EIGHTY YEARS OF LONELINESS

Posted on December 28, 2008 by Keghart

Category: Opinions

By Berge Minassian, Posted in 24April Forum, Toronto, 21 December 2008

"And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" - Gospel of Mark

By Berge Minassian, Posted in 24April Forum, Toronto, 21 December 2008

"And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" - Gospel of Mark

Yesterday, I attended the 80th anniversary gala dinner of the Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church.

It was a memorable and moving evening of witnessing an Armenian Diasporan community's 80 years of survival. The highlight for me was a video in which Vazken I Gatoghigos was laying the cornerstone of the new church building, a great Armenian who navigated the church through the darkness of Soviet occupation. I was moved close to tears to see his kind face, and through its deep furrows what pain he must have felt for our people, and our church, through the desolate recovery from genocide in the gloom of brutal Bolshevik oppression of faith and freedom.

As expected, priests and bishop of Etchmiadzin were present, and that section of our hemi-community. There was no priest from the Antelias church, nor any lay people who usually attend the Antelias church (except for one good friend of mine). So Toronto's Etchmiadzin church, priests, and bishop were celebrating 80 years, almost a century of survival in this difficult land, of Armenian life in the Armenian-life sucking wonderful country of ours... all alone. Their brothers were not present at the birthday party.

Were they invited and did not come?
Were they not invited?
Were they not invited nicely enough?

Who cares...

If I were celebrating my birthday and my brother would not come, I would be at his door knocking on it till I knocked it open or knocked my wrist off.

The organizing committee had published a high-quality brochure, in which the prime minister of Canada was expressing his happiness, the premier of Ontario his joy, the mayor of Toronto his delight, Gatoghigos Karekin II his blessings, the Srpazan, the priest, the head of the Dzkhagan. I thought if the brothers from Cilicia were not physically present, maybe they would have a message in this great big book, maybe they would send a message, or be asked for a message?... no.

Looking at this great book, one is struck by how much we are the last of the Christian nations, how much we have failed in Love.

Having read most of the pages in the book, with chagrin building with every turn, as I was putting the book down, a sentence typed in bold caught my eye in one of the messages. I think it was the only bold message in the entire book.

I looked to see, which of the various leaders of the Etchmiadzin church had written this.

It was the message of the representative of the youth committee. Sorry, I forgot the book at the hall, and I can't name the person here, maybe someone will help me.

The young person had written a typical empty message of congratulations, thanks, and cordiality... but at the bottom, before he signed, totally unconnected to anything he had written above, in bold, as if to scream, in wailing silence:

"And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand" - Gospel of Mark