

St. John's Armenian Church

OF GREATER DETROIT
VERY REV. FR. PAREN AVEDIKIAN
Pastor



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22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

★ Phone: (313) 569-3405 ★

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

February 16, 1993

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Your Excellency:

I hope you are in good health and I look forward to seeing you at the Diocesan Assembly. My letter is prompted by the deep concern of our parishioners regarding the present situation in Armenia.

I am writing to you concerning the \$900,000 contributed by to St. John's to the Earthquake Relief Fund and which is still being held by the Diocese. Since our contribution was not used for the purpose designated by the Diocese, a dental clinic, we have, as we were instructed by the Diocese, made inquiries into a possible project (or projects) for these monies in an attempt to assist Armenia in its current desperate situation.

First, we wish to be assured that the \$900,000 is still in the possession of the Diocese. Second, we are requesting either the immediate return of these monies to St. John's or to be assured that we may submit for approval our project(s) to assist Armenia using our funds. This is information we must have so that we may immediately move forward on a project(s) in accordance with the expectations of our parishioners.

We look forward to a prompt reply.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vahram Fantazian". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'V'.

Vahram Fantazian
Chairman, Parish Council

OF 80422-11040582 ZUSS. 646260
GENERAL STAFF

St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



WEST LIVER FARM, MICHIGAN
PASTOR

REV. FRANK
ASSISTANT

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

PO BOX 405

SOUTHFIELD, MI

April 5, 1989

The Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian, Pastor
St. John Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, Michigan 48075

Dear Fr. Paren:

Your letter of February 14 was brought to the attention of the Diocesan Council at its recent meeting.

We were all extremely pleased by the efforts being made by your parish and community organizations to raise funds for the rehabilitation of the devastated areas of Armenia; and, if your parish so desires, we can see no reason why the effort cannot be representative of the entire community.

You are right about the wishes of His Holiness; he wants very much for the Armenian-American community to concentrate its rebuilding efforts on Stepanavan, which offers abundant opportunities for our energies and resources.

In fact we have been asked to furnish plans for our projects, which will of course be subject to their approval. Once approved, a formal agreement will be made that will detail and assign responsibilities; then implementation will be initiated.

Everything you propose in your letter is possible. All contacts however, all communications with Etchmiadzin are to be made through the Armenian Relief Committee established by our Diocese.

If there are any further questions, please let us know. Meanwhile continue raising funds even while your group selects a project. The sooner we come forward with specific construction plans the better.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Yerkon Manoogian
Primate

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St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



VERY REV. FR. PAREN AVEDIKIAN
PASTOR

REV. FR. HAIK DONIKIAN
ASSISTANT PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

★ PHONE: 569-3405 ★

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

February 14, 1989

His Eminence,
Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Your Eminence:

Now that His Holiness has returned home, and you may have a few moments, I would like to bring forth an important matter for your consideration. As a consequence of the Earthquake, a meeting was convened on Thursday, December 8, 1988 at St. John's Armenian Church to organize the relief efforts in our community. The meeting was attended by St. John's Parish Council members; Diocesan Delegates of our Parish; the A.G.B.U. Mid-West Coordinator; A.G.B.U. School Board Chairman; Representatives of the A.G.B.U.; Representatives of the Armenian Democratic League; Representatives of the Tekeyan Cultural Association; Representatives of the Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul; Representatives of the Detroit Armenian Komitas Monument Committee; Representatives of the Detroit Area Armenian Jewelers (primarily from the Middle East); other active members of the community; and an observer representative from St. Sarkis Armenian Apostolic Church affiliated with Antelias.

It was decided at the meeting, on behalf of all present, to establish a Fund in the name of the Armenia Earthquake Fund c/o St. John's Armenian Church. Our reason for inviting all of these representatives was to insure that our community did not organize many different fund raising and relief committees, so that for our own people and for the non-Armenian community, we presented a united front.

Thus far we have proceeded with this united front and to date have raised over \$850,000.00. There are only three large donations in this total, Mr. & Mrs. Edward Mardigian, \$100,000; Mr. & Mrs. Mike Kojanian, \$40,000; and Mr. Raymont Paul, \$25,000. The Earthquake Committee had been waiting for the visit of His Holiness, since the visit was announced in early December, to learn of his plans for the use of the funds collected by our Committee.

We understand from the Armenian Press that His Holiness would like to see the reconstruction of the city of Stepanavan to be adopted as a project to be undertaken by the Armenians of America. At this time, I am asking Your Eminence's approval for our Committee to proceed to adopt a specific project within this

plan and work towards its accomplishment. I understand that His Holiness stated at his meeting with representatives of the American Armenian Community, that individual groups ought to embark on specific projects. My personal feeling is that we, in Detroit, as well as all other Armenian Churches and Armenian Organizations in the United States failed in raising sufficient funds which would enable us to participate in the reconstruction of our homeland in a meaningful way. If it is permitted for communities to pursue specific projects, then we could be more successful in assisting His Holiness and the Government of Armenia with their reconstruction plans.

We are aware of your directives regarding funds collected. If we proceed according to Your Eminence's directives, I am of the opinion that we will be obligated to divide the funds we have collected between the Diocese and other Armenian Organizations' Centers. If we do not divide the money as indicated above, it will be the cause for a major upheaval within the Armenian community of Detroit. On the other hand, going ahead with the adoption of a specific project and to continue raising funds for that project, will please every segment of our community and will be the impetus for a renewed effort which otherwise is breathing its last breath.

Bringing this to your attention and asking for your blessing and approval, I remain,

Respectfully yours,



Father Paren Avedikian
Pastor

PA/la

ST. JOHN'S ARMENIAN CHURCH
OF GREATER DETROIT

St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



June 29, 1989

The Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian, Pastor
St. John Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, Michigan 48075

Dear Fr. Paren:

We were very pleased with our visit to your parish last week, not so much for the really impressive donation to the Earthquake Fund, since we were aware of that in advance, but more for the devotion and enthusiasm evinced by members at the meeting. Wherever we go we find the dedication to this cause undiminished. It may be that we sense that here is everything that demands our total participation.

We are of course gratified with what your parish has produced to date, and happier still with your intention to continue. The Diocesan Recovery Committee regards our work in Stepanavan as a continuing responsibility. But that is a subject for later consideration. Now we will concentrate on the 40-acre district discussed at your meeting, and more particularly the medical and dental clinic to be sponsored by your parish.

As soon as a plan is created, we will be in touch with you. Then we will know more clearly what is required; then you can decide how much more it is possible for you to do.

For now we can offer our prayers for God's blessings on a parish that has demonstrated such warm sympathy for the welfare of its people who are suffering trials the depths of which we cannot possibly fathom.

May God bless you all.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

Receipt #23634
\$900,000.00

6-29-89
Exp # 23634
\$ 900,000.00

EW/la

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St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



VERY REV. FR. PAREN AVEDIKIAN
PASTOR

REV. FR. HAIK DONIKIAN
ASSISTANT PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

★ PHONE: 569-3405 ★

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

June 21, 1989

His Eminence,
Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Your Eminence:

Herewith, we are presenting to you a check in the amount of \$900,000.00 (nine hundred thousand dollars and 00/100) payable to the Diocese of the Armenian Church Earthquake Fund. This check represents funds collected by St. John's thus far and is partial payment for the project of the Medical Clinic and a Dental Clinic in Stepanavan, Armenia sponsored by St. John's Armenian Church on behalf of the Greater Detroit Armenian Community.

After the finalization of the plans for our project in Stepanavan, we intend to actively solicit funds. As a matter of fact, your visit together with Mr. Jack Antreassian, the Diocesan Coordinator of Earthquake Relief is designed to be the beginning of that effort.

Wishing well to those who are suffering in Armenia and in a small way to render them assistance, I remain,

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Fr. Paren Avedikian".

Father Paren Avedikian
Pastor

PA/1a

enc.

6-28-89
Rept # 23634
\$ 900,000.00

ARMENIA EARTHQUAKE FUND
ST. JOHN'S ARMENIAN CHURCH
22001 NORTHWESTERN HWY.
SOUTHFIELD, MI 48075

No. 1002

JUNE 21 1989

$\frac{9-32}{720}$

PAY
TO THE
ORDER OF

DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH - EARTHQUAKE FUND

\$ 900,000.00

NINE HUNDRED THOUSAND AND NO/100

DOLLARS



National Bank of Detroit
West Eight Mile Rd.-Lindsay Office - 58
Detroit, Michigan 48235

FOR

Harry H. Kelch
Peter J. Arkesian

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0043351⑈84⑈

MEMO

Sylvia Terzibashian

To: _____

not mailed

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UNUE, NEW YORK, N.Y. 10016-4885 212 686-0710

November 28, 1989

The Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian
Pastor,
St. John Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, Michigan 48075

Dear Father Paren:

We fully understand the disappointment expressed in your letter of October 18, and the anxiety felt by you and your parish for the prompt realization of the project you have adopted and for which you have raised considerable funds. We ourselves have felt some frustration because of the delays that have hobbled our efforts to some extent. But now our work is beginning, and we all, your parish included, have reason to rejoice.

The medical/dental clinic and other auxiliary structures have not been put off by some arbitrary whim, but by compelling circumstances, first among which is the urgent need for housing. Both our own observations and the counsel received from Armenia accord this the highest priority by far, a priority it would be wrong to ignore. There is a further consideration. We will be building our community in stages. The entire project cannot be done at once because we cannot get all the material there at the same time, and the local authorities cannot prepare the infrastructure of the entire project at the same time. The infrastructure of the first phase is being prepared, and the others will follow in order, and the area of the first phase is exclusively apartment units. As the order progresses, and the infrastructure is made ready, the subsequent phases, among them the medical clinic, etc., will be constructed.

We feel sure your parish will understand this, particularly since the project expanded to 640 apartment units, is under way now. The materials for the first phase are being assembled and will be shipped in December, with supervisory personnel to follow immediately. That and subsequent events will be publicized, and early in 1990 drives will be undertaken for additional funds.

This is a critical time for us because the massive project we are embarking on is fraught with uncertainties, the uncertainties of working in a different world, in vastly different circumstances. But though we cannot know what to expect, we are optimistic that we will succeed, and bring this project to a wonderful realization. But we, the Diocese and the Earthquake Committee, need the support and understanding of all our parishes and all our faithful. Together we can accomplish much.

Prayerfully,

Archbishop Torkom Manoogian
Primate

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St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



VERY REV. FR. PAREN AVEDIKIAN
PASTOR

REV. FR. HAIK DONIKIAN
ASSISTANT PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY



PHONE: 569-3405



SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

October 18, 1989

His Eminence,
Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Your Eminence:

We received your letter of October 4 in regards to the reconstruction project in Armenia. Even though finally you have been able to arrange for the Diocesan plan for reconstruction of Stepanavan to get off of the ground, we are dismayed that the project sponsored by St. John's of a Medical and Dental Clinic has been placed in the indefinite future.

In order for St. John's Armenian Church to embark on additional fund raising and also to be able to provide a more acceptable answer to the criticisms which already exist among the donors; moreover, to make a statement to the general public who donated to St. John's Armenia Earthquake Fund, we the St. John's Community bring to your attention the necessity to start the Medical and Dental Clinic portion of the project concurrent with the housing project in January, 1990.

Bringing this urgent matter to your attention and expecting a reply in the very near future, on behalf of the Committee, I remain,

Respectfully,

Father Paren Avedikian
Pastor

PA/1a

October 6, 1989

The Very Reverend Father Paren Avedikian
Pastor,
St. John Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, Michigan 48075

Dear Father Paren:

I am sorry I have been unable to be in touch sooner; it certainly was not my intention to keep you in awkward suspense. But things have been somewhat of a state of flux, with conditions and arrangements shifting. Perhaps I should at least have apprised you of this, but it seemed too little to say. Now some real shapes are emerging.

Since August two trips have been made to Armenia, one by a group of construction specialists who with local counterparts discussed work conditions and schedules, and the progression by which the extensive project would be achieved. More recently our committee chairman, Kevork Hovnanian, was there as well.

As you know, the community the Diocese has projected, and the Hovnanian Company has designed, comprises 500 apartment units, as well as a number of auxiliary institutions, among them a medical/dental clinic, to make it something of a self-contained entity.

These trips further confirmed the high priority of housing needs, and have convinced the Diocesan relief committee to concentrate on that, building the homes in stages, and setting in the other institutions as we go along.

An exact schedule is not yet available. The authorities there are to have the foundations of the first phase of housing done in the next two months; by the first of the year our supervisory people will be there to initiate construction. Soon after it will be possible to schedule other units and the auxiliary institutions, since the first phase will indicate just how much is possible and in what time span, in the conditions that prevail there.

So we do not anticipate any work on the clinic before next summer; we can be more definite about this in the spring. I earnestly hope this does not prove discouraging to you, your committee members or your parishioners. On my own part, I feel better about our project now than at any time in the past. We have finally overcome all sorts of inertia and bureaucratic inefficiency (some of it our own), and will be embarking on what promises to be a historic project.

I have enclosed an architectural rendering of the proposed medical/dental clinic. Perhaps some significant progress can be made between now and whenever actual construction begins, if your medical people studied and evaluated this, and made whatever recommendations they deemed appropriate, regarding not only the structure itself, but also furnishings and equipment.

It might well be desirable, following such a study, to have a representative group of your committee meet with Dr. Housepian and together come to some conclusions about what will ultimately be built.

Very best wishes.

Sincerely,

Jack Antreassian
Executive Director, Diocesan
Fund for Armenia's Recovery

Enclosure

GREATER DETROIT ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY PLANS TO PARTICIPATE IN RECONSTRUCTION OF ARMENIA IN A MEANINGFUL WAY

With a meeting convened on Thursday, December 8, 1988 consisting of representatives of St. John's Armenian Church of Greater Detroit and a number of community organizations, the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee was organized and immediately mobilized its efforts to assist our earthquake devastated homeland.

On Sunday, December 11, 1988 together with over a thousand members of the Armenian community, Michigan Governor James Blanchard attended the Divine Liturgy at St. John's. At the conclusion of the services, the Governor briefly addressed the congregation conveying his sympathy along with that of the citizens of the State of Michigan, and following the services contributed a personal donation in the amount of \$1000.00 to the Armenia Earthquake Fund. Senator Carl Levin expressed his sympathy and sent a personal donation of \$500.00. A few days later a letter of sympathy arrived from the Mayor of Detroit, Coleman Young along with his personal donation of \$5000.00 to the Fund.

On Sunday, December 18, a full page ad appealing for assistance was published in the Detroit Free Press paid for by St. John's Armenian Church, itself. On Thursday, December 22, a full page ad appeared in the Observer Suburban Newspapers, gratis, arranged by parishioner Richard Aginian, President of Observer Newspapers. On Sunday, December 25, a full page ad appeared in the Detroit News sponsored by a friend, Harry Kosins, Clothier. Publicity and appeals appeared on all local TV Channels with the exception of ABC's Channel 7 and on all radio stations, gratis.

Earthquake relief supplies on route to Armenia, including medical supplies and equipment, new clothing, shoes and blankets were dispatched aboard two semi-trailers from St. John's to Pan Aviation in Florida. One of the semis was donated by Roadway Express Co. and the other was paid for by St. John's Armenian Church, itself. Pan Aviation donated their cargo plane and services to transport the desperately needed supplies. St. John's sent forty thousand pounds of relief supplies to Armenia.

On Saturday, January 29, Governor James Blanchard of Michigan and his staff sponsored, organized, promoted, managed, and entertained at a Cabaret Concert for the benefit of the Armenia Earthquake Fund at Greektown's International Banquet Center. Pegasus Restaurant donated the facilities and the food for the occasion with all proceeds in the amount of \$24,000.00 being donated to the Fund.

Parishioners placed hundreds of Earthquake Fund Canisters in businesses throughout the Metropolitan Detroit area, thus far netting over \$6000.00.

St. John's Church School sponsored the Armenia Earthquake Walk-a-Thon on Sunday, April 9. Three hundred students, parents, staff members, and friends walked a six mile route raising approximately \$12,000.00 for the Fund.

Aside from these public officials' personal donations and efforts and the Church School sponsored Walk-a-Thon, there were many group and personal efforts throughout the Metropolitan Detroit Area and Ann Arbor.

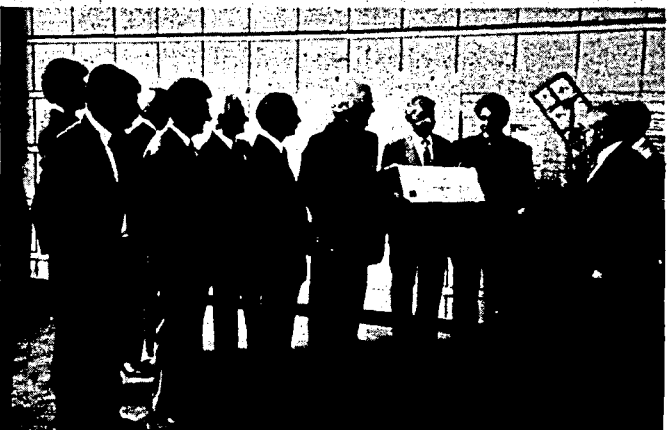
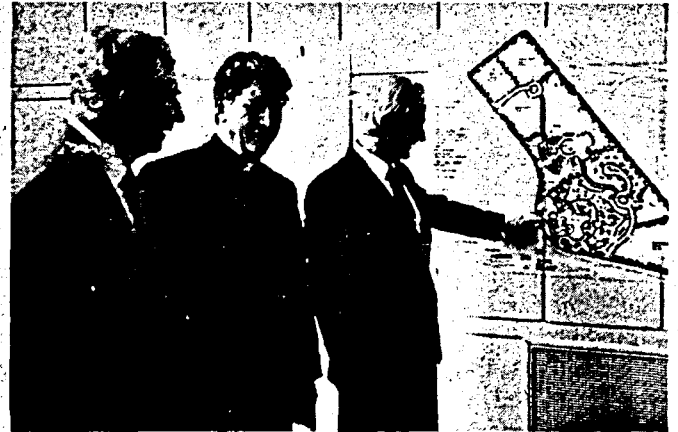
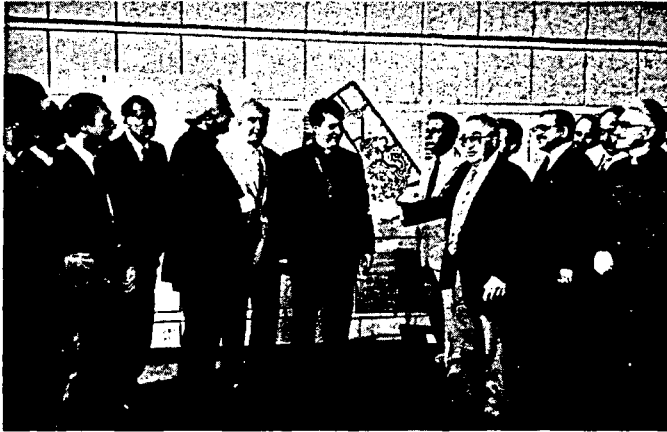
Major donations received by the Armenia Earthquake Fund were from Mr. & Mrs. Edward and Helen Mardigian, \$100,000.00; Mr. & Mrs. Michael & Shirley Kojaian, \$40,000.00; Mr. Raymont Paul, \$25,000.00; Cultural Society of Armenians from Istanbul, \$10,000.00; Mr. Ronald Aprahamian, \$10,000.00; and Mr. & Mrs. Charles and Alice Manoogian, \$10,000.00.

All expenses in regards to relief and fund-raising efforts have been and are presently being underwritten by St. John's Armenian Church solely to date approximately \$25,000.00, so that no expenses would be incurred by the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee.

On Wednesday, June 21, 1989, His Eminence, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, Primate accompanied by Mr. Jack Antreassian, Co-Ordinator of the Diocesan Earthquake Committee arrived in Detroit to be the personal guests of thirty members of the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee for a dinner and meeting held at St. John's Cultural Center during which on behalf of parishioners and Armenian and non-Armenian friends of St. John's Armenian Church, Fr. Paren Avedikian presented a check in the amount of \$900,000.00 to the Primate for the Diocesan Relief Fund earmarked for a Medical and Dental Clinic in the forty acre complex to be developed by the Diocese in Stepanavan, Armenia.

Following the presentation of the plans for this complex, the Committee was informed that as soon as final approval for the total complex has been received by the authorities in Armenia, and accordingly estimates have been calculated by a sub-committee of the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee, we will embark upon a new fund-raising effort to complete the Medical & Dental Clinic Project.

We take this opportunity to thank the thousands of non-Armenian and Armenian donors and hundreds of volunteers through whose donations and efforts the Armenia Earthquake Fund Committee was enabled, in a to small way, plan to rebuild what nature so mercilessly devastated.



March 17

1989

Minutes of the Diocesan Council Meeting

- 1192 -

It is the Council's understanding that the committee will take no official action without its approval, and further that the Diocesan budget will not be the source of funds for this project. Also, pursuant to a motion by the Very Rev. Fr. Baret Yeretjian, seconded by Mr. Chapien, the Council designated the Rev. Fr. Karekin Kasparian and Clement Ashekian as its liaisons to the committee on this project.

3. St. John Parish (Southfield)

The Primate reported receipt of a letter dated February 14 from the Very Rev. Fr. Paren Avedikian concerning the disposition of the relief funds raised by the Detroit community. The letter explained that the community's organizations had agreed during a meeting held on December 8 to establish a single relief fund, contributions to which would be made in care of St. John Armenian Church. The sum of \$850,000 has been raised, and permission was being requested to apply the money to a specific project from among those presented during the Vehapar's visit.

Pursuant to a motion by Mr. Chapien, seconded by Mr. Ashekian, it was agreed to advise the parish in writing of the establishment of the permanent committee, and of our intention to contact them once the committee's plans have been approved so that they can select a project. The Primate agreed to write to Fr. Paren Avedikian.

4. 87th Diocesan Assembly

In response to the Primate's request for recommendations as to the 1989 Friend of the Armenians, it was moved and approved following discussion to designate The World Community as this year's recipient. It is our intention to present the award to the Secretary-General of the United Nations or his designee, with the request that the plaque be placed in an appropriate public area at UN Headquarters. If the UN should be unwilling to place the plaque on display, a resolution designating The World Community as the recipient will be released to the media, and appropriate remarks will be presented at the Assembly banquet.

The Primate reported that two clergymen from Etchmiadzin, The Very Rev. Fr. Natan Samuel Hovhanesian and the Rev. Fr. Hagop Ashot Petrossian, will attend the Assembly and that Arshavir Gundjian will represent the Canadian Diocese. We have yet to hear from the Western Diocese.

As for our representatives, Arthur Mardigian will attend the Assembly of the Canadian Diocese, and the Very Rev. Fr. Papken Anoushian will be asked to attend the Western Diocesan Assembly. Also, if arrangements can be made, Fr. Anoushian will attend an American Bar Association conference on Tort and Religion in San Francisco on May 5-6.

Finally, Mr. Mardigian requested that the Very Rev. Fr. Haigazoun Najarian attempt to locate a secretary to assist the official Assembly Secretary.

November 15, 1991

The Council joined in intense discussion regarding St. Thomas. Issues that arose included the protocol of dealing with the Primate; the role of the Council in disputes; the requirement of Council action under Bylaw 35; various letters that have been sent to the Primate and Council members; Parish Council members bringing complaints to the Primate and Diocesan Council while Trustees and others are organizing petitions and calling for resignations, etc.; and unauthorized financial expenditures.

Mr. Shahinian moved and Dr. Onanian seconded a motion that "The Diocesan Council shall send a response to the eight parish council members who sent a letter to the Council Chairman asking to appear at a Diocesan Council meeting." The motion was defeated, 2 (for) - 8 (against). The Council did not act to authorize any meeting between Council members and any parties to the dispute.

D. Catholicos Approves Bylaw Amendment

The amendment to Bylaw 14(F), which was previously approved by the Diocesan Assembly, has been approved by the Catholicos. Dr. Onanian noted that the memorandum describing the Bylaw that was distributed to the Council contained errors. The Council by consensus agreed to correct the errors.

E. St. John's Parish asks to send Accrued Interest to Armenia

The Pastor and Parish Council of St. John's Armenian Church, Southfield, Michigan, responded to the Diocesan request for donations to buy and send food to Armenia this winter, by asking the Primate to send \$50,000 interest that has accrued on its \$900,000 donation to the earthquake fund, and asked to use that money to send food to Armenia. Judge Gurahian noted that no separate account exists for individual parish donations. The Primate will send an appropriate response, denying the request.

F. St. Stepanos Parish meets to Discuss Financial Needs

The Pastor of St. Stepanos Armenian Church, Elberon, New Jersey, reported that a special Parish Assembly was recently held to discuss the significant financial problems of the parish. One result was to raise parish membership fees. The Council awaits the receipt of the Minutes of the meeting.

G. Atlanta Armenian's Request to Form Church Council Rejected

About 50 individuals from Atlanta sent a letter to the Primate and Archbishop Mesrob Ashjian, Prelate, asking for recognition of an Atlanta Armenian Church Council. The proposed Council would arrange with the Diocese and Prelacy for clergy to visit and perform services in rented facilities that the entire Atlanta Armenian community would attend. The Council discussed the issue at length, and noted that the community in Atlanta is probably too small to support a full-time church. The Council by majority consensus agreed that a joint Church Council would not be approved but that the Atlanta Armenians could form a cultural association to arrange with the Diocese and Prelacy for church services which the entire Atlanta Armenian community could attend.

D/C

St. John's Armenian Church
OF GREATER DETROIT



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VERY REV. FR. BARET YERETZIAN
PASTOR

22001 NORTHWESTERN HIGHWAY

PHONE: 569-3405

SOUTHFIELD, MICHIGAN 48075

July 18, 1994

His Grace,
Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate and President of Diocesan Council
Diocese of the Armenian Church
630 Second Ave.
New York, N.Y. 10016

Your Grace:

As you will recall, St. John's has made many inquiries during the past five years to both you and the former Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian regarding the \$900,000 contributed by our community to the Earthquake Relief Fund. Since our contribution has not been used for the purpose designated by the Diocese, a medical-dental clinic, St. John's Parish Council is unanimously requesting that the funds we have donated plus the interest accrued be returned to us so that we may present these funds to the President of Armenia, Levon DerPetrosian when he visits Detroit in early August.

I wish to emphasize that many organizations joined together to raise the above funds with the understanding that Armenia would benefit from the contributions immediately. At the present time our entire community is dismayed that the Diocese is still holding these funds. Armenia is in dire need of assistance, as you are aware, and we feel that by transferring the funds to the President he can effectively carry out our wishes for the use of our community's contribution.

It is imperative that the entire sum be returned to St. John's promptly. We look forward to hear from you.

Maria M. Manoukian
Armen A. Hovhannissian
Richard Vahatian
William Balaban
Peter S. Egan

Karav P. Tertarian
John K. Simigian
Jane Hovsepian
George Laktyan

Respectfully,
Father Baret Yeretian
Fr. Baret Yeretian
Pastor
Edward Haic Karakian
Chairman Parish Council



DIOCESE OF THE ARMENIAN CHURCH OF AMERICA
ԱՌԱՋՆՈՐԴՈՒԹԻՒՆ ՀԱՅՈՑ ԱՄԵՐԻԿԱՅԻ ԱՐԵՒԵԼԵԱՆ ԹԵՄԻ

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian, Primate

October 20, 1994

The Very Reverend Father Baret Yeretzian
Pastor
St. John Armenian Church
22001 Northwestern Highway
Southfield, MI 48075

Dear Father Baret:

The Diocesan Council at its meeting of September 23, 1994 considered your letter of July 18, 1994 requesting that the Diocese return the \$900,000 contribution of the Detroit community made in 1989 for the Diocesan earthquake reconstruction project in Armenia.

Following extensive discussion of the matter, the Diocesan Council concluded that it cannot acquiesce to your request and by majority vote adopted a resolution to that effect. The Board of Directors of the Fund for Armenian Relief, Inc. (which is the successor to the Diocesan department responsible for carrying out projects in Armenia) had also concluded that it was neither feasible to return the money nor to build a medical/dental clinic in Stepanavan and recommended that the Diocesan Council adopt a policy resolution that funds contributed by parishes in the aftermath of the earthquake cannot be returned.

The Diocesan Council, as well as FAR's Board considered the matter seriously demonstrating an understanding of your position and sympathy with your circumstances. Both bodies expressed an earnest desire, without formally adopting resolutions to that effect, to find a solution to the matter either by using a completed project or considering something which is within the boundaries of current needs of Armenia and the mission of FAR.

In reviewing past communications between St. John's and the then Primate, Archbishop Torkom Manoogian, the Diocesan Council acknowledged that the medical/dental clinic envisaged in the original Stepanavan project was to be built with your contribution. However the original project had to be modified due to the fundamental political changes that happened in Armenia and the former Soviet Union. A comprehensive review of these events would make it clear why the original project could not be completed.

In December 1988 the Soviet Union, while undergoing major changes, was alive and well and no one anticipated its demise or even radical transformation to a more open society. All earthquake relief projects were closely monitored and approved by the central government in Moscow. At the time no long-term plans were conceived and none was necessary. All organizations (Armenian and non-Armenian) had one mission: complete the agreed on project and leave the country. Long-term presence and/or providing assistance other than the project was not anticipated.

Under these circumstances, the Armenian Church, under the leadership of the Catholicos of All Armenians, His Holiness Vasken I of blessed memory, undertook to concentrate its efforts on the City of Stepanavan. The Eastern Diocese developed plans for the largest project, building a whole community of earthquake-resistant homes, a school, a clinic, playground and so on. The plan was to build a community of about 600 families. Some parishes which had collected substantial sums of money for the earthquake project were to be identified with certain parts of this community: school, playground, clinic. The Detroit community had requested to be identified with the medical and dental clinic to be built as part of the Stepanavan project.

As construction got under way in 1989, the pace of change in the Soviet Union accelerated and took the unexpected turn towards the eventual dissolution of the Union. The internal turmoil of the Soviet Union during the months of disintegration created logistical nightmares for all organizations trying to complete their earthquake relief projects. Furthermore, these difficulties caused expenses to skyrocket to a point where it was not justifiable to continue in many instances. The turmoil and final disintegration of the Soviet Union made the assumptions underlying the entire project meaningless and made it practically impossible to continue implementing projects. Even many governments abandoned their half-finished projects. The project assumptions included easy and cheap transportation, skilled labor with pay according to local standards, and government participation in the project through building of infrastructure and services.

Transportation became very expensive and difficult. Containers of material had to be rerouted several times to get them to their destination. Hyperinflation caused the constant escalation of wages and other expenses making laborers reluctant to work without sufficient incentives. Additionally, the Government was unable to fulfill its obligation of building the infrastructure and provide services to the community. Thus the Diocese/FAR had to incur substantial expenses to build the roads, sewer lines, utility lines and so on.

A factor as important as the logistical difficulties and hyperinflation was the changing priorities of Armenia. As the country moved toward political independence its economy collapsed because of the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the war of liberation for Artsakh and the blockade imposed by Azerbaijan and Turkey.

The new situation caused severe misery and hardship for the entire population. Now the entire country needed assistance ranging from food and clothing to technical assistance in many areas.

It is to the credit of the Diocese that it became one of the first organizations, Armenian and non-Armenian, to try to respond to this changing situation by expanding its activities in Armenia and still working to complete at least the first phase of the Stepanavan housing project.

The Diocese was filling an important void, soon to be followed by many other organizations, when it started activities above and beyond the housing project. Since then the Diocese/FAR has been at the forefront of implementing humanitarian and development projects in Armenia. The total value of the humanitarian aid provided to Armenia by the Diocese/FAR since then is well over 100 million dollars. In 1994 alone the value of the Diocesan/FAR aid to Armenia would be about 50 million dollars.

Some of the aid provided by the Diocese/FAR include the following:

1. More than 50,000 metric tons of food ranging from butter to milk to lentils;
2. Over 150 20 foot containers of clothing, blankets, shoes and so on;
3. Agricultural aid in the form of potato seeds, fertilizer, equipment and training;
4. Multifaceted medical aid including: maintaining the medical library by supplying journals and books, providing training to doctors in the U.S.; sending drugs, equipment worth millions of dollars.
5. Encouraging the local economy by purchasing to the extent possible locally manufactured goods and employing local Armenians instead of expatriates.
6. Helping the government of Armenia in reorganizing the healthcare system, the welfare system and other technical assistance.

There are numerous other projects, small and large, which have been accomplished and/or are in progress that will benefit Armenia for a long time to come.

The Diocese/FAR has been able to conduct these activities and continue to do so largely by having prudently managed its earthquake relief funds. The Diocese could have easily spent all the money received as well as the interest and other donations on the original project and still not have completed it. So far it has at least completed one phase of it where about 100 families live comfortably and done so much more by leveraging the funds available.

In addition to the above, the Diocese contributed 1.5 million dollars directly to the Government of Armenia for completion of buildings left unfinished by other governments and organizations.

In view of the above and the current situation in Armenia it would be unwise to stick to the original Stepanavan plan regardless of promises made at an earlier time. The situation has drastically changed and new solutions are needed.

The money that the Diocese/FAR still has should be spend very prudently to maximize it. By leveraging the remaining funds, millions of dollars worth of aid can be secured for Armenia.

One of the most important factors sometimes overlooked is the fact of the commitment that the Diocese/FAR has for Armenia. This commitment is what differentiates us from the non-Armenian organizations currently in Armenia. There are some 30 non-Armenian organizations working in Armenia. However, these organizations have received various grants for projects in Armenia. Their operating expenses are tenfold more than ours and after completion of their grant they will leave for somewhere else. The Diocese/FAR are in Armenia for the long-term with a commitment of channeling as much aid to Armenia as possible from whatever source.

Total earthquake related (i.e., contributions received in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake and throughout 1989) contributions to the Diocese were under eight million dollars. In addition the Diocese received contributions for relief and development in Armenia (donations received 1990 to present) of over one million dollars. This distinction should be made because starting in 1990 contributions were for general relief and

development in Armenia rather than being emergency donations for earthquake relief. These amounts can be adjusted upward if the interest or investment income factor is added.

Through December 1993, the Diocese/FAR had expended in cash (figures are rounded):

- a. Over 4.1 million dollars on the Stepanavan project. This figure does not include substantial expenditures incurred by K.Hovnanian Companies in the form of donated materials, technical assistance and personnel.
- b. The 1.5 million dollar special contribution to Armenia to be used for the completion of unfinished housing projects in the earthquake zone.
- c. Over 800,000 on various medical projects.
- d. Over 250,000 on Agricultural development projects.
- e. Over one million dollars on miscellaneous humanitarian assistance in the form of food, clothing and other items distributed to refugees and other needy groups in Armenia.

Thus, the Diocese/FAR has had cash expenditures on actual projects of close to eight million dollars. And yet this figure does not include any administrative expenses ranging from salaries to employees to telephone and office supplies. The above makes it clear that the Diocese did actually spend ALL the money it received as earthquake relief donations.

You are well aware that Armenia's priorities and needs have changed dramatically since the earthquake. In this new situation it is not feasible to complete the original Stepanavan project nor build a medical/dental clinic. In fact, the Germans finally completed the hospital built in close proximity to our community years behind schedule and with tenfold the original cost. The hospital is under-utilized and another medical facility would be wasteful.

Considering your circumstances, informally we suggest the following as possible solutions:

1. Place a commemorative plaque acknowledging the Detroit community's contribution on one of the completed structures in Stepanavan;
2. We are planning a commemorative monument at the entry of the community. We can mention the Detroit community's contribution specifically;
3. Considering the desire of giving the money to the President of Armenia as expressed in your letter of July 18, 1994, I would like to inform you that the Diocese gave 1.5 million dollars to the Republic of Armenia for reconstruction purposes. We can draft formal protocols designating a part of that special contribution as having been made from the funds of the St. John's parish.

4. Recently the Government of Armenia has asked us to sponsor and fund a project of finishing several buildings in the new ANI section of Gumri. These include a kindergarten, a children's hospital, a cultural center and several other public buildings. Perhaps we can fund one of these construction projects and designate it as having been built with the contribution of St. John's parish.

The above are informal suggestions and stem from the discussion of the matter at the Diocesan Council. We are open to discussing various options. The Board of FAR also has expressed similar willingness to explain what it has done, what it is currently doing and what it has planned for the future in Armenia. These can be done in meetings with the Parish Council or in general public forums.

All of us share the same goal of helping our brothers and sisters in Armenia and contribute to the rebuilding of the nation. This issue should be resolved with that spirit and goal in mind. We look forward to your suggestions as well on this matter.

May the Good Lord bless all your endeavors with success.

With Prayers,

Abp. K. Barsamian

Archbishop Khajag Barsamian
Primate

cc: Mr. Edward Haic Korkoian,
Chairman, Parish Council