

# AMAA news



Հրատարակութիւն Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան  
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**Children's Retreat  
Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church, Aleppo, Syria**



# Immanuel God With Us

Levon Filian

“All this took place to fulfill what the Lord God had said through the prophet: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel' (which means 'God with us')." (Matthew 1:22-23). A promise made 700 years earlier through the prophet Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14).



On this special occasion, as we celebrate the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AMAA mission and ministry around the world, we greet you with the assurance of Immanuel, God with us, a promise made by our heavenly Father.

We say Immanuel to our brothers and sisters who are facing personal challenges, struggles with ungodly thoughts and actions, pride and jealousy, with financial and family issues, with fear of snipers in our bordering villages in Armenia, with fear of killings and kidnappings in Syria, and with the many challenges we face in our lives each day. We say Immanuel.

We promise to stand by you, pray for you, help you, and show our support and solidarity for you, as we are your brothers and sisters in Christ. Indeed, the AMAA has remained faithful for 95 years in our ministry to "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to all creation." (Mark 16:15).

There are over 7,000 promises God has made to His people through the Bible, and He has kept them all in His time. "God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1) and He is in charge. He has been true to His promises and provided guidance to prophets, judges, kings and tribe leaders. He has also been with the cowards, stutterers, the poor, the widows, the sinners and even the prostitutes, guiding them to return to their Creator, and to keep His commandments. The book of Hebrews, Chapter 11, lists the heroes of men and women who kept their faith in the Lord, whom He instructed to remain strong and courageous. This is why the Bible tells us "Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips, meditate on it day and night so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful." "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:8-9).

He comforted His disciples who were fearful of being left alone without a teacher, by promising them the Comforter, the Holy Spirit. He said, "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever – the spirit of truth." (John 14:15-16).

And now, during this season of celebrating the birth of our Lord, we invite you to renew your relationship with Him, the promise of His being with us, Immanuel. Let us invite the Counselor, the Holy Spirit into our lives, to comfort us and to guide us with the "fruit of the Spirit, which is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law." (Galatians 5: 22-23).

Քրիստոս ծնաւ եւ յայտնեցաւ, ձեզի մեզի մեծ Աւետիս!  
Christ is born and is revealed, good tidings to you and to us!

## AMAA NEWS

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# The AMAA

## In God's Global Mission

Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian

**A**s someone new to my position as Interim Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, I find myself asking questions like "What am I doing?" "What is the AMAA doing?" "What do we get out of all these programs?" "Is it worth it?"

In order to find satisfactory answers, I want us to learn from a person, a wise man, *never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be* (1 Kings 3:12), namely Solomon. King Solomon asked very similar questions thirty centuries ago. *What does man gain...?* (Ecclesiastes 1:3). He was willing to work hard and invest, but first he wanted to know the cash value. Is it worth it? What will I have instead? Am I really accomplishing?

Interestingly, the wise man does not give us the answer we are expecting. We are waiting for something like "work hard" or "work smart" as a key for success. To our disappointment, the wise man states: "meaningless," or "vanity," *emptiness, everything is empty...* (Ecclesiastes 1:2). The wise man backs up his argument by giving examples starting with humans: Generations come and go. He continues with the example from nature: the sun rises and sets. People coming and going, the sun rising and setting suggest movement, motion, but not progress, making no sense, emptiness....repetitive, but not progressive, monotony and meaningless....

But the wise man does not stop there. He continues: *what does man gain from all his labor under the sun.* (Ecclesiastes 1:3) or *nothing is new under the sun.* (Ecclesiastes 1:9).

The previously described meaningless life is **under the sun**. The picture will be totally different if we believe in God who is **ABOVE** the sun and ruling over the sun. When we bring God in our lives; the life doesn't become boring, repetitive or meaningless. We all have heard "if God seems to be far away, guess who moved?" When we

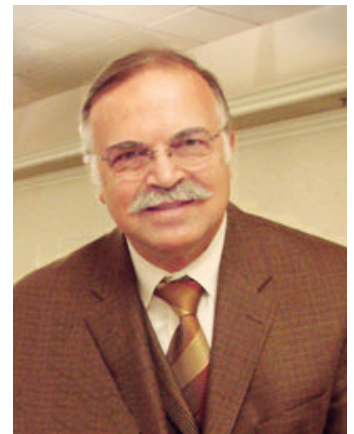
don't find meaning in what we are doing, when we have lost the peace, the joy and the excitement of doing mission, guess who is living **under the sun**. We may see nothing new **under the sun**, but when we invite God into our hearts, our perspective on life, our experience and our mission become meaningful, exciting and productive, because God who is above the sun is making something new every day, all the time. God gives us life, abundant life, hope, love, a new heart, a new vision. God makes a new creation in Jesus and we have a whole new life.

Ten centuries after King Solomon, the Apostle Paul advises us to do the same in different words: *Set your hearts and minds on things ABOVE not on earthly things.* (Colossians 3:2)

I know the AMAA selected "Mission in Motion" as our theme for last year. That's great. We are moving and that's a sign that there is life. Now let's move forward to have a progressive motion. The Word of God teaches us "how to."

We all are busy now planning and organizing Christmas events to welcome Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. The Prince of Peace is coming to bring us new life, new hope, new vision, new meaning. When we accept the Son, believe and obey the Son, we are not **under the sun** anymore. We are a new creation in the Son (2 Corinthians 5:17). Let us leave the old behind, just like we are leaving the year 2013 behind us and have a New Year with Merry Christmas in our hearts.

To all of our AMAA members, Board members, staff and fellows, Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year. ☐



# AMAA Annual Meeting Banquet and Concert Highlights *Our Mission in Motion*

The 94th Annual Meeting Banquet and Concert of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) was held at the Westin Waltham-Boston Hotel, Waltham, MA on Saturday October 12, 2013. Over 165 guests attended the dinner and concert which featured Grace Kelly, a renowned saxophonist, singer, composer and lyricist.

The theme of the evening was *Our Mission in Motion - Celebrating our Precious Children*. Ken Kevorkian, AMAA Board Member and Co-Chair of the Development Committee, welcomed the guests and thanked all who participated in the success of the event. A group from the Watertown, MA Armenian Memorial Church Choir, under the leadership of Choir Director June Baboyan, sang the American and Armenian National Anthems with the participation from the attendees. Rev. Avedis Boynerian, Pastor of the Church, offered the Prayer of Invocation.

Master of Ceremonies Carol Ishkhanian welcomed the guests and introduced the program's participants. The AMAA was honored by the presence of Rev. Father Vasken Kouzouian, Holy Trinity Armenian Orthodox Church, Cambridge, MA, Rev. Father Antranig Baljian and his wife



*l to r: Lucienne Aynilian, Louisa Janbazian, Lusine Ohanian, Levon Filian, Harout Nercessian, Tigran Melkonyan, Anita Buchakjian and Christine Simonyan*

Arpineh, St. Stephen's Armenian Orthodox Church, Watertown, MA, and Very Rev. Father Raphael Andonian, Holy Cross Armenian Catholic Church, Belmont, MA.

AMAA President Dr. Joseph Zeronian thanked the guests for their presence and support. He highlighted the major achieve-

ments of the AMAA during the year, which included the construction of the Bilezikian Elementary and Avedisian Middle and High Schools in Yerevan, Armenia, the opening of *Shogh* Day Centers in Yerevan and Vanadzor, and the strong and unprecedented financial status of the AMAA.



*Joseph Zeronian, Ed.D., President of the AMAA Board*



*Ken Kevorkian, Co-Chair of the AMAA Development Committee*



*Carol Ishkhanian, Master of Ceremonies*

A video presentation was shown about the Precious Children of Armenia and how the AMAA with its supporters makes a significant change in the physical, social and spiritual needs of these children. AMAA Board Member Anita Buchakjian introduced the *Our Mission in Motion* Brochure, highlighting the major construction projects and the AMAA's day to day operation projects in 24 countries around the world.

Levon Filian, Executive Director of the AMAA, in recognition of Armenian cultural month, recited a poem "The Great," by famous Armenian poet Rafael Badagian. Mr. Filian dedicated the poem to our brothers and sisters in Syria and challenged each and every one to make a difference by praying and making a donation to help our community in Syria.

On this festive occasion, Mr. Filian recognized Lucienne Aynilian and Anita Buchakjian for their many years of dedicated service to the AMAA as Co-Chairs of the Banquet Coordinating and Public Affairs Committees; Tigran Melkonyan (USA) and Christine Simonyan (Armenia) for their 10 years of faithful service to the AMAA's Child Sponsorship Program; Lusine Ohanian, Coordinator of External Relations of the AMAA-Armenia, for her dedicated service to the Association; Louisa Janbazian, currently Associate Editor of the AMAA News and Coordinator of the Armenian version of "Our Daily Bread" (Zhatz Mer Hanabazort) which has been published since 1991, for her dedication and service to the AMAA since the early

eighties which included the computerization of the AMAA News in the mid-1990s; and Harout Nercessian, AMAA's Representative in Armenia, who has served the AMAA in various capacities for the past 17 years, such as heading the Christian Education Department, as Operations Director and as the AMAA Representative since 2011.

The Dinner was followed with a musical program featuring Grace Kelly and her band. Grace mesmerized the audience with her vocal and musical talents offering a selection of Jazz pieces such as *Bye Bye Black Bird* and *Summer Time* with her improvisations, her own vocal and sax compositions, and Gospel Music featuring her version of *Amazing Grace*.

Please consider supporting "Our Precious Children" by making a gift to the AMAA's General Fund. Your gift will help the AMAA continue to support various programs for our children, as well as all of our Humanitarian programs throughout the world.



We take this opportunity to thank all who made this event a success - our Paramus Staff, the Missions Committee of the Armenian Memorial Church, as well as our Patrons, Sponsors, Donors and Friends. May God continue to bless you and your loved ones. □



## AMAA Holds 94<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting in Watertown, MA

The 94th Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) was held at the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown, MA on October 12, 2013. AMAA President Joseph Zeronian presided over the meeting, which was attended by over 70 members. Delegates of Armenian Evangelical Unions, Armenian Evangelical World Council, AMAA Committees and affiliated organizations shared their joys and concerns and praised God for another successful year.

The general membership of the AMAA elected the following nine members for the Class of 2016 (for a term of 3 years): Hon. Alice Altoon, Edward Avedisian, Rev. Ara Guekguezian, Berjuhi Gulesserian, Peter Kougasian, Esq., Thomas Momjian, Esq., Hovhannes Shnorhokian, D.D.S., Joseph Stein and Joseph Zeronian, Ed.D. The following four members were also elected for a term of two years to serve on the Nominating Committee: Nazareth Darakjian, M.D., Peter Kougasian, Esq., Rev. Nerses Balabanian and Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian.

On October 13, AMAA members and guests attended the Worship Service at the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown. Rev. Avedis Boynerian, Pastor of the Church, was the worship leader. The guest preachers were Rev. Joel Mikaelian and Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian. Rev. Joseph Matossian offered the pastoral prayer. During the Worship Service, the newly elected Board members of the AMAA were installed by Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian.

A special prayer was offered in memory of AMAA members and friends who made the transition from this life to Life Eternal during the past year.

We take this opportunity to thank the Memorial Church members and their pastor for hosting the annual meeting and for welcoming us with great warmth, hospitality, delicious meals and enthusiasm. We pray that God will continue to bless this congregation and their ministry abundantly.

***This poem "Great" by Rafael Badganian was recited at the AMAA Banquet in dedication of our brothers and sisters in Syria.***

## ՄԵԾ

Ռաֆայէլ Պատկանյան

Գընա՛, իմ որդեակ, աշխարհքըս անցի՛ր  
Պանծալի անուն Մեծի դու ստացի՛ր:

Ու գընաց որդին, շատ քրտինք թափեց,  
Մեծ հարըստություն, մեծ գանձ ժողովեց,

Ու դարձավ հորը, ասաց պարծանքով.

- Հայր իմ, այժըմ Մեծ չե՞մ քու կարծիքով:

- Չէ՛, չէ՛. թէեւ դու բորսայի ես վարդ,  
Բայց քեզ չեմ ասիլ տակավին մեծ մարդ:

Նա գընաց մըտավ իմաստնոց տաճար,  
Եղավ խորիմաստ գիտուն ու հանճար,  
Ու դարձաւ հորը, ասաց պարծանքով.

- Հայր իմ, այժըմ Մեծ չե՞մ քու կարծիքով:

- Չէ՛, չէ՛. թէեւ դու գիտութեանց ես վարդ,  
Բայց քեզ չեմ ասիլ տակավին մեծ մարդ:

Ու գընաց որդին, դարձաւ կորավար,  
Խելքով, քաջութեամբ տիրեց շատ աշխարհ,  
Ու դարձավ հորը, ասաց պարծանքով.

- Հայր իմ, այժըմ Մեծ չե՞մ քու կարծիքով:

- Չէ՛, չէ՛. թէեւ դու գոռ դաշտին ես վարդ,  
Բայց քեզ չեմ ասիլ տակավին մեծ մարդ:

Ու գընաց որդին գըլխակոր տըրտում,  
Հոգին վրդոված, ցավ ու դարդ սըրտում,  
Մաշվում էր խեղճը, կոր տալով խելքին՝  
Հե՞ր չարժանացաւ հոր գովասանքին...

Նորա եղբայրը գերի էր տարած,  
Թըշնամու ձեռքով տունը ավերած.  
Ճիգ արաւ, գլուխը վտանգի ձրգեց...  
Ապատեց եղբորն ու տունը կանգնեց...

Հանկարծ... սար ու ձոր, ծով դըղըրդեցան,  
Բյուրք բյուրոց բերնով գոչեց ապգ մարդկան.  
«Մեծ Մարդու անուն դու այժմ ըստացար,  
Եղբորդ հիշեցիր ու քեզ մոռացար»:

## Great

by Rafael Badganian

Translated by Louisa Janbazian

Go my son to the world  
And merit the glorious name Great.

And the son went out and toiled.  
Earned much wealth and much treasure.  
And came to his father and said with pride,  
Father, in your opinion am I not great now?

No, no, though you are the ornament of the market,  
But I would not consider you Great as yet.

The son went and entered an institute of science,  
And became wise, sage and genius.  
Then came to his father and said with pride,  
Father, in your opinion am I not Great now?

No, no, though you are an ornament of knowledge,  
But I would not consider you Great as yet.

And the son went out, and became a general,  
And ruled the world with his intelligence and power.  
And came to his father and said with pride,  
Father, in your opinion am I not Great now?

No, no, though you are the ornament of the vast world,  
But I would not consider you Great as yet.

The son went out, his head down and sad.  
His soul troubled, his heart in pain.  
He was consumed, and was thinking hard  
Why he did not merit his father's praise.

His brother was taken captive,  
And his house was ravaged by the hands of the enemy.  
He did his utmost; he put his life at risk,  
He rescued his brother and rebuilt his house.

Suddenly the mountains, valleys and seas shook,  
The mouth of multitudes of nations exclaimed out loud,  
"Now you merit the name of a Great Man,  
You remembered your brother and forgot yourself."

# AEWC Executive Committee Holds Meeting in Boston

The Executive Committee of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) held its Annual Meeting October 10 at the Westin Hotel in Waltham, MA and on October 11 at the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown MA.

The following representatives of the member organizations of AEWC were in attendance: Rev. Joel Mikaelian, President; Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Executive Director; Rev. Megrdoch Karagoezian, Vice Moderator; Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian, Secretary; Rev. Dr. René Leonian, Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Rev. Joseph Matossian, AMAA Executive Director Levon Filian and AMAA President Dr. Joseph Zeronian.

Among items dealing with old business on the Agenda, the following were discussed:

**1. Dialogue between the AEWC and Etchmiadzin.** The proceedings of the Dialogue between the Armenian Evangelical Council and the Holy See of Etchmiadzin were discussed. *It was resolved to continue the Dialogue on a mutually agreeable date.*

**2. Centennial Observance of the Armenian Genocide.** Plans for the Centennial Observance of the Armenian Genocide, to be held in 2015, were discussed. *It was resolved to appoint a committee of four to plan the observance for the 100th anniversary of the Genocide. The committee consists of Revs. Rene Leonian, Megerditch Karagoezian, Joel Mikaelian and Vahan H. Tootikian.*

*It was further resolved that on the Centennial the following would take place:*

- a. *A special Order of Worship will be prepared for the use of Armenian Evangelical Churches worldwide;*
- b. *A special book will be prepared to describe the losses of the Armenian Evangelical Church during the Armenian Genocide;*
- c. *A declaration will be prepared to be read in all Armenian Evangelical Churches in April of 1915.*

**3. Reports.** Reports were given and evaluations were made about the Armenian Evangelical Pastors' Retreat held at La Source, France; the missions work in Eurasia and the 95th Anniversary celebrations of the AMAA.

**4. Reports by the Officers of AEWC.** The annual reports were received by the officers of AEWC, by the President, Rev. Joel Mikaelian, Treasurer, Dr. Nurhan Helvacian, and Executive Director, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian.

Under New Business, the following resolutions were made.

**5. Status of AEWC Member Organizations and Missions Strategy.** The status of the member unions of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) setting worldwide missions strategy and exploration of new missions were discussed along with structural changes in the AEWC. Because of the brevity of time and the relevance of this matter it was resolved that *A special seminar for all members of AEWC be held in France, sometime in late April or early May of 2014, (final date to be decided) for the purpose of discussing the scope of the mission work of AEWC, the identity*



**Front row l to r: Levon Filian, Rev. Nishan Bakalian, Dr. Joseph Zeronian, Rev. Dr. Rene Leonian, Rev. Joel Mikaelian, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Rev. Joseph Matossian, Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Back row l to r: Rev. Megrdoch Karagoezian and Rev. Krikor Youmshajekian**

*and mission of the areas AEWC is seeking to reach out to. It was further resolved that before the seminar, each member organization of AEWC discuss this subject amongst itself and prepare position papers to be shared with other members in advance of the meeting. Moreover, it was further resolved that the expenses of this special seminar will be equally shared by the AEWC, AMAA and the SPF.*

**6. Mission Work in Eurasia.** In the light of the reports about the mission work in Eurasia, presented by AMAA Executive Director Levon Filian, and the Senior Minister of ECA Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, *it was resolved that Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian will prepare a clear action plan to organize the outreach work in Eurasia by the end of 2013 in order to move these efforts forward.*

**7. The Situation in Syria.** The situation of the Armenian community in Syria was discussed at length. The content of Rev. Haroutune Selimian's letter was discussed. *It was resolved that we continue to stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in Syria, to give them our moral support, through our prayers, letters and telephone calls to the leadership, and to make tangible expressions of our solidarity by continued financial support to help alleviate their suffering.*

**8. Ministers' Appreciation Sunday.** Acting upon a request to set apart a special Sunday to pay tribute to the active and retired Armenian Evangelical ministers, *it was resolved to set aside the second Sunday of October as Ministers' Appreciation Sunday*

**9. Armenian Evangelical Pastors' Retreat.** In the light of the positive and encouraging reports received from the Armenian Evangelical Pastors' Retreat, *it was resolved to hold similar retreats once in every five years. Thus the next meeting is to be held in 2018. The time and venue will be decided at a later date.*

**10. Thanking The Host Church.** *It was resolved to express our appreciation to the Armenian Memorial Church Watertown, MA for hosting the Executive Committee Meeting. □*



# The Hilfsbund Foundation

## A Story of Christian Love: Part 2

Levon Filian

*The Hilfsbund Foundation has served the Armenian people in several countries since 1896. In the April-May-June 2013 issue of the AMAA News, we featured an article about its mission work among the Armenians from 1896 until 1946. This new article will cover the Foundation's ministry from 1947 to 2013. Most of the Foundation's work has been done in Anjar, Lebanon providing health and education for its people. The best way to describe the impact the Hilfsbund Foundation has had as a missionary organization in Anjar is to share with you how an all Armenian town grew from poverty to prosperity. We will show each step of the way how the Foundation helped the people grow physically, economically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.*

In 1939, at the onset of World War II, about 6,000 Armenians, the decedents of the 40 Days of Musa Ler, were asked to leave their six villages near Antioch and were transported by boat, train, truck and on foot to settle in a desolate area in the Bekaa Valley in Lebanon, midway near the road that connects Beirut and Damascus. The place was called Anjar.

The people settled in tents for about four years while the French government, with the help of the Gulbenkian Foundation, built three churches and schools, one for each denomination – Apostolic, Catholic and Evangelical. They also built houses for each family consisting of a 12x12 room with one door, one window, dirt floors and an outhouse. There was no water, no gas, and no electric power. They lived there through severe winters and summers. It was common practice for the priest and the pastor to spend the day at the cemetery to bury the dozens of people who died each day from malaria and other



*Anjar in the 1940s*

diseases. There was poverty, unemployment, despair and disease, illiteracy and hopelessness.

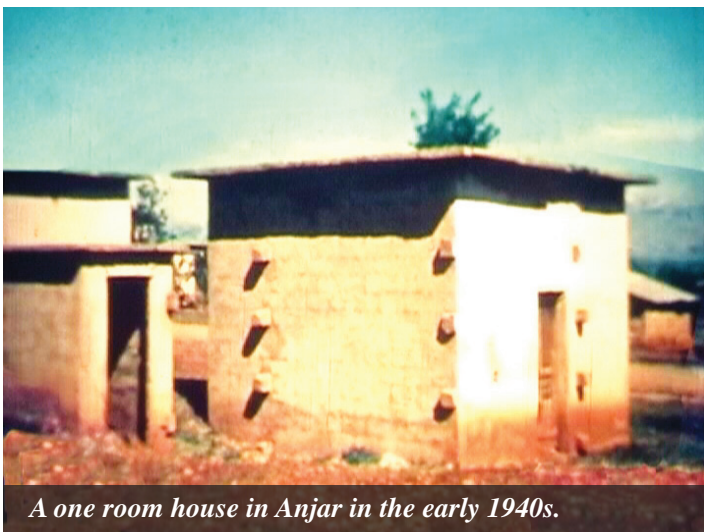
Each denomination opened its church doors and started schooling the children in the churches which were divided into classrooms by curtains during the week. There were no books, no paper or pencils, and no chalk boards. The students learned everything by heart. The best part was that there was no homework!

During 1946 and 1947, over half of the population from Anjar emigrated to Armenia. Soon thereafter, Palestinian refugees from Palestine and Jordan occupied the vacated houses. The Armenian population had dwindled to about 4,000.

In 1947, the Hilfsbund Foundation started its mission work in Anjar under the leadership of Sister Hedwig. Her headquarters consisted of an office, a clinic, a reception room to do Bible studies and living quarters for cooking, eating and sleeping. All of this was in a 12x12 room with an outhouse.

Sister Hedwig had learned to read, write and speak Armenian. She held Bible studies for all who wished to learn about God. She gave medical advice and pills without prescriptions and rushed to deliver babies as a midwife. She taught Sunday school classes in all church denominations. She planted trees and flowers that she brought from Switzerland. She delivered clothes to the needy, which was almost everyone. **She was a missionary for all the Armenians.**

In 1949, with the arrival of Sister Marie and in 1953 with Sister Hanna, the Clinic expanded. It now consisted of two rooms and served the neighboring towns as well. The Sisters



*A one room house in Anjar in the early 1940s.*



spent most of their days in the Clinic. It was reported that during 1949-50, the Clinic attended to the needs of about 1,000 people per month.

For all internal pain there was one pill – take one, or two or three a day. For all external cuts, wounds or bites, there was sev mahlab, a black colored soothing cream. If you had eye problems, there were eye drops and a big box of used prescription glasses. The villager tried several glasses on and chose the one that helped his or her vision the best. Everyone who itched was treated for lice. All children were recommended to swallow a spoonful of balek yaghe or fish oil. Town people learned to boil milk, wash their hands before eating a meal, and to wash the fruits and vegetables before eating them.

However, the Foundation's largest contribution to the Armenian people came through their mission work in education, by building classrooms, increasing enrollment, starting a boarding school, growing into a high school, and providing an academic, quality education in a Christ centered environment with passion, love and the spirit of servanthood.

In 1948, the town was half empty. In 1949, with the help of the Hilfsbund Foundation and under the leadership of Sister Hedwig as Principal, the school started an expansion plan. They started a secondary school program and the first graduates were five girls from Anjar – Lucine Aprahamian, Mary and Vehanush Janbazian, Iskuhl Kasamanian and Teshko Kelian – all of whom were part time teachers in the elementary school. They became full time teachers after graduating from high school in 1956.

In 1953, with the financial assistance of the American Christian Children's Fund, the school built classrooms to house both the elementary and secondary school children. In 1955, under the leadership of Sister Mary, the Foundation started a Boarding School and accepted 15 students from neighboring towns.

The Hilfsbund Foundation, under the leadership of Rev. William Frankhauser, built dormitories for the boys in 1961 and for the girls in 1963. They also built housing for the toddlers in 1967 which was called the Sparrows Nest. The contractor was Hagop Kerkezian.

## About the Early Missionaries

**Sister Hedwig Aenishanslin** was the Pioneer and the Principal. Born in Basel, Switzerland in 1900, she attended Bible School and nursing school to become a midwife. She learned Armenian and went to Greece as a missionary from 1931-1944. She taught the Bible and the catechism in elementary and middle school. She was a fund raiser, a disciplinarian and a Sunday school teacher. She served the community



*Sister Hedwig*



*l to r: Sister Hedwig Aenishanslin, Sister Marie Rock and Sister Hanna Nishke*

until her retirement in 1972. The Bible verse that kept her going was Job 22:28. "In all your designs you will succeed." "The Lord blessed everything we did. The more we were asked to do the more we were pushed, the more we were blessed, said Sister Hedwig.

**Sister Marie Rock** was just that, a Mother and a Rock. Born in Germany in 1897, she grew up in a family of many children. She attended Bible School and became a midwife. She received the calling to serve among the Armenians in Govala, Greece in 1927, where she served as a missionary until 1944. In 1949, she joined Sister Hedwig in Anjar. She would soon gain the trust of the leadership in Anjar for her strong faith in God, with whom all things were possible. She spearheaded the Boarding School which started with 15 students. In its peak in 1970, the School had 220 boys, 150 girls and over 50 children under the age of eight.

**Sister Hanna Nishke** joined Sister Hedwig and Sister Marie in 1953. She was familiar with the Armenian language as she had previously served the Armenian communities in Bulgaria. Sister Hanna took charge of the newly opened clinic and was the pharmacist, doctor and the ophthalmologist for that clinic. There was no need for prescriptions for drugs or glasses. It was not an accepted practice at that time. She served wholeheartedly until 1972.

**Sister Hanna Christen** was the Sound of Music. The Sound of Music movie may very well have been written about the life of this Lutheran Nun who was called by God to come to Anjar and start singing "the fields are alive with God's love for music." As a 29 year young and beautiful Ger-



*l to r: Sister Hanna Christen, Sister Hanna Nishke, Rev. Edward Tovmassian (AMAA Executive Secretary), Rev. John Melkonian, Sister Hedwig Aenishanslin and Sister Marie Rock.*

pastor who was imprisoned under Hitler's rule. She was forced to live on a chicken farm with her mother and seven siblings. After serving for over 40 years in the Middle East, she was called to retirement. However, in 1998 she went to Armenia to serve as a volunteer, taking care of elderly grannies. She changed them and fed them, and prayed with them. She opened soup kitchen in Stepanavan, Bert and Toumanian and fed the hungry in His name. All of the funds to support her came from the German Foundation and the children she had helped to raise in Anjar. "Every morning I count my blessings," she says. "I wake up and do my devotional in the kitchen of the Nicol Duman Building. From the window I see Mount Ararat, where Noah's ark landed and think about God's love. I am German by birth, but my soul has become Armenian, you are my people and I am yours in Christ."

man missionary, she brought the sound of music to Anjar in 1959. The Bible classes were taught live on felt boards with animation, puppetry was used to teach about God and show love for each other. There was the children's choir and recorders and reading musical notes were all new to the children. And, all of that was done with passion and a smile that radiated from her entire being. She became the mother for many orphaned children, a counselor to others and she prayed for all. She was a role model of love, forgiveness, singing, praying, praise. **She was the Mother Teresa of Anjar.** She was in charge of taking care of children ages 5-12, and over the years, she helped over 500 children. Born in Rotenberg, Germany in 1930, she was the daughter of a

## The Missionaries from 1972-1984

The three sisters, the Hedvigners as they were called, retired from their ministry in 1972. Several missionaries from the Foundation took responsibilities in the management of the Boarding School and providing Christian education, teaching Bible classes, holding Bibles studies and being parents to many orphans. We take this opportunity to thank all of them for their service and ministry: They are Alice Wilmer, Ursula Rawekh, Elizabeth Kaser, Feroni Helga Kolzau, Rev. Harold Lensen, Rev. and Mrs. John and Heidi Hagopian, Adolph Aikhkorn, and Daniel Haysen.

The Executive Directors were Gustav Mollen, Gerhard Sander, Edwin Meergans, Horst Schultz, Andreas Rudolph, Bruno Blaser, Andreas Baumann, Willi-Hermann Merten and Rainer Geiss.

**Gottfried and Anneliese Spangenberg** – a Christian Fam-



*Serving food at a Near East Armenian Evangelical Union Annual Meeting.*



*The Spangenburgs*

ily. The Spangenberg family, Gottfried and Anneliese, arrived in Anjar as a family with two children in 1984. Soon they were blessed with a third child. They served as missionaries for 29 years and raised their children as German/Armenian/Lebanese. "After reading the 40 Days of Musa Dagh," Anneliese said, "I felt compassion for these people who had suffered so immensely." She learned Armenian, adapted to the unique culture of the Anjarsis, and worked alongside them with her husband 24/7 caring for children with a "golden heart."

They came "well equipped", Gottfried as a teacher and preacher, and Anneliese as a nurse and a midwife. In their words, "we followed the footsteps of Jesus, who while on earth, was healing, teaching and preaching." As a family, they exemplified Christian living with their servant ministry, and their Christ centered education and teachings. They became the caring and loving parents of many orphans and social orphans (children who came to find refuge away from the challenges of poverty, broken homes or the violence of daily civil war casualties in Lebanon and Syria).

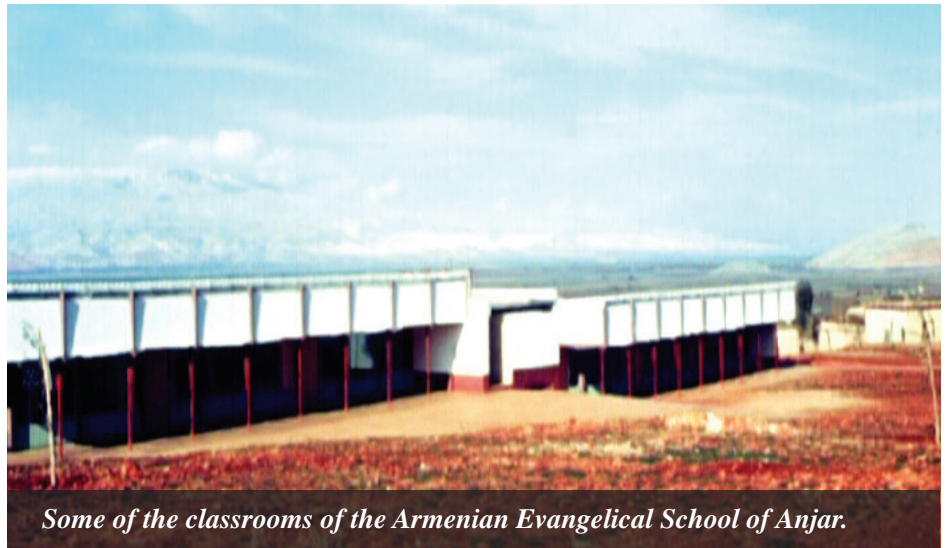
Here are some examples and challenges they have shared with me. "When parents lost their jobs or rockets destroyed their homes, the common saying was 'we can send our children to Anjar.' Children will show up to school with a letter from a social organization reading 'these children lost their parents to civil war, please take them in.' And, they would be taken in."

After 29 years of dedicated service, the Spangenbergs challenge us as follows. "We hope that these children once unvoiced will in the future raise their voices for others and support them, that after 100 years of the Hilfsbund Foundation ministry among the Armenians, from Turkey to Bulgaria, to Syria, Greece and Lebanon, the Boarding School in Anjar will not become a MUSEUM." They remind us and challenge us as Christians to do the deeds of charity and to show love toward those who are in need.

We also take this opportunity to thank all of the Badvelis who served as the Pastors of the Armenian Evangelical Church and as School Principals. They are Revs. Aram Hadidian, Mardiros Marganian, Bernard Geukgeuzian, John Melkonian, Hagop Janbazian, Manaswseh Shnorhokian, Hovhannes Sarmazian, Nerses Balabanian, and Raffi Messerlian.

## A Mission Field Worldwide

The Hilfsbund Foundation mission work in Anjar has been and continues to be a mission field for Armenians worldwide. Here, Armenian children have found refuge under the wings of Christian missionaries who have given their lives to serving the Lord. The Boarding School became a home to children mostly from poor, broken or displaced families. Students came to get a Christ centered, Armenian and academic education in a safe and loving environment. They came from Lebanon, Syria,



*Some of the classrooms of the Armenian Evangelical School of Anjar.*

Jordan, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, India, Turkey, Kuwait, Sudan, Bulgaria and Armenia. It became a refuge to children and their families during the Syrian and Lebanese Civil Wars. All children from all denominations and all political parties were welcome without discrimination, just as God wanted it to be. In addition to receiving a quality education, each child was trained to help and participate in cleaning the classrooms and dormitories, serve food and wash dishes, supervise and mentor their younger brothers and sisters both academically and in Christian growth, and participate in Sunday school, church services, Bible studies and daily devotionals.

## Transition

In 2013, the responsibility to run the Boarding School was transferred to the UAECNE Board of Directors. Rev. Raffi Messerlian continues to be the Principal of the School. Rev. Hagop Akbashian, the young energetic Pastor, became the new Badveli for the Church and Asbed Cholakian took over the responsibility of supervising the Boarding School and his wife, Mania became responsible for the girl's dormitory.

## Our Challenge Today

Today, this very unique school is a one of a kind Boarding School that provides Christ centered education 24/7 to the neediest Armenian children. It needs your help. After almost 60 years of support and over 12 years of advance notice, the Hilfsbund Foundation has transferred the ownership and leadership of the Boarding School to the Union of the Near East and to the Armenians around the world. They have promised to continue their financial support through 2014. However, they can no longer provide the financial support they have provided thus far and would like to see the Armenians around the world take a greater responsibility in supporting this School.

Please help this School flourish and continue its ministry. The testimony of hundreds of students who were nourished in these schools is "if it were not for the Boarding School, I would be without an education, without work and without the knowledge of God's abundant love for me." □

# LOVE AND HOPE

For Border Villages in Armenia



# “ Please come again, we love you! Thank you for your gifts! Remembering us was your greatest gift!

These were the words of welcome that echoed over and over again from the hearts and mouths of the residents in Choratan, Armenia.

Many of us have heard about or visited Yerevan, Gyumri, Vanadzor and Etchmiadzin in Armenia. However, few of us have little or no idea about the bordering towns of Garmir, Aghpyur, Aygepar, Chinari, Tavush, Movses, Norashen or Choratan.

These are the small towns and villages on the northeast side of Armenia, near the Azeri border. These are the villages where families can no longer cultivate their land to earn a livelihood, and where they live in fear of being killed by sniper bullets. More than half of the population in those towns are empty. Those who stay live in semi isolation. The school enrollment has dropped drastically.

The only road leading to the towns is beyond repair and is completely closed during the winter months. These are the towns and villages that protect the borders of our independent country from the enemy.

In 2013, the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) made a special effort to touch the lives of these Armenians. The AMAA met with the leaders of the towns to share their concerns and give them a glimmer of hope. They visited the kindergartens and the schools and provided them with much needed supplies, shoes and clothing.

On November 20, 2013, AMAA representatives Harout Necessian, Lusine Ohanian, Albert Paytyan, David Sarkissyan and Levon Filian along with members of the newly formed Hayasa pop musical band

paid a special mission trip to Bert, Norashen and Choratan. The group, which took back roads to avoid being hit by snipers, was greeted on a cold day with warm hearts and a great reception. The band presented a one hour program in the school auditorium, which is left in a dilapidated condition with broken doors and windows.

Over 150 children, teachers, parents and city officials attended the event. The AMAA distributed over 450 pairs of winter boots and 15 boxes of scarves to the children. "We have never experienced anything like this," said the Mayor of Choratan, "Please come again!"

The AMAA shared the love of God for them, gave them hope and the assurance that they will remain in our prayers. □





*The AMAA's Little Virtuosos*



*Gevork Goyunian*



*Harout Nercessian and Andranik Mardoyan*



*Shoghig Choir of Armavir*

# AMAA: Celebrating 95 Years of Ministry

2013 marks 95 years since the founding fathers of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) had a vision to minister to the spiritual, physical and educational needs of their brothers and sisters in Armenia. They had seen or heard about the pain and suffering of their relatives, friends and kinsmen under the atrocities of the Turkish government, and had decided to reach out as a Good Samaritan to help them.

On November 23, the AMAA celebrated this special anniversary of Christian ministry in the form of worship services, banquets and special events. The day was the fruit of good planning and hard work by the AMAA Armenia staff. The AMAA headquarters and the Chekijian lobby were decorated with exhibits demonstrating the various ministries of the AMAA in Armenia.

Over 300 guests, including government officials, mayors, ambassadors, representatives of local and international NGOs, church leaders from different denominations and the AMAA staff, attended the anniversary celebration event.

Master of Ceremonies Andranik Mardoyan gave the opening remarks and read letters of congratulations sent by President Serge Sargsyan and President Pago Shakyran. Harout Nercessian, AMAA Armenia Representative, welcomed the guests and thanked them for their support. Gevork Goyunian, AUA Vice President of Finance, gave a heartwarming testimony of how he had received a scholarship from the AMAA to study at Haigazian University. He emphasized that quality education was one of the main ministries of the AMAA.

A 15 minute video was shown which featured an overview of the ministries the AMAA supports in 24 countries and focused on its ministry in Armenia from the 1988 earthquake to the present. The cultural portion of the program included a musical selection from Armenian composers performed by The Little Virtuosos. This was followed by Armenian dances by the Escada Dance Group from Gyumri and a selection of popular Armenian songs by the Shoghig Choir from Armavir.

Levon Filian, AMAA West Coast Executive Director, was the guest speaker. He challenged the guests to show compassion for each other and not to turn a deaf ear or a blind eye to what is unfair and unchristian. He said, "Let us make every effort to keep Armenians in Armenia, provide a healthy economic environment to help bring back those who have left, and encourage a strong fatherland and Diaspora relationship for the survival of this country. Doing all of this by showing God's love to our brothers and sisters."

In his closing remarks, Mr. Mardoyan thanked everyone for coming and challenged them to plan to attend the AMAA's 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2018.

The AMAA thanks all who have been participants in the AMAA vision and mission over the past 95 years and welcomes everyone to join in our ministry to preach the Gospel of Good News to all and to give a glass of cold water to the thirsty in His name. □



*Drs. Hagop Muradyan and Gohar Markarian of the AMAA Aynilian Clinic in Yerevan.*



*Harout Nercessian (2nd from left) with Karabagh War veterans: Jora Mikaelyan, President of the Union of Karabagh war veterans (3rd from left) General Samvel Safaryan (4th from left); Colonel Sergei Gasparyan (5th from left).*

# Avedisian School Update

The construction of The Avedisian Middle and High School and Bilezekian Elementary School campus in Yerevan, Armenia is proceeding with Phase 2 and Phase 3 of the project currently underway. Phase 2 consists of the construction works, external water supply and sanitation and Phase 3 includes the ventilation, water supply, drainage, power supply, technical building and internal and external works. The School, which will house over 700 students from Kindergarten through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade and is a first of its kind LEED-certified (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) building, is on schedule to open in September 2014. The AMAA is thankful for the generosity of the many donors who are making this dream become a reality for the children of Armenia. □



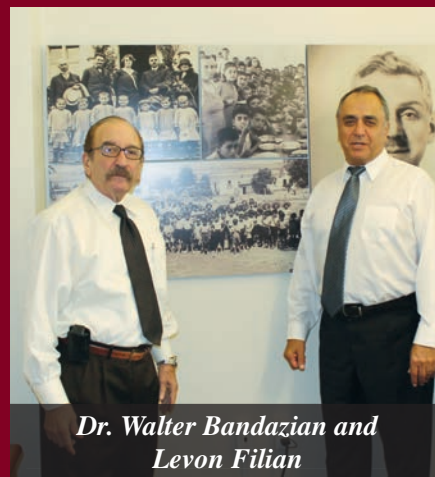
## AMAA and Karaguezian Cooperate To Help Armenians

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) and the Howard Karaguezian Foundation continue their joint efforts to help Armenians in the Middle East and Armenia. They work together in health clinics and schools to provide health care and social services for children and their parents.

The AMAA would like to thank the Karaguezian Foundation's Executive Director Dr. Walter Bandazian, a former Haigazian University Dean, Serop Ohanian, a graduate of Haigazian University and the newly appointed Director of the Foundation in Lebanon who succeeded Rev. Robert Sarkissian, and Gamo TerPetrossian, who has served as Director of the Foundation in Armenia since 1991. Levon Filian, AMAA Executive Director, and Harout Nercessian, AMAA Representative in Armenia, visited Mr. TerPetrossian in Yerevan in November.



*Levon Filian and Gamo TerPetrossian*



*Dr. Walter Bandazian and Levon Filian*

## Haigazian University Board Meets Holds Banquet to Honor Auxiliary

The Haigazian University Board of Trustees held its biennial meeting in Los Angeles, CA November 8-9.

University President Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian presented an update which included the valuable work being done by the Armenian Diaspora Research Center of HU, new publications of the Haigazian University Press, increased cooperation and MOU's with Yerevan State University and Colleges in the United States, a grant awarded to the University by the USAID, and the increasing visibility and high reputation of Haigazian University both in Armenian and non-Armenian communities in Lebanon. He also spoke about the current enrollment at HU and the upcoming plans for the 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the founding of the University.

On November 8, the Board enjoyed the warm hospitality of Hratch and Helga Sarkis at their home in Bel Air. Mr. Sarkis has been a member of the Board since 2008.

On November 9, the Alumni Committee of Haigazian University held a banquet at the Wilshire Country Club to honor the Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary for its many years of service on behalf of the University. The evening began with words of welcome from Alumni Committee Chair Raffi Kendirjian and a prayer by one of the founding members of the Auxiliary, Suzie Phillips. Dr. Ani Darakjian, Chair of the Haigazian University Board of Trustees, and Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, President of the University, also spoke. A video, narrated by Elizabeth Agbalian, Hermine Janoyan, Suzie Phillips and Joyce Stein, current President of the Auxiliary, was presented and showcased the various events sponsored by the Auxiliary. The Auxiliary has grown from a few members to over 300 current members.

Keynote speaker for the evening was Dr. Hrant Khachadourian, former Professor of Psychiatry at Stanford University, who spoke about volunteerism.



*Dr. Hrant Khachadourian, keynote speaker at the Banquet.*

Auxiliary members were presented with a gift with the seal of Haigazian University from the Alumni and gifts from the Board of Trustees. The Benediction was given by Rev. Dr. John Khanjian, former President of Haigazian University.

The Alumni Committee who planned the evening included Alexandra Bessos, Khachig Havatian, Hagop Kazazian, Maro Kasasian, Chairman Raffi Kendirjian, Katia Kermoyan-Khodanian and Houry Tavitian. □



*Haigazian University Board of Trustees*





*Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary*

## **Haigazian University Receives \$250,000 Scholarship Donation From Mr. & Mrs. Armen Haroutunian**

The establishment of the Armen & Salpi Haroutunian Scholarship Fund was announced at Haigazian University on December 2. Mr. and Mrs. Haroutunian donated \$250,000 to Haigazian for scholarship assistance for Armenian students in the graduate and undergraduates levels. The University celebrated the establishment of the Fund as it approaches the celebration of its 60th anniversary.

Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian, President of Haigazian University, expressed his gratitude for this generous donation and noted that it showed the trust the Haroutunians have in Haigazian's mission. He highlighted that this substantial gift will be used for Armenian students who maintain good academic standards and are in need of financial assistance. He stated that the University's greatest needs are in and will continue to be in the area of raising funds to enable students to attain a higher education, especially those with limited financial resources. He also spoke about the long years of service that Mr. Haroutunian has given to the Armenian community and in particular to Haigazian University in the form of financial assistance which has benefitted many students. A PowerPoint presentation was shown which profiled the life of Mr. Haroutunian and the many contributions he has made through publications and various cultural and charitable initiatives.

Mr. Haroutunian spoke and expressed his satisfaction and fulfillment and hoped that "events such as this one would be contagious and repeated often." He added that Haigazian University brings together Armenian and non-Armenian students from all backgrounds and offers them a variety of academic programs of study in an atmosphere that also nurtures the Armenian spirit. He noted that Haigazian University helps elevate the educational and social standards of our nation and encourages others to share their financial resources supporting the growth and prosperity of a unique institution of the Armenian Diaspora.

A reception and a time of fellowship with Mr. and Mrs. Haroutunian concluded the event. The donation was a special tribute to and recognition of all of Haigazian University's faculty and staff, past and present, and for its ongoing educational work.



*Rev. Dr. Paul Haidostian with Mr. & Mrs. Armen and Salpi Haroutunian*

# Crisis In Syria

Rev. Haroutune Selimian

In the course of two and a half years, Syria has become the scene of killings and violence exercised by the opposition parties turning Syria from a land of peace and security to a land that lacks peace.

The battle of Aleppo began on July 19, 2012 as part of the Syrian civil war. Clashes escalated in late July in Syria's largest city that holds great strategic and economic importance. The battle's scale and importance led combatants to name it the "mother of all battles."

As the conflict expanded across Aleppo-Syria, thousands of people are struggling to preserve their safety and their livelihoods and the number of beneficiaries is rapidly increasing. The previously well-functioning health system has collapsed, food shortages are commonplace, and the water and electricity supply is disrupted. Medical aid is being targeted, hospitals destroyed and medical personnel captured. Thievery has increased, with criminals robbing houses and stores. Rates of kidnappings increased as well. The number of jobless people is increasing. Food and fuel prices have risen and the economy is clearly in decline. People cannot travel or drive outside Aleppo. Aleppo's International Airport has been closed since January 2013. Many of Aleppo's most populous streets are now in ruin, buildings and lives torn apart by a seemingly endless barrage of missiles, bombs, mortars and tank shells.

Many people are suffering from various diseases because of the fear of rockets and missiles showering over them, and from the loss of family members from the mortars and explosions that happen unexpectedly



*The damaged classroom of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel School.*

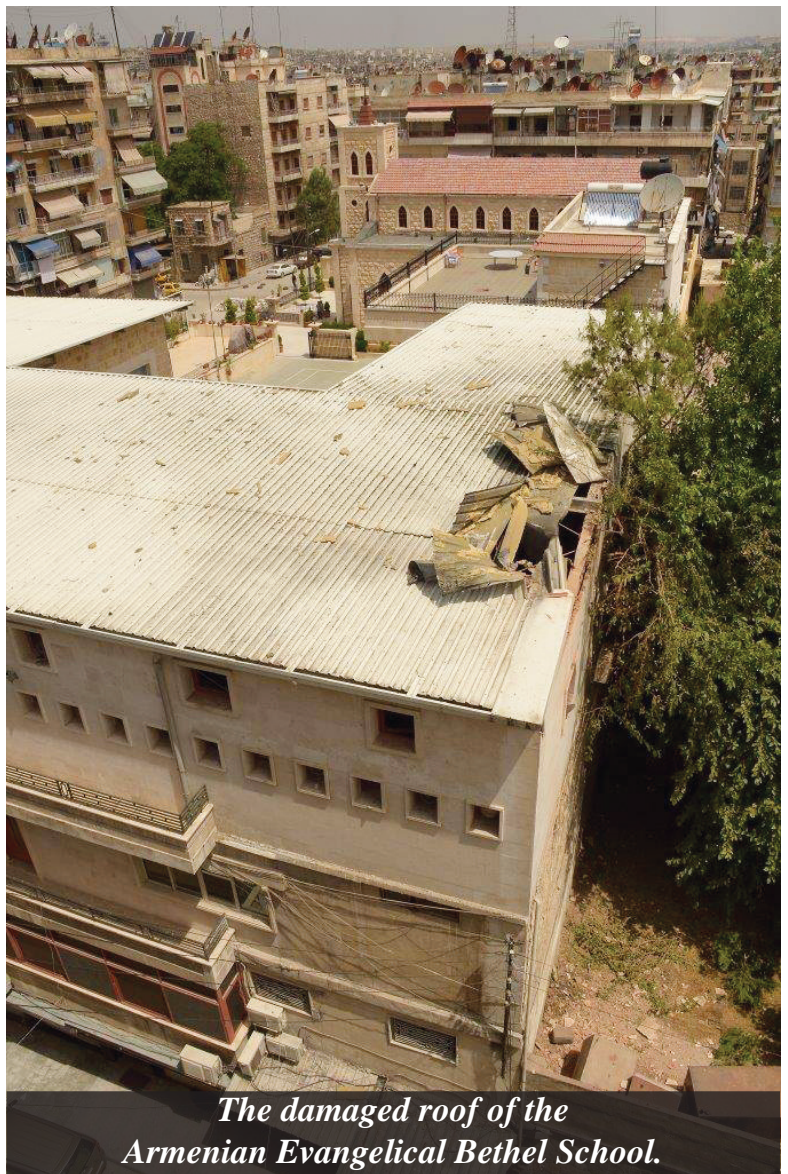
age of the church where we live. The roof of the school building was damaged directly. The third missile fell in the school yard and fortunately did not explode. The first attack was on May 24, 2013, the second on September 12, 2013 and the third one on September 22, 2013. Students could easily see the sky from where they sat in their school desks.

In spite of all the missile attacks, the Armenian Evangelical schools in the city are swimming against the flow, as we say in Armenian. We are not allowing the fear and the uncertainty to hijack our hope and our firm will to live. This year the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Secondary School accommodated 350 students from grades KG -12. The number of active teachers for the current school year is 40. The School always offers a highly qualified education and academic program and it is worthwhile to mention that the Ministry of Education in Aleppo presented a letter of appreciation to Bethel School for its highly qualified academic standards in the city.

In spite of all these difficult conditions, our churches have kept their services intact and schools running. The nine churches of the Armenian Evangelical Community in Syria, including Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church, Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church, Armenian Evangelical Martyr's Church, Armenian Evangelical Church of Christ, Syriac Evangelical Church, Armenian Evangelical Kessab Churches, act vitally with different proportions.

As Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church, I would like to give you some information about the Church's activities and social work that were managed and administered since July 2012. Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church continues its Sunday and weekly communal worshipping and meetings in the following domains - Sunday school, Youth, Junior High Group, and "Armiss" Conservatory, the Women's communal worshipping. Throughout all of these, we can clearly feel the guidance of our Lord as we put ourselves at His service. We gladly mention that more than 400 individuals attend the Church's Sunday worship service. Considering this inhuman and sad situation, the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church established a polyclinic to serve the Armenian community regardless of denominational affiliation by assisting those in need of medical care, and by helping patients with chronic diseases in need of long-time medical assistance.

Our people will work and pray for peace and safety. They will continue preparing for a good future for their children. Syria was a beacon over the ages and we have hope that it will remain so in the future, depending upon the existing principles of co-existence of our nation. We, as the Armenian Community in Syria, will remain faithful and will keep our houses, churches, and organizations alive. The source of strength is



*The damaged roof of the Armenian Evangelical Bethel School.*

not in us: it is God himself. We do not survive pressure by focusing on surviving; we do not survive pressure by focusing on our own perceived strength. We survive pressure by keeping focused on God.

*"...who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God." - 2nd Corinthians 1:4*

Considering the priorities and today's basic needs of our people in different cities in Syria, especially in Aleppo, we ask our dear friends, brothers and sisters, to extend helping hands, so that we can assist economically inflicted Syrian families by preparing food parcels to the needy, providing milk to the families for their children, providing more scholarship aid for Armenian students, as well as providing medical assistance for the sick.

We deeply appreciate your prayers and efforts. It is a rare time where the Church in Syria is feeling the true oneness of the body of Christ all over the globe. For this, we thank the Lord, for it is a great encouragement to us. □

## Children's Retreats Held At Emmanuel Church in Aleppo

Since July 2013, the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Aleppo has been organizing Children's Retreats on Saturdays. The Director of the retreats is Alina Megerditchian, D.D.S. assisted by 12 leaders.

Each of the programs includes a worship service, praise songs, and special topics presented by guest speakers. The children also have social time which includes games, sports, arts and crafts sessions and lunch which is provided by the volunteer ladies of the Church.

In spite of the ongoing Civil War in Syria, over 55 children participate in these retreats and enjoy the blessings from God. □



## Emmanuel Church in Aleppo Celebrates Two Important Events

**October 13, 2013 was an important day in the history of the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church of Aleppo, Syria.**

Despite the ongoing political uproar in Aleppo, around 250 people gathered for Sunday Worship Service and to celebrate Translators' Day. Following prayers, Scripture readings and hymns, the children, who had participated in the "Armenian Language Reading" sessions at the Church for several weeks, recited an Armenian poem and Rev. Serop Megerditchian, Pastor of the Church, delivered the sermon. He presented the history of the Armenian Translators, highlighting the importance of their contributions to the Armenian culture which included the translation of the Bible into Armenian and making the Gospel accessible to the Armenian population.

After his sermon, Rev. Megerditchian announced the opening of the Church's Library which had been a dream for many years. The Library, which was intended to be dedicated last year at the 160<sup>th</sup> Anniversary (1852-2012) of the Church, could not take place because of the political crisis in the country. The opening of the Library

this year, however, coincided with the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the building of the Church.

Ani Vartabedian gave a brief description of the Library which has about 2,000 books in different languages, including Armenian, English, French, Arabic and Turkish. The Library is open to the public every Thursday and Sunday after Worship Service. Rev. Megerditchian thanked those who had donated books to the Library and added that they hope to add more books to the children's section in the near future. □



# NJ Child & Orphan Care Committee Raises Funds for Emergency Medical Fund

"**Style in Motion**" was the theme of the fourth annual Christmas Luncheon sponsored by the New Jersey Child and Orphan Care Committee. The event, chaired by Anita Buchakjian, was held at Neiman Marcus in Paramus, NJ on December 5. Over \$13,000 was raised to help AMAA sponsored children in Armenia with emergency medical needs.

Over 75 guests were greeted by striking models wearing the newest fashions and enjoyed a special presentation by Elad Yifrach, founder and designer of L'Object, handcrafted pieces for the home.

MJ Hekemian, Chair of the NJ Child and Orphan Care Committee, welcomed Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, Interim Executive Director/CEO of the AMAA, who led the group in prayer before the program.

Tigran Melkonyan, Manager of the AMAA Child Sponsorship Department, presented the program's history and announced that 85 children have been helped with their special medical needs since the program's start. Elizabeth Karalian, Development Department Assistant, shared one of the special cases supported by this fund.

The AMAA would like to thank all of those who attended the Luncheon in support of this important cause and Neiman Marcus for hosting such a lovely affair. A special thank you goes to MJ Hekemian and her daughter, Lisa Hekemian Mongelli, for underwriting this event. □



*Elizabeth Karalian*



*Tigran Melkonyan*



*Mary Jane Hekemian*



*Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian*



*Anita Buchakjian*

# AEUNA Board Meets in Belmont, MA

Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian

**B**eautiful autumn weather and a victory parade for Boston's Red Sox World Series champions coincided with the meeting of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) Board of Directors on November 1-2. The First Armenian Church in Belmont, MA served as the gracious host for the meetings, which covered a wide spectrum of concerns of the Armenian Evangelical churches in North America in their ministry in Christ Jesus' name.

Following the Executive Committee meeting on October 31, the complete Board assembled to discuss topics that covered the administrative, church care, outreach and youth efforts of the Union.

The Board was updated on the efforts made to fill the Minister to the Union position following the completion of Rev. Joseph Matossian's term of service in July. Interim plans have been implemented including part-time ministerial support from Rev. Hendrik Shahnazarian and advisory help from Rev. Matossian, while the Search Committee continues its efforts to fill this crucial leadership role.

Biennial Assembly Task Force Chair Ed Saliba reported on the progress of plans for the June 26-29, 2014 event, which will be hosted by the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church of Fresno, CA. The theme will be "Forging Ahead for Christ," and publicity material will be sent to churches by the end of 2013.

The culmination of hundreds of hours of effort was affirmed in the Board's enthusiastic approval of the newly revised Ministerial Manual. The Manual covers all aspects of ministry in the Union's churches, from the call and preparation of pastors to the important aspects of the church and pastor relationship.

Youth ministry in both the Eastern and Western regions is experiencing growth and improvement through the efforts of Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian (East) and Rev. Razmig Minassian (West). The Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship retreats, Camp Arevlk and church visitations are core parts of Rev. Jizmejian's vital ministry, and many churches attest to the resulting benefits seen in their own programs. Rev. Minassian



has been working hard to develop, plan, implement and promote the ministry at Camp Arev as the newly appointed Camp Director.

Evangelism and new church issues were also explored, including the efforts to bring churches to South America under the AEUNA umbrella. The work continues on developing the Union's financial status, as well as its official structure. Revised bylaws are being reviewed in the local churches for ultimate approval at the upcoming General Assembly. Affiliated organizations, such as the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), the AMA of Canada, and the Armenian Theological Students' Aid discussed programs, efforts and concerns pertinent to the Board. During the meetings, special prayers were offered for specific worldwide concerns, including Syria, Armenia and Iraq.

A highlight of the meetings was two, hour-long oral examinations of two candidates for ordination. Haig Kherlopian, newly appointed Pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church in New York, and Sam Katchikian, who was set to begin his new ministry at the Salem church the day after the Board meetings, spoke clearly about their faith and answered questions posed to them by over 25 pastors and laypeople. Pastor Sam is continuing to complete his ordination requirements, and Pastor Haig along with Pastor Jeremy Tovmassian in Chicago were both approved for ordination. □

# Archbishop Hovnan Derderian Visits Merdinian School

For the second year in a row, His Eminence Archbishop Hovnan Derderian, Primate of the Western Diocese of the Armenian Church of North America, visited the C. & E. Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School in Sherman Oaks, CA.

In honor of his Eminence's visit, the Merdinian students, with the help of the Armenian Department, presented a cultural program of Armenian poems and songs. The Primate was very impressed by the spirit and dedication of the Merdinian family

and by the strong Armenian Christian heritage that are nurtured in the School.

Following the program, the Archbishop and church representatives accompanying him, met with members of the Board of Directors and Administration. To show his gratitude, Archbishop Derderian presented them with copies of his latest book and also left copies for Merdinian faculty members.

Archbishop Derderian prayed for Merdinian School and blessed the students, faculty and families. □



## Belmont Church Seeks New Senior Pastor

**The First Armenian Church in Belmont, MA is seeking an individual to fill the newly vacant position of Senior Pastor.**

The candidate will have several years of pastoral experience in leading worship, pastoral care, discipleship programs, missions, evangelism and Christian education programs. A passion for the Lord is required along with a Christ-like attitude of humility and servant leadership. In this role, the Senior Pastor will lead worship, evangelize and disciple all generations with a special focus on the Armenian community. Proficiency in both English and Armenian is required. All pastoral respondents will remain confidential.

In order to initiate the application process, please contact Dr. Setrag Khoshafian, Pulpit Search Committee Chair, at [setrag@yahoo.com](mailto:setrag@yahoo.com). During the search process, the Church will be seeking interim pastors to lead the congregation in worship on Sunday mornings as well as at other special services. If you are interested in serving the First Armenian Church at an interim level (1-3 months), please contact Dr. Khoshafian.

For more information on the First Armenian Church, please go to [www.facbelmont.org](http://www.facbelmont.org).

# UACC Gala Anniversary

## A Time to Remember, Rejoice and Renew

The United Armenian Congregational Church in Los Angeles, CA held its Jubilee Banquet on October 27 at the Glendale Hilton. Over 550 guests attended the celebration which included speakers, music and fun.

Kevin Kevorkian served as Master of Ceremonies, introducing the speakers and a video showing the actual UACC groundbreaking ceremony over 50 years ago and featuring interviews with parishioners on their thoughts about the Church. Harold Nahigian and Dr. John Kassabian spoke about the construction of the building and Taline Boyajian spoke for the members who have joined the Church after its founding. Lena Galian and Ari Ekmekji, young members of the Church, talked about the sense of community and the opportunity to develop many friendships.

Ann Sarafian, who has mentored and taught many graduate students in mechanical engineering at Cal Tech and UCLA

as well as many UACC students over the years, was presented with the Trustee's Lifetime Achievement Award.

The guests were treated to an evening of music by the choir, the worship team and several musical numbers from "The Singing Badvelis & Friends", led by UACC Pastor, Rev. Ron Tovmassian and accompanied by Rev. Jason Matosian, Rev. Haig Darakjian, Searan Kiledjian, Mary Aslanian, Araz DerTavitian, Timothy Ketenjian, Erika Levonian and Thomas Sekeyan.

The enjoyable and memorable evening ended with the guests looking forward to the future of the Church and singing the hymn "O Church Arise." □



*Ann Sarafian*



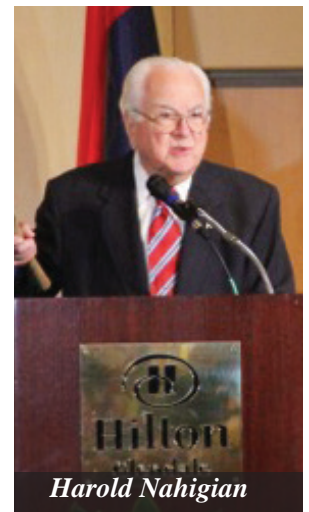
*Birthday Cake - Ken Kevorkian, Moderator during construction. Helen Rainey, her late husband Henry, was the Chairman of the Building Committee. Grace Avazian, wife of the first Co-Pastor of UACC Rev. Paul Avazian, Joe Zeronian, First Moderator of UACC.*



*The Singing Badvelis and Friends*



*Dr. John Kassabian*



*Harold Nahigian*



# Ararat Church Celebrates 100 Years Welcomes New Pastor

**T**he Ararat Armenian Congregational Church in Salem, NH has much to be thankful for this Christmas season. As the Church celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it also welcomed a new pastor and his family to the community.

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, several Armenian families purchased farms in Salem. They traveled a long distance to attend church in Lawrence, MA, so in October 1912, a meeting of all Armenians in the area took place and a building committee was formed. The Northeastern Street Railway Company granted a parcel of land and the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ provided financial assistance. Construction was completed in July 1913 and the Church was dedicated in Salem on November 12, 1913. Many of the Church's present members are descendants of the original 19 founders and some of them still maintain family farms in Salem.

On November 3 the Church welcomed Pastor Sam Katchikian to lead them into the Church's second century. Pastor Katchikian, his wife Jen and their newborn daughter relocated to Salem from Canada. Present for his first sermon were representatives of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America and the NH Conference of the United Church of Christ.

Following the service, a banquet was held to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Sarah Gilman, a fifth generation member of the Ararat Church, spoke about the history of the Church. Guests also enjoyed a presentation of over 500 photos about the Church.



*Attending the Ararat Church 100th Anniversary Celebration, new Pastor Sam Katchikian (middle) and previous Pastors, Rev. John Mokkalian (left) and Rev. Dr. Ara Heghinian (right).*

Salem High School student Jack Brunelle, collected photos from Church members and prepared the presentation.

New Hampshire Governor Maggie Hassan issued a commendation, recognizing the Ararat Church for its faithful service and dedication to its community and state.

The AMAA and the AEUNA wish the church great success and God's abundant blessings upon the newly appointed pastor. □

*Ararat Church in 1913*



*Ararat Church in 2013*



## Armenian Church of the Martyrs Seeks Support for the Future

**A**rmenians from various walks of life have entered the doors of the Armenian Church of the Martyrs in Worcester, MA for worship services for almost 112 years. The Church has served Armenians well throughout the years, during the Armenian Genocide, the Great Depression, the civil war in Lebanon and the collapse of the Soviet Union. It has been and continues to be a place of joy, family, fellowship and faith.

The Church's desire is to move forward with its ministry and continue to serve the future. This desire will be difficult to achieve with the daunting challenge that it faces.

The Church building is showing its age and is in dire need of repair. The windows, the foundation, and the outside façade must all be replaced to prevent continued decay and the loss of this small, yet strong Church on Ormond Street. The cost of this restoration will exceed \$200,000 and we are asking for your support to preserve this historical landmark for all Armenians.

This humble Church, founded in 1881 as the first Armenian Evangelical Church in North America, has been the gateway to Christ for generations of Armenians from all over the country. The building, while not as old as the Church itself, is the oldest Armenian Church building still in use on this continent, having celebrated its first service on December 1, 1901.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) is allocating some funds for the restoration of this Church, which gave birth to both the AMAA and the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA).

We ask that you help meet this challenge and help preserve this historical landmark for all Armenians in the United States. Please send your donation to the Armenian Church of the Martyrs, 22 Ormond Street, Worcester, MA or to the AMAA, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652, earmarked for the Armenian Church of the Martyrs Preservation Fund. □

*AMAA Board members and  
AMAA-Armenia staff members  
visiting the Armenian Church of  
the Martyrs in Worcester, MA.*



## The Executive Director Visits the Belmont Church

AMAA Executive Director **Levon Filian** visited the First Armenian Church of Belmont, MA on September 29 to celebrate AMAA Sunday. After preaching in Armenian and English, Mr. Filian gave a power point presentation about the AMAA's mission fields worldwide. He also met with Church members and friends of the AMAA. □



*Silva Khoshafian leading the worship service.*



*l to r: Adom Fermanian, Levon Filian and Albert Kaljian*



*l to r: Liliana and Levon Filian with Berj and Ani Chekijian*



## Rev. Dr. Tootikian Authors 35<sup>th</sup> Book, *Keeping the Balance*

Reviewed by Phillip Tavlian

**A leading pastor of the Great Lakes State has just published his 35<sup>th</sup> volume, a highly readable compendium of inspirational essays in the English and Armenian languages.**

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Minister Emeritus of the Armenian Congregational Church of Greater Detroit and Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, has prepared a bilingual work emphasizing "a balance between one's personal salvation and the social implications of one's religious experience." As the author states in his preface, "Without faith a person's good works are futile and without good works one's faith is dead."

The English language portion of the volume comprises 31 articles divided into three sections – "Holidays and Observances," "Views on Issues," and "Armenian Issues."

The section addressing Armenian issues eloquently examines theological diversity among Armenian Evangelicals, the 98<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide, problems and solutions in the modern Republic of Armenia, the 2009 Armenia/Turkey Protocols, and the interdependence of Armenia and the Diaspora.

The Armenian-language portion of the volume is entitled "Nertashnagootyun" (meaning harmony) and consists of ten articles dealing with religious and patriotic subjects.

"Balance" is the rich literary harvest of a gifted scholar whose five and a half decades of Christian ministry have taken him from Beirut, Lebanon and Damascus, Syria to pulpits in Massachusetts and Michigan as well as to the classrooms of Harvard University, Andover Newtown Theological Seminary, and the University of Michigan.

Given recent tragic developments in the Near East and other points around the globe, the informed reader is well-advised to acquire this estimable volume and keep it within arm's reach in the trying times ahead.

Inscribed copies may be ordered from the Armenian Heritage Committee, 3922 Yorba Linda Boulevard, Royal Oak, Michigan 48073-6455.

## The AMAA Opens West Coast Office in Glendale, CA

After several meetings and considerable prayer, the Board of Directors of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) approved a reorganization of the Association and the expansion of its services.

Effective November 1, the current Executive Director, Levon Filian, will begin the process of opening a West Coast Office of the AMAA in Glendale, CA, and give direction to that office as the West Coast Executive Director. "For some time, there has been discussion about opening a field office in California to improve the work of our organization by its proximity to the large Armenian Community in Southern California. We are hopeful that there will be an official opening of the office in January 2014," said Dr. Joseph Zeronian, President of the AMAA Board.

The Restructuring Implementation Committee, Co-Chaired by Louis Kurkjian and Thomas Momjian, is now in the process of searching for an Executive Director/Chief Executive Officer to lead the AMAA and give leadership to the Paramus, NJ Office, the West Coast Office, and the Yerevan Office. It is expected that it will take several months to identify and screen candidates and eventually call a person to this important responsibility.

In the interim, the Board of Directors has acted to call Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian as Interim Executive Director/CEO. He will take on that responsibility November 1, 2013. In that capacity, he will direct the activities of all AMAA personnel and be responsible to the Board of Directors. Rev. Melkonian, who is in the United States on his rotation between the U.S. and Armenia, is a well-respected and experienced member of the Armenian clergy and is very familiar with the mission work of the AMAA.

Rev. Melkonian formerly served as the Pastor of the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal, Canada, Associate Pastor of the United Armenian Congregational Church of Los Angeles, CA, and the Senior Pastor of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, CA. He was also the Moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America.

## APC and AMAA Board Members and Friends Pay Tribute to the Filians



*AMAA Board members and friends with Liliana and Levon Filian.*



*l to r: Sam Hekemian, Seta Nalbandian, Levon Filian, Richard Hekemian, Berjouhi Barsoumian and Khoren Nalbandian*

On October 19, several AMAA Board members and friends of the AMAA hosted a dinner for Levon and Liliana Filian who moved back to California where Mr. Filian assumed the new position of West Coast Executive Director of the AMAA California office. On October 20, members of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ bid farewell to the Filians during their weekly coffee hour. □

# Աճիլ Եկեղեցիին Յետ

(Քարոզուած՝ Պրուքսելի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցաշէնքի

Բացման Պաշտամունքին)\*

Գործք Առաքելոց 6. 1-7

## Լեւոն Ֆիլեան

Սիրելի Քոյրեր եւ Եղբայրներ, Տէր Յիսուս Քրիստոսով,

Աստուծոյ փառք կու տամ այս գեղեցիկ օրուան համար, զոր Տէրը ստեղծեց: Ուրախանամք եւ ցնծանք Իրմով:

Այսօր, այս գեղեցիկ Ապրիլ ամսուայ մէջ, Աստուծոյ փառք կու տամ, որ Հայը կ'ապրի աշխարհի չորս ծագերուն եւ կը պաշտէ կենդանի Աստուծոյն, որ կ'ապրի մեր սրտերուն մէջ եւ ներկայ է հոս մեր մէջ, ուր որ մի քանի հոգի հաւաքուած են Իր Անունով: Հոս ներկայ է Ինքը եւ մեզի կ'ըսէ «Ապրի՛ս, բարի եւ հաւատարիմ ծառայ»:

Այսօր հաւաքուած ենք այս եկեղեցաշէնքի նորոգման եւ բացման արարողութեան: Հաւաքուած ենք խնդրելու մեր Հօրմէն, որ օրհնելով օրհնէ այս շէնքը, օրհնելով օրհնէ Հայ հաւատացեալը որ կու գայ հոս՝ Վահան Թէֆէեանի խօսքերով՝ «Հաղորդուիլ անցեալի հաց ու գինով կենսառողջ»: Այսօր հաւաքուած ենք խնդրելու մեր Հօրմէն, որ այս նորաշէն շէնքին մէջ առաջնորդէ մեզ, նորոգելու մեր ուխտը՝ հաւատարիմ մնալու Իր պատուէրին, որ սիրենք մեր Տէր Աստուածը մեր բոլոր մտքով, սրտով, ոյժով եւ սիրենք մեր բոլորը եւ եղբայրը մեր անձին պէս: Նոր ժողովուրդ մը, նոր ուխտ մը, նոր վկայութիւն մը, նոր խոստում մը: Այս է Աստուածային կոչը, որ կ'նուղղուի մեզմէ իւրաքանչիւրին: Դուն կը հաւատա՞ս սատր, որ կանչուած ես քու բաժինդ բերելու Աստուծոյ թագաւորութեան դաշտին մէջ, այս եկեղեցւոյ միջոցով: Ամէն, Ամէն:

Ո՞վ է Եկեղեցին: Ի՞նչ է Եկեղեցին: Եկեղեցի բարին իմաստը մեզի կու գայ Յունարէն Ekklesia բառէն եկ եղիցի (Եփեսացիս 1. 22-23), որ կը նշանակէ հաւաքուելու տեղ կամ կանչուածներու տեղ:

Հայերէնով կրնանք ըսել եկ եղիցի - եկուր Յիսուս եւ կամֆո թող ըլլայ:

Առաջին անգամ Յիսուս գործածեց եկեղեցի բառը երբ Պետրոսի ըսաւ «Այս ժայռին վրայ պիտի շինեմ իմ եկեղեցիս» (Մատթ. 16. 16-18): Յիսուս կ'անդրադառնար Պետրոսի վկայութեան - «Դուն ես Քրիստոսը՝ կենդանի Աստուծոյ Որդին»:

Եկեղեցին սկսաւ Նոր Կտակարանին մէջ, Յիսուսի յարութենէն ետք, Պենտեկոստի օրը, Սուրբ Հոգիին գալուստով (Գործք Առաքելոց 2):

Նոր Կտակարանը եւ մասնաւորաբար Գործք Առաքելոցը մեզի յստակ ուղեգիծ մը կու տայ եկեղեցւոյ ինքնութեան, կազմին եւ գոյատեւումին մասին: Մեզի կը սորվեցնէ, թէ եկեղեցին հաւատացեալներու հաւաքման հոգեւոր տունն է: Հաւատքի տունն է, հիւրանոց է, հաւատարմութեան եւ համբերութեան տեղ է, հունար

ցանելու եւ հունցքը հնձելու տեղ է, հերոսներու, հսկաներու, հեզերու, համեստներու տեղ է: Հայուն համար, Հայաշունչ նախահայրերու վկայութիւնը, Հայ գիրը, Հայ լեզուն եւ Հայ մշակոյթը փոխանցելու տեղ է:

Եկեղեցին **հրաւերի** տեղ է: Յիսուս կ'ըսէ.- «Եկե՛ք ինձի բոլոր յոգնած ու բեռնաւորուածներ, եւ ես ձեզ պիտի հանգչեցնեմ: Իմ լուծս ձեր վրայ առէք եւ ինձմէ սորվեցէ՛ք որ հեզ եմ ու սրտով խոնարհ, եւ ձեր անձերուն հանգստութիւն պիտի գտնէք, վասնզի իմ լուծս քաղցր է ու իմ քերս թեթեւ»: (Մատթէոս: 11. 28-30)

Եկեղեցին կը հրաւիրէ մեզ Աստուծոյ հետ հաղորդակցութեան մէջ մտնելով եւ աղօթելով սորվելու հեզութիւն եւ գտնելու հանդարտութիւն: Եկեղեցին **հրահանգի** եւ **հրովարտակի** տեղ է: Քրիստոս կոչ կ'ընէ մեզի ըսելով.- «Գացէ՛ք աշակերտեցէ՛ք բոլոր ազգերը, մկրտեցէ՛ք զանոնք Հօր, Որդիին եւ Սուրբ Հոգիին անունով: Սորվեցուցէ՛ք անոնց պահել ամէն ինչ որ պատուիրեցի ձեզի: Եւ ահա՛ ամէն օր ես ձեզի հետ եմ՝ մինչեւ աշխարհի վախճանը»: (Մատթէոս 28. 19-20)

Առաջ կը հրաւիրէ մեզ սորվելու, ապա կը դրկէ մեզ երթալու եւ սորվեցնելու: Լսած եմ եկեղեցիի մը մուտքին քարտախտակ մը կար, որ դուրսէն եկողը կը կարդար «Եկու՛ր եւ սորվէ», իսկ եկեղեցիէն դուրս գացողը կը կարդար «Գնա՛ եւ սորվեցուր»:

Այս եկեղեցին, Պրուքսելի մէջ, օտար ափերուն, կանչուած է ըլլալու փարոս մը, հաւաքավայր մը, հրաւիրելու հայորդին՝ հայապահպանութեան հոգիով: Այսօր Հայը ցրուած է աշխարհի չորս ծագերուն եւ մեր պարտականութիւնն է գիրենք հաւաքել եւ հոգ տանիլ, ինչպէս մայր հաւը կը հաւաքէ իր նուտիկները իր թեւերուն տակ: Յիսուս այսպէս արտայատուեցաւ իր ժողովուրդին համար «Ո՛վ Երուսաղէ՛մ, Երուսաղէ՛մ, որ կը սպաննէիր մարգարէները ու կը քարկոծէիր քեզի զրկուածները. քանի՛ անգամ ուզեցի հաւաքել զաւակներդ, ինչպէս հաւը թեւերուն տակ կը հաւաքէ իր ձագերը, բայց դուք չուզեցիք»: (Մատթէոս 23. 37):

Եկեղեցին կը բաղկանայ **հովիւ**, **հոգաբարձութենէ** եւ **հօտ**:

Եկեղեցին պէտք ունի հովիւի: Հովիւ մը, որ կը նմանի բարի հովիւին: Յիսուս ըսաւ, «Ես եմ բարի հովիւր. բարի հովիւր կ'ընծայէ իր անձը իր ոչխարներուն համար... կը ցանցնամ իմինքնս ու կը ցանցնուիմ իմինքնս»: (Յովհաննոս 10. 11, 14): Դաւիթ, Սաղմոս 23. 1-3 համարներուն մէջ այսպէս կը բացատրէ Աստուծոյ հովուական դերին մասին՝ իր կեանքին մէջ.- «Տէրը իմ հովիւս է. ես բանի մը կարօտութիւն պիտի չունենամ: Զիս խոտաւէտ արօտներու մէջ կը պարկեցնէ, հանդարտ ջուրերու քով ինձի կ'առաջնորդէ: Հոգիս կը նորոգէ:

Իր անուանը համար արդարութեան նամբաներու մէջ կ'առաջնորդէ ինծի»:

Եկեղեցւոյ հովիւը պէտք է ըլլայ Աստուածավայի, Սուրբ Հոգիով լեցուն, նուիրուած իր ծառայութեան, աշխատասէր, հաւատարիմ, հեզ ու հնազանդ տնտես մը: Բայց չմոռնանք, ան ալ մեզի նման մարդ է: Համաշխարհային հերոս չէ, ոչ ալ ամենակարող է: Մարդկային է եւ սխալական: Ամէն բան առանձինը չի կրնար ընել եւ օգնականներու կը կարօտի:

Աստուածաշունչը մեզի կը հրամցնէ երկու օրինակներ, որմէ կրնանք սորվիլ:

ա) Հին Կտակարանին մէջ կը հանդիպինք Մովսէսին, որ ամէն բանի պատասխանատու էր: Օրէնքի, հաւատքի, ծնունդի, թաղումի, ագարակի, տնտեսական եւ ֆինանսական հարցերու, որբերու եւ որբեւայրիներու պէտքերը հոգալու եւայլն: Գիշեր ու ցերեկ կ'աշխատէր: Իր աներհայրը կանչեց զինք եւ խրատեց ըսելով՝ «Լաւ բան է առաջնորդ ըլլալ, նուիրուած ըլլալ, ժողովուրդին հոգերը վրադ առնել, բայց ընտանիքդ լքած ես: Օգնականի պէտք ունիս»: Հոգաբարձուներ եւ եկեղեցւոյ անդամներ, բոլորդ ալ կանչուած էք ձեր պարգևներուն եւ կարողութեան սահմաններուն մէջ օգնել ձեր հովիւին, ձեր առաջնորդին: Ինչպէս ինքն ձեզի կը հոգայ, դուք ալ իրեն պէտք է հոգաք, իրեն նեցուկ կանգնելով, իրեն համար աղօթելով եւ իր ձեռքերը վեր վերցնելով:

բ) Նոր Կտակարանի Գործք Առաքելոց գիրքի 6. 1-8 համարներուն մէջ կը կարդանք, որ եկեղեցին օրէ օր կը մեծնար: Աշակերտներ եւ հաւատացեալներ անմիջապէս անդրադառնան որ 12 աշակերտները օգնութեան պէտք ունէին: Ինչպէս Յիսուս 12 աշակերտներ ընտրեց, աշակերտներն ալ իրենց կարգին 7 պատասխանատու անձեր ընտրեցին որպէս իրենց օգնական հոգաբարձուներ:

Եկեղեցին պէտք ունի **հոգաբարձուներու**: Գործք Առաքելոց 6. 3-4 համարները յստակ ուղղեգիծեր կու տայ հոգաբարձութեան անդամներ ընտրելու մէջ:-

1. Ձեր մէջէն ընտրեցէք մարդիկ որոնց կը ճանչնաք իրենց նկարագրէն, հաւատքէն, գործելակերպէն:

2. Սուրբ հոգիով եւ իմաստութեամբ լեցուն: Այսինքն Սուրբ Հոգիին պտուղը իրենց մէջ յստակ է եւ յայտնի է իրենց գործելակերպին եւ վարուելակերպին մէջ:

3. Պատասխանատու մարդիկ, որոնց պարտականութիւն կը տրուի Կիրակնօրեայ Դպրոցի ուսուցիչ կամ Սուրբ Գիրքի սերտողութեան պատասխանատու ըլլալ, հիւանդներ այցելել, մոմ մը վարել կամ պարզ եկեղեցական տնտեսական գործ մը սկսիլ ու լիովին վերջացնել, եւ որբեւայրիներուն կերակուր տանիլ: Հոգաբարձութեան անդամները պէտք է ըլլան իրատես, լաւտես, բարեխօս եւ ամէն բան համոյժով ընողներ, որպէս թէ Աստուծոյ համար կ'ընեն:

Հոս տեղին է յիշել եկեղեցւոյ մը շինութեան ընթացքին պատահածը: Ճամբորդ մը, նոր եկեղեցաշէնքի շինութեան ժամանակ հարց տուաւ երեք քարտաշ մարդոց, որոնք նոյն եկեղեցւոյ շինութեան մէջ կը ծառայէին: «Ինչպէ՞ս էք» հարցուց նամբորդը: Առաջինը պատասխանեց, «Ձե՞ս տեսնէր ինչպէս եմ: Արեւուն տակ, քրտինք ջուրի մէջ, փոշիի մէջ, ձեռքս կը ցաւի, ծունկս կը ցաւի, անօրի ծառաւ եմ»:

Երկրորդը պատասխանեց ըսելով «Օր մըն է կ'անցնի, գործ ունիմ, արողջ եմ, կրնամ ընտանիքս պէտքերը հոգալ»:

Երրորդը պատասխանեց ըսելով «Փառք Աստուծոյ եւ շատ օրհնուած կը գգամ: Աստուած ինծի ընտրած է որ իր տան շինութեան մէջ բաժին վերցնեմ: Ամէն օր երգելով գործի կու գամ եւ գոհունակ սրտով արեւմամուտին ընտանիքս կը վերադառնամ»:

Աստուծմէ խնդրենք, որ մեր մէջէն կրնանք այս երրորդ անձին պէս, ինչպէս Հայաստանի մէջ կ'ըսեն, «նիկերով» հոգաբարձուներ ընտրել եկեղեցւոյ անման համար:

Եկեղեցին պէտք ունի **հօտի**: Այո, եւ այդ հօտին մէջ անպայման պիտի գտնենք հաւատացեալներ, հիւրեր, առողջներ, հիւանդներ, հերոսներ, հպարտներ, հեզեր, հեթանոսներ: Այո, եւ թերահաւատներ եւ թէ Թովմասներ: Այս բոլորը, որոնք Աստուծային կարգադրութեամբ առաջնորդուած են այս եկեղեցին յանախելու, Աստուծոյ պատգամը լսելու եւ վերստին ծնելու:

Եկեղեցւոյ անդամներուն հինգ կարեւոր յատկանիշները:-

ա) **Հաւատք**: Յովհաննու 3. 16 համարը կ'ըսէ.- «Վասնզի Աստուած այնպէս սիրեց աշխարհը, որ մինչեւ իսկ իր Միածին Որդին դրկեց, որպէսզի ան, որ Անոր հաւատայ, չկորսուի, հապա յաւիտենական կեանք ունենայ»:

բ) **Հնազանդութիւն**: Աստուած մեզմէ կատարելութիւն չէ որ կը պահանջէ, այլ հնազանդութիւն: Հաւատքին որպէս հետեւանք է որ կու գայ հնազանդութիւնը: (Հռովմ. 1. 5-6): Եւ որպէս աշակերտներ, մենք կանչուած ենք հնազանդիլ մեր հաւատքին: (Գործք Առաքելոց 6. 7):

գ) **Համագործակցութիւն**: Համագործակցութիւն կար աշակերտներուն մէջ այն ատեն, եւ նոյնը պէտք է ըլլայ հիմա: (Գործք Առաքելոց 6. 4):

դ) **Համաձայնութիւն**: Բոլոր հաւատացեալները համաձայնեցան որ հունցքը շատ է, գործը շատ է, մշակները քիչ են, եւ ընտրեալ անձեր պէտք է բաժին վերցնեն գործը յառաջ տանելու: (Գործք Առաքելոց 6. 5):

ե) **Հաստատում**: Աստուածաշունչը մեզի կը պատուիրէ հաստատել այն անձերը որոնց յստակ պարտականութիւն տրուած է, զիրենք վեր վերցնելու մեր աղօթքներով եւ մեր աշակցութեամբ:

Հին Կտակարանին մէջ կը տեսնենք, թէ երբ Մովսէս ձեռքերը վեր վերցուցած կ'աղօթէ, այն ժամանակ իր բանակը կը յաղթէ: Ահարոն եւ Ովր ակամատես եղան եւ Մովսէսի ձեռքերը վեր վերցուցին որ իրենց բանակը յաղթէ:

Նոր Կտակարանին մէջ կը կարդանք որ երբ եօթը օգնականներ ընտրեցին, աշակերտները իրենց համար աղօթեցին եւ իրենց ձեռքերը վրանին դնելով զիրենք օրհնեցին: (Գործք Առաքելոց 6. 6):

Այսօր եկէք միասին աղօթենք, որ այս եկեղեցին իր հովիւով, հոգաբարձութեամբ եւ հօտով ներկայացնենք Աստուծոյ գահին առջեւ եւ խնդրենք Աստուծմէ, որ մեզմէ իւրաքանչիւրին մէջ գորացնէ մեր հաւատքը, հնազանդութեան հոգին, համաձայնութեան եւ համագործակցութեան եռանդը եւ պատրաստակամութիւնը ցոյց տալու, թէ մենք կը հաստատենք մեր առաջնորդներու ծառայութիւնը այս եկեղեցւոյ բարգաւաճման համար: Աստուծոյ խոստումը այս է.- «Աստուծոյ Խօսքը կ'անէր, աշակերտներուն թիւը չափազանց կը շատնար Երուսաղէմի մէջ, ու քահանաներէն մեծ բազմութիւն մը կը հնազանդէր նոր հաւատքին»: (Գործք Առաքելոց 6. 7): □

\* Քարոզ տրուած Պրուքսէլի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի Նոր շէնքի նուիրման պաշտամունքին - 13 Ապրիլ 2013

## Dr. Henry G. Giragos

Dr. Henry G. Giragos, known to his patients and colleagues as "the Praying Physician," passed away on August 19, 2013 in Munster, IN.



Born to Armenian parents, Garabed and Bayzar Giragos in Aleppo, Syria, Dr. Giragos was educated in the American school system and was fluent from childhood in Armenian, Arabic, English and French. He graduated from the American University of Beirut (AUB) in Beirut, Lebanon with a Doctorate of Medicine with distinction. At AUB, he was mentored by physicians hailing from Yale and Harvard, and came to the United States as a Research Fellow in Hyperbaric Medicine and completed residencies in Chicago, IL. He worked as an Attending Surgeon at Cook County Hospital and as an instructor in Surgery at the University of Illinois College Of Medicine. He had been in private practice of Cardiovascular and Thoracic Surgery since 1969 and it is estimated that he performed over 5,000 open heart surgeries and many other CV operations.

Dr. Giragos was trained in Arabic calligraphy and as a young man hand wrote graduation diplomas for Aleppo College. He recently had hand designed and printed a brochure urging his Arabic speaking brothers and sisters to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. He was also a lover of and philanthropist for classical music.

Dr. Giragos is survived by his wife Jeanette, his daughter Renee, sister Janet Dayian of Toronto, brother Dr. John Giragos of New Jersey, and numerous nephews and nieces.

He was a member of Family Christian Center in Munster and the Armenian Evangelical Church in Mount Prospect, IL. A celebration of his life was held on August 27 at the Family Christian Center. □

## Charles Joseph Jenanyan

Charles Joseph "Chick"

Jenanyan passed away on March 21, 2012 in Fresno, CA at the age of 64. He was a descendant of Rev. Haroutioun Jenanyan, a pioneering Armenian Evangelical pastor in Central California who conferred the name "Yettem" (meaning Eden) on the Armenian Cilician settlement of Tulare County.



Born in Fresno, Chick graduated from Bullard, where he participated in sports, played trumpet, sang in the chorus, and was an avid art student. He served in the United

States Army in Vietnam, where he earned two Bronze Stars.

He worked in retail in both Los Angeles and Fresno until he started Chick's Insulation, which he ran until his retirement. Chick loved animals, baseball and football and was an avid Raiders and NASCAR fan. He grew up in the Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church of Fresno.

He was preceded in death by his father, Charles. He is survived by his mother, Roxy; sister, Kathleen and many dear friends.

A graveside service was held at Belmont Memorial Park in Fresno. □

## Maral Amoghlian Karayan

Maral Karayan was born in Lebanon on September 23, 1967, to parents Hovhannes John and Teshkho Queenie Amoghlian.



Maral and her family moved to Glendale, CA when she was two years old, eventually settling in Thousand Oaks, CA, where she received her elementary and secondary education, graduating from Thousand Oaks High School in 1985. After completing her BA Degree from California Lutheran University in 1989, she went on to teach fourth grade students at Flory Elementary School in Moorpark, CA. She had a lifelong passion to teach.

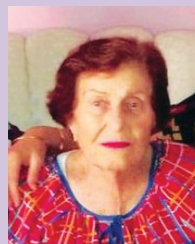
Maral was married to Raffi Karayan of Hanford in 1996. They were blessed with two wonderful sons, John Hovig and Alec Raffi. Those who were fortunate enough to have known Maral and had the privilege of reading her letters, cards, texts, or emails, are witnesses of her faith in God regardless of her pain, and her love and commitment to her family and friends with no expectations in return, she was truly an 'amazing' person.

Maral passed away on Saturday, September 14, 2013, in Hanford, CA, after a courageous battle against a terrible disease. She will be greatly missed. She is survived by her parents; her husband; two sons; and her brother, Moses Amoghlian. A Funeral Service will be held on Saturday, September 21, at First Armenian Presbyterian Church, Fresno, CA. Donations in memory of Maral can be sent to the Armenian Missionary Association of America. □

## Yevkine Mgrdichian

Yevkine Mgrdichian of Colvis, CA passed away peacefully on September 30, 2013. She was 82.

Born in Kessab, Syria, she was the third of seven children born



to Hovhannes and Efronia Makhshikian Mgrdichian. Her family migrated to Armenia in 1947 where she followed her passion for sewing. Over the years she lost several members of her immediate family. In 1973 she aimed for a new beginning and moved to Hollywood, CA with her older sister. Here her talent of sewing flourished as she quickly became a seamstress and made many valued samples. She moved to Fresno in 1988 and for twenty years she committed herself to Christ as a loyal member of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church Choir.

She is survived by her sister, Angel, and beloved family and friends. A memorial service was held at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Hollywood Hills, CA. □

## Alice Shahagen

Alice Shahagen passed away peacefully on October 17, 2013 in Mission Viejo, CA. She was 99.

Alice was the third of five children (Agnes, Carney, Albert and Gertrude) born to Elmas and Mardiros Nahigian. The family emigrated from the village of Hussenig in the province of Kharpet, Turkey to the Boston, MA area in the early 1900s. They soon became active in the Armenian community and helped establish the Armenian Apostolic Church of Boston, where new immigrants were able to affirm their spiritual and ethnic identities.

After her daughters married and moved to California, Alice and her sisters moved to California in 1985. In keeping with the priority of faith in her life, Alice and her sisters became founding members of St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Costa Mesa, where they worshipped regularly and participated in a variety of activities.

She is survived by her daughters, Beverly and Judi, her grandchildren, Debbie and Paul and a great granddaughter, Kayla.

A funeral service was held at St. Mary Armenian Apostolic Church in Costa Mesa, CA. Another service was held at the Bedrosian Funeral Home in Watertown, MA. She was buried with her parents and sisters in Waltham, MA. □

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff also wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends whose names were submitted to us for publication in the AMAA NEWS.

\* **Levon Goulian**  
*New Milford, NJ*

\* **Sona Nashian**  
*Beirut, Lebanon*

\* *Memorials designated for AMAA*



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