

OUR RELATIONS WITH THE ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH

REV. DR. VAHAN H. TOOTIKIAN

Nothing is more central to the teachings of Jesus than that we can worship God only in fellowship. He knew nothing of a solitary and private religion. Christians cannot be close to God and separated from each other at the same time.

The Armenian Evangelical Church, like other ecclesiastical bodies, considers herself an indivisible part of Christ's universal Church, and therefore, cherishes Christian fellowship with other churches. As in the past, at the present time also, she has ecclesiastical relations with Armenian and non-Armenian churches and organizations.

The Armenian Evangelical Church has been, and is, an Armenian Church. Although she belongs to the reformed group of Protestant Churches, she was born in the Armenian Apostolic Church, as part of the renaissance of the nineteenth century and as an attempt to reform the Mother Church. The early reformists, members of the "Society of Piety," were Armenians.

Their declaration to Patriarch Chouhajian asserted: "By nationality we are *Armenian* and by faith and religion we are Christians."¹ Again, when the question was posed to them, as to what denomination would they adhere, their response was, "By nationality we are *Armenian*...we are called <Evangelical> and have named our church The Evangelical Church of Armenia."²

In spite of the persecution, deprivation, and imprisonment, the early Armenian reformists were determined to remain Armenian, and serve the Armenian people. In spite of the fact that their successors were accused of being "unpatriotic" and "schismatic," the Armenian Evangelicals did not resign from the Armenian nation, nor did they withdraw their participation and contribution to the Armenian causes. In self-defense, the Armenian Evangelicals also reacted negatively. Thus, both camps indulged in the sport of blaming each other and in name calling, which resulted in prejudices and ill feelings. As time went by, however, passions gradually decreased. The spectrum of feelings moved from animosity and hatred to tempered dislike, to indifference, and reserved acceptance of each other.

It would, of course, be naive to think that all the reservations between

the sides dissipated. Yet, there was a change of attitude. Several factors became conducive to this change. For one thing, the rapid expansion of the Armenian Evangelical movement, the official confirmation of the "Protestant Millet," the gradual gaining of respect through the manifold contributions of Armenian Evangelicalism in the religious, cultural, social and educational realms of the Armenian national life came to convince the masses that the Armenian Evangelicals were not an undesirable element within the nation. Then came the sporadic massacres and pogroms perpetrated by the Ottoman Turks toward the end of the nineteenth century, and the Armenian genocide of 1915-1918 premeditated and perpetrated by the Young Turks, which came to convince the Armenian masses that they are not enemies to one another, but they are all indiscriminately victims of a common "enemy;" that the blood in the veins of Armenian Apostolics, Evangelicals and Catholics is the same everywhere.

Furthermore, both the Armenian Apostolic and Evangelical Churches began to realize that besides sharing a common national and cultural heritage, they share common experiences, common concerns and problems, common gripes and grievances, common fears and frustrations.

The realities of the genocide and the so-called "white massacre;" the assimilation of Armenians and the gradual disintegration of its cultural values, taught the Armenian masses the important lessons of accepting one another and cooperating with each other. Thus, a number of cooperative ventures were undertaken in the aftermath of the World War I and the post-exilic period of the diasporan Armenians. The National Sanatorium in Azounieh, Lebanon, the Armenian Old Age Home in Aleppo (both founded by Armenian Evangelical ministers), and the Birds' Nest in Jibeil; the quality leadership provided by Armenian Evangelicals to the Tashnag, Ramgavar, and Henschagian political parties; the widespread support of Armenian General Benevolent Union by the Armenian Evangelicals; and many other contributions of the Armenian Evangelicals facilitated the desired cooperation.

Then came the joint commemoration of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, which was celebrated throughout 1965 by Armenians of all persuasions, in all parts of the world. These joint observances prepared the ground for further cooperation among the three Armenian denominations -- Armenian Apostolic, Catholic, and Evangelical Churches. Two noteworthy events, however, in the contemporary Armenian ecclesiastical history became significantly conducive to the strengthening of the ecumenical spirit and rapprochement of the Armenian Apostolic and Evangelical Churches. The first was the official visit of the then Moderator of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, Rev. Hovhannes Aharonian, to the Holy See of Echmiadzin, Armenia, in 1965, at the invitation of Vazgen I, Catholicos of All Armenians, on the dual occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the 10th anniversary of the coronation of His

Holiness as Catholicos.³ The second was the bold initiative of a veteran minister, the Rev. Senekerim K. Sulahian, in 1966, who, during a joint celebration of Vartanants, of St. Vartan's Day, in New York City, made a public request of Catholicos Vazgen I, the Supreme Spiritual Head of All Armenians, to "consider seriously the rescinding of the Act of 1846, as issued by Patriarch Matteos Chouhajian, and thereby tear down the wall between the Apostolic Church and the Evangelicals, opening the door to cordial and affectionate relationships between both Churches."⁴

In 1968, the Executive Committee of the Armenian Evangelical Union (AEU) of Eastern States of America and Canada decided to pursue this matter, and the following year, the AEU of California followed suit. When the merger of these Unions resulted in the formation of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, an Ecumenical Task Force was appointed. A similar committee was appointed by the Primate of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America, under the name of the Rapprochement Commission. The two ecumenical committees began a dialogue between the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Evangelical Churches. They met under the joint leadership of Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan and the Rev. S. K. Sulahian.

The commission classified the general agenda as follows:

- a) The excommunication act of 1846.
- b) The joint application of methods to strengthen the national consciousness of our people.
- c) The mutual use of the buildings and facilities of the two churches, whenever needs arise and wherever possible.
- d) Joint conferences for spiritual renewal and mutual enlightenment.
- e) The participation of both churches in each other's services and ceremonies.
- f) The examination of the extent of agreements of the two churches on doctrine and ecclesiology, and the preparation of studies thereon.⁵

The Rapprochement Commission held eight meetings between October 12, 1970, and December 14, 1971. The meetings were alternately held in the Armenian Diocesan Headquarters and the Armenian Evangelical Church in New York.⁶

The Commission made a number of recommendations to its respective bodies, which included the following:

1. To take cautious, circumspect, yet firm steps, in the direction of future organic union, no matter how indefinite and how far in the future that prospect may seem to be. The preparation for such a proposed complete union must be carried out gradually, so that the means employed may lead to general harmony, and not give way to new misunderstandings, or result in disappointments.

2. To promote mutual respect, goodwill and cooperation among the people of the two Churches, stressing our common nationality; the responsibility thrust upon us by our common history, tradition and by our forefathers, as well as the primary demands of our Armenian Christian faith. At the same time, to reject the idea of opening new controversies and misunderstandings, using as pretext the history of division of the two Churches. Specially, going beyond the level of simple tolerance and common civility, to make an effort to bring about gradually, on a deeper and broader basis, closer relationships, as a result of the efforts of rapprochement between the two Churches.
3. To encourage mutual participation in each other's services and religious ceremonies, as much as prevailing circumstances and the established order permit such participation.
4. To make possible, for the clergy of both Churches to exchange pulpits on appropriate occasions and under certain conditions.
5. To encourage the joint undertaking of general community type *solemn gatherings, important celebrations, cultural projects, national commemoration and educational programs*, taking advantage of opportunities presented to create an atmosphere of harmony.
6. To facilitate the mutual use of church buildings and social halls of one Church by the other, for public or special purposes, wherever it is necessary and whenever possible.
7. Occasionally, *to organize and hold joint conferences or meetings on a district level, to discuss religious and social problems*, primarily concerning the two Churches. Also to organize joint Bible-study groups in the buildings attached to the Church or elsewhere, and on such occasions to pray together, in accordance with an agreed program.
8. Through such assemblies and special celebrations to make an effort to study such topics as Church organization, spiritual ministry, holy sacraments, religious ceremonies and similar subjects, in order to facilitate the growing understanding and agreement between the two Churches and thus pave the way to future union.⁶

As a result of these ecumenical dialogues, two historic Armenian Clergy Retreats were held; one in California, with the participation of the clergy of the western Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian Evangelical Ministerium in California, in 1974; the other, at St. Benedict's Retreat House in Peekskill, New York, in 1975, with the participation of the clergy of the Armenian Diocese (Echmiadzin), the Armenian Prelacy (Cilicia), and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

Unfortunately, in ecumenical endeavors, these retreats proved the exception rather than the rule, because the recommendations of the Commission were not implemented.

Undoubtedly, the Rapprochement Commission's Report was a most welcome development. It was a very encouraging phenomenon that representatives of the Eastern Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of America and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America seriously deliberated the question of church reunion. Their report, submitted on February 12, 1972, to the "proper authorities of both Churches," raised hopes in both camps. Unfortunately however, Vazgen I, the then Catholicos of All Armenians, unexpectedly and abruptly put an end to these ecumenical dialogues.

In his letter of December 30, 1972, to Archbishop Torgom Manoukian, the Primate of the Eastern Diocese, His Holiness Vazgen I, in a negative mood, stated that "The Report of the Rapprochement Commission does not correspond with the objectives of the Bishop's Council (held in 1968, in Echmiadzin, Armenia)." He added, "We wish to offer invitation of union to our Evangelical children and to submit to their kind attention, that to arrive at that goal...it is necessary to adhere more firmly to the canonical and traditional principles, understandings, and hierarchical structure...only they become the supreme pledge of the perpetuity of the particular survival of Armenian Christianity...and the spiritual, cultural, and national unity of the Armenian people." He then concluded with a rhetorical question, "Are our separated children, Catholic and Protestant, prepared to hear the invitation of the Mother Church of the Armenians?"⁷

This letter was a complete shock to the members of the Rapprochement Commission and many ecumenically-minded clergy and lay people from both Armenian and Evangelical Churches. Of course, there were reasons for this unfortunate "letter." There were internal and external pressures on Catholicos Vazgen; perhaps there were factors and circumstances beyond his control! But whatever the causes, there was no justification for such a drastic decision!

Times have changed, leaders have changed, and circumstances have changed since the writing of the letter. Almost a quarter of a century has elapsed. Political circumstances have changed -- the Soviet Union has collapsed, Armenia is a free and independent country, the cold war is over and there is a new catholicos on the throne of Holy Echmiadzin, in the person of Catholicos Karekin I (formerly Catholicos Karekin II of the See of Cilicia), who not only is endowed with wisdom, Christian statesmanship, and good will, but also with an ecumenical spirit. He can revive the ecumenical dialogue between the two churches; he can also initiate the implementation of the resolutions of the Rapprochement Commission, and pursue the ecumenical endeavors cherished by concerned Armenian clergy and laity from both Churches. Undoubtedly, he will find genuine support from the present pontiff of the Great House of Cilicia, Catholicos Aram I, who is a highly esteemed leader in the World Council of Churches and an equally ecumenically-oriented leader of the

Armenian Church.

In 1996, several developments took place which reaffirm our belief that both the Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Karekin I, and the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, Aram I, are open to closer relationship with the Armenian Evangelical Church. These include:

- a. Their visitations to the Armenian Evangelical institutions during their pontifical visits to their North American constituencies (Karekin I in January and February, 1996; and Aram I in June and July, 1996);
- b. Their public acknowledgements that Armenian Evangelicals are part and parcel of the Armenian nation;
- c. Catholicos Karekin's recognition of Armenian Evangelicals (Dr. Jack Abdulian and Mrs. Zevart Apelian) for their services to the Armenian nation;
- d. The invitation of this writer, the Rev. Tootikian, by the Executive Committee of the 1700th Anniversary of Christianity in Armenia to a Consultation Conference, June 14, 1996, in Paris, France;
- e. Catholicos Karekin I's videotape message and letter, and Catholicos Aram I's letter on the occasion of the International Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church, held in Issy-les-Moulineaux, France, from June 27-30, 1996.
- f. Catholicos Karekin I's warm reception of the Armenian Evangelical delegation on Sunday, July 7, 1996, at the Cathedral of the Holy Echmiadzin, on the 150th Anniversary observation of the Armenian Evangelical Church; his recognition of the Armenian Evangelical Church and her contributions to the nation during his sermon that morning; and his presence, with high ranking Armenian clergy at the public celebration in Yerevan, and his special message to all Armenian Evangelicals in Armenia and the Diaspora.

The effectiveness of both Armenian Apostolic and Evangelical Churches lies in their spiritual strength, and that can be realized by unity -- of purpose, in Christian ideals and in hearts.

All Armenians are bound together for weal or woe. They must be unified into one national family. Their solidarity is based on two important principles. First, they are all one in Christ. They are bound together by Christian ties. They must so guide their thoughts that they may realistically weigh the issues of life, and seeing their religious life as a nation, may move beyond provincialism to a well grounded commitment to the building of God's kingdom. Secondly, their unity is based on a simple principle that they all belong to one Nation united in destiny and indivisible as an entity. They are the same on the basis of *Armenianism*.

At a time when the loss of social cohesion in Armenian community life has prompted many Armenians to search for spiritual alternatives, and at a

time when all concerned Armenians are troubled by the problem of assimilation, every responsible Armenian leader should accept the necessity of putting national interests above partisan and parochial considerations. It will take an active commitment on the part of both individuals and organizations to create a climate of reconciliation, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and to carry the noble torch of brotherly love among the Armenians.

The time has arrived for the Armenian Evangelical Church to rededicate itself to its past goals and to heed the voice of the future. Armenian Evangelicals should regard their Church as a vital cog in the great national scheme of things and give themselves a chance to achieve true fulfillment. This can be done most effectively with the Armenian Apostolic Church.

The road to unity is not paved and smooth; it is a rugged road. Undoubtedly, there are important differences between the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Evangelical Churches which present some problems. There are doctrinal, theological, institutional, and liturgical differences. There are also differences of outlook, orientation and custom.

In spite of all differences, however, the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Evangelical Churches are not poles apart as some seem to think. Even if there are significant differences, the two Churches have much in common and they can still unite in most essentials. Both the Armenian Apostolic and the Armenian Evangelical Churches, for instance, share belief in the same doctrines:

- the Nicene Creed;
- the Holy Trinity -- God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of mankind;
- the same Jesus Christ, in the redemptive act of God through Jesus Christ; that this redemptive act is centered in the birth, life, ministry, and death and resurrection of Jesus Christ;
- the Holy Spirit, Who is present and active in this world and among His children;
- sin, atonement, redemption, grace, salvation, and eternal life; that all men are corrupted by sin and cannot save themselves; that atonement in the work of Christ reconciling God and man; that God's grace is free; that salvation is the sum total of the good that comes to men through God's free gift by grace and through their own free acceptance of what He offers and their conformity to His will; that eternal life is the climax of God's gift to men through Christ;
- the Church, the Body of Christ and the fellowship of those who are committed to Him;
- worship, prayer and sacraments;
- the Bible, which contains the Word of God;
- a Christian way of life; the moral and ethical demands of a religion that

calls for allegiance to Christ, purity, justice, mercy, love, service and good will among men.

At present, the two Churches are not far apart even in non-essentials, such as use of vestments, symbolism, observances of holidays and festivals. In recent years there has been a liturgical revival in the Armenian Evangelical Church. The old puritanistic antagonism to all kinds of formalism is not characteristic of the Armenian Evangelical Church anymore. The liturgical renewal in some Armenian Evangelical churches has created not only a revival of interest in worship and rituals, but has also brought about changes in church architecture, in the arrangements of sanctuaries, in the use of symbols, in the attire of ministers, and in the observance of traditional seasons of the church year.

In appraising the prospect of a union between the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Evangelical Churches, one who stands too closely within his own denominational tradition is likely to accentuate the differences and difficulties that must be surmounted in attaining union. It is important to realize that there are many similarities, common experiences and common meanings, even in dissimilar practices, as well as great possibilities of rapprochement and reconciliation.

Admittedly, complete and final merger is not an immediate possibility. But it is very encouraging to know that the Armenian Apostolic Church is not only interested in rapprochement and unity but considers that "theological and doctrinal matters would be the last step on the long road to union."⁸ In some Church traditions, such as in the Greek Orthodox Church, uniformity in matters of faith is a prerequisite and a categorical imperative to any serious talks or merger. Such religious traditions maintain that before there can be union among Christians, there must first be full agreement in faith that there can be only one basis for union -- *the fullness of the faith*. The Greek Orthodox Church rejects the whole concept of "intercommunion" between separated Christian bodies and admits no form of sacramental fellowship short of full communion.⁹

In our day and age, Armenians have to understand that the totality of the Armenian people is bound up as one indivisible unit. What happens to Armenians in one place affects the destiny of Armenians throughout the world. In recent years, the tragic earthquake in northern Armenia, the Azeri massacres in Baku and in the historic Artzakh, the Turkish and Azeri economic blockade of Armenia, the heart-rending suffering of the Armenian people in their Fatherland in the face of enormous hardships have awakened all Armenians to the stark realization that none of the religious or political groups is self-sufficient in itself. Thus, all Armenians must recognize that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link, and they must be sure that every link in their chain is forged just as strongly as another. Each component of the nation must realize that it is

a link in an endless chain, and to be an Armenian is to have a bond with every other Armenian, no matter where or in what circumstances.

In short, the Armenian Apostolic and the Armenian Evangelical Churches must be unified in spirit. Their solidarity is based on two important principles:

- a. All Armenian Churches and all Armenians are one in Christ;
- b. They belong to one nation, united in destiny and indivisible as an entity.

Their greatest challenge now is to be one strong nation serving God and mankind in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTES

1. Stepan H. Utudjian, *Tsakoumen Yev Untatsk Avetaranakanoutian Ee Hays* (Origin and Course of Evangelicalism Among Armenians), Constantinople, 1914, p. 162.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 202.
3. Rev. H. P. Aharonian, *Hai Avetaranakan Yekeghetsin Janapathnerou Khachadzevoumin* (The Armenian Evangelical Church at the Crossroads), [Yervant H. Kassouny, ed.], Beirut, 1988, p. 21.
4. G. H. Chopourian and S. K. Sulahian, *The One-Hundred and Twenty-Fifth Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Movement: 1846-1971*, New York, 1971, p. 109.
5. The first full meeting of the joint Commission was held on May 20, 1970, in the Armenian Diocesan office, in the presence of the following appointed persons:
From the Armenian Apostolic Church: Most Rev. Arch. Tiran Nersoyan, Rev. Mampre Kouzoulan, Rev. Tatjat Davidian, Dr. Hakob Etmekjian, Mr. Petros Norehad, Rev. Arnak Kasparian, Dr. Hakob Nersoyan.
From the Armenian Evangelical Union: Rev. S. K. Sulahian, Mr. John Keyishian, Rev. Vahan Tootikian, Mr. Steven Mardigulian, Rev. Dr. Kirakos Chopourian, Rev. Dr. Tigran Kassouny, and Mr. George Philibosian.
The Commission chose its executive body as follows: Most Rev. Arch. Tiran Nersoyan, First Chairman, S. K. Sulahian, Second Chairman, Rev. Dr. Tigran Kassouny, First Secretary, and Mr. Petros Norehad, Second Secretary.
6. *Report of the Rapprochement Commission of the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Evangelical Churches*, Boston, 1975, p. 13. Hereafter cited as *Report*.
7. "Amenayn Hayots Vehapar hayrapeti Namake Amerikayi Miyatsial Nahangats Arevelian Temi Aradjnort T. Torgom Ark. Manoukianin AMNi hayots Aradjnortarani yev Hay Avetaranakan Hamaynkneri Nerkayatsoutsichneri midjev Niou Yorkoum Kayatsats Handipoumneri Masin, *Echmiadzin*, Vol. XXX, November, Echmiadzin, 1973, pp. 26-29.
8. *Report*, p. 26.
9. A. Schmemmann, *The Historical Road of Eastern Orthodoxy*, New York, 1963, pp. 35-36.

V. H. T.

ՄԵՐ ՅԱՐԱԲԵՐՈՒԹԻՒՆՆԵՐԸ ՀԱՅ ԱՌԱՔԵԼԱԿԱՆ ԵԿԵՂԵՑԻՆ ՀԵՏ

(ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ)

ՎԵՐ ԴՈԿՏ. ՎԱՀԱՆ Յ. ԹՈՒԹԻԿԵԱՆ

Հայ Աւետարանական Բարենորոգչական Եարժումի ծննդոցի առաջին իսկ օրէն անոր առաջնորդները հաւատացին, հաստատեցին եւ պնդեցին, թէ հայ էին իրենք եւ կը մնային անբաժան մէկ մասը հայութեան եւ Հայ Եկեղեցիին, ու եթէ յետագային յառաջացաւ բաժանումը՝ այդ եղաւ ակամայ: Սակայն տասնամեակներ ետք պատահող դէպքերն եկան ցոյց տալու, թէ հայը հայ էր՝ ինչ գոյնի եւ երանգի, ինչ հաւատքի եւ հաւատամքի, ինչ եկեղեցիի եւ յարանուանութեան ալ պատկանէր: Իրականութեան մէջ՝ հայը թշնամի չէր հայուն, ու եթէ պահ մը եղաւ այդպէս՝ արուեստական էր անիկա եւ ժամանակաւոր: Իրականութեան մէջ բոլոր կողմերն ալ շուտով անդրադարձան, որ իրենք մէկ էին իրենց անցեալով, ազգային եւ մշակութային ժառանգով, իրենց ապրած եւ իրենց վիճակուած փորձանքներով եւ փորձութիւններով, դասերով եւ տառապանքներով, եւ վախով ու տագնապով: Աւելին՝ Հայկական Եղեռնի Յիսնամեակը՝ 1965ին, եկաւ ցոյց տալու թէ նոյնն էին իրենք՝ հայերը, եւ այդ իսկ պատճառով անհրաժեշտ էր մօտենալ իրարու, ձեռք երկարել իրարու եւ համագործակցիլ որպէս մէկ մարմին, մէկ հոգի եւ մէկ ամբողջութիւն:

Այսպէս էր որ 1965էն սկսեալ առաքելական եւ աւետարանական հաստատմանը հայութեան փորձեցին մօտենալ իրարու: Արդարեւ՝ 1965ին Վեր. Յովհաննէս Ահարոնեանի պաշտօնական այցովը Էջմիածին՝ կոտրեցան ազգաբաժան սառցակոյտերը, եւ ճամբայ բացին Վեր. Մենեքերիմ Սիլահեանին, որ Նիւ Եորքի մէջ կայացող Վարդանանց տօնակատարութեան մը ընթացքին հրապարակաւ եւ պաշտօնապէս խնդրէր Ամենայն Հայոց Հայրապետ Վազգէն Առաջինէն որ վերջ տայ հայ աւետարանականներու դէմ Պոլսոյ պատրիարք Մատթոս Չուխաճեանի դրած բանադրանքին:

Մերձեցումի սկզբնական այս արտայայտութիւններէն ետք էր, որ 1966ին իսկ Միացեալ Նահանգներու մէջ սկսան շարժիլ կողմերը եւ գոյութեան կոչեցին Մերձեցման Յանձնախումբ մը, որ զբաղէր մերձեցումի հարցով, եւ կարեւորութեան պարագային՝ կողմերը բերէր իրարու:

Յանձնախումբն իր առաջին հանդիպումն ունեցաւ 20 Մայիս 1970ին, որուն յաջորդեցին եօթը ուրիշներ. նոյն շրջանին կայացան նաեւ բազմաթիւ երկխօսութիւններ, աղօթքի եւ փոխհասկացողութեան համար խմբական առանձնացումներ 1974ին եւ 1975ին, այս վերջիններուն մասնակցեցան ինչպէս Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիներու նոյնպէս նաեւ Առաքելական Մայր Եկեղեցիի Էջմիածնական եւ Անթիլիասական Աթոռներու կրօնականներ: Տիրան Արք. Ներսիսեանի կարող ու ճկուն ղեկավարութեան տակ՝ Մերձեցման Յանձնախումբն ի վերջոյ 1972ի կէսերուն հասաւ որոշ եզրակացութիւններու եւ պատրաստեց իր տեղեկագիրը, որ նոյնիտայն յանձնուեցաւ կողմերու պատկան

մարմիններում:

Ըստ սկսուած գործը, սակայն, անակնկալ կերպով կասեցաւ Վեհափառ հայրապետին 30 Դեկտեմբեր 1972 թուակիր նամակով որ ուղղուեցաւ յանձնախումբի ատենապետ Ներսիսեան Սրբազանին... Ըստ այդ գիրին՝ տեղեկագիրին բովանդակութիւնը չէր համապատասխաներ 1968ին Էջմիածինի մէջ կայացած եպիսկոպոսական Ժողովի որոշումներուն. այսուհանդերձ, իր գիրով, Վեհափառը լայն կը քանար դուռը Հայ եկեղեցիին բոլոր անոնց առջեւ, որոնք անսակարկ կ'ընդունէին անոր հիմնական կանոնական սկզբունքները եւ եկեղեցական կարգ ու սարքը:

1972էն առդին անցաւ մօտ քառորդ դար, եւ փոխուեցաւ շատ բան հայուն քաղաքական, ընկերային եւ ազգային կեանքէն ներս: Այժմ կան կրօնական, ընկերային եւ ազգային նոր դէմքեր եւ նոր դեկավարութիւն. ստեղծուած են նոր պայմաններ եւ յառաջ եկած՝ նոր տուեալներ, որոնք աւելի դիւրին կ'ընծայեն հայ համայնքներու եւ կողմերու մատչումն իրարու: Էջմիածինի Սուրբ Արոտի գահակալ Գարեգին Ա. Ամենայն հայոց կաթողիկոսը եւ Կիլիկեան Արոտի գահակալ Արամ Ա. կաթողիկոսը յայտնի են ոչ միայն իրենց միջ-եկեղեցական յարաբերութիւններու սրտբացութեամբ՝ այլ մանաւանդ Հայ Աւետարանականութեան հանդէպ իրենց ունեցած կեցուածքով: Այլ չկան քաղաքական եւ գաղափարական տաք ու պաղ հովեիք, եւ անկախ է հայրենիքը: Այս բոլորը կը կազմեն զրաւականը կողմերու մատչումին եւ իրարհասկացողութեան կարելիութեան: Աւելին՝ սփիտքեան պայմանները եւ անոնցմէ յառաջացող «սպիտակ ջարդ»ը հրամայական կը դարձնեն կողմերու մօտեցումն իրարու՝ վասն որոնումին հասկացողութեան մը եզրերուն, որպէսզի ամփոփուի, միանայ եւ զօրանայ հայութիւնը: Ի վերջոյ՝ այսօր շատ աւելի տուեալներ կան անզատ ինկած կողմերը իրարու հետ միացնելու եւ իրարու զօրելու քան թէ բաժնելու զանոնք կրօնականէն եւ համայնքայինէն մինչեւ կառուցուածքային եւ ընկերային տուեալները: Անշուշտ անմիջական կարելիութիւն մը չէ ամբողջական եւ վերջնական միաձուլումը կողմերուն, սակայն անհրաժեշտ է միանգամընդմիջտ ընդունիլ, թէ հայ Ժողովուրդն ստիպուած է ըլլալ մէկ եւ միասնական՝ առնուազն հոգեպէս, իմացականօրէն եւ ազգովին, որովհետեւ, ինչպէս կ'եզրակացնէ յօդուածագիրը.

«ա. Բոլոր հայ եկեղեցիներն ու հայերը մէկ են Զրիստոսով, [եւ]

«բ. Անոնք կը պատկանին մէկ ազգի, միացած են ճակատագիրով եւ անհատանելի են որպէս ամբողջութիւն»: