

TRIBUTE TO AMBASSADOR JOHN EVANS

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By Berge Minassian MD CM FRCP(C), Toronto 19 April 2008

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Yesterday Ambassador John Evans spoke at an event organized by our hemi-community (half the community); I could have also said semi-community (i.e. pseudo-community).

The MC did a fantastic job. At one very pleasing moment, she made a slip of the tongue calling Ambassador Evans the ambassador of Armenia to America. She quickly corrected herself, but maybe she shouldn't have, because this amazing man is now in fact the Ambassador of Armenia and the Armenian Genocide to America. The MC's message was thoughtful and well-prepared. I liked it a lot, but for me it was not the main message of the evening.

John Evans himself was eloquent, but that goes without saying for a career diplomat. What struck me most was the utter kindness of the man. Everyone congratulated him afterwards. I myself wanted to hug him, but was embarrassed to do so, so I did not. His message was superb, from the heart merged with honest, sometimes biting clear thought. I liked his message a lot, but for me it was not the chief message of the evening.

Next, the main organizer of the event spoke. While his accent persists, most naturally, this gentleman has become a seasoned politician. His words were well-chosen, heartfelt, and effective. He was amazingly brief for an Armenian speaker, and I liked his message a lot, but his message was not the key point of the evening for me.

Last to speak was a bishop. He was one of many clergy present there that evening. All our denominations were represented, and to the odars there, a glorious show of unity. Apostolic, Catholic, Evangelical, a colourful mix of robes. Oh, but what the odars could not discern we could see clearly. In the case of the Apostolic it was not actually Apostolic. It was hemi-Apostolic (I could have said semi-apostolic, i.e. pseudo-apostolic). The bishop's speech was also remarkably brief. I did not like his jocularly, which I usually enjoy, in this solemn gathering around Genocide commemoration. His speech was not particularly uplifting. It came across as an excellent speech from a politician, but I would have expected something not better, but different, from a priest. Anyway, that's just me, and in any case his message did not turn out to be the most important impression left on me that evening.

I left the hall in pain yet painfully blasé. I left the hall with one important yet boring message. The message that I got from the evening is that we hate each other so much that practically NOT A SINGLE MEMBER OF THE OTHER HEMI-COMMUNITY AND HEMI-CHURCH was present.

We hate each other so much that we allowed someone like John Evans who gave his career away for our cause to look at a hall that was half-empty.

We hate each other so much that we are able to hate each other on April 24.

