

# A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ARMENIAN MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION OF AMERICA, 1918-1995

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## INTRODUCTION

The roots of the AMAA are interconnected. Its story is simple, but the route which led to its founding is complex. It has a connection to the Armenian Evangelical Reformation of the mid-nineteenth century in Turkey, the Enlightenment of the same period, the growth of Armenian Evangelical Churches in Turkish-Armenia between 1846 and 1915 to about 140, and the scattering of those churches to about nineteen countries as a result of the Genocide. (Figures for the same period for Armenia Proper are not available to us.)

### **Impact of the Nineteenth Century Enlightenment**

Following the Industrial Revolution, the striking changes in economic, social, intellectual and communication structures in England were so great that they changed the face of Europe. With large numbers of Armenian youth attending universities overseas and returning home to Turkey, the ferment of intellectual movement became a point where Armenian reform tendencies converged. Intellectual awakening induced questioning; economic well-being led to independent thinking; exposure to European trends induced desire for better ways of life. This revival of thinking on all fronts suggested a parallel revival in the religious area. In matters of Christian existence, Armenians had already formed a Society of the Pious in search for effective Christian life.

### **The Congregational Connection**

The nineteenth century was a period of worldwide missionary movements. German, English, American and other missionary societies searched the world to bring the unconverted to Christ and to revitalize the faith of those who were shrouded in ignorance. Into this fertile soil in Turkey, where the ratio of Christians vis a vis the total Turkish population was about thirty-three percent, entered the missionaries of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions (ABCFM) in 1831. This Board's missionaries, unable to reach the

Moslem population in Turkey, turned to the Armenians who were in sincere search of the Scriptures. The desires of the two groups coincided and Christian life was revitalized. The "Hayassdaniaitz Avedaranagan Yegeghetsee's" founding on July 1, 1846 brought phenomenal religious, social, educational and intellectual growth.

### **The Vision of U. S. Churches**

The dispersion following the withdrawal of the Allied Forces beginning in 1922 brought many Armenian pastors to the United States and thousands of their parishioners. Prior to the dispersion, many farsighted Armenians had already immigrated to the United States. The spiritual leadership along with active Christian laymen, felt burdened to establish an outreach to help heartrending needs worldwide and to uphold Armenian institutions lest community growth would be stunted. Having rubbed shoulders with missionaries, they had received inspiration to become mission-oriented.

### **The Founding and Incorporation of the Armenian Missionary Association of America**

First, in 1907, the Union of the churches in eastern United States formed a Missions Committee, then, at three Annual Meetings of the Union (1915, 1916, 1917), the delegates began to show impatience with the lack of progress. Finally, the Executive Committee of the Union, composed of the Reverends Mhram T. Kalaydjian, H. Y. Yardumian, S. B. Yacoubian and businessmen John Telfeyan and Dikran Donchian were instructed to come up with an organizational structure for a Missionary Association by the time the Convention met in Worcester in 1918. These men presented their findings and recommendations, along with formulated Bylaws to the Annual Meeting of the Union held in Worcester in 1918. On Friday, June 7, 1918 delegates from ten established churches and twelve mission fellowships set aside hesitation and voted with enthusiasm and unanimity to establish the Armenian Missionary Association of America unanimously and enthusiastically. Between the years 1918 and 1921, the Bylaws were finalized and the Association was registered as a Corporation.

## **THE ACCOMMODATING POLICY OF THE AMAA**

### **The Preparatory Period**

Now they had to keep the momentum alive. That meant organization, structure, activity programs, funds and leadership.

It was not easy, but they tried. The Constitution, modeled after US corporations, provided for a public charitable organization based on membership. The service programs were few -- mostly for requests that came from Armenia, such as helping a church, providing small stipends to pastors, or aiding a school. An administrator to carry on the work was difficult to find. The



Rev. M. T. Kalaydjian gave up his happy ministry in the Troy Church and did marvelous inspirational work in the dual capacity of mission pastor at large and executive secretary: he organized Missions Committees in churches, a California District Committee and a fund raising program, but graciously resigned due to unavailability of funds. The Association could not muster a budget of \$10,000. Plans for a \$500,000 fund drive were abandoned due to deteriorating political conditions in the homeland. So, there was serious apprehension. The burden: Can we redeem the needy? Can we provide for the education of youth in refugee camps? Can we help construct the dispersed people's religious life? If we don't help wipe out ignorance and hopelessness by providing educational, social, intellectual and religious opportunities, might we not lose a whole generation? Their misgivings and anxiety were moderated by their expectations because they had a few things going for them. The most important one was the commitment and dynamism of the Board of Trustees. Well-trained and well-educated ministers of the Gospel, highly successful businessmen, and equally successful intellectuals were at the helm right from the beginning. The composition of the first 15-member Trustees brightened the picture. There was commitment in those hearts: John Telfeyan (President); Dikran Donchian (V. President), B. John Mushekian (Treasurer); Prof. Haroutune Dadourian, Melidon B. Ignatius; Rev. Kapriel Bedrosian; Prof. Vahan Babasinian, Rev. A. A. Bedikian; Dr. Aram G. Hejinian; Rev. Haig Yardumian; Armenag Mahjoubian, Dikran S. Sarkissian; Rev. Hagop M. Depoyan, Minas Kondazian; Garabed T. Pushman, alternating roles with about fifteen others on and off, steered the course of the AMAA for a quarter of a century. At the first Annual Meeting of the organization in 1919, their commitment shone brightly when, on receiving news California was joining the efforts with generous donations, registered pledgers multiplied their pledges - a few 100, some 300 and others 500-percent. Amazing enthusiasm prevailed. These high quality leaders attended meetings, struggled with budgets, accommodated individuals and institutions that appealed for help, appointed mission workers for Armenian lands, personally undertook the wages of Executive Secretaries on part-time basis, and when budget provisions came short, paid the deficit out of their pockets. This kind of commitment sustained the fledgling organization.

### **The Organizational Period**

Organization and structure in the preparatory years were difficult to achieve, so development was slow. The Rev. M. T. Kalaydjian served for a little over three years in two capacities, but only about one year as executive secretary of the AMAA. The Rev. Antranig A. Bedikian, whose service was always non-compensatory, filled the unfulfilled years of executives almost automatically. The Rev. Manasseh G. Papazian became secretary for one year (1928-1929), then went back to his church in Fresno because the Trustees did not have the means to employ him long term. The tough years of the

Depression were undertaken by the Rev. Yervant Hadidian, Ph. D. He worked creatively from September 12, 1930 to 1935 on a half-time basis. An important contribution was his establishing the Joint AMAA/ABCFM Committee. Together with the Congregational Board, the mission work in the Middle East was reviewed and needs met jointly. Rev. Nishan Begian followed, on a one-third time basis, until his death in 1943, necessitating A. A. Bedikian to take over the helm once again on the customary unreimbursed basis until a full time executive was appointed. It has been reported that he did this, on and off, for a total of 15 years. The last try was providential, because 1946 was the One Hundredth Anniversary of the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Reformation. On the Board for over a quarter of a century, and having full grasp of the spirit of the Evangelical Movement, his personal influence could be a factor for the fulfillment of the Centennial Fund Campaign - a milestone for AMAA. So it came about that with the strong recommendation of Bedikian, a fully-paid, full-time and fully-equipped Executive Secretary was hired on September 20, 1946 in the person of the Rev. Puzant H. Kalfayan.

For the first time continuity of an administrator was assured. Equipped with University and Theological training, thoroughly familiar with the institutions and needs of the mission field and conversant with five languages used in the field, he was the perfect choice. Aware of the work the AMAA had supported in Armenia, Turkish Armenia, Lebanon, Syria, Greece, Cyprus, Bulgaria, Iran, France, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay, and conscious of the growing needs of the regions, Kalfayan was able to build on the past. The help provided before was not so much a financial solution of problems but rather an arousal of hope. In those very terrible days the prayers and the encouragement of friends generated a sense of solidarity and hope - a more important contribution than the limited money AMAA could distribute. Within two years of his appointment, Kalfayan had doubled revenue. The larger revenue enabled bigger budgets for the old and new projects, for it is AMAA policy to use all annual income. Between 1946-48, the Centennial Fund grew to \$154,000, \$19,000 of which was raised in the Near East, showing unity of purpose between the churches of the Near East Union and the Armenian Missionary Association. Kalfayan also broadened the number of the leadership so that more persons served on Boards and sub-boards. Among the number who gave him strong support were newly enlisted giants who gave of their time and wealth and expertise. Kalfayan prayed for and supported the creation of a Teacher Training Institute (TTI) to prepare teachers, social workers and preachers. TTI was sacrificed to found Haigazian College in 1955 with the understanding Haigazian College would do TTI's work as well. He started a Child Education Sponsorship Program inspired by the example of the Christian Children's Fund, and planned for a One Million Dollar Fortieth Anniversary Campaign in May, 1959. Just as the Campaign was to take wings, the sad news of his death on



May 26 shocked every leader and member of the AMAA. The then President of the AMAA, J. H. Hekimian, M.D. wrote to the constituents on May 27, 1959: "It is my sad duty to inform you of the sudden passing away of the Rev. P. H. Kalfayan, our Executive Secretary. We all share in the sense of this grave loss to our entire people and our profound sympathies go to the members of his family."

Even in death he was helpful, for his tragic departure stirred committees to surpass their efforts. During his thirteen years of executive work, he popularized the AMAA. The Rev. Edward S. Tovmassian followed Kalfayan in 1959, leaving his loving congregation of greater Detroit. He served for nine years before retiring in 1968, following a heart attack. His parental image, soft sell, friendly and winning visitations, his touching sermons added further to the growing image of the Armenian Missionary Association. He dealt wisely with the Istanbul Youth Home for children brought from the interior of Turkey and found many sponsors for these youth, in addition to his fruitful promotion of the Child Education Sponsorship Program. Steven Mardiguian became Acting Executive from September 11, 1968 to December 11, 1968, holding the "fort" while search was made for a permanent Executive. In the period outlined, there was gradual but steady growth of funds, making possible more generous budgets for additional new projects and services. There were growing signs that AMAA's mission outreach was ready to crystallize into major undertakings.

### THE GROWING STORY OF AMAA'S OUTREACH

The assumption of the office of Executive Secretary for the AMAA is analogous to the passing of the torch of light by Olympic athletes from one station to the other. Or, akin to a relay team with each member carrying the baton as fast as possible until success is achieved. And so it was that following the energetic leadership of Kalfayan the baton, or the Olympic Torch, was passed on to Giragos Haroutune Chopourian on January 1, 1969. In 1975, because of the more extensive Administrative Responsibilities, increased financial resources and multiplicity of projects, the title was revised to Executive Director. He served close to nineteen years retiring officially on August 1, 1987. When he assumed the work, he "inherited" a little under \$2,000,000, at his retirement the Association's total net worth amounted to \$25, 538,088. In the same period, the budgets were \$160,245 and \$1,753,606 respectively.

This kind of growth enabled the Association to intensify its support of the established services for church, publications, schools, charitable institutions, handicapped groups and many other human services. But it also made it possible to engage in new programs, among which, to name a few, were: adding the Armenian Uniting Church of Australia into the program, the purchase of the IPC building for Haigazian College; princely contribution by Miss Ruth Philibosian for construction of a seven-story building for the Yeprem and

Martha Philibosian School in Beirut; shared expenditure with financier Steve Philibosian of a quarter of a million dollars to build and or improve seven or more school buildings in Lebanon; campaigning for a Ministerial Retirement Fund for the Near East Union of Churches for \$100,000 which has grown to \$368,604; updating of the Retirement Pension Fund for North American ministers, establishing the AEUNA/AMAA Home Missions Committee with annual budget runs of a quarter of a million or more, building the AMAA Headquarters in Paramus in cooperation with the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus with a donation of \$100,000 by Miss Ruth Philibosian, promoting the \$50,000 Independently Investable Fund concept which was picked up by about 15 persons, the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center in Los Angeles, developing a U.S. College level Scholarship Program, organizing an Armenian Evangelical World Conference out of which grew the Armenian Evangelical World Council, establishing AMAA Branches worldwide, establishing an Armenian Elementary School with funds from Miss Elize Merdinian and her sister Charlotte, assisting in the formation of the Armenian Missionary Association of Canada Inc. in 1984.

The next person to pick up the baton was Movses Boghos Janbazian. He served as Field Director from September 9, 1980 to July 31, 1987 and has been serving as Executive Director since August 1, 1987. As can be seen, there was a period of almost seven years when Chopourian and Janbazian collaborated together and participated in its growth. Since Janbazian's appointment there has been further phenomenal growth in Funds and Projects. The Treasurer's Report on April 30, 1996 shows consolidated net worth of \$48,925,330 and a budgetary commitment of \$5,411,263 for 1994-1995. It is gratifying to know that \$1,635,000 of the 1994-95 budget is assigned for the evangelistic, relief and infrastructure needs of Armenia. This growth too has had its salutary effect in providing greater substantial assistance, with special stipends provided to ministers in Lebanon whose local salaries are so meager in exchange value that life would have been miserable without such provision; founding of a pioneer church in Belgium. Added to the burdens of the Executive Director are the grave needs as well as opportunities in Armenia. The growth referred to may be summarized under the following periods:

Years	Assets	Budget
1946-1960	755,000	108,200
1960-1969	2,200,000	211,000
1969-1987	26,549,686	1,753,606
1987-1996	48,925,330	5,411,263



## AMAA'S OUTREACH PROGRAMS

### A. Education

For displaced people, the most important and permanent capital is education. Consider the 1915-1918 genocide; the return following Armistice on November 11, 1918; the betrayal of the victorious Western powers when they abandoned their Mandate in 1922; the practically total exodus from their homeland and dispersion to over fifty countries. Consider further how the dispersed were further dispersed: when Alexandretta was delivered to Turkey; Palestine was occupied by Israel, Cyprus was claimed by Turkey; and the most bitter one, when Lebanon was practically destroyed. Those educated fared much better. Conscious of the importance of education, the AMAA supported any and all calls that came from churches and institutions for educational purposes.

#### 1. Schools

Our Evangelical leadership was astute in founding schools. Even the smallest church established a school, mostly from kindergarten to primary. Those more able or larger, set up schools from Kindergarten to Secondary. Such schools mushroomed everywhere - in Lebanon (8), Syria (5), Greece (2), Cyprus (1), Iran (1), Turkey (2), U.S. (2) - in which the Bible was also taught. In the bosom of each church, there was also an organized Sunday School to make sure the intellectual and religious development of each child went hand in hand.

Thousands of well-educated and enlightened youth graduated from these schools, creating a core on which a middle class population was built from 1918 through 1995. Genuine praise has been given by all sectors of the Armenian community for the quality of education and ethical training transmitted by the Evangelical School System. The AMAA stood by these schools through thick and thin, encouraging by word and deed.

#### 2. Educational Scholarship Funds

The importance attached to education was further highlighted when AMAA accepted contributions to create a College Scholarship Fund both at Haigazian University College in Lebanon and in the United States. At Haigazian there are twelve \$25,000 Individually Endowed Funds against a pledge by the College that for every Fund one qualified disadvantaged student will be educated gratis. In the United States, the income distributed from the Endowed Funds runs from \$100,000 to \$250,000 annually. Scholarships are granted on the basis of need, character and academic excellence in that order. Great tribute goes to the large number of donors whose passion for educational excellence has made a healthy impact on thousands of lives.

#### 3. Haigazian University College: The Crown Jewel of AMAA's Outreach

Many in the Evangelical community in the Middle East felt that higher education was an absolute necessity to prepare leaders for the community - teachers, educators, preachers, school principals, nurses, social workers and the

like. When local problems in Lebanon were resolved and the proper licenses were obtained, the AMAA entered the picture, committing itself in faith to help with the founding of a college level educational institution. In 1955, with the sum of \$25,000 pledged by Steve and Mary Mehagian, in memory of Mary's father Dr. Armenag Haigazian, President of the Jenanian Institute of Konya, the school was organized and named Haigazian College, which was also interpreted by a number of important leaders in Lebanon to be a fortunate reference to the Armenian Haigazian Dynasty. Leaders in the AMAA and in the newly-established Board of Trustees rolled up their sleeves and went to work, first providing towards the budget of the College, second hiring a President in the person of John Markarian, Ph.D., third purchasing a very adequate building in Beirut and naming it in honor of Steve Mugar who had pledged \$250,000. It was used against the purchase of the IPC building bought for about \$500,000 (including expenses), the AMAA providing the difference from other funds, and fourth by developing a plan for an Endowment Fund for the College.

Haigazian University College, like its founder, the AMAA, started on a shoe string. It opened on October 17, 1955 with just 43 students and an annual budget of \$18,000. In 1918, the annual budget of the AMAA was about \$10,000. The latter's annual budget rose to \$5,411,263 and the College's to \$147,000, not inclusive of student tuition, and at some point the student body reached 680, currently averaging about 300.

The forward looking educational vision of the Armenian Evangelicals made the founding of the college possible, coupled with the close cooperation of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches of the Near East (UAEC-NE) and the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA). While the AMAA was of great help, specially with the enthusiasm of the Haddin-born "triumvirate" Stephen Philibosian, Steven Mehagian and Henry Gertmenian, all AMAA members, and the inspirational leadership of Puzant Kalfayan, it could not have been a successful enterprise without able local leadership in the country in which Haigazian College was placed, namely, Beirut, Lebanon. The Union provided the much needed skills and direction. The administrative arrangement was also done cooperatively, a Board of Trustees being established by AMAA in the United States and a Board of Managers in Beirut with membership from the Union, AMAA and the First Armenian Evangelical High School.

The AMAA was supportive of creating a Haigazian University College in Yerevan, Armenia with the cooperation of the Board of Trustees to provide opportunity to local Armenians for a Master of Business Administration (MBA) degree. The program was suspended due to difficulties in Armenia. Sixteen students benefited by qualifying for MBA degrees.

The college has tremendous public relations opportunity in bestowing honorary degrees, but it is not clear if it is using that advantage to the fullest



extent. In 1980, on the occasion of its Twenty-Fifth Anniversary, when AMAA representatives attended the graduation ceremonies, honorary degrees were bestowed on former UN Ambassador Set Momjian, Dr. Giragos H. Chopourian, Mrs. Joyce Stein and the Rev. Hovhannes P. Aharonian. One important contribution the College made to the Armenian national "image" arose out of the natural milieu in which it operated. As a people, Armenians are parochial. Haigazian College broke through that narrow confine. Haigazian was cast into an Armenian Evangelical Church-related atmosphere. Its curriculum and educational direction was based on the American model. It operated in a non-Armenian host country being impacted unavoidably by the culture of the host country. Most important, it carried an Armenian name and was created to prepare Armenian leadership, yet was open to having a mixed student body. Consequently, Haigazian broke through that Armenian parochial barrier, augmenting the "image" of Armenians as a universal people. Haigazian became a mini United Nations.

In the words of the first President Dr. John Markarian: "The Evangelical Christian influence, the Armenian language and culture, the American form of education and the location in Lebanon have joined to make Haigazian University College a very special center of higher education."

Up to now about 1500 graduates have walked through the portals of Haigazian University College who are spread over numerous countries providing able leadership in arts, sciences and business administration. Some of these were beneficiaries of AMAA scholarships, particularly from the twelve \$25,000 funds which were provided by Mr. Haig Berberian, Mr. Louis Jivelekian of Argentina, Mr. Alex Manougian, Miss Elize Merdinian, Mr. Avedis Chakejian of Egypt, Dr. Puzant Hadidian, Dr. J. Hekimian, Mr. Robert Hekimian, Dr. Dikran Kassouni, Mr. Joseph and Mrs. Joyce Stein (2 funds) and Mrs. Flora Sarkissian. Annually, one deserving student will receive free education from each of the twelve funds.

These graduates are serving communities round the world as clergymen, teachers, businessmen, professors, newsmen, diplomats and social workers with many having reached prominent heights in their special fields of endeavor.

The Armenian Missionary Association is specially grateful to the four Presidents of the College: Dr. John Markarian, Dr. Gilbert Bilezikian, Dr. Verne Fletcher, and the newly-elected Dr. John Khanjian. Gratitude is also due to the Faculty, Deans, Acting Presidents, Chaplains and Administrative Personnel for their serious and productive involvement with Haigazian University College. Without them it would have been futile to operate the institution.

## **B. Human Services**

The thrust of AMAA is mission. The important word in its four-name

title is "missionary." That is what makes it unique among the vast number of charitable organizations in the Armenian world. And "mission" means reaching out to needs of human beings in every area of those needs bringing to them the love of Christ in word, to save, and in deed, to salvage. Structuring their spiritual condition, lifting them up out of their physical impoverishment, saving them from ignorance, meeting serious life-threatening emergencies, encouraging the handicapped. But to do all these, like pipes from a spring to a home, a financial pipeline is needed. An important activity of the Association, by heavenly fiat, is to inspire members to provide for those needs unselfishly and humbly. Another role of the AMAA is to sublimate the motives of members to make outreach possible by their own outreach. But in the process, it may appear that the AMAA is interested just in money. Nowhere else can the true heart and soul of the AMAA be understood better than in its programs for human services. All annual income, to repeat, is expended annually.

#### 1. Serving the Sick, the Elderly, and the Handicapped

The AMAA has no in-house facilities to do such human services. In a sense, its work is passive in that it helps others do the services. The Association supports institutions serving the sick, the widowed, the elderly, the poor, the disadvantaged and the handicapped. Often acting on recommendations from churches, Unions of Churches and care-provider institutions, it locks in the required amounts into its Annual Budget and makes the distributions during the budget year. A number of the institutions are: in Aleppo, the Bethesda Medical and Dental Clinics, the Old Age Home of Aleppo and the Progressive Association of the Blind; in Lebanon, the Nor Marash Medical Clinic, Social Service Center of the Union and the Center for the Armenian Handicapped.

#### 2. Supporting Pastors, Teachers and the Retired

Expensive conditions due to unearthly inflation make life unbearable to low salaried persons and retired persons with no retirement benefits. In consequence, the Association established an Endowment Fund generously supported by over 175 individuals, enabling the Association to invest \$368,930. The income provides pension and/or stipends to teachers, ministers and widows of ministers both in the Near East, the United States and Canada.

#### 3. Encouraging the Evangelical Church Unions in Their Needs

On proof of need, support has been given to the Union of the Near East for numerous services, including church and school construction; the Union of France for mission, church construction and children's camps; the Union of North America for Home Mission. The AMAA has also been helpful, in investing Union Funds both to augment the portfolios and create income for use by the respective bodies.

#### 4. Meeting Special Emergencies

Whenever major medical emergencies have occurred, the AMAA has been on the front line to help. A young man from Damascus came to the States



with a failing kidney and the AMAA rolled its sleeves to raise the needed sum of money; another from Lebanon was similarly helped for another kind of medical emergency. And so on!

These human services were rendered in response to God's question, "Where is thy brother, Abel?" The AMAA is responsive to that challenge to be its brother's keeper.

### **C. Church Extension Worldwide**

The AMAA was established by the vision of the U.S. churches and they became the mainstay of support of its programs. The Association was asked to do mission both at home and overseas. Numerous factors, including new immigration, necessitated the U.S. churches to turn to the AMAA for assistance of all kinds. A request was made for a Social Service Center in Los Angeles to help with the influx of immigrants from Armenia. New immigrants to Canada desired that the AMAA assist with the purchase of a building for church services. Gradually, policies were developed to help meet the needs of churches. For about fifty years, the AMAA was unable to respond to loans to churches. Fortunately, as its resources increased, prospects for positive responses became possible. The following programs were formulated:

#### **1. To Provide Assistance for Church Planting**

Support was provided to Iran for two churches, to Canada for two, and in U.S. for two. They are active churches providing spiritual nurture for members of their churches as well as the communities at large.

#### **2. To Establish a Church Loan Program**

The AMAA Board, after about fifty years of refusal to provide loans to churches on various valid grounds, finally determined to help. At least four churches have benefited from loans the Association has provided at very low interest rate. The loans are provided from endowed funds which must be returned to provide income for projects.

#### **3. To Assist Mission Outreach Beyond the Confines of Churches**

Assistance has also been given towards the mission budget of the churches when the outreach is beyond their confines. Such assistance is viewed as encouragement to churches to engage in mission. In truth, unconditional encouragement is available when churches engage in pure mission.

### **D. Evangelism**

In three texts of the New Testament, the mandate for evangelism is spelled out clearly -

Matthew 28:19 (Go ye therefore, and teach all nations...);

Mark 16:15 (Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature),

Acts 1:8 ( ...and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth)

It is important to note the words **teach, preach the gospel, be witnesses**. Those words define what evangelism is. The Greeks call the *New Testament* "To Evangelion" - the good news of redemption. The AMAA is supposed to teach, preach and be witness to the salvation offered in Christ. How well it has been able to do that may be in question. But the true thrust of its work is just that.

#### 1. United Effort by Churches and Unions

Each Sunday at 11:00 a.m. (time zone adjusted), the Word is read and preached in 83 churches in 19 countries. The voices of the believers are raised in songs and hymns, and with their lives they witness to the truths of the Scriptures. They all engage in some form of mission outreach. They gather round the communion table and commune with Christ and pledge to live lives worthy of their Lord. Each unit is a mission. The Word is taught in the 20 Evangelical Schools in five countries from early grade to college. So, the Armenian Evangelical World has been putting its best foot forward and letting God bring the harvest. The AMAA is the instrument of unity of action.

#### 2. Evangelism Through Publications

The AMAA has published Christian literature and Bibles, providing nurture through the printed medium. It has also provided simple daily devotional material in Armenian with the publication of the *Daily Bread*, distributed widely, and published edifying books.

#### 3. And now Armenia

God, the Lord of History, works in mysterious ways to accomplish his purposes. Hardly anyone could have divined the crumbling of the mighty Soviet Empire in his own short lifetime and even more unbelievable was the possibility of Armenia becoming independent. In 1918, while the Bolsheviks were sovietizing the regions of the Caucasus between 1918-1920 the Armenians took advantage of the situation and declared independence. But squeezed between Turkey and the Soviet Union the Republic of Armenia was obliterated and replaced by a Soviet Armenian Government in December, 1920. Thus ended all dreams of the AMAA to do Christian work in Armenia, with atheistic philosophy obliterating all religious orientation for 75 years. The darkness of the godless society played havoc with the moral, ethical and social values of the population. But with the Independence Declaration in February, 1992, we have come full circle. The Association is in Armenia, heavily involved in Christian work, relief provisions, church planting, leadership training. More than half a million *Bibles* and portions of Scripture have been distributed, mostly for students in schools. Most of our pastors have gone to Armenia for short terms to preach, teach, prepare Christian leaders among youth. What does Armenia need most? Houses? Help for the country's infrastructure? Food, employment, healthcare? Yes, absolutely! The gravest need, however, is the healthy Christian orientation of the people to revitalize their



moral, ethical and social values, for which permanent workers are much needed. One is reminded of Isaiah who was frightened to respond to God's call, but when he felt cleansed he said, "Here am I, send me." (Isa. 6:8b) Opportunity is knocking at the door to bring spiritual revival to Armenia. Who will take up the challenge?

### THE SECRET OF AMAA'S UNIQUE SUCCESS

Growth of charitable organizations is not any different than successes experienced by entrepreneurial businesses. There must be a dream or a vision, imaginative leaders, a clear purpose of what product to sell, and good administration undergirded by law and order. All of these the AMAA has except that **it is not a for profit business. All revenues are used for upbuilding life.**

The AMAA had a very good constitution and bylaws. It changed in small ways over the original, but the purpose held firm - to become an instrument to serve churches and God's children - "to act as the missionary agency of Armenian Evangelical Churches and to encourage religious, educational, literary and philanthropic work at home and abroad." It was not a dictatorial document, but a public one. Suggestions were made to hand over the management to a few able businessmen to "grow" the Association, but wisdom prevailed and the AMAA stayed as the property of its members. It has an open policy, but stays church-oriented.

Over the years, the AMAA had superb leadership. They were church-related men and women of sterling character, with apolitical orientation, generous of their time and substance, and committed. It turned out that all of the Association's executives were pastors - the Reverends Kalaydjian, Bedikian, Hadidian, Kalfayan, Tovmassian, Chopourian and Janbazian among others. This provided stability and peace. The 26 presidents from 1919 to 1996, a number of whom served two or more terms, were able men of goodwill and of genuine commitment to the cause of mission. The fourteen treasurers during the same period were all experts in the field of finance and investment. The thirty or more recording secretaries were hardworking men and women who became instrumental in creating historical records with their detailed recording of the decisions of the Board of Directors. An incorporated body by fiat is dependent upon legal counsel. The Association was blessed with many able and distinguished attorneys who served the AMAA on a "pro-bono" basis for many years. Gregory Mouradkian of Andover, Massachusetts, was one of the early ones, so were Martin Hatch and Haig Haigouni. Others included Alan Philibosian, George Phillips, Lawrence Kalfayan, nephew of the late Puzant Kalfayan. One who served for over thirty years was Albert Momjian who was recently appointed by the Board of Directors as AMAA president currently serving his third year (for a listing of presidents and treasurers see AMAA Annual Report 1994-1995, pp. 8-9). Neither should we fail to make mention of

the hundreds of individuals who served on more than thirty committees each year. But more than all, we need to commend the services of more than 350 members of the Board of Directors who faithfully traveled long distances to attend meetings and make their constructive input over the past 75 years. At a time when there is a dramatic breakdown of "trust" when, 70% of Americans say they do not trust their government, it is a refreshing feeling that the AMAA leadership is trustworthy and reliable bringing credibility to AMAA. And the public trusts the AMAA and its leadership.

The Association's timely and well-planned fund raising campaigns strengthened its financial base of operation. Two big efforts were on the occasion of the Fiftieth and Sixtieth Anniversaries of the AMAA, producing about \$5,000,000 each time. There were several minor ones which were just as effective (fortieth in 1958, and a Haigazian 25th Anniversary in 1980). To alert members of the danger of dying "intestate" the Association developed a four year program on Wills, Testamentary, Revocable and Irrevocable Trusts. Occasional releases on Wills continue to be made. Over the years, AMAA became **beneficiary of many bequests**. The AMAA also learned a lesson from "ants." Ants store food for the harsh winter days when they cannot work as well. So, the Association placed great importance on the creation of endowed funds. It now provides benefits from about \$30,000,000 in endowed funds. Without that reserve, it would be impossible to raise each year the \$5 million needed for its operation.

A Constitution with vision, superb and trustworthy leadership, generous public support from all sectors, a non-political orientation, an endowment fund policy, expertise in investment, quick responses by the administrative personnel to questions and donations from the public are elements which made progress and success possible.

### **A WORD NEEDS TO BE SAID ABOUT AMAA'S GENERAL INFLUENCE**

Armenian Evangelicals have no church hierarchy, nor a centralized administration. They have four Unions of Churches spread over the U.S., the Near East, France and Armenia which are independent and the churches within each Union are themselves independent of, except for the Union of France which is somewhat centralized. Because of that situation, the AMAA became a unifying force. All churches and the communities which they represent, look to the AMAA as the cement that ties the communities together. In addition, AMAA kept the challenge of mission alive before them. Consequently, mission projects touched the lives of Armenians in about twenty countries. AMAA's mission outreach is beginning to extend to non-Armenian emergencies, thus broadening its effectiveness with the salutary impact on the churches to become less parochial. Because of its non-political status, AMAA is able to commune



with all groups of Armenians, and often, it plays a unifying role. But above all, AMAA has been a great source of **HOPE** by assuring Armenian evangelicals worldwide that they have a "big brother" to lean on. It is a gratifying feeling that most non-evangelical Armenians show appreciation for the services of the AMAA, specially in the field of education and culture. Mr. Onnig Marshlian, a non-evangelical, speaking on behalf of the Prelacy Executive Council and the Prelate at the 75th anniversary observance of the AMAA said: "I am particularly impressed by the way the AMAA has fired up the evangelical communities -- and mobilized its resources for the humanitarian, life-saving and nation-saving assistance it has given the population of Armenia since the earthquake in 1988.....In so doing, the AMAA has set a good example to all....It, has, moreover, demonstrated the unity of heart among Armenians, the inner spiritual unity of heart that we all crave for, a unity that is built on our shared identity..."

### WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

Albert Momjian, Esquire, the President of the AMAA, gave a stirring message at the 75th Anniversary Celebrations. Talking of "Soaring on the Wings of the Future of the AMAA" he outlined five proposals based on the triumphant past of the AMAA: First, a retreat once every five years with a cross-section of representatives to plan for the future; Second, to plan to train leaders for the future work of the AMAA; Third, to internationalize the AMAA Board so as to have international representatives to deliberate and make policy together for the whole World; Fourth, re-evaluating the administrative functions of the AMAA because we need to think of new and effective procedures to administer the overwhelming work load; Fifth, to rethink AMAA's goals in all of our mission fields, specially in the Middle East and Armenia, as long as we keep in mind that our guiding star is service to God. He concluded in these words: "The AMAA has had a triumphant past. I believe it can have a wonderful future. But it isn't going to be wonderful at all unless we rededicate ourselves to the challenges which lie ahead and unless we formulate new ideas, new programs and new techniques to respond to the unique challenges of the society in which we live today and the new challenges that will develop week by week, month by month and year by year over the next 75 years."

The AMAA assuredly will stay an upbuilding influence in the years ahead because its leaders will leave no stone unturned to keep it a progressive and service-oriented institution fired up by the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.

G. H. CH.

ՀԱԿԻՐԸ ՊԱՏՄՈՒԹԻՒՆ  
ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱՅԻ ՀԱՅ ԱՒԵՏԱՐԱՆՉԱԿԱՆ ԸՆԿԵՐԱԿՑՈՒԹԵԱՆ  
1918-1995

(ԱՄՓՈՓՈՒՄ)

ՎԵՐ. ԿԻՐԱԿՈՍ ՉՈՓՈՒՐԵԱՆ

Թէպէտե՛ս Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան սաղմնաւորումին արմատները կը հասնին մինչեւ տասնիններորդ դար՝ իրականութեան մէջ անիկա գոյութեան կոչուեցաւ միայն աւարտելէ ետք Համաշխարհային Առաջին Պատերազմին, մանաւանդ՝ 1922էն, երբ յաղթական պետութիւնները մէկ առ մէկ թուրքին զիջեցան հայկական շրջանները, եւ առ այդ՝ վտարանդի հայութիւնը ցրուեցաւ քիչ մը ամէն կողմ:

Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիներու առաջին միաւորումին կարելի է հանդիպիլ Միացեալ Նահանգներու արեւելեան ափին վրայ, ուր, 1907ին, զանազան եկեղեցիներու ներկայացուցիչներ եկան քով քովի եւ կազմեցին յանձնախումբ մը, որ, սակայն, հազիւ թէ եղաւ ցոյց տալու պէս կեանք ու կենսունակութիւն: Յետագայ տարեկան հանդիպումները յանձնախումբին եկան վկայելու ճշմարտութիւնն այս հաստատումին, ահա թէ ինչո՞ւ համար 1918ի Ուորչեսթըրի մէջ կայացող տարեկան հանդիպումին՝ կարգ մը ներկայացուցիչներ 7 Յունիսին հիմը դրին Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան, որուն ծրագիր-կանոնագիրն իր վերջնական ձեւն ստացաւ 1921ին: Յաջորդ մէկուկէս տասնամեակը տեսաւ հիմնաւորումն ու զարգացումը Ընկերակցութեան, թէպէտե՛ս դանդաղ: Այս շրջանին Ընկերակցութեան որպէս վարիչ-քարտուղար ծառայեցին Վերապատուելիներ Թ. Գալայճեանը, Ա.Ա. Պետիկեանը, Մ.Հ. Փափագեանը եւ Ե. Հատիտեանը ոչ-մնայունի հանգամանքով: Միայն 20 Սեպտեմբեր 1946ին էր որ վարիչ-քարտուղարի մնայուն դրութիւնը հաստատուեցաւ պաշտօնի կոչուելովը Վեր. Բիւզանդ Գալֆայեանին, որ ո՛չ միայն իր վարելիք պաշտօնին համար լաւապէս պատրաստուած մարդն էր այլ մանաւանդ տեսիլք ունեցող եւ զայն հետապնդելու պատրաստ անհատ մը: Ահա թէ ինչպէ՞ս կարճ ժամանակի մը տեւողութեան անիկա կարողացաւ կրկնապատկել եկամուտները Ընկերակցութեան եւ իրագործել նախապէս անհասանելի նկատող գործեր: Յաջողութեամբ աւարտելէ ետք Հայ Աւետարանականութեան հիմնադրութեան հարիւրամեակի հիմնադրամին աշխատանքները՝ իր գործակիցներուն հետ անիկա ձեռնարկեց հիմնադրութեանը Հայկազեան Գոյէճին, որուն զոհ պիտի երթար նախապէս Պէյրութի մէջ հաստատուած փոքր Ուսուցչանոցը:

Գալֆայեան հիմը դրաւ Մանուկներու Դաստիարակութեան քիկունք կանգնող ծրագրիի մը նաեւ, իսկ 1959ին ալ մէկ միլիոն տողար հիմնադրամի հանգանակութեան մը: Սակայն իր շուտափոյթ մահը անակնկալի մը առջեւ դրաւ ո՛չ միայն իր գործակիցներն ու շրջապատը՝ այլեւ իրագործելի բազմաթիւ ծրագիրներ:

Նոյն տարին իսկ, եւ անմիջապէս՝ Գալֆայեանին տեղը զրաւելու կոչուեցաւ Վեր. Թովմասեանը, որ, սակայն, Պոլսոյ մէջ հաստատելէ ետք Երիտասարդական Տունը



Թուրքիոյ ներքին գաւառներէն եկող հայ տղոց եւ պատանիներու համար եւ պայծառացնել եւ ծաղկեցնել ետք գոյութիւնն ու պատկերը Ընկերակցութեան՝ 1966ին հրաժարեցաւ իր պաշտօնէն եւ վերադարձաւ Տիբրոյթ՝ եկեղեցական իր նախկին պաշտօնին: Ջիմք փոխարինողի մը փնտռտուքի շրջանին՝ Ընկերակցութեան գործերը վարեց Սթիվըն Մարտիկեանը, որուն 1 Յունուար 1969ին որպէս վարիչ-քարտուղար յաջորդեց Վեր. Կիրակոս Չոփուրեանը, որ պաշտօնի վրայ պիտի մնար տասնին տարի՝ մինչեւ որ 1987ի Օգոստոսին հանգստեան կոչուէր: Հետաքրքրական է, որ երբ Չոփուրեան ձեռնարկեց պաշտօնի՝ Ընկերակցութեան գանձն ունէր երկու միլիոն տոլար եւ տարեկան 160,245 տոլար ամսվարկ, իսկ իր պաշտօնի աւարտին՝ գանձէն ներս կար 25,538,088 տոլար, տարեկան 1,753,606 տոլար ամսվարկով մը:

Չոփուրեանի պաշտօնավարութեան ընթացքին էր որ կատարուեցան կարգ մը հիմնական իրագործումներ. այսպէս՝ Հայկազեան Գոլէճին համար գնուեցաւ այժմ ծանօթ Մուկար շէնքը, վերանորոգուեցան կամ նոր ի նորոյ կառուցուեցան շէնքերը եօթը վարժարաններու, հաստատուեցաւ Հանգստեան Թոշակի Հիմնադրամը Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիի Միացեալ Նահանգներու եւ Միջին Արեւելքի պատուելիներուն համար, ծրագրուեցաւ եւ գործի դրուեցաւ Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերային Ծառայութեան կեդրոն մը Լոս Անճելէսի մէջ, զարգացաւ կրթանպաստներու դրութիւն մը Ամերիկեան Գոլէճներու մակարդակով, հաստատուեցաւ Մերտինեան նախակրթարանը, եւ կազմակերպուեցաւ Հայ Աւետարանական Համաշխարհային Համագումարը, որմէ շուտով ծնունդ պիտի առնէր Հայ Աւետարանական Համաշխարհային Խորհուրդը, եւ ի վերայ այսր ամենայնի՝ օժանդակութիւն տրուեցաւ որ 1984ին կազմակերպուի Գանատայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը:

Չոփուրեանի պաշտօնավարութեան վերջին եօթը տարիներուն, 1980էն սկսեալ, անոր գործակից դարձաւ Վեր. Մովսէս Դանպազեանը, որ բերաւ իր օժանդակութիւնը Ընկերակցութեան աճին ու զարգացումին: Իրաւ ալ՝ փոքր ակնարկ մը անոր վերջին յիսնամեակին վրայ նետուած՝ պիտի ցոյց տայ իսկայ այն փոփոխութիւնը որ եղաւ անորը տնտեսապէս. այսպէս՝

ՏԱՐԻ	ՀԻՄՆԱԳՐԱՄ ՏՈԼԱՐ	ԱՄՆԱՎԱՐԿ ՏՈԼԱՐ
1946-1960	755,000	108,200
1960-1969	2,200,000	211,000
1969-1987	26,549,686	1,753,606
1987-1996	48,925,330	5,411,263

Իսկ գործնապէս եւ գործօնութեամբ: Մակայն Ընկերակցութեան գործունէութիւնն ընդգրկեց

ա. Ուսումնական դաշտը (կառուցում եւ նորոգում դպրոցներու, կրթանպաստ, Հայկազեան Համալսարանական Գոլէճի հիմնադրամ, նպաստ՝ հայ աւետարանական վարժարաններու),

բ. Մարդկայնական ծառայութիւններ (խնամատարական օգնութիւն հիւանդներու, ծերերու, խեղանդամներու, նիւթական օժանդակութիւն պաշտօնէ դադրած պատուելիներու, քարոզիչներու եւ ուսուցիչներու, նիւթական նպաստ Հայ Աւետարանական Միութեան)

թիւներում, եւ օժանդակութիւններ տարապայման կացութիւններու պարագային)։

գ. Եկեղեցական դաշտը (օժանդակութիւն եկեղեցիներու հաստատումին եւ կառուցումին, նիւթական փոխատուութիւն աւետարանական եկեղեցիներու, եւ դրամական օգնութիւն աւետարանական գործունէութեան. օժանդակութիւն կիրակնօրեայ դպրոցներու եւ պաշտամունքներու կատարումին, աւետարանական հրատարակութիւններու, եւ այսօր ալ Հայաստանի քրիստոնէացումին)։

Փոքր մէկ վերլուծումը բոլոր այս տուեալներուն՝ ցոյց կու տայ, որ Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութիւնը հաւատարիմ մնաց առջի իր սկզբունքներուն։ Իրագործելու համար ծառայութիւնը աւետարանական եկեղեցիներուն եւ առ այդ՝ քաջալերելու համար անոնց կրօնական, կրթական, գրական եւ բարեսիրական գործը, Հայաստանէն ներս թէ դուրս, Աւետարանականը ծառայեց որպէս միջոց եւ ունեցաւ գործօն մասնակցութիւնը վարիչ-բարտուղարներու սքանչելի շարքի մը, եւ մանաւանդ անխախտ գործունէութիւնն ու նիւթական օժանդակութիւնը զանազան իր վարչութիւններուն, խորհուրդներուն, եւ տնտեսական, կրթական, կրօնական թէ այլ ձեռի մարմիններուն, եւ հասաւ իր այսօրին։ Ասկէ ե՞տք։ Սակայն, ինչպէս կը դնէ Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ընկերակցութեան այժմու մախազահ Ալպըրթ Մոմճեանը՝ «ԱՀԱԸ ունեցաւ յաղթապանծ անցեալ մը։ Կը հաւատամ, որ անիկա կրնայ ունենալ սքանչելի ապագայ մը։ Սակայն երբեք պիտի չըլլայ սքանչելի՝ եթէ մենք մեզ վերստին չնուիրենք այն մարտահրաւերներուն որոնք կը գտնուին մեզմէ անդին, եւ եթէ չընդգրկենք մօր գաղափարներ, ծրագիրներ եւ միջոցառումներ պատասխանելու համար եզակի մարտահրաւերներուն այն ընկերութեան որմէ ներս կ'ապրինք այսօր, եւ չղիմագրաւենք մօր մարտահրաւերներ, որոնք պիտի զարգանան շաբաթ շաբաթ, ամիսէ ամիս եւ տարիէ տարի յաջորդ 75 տարիներու ընթացքին»։