

## Presbyterians call for genocide recognition, commemoration

Eliza Minasyan, Executive Director



The Jinishian Memorial Program (JMP) of the Presbyterian Church (USA) has faithfully served in diverse Armenian communities

for nearly 50 years. Rev. Martin Lifer, member of our governing commission, has seen the projects first-hand: “Lives are being transformed! It is a great opportunity to partner with Armenian churches in places of deep need.”

When the Ottoman Empire massacred 1.5 million Christian Armenians and expelled one million more from their historic homeland (now Turkey), the Presbyterian Church directed relief funds to Armenians and vehemently protested the “atrocities” that began April 24, 1915.

As JMP planned to commemorate the 100th anniversary in 2015, a few Armenian Presbyterians realized that the PC(USA) had never officially designated this systematic elimination of a people as “genocide,” the first of the 20th century. We are grateful to three presbyteries—Chicago, Los Ranchos (southern California), and Palisades (New Jersey)—who adopted an overture to bring before the PC (USA) General Assembly in Detroit this summer.

The overture calls congregations



“The Cliff,” (39”x33”) shared with permission of Jerusalem-born artist and faithful Jinishian supporter, Lucy Boyadjian Janjigian, who’s Uprooted Collection interprets the Armenian Genocide and the will to endure ([lucyjanjigian.com](http://lucyjanjigian.com))

across the country “to testify to this tragedy and to help ensure that no other peoples experience such suffering,” and to set aside April 24th as a day of remembrance. If the overture is approved, the PC(USA) would officially call upon the President and Congress of the United States to condemn the acts as genocide.

Adolf Hitler once asked, “Who, today, remembers the Armenians?” Please join Jinishian and PC(USA), as we continue in the church’s journey toward justice and reconciliation, in remembering and honoring those who suffered expulsion, disposition, or death.

Although history has wounded God’s people, we persevere in faith, courage and hope. We give thanks for your much-needed support of JMP’s work!

## Survivors in Syria have a legacy of faith

Story and photo by Talin Topalakian, JMP-Syria Country Director

“Lord, you establish peace for us; all that we have accomplished you have done for us.” (Isaiah 26:12)

**Aleppo**—Survivors of the Armenian Genocide formed Diaspora communities around the world, but the Syrian desert of Deir-el-Zor was the nation’s ultimate destination, where many Armenians were murdered by the Ottoman Turks during deportation. They are remembered today in the crypt

dedicated to martyrs of the Armenian Church. Every corner of Syria is sacred to us, a witness of the genocide.

Because Aleppo and Beirut were the first Armenian sanctuaries in 1915, this is where the Jinishian Memorial Program began in 1966 when Mr. Vartan Jinishian bequeathed his entire estate for the relief of his people in the Middle East. The three Armenian religious communities have several dioceses and about 45 churches in Syria, most

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## Disclose mistakes

By Dr. Carnegie Calian

Confessions and restitution are necessary means to restoring ethical character throughout the global community. The news today is full of apologies, blame, and cheating, but generally such practices leave us dissatisfied with issues largely unresolved. Furthermore, such behavior leads to unhealthy relationships, underlying our yearning for true healing, for authentic forgiveness that matters. Otherwise, unresolved feuds last for generations among families, societies, and nations. Religious disputes aren’t any better. And in many cases our errors are buried, but not forgotten. Saints are seen in retrospect as sinners revised and edited for the benefit of a group’s members. Mark’s gospel had it right when Jesus warned his disciples saying, “For there is nothing hidden but it must be disclosed; nothing kept secret except to be brought to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen to this” (Mark 4:22-23).

Excerpted from “Your Biblical Passport: at home and abroad towards a safer and wiser global society.” Full article published in Forum: the quarterly journal of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (Winter/Spring 2013). Dr. Calian is President and Professor Emeritus at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary where he led and taught for 25 years. More recently, he served as Visiting Professor of leadership ethics at the University of Pittsburgh, Katz Graduate School of Business. His latest book is **The Spirit-Driven Leader: Seven Keys to Succeeding under Pressure** published by Westminster John Knox Press and also available on Kindle.

### Get connected!

Include your email in the attached return envelope. Email [jmp@pcusa.org](mailto:jmp@pcusa.org), or call 800-728-7228 x5291. Visit online and give anytime at [pcusa.org/jinishian](http://pcusa.org/jinishian)

## Survivors, continued

of them built in Aleppo after 1915. As a faith-based social organization, Jinishian collaborates with all three religious communities and strongly believes that God never gives up on his people. The strength of our nation is unity. We serve every single Armenian in need, without discrimination. At Jinishian we feel social responsibility: empowered by faith to serve with compassion for those who suffer.

Nowadays, it is devastating to witness the moral, physical, and financial damage to our community during the Syrian crisis. Armenian roots were spread in the Syrian land with the memories, spilled blood, patience, perseverance, and sacrifices of four generations. It's



In 1990 Jinishian-Syria with the Karagheusian Foundation put an end to the miserable conditions in Zeitoun Khan by providing homes to the last 18 families still living in the camps.

very hard to leave all this behind. Today, Jinishian is one of the main contributors in the survival of our community—a critical role made possible by ongoing international support.

As descendants of heroic survivors and having the same strong faith, we are confident that God hears our cry and will save our nation once again.



My grandmother, Anjele Nersoyan, a genocide survivor, with my children. "I was too little to understand why this happened, but old enough to remember the 'red' Euphrates River. Now I'm very proud, and I thank God that I was able to see my great grand-children speaking Armenian, feeling Armenian, and praying in Armenian."

## Armenian youth say "YES we can"

Alina Hovhannisyan

**Armenia**—Khachatur Margaryan is a grandchild of a Musa Dagh survivor. Born in Lebanon to concert musicians, this teen firmly believes that he has the ability and responsibility to help build a prosperous, democratic Armenian homeland. When he joined Jinishian's debate club at school #190 in Yerevan, he discovered a great opportunity for leadership, critical thinking, and public speaking.

"I want to show the world that Armenian youth are an indispensable part of global society and able to struggle for progress." Khachatur Margaryan

Khachatur devoted himself to debate and was selected for national competitions and televised debates organized by Jinishian's YES project. He also seized the opportunity to come to the United States for one year of high school and returned home full of new experiences and energy.

This April, Khachatur, along

with Lucy Bichiakhchyan, Grigor Khachatryan, and Mary Mesropyan form the Jinishian debate team invited to represent Armenia in the international Bratislava Debate Tournament. Competing in English with teams from all over the world—including Germany, Israel, Lebanon, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Turkey and Ukraine—all the team members are enthusiastic and optimistic about being the first Armenian team to participate in such a highly-ranked event!



Over the last ten years, Jinishian's Youth Engaged in Society (YES) project has made a huge impact, earning the support of World Vision and the Open Society Foundation. Through high school debate clubs established in 130 schools across Armenia, teens engage key issues of democracy and human rights. Seminars and round-tables build links to government and non-profits.

## At-risk teens in Lebanon find hope

Pauline Sagherian

**Beirut**—Working to end the vicious cycle of poverty and dependency among at-risk teenage girls, Jinishian began a unique, faith-based, self-development group in 2005. Along with support for vocational training, the young women are learning about God's love for them—a love that remains and enables one not to give up in the face of many disappointments in their families.

How do we see the impact? The social worker noted that one young woman has changed her self-destructive habits and now comforts her mother instead of partying. In group, they have shown the courage to confess their struggles and care for each other, like the suicidal teen who found acceptance and then visited others in need—what a change from hopelessness and to giving hope!

This change is real. Jinishian-Lebanon puts faith into action by serving those in need, and making God's love visible in a hurting world. Girls discouraged by life are learning to trust God while gaining tools for healthy, productive lives. Now when they do experience success, they are amazed at the fruit of their own perseverance and faith—encouragement they have begun passing on in their families.

## Bringing joy to kids

**Armenia**—Hip dysplasia in a child can lead to life-long disability if undiagnosed. In collaboration with Armenia's Ministry of Health, Jinishian has expanded training for pediatric orthopedists and ultrasound specialists to screen thousands of infants each year in Yerevan, Nagorno-Karabagh, and five other targeted regions. Early treatment for hundreds of affected children prepares them for healthy, happy lives.



Christmas brought much-needed joy to over 300 children in remote regions of Armenia last December where harsh climate, unemployment, and migration make for a deprived and gloomy childhood. Thanks to generous donors, packages included candies, a toy, warm pajamas and blanket.