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WINDOW VIEW OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH



A Catholicos
for the
21st Century



From the Publisher

Etchmiadzin in Cyberspace

The National Ecclesiastical Assembly of the Armenian Apostolic Church convened for the first time in forty years to elect the new Catholicos of All Armenians—April 3-5, 1995. On this historic occasion, *Window Quarterly* organized a special coverage of the election on the Internet, starting on March 26 and ending on April 9, 1995. "The election's historic and practical implications for our Church today warranted the full use of our resources", said *Window* editor Fr. Vazken Movsesian.

Our daily feeds to the internet community through the SAIN system and the Groong Network, provided wide pre and post election coverage from London, New York, San Jose, Rome, Athens, Beirut, Antelias, Yerevan and Etchmiadzin. It included exclusive interviews with delegates and candidates, updates on the proceedings of the NEA, election results and statistics—which were complimented with historical background on the election process in the Armenian Church. *Window's* daily coverage became a primary source of information to hundreds of internet users, as well as to the Armenian media, such as: *Noyan Tapan (Yerevan)*, *Armenian Reporter International* (New York), *Asbarez* (Los Angeles), *Massis* (Los Angeles), *Armenian Television Network* (Beirut), *Armenian Radio Hour* (Australia) and others.

Window's field work for this purpose was headed by editor Hratch Tchilingirian, who was on the road for three weeks. He provided daily updates from England, Lebanon, Greece and Armenia until April 9, 1995. "It was exciting to realize that history was being made by placing Etchmiadzin in cyberspace," said Tchilingirian. Excerpts from his coverage and interviews appear in this special issue of *Window*.



Window's Hratch Tchilingirian, in Etchmiadzin, is giving one of his daily reports on the proceedings of the NEA for Armenian TV.

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From Antelias to Etchmiadzin: A Chronology

Excerpts from Window's Election coverage (March 26-April 9, 1995).

March 26 — Delegates from Armenian communities around the world begin their journey to Etchmiadzin, Armenia to participate in the National Ecclesiastical Assembly (NEA). Their mission is to elect a new Catholicos of All Armenians. The NEA is the highest legislative body of the Armenian Church. Its principle responsibilities are: a) Election of the Catholicos of All Armenians; b) Election of the members of the Supreme Ecclesiastical Council; c) Establishment of a national-ecclesiastical constitution; d) Examination and resolution of ecclesiastical issues; e) Stewardship of the church's financial affairs.

The last National Ecclesiastical Assembly to elect a Catholicos of All Armenians was convened in 1955. The election was conducted much like that of any civic or church organization.

Following the funeral of Catholicos Vazken I (August 1994), Archbishop Vatché Hovsepian, Primate of the Western Diocese, was appointed person-in-charge of the 1995 election. His plans for next week's election include the celebration of the divine liturgy prior to the election, requiring all delegates to receive holy communion and take an oath of office. As delegates arrive in Etchmiadzin they will be briefed as to their duties in selecting the next catholicos.

March 27 — Beirut — His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, is due to arrive in Armenia on Wednesday, March 29, 1995, to participate in the upcoming election.

In an interview in Antelias with *Window Quarterly*, H.H. Karekin II stated that, "At this critical moment in our history, the upcoming patriarchal election is a chance for all of us to create consensus and unite the will of our nation. This should be a top priority for us. We should rise above our individual, sectarian and

narrow ideas and seek the highest good of the Armenian nation. The prestige and dignity of our church and nation are at stake. We should take this historic opportunity and build a prosperous future for our church and nation."

According to sources in Lebanon, the election of H.H. Karekin II as the Catholicos of All Armenians is eminent. An Armenian diplomat in Beirut said, "At this juncture in our history we cannot afford to spend time on preparing or grooming a new catholicos. What we need right now is a Catholicos who is ready to assume the leadership of the Armenian Church, and there is a catholicos already." Karekin II has been Catholicos of the Cilician See since 1983 and co-adjutor Catholicos from 1977 to 1983.

One week ago, ADL party newspaper *Zartong*, here in Beirut published a series of editorials opposing and ridiculing the prospect of H.H. Karekin II's election as Catholicos of All Armenians. Meanwhile, the ARF in Beirut has been noticeably silent on this issue.

March 28 — Rome, Italy — Even though the Armenian Church is autonomous of Rome, Vatican officials are monitoring the upcoming elections with interest. Roman Catholic officials are pleased that H.H. Karekin's election as Catholicos of All Armenians is a strong possibility.

Relations between the Vatican and Armenia were solidified this week with the opening of the Armenian Embassy to the Vatican. The embassy is an apartment on the North Western side of Rome. There was a brief "house blessing" ceremony there last Saturday, and flag raising. Relations between the Catholic Church and the Armenian Orthodox (Apostolic) Church were strained in the aftermath of the Armenian earthquake (1988), when it was perceived that Catholic proselytizing was taking place in Armenia. H.H. Karekin's election would be welcomed by the Catholic Church as it would mean

less problems for Catholics in Armenia. Karekin is well known and respected in Roman (i.e. ecumenical) circles for his education, intelligence, charisma and political savvy.

A year ago, a delegation from Rome visited Armenia and presented relics of St. Gregory the Illuminator to the late Catholicos Vazken I. An invitation from Pope John Paul II for the Catholicos to visit Rome was to be presented at this time, but due to H.H. Vazken's ill health, this invite was never given.

Pope John Paul II has strong sympathy for the Christian East and for unity among Catholics and Orthodox. His recent encyclical for the millennium devoted a fair amount of space to this desire. There is no question that in the twilight of his pontificate, he would like to meet with the Armenian Catholicos. Memories of H.H. Vazken's visit to Pope Paul VI over twenty years ago are still strong in Rome.

Lay participation in the electoral process is unique to the Armenian Church. Observers and students of the church history here, are extremely interested in the laity's important role in the election. For Catholics (who's college of cardinals is vested with the duty of selecting the Pope) this procedure is unheard of. Even the Eastern Orthodox Churches find the practice unusual.

In an open letter to the Armenian people, Eastern Diocesan Primate, Archbishop Khajag Barsamian explains the office of Catholicos as, "... the only officer in the world elected by the representatives of the entire nation, the Catholicos enjoys a unique relationship with the Armenian people. He is truly called the "Catholicos of All Armenians," for he represents the whole range of our people — encompassing the Diaspora as well as the homeland — in a way that no other bishop, no king, no elected politician, has ever done. He is a spiritual father, through whom all the component parts of the Church are united. But the Catholicos does not just represent the people of the Church: he symbolizes the very Church itself, embodying its continuity through the ages, its moral authority, and the dignity of its mission as established by Jesus Christ. All the moral, intellectual and spiritual resources of the new pontiff will

continued on p. 21

National Ecclesiastical Assembly Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin April 3-5, 1995

A G E N D A

Monday, April 3

- Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral (9:00 AM)
followed by delegates' oath taking ceremony
- Registration of Delegates (10:30 AM)
- First Session of the Assembly (3:00 PM)
 - Officers of the Supreme Religious Council were temporary officers of NEA
 - Entrance of the Hierarchs
 - Opening Prayer
 - Roll call
 - Entrance of the President of the Republic of Armenia
 - Introduction by the Locum Tenens
 - President Levon Ter Petrossian's address to NEA
 - Catholicos Karekin II's address to the NEA
 - Ratification of Rules and procedures of meetings
 - Election of Officers
 - Election of Credentials Committee
 - Appointment of Parliamentary Committee
 - Appointment of Appreciations Committee
 - Appointment of Resolutions and Proposals Committee
 - List of clergy candidates for election of Catholicos

Tuesday, April 4

- Second Session (9:00 AM)
 - Entrance of Hierarchs
 - Prayer
 - Roll Call
 - Reading of Minutes of First Session
 - Report of the Locum Tenens for the seven months of activities
 - Procession to the Cathedral
 - Election of Catholicos of All Armenians
 - Announcement of results

Wednesday, April 5

- Third and Final Session (9:00 AM)
 - Entrance of Hierarchs
 - Prayer and meditation by Catholicos-elect Karekin I
 - Catholicos-elect's address to the NEA
 - Proposals and considerations
 - Closing remarks & benediction by newly elected Catholicos of All Armenians.

Presidium

His Holiness Catholicos Karekin Sarkissian
His Beatitude Patriarch Torkom Manoogian
His Beatitude Patriarch Karekin Kazanjian

Chairman

Judge Dariel Barseghian
(Yerevan)

Vice Chairman

Archbishop Nersess Bozabalian
(Etchmiadzin)

Secretary

Father Haigazoun Najarian
(New York)

2nd Secretary

Bishop Anania Arabajian
(Etchmiadzin)

"There is no question more significant than the election of the Catholicos. We are electing a catholicos for life, who is going to lead the work of the Church for the entire Armenian nation. Through his work, he should contribute to the unity of the Armenians, think about the concerns of the Armenian nation — not only spiritual, but other areas as well — and contribute to the establishment and straightening of our independent statehood.

It is the National Ecclesiastical Assembly that will contribute to the unification of the entire Armenian nation and to the realization of our unified objectives."

—Statement given to Window by **Judge Dariel Barseghian**, Chairman of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly during the short break between the first and second balloting on April 4.

Address of the President of the Republic of Armenia Levon Ter Petrossian to the National Ecclesiastical Assembly

Patriarch Manoogian's Introduction

Patriarch Torkom Manoogian of Jerusalem, who was the Locum Tenens of Etchmiadzin, during the first session of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, expressed words of gratitude to the Republic of Armenia and introduced the President to the Assembly. Archbishop Manoogian said:

Today, our nation has the unique opportunity to convene this Assembly in the name of the Armenian Church. It is for the first time that the National Ecclesiastical Assembly is being convened under the banner of independent Armenia. It is the first time that an invitation was sent to the President of the Republic to be present at this first session of the Assembly and to say a few words of welcome. It is the first time that the President of a Republic has responded to such an invitation. We [invited him] with the confidence and faith that—on the soil of our fatherland—our state knows and appreciates the spiritual values of its people. Consequently, [the state] is not only the guardian of our land, but also the guardian of our spiritual legacy.

We have also invited the representatives of the Republic of Artzakh.

I would like to thank our national government not only for its support and cooperation—during the funeral services of the late Catholicos Vazken I and on the occasion of the convening of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly—but also for zealously and appropriately contributing, on a state level, to the organizational efforts of these events.

Today, as we welcome President Ter Petrossian, we also welcome those who accompany him: Vice-President, Gagik Harutyunian; Prime Minister, Hrant Bagratian; President of the Parliament, Babgen Ararktzian; President of Religious Affairs Committee of the Parliament, Lazar Soujian; Director of pan-Armenian "Hayastan Fund", Manushag Petrossian; President of the Republic of Artzakh, Robert Kocharian; Prime Minister, Leonard Petrossian; and President of the Parliament of the Republic of Artzakh, Garen Babourian.

It is my pleasure and honor, with special gratitude, to invite the President of the Republic of Armenia, Mr. Levon Ter Petrossian, to say his words of welcome.

Excerpts from the President's address to the NEA on April 3, 1995 before the formal opening of the Assembly in Holy Etchmiadzin.

Tomorrow, the 131st Catholicos of All Armenians will sit on the throne of the Armenian Apostolic Church—the honor and responsibility of electing him has been entrusted to you. We have no doubt that you will rise above petty, secondary and sectarian

interests; that you will rise above the traditional positions of fossilized relationships, and be guided, especially, with the voice of your conscience and with the awareness of the supreme issue placed before the Armenian Church—the restoration of the unity of the Armenian Church.

History is according [us] an extraordinary opportunity to organize the pan-national work of restoration of the unity of the

Armenian Church. I am sure that the National Ecclesiastical Assembly will not let this opportunity slip. Otherwise future generations will not forgive us.

Here, I would like to put diplomatic language aside and speak with you with simple human language.

Let us all admit that the current situation that exists in our Church—that is, her division—is a national disgrace. I do not ac-

cept any justification, any argumentation, from all those who have contributed to that division. They do not have any justification. I do not accept the false passions that caused the division. I do not accept the thought that the Church in Etchmiadzin, which was seen as subservient to the Kremlin or the KGB, has served our people worse than the Cilician See. Simply, the Armenian nation, as in the past, in this era as well, had turned into a pawn of the Cold War. Today, we have the opportunity—without the demands of foreign forces—for the first time, to solve our problems ourselves. To solve the greatest problem that is placed before our Church.

I am reminded of the great deeds of [St.] Gregory of Tatev and Tovma Metzaboretzi—who, during one of the darkest period of our history, had such broad minded wisdom and national thinking, that they were able to achieve great deeds. They resolved a most important national problem by dealing with foreign rulers, with the help and donations of a patriotic Prince Rostom Orbelian. In fact, that fundamental deal constituted the basis of what is Armenia today.

Today, the same problem is placed before our nation—before our generation. Our generation, together with you, regained our independent statehood. Our generation liberated Mountainous Karabakh, and it is the duty of our generation to regain the unity of the Armenian Church.

I believe in your broad-mindedness and judgment and wish heartfelt success to your work.

* Translation by Window Quarterly

Endorsement?

On March 8, in an interview with Hayastani Hanrapetutyun, President Levon Der Petrossian, commented on the upcoming election of Catholicos. Following is the text of that interview which later became known as the "President's endorsement."

Q: Mr. President, the elections for the Catholicos of All Armenians are scheduled for April 3. Does the government have a position on this?

A: In accordance with the law "On Freedom of Conscience" the Church is separated from the state, therefore the latter has no right to interfere in church affairs, including the election of the Catholicos.

Q: However, could you specify what you think, not as the President but as a citizen, about the electoral process and possible candidates for this post?

A: I believe it is my duty, since historically the elections of the Armenian Catholicos have grown to a national issue of paramount importance. Parallel to its spiritual activities the Armenian Apostolic Church was obliged to act as a secular authority in the absence of statehood. As a natural result, a certain number of secular delegates were granted the right to participate in the elections, which sets the Armenian Church apart from others.

Q: Does the restoration of Armenian statehood imply that the national activities of the Armenian Apostolic Church will end?

A: Not at all, though this answer may sound contradictory in light of what I said previously. It is true that along with the restoration of Armenian statehood, the church was relieved of its secular obligations. However, as long as a considerable number of Armenians live abroad, the church will preserve its role of uniting the Armenian people. The activities of the church in the nation's spiritual and moral education should not be underestimated.

Q: What do you think about the upcoming elections? Who is the most likely candidate for the post of the Armenian Catholicos. Who would you prefer to see in that post?

A: During its 1700-year history, the Armenian church has almost always had very capable individuals in that post. If any contradictions have emerged during the elections, they were due to external interference rather than internal disagreements.

Nowadays, the See of Echmiadsin has many esteemed candidates for Catholicos, such as Jerusalem Patriarch Torkom Manoogian, Constantinople Patriarch Garegin Archbishop Gazanjian, the Ararat diocese leader Archbishop Garegin Nersisian and others. However, because of his Armenian theological and historical knowledge, diplomatic abilities and administration skills, the Catholicos of Cilicia, Karekin II is the undeniable authority for believers in Echmiatsin, in Armenia and in the Diaspora.

I believe that these elections are crucial for the consolidation of the Armenian Apostolic Church, or in a wider sense, for the nation-wide undertaking of regulating the Armenia-diaspora relations. My confidence is based on the joint efforts of the late Catholicos of All-Armenians, Vazken and Catholicos Karekin toward the restoration of the Church's integrity and the organization of the Pan-Armenia "Hayastan" Fund.

Q: How do you feel about the unification of the Armenian Church?

A: I do not believe that it will take place soon. The Cilician See, as an historical institution, will maintain its existence for a long time, while unreservedly recognizing Echmiadsin's primacy and gradually confining itself to its former religious boundaries of Lebanon, Syria and Cyprus. Catholicos Karekin II is the most capable person to begin this process. I am convinced that the Armenian clergymen will not lose this historical opportunity.

(HAYASTANI HANRAPETUTYUN-3/8/95)

S E R M O N
of
His Holiness Karekin I
on the occasion of his enthronement as the
131st Catholicos of All Armenians

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1)

Glory and thanks to You, O Lord, Heavenly Father, for blessing my soul—from the very beginning of my physical and spiritual birth—with Your all-luminous presence, like the light of the sun, and for blessing my entire life with Your almighty power. Today, You have called me, Your humble servant, to spiritual service through the election by the children of Your Armenian people to this highest and most holy office. The dignity of this office—as the radiance of Your grace—is understood and expressed through the greatest sense of duty. Like any human being, this duty is difficult for me, and it is actualized only through human limitations and mediation. As I have not been able to accomplish anything without the presence of Your power—throughout the last four decades of my priesthood—today also, I realize that I could not do anything, as Your truth-communicating words affirm, "Apart from me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

I have carried Your yoke continuously for forty-three years—since my ordination as a celibate priest. I carried your cross and walked behind you. Your yoke was heavy in my life, my shoulders were weak, but the strength

of your cross—which has two names: love and *sacrifice*—eased my burden by making it "sweet" and "light" (Matthew 11:30). If I were left alone, I would have said with the words of Your Only Begotten Son, "remove this cup from me." But immediately, I would have undoubtedly added "yet not what I want, but what you want" (Mark 14:36). Having Your will as my guide, I progressed from the rank of priesthood to that of episcopacy and You brought me to the highest and most eminent rank of Catholicos. I carried that yoke for eighteen years as Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, and now with a higher level of responsibility, I will carry the yoke of the Illuminator's most holy throne—the Mother See of Etchmiadzin—as Catholicos of All Armenians.

At this final phase of the journey of my spiritual service, before this most holy altar, I beseech you O Lord, my God, "Give thy strength to Thy servant, and save the son of Thine handmaid, and show me the sign of your favour" (Psalm 86:16-17). At this sacred moment of Enthronement—once again feeling the flow of Your strength in my soul—I repeat the words of the Psalmist King "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall want nothing" (Psalm 23:1).

At this decisive moment of my entry into a broader field of ministry, I feel a heartfelt urge to raise my voice to Almighty God and beseech Him to grant repose to the noble soul of my predecessor, the memorable Catholicos Vazken I, in the light of His glory and in blissful, eternal peace. May the Lord accept Vazken I's fruitful and God-pleasing ministry in His Armenian vineyard.

I am certain that you all realize the unique and exceptional significance of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly's catholicossal election. For the first time in the twentieth century, the election was held—as now this solemn Ceremony of Enthronement is taking place—at a time when our fatherland is an Independent republic. Having been liberated from seventy years of totalitarian rule, today our nation is living in a free country, where new democratic rules have been established. At this decisive and significant period of our modern history, our Armenian Apostolic Holy Church—whose office of first servant has been entrusted to me—is called to an decisive and salvific role in the life of our nation. Our church—led by the God-given and Christ-instructed mission and historical legacy—is called to pour abundant, clean and new water

Oath of Catholicos Karekin I

Karekin, servant of Christ and Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia — at this time, having become a member of the Brotherhood of Holy Etchmiadzin, by the will of God and through the election of the entire Armenian nation — has been called to the Araratian throne of the Catholicosate of All Armenians. Trusting in the helping grace of the Almighty, I promise and vow before this holy altar and holy symbols accepted by God.

I accept this office of Chief-bishop of the Armenian Church, and with complete devotion, I dedicated myself, without failing, to carry out God's established laws and the duties of the Catholicos of All Armenians. To lead the Armenian nation according to the orthodox teachings of the Christian religion, according to the doctrines of our Church and according to the canons and rules of worship of the fathers. To be lead at all times — without compromise and deviation — in the glowing footsteps of the worthy successors of the holy apostles, Sts. Thaddeus and Bartholomew, and our patron St. Gregory the second Illuminator; and to carefully protect the rights of the Mother See of the Armenian.

from the fountain of the Gospel and the holy tradition of our fathers into the life of our people. The truths that are lived through Christ and taught by the Gospel, the moral principles of life and spiritual values ought to become life-giving streams in the spiritual fields of our fatherland and in the life of our entire people—and having flourished, they will present spiritual fruits to our people. Without the Gospel, our nation is weak. Without the revitalization of the holy legacy of our fathers, the image and character of our people is gloomy.

This is the lesson of history. This is what our people needs and mandates. We believe that this is also the expectation of our government. The Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin—the spiritual house built by God and established by Christ—with God's help and your dedication shall become a vital and bountiful source of Christian spiritual nourishment.

We have a wonderful opportunity presented to us—the

1700th anniversary of the declaration of Christianity as the state religion in Armenia and the formal establishment of our church. As I have already said elsewhere, this occasion shall become a miracle of new Pentecost in the life of our nation in Armenia and the Diaspora. It shall become a stream of renewal through which the life of the Armenian nation shall flourish further in the service of God and all of humanity.

Our church is also the cement of our national unity, as well as the power which nourishes and fortifies our strength. If we are alert and perceptive, we cannot avoid reading the "signs of the time" which place us all, without exception, under the command of unity, solidarity, brotherhood and harmonious cooperation. Our church becomes internally more invigorated and benevolent in her activities when she acts as one church, under the auspices and guidance of the Catholicosate of All Armenians, which is recognized by the entire

Armenian nation as the Mother See. The current situation of the world and the contemporary life of the Armenian nation, advise us of one thing: the strengthening of the unity of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church. A new page has been opened before humanity. A new page has been opened in the life of the Armenian nation. A new page *must* be opened in the life of the Armenian Church. The page of rivalry and opposition should be considered closed. The page of unity has been opened and it should be our common responsibility to fill that page with "brave works", as Khorenatzi explains—grand and noble works through which the unity and strength of the Armenian Church will shine without shadow, bright as the light of the sun.

The twentieth century began with a dark date, the Armenian Genocide of 1915, which spread the shadow of death over our land and people. This year—with exemplary faithfulness, on a national scale and under the flag of unity—we commemorate the 80th anniversary of the genocide perpetrated against the Armenians. The commemoration will be on state, church and popular levels. Certainly, this commemoration will prove to be a source of new regeneration for the entire Armenian nation.

Praise—praise a thousand times—that this same century in our history is closing with the most splendid and luminous event: the establishment of the self-ruling and supreme state of free independent Armenia. This was the dream of centuries that became a reality. Imagined on the horizon of centuries, it is the first time that the president of an independent state, together with his state officials, is present at the Service of Enthronement of the Catholicos. I believe, that day by day, our established and developing State will enter the third millennium, with strengthened

continued on p. 18

Biographical Sketch

His Holiness Karekin I Sarkissian Catholicos of All Armenians

Born in 1932 in Kessab, Syria.

- Education:**
- Antelias Seminary, 1946-1952;
 - Oxford University, UK, 1957-1959; B. Litt.
- Calling:**
- Ordained deacon in 1949
 - Priest 1955
 - Supervisor and member of faculty of Antelias Seminary, 1956
 - Archimandrite 1963
 - Bishop 1964
 - Archbishop 1973
 - Primate, Irano-Indian Diocese in Julfa, Iran 1971
 - Primate of Eastern Prelacy, New York, USA
 - Catholicos Co-adjutor of Cilicia 1977-1983
 - Catholicos of Cilicia 1983-April 1995
 - Catholicos of All Armenians, April 1995
- Postions:**
- Lecturer of theology, literature, history and culture at Palanjian Academy in Beirut; Beirut College of Women; American University, Beirut.
 - Lectures delivered in various universities in the US, Canada and Europe.
- Publications:**
- *The Witness of the Armenian Church* (Antelias 1955 and Julfa 1973)
 - *The Right Arm of St. Illuminator and its Return* (Antelias 1957)
 - *A Brief Introduction to Armenian Christian Literature* (London 1960, reprinted in New York 1976, French in Paris 1964)
 - *The Council of Chalcedon and the Armenian Church* (London 1965, New York 1975)
 - *The Witness of the Oriental Orthodox Churches* (Antelias 1968, reprinted in 1969)
 - *Iran and the Armenian* (Iran 1971 also in Persian)
 - *Armenian Christian Tradition in Iran* (Iran 1973, also in French)
 - *Heroic Posterity* (New York 1975)
 - *Pastoral Theology* (Antelias 1979)
 - *Land, Man and Letter* (Antelias 1983)
 - *Know Thyself* (Antelias 1983)
 - *Think and Enter* (Antelias 1984)
 - *The Past is not Passed* (Antelias 1986)
 - *Tribute to Catholicos Zareh I* (Antelias 1988)

Ecumenical Activities

His Holiness is well known and respected within Ecumenical circles. He has been one of the initiators of the ecumenical movement in the Middle East. He has attended interchurch conferences since 1955 and through his efforts the Holy See of Cilicia became a member of the World Council of Churches in 1962. In 1963-65, he attended the Second Vatican Council in and the Conference of Lambeth in 1968.

WCC

In the World Council of Churches, he has attended WCC General Assemblies in New Delhi, India in 1961; in Uppsala, Sweden in 1968; in Nairobi, Kenya in 1975; and in Vancouver, Canada in 1983. He was elected member of the Central Executive Committees of WCC.

MECC

Middle East Council of Churches: One of the three Presidents of Middle East Council of Churches.

Other: Founder of the Armenian Church University Student Association (ACUSA) in 1963.

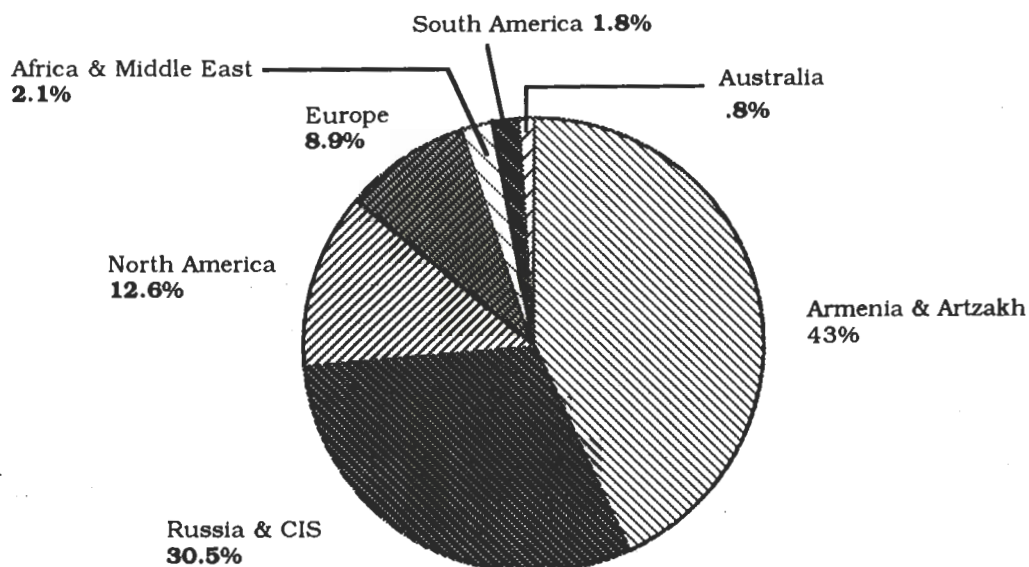
THE NATIONAL ECCLESIASTICAL ASSEMBLY

WHERE, WHAT, WHO, HOW MANY

Country	Diocese/See	Center	D ¹	C ²	L ³	F ⁴	Population ⁵
*Bishops and Primates	Catholicosate of All Armenians		46	46			
*Supreme Religious Council	Catholicosate of All Armenians		4	4			
Albania	Ponti. Legate (Paris)	Tirana	1		1		400
Argentina	Diocese of Argentina	Buenos Aires	4		4		85,000
Armenia	Catholicosate All Arm.	Etchmiadzin	1	1			
	Diocese of Ararat	Yerevan	104	13	86	5	2,601,113
	Diocese of Shirak	Gumri	30	6	23	1	742,704
	Diocese of Koukark	Tilijan	10	2	6	2	250,000
	Diocese of Siunik	Datev	10	2	7	1	238,000
Australia	Diocese of Australia & New Zealand	Sydney	2		2		40,000
Austria	Pontifical Legate	Vienna	1		1		6,000
Belgium	Pontifical Legate (Paris)	Bruxelles	1		1		3,100
Brazil	Diocese of Brazil	San Paulo	1		1		15,000
Bulgaria	Diocese of Bulgaria	Sofia	1	1			19,700
Canada	Diocese of Canada	Montreal	4	1	3		85,000
Chile	Diocese of Argentina	Santiago	1		1		750
Egypt	Diocese of Egypt	Cairo	1		1		10,000
Ethiopia	Diocese of Egypt	Addis Ababa	1		1		200
France	Diocese of Paris	Paris	8	1	7		193,000
	Rhone-Alpes Region	Lyon	3		3		60,000
	Marseille Region	Marseille	4		4		101,600
Georgia	Diocese of Georgia	Tiblisi	16	2	13	1	400,000
Germany	Diocese of Germany	Koln	1	1			30,000
Great Britain	Diocese of England	London	1		1		10,000
Greece	Diocese of Greece	Athens	1		1		12,000
	Patr. of Constantinople	Is. of Crete	1		1		120
India	Pontifical Legate (Sydney)	Calcutta	1		1		467
Iraq	Diocese of Iraq	Baghdad	1		1		19,500
Israel	St. James Brotherhood	Jerusalem	1	1			
	Patr. of Jerusalem	Jerusalem	1		1		2,800
Italy	Pontifical Legate (Paris)	Milano	1	1			2,500
Jordan	Patriarchate of Jerusalem	Amman	1		1		7,000
Karabakh	Diocese of Artzakh	Shoushi	9	3	5	1	216,000
Lebanon	Catholicosate of Cilicia	Antelias	2	1	1		
Netherlands	Pontifical Legate (Paris)	Amsterdam	1		1		6,000
Romania	Diocese of Romania	Bucharest	1	1			4,750
Russia	Diocese of Russia & New Nakhichevan	Moscow	100	18	76	6	2,500,000
Sweden	Pontifical Legate (Vienna)	Uppsala	1		1		3,000
Switzerland	Diocese of Switzerland	Geneva	1		1		3,000
Turkey	Patriarchate of Constantinople	Istanbul	6	1	5		114,500
Uruguay	Diocese of Uruguay	Montevideo	1		1		10,000
USA	Eastern Diocese	New York	24	6	16	2	600,000
	Western Diocese	Los Angeles	20	4	15	1	500,000
32 Countries		TOTAL	430⁶	112	298	20	8,893,204

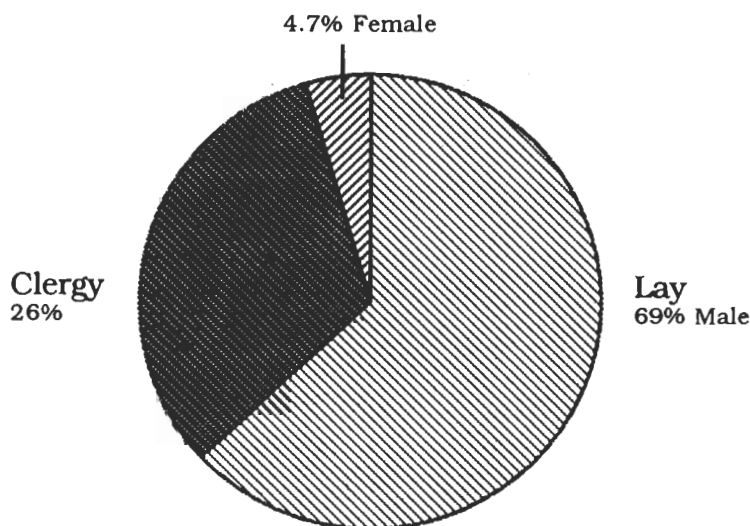
1 Total Number of Delegates; 2 Clergy; 3 Male; 4 Female; 5 Number of Armenians represented; 6 Maximum number, actual was 398

Geographic Distribution of Delegates



The rubric of the "Service of Consecration of a Catholicos" states, "When they are prepared to raise someone to the dignity of the office of catholicos of Armenia, first they must hold an election according to the regulations of the universal church.... All the people of Armenian lineage, together with all the clergymen of the church and twelve bishops, shall elect from among them three men...and through scrutiny on the part of the Assembly, one of them who is in all matters acknowledged for good works and for virtuous life as a holy and immaculate man, full of knowledge and wisdom, shall be elected; one who can serve as a shepherd to the people entrusted to him by God." The original of this rubric goes back to the twelfth century.

NEA Delegates



The functional structure of the Armenian Church is based primarily on the canons of the Armenian Church which were compiled and developed over the centuries. One of the most important aspects of the Armenian Church administration is its Conciliar system—i.e., the administrative, as well as doctrinal, liturgical, and canonical norms are set and approved by a council. The decision in the church are made by a collective body, through a participatory decision making process. The Council of Bishops (or the Synod) is the highest religious authority in the Church, while the National Ecclesiastical Assembly is the highest legislative body.



Top: The delegates and clergy after the election and closing of the NEA on April 5, 1995. Bottom: Church hierarchy, Pres. Levon Ter Petrossian and government officials proceed to the NEA meeting



Top: On his way to Yerevan, the newly elected Catholicos is being greeted by residents of a town between Etchmiadzin and Yerevan; Bottom: Between the sessions of the NEA meetings, Dean Shahinian, Esq., NEA delegate from the Eastern Diocese (USA), is checking the pages of Window for background material on the election and the list of candidates.

ENTHRONEMENT



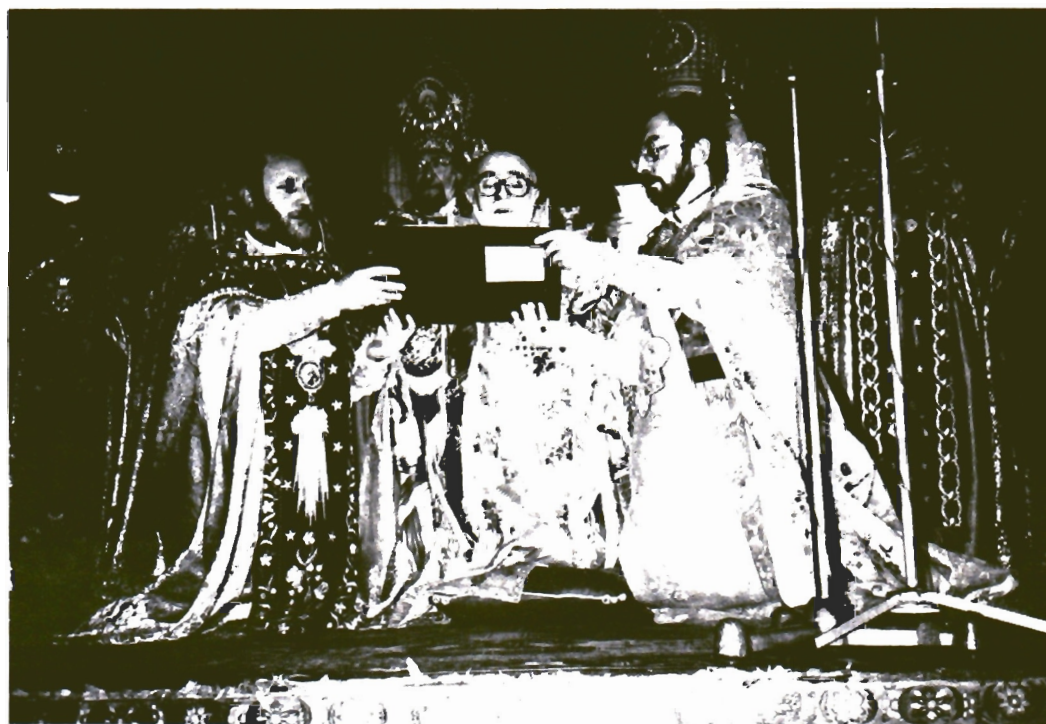
His Holiness Karekin I delivered the sermon on the day of his enthronement as the 131st Catholicos of the Great House of Armenia, Apb. Kevork Seraydarian, Apb. Klud Nakashian, Apb. Ardavazt Terterian, Apb. Vahan Nersisyan, Apb. Nerses Bozabalian, Apb. Aghan Baliozian, Apb. Asoghig Artsdagesian, Bp. Barkev Mardikian.



Pontifical entrance to the cathedral



s of All Armenians. In the background are the bishops who participated in the service: (l to r) Abp. Ktsag Mouradian, Abp. Krigorts Iousepian, Abp. Karekin Nersisian, His Holiness, Abp. Khajag Barsamian, Patriarch Torkom Manoogian, Abp. Zaven Chinchinian, an.



His Holiness taking the Oath of Office

Cardinal Cassidy on the Vatican and the Armenian Church

CARDINAL EDWARD CASSIDY—President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity in the Vatican—was the head of the delegation sent by H.H. Pope John Paul II to the Enthronement Ceremony of H.H. Karekin I. The Vatican delegation included: **ARCH-BISHOP JEAN-PAUL GOBEL**, Apostolic Nuncio and the Vatican's Ambassador in Armenia; **FR. CLAUDIO GUGGEROTI**, Congregation for the Oriental Churches in the Vatican; **FR. BERNARD DUBASKE**, Director of the Oriental Section of the Pontifical Council. On April 7, 1995, Window Quarterly held a brief interview with Cardinal Cassidy in Yerevan. Here is an excerpt from that interview:

Window: Your Eminence, As representative of H.H. Pope John Paul II to the enthronement of H.H. Karekin I, what are your thoughts on this trip?

Cassidy: We had joined the delegates at the election with our prayers during the first few days of this week. We were filled with great hope that this election would give the Armenian Church a leader who would be ready to cooperate and work together with us in the ecumenical field. You can imagine our pleasure and immense joy when we heard the result of the election. The new Catholicos is a man whom we all know personally and with whom we have worked—some of us for many years. Our Holy Father, Pope John Paul II, knows him personally. I myself have had the joy of working with him personally over the past few years. I don't think we could be more joyful than we are at this moment.

Window: How are relations between the Vatican and the Armenian Church in general?

Cassidy: In brief, I would say that we have no great problems.

But I believe that we have a lot of room in which we can work more closely together than we've been doing up to now. I think there are areas of cooperation, such as bringing more help to people in need. We have, I think, a common problem facing us and that is the existence of sects and new [religious] movements who attack both of our churches very viciously. We need to be together

more closely in order to resist those attacks upon our two churches. I think that is something we could look forward to now. As I said, we do not have major obstacles to overcome; we do have, from time to time, some misunderstandings. We have to make sure that we avoid those problems where possible and when they happen, we should come together and find a way out of those misunderstandings. I think when we work together in the fields that are open to us we can overcome our differences.

The Delegation of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the Enthronement Ceremony of Karekin I

The Iranian delegation was headed by **HOJATOLISLAM VALMUSLIMI SOBHANI**—Member of the Parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Member of the Presidential Council and Foreign Relations Committee of the Parliament. It included **MR. VARTAN VARTANIAN**, Delegate of the Armenians of Northern Iran to the Iranian Parliament, and a representative of the Iranian Foreign Ministry.

On April 9, 1995, Window Quarterly asked **Hojatolislam Valmusrimi Sobhanita** about his visit to Etchmiadzin.

Window: As an Iranian cleric, what are your impressions of the enthronement ceremony held in Etchmiadzin?

Sobhanita: In the name of Allah, the Most Merciful. For me as a clergyman, it was very impressive to be at the ceremony of the enthronement of the Christian leader of your nation.

In view of the good relations that exist between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Armenia, I and Mr. Vartanian, the representative of the Armenian community in Iran, participated in the ceremonies on behalf of the Iranian Parliament. Our purpose was to be present at this great religious event and offer

our congratulations to the Head of the Armenian Church and the Armenian people.

Generally speaking, what I saw at the ceremony [in Etchmiadzin] was very impressive and filled with spiritual significance.

On the occasion of the election of H.H. Karekin I, as Catholicos of All Armenians, I congratulate the people of Armenia, the Armenian nation and the government of the Republic of Armenia.

I wish His Holiness success in the difficult, serious and weighty tasks that he will carry out as the religious leader of the entire Armenian nation.

I would like to emphasize that the presence of Mr. Vartanian in our delegation is vocal proof that we also bring the good wishes of the Iranian Armenian community with us to His Holiness.

Considering the fact that His Holiness—having worked and lived in Iran [as Prelate of the Armenian Church]—is well acquainted with our country and people, I hope that his endeavors as Catholicos of All Armenians will include the further development and deepening of the already good relations that exist between the Islamic Republic of Iran and Armenia—as two neighbor countries and peoples.

Overheard...

• AT THE BALLOT BOX

"As I was voting in the Cathedral, I asked the Almighty to guide me in doing the exact thing for the ultimate welfare of the Armenian Church and nation; because we were not electing just anybody, it was the Supreme Catholicos of All Armenians, the spiritual head of all the Armenians. I felt that it was a historical moment. A very important event in our lives. We were deciding the fate of the Armenian Church." (April 4).

YEGHIA DICKRANIAN

Delegate representing the Armenian community of Jerusalem

• ONE THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE ELECTION

"With the enthronement of the new Catholicos, I expect the hopes that we had for free Armenia and free Armenian Church will be realized. I hope that we will have a rebirth of faith and church life. Our people was cut off from the church and the faith of our forefathers for many years. Now we will be able to recover that through education and revitalization of our church's life. The election of our new Catholicos coincides with the revival of our new spiritual and moral conscience. It is my wish that the relationship of Armenia and Armenians all around the world would become practical, dear and honest; that we shall become one nation, one church, one faith and one luminous future." (April 4).

SEN AREVSHADIAN

Director of the Matenadaran—Mesrob Mashdotz Manuscripts Library and Delegate of the Ararat Diocese, Yerevan.

WE WILL FOLLOW OUR KING!

"Well... I cannot say anything about the Armenian people or our church. I have been a musician and have played behind the walls of the Monastery of Etchmiadzin for 50 years. I have seen the burial of Catholicos Gevorg VI, I have seen the burial of Catholicos Vazken I and now this is the third event: we will have a new Catholicos. People are saying that they are going to elect Catholicos Karekin II. Well, whoever becomes our king, we will be his men. We will follow our king. Whether he is a good man or a bad man that's their job. We are like this, we are followers. ...well, what shall I say, I have fought for Armenia and I will sacrifice myself 'til the end. That's it. That's all! Tzavt da'nem..." (April 2).

—Megrdoch Hovanesian

80 year-old resident of Etchmiadzin

Just a thought!

If Archbishop Nercissian is elected, then we'll have a period where we will say "Karekin Vehapar" and all of us will understand whoever we want.

Maybe if their actions are synchronized we may not even know the difference! We may even have Primates and Prelates whose actions are synchronized! And we start going to Churches for both Sees. Easter is near! Anything is possible!

Toros Babikian

via the internet (April 3)

I've been a subscriber to *Window* from the beginning and I love your coverage of the election. Do I get any Electoral votes?

Harout Topsacallian

IDEA, Inc.

via the internet

I wanted to thank you for this election coverage and hope that you continue to provide information about the Armenian church on the email network. I am an Armenian graduate student and do not get to go church as much as I would like. I feel like this at least gives me some sort of a link!

Pamela Young

University of Michigan

via the internet

What's in a name?

When the new Catholicos was elected in Etchmiadzin, a British journalist overheard a phone conversation through an open window. Unfortunately, only one side of the conversation was audible, but an Armenian was apparently explaining the election to a baffled editor.

—This Karekin got 124 votes in the ballot, so he's now Catholicos Karekin?

—Karekin didn't make it, though he got the most votes?

—So this second ballot was the one that counted? What was wrong with the first ballot?

—I see. So who won the second time around?

—It was also Karekin but not the same guy who won the first time around?

—So the guy who won was Catholicos Karekin. How come he's already a Catholicos then?

—I get you. This Karekin II of Antelias, not the same as the other Karekin, won the election on the second go and now becomes Karekin II of Etchmiadzin, right?

—So this guy was Karekin II, now he's Karekin I. So when does he get to be Karekin O?

At this point the window was closed, and the rest of the conversation was lost.

Sermon (continued from p. 8)
dynamism—to continue its creative journey toward the future.

Inevitably, this fundamental and enormous reality leads us to a new way of thinking. Henceforth, we are called to think as a nation state, and as such, we ought to live and work accordingly. We are no longer—and we cannot be anymore—that which we were yesterday. We were a nation under foreign repression, even in our own fatherland. We were communities spread throughout the world under the conditions of Diaspora life. Today, we are an independent country and a people with a free and democratic state. It is time for us to change and reform and realize the value of our fatherland and statehood. We are no longer a Diaspora. Yes, we have a Diaspora, and we will have in the future. But the Diaspora has an immense importance to our fatherland and the entire Armenian nation. Millions of Armenians live outside the fatherland in a *diasporized* reality. They are the loyal and creative citizens of their respective countries and will remain so. They have their own unique conditions and needs—under which they undertake brave and vital efforts to preserve their identity. But they never forget that their ancestral home is Armenia and thus bring their contribution to the holy work of nation building. Geographic distances, political differences, cultural idiosyncrasies and lifestyles can not harm the unity of fate of the heart, mind and soul—if continuous communication and wisdom always operate with a spirit of mutual understanding.

I am a so-called son of the Diaspora. I was not born in the fatherland, but the fatherland was born in me. It was born from the day when the Armenian language echoed in my ears through my mother's lullaby; when the Armenian alphabet was opened before my eyes on the chalkboard of

my school; when Armenian books became the indispensable, intellectual ink of my pen.... Today I have come to the abode of my ancestors, where I feel as if I have never been separated....

My brothers and sisters, it is necessary to extend a golden bridge between the fatherland and the Diaspora. We must remain one in the residence of our spiritual geography, kindled with the feeling that we are members of one nation. It is with this realization that we must all participate in the process of strengthening our national government and in the development of resources for our people.

It is with this understanding that the Armenian Church will play its national role, because she is inextricably commingled with the history and fate of the Armenian nation.

It is with this same understanding that our church will continue to support our brothers and sisters in Artzakh in their heroic struggle and in defense of their just rights. The problem of Artzakh has no religious dimension. Like our memorable predecessor, we have been—and remain—the advocate of the idea of peaceful and honest negotiations toward the resolution of the Artzakh conflict, based on the principles of human rights and self-determination.

At the conclusion of our words, we would like to express our deep gratitude and appreciation to the heads and representatives of the sister churches and ecumenical organizations, who enriched our Enthronement ceremony with their presence, prayers and with their spoken and written statements of good will.

We would like to express our appreciation to all the representatives of states and diplomats, who with their presence honored the Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin and our national government.

We warmly greet the Hierarchical Sees of our Holy Church:

- The Catholicosate of the

Great House of Cilicia—where we served as a member of the Brotherhood from the time of our ordination until today—and where we brought our dedicated participation in her spiritual and national service;

- The Patriarchal See of Jerusalem, its Patriarch, Brotherhood and its historical mission;

- The Patriarchal See of Constantinople, its clergy and faithful people.

Our fatherly love and greetings to the Brotherhood of the Mother See, all the bishops, diocesan bishops, vardapets, priests, deacons, diocesan and national ordinaries and the entire faithful people in Armenia and throughout the world.

We express our word of love, appreciation and gratitude to the President of our Republic, His excellency Levon Ter Petrossian, his eminent officials, the ministers, the members of the parliament, the presidential staff, the brave armed forces and the entire state administration. We highly appreciate their love and respect toward the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church.

May the invisible Eye and the almighty Arm of God protect and preserve our entire faithful people in Mother Armenia and the Diaspora.

"The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).

Pray that the Lord may shepherd me, so that I am able to shepherd you in *green pastures and near peaceful waters*, for the glory of God, for the peace and prosperity of the world, for the illumination of the Holy Church, and for the edification and renewal of the Armenian nation. Amen.

Karekin I

Catholicos of All Armenians

9 April 1995

Palm Sunday

Holy Etchmiadzin

*Translated by Hratch Tchilingirian

Did we need to elect a Catholicos?

Fr. Vazken Movsesian

Now that Armenia is independent and the republic has its own president, why did we need to elect a Catholicos? Our intention is not to demean the office of the catholicos, here, rather it is to alert our attention to the rhetoric surrounding the election of Karekin I.

We have heard on many occasions the phrase that the Armenian Church has a national mission. Somehow, the Armenian Church has been responsible for the deliverance of the Armenian national consciousness and should not stray from this "holy" mission of saving the Armenian nation. We have been indoctrinated with this message throughout the years from our hierarchs, to our priests, to the laity. We continue to hear this rhetoric today, in all facets of our church.

Fine. If this is the case, now that Armenia is an independent republic, is there a need for the Church? Now that Armenia has a president, is there a need for the Catholicos?

Obviously, the Church is much more than a platform for national preservation. The real challenge follows: *now* that Armenia is independent, *now* that Armenia has a president, the time has come to drop the baggage of the nation-saving and concentrate on the true soul-saving mission of the Church. As we have written on many occasions on these pages of *Window*, if we are faithful to our mission as expressed in the Holy Gospels, then, and *only then* can we begin to alleviate the pain and suffering of a nation in turmoil—that being the Armenian nation by virtue of our charter. Because, only when we understand the Church as a divinely established institution, do we understand its mission as *Holy*—to continue the mission which Christ began centuries ago: giving sight to the blind, setting at liberty those who are oppressed and proclaiming the Kingdom of God enacted.

The Armenian nation is in need of healing and salvation—economically and spiritually. The Church must inspire the soul, move the spirit for the economic fixes to become real.

The election of His Holiness Karekin I signals a new era in the life of the Armenian Church. We applaud the decision of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly in its selection of Karekin I. We are further elated by the tone His Holiness set for his pontificate. Immediately following his election, he met with the delegates and gave an opportunity for prayer. He read from the scriptures, relinquishing the archaic krapar for a colloquial translation. He quoted from the Book of Matthew (ch. 25) stressing a "working theology"—where God works through His people.

This may not seem strange from the outside, but in the Armenian Church it is a novelty to have a hierarch holding a Bible and uttering a non-formula prayer. From our vantage point, it is also most welcome by a people looking for spirituality from their church hierarchs. The Bible passage he selected was also significant in that it moved the Church from idealism to pragmatism. Above all else, it signaled a new beginning in the life of the Armenian Church.

The Catholicos will have his work cutout for him in the next few months. Once the "honeymoon" period is over, he will be susceptible to the criticisms of the self-appointed "guardians" of our national identity. Furthermore, he will inevitably have to deal with the issue of administrative unity in the Diaspora. It will be a difficult period of settlement and adjustment for the new Catholicos, and we continue

continued on next page

Editorial (continued from p. 19)

to offer our prayers of support.

Here, we take the opportunity to remind our readers of our collective responsibility within the Church. Particularly, through *Window*—which now enters its fifth year of publication—we have an opportunity to accentuate and align our focus on the true mission of the Church. It will be up to us—the Church—to remind our clergy, our laity, our hierarchs and our catholicos that the Armenian Church is Christ-ordained and Christ-centered. We must remember that Armenia has a president! Armenia is independent! A catholicos has been elected and enthroned by the people and by the Grace of the Holy Spirit. Let us not give an opportunity to degrade the office with secular nonsense.

We join our readership in prayer for our new Catholicos and the blossoming of the Armenian Church through his leadership.

Computer Projected another Catholicos?

April 2, 1995—What would an election coverage be without projections? How about the next best thing — a computer simulated election? The Armenian Church Research and Analysis Group (ACRAG) has once again applied the "technology to the institution" in selecting the next Catholicos just two days before the election. And the winner? Archbishop Zaven Chinchinian of Egypt.

The object of this technical exercise was to find the most qualified bishop for the position, and not necessarily the one most likely to win the election.

The computer program assigned different rankings to the candidates based on a number of criteria, including spirituality, administrative skills, organization of candidate's diocese, years of service to the Church and ecumenical considerations.

If the elections were based purely on merit, with no outside factors, Abp. Chinchinian would be elected, or at least he would be a top contender. Unlike this mock election, the actual election in Etchmiadzin, includes human and political factors which were too complex to account for in this program.

Archbishop Chinchinian is the primate of Egypt. He was born in 1929 in Aleppo, Syria. He was ordained a priest in 1951 and consecrated bishop by the late Catholicos Vazken I in 1965.

35 Million Readers!

WINDOW ON THE INTERNET

The Armenian Church Research and Analysis Group (ACRAG) is pleased to announce its accessibility on the internet. ACRAG can be reached internationally via email at: acrag@sain.org

*ACRAG has joined forces with S*A*I*N* to make Window available through the SAIN archive server. Anyone with internet access can now download past and current issues of Window with a simple command. Internet access is available world wide through government agencies, private businesses, universities and subscription services such as America on Line, Prodigy, EWorld, Netcom, etc. With a population of over 35 million people and growing at a rate of 10% per month, the internet provides a means for information dissemination. ACRAG is proud to be a part of this growing community.*

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Chronology continued from p. 3

be called upon, as he assumes the weighty mantle of this institution." (TAR Int'l 3.18.95)

March 30 — Beirut, Lebanon — His Holiness Karekin II left Beirut for Armenia, yesterday. At Beirut International Airport he was received in the VIP Hall by Lebanese government officials and Armenian members of the Lebanese Parliament. The two delegates representing the Catholicosate of Cilicia for the April 3 patriarchal election—Mr. Khachig Babikian, Lebanese MP and Archbishop Suren Kataroyan, Primate of Aleppo—were accompanying Karekin II.

At Beirut Airport Karekin II expressed his thoughts to the members of the media: "It is my prayer that God may bless all the lay and clergy delegates who are called to a supreme duty of electing the new Catholicos of All Armenians. We all realize that this election has a unique significance. It is a special event in view of the fact that such an election is taking place in the independent Republic of Armenia. Today our fatherland, our national government, our entire people—both in Armenia and the Diaspora—find themselves before a very significant event in the life of our nation. It is imperative that we feel, think, speak and work as one church, one nation and one national government.

"During the last decade, the world has seen enormous changes. Naturally, Armenians are also affected by these changes. We cannot ignore these positive changes. As such, there are so many vital needs facing the Catholicosate of All Armenians. First, each and every Armenian should pray that God may give us strength. Second, every Armenian should think harmoniously, with brotherly love and with the common good of all in mind, so that through this election, the unity of our church may be solidified, especially in terms of her mission, her service to the nation. This entails all spheres of our national life—spiritual, Christian, religious, and social. Our church is not just a proof of our national preservation—like the shell of a tree that protects it—but it is an assurance of national preservation through her spiritual service. As such it is not just a protective shell but it is part of the very core of the tree.

"We need a spiritual renewal

both in Armenia and the Diaspora. Today, we are standing at a historic cross road. I believe that as we have succeeded in history, we will be successful again this time, as we prepare to face the challenges that are before us.

"It is with such thoughts that I look at this important date [April 3] and it is my prayer that the outcome would be a new source of goodness and prosperity for our church, our fatherland, our entire nation and our national government."

Arrival in Armenia — His Holiness Karekin II arrived in Yerevan in the early hours of Thursday, March 30. At the Airport he was greeted by His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Locum Tenens of Etchmiadzin and Patriarch of Jerusalem, as well as senior archbishops of Etchmiadzin, including Primate of North America, Archbishops Vatché Hovsepian and Khajag Barsamian. After a brief reception in the VIP Hall at Yerevan's Zvartnotz Airport, Karekin II and his entourage were escorted to Holy Etchmiadzin.

Within few hours after Karekin II's arrival, the Patriarch of Constantinople, His Beatitude Karekin Kazanjian arrived to Armenia and was escorted to Etchmiadzin as well. Already many of the Primate of the Armenian Church are in Armenia, including the Primate of Australia and New Zealand, Argentina, Uruguay, Damascus, New York and California.

31 March 1995 — Yerevan, Armenia — As delegates arrive, mini-caucusing is taking place among them here, in hotel lobbies and street corners. While these meetings are unofficial, they set the tone for what will unfold next week when the National Ecclesiastical Assembly convenes.

Since President Levon Der Bedrossian's endorsement of H.H. Karekin II for the position of Supreme Patriarch, a climate of uncertainty has prevailed even among the delegates. Some view the endorsement as a "done-deal" with the delegates rubber stamping the decision. Many still feel confident in the democratic process of the Armenian Church. They are lobbying for their candidate and ready to elect the next Catholicos.

Some of the candidates have publicly withdrawn from the race. Though election officials are tight lipped about Monday's ballot, it is

generally agreed that a candidate can only withdraw his name before the National Ecclesiastical Assembly.

April 2 — Etchmiadzin — Over 35 Archbishops and Bishops of the Armenian Church will meet in Etchmiadzin for a consultative meeting. In preparation for the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, the Bishops will discuss procedural issues as well as problematic areas that need to be ironed out before the Assembly. As the date of the Assembly comes near, the debate among the bishops over who will be the next catholicos is intensifying. Several bishops have been campaigning vigorously to find support among the delegates.

Khor Virab — On Saturday, pilgrims from various regions of Armenia came to the monastery of Khor Virab for the celebration of the feast of St. Gregory the Illuminator. Bishop Barkev Martirosian of Artsakh celebrated the Divine Liturgy.

The election of the new catholicos was being widely discussed among the faithful outside in the courtyard of the monastery, from where the snowy peak of Mt. Ararat was clearly visible. Two young men, in their mid-thirties, have walked from Yerevan (about 4-5 hours) to Khor Virab with an oukhd (oath). They came to Khor Virab—the place where St. Gregory the Illuminator was imprisoned for fourteen years in the third century—to pray and ask for God's blessings for the upcoming election in Etchmiadzin. One of the pilgrims, Vahan Antreasian, 34, said "We came here as pilgrims so that God may bless our nation with a worthy catholicos, who can lead our church in Armenia and around the world."

When people on the streets of Yerevan are asked about who will be the next catholicos, they mention two candidates, Catholicos Karekin II and Archbishop Karekin Nersissian of Yerevan.

—U.S. Ambassador Gilmore on the Patriarchal Election — Yerevan — On Sunday, April 2, close to 100 delegates and representatives from the United States who are in Armenia for the National Ecclesiastical Assembly visited the U.S. Embassy in Yerevan. Ambassador Harry Gilmore welcomed the group, which was led by Archbishops Vatché Hovsepian and Khajag Barsamian.

Ambassador Gilmore introduced the staff of the embassy and

gave a brief introduction to American and Armenian relations. At the beginning of his remarks, Amb. Gilmore reflected on the upcoming patriarchal elections. He said, "The Armenian Church, for me, has been in many ways, the most fascinating institution, and certainly is my favorite Armenian institution, both because of its long history and what it symbolizes in terms of the long and successful pilgrimage of the Armenian people and the ability of this church to keep the culture of the people alive. This is evident to me as an outsider reading the history.

"For me to see an election of a new catholicos in free Armenia is a very special occasion. Obviously, as a country that has separation of church and state, I will be totally a witness, as all of us in the Embassy. We will not have any thoughts to offer about individual candidates, we will be watching intently, I will be watching very sympathetically.

"It is impressive to me to read the oath that you all are going to take. I believe it will be pretty much the same oath that dates back to 1911. I look forward to the results of the election."

April 3 — Etchmiadzin —The National Ecclesiastical Assembly was called to order by Archbishop Vatché Hovsepian, on Monday with close to 400 delegates in attendance. Hovsepian, designated as the person in charge of organizing the elections, remarked about the historic significance of this convocation and thanked the many volunteers who assisted in organizing the convocation.

A solemn Divine Liturgy was celebrated in the main Cathedral of Etchmiadzin with all delegates participating and receiving Holy Communion. Requiem service was held for Catholicos Vazken I followed by a procession to the courtyard of Etchmiadzin where the remains of the late catholicos are buried. Archbishop Khajag Barsamian celebrated the Liturgy. H.H. Karekin II officiated.

President Der Bedrossian addressed the assembly. In his remarks, he discreetly attempted to squelch the misunderstanding about his personal choice of Karekin II for the position. He emphasized that ultimately, it is in the power of the delegates to elect the next catholicos

and thereby forge ahead the work of the church and nation.

His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia addressed the convocation attendees, openly eschewing any consideration of politics. He asked that each delegate cast their vote according to their conscience and as moved by God.

The delegates took the following oath of office:

"I, the undersigned, a lay delegate to the pontifical election, promise and swear by the Almighty God, before His Gospel, that in the forthcoming election of the Supreme Patriarch and Catholicos of All Armenians, I shall seek, for the highest level of administration of the Holy Church of Armenia and the supervision of its clergy—with a clear conscience and personal responsibility, without any favoritism or personal expectation, repelling from myself all grudges of hostility or any ties of relationship or friendship—to elect from among the clergymen of my ancestral church such a person whom I consider to be the most capable and worthy in intellect and conscience, whom I expect to emerge, in fulfilling the obligations which are laid on him by this sublime office, as a devout officer of God, and as a spiritual overseer of the welfare and the good of the Church of Christ, as well as of the patriarchal authority over the rational flock of Christ entrusted to him. But if of the church, wherein lies my allegiance, I shall expose myself to the reproach of my fellow brothers and become accountable before God in life hereafter and before His Great Judgment. Following my oath, I will kiss the Word [Gospel] and the Cross of our Savior for a fair election. Amen."

The meeting convened in the Patriarchal Palace, adjacent to the main cathedral of Etchmiadzin. His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Locum Tenes and Patriarch of Jerusalem, presided.

Yerevan, Armenia —Two candidates are favored equally by the citizens of Yerevan: Karekin II of Cilicia and Archbishop Karekin Nersissian of Yerevan. In a person-on-the-street interview with inhabitants of Armenia's capital city, Window News asked individuals about their choice for catholicos. Archbishop Karekin Nersissian, the primate of Yerevan

and the Araratian diocese was the favorite of the people until President Levon Der Bedrossian's endorsement of Karekin II. Differentiating between the two Karekin's, people on the street refer to Nersissian as "Yerevantzi" and the catholicos by his name.

April 4 -- KAREKIN II ELECTED CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS—Etchmiadzin, Armenia —The National Ecumenical Assembly has just elected His Holiness Karekin II as Catholicos of All Armenians. This news comes hours after the ballot had been narrowed to three candidates: Karekin II, Abp. Karekin of Yerevan (Nersissian) and Abp. Barkev of Artzakh (Mardirossian). [ed.note: His Holiness is the first "Karekin" to assume the catholicosal throne of Holy Etchmiadzin and will henceforth be known as Karekin I.]

On April 4, the first round of voting was held in the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin where 399 delegates representing the entire Armenian nation around the world gathered to elect the new catholicos.

The first ballot had eight names and the voting results were as follows:

Cthcs. Karekin Sarkissian	111
Abp. Karekin Nersissian	123
Bp. Barkev Mardirossian	61
Abp. Diran Guereghian	42
Abp. Grigoris Puniatian	38
Abp. Zaven Chinchinian	9
Bishop Aris Shirvanian	3
Bp. Gueregh Kapikian	2
(10 invalid votes)	

At the conclusion and announcement of results of the first round, a three name ballot was prepared for the second round of voting. The candidates were Catholicos Karekin, Abp. Karekin Nersissian, Bp. Barkev Martirossian.

After one hour of recess, the Assembly reconvened in the Cathedral where the second round of voting was held. The results were as follows:

Cthcs. Karekin Sarkissian	184
Abp. Karekin Nersissian	146
Bp. Barkev Mardirossian	61
(5 invalid votes)	

Originally, the Assembly had decided that the candidate who receives fifty percent and one votes (50%+1) would be the new catholicos. At the end of the second round of votes, Catholicos Karekin and Archbishop Karekin Nersissian were the

front runners and according to the rules accepted by the Assembly, a third round of votes would have been required. However, Archbishop Karekin Nersissian withdrew his candidacy for a third round and gave his full support to Catholicos Karekin. Thus, the need for a third round of voting was unnecessary. The presidency of the Assembly, announced that Catholicos Karekin is the 131 CATHOLICOS OF ALL ARMENIANS.

The bells of Etchmiadzin tolled the news of the election of Catholicos All Armenians to the multitude of the people who were anxiously waiting outside the gates of the Monastery of Holy Etchmiadzin.

A delegate from Michigan, Dr. Dennis Papazian reflecting on final election process said, "All the Archbishops and Bishops congratulated the new Catholicos and one another and the Cathedral was filled with jubilation and festive mood. There seem to be a great deal of good will and I think that this is very important in view of the fact that our church needs to move ahead, together with our country and people. Everyone seemed to understand that and showed great statesmanship and dignity. It was a proud moment to see our chosen leaders come together and say this is our Catholicos we will work with him. He is Chosen of God!"

His Holiness Karekin I's Accepted Speech — After being elected the 131 Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Karekin I made a brief acceptance statement in the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin to the 399 delegates:

"The first thing that I would like to do is kiss the Holy Altar of Descent as a sign of my devotion and oath.

[Quotation from the Book of Psalms]

With the words of the Psalmist, I open my mouth, to accept, willingly and by the will of the entire nation, the calling to this most high office. As St. Gregory of Narek said, 'Give strength to your servant O Lord, knowing myself, I am weak to bear the great and unforgivable burden.' But I beseech Thee, O Lord, give strength to your servant".

Dear reverend brothers and lay colleagues, ladies and gentlemen

First, I express my thanks and gratitude to all of you for dully performing your national responsi-

bility. After long consultations and at times emotional difficulties, you came to this decision and elected me as successor to the throne of the Illuminator's Mother See.

Your Beatitude, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian...

During the last six months you carried out the difficult task of assuring the smooth transition of the 130th and 131st Catholicos, with courage, persistence and great patience. Today I express my warm feelings and gratitude to you and wish, from the depth of my heart that the Apostolic See of Jerusalem may prosper during your tenure for many years. I hope that your Patriarchate will become one of the most important Sees for spiritual strength and nourishment.

Brethren of the Supreme Religious Council, under the chairmanship of Patriarch Karekin Kazanjian of Constantinople and participation of the clergy and lay members, I express to you my deep gratitude.

I express my thanks and gratitude to the Primate and Patriarchal Vicar of the Ararat Diocese in Yerevan and my dear junior brother Archbishop Karekin Nersissian. [Applause]. I embrace you as one of my closest assistants in the coming years.

On this occasion, I would like to thank all those who helped organize this national Assembly which will continue tomorrow.

I express my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Government of newly Independent Republic of Armenia, to his excellency the President and all the government and civil servants and to all the children of our Nation, both in Armenia and the Diaspora.

Finally, as I enter this blessed house, I address my words of love to the institution which I served for eighteen years, the Catholicosate of the Great House of Cilicia. It is my duty and desire [to see] the realization of cooperation and unity, and may the will for one church, flag and cross lead us forward henceforth.

And now, dear clergy and lay delegates of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, I would like to conclude my remarks with my first blessing as Catholicos of All Armenians.

(English translation provided by Window Quarterly)

Final Session — On Wednesday, April 4, the National Ecclesiastical Assembly convened in the patriarchal palace in Etchmiadzin for the final session of the three-day national meeting.

His Holiness Karekin I, Catholicos-elect of All Armenians, presided over the meeting. He opened the meeting with a prayer and a short meditation on a passage from the Gospel of Matthew. After reading the biblical passage, His Holiness invited the delegates and the members of the Assembly for a moment of prayer and meditation in silence.

According to Archbishop Mesrob Mutaftyan of Istanbul, "This prayerful opening was very significant and different from previous church assemblies. His Holiness, by his own example, set the stage for more spiritual awareness in the Armenian Church. All the delegates were inspired and touched by this beautiful beginning of the final session of the Assembly."

His Holiness addressed the Assembly and gave a presentation on some of the major themes that will be on his list of priorities as the 131st Catholicos of All Armenians.

Among the priorities, Karekin I discussed briefly

- a) The importance of the upcoming 1700th Anniversary of Armenian's declaration of Christianity as state religion;
- b) The preparation of new cadre of clergy and servants of the church;
- c) The national character of the Armenian Church;
- d) The importance of safeguarding the independence of Armenia. In this connection he called upon the delegates and Armenian communities around the world to support the "Hayastan Fund".

At the end of his address, His Holiness asked the delegates for suggestions or proposals that they have. About two dozen delegates expressed their views and ideas and brought some of the concerns of their communities to His Holiness's attention.

After the proposals, His Holiness made some concluding remarks. The National Ecclesiastical Assembly was formally closed with His Holiness's blessing.

April 6 — YEREVAN— On Wednesday, April 5, after the conclusion of the National Ecclesiastical Assembly, the newly elected Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Karekin I made his first courtesy visit to the President of the Republic of Armenia, Levon Ter Petrossian.

His Holiness was accompanied by the respective Patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople, members of the Supreme Religious Council and several archbishops of Etchmiadzin.

On his way to Yerevan, His Holiness's entourage stopped at the outskirts of the city where thousands of Armenians were waiting on the streets to greet the new Catholicos. His Holiness came out of his car and was greeted by dancing children, who brought bread and salt for blessing. After the blessing, a sheep was slaughtered by the residents of the area, as it is customary in Armenia for special occasions.

His Holiness met with the President of the Republic and his staff briefly. At about 5:00 PM a large crowd of several thousand Armenians were waiting in the Opera Square in Yerevan to greet the new Catholicos. Karekin I was received with music and loud cheers. The gathering was concluded with the singing of the Lord's Prayer by all who were present.

April 9 — Enthronement of Catholicos Karekin I ETCHMIADZIN—Palm Sunday, His Holiness Karekin I was enthroned as the 131st Catholicos of All Armenians in the Cathedral of Holy Etchmiadzin.

At 11:00 AM, the Catholicos was lead from the patriarchal palace to the Cathedral of Etchmiadzin with a procession in which high ranking clergy and ecumenical guests took part.

President Levon Ter Petrosian witnessed the ceremony in the Cathedral, together with the vice-president of Armenia, Chairman of the Parliament, Cabinet Ministers and other high ranking government officials. President Kocharian of the Republic of Mountainous Karabakh was also present.

The ceremonies started with the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. His Holiness Karekin I was the celebrant. Before the "Kiss of Peace" the catholicos elect knelt before the

holy altar facing the people and took his public oath. Afterwards, twelve bishops and respective patriarchs of Jerusalem and Constantinople placed their hands over Karekin I's head and asked for the blessings of the Holy Spirit to descend over the Catholicos of All Armenians.

Immediately after the prayers, the newly enthroned pontiff gave his first sermon as Catholicos of All Armenians.

Many foreign and ecumenical guests were present at the enthronement ceremonies, among them Pope Shenuda of the Coptic Church, the Patriarch of the Indian Malabar Church, the Patriarch of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church, Patriarch of Syrian Orthodox Church, Cardinal Cassidy of the Vatican, representing Pope John Paul II, and representatives of the Russian, Greek, Romanian, Georgian Orthodox Churches, the Church of England and many others. Also present were the foreign diplomatic corps in Armenia.

Reception in Honor of Catholicos Karekin I—Following the religious ceremonies for the enthronement of Karekin I, a reception was held at 4:00 PM in the large hall of the "Hamalir" in Yerevan. Over one thousand invited guests and delegates, together with President Ter Petrossian welcomed the 131st Catholicos of All Armenians.

The two-hour reception was concluded with the words of the Catholicos, where he said, "During the past few days we have spoken a lot, now we need to move from words to work. Let us start our work together".

Karekin I's Address to the Foreign Guests—At the reception following the enthronement ceremonies in Etchmiadzin, His Holiness Karekin I said a few words to the foreign and ecumenical guests in the large hall of the "Hamalir" in Yerevan.

"This evening is an unforgettable moment in our history of modern times. As I said in my sermon, this is a unique event in the sense that for centuries, we did not have an election and an enthronement of a Catholicos where free independent Armenia could express its own will. That happened and may God's name be praised for having granted us this great opportunity. And your presence here, from so

many sister Christian churches, your presence from so many countries [is a testimony to that fact]. The world is looking to Armenia, it has to look to Armenia because your salvation came from Mount Ararat. Had it not been for that big Mountain, Noah would not have, perhaps, survived and if not, you would not have existed today.

"I would like to thank you for your Christian spirit of solidarity. What is Christianity? It is togetherness, fellowship, brotherhood and you being with us give us a tangible proof of being true Christian. To be a Christian alone without another Christian is not to be a Christian. Christians have to manifest their community through that kind of togetherness.

"I wish all my brethren, the heads of your churches, those who are here and those who are represented here, I greet them and embrace them with Christian love." I give you my assurance that we will, hand in hand together, bring about the unity of Christ's church. That unity is imperative, it is part of our essence, that unity is intrinsic in our being Christian. This is the lesson of this evening. Thank you."

Karekin I Granted Armenian Citizenship—During the reception following the enthronement of His Holiness as the 131st Catholicos, President Levon Ter Petrossian, at the conclusion of his remarks, granted Armenian citizenship to Karekin I by handing him an Armenian passport. The President also granted citizenship to His Beatitude Archbishop Torkom Manougian, Patriarch of Jerusalem, who was Locum Tenens of Etchmiadzin during the interim period between the death of Catholicos Vazken I and the election of Karekin I.



PAST WINDOWS YOU MAY HAVE MISSED...

Window Vol. I, No. 1 • **PREMIER ISSUE**

The first issue of Window is an eight-page introduction that sets the tone and scope of this "new" publication. It consists of three articles written by the editors and a translation of Patriarch Torkom Kushagian's "Revival in the Armenian Church."

Window Vol. I, No. 2 • **ARMENIAN THEOLOGY OF LIBERATION**

This issue provides a series of articles in search of an Armenian theology of Liberation, stimulating discussion and dialogue between Armenian church members and theologians.

Window Vol. I, No. 3 • **1915—THE YEAR THE CHURCH DIED**

This entire issue is dedicated to the martyred clergy of the Armenian Church during the Genocide of 1915. With this issue, *Window* turns the views of its readers back 75 years and provides a glimpse of the pre-Genocide Armenian Church. For the first time in the English language, the monumental work of Teotig—a scribe who tediously recorded the lives of the martyrdom of the Armenian clergy—is presented with statistical and analytical charts.

Window Vol. I, No. 4 • **IS THE COLLAR CHOKING THE PRIEST?**

This issue discusses the role for the Armenian priest from the perspective of both the Armenian community and the Church. In doing so, it dispels some of the stereotypes and myths associated with the Armenian clergy.

Window Vol. II, No. 1 • **CULTS IN ARMENIA**

In an attempt to educate the Armenian community on the dangers of cults, this issue provides an extensive coverage of cults presently operating in Armenia. The deep psychological wounds caused by the 1988 earthquake have facilitated the infiltration of various cults into Armenia under false pretenses. This issue of *Window* poses a challenge to the Armenian community and the Church, by the fact that "the cults will do what we neglect!"

Window Vol. II, No. 2 • **INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF ARMENIAN CLERGY**

The first ever International Conference of Armenian Clergy held in New York, June 17-21, 1991 is covered with exclusive interviews and analysis by the *Window* editors. An inside view of the conference is provided. Detailed information about the current situation in Armenia by the directors and leaders of the Center for the Propagation of Faith. Candid and alarming revelations regarding the religious awakening in Armenia and the Church's ability (or inability) to provide for the needs of the people.

Window Vol. II, No. 3 • **ARE ALL BRANDS THE SAME?**

This issue of *Window* explores the Armenian Protestant and Roman Catholics churches, providing a history of their development and place within the Armenian Community. A candid discussion of possible means of rapprochement is provided. Also, the place of the Armenian Church within the world Church community is explored with statements by the Orthodox Churches and reflections concerning the cost of unity. This issue is filled with facts and information. A map of religions is provided as a centerpiece to this important volume.

Window Vol. II, No. 4 • **TESTING THE MYTH AND BEYOND**

The understanding of myths and their place in religious perception is the theme of this issue, especially as it is applied in the Armenian Church and community. The main article gives an excellent definition and explanation of what Myth is. Articles discuss services in the liturgical tradition of the Armenian Church, namely Blessing of Madagh and Chrismation.

Window Vol. III, No. 1 • **THE CHURCH IN ARMENIA**

This issue presents a series of interviews conducted in Armenia, which give a general view of the state of the church and religion in the post-soviet Republic of Armenia. There are conversations with the Catholicos, representatives of Armenian political parties; Armenian "skinheads," and others who are closely involved with the church.

Window Vol. III, No. 2 • **HYPOCRISY**

Hypocrisy is among those topics that are normally avoided in church life. However, in this issue, ordained and lay workers in the church candidly write about their experiences in the Armenian Church and share their thoughts about hypocrisy in the community.

Window Vol. III, No. 3 & 4 • **DEATH: THE KEVORKIAN FACTOR**

Death and Dying, Euthanasia and assisted suicide are among the main topics of this issue. The articles discuss the issues in the context of the controversy of assisted suicide that became a matter of public debate, especially through the actions of Dr. Jack Kevorkian, or "Doctor Death" as he became known by the American media.

Window Vol. IV, No. 1 • **THEOLOGY OF WAR: KARABAKH**

The main focus of this issue is the religious revival in Nagorno-Karabakh, despite the war in the region. Two significant interviews – with the Primate of the Diocese of Karabakh and the Editor of Kantzasar Theological Journal – are the highlights of this issue.

Window Vol. IV, No. 2 • **PONTIFICAL ELECTION PROCESS**

In Memoriam issue dedicated to the blessed memory of His Holiness Vazken I (1908-1994). Historical process of election of a catholicos are presented with statistics and charts, as well as brief profiles of the 45 candidates for the 1995 election. Also, in an exclusive interview, H.H. Karekin II, Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia, reflects on the mission of the Armenian Church today.

Window Vol. IV, No. 3 • **JOURNEY TO A PROMISED LAND**

The issue of non-Armenians in the Armenian Church is discussed in a candid and critical look at the Armenian Church. The issue includes an interview with a non-Armenian candidate for the priesthood and an in-depth analysis of the spiritual life within the diasporan Armenian community.

Window Vol. IV., No. 4 • **OEKIMENI**

Archbishop Aram Keshishian is featured in this issue, which focuses on the unity movements between the Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Oriental Churches. Keshishian presents his views through an interview and article.

ACRAG

The Armenian Church Research and Analysis Group (ACRAG) was founded in 1989 by a group of clergy and laity of the Armenian Church. ACRAG attempts to feel the need for a professional and innovative approach to the matters facing the Armenian people in general and the Armenian Church in particular. With a firm commitment to the Traditions of the Church and sharing the vision of St. Gregory the Illuminator, ACRAG, through its *Window*, provides a forum for contemporary Church thought. The aims of ACRAG are: Through research and observations, highlight the role of the Armenian Church in the life of the Armenian people; To provide a forum for dialogue and discussion on matters concerning the Church today; To provide publications that would further contribute to the growth of the Armenian community in the Faith of their forefathers; To fill the gap between the National and Religious characteristics of the Armenian Community.

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