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Armenian Apostolic Church of America
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Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian Baptizes Forty Children in Holy Etchmiadzin



His Holiness Karekin I speaks to the 130 children of fallen freedom fighters who came to Holy Etchmiadzin with members of the Armenian Relief Society who care for the children financially.



Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian baptized forty of the children in Etchmiadzin. Baptisms in Armenia have been steadily increasing.

During his visit to Armenia in July, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian baptized 40 children in the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin. Archbishop Ashjian was in Armenia July 23–30 to oversee the establishment of the Etchmiadzin office of the commemorative committee for the 1700th anniversary of the establishment of Christianity in Armenia.

The baptisms took place on Friday evening, July 26, upon the request of Ms. Vanouhi Isachanian, chairwoman of the Central Executive of the Armenian Relief Society. On that day 130 children, who are under the care of the A.R.S., had journeyed to Etchmiadzin. Most of the children are children of freedom fighters who died in battle.

Prior to the baptism, the entire group of children and their chaperones were received by His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians, who blessed them, gave each child a memento, and offered his words of praise to the A.R.S. for that organization's great charitable endeavors. ✠

Steering Committee Begins Planning 1997 Pontifical Visit of Aram I

The recently formed National Steering Committee overseeing the Pontifical Visit of His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Holy See of the Great House of Cilicia, met and began planning for the Catholicos' visit to the Eastern Prelacy next year. His Holiness will visit the parishes of the Eastern Prelacy in the United States and Canada beginning October 1, 1997 through November 5, 1997.

Presiding over the first meeting was the Prelate, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, who

expressed his pleasure that His Holiness accepted the Prelacy's invitation. "Vehapar will visit almost all of our parishes," said His Eminence, "although in a few areas, for logistic reasons, we have joined together two or more parishes on Vehapar's itinerary."

Elected to serve on the executive body of the steering committee are: Sarkis Ohanessian, chairman; Kenneth Sarajian, secretary; Dr. Luisa Kubikian, treasure; and Iris Papazian, public relations.

(Continued on page 2)

Չորեքշաբթի եւ Հինգշաբթի Յուլիս 17-18, 1996-ին, Թեմիս առաջնորդ Բարձրաշնորհ Տ. Մեսրոպ Արքեպիսկոպոս Աշճեան, յանուն Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Վեհափառ Հայրապետին՝ Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոսին, մասնակցեցաւ ազգային մեծ բարերար ճանգուցեալ Ալեքս Մանուկեանի տան կարգի եւ յուղարկաւորութեան արարողութեանց, Տիրորդի Ս. Յովհաննէս Հայր. Առաք. եկեղեցոյ մէջ, եւ որոնց կը նախազահեր Ամենայն Հայոց Վեհափառ Հայրապետը՝ Ն.Ս.Օ.Տ.Տ. Գարեգին Բ. Կաթողիկոս:

Տան կարգի արարողութեան ընթացքին, Բարձրաշնորհ Սրբազան Հայրը կարդաց Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոսի ցաւակցական հետեւեալ նամակը ուղղուած Մանուկեան ընտանիքի անդամներուն:

Ազնուափայլ Տիկին Լուիզ Սիմոն Մանուկեան
Մեծայարգ Տէր եւ Տիկին Րիչըրտ Մանուկեան
Տիբրոյիք

Խոր ցաւով կը բաժնենք Ձեր սիրելի հոր՝ Ալեքս Մանուկեանի մահուան սուգը:

20-րդ դարու մեր մեծագոյն բարերարներէն մին եղաւ Ալեքս Մանուկեանը: Արդարեւ, ո՛չ միայն իր իմաստուն ղեկավարութեամբ ան յաջողապէս առաջնորդեց Հայկական Բարեգործական Ընդհանուր Միութիւնը իր առաքելութեան ճամբուն վրայ, ո՛չ միայն իր շարունակական բարերարութեամբ ան մեծապէս նպաստեց այս մեծ Միութեան գործունէութեան ծաւալման ու հզորացման, այլ նաեւ ան եղաւ ազգին բարերարը տալով բոլորին՝ Հայաստանէն մինչեւ Արցախ, Միացեալ Նահանգներէն մինչեւ Եւրոպա, Միջին Արեւելք ու Աւստրալիա: Ան տուաւ եկեղեցիին, դպրոցին, ակումբին, բարեսիրական ու մարզական միութիւններուն, տուաւ աղփատին, ուսուցչին, մտաւորականին, հիւանդին, աշակերտին, այլ խօսքով ամբողջ ազգին: Ահա թէ ինչու ազգին հաւաքական սրտին մէջ ան ունեցաւ իր արժանի ու սիրելի տեղը:

Ազգին բարերարները չեն մեռնիր: Ալեքս Մանուկեանը Աստուծոյ, ազգին ու հայրենիքին համար ըլլալու ու տալու գերագոյն յանձնառութեամբ եղաւ ու մնաց Ազգին Բարերար: Ան իրաւամբ արժանի դարձաւ «Ազգային Հերոս» կոչումին, որ իրեն շնորհուեցաւ Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան նախագահին կողմէ: Վստահեմք ենք, որ իր հերոսական ոգին, հաւատքը ու նուիրումը վերանորոգ տեսիլքով պիտի շարունակուի Ձեր եւ Հայկական Բարեգործական Ընդհանուր Միութեան համագային առաքելութեան ճամբով:

Յառաջիկայ Կիրակի, Անթիլիասի Մայր Տաճարին մէջ Հոգեհանգրստեան յատուկ Պաշտօն պիտի կատարուի հանգուցեալի հոգիին համար:

Թող Աստուած իր երանութեան մէջ հանգչեցնէ իր հոգին: Յարգանք իր կատարած մեծ գործին ու իր անմեռ յիշատակին:

Աղօթարար՝

ԱՐԱՄ Ա. ԿԱԹՈՂԻԿՈՍ
ՄԵԾԻ ՏԱՆՆ ԿԻԼԻԿԻՈՑ

17 Յուլիս, 1996

PRELACY BOOK STORE CELEBRATES CULTURAL MONTH BOOK FAIR

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Առաջնորդ Սրբազան ալ, յանուն իր թեմի հոգեւորականութեան եւ համայն ժողովրդեան, առանձին ցաւակցական հեռագիր էր դրկած եւ հրահանգած, որ թեմիս բոլոր եկեղեցիներուն մէջ Կիրակի, 14 Յուլիսին, կատարուի հոգեհանգստեան յատուկ պաշտօն, ի հանգիստ հոգեւորական Ալեքս եւ Մարի Մանուկեաններու:

Յիշատակն արդարոց օրհնեալ եղիցի:

Communique:

V. R. Khajag Hagopian
Appointed in Canada



Very Rev. Khajag Hagopian

Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian has appointed the Very Rev. Khajag Hagopian to serve as the Vicar-General of Canada and Rector of Sourp-Hagop Cathedral in Montreal, where he will work in unison with the Cathedral's pastor, Archpriest Armen Ishkanian. Hayr Khajag assumed his new posts on August 5, 1996.

Dr. Ara Caprielian, the well-known educator and community leader, has been appointed to serve as principal of St. Illuminator's Day School in New York, as post which Very Rev. Hagopian held prior to his most recent appointments.

On behalf of His Eminence and the Religious and Executive Councils of the Eastern Prelacy, we congratulate Very Rev. Hagopian and Dr. Caprielian. We wish them success in their new endeavors.

We trust that under Very Rev. Hagopian's leadership our Canadian parishes and community will witness even greater successes in their religious, spiritual and educational life.

PRELACY SECRETARIAT

Pontifical Visit

(Continued from page 1)

Because Aram I is currently the Moderator of the World Council of Churches, the official itinerary will include many receptions and meetings with sister churches and ecumenical leaders. Catholicos Aram has been an active participant in the ecumenical movement throughout his service to the church and as such is now one of the most respected religious leaders internationally.

The highlights of his visit to the United States will be the consecration of the new church in Granite City, Illinois, which will take place on Sunday, October 12, and the blessing of the new expanded Prelacy facilities, as well as the new St. Illuminator's Day School and Community Center in Woodside, New York.

Divine Pontifical Liturgies will be celebrated in New York, Detroit, Montreal, Toronto, Boston, and Granite City.

All of the parishes are forming local committees and will be responsible for arrangements when Vehapar visits their respective communities. In order to keep each community informed of the details of the visit, the chairman of each local committee will be invited to attend meetings of the national committee.

"We are confident that this Pontifical Visit will be an occasion for all of our parishes and our faithful to welcome our beloved Vehapar, and a time of renewal for all of our faithful," said Archbishop Ashjian. †

Countdown 2001:

Reflections on the 17th Centenary Celebration of the Proclamation of Christianity as National Religion in Armenia

by KAREKIN I

Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians

THE end of the second millennium of the Christian era of history is drawing near. People and institutions, religious and secular, states, churches, international and ecumenical organizations are growingly getting engaged in a process of self-awareness of and self-inquiry in their present-day world predicament and of the future, however uncertain and unidentifiable it may look. Books are being written, symposia are being held, debates are taking place, statistics are being drawn-up, historical experiences are being analyzed, achievements are being assessed, failures are being identified and projections are being envisaged for future predictions.

The Armenian church and nation while sharing the concerns of their brethren and sisters around the world in this regard, have a particular reason and a unique opportunity to take the end of the second millennium and the dawning of the third very seriously, and, indeed, in a distinctive manner. For, in fact, the first year of the third millennium will mark the 1700th anniversary of that greatest moment of Armenian history when the Christian faith was adopted by the king of Armenia, Tiridates III, and was proclaimed as the national religion of the Armenian people. It is a well known fact that in the very beginning of the 4th century Armenia through the baptism of its king and through the proclamation by the State recognized the Christian faith as its official, national religion.

The exact date of such formal acceptance has been a matter of debate among scholars, both Armenian and non-Armenian. Recent researches have acknowledged the years between 313 and 316 as the most probable date.

However, the question of date is of secondary importance for the purpose of the celebration of the 1700 years of Christian witness in Armenia and in the neighboring countries. The 2001 date is selected because the year 301 has always traditionally enjoyed the character of official acceptance. Indeed, the first year of the third millennium provides a most appropriate context for such celebration. In any case, as the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* puts it, "The Armenians were the first nation to adopt Christianity as their national religion."

Proclamation by the king of the Christian faith as the national religion, however, does not mean that Christianity entered Armenia for the first time in 301. The presence of the Christian faith in Armenia between the first and third centuries is amply substantiated by historical facts and references. The official name of

the Armenian church is the Armenian *Apostolic* Church for the very simple reason that according to the earliest and the most cherished tradition of the Armenian people two of the twelve apostles of Christ, St. Thaddeus and St. Bartholomew, were the first preachers of Christianity in Armenia. Their pioneering work was continued, often at the price of martyrdom, all along the succeeding two centuries. It is, therefore, in the background of that Christian church and community, on the one hand, and on the other hand, due to the missionary zeal, sacrificial life and arduous work of Gregory Parthev, called St. Gregory the Illuminator, that the official acceptance by the State of the Christian faith can be truly understood.

In order to well understand the conversion of Armenia one must take into account the fact that Christianity was not an alien religion in the countries surrounding Armenia on its southern and western borders, namely East Syria, Edessa, Nisibis, Melitene, and Caesarea in Cappadocia.

Recent studies have provided ample evidence that from very early times, beginning from the first century, Christianity had been preached in those parts of Asia Minor, both in Cappadocia and in East Syria, and gradually spread towards East, reaching as far as India.

It is also a well known historical fact that the Syriac speaking peoples were among the first who were touched by the first Christian preachers, the apostles and their immediate followers. Historians of these early centuries assure us that whatever touched the Syriac speaking world in the first centuries of Christian expansion touched also Armenia because of the close cultural and social ties between the two.

One cannot understand the conversion of Armenia without visualizing it as a process rather than an event. The proclamation by the king could not make the people change overnight their religious beliefs and customs which were so deeply rooted in their centuries-old historical experience. Even after such official proclamation it took a whole century for Christianity to survive the opposition continually and bitterly staged against it by the authorities and the established structures of the old pagan religion. The fourth century proved to be a century of confrontation; this was a decisive time for the new Christian religion to consolidate its hold by gradually penetrating the inner texture of the life of the people. The reformatory council of 353 organized by the great figure of the century, St. Nerses, who is rightly described as the "Illuminator of the heart," bears eloquent witness to this historical truth. The canons of the Council illustrate the determination of the leaders of the Christian religion to change the spirit, the philosophy and the content of the old pagan life.

A most decisive and determining factor in the conversion process surely was the translation of the Holy Scriptures into Armenian, which followed the creation of the Armenian alphabet by St. Mesrob Mashtots (406 A.D.). The translation movement was sponsored and guided by the eminent figure of the century, Catholicos Sahak, who was a close associate to St. Mesrob. The result was not just literary works rendered from one language into another, but rather a cultural movement which produced not only the translation of the entire Bible, but also a large

This address by Karekin I, Catholicos and Supreme Patriarch of All Armenians, was delivered at the opening of the consultation conference which took place in Paris, June 14 to 16. An overview of the deliberations was presented in the Summer issue of OUTREACH.

Starting now and through the year 2001 we will feature articles concerning the 1700th commemoration under the general title of "Countdown: 2001."—Editor

amount of liturgical, patristic and hagiographic literature which constituted the glory of the Greek and Syriac Christian literary heritage.

The translation movement, far from being purely or solely a literary and scholarly work, was accompanied by an intensive course of preaching which spread the Word of God, thus integrating the Christian faith into the ethos and patterns of the Armenian cultural, social and even political life. This was the century *par excellence* of the spiritual and cultural history of Armenia, rightly recognized as the Golden Age of Armenian history. Indeed, for many scholars and interpreters of history this century was the time of the real conversion of Armenia when the people made the Christian faith their own, expressed in their own language and through their own national life setting.

That is why Gorun (the disciple and biographer of St. Mesrob Mashtots), described that century as a time of transfiguration of Armenia:

At that time, our blessed and desirable country of Armenia became surely an admirable land. For here, at the hands of the two equals (servants), i.e., St. Sahak and St. Mesrob, Moses the law-teacher, together with the ranks of the Prophets, and Paul the forward-looking Apostle, together with the band of the Apostles and with the world-sustaining Gospel of Christ suddenly found themselves to be speaking Armenian. What a heart-filled joy! What a beautiful sight to behold! A whole people who had not even known the names of the places where the marvelous divine deeds had been accomplished, suddenly, all at once, became aware of all events, not only those that had happened in the course of time but those that occurred before time, in eternity, and those yet to come as well, those of the beginning and those of the end, and all the God-given traditions.

That is also why just in the middle of the century, the Armenians fought their decisive battle against the Mazdean Persians who were forcefully trying to make them renounce their newly adopted Christian faith and to return to the pagan tradition that had so many affinities with Mazdean religious traditions which constituted the official religion of the Kings of Kings of the Sassanid empire in Persia. It was on the eve of that, their life-or-death battle of Avarayr in 451, that they proclaimed their conversion which may sound rhetorical to the ears of modern men and women, but were truly lived because they were authenticated by the martyrdom of the confessors, by the supreme test of the faith. "From this faith no one can shake us; neither angels, nor men, neither fire, nor sword, neither water nor any other blow however bitter it be."

It is for this reason also why Yeghishe, the epic writer, theologian, and the historiographer of the battle of Vartan and his

(Continued on page 4)

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ԱՌԱՋՆՈՐԴ ՍՐԲԱԶԱՆ ՀՕՐ ԽՕՍՔԸ
Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-Ի ՄԻՋ-ՄԱՍՆԱՃԻՒՂԱՑԻՆ 6-ՐԴ ՄՐՑՈՒՄՆԵՐՈՒ
ՓԱԿՄԱՆ ՀԱՆԴԻՍՈՒԹԵԱՆՑ

Յուլիս 4-7, 1996-ին, Շիքակոյի մէջ տեղի ունեցան Արեւելեան Ամերիկայի Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ի Շրջանային Վարչութեան կողմէ կազմակերպուած Միջ-Մասնաճիւղային 6-րդ տարեկան մրցումները, ընդ նախագահութեամբ Տր. Ե. Տիկ. Բաֆֆի եւ Շոդակ Յովհաննէսեաններու:

Թեմիս Առաջնորդ Բարձրանորհ Տ. Մեսրոպ Արքեպս. Աճեան, Կիրակի 7 Յուլիսին, Միջ-Մասնաճիւղային այդ մրցումներուն փակման Հանդիսութեանը ընթացքին Հետեւեալ պատգամը տուաւ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ի մարզիկներուն եւ ներկայ Հանդիսականներուն:

Արժանապատիւ Տէր Հայր, Յարգոյ ատենապետ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ի Շրջանային Վարչութեան Յարգարժան Պատուոյ Նախագահ Տր. Ե. Տիկ. Բաֆֆի եւ Շոդակ Յովհաննէսեան,

Կազմակերպութեանց յարգարժան ներկայացուցիչներ, Հանդիսականներ եւ մարզիկներ.

Ինծի Համար մէկէ աւելի իմաստներով բաղդաւոր տարի մը եղաւ 1996-ը: Տակաւին մի քանի շաբաթներ առաջ, Պէյրութի մէջ, ներկայ գտնուեցայ Հայաստանի Հանրապետութեան տարեկարձին առթիւ կազմակերպուած շքեղ տողանցքին, երբ 3000 Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ական մարզիկներ եւ 1.5.Մ.-ականներ տողանցեցին Պուրճ Համուտի Քաղաքապետարանի դաշտին վրայ եւ ապա, երբ շարուած էին ամբողջ դաշտի լայնքին՝ մէկ ազդանշանի վրայ Հազարաւոր Հայ պատանիներ յառաջացան դէպի պատուոյ թրիպին՝ յուզումի ալիքի մը մէջէն սարսափներով բոլորին սրտերը: Այդ պատկերին կարօտ էի 25 երկար տարիներէ ի վեր եւ ասոր Համար ալ ապրումս խոր էր եւ երջանկութիւնս անխառն: Այսօր, Լոս Անճելոսի մէջ, աւելի քան 2500 Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ականներ պիտի տողանցեն՝ Մեծի Տանն Կիլիկիոյ Արամ Ա. Կաթողիկոսի ներկայութեան: Եւ ահա այստեղ, Շիքակոյի մէջ, 650 սկաուտներ եւ մարզիկներ տողանցեցին... -գուցէ եւ ուրիշ երկիրներու մէջ՝ Աւստրալիայէն մինչեւ Ամերիկաներ՝ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ականներ նոյն հրապարտ շարքերով անցան զանազան դաշտերու մէջէն եւ Հայ զանգուածներուն ներշնչեցին Հայրենիքի սէրը, Աստուծոյ պաշտամունքը, ծառայութեան կոչումը, դրօշակին յարգանքը, միշտ պատրաստ նշանաբանով եւ բարձրացի՛ր, բարձրացուր սկզբունքով:

- Օրհնեալ ըլլաք:
 - Այս առթիւ, կ'ուզեմ երեք մտածումներ բաժնել Ձեր Հետ.
 - ա. Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը իբրեւ բարոյական ընտանիք:
 - բ. Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը իբրեւ Հաւաքական ուժ:
 - գ. Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը իբրեւ մրցակցութեան, գործակցութեան, մարզական բարձր գիտակցութեան ջահակիր:
- Արդարեւ՝ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը այն Համահայկական երիտասարդական կազմակերպութիւնն է, որ իր անդամներուն կը ջանքէ Աստուծոյ սէրը, Հայրենիքի սէրը եւ բարոյական բարձր սկզբունքներ: Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը կու տայ իր անդամներուն՝ շիտակի եւ սխալի գիտակցութիւնը եւ նաեւ այն՝ որ այս աշխարհին վրայ, մարդ անհատը, իբրեւ պատկերը Աստուծոյ, պէտք է որ



Dr. and Mrs. Raffy Hovanessian from Munster, Indiana, served as the honorary chairmen of the HMEM's 6th annual sporting events which took place in Chicago in July. In his address to the group, which included more than 650 HMEM scouts, Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian praised the organization for its dedication to the youth. He asked each member to bring to the ranks one new member so that next year in Providence, Rhode Island, more than 1,200 will participate in the annual event.

կարենայ գիտնալ, թէ կեանքին մէջ իտէպիներ կան՝ որոնց պէտք է ձգտի եւ նիւթական շահերէ վեր նուաճումներ կան՝ որոնց պէտք է Հասնի: Քանի՛ առանց այս գիտակցութեան՝ մարդկային ընկերութիւնը դատապարտուած է անկման եւ ուժացման: Երկրորդ՝ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը սքանչելի ոյժ է, իբրեւ Հաւաքող, միացնող, միաւորող կազմակերպութիւն: Նիւտրոք, իմ բնական շնորհս մէջ՝ 452 յարկաբաժին կայ, նոյնքան ընտանիքներ՝ տասնեակ ազգերէ եւ երկիրներէ Հաւաքուած: Այնտեղ կայ նաեւ Հայ երիտասարդ մը՝ որ այսօր տողանցեց Ձեր առջեւ: Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը զինք գտնել եւ բերել էր: Նոյն քաղաքի Հազարաւոր շնորհներէ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ը Հաւաքել էր, բերել էր այստեղ ուրիշ երիտասարդներ: Ուրիշ քաղաքներէ՝ Պոսթընէն, Ֆիլադելֆիայէն, Բրաւիտընսէն, Ալպընիէն, Տիլթոյիտէն, Շիքակոյէն, Ուաշինկթընէն, Մոնրէալէն, Թորոնթոյէն ալ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը Հաւաքել եւ մէկտեղել է ձեզ եւ անհատ պատանիներէ եւ մարզիկներէն ըստեղծուած է Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ի մեծ ընտանիքը: Ասիկա ինծի կը յիշեցնէ քոր մը՝ փողոցին անկիւնը, լերան կողին, պարտէզի մը մէջ, փոսի մը մէջ: Ամէն մէկ քոր, առանձին առած՝ պարզ քոր մըն է, քորի կտոր մըն է: Բայց երբ ճարտարապետական Հանճարով քորը քորի վրայ կը դրուի եւ պատ կ'ըլլայ ու կամար, կը ստեղծուի շէնք, կը ստեղծուի տաճար, կը ստեղծուի պալատ: Քարերը իմաստ կ'առնեն, իրարմով ազուցուած՝ միաւոր կը դառնան, գեղեցկութիւն կը դառնան, Հարստութիւն կը դառնան: Իմաստ կը ստանան: Ահա Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը: Անհատ քարերէն ստեղծուած է Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ի շէնքը կառուցող ուր Հայ պատանին աւելի լաւ մարդ է, աւելի լաւ Հայ է: Եւ վերջապէս՝ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ը կու տայ ամէն մէկ մարզիկի՝ մրցելու ոգին, խմբային խաղերու մէջէն Հաւաքական ոյժին եւ արժէքի գնահատութիւնը եւ Համազգային ոգիի գիտակցութիւնը: Ահա օրինակ մը Ձեզի՝ այսօրուան պատուոյ նախագահները՝ Տր. Ե. Տիկ. Բաֆֆի եւ Տիկ. Բաֆֆի: Բաֆֆին Հայէպի Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.-ականներէն էր, որ Երուսաղէմ ալ իր բարիքը բաժնեց: Մարզիկ էր, մարզական ոգիի տէր էր: Իր կինը՝ Շոդակը, Հ.Ե.Ը.-ի մարզիկ էր. բայց երկուքը միասին՝ գիտցան արժեւորել մարզական ոգին, գործակցութեան

ոգին, ներդաշնակութեան ոգին եւ այդ ոգին փոխադրեցին Հայ կեանքին մէջ. իրենց կեանքի օրինակին մէջէն եւ ես իրաւամբ կրնամ ըսել, որ Ամերիկայի Արեւելեան Կիւրեղեան մինչեւ Նաղաղականի Կիւրեղեան ճանաչար աւելի ներդաշնակ զոյգ մը՝ որ իր ոգիով, նուիրումով, Համադրումի եւ ներդաշնակումի իր գիտակցութեամբ կարենայ մոռցընել տալ Բաֆֆիին եւ Շոդակին ոճը: Ապրին իրենք, որ իրենց մարզական ոգիին ընդմէջէն այսօր ազգին պատիւ կը բերեն իրենց կեանքի օրինակով:

Ապա սրբազան Հայրը կոչ ուղղեց որ ամէն մէկ մարզիկ մինչեւ զալ տարի մէկ Հոգի աւելի բերէ Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ.ի ընտանիքին՝ որպէսզի զալ տարի, Բրաւիտընսի մէջ տողանցեն 1200 Հայ երիտասարդ երիտասարդուհիներ: Նախապէս ալ Սրբազան Հայրը մաղթել էր նաեւ, որ 2001 թ. Յուլիս 1-ին, երբ Հայաստանի մէջ քրիստոնէութեան պետական կրօն Հռչակման 1700-ամեակի առթիւ երիտասարդական Հաւաք պիտի ըլլայ՝ Խոր Վիրապէս Ս. էջմիածին տողանցեն 1700 Հ.Մ.Ը.Մ. ջահակիրներ՝ որոնք պիտի առաջնորդեն տասնեակ Հազարաւոր Հայ արիւնք Հայոց նոր արշալոյսը ողջունելու Համար Ս. էջմիածին զմբէթներու տակ, Արարատի նայուածքին դիմաց:

Four Regional Board of Trustees Seminars are Planned

Four regional Board of Trustees seminars have been planned for the coming months by the Executive Council of the Prelacy. One such seminar took place last year, after a hiatus of several years, and was very much acclaimed by the more than 80 lay and clergy leaders in attendance. "We were very encouraged by the response and caliber of the first seminar," said Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate, "and therefore four regional seminars have been scheduled." With the general theme of "Behold I Make All Things New," (Rev. 21:5), the seminars are slated to take place in Detroit on October 12, in Montreal on December 14, in Philadelphia on February 8, and in Boston on March 22. According to Archbishop Ashjian, each seminar will begin with a meditation led by a clergyman in order to set the atmosphere for a successful and fruitful seminar. Topics which will be discussed are: 1.

Prelacy's Armenia Projects Administered by "St. Nerses the Great Charitable Fund"

The Prelacy recently announced the registering of the name "St. Nerses the Great Charitable Fund" with Armenia's Ministry of Justice and hereafter the Prelacy's office in Yerevan at 15 Apovian Street will operate under this name in implementing the Prelacy's charitable programs in Armenia and Artsakh.

The Yerevan office includes four full-time employees and a three-member advisory board. All administrative decisions emanate from the Prelacy's office in New York, with regular communication and supervision, as well as periodic field visits.

"By using the name of St. Nerses we are honoring the memory of a great man and it is especially appropriate," said Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, "because St. Nerses, in the spirit of St. Basil of Caesaria, was a pioneer in introducing charitable organizations including homes for orphans, elderly, and lepers."

The Prelacy's projects in Armenia and Artsakh include the sponsoring of more than 800 individual orphans; financial aid to the orphanages of Nor Kharper, Gamo, and Nork; financial assistance to the elderly; shipments of humanitarian aid through MPRI, an agency financially sponsored by the U.S. State Department; sponsorship of publications; the rebuilding of the village of Talish; aid to hospitals and schools; and scholarship grants for needy students. In addition to these projects the Prelacy fully supports the United Armenian Fund and Armenia Fund USA.

Funding for all of these projects comes from donations from generous benefactors and not from the Prelacy's annual budget. "Sometimes we get general donations for Armenia and Artsakh and it is left to our discretion as to what project it should be used for," said Archbishop Ashjian, "but more often we get donations for specific projects. For instance just a few days ago a woman from Providence sent money for Madagh for the residents of old-age homes and orphanages in Yerevan and Gamo. The blessing and distribution of Madagh becomes a very special event for both the elderly and the young."

Another special current project is the Maternity and Pediatrics Polyclinic in Yerevan, where a laboratory building is being constructed, thanks in large part to the children of the late Haig Papaian from California.

"With each trip I take to Armenia and Artsakh," said Archbishop Ashjian, "I see first-hand the difference that our support is making in the life of our brothers and sisters. I come back heartened and rejuvenated knowing that we are making progress and the light at the end of the tunnel is in sight."

Donations for Prelacy projects in Armenia and Artsakh can be sent to the Prelacy at 138 E. 39th Street, New York, NY 10016. For information call 212-689-7810. ✦

Countdown 2001: Reflections on the 17th Centenary

(Continued from page 2)

companions, could assess the conversion of Armenia by saying that the Christian faith had become for the people of Armenia, "as the color of the skin and not like a garment."

I believe one can be justified in saying that after the middle of the 5th century, following the heroic struggle of Vartanank in the battle of Avarayr, and the subsequent resistance movement, Christianity became inherently, existentially and inseparably integrated in the national ethos.

The year 506 was another landmark in this early times of the Armenian church, because it was in that year that the Armenian church took its initial and decisive step in rejecting the Council of Chalcedon (451) and thus rejecting also the hegemony of the Byzantine empire. It is a well known historical truth that the Byzantine empire was trying to bring all Christians in the Middle East and in the Caucasus under its monolithic domination and political subjugation. Besides the theological objections to the christological positions as exposed in the Tome of Pope Leo adopted by the Council of Chalcedon and expressed in the definitions formulated by the Council, the Armenians had other reasons to reject the Council of Chalcedon. The Council was being used as a vehicle to promote the Byzantine policy of assimilation, which they considered a threat to their new national Christian identity.

In the same 6th century and in the following ones, this anti-chalcedonian position of Armenia was reiterated and reinforced. Through all this process the independence of the Armenian church was consolidated and buttressed. Attempts at the recovery of the unity in later centuries could not heal the wound of division that made such a devastating impact in the common witness of the Christian church in the Middle East, in Asia Minor, and in the Caucasus.

Thus, the Christian faith came to be so closely associated with the destiny of the Armenian people that all along the succeeding centuries, the life of the church and that of the nation went on by being inseparably interwoven. Any threat to the existence and independence of the church was felt as a threat that would jeopardize the integrity and independence of the nation, and vice versa.

It was through such historical circumstances that the national character of the Armenian church acquired its distinct shape.

The conversion of Armenia to Christianity permeated the whole course and destiny of Armenian history. All along the succeeding centuries the Armenian people lived their national life under the impact of the Gospel. Their family life, domestic customs and public conduct were impregnated by the tenets of Christ's life and teachings.

The relations with other peoples were guided by constant concern and unyielding determination to maintain and promote their Christian way of life. Their attitude of both partnership with and resistance to others were motivated and determined by the self-awareness of their Christian identity and the preservation of their distinct national integrity manifested through their whole, all-inclusive culture.

The 17 centuries of continuous, unbroken and creative witness of the Armenian church is part of Christendom and of human history in general. The 17th centenary celebration is an excellent opportunity to bring that witness under international and pan-Christian focus. Particularly in this present age of world communication where the encounter of cultures has created a multi-cultural trend of dialogue and interchange, such a world wide knowledge and recognition of Armenian Christian culture of spiritual, theological, liturgical, literary and artistic nature and content is not only possible but also important for an integral understanding of the relationship between Christian faith and human culture.

One of the most eloquent and characteristic words in modern philosophical, theological and sociological vocabulary is the word *inculturation*. How can the Armenian historical experience offer a valuable contribution to our present-day search for a true understanding of the interplay between religious faith and human culture? This is an area of investigation in which the Armenian Christian culture may cast some light.

I personally wanted from the very early stage when I, then as Catholicos of Cilicia, was discussing the 1700th anniversary theme with the late Catholicos Vazken I together with the Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople two years ago, to invite a group of scholars both Armenian and non-Armenian and have an open discussion with them and to consult with them about ways and means by which the 17 centuries of our Christian heritage may be brought to world attention through scientific and academic circles.

Of course, much work has been and is being done in the study of Armenian history and culture. Indeed, we are deeply grateful for the work accomplished and the work in process not only in Armenia but also in the Diaspora.

The passing of His Holiness Vazken I, my election as Catholicos of All Armenians, then the election of Catholicos Aram I of the Great House of Cilicia, delayed the implementation of the idea. Last September when we had the first meeting in Etchmiadzin of the Central Committee for the 1700th anniversary, we decided to have this consultation in Paris as a first step in the course of planning and preparing events and activities that will take place between now and the year 2001 when we will mark the 17th centenary in a most solemn celebration in Holy Etchmiadzin.

I am delighted and thankful to you all for having responded to the invitation of the Executive Committee headed by Archbishop Mesrob Krikorian and Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian to participate in this scientific consultation of scholars. As we all know, there is much work to be done.

I am extremely happy that the new Independent State of Armenia through the edict of its president, Mr. Levon Ter-Petrosian, himself a well-known scholar in Armenology, has appointed a special commission composed of 24 government ministers, scholars, academicians, university professors, historians, and artists, to do their utmost for the promotion of studies in Armenian culture and to enhance the significance of the acceptance by the State of Christianity as its state religion in 301 A.D.

We have, and will continue to have, close collaboration with the committee established by our State. The whole process of the celebration will have a major focus on Armenia with all its cultural riches.

The challenge is before us. Let us take it seriously and with utmost love and responsibility. Your suggestions, your experience and your possibilities will enrich our endeavor. We consider you partners in our task.

I thank you wholeheartedly and wish you the very best in your deliberations. ✚

HELP

us keep our mailing list up-to-date.

Please send corrections to the Armenian Prelacy, 138 East 39th Street, New York, NY 10016. Include a copy of your mailing label or labels.

Armenian National Education Committee

ANEC NEWS

Ազգային Ուսումնական Խորհուրդը, Ռովանաորութեամբ Արեւելեան Թեմի Ազգային Առաջնորդարանի եւ Հայ Օգնութեան Միութեան, պարզեւտուած է «Արեւեան Հին Հայկական Դրամ» ներ, առատաձեռն նուիրը Պարոն Կերի Արեւեանի, իրենց հալազիտական դասընթացքը յաջողութեամբ ամբողջացուցած արժանի աշակերտներու ձեռնեւալ դպրոցներէն՝

Մարգարէտ Դպրոց, Racine, WI - Անի Սարեան: Սուրբ Գրիգոր Առաքելական Եկեղեցի, Indian Orchard, MA - Տարօն Ստեփանեան: Արարատ Հայ Դպրոց, Elberon, NJ - Արա Գարագաշեան: Դանիել Վարուժան Դպրոց, Glenview, IL - Ատրիճէ Պոլրազեան եւ Եղուարդ Խաչատուրեան: Արագ Ծաբաթօրեայ Վարժարան, Richmond, VA - Պողոս Պալանեան եւ Մանուէլ Իշխանեան: Նարեկ Ծաբաթօրեայ Վարժարան, Ridgefield, NJ - Երուանդ Տէրմենեան: Սուրբ Լուսաւորիչ Ամէնօրեայ Վարժարան, Woodside, NY - Մելիճէ Յովնանեան: Սուրբ Լուսաւորիչ Ծաբաթօրեայ Վարժարան, Woodside, NY - Նայիրի Յարութիւնեան: Սուրբ Ստեփանոս Ամէնօրեայ Վարժարան, Watertown, MA - Յոլեն Աւետիսեան եւ Ծահան Ներսէսեան: Սուրբ Ստեփանոս Ծաբաթօրեայ Վարժարան, Watertown, MA - Թանիա Միքայէլեան եւ Գլոսիա Ժամազորժեան: Սրբոց Նահատակաց Ազգային Վարժարան, Bayside, NY - Արմէն Պազալեան: Սուրբ Յակոբ Ազգային Երկրորդական Վարժարան, Montreal, Canada - Հորի Նուպարեան, Միսիսի Խազիկեան եւ Սարին Զարգալանեան: Սուրբ Յակոբ Ծաբաթօրեայ Վարժարան, Montreal, Canada - Արա Գույումեան եւ Արմէն Մոսեան: Մուրատ Վարժարան, Providence, RI - Թամար Փալանեան: Սիամանթօ Լսարան, New York, NY - Ռիթա Յարութիւնեան, Լեւոն Պարսեան եւ Սուրէն Անատոսեան: Յովնանեան Վարժարան, New Milford, NJ - Ռիթա Քահվէճեան եւ Անէթ Պարսանգուլարը:

Marzbed School of Racine, Wisconsin



ARS Marzbed Armenian School is a miniscule school of seven students, yet its school board and teachers have taken gargantuan strides with exemplary commitment and perseverance to teach Armenian language and culture to its young. From left to right, teachers, Marie Louise Mahdasian, Sara Mikaelian and Lara Kazarian flank students Sosi Mikaelian, Sona Mikaelian, Nina Fronjian, and Martin Antaramian.

Araz School of British Columbia

Araz School of British Columbia, Canada, sponsored by the Armenian Relief Society recently announced the appointment of Mr. Alexander Geghalian as the principal of the Saturday school. Mr. Geghalian, a dedicated and experienced professional, was born in Yozgat, Turkey. His goal is to teach Armenian children an understanding of "where we were, where we are now, and where we ought to be tomorrow as Armenians." The principal also believes in the importance of spiritual nourishment as a complement to academic teaching. Fluent in French, Armenian, and English, Mr. Geghalian has served as Sunday and day school administrator, as well as trustee and parish council member in Lebanon and Canada.

Siamanto Academy Begins Fall Semester

Siamanto Academy of the New York metropolitan area began its fall schedule on September 14, with an orientation session which was followed by the first Armenological lecture of the semester. The weekly lectures span a three-year program. Courses offered are at college level and they center upon the Armenian language, literature, history and Christian studies. The core curriculum is supplemented with lectures that are challenging to the high school students who attend the Academy. Upon graduation, Siamanto students become eligible for nine college credits as recommended by the American Council of Education in Washington, D.C. This year a Preparatory program has been developed to bridge the gap between graduation from Armenian school and eligibility to Siamanto Academy. This program, with its own teachers and separate curriculum, is for younger students and is meant to serve a stepping-stone to the Siamanto Academy. Siamanto Academy classes are held at the Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America in New York City. Round trip transportation is available for New Jersey residents. For additional information contact the Armenian National Education Committee at 212-689-7231.