

AMIAA NEWS

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The Rev. Jirair Sogomian
Editor



**The Participants in the World Council of Armenian Evangelical Pastors
in Thollon - Evian, France
(Story on page 5)**

AMAA Missions Come of Age!

by Rev. Jirair M. Sogomian

For quite some time now, especially during the last few decades of the 20th century, denominational mission agencies have been consciously and intentionally downsizing their presence in lands where they had a traditional, sizeable presence to spread the gospel. A fresh look at their theology of missions and recent political realities, have taught many of these mission organizations that the old “donor-recipient” model of missions is no longer appropriate, healthy, or even biblically faithful. Discussions and consideration of institutional and theological changes in our understanding and practice of missions were of late enhanced by the deteriorating financial market in the West and the resulting budgetary shortfalls experienced by most mission agencies. The “big brother” image of donors, tainted with the tendency and temptation to “lord it” over the recipients, is being slowly replaced with the humble and unassuming image of the Christ, who in his mission to us “emptied himself” to become like the least of us!

It is therefore vital for members and supporters of the AMAA to know that the AMAA is also revisiting its mission theology with an effort to bring its understanding and practice of missions to the reality dictated by the gospel and our times. Even though, with our presence and direct involvement in Armenia and Karabagh, our mission endeavors have taken a different nature in the last decade and a half, it is important for us to periodically pause and reassess our goals in the light of our scriptural mandate. In our eagerness to be faithful to Christ’s mandate, it is imperative for us to redefine the direction of our mission in Armenia, the Middle East, North America, and the other countries and cities where we reach out to help spread the gospel through educational, evangelistic or humanitarian efforts and endeavors.

Indeed, there is no sense in moving ahead if we do not have some sense of direction and a well-defined mission theology that drives our humanitarian and benevolent work agenda. To help us do so, we need serious theological reflection that will help us adopt a mission philosophy that will embrace partnership in place of the donor-recipient model so far in vogue. We must confess, however, that the transition pace from one to the other is slow because of the difficulty some have in embracing the new paradigms of partnership and mutual empowerment in humble service.

Today, as churches in the Third World seek to hold and control the helm of their destinies, we too must seriously

endeavor to move in the direction of preparing and empowering local churches in Armenia and Karabagh, in partnership with us, to shape the future of the gospel in their lands. After a decade of independence, the vast majority of our people do not yet profess their historic Christian faith as their own. They have neither been baptized nor have they been claimed by the church as heirs of the ancient, historic faith of a people who were first to adopt that faith as their national treasure, and first to defend its preservation at the cost of their lives. The task entrusted to us is monumental and sacred, and cannot be accomplished without cooperation, mutual respect, a healthy partnership that witnesses the spirit of the Christ who alone can help us “empty ourselves” of all ego and superiority complex.

It is also time for us to recognize and accept that mission work has come full circle, making the West as legitimate a field of mission endeavor as any other part of the world. In such a world the paradigms of partnership and mutual empowerment are the only means to fulfill the mandate of our Lord to teach, preach and make disciples of all people. Our spiritual needs here in the West are as monumental as the ones in the East. We need to hear the gospel afresh and accept the challenge it offers us to humility and faithfulness in service. May our efforts in the physical and spiritual restructuring of the AMAA to claim its 21st century agenda and to meet the demands of a world starving for spiritual nourishment and thirsty for the “living water,” soon become a practical reality to the glory of God.□

Clay Pots and Chosen Vessels

by Rev. Vartkes M. Kassouni

Editor's Note: This message was delivered on Sunday, October 20, 2002, by the Rev. Vartkes Kassouni at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ, on the occasion of the Annual Meeting of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), based on Jer. 18:1-4, and II Cor. 4:5-10

There is a small pottery studio and shop in Aviemore, Scotland. The owner and artist is Penny Weir. I was there last July on a vacation and study leave. When people ask me what I was doing there I say, "Studying the Armenian roots of Scottish Presbyterianism!" With tongue in cheek I continue, "Did you know that John Knox (the father of the Presbyterian movement in Scotland) was Armenian? His name was Hovannes Zargoghian before he Anglicized it!"

Among the variety of pottery items in this little shop in Aviemore was a goblet. I looked it over a number of times and finally decided to buy it. I took it to Penny Weir and said, "I am a Presbyterian minister, and I love to shop in pottery shacks looking for one item, a goblet to add to my collection of them. You see I dedicate them to their sacred use as chalices in the service of Holy Communion."

"Yes! Yes!" she exclaimed with joy. "I knew it! I watched you as you carefully looked it over and then chose to buy it. I am thrilled that you have done so!"

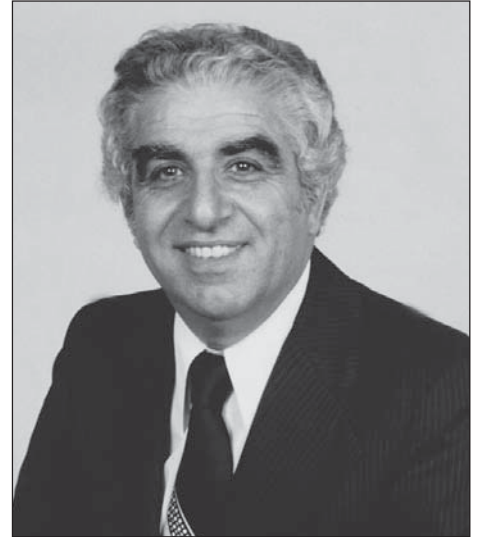
Here then is an illustration for today's message. It is not the vessel itself but what it is to be used for, or the vessel's content, that makes it so very special. Paul says in II Corinthians 4:7: "We carry this precious **Message** around in the unadorned clay pots of our ordinary lives. That's to prevent anyone from confusing God's incomparable power with us." (The Message, by Eugene Peterson) Or, as the RSV says, "We have this **treasure** in earthen vessels, to show that the transcendent power belongs to God and not to us."

We are special People:

As Armenians, as Armenian Christians, and more specifically as Armenian Evangelical Christians, we have a unique identity stamped with the image of Christ. We are a holy chalice designed and dedicated by God to contain His person and His message to the world! So, two words stand out in this perception and this truth: **Identity** and **Mission**. Anyone who knows anything about the Armenians knows how our identity as a people has been inextricably merged and fused with the person and faith of Jesus Christ. God's acts of redemptive love have transformed us to be the carriers of Christ to the world. In 1918 the AMAA was formed for this very same purpose. God began to shape a very precious vessel in those days. In its first year it gathered \$27,000 for its humanitarian mission of rescuing the perishing in the name of Christ. How marvelous and inspiring has been that story, and today we pay tribute to so many faithful servants of Christ who have given of themselves in the fulfillment of its mission! We also take on this mission today to carry it on into the future. Each of us has, insofar as we too have committed ourselves to Christ, also been identified as chalices containing this "**treasure**."

What is this Treasure?

In verse 5 a clear differentiation is made between the vessel (us), and the content (Jesus Christ): "Remember, our Message is not about ourselves, we're proclaiming Jesus Christ the Master. All we are is messengers, errand runners from Jesus for you. It started when God said, 'Light up the darkness!' and our lives filled up with light as we saw and understood God in the face of Christ, all bright and beautiful." (The Message, by Eugene Peterson) We must never confuse the content with the vessel. When the message is disregarded, ignored, or taken for granted, then the vessel loses its unique identity and along with that its



unique character as well! Armenians must never forget that! Our identity is derived from our mission. When we separate them we lose our identity! Within the bosom of the Armenian people the Evangelicals have been raised by God to keep the nation focused on this critical fact! In this sense the roles of the "Lousavoritch" or "enlightener" is with us still. This "light" must continue to hold its central role in the mission of the AMAA. Putting it another way, all that the AMAA does must be informed and inspired by this "light" as we see and understand it in the face of Christ.

We are ordinary people.

We are "clay pots!" Clay pots were the common vessels in Jesus' day, as they continue to be so in our day in Palestine. Their role was basic to life: that of carrying water, oil, wine for the people. I believe, by the way, that the goblet Jesus used during the Last Supper with his disciples was not a silver chalice but an ordinary clay goblet, as much as we may want to romanticize that fact. What does "clay" mean? Made from most common elements, the soil!

So, it is **humility** that is being called forth here! Too often clay pots in service, or people in places of ministry, get carried away with their own importance and they confuse their mission with their person. The message is, "Don't let it get to your head!" In the incarnation of God in Jesus Christ, "The Word became flesh and

dwelt among us” as one of us. Today, many who would be Christ’s communicators do just the opposite. We try to take on the trappings of deity! We stand separate from, and often above, the people we serve! We try to exchange to power of clay for the power of silver and gold! In doing so we nullify the message and confuse our identity!

It is said that when Caesar used to ride his chariot in the roman victory parades, a slave would stand behind him and whisper in his ear, “Remember you are mortal!”

To be clay means also to be **fragile**. Clay pots shatter very easily. Broken pieces of pottery are known as “potsherds.” Archeologists, digging to discover the story and life of people long gone, treat these potsherds with great care for even in their broken state they tell a story. The message of civilizations is discovered by the study of potsherds. So it is and must continue to be with us. I have struggled for many years with the agonizing history of the Armenians, seeking to come to a point of emotional resolution over the horrible shattering and fragmentation of our people through the centuries. At the center of this dilemma is the Genocide of our people. We have strewn a whole lot of potsherds throughout history, and their study tells the story and highlights our identity – Jesus Christ! I believe that the Genocide is for the Armenians, as the Holocaust has been for the Jews, the critical event in history defining our identity. That’s when the clay pot was shattered! Did we therefore lose our identity and our mission as a people? Absolutely not! So it is that not only we, the chosen vessels alive today, continue to tell the story, but also millions of pieces, even those buried in the ground continue to tell the story!

So, as precious as it may be, the chalice, the holy vessel, can and actually does break. Whether by accident, or by intention at the hands of adversaries and enemies of the Gospel, it does shatter into pieces! The pieces carry on the mission, nevertheless, just as a shattered mirror multiplies the image it reflects. That is the essence of our humanity. We must come to grips with that fact and accept our

fragility and mortality. Doing so does not diminish the power of our faith and witness but on the contrary enhances and empowers it!

Sam Keen, a Presbyterian theologian and counselor at Esalen Institute, several years ago wrote a book, which for me has been seminal in helping me form my faith in regard. It is titled, “Apology For Wonder.” He speaks eloquently to this point when he says: “Maturity involves both acceptance and gratitude. A central task each man faces in the formation of an identity is the acceptance of the deformities and limitations which are his destiny. Self-acceptance is the prelude to responsibility and creative change. Before we may be graceful we must accept our gracelessness. Mere acceptance and resignation, however, are not sufficient; gratitude is, finally, necessary to full integration and self-acceptance... there is no hope that we can eradicate evil and tragedy – only that we can find ways of keeping the spirit alive. This being the case, we must be able to speak of gratitude at the same time that we acknowledge the existence of evil. In fact, it is only when we set as a **norm** a model of life in which gratitude is appropriate that we have a standard by which to judge the measure of evil that man creates and suffers... It is because we define **gratitude** as a condition of authentic life that we can resist all those concrete forms of injustice and evil that lead inevitably to bitterness and resentment.”

The metaphor of the chalice we have been using becomes even more powerful in its impact on us when we remember that the term for the Sacrament of Holy Communion is “Eucharist” which is Greek for “thanksgiving” or gratitude! To accept with gratitude the events of our history? Yes! To accept the tragedies that have left their indelible mark on our people? Yes! To integrate all of these facts with the story of the Gospel and live that story out as our witness to Jesus Christ? Yes! That’s how God transforms the clay of our identity into the chalice of God’s Message to the world! Are we still up to it friends?

In Jeremiah chapter 19, the potter is not happy with his work, destroys it and starts all over again to shape the vessel of clay

he is working with at the wheel.

Our being “vessels of clay” points up also the fact that we are **sinners** who fail to live up to God’s expectations and God remakes, reshapes and recreates us. The metaphor of the new birth is most appropriate here. Gratitude involves a profound thanksgiving to God for giving us all second, third and even more chances to carry on in the sacred task of being Christ’s vessels!

The Rev. M. P. Krikorian, fifty years ago wrote a gem of a commentary of the 23rd Psalm titled, “The Spirit of the Shepherd.” In it he recounts the fantastic story of Brother Movy and his brave band of Christian believers who mingled among the tragic thousands on their forced march to the desert of Der Zor on their way to exile and death. They ministered to them and shared the comfort of the Gospel wherever they could. Soon they were apprehended by the Turkish soldiers and marked for death. Movy, requested a few minutes for prayers for his group, which was granted. He first recited the words of the blessed Sacrament of Holy Communion, then he scooped up a handful of dirt, went to each brother who proceeded to partake of it as if it were Holy Bread. Then as shots rang out they fell mortally wounded. With their dying gasps, each man dipped his fingers into his own blood and then licked them in the act of drinking from the holy Chalice of Christ. One man lived to tell the marvelous story of their martyrdom, which Rev. Krikorian picked up when he worked as a relief worker among the surviving refugees. He tells this story to illustrate the line in the 23rd Psalm which says, “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies”! I can think of no more vivid story than this to illustrate what I have been sharing with you today.

Here then is the fantastic calling we have: **Ordinary people transformed by God’s grace and spirit to be extraordinary agents of God’s mission on earth through Jesus Christ.** This task we accept and carry on with joy! We are after all clay pots and chosen vessels. May God bless and sustain us all in this sacred service. □

The First World Conference for Armenian Evangelical Pastors in France

by Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian

The Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) held its first World Conference for Armenian Evangelical Pastors (WCAEP) at La Source Armenian Evangelical Camp, in Thollon – Evian, France, from Monday, April 28 to Friday, May 2, 2003. In attendance were forty-four Armenian Evangelical ministers from the five Church Unions of AEWC.

The general theme of this five-day Conference was **“The Calling and Challenges of the Armenian Evangelical Church in the Twenty-first Century.”** Its avowed goals were: a) *to bring all the active Armenian Evangelical ministers under one roof to seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit for the revitalization and growth of the Armenian Evangelical Church,* b) *to evaluate, plan and devise ways and means of making the Church’s testimony more dynamic and relevant; and c) to strengthen the base of the Evangelical missionary outreach in Armenia and the Diaspora.*

The Conference gave Armenian Evangelical ministers an opportunity to learn and know more about each other and each other’s churches, and develop mutual understanding, concern and support. It also gave the participants an opportunity to think together over essential ecclesiastical issues, plan together in areas of universal concern, and act together with necessary knowledge of each other’s needs and vision.

The Conference opened on Monday, April 28th, with a worship service, then a warm welcome by the Moderator of the Union of France, the Rev. Gilbert Léonian, followed by an explanation of the purpose of the conference by the Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, Executive Director of AEWC.

During the Conference eleven major subjects, related to the general theme, were presented by sixteen ministers and one guest lay leader. Each presentation was followed by an extensive period of discussion.

The topics discussed during the Conference, and the presenters were as follows:

1. “The Proclamation of the Good News in the Armenian Evangelical Church” by the Reverends Joel Mikaelian and Harout Selimian.

2. “The Worship Service in the Armenian Evangelical Church” was prepared by the Rev. Jirair Sogomian, in whose absence (due to the death of his brother-in-law), it was read by the Rev. Vahan H. Tootikian.

3. “The Sacraments of the Armenian Evangelical Church” by the Rev. Yessayi Sarmazian.

4. “The Christian Fellowship Within the Armenian Evangelical Church Family,” by the Rev. Bernard Guekguezian.

5. “The Ecumenical Christian Fellowship of the Armenian Evangelical Church” by the Rev. Avédis Boynérian.

6. “Evangelism in the Armenian Evangelical Church” by the Reverends Jacques Tchoghadjian and George Dabbo.

7. “The Witness and Service of the Armenian Evangelical Church” by the Rev. Joseph Matossian.

8. “Christian Education in the Armenian Evangelical Church” by the Rev. Jirair Bizdikian.

9. “Ministry – Recruiting and Preparation of the Armenian Evangelical Pastors, and Pastoral Ethics” by the Reverends Karl Avakian and Mher Khachigian. Also, a brief paper concerning recruitment and leadership training and other related matters, prepared by the Rev. Dr. G. H. Chopourian, was read and discussed.

10. “What of the Future?: Future Goals and Challenges of the Armenian Evangelical Church” by the Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian. On the same topic, there followed a panel discussion participated in by AEWC members.

11. “The Necessity of Revision in the Western Armenian Bible” by Dr. Ari Topouzhanian.

The WCAEP became an open forum for all participants to clarify the identity, hopes and aspirations of the Armenian Evangelical Church. It also revealed some areas of disunity in terms of theology and practice, caused by cultural, sociological and theological influences. But, the prevailing mood was fraternal, and unity in Jesus Christ.

From the presentations and discussions emerged the following important issues,

which the Conference decided to refer to the AEWC for further study and actions:

- Stressing the importance of the proclamation of the Good News, through Bible-centered and timely sermons by our spiritual leadership, and the Armenian Evangelical media.
- Emphasizing the necessity of spiritual regeneration through the pulpit and media, as well as through personal witness and lifestyle.
- A well-rounded Christian education program for all age groups by preparation of literature, curricula, and an Armenian Evangelical Catechism.
- Adoption of a uniform “Order of Worship” (A Service of Word and Sacrament) based on the insights of the Protestant Reformation and the most recent ecumenical consensus concerning worship.
- The use of lectionaries or schedule of readings for particular days as a disciplined way to open the treasures of God’s Word to the faithful.
- More frequency of the administration of the Sacrament of Communion with an intention of finding an acceptable middle ground between the weekly celebration of the Lord’s Supper and the three or four times a year celebration of a closed, exclusive Supper.
- In the case of Baptism, it was recommended that churches refrain from rebaptism; and if a child is dedicated, he/she can be baptized in adult life, or conversely, if he/she is baptized, can be dedicated as an adult, following the person’s commitment to the Lord. Being well aware of their differences in the mode of the administration of the Sacraments, it was recommended that sister Unions show sensitivity toward each other’s practices.
- Finding ways and means of making the Armenian Evangelical Church a fellowship of evangelizers, obedient to our Lord’s Great Commission.
- Augmenting church and neighborhood Bible study and prayer meetings.
- Organizing new churches or new church fellowships wherever there are opportunities to meet the spiritual needs of the unchurched.
- Strengthening our ministry to the youth, by making our churches centers of youth activities, investing both financially and spiritually in their programs, and creating invigorating factors for their missionary outreach.

(continued on page 11)

AMAA Armenia Christian Education Ministries

by Harout Nercessian*

Since its early ministry days, AMAA Armenia has made outreach to children its main priority. There are many reasons for this: 1) The children are one of the most vulnerable elements of society. When a nation is faced with political and economic hardships, children suffer most. 2) The country coming out of Atheism is unable to teach its children its Christian heritage. 3) The moral-spiritual training of the new generation is indispensable for the building of a fair and prosperous nation in the post-soviet era.

In cooperation with the Evangelical Church of Armenia, AMAA Armenia carries out an extensive Christian Education (CE) program that reaches out to thousands of children and youth. This program aims at helping the young generation grow and develop as mature Christians and responsible citizens. To meet this objective, AMAA volunteers and staff work with the young to help them understand the Bible and apply it in their daily lives. AMAA also believes that children and youth must develop their God-given skills and abilities. Hundreds of free art classes, choirs, sports teams and academic programs help the young make good use of their time and talents.

We believe that the children that are instructed by God's Word will grow up to become responsible citizens of integrity and character, thus giving hope that Armenia can have a bright future.

Over 400 staff and volunteers reach out to over 6000 children in 78 locations throughout Armenia and Karabagh. The AMAA-Armenia CE ministries provide the following services free of charge. 1) Biblical teaching using creative means – visual aids, drama, discussion, debates; 2) Free tutoring services and foreign language instructions; 3) Sports programs – soccer and bicycle; 4) Organized art teaching groups – painting, woodwork, needlework, etc.; 5) Organized theater groups. They learn acting and present dramas to large audiences of near-professional quality; 6) Organized Summer Camps and Daily Vacation Bible Schools; 7) Organized Christmas Programs.



The AMAA-Armenia's 12-year old Summer Camp activities are an integral part of its Christian Education program. Every Summer thousands of needy children participate in Summer Camps and Day Camps where they enjoy nutritious meals, participate in outdoor and indoor games, take part in Arts and Crafts activities, receive Biblical instruction and more. Most important though, these youngsters' lives are changed as they experience God's love and care. They experience the loving care of their camp counselors who spend much time listening, talking, playing and praying with them. At the end of the camp, many return home with tears of joy and a determination to live in obedience to God.

During Summer 2002, three thousand four hundred children participated in AMAA-Armenia camps that were held in three locations: Camp Lori in Northern Armenia – 180 children participated in each of the seven, one-week camp sessions; Camp Datev in Aghveiran region (North-East of Yerevan) – 180 children participated in each of the seven, one-week camp sessions; and Camp Kar-Kar in Stepanakert, Karabagh – 180 children participated in each of five, one-week camp sessions. In addition, near eight thousand children participated in 70 Day Camps organized throughout Armenia and Karabagh.

Many of Armenia's children are in need. A recent study by two child welfare special-



The 9 AMAA CE soccer teams that participated in this year's soccer tournaments (above). Children getting medical exams in preparation for summer camps.

ists estimates that 27% of the population is below the food line and 54.7% are below the poverty line and as much as 70% of the population are unemployed. Such statistics make us believe that the most pressing needs of these children are financial. Although financial needs are very pressing, many of these children need things that money cannot buy. They need hope for the future. Many live in broken or single-parent homes. According to the study mentioned above, 10,000 children live in institutions and an additional 1,000 are considered "street children". These children need love and care.

AMAA CE programs are enabled by the generous contributions of many friends and the fund raising efforts of the AMAA's Orphan Child-Care and Summer Camp/Christmas Committees. □

**Mr. Harout Nercessian is AMAA's Deputy Representative in Armenia and the Director of CE Ministries.*

Armenian Evangelical Avedisian School A Model Educational Institution

The first and only Armenian Evangelical School in Armenia, named after Khoren and Shoushanig Avedisian, was founded in May 1999.

The main purpose of this unique institution is to educate and nurture the children of today's and future generations of Armenia in a Christian environment.

The Avedisian School has been one of the best contributions of the Evangelical Church of Armenia to the people in the homeland. Thus, this institution represents the continuation of one of the most important areas in the tradition of the Armenian Evangelical Church.

Care for children has always been the basis of the foundation of the Avedisian School of Yerevan. And it is with this in mind, that Mr. & Mrs. Edward and Pamela Avedisian of Lexington, MA, accepted the sponsoring of this educational institution.

The official inauguration of the school was held on September 20, 1999 with the presence of Mr. Andrew Torigian, Rev. Movses B. Janbazian, Rev. Rene Leonian and Rev. Megerdich Karageozian. Present at the inauguration ceremonies were also the sponsors of the School, Mr. & Mrs. Avedisian.

Armenian Evangelical Avedisian School is a local educational institution, that follows the regular curriculum of the Ministry of Education of Armenia. In addition, it also teaches foreign languages and Armenian Christian heritage. The level of the education of the school fulfills and surpasses the requirements of the Educational Ministry of Armenia.

The location of the school is in one of the poorest areas in the South-West District of Yerevan, known as Malatya-Sebastia section.

The school started with only 4 Kindergarten classes for ages 3-6 in 1999, and in 2001 two first grades and in 2002 two second grade classes were added consecutively. The number of students during this 2002-2003 scholastic year is 160 with 35 full time teachers and other staff members.

Major Christian and national holidays are observed at the school with special presentations by the students. Parents, Educational Ministry representatives and local officials attend and witness the high quality of the education of this unique institution. They all speak highly about the contribution of the school in the preparation of the future generations of Armenia.

The teaching staff of the school is of high standards, who constantly participate in seminars offered by the Ministry of Education. The majority of the teachers, including the principal, are Evangelicals. Many of them also serve as Sunday School teachers, youth group leaders and youth camp counselors.

The Armenian Evangelical Avedisian School is a powerful testimony to the quality of education provided by the Armenian Evangelicals worldwide. □



Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church The Ministries of the CE Center

by Rev. Haroutune Selimian

The year 2002 has been a year of both great blessings and wonderful challenges for the Armenian Evangelical Bethel Church of Aleppo, Syria. For some time we have had the vision and plan to establish a Christian Education and Resource Center on our own premises. The main purpose of having such a center would be to serve as a place to offer leadership training and seminars for Sunday school teachers, youth group leaders, lay preachers and church board members, as well as to provide our youth with the opportunity to take language courses and computer training.

The following are the highlights of the seminars and conferences held in 2002:

- On the 18th and 19th of Feb., a Seminar was held for the Pastors and lay leaders of the Evangelical and Presbyterian Churches in the region about **"How to re-read the Bible in our context"**. Twenty people participated in this one-day seminar which was led by Dr. & Mrs. Ted Hiebert, visiting lecturer of Near East School of Theology, Beirut, Lebanon.

- On the 22nd of Feb., a One-Day Leadership Training Seminar was held for youth leaders and more than one hundred young people participated coming from Armenian, Arab and Syriac Evangelical Churches in Syria. The topic of the day was "The Challenges that Youth Face in the Twenty-First Century". Lectures were delivered by the Rev. Dr. Ikram Lamii, president of The Nile Presbyterian Synod, Egypt.

- On the 26th of Feb, a Seminar was held for the Armenian and Arab Evangelical pastors. Ten pastors participated in this seminar. The subject was "Renewal of Pastoral Commitment and Service", by Rev. Dr. Ikram Lamii.

- On the 3rd, 4th and 5th of April, a Leadership Training Seminar was held for Sunday School Teachers. Fifty teachers participated in this three-day training led by Mr. Nabil Bakhit, Field Director of Youth for Christ in Egypt.

- On the 3rd of May, a Leadership Training Seminar was held for the leaders of the women's auxiliaries of Armenian, Arab and

Syriac Evangelical Churches of Aleppo, Syria and was led by Mrs. Maral Deirmenjian, Head Nurse and lay-leader at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Ashrafiieh, Beirut-Lebanon.

- From June 1-7, a special seminar was held by the "Mission and Evangelism" Committee of the World Council of Churches. Those who participated in this conference came from Egypt, Lebanon and Syria. The thirty participants, both clergy and lay-leaders, represented the following Churches: The Armenian Apostolic Church, The Syriac Orthodox Church, The Greek Orthodox and Catholic Churches, The Roman Catholic Church, The Armenian Catholic and Evangelical Churches and the Arab Protestant Church. The theme of the seminar was **"Sharing the Good News in the Middle East"**. Dr. Carlos Ham of Cuba, and Dr. Gert Rueppell of Finland, made a great impact in delivering the Bible Studies where they also shared their own experiences.

- During the period 18th of June - 3rd of Sep., an English Language Course was held for pre-teens. Ten students participated in this ten-week intensive course. Miss Arda Isgenian, a professional language teacher at Accad Institute in Aleppo, Syria, conducted this course.

- A Three-Day Leadership Seminar for leaders of Women Auxiliaries and Youth leaders was held during the All Saints' Holiday (Oct. 31 - Nov. 2). Forty leaders participated in this seminar led by Mrs. Maral Deirmenjian from the Armenian Evangelical Church, Ashrafiieh.



Seminar for Armenian and Arab Evangelical pastors.

- On the 15th of Nov., the Middle East Council of Churches organized and conducted a Leadership Training Retreat for Leaders of the Youth Groups from different church backgrounds. Eighty people participated and the topic was **"Dialogue between Christians and Muslims"** presented by Fr. Pierre Masri, from the Greek-Catholic Church.

- On the 9th and 10th of Dec., a Two-Day Leadership Seminar was held for Sunday School and Day-School teachers, led by Mrs. Lena Ekmekjian. Twenty-five teachers participated.

We thank God for blessing us with the vision to serve our people in this region of the world. Our aim is to improve our Christian testimony and make it more effective. We ask you to continue to pray for us as we serve our God by obeying and trusting Him. □



English language course for pre-teens.

The Installation of Rev. Roy Abrahamian in Sao Paulo, Brazil

by Marlene Gazebayukian*

The Rev. Dr. Roy Abrahamian, the assistant pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Sao Paulo, Brazil, was elected as the senior pastor of the church, after the resignation of Rev. Dimitrios Constandis, who had served the church for almost 10 years. The installation service of Rev. Dr. Abrahamian took place on Palm Sunday, April 13, 2003, during a special worship service, officiated by the Rev. Wilson Fernandes Jr., President of the Presbytery of Carapicuibá of Sao Paulo, Brazil. The pastors of the sister Armenian churches of Sao Paulo were present, as well as representatives of several Armenian community organizations of the city.

The Rev. Dr. Roy Abrahamian assumed his responsibilities as senior pastor having the Rev. Dionisio Straw Ataide, as his assistant. Both pastors have the responsibility to also serve in the mission center of the church in Ferraz de Vasconcelos, a suburb of Sao Paulo, where about 180 people congregate each Sunday for worship service. Congratulatory letters and telegrams were received from the United States, Europe, Argentina, and Uruguay. The installation service was



(l to r) Rev. Dionisio Straw Ataide, Rev. Wilson Fernandes, Jr., Rev. Dr. Roy Abrahamian and Mr. Jorge Gazebayukian, Moderator of the Church Council.

concluded by the benediction of the two pastors of the church, followed by a reception in the social hall of the Church.

It is indeed a blessing to have such a young Armenian minister, right from the midst of the congregation, who responded positively to the call he received from God, and soon after graduating from the seminary started

to minister to the church, first as assistant and now as the senior pastor assisted by the Rev. Dionisio.

Praise be to the Lord. □

**(The original of this article was written in Portuguese and was translated into English by Louisa Janbazian).*

NEW ARARAT EASTERN ARMENIAN NEW TESTAMENT

The "New Ararat Eastern Armenian New Testament," most recently printed in soft-cover, is now available from the AMAA office. This New Testament is the revised version of an earlier Eastern Armenian translation from the original Greek, with many corrections, explanations, improvements and language adjustments to correspond to present Eastern Armenian syntax.

The price of each unit is \$10.00 (Ten Dollars) including the Shipping and Handling costs. To order a single copy or in bulk, please fill out the form and mail it to the AMAA at 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652.

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AMA-Australia Celebrates AMAA Sunday

By Natalie Aroyan

“Jesus was the first missionary – His was a mission of love and mercy, a Mission to bring back together lost creatures to their Creator and each other, and to make out of those who are separated - one loving, caring and compassionate body in Christ, called the church.” - Rev Jirair Sogomian.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) has encapsulated this same mission and vision since it was incorporated in 1920, New York, and has at heart the religious cultivation, spiritual growth and development of the Armenian people.

On the 23rd March 2003, the sister chapter of AMAA, the Armenian Missionary Association of Australia celebrated AMAA Sunday and the second anniversary of its foundation “Down Under”. The program started in the morning with Church service. Rev. Krikor Youmshakian, the minister of the church invited the people to worship God with thanksgiving and praise. Following the Pastoral prayer, Rev. Youmshakian warmly greeted and welcomed everyone and specially Mr. Dikran Youmshakian, the Administrative Director of the AMAA, who was in Sydney, for the first time visiting family. Mr. Youmshakian gave a brief report about the AMAA work in 23 different countries and especially in Armenia and Artzakh. He then delivered an appropriate message with the topic “God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor. 9:7).

Following the service, a special Luncheon was held in the tranquility of the newly refurbished Soghomonian Hall of the Armenian Evangelical Church, Sydney, currently situated below the Minister’s newly erected residence.

The celebration commenced with the sanctified blessing of the minister, Rev. Krikor Youmshakian, followed by the responsive opening address by the Secretary of AMA-Australia, Mrs. Lucy Aroyan. The AMA-Australia was privileged by the presence of the special guest, Mr. Dikran Youmshakian and his cerebral brief synopsis of the AMAA’s global activities. Mr. Youmshakian also provided a complemen-

tary audiovisual presentation with explicit information on these activities with great precision, illustrating the highly emotive footage of orphans in Armenia.

We sat and watched the hardships of the Armenian people right before our very eyes. We could not believe the intensity of the circumstances faced by our people and in some way felt helpless at the thought of making a difference. But Mr. Youmshakian did his best to diminish our depression and turn it into pride, by encouraging the audience to spread their generosity in the aim of lifting the spirits of the disadvantaged children and youths of Armenia, by prospering them with the gift of walking through life with the light of the Lord to guide them, and the love of the Lord to set them free.

Mr. Youmshakian was indeed a true inspiration to all the attendees of our luncheon by elaborating on AMAA’s latest project to furnish the Youth Campsite in Shoushi, Artzakh; providing thousands of underprivileged children and youth with the nourishing experience of a Christian Camp in Shoushi and the Armenia Child Sponsorship Program - through which orphans and needy children receive regular assistance.

The captivated audience of over 100 people embraced both of these projects and, consequently, 10 children were sponsored in addition to the 9 children already being sponsored by our church members, Sunday School children and Women’s Auxiliary. Generous donations were raised towards furnishing the youth campsite in the attempt to bring a smile and dignity to a fellow human being, which in itself is deeply fulfilling. The sum raised for the campsite was 6,280 Australian dollars.

We were also privileged to have the illustrious singer from the Yerevan Band, Loucineh, who generously illuminated the audience with a selection of her traditional,



AMA-Australia Executive Board (l to r) Mr. Hovhannes Soghomonian, Mrs. Lena Boymoushakian, Rev. Krikor Youmshakian, Mrs. Lucy Aroyan and Mr. Barkev Ishkhanian

classical and folkloric Armenian songs, one of them which touched my heart was the infamous “Tercheyie Mdkov Doon”, which I am certain touched everyone else’s heart, making sure she did not leave a dry eye in the room. This song especially touched our Armenian mothers, reflecting on their fellow sisters who suffered tragedies in consequence of the Armenian massacre. Once again, in retrospect, donations were made to the AMAA in remembrance of all the hardships experienced by the Armenian people, and acted as a sign of encouragement to the AMAA to achieve success with their proposals and projects in the near future.

After the proceedings, Rev. Youmshakian further elaborated, endorsed and commended the AMAA worldwide service and its importance with its dedicated team in Paramus (New Jersey), Yerevan and the different chapters. Then he presented Mr. Dikran Youmshakian with a memento gift on behalf of AMA-Australia and the Armenian Evangelical Church of Sydney - a glass church ornament, which Mr. Youmshakian appreciated whole-heartedly. The celebration ended with a thanksgiving prayer and the blessing by the Rev. Youmshakian

The concentrated efforts of the committee proved the day to be a success, and have left footprints in our memories and our hearts by glorifying the mission of Jesus through the hands of the AMAA.

We praise the Lord for giving, to those involved in this spiritual venture, the opportunity to serve God and the Armenian People. We pray that the AMAA will be able to continue their mission into God’s future and to the sole glory of God!□

Dedication of the New Sanctuary of St. Antoine Church of Marseilles

by Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian

The date of May 4, 2003 became an unforgettable day of joy, spiritual celebration and gratitude to God, for the congregation of Saint Antoine church, located in a suburb of Marseilles, as they officially dedicated their new sanctuary.

That day became a doubly celebrative day with the morning and evening dedication services. The morning worship began with an hour of praise, with the participation of the church's children and youth with their songs, Scripture readings, choir and musical instruments, followed by the morning worship service led by their pastor, the Rev. George Dabbo. The sermon was delivered by the Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, the Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, who shared a relevant word fit for the day.

That same evening at 5:00 p.m., more than 350 people filled the sanctuary and the narthex, to participate in the joyful realization of their long-experienced dream, the dedication of their new sanctuary. The service was conducted by the hard-working pastor of the church, the Rev. Dabbo, who had played a key role in the building of the new sanctuary. Following Rev. Dabbo's short history of the stages of the sanctuary building project, Rev. Gilbert Leonian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France, delivered a sermon on the meaning of the day, mentioning among other things that this new sanctuary in France is the first Armenian Evangelical church built in the last 38 years, a hopeful symbol for the Armenian Evangelical Community in France.

At the invitation of the pastor, several representatives from the community brought their messages of congratulation, praising both the congregation and their pastor for the role they have played in the life of the community. Also participating in the service were pastors of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France and several pastors who were attending the Armenian Evangelical Pastors' Conference in France. The speeches were interspersed with musical renditions by the church choirs and soloists. Words of congratulations and best wishes were also ex-



pressed by Rev. Tootikian on behalf of the AEWEC and the AMAA. In turn, pastor Dabbo expressed the church's appreciation to the AMAA for the financial and moral support they received in this accomplishment. He also expressed special thanks to the members of the Boards of Deacons and Trustees, and all those members who participated in the building of the sanctuary in

sundry ways, presented symbolic gifts to some twenty members, and emotionally announced that his ten-year term ended, he had accepted to be the pastor of the Armenian Evangelical First Church of Montreal. He then invited the Rev. Teri Katanjian, the pastor who will succeed him at that church, and urged the congregation to support their new pastor. □

(WCAEP - Continued from page 5)

- Maintaining strong ecumenical ties with Armenian and non-Armenian Churches and organizations, cognizant of the fact that we are all one in Christ and are bound by Christian bonds.
- Providing competent and dedicated spiritual leadership by effective recruitment.
- Utilizing the internet as a means of communication, and a vehicle of providing and imparting education, and an effective instrument of evangelism and spiritual outreach.
- To facilitate the communication issue, it was resolved that all Armenian-speaking Evangelical churches adopt the "Arasan" program.
- The new 1700 Anniversary translation of the Western Armenian Bible, is an ever-existing challenge to the need, value, and importance of the revision of the Armenian translation of the Bible.

The WCAEP became a good forum to diagnose the present situation of the Armenian Evangelical Church and make recommendations for the future.

The Conference also provided ample time of fellowshiping – making new friendships and strengthening old ones. The ministers who had a Swiss visa were able to visit

Lausanne, and other cities of Switzerland. The rest visited the towns and villages of the French side of Lake Geneva. There were also periods of inspiration, devotion, and the study of the Word of God. Reports were given by the Moderators and leaders of Church Unions. The consensus was that it was a historic event with great spiritual and educational benefits.

The conference expressed its gratitude to the following:

- The AMAA, Stephen Philibosian Foundation, and friends of AEWEC for their financial contribution to sponsor the travel expenses of needy pastors from Armenia, Eastern Europe, and the Near East;
- The Armenian Evangelical Union of France and its moderator, the Rev. Gilbert Léonian for playing gracious host;
- The kitchen crew for their efficiency.
- The Executive Director of AEWEC, the Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, for the program and organizational details of the Conference.

The climax of this historic conference was a dedication worship, followed by the Celebration of the Sacrament of Communion. □

Merdinian School's 21st Annual Banquet

The Board of Directors of C. & E. Merdinian Armenian Evangelical School held its 21st Annual Banquet on March 8, 2003, at the Ararat Home Deukmejian Hall in Mission Hills, California. Representatives from the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), Armenian Evangelical churches, the press, friends and families were present to celebrate the triumph of this only Armenian Evangelical institution in North America.

Dr. Vicken Aharonian, the Master of Ceremonies for the evening, led the program with a warm and humorous tone, thereby creating a pleasant atmosphere for the audience. After Rev. Dr. Avedis Hassessian's invocation, a delicious dinner was served followed by musical selections rendered by Mr. Razmik Mansourian and Mr. Artashes Kartalyan.

Dr. Aharonian invited Principal Dr. Vahram Shemmassian to deliver his message. Among other things, Dr. Shemmassian stated that the challenges facing the school required the sustained commitment of all those who believed in the mission of Merdinian School.

On behalf of the board of Directors of the school, Chairperson, Mr. Zaven Khanjian, invited Rev. Dr. Hassessian to the podium to honor him with a plaque in recognition of his many services to the school and the Evangelical community at large in various capacities.

The Keynote speaker was Rev. Jirair Sogomian, the Executive Director of the AMAA. In his message, Rev. Sogomian reminded the audience that there would have been a vacuum had Merdinian not been founded and that people need to come up with good causes in order to fill lacunae. The creation of institutions and/or worthy enterprises is most pleasing to God, because such entities serve society in a positive way, he said.

Mr. Andrew Torigian, the President of the AMAA, in turn, announced the names of

two deserving persons whom the AMAA was to honor: Mrs. Elizabeth Agbabian and Rev. Dr. John Khanjian.

Mrs. Agbabian has served on the AMAA Board of Directors and founded the AMAA Orphan and Child Care Committee after the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. She has also been one of the founders of the Merdinian Women's Auxiliary, and has been actively involved in the Armenian Assembly, as well as the Armenian International Women's Association (AIWA). A certificate of blessing and gratitude by HH Garegin II, the Catholicos of All Armenians, and several other congratulatory letters from various organization were also read.

In her remarks, Mrs. Agbabian expressed herself emotionally, thanked the AMAA and all those involved in honoring her, and attributed her love for and dedication to her community and the Armenian people to her parents, who had set an example for her.

The second honoree, Rev. Dr. Khanjian, was called upon by Rev. Sogomian to be recognized. Rev. Dr. Khanjian has served the Armenian Evangelical community in various capacities. During the last seven years, he was the President of Haigazian University, at the same time being actively involved in the Armenian Evangelical Union of the Near East, particularly in the education of youth. Rev. Dr. Khanjian thanked the AMAA for the honor bestowed upon him. Both honorees likewise received a pictorial book about Erevan from Merdinian School as a token of appreciation.

The very enjoyable and fulfilling banquet, including a successful silent auction, came to an end with Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian's benediction. □



Rev. Jirair Sogomian, Mrs. Pauline Khanjian and honoree Rev. Dr. John Khanjian (above); Honoree Rev. Dr. Herald Hassessian receiving his award from Mr. Zaven Khanjian; Honoree Mrs. Elizabeth Agbabian with Mr. Andrew Torigian (below).

"Blessings in Bitter Cups" by the Rev. Giragos H. Chopourian, Ph.D. Hon. D.LHD
Book Review by W. Thomas Gehrt (Senior Vice President of Morgan Stanley)

There are times, after a torrential rainfall, when the overflow from a large reservoir cannot be contained because of the volume of water flowing in. Similarly, an overflow of emotions, built up over the eighty-year experience of the author, along with a search for truth and justice, has poured forth in the writing of this historical novel.

Blessings in Bitter Cups is the tragic, yet triumphant story of a small clan of successful working class Armenians, living in Turkey just prior to the outbreak of World War I. The narrative begins with the confiscation of properties and forced deportation of the country's Armenian population at the hands of the Turkish army. After many trials, tribulations, atrocities and deaths, the family is rescued from the terrible fate of their countrymen by a Kurdish clan chieftain, who disguises them and gives them work.

Saved when WWI ended with the defeat of the Axis powers, the clan begins to reconstruct their lives. Four years later, fear grips the Armenian population once again

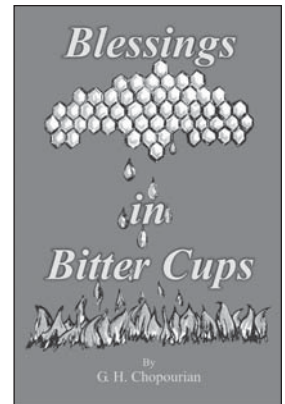
with the rise to power of the ultra-nationalist general Mustafa Kemal Attaturk who proclaims "Turkey for the Turks." Once more the family will flee for their lives.

Settling in Cyprus, they rebuild their futures with hard work, creativity, and courage. The family survived and prospered for two decades, even during the uncertainties of the Second World War. However, they would again fall victim to cruel persecution. As the Greeks and Turks fought for the control of Cyprus, a strategic island in the Eastern Mediterranean, they again lost land and property along with others of the Armenian population. So once more they fled, finally finding salvation in the land where freedom rings-America. Here they live to this day, thanking God for their deliverance. The patriarch of the clan reminds us: 'We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cut down, but not destroyed' (second Corinthians 4:8-9).

Our author states his purpose more eloquently than any reviewer could. This book

was written in the hope that the trials and hardships of this Armenian will endow future generations with the courage and hope to defend peace and liberty for all, sprinkled with the sweetness of honey. What a timely message this is, as good continues to battle evil in so many corners of the world.

(Those interested in a copy of Blessings in Bitter Cups, may write to Rev. Dr. Giragos Chopourian, 9 W. Golfview Rd., Havertown, PA 19083. Additionally, copies are being distributed through the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, the Armenian Missionary Association of America and various churches. It is hoped that applications made to Barnes and Nobles and Borders will be accepted for distribution. The cost of the book is \$20 plus \$2 for postage and packing.) □



"The Light Bearers", Carrying Healing and Hope to the Middle East Battleground, by Jean Hatton

This book interweaves the stories of some extraordinary individuals, British, American, Armenian, Palestinian, Lebanese, Egyptian, Bulgarian and more, who have been involved for 150 years in Christian humanitarian work among the battlegrounds of the Ottoman Empire and the Middle East. They are linked together by the support they received from BibleLands, a British charity originally founded as the Turkish Missions Aid Society, and their story begins in 1854 against the backdrop of the Crimean War. It continues through civil war in Lebanon, atrocities in Bulgaria and Macedonia, and the massacres of Armenians in Turkey in the 1890's and the early part of the twentieth century. It includes the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913, and events in the Balkans and in Palestine during the Great

War. It highlights the Armenian Genocide of 1915, and the final eviction of the Armenians and Greeks from Turkey - in 1921 from Cilicia and in 1922 from Smyrna. It continues in the refugee camps of Greece and Lebanon that became home to the Armenian and Greek survivors. After the birth of the State of Israel in 1948, the story continues in the Palestinian refugee camps of Jordan and then in the occupied territories of the West Bank. In the 1970's and 1980s it shifts to Lebanon through sixteen years of civil war. Finally, in the 1990s it highlights the effects of the first Intifada. It concludes with the Al-Aqsa Intifada and the beginnings of buildup for war with Iraq.

However, the book is not a record of wars and atrocities, although it certainly provides explicit details of them. Rather it tells the

stories of people who brought healing and hope into these conflicts and events. They were evangelists, educators, relief workers and healers, and they worked with refugees, with orphans, with the disabled and with the injured and sick. Many of them were seemingly quite ordinary people, but who became extraordinary by their determination to take a stand and make a difference. The Light Bearers is their story. It is a story of dedication, of heroism, and of sacrifice, made by Christian men and woman, who in the name of Jesus Christ, have devoted their lives to the enduring cause of humanity. □

The book will be published in May 2003 by Monarch Books, London (UK), and Monarch Books, Grand Rapids, Michigan. (US distributor Kregel Publications, PO Box 2607, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49501)

AMAA & Lark Musical Society Present Brahms Requiem

by Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.

In what has almost become an annual tradition, the Armenian Missionary Association of America and the Lark Musical Society jointly sponsored another sacred music concert for the Easter season of 2003.

This year's concert featured "A German Requiem" by Johannes Brahms, a monumental masterpiece and the second most performed choral work after Handel's Messiah. As the name implies, this work is in German and not in Latin like other traditional Requiem Masses. In addition to the difference in language, the text that Brahms uses is very much different from the Roman Catholic liturgical text. Brahms, who was brought up in a North German Protestant tradition, compiled his own text from his German Bible, by piecing together different verses from the various books of the Bible that deal with life, death and life after death. This work consists of seven movements. It starts with a verse from the Beatitudes of the Gospel of Matthew: "Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted", and concludes in the seventh movement with the verse, "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on, that they may rest from their labors and their works follow them", from the book of Revelations. In between, Brahms bewails the short duration of our days on this earth, the suffering and sorrow that accompanies it, and the vanity of all human glory. Brahms however is not pessimistic, because he believes that "the ransomed of the Lord shall return with everlasting joy upon their heads" and "the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment shall touch them". The message that Brahms brings to us through this "Requiem" is one of hope and consolation, an occasion for comfort to the living and for rejoicing in the certainty of Paradise.

The concert took place on April 6, 2003, in the sanctuary of the First United Methodist Church of Glendale. The program started with welcoming words by Mr. George Phillips, vice president of the AMAA



on the West Coast. Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, moderator of the AEUNA, followed with the Invocation. The concert was performed under the able direction of Maestro Vatsche Barsoumian. The church was packed full with close to 700 people in the audience and about 140 performers filling the stage. The soprano solo was performed beautifully by Ms. Alenoush Yegnazar and Mr. Ara Kourouyan ably handled the difficult Baritone solos. The reaction of the audience was very positive and the performers received a standing ovation at the end.

This concert was dedicated to Ara Baran, who went to be with the Lord several years ago at the tender age of 23. Ara was an outstanding young man with a very strong foundation of faith in God and His Word. In fact Ara had posted the following verse on the wall above his bed, "For all flesh is like grass, and all the glory of man like the flower of grass. The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord abides forever". I Peter, 1:24-25. This verse also happens to be the core idea of the second movement of the Brahms Requiem, and for that reason the organizing committee felt that this work would be a fitting tribute to Ara, for what he believed in and stood for.

I believe that this performance was a blessing for both performers and listeners, and I am hopeful that Lark and AMAA will continue their collaboration to bring us other sacred music concerts in the future. □

To Preserve A Nation

by Rev. Jerair Bezdikian

A landmine is a hidden enemy waiting for the unsuspecting prey to fall into its trap. Unfortunately, the most unsuspecting victims are children who happen to be living near mine-infested areas. In Armenia there are tens of villages that are too close to such minefields. There are as many as half a million mines strewn along its six hundred mile border with Azerbaijan. Since the armistice in May of 1994 between Armenia and Azerbaijan, thousands of casualties have been reported on both sides of the border. In Armenia alone, there are close to one thousand mine casualty survivors, mostly children, who are crippled for life.

Besides the loss of human lives and injuries, another serious problem is that sizeable lands remain fallow as mine-infested areas. Some estimate this to be close to 10% of arable lands in Armenia, creating a major economic loss for the people of those regions. In spite of public pressure and the vast number of families suffering casualties, mine awareness has only recently become an official public issue.

"Children of Armenia Fund" (COAF), founded by Dr. Garo Armen,

was formed to alleviate problems facing the children of Armenia today, including landmines. Efforts are being made, in partnership with organizations like the Humpty Dumpty Institute (HDI) and the State Department, to involve the international community in this effort.

One of the newest methods of landmine removal is the use of teams of specially trained mine-sniffing dogs. A team of six dogs and their trainers costs \$400,000. The State Department has already sent one such team to Armenia and another is ready to go soon. The State Department has promised to match up to almost three dollars for each dollar raised to this end. COAF has already raised \$70,000 and the Greater Boston area Armenian community is committed to raise the remainder of \$30,000. Any amount raised above this sum will be used for the purchase of prostheses for victimized children.

Our two churches in the Greater Boston area – First Armenian Church of Belmont, and Armenian Memorial Church of Watertown – are an active part of The Greater Boston Committee of Landmine Removal. Their goal is to raise as much as possible to save innocent children and women, who happen to be the majority of casualties. We urge our people in the Boston area to participate wholeheartedly in this life-saving cause. □

\$145 Thousand Raised For Armenian Orphans

by Grace Kurkjian

A sold out crowd, at Four Seasons Hotel, was welcomed by AMAA Orphan/Child Care Committee Chair, Joyce Stein. Mrs. Stein thanked everyone sincerely for the generous support given to the committee and offered the opening prayer. The proud parents, grandparents and well-wishers were on hand to witness their children model clothes in extending "Little Hands United, Making a Difference in Armenia," which was the theme of this year's event.

Linda Kay Abdulian, one of the co-chairs of the event, along with Christina Jabarian and Sandra Kalemkarian, served capably as Master of Ceremonies. She introduced a video showing the children of Armenia welcoming the AMAA Orphan/Child Care Committee in sponsoring holiday parties, in improving school conditions and providing sustenance as well as summer camp experiences to thousands. Elizabeth Agbalian, Hermine Janoyan and Savey Tufenkian each spoke of their experiences in Armenia and assured everyone that all funds raised go directly to help the children and urged all to sponsor a child which is \$240 annually. Narrators of the Fashion Show, Diane Cabraloff and Michael Agbalian, introduced each of the forty four children individually. Some were dressed in authentic Armenian costumes and some in festive or casual clothes. Gina Felikian was in charge of organizing the models and wrote the script.

The silent Auction raised over \$10,000 thanks to Silent Auction chairs,



Some of the children modeling for the Fashion show.

Dr. Lisa Karamardian and Gayane Tatoulian, assisted by Michele Shrikian. The colorful favor bags filled with gift items were procured by Arsine Phillips. Other committee members, Alice Chakrian, Lucy Gulvartian, Mary Hovanessian, Mary Kassabian, Grace Kay, Suzie Phillips, Barbara Poladian and Irene Sassounian worked diligently, under the leadership of the three co-chairs, to assure the success of this event. □

Corinthian Trio Scores a Major Success at AMAA Spring Recital

by Ani Chalemian

The AMAA Armenia Summer Camp Committee presented a benefit Spring Chamber Music Recital featuring the Corinthian Trio, with Ani Aznavoorian, cello, Stefan Milenkovich, violin and Adam Neiman, piano at the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York. The group has recently formed and has been concertizing to critical acclaim. Each instrumentalist in the group has an active solo career as well. Sunday's audience was treated to a beautiful Suite for Cello and Piano by DerAvedissian, Elegy for Cello and Piano by Aram Khachaturian, and as a special treat, the cellist and violinist (who are husband and wife) played "the Armenian Song and Dance" by Zoran Milenkovich, the violinist's father. The lovely



photo by Harry L. Koundakjian

piece was written as a wedding present to the young couple. The couple then played pieces by Handel-Halvorsen, "Passacaglia", and Paul Nero's "Pitzi-Cats" which required only plucking of the strings. After intermission the audience were treated to the Brahms Piano Trio in B. Major. The Ensemble played with extreme sensitivity, beauty, and maturity far beyond their years. During the third movement the cellist, Ani Aznavoorian, played a passage of unspeakable beauty and grace. The applause was thunderous and the trio graciously played an arrangement of Aram Khachaturian's Karoon Yerevan as an encore. It was a great event! All proceeds will benefit the children of Armenia and Karabagh this summer. □



**AMAC Elects
Board Members and Officers**

The Board of Directors of the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada (AMAC), at its meeting on March 15, 2003 at the "Holiday Inn" in Kingston, Ontario, elected the new executive officers of the Association.

The new officers of the AMAC for 2003 are: Mihran Jizmejian of Toronto (President), Rev. Mher Khatchikian of Montreal (Vice President), Sylvia Yenovkian of Toronto (Recording Secretary), Hagop Basmadjian of Montreal (Treasurer) and Salpi Deirmenjjan of Toronto (Asst. Treasurer). The AMAC Board members in an advisory capacity are: Mardiros Eylenjian of Montreal, Levon Hasserjian of Toronto, Hagop Kaakahdjian of Cambridge, Harout Ohanian, Shahe Shnorhokian and Nubar Doramadjan of Montreal. Ex-Officio Permanent members are: Rev. Hovhannes Sarmazian of Cambridge and Rev. Yessayi Sarmazian of Toronto. □



(Standing l to r) Mihran Jizmejian, Mardiros Eylenjian, Shahe Shnorhokian, Nubar Doramadjan, Levon Hasserjian. (seated l to r) Salpi Deirmenjjan, Hagop Basmadjian, Sylvia Yenovkian and Rev. Mher Khatchikian.

Books Available from AMAA

If you are interested to receive any one of the following books from the AMAA's Book Service Program, please fill out the form below, and we will be glad to mail them to you free of charge if you cover the shipping and handling charges.

BOOK ORDER FORM

Armenian Missionary Association of America
31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652
Tel. (201) 265-2607, Fax: (201) 265-6015

Please forward Book(s) {List by catalogue No.(s)}

For shipping and handing in the U.S. add \$4.00 for first copy and \$2.00 for each additional book. In Canada add US\$6.00 for first copy and add US\$3.00 for each additional book (order books by catalogue number).

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State ____ Zip _____

Enclosed is my check for \$ _____

(Make checks payable to AMAA - Canada: Payable in U.S. dollars)

The Golden Age by A. A. Bedikian, 128 pp, pb, No. 8

The Armenian Evangelical Reformation Causes and Effects, by G. H. Chopourian, 170 pp, hc, No. 50

Our Armenian Christian Heritage, by Rev. Dr. G. H. Chopourian, 122 pp, pb, No. 50a

The Armenian Evangelical Church, by Vahan H. Tootikian, 322, pp, pb, No. 92b

The Reverend Kara Krikor Haroutunian or A Guileless Life, Translated from Armeno-Turkish by B.B. Ajemian, Edited by G. H. Chopourian, 58 pp, pb, No. 174

The Cultural Contributions of Protestantism to the Armenian Nation and Notable Armenian Women of History by Yeghia S. Kassouny, 61 pp, pb, No. 175

Yoljuluk - Random Thoughts on a Life in Imperial Turkey, by William Nesbitt Chambers, 125 pp, pb, No. 182

Escape to Musa Dagh or the Banishment of Zeitou and Suedia's Revolt, by Rev. D. Antreassian, 74 pp, pb, No. 234

ARMENIA - Portraits of Survival, Photographs by Jerry Berndt, Introduction of Donald E. Miller, 48 pp, pb, No. 240

Leader for Salvation (Arachnort Pergoutian), in Armenian, by Rev. Father Kapriel DerHaroutunian, 71 pp, pb, No. 304

AMAA APPEAL FOR IRAQ HUMANITARIAN AID

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) issued an appeal to provide humanitarian aid to those affected by the conflict in Iraq. So far the response has been encouraging and we thank all those caring individuals, churches and other organizations for their support. However with the unfolding of the events in Iraq, a huge human crisis has emerged which needs our continuous support. There is substantial need for relief and rehabilitation for thousands of families who were affected in the Middle East as well as in the United States.

◆ As Armenians, we are concerned with our compatriots – Armenians living in Iraq. The Foreign Ministry in Armenia has offered resettlement for those of the 15,000 Armenians in Iraq, who have chosen to leave Iraq because of the war. Many families have already moved to Armenia, Lebanon or Syria. Many more might move. These families and those who choose to stay do need our support.

◆ The thousands of Iraqi refugees, who have suffered under a harsh regime and who were displaced because of the war, not only need our prayers but also need food, clothing, medical care and housing.

◆ We all recognize that wars are very costly in terms of loss of human life. Over one hundred of our young people in military service sacrificed their lives and their families were devastated. These families also need our moral and prayerful support.

The AMAA shares the grief of all those who were affected by this crisis and once again makes this urgent appeal to you: to pray for the continuing progress towards peace; for the safety of our troops; for the people of Iraq; **and to make a generous contribution to support all those victimized by this crisis.**

The AMAA is the missionary arm of the Armenian Evangelical Churches worldwide, and its relief efforts are primarily directed to Armenian Communities in need of assistance in the homeland and the Diaspora. Nevertheless the AMAA also concerns itself with the needs of victims of natural and man-made disasters around the world. The crisis in the



A U.S. Marine with the 15th Expeditionary Unit holds a baby as the baby's mother attempts to pass through a checkpoint at a Hospital in AnNasiriyah, Iraq.

Middle East and specifically in Iraq is a great concern.

Please be as generous as you can when you make your contribution to help support the victims of this tragedy. Funds raised are channeled directly through our office, and through the Wider Church Ministries of the United Church of Christ. Please send your tax-deductible donation to the **AMAA, 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652, earmarked for "Iraq Humanitarian Aid."** □

Yes, I would like to reach out to the AMAA's efforts in the Iraq Humanitarian crisis.

Enclosed is my contribution of \$ _____.

Name: _____

Address: _____

ՀԱԼԱԾՈՒԱԾ ԱՐԴԱՐՈՒԹԵԱՆ ՀԱՄԱՐ

Տիգրան Եւովշաբեան

«Երանի անոնց որ հալածուած են արդարութեան համար, վասնզի երկինքի թագաւորութիւնը անոնցն է»: Մատթ. 5. 10

Նոր Կտակարանին մէջ երանելիներուն շարքը Յիսուսի յատկանշական խօսքերէն է, եթէ ոչ ամենակարեւորը: Յիսուս երանելի կը դասէ ուր խումբերու պատկանող անձեր այս ձևով.- Հոգիով աղփատները, սգաւորները, հեզերը, արդարութեան անօթի ու ծարաւները, ողորմածները, սրտով մահուր եղողները, խաղաղութիւն ընողները, եւ՝ վերջապէս՝ հալածուածները:

Ասոնց բոլորը երանելի են, ըստ Յիսուսի, եւ պիտի ստանան երանելիութեան պտուղը, իւրաքանչիւրը՝ իրեն յատուկ: Սգաւորները պիտի մխիթարուին, հեզերը երկիրը պիտի ժառանգեն, արդարութեան անօթի ու ծարաւները պիտի կշտանան, ողորմածները ողորմութիւն պիտի ստանան, սրտով մահուր եղողները զԱստուած պիտի տեսնեն, խաղաղութիւն ընողները Աստուծոյ Որդիներ պիտի կոչուին: Միայն հոգիով աղփատները եւ հալածուածները պիտի ժառանգեն Աստուծոյ թագաւորութիւնը:

Ո՞րքան տրամաբանական են Յիսուսի ըրած այս ակնարկութիւնները: Ի՞նչպէս կրնան հոգիով աղփատները ժառանգել երկինքի թագաւորութիւնը, երբ մենք կը խորհինք՝ թէ հոգիով հարուստ ըլլալու ենք: Իսկ ո՞րքան տրամաբանական է, որ հալածուածները ըլլան երանելի եւ ժառանգեն Աստուծոյ թագաւորութիւնը: Այս երկրորդին է, որ կ'անդրադառնանք, Ապրիլ ամսուն առիթով:

Պատմութեան ընթացքին, քիչ չէ եղած հալածուածներուն թիւը՝ մասնաւորաբար Հայ ժողովուրդին համար: Տակաւին քանի մը օրեր առաջ նշեցինք Հայ Նահատակաց Օրը: Ուրեմն մենք ինքնաբերաբար ժառանգորդներ ենք Աստուծոյ թագաւորութեան:

18րդ դարու վերջաւորութեան եւ 19րդ դարու սկիզբները Բրիտանոնեական պատմութեան մէջ յառաջ եկաւ փիլիսոփայութիւն մը, որ փորձեց տրամաբանականօրէն մօտենալ Բրիտանոնեական կրօնքին: Անոնց համար իրականութիւն էր ամէն բան, որ տրամաբանական էր մարդկային մտքին:

Դժբախտաբար ոմանք սխալ հասկնալով, եւ սոսկ տրամաբանութեան վրայ հիմնուելով, անտրամաբանական նկատեցին ոչ միայն Յիսուսի վերեւ յիշած խօսքերը, այլ նոյնիսկ Յիսուսի կեանքը, խաչելութիւնը եւ յարութիւնը:

- Տրամաբանակա՞ն էր, որ Աստուած Իր միակ Որդին աշխարհ պիտի դրկէր Կոյս Մարիամի միջոցով:
- Տրամաբանակա՞ն էին Յիսուսի հրաշքները:
- Տրամաբանակա՞ն էր, որ Յիսուս՝ Աստուծոյ Որդին՝ պիտի արհամարհուէր, ուրացուէր, մատնուէր, դատապարտուէր ու խաչուէր:
- Տրամաբանակա՞ն էր, որ Յիսուս յարութիւն առնէր մեռնելէ երեք օր ետք:

Եթէ այսօր թերթին մէջ կարդայիք մման դէպքեր, որքա՞ն տրամաբանական պիտի նկատէիք ու ընդունէիք եղելութիւնը:

Այս բոլորը տրամաբանական չէին, բայց իրականութիւն, որովհետեւ երկնային յայտնութիւնով կատարուած ու արձանագրուած են Աստուածաշունչին մէջ: Բարեբախտաբար,

Աստուած տրամաբանութեան վրայ աւելցուց հաւատքի շնորհքը եւ օգնեց, որ հազարաւոր մարդիկ վստահին Աստուածաշունչի իրականութեան: Արդ, հաւատքն էր կարելորդ եւ ո՛չ թէ տրամաբանութիւնը: Այս հասկացողութեամբ է, որ շատեր հալածուեցան, չարչարուեցան, սպանուեցան եւ սակայն Տէրը չուրացան եւ որպէս արդիւնք, անոնք պիտի ժառանգեն Աստուծոյ թագաւորութիւնը:

Ապրիլ ամսուան ընթացքին, կը նշենք հայ ժողովուրդի ցեղասպանութիւնը եւ այս առիթ կ'ըլլայ, որ սերտենք Աստուծոյ խօսքը՝ յատկապէս կապուած հալածանքի ու տառապանքի հետ:

Ողբալու, վշտանալու, գայրանալու եւ մանաւանդ արդարութիւն պահանջելու ամէն պատճառ ունիմք, սակայն երբեք մեր սիրտերը կարծրացնելու չենք Աստուծոյ հանդէպ, լոկ հիմնուելով տրամաբանութեան վրայ: Որովհետեւ տրամաբանական չէ, որ սիրող, զքացող եւ միշտ հաւատարիմ Աստուած, արտօնէ նմանօրինակ արարքներ, որոնք դժբախտաբար պատահեցան եւ տակաւին կը պատահին: Երբեք չայպանենք զԱստուած, եւ Զինք պատասխանատու նկատելով՝ արդարութիւն պահանջենք Իրմէ:

Երկու հազար տարիներ առաջ, Աստուած Իր Միածին Որդիին միջոցով ազդարարեց, թէ այս աշխարհը անարդար պիտի ըլլայ արդարութիւն փնտոողներուն համար: Ան ազդարարեց, թէ հաւատացեալներ պիտի հալածուին, սգաւոր պիտի ըլլան, անօթի ու ծարաւ՝ փորձանքի եւ հալածանքի պիտի ենթարկուին, եւ սակայն, պիտի մեռնէ երանելի, որովհետեւ պիտի ժառանգեն Երկնային Թագաւորութիւնը: Յիսուս՝ Ինք ալ երանելի էր, որովհետեւ Ինք ալ հալածուեցան եւ խաչուեցաւ մեր հաշտոյն: Արդ, Իր հետեւորդներն ալ պիտի հալածուին Աստուծոյ հաշտոյն, որովհետեւ անոնք ալ՝ Յիսուսի նման՝ այս աշխարհին համար չեն, այլ կանչուած են աշխարհէն: «Եթէ աշխարհէն եղած ըլլայիք, աշխարհ իրենները կը սիրէր: Բայց որովհետեւ աշխարհէն չէք, հապա ես ձեզ աշխարհէն ընտրեցի, անոր համար աշխարհ ձեզ կ'ատէ» (Յովհ. 15. 19):

Հաւատացեալները պիտի հալածուին, որովհետեւ անոնք կ'արհամարհեն մեղքը եւ կ'ապրին արդար կեանք մը:

«Ամէն անոնք որ կ'ուզեն աստուած պաշտութեամբ ապրիլ Քրիստոս Յիսուսով, հալածանք պիտի կրեն» (Բ. Տիմ. 3. 12): Մեր նահատակները ունեցան հաւատքի այս փորձառութիւնը, ուստի երանելի են: Երանելի են ո՛չ միայն հալածուելուն համար, այլ իրենց հաւատքին ու հաւատարմութեան համար: Ուրեմն անոնք պիտի ժառանգեն Աստուծոյ թագաւորութիւնը:

Ի՞նչ պիտի ըլլայ մեր կեցուածքը այս աշխարհին մէջ: Արդեօք մենք կը դատուի՞նք Յիսուսի երանելիներուն շարքին: Եթէ մենք աշխարհին համար ենք, պէտք ունինք տրամաբանութեան, որպէսզի հասկնանք, ի՞նչ է աշխարհը: Սակայն, եթէ մենք կը փափաքինք այս աշխարհէն չըլլալ, պէտք ունինք հաւատքի: Կեանքը այս աշխարհին վրայ պիտի չըլլայ դիւրին, եւ մենք պիտի ենթարկուինք դժուարութիւններու եւ փորձութիւններու, սակայն երանելի պիտի ըլլանք, երբ վստահինք Տէրոջ շնորհքին: □

Rev. Yura Avanesian

"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints."

Psalm 116: 15

On February 19, 2003, at the age of 54, Rev. Yura Avanesian, President of the Union of



Evangelical Churches in Armenia and the senior pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church of Yerevan made his transition from this life to life eternal.

Rev. Avanesian was born in 1948 in the village of Maghavouz of the Mardagerd region in Mountainous Karabagh. In 1968 he accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. After his military services and his higher education, he became involved in the life of the Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church of Yerevan.

In 1971, while visiting Tbilisi (Georgia) with a group of young people from his church, he was baptized in the Kour River, and after passing the church membership examinations he officially became a member of the church.

In 1975 he was ordained as Deacon and went to Moscow to study in the Evangelical Baptist Church's Seminary. He was ordained into Christian ministry on April 29, 1979 and in 1980 he was elected as the senior pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church of Yerevan. In 1988 he was elected as President of the Armenian Evangelical Baptist Union of Armenia and in 1995 as President of the newly established Union of Evangelical Churches of Armenia.

Both during the Soviet era, as well as after the independence of Armenia, Rev. Yura Avanesian remained faithful to his Christian faith preaching the Good News of the Gospel and the salvation through Jesus Christ. During the past ten years, Rev. Avanesian actively participated in the activities of the Bible Society of Armenia and the Jinishian Memorial Program in Armenia. He was a member of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, the Baptist World Alliance and Vice President of the Baptist Federation of Eurasia.

Rev. Avanesian was married to Nadia Brotzengo and they had two sons and a daughter. He was very much loved and respected by all who knew him.

A memorial service was held on February 21 at the Armenian Evangelical Baptist Church of Yerevan. Representatives of Baptist unions and alliances from several countries, represen-

tatives of Armenian Apostolic and Catholic Churches and representatives of several Armenian organizations participated in the services and expressed their sorrow on the untimely passing of this servant of God.

Rev. Megerdich Karageozian, President of the World Council of Armenian Evangelical Churches, Rev. Gilbert Léonian, President of the Armenian Evangelical Union of France and Rev. René Léonian, AMAA's representative in Armenia brought special messages highlighting the faithful and dedicated service of Rev. Avanesian in God's field.

Several condolence letters were received from churches and other organizations from different countries around the world. The service of interment was held in the afternoon of February 22.

"His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'" Matthew 25:21□

Rev. Vartan Hartunian

Rev. Vartan Hartunian, whose faith remained firm despite the horrors he saw as a child during the Turkish massacre of his fellow Armenians, died on April 1 of complications of Guillain-Barre syndrome in St. Elizabeth Medical Center in Brighton, MA. He was 88 years old.



The spiritual leader of First Armenian Church in Belmont, MA from 1959 until his retirement in 1998, Rev. Hartunian spoke often of the Turkish massacres.

"Any crime that is forgotten or forgiven is a crime that has been sanctioned and blessed," he once said. "The surviving victims must proclaim the truth."

Rev. Hartunian has translated and published his father's, Rev. Abraham Hartunian's memoirs of the Armenian Genocide under the title *Neither to Laugh Nor to Weep*, which was reprinted several times.

Rabbi Earl Grollman, retired spiritual leader of Temple Beth El in Belmont, MA, traveled widely with Rev. Hartunian and marched with Martin Luther King Jr., in Selma.

"He was committed to his people and a great spokesman for the Armenian genocide, but he was also concerned about the

greater community," the rabbi said. "He was an exciting man who loved people and loved life."

Rev. Hartunian was born in Marash, Turkey, the son of a pastor, and was only 2 months old when the violence began. For the first seven years of his life he was surrounded by death and destruction.

He once was witness to the burning of 2,000 Armenians in a local church. "We heard their shrieks and cries," he recalled in a story published in the Globe in 1986.

His family sought refuge in another church and they were about to face a similar fate when they were rescued by two missionaries waving white flags.

One night, when his family sat down to dinner at their home in Smyrna, they heard screams. Turkish soldiers had entered the house of an Armenian family next door and were raping a woman.

They fled their home through a basement window and reached a harbor, where his father put him and his sister in a rowboat and took them to the USS Simpson, a battleship, which took them in. From the ship, the 7-year-old watched the city burn.

His father wrote to a missionary and a YMCA official whom he knew and borrowed \$800 to book the family's passage to the United States. They sailed steerage aboard the King Alexander. Eighteen days later they arrived in New York City.

After spending two weeks on Ellis Island, the family settled in Philadelphia.

When he was 8, he entered the Philadelphia school system, though he couldn't speak English. But he caught on fast. He was valedictorian of the 1934 class at West Philadelphia High School and graduated from Swarthmore College a member of Phi Beta Kappa.

He was a messenger boy and later worked in a painter's studio before becoming a technical writer.

But his heart was in the ministry. "I wanted to do something for my people," he said. While working, he attended Union Theological Seminary in New York, graduating in 1949.

Despite the harrowing events of his youth, he maintained a profound faith in his spiritual beliefs and in the future.

First Armenian Church of Belmont, MA was Rev. Hartunian's first and last congregation.

Rev. Hartunian is survived by his daughter Sharon Hartunian Credit of Belmont, and two sons, Nelson of Belmont and Bryon of Woburn.□

*From The Armenian Reporter International
April 12, 2003*

Armine Darakjian

Armine Darakjian was born on May 4, 1931 in Aleppo, Syria. She was the daughter of Rev. Dikran and Mrs. Zarouhy Dedeyan Andreassian. Her father was a native of Musa Dagh and had headed the Committee for the Defense of Musa Dagh during the 1st World War, organizing the resistance movement against the genocidal plans of the Turkish government. Although Armine was born in Aleppo, she spent her childhood years in Bitias, one of the villages of Musa Dagh, as well as in Kessab and Latakia where her father served as pastor. In 1942, the family moved to Aleppo, where Armine attended Aleppo College, graduating in 1948. Recognizing Armine's superior abilities, the principal of the school offered her a position as school secretary.



In 1953, Armine married Barkev Darakjian. Several years later they were blessed with their first daughter, Ani. Armine continued to work at Aleppo College in order to contribute to the family finances. Her husband, who had been forced to leave school after the 6th grade for financial reasons, owned a small bookstore. However he dreamed of continuing his education in order to become a minister. Armine was very supportive of his dream and encouraged him to return to school and complete his education. With this in mind, the family moved to Beirut in 1958, and Armine became the school secretary at the American School for Girls and Barkev continued his education at Haigazian College and at the American University of Beirut. He subsequently earned his Bachelor of Divinity degree from the Near East School of Theology.

Armine's duties continued to multiply as their second daughter, Houry, was born. She was the main breadwinner of the family and she attended to the household duties with the help of her mother, Zarouhy. She also helped her husband make the adjustment to becoming a college student without him ever having attended High School. At the same time, Armine began to take courses at Haigazian College and at the Near East School of Theology. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and went on to obtain a Master of Arts degree in Educational Administration from the American University of Beirut in 1974. During this time Armine received a job offer from Haigazian College where she sub-

sequently served as Assistant Registrar and then Registrar.

In 1974, Rev. Darakjian was invited to become the pastor of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago, and the family moved to the U.S. Armine quickly found a job as Assistant Registrar at Mundelein College and subsequently served as Registrar. When Mundelein College merged with Loyola University, Armine continued her work at Loyola until 1996. She and her husband both retired from work in 1996, and moved to Glendale, California. Her retirement was hastened by the discovery that she was suffering from leukemia. The diagnosis of her illness was made in 1994. She received multiple courses of chemotherapy and enjoyed periods of remission from her illness. Although she was under constant threat of a relapse, God granted her nine more years of life with her family, after her initial diagnosis. Armine put up a fierce battle against her illness during the last six months of her life. She went to be with the Lord on April 10th, 2003.

I was doubly blessed in having known Armine both as my aunt and my mother-in-law. Her outward calm hid a strong personality with extraordinary moral courage, personal integrity, a sense of humor and amazing organizational abilities. She would have been unable to fulfill her multiple roles as wife, mother, graduate student, registrar, and homemaker if she had not possessed an amazing intelligence, a deep sense of responsibility and sacrificial Christian love. She believed in quiet persistence and hard work, which she did without expecting any reward or praise. Whether working at home or in the office, or studying, her work was always planned and executed with the greatest attention to detail and with adherence to the highest standards. She expected the same from her family and coworkers and even her visitors knew that she appreciated punctuality.

She never complained during her long illness, having adopted a stoical attitude from the beginning. She remained an optimist up to a few days before her death. Her only regret was that she could no longer participate in the household duties which she used to share with her sister Agnes, a professor of mathematics, who had taken early retirement to come and live with them, knowing that Armine's health was precarious.

I had the opportunity to learn many things from Armine, and now, after her death I recall many instances in her life which confirm to me her extraordinary personality and her exemplary life. I thank God for her life and es-

pecially for the last nine years that He gave her to enjoy with her loved ones. I also thank God that we as her family were able to be with her to support her during her illness. Armine, displayed, without words but with her life, her Christian faith and hope and love for God during all the ups and downs in her life and in all her interactions with others. May God bless her memory for all of us and especially in the lives of her loved ones. □

- Nazareth E. Darakjian, M.D.

Dr. Antranig Manougian

A Pioneer of Lebanese medicine, former MP Antranig Manougian, has passed away at the age of 93.



A former superintendent physician at the Lebanon Hospital for Mental and Nervous Disorders in Asfourieh (Psychiatric Hospital of Lebanon), Manougian graduated from the American University of Beirut's Medical School in 1935, and received a Diploma of Psychiatry in 1939 from the University of Edinburgh, before joining the British Middle East Forces during World War II.

He was elected to Lebanese Parliament and served from 1968-1972. Manougian was also a member of the parliamentary Health Committee.

"Manougian was a true pioneer in the practice and teaching of psychiatry in the Middle East. He was an effective teacher and an ardent defender of the role of psychiatry in the medical curriculum," said Nadim Qortas, Dean of Medicine at the American University of Beirut (AUB), in a statement.

The statement said that Manougian, who served for 19 years as Head of the Division of Psychiatry in the Faculty of Medicine, "was instrumental in introducing the teaching of psychiatry at all levels in the School of Medicine."

Manougian joined the AUB as a clinical assistant in psychiatry in 1947. He became assistant professor in 1957 and a clinical professor in 1959. In 2000, AUB decorated him as professor emeritus. His work is also widely published.

He is survived by his wife Alice, his sons Arsin, Vahe and his daughter Vivian. Funeral services were held on Thursday, March 13 at the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut. □

Lucy Kearney

Lucy Kearney was born on March 17, 1912 in Lynn, Mass. She was the eldest of three children born to Karekin and Takoohie (Levonian) Shamlian. Her family moved to California when she



was nine and settled in East L.A., where she received her education. An excellent honor roll student and recipient of many awards, Lucy's life dream was to become an educator. The early death of her father and the depression years left that dream unfulfilled. Instead, Lucy worked to help raise her two younger brothers, Suren and Armand.

Early in life, her mother's strong faith was instilled in her. That faith was later translated to commitment to Christ's Church and faithful involvement in the ministry of Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church as Sunday School teacher.

During the war years, she worked for Lockheed Aircraft, where she met William Kearney. They were married in 1943. Following the war, in search of a more challenging and gratifying career, Lucy worked for the State Controller's Office and later for the Department of Employment as a case worker and court referee. Her hard work and numerous skills allowed her to hold those positions until retirement.

Following retirement and the premature death of her husband, Lucy found meaning and purpose in her life through reading, volunteering, family and church involvement. She did volunteer work at the Beverly Hospital in Montebello until the last few months of her life. She took joy and relished the time she spent with her niece, great nieces and nephews, loving each of them as if they were her own children. She was very close to her sister-in-law Bernice, who was to her more like a sister. After the loss of their husbands, Lucy and Bernice became constant companions in their volunteer work at the hospital as well as their involvement in the church.

An accidental fall on Christmas Day led to complications and ultimately to her death on February 21, 2003. She leaves behind her sister-in-law Bernice Shamlian; nephew Ralph and his wife Sandy; nephew Robert and his wife Teri; niece Lorraine and her husband, Rev. Jirair Sogomian; as well as three generations of nieces and nephews and dear friends. We give thanks to God for her life lived conscious of her neighbors. □

Aida Elizabeth Baghdassarian

Aida Elizabeth Baghdassarian died in Albany, NY on April 9, 2003. She left no survivors, but her own story is a remarkable tale of survival.



Aida was born Yeghsapet (Armenian for Elizabeth) Baghdassarian, most likely in 1911, in Kharpout, Turkey. Aida remembered how her father, a devout Roman Catholic, often placed her on his knee and prayed for her. Those prayers were to aid her when she suffered the loss of all her family members during the genocide 1915-1920.

Becoming an orphan, Aida was found and came under the care of the Near East Relief. In Lebanon, Aida was given refuge in the orphanage at Juniye. She attended missionary schools and was admitted in 1928 to the American University of Beirut Nursing School from which she graduated. After some time, she served as Nursing Supervisor at the Presbyterian Hospital at Deir el Zor, Syria. She was a member of the Christian Endeavor Union and of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Beirut where she was an alto in the church choir and in the affiliated Sacred Music Singers. While nursing at the American University Hospital in Beirut, she became acquainted with Armine and Dicran Berberian.

The Berberian Family emigrated from Lebanon to the United States in 1947, and Aida followed that same year. She furthered her education at the University of Rochester School of Liberal and Applied Studies, earning a Bachelor of Science degree in General Studies in 1952, where she was one of only four women in her graduating class. With the expiration of her student visa, Aida needed to return to Lebanon or face deportation. She took her story of persecution to Congressman Kenneth B. Keating of Rochester, NY, where her appeal for sanctuary made the front page of the Democrat and Chronicle. Representative Keating (later a prominent U.S. senator) was successful in introducing a bill to grant her performance resident status in the USA. The bill was signed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower, and Aida's picture and story again made the front page in Rochester on July 30, 1953.

After working in several Rochester hospitals, Aida came to Loudonville, NY in 1957 to work as a nurse in Dr. Berberian's private medical practice, and she lived in the Berberian

home that first year. After becoming a U.S. citizen, she continued her profession as a nurse in Albany area hospitals (later as a private nurse), living in her own rented apartment until 1998, when she moved to Nelson House in Albany. When her health declined in 2001, she moved to Child's Nursing Home in Albany, where she died.

Her years in the Albany area were characterized by her strong evangelical faith and regular prayers. As an active member of the Loudonville Community Church, she was a devoted participant in the adult Sunday School class, a small group Bible study, and the Mary-Martha missionary support circle. She was generous at heart. She enthusiastically supported the work of the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and the Armenian Missionary Association of America. Desiring everyone to acknowledge Jesus as Savior and receive eternal life, she often witnessed for Christ, passing out Gospel tracts to whomever she met. Her boundless love and unceasing prayers for her circle of friends is testament to the power of her convictions. She will be missed.

Memorial contributions in lieu of flowers may be sent to any of the organizations which Aida supported: Armenian Missionary Association of America, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, Loudonville Community Church or Loudonville Christian School. □

Rose Sarjanian

If you asked anyone who had known Rose what they thought of her, the answer, invariably, would be "she was a Class A Lady" ... or something like ... "She was a class act". She was a very



generous, giving and loving person. She was reserved, but she embraced her Armenianism and practiced it through her life.

Rose was born in East St. Louis, IL to Mr. and Mrs. Cherokian. Her father died when she was just three years old and her brother, Edward was six. Her mother remarried one year later, had two more sons, Ralph and Malcolm, and they moved to Detroit, MI after World War I.

Because of the Depression, Rose was only able to go as far as the 11th grade in school ... she had to leave to work to help her family. She worked for 11 years until she met her future husband ... Arshag Oscar Sarjanian. They

were married in the Armenian Congregational Church in Detroit, on August 11, 1940 and moved to Worcester, MA where Arshag had his residence. They subsequently moved to Detroit where there were better opportunities. On July 14, 1942, they were blessed with a daughter, Aznive.

Throughout her years in Detroit, she belonged to the various clubs and organizations in the Armenian community and the Congregational Church. She was a driving force behind the Ladies Aid, Women's Christian Fellowship as well as the Armenian Congregational Women's Fellowship. She was also a generous supporter of the Armenian Missionary Association of America and was also a member of the Daughters of Vartan.

After her husband's death in 1991, Rose moved to Las Vegas in 1992, to be close to her daughter Aznive who had married and with her husband and two daughters had moved there. Due to the fact that there was no Armenian Congregational Church in Las Vegas, she and Aznive became members of the Armenian Ladies Society which was an organ of the Armenian Apostolic Church of Las Vegas, and became integral parts of the Armenian community.

At her 85th Surprise Birthday party she challenged all to reach their 85th birthday, and looked forward to her 90th. Unfortunately, she fell short of it by two years. She and her smiling, hospitable, generous and loving person will be sorely missed. □

June Sarafian Caruso

June Sarafian Caruso was born in Kharpert, Turkey, on June 1, 1911, to Nishan & Loucine Minassian. Her parents named her Arkuhi. In 1914, along with her parents and brother Ara, she immigrated to the United States and settled in Lowell, Mass. She spent her formative years there with her three brothers, Art, Bob and John, and her sister Rose.

At the age of seventeen, she moved to Philadelphia, where she completed high school, attended a business college, and taught herself the art of dressmaking. In 1936, she married **Harry Sarafian** and together they started a dry cleaning and tailoring business. The Lord blessed them with two daughters., **Harriet and Frances**. Tragically, Harriet died in 1944 at age three, and her husband Harry died in 1946.



Left with a toddler and a demanding business, June survived and thrived. She became an accomplished dress designer and had many fashion shows. Her clients wore her designs around the world. She became a member of the Delaware County Business Women's Association.

In time, June met Rocky Caruso and the two were married in 1955. They became active members of the Armenian Martyrs Congregational Church of Philadelphia. Among their sundry involvements in the church, June taught Sunday School for many years, because it gave her great pleasure to teach the children.

June loved life and was happiest in her roles as a wonderful wife and devoted mother and grandmother. Her creativity was endless. She studied art at the Hession School of Art in Philadelphia, and attended many adult education classes through the years. She mastered watercolor, oils, pastel, acrylic and even china painting. She showed many of her paintings at local art shows. One of her oils hung in the Philadelphia Museum of Art as part of a student show. June's artwork is most precious to her family and many pieces proudly decorate their walls with great beauty.

About 14 years ago, June was diagnosed with Senile Dementia and her artistic skills suffered almost immediately. During this decline, she joined her daughter, Fran and her family in Tualatin, Oregon. She fell in love with Oregon - with the big sky, the unusual cloud formations and the beautiful sunsets. She passed away on February 6, the year of our Lord 2003, leaving behind her husband Rocky Caruso; daughter Fran Hepp and her husband Ed; three grandchildren: Ed Hepp 3rd, Sarah (Hepp) Burke, and Laura Hepp; as well as a church family and friends.

A Memorial Service was held on Saturday, May 31, 2003 at the Armenian Martyrs' Congregational Church in Havertown, PA. □

Vazken Kizirian

Monday, March 31, 2003, was a very sad day for the Bay Area Armenian Community. On that date, a "silent" pillar of Calvary Armenian Congregational Church crumbled as a result of a post-operative complication of open heart surgery. Vazken Kizirian departed from us to be with his Lord.



As I am writing these lines a week after the event, it is still very hard to accept the great loss of this exceptional person and a dear friend. Vazken was a very kind, self giving, most generous and yet humble, hard working man. In a true Christian spirit, he never wavered extending a helping hand to anyone in need.

Calvary is deeply indebted to this highly devoted member. His services to the Church were numerous. He contributed very significantly to the realization of our dream of building a new sanctuary complex.

Vazken was born in Beirut, Lebanon on March 19, 1933. His family moved to Haifa, Israel at the age of two but returned to Beirut after seven years. At the age of ten, he lost his father and grew up under very difficult and dire circumstances. He attended the Armenian Evangelical "Central High School" in Ashrafieh and distinguished himself as a very bright and outstanding student. After high school, he attended Haigazian College for two years at the end of which time he was granted a trade scholarship in Germany by the Embassy of the said country in Beirut. For the next seven years, he was initially an apprentice and later an employee of Dr. Richard Römer, a plastic and leather manufacturer in Neu Ulm. He was lovingly embraced as a new family member by this devout Catholic gentleman and lived at his home throughout his stay in Germany.

In 1965, Vazken immigrated to Toronto, Canada, where he worked in the plastic industry, and in 1968 he moved to and settled in San Francisco. After working for a few plastic manufacturing outfits for short periods, he gained employment with the Thomas Swan Sign Company in San Francisco and worked for this firm for over twenty years until his retirement late last year.

Vazken and Arax (nee Bezirgianian) grew up in the same neighborhood in Beirut and knew each other from childhood. They were married in 1969 and were blessed with a daughter Hourig.

Funeral services were held on April 4, 2003 at Calvary Church with Reverend James Kizirian, Vazken's brother, officiating and with the participation of Reverend Father Avedis Torossian of St. Gregory Armenian Apostolic Church of San Francisco and the local chapter of the Knights of Vartan.

Memorial gifts can be made to the Calvary Armenian Congregational Church earmarked for the "Vazken Kizirian Endowment Fund". □

- Zaven A. Adrouny, M.D.

Մարի Վասոյեան Մելֆոնեան

Մարի Վասոյեան Մելֆոնեան, Այնփայ ծնած, մեծցած եւ ամուսնացած Տէր եւ Տիկին Նագարէք եւ Լուսին Վասոյեաններու չորս զաւակներէն մէկն է: Մարին



ծնած է Հալէպ, Սուրիա: 1915-ի Մեծ եղեռնի հետեւանքներուն սպիներով լեցուն սերունդի մը որպէս յաջորդ, Մարին հազիւ առիթ կ'ունենայ նախակրթարանի ուսում ստանալ եւ կը նետուի կեանքի ասպարէզ հակառակ ուսումի հանդէպ իր ունեցած անսահման սիրոյն եւ փափաքին, որ կարծես ժառանգած ըլլար իր հօրմէն, որ գրասէր եւ հաշուապահութեամբ զբաղող օրուան մտաւորակներէն մէկն էր:

Մարին այն անձերէն էր, որոնք կեանքի դժուարութիւններուն դիմաց ընկճուելու փոխարէն՝ լաւատես ու նկուն նկարագիրով կը շարունակեն ազգին օգտակար կեանք ապրիլ: Ան երկար տարիներ Հալէպի հիւանդանոցներուն մէջ կը ծառայէ որպէս հմուտ եւ վարպետ խոհարարուհի:

1960-ական թուականներուն Սուրիոյ քաղաքական իրադրութիւններն ու տակնուվրայութիւնները պատճառ կ'ըլլան, որ շատեր Միացեալ Նահանգներ մեկնին: Մարին ալ այդ հայ պանդխտութեան ցուպը ձեռին կը հաստատուի Միացեալ Նահանգներ, ուր իր մեծ եղբայրը՝ Կարապետ ընտանեօք արդէն փոխադրուած էր:

«Ծիծեռնակը դարձեալ տուն կը շինէ...» Մարին իր նակտի քրտինքով կ'աշխատի իր ապրուստը նաեւ, քրիստոնէական հոգիով, հաւատարիմ ծառայութեամբ եւ անտրտունջ աշխատանքով: Մարին իր կեանքի կողակիցը կը գտնէ եւ կ'ամուսնանայ Հայկազ Մելֆոնեանի հետ եւ միասին կ'ապրին Վան Նայս՝ Քալիֆորնիա, եւ վերջին տարիները Կլէնտլէյ, Քալիֆորնիա:

Մարին մանչցող իւրաքանչիւր անձ չի կրնար մոռնալ իր անուշ ժպիտին միջոցով արտայայտուած անկեղծ սէրը, միշտ օգնելու պատրաստակամութիւնը եւ իր լաւագոյնը ընելու տրամադրութիւնը:

Մարին, սրբազան Պօղոս Առաքելի նկարագրածին պէս եղաւ, որքան որ փիզիքական տկարութիւնները շատնային, այնքան կը զօրանար իր հոգեւոր կեանքը: Աստուածավախ կեանք մը ապրիլը գործնականապէս ցոյց կու տար բոլորին անխոր օգնելով, բոլորին՝ Քրիստոսի Բարի Լուրը անտարանելով: Եկեղեցիի հաւատարիմ անդամ մըն էր, աղօթող հաւատացեալ մը եւ իր անդամատուրքը հաւատարմութեամբ եւ կանոնաւորութեամբ վնարող տիպար մը:

Մարին ոչ թէ միայն չէր նեղացներ մէկու մը, այլ՝ շատ կ'աշխատէր որ ամէն մարդ իրարու հետ սիրով ըլլայ: Ամէն գնով ջանք կ'ընէր խաղաղութիւն եւ սէր հաստատելու: Աստուածաշունչի ընթերցումով, քարոզներ մտիկ ընելով եւ աղօթքով այնքան կը լեցուէր Քրիստոսի Հոգիով, որ իւրաքանչիւր իրեն հանդիպող կը զգար քաղցր եւ տաք ու կ'անձնաւորութիւն մը:

Մարին իր աչքերը փակեց Հոկտ. 28, 2000-ին, Կլէնտլէյ:

Թող իր յիշատակը օրհնեալ ըլլայ: □

Անթուանէք Հասրեան

Անթուանէք Հասրեան ծնած է 1923-ին, Մալաթիա, Թուրքիա: Նախնական ուսումը ստացած է Հայ Կաթողիկէ Մայրաքաղաքներու քով: 1943-ին կ'ամուսնանայ Գրիգոր Հասրեանի հետ եւ Աստուած կ'օրհնէ զիրենք հինգ զաւակներով՝ Ռօզին, Սիլվա, Մանօ, Ալպեր եւ Սեդա, նաեւ 12 թոռներով եւ 3 ծոռներով: Ան եղած էր ընտանիքին նուիրուած եւ գոհունող մայր մը:



1965-է ի վեր նուիրուած էր Հալէպի Հայ Աւետարանական Էմմանուէլ Եկեղեցիին, ըլլալ որպէս անդամ հոգաբարձութեան կամ Տիկնաց Վարչութեան: Անոր միակ մտահոգութիւնն էր եկեղեցին եւ եկեղեցիին կեանքը, երբ որ կարիքը ըլլար ան եկեղեցի կը գտնուէր, գիշեր կամ ցերեկ: Հաշկերոյթներու ընթացքին միշտ իրեն կը վստահուէր ճաշի ընդհանուր պատասխանատուութիւնը: Եկեղեցին իր կեանքին հիմնական մէկ

մասն էր: Եկեղեցիին մէջ մեծին հետ մեծի պէս կը վարուէր, իսկ պզտիկին հետ՝ պզտիկի պէս: Բժախնդիր կին մըն էր եւ կ'ուզէր ամէն բան իր ձեռքով քննարկելով ընել: Ծառ լաւ ձեռագործ կ'ընէր եւ որպէս նուր կը բաժնէր:

Այցելութիւններու ընթացքին յաճախ կ'ըսէր.- «Պատուելի, դուն իմ լաւ եւ առողջ օրերու չհասար, հիմա կ'ուզեմ ծառայել բայց առողջութիւնս չի ներեր, միայն կրնամ աղօթել»:

Աստուածաշունչը եւ Լոյս գրքոյկը միշտ բովն էր եւ ամէն առտու կը կարդար եւ կ'աղօթէր: Ան իր կեանքը նուիրած էր Աստուծոյ եւ միշտ աղօթքով, Աստուծոյ կամքը կը փնտռէր:

Որպէս տիպար եւ հաւատացեալ մայր պարգեւատրուած էր Էմմանուէլ Եկեղեցիին եւ հայկական կազմակերպութիւններուն կողմէ:

Ան նաեւ երկար տեւած ծառայած էր Քրիստոնէական Ջանից Ընկերակցութեան Ամառնային Կեդրոնի (ՔՋԱԿ) խոհանոցէն ներս որպէս պատասխանատու:

Դեկտ. 24-էն ի վեր ան անկողնի կը ծառայէր, բայց կը վայելէր զաւակներուն, փեսաներուն եւ թոռներուն ծառայութիւնը, գուրգուրանքը եւ սէրը:

Ան իր աչքերը փակեց այս աշխարհէն Երկուշաբթի, 17 Փետրուար 2003, առաւօտ կանուխ եւ կրնամ վկայել թէ որպէս հաւատացեալ անձ մը ան յանձնուեցաւ Իր Փրկչին.- «Երանելի եմ այն մեռելները որոնք Տէրոջմով կը ննջեն, որ իրենց աշխատութեան հանգչին ու իրենց գործերը իրենց ետեւէն կ'երթան»:

Կը միանամք Առաքելի ըսելով, Տիկին Անթուանէք Հասրեան բարի պատերազմը պատերազմեցաւ, ընթացքը կատարեց եւ հաւատքը պահեց, հիմա իրեն կը մնայ արդարութեան պսակը որ Տէր Յիսուս խոստացաւ տալ ինչպէս որ ըսաւ ծառաներու առակին մէջ.- «Ապրիս, բարի ու հաւատարիմ ծառայ, դուն որ քիչ բանի մէջ հաւատարիմ եղար, քեզ շատ բաներու վրայ պիտի կեցնեմ, մտիր քու Տիրոջ ուրախութեանը մէջ» (Մատթ. 25. 23):

Թող Աստուած Իր Սուրբ հոգիով մխիթարէ զաւակները, հարազատները եւ յատկապէս Հասրեան, Սթանպուլեան, Էֆիզեան, Գանտիլեան եւ Պետիկեան ընտանիքները: Ամէն: □

Վեր. Սերոբ Մկրտիչեան
Հովիւ՝ Էմմանուէլ Եկեղեցիի

AMAA Armenia Summer Camp/Christmas Committee

Drive For

Backpacks Filled With Love

For Children in Armenia and Karabagh



Yes, I would like to provide backpacks filled with school supplies at \$10 each for needy children in Armenia and Karabagh. Enclosed please find my donation of ----- U.S. dollars for ----- backpacks.

Name -----

Address -----

Donations in lieu of backpacks may be sent to your church's Missions Committee or directly to the AMAA at 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652.

The backpacks will be distributed to the children at the conclusion of Summer Camps. They will joyfully return home ready for school!

Armenian Missionary Association of America
31 West Century Road
Paramus, NJ 07652

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