

STATEMENT ON ARMENIAN GENOCIDE RESOLUTION, FROM REV. NISHAN BAKALIAN,
REPRESENTING THE ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL UNION OF NORTH AMERICA
UCC GENERAL SYNOD 30 – JUNE 26-30, 2015 – CLEVELAND, OHIO

I am the child of survivors of the Armenian Genocide. I live in this country because my father and mother were able to escape a government that had turned against its own citizens in order to cleanse the land of its indigenous Christian population.

That my grandparents and parents were able to reconstruct their lives in this foreign land does not mean that they – or I – have forgotten the horrors that drove them from their hometowns in Turkey. That those events occurred a century ago does not mean that the Genocide, which has had an impact on practically every living Armenian, is something we should forget about or “get past”. Turks – Armenians – humans will not, must not “get beyond” so heinous a crime, but must face it squarely and do what is necessary to lay the groundwork for justice and reconciliation. Forgetting the past and accepting the world as it is will not put an end to the obscene denialism of today’s Turkish government, nor will it interrupt the very same arc of violence that is the daily bread of Muslims, Christians, Yezdis and others in Syria and Iraq, in the same regions where one and a half million of my ancestors were condemned to death.

In 1986 I petitioned the United Church of Christ to include Armenian Martyrs’ Day, April 24, on its Desk Calendar each year, which it did as a statement of recognition of the Genocide. Today I ask that this resolution be adopted, and at the very least create an impetus for meaningful action toward a just resolution of this unhealed wound. Thank you.

*Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian
21 June 2015 – Havertown, Pa.*