

# TOMORROW'S CHURCH DEPENDS ON TODAY'S YOUTH.



ARCHBISHOP'S FUND FOR

# DAY

DIOCESAN ARMENIAN YOUTH

**T**he existence of any people, society or human collective is utterly dependent on its resources and the manner in which they are utilized. Resources — so often treated as if inexhaustible — and the planning that is dedicated to their proper stewardship will always bear commensurate results.

In the same manner, the future of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America will be determined by the depth of its membership's present commitment to the support of the Church's most precious resource — its youth.

The proper nurturing of our youth's spirituality has always been one of the Diocese's paramount concerns, in observance of the Lord Jesus Christ's command not to hinder the children from coming to the kingdom of God (Mark 10:14). As part of the body of Christ, we acknowledge the biblical promise that a child trained in holy living will not depart from it in adulthood (Proverbs 22:6). And it is especially important to note that God exhorts young people to remember Him while they still have their youth (Ecclesiastes 11:1).

That exhortation never had a more urgent ring than it has today. In these final years of the Twentieth Century, we are witness to the great battle being waged for the hearts, souls and minds of our youth.

Fr. Garen Gdanian of St. Peter Armenian Church in Watervliet, N.Y., clearly and concisely captured the problems confronting our youth in an article he wrote for the fall 1982 issue of *Junior Connection*, a Diocesan publication for teenagers:

“America is a wonderful country but, unfortunately, our age is filled with evil attractions and happenings. In the marketplace, in the world of books and television, satanic ideas crowd the mind and blur the vision of the young people.”

The potential for harm, cloaked in the distractions and detrimental influences of this age, extends well beyond today's youth. The falling away of our children also threatens the future of the Armenian Church and culture in America.

Armenians are heirs to a rare endowment. Only a precious few peoples of this world have had their ecclesiastical and ethnic heritages inseparably entwined.

But that distinction presents a dilemma for Armenians living in the United States: We are the seed of an Eastern people that has propagated in a Western society, and our



spiritual roots, which were grounded in an Eastern hierarchal church, have been transplanted to a more liberal environment.

Therefore, as we quite naturally became a part of mainstream American life, we brought more pressure to bear on our ability to keep our religious and ethnic uniqueness from being wholly assimilated and, perhaps, forever lost.

Considering that the acculturation of immigrants has been enormously successful in this nation, it is understandable that a certain degree of assimilation will always take place. The weakening of America's moral fiber, however, poses a compounding problem. Negative aspects of our society have created, among other spiritual erosives, an accelerated attrition rate in the memberships of all religious groups. When both cultural assimilation and church attrition beset a group as small in number as Armenian Christians (600,000 estimated in America), the impact has serious implications.

Will the Armenian church and culture prevail throughout these difficult times and those that lie ahead?

The answer may well be locked within the hearts of the membership of the Diocese of the Armenian Church of America. Through our parishioners' prayers and financial support, the Diocese will be better able to minister to the needs of its youth in an effective, contemporary fashion.

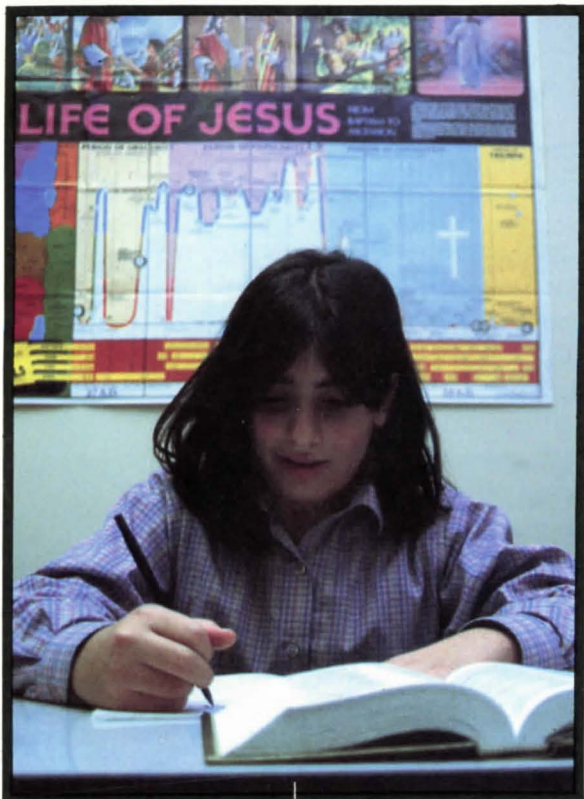
The Diocese has prepared and, prompted by necessity in certain areas, has implemented a five-year plan that will update, expand and intensify the programs overseen by four departments whose resources are either wholly or in the majority dedicated to serving Diocesan youth: the Armenian Church Youth Organization of America ACYOA Junior Division, the ACYOA Senior Division, Religious Education, and the Armenian Language Lab and Resource Center.

The departments' leadership has formulated a strategy and a budget that, on a step-by-step basis over five years, will advance each program's content, technology and teaching methodology to a level that is not only equivalent with modern secular systems but also in pace with our youth's spiritual, cultural, social and recreational demands.

The Archbishop's Fund for Diocesan Armenian Youth (DAY) has been created to focus attention on and to seek financial assistance for the departments ministering to Diocesan youth.



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



The DRE provides general direction and resources to Diocesan Sunday Schools and promotes, through its publications and workshops, religious education here and abroad.

Another baby boom and the effects of the most recent Armenian immigration from the Middle East have increased the number of children attending Sunday School. Therefore, the DRE's major concern is the health of Diocesan Sunday Schools.

The DRE realizes that the welfare of parishes are directly related to the strength of its Sunday School. Therefore, the department has taken aggressive steps to build a strong educational program that integrates sound Christian teaching with the Armenian form of worship, tradition, culture and history.

The department's most dynamic singular effort, however, has been the development of a complete education curriculum — which has been referred to by *Bema* as the "project of the century." Fifteen student texts (pre-school through twelfth grade) and fifteen teacher manuals have been written, illustrated and edited and are nearing publication. Our children will soon have the opportunity to learn about their religion, liturgy and tradition in their unique language and terminology. But the sole impediment to the project's completion is funding.

The DRE continues to hold teacher training workshops and week-long intensive teacher training sessions. The department, which supplies Sunday Schools with all materials and publications, also sponsors art contests, charity drives and outreaches to established parishes as well as newly formed Armenian communities without churches or clergy.

Beyond the curriculum project, the DRE has been active in publishing periodicals. The *DRE* bulletin, *Sunrise* (a magazine for fourth to sixth graders), and *Avedis* (a magazine for adult readers) are periodicals produced by the department. *A Dictionary of the Armenian Church*, *The Life of Jesus Christ in Miniatures: An Armenian Coloring Book*, and the series, *Armenian Church Classics*, are among the many specialized publications put out by the DRE. Several publications have recently been made available for sale in religious bookstores.

To keep pace with the Diocese's ever-growing needs in the area of religious education, the department foresees an increase in budget needs from \$48,000 in 1985 to \$143,350 by 1990.

# LANGUAGE LAB & RESOURCE CENTER



Beginning its twelfth year of existence, the Armenian Language Lab and Resource Center (ALLARC) has maintained an expansive and prolific department.

ALLARC, whose major emphasis is on the Armenian culture, produces print and electronic teaching materials to 300 Armenian Language Schools throughout the world.

ALLARC offers numerous adult "crash courses" and seminars in language, history and religion. The department is affiliated with a teacher training program at St. Peter's College, New Jersey, and is the course developer for an Armenian Language program at Brown University, Rhode Island. ALLARC maintains a cultural phone line that plays a folk story or message in accordance with special days and events. ALLARC also sponsors a host of cultural presentations commemorating religious, cultural, and historical events and has recently begun to sponsor a month-long trip to Armenia.

As the only educational and resource center for Armenian Schools in the Diaspora, ALLARC has developed the curriculum for not only the language schools, but the A.G.B.U. day schools as well. The department also supplies textbooks and numerous supportive materials such as workshops, flashcards, audio and video tapes, reading books, grammar books and song books, and a wide variety of gift items and achievement perks.

*Armenian Badarak* (Divine Liturgy), a series of seven texts for children between ages four and ten, *Zarteer*, a children's literary magazine, and the publication of one children's story book per year are the specialized literature projects produced by ALLARC.

As more schools are created and as ALLARC begins to meet the demands set by current trends for films, slide presentations, audio and video cassettes and other educational projects, more funds will surely be needed.

To date, there is one full-time and one part-time member to handle departmental responsibilities, which include an active schedule of symposiums, conventions, and class instruction as well as school visitations. There is a need, therefore, for more full-time and part-time staff workers.

ALLARC's proposed program budget over the next five years calls for an increase from \$50,000 in 1985 to \$247,900 by 1990.



# ACYOA JUNIOR DIVISION



Perhaps the most critical period in the spiritual, mental and physical development of an individual takes place between the ages of 13 and 17. The Junior Division of ACYOA focuses on helping these young people build a strong spiritual foundation.

The Junior programs are targeted for young teens, all of whom exhibit a special need for a forum on such serious, contemporary topics as sexuality, abortion and drugs. Since children in this society are inundated with worldly views and attitudes on such topics, the department sees the necessity to sponsor leadership seminars, under the direction of clergy and adult advisors, to provide a proper spiritual setting for the discussion of these difficult issues. In addition to leadership seminars and parish visitations, the department also promotes summer camp programs, weekend retreats, and sports weekends. Several regional seminars for youth are held throughout the year to address specific areas of church life and servanthood. The department also conducts training workshops for youth workers and advisors in every region of the Diocese.

Presently, the department has only one part-time director. Two or three additional staff members would alleviate the increasing workload and enable a department representative to visit all parishes on a regular basis. A staff addition would help actualize two vital goals: A mission outreach to parishes without clergy and an ambitious schedule of training seminars for adults willing to teach and counsel.

Funds are needed to upgrade the popular national publication *Junior Connection* from a 12-page quarterly to an eight-page monthly. An increase in the number of issues will keep submitted news releases and stories more current. Reading about what other groups are doing in different parts of the country creates a feeling of solidarity while strengthening the bonds between youth groups who may meet but once a year at a special event.

The department plans to develop a comprehensive handbook for youth workers and interested adults who may not have any experience in this area. A handbook would also make the functions of all groups more uniform and better coordinated. As an adjunct to the handbook, the department will develop a method by which it would disseminate a monthly list of ideas and suggestions to parishes.

The ACYOA Junior Division budget for 1985 was \$32,000. In order to accomplish its mission, the Diocese hopes to increase that figure to \$126,500 by 1990.

# ACYOA SENIOR DIVISION



In its fortieth year of service, the Senior Division ministers to young men and women from age 18 to the late 20s. The department promotes the continued spiritual development of the church's young adults and seeks to keep at a high level the interaction between members of each chapter and other chapters.

The Senior Division's manifold goal is to bring young adults into participatory roles in the church, to prepare them for leadership and, perhaps, the ministry, and to encourage servanthood not only in the body of Christ but also in the community.

The department undertakes this sizable task by offering a spectrum of spiritual, cultural, social and recreational programs on three levels.

**National Participation:** Armenian Studies Programs, featuring trips of four and three weeks to Armenia and the Holy Land; promotion of the Summer Study Conferences, which are held at St. Nerses Seminary and comprise five summer sessions of special interest to ministerial candidates; ACYOA Leadership Seminar; Audio-Visual Educational Programs and Publications; Archbishop Manoogian Basketball Tournament; Scholarship Program; Awards Program; National Sports Weekend.

**Regional Participation:** Retreats; the Anniversary Ball; Regional Conferences, and recreational activities.

**Local Participation:** Martyrs' Day Commemoration; ACYOA Day Celebrations; chapter meetings, projects and community life.

In the near future, the department plans to implement regional athletic competitions and, on the local level, a well-defined college campus program and a lecture-discussion series with an emphasis on education and awareness. Another local function, the parish mission program, will be redeveloped and again activated.

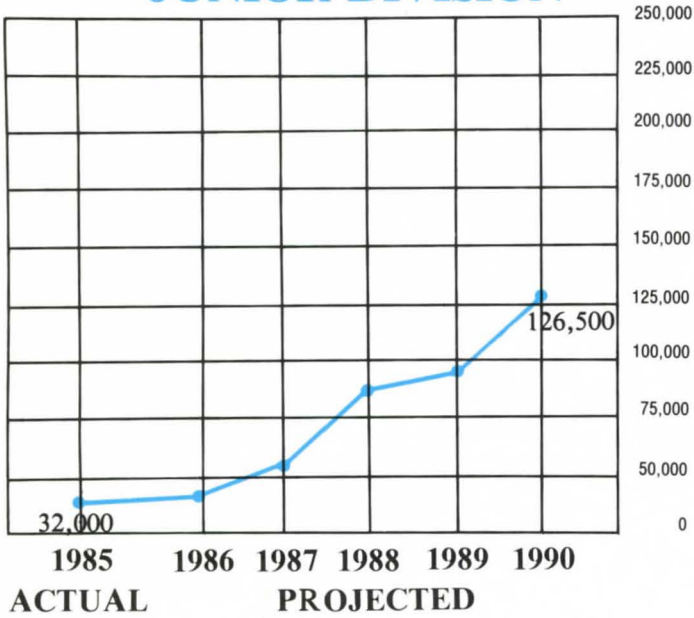
The department's greatest need is for an increase in staff. There is one full-time staff member, but the demand is for two or three more to oversee the four regions (Northeast, Middle Atlantic, South and Midwest) in the Diocese. Without a supervisor to closely monitor and extend help to the parishes in a particular region, all programs cannot be implemented with consistency. It has been demonstrated that if our young adults don't receive the *services that address their critical needs*, they will seek other sources outside of the church.

The ACYOA Senior Division budget was \$31,000 for 1985. The increase and upscaling of programs and the need of three additional staff members would raise the budget figure to \$138,000 by 1990.

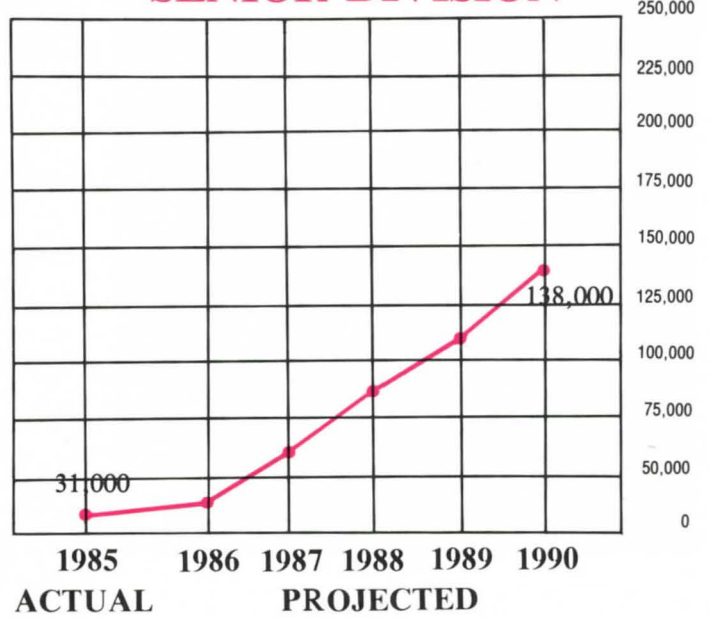


# FIVE YEAR PROJECTED BUDGET

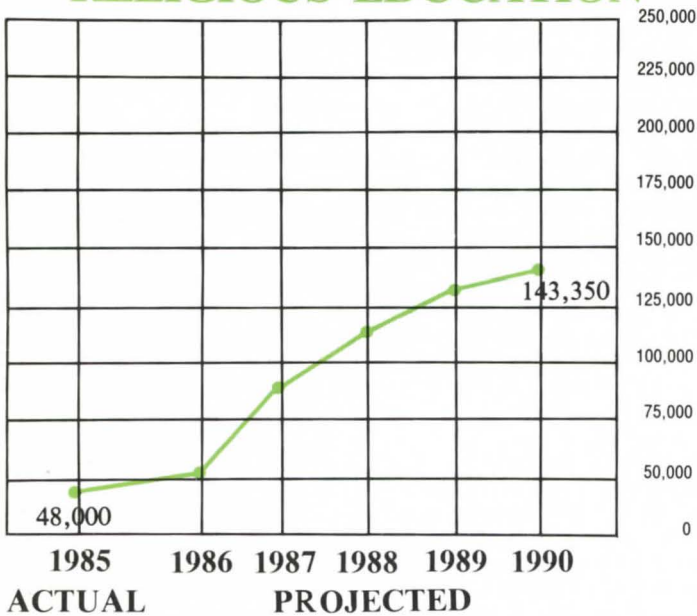
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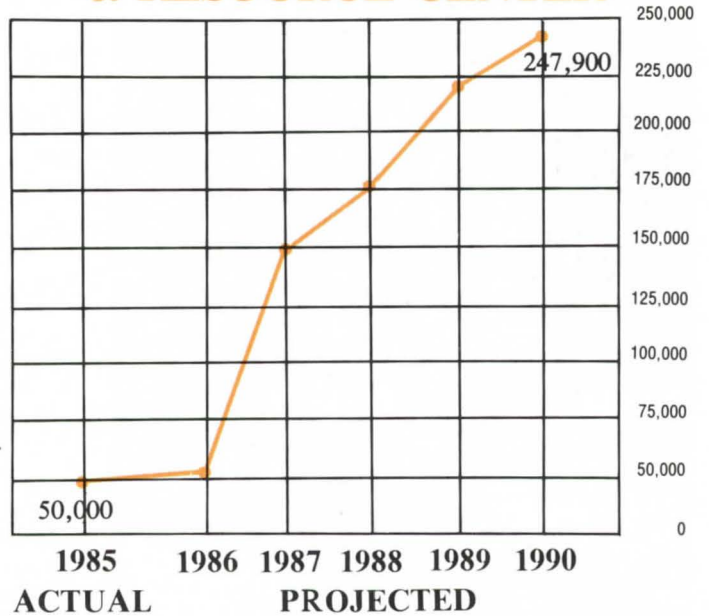
## ACYOA SENIOR DIVISION



## DEPT. OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



## LANGUAGE LAB & RESOURCE CENTER



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