

CORRUPT CLERGY OF ARMENIA DAMAGE APOSTOLIC CHURCH

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Karen Mkrtchyan, India, 1 August 2011

The following is in response to [John K.'s comment](#). Ed.

Who is destroying whom now? Whose interests Echmiadzin serves?

Dear John K.,

Your reference to Tashnags and Hnchags are sadly to the point. There was a lot of disagreement between these two parties, not to mention other parties. Unfortunately, we Armenians have a bad record when it comes to unity. This shortcoming has caused a great suffering to our nation. It's foolish to run away from the historic facts, no matter how bitter they may be.

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Back in the days when different Armenian political groups argued against each other, one thing remained common-- ALL OF THEM ACTED WITH THE INTEREST OF ARMENIA AND ARMENIANS IN MIND. Every party wanted a bright future for Armenia; they differed only in their opinions on how to achieve this aim. It happens everywhere. Here, in India (radicals versus the moderates) these differences in approach weakened the independence movement and advanced Lord Dalhousie's "divide and rule" strategy. Similar divisions have taken place in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, etc. So pointing the finger at Tashnags and Hnchags is misguided. At least they wanted what's best for Armenia, and worked toward that goal.

My point is this: what is Echmiadzin doing now? Are we destroying Armenian society by commenting on the drawbacks of our religious leaders, or is our clergy contributing to the destruction what Armenia has always upheld as holy? I recommend you conduct a personal survey in Armenia. When I went back to Armenia last year, I tried to do a little survey in my hometown. More than 80% of the citizens have not attended a full divine liturgy. To them church attendance lasts five minutes maximum--light a candle, take a picture and walk out. Most of them don't know the Lord's Prayer, have not even read a single page from the Bible, don't know more than two or three prayers (if they

know at all) and don't even know when was Christianity declared state religion in Armenia and under which king. They have heard of Krikor Lusavorcch, but half of them have no clue as to who he is, except that they know he had some connection with Khor Virab. What is most shocking is that most have heard more about Jehovah's Witnesses than about Jesus, although they believe Christ to be God's Son. I am sure my hometown is not alone as far as the pathetic religious condition is concerned.

How is it that although ruled for so many years by Zoroastrian Persians and Muslim Turks we retained our religion and traditions, no matter how much these occupiers tried to change our beliefs but now, just 20 years after independence, we see so many people following new sects and cults? Why are the people losing faith in the Church? How is it that after over 1,700 years of Christianity, Armenians look away at other faiths? How are these new organizations able to make the Armenians go against not only their Church but also our national values?

The bigger question is "What has the Church done to combat these new 'faiths'"? Instead of fighting against these social evils, which are growing like epidemic, clergymen are contributing to the popularity of these cults by their sorry behaviour. It's no wonder so many people don't go to church. Why is the Armenian clergy not dissuading people from changing their national faith? If the Church establishes credible connections with the people, maybe it would be able to bring back the people to the Mother Church. If they speak more about God and less about money it might help. Maybe if they act more like respectable clergymen and less like businessmen and mafia members, people would trust them. Now nobody trusts them; nobody respects His Holiness Karekin II. Hence, people don't go to church or even care to learn about the Armenian Church or Christianity.

When I was a kid, I was taught that a clergyman, a "Hokevoragan" was a person who had denounced worldly pleasures and had devoted himself to the service of the people, the Church and God. Tell me what part of the life of the clergy is not full of worldly pleasures these days? Is it the gold they wear, the disreputable girls they chase, the fancy cars they drive? It is said that the Catholicos has children in Yerevan. With this kind of behaviour by the head of the clergy is it a wonder that people are staying away from the Church?

Has what the Church done and is doing brought us closer to our Church or made us move from it? Have the clergymen done enough to maintain our faith and traditions or have they worked against our sacred values? Call me what you will; accuse me of sowing seeds of division, but I just can't respect our clergy anymore. There are many Armenians like me--and many who are leaving the faith to follow other faiths.

So please, don't cite examples from Tashnag and Hnchag quarrels of the past. Open your eyes wide and see what's going on. We, who criticize the Church, are doing what's right. We aren't dividing society. We care for our country, religion and Church. We are at least taking action. Pointing the finger at us will neither make you an Armenian patriot, nor will help you get an award from

Catholicos Karekin II. Be fair, be honest, be Armenian. Who is destroying whom now? Whose interest is Echmiadzin serving?

