

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH

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On July 1, 1846, thirty-seven men and three Armenian women established the Armenian Evangelical Church in the «mission chapel» at Pera, Istanbul (then Constantinople). Four years later, on November 27, 1850, the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Medjid granted formal recognition to the newly established Church. The result: a permanent breach between the Armenian Apostolic Church and the Armenian Evangelical Church. Since then the Armenian Evangelical Church has continued its separate existence.

At the height of the Armenian Evangelical movement, prior to World War I, Armenian Evangelicals all over the world numbered approximately seventy thousand, the vast majority of whom lived in the Turkish Ottoman Empire¹.

The Armenian Evangelical Church today comprises sixty-five churches and more than a dozen fellowships with a total of approximately twelve thousand communicant members and thirty thousand adherents. Among the adherents are included the pledging members, youth, children, and supporting friends of the churches.

With the exception of thirteen churches, three in Europe, four in South America, four in Armenia, one in Georgia, one in Sydney, Australia, and one in Cyprus, all Armenian Evangelical churches belong to three Church Unions: the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, the Armenian Evangelical Union of France, and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

Compared with other hierachical churches, the Armenian Evangelical Church may give an impression of disorder and division. There are varieties of Armenian Evangelical thought and practice. The special elements which constitute an Armenian Evangelical Union are the right to draw up its own constitution, to adopt its own church polity, and to determine its relationship with other churches. Each Union is jealous of its independence, and, while it remains loyal to Armenian Evangelicalism as a whole, makes plain its intention in many matters to go its own way.

Unlike the Protestant Reformation in Europe, the Armenian Evangelical Reformation began as a single united movement in her homeland.

Within a short period, however, due to circumstances, geographical proximity, and organizational considerations, Armenian Protestantism was organized into Church Unions. In chronological order four Unions were first organized in Turkey in the 1860's: Bithynia Union (1864), Eastern Union (1866), Cilician Union (1867), and Central Union (1868). Then, at the turn of the century, two more Unions were organized in America: the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States (1901), and the Armenian Evangelical Union of California (1908). In May of 1914, immediately before World War I broke out, the Armenian Evangelicals organized the first Armenian Union in their Fatherland, Armenia: the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Ararat². Although the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Ararat was organized in May of 1914, the Armenian Evangelicals could not hold Union meetings before 1919 due to the World War I. They started holding meetings after Armenia became an independent republic. Annual conventions were held regularly until 1926. By 1927, due to government restrictions, the Union was dissolved as church life was disrupted. Thus, before World War I, the Armenian Evangelicals throughout the world counted seven Unions with one hundred seventy-eight churches³.

The Turkish genocide of the Armenians between 1915 and 1922 wiped out all of the Armenian Evangelical Unions and most of the churches and their members in Turkey. The survivors of the massacres, «the Remnant», managed to organize two Unions in the 1920's in their new lands of adoption: the Armenian Evangelical Union of Syria and Lebanon (the Armenian Evangelical Union of Syria and Lebanon [Cilicia] assumed the name «Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East [UAEC-NE] in 1930) and the Armenian Evangelical Union of France. By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, Armenian Protestantism was reduced to four Unions. Since the merger of the two Unions of America in 1971, the Armenian Evangelical Church has comprised three Unions.

The Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAEC-NE)

Until the early 1970's the largest and the relatively more organized of the three Unions was the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, but the political instability in the Middle East and the ensuing civil war in Lebanon changed that status. At present, UAEC-NE has twenty-five churches with the following distribution: six in Lebanon, ten in Syria, three in Turkey, one in Egypt, two in Greece, and three in Iran⁴.

The UAEC-NE has overall jurisdiction of twenty-five Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Middle East. The highest ecclesiastical authority of these churches is the annual convention of the Union and its Central

Committee⁵. The churches in Syria and Lebanon have separate executive councils; the Central Committee is made up of both. The Union has the following officers: a moderator, chairman of the Central Committee, two heads of Communities (one each for Syria and Lebanon), and two community Councils. A **Personne Morale** represents the Union vis-a-vis the Lebanese government⁶. The Community Councils (**Hamaynkayin Zhoghov**) of the Union «look after the political and civil rights of Armenian Evangelicals according to the code of **Status Personnel**»⁷. The Union also has two Church tribunals for marital problems: the «Tribunal of First Instance» and «Court of Appeal». In Lebanon the government has continued to oppose recognition of Armenian Evangelicals as a separate denomination. All Protestant Churches are identified as one category and constitute a single Protestant denomination administered by the Supreme council. The Armenian Evangelicals have pressed consistently for separate registration, but the Lebanese government has refused to grant them separate «millet» status.

All the churches of the UAEC-NE, with the exception of one or two, run their own Sunday Schools with a unified graded curriculum. Most of them also have a Christian education program for their youth groups and Christian Endeavor Unions for the youth.

The educational work of Armenian Evangelicals is a long-standing tradition. The UAEC-NE has a network of eighteen educational institutions ranging from elementary schools to colleges: nine in Lebanon, six in Syria, one in Greece, and one in Iran. Of these, Haigazian College, the first Armenian college in the Diaspora, has operated in Beirut since 1954, serving the greater Armenian and local Arab community. The Near East School of Theology (NEST) is the only full-fledged inter-denominational seminary dedicated to the preparation of parish ministers and Christian educators. UAEC-NE is one of the strongest supporting members of the NEST⁸. The long-time moderator of the Union, the Rev. H.P. Aharonian, was the president of the seminary from 1961 to 1978. The seminary since 1991 has another Armenian president in the person of the Rev. Hovhannes Karjian.

The Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEU-NA)

The Armenian Evangelical Union of America was the product of the merger of the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States and Canada, Inc. and the Armenian Evangelical Union of California, Inc. After more than six decades of separate existence, the twenty-one churches and three fellowships of these two Unions united in 1971 into one Christian brotherhood «to uphold one another in their needs, to work together in mutual respect, ... to work for the Kingdom of God, to promote their general welfare and their missionary outreach»⁹.

Numerically, Armenian Evangelicals in North America are a small minority. Today the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America comprises twenty-five churches and three fellowships with a total communicant membership of about five thousand, and an additional five to six thousand supporting members, youth, and Sunday School pupils.

Most of the AEU-NA churches have Christian education programs, church school and youth activities, and most of them distribute weekly and/or monthly newsletters. Most of them are financially self-sufficient, and all of them, with the exception of two, have adequate buildings of their own. There is a wide spectrum of inter-communal relations between Armenian Evangelical Churches and those of the Armenian Apostolic and Catholic traditions.

Undoubtedly, the formation of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America is one of the most important accomplishments in recent years by the Armenian Evangelical Churches in America. Since its inception in 1971, AEU-NA has embarked on a number of ventures and has successfully accomplished some important undertakings. These include fund-raising campaigns for the purpose of promoting their religious, educational, and cultural programs as well as sustaining and strengthening the churches. Several new churches and fellowships have also been organized.

Most of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of North America have denominational affiliations such as their affiliations with the United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, and United Church of Canada. A small number of them, however, are independent; their sole loyalty is to the AEU-NA. The church polity of the majority of the churches is congregational. All of them, in varying degrees, support the missionary agency of Armenian Evangelicalism, the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

The Armenian Evangelical Union of France (AEUF)

The Armenian Evangelical Union of France is the smallest of the three Unions of the Armenian Evangelical Church. It has fourteen organized churches and small missions, with approximately one thousand communicant members and three thousand supporting members, youth, and children¹⁰.

In general, the Armenian Evangelical Churches in France are confessional churches with a fundamentalist orientation¹¹. The majority of the present ministers are French-born Armenian Evangelicals. All of the churches are small in size and numbers. Attrition attributable to deaths and other causes has not been offset by new additions. In spite of this, however, the AEUF tries to challenge the Armenian Evangelical youth for church leadership and administrative responsibilities. In recent years it has encouraged the transition from Armenian to Franco-Armenian services. Special efforts are made to reach out to young generation through the church schools, church schools

youth groups, and two summer camps. Many adults and youth benefit physically and spiritually from the facilities of the summer program of Toulon and Fontanelle Evangelical Camps¹².

Other Armenian Evangelical Churches

The Armenian Evangelicals in South America have four organized churches and three Armenian Missionary Association District Committees. In this vast continent, larger than North America, the total population of Armenians is approximately eighty-five thousand, of whom only two thousand five hundred are Armenian Evangelicals; they are a minority within a minority of Armenians. The total number of Armenian Evangelical families is about five hundred with a communicant membership of three hundred. There are also four Armenian Brotherhood Churches which have close ties with the Evangelicals. In spite of their size and limited resources, some of these are quite vibrant and active.

Two of these churches have strong missionary outreach programs. The Armenian Evangelical Congregational Church of Buenos Aires, for example, besides holding frequent evangelistic activities among the Argentinians, employs a full-time missionary in the remote Chado province inhabited by native Indians. It also owns a summer camp in the outskirts of Buenos Aires with a strong Christian education program¹³. Similarly, the Armenian Evangelical Central Church of Sao Paulo supervises a Mission Center in Ferrax (a small town forty miles from Sao Paulo), as well as running a weekly evangelistic radio program¹⁴.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America has three important District Committees in South America: the AMAA of Argentina, the AMAA District of Montevideo, and the AMAA District of Sao Paulo.

Not formally affiliated but cooperating with the Armenian Evangelical Church are four Armenian Brotherhood Churches in the cities of Buenos Aires, Cordoba, and Montevideo. They have very strong Christian education programs for children, youth, and adults and an ever-growing number of missionary projects. They jointly support four missionaries in Turkey, and two mission centers in Latin America¹⁵.

In Europe, two churches and four fellowships are loosely affiliated with the Armenian Evangelical Union of France and supported by the AMMA. These are the Armenian Evangelical Church of Brussels, Belgium; the Armenian Evangelical Church of Sofia; and the Armenian Evangelical Fellowships of Varna, Plovdiv, and Shoumen of Bulgaria. In London, England, there is the Armenian Evangelical Fellowship.

The only Armenian Evangelical Church in the Far East is the Armenian Evangelical Uniting Church of Sydney which was organized as a church fellowship in the early 1970's. It has a membership of approximately one

hundred persons. It is affiliated with the Uniting Church of Australia, and is partially supported by the U.C.A. and the AMAA. There is another Brotherhood Church, called the Armenian Evangelical Nazarene Church, with a membership of 20, which is in the process of seeking membership in the AEU-NA.

Armenian Evangelicalism has some churches even behind what used to be the Iron Curtain, the former Soviet Union. At present there are four organized churches and a number of emerging fellowships in the former Soviet Union, particularly in the Republics of Armenia and Georgia. From the sovietization of these republics until their independence in 1991, these churches had no outside ties nor had they received moral or financial assistance from without. They had been thrown entirely on their own resources. They lived under a regime which made no secret of its hostility to all religions. Yet, they managed to carry on.

Organizations: Educational, Missionary, and Benevolent Institutions

One of the greatest contributions of the Armenian Evangelical Church to the Armenian people continues to be in the realm of education. For decades her educational institutions have provided valuable services to young generations of Armenians in the Diaspora. All of these schools are located in the Middle East, and are under the jurisdiction of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East (UAEC-NE). Some of these educational institutions have been, and still are, instrumental in the preparation of Armenian Evangelical leaders. In this respect, the following are the most noteworthy:

The Near East School of Theology (NEST). It is the only full-fledged Protestant seminary in the Near East dedicated to the preparation of parish ministers, Christian educators, and religious workers. It is a joint venture and partnership of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon, the Evangelical Episcopal Church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Jordan, and the Armenian Missionary Association of America. The NEST, in its present form, came into being through the union of the School of Religious Workers in Beirut and the School of Religion in Athens in 1932 under the auspices of the Congregational and Presbyterian Mission Boards in America. A good share of its ministry has been directed to the education and training of Armenian Evangelical leaders. In all, a total of over one hundred Armenian ministers and Christian educators are graduates of the seminary, most of whom have served, and are still serving the Armenian Evangelical Churches all over the world¹⁶.

Aleppo College. Until a decade ago, Aleppo College was a junior college. But due to the existing local circumstances, the freshman and sophomore were eliminated and presently it operates as a high school. It is owned and administered cooperatively by the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and the Arab Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon. Aleppo College is really a continuation of Central Turkey College, originally established in 1876 by the Armenian Evangelicals in the Cilician town of Aintab. It was a university-level college which included a medical school. The majority of the student body and the faculty was comprised of Armenians¹⁷. Following the evacuation of the Armenians from Cilicia, the college was transferred to Aleppo, Syria, and after merging with the North Syria School for Boys (Presbyterian), assumed the name Aleppo College. It was supported by two mission boards: the United Church Board for World Ministries and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. The Mission Board in 1963 turned over the college to the two local bodies, viz., the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and the Arab Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon. At the present the UAEC-NE owns fifty-one and one-half percent (51 1/2%) of the property of the college¹⁸.

Haigazian College. It is the only full-fledged Armenian Evangelical College outside Armenia, and until a few years ago, was the only university-level independent Armenian college in the Diaspora. It was named after the late Dr. Armenag Haigazian, a great Armenian educator and President of the Apostolic Institute of Konia (Jenanian College) in Turkey. It was founded in 1955 through the financial commitment of two prominent Armenian/American couples, Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Mehagian of Phoenix, Arizona, and Mr. & Mrs. Stephen Philiposian of Radnor, Pennsylvania¹⁹. Although the college is an Armenian Evangelical educational institution in Beirut, Lebanon, over thirty nationalities and more than half a dozen religious sects are represented in it. At its height, it had over 650 students, but due to the civil war in Lebanon, the total student body in 1979 was about half that number²⁰. The college is governed by a Board of Trustees with headquarters in Los Angeles, California, under the auspices of the AMAA, and a Board of Managers in Beirut, Lebanon.

In historical perspective, two other Armenian Evangelical institutions of higher learning can justifiably be recognized as forerunners of Haigazian College: **the Teachers' Training Institute** and **the Armenian Evangelical College**. The Teachers' Training Institute was a junior-college level teachers' training school founded in 1947 in Eshrefieh, Beirut. It was the product of the vision and labor of love of a group of influential Armenian Evangelical leaders from Beirut, Lebanon. The Armenian Evangelical College was established by the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut, Lebanon, when it added freshman and sophomore years to its existing high school. When the idea of a college became a reality, the programs of these two schools were incorporated into the Haigazian College²¹.

Missionary Endeavor

The missionary agency of the Armenian Evangelical Church is the Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc. (A.M.A.A.). It was born on June 7, 1918, during the annual convention of the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States (U.S.A.), which was held in the Armenian Evangelical Church of the Martyrs in Worcester, Massachusetts.

The beginning of the AMAA can be traced back to the Missionary Committee of the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States which was formed in 1907. The outbreak of World War I and the calamity to which Armenians were subjected became serious concern to the Armenian Evangelical leadership. But it was not until 1917 that practical steps were taken. The newly elected Executive Committee of the AEU of Eastern States was authorized to study the matter of creating a missionary association. In the following year, at the 17th annual convention of the Union, the Executive Committee presented its report, and a motion for the creation of the Armenian Missionary Association of America was unanimously adopted.

The first announcement of the Association stated its purpose as follows: «... To strengthen the spiritual life of our churches, and to rebuild the ruined churches of the fatherland»²². Then the AMAA was placed on a membership basis. Its motto was, «Every Evangelical Armenian a member of the Missionary Association». Seven categories of membership were established, ranging from an annual membership fee of five dollars to that of «honorary life membership» of five hundred dollars. Thus, during the first year of the Association a grand total of \$27,000 was pledged²³.

It is hardly an exaggeration to state that the AMAA became, in many ways, the historical liaison, the unifying bond, and the catalyst of the Armenian Evangelical Churches scattered all over the world. Without it the Armenian Evangelicals would have been deprived of good leadership during the most difficult period of their history. It provided them with the sinews of organization and guidance. Their misfortunes would have been even greater and their good fortunes would have been less had not the AMAA existed to fulfil its destiny as the beneficent ministrant of the Armenian Evangelical Church. Indeed, had not the AMAA given the stricken Armenians of World War I guidance and moral and material support, the calamity of the «First Genocide of the Twentieth Century» would have been even more pronounced.

At present, the Armenian Missionary Association of America has to its credit over three quarters of a century of tremendous success both in America and abroad and an untarnished record of service to Armenians everywhere. The spirit of dedication and service which has been shown by the members and friends of the Association has been recorded with appreciation in the annals of the Armenian Evangelical communities in the Diaspora²⁴.

Since its inception the AMAA has been not only the missionary arm of the Armenian Evangelical churches in North America but also the «golden chain» binding all Armenian Evangelicals throughout the world. It has also become the «Good Samaritan» embodying intense concern for brethren in need, and constantly answering the «Macedonian call».

Christian Education

Almost all Armenian Evangelical Churches have church schools or Sunday schools. Christian education for children has been part and parcel of the Evangelical witness. In the early period of Armenian Evangelical church life, strong biblical foundations of faith and their application to life for all age groups were an important characteristic of the new church. No person was received into church membership without going through a period of Christian education and successfully completing a confirmation class²⁵. Christian education was not confined to the Sunday School and the training of youngsters in Christian ways. The first two generations of the Armenian Evangelical Church recognized that the educational mission of their churches was to be the training of young and old alike. They knew the importance of adult Christian education. Besides the church school for children, they organized regular Sunday classes for adults before or after Sunday morning services. They had mid-week prayer and Bible study meetings. In general, Armenian Evangelical Churches realized that their educational mission included a compelling mandate on adult education. As time went by the emphasis on adult education diminished²⁶. But recognition of the importance of Christian education for children continued. In the aftermath of World War I, when the Armenian refugees had lost most of their possessions, one of the first things they did was to rebuild their churches and to reorganize their church schools. By 1926, four years after their settlement in Syria and Lebanon, the Armenian Evangelicals counted over four thousand church school pupils²⁷.

At present, in Syria and Lebanon, where the bulk of Armenian Evangelicals in the Middle East live, there are as many Sunday schools as there are Armenian Evangelical Churches. The Sunday schools are organized into local Unions. They are members of the Bible Lands Union for Christian Education. There is a unified graded curriculum published in Armenian by the Near East Sunday school Curriculum Board. The total number of pupils in the church schools is approximately three thousand.

In North America, France, and South America there are about thirty church schools with more than two thousand pupils. In North America, when the Armenian Evangelical Churches were being founded during the last quarter of the nineteenth and the first decade of the twentieth centuries, the membership was largely composed of adults; there were few children and fewer young people. By the end of the first two decades of this century there was

already a thriving Sunday school program both in the Eastern States and in California. The first statistics of 1908 about the California Union indicate that there were four churches and three hundred sixty Sunday school pupils²⁹. Although statistical data about the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States are not available, reports indicate that there was also a growing Sunday school in the East³⁰. Today the Armenian Evangelical Churches in North America count twenty church schools with over eleven hundred pupils³¹. In France the situation of the church school membership at present is deteriorating. In the 1940's the Armenian Evangelical Union had a vibrant church school organization with over nine hundred pupils³². Today that number is as low as about three hundred. The South American churches count about the same number of pupils.

As for youth work, in the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East the main Armenian Evangelical youth organization is the Christian Endeavor Society. It was organized in 1924 in Aleppo, Syria³³. Presently, twenty-two churches of UAEC-NE form the Christian Endeavor Societies, some of which have Junior and Senior departments. These youth groups form a Union and carry on their activities through an Executive Committee of their own. The Christian Endeavor Union has two summer camps, both known as **Kchag** (the Armenian word **Kchag** is an acronym of «Christian», «Endeavor», «Summer», and «Center»). The first is located in Beit Mery, Lebanon; the other, in Kessab, Syria³⁴. Besides the Christian Endeavor Unions, the Armenian Evangelicals in Lebanon have an association of young adults, the Armenian Evangelical Young Men's Association (HAEM). The avowed goals of this organization, which was organized in 1973, is to foster the Armenian Evangelical Movement in religious, social, cultural, and benevolent realms.

The youth work of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in America started in the second decade of the twentieth century. In its initial stage, youth groups were organized on the model of Christian Endeavor Societies of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in Turkey. Gradually, new groups were organized by many Armenian Evangelical Churches on the East and West coasts. It was not until 1925 that a Union was formed in the East which was named the Inter-State Union. Not long after, the youth groups of the New England Armenian Evangelical Churches got together and organized the New England Union. In 1961 these two Unions merged and the Armenian Protestant Youth Fellowship was born. The APYF operated in three geographical regions, Mid-Western, Middle Atlantic, and New England, and once a year they met for their annual convention³⁵. While the APYF was active on the East coast and Mid-West, the Christian Endeavor Union of California became the unifying force of the Armenian Evangelical youth in California. In 1978, the two youth organizations merged and formed a new united youth group, the Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship (AEYF)³⁶.

In France there are signs of revival in youth activities. More and more French-born Armenian Evangelicals are joining the churches. They have their own groups, two summer camps, and some evangelistic and missionary outreach programs³⁷.

In South America there is no organized Union or Fellowship for Armenian Evangelical youth. There are two churches, however, which have their own youth groups: the Armenian Evangelical Congregational Church of Buenos Aires and the Armenian Evangelical Central Church of Sao Paulo.

The newly organized Armenian Evangelical Uniting Church of Australia has recently organized a Christian Endeavor Society which is still in its organizational stage.

Benevolent and Philanthropic Organizations

There are more than half a dozen benevolent, philanthropic, and humanitarian organizations through which the Armenian Evangelical Church reaches out to many needy Armenians. Some of these organizations belong to the Evangelical Church and some were inspired and organized by Armenian Evangelicals. Most of these, however, are jointly owned and supported by the Armenian Evangelical Church and other church bodies and organizations. A short description of the most important of these organizations follows:

The Stephen Philibosian Foundation is named after the late Stephen Philibosian, a long-time treasurer and board member of the Armenian Missionary Association of America and a great benefactor. After establishing a sizeable Endowment Fund in the AMAA, Stephen Philibosian organized his own foundation in 1969, the income of which has been used for scholarships, reconstruction of churches and schools, and for benevolence in the mission field, especially the Middle East. In the past two decades, through the generous contribution of both the Stephen Philibosian Endowment Fund and the Stephen Philibosian Foundation, a number of buildings have been constructed or renovated and hundreds of scholarships have been granted to needy students.

The Jinishian Memorial Foundation is in memory of an Armenian Evangelical rug merchant, Vartan Jinishian, son of the late Rev. Haroutune Jinishian. The Foundation amounts to ten million dollars, seventy-five percent of the annual interest of which is being used for the Armenian needy in the Middle East.

The Armenian National Sanatorium of Lebanon is the brainchild of the late Rev. Yenovk Hadidian and was founded in June of 1923. It is jointly owned and managed by the Armenian Apostolic and Evangelical churches in Lebanon. It has an auxiliary committee in the United States and is supported by Armenians of all persuasions, both in the Middle East and North America³⁸. The Sanatorium has fourteen buildings on its 48 acres of land.

For many years it has served not only the tubercular but also those suffering from chronic respiratory and cardiac diseases who have either had no home or families able to care for them³⁹. Lately, the managers of ANSL have decided to convert it to a general hospital due to the diminishing number of tubercular cases.

CAHL (Center for Armenian Handicapped in Lebanon), formerly known as the Institute for the Blind, Deaf, and Dumb and the Widows' Home, is cooperatively managed by the Swiss Friends of the Armenians, the Armenian Apostolic Church, and the Armenian Evangelical Churches of Lebanon. It was originally organized by the Near East Relief.

The Near East Relief, a great philanthropic organization, was founded on September 16, 1915, by two American missionaries, James Barton and Cleveland Dodge. For fourteen years, from 1915 to 1929, it met the economic, social, and educational needs of thousands of Armenians. Howard M. Sachar claims that during its fourteen year existence the NER raised and expended \$85 million for Armenians, and quite literally kept the entire Armenian people in the Near East alive⁴⁰. When the mandate of the Near East Relief expired in 1928, the Swiss Friends of the Armenians took over full responsibility for the work. The Swiss Friends of the Armenians was formed after the Turkish massacres of the Armenians in 1896. It has operated hospitals, orphanages, homes for the aged and the widowed, and other institutions among the Armenians.

Originally the Institute's work consisted of providing housing and vocational training for blind orphans. Following World War II, the Institute was transferred from Ghazir to Bourj Hammoud, Lebanon, and in 1948 it opened a school for deaf and dumb children. In 1964 the work was expanded and a school for mentally retarded children was opened. Adjacent to the premises of the Institute is also a Home for Armenian Widows. By an act of integration in 1963, the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East and the Swiss Friends of the Armenians cooperatively managed the Institute⁴¹. Later, however, by a new agreement the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church in Lebanon became a third partner⁴².

The Deutsche Hilfsbund Mission in Ainjar, Lebanon, is a small European Protestant missionary society currently administering an Armenian Evangelical high school in Ainjar, Lebanon. The school has a large boarding department. Together with their educational work, the mission has also been running a clinic since 1947⁴³.

The **Action Chrétienne en Orient** is a missionary society established following World War I by Dr. Paul Beron, son of a Lutheran minister from Alsace. A theologian, missionary, and Evangelist, Dr. Beron dedicated himself to two purposes: preaching the Gospel to the Muslim people and helping the survivors of the Armenian Holocaust in every way possible⁴⁴. Besides playing a most decisive role in the reconstruction work of Armenian Evangelicalism in France, Action Chrétienne en Orient established mission

centers in Syria and Lebanon. Since 1956, its work among the Armenians has been integrated with the evangelistic outreach of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East⁴⁵.

The Old Age Home in Aleppo is an interdenominational home for the Armenian aged. It is owned and operated by the UAEC-NE, the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Northern Syria, and the Armenian Catholic Church in Aleppo, Syria. The Home was started by the Near East Relief following World War I in an informal way to meet the needs of Armenian old people who had lost their families and were left without any shelter or protection⁴⁶. It was organized and placed under the supervision of an Armenian interdenominational body in 1923 by the Rev. Aharon Shirajian and Hampartzoum Kellejian. At the present, it is supported by the Armenian community of Aleppo, Syria⁴⁷.

The Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center (AESSC) was organized in 1977, pursuant to AMAA's encouragement by a one-year initial grant, but its embryonic beginnings go back to 1974. It was the brain child of the late James Koundakjian who saw the various needs of increasing numbers of Armenian refugees arriving in the Los Angeles area. AESSC, headquartered in Hollywood, California, offers a full range of social service activities such as immigration, counselling, job and educational counselling, «English as a second Language» training classes, senior citizen activities, and acculturation counselling. The center has a full-time director, job developer, adjustment counselor, a teacher of English as a second language, and a host of volunteers. It is governed by a board of directors representing its main supporters, the AMAA, the AEU-NA, the Stephen Philibosian Foundation, and the local Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Greater Los Angeles area.

Publications

Since its inception, the Armenian Evangelical Movement has launched more than a score of publications, including weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, and quarterly periodicals, many of which have since ceased⁴⁸. (Not including church bulletins, newsletters, and other small-scale publications.) Those that survive under the aegis of Armenian Evangelicals are as follows:

Tchanasser, which is the official organ of the Christian Endeavor Union, serves the entire Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. It is a monthly magazine, published in Armenian, in Beirut, Lebanon. It was established in 1937 as a monthly, later it became a bi-weekly, then monthly, but in recent years it has become again bi-weekly or semi-monthly. Its circulation is about one thousand.

Panper has been the official organ of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France since its establishment in 1925. Its circulation is over two thousand. It is published in Armenian, in Marseille, France.

AMAA News has been the monthly publication of the Armenian Missionary Association of America since 1965. It is published in Paramus, New Jersey, in English and Armenian. It has the largest circulation among all the Armenian Evangelical publications. It is sent to over twelve thousand readers with the compliments of AMAA.

Ezhatz Mer Hanabazort (Our Daily Bread) is a quarterly Armenian devotional booklet, providing daily devotion to the Armenian readers of the American Armenian Community since 1991. It is published by the Armenian Missionary Association of America.

Paree Louys is the monthly newsletter of the Armenian Evangelical Union since 1990. Its circulation is over three hundred.

Badanegan Artzakank is a monthly magazine in Armenian published in Beirut, Lebanon, for children and adolescents. It was established in 1936 and published singlehandedly by the Reverend Manasseh Schnorokian for many years. At present, it is the property of the Christian Endeavor Union of UAEC-NE. Its circulation is about nine hundred.

Le Lumignon is the bi-monthly publication of the youth of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France. It is published in French. Its circulation is about one thousand.

AEU-NA Forum has been the quarterly newsletter of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America since 1975. It is published in English, and is mailed free of charge to three thousand readers.

Looy's, a daily devotional booklet («Upper Room») for family and private prayers, is published quarterly in Armenian and Arabic by the Christian Endeavor Union of UAEC-NE.

A Christian Family Calendar is published annually in Armenian by the Christian Endeavor Union of Syria and Lebanon.

Haigazian Armenological Review is a scholarly yearbook which has been published by the Armenian Department of Haigazian College, Beirut, Lebanon since 1970. It carries articles in Armenian, English, and French.

Apart from these publications, about thirty-five Armenian Evangelical churches in Syria, Lebanon, Iran, and North America have individual weekly or monthly newsletters.

Ecumenical Relations

The Armenian Evangelical Church has a relatively long history of ecumenical involvement. The Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East was one of the charter members of the World Council of Churches which came into existence in Holland, in 1948. Since then, it has attended most of the important meetings of the Council. The representative of UAEC-NE, the Rev. Hovhannes Aharonian, served as a member of the Central Committee of the W.C.C. for seven years⁴⁹.

The Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East is also a charter member of the Middle East Council of Churches (formerly the Near East Christian Council). It is also a member of the Fellowship of the Evangelical Churches in the Near East. Rev. Hovhannes Aharonian served as its president at one time⁵⁰.

The ecumenical relation and contacts of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in North America have been indirect, through the respective denominations to which most of them belong, namely, through the United Church of Christ, the United Church of Canada, and the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A..

The Armenian Evangelical Churches in France and South America, being primarily confessional and conservative churches, have a reserved attitude toward the World Council of Churches. It must be stated, however, that they maintain a cordial relationship with some other confessional and fundamentalist church bodies.

In recent years the Armenian Evangelical Church has also tried to strengthen her ties with the Armenian Apostolic Church. In this respect, the appointment of a Task Force on Ecumenicity by the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, and subsequently, the creation of the **Rapprochement Commission of the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Evangelical Churches** in the early 1970's are significant milestones.

Although the Armenian Evangelical Church's relationship with the Armenian Apostolic Church is not a new phenomenon, two events in contemporary history combined were conducive to the strengthening of the ecumenical spirit and rapprochement of the two 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 Etchmiadzin, Armenia, in 1965, at the invitation of Vasken I, Catholicos of All Armenia, on the dual occasion of the 50th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide and the 10th anniversary of the coronation of His Holiness as Catholicos⁵¹. The second was the bold initiative of a veteran minister, the Rev. Senekerim K. Sulahian, in 1966, who, during a joint celebration of Vartanantz, or St. Vartan's Day, in New York City, made a public request of Catholicos of Vasken I, the Supreme Spiritual Head of All Armenians, to «consider seriously the rescinding of the Act of 1846 as issued by Patriarch Matteos Choohajian and thereby tear down the wall between the Apostolic Church and the Evangelicals, opening the door to cordial and affectionate relationships between both Churches⁵².

In 1968 the Executive Committee of the AEU of Eastern States 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 and the two ecumenical committees began a dialogue under the name of the **Rapprochement Commission of the Armenian Apostolic and Armenian Evangelical Churches**. They met under the joint leadership of Archbishop Tiran Nersoyan and the Rev. S.K. Sulahian⁵³. Their joint report and communiqué was published in 1975. It made some important recommendations among which were the following: «To take cautious, circumspect, yet firm steps, in the direction of future organic union; to promote mutual respect, good will, and cooperation among the people of the two Churches; to encourage mutual participation in each other's services and religious ceremonies; to make it possible for the clergy of both Churches to exchange pulpits on appropriate occasions; to organize and hold Bible Study groups and conferences on a district level to discuss religious and social problems, etc.»⁵⁴.

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 (Etchmiadzin), 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, primarily due to the undecided and ambivalent attitude of the Diocese of the Armenian Apostolic Church. The Rapprochement Commission has since been inactive and there is no formal dialogue between the two Churches.

Inter-Union Relations

In the realm of Inter-Union relations there have been three important developments in the past three decades: the formation of the **Inter-Union Council of the Armenian Evangelical Churches**, the **World Conference of Armenian Evangelicals**, and the **Armenian Evangelical World Council**.

The Inter-Union Council of the Armenian Evangelical Churches was initiated by the UAEC-NE in the early 1950's. It was composed of the representatives of the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, the Armenian Evangelical Union of France, the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States, the Armenian Evangelical Union of California, and the Armenian Missionary Association of America. It was set up to be a deliberative body to review the State of the Unions; to strengthen the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the world; to recruit, train and place ministers for their churches; to start a publication which was to be the official organ of Armenian Protestantism; to deliberate on ways and means of preserving and perpetuating the educational institutions, and to cultivate and transmit the

Armenian Evangelical heritage⁵⁵. The Council had three formative Conferences: the first, in 1952 in Beirut, Lebanon; the second, in 1955 in Marseille, France; and the third, in 1965, in Paris, France. The last was relatively more organized than the previous two and continued for four days with three sessions each day. The Reverend Antranig Bedikian, one of the organizers of this conference, described the conference as «historically significant because it was the first time since 1846, when the first Armenian Evangelical Church came into being, that a group of men were brought together for a conference in the name of all the existing churches to take a broad view of their lives and discuss issues growing out of new conditions in which they are to meet the call of their mission on earth»⁵⁷.

The Paris Conference of the Inter-Union Council elected an Executive Committee and proposed a revised constitution which had been drawn up by the previous Conference in Marseille. The proposal was to be submitted by the representatives to their respective Unions for ratification. Only the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East ratified the constitution. No action, pro or con, was taken by the other Unions. Consequently, the Executive Council of the Inter-Union failed to fulfill its mandate to call another meeting within five years.

The factors which contributed to this failure included the preoccupation of the two Unions in America with their merger, the deterioration of the political situation in the Middle East, and the lack of urgency on the part of the majority of parties involved to convene another meeting. Since 1972 all efforts to reactivate the Council by the Chairman of the Inter-Union Council failed.

In the late 1960's the Armenian Evangelical Union of Eastern States and Canada and the Armenian Evangelical Union of California were preoccupied with the problems of merger which consummated in the creation of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America in 1971. The Inter-Union relations were to be re-evaluated by the newly formed AEU-NA. Then, the Arab-Israeli war in 1967 and the subsequent tense situation in that area became obstacles for convening another Inter-Union Council meeting.

In 1967, the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America decided to table the proposed Constitution of the Inter-Union Council and together with the AMAA, recommended the calling of an all-Armenian Evangelical Conference⁵⁸.

Through the initiative of the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the participation of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America an all-Armenian Evangelical Conference, called **The First World Conference of Armenian Evangelicals** was held from June 25-28, 1978 at Haverford College, Haverford, Pennsylvania, with 126 representatives (44 clergymen and 82 laymen) in attendance. The theme of the Conference was «Evangelical Vision For Our Time». Its purposes were as follows:

- To bring clergy and lay church leaders together for consultation on the status of the Armenian Evangelical Movement.
- To study and pray together to recapture the inspiration which led us to our commitment to the Kingdom of God.
- To evaluate, plan, and act upon ways and means of making our Christian testimony more biblical, dynamic, and soul-winning.
- To strengthen the base of our missionary outreach by making the AMAA the missionary arm of all Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Diaspora.
- To seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the «revitalization and growth of our Armenian Evangelical Movement»⁵⁹.

The World Conference tried to evaluate Armenian Evangelicalism in its various fields of endeavor. Its findings were turned over to a «Master Plan Committee». The recommendations of this 13-member Committee led to the founding of the Armenian Evangelical World Council. Major topics identified by this same committee became the basis of the deliberations of the Council in France.

In spite of its sublime purposes, however, the First World Conference of Armenian Evangelicals created some controversy in some circles: some of the participants and leaders of the Inter-Union Council charged that the World Conference was a subtle means to destroy the Inter-Union Council.

Nevertheless, the Council continued its work, and as planned, held its meeting from April 29 to May 5, 1981 at Issy-Les-Moulineaux, France. In attendance were two representatives from each of the following bodies: the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, the Armenian Evangelical Union of France, the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East, and the Armenian Missionary Association of America. After the meeting, it released a communiqué which stated that it was proposing to its constituting bodies «a structure for its corporate activity;» that, «it set up task forces to deal with area of common concern: mission and evangelism, Christian education, records and archive, theology, and inter-church relation.» The communiqué concluded with these words: «Subject to the ratification of the proposed Constitution and By-laws by the constituting bodies, authorizing the Council to be the corporate expression of the ongoing life of the Armenian Evangelical Movement in the world, the delegates agreed to call the first official meeting of the Council in the fall of 1982, in Paris, France»⁶⁰. The civil war in Lebanon delayed the approval by the Near East Union for six years, but finally it became possible for the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) to meet in full capacity in Havertown, Pennsylvania from October 12-14, 1987.

Since its inception, the Armenian Evangelical World Council has had four meetings: Paris, France (1982); Havertown, PA, USA (1987); Athens,

Greece (1989); and Aleppo, Syria (1991). During this relatively short period of time, it has accomplished the following: 1) preparation of a new constitution; 2) gaining the status of incorporation; 3) coordination of the Armenian Evangelical relief aid for Armenia and Lebanon; 4) establishment of an endowment fund; 5) visitation to and provision for moral guidance to small struggling Armenian Evangelical Churches; 6) creation of a united voice and stance on behalf of the Armenian Cause, re: the genocide issue, Armenia and liberation of Artzakh (Nagorno Karabagh); 7) formulation of guidelines concerning the preparation of ministers and religious leaders; and 8) the creation of an Armenian Evangelical Archives at the AMAA headquarters⁶¹.

Besides these and other tangible accomplishments, there are other significant gains that Council members have acquired in terms of fellowship, prayer, and working together, learning from each other, and helping one another ... things of this nature are obviously not visible and measurable, yet exceedingly important in mutual cooperation and spiritual growth.

AEWC is not a «super church»; it is only a representative body of three Armenian Evangelical Unions and two organizations (Armenian Evangelical Union of North America; Armenian Evangelical Union of France; Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East; Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc.; And Stephen Philibosian Foundation), bringing Armenian Evangelicals together in order to deepen and strengthen their commitment to the Kingdom of God, to evaluate, plan, and act upon ways and means of making the Armenian Evangelical testimony more effective, to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the revitalization and growth of the Armenian Evangelical Church, to strengthen missionary outreach, and to create a united front in essential matters of national interests and tragic emergencies.

In the absence of a centralized church structure, AEWEC endeavors to cement all Armenian Evangelical Unions and organizations for the common purpose of sharing in the needs and the deeds of each other's lives. It endeavors to become a more effective instrument of mutual assistance in serving the Unions, Armenian people and others, rather than independent Unions working in isolation.

The Ministry

All members of the Armenian Evangelical Church, clergy and laity, have the privilege and responsibility to witness to the Gospel. They are in the ministry and are called to exercise such gifts of teaching, evangelizing, healing, preaching, and administration as God has bestowed upon them.

The Armenian Evangelical Church also recognizes the fact that some of her members are called to full-time service for various forms of ministry in the Church. This calling is recognized by ordination, commissioning or other appropriate services of dedication.

The officers of the Armenian Evangelical Churches include clergy as well as laity. These officers are: the minister or the pastor, the associate or assistant minister, the Christian education director, the board of deacons, the board of trustees, the Council or the Session of various committees.

A pastor or minister of the Armenian Evangelical Church is a communicant member who has been called of God and ordained to preach and teach the Gospel, to administer sacraments and rites of the Church, and to exercise pastoral care and leadership. Membership in the Union to which the candidate's own church belongs is a requirement, as well as the acceptance of the constitution of that Union⁶¹.

There are a few important considerations pertinent to the ordained ministry. The first relates to the calling by God of the one who seeks ordination. The person who desires to be ordained must be convinced of God's choosing for that special ministry. But the church must also recognize and validate the call, because ordination pertains to the entire Christian community. At ordination the church publicly recognizes gifts for ministry; not just for the local parish but for the universal Church. The whole process leading to ordination — involving consultation with one's parish minister, with the Boards of the Church and Department of Ministerial Relations of the Union or Conference — is a process of examination — of testing one's inner call. The inner call must find some objective authentication.

Ordination in the Armenian Evangelical Church is not a sacrament; it is a service whereby the Church through her Unions, in cooperation with the local church, ordains her ministers, confers on the ministerial standing, and authorizes them to perform all the duties and exercise all the prerogatives of the ministry. Before ordination, however, there is a period of preparation. The first stage in the period of preparation for the ministry is when the candidate who prepares for the ministry applies to be received as a **Student in Care of the Union**. The Department or Committee of Ministerial Relations of the student's Union examines the applicant with respect to fitness, aptitude, Christian experience and commitment. If found to be qualified, the applicant is received into the care of the Union. The latter extends fellowship, counsel, and assistance to the student during the time of academic preparation for the ministry⁶². Then the next stage is application for Licensure. In some Armenian Evangelical Unions, particularly those in the Near East and France, licence is given only to the person who has already completed theological training and is serving a church. The licentiate is usually given a temporary license by the Union to perform such ministerial duties as it may determine. A licentiate has all the rights and privileges of a minister, except the administration of the sacraments, the solemnization

of marriage, and the reception of communicant members⁶³. In the United States those AEU-NA churches which have United Church of Christ affiliation, as most of them do, a licentiate is a student in care of the Union (AEU-NA) or through the Association of the United Church of Christ to which the student's home church belongs. In cases where the student's church belongs to the Presbyterian denomination, if the student is found to be qualified, licensure is granted by the Presbyter. Application for licensure is made by the candidate through a local church to its Union; licensure is granted by the Presbytery. A licentiate who is given temporary license can perform such ministerial duties as the Union may determine.

The final step in the process of induction into the ordained ministry is the ordination itself. The three main parts of the ordination service are the Presentation, the Examination, and the Act of Ordination. The **Presentation** establishes the fact that the church has properly recognized the call of the candidate and the willingness of the congregation to assent to the ordination. This element of the service corresponds to the church's recognition of the call of the candidate. The **Examination** of the candidate by a team of ordained ministers is a formal recognition by the ordination committee of the candidate's fitness for ministerial duties and responsibilities. The **Act of Ordination** by the laying on of hands is the invoking of God's blessing on the candidate, as well as the formal authorization and consecration of the new minister as a spiritual leader.

The ordained minister is called to play a number of roles as a spiritual leader. Carnegie Calian beautifully describes some of the current models and distinguishable styles of ministry which are applicable to the Armenian Evangelical as well as to many churches. He labels them as follows: 1) the servant-shepherd who seeks to serve «without acclaim», and attempts to minister with sensitivity to the needs of people individually and in group; 2) the politician-prophet who tries to be a «conscience raiser» in society; 3) the preacher-teacher proclaiming the Gospel and instructing the congregation through pulpit, classroom, and counseling sessions; 4) the evangelist-charismatic person who confronts the congregation directly with the meaning of salvation and brings to their attention God's activity in changing lives; 5) the pragmatist-promoter whose leadership places the church in a strong financial and social position in the community; 6) the manager-enabler who participates within the congregation as an enabler and inspirer; and 7) liturgist-celebrant who leads in worship and administers the sacraments⁶⁴. Besides these styles of ministry, the Armenian Evangelical minister in the Diaspora is called to play the role of community leader, often a specialized ministry attending to the spiritual and cultural needs of parishioners.

The Role of the Laity

In the Armenian Evangelical Church the laity play an important role. Lay persons have the opportunity to take an active role in the life of the

church, not simply in its organizations, but also in ecclesiastical matter. The Board of Deacons of any local church, for instance, is called to look after the spiritual welfare of the church. The diaconate is called to assist the minister in the conduct of the worship services as shall best promote the welfare of the church and in the preparation and administration of the sacraments. It is the privilege and duty of the Board of Deacons to minister to the needs of the poor, the sick, the sorrowing, the aged, the indifferent, and the stranger; act with the minister in considering applications for membership in the church and make recommendations pertaining thereto; find ways and means to enhance the church membership; seek to awaken an intelligent interest in evangelistic and missionary causes; provide preachers in the absence of the minister or in case of a vacancy in the pastoral ministry⁶⁵.

The laity of the Armenian Evangelical Church is also charged with the temporal and physical needs of the church. The Board of Trustees, for example, assumes the care and custody of the property of the church. It raises and disburses budgeted funds for the expenses of the church⁶⁶. Lay persons also serve the church through other committees such as Christian Education, Benevolence, Missionary, Music, Social Action, and Stewardship Committees, as well as through auxiliary organizations.

The Armenian Evangelical Church is governed, her service ordered, and her work organized on a constitutional and democratic base in which lay persons play a decisive role. Her power and effectiveness, from the human point of view, lies in the dedication, the leadership, and involvement of her people.

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(ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ)

ՎԵՐ.-ԴՈԿՏ.-ՎԱՀԱՆ Հ. ԹՈՒԹԻԿԵԱՆ

Գրեթէ հարիւրյիսունամեայ հաստատութիւն մըն է Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին, որ պաշտօնապէս գոյութեան կանչուեցաւ 27 Նոյեմբեր 1850-ին՝ Սուլթան Ապահիլ Մեհիտի գիրով, որով կը յայտարարուէր գոյառումը *Բրոթերսիթի Միլլեթի* սահմաններէն ներս Օսմանեան Կայսրութեան: Սուլթանական սա գիրը վաւերացուց այն շարժումը որ սկսաւ 1 Յուլիս 1846-ին, եւ որ անյող-ղոյզ կերպով կը շարունակուի անկէ ի վեր:

Հոս տրուող յօդուածը կու տայ պատմութիւնը ո՛չ թէ կրօնական այս շարժումին՝ այլ անոր ֆիզիքական արտայայտութիւնը հանդիսացող եկեղեցական ու կրօնական կանոնքին:

Վեր.-Դոկտ.-Վահան Թութիկեան մանրամասն կերպով վերլուծումի կ'են-բարկէ այս կանոնքը, անոր գործօնները, անոր խթան հանդիսացող եւ իմաստ պարզեող պատճառները, եւ գայն կանգուն պահող կազմակերպչական եւ էու-րային դրոյթները՝ յայտնուելով յայնկոյս, ծովերէն աղիւն թէ անդին, Մերձա-ուր Արեւելի, Ֆրանսայի, Միացեալ Նահանգներու, թէ հայրենի սահմաններէն ներս, մի՛շտ ալ շեշտը դնելով ոչ միայն անոր կրօնական ու եկեղեցական արտա-յայտութեան վրայ՝ այլ մանաւանդ անոր գործնական աւետարանչութեան, եւ կրթական, բարեսիրական, երիտասարդական եւ հրատարակչական գործունէու-թեան: Վերապատիւ հեղինակը կը խօսի տակաւին Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղե-ցիին միջնաբերդական, միջեկեղեցական, միջհամայնքային, եւ տիեզերա-կան ու ընդհանրական փոխարարներութիւններուն մասին- աւելին՝ անկա վեր-լուծումի սեղանին կը բերէ դերն ու պատրաստութիւնը, պարտաւորութիւններն ու պատասխանատուութիւնները Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի պաշտօնէու-թեան, որ միշտ չէ որ կրօնական է: Հոն է նաեւ անհատ եկեղեցին կազմող ժո-ղովուրդը, որ համայնքն է եւ ունի իր որոշ պարտաւորութիւնները հանդէպ եկե-ղեցիին- ահա թէ ինչո՞ւ կ'եզրակացնէ Վեր.-Դոկտ. Թութիկեան, թէ «Հայ Աւե-տարանական Եկեղեցիին բոլոր անդամները, կղերական թէ աշխարհական, ունին առանձնաշնորհումը Աւետարանը վկայելու: Անոնք մաս կը կազմեն աւետարան-չութեան, եւ կոչուած են կատարելու ուսուցանելու, աւետարանելու, բժշկելու, բարոզելու եւ առաջնորդելու այնպիսի բարիքներ, գործնք Աստուած շնորհած է իրենց»- աւելին՝ «Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին կը կառավարուի, անոր ծառայութիւնները կը կարգաւորուին եւ գործը կը կազմակերպուի սահմանադ-րական եւ ռամկապետական խարխիւ մը վրայ, ուր վճռական դեր կը խաղան աշխարհականները», ի՞նչ փոյթ թէ, ինչպէս կը հաստատէ հեղինակը, «բաղդա-տած նուիրապետական այլ եկեղեցիներու՝ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցին կրնայ տալ տպաւորութիւն մը անկարգութեան եւ բաժանուածութեան»: