



Armenian Apostolic Church of America
138 East 39th Street, New York, New York 10016

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Catholicos Aram Re-elected Moderator of World Council of Churches

The 8th Assembly of the World Council of Churches which convened in Harare, Zimbabwe, in December, unanimously re-elected His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, to a new term as Moderator of the Central and Executive Committees. Moderators are generally elected for a one seven-year term.

In electing him for another seven-year term, the delegates hailed His Holiness's past performance as the top executive of the international ecumenical organization and described him as a seasoned and authoritative church leader who is highly knowledgeable in the operation of the WCC which is composed of diverse churches.

Catholicos Aram was first elected moderator of the WCC during its 7th Assembly held in Canberra, Australia, in 1991, becoming the youngest individuals to hold that position.

Elected to serve on the 150-member Executive Committee were Archbishop Aghan Baliozian, Primate of the Diocese of India and the Far East, and Ms. Sylvia Ghazelian of the Mother Holy See of Etchmiadzin.

In his report to the WCC, the Catholicos told the membership that "Institutional ecumenism is in crisis. Much of our constituency is disillusioned with the institutional expressions

of the ecumenical movement. People, especially the youth, do not want to become prisoners of structure....

"I strongly believe that the future of the ecumenical movement lies with committed and visionary young people, not with structures and programs. Hence, unless the churches re-own the ecumenical movement and re-articulate clearly its vision by making it relevant to the life of the people, the ecumenical movement may lose its vitality and sense of purpose."

His Holiness concluded his lengthy report with, "There is no growth without risk. Yet, we must grow together responsibly, challenging, understanding and respecting each other. This is the call of God. This is the sacred task before us. It is my deep desire that our prayers and meditation, our reflections and actions in the coming days be strengthened, enriched and guided by this vision and commitment. And, let us, with this hope in heart, "Turn to God—Rejoice in Hope."

Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan who headed the delegation of the Eastern Prelacy to the WCC, noted that this assembly was in many ways better organized than the last two assemblies.

"There was far greater participation of women and there was an emphasis on youth participation," said the Prelate. ✚

Prelate is Elevated to Archbishop Celebratory Banquet Planned on March 13

The Executive Council of the Eastern Prelacy of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America is pleased to announce that the Prelate, His Grace Bishop Oshagan Choloyan has been elevated to the rank of Archbishop by His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia.

In an encyclical dated December 25, 1998, His Holiness praised Archbishop Choloyan for his many years of devoted service to the Armenian church and nation.

Jack Mardoian, Esq., chairman of the Executive Council, expressed the pleasure of the Executive and Religious Councils for this honor bestowed upon the Prelate in recognition of his many decades of service to the Armenian Church.

Mr. Mardoian also announced that a committee has been formed to make plans to honor the Prelate upon his elevation. "The committee will formulate plans for an appropriate celebration in honor of the elevation and also as an official welcome to Archbishop Choloyan who was elected Prelate last May," said Mr. Mardoian. Leading this committee are Very Rev. Anoushavan Tanielian, Vicar of the Eastern Prelacy, and Mr. Bedros Givlekian.

Archbishop Choloyan was born in Aleppo, Syria, in 1947. He received his primary education in Aleppo's Haikazian School. In 1960 he was accepted in the Cilician See's Seminary in Lebanon. He was ordained a deacon in 1964 and a celibate priest in 1967 by Bishop Karekin Sarkissian (now Catholicos of All Armenians), who in 1994 as Catholicos Karekin II of Cilicia ordained him a Bishop.

He attended the American University of Beirut from 1968 to 1970 where he majored in history. From 1974 to 1978 he attended the Princeton Theological Seminary where he majored in education and psychology earning a Master's Degree. His continued studies in Princeton in church history earned him a second Master's Degree.

In April 1980 he was appointed to serve as pontifical legate to Kuwait and the Arab Emirates and was subsequently elected to serve that diocese as Prelate, a service he continued until his election as Prelate of the Eastern



Prelacy on May 1, 1998.

An accomplished musician with extensive knowledge of church music, Archbishop Choloyan has published five volumes of Sharagans (hymns) with Archbishop Zareh Aznavourian. He and Archbishop Aznavourian have also translated the New Testament from classical Armenian into modern Armenian. Together with Archbishop Datev Sarkissian he has prepared a series of religious textbooks for grades 1 to 10 currently in use in the Middle East.

He serves as one of two chairmen of the Executive Committee of the 17th Centenary of the Proclamation of Christianity in Armenia, an event which will be celebrated worldwide in the year 2001.

Celebratory Banquet Will Honor Prelate

Very Rev. Tanielian reports that following several meetings the committee has formulated plans to honor Archbishop Choloyan on the weekend of March 13 and 14, 1999. A banquet will take place on Saturday, March 13, at the New York Hilton Hotel. On Sunday, March 14, the Divine Liturgy will be celebrated at St. Illuminator's Cathedral, New York, with Archbishop Choloyan presiding, at which time the Pontifical Encyclical will be presented.

For information and/or reservations to the Celebratory Banquet contact Dr. Louiza Kubikian, 516-248-2955. ✚



The Prelate and the delegates of the Cilician See at the World Council of Churches 8th Assembly which took place in Zimbabwe.

Obituary:

Archpriest Arsen Hagopian

Archpriest Rev. Arsen Hagopian, pastor of St. Gregory the Illuminator Church in Philadelphia, passed away on December 29, 1998. Rev. Hagopian served the Philadelphia community from 1956 until his retirement in 1991.

Last rites and anointing were presided over by the Prelate, Archbishop Oshagan Cholyan, with the participation of clergymen serving the Eastern Prelacy on January 2.

Antranig Hagopian was born on March 15, 1920 in Aintab to Elizabeth and Hagop Hagopian. In 1922 the Hagopian family fled to Aleppo, Syria, to escape from the aftermath of the Turkish persecutions.

In 1947 he married Marie Manoulian and the couple were blessed with the birth of a son, Hagop. Expressing a desire to become a priest in the Armenian Church he enrolled in the Theological Seminary of the Holy See of Cilicia. He was ordained in 1951 and given the name Arsen. Subsequently he was sent to Cyprus where he and his family lived from 1951 to 1955. A second son, Vahe, was born in 1951. A daughter, Elizabeth, was born in 1956 and a third son, John, in 1959.

In 1955 Der Arsen was invited to America in order to serve the parish of St. Gregory the Illuminator, in Philadelphia. During his tenure the parish was re-located to its current location on Ridge Avenue where a beautiful church was built in 1967.

In 1958 he was honored with the Pectoral Cross or *Lancha Khatch* presented by Catholicos Zareh I. In 1966 he was given the right to bear the Flowered Stole, *Dzaghegee Pilon*, and in 1969 he was given the title of Archpriest by Catholicos Khoren I.

Der Arsen served as a member of the Prelacy's Executive Council for many years.

We express our deepest condolences to his wife, Yeretgeen Marie, their children and grandchildren. May God rest his soul. ✙

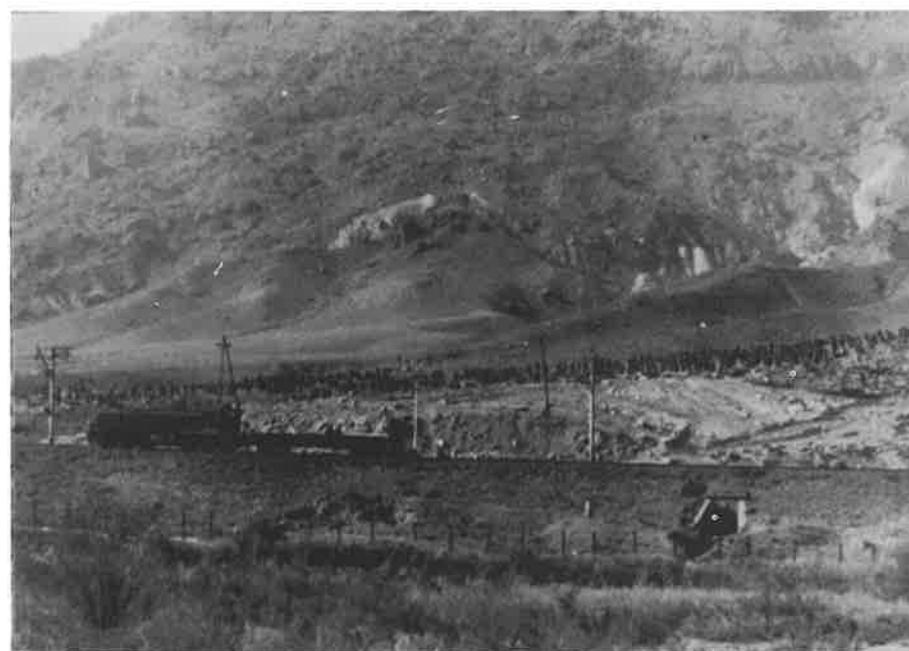
Prelate Joins St. Gregory in North Andover in Celebration of 28th Anniversary



The Prelate officiates at ordination of Dr. John Saryan as stolebearer.



Young children of the parish perform for the Prelate and guests during a banquet following the Divine Liturgy.



Visitors to St. Stepanos Church have confirmed the demolition of Armenian monuments and desecration of graves across the river Arax in the Julfa region of Nakhichevan. It was learned that khachkars (stone crosses) were being loaded on flatbed train cars and transported away from the old Armenian cemetery. His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos of All Armenians petitioned the Secretary-General of UNESCO, Frederico Mayor, to stop the desecration. His Holiness also sent an appeal to the World Council of Churches. The Julfa cemetery is perhaps one of the largest Armenian cemeteries with a variety of khachkars and decorative art. It occupies 1600 square meters extending from north to south to the river Arax. At the turn of the century the number of khachkars were estimated near 10,000, all in good condition. Nearly half of these were destroyed in the early 1900s when the railway construction passed through there without consideration given to the historic Armenian monuments. In photo above, the cleared area directly below the tombstones still standing is the section where Khatchkars and other tombstones were removed. ✙

The 28th anniversary of St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of Merrimack Valley (North Andover, Massachusetts) was marked with the first visit of the Prelate, Bishop Oshagan Cholyan on Sunday, October 4. The Prelate officiated at the Divine Liturgy during which he ordained Dr. John Saryan as a stolebearer (ourarager).

Srpazan Hayr was very much impressed by the enthusiasm and spirit of the North Andover community and had words of praise and encouragement for the vibrant parish and their dedicated pastor, Rev. Fr. Gomidas Baghsarian.

In his sermon the Prelate chose a verse from John, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty" (John 6:35).

"On the occasion of my first visit to North Andover as your Prelate, I elected this verse as my central theme," the Prelate told the parishioners. "Our Lord Jesus Christ proclaimed these words to the world so that Humankind would hear and embrace Him and His way. Seventeen hundred years ago the Armenian people heard His words and through Him and the Armenian Church found eternal life. ...

"Today you, faithful to Christ and our Armenian heritage, have gathered here in this holy church to pray together and to know that we all belong to the same family. It is my heartfelt prayer and wish that we all remain faithful to this church which for centuries has kept us, strengthened us, nourished us, and enriched our lives. It is our obligation to be unsatisfied with our past efforts and those of our forefathers. We still have much work to accomplish, especially for our new generation. We must transmit to them the message that they also belong to the same church and nation that for centuries remained faithful to Christ, through happy and tragic days. We must work together with all of the organizations of our community. With each other and for each other. Our younger generations must hear Christ's words, the same words which called us to Him: "Come to me,"

A banquet took place following the Liturgy during which special tributes were made to faithful servants of the church including Matilda Soghigian who recently retired after 16 years of serving as the church's organist and the community's eldest member, 98-year-old Yeghsapet Giragosian.

St. Gregory Church is currently looking for land to construct a new and larger church and is in the midst of a major fundraising drive. According to trustee chairman, John Dadigian, during the past few years, membership has risen significantly and enrollment in the church's school programs has increased tremendously. ✙

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OUTREACH

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**Aram I Consecrates
First Church in
Arab Emirates**

The St. Gregory the Illuminator Church, the first Armenian church in the United Arab Emirates, was consecrated in November by His Holiness Aram I, Catholicos of the Holy See of Cilicia. The church is located in the Al Yarmook district of Sharjah.

Bishop Oshagan Choloyan, who served as Prelate of Kuwait and the Gulf Region for many years before becoming Prelate of the Eastern Prelacy, was part of the official entourage accompanying His Holiness, as were the current Prelate, Bishop Sebouh Sarkissian, Archbishop Gorun Babian, Ara Yerevanian, Shahe Barsoumian and Voskeperan Arzoumanian.

The church is large enough to serve the Armenian community in the Northern Emirates which numbers about 3,000. The one million dollar project was financed by members of the Armenian community in the country.

Several years ago, on the request of His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of Cilicia (now Catholicos of All Armenians in Etchmiadzin, Armenia), a plot of land was granted to the Armenian community of the Northern Emirates to build a church in Sharjah. ✚



Aram I and entourage visit with faculty and administration of Armenian School in Abu Dhabi. The first Armenian Church in the region was recently consecrated in Sharjah, United Arab Emirates.

A Mini Lesson

The book of Revelation is the last book in the New Testament. It is unique because it is the only prophetic book in the New Testament and because of its special form of presentation. The heart of the book is a series of visions, the meaning of which has long puzzled scholars. The writer gathers up previous prophecies relating to the Messiah and the establishment of God's kingdom on earth. He describes in apocalyptic terms a new coming of Christ, a new heaven, and a new earth. The emphasis is on the words, "I come quickly."



Archbishop Oshagan Choloyan celebrates the birth and baptism of Christ on January 6 at St. Illuminator's Cathedral in New York City.

News from Armenian National Education Committee:

College Credit for ANEC's Siamanto Academy



Siamanto Academy evaluation team and administrators, left to right, Dr. Thomas Bird, Mrs. Sandra Shahbazian, Mrs. Gilda B. Kupelian, Prof. Hratch Zadoian, Mrs. Norik Baboorian-Checkosky, and Mr. Dan Negron. The Academy recently went under a successful five-year evaluation by the American Council on Education's College Credit Recommendation Service. The evaluation was conducted by Thomas Edison State College, which serves as regional representative of ACE. Upon successful completion of the Academy's program, the graduates are eligible for up to nine college credits at over 1,000 colleges and universities nationwide. ✚

Academy Students Share the Spirit with Elderly



Siamanto Academy students visited the Armenian Homes for the Aged of New Jersey and New York during the holiday season. The students not only performed for the residents but also spent time with individual residents to interview them and learn about their lifetime experiences. At both Homes the students had lunch with the residents. The Siamanto Academy staff and students are grateful to the management of the Armenian Home of NJ, Mrs. Ida Abrahamian and Mrs. Louise Macchia for their hospitality. Thanks also to the Armenian Home in New York, especially to Mrs. Takouhi Vorperian, Mrs. Yevgine Hagopian and Ms. Aggie Ellian. ✚

Armenian Prelacy Bookstore



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Ռ'ը Է, ո'ը գրի'ր փոքր
Ֆրանսա, 1998, 29 էջ
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Ներսէս Զինյ, Մանուկեան
Նիւ Եորք, 1998, 112 էջ
լսթ. \$10.00



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Առաքելներ
Լոս Անճելըս, 1998, 233 էջ
թղթ. \$15.00

Մարգարեան Նրանդ
Քարաձայն Պապարագ
Նայերէն-անգլերէն պարկերագարդ
Նալէպ, 1998, 271 էջ
թղթ. \$20.00

Avakian, Lindy V.
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soft cover \$12.95

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Armenia and Karabagh
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