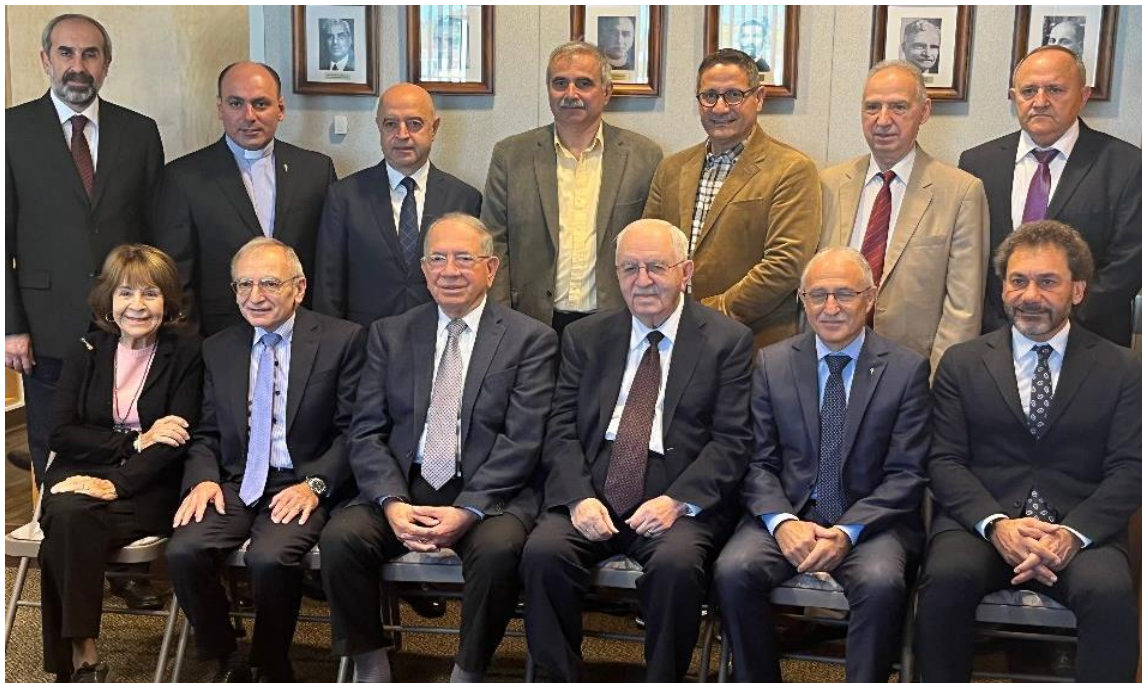


AEWC 2022 Biennial Meeting Held in Paramus, N. J.

The biennial meeting of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) was held at the AMAA headquarters, in Paramus, New Jersey on October 20-21, 2022.



Standing left to right: Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Rev. Hovhannes Hovsepian, Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, Rev. Samuel Albarian, Rev. Dr. Rene Leonian, Rev. Albert Paytyan;
Sitting left to right: Mrs. Joyce Philibosian Stein, Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, Mr. Zaven Khanjian, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Rev. Joel Mikaelian, Rev. Dr. Haroutune Selimian.
Absent from the photo: Dr. Nurhan Helvacian.

Following the written and oral reports of the officers of the Council and the representatives of church Unions and organizations, the Board dealt with ecclesiastical and missions' issues on the meeting's agenda and made decisions accordingly.

Under the old and new business items of the agenda, the following items were discussed and resolutions were made:

1. Proposed membership in the World Council of Churches (WCC). Of the five church Unions of the Council only the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Church of the Near East is a member of WCC. The majority of the remaining church Unions is in favor of membership.

The Council resolved that those church Unions of AEWL that wish to become members of WCC should submit their application to the World Council of Churches separately.

2. Digitization of important Armenian Evangelical documents. A report of the first phase of the digitization of Armenian Evangelical documents was presented by Rev. Vicken Cholakian. *The Council resolved to embark upon the second phase with an allocation of \$50,000 on condition that each of the seven members of AEWL equally shares the expenses.*

3. Evaluation of the 175-th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical Church celebrations in Armenia. A general review and evaluation was made on the 175th Anniversary celebrations of the Armenian Evangelical Church, which were held in Armenia from July 1 to 7, 2022. The Council commended the Steering Committee for planning and executing all the activities of the 175th Anniversary celebrations. It also thanked the Armenian Christian Cultural Committee of the AEUNA for translating the *Hooshamadyan* into English and publishing it. Furthermore, the Council expressed its thanks to Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, the compiler and editor of the Commemorative Book.

Moreover, the Council discussed the subjects of calling of pastoral ministry and the significance of the role of Christian education as well as some issues emanated from the 175th Anniversary of the Armenian Evangelical conference held in Yerevan, Armenia. *The Council appointed an eight member committee, consisted of each of the seven members of the Council and its Executive Director, under the chairmanship of Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, to study the above mentioned subjects and report to the AEW.*

4. Unified Armenian Evangelical Authority. The Council studied Rev. Megerditch Karagoezian's report on this matter. The report is basically a proposal to a new AEW constitution and bylaws. *The Council thanked Rev. Karagoezian for his work and resolved to maintain its present constitution and bylaws as they are.*

5. Proposal to change the date of the Armenian Evangelical Ministers' Appreciation Sunday. For a number of years the Armenian Evangelical Ministers' Appreciation Sunday has been observed on the second Sunday in October. A proposal came from the UAECNE to AEW to change this date, because that Sunday is Holy Translators' Sunday. The Council agreed to change the date to another Sunday in October. It was noted that all Sundays in October are dedicated to important observances (the first Sunday is World Communion Sunday; the second Sunday is Holy Translators' Sunday; the third Sunday is AMAA Annual meeting Sunday; The last Sunday is Reformation Sunday). *The Council resolved to change the date of the Armenian Evangelical Ministers' Appreciation Sunday from the second Sunday in October to the last Sunday of October (October sometimes has five Sundays), which is Reformation Sunday. It is expected that each Armenian Evangelical church will commemorate this important date of our common religious heritage and will pay tribute to its past and present ministers.*

6. Election of officers. Elections for the cabinet (Divan) of AEW were held as follows: Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, President; Rev. Albert Paytyan, Vice President; Rev. Dr. Haroutune Selimian, Secretary, Dr. Nurhan Helvacian, Treasurer and Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Executive Director.

7. Closing remarks. In his closing remarks, the Executive Director, Rev. Tootikian, expressed his thanks to the outgoing members of the Council and to the AMAA for playing host to AEW biennial meeting. He also reflected on the present status of AEW and presented a brief communique of the meeting to be mailed to the Armenian news media. The meeting adjourned at 1:00 p.m. with the singing of the Doxology and the closing prayer.

Communiqué to the Armenian news media

The Council paid its respects to the Armenian victims of Azeri aggression of September 12, 2022 in the Southern towns of Armenia. The Council also condemned the Azeri government for its unprovoked aggression against the peaceful Armenian population and indiscriminate shelling of contact towns and villages.

AEWC appeals to the international community to condemn Azerbaijan's continuous violation of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Armenia.

The Council also discussed the status of Armenian communities in the Middle East, particularly in Syria, Lebanon and Iraq. In spite of the harsh economic realities, the severe devaluation of the local currencies and a number of unfavorable circumstances, the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East rose above many obstacles, challenging experiences and marched forward.

The Council extended its appreciation to the church Unions and missionary organizations, including Hope for Armenia, Stephen Philibosian Foundation, and particularly the Armenian Missionary Association of America that extended their financial assistance to these Armenian communities. The Council further pledged to continue its moral and financial support as needed.

Because at the present time both the Republics of Armenia and Artsakh are in one of the fateful stages of our recent history, the Armenian Evangelical World Council calls all Armenians worldwide, to recognize the gravity of the moment, to lay aside their political and ideological differences, and unite around the Armenian nation reclaiming our destiny together for the sake of the freedom and security of our Fatherland.