow with God, then one must be willing to give up of himself and take on the nature of God who is total love.

Loving others can be truly accomplished only when the focus of our minds and the object of our desires is another. and when all of our activities result from concern for another and not from concern for ourselves. If a person truly lives in this way, he will be loved and he should accept the love of others. The delusion to be strangled at all costs is to love in order to receive love. Christ teaches that we must lose our life before we can gain it, that the only real receiving is in giving. If one is totally concerned with himself, he can never lose his life, can never understand nor experience total love. Love means a concern for, acceptance of, and an interest in the others around us.

Let us pass over the obvious, i.e. family relationships, friendships etc. and focus instead on the church parish community.

Christ Our Lord left no doubt about the credentials of the Christian. He said: "By this you shall know that you are my disciples, that you love one another... love one another as I have loved you... this is all I command you that you love one another." St. John reminds us in his First Epistle that it is impossible to love God whom we do not see and not love those around us whom we do see. Yes, these things we have heard and maybe even read but we pay them no attention and fails to perform as action.

The only attitude worthy of the Christian is that of Christ who thought of others always, who gave himself totally even unto death. In his own words "Greater love than this no man that, that he lay down his life for his friend." This is what love, Christian love, asks of us, that we lay down our lives for others. Only when we have consented to do this, will we find ourselves, our own happiness, our growth and maturity, our justification as a Christian community.

Becoming a true church community is a long and hard road. It is another of sacrifice. It asks an enormous price in self-forgetfulness on the part of the individual. It is to seek only the glory of God who is love. The true Christian community seeks only the good, the fulfillment and the destiny of his fellow man. It is difficult. But yet, the Lord Jesus Christ stands with us, and it becomes our joyous exhortation "By this shall men know that you are my disciples, that you love one another."
Fellowship
continued from p. 11
the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, simple low-cost buildings were built for religious as-
semblies. It’s a fact too that during the period of Communist rule, 3500 churches were either closed down or destroyed in Armenia. Today, this much time has passed since the overthrow of that regime and yet not a single church has reopened in Armenia [as a functioning church]; it is, in fact, difficult to explain. That is where we need help. Today, things are quite small, without pews and other facilities. We don’t even wish to talk about the ongoing condition of the priests who are physically un-
able to perform their ever increasing liturgical or ritual obligations. The long-term spiritual barrenness has now come to an end, the people are already experiencing a reawakening, and now it remains for the church to wake up too, for its clergy to be of service and to experience that reawakening. In the first place, the church’s con-
cern must be the building of large comfortable churches and the sup-
ply of suitable clergy.
Dr. Hovakim: In some circles, there is the notion that your Fellowship has adopted certain customs unique to the Armenian Catholic Church in this matter and how would you respond to that notion?
Zoomar: The issue itself is baseless because it comes from those persons who don’t know what the church is. The Armenian Apostolic Church has its creed, dogmas, and sacred traditions and un-
questionably, the liturgical traditions of the Fellowship accept them wholly as they are. Our Fellowship recognizes the hierarchy of the Armenian Church and its liturgical traditions and accepts liturgical worship that is that of the Ar-
menian Apostolic Church only. We might mention that there were attempts to dictate reforms during the 1920’s, but we have no such intentions whatsoever.
As far as Protestantism is con-
cerned, for a long time an erroneous point of view has prevailed that preaching the Gospel is Protestant-
sim and that, since we are preach-
ing the Gospel, therefore we have been influenced by Protestant dis-
tem in doing so. They are saying to us, “Well, what is true? Is Protestantism some day?” See what a baseless and absurd belief is being applied to us! How and why would a believer, who applies the Armenian Apostolic
Church’s declaration of faith unques-
tioningly, resign fasci It and turn to Protestantism? Absolutely the Prote-
stant Church has certain positive and edifying aspects, such as for example the manner of immediate, simple, sincere, and direct contact with all members of the public—some-
things which we are also aspiring to achieve—but that doesn’t mean that we are thereby identifying ourselves with them.
Dr. Hovakim: Do you, having wholly dedicated your time and service to this work, think that the Fellowship’s relationship with the Church can be threatened in the near or distant future, as a result of the presence exerted by the Church; and that the Fellowship might be forced to continue its mission independently and in its own fashion?
Zoomar: Such a thing has hap-
pened. In 1961, due to political considerations, His Holiness was forced to reject us and it reached the point where our prayer meetings were forbidden and we were obliged to gather together in homes. We’ve been in existence for 15 years, yet, both government and religious bod-
ies are making it appear that we are-
and trying to make us into secta-
tarians; they are attempting to entice us with various promises: financial se-
curity, the freedom to expand our activity, and the necessary means of facilities. However, all that of course is geared toward one basic purpose: to weaken and soften the church. The Fellowship has never closed itself to its father, the mother, the church is the birth giver of our faith and the “father” is the Gospel.
Dr. Hovakim: Does this mean that you could continue to exist under the wings of the Armenian Apostolic Church by all means and in any event? Zoomar: Yes. Even if they put a stop to our meetings, we will go on and go on and continue our work by going underground. We have experience in that and shall not leave the orbit of the Armenian Church at any cost. However we are optimistic and nur-
ture the hope that our church will be transformed with regards to its officials and servants. The vision of our Holy Fathers, that Armenia and the Armenian Church shall be reborn, too. We guided us for 15 years already and shall continue to illumine our path hereafter too.
Dr. Hovakim: Earlier you said that the lack of clergy is acutely felt. Is there perhaps individuals among your Fellowship who are ready and able to carry on a minis-
try within the church?
Zoomar: Within our Fellowship, there are at present some 50 persons who are able to work as preachers, as well as 10-15 women, sisters who could serve as deaconesses. As early as 1980, vigorous activity toward this end was started in Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and the Catholic Church is quite seriously considering the is-
sue of ordaining men and women in those countries. Back in October 1991, His Holiness and the Primate of the Armenian Diocese promised to ordain all the members of our execu-
tive committee as deacons and preaching priests, non-liturgical.
However, they apparently have cer-
tain doubts and again they reverted to the decision that we are only able to function as aides to priests. Prob-
ably a certain amount of time must pass before they can be freed from the preconceived attitude and reser-
vation they have toward us. The church, instead of concerning her-
self with the issue of sects—which have been growing like mushrooms and spreading throughout Armenia in the past few years—has made its task, target. I am pleased to note the fact that, among the church officials and its governing bodies there are indiv-
iduals who have understood us cor-
tectly—recognized the true essence of the Fellowship and are endeavoring to support our growth, knowing full well that the assistance provided by us to the church can help it to a great extent in its efforts to better serve...
Dr. Hovakim: At present time, what are some of the concrete needs of the Fellowship?
Zoomar: Perhaps the most immedi-
ate issue is having a building or a place in the Fellowship’s office. We have al-
sreadily discussed this mat-
ter with the Primate of the Armenian Diocese.
The next important issue is the dire need for means of transporta-
tion for the evening meetings. That is to increase and expand our activities of the Fellowship. But in light of the fact that prices are increasing at exponential propor-
tions daily. Recently we bought a bus for $2500 and thereafter our work improved considerably, espe-
cially in Kalimian and Stepanavan. Presently we have 9 Sunday Schools there already and soon we will have 3 annual meetings.
Dr. Hovakim: How frequently do you hold Annual Meetings? Are they held during the week or only on Sunday? What is the format of the meeting?
Zoomar: The prayer meetings don’t follow a rigid scheme; it’s different depending on the location and the place. For example, we get together twice a week in Yerevan, on Wednes-
days and Saturdays. In towns there are places in other places; and there are places continued on next page
Judge continued from p. 14

rally, we will treat the non-Armenian elements in our country in the same manner. For example, approximately 6 months ago, Russia announced that the Armenian Apostolic Church is now the state church and has the right to build its houses of worship throughout Russia. The Shurik Dior- cese welcomed that step and, in re- sponse, has decided, of course with the Catholicos, prie de choc to open a Russian church in Kirovakan that had been previously closed down.

Dr. Hrachia: I wish to repeat my ques- tion: Should the Armenian Apostolic Church be permitted to do the Hano- rial Church and, at the same time, give other churches the opportunity to function freely?

Catholicos: Yes, I'm in agree- ment with both points of view. Hayk- vening in many diocesan Armenian com- munities, I am convinced that the Armenians there have gen- erally clung much more firmly and resolutely to their religion and their faith and, in my opinion, that stems from the governmental structure of these countries, which has displayed an attitude of tolerance toward people, regardless of their national identity and profession. Unfortunately the situation was totally different during the period of Soviet rule, when the church and its role was com- pletely ignored, scorched and isolated. The difficulties we are currently fac- ing in religious matters are also at- tributable to that, but if we are able to properly carry forward what we have planned and already begun in many places, I'm confident that we will have double the number of true be- lievers in all of ten years.

Dr. Hrachia: In this new situation, is the Armenian Apostolic Church seeing its mission and expand its evangel- ical activity?

Catholicos: Yes, it is prepared and in a position to do so. To tell those who think that the Church's work makes the necessity of the church’s work, difficulty and are more interested in for- mids raising spirits, healing pierced souls and creating a sense of confi- dence in the legitimate church and reconstruc- ting impaired faith, I think now is the time to focus attention on spiritual instruction. In this regard, marvel- ous work is being done by the Araratian Diocese which has already been able to assemble a large number of believers around the church, through various programs organized by it. Our situation here in Gumri is much more difficult, extreme cau- tion, sensitivity and dedication are required in order to bring people, who believe in the presence of God, back into the church's fold, to inspire depressed souls with faith and optim- ism, yet we must admit that the results are satisfying. Adding that is the financial and moral support be- ing shown by the Diaspora which is being realized by and large through the church according to its mission, and more so to the church and are believing in 21st mission.
Disaster-Zone
continued from p. 16
one, terribly difficult, both in terms of the economy and from a political standpoint, is nothing new. Our very precarious economic situation is known to the whole world and to America in particular, which is helping our country with humanitarian aid. The severity of the economic situation is basically the result of the blockade of Armenia. Our people are suffering, they don’t want to do anything but it seems that the aim of the blockade is to make them surrender. All sources of trade and energy have been exhausted so, as a result, there’s no production. And if there’s no production, there can’t be any money. In this sense, we are subjected to a very difficult, even deadly situation.

As far as the political situation is concerned, forgive me for saying, but in reality the future of the Armenian people is not bright at all. I’m constantly afraid that the year 1915 will be repeated, that we will close out the 20th century under the same terrifying circumstances with which we started it. Let this not be regarded as pessimism but, in hearing and reading news of events in the political arena, I dread that Europe and America will perhaps again close their eyes, as it happened in the case of Cyprus, and allow Turkey to carry out its excesses with a clear conscience.

Dr. HAKATZ: As a judge, what difficulties do you encounter and generally what sort of criminals do you have in your court?

Juuce Tavevooer: As a Judge, I can say that I don’t have difficulties because I love my profession very much. I’ve been a lawyer for more than 25 years and I really enjoy what I do. As far as crime is concerned, the crime rate in the area in which I practice is quite serious: crime—murder, theft, robbery—practically none. This is a fact that I am very pleased about. As far as crimes are concerned, the crime rate in the area where I practice is quite low.

Dr. HAKATZ: How do you view this situation of this Armenian community?

P. E. SVEG: As a priest, I again feel that our fate is tied to God, the Armenian God who hopefully, this time at least, won’t let us be clawed to death by the enemy dragon. I have faith that God is with us, protecting us, and I think that however difficult the situation is, it is determined by God and we should trust in Him and not despair.

Dr. HAKATZ: What thoughts went through your mind when you were thinking about the children you were baptizing the children?

P. E. SVEG: At that moment, I was almost certain that this baptism was going to be the last for a while. I have the impression that the baptism of children was performed in this area not only because of the children who were present, but because of all the Armenian villages nearby. In this case, the decision to perform the baptism was not made in advance, but rather it was the result of the situation at the time. We performed the baptism in a church in the village of Gamses, where there were about 100 people. We were able to perform the baptism in a very short period of time because of the circumstances.

Dr. HAKATZ: What spiritual satisfaction do you derive from your work, both as a Judge and as a Chairman of the Diocesan Council?

Juuce Tavevooer: I love to do both. I love my work as a Judge and I think that my performance in both areas could be very high marks.

... A few Armeians living in Gamses had invited me to perform a baptism. The house that I went to was a little shack (they call it "domik" in Russian) made out of iron, 6 meters deep and 3 meters wide (approximately 20' x 10'). There were four iron beds and the mattresses were covered with very thin blankets. There was nothing even a toilet. There wasn’t even a stove, let alone a bathroom. The family consisted of husband and wife and four small children, two of whom were twins. The godfather was also present. Under these conditions, the baptism of the 4 little ones was performed.

Dr. HAKATZ: As a priest, how do you view this situation of this Armenian community?
Democrats continued from p. 20
people. This must be its motto, this must be its basic fundamental motto. Dr. HATCH: What do you think about the different denominations and sects that are prevailing in Armenia? What position does your party have regarding them?

Roussanian: Our party's point of view on this matter is quite plain. Matters of faith are not to be discussed in the church's. If the Armenian Church accepts them, we have nothing further to say. As far as the sects are concerned, our attitude toward them as well is one of tolerance. We said that we, as a base, accept and recognize the Armenian Apostolic Church because it is also our position that man is free in his beliefs, perhaps even to the degree of being misled, but he is free, he has the right to inhabit that freedom in any way, to limit or hinder his rights and privileges.

Arm. Marzoukian: We defend the point of view, whereby man is free to speak, listen and profess what he pleases; no one has the right to obstruct, to prevent this activity. Moreover, if various sects and religious teachings can find an audience among the people and be spread, it means that there is an empty space, a gap in the matter of declaration of faith that the Mother Church hasn't been able to fill. The church must occupy and concern itself with that matter; it must attempt to fill that gap if it doesn't wish for others to do that. This is not our business anyway; it is the church's business, a multiplicity of religions is an inevitable phenomenon in countries governed according to democratic principles. So why shouldn't it be the same case in Armenia?

We wish to acknowledge and thank Armeke Kehgrian for transcribing and editing the Armenian text of the conversations, with great patience and care. The conversations were translated to English by Artsiv Sarooy.

Diary continued from p. 25

Yerevan, who lived in America for severa years, thinks it's funny when he sees his brand new next to the cathedral, a good 100 yards away from where it was parked. The resident priests don't get it. There is no sense of humor in the priests here.

March 19
I am sick again with a bad cough. Sleeping at the guest house in Etchmiadzin with its marble interior makes it humid and cold.

March 20
We get to Gz analyzing, populated about 40,000. We arrive on time to hit one of the schools, but first we stop at the place where Father Davidian is staying. The rich guy insists that we spend two hours having tea. I vote to leave. This insists him but, more uncomfortable, I am confused by my attitude. I have come to see that the clergy have to act in great deference toward someone with money. This is one custom I won't have to get used to.

I am staying with the family of a fedayin, Khachig Tanjian, who was killed in action in Karabagh. There are 14 people in four rooms, heated by one pot-belly stove. The basic staples are potatoes, bread and tea. There's no running water, but there's an outhouse, of course.

Tanjian was killed when under a white flag while defending the village of Kedashen on April 24, 1991. This story of fedayin getting killed repeats itself wherever we go. This had been his sixth battle. Even if he had not died there, he would have eventually died anyway.

The widow is broken by the death of her husband. The son, 5 years old, accepts the death but is still confused. The daughter, 5 years old, asks every day when her father will come home. I am sleeping in a room that they have transformed into a shrine for the dead man. There are pictures of him all over, holy pictures, candles, crosses. The other two women in the house work in the kitchen and the kitchen is the only place where we have a bit of privacy. It is difficult to remain Armenian apart from the soil. Thus, to defend the soil of Armenia is to defend our soul.

They tell us haunting stories of destruction in Karabagh. Many times they get to a village too late and see how the Azeris have mutilated the bodies of the civilians: smashed heads, disembowled bodies and worse. Death is daily in Karabagh.

March 21
Armenia is in a state of military readiness to defend its borders. The army of the new Republic has been officially established.

I spend a good part of the evening talking with the priest of Gz. Fr. Hratchi Pakopjian. He is an intelligent, univeristy educated young man. We talk about all the problems of Armenia and possible solutions...a typical male discussion. To each solution we mention, we also see a factor which would negate the solution. Finally, his wife, who is knitting on the other side of the room, simply sighs and says, "Yes, if we had fingernails, we could scratch our head." This old Armenian saying seems to sum up the situation in which we find Armenia.

We have noticed that for the past week or so I have been eating very little. There are days I can get by on bread and tea. When I see so much hunger and I see the price of food, it is hard to eat. When food is offered in a meal, I tell them I am keeping a religious fast (no meat, no dairy). In this way, they can save the food for another day. Even if they do have the means to offer food, it seems obscene to eat in a country of hunger.

March 22
We hit School No. 13 and talk with several classes. It is easy to get them smiling, laughing and celebrating God.

In the evening, Fr. Dapad Fr. Hratchi and I met with a group of teachers. After talking questions on the Bible, I ask one of the teachers what she thinks of women's liberation for Armenia. She thinks the roles of men and women should stay as they are. A couple of days ago this same teacher said she would go to Karabagh and fight as soon as her youngest is in college.

March 23
Five days back in Etchmiadzin, I have a choice: Go to Yerevan, for a banquet at the Hotel Armenia is only place in Armenia to get one or go to the Yerevan post office and wait in line for an hour to call home. I call home.

It's still cold at the monastery, and it still drizzles. What's new?

March 26
We go to Abseran, a small city in the mountains.
Enough money has been collected to renovate the 4th-century church, but the people are arguing with the architects over the plans. These are stubborn people. I like them. We meet with the city council, and the vice mayor invites us to stay at his home. We immediately go and speak to about 100 people in the Adult Christian Education class. They don’t want our topics with a talk and a lot of talking. I like this place.

March 27

This is our last city and this is when I am really getting comfortable and good at speaking. This may sound strange, but as I was walking today, I felt that my feet really belong in this country. Every step resonated perfectly with the ground. This is a great city. These people are down-to-earth, intelligent, faithful, courageous. They are also very proud people. Many different people told me that they are sick of the food handouts coming over. “Don’t give us fish, teach us to fish,” was a common refrain. They want help to get the industry going. They want work, not handouts. This sentiment is echoed by the people throughout the villages and cities like Hrazdan and Abaran. They want work and industry, not welfare.

March 29

Being Sunday, there is a one-hour service at the church. It is outdoors, next to the church, since the building is not ready to be used yet. There are 150 people there, in the 30-degree temperature, blowing wind and more than a foot of snow. These people sang and danced and look in proper. After this service we speak at their regular Sunday prayer meeting in a packed school auditorium. Fr. Mgrditch, the young priest of Abaran, assures us that the prayer meeting in the church under meeting attendance are nothing unusual. It is exceptional attendance not only because of the cold, but because most of the people had to walk miles to get there.

March 30

We are back in Etchmiadzin to rest and pack. I am depressed about leaving. I could do so much more. I am hitting stride now. This is really the work of a priest.

April 1

We are in the plane now, I am looking at the mountains one last time. Although I am sad, I am also anxious to get home.

We arrive in DT for a one-day layover. I look long, long shower, round out that week, get drunk. We went out and had our first Western meal.

April 2

Home! It is good to be with my family. I sleep for about two days.

Postscript

The depression of being back in America has subsided somewhat by now. I missed so many of the people I left behind. I am still depressed. When I think about the condition of the church in Armenia, America, faith is exploding and growing. It reminded me of the New Testament churches when people experienced a personal relationship with God and made the Lord their first priority. In America there are many distractions, so much wealth. We do not have the Lord as the focal point, the center of our being, the ground of our existence. In Armenia, stripped of material goods, people are forced to reflect on what’s important. In America, money and material pleasures have kept so many of us from much of reality and the beauty and the pain of life.

The American Armenians are proud of their success. We trend to honor and respect those who have “made it.” However, it is this accumulation of material success which has torn us from our roots. Christ had warned that we could not serve both God and money. We did not heed the warning.

Though Christianity is growing in Armenia, there are two dangers.

The Fellowship is at best tolerated, at worst ignored by the hierarchy. Should this continue, the Christian movement will be stifled and institutionalized.

One is that, as Armenia grows economically, atheism will grow and a drifting away from the faith may occur. For it is in this country, that is hypothetical, of course. An immediate danger, however, is that the Armenian Church Brotherhood or Fellowship may not be fully incorporated into the structure of the church. The Brotherhood is instrumental in the spreading of Christian preaching, religious education for children and adults, prayer meetings...etc. And, for the most part, they are at best tolerated. At worst, they are simply ignored by the hierarchy. Should this continue, the Christian movement will be stifled and institutionalized.

But, in the meantime, the “word” of “faith” is spreading. So many people come back and paint a picture of despair and hopelessness. What they say is true. But, at the same time, if you look at the growing faith, there is only hope and life.

Finally, what can Armenians in America do? Of course, we need to somehow get industry moving over there. Our material efforts must be centralized on that. Food aid should be limited only to the refugees in Armenia. The other aspect needed is for us to pray and send every type of religious encouragement, printed material, priests, as well as groups of people who are interested in faith to establish a sister church system...ect.

When I was in Armenia 22 years ago, there was plenty of food, decent wages, jobs, no fear of annihilations, no famine from a recent earthquake. But Communist suppression had deadened people in so many ways. Today there is hunger, poverty and fear of the enemies surrounding Armenia, but the people are free and the church is once again alive.

Armenia, America, what do the newly independent Armenians do? There is much that we can do materially. But it’s more important to use our political and moral resources to bring peace to the region. That Armenians need to put pressure on elected officials. The influence of this country is considerable when we plan to exercise it. The American eagle, in parts of the world like Armenia, represents hope and enlightenment. Let us live up to that image. Armenia has no oil, no precious metals, no strategic location. Armenia is simply trying to stay alive amid its newfound freedom.

Exceptionally this diary was published in The Armenian Courier, Sunday, June 14, 1992 issue. Fr. Gagik is the provost priest of the St. George Armenian Church in Hartford, CT.
FATHERLY ADVICE
Joint Statement of Catholicos Regarding Religion in Armenia

During August 25-30 of this year, we, the Catholicos of all Armenians, and Karekin II, Catholicos of the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and Father of the Holy Apostolic Church of Armenia, focusing our thoughts and deliberations on the Present-day religious situation of our motherland of Armenia and on the role of our Church within that contest;

We feel our obligation to bring the following considerations to the attention of our beloved people in Armenia and in the diaspora with our desire to keep them in communion with our thoughts and concerns so that they may continue to fulfill their responsibilities with wisdom and dedication towards their Holy Church, their Nation, and their Motherland.

1. After the proclamation of the independent Republic of Armenia (following the break-up of the Soviet Union) and under the new conditions of freedom in our Motherland, the task of the Armenian Church entered a new direction and a new process and received renewed importance. To provide Christian spiritual nurture for our people became more urgent and acquired wider dimensions.

2. The Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin, with its Religious Order, the ranks of its clergy, and its dioceses and its lay people, and with the cooperation of the Catholicosate of the Trans Jordanian Diocese, the Patriarchal Sees of Jerusalem and Constantinople, has displayed a dynamic and manifold activity through the expansion and reorganization of ecclesiastical life, the preaching of the Christian faith, and the humanitarian and social services rendered to the basic and immediate human needs, particularly in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake of the Leninakan district on December 7, 1988. To give only a few illustrations:

   a. A great number of churches were erected.
   b. New dioceses were established.
   c. New parishes were constituted.
   d. New Christian associations of youth and adolescents were organized.
   e. Religious journals, periodicals, and other Publications came into existence.
   f. Programs of Christian preaching, seminars, talks, and interviews began to be broadcast on both radio and television on a regular and continuous basis.
   g. Religious instruction was introduced in the schools.
   h. Courses were established for the pedagogical preparation of teachers of religion.
   i. Pastoral and pastoral visits took place in various regions of Armenia.
   j. Canonical church services, particularly the celebration of the Eucharistic Divine Liturgy and the Holy Sacraments acquired a new popularity involving larger numbers of lay people attending and participating.

3. A new and wider field of spiritual work was opened for the Armenian Church in what is described as the "internal diaspora," namely in such countries which came out of the former Soviet Union and where we have substantial Armenian communities. In such countries, a new movement of religious and national awakening dawned upon our people. A considerable (though not yet sufficient) number of clergymen were sent from Etchmiadzin to reorganize new parishes and to offer spiritual guidance.

4. In Artsakh (Karabah Autonomous Region) where new conditions of liberated life were created, a new diocese was established with a Patriarch and clergy to provide spiritual assistance to the people, enhance their courage and strengthen their endurance after having been denied their basic human rights for so many years. They desperately need such spiritual and moral support as they are forced to continue their struggle for justice and freedom, and to eliminate the externally imposed dependency.

5. These and still many other kinds of services surely had and continue to have their positive and beneficial influence for our people in the Motherland. Nevertheless, the needs are of an acute nature and of immediate importance. As is often said in our language, the spiritual needs of our people of Armenia are like the water of the sea.

6. In such a state of affairs, we see that churches other than our own from Armenia, and Armenian and non-Armenian, other Christian and para-church movements and sects of various kinds have begun an active program of preaching, which is altering the nature of a campaign in our Homeland. It is worth noting that such action falls within the framework of the general movement engaged in by the Roman Catholic Church, under the guidance of the Vatican, and by the Protestant churches in Europe and the U.S.A., each motivated by different aims. They are implementing well devised policies of action by having as the major field of operation the entire area of Eastern Europe, i.e., the former Soviet Union and its satellite countries. Such action has reached a climax and is carrying out actual and uncontrollable penetration with those religious and philosophico-religious and ideological movements, some of which using the terms "Christian" and "Evangeli- cal," and through intense efforts and various methods are engaged in a so-called mission of evangelization.

7. Within the context of our Motherland of Armenia, we have to consider the following specific cases:

a) Armenian Catholic (Uniate) Churches in Armenia and in the diaspora. We are considering the fact that prior to the Soviet era, there were Armenian Catholicos, particularly in the rural areas of the northernwestern regions. They were working in the villages, and under the protection of the local priest, also from the Melkite Georgian Church, who, in the name of taking care of the spiritual needs by the Armenian Catholic Church is engaged in as part of the general work of the Roman Catholic Church in this respect.

b) The Armenian Evangelical Church. We are considering the fact that it was introduced into the regions of Armenia. Obviously the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is carrying its
contribution to this task of providing spiritual assistance to the members of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Armenia. c) Para-church (non-ecclesiastical) movements and organizations (for the sake of giving some examples, we mention only a few, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Pentecostals, the Nazarenes, and the Mormons) with 15,000 to 20,000 are characterized as radical and fundamentalist sects, mainly originating in the West, more specifically in the United States of America and Europe, and which have now also established footholds on the whole territory of Armenia. In this case, the purpore is not to provide spiritual care for their already existing members or followers (that normally does not occur) but their clear aim consists in "winning" new adherents, in simple words, conducting proselytism with the definite purpose of seeing the Armenian people change their Christian faith which they consider to be "conversion." They simply are taking advantage of the principle of religious freedom which is now a recognized law proclaimed by the state authorities of Armenia. d) Finally, there are also other movements of non-Christian origin or character, all of imported from outside, such as the Transcendental Meditation, Alexei Emmerich's words that are the product of pre-Christian pagan ideologies and movements; and religions. These also are now engaged in an aggressive and unbridled action of proving their ideas among the people. It is no longer possible to remain indifferent to these movements and phenomena. What attitude should be adopted by the Armenian Church towards all these trends? Before taking any position or staking out a standpoint of one's own, one has to state and adopt as a first and foremost and general principle the following historically valid and irrefutable truth, namely, that Armenia is and has been the Christian world and must always be so. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church. In this direction, the work of the Armenian Orthodox Church has been pursued in the context of the Biblical principle that Christ cannot be known apart from the Church.
Armenia, together with all of its gov-
ernment structures, public institu-
tions, and all segments of its population.
The imperative obligation of the Armenian people to recover full au-
tonomy and self-determination, for
the people of Nagorno-Karabakh, has
acquired a dimension of critical au-
thority for the entire Armenian nation,
in Karabakh, in Armenia, and in the
diaspora. Such rights and justice
have been denied to the Armenian people
under Soviet rule. The people
who have been forced to leave their
homes, towns, and villages in
Karabakh and reduced to the state
of refugee life, the families of those
who have lost their lives during the
struggle, both the heroes who sacri-
ficed themselves and the simple in-
nocent victims, need comfort and
support. This urgent obligation is
also added to the one mentioned above.

The necessity for reconstruction of
the villages, towns, and cities
stricken by the earthquake of 1988,
the need for rehabilitation of hun-
dreds of thousands of the homeless,
the human needs of a large number
of people driven out of Azerbaijan,
who have taken temporary refuge
in various parts of Armenia, all of
these have become a heavy responsi-
bility for the Armenian nation.

Under such traumatic condi-
tions, the unity and the
sovereignty of Armenian people have
become as vitally important as the
daily bread. Joint actions are not compa-
rible with the common task and re-
sponsibility for the country and
the rebirth of the motherland.
The Armenian Apostolic Church as
the national church of Armenia is the
spiritual-religious foundation for
the building of the unity and
strength of the nation. Therefore,
to create and develop new groupings
and polarizations in the realm of
religion, it surely becomes detri-
mental to the strengthening and so-
liading of the unity of our nation.
Obviously, these religious radical
movements have no respect for the
national entity and play a negative role
in this respect. Such move-
ments are, on the one hand, a threat
to Christian unity and on the other
hand to national unity. And, in these
days, we give top priority to both.

14. Letting the fundamental principles, principles and convictions and fol-
lowing the exhortation of the Apostle: “Keep watch over yourselves and over
all the flock, of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd
the Church of God that He obtained with the blood of His own Son.” (Acts
20:28), we convey to our faithful people the following thoughts and exhortations:

15. With Christian love and in the
sense of national unity, we give the
spiritual care that is being provided
by the official authorities of our
Armenian Catholic and Evangelical
Churches to the faithful who already
are members of their own church.
The Armenian Apostolic Church
has recognized them as a historical
reality and in the spirit of brotherly
love gives credit to their action in
the fold of their constituency. In that
respect we find natural services to
their own people.

We expect that respecting the
ethos, the faith and order, the tradi-
tions and mission of the Armenian
Church, that has been the spiritual
nurturing mother of the Armenian
people all during the past centuries,
they will cooperate, through the
Mother See of Etchmiadzin, with the
Holy Armenian Apostolic Church thus
enriching and promoting its religi-
ous, spiritual, educational, and
social work. We expect the parallel,
competitive or duplicating structures
and activities will not be created and
spread, producing unecessary con-
fusion in the life of the simple faithfull
and may be taken away from the
means of proselytizing for which nei-
ther the Church of Christ nor our
motherland and nation have any
need, particularly in these present
times. Today it is the Christian faith
that is being sought by the people
and not this or that pattern of their
missionaries. Our people and coun-
try are called upon to respond to
the appeal for unity and solidarity.

With thanksgiving and gratitude,
we greet all the non-Armenian sister
churches, the relief organizations
and the inter-church aid associa-
tions which, during the devastating
earthquake of 1988, offered their
textile and unreservedly high ben-
eficial and deeply appreciated assis-
tance and solidarity in an exemplary
spirit of Christian brotherhood and
fellowship. The Armenian Church
can never forget the truly Christian
and genuinely human assistance that
the non-Armenian sister church from
all over the world, Orthodox, Catho-
lic, and Protestant, who distinguished,
extended and continue to extend to
our people stricken by that calamity.

With deep satisfaction we affirm
that a great many of such churches
and confessional or ecumenical relief
organisations rendered their services
in a truly pan-Christian spirit by
working harmoniously with the Holy
Apostolic Church of Armenia through
the Mother See of Etchmiadzin in or
association with it.

It is our wish and expectation that
all such work already accomplished
or in the process of expectation,
which are God-pleasing actions, not
be used in any way or measure for
direct indirect purposes of doctrinal or
confessional preaching and expan-
sion. We consider such actions as
a deviation from the authentic under-
standing of the Christian faith, of
the true spirit of the Gospel and sound
human behavior.

17. We find incomprehensible, unja-
unifiable, and unacceptable such ac-
tivities that are being carried out in
a well-planned, continuous and inten-
sive manner by para-church.
Christia
and non-Christian organisations,
sects and movements which use the
name of the Gospel and which con-
sider Armenia as a fertile land for
their preaching. For the love of Christ
and of our nation, and country, we
cannot accept such movements, some-
times working under the name "Evan-
genical," Armenian or non-Armenian
religious associations, groups or or-
ganisations, to spread in Armenia
and among our people under the
name of 'Christian education,' often
to spread through non-religious, dishon-
ored means and motivation to 'preach
Christianity to our people who are al-
ready devoted followers of Christ.'

We believe and expect that our
own people of Armenia will keep sound
and alive in their consciousness the
true Christian spirit and that one
of the distinctive features of
our national character and will expect
such persons and agencies to help our
people and thorns in our "small or-
chard" as our country has been de-
scribed by Moses Hemorrhai (the
5th century hebrew geographer par
excellence). Such "preachers" should
become aware that the seeds of Chris-
tianity have been sown in the very
field by the two Apostles of Christ (St.
Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew), that this "or-
chard" of the Lord has been irrigated
by the tears of St. Gregory and culti-
vated by the sacred altar of St.
Mesrob Mashtots. The custodian and
the laborers of this "vineyard planted by God" has for centuries
continuously been, without interrup-
tion or weakening, the Armenian
Apostolic Church. And it remains
the same laborer today with renewed
awareness of its mission, with reso-
late willingness and service. Such movements that distort the Christian faith and cause new divisions within the Christian Church, whatever name they may have, what- ever oddness of material means they may possess, should leave and disappear from Armenia. If they have the slightest consciousness and understanding of the mission as taught by the Gospel, they should go to such countries and peoples which have not heard the name of Christ or ac-
ccepted His faith. This is the proper way of mission as indicated and opened by Our Lord, Jesus Christ. (See the Gospel of Matthew, 20:19-20.)

To create and promote inner spiritual awakening (sometimes referred to as “revival” or “revivalism”) to often a misconceived or superficial form of true renewal in the life of the people is the proper task of the Churches. All such people who have the thirst and the need for such inner spiritual awakening should turn to their church, to their own mother and receive the genuine milk, and should not turn and look for such milk and food which is discolored and which affect the unity of the nation and the country.

18. No church, no state, nor any public and communal organization and institution can claim to be ex-
empt of misgivings in the course of its services. Which church, state, or organization can claim for its activity to be fully satisfactory? There always have been and still are difficulties, problems, needs, and shortcomings on all levels and in all spheres of public activity.

The Armenian Church is not an exception among them. We are in need of manpower, we lack material means. But these cannot be taken as reasons for not taking up the task. The Armenian Apostolic Church parallel or opposite or separatist channels of operation for Christian preaching. On the contrary, the spirit of Chris-
tian love demands and asks all who bear in themselves the love of Christ and the love for the Armenian people to give tangible expressions of the com-
munion of faith and fellowship by strengthening the spiritual mission of the Armenian Apostolic Church by initiating various forms of solidarity with the Church of Armenia.

19. We believe that in these times the spirit of the apostolate, the renewed course of spiritual and national ser-
vice will gradually be promoted within the fold of our Armenian Holy Apo-
stolic Church. Already we see the tangible signs of large-scale move-
ments of reawakening and renewal that has dawned upon our Church. It surely will receive continued inspir-
tus and bear fruit sixty—fold, eight-
fold and hundred—fold.” (Mark, 4:20)

In this respect, highly hopeful and encouraging is the deepening and the growth of the sense of unity and cooperation within the entire Armenian Church, which is made manifest through the close collabora-
tion among all the hierarchical Sees of our Holy Church.

20. We appeal to all our clergy, in all ranks and on all levels of responsibility, to stand before God and again open themselves and always keep open their minds, hearts and lives for the operation of the Holy Spirit, and to renew in themselves the ethos and the style of life and work as these were revealed in the Apostolic age and through our Church Fathers.

We expect from all of them that they will devote themselves with the maximum degree of unrestrained and self—denying dedication and sacrifice to their sacred tasks; may they with greater degree of chasteness and real approach the people, visit local com-
munities and with whole—hearted service respond to their basic human needs, and with renewed inspiration instill in them the virtues of hope, faith and love, steady will and endur-
ance: may they spread in the life of their flock the light, fruits of the principles of Christian ethos and genuine and valid Armenian—Christian traditions. Let the words of the Bible, “Seek our house will consume thee.” (Jer.21:17), be a true and new dimension and vitality in the lives of our beloved clergy.

Surely, in this respect, the en-
cyclical of the Bishops of All Arme-
nians (No. 1907) which was issued on 26 August 1992 will have its ben-
eficial impact.

We appeal to all the responsible servants of the State of our mother-
land to vigilantly see that the prin-
ciple and law of religious freedom be implemented in its authentic sense and not let people misuse or manipu-
late it by the deployment of such activities which cause harm to the spiritual freedom of our people and to the unity of our Church and Nation.

We appeal to all the children of our nation, without distinction, to the aged and the children, to men and women, to those who hold high positions and those who hold lower positions, to keep their souls clean and awake, and not let alien and alienating voices and influences, of-
ten expressed through attractive

manner, distort their Christian faith with so many centuries of rich experi-
ence, with their fathers kept as the apple of their eyes, and at the cost of their blood. May the “little orchard,” (our Motherland) having now fully recovered its Armenianness through the proclamation of its independence remain pure and unblemished: may the Armenian Church, the Mother Church remain a source of spiritual health; may our Motherland of Arme-
nia remain a province of God’s King-
dom for the Armenian nation.

We remind all of you of the mes-
sage and directive of St. Paul the Apostle: “Finally, be ardent in the Lord and in the strength of this power. Put on the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. (Therefore take up the whole armor of God, so that you may be able to withstand on that evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm. Stand, therefore, and fasten the belt of truth around your waist, and put on the breastplate of righteousness. As always for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace. With all readiness in zipping your faith, with which you will be able to quench all the flaming arrows of the evil one. Take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of truth.)” (Eph. 6:11—18).

May God in the highest grant to all of you, clergy and laity, His divine grace and wisdom, His love and faith and the renewing power of His Holy Spirit—so that in the spirit of unam-
mous communion, unshakeable faithfulness we may render visible, and hold in honor and glory, this determining and epoch—making mo-
tion and duty of our Church.

Be alive and whole in the Lord, strengthened by the Holy Spirit and ever blessed by God and us. Amen.

Vardeni I
CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS

Karekin II
CATHOLICOS OF THE GREAT HOUSE OF CILIA

AUGUST 30, 1992

HOLY ECHMIADZIN, ARMENIA
With the collapse of communism, the East is looking to the West for assistance and order. Following this lead, the Church in Armenia is also looking to the American churches for help. We have been made aware of the cults, of the need for evangelization and education, of the advances made by the Protestants and Catholics, and of the need to develop an organization. How close are we to resolving these problems and achieving these goals?

As we witness the renunciation of the Church in Armenia, we notice the new found sense of purpose for the Church in America. Bills are sent to the "scripturally illiterate," the op-ed pages of Armenian newspapers debate the reconciliations, and stories of faith provide excellent material for inspirational sermons. On the darker side, however, dare we presume that the Church in Armenia has turned into a convenient scapegoat for the Church in America which is far from resolving its own internal problems?

What has happened to the tremendous clergy shortage facing Armenia today? What has happened to unity between the Diocese and the Prelacy? And what of the declining influence in membership in parishes and the further alienation of the people from their Church and Faith? For a church which has been unsuccessful in dealing with its problems at home, it is presumptuous to think that she has answers for her counterpart abroad.

What answers has the Church provided to the cultural problem in America? Materialism, greed, self-glorification are the new cults which alienate us from the true Faith. Are the ministries of the American dioceses or parishes so good/successful that it is worthy of being copied in Armenia? In fact, parishes and dioceses — relying heavily on bazaars and bingo games rather than pledges and tithe — continue to operate in red-ink. Has any one diocese or for that matter any one parish community been successful in protecting its people from outside proselytizing? More often than not, our communions are strengthened on their beliefs and opt for other expressions of faith.

The current political and economic situation in Armenia presents its share of problems for the Church. As is evident from the conversations presented here in Washington there are many dynamics at play within the Church in Armenia. She is faced with a multi-dimensional mission. As part of the same body, the Church in America (or elsewhere in the Diaspora) cannot stand idle and tolerate the circumstances. Naturally, she will want to involve herself in the rebirth and redevelopment process. But can she use Armenia as a scapegoat for herills? A contractor whose house has fallen is unlikely to get a new contractor. A dentist whose own teeth have rotted is unlikely to find patients. America can only be effective if it is strong enough internally. This can only be accomplished by a return to Faith. Yes, even here in America.

At stake in Armenia is not merely the primacy of the Armenian Church but rather the salvation of souls. If the Church is going into Armenia with motives other than to console, to heal or to spread the Good News, she is no better than the Protestants or Catholics. She cannot wage a war of denominations. The Armenian Church is the true orthodox church. The long "fatherly advice" given by our dear cathedral regarding the primacy of the Armenian Church is superfluous. It is ridiculous to presume that the Protestants or Catholics are going to stay among "their own people." Not withstanding theological differences, who are "they" and who are "we" if not all the same children of God? There is only ONE Church and the others are denominations. The Armenian Church cannot reduce herself by engaging in such nonsensical discussions. Religion can never be legislated.

Our first obligation to Armenia is prayer. Our minds and sense must be opened to the real problems. Our brothers and sisters are in hunger of spiritual food as much as we — here in America — are starving. We must move beyond rhetoric. If we believe that the Armenian Church is God ordained and built on the footsteps of the Apostles then we cannot underestimate the power of God to work within us. At first, we will not likely be convinced that the power of God will save the Church despite ourselves. When we begin to focus individually and collectively through prayer, we begin a healing process not only abroad, but in the center of our being. Yes, even here in America.
**Compendium**

- Bishop Hormizd Barsamian was elevated to the rank of Archbishop. His Eminence is the primate of the Armenian Church of North America, Eastern Diocese.

On September 27, Catholicos Vazken I consecrated four clergymen to the rank of bishop: Fr. Hormizd Barsamian, a member of the St. James’ Brotherhood of Jerusalem and the first American born clergymen to be elevated to the episcopate; Fr. David Isajian, Vicar of Marseille; France; Fr. Vazken Movsesian, pastor of the Armenian community in Switzerland; Fr. Hormizd Barsamian, primate of Armenians in Germany. With these consecrations, the Brotherhood of Etchmiadzin claims 43 bishops to 39 priests.

In Vatican: Several high-ranking Armenian clergymen met with Cardinal Cassidy, President of the Pontifical Council to Promote Christian Unity and Cardinal Silvestrini. Perfect of the Congregation for the Oriental Churches, in order to express the serious concerns and discontent regarding the Armenian Uniate Catholic Patriarch, John Peter Zimka’s “return to Armenia” Encyclical. Representing the Armenian Church were Archbishop Vatche Homejian, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Bishop Mesrob Shevjian, and Bishop Hovnan Derderian. On October 26, this delegation met with the Pope, John Paul II.

In Istanbul: The same delegation continued on to meet with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomelos. They were joined by the Armenian Patriarch of Constantinople, Archbishop Karekin Kazanjian and his vicar, Archbishop Shahvan Seroblian.

- World Council of Churches (WCC): Konrad Raiser, 54 year old German Lutheran professor of theology, has been elected general secretary of the WCC. Eighty-six of the 150 delegates voted for Professor Raiser, an ordained Lutheran pastor, who will succeed the Methodist theologian Emilios Castro when he retires at the end of the year.

---

**Window Selection**

**COMING HOME**

Why Protestant Clergy are Becoming Orthodox

Edited by Peter E. Gillquist

---

Eighteen Former Protestant Leaders tell of Coming Home to the Orthodox Christian Faith

Antony Hughes • Oral Roberts University
Gregory Rogers • Church of Christ
Kenneth Hines • Westminster Seminary
Daniel Matheson • United Church of Canada
Thomas Remfree • Western Conservative Baptist Seminary
Frank Milavec • Campus Crusade for Christ
Andrew Harmon • United Methodist Church
Paul Waisseen • Trinity Evangelical Divinity School
Allister Anderson • Episcopalian
Timothy Creemers • Assemblies of God
John Pro • Luther Rice Seminary
Athanasios Ledwich • Anglican
Harold Dunaway • Bible Baptist College
David Smith • Asbury Seminary
Bill Caldern • United Church of Christ
Ron Elton • Biola College and Inner-city Missions
Tim Blumenstein • Plymouth Brethren
William Olhausen • General Theological Seminary

$7.95 California residents, add 8.25% sales tax. Include 10% postage & handling in US (min. $1.90) or 15% postage & handling in Canada (min. $1.75).

Order your copy today!

Send your request, together with check to Conciliar Press, P.O. Box 76, Ben Lomond, CA 95005
Letters

Dear Editors:
First, I must express my satis-
fection that for once, an intelligent
and decent person has treated the
subject of the story (Doshov) in a
dispassionate, honest and coura-
geous manner. So far, apart serious
stories that some of the best read-
ers of the Diaspora have given to that
story, no one had the tem-
porary to take words or images out of
context and ridicule or curse the
nudity. In that sense, the story has
failed in its intent—all the attention
was fixed on the wrong ideas and
themes and the "debunking" did not
occur. That, in itself, is highly reveal-
ing of our national state of mind. I am
not mad at anyone, even those who
called for my condemnation! But
I must add that a serious psychona-
ly study of Armenian sexuality is
in order…

I will not correct or alter any of
the ideas you have expressed—a lit-
erary essay, once published, belongs
to the reader and is free to give it the
interpretation he wishes. I will,
however, for the sake and in recogni-
tion of your unbiased approach, make
a few comments.

The analysis of the "demythification," if such a word ex-
tists, is correct. But you should have focused on the Armenian con-
cept of God. That special God to which he prayed, in my conception, is the way
Armenians have understood Him and that is why they have weathered His-
try. God is the soul of my book, and the best among the Armenians have
seen through that myth.

What lies beyond the shattered
myth? Only despair and the sarcasm
of the damned. Your approach, in this
simple way, feels that you and recon-
stitute himself with the God of the bible.

The universal dimension of the
Armenian myth is what gives it its
force. Only a treatise's sacrilegious
actions could awaken the Armenians
to its strength. Your analysis on this
point is very correct.

I think you have a major theme of
Armenian survival in your hands and
pages. Do you think of developing
the myth theme further? I would cer-
tainly enjoy reading your periodical's
future issues.

—Nareh Oshaghi
Kifaro, Australia

Dear Editors:
Your last issue was horrible. I
wasn't sure if I was reading a church
magazine or pornography. You
can do a great deal better. Please!
—Fr. Jerry Pechman
San Diego, CA

Dear Editors:
I appreciate Window publishing
"A Call to Excellence" fall. II, no. 4, p.
19. Since hearing about it, I have
wanted to read it, but neither the
Church nor the ACYOA has distrib-
uted it. These young adults are the
only Church group that has pre-
pared a major critique of the Diocese.
The "Call" contains simple and
humble requests, many of which are
easy to implement. If we follow these
concrete steps, some new people are
likely to join the Church. Further-
more, the "Call" is written by some of
the Diocese's most active and re-
spected young adults, who deserve
our respect and attention.

The most significant statement
by the Church's young adults in decades. Unfortunately, it
appears that much of the Church
leadership is ignoring the "Call." If
the Church expects the young adults
ideas, the Church is rejecting them
and should not pretend to see us
until they expect we will continue to par-
ticipate in the Church.

—Dean Shabalin
Mt. Vernon, VA

Dear Editors:
The juxtaposition of the 1968
and 1992 calls from the youth were
interesting. It confirmed my suspi-
cion that not much has changed in
the past 25 years, except that the
youth have become a bit more worthy.
Wouldn't you say?

—Malcolm Magarian
Los Angeles, CA

Women's Issue: Is it an
issue?

Dear Editors:
The issue concerning women's
roles in the Armenian Church is
one which is dear to my heart. I was
an editor of Side by Side, a newsletter
which struggled with examining
women's roles in the Church. At
a Side by Side conference in March
1961, the women and men attending
defined themselves as "side-by-side…
an independent organization devoted
to expanding the role of women and
men within the Armenian Church.

As a member of this organiza-
tion, I noticed that many women have verbally expressed their support for
women being deacon and/or priests,
of women holding more spiritual roles
within the Church and of women
beginning much-needed services
such as day care, etc. To my dismay,
it appears that most women have
not publicly shown support for these
expanding roles. One reason may be
the very strong fact that women's
opinions are not regarded on the
same authoritative level as men's
opinions. I also feel that our Arme-
nian culture encourages supporting
oneself rather than supporting one
another in a community. We would
not necessarily have to have the same
needs as others in order to support
them. If a woman wanted to be a

Share your thoughts and ideas!

Submit your letters to Window Quarterly
ACRAG
P.O. Box 700664
San Jose, CA 95170

priest and that was not my calling, I
would still wholeheartedly support her
because she believes it is her
calling to serve the Armenian Church
in that manner. I would see here
as an equal, a person whose needs and
ideas and gifts are valuable to my
community. I would encourage her,
not shun her.

If the Church expands its role and
more inclusive, more people will be reached, served and
healed. I gave my theories, but I
would like to hear from others. Maybe
I am just one of few who feel women's
equality within the Armenian Church is
vitaly important. I need to know if
there are people who not only agree
with me, but who are willing to go
public with their beliefs. In the near
future, I hope that such a dialogue
will be accomplished within the
Window forum.

—Thana Kavanagh
Austin, TX

 prankish letters to
the editor:
Subscribe today!
Name: 
Address: 
City: State: Zip: 

Subscribe for a friend!
Name: 
Address: 
City: State: Zip: 

Subscribe for your local parish!
Name: 
Address: 
City: State: Zip: 

Back issue request:
Back issues of Window are available at $5.50 per issue + $3 s&h per order. See contents of previous issues on back cover.
- Vol. I. No. 1 - Premier Issue - Vol. II. No. 1 - Cults in Armenia
- Vol. I. No. 2 - Liberation Theology - Vol. II. No. 2 - Clergy Conference
- Vol. I. No. 3 - Genocide & Church - Vol. II. No. 3 - Denominations
- Vol. I. No. 4 - Collar & Clergy - Vol. II. No. 4 - Myth
Past Windows you may have missed...

Window Vol. I, No. 1 PREMIER ISSUE
The first issue of Window is an eight-page introduction that sets the tone and scope of this "new" publication. It consists of three articles written by the editors and a translation of Patriarch Torkom Yezeghian's "Revival in the Armenian Church."

Window Vol. I, No. 2 "ARMENIAN THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION"
This issue provides a series of articles in search of an Armenian theology of Liberation, with stimulating discussion and dialogue between Armenian church members and theologians. The issue provides a descriptive and interpretive study of the subject and underlines its application in the Armenian Church.

Window Vol. I, No. 3 "1915—THE YEAR THE CHURCH DIED"
This entire issue is dedicated to the martyred clergy of the Armenian Church during the Genocide of 1915. With this issue, Window turns the views of its readers back 75 years and provides a glimpse of the pre-Genocide Armenian Church. For the first time in the English language, the monumental work of Telik—a scholar who meticulously recorded the lives of the martyred clergy of the Armenian Church—is presented with statistical and analytical charts. Addressed in this issue are the issue of remembrance, the problem of commemoration of the victims and the silence of Church leadership concerning religious treasures.

Window Vol. I, No. 4 "IS THE COLLAR CHOKING THE PRIEST?"
This issue discusses the role for the Armenian priest from the perspective of both the Armenian community and the Church. In doing so, it dispels some of the stereotypes and myths associated with the Armenian clergy. Issues such as reform, recruitment, and contemporary challenges to the church are discussed in a very sincere and open forum.

Window Vol. II, No. 1 "CULTS IN ARMENIA"
In an attempt to educate the Armenian community on the dangers of cults, this issue provides an extensive coverage of cults presently operating in Armenia. The deep psychological wounds caused by the 1988 earthquake have facilitated the infiltration of various cults into Armenia under false pretenses. This issue of Window poses a challenge to the Armenian community and the Church, by the fact that "the cults will do what we neglect! They will extend where we cannot reach! They will be heard where our voice is silent."

Window Vol. II, No. 2 "INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ARMENIAN CLERGY"
The first ever International Conference of Armenian Clergy held in New York, June 17-21, 1991 is covered with stimulating interviews and analysis by the Window editors. An inside view of the conference is provided. Detailed information about the current situation in Armenia by the directors and leaders of the Center for the Propagation of Faith. Candid and alarming revelations regarding the religious awakening in Armenia and the Church's ability for inactivity to provide for the needs of the people. Must reading for anyone concerned with the current and future state of the Armenian Church in Armenia and the diaspora.

Window Vol. II, No. 3 "ARE ALL BRANDS THE SAME?"
This issue of Window explores the Armenian Protestant and Roman Catholics churches, providing a history of their development and place within the Armenian Community. A candid discussion of possible means of reappropriation is provided. Also, the place of the Armenian Church within the world Church community is explored with statements by the Orthodox Churches and reflections concerning the cost of unity. This issue is filled with facts and information. A map of religions is provided as a centerpiece to this important volume.

Window Vol. II, No. 4 "TESTING THE MYTH AND BEYOND"
The understanding of myths and their place in religious perception is the theme of this issue, especially as it is applied in the Armenian Church and community. The main article gives an excellent definition and explanation of what Myth is. Of particular interest is a discussion of Vahé Oshagan and the controversy surrounding a piece of his writing, entitled Okraino, Also, two articles discuss services in the liturgical tradition of the Armenian Church, namely Blessing of Madagh and Chromation.

See inside back cover for ordering details.