

NAIROBI EVANGELICAL GRADUATE
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

THE ARMENIANS AND THE TURKS: CAN THESE
TWO NATIONS BE RECONCILED?

BY
HASMİK BABAYAN

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Theology in
Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Masters of Arts in Missions (Islamic Studies)

JULY, 2007

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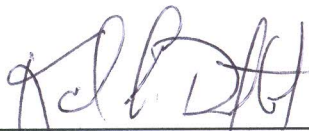
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Approved:

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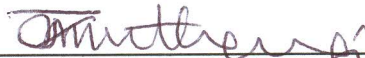
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Student's Declaration

THE ARMENIANS AND THE TURKS: CAN THESE TWO NATIONS BE
RECONCILED?

I declare that this is my original work and has not been submitted to any other Collage
or University for academic credit.

The views presented herein are not necessary those of the Nairobi Evangelical
Graduate School of Theology or the Examiners.

(Signed)



Hasmik Babayan

July, 2007

ABSTRACT

This paper begins with a historical description of Turko-Armenian conflict in order to gain an accurate understanding about the cause and effects of this conflict, as well as the historical overview attempts to present the complicated situation of this conflict in the spheres of politics, economics and religion. Later it will look at the psychological and spiritual part of the conflict. This section will mainly discuss the problem of exclusion, embrace, forgiveness and reconciliation. It is my great hope and prayer that this study will encourage Armenians to start loving Turks through unconditional love of Christ, through which only reconciliation and forgiveness will be possible.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My first gratitude goes to the Almighty who made my coming to Africa possible. For years I have been praying and dreaming of my coming to Africa, but in my cultural and historical context it was completely impossible for me to make it. Thus, first I want to give all glory and honor to God, who not only brought me to Kenya, particularly to NEGST, but also took care of me throughout these two years. To Him, the faithful and the loving one, be the glory, honor, and power forever and ever.

I am very grateful to all my professors who have made it possible for me to come to this level of higher learning. I am grateful for the patience and encouragement they have accorded to me throughout the two years of study at NEGST.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Topic

An analysis of the relationship between the annual commemorations of the Armenian Genocide and its reflection of the current life and psychology of the Armenian nation in the 21st century.

The Problem Statement

What is the relationship between the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide which took place in 1915 and the ability to pursue forgiveness and reconciliation by Armenian Christians?

The Thesis

The thesis to be addressed in this study is that the annual commemoration of the Armenian genocide which took place in 1915 has a negative influence on the psychology and life of Armenia as a nation.

Research Questions

What role did the Turks, the Armenians and other nations play in the genocide?

How does the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide affect Armenian identity?

What is the range of understanding of forgiveness in relation to this problem?

The Significance of the Topic

The Armenian Genocide (also known as the Armenian Holocaust or the Armenian Massacre) took place from 1915 to 1917 in the Ottoman Empire during the government of the Young Turks. This tragic event has traced huge wounds, sorrow and bitterness in the heart and psychology of the Armenian nation. Generation after generation this information has been passed on as a spirit of bitterness and mourning. Today's generation also feels and bears the pain, bitterness and sorrow of the loss. The bitterness is not usually addressed towards those who organized the genocide or massacre, but rather towards those political leaders who deny the genocide. By writing this I mean not only the political leaders of Turkey, but also of the United States and several other countries which were involved in this conflict. Therefore, we can state that the bitterness of feeling is focused not so much on what happened at the time of, but on the subsequent sense that injustice has been done by political leaders who continue to deny the genocide completely.

It is also interesting that there are even some young Armenians who keep asking questions like "Why we were killed?" without knowing towards whom they are bitter. In this case the bitterness of today's generation of Armenians is not addressed to a particular person or people, since in general they do not know who

killed whom. From a psychological perspective this condition is very interesting; a person is bitter towards no one or anyone, and the object of bitterness is not identified or doesn't exist at all, but the feeling is still there.

Moreover, as citizens of a nation that calls itself "Christian", Armenians should understand that if the denial of genocide by the Turks is not just, bitterness and unforgiveness on the part of Armenians is also an injustice in the light of the crucifixion of Jesus, and the forgiveness he offered through his death. Bitterness harms not the Turks, but the Armenians. The spirit of bitterness does not allow the Armenian nation to see God's heart towards the Turks as a nation. Moreover this bitterness does not allow God to reveal his will to Armenians, since bitterness and love cannot exist at one and the same time.

In addition, this complicated condition prevents a further relationship between Turkey and Armenia. Since Armenians share their border with Turkey, it is essential to develop a good relationship between these two countries, particularly in politics.

In addition to all these considerations, my hope is that this research will help me to understand the origins of genocide and all the complications related to this historical event. Furthermore, since this topic cannot be investigated in isolation from Turkey, it is my intention to make connections with Turks and thus get to know their own understanding of this problem. Finally, this topic will challenge me to challenge the Armenian Apostolic Orthodox Church to start thinking and praying as well as acting in love, forgiveness and reconciliation in relation to Turks. This issue will also "force" the Church towards revival, since 70 years of communism has pulled back the Armenian Church from development.. Therefore, before forgiveness can take place, first the concept of forgiveness and reconciliation should be clarified for Armenian believers.

Furthermore, my research topic will help me to understand how and by whom the spirit of unforgiveness is motivated and nurtured in the hearts of Armenians, and will throw light on both the religious and the political facets of the problem.

Thus, the urgency of this topic is not related only to Armenians and to Turks, but also to the rest of the world. If Armenians are able to forgive Turks in the very same way Jesus forgave those who crucified him, it will become a testimony to the entire Islamic world that Christians are truly the followers of the crucified Messiah. It will demonstrate that crucifixion is not a sign of weakness, but rather a sign of strength, which can enable Armenians to overcome their pain, and therefore be able to love Turks.

Limitations

Personal Considerations

Due to a politically hard situation in relation to this topic, the interviewing process may not be very safe. For instance in Istanbul, on January 19th Hrant Dink, a prominent Turkish-Armenian editor, convicted in 2005 of insulting the Turkish identity by writing about the Armenian Genocide, was shot dead outside his newspaper's office (BBC news).

Moreover, any efforts to make Armenians and Turks think anew or differently over this issue is very risky. For instance, The Economist writes, "Unbowed by a flawed judicial system and a crescendo of death threats, Mr. Dink paid with his life for his efforts to make his fellow Turkish citizens, and his fellow ethnic Armenians, think anew about the horrors that unfolded in the final years of the Ottoman era" (The Economist 2007, 10). In addition this murder may cause problems in politics. The

Economist says, “A new dispute over the Armenians may sour Turkish-American relations”, and later continues, “It could even hurt America’s efforts to restore order in Iraq” (The Economist 2007, 31).

The topic of genocide is very hard; it cannot be solved without complications and conflict. Armenians’ pain is very deep, and the politics related to this are poorly understood and dangerous. Thus, if one wants to view this topic from the perspective of both Armenians and Turks, one can not avoid conflicts. The only thing here is that I pray and trust God that he will provide enough resources and courage to accomplish his will in relation to this topic.

Resource Considerations

Since both financial and time resources are limited, I was not free to travel to the geographic area of this conflict for interviews, nor was able to have access to archives in both Turkey and Armenia or to very vital books relevant to this topic. Furthermore, in addition I was not be able to take interviews from those politicians who are involved in the decision making process in relation to this topic. The literature review will be based on internet and library research.

Also, there is one point of view from the Armenian side that Armenians also killed Turks. This was almost impossible for me to investigate; I did not have access to particular Armenian sources and archives as well as to those Armenians who gave me information about this.

Topic or Meaning Considerations

The topic of genocide is very wide and it includes many areas of political and social life, not only for the Armenian nation, but also for other nations, particularly Turkey, France, the United States, Russia and Germany. I will narrow down this topic to the concept of forgiveness, reconciliation and its possible positive consequences in different areas of life of Armenians and their psychology.

Definitions of Key Terms

Genocide-The definition of the crime of genocide consists of three elements:

1. There has to be a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.
2. This group has to be subjected to certain acts such as murder of the members of the group or forced transfer of the children of one group into another group or subjecting the members of the group to conditions which will eventually bring about their physical demise.
3. There has to be the intent of destroying in part or in whole the said group (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 27).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The first part of the literature for this topic is divided into two parts: the Armenian side and the Turkish side. According to Armenian archives and eyewitnesses the genocide has happened and Armenians actually were killed. But according to Turks the genocide never took place; the Turks admit that something happened, but it was not genocide. However, while speaking from Armenian perspective I will be using the term genocide, since this is the way Armenians address Turko-Armenian conflict.

Armenians Explain the Conflict

Historical Overview

Since time immemorial the Armenians have inhabited the vast mountain region between the Taurus Mountains on the northeastern coast of the Mediterranean across Anatolia to the Black and Caspian seas. Due to its location Armenia has always faced atrocities, persecution and war. Because of this the present-day independent state of Armenia represents only one-tenth of the historical land (Tschuy 1997, 2).

However the worst catastrophe that befell the Armenian people was the domination by the Ottoman Turks from 1375 until 1918, culminating in the Genocide of 1915. During this domination the Ottoman Empire also imposed on the Armenians a head tax (karadj). According to some sources, Christians were required each year to deliver to the Sultan a number of boys between the ages of four and eight, called the *Devishirme*. After being circumcised and reared in the Islamic faith and Turkish culture, they were trained for the military purposes. Under the rule of Suleiman the Magnificent (1520-1566) about 40,000 such boys were taken away from their families (Tschuy 1997, 3).

Under these harsh circumstances, the Armenian Orthodox Church had become the identity shaper of the entire Armenian nation. At that time the Catholicos was the right hand of the king, and therefore was seriously involved in politics (Tschuy 1997, 3).

In the late 18th century Armenia along with other Christian nations, such as Greek and Serbians, under the Ottoman yoke started to rebel in order to gain independence. In those years Orthodox Russia was becoming a great power and occupied the northern shore of the Black Sea and Transcaucasia. In 1828 the Russians under Alexander II entered eastern Armenia (Tschuy 1997, 4). The Russians were mostly interested in eastern Armenia. Although the Russians were Christians, they started the Russification program of schools, churches and society in Armenia, more accurately in the areas free from Turks. The Russification process was a threat to the Armenians' identity. The Russians' motivation was very unclear.

It is very necessary here to stress the treaty of San Stefano (1878) which actually ended with the Russo-Turkish war. In this treaty Romania, Serbia, and Montenegro obtained their independence, Bulgaria became an autonomous

principality, Bosnia-Herzegovina was occupied by Austria-Hungary and Cyprus was “leased” to the British. The Armenians were merely granted an internal autonomy (Tschuy 1997, 4). Based on this and other events during these years Armenians faced several disappointments with other Christian nations. Actually, as very often history itself has proved, any nation is first of all interested in its own well being, and only secondarily does it focus on the needs of other nations. This phenomenon has been seen in the relationships between Russia, Britain and Armenia. Let us see what Tschuy writes: “Even so Armenian reformists and revolutionary circles began in 1885 to clamour for the implementation of the Armenian clauses of San Stefano. They did not realize that Russia, frustrated that San Stefano had prevented it from controlling the Dardanelles, had lost interest in the Armenians and was expanding into Central Asia. The British ever worried about the Suez Canal, had occupied Egypt in 1881, and were also turning their eyes away from Armenia” (1997, 4). As history shows the conflict between Turks and Armenians involves more than merely the Armenian and the Turkish nations. Based on this argument it is not accurate to state that only Turks or only Armenians are responsible for this conflict.

In addition to the points mentioned above, the Turkish state itself was facing a crisis; the Turkish people themselves were tired of their corrupt state. As a reaction to this the newly established party of the “Young Turks” was developed. The Young Turks were demanding that every inhabitant of Turkey should be granted the same civic rights as had been established in western European countries, without regard to race or religion (Ibid., 5). Turks as well as other nationalities including Armenians welcomed the Young Turks very enthusiastically; they were expecting that the Young Turks would create a modern state in which all ethnic, racial and religious differences would not be emphasized. However, due to the hard political situation the Young

Turk's movement also was touched by the spirit of nationalism, and as a result all expectations were discouraged. Counting on this politically unstable situation and on foreign help, Armenian nationalists felt that the time had come to push the Turks further. Thus, on 30th September 1895 two thousand Armenians marched through the streets of Constantinople to present their request to the grand visir. This action encountered a counter-demonstration and as a result several hundred Armenian demonstrators were killed. After this Abdul Hamid stated that the Armenians had intended to murder the grand visir. As a reaction to this accusation another massacre was organized by Turks; by the end of the year over 88,000 Armenians were killed, 2500 villages and towns were burned, 586 churches and monasteries destroyed and 328 churches were converted into mosques. These events were described by local authorities of the Arabkir region in the following way:

All of Muhammed's sons are called to fulfill their duty which is to kill all Armenians, to loot and burn their houses. Not one single Armenian must be spared. This is the sultan's command. Whoever does not obey his command shall be considered to be an Armenian and will be killed as such. Therefore each Muslim must show obedience to the Government and kill first those Christians who up to now have lived in friendship with him. (Tschuy 1997, 5)

On 12 November 1914, Turkey entered World War I (as Germany's ally) by declaring war on Russia and the Western Allies. The Armenian massacre occurred exactly during this political chaos. Some sources even state, that the Turks did not take into consideration the fact that Armenian soldiers were fighting for Turkey or that the Armenian Church and the community leaders were loyal to the Turkish government. The actual massacre began on 24 April 1915, with the arrest of leading Armenians in Constantinople.

According to Armenian statistics, there were 1,845,450 Armenians in the Ottoman Empire before the Genocide. Of these, only 204,700 managed to stay alive and 244,400 fled abroad. The rest who survived were forced to convert to Islam.

When Turkey entered World War I on the side of Germany against Britain, France, and Russia, Talaat Pasha (Minister of the Interior) declared that the Empire would target its Christian subjects (Power 2002: 2). According to this fact, Armenians were persecuted because of their religion. According to the New York Times, in January 1915 Talaat declared that there was no room for Christians in Turkey. By late March, Turkey had begun disarming Armenian men serving in the Ottoman Empire. On April 25, 1915 about 250 leading Armenian intellectuals were executed in Constantinople. Churches were defiled, Armenian schools were closed, and especially those teachers who refused to convert to the Islamic faith were killed. The Turkish government ordered the deportation of Armenians all over the Anatolia. Armenians were supposed to be deported to the deserts of Syria. The deportation was organized without any preparation. Because of this more than half of the deported Armenians died on the way. There is one official proclamation from June 1915:

Our Armenian fellow countrymen, ...because...they have...attempted to destroy the peace and security of the Ottoman state, ...have to be sent away to place which have been prepared in the interior...and a literal obedience to the following orders, in a categorical manner, is accordingly enjoyed upon all Ottomans:

1. With the exception of the sick, all Armenians are obliged to leave within five days from the date of this proclamation...
2. Although they are free to carry with them on their journey the articles on their movable property, which they desire, they are forbidden to sell their land and their extra effects, or to leave them here and there with other people...(Power 2002, 2).

Thus, the Young Turks in leadership with Talaat and Enver Pasha (the minister of war) and Djemal (the minister of public works) justified their action by claiming that it was necessary to prevent and suppress Armenian revolts (Ibid).

The “International Community” could not prevent this massacre. Although France, Britain and the United States tried to help, they could not or didn’t do much due to politically complicated issues related to Turkey as well as other nations. During this time Britain and France were at war with the Ottoman Empire which actually promoted the violence of the Young Turks. Despite these facts confusion was great; people could not believe or even understand what was going on in reality. As in 1915, so in the 21st century the main problem concerning the genocide is political. Genocide could have been easily prevented had the political situation been better. There is no nation in this world that desires to have a war; everybody wants to live and everybody wants a happy life. It is said that every war is caused by the mistakes and foolishness of the political leaders. Now if we are to speak about forgiveness, then who should Armenians forgive? Should they forgive the political and military leaders or those soldiers who possibly raped or killed the Armenians without the knowledge of Turkish politicians who ordered the deportation? Who did what? Who is guilty: the politicians or everyone who committed an act of violence?

Henry Morgenthau, a German born Jew, was appointed as the US ambassador to the Ottoman Empire by President Wilson in 1913. Due to the Turks not giving right and accurate information, initially Morgenthau did not recognize that the killing of Armenians was not just violence but rather genocide. After getting more information about the massacre from accurate sources such as visits from traumatized Armenians and trusted missionaries, Morgenthau started to do his best to prevent the mass extermination of Armenians. This was not easy for him. He noted to himself, “I

had no rights to interfere. According to cold-blooded legalities of the situation, the treatment of Turkish subjects by the Turkish Government was purely a domestic affair; unless it directly affected American lives and American interests, it was outside the concern of the American Government” (Power 2002, 11). Morgenthau was very unhappy with this. He tried to solve this problem in different ways. On behalf of humanity he urged the United States to convince the German Kaiser to stop the Turks. He also tried to evacuate Armenians by negotiation with Turks, but he could not succeed with this project. Moreover he tried to get help and support for desperate Armenians from outside the U.S. Government; many churches such as Congregationalists, Baptists, and Roman Catholics made donations for Armenians. In sum 1,000 churches and religious organizations in New York City were involved in helping and preventing the massacre of Armenians. Despite this attempt, the U.S. didn't use its military power to prevent Turks; Americans were worried about their schools and churches in Turkey (Ibid). Again we see that the only reason of not being able to prevent the massacre was political. This is some kind of paradox; what is the role of political leaders? Ironically, throughout history we see that instead of protecting human rights and human life, political leaders seem to primarily seek their own benefit. Both Armenians and Turks face the same problem even now; politics prevent both nations from achieving possible reconciliation and cooperation.

Thus, according to Armenian archives the Armenian Genocide (also known as the Armenian Holocaust or the Armenian massacre) had taken place during the government of young Turks (by the leadership of Enver Pasha, Talat Pasha and Cemal Pasha) from 1915 to 1917 in the Ottoman Empire (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Armenian_Genocide). Thus, based on these historical events Armenians annually commemorate the day of Genocide on the 24 of April.

This day is very essential for Armenians all over the world. This annual commemoration has several meanings for Armenians. One of those meanings is that Armenians want as many nations as possible to accept the notion of Genocide; this is the way Armenians protest against injustice. For instance let us quote from Kolbert's article; "Like President Clinton, President Bush continues to "respect the Turkish government's assertions" and to issue Armenian Remembrance Day proclamations each year without ever quite acknowledging what it is that's being remembered. If in Washington it's politically awkward to refer to the *genocide*, it is positively dangerous to do so in Istanbul" (Kolbert n.d, 120-124).

According to some archives the Armenians say that because this crime remained unpunished by the international community, it encouraged a new Genocide to come forth; just two decades later the Jewish Holocaust was committed. This statement is supported by the following declaration by Hitler; "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians?" (<http://www.ksg.harvard.edu/citizen/>).

Turks Helped Armenians

According to some anecdotal sources, such as family histories that have been transmitted orally, autobiographies, personal memories and oral testimonies of survivors, a number of Turks risked their own lives to rescue Armenians from the horrible massacre. According to sources nobody can say how many Turks helped Armenians by risking their lives.

It is worthwhile here to give parallel examples from the Rwandan Genocide, which occurred in 1994 between the two tribes of Rwanda: Tutsi and Hutu. Thousands of Hutu who rejected the policy of killing Tutsi were murdered themselves. Many Hutu acted with tremendous courage to save their Tutsi neighbors.

For instance one Kigali man, Dismas Mutezintare Gisimba, managed during the three months of genocide to protect an orphanage in Nyambirambo. For the sake of saving 400 children he risked his life. Afterwards he said: “The education I got from my parents really helped to ward off the evil during the genocide. If parents had really made their children understand that Tutsi have the same flesh as them and that their blood is the same as them, they wouldn’t have dared to kill their fellow men in such a cruel manner. The people who took part in the genocide had learned from their parents that Tutsi are bad by nature and were created to die” (Melvern 2004, 192). It is interesting how Gisimba’s comment reflects the Turko-Armenian conflict.

It is very simple to explain the reason of this courage; friendship and compassion towards those who are in need. Despite this there are cases where some benefit to the rescuer was involved: bribes, labor, sexual exploitation, marriage to the rescuers’ children as well as forced conversion to Islam (<http://www.zoryaninstitute.org/>). Because Armenians’ pain was horrible, they usually do not acknowledge that Turks helped Armenians. Some individual Armenians can do this, but in general Armenians cannot view this question objectively. Furthermore, The Republic of Armenia and Turkey do not enjoy official diplomatic relations or the economic benefits; both Turks and Armenians have been wounded by each other. On the one hand Armenians are injured and offended because Turkey denies the Genocide. On the other hand Turks are injured because they are blamed for their lack of adherence to truthfulness and democratic principles (<http://www.zoryaninstitute.org/>). Thus as we see, it is very hard for both sides to start any dialogue or negotiation between these two nations. On the individual level many Armenians have Turkish friends and vice versa, but these people never try to address the topic of Genocide at the political level; it is not safe. For instance, there

are several intellectual Turks who publicly gave a speech about this and recognized the Genocide, but due to political reasons it was not safe for some of them (Orhan Pamuk, a Turkish novelist) to stay in Turkey.

Turks Explain the Conflict

The Problem of Land

Before introducing the theories of the origins of Armenians, it will be helpful to present the Armenian demand towards the land. In relation to this Sonyel writes: "...if the Armenian demands were accepted, the Armenian Republic would expand to within thirty kilometers of Batum, following the Kura valley from Baku to Tiflis. It would also reach to within a 150 kilometers of the Caspian Sea and the province of Nahcivan would be annexed. Thus the Armenian state would occupy the whole of the eastern portion of the Anatolian peninsula, including the eastern parts of the Toros (Taurus) and Sivas plains, and would have access to the Black and Mediterranean Seas" (Sonyel 2001, 48). After giving a brief introduction of the Armenian demand, it is very essential also to give a brief presentation of the possible origins of Armenia and the Armenian land. According to some sources even Armenian historians disagree on this question. Let us discuss some of these controversial theories.

1. *The Biblical Noah Theory.* This theory states that Armenians descended from Hayk, great son of the Biblical patriarch Noah. Because Noah's Ark was to rest on Mount Ararat, the holders of this theory claim that eastern Anatolia must have been the original Armenian homeland. According to this theory Hayk lived about 400 years and expanded his dominion as far as Babylon.

2. *The Urartu Theory.* Those who hold this theory claim that Armenians were

the people of Urartu, which was located in eastern Anatolia starting about 3000 BC (The Armenian issue in nine questions and answers 1982, 1-2).

Since there is more than one theory of the origins of the Armenian nation, it can hardly be stated that all of them are right. Therefore it is questionable to state that eastern Anatolia was truly the original homeland of the Armenians.

The Problem of Relationship

Have the Turks always attacked and misruled Armenians throughout history? There are some claims that the Turks mistreated non-Muslims, and particularly the Armenians throughout history. Without this claim it would have been really hard for Armenians to justify or to prove their claim for “Genocide,” since for about 600 years Turks and Armenians used to live side by side in peace and harmony. If this is so then why did the Turks suddenly started killing Armenians? Moreover, Armenians had always tried to interpret the Turko-Armenian conflict as struggle between Christians and Muslims. This is not necessarily true, since contemporary Armenians themselves have mentioned how the Armenians of Byzantium welcomed the Seljuk conquest, since they rescued them from the Byzantine oppression. History states that the Seljuks even protected the Armenian Church which the Byzantines were trying to destroy. Even the Armenian spiritual leaders went to Seljuk Sultan Melikshah to express their thanks. For instance the Armenian historian Mathias of Edessa writes; “Melikshah’s heart is full of affection and good will for Christians; he has treated the sons of Jesus Christ very well, and he has given the Armenian people affluence, peace and happiness” (1982, 6). After the death of Seljuk Sultan Kilich Arslan the same Armenian historian writes; “Kilich Arslan’s death has driven Christians into mourning since he was a charitable person of high character.” In fact the Turkish tradition and

Islamic law required that non Muslims should be well treated in the Turkish Empire. For instance the establishment of the Ottoman Empire in 1453 opened a new area of religious, political, social, economic and cultural prosperity for the Armenians and for other non-Muslim and Muslim people of the new state. Osman Bey (1300-1326), the first Ottoman ruler of the Turkish state, permitted the Armenians to establish their first religious center in western Anatolia, at Kutahya. Much later this center was moved first to Bursa in 1326 and than to Istanbul in 1461. As a result Armenians from different countries, such as Iran, the Caucasus, eastern and central Anatolia, the Balkans and the Crimea, immigrated to Istanbul, since Istanbul had become the true center of Armenian life (1982, 7).

Actually this fact is very interesting. If we look Istanbul and Yerevan (the capital of Armenia) today, we see a very interesting picture. In Istanbul the percentage of Armenians is very high. There is a big Armenian community in Istanbul, having the Armenian Apostolic Church as its spiritual center. Besides Armenians who already live in Turkey, there are large numbers of others coming from Armenia and trying to make money in Turkey. In terms of economics Turkey is doing much better than Armenia. Because of this many Armenians are closely connected with Turkey in terms of business. It is interesting to compare Armenian's condition in Georgia and in Turkey. While I was traveling in Georgia, I was surprised to see that one of my Armenian friends was scared to speak in her mother tongue in public transport. In response to my question of why she was scared she answered that people here in Georgia did not like us speaking Armenian, it was better to speak Russian. Again I was surprised seeing that some Armenians were feeling oppressed in Georgia. Personally I didn't like the Armenian spirit in Georgia.

Unlike Istanbul there is no Turkish community or Turkish spiritual center in

Yerevan. I knew only one Christian Turk in Armenia. He left for Armenia in order to get Biblical education in “World of Life” Church. While I was in Turkey I could see that Armenians in Turkey were feeling much better than in Georgia, although Georgia is a Christian country.

Going back to the 19th century we see some sources stressing that even in politics Armenians had their people. For instance, there were twenty-nine Armenians in the highest Governmental rank of Pasha, twenty-two ministers, including the minister of the foreign affairs, Finance, Trade and Post. There also were thirty-three Armenian representatives appointed and elected to the Parliaments formed after 1876, seven ambassadors, eleven consul-generals and consuls, eleven university professors, and forty-one other officials of high rank (1982, 8). Of course time to time internal difficulties did arise within some of the individual elites, but in general the empire was at peace. In fact, Armenians used to have periodic internal clashes and disputes among each other over different issues. For instance within the Armenian elite dispute arose over the election of the patriarch between the “native” Armenians, who had come to Istanbul from Anatolia and the Crimea, and those called “eastern” and “foreign” Armenians, who came from Iran and the Caucasus. These groups often had problems with each other and complained against each other to the Ottomans, in order to gain governmental support for their own interests. According to some sources there were even some bloody clashes among conflicting Armenian political groups, against which the Ottomans were forced to intervene to prevent the Armenians from annihilating each other (1982, 9).

Besides political clashes there were also some clashes in the sphere of religion. Inside the Gregorian Armenian Church there was a decline in the form of corruption and the like. Because of this many Armenians were open to accept the

teaching of foreign Catholic and Protestant missionaries sent into the Empire during 19th century. These missionaries were sent from England and France. This missionary movement led to the creation of the Armenian Catholic Church in Istanbul in 1830 and the Protestant Church in 1847 (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 17). Thus this created a split and division among Armenian Christians. Even the Armenian Gregorian leaders asked the Ottoman government to assist them in this dispute, but the Ottoman government refused to do so, by arguing that this kind of problem should not be solved by the state. Later bloody clashes followed with the Gregorian patriarch Chuhajian and Tahtajian going so far as to excommunicate and banish all Armenian Protestants. Later another serious conflict emerged among the Armenian Catholics in relation to the nature of their relationship with the Pope in 1888. In this conflict the Ottomans interfered in order to reconcile the two Catholic groups (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 17).

The Roots of Rebellion

The Ottoman-Russian war awakened the Armenian dream of independence with Russian help and under the guidance of Russia. It is interesting that according to some archives the presence of Russians in the region encouraged Armenians to mistreat their Turkish Muslim neighbors. For instance Captain Trotter, the British Military Consul at Erzurum, reported; “There is no doubt that during the Russian occupation several of the Armenians, who had been enrolled in the local police, took advantage of the opportunity to abuse and maltreat the Mussulmans. This has been admitted to me by the Russian acting Vice-Consul...” (Simsir serial VII-No.84, 6). In fact Russia and Great Britain used Armenians as a tool for their own ambitions and political reasons. Facts about this have been adequately documented by various

Armenian and other foreign sources. For instance Edgar Granville stated, "There was no Armenian movement in Ottoman territory before the Russians stirred them up. Innocent people are going to be hurt because of this dream of greater Armenia under the protection of the Czar," as well as "the Armenian movements intend to attach Eastern Anatolia to Russia." Besides the Armenian writer Gabriel Kaprielyan said in his book "The Armenian Crisis and Rebirth" that the revolutionary promises and inspirations were owned to Russia. In addition the Dashnak newspaper Hairenik in its issue of 28 June 1918 stated that the awakening of a revolutionary spirit among the Armenians in Turkey was the result of Russian stimulation. Again the Armenian Patriarch Horen Ashikian wrote in his "History of Armenia" that the Protestant missionaries distributed in large numbers to various places in Turkey made propaganda in favor of England and stirred the Armenians to desire autonomy under British protection. He continues saying that the schools that they established were the nurseries of their secret plans. Another Armenian religious leader Hrant Vartabed wrote that the establishment of protestant communities in Ottoman territory and their protection by England and the United States shows that they did not shrink from exploiting even the most sacred feelings of the West, religious feelings, in seeking civilization. In addition he also stated that the Catholicos of Echmiadzin Kevork V was a tool of Czarist Russia and that he betrayed the Armenians of Anatolia (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 20).

In 1876, the British Ambassador in Istanbul reported that the Armenian patriarch had said to him: "If revolution is necessary to attract the attention and intervention of Europe, it would not be hard to do so." Other sources also confirm that Armenians truly were in a revolutionary mood. For instance the archives of "Foreign Policy Institute" in Turkey state that the Prime Minister of the Armenian

Republic of Transcaucasia, Howhannes Katchaznouni, stated the following: “At the beginning of the fall of 1914 when Turkey had not entered the war but had already been making preparations, Armenian revolutionary bands began to be formed in Transcaucasia with great enthusiasm and, especially, with much uproar... We had created a dense atmosphere of illusion in our minds. We had implanted our own desires into the minds of others; we had lost our sense of reality and were carried away with our dreams...” (Simsir 1992, 50).

“We overestimated the ability of the Armenian people, its political and military power, and overestimated the extent and importance of the services our people rendered to the Russians. And by overestimating our very modest worth and merit we were naturally exaggerating our hopes and expectations...” (Ibid., 50). It is very essential here to stress that many Turkish sources emphasize that Armenians truly had exaggerated the events of the Turko-Armenian conflict. For instance Simsir writes: “Armenian fanatical clergy and intellectuals started a vigorous campaign of agitation following the signature of the Berlin Treaty and the Anglo-Turkish Convention. The Armenian Patriarch Mgr. Nerses was acting as a professional petition-writer, or *arzuhalci* of Istanbul. In order to impress as much as possible foreigners, he did not hesitate to exaggerate every minor act of authority or even to fabricate some cases of oppression. The British Ambassador of Istanbul, Sir H. Layard, wrote that the petitions emanating from the Armenian Patriarchate were ‘proved on inquiry, to contain much exaggerated statements’” (Simsir serial VII-No. 84). In relation to this Firuz Kazemzadeh says; “Armenian leaders were drunk with victory and power” (Sonyel 2001, 47). Sonyel also addresses this topic; “It appears that some among them are obsessed with the dream of a large empire”.

It is necessary here to stress that in the time of any conflict information can be easily erased or transformed into false information. For instance Pottier while analyzing the Rwandan Genocide writes; “Today, the international community understands better that information and disinformation merge in times of conflict, and that confusion, often spread deliberately, is the inevitable outcome” (Pottier 2002:1). Moreover, Pottier goes on arguing that very often in the time of conflict foreigners (journalists, missionaries, humanitarians and the like) do not always question what they hear. In the race to be first, first to deliver aid, first to transmit pictures and stories, foreigners hardly admit that they are vulnerable to manipulation and deception. For example, in his book “Re-imagining Rwanda” Pottier quotes from John Ryle in relation to a Sudanese informant; “Who cares what I tell the foreigners as long as the [rebel] authorities do not think I am being subversive?” This concept of disinformation and manipulation should be taken into consideration in relation to the Turko-Armenian conflict.

Furthermore it is very interesting to see how the Turks explain the role of Russia in this conflict. According to Turkish archives Russia was just using the Armenians for its own purposes. Actually Russia had no intention to establish Armenian independence either within its own dominion or in Ottoman territory. Right after the Russians took over the Caucasus, they started the Russifying process of Armenians by establishing their own control over the Armenian Gregorian Church in their territory. Even the Catholicos was dependent on the Czar; he was not flexible to make decisions on his own. In addition, in 1903 The Russians took control of all the financial resources of the Armenian Church as well as Armenian establishments and schools (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 25). It is also interesting that the expression “As Armenia without Armenians” Turks address to the Russian

Foreign Minister Lobanov-Rostowsky which actually was attributed to the Ottoman administration by some, as Turks state, propagandist Armenians. Hence the Russian's oppression over Armenians was severe. For instance the Armenian historian Vardanian writes; "Ottoman Armenia was completely free in its traditions, religion, culture and language in comparison to Russian Armenia under the Czars." What happened during WWI shows that truly the Russians were not interested in Armenians at all; the territory which the Russians had promised to the Armenians was summarily divided between Russia and France without any mention of the Armenians. As a response to the Catholicos' complaint the Czar declared; "Russia has no Armenian problem." Even the Armenian writer Borian says; "Czarist Russia at no time wanted to assure the Armenian autonomy. For this reason one must consider the Armenians who were working for Armenian autonomy as no more than against the Czar to attach Eastern Anatolia to Russia." Thus, based on facts and archives the Turks conclude that the Russians have deceived the Armenians for years; the Armenians were left with nothing more than an empty dream (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 26).

Did The Turks Undertake a Systematic Massacre of the Armenians in 1915?

The Ottoman Turks entered into the WWI on November 1, 1914 as ally with Germany and Austria-Hungary. By Armenian revolutionaries this event was considered to be the best opportunity to attack the Ottoman State. Thus, the Russian Armenians were preparing to attack the Ottomans as soon as the war was declared. Armenians were planning to do so by joining the Russian army. For instance the Catholicos of Echmiadzin assured the Russian General Governor of the Caucasus,

Vranzof-Dashkof the following; “in return for Russia’s forcing the Ottomans to make reforms for the Armenians, all the Russian Armenians would support the Russian war effort without conditions” (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 28). The Armenian representative of the Ottoman parliament for Van, Papazyan, ended up being a leading guerilla fighter against the Ottomans. Papazyan declared; “The volunteer Armenian regiments in the Caucasus should prepare themselves for battle, serve as advance units for the Russian armies to help them capture the key position in the district where the Armenians live, and advance into Anatolia, joining the Armenian units already there” (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 29). Within a few months after the war began, Armenian guerilla forces, by operating with the Russians, started brutally attacking Turkish cities, towns and villages in the East. During these attacks Armenians were massacring people without mercy, as well as they were trying to sabotage as much as possible the Ottoman army’s war effort by destroying roads and bridges, raiding caravans, and doing whatever else they could do to ease the Russian occupation. The massacre committed by Armenians was so severe that even the Russian commanders themselves were forced to withdraw the Armenians from the fighting fronts. There are many accounts of this issue by many Russian officers.

Hamparsum Boyaciyanyan, under the nickname “Murad” particularly ordered that Turkish children should be killed as they form a danger to the Armenian nation. Basically the aim of these atrocities was to leave only Armenians in the territory being claimed for the new Armenian state. Furthermore, during the Armenian National Congress assembly at Tiflis in February 1915 the Dashnak representative declared: “Russia provided 242,000 rubles before the war even began to arm and prepare the Ottoman Armenians to undertake revolts.” As a result on April 24 of the year 1915

the Armenian revolutionary committees were closed and 235 of their leaders were arrested for activities against the state. In his book "The Armenian Question" Ataov also stresses that the 24 of April was the day of the arrest of 235 Armenian leaders (Ataov 1999, 26). It is this day of arrest that Armenians in recent years have been annually commemorating. Throughout the world, all Armenians take part in this commemoration of the "massacre" taken place in 1915. However by the Ottoman Council was ordered the deportation and transportation of Ottoman Armenians; about 700,000 people were transported. According to Turkish sources they did not have any intention to massacre Armenians; moreover their initial plan was to provide Armenian refugees with food and money after they arrived in Syria, Palestine or Iraq. There are some documents confirming this attempt. Again the Ottoman Council of Ministers ordered: "This order is entirely intended against the extension of the Armenian Revolutionary Committees; therefore do not execute it in such a manner that might cause the mutual massacre of Muslims and Armenians. Make arrangements for special officials to accompany the groups of Armenians who are being relocated, and make sure they are provided with food and other needed things, paying the cost out of the allotments set aside for emigrants."

Although this was attempted Turks admit that they could not organize the transportation of Armenians the way it was supposed to be. In addition Turks say that the deportation of the deported Armenians took place at a time when the Empire was suffering from severe shortage of fuel, food, medicine and other supplies as well as large-scale plague and famine. Turks continue saying that it should not be forgotten that during this time the entire Ottoman army lost about 90,000 men in the East as a result of severe shortages. Besides this as a result of the war about three or four million Ottoman people, belonging to various religious groups, died because of the

same conditions that affected the deportees. How tragic and sad this is; it is not just for Armenians to blame Turks for the loss of Armenians lives (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 32).

Armenians in Turkey Today

As I have already mentioned there are about 40,000-50,000 Armenians in Turkey, particularly in Istanbul. Many of these Armenians are full Turkish citizens, with the same rights and privileges as other Turkish citizens. It can be said that most of Turkish Armenians are Gregorian, who are led by the Patriarch. Furthermore, Armenians have their own newspapers, books and magazines in Istanbul. In fact there are thirty Armenian schools, seventeen cultural and social organizations, two daily newspapers called Jamanak and Marmara, two sport clubs, and many health establishments in Turkey.

Today Armenians and Turks live side by side without conflict. It is also worth noting that the Armenian Patriarch held a memorial service at the Patriarchate on behalf of those Turkish diplomats killed by Armenian guerillas. This commemoration service was held on the 1st November of the year 1981. In response to the claims that Turkey is oppressing the minorities in Turkey, the Armenian Patriarch replied: "The Armenians of Turkey are Turkish citizens, they live in peace in Turkey, they practice their religion freely and benefit from the freedom of belief." Besides this in January 28 of the year 1982 the Turkish Consul-General Kamel Arikan was killed by Armenians in Los Angeles. In response to this the Armenian Patriarch stated: "The Turkish Armenians, like all other citizens, learned of this with great sorrow" (Armenian Claims and Historical Facts 1998, 44).

Christianity and Armenians

What kind of religion is Christianity and what are the core values of this religion? The Bible says that God is love. What is love and what are the fruits of love? John 3:16 states that God loved the world so much that he sent his son, who later was crucified for our sake. The results of Jesus' sacrifice are many; redemption, salvation, forgiveness, and so on. By his suffering Jesus created a new future for humanity: a future without bitterness, malice, revenge, and hatred. Does Jesus' suffering in any way relate to the Armenian problem? What is the application of Jesus' suffering in the life and psychology of Armenians as a nation? What is the relevance of the cross in Armenian identity?

It is interesting to note what Peck writes about love. "Moving out in the face of fear we call courage. Love, then, is a form of work or a form of courage. Specifically, it is work or courage directed toward the nurture of our own or another's spiritual growth" (Peck 1978, 120). John says that in love there is no fear. Therefore we can say that fear destroys. Fear destroys the love of God in us. Regardless of circumstances and possible consequences, the human heart should abide in God's love, which excludes fear. How do fear and love relate to a person's identity? Judith writes, "...Identity I define as the harmony between your values and your actions. In other words, you know who you are and you want to protect that...and be recognized for that" (Judith 1997, 4).

What is the Armenian national identity? Love gives, and love embraces the other, whereas lack of love excludes the other. Very often by exclusion people create their identity. What is the identity of Armenians as a nation? Is it the crucified and later glorified Messiah, or does it have to do only with Armenian suffering? Does Armenian identity focus on the love of God or on the sorrow of the genocide? Ataov

writes, “He underlined that people sometimes have a psychological investment in the continuation of a given conflict, and that they actually use them as external stabilizers of their sense of identity and inner control” (Ataov 1999, 40). Has the genocide become Armenians’ identity? Are Armenians willing to give up with their pain and sorrow or they want to keep it? Very often Armenians as a nation are identified with their suffering; we are the ones who have suffered a lot. Jesus suffered too, but for Jesus, suffering was just a means to reach to his goal, which is to embrace evil humanity through forgiveness.

As a Christian nation Armenians always had identified their suffering with Jesus’ suffering. Because of this Jesus’ suffering has always been a comfort for Armenians. This is right, and this should be so in order to comfort the nation. But one thing, and the most vital thing Armenians somehow missed was to identify themselves with Jesus: through suffering Jesus loved and forgave evil humanity. Jesus loved, and Jesus loved through his suffering. Does this sacrificial love relate to Armenians’ pain? If does then how?

Love has redemptive power. As Peck says, love is a courageous giving for the sake of the receiver’s spiritual growth. By overcoming his fear at Gethsemane Jesus gave through suffering. Volf says, “If giving were a way of getting, God would not give at all; being a possession of all things, God wouldn’t need to get anything and so wouldn’t give anything. God doesn’t give in order to acquire. God loves without self-seeking; that’s at the heart of who God is. God gives for the benefit of others” (Volf 2005, 68).

Is there anything that Armenians can give Turks? Gifts are different and not all gifts are easy to give. Some gifts require even our life. Volf writes, “In a fragile and sinful world, we may be required on occasion to give a ‘gift of death’, as Christ

died for our salvation...”(2005, 77). What is death for Armenians? Definitely it does not refer to a physical death. Therefore, what is it that Armenians should sacrifice?

The Bible says unless the seed dies it will not give fruits. Can we say that unless Armenians “die” Turks will not give fruits, or unless Armenian Christians testify to Jesus’ power of giving, Turkish Muslims will not give fruits? Why did God allow this suffering upon Armenians? “God works against evil and suffering. But God, in immense divine power and inscrutable divine wisdom, also works through evil and suffering” (2005, 30). Why being a powerful God, does he allows evil in our lives?

About the human condition Lewis writes:

“Thus the human spirit from being the master of human nature became a mere lodger in its own house, or even a prisoner; rational conciseness became what it now is—a fitful spot-light resting on a small part of the cerebral motions. But this limitation of the spirit’s powers was a lesser evil than the corruption of the spirit itself. It had turned from God and became its own idol, so though it could still turn back to God, it could do so only by painful effort, and its inclination was self-ward. Hence pride and ambition, the desire to be lovely in its own eyes and to depress and humiliate all rivals, envy, and restless search for more, security, were now the attitudes that came easiest to it. It was not only a weak king over its own nature, but a bad one: it sent down into the psycho-physical organism desires far worse than the organism sent up into it. This condition was transmitted by heredity to all later generations, for it was not simply what biologists call an acquired variation; it was the emergence of a new kind of man—a new species, never made by God, [and it] had sinned itself into existence. The change which man had undergone was not parallel to the development to a new organ or a new habit; it was a radical alteration of his constitution, a

disturbance of the relation between his component parts, and an internal perversion of one of them” (Lewis 1942, 71).

As Lewis says, after the fall a human being still can turn to God, but only after a painful effort, which is suffering. God allowed suffering upon Armenians’ lives. What was the purpose of it? The Armenian genocide had become a thorn of the Armenian nation. What are we supposed to do with this thorn? Ogan writes, “Learn to build your thrones with your thorns” (Ogan 2005, 19). In order to do so Armenians should develop a vision of seeing beyond the thorn, just as Jesus saw beyond the cross. The problem is not the genocide, but the way in which Armenians view the genocide. Ogan writes, “What they saw influenced what they did and what they did had depth because of what they saw” (2005, 65). The annual commemoration of the genocide reflects Armenians’ paradigm; they do what they see, and they see the thorn, their suffering, and their cross only.

How does the annual commemoration impact Armenians’ identity? The commemoration reflects the past, and it reminds them of the past. What is the meaning of this memory? Human memory is powerful; it can destroy as well as create, depending on how people use it. Memory can nurture hatred and hatred may nurture the memory. How do Armenians remember the genocide? With hatred or with love, with loving their enemies or with hating them? Volf writes, “You see, it is important not only that we remember, but how we remember-with love or with hate, seeking reconciliation or going after revenge. Salvation, ladies and gentlemen, does not lie simply in memory; it lies also what we do with our memory” (Volf 1996, 239). How do Armenians use their memory? One of the Ten Commandments is ‘you shall not kill.’ In relation to John’s saying “Any one who hates his brother is a murderer” Stott writes, “Every loss of temper, every outburst of uncontrolled passion, every

stirring of sullen rage, every bitter resentment and thirsting for revenge-all these things are murder” (Stott 1958, 67). Armenians’ memory is based on eye witnesses as well as in history, but can we always and completely trust history and historians? “Today, the international community understands better that information and disinformation merge in times of conflict, and that confusion, often spread deliberately, is the inevitable outcome” (Pottier 2002, 1). Even the victims of genocide very often do not know the truth, particularly the cause of the chaos or the mass massacre. They see *what* happens but they do not know *why*; this ignorance very often creates confusion and causes disinformation, which later can be used by historians.

Armenian and Turkish historians contradict to each other. What is the main reason for this? Who is right, the Turks or the Armenians or neither? In Rwanda’s case Pottier writes the following, “Rwanda’s post genocide leaders have tried to persuade members of the international community that the history books need to be rewritten” (Pottier 2002, 47). In conflicts like the Armenian or Rwanda genocide, it is impossible to draw a line between white and black. These kinds of conflicts can be compared with an abstract picture, where there are many colors and the picture is not very clear but rather vague. The events of history should be recorded accurately, but this is not always the case. Aatov writes, “We can not leave history entirely to nonclinical observers and to professional historians who often too nobly immerse themselves into the very disguises, rationalization, and idealizations of the historical process from which it should be their business to separate themselves” (Aatov 1999,40).

Thus, Armenian history dictates to us that we have an enemy, and that we have suffered a lot. Even Armenian music and art indicates the pain and sorrow of

the nation. Armenian suffering has become the Armenians' identity, and even the national hymn sings about the innocent Armenians who had always become victims of the enemy. So the Armenian pain is deep, and it is understandable that for centuries Armenians were not able to forget their pain.

Ironically Armenians are very proud of being the first Christian nation. In 2001 Armenians celebrated the 1700th anniversary of their identity as Christian nation. But there is a problem here because Armenians face a crisis in their identity. What is that crisis?

The core element of Christianity is forgiveness and love. The concept of forgiveness is very complicated and complex. Forgiveness has many faces, and one of them is that forgiving the enemy does not necessarily mean speaking or thinking only nice about them. Neither does forgiveness mean to excuse or to ignore the hurt, or to practice unconditional trust or to desire revenge. Rather, in contrast to unforgiveness, forgiveness can be presented in the following way:

What Forgiveness is	What Forgiveness is not
Courage to walk towards the enemy	Fear, isolation from enemy
Embrace	Exclusion
Bringing the pain to God	Keeping the pain and becoming bitter
It is a process; it takes time	Does not happen all at once
Does not depend on offender; one sided action	Demands repentance
To speak the truth about the enemy	To speak nicely about the enemy
To admit the hurt	To excuse or to ignore the hurt
To be realistic	To trust unconditionally
Letting go the right to retaliate	To keep the power of victim
Redemption, liberation	Bondage, dependence on hurt
Love	Hate

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Research design itself is a plan that seeks to guide the whole research process (Sogaard 1996, 96). In this research process I will practice both Descriptive Research and Causal Research. Descriptive research is similar to exploratory research, and causal research itself addresses cause-and-effect relationships among variables (Sogaard 1996, 98). The purpose of this research is to pour light on a solution to the Turko-Armenian problem. This research is a qualitative study.

For the last five to six years I has worked among Armenian Christians, and particularly for the last three years I was very active in cooperating with international mission organizations and organizing their mission works in Armenia. I used to take each group to the museum and Memorial place of Genocide in Tsitsernakaberd. Therefore, this research will combine both ethnographic interviews and participant observation in data collection. As Seidman states the purpose of interview is not to get answers to questions, but to try to understand the experience of other people and the meaning they make of that experience (Seidman 1998, 3). I will follow this principle.

Data Collection

Data of this study has been collected via e-mail by using the questionnaires. The questionnaires are based on “Guiding Questions,” which are listed in Appendix A.

The Population of the Study

The researcher will send the questionnaires to very diverse groups of people with different specializations, age and gender. The researcher has chosen Armenian informants from different countries, having different life experiences. The main purpose of this is that the researcher wants to have a wide variety of responses to the problem.

Questions in the questionnaire are open-ended.

The Data Collection Procedure

The data collection will be done via e-mail. The questionnaires will be sent to a particular number of chosen Armenians. The language of communication will be English. Culturally this will not cause problems to informants, since Armenians abroad usually know English.

Analysis of Data

The data collected from this study was analyzed qualitatively. After data collection from the questionnaires the data was organized in the following way. In the next stage I have identified key terms based on research questions. Key terms

were chosen and identified from Miroslaf Volf's book "Exclusion and Embrace." All information from the data collection was identified and analyzed through these key terms, which are listed in Appendix B.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

What role did the Turks, the Armenians and other nations play in the genocide? The literature review and the data analysis show that other nations such as Germany, the US, and Russia, were indirectly involved in supporting or not preventing the Armenian genocide. Additionally these days there are several more countries involved in hindering the solution to this problem. According to my informants those nations are Azerbaijan, Israel, the US, and Germany. This complicates the situation more. It is very hard to speak about the historical truth. In this case the true justice will also be hard to bring forth. In order to give more precise and correct answers to this question I need to do more research in Armenian and Turkish archives. This result indicates that the process of the solution to this problem can not be handled in isolation; other nations definitely should also be involved in it. Again this complicates the problem more; the historical events are very complex and vague, and it will not be easy to draw a clear line between white and black. However, it is essential to investigate the history and come up with possible truthful results.

Although historical events are vital in the process of solution to this problem, the investigation can not bring forth the perfect and eternal truth. Why is this so? What is the criteria by which the true and the false are separated within a given social

order, or within a given historical event? Volf writes, “The significant question is not so much *what* is the case, but *why* and *how* is something proclaimed and believed to be the case” (Volf 1996, 245). We can review the history from our limited perspectives and assumptions, which are based on our worldviews. We do not know what God knows, and we do not see things the way God sees. Even the victims of massacre can not see and interpret things from God’s perspective. They see things only through their pain and loss. This is not to say that God does not suffer with those who suffer, but rather this is to say that God sees things differently. Job’s story in the Bible is a good example of how God interprets our suffering differently than we do. Volf continues arguing, “We know only something of what God knows-as much and as little as God has revealed” (1996, 243). Therefore, we can address this topic only from our human perspective, which is not perfect, and which does not reflect the eternal truth. Hence, even though the historical investigation can not reveal the eternal truth, which is the only truth, without it this problem cannot be solved.

Also the role of both governments should be taken into consideration seriously. What do both governments do towards the solution of this problem? Based on informants’ responses I would say that another investigation should be done to spread light on what truly politicians do in trying to solve the problem. For those who are not directly involved in politics it is very hard to state what the case is? As Volf says the main point is not what happens but *how* and *why* it happens. What politicians speak out loud does not necessarily reflect the truth which is behind the screen. Since this problem had become power maintaining force even in politics, it is vital to penetrate political affairs not only of Armenia and Turkey, but also of those countries involved in this conflict. It is not right for Armenians to put complete trust in their

government. What the Armenian government did throughout history should be investigated too.

How does the annual commemoration of the Armenian Genocide affect Armenian identity and what is the range of understanding of forgiveness in relation to the Turko-Armenian conflict? Armenians' face a crisis in their identity. What is this crisis and how does this crisis identify itself? Do Armenians realize that unless they overcome this crisis they will not see God's heart towards the Islamic nations such as Iran, Turkey and Azerbaijan? Armenia is a strategic place to reach out Muslims. How should Armenians reflect on this fact? Does God love Muslims? Does God want Armenians to become a blessing to Muslims? If do, then how?

Lewis writes, "...in Christian morals 'thy neighbor' includes 'thy enemy,' and so we come up against this terrible duty of forgiving our enemies" (Lewis 1958, 89). What is forgiveness and is it really easy to forgive? Lewis goes on to say, "Everyone says forgiveness is a lovely idea, until they have something to forgive, as we had during the war" (1958, 89). Jesus has commended us the following prayer, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those that sin against us." Lewis says, "There is not the slightest suggestion that we are offered forgiveness on any other terms. It is made perfectly clear that if we do not forgive we shall not be forgiven. There are no two ways about it. What are we to do?" (1958, 89).

Is it easy to become a blessing to others? By his crucifixion Jesus poured the heavenly blessing upon humanity. By looking at Jesus example we can conclude that without sacrifice, it is impossible for suffering and pain to become a blessing. Also, our God commends us not only to forgive our enemies, but also to love them. Love your neighbor, or love your enemy as yourself. But how do we love ourselves? As Peck says, love is work or courage directed toward the nurture of our own or

another's spiritual growth" (Peck 1978, 120). Thus, when I love myself, I work on my self for the sake of my spiritual growth. Very often, almost always when I work on my self I do not think well of myself, but rather I see my wrongdoings. This should be the model for loving enemies. Love has a purpose which is to impact the spiritual growth of the other.

My informants say, "I now see Turks as people in need of Christ, in need of forgiveness..." "God loves them, and I am also called to love them." Armenians do speak about love. This indicates that they are open to offer the sacrifice of love. Many Armenians as Christians love Turks. They are not bitter, and they are open to follow Jesus' example: "Suffering can make me a wiser individual; make me strong and potentially more loving. My model in handling suffering is Christ." This shows that Armenians are willing to resemble their God, they are willing to use suffering for God's glory. Many Christian Armenians are willing to see their suffering through Jesus' eyes. The data analyses however show that the Armenian Church is passive; it is not involved in this problem at all. Five of my informants were completely ignorant about Church activities. This is the main reason that Armenians do not practice their love towards Turks. They are not taught how to do it. By its passive position the Armenian national Church contributes a lot in non-forgiving and in not loving. Love is about giving, but the Church does not teach what to give and how to give. Song says, "This is a supreme irony. A religion that preaches love can turn itself into an instrument of hate. It can resort to destruction of lives in defense of salvation of the soul. And when politics and religion join forces of destruction of the enemies and opponents, fear and anguish fill the hearts of people and stifle their humanity" (Song 1990, 18). This is the current picture of the Armenian national Church; in defense of "salvation" and "love" Jesus' message of love and embrace has

departed from the Church. The condition of the Armenian national Church is alarming; instead of impacting the conflict-solution problem, the Church makes it worse.

Lewis writes:

In fact it is the other way round; my self-love makes me think myself nice, but thinking myself nice is not why I love myself. So loving my enemies does not apparently mean thinking them nice either. That is an enormous relief. For a good many people imagine that forgiving your enemies means making out that they are really not such bad fellows after all, when it is quite plain that they are. Go a step further. In my most clear-sighted moments not only do I not think myself a nice man, but I know that I am a very nasty one. I can look at some of the things I have done with horror and loathing. So apparently I am allowed to loath and hate some of the things my enemies do. (1958, 90)

How does the commemoration of genocide nurtures the memory of Armenians? My informants' responses show that the main purposes of the commemoration are the following: not to forget, to recall international attention towards injustice, to provide security for the current and coming generation, and to bring forth the truth. Also several of informants stress that they see Turks as any other nation, a nation who needs Jesus. Hence, as I have already mentioned the concept of forgiveness is not really excluded from my informants' responses, but the problem here is that my informants do not speak about the fruits of forgiveness and its meaning. Ironically next to forgiveness some of my informants show bitterness. The main point here is that Armenians still struggle and they cannot forget their suffering, to the extent that it has become their identity. What is the solution to this problem or is there a solution?

What do Armenians do with their memory? In regard to what the main reason of commemoration is, Karen writes, "First of all I think it has political, but for sure it has basic reason...it is the memory of victims". For more than ninety years Armenians remember the genocide, but what is beyond this memory? As Volf says it is important for us not only what we remember, but how we remember, by love or by

hate. Salvation and healing do not lie simply in memory; they lie also in what we do with our memory. Memory is not just a retention. Memory is a power which can destroy as well as give birth. It can recall the truth as well as nurture a lie. “Vivid or clouded, the memory of exclusion suffered is itself a form of exclusion—a protective one to be sure, but an exclusion nonetheless. In my memory of the other’s transgression the other is locked in unredemption and we are bound together in a relationship of nonreconciliation” (Volf 1996, 133). When exclusion nurtures the memory, memory becomes the victim of the past. And as a result the past controls the present and the future. Exclusion gives birth to an unforgiving memory, which is against God. When Mackesie was asked by his interrogators for forgiveness, he replied, “We have to forgive the past, even if it means forgiving at a price, for no amount of retribution can pay back the harm that has been caused” (Frost 1998, 150).

Forgiveness has never been free. It is not cheap and Jesus too paid a high price for it. What price should Armenians pay in order to forgive and embrace the enemy? My informant writes, “Suffering can make me a wiser individual; make me strong and potentially more loving.” Through suffering Armenians should love, and by loving Armenians should forgive. Forgiveness heals. It heals both the victim as well as the perpetrators. It is worth noting here from the words of Nelson Mandela, who was imprisoned for 27 years and later became the president of South Africa. He says, “It was during those long and lonely years that my hunger for the freedom of my own people became a hunger for the freedom of all people, white and black.” He has recalled, “I know as I knew anything that the oppressor must be liberated as surely as the oppressed, for all had been robbed of humanity. When I walked out of prison,” he added “that was my mission, to liberate the oppressed and the oppressor both” (Frost 1998, 6). Both Turks and Armenians need to be liberated from corrupted humanity.

Mandela says that all have been robbed of humanity; all nations, all people and all individuals have robbed and excluded themselves from the community of humans. “Reconciliation between man and God required a price to be paid, but the price was paid by the offended, God himself” (Dortzbach 2002, 32). Armenians are the offended ones; therefore they should be the first to pay the price of embrace. Embrace will cost Armenians something. It will not be free. One of my informants says, “[it is important] to keep the issue alive as we continue to seek justice, to acknowledge that forgiveness and reconciliation must be accompanied by truth.” Through embrace Armenians will face a paradigm shift; justice will change its meaning for Armenians. Justice of the victim will be transformed into justice for the one who embraces. The process of this transformation will not be easy, but rather very painful.

Jesus’ forgiveness brought healing and reconciliation to corrupted humanity. By Jesus healing, humanity was redeemed spiritually, physically, mentally, socially and emotionally. Based on Mandela’s comment we can say that both Armenians and Turks need liberation, since both have been corrupted from humanity in their own ways. Forgiveness is a healing process, and by forgiving Armenians will receive healing. What is healing? Healing can be defined as the following, “healing is the renewal, or restoration of all aspects of mankind’s life: loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves” (Ibid., 32). Based on this definition, Armenians need healing, particularly healing in their minds which relates to their memory. Armenians have locked Turks in unredemption, Armenians have imprisoned Turks in their memories, and excluded Turks from receiving Jesus’ forgiveness, which is the unconditional forgiveness that flows down from the heart of the crucified Messiah into the hearts of humanity. Armenians have blocked their

hearts from both receiving forgiveness from God and forgiving Turks. Why? The “Lords Prayer” has become a curse for Armenians, since the “Lord’s Prayer” says “Forgive us our sins as we forgive those that sin against us.” God forgive Armenians as Armenians forgive Turks. Did Armenians forgive Turks? If they did then what are the fruits of forgiveness: Exclusion or embrace?

What is the role of fear in this problem? Do Armenians fear to forgive Turks? Do Armenians fear to lose their power of being victim? It is true that Armenians were victimized in the past, but it is not just for Armenians to remain in that position for centuries. The commemoration has become a part of Armenian culture. According to Kraft, culture has two forms: surface level and deep level (Kraft 1996, 134). The deep level includes the worldview, which consists of the assumptions and images of people within that particular culture. The exclusion of Turks from rights to be forgiven has become a part of the Armenian worldview. As one of my informants mentions it has penetrated into the blood of Armenians.

Memory, particularly the victimized memory is power. The memory of the past is not only about past, it is also about the present. Volf writes:

The memory of the wrong suffered is also a source of my own nonredemption. As long as it is remembered, the past is not just the past: it remains the aspect of the present. A remembered wound is an experienced wound. Deep wounds from the past can cause so much pain to our present that, as Toni Morrison puts it in *Beloved*, the future becomes “a matter of keeping the past at bay” (Morrison 1991”52). “All things and all manner of things” cannot be well with me today, if they are not well in my memory of yesterday. Even remaking the whole world and removing all sources of suffering will not bring redemption if it does not stop incursions of unredeemed past into the redeemed present through the door of memory. Since memories shape present identities, neither I nor the other can be redeemed without the redemption of our remembered past. (1996, 133)

Armenians should redeem their victimized memory through forgiveness. Forgiveness is not easy. It is another type of suffering. God works through suffering and uses it

for his glory. This is a bit controversial, since suffering is not good itself; it is not good *to* me but it may become good *for* me later. God creates through suffering a new identity, and a new future and new hope.

The war in Sudan paradoxically has brought about the growth of the church. Dau writes, “Paradoxically, the major breakthrough in the growth of the Dinka church came with the outbreak of the current civil war and the resulting suffering” (Dau 2002, 66). Dau writes that Dinka never regret or despair of life because of the suffering they are undergoing. For example one Dinka leader says the following”

God has allowed suffering or destruction to come to our country. We have lost our children, our cattle and everything we had. Only our life (literally our breath) has been spared. It is only the Great God who knows what he is doing (in allowing this suffering and destruction). He will let us see some good and prosperity someday. He has abandoned us and yet he is still with us. (2002, 67)

In this fallen world suffering is inevitable. It is a way to get to know the suffering heart of the Messiah. Forgiveness is inevitable also, since without forgiveness suffering loses its purpose or it serves a wrong purpose. Ironically both forgiveness and un-forgiveness causes people suffering, but the fruits of these two sufferings are different. The suffering of forgiveness brings forth a new life and identity, whereas the fruits of suffering brought about by un-forgiveness are destruction. Therefore Volf says, “Under the foot of the cross we learn, however, that in a world of irreversible deeds and partisan judgments redemption from the passive suffering of victimization cannot happen without the active suffering of forgiveness” (Volf 1996, 125). Being and feeling the victim is suffering, but it is suffering in the wrong direction, because it leads to nowhere but destruction. My interviews show that some Armenians are really tired of this issue; they want to see the end of this never ending Turko-Armenian conflict. One of my informants indicates that he does not wish to live his life captive to the genocide. Thus, there are Armenians who

prefer the active suffering of forgiveness over the passive suffering of non-forgiveness. The data analysis show that there are Armenians willing to adopt and practice Jesus' model of suffering, since they do understand that living in the past can not create a right future.

A victimized spirit cannot create. It can not give birth to new future. One of my informants mentioned that his model of handling suffering is Jesus. Armenians are called the followers of Christ, and it is true. Throughout the centuries Armenians have suffered a lot. From this point of view Armenians truly are Jesus' followers, but somehow Armenians have detached themselves from the creative power of the cross; through the cross Jesus embraced the enemy. "At the heart of the cross is Christ's stance of not letting the other remain the enemy and of creating space in himself for the offender to come in" (Volf 1996, 126).

Turks are Muslims and therefore are not responsible to create space for their enemy. Unlike Turks, Armenians are the followers of the crucified Messiah. Thus they are required to create space for Muslims. There is no other way. Either the Armenians will forgive the Turks, or the Armenians will not be forgiven by God. This is the logical conclusion of "Lord's prayer." For forgiveness and reconciliation there is price to be paid, and the price should be paid by the offender, that is to say, by the Armenians. "Suffering is power, in that it has redeeming power. To turn to a different point, action, as well as suffering is a way to freedom. In suffering, the deliverance consists in our being allowed to put the matter out of our own hands into God's hands. In this sense death is the crowning of human freedom. Whether the human deed is matter of faith or not depends on whether we understand our suffering as an extension of our action and a completion of freedom. I think that is very important and very comforting" (Bonhoeffer 1971, 375).

Are Armenians willing to put the matter out of their own hands into God's hands? By the annual commemoration, Armenians want the world to recognize the genocide. They want justice, and they want the entire world recognize the wrongdoings of the Turks. Armenians were victimized, and they also want Turks to be victimized. Is this the way Armenians should love their enemies? Love liberates as well as reveals the truth. Interestingly Benjamin Franklin says, "Love your enemies, for they tell you your faults" (Great quotes from great leaders 1997, 49). What faults? Our enemies always remind us that we hate them, whereas we are supposed to love them. Our enemies reveal the truth about ourselves. The Turks reveal the truth about Armenians as Christians. Armenians identify themselves as a Christian nation, and moreover, they are proud that they were the first to officially become a Christian state. This is the crisis of Armenian identity, because Armenians contradict their identity of being Christian. God says, "Love your enemies." As I have already discussed love is about giving. We give for others' benefit. Jesus gave us his life for the benefit of our salvation. Jesus suffered without bitterness. Shenk writes, "Jesus suffered without any bitterness. He forgave freely without blaming those who had tortured him. His death is a monument of greatness. Even in death he affirmed life, because he suffered without bitterness. Whenever people invite the Spirit of Jesus the Great One to be present among them, he gives to them also the gift of forgiveness, the gift of healing, the experience of harmony and life" (Shenk 1983, 89). As Jesus' followers in their death Armenians should also proclaim life and forgiveness.

The most painful thing for Armenians is the Turkish denial. Armenians are eager to see justice; they want the entire world to proclaim the truth about the genocide. Armenians feel victimized by Turks not only in the past, but also in these

present days because the Turks deny justice. Here Armenians do not act, but rather they react towards Turkish injustice. In one of his public speeches Jomo Kenyatta has said, “I hope that we are showing that white racialism need not be replaced by black racialism” (Kenyatta 1968, 224). In this same way I would say that I hope that we will show that Turkish injustice need not be replaced by Armenian injustice. Turks deny the genocide and interpret the historical events differently. To Armenians this is not just. But the Armenians deny Jesus’ sacrifice since The Bible says that those who have been given much will be required much. In this case, as Christians, Armenians are given much more than the Turks have been given. Therefore more should be required of the Armenians than should be required of the Turks. God can not blame the Turks for not embracing Armenians, but God can blame the Armenians for not embracing Turks. Armenians as Christians should testify Jesus’ love to Muslims. Judith writes, “the real sinner is not the outcast, but the one who casts the other out” (Judith 1997, 49).

As I have already mentioned it is not easy to disclose the truth about history. Each historian writes the history from his own perspective, but not from God’s perspective. Each historical book reflects the interest of the particular nation or culture; therefore it can not be perfectly true. Volf quotes Macintyre:

The notion of single neutral nonpartisan history is one more illusion engendered by the academic standpoint of the encyclopaedist; it is the illusion that there is the past waiting to be discovered, *wie es eigentlich gewesen*, independent of characterization from some particular stand-point. (Volf 1996, 243)

What is the criterion of judging the events? What is the guarantee that what we know is the only truth, and that there is no other truth besides our own? Turkish and Armenian archives contradict each other completely. Who is a liar, or could it be that neither writes the truth? Volf writes:

What is at stake in the question about truth is not just our pride, however, but our power. In recounting the past we are jockeying for a position. The fiercer the struggle the less willing we will be to accept any statement that calls into question our power. It is not only that our human knowledge is inescapably limited because we are finite beings or that what we know is culturally tinted. The little knowledge we have is skewed because we suppress truth through desire to overcome others and protect ourselves. As we seek to know we are caught in the fields of powers that distort our vision. (1996, 247)

As Armenians try to suppress the truth about the cross they are caught in the fields of two powers -- “we” and “others.” “Others” are excluded from the community of knowing something about truth, and “we” are included into the community that always knows and speaks the truth. As Armenians require justice they practice injustice towards the eternal truth: love your God and love your neighbor, who in this particular case is their enemy. One of the reasons for the commemoration was the safety of the nation. The victims of genocide had become perpetrators who by oppressing the eternal truth and excluding the other from the community of love receivers gain power and protection. Judith writes about identity, “... that you know who you are and you want to protect that...and be recognized for that.” Armenians want to be recognized by genocide, they want to protect it, and therefore the topic of genocide has become Armenians’ identity. What justice and what truth do Armenians want to hear? As Volf says there can be no justice without the will of embrace. Therefore without the will of embrace there can be no truth either.

Finally Volf says that there is risk in embrace; “I open my arms, make a movement of the self toward the other, the enemy, and do not know whether I will be misunderstood, despised, even violated or whether my action will be appreciated, supported, and reciprocated. I can become a savior or a victim-possibly both. Embrace is grace, and grace is gamble always” (1996, 147).

And finally, what is the range of understanding of forgiveness in relation to Turkish-Armenian conflict? What is forgiveness? The concept of forgiveness is very common not only in Christianity but also in other religions. But Christianity is outstanding by its application of forgiveness. Even several of my informants mentioned that they have forgiven Turks. From a psychological view point it was very interesting to me to see that after forgiveness people still bear bitterness and the cry of justice in their hearts. This is not a right psychological condition, since the fruit of forgiveness can not be bitterness. It is impossible to exclude the enemy after forgiveness; true forgiveness liberates, it gives birth to a new life. But true forgiveness is not free; even Jesus did not forgive for nothing. He paid the price on the cross. True forgiveness cannot avoid suffering, but rather true forgiveness itself is suffering. In the cross Jesus created a space for the other, for the sinner, for the wrongdoer, for the offender. The fruit of Jesus' suffering and death was life, a new life and completely different than the previous one. Through forgiveness Jesus reconnected God the Father with humanity. Therefore, forgiveness is a bridge between evil and good. Forgiveness is not substitute for justice, since it was just for Jesus to reconnect humanity with the Father.

Through Adam's sin violence entered into human history; humans as well as nature accepted the curse upon themselves. In order to redeem the creation from the curse Jesus himself faced violence in the cross. Through receiving violence, forgiveness entered into human history. And while forgiving evil humanity Jesus faced violence upon his heart; he bore our sin on himself. In order to release and redeem the creation from violence Jesus himself faced violence, and through accepting violence he atoned. Undergoing violence was inevitable in the human history of redemption.

We are ordered to forgive and to love those who persecute and kill us. What is forgiveness in the face of mass violence? How can we forgive inhuman humanity, or as the Chinese historian says how can we forgive cannibalism? As Fromm says only human beings seem to take pleasure in destroying life without any reason or purpose other than that of destroying. How can the human heart forgive this destruction? Or even more; some people can not forgive God when it comes to inhuman killing. Is God in control of what happens? In his book “A Grief Observed” C.S. Lewis says, “Sometimes it is hard not to say ‘God forgive God’. Sometimes it is hard to say so much. But if our faith is true, He didn’t. He crucified Him” (Lewis 1961, 25). How does forgiveness relate to violence and what is forgiveness to the heart that struggles to forgive?

Hill stresses several things necessary to be remembered about forgiveness. First of all forgiveness is not forgetting, or saying the offence did not matter or acting as if the event never happened (2005, 88). But rather forgiveness involves bringing the pain to Christ, which always takes time. Additionally, forgiveness does not depend on the offender, but rather it is a one-sided decision. The offended person should remember that to forgive is not to excuse, or to ignore the hurt, or to extend unconditional trust. True forgiveness is to give the case to God, or as Benner defines it most simply, forgiveness is letting go of my malice and my right to retaliate and letting go of my right to hang on to the emotional consequences of the hurt (Benner 1993, 121).

Why forgiveness is essential? Hill gives several reasons for this. First, forgiveness sets us free. Secondly, forgiveness allows us to receive God’s forgiveness. Thirdly, forgiveness shows that we understand Christ’ sacrifice and our salvation. Forthly, forgiveness brings reconciliation. And finally, forgiveness may change the

offender (Hill 2005, 92). Volf concludes that forgiveness is “a genuinely free act which ‘does not merely re-act’ (216), forgiveness breaks the power of the remembered past and transcends the claims of the affirmed justice and so makes the spiral of vengeance grind to the halt. This is the social import of forgiveness” (Volf 1996, 121).

Thus, forgiveness has redeeming power. It redeems us from our pain, from our past, from our vengeance, and from our victimized identity. Forgiveness stops the circle of vengeance, and by doing this it creates new future. But the process of forgiveness is like surgery: to remove the pain the doctor causes worse pain. Very much like surgery, if Armenians want to remove the pain of genocide, they need to face worse pain. If they want to get rid of their suffering, they need to face another suffering: the active suffering of forgiveness. By doing this Armenians will regain their true identity of being the followers of the crucified Messiah. What did Jesus do on the cross? In order to embrace the enemy Jesus faced violence in his heart as well as in his body. Through the violence of his death he proclaimed life. Through the suffering of his heart he embraced the excluded sinners, and through the power of his love he overcame the evil. Armenians should follow this example of the crucified Messiah. For the sake of embracing the other Jesus tore his heart. Likewise for the sake of embracing the enemy, Armenians should tear their heart; they should become the crucified Messiah on the cross. Thus, in order to stop violence which has lasted for over ninety years, Armenians should face another violence; they should forgive the Turks.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In Genesis 12:1 (NIV) we read; “The Lord had said to Abraham, ‘Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you.’” Kinlaw argues that by this call God was saying to Abraham; “I want you to find your identity, your security, and your fulfillment not first in these relationships but in your relationship with me” (1985, 26). God wanted Abraham to find a new identity by separation from what he had and from who he was. By separation God wanted to create a new identity for Abraham. By this call God promised to bless Abraham and make him become a blessing to other nations. Thus, though separation from the past God created a new identity for Abraham. After leaving his father’s house Abraham stopped belonging to his past and to his household. By this call Abraham gained a new belonging; he belonged to God alone, and by this belonging Abraham allowed God to create a new future through him.

Armenians should follow Abraham’s example of separation from their past. In this separation Armenians will create a new identity and a new belonging. Up to this day, Armenians belong to their past. They should change this belonging. This does not mean forgetting the past. The past cannot be deleted from the Armenians’ memory. The meaning of this is that neither a nation nor a person should belong to the past because this belonging cannot create a new future. Rather, by having a history of the past people should belong to God; this is the only true and right belong-

ging. By doing this Armenians will change their identity; instead of belonging to the historical past, they will belong to the living God. This belonging will bless Armenians and will make them become a blessing not only to the Turks, but also to other nations. And the only way to reach this goal is through forgiveness, or through a second suffering of the genocide. Armenians' unconditional love and forgiveness will have a huge missiological and theological impact upon not only Turks, but also upon the entire Islamic world. The Islamic faith rejects the cross; for them Jesus has never been crucified. By forgiveness, the Armenians will reflect the loving heart of the crucified Messiah. For centuries Muslim and Christian theologians have been arguing over this issue. Sometimes the best way to prove a particular theological statement is to apply it in real life. The best way for Armenians to prove to their Muslims neighbors that through crucifixion Jesus forgave is to forgive Muslims. And the only way for Armenians to forgive the enemy is to re-suffer the violence of genocide, which in practice will mean that the Armenians must face violence to their hearts. Therefore, the only way for Christians to testify to the meaning of the cross is to practice that meaning and make it relevant in their lives. Even more, without practicing the meaning of the cross it is meaningless to boast over the power of the cross; because Muslims do not need theology. They need life.

To accept them, much more to actively pursue them, we must be willing to part with ego-boosting self-deceit and power-maintaining ideologies, be ready to rewrite the story of our identities and reform our practices. If we refuse to be unsettled and transformed, we will shy away from truth and stick to our preferred beliefs, which make us "blessed" precisely because they tell us lies. The will to truth cannot be sustained without the *will to obey* the truth. (Volf 1996:255)

Recommendation for Further Studies

Forgiveness and therefore the healing are not the end point of the Turko-Armenian relationship: the end point is reconciliation. Reconciliation can not occur without speaking the truth. Although it will be impossible to speak the truth the way God knows it, the best should be done to investigate the historical truth, at least as much as possible. In order to do so, both sides need to open their archives in front of an international commission.

As I have already mentioned after Hrant's murder (January 2007) this topic has become more sensitive. Due to several reasons I was not able to confirm the accuracy of the document from Turkish embassy which was telling about the historical phone call of the Turkish Prime Minister to the Armenian President. By this call the Turkish Prime Minister was suggesting that the Armenian president call on an international commission to investigate the case. For further studies it is very urgent to investigate and find out the accuracy of this document. If this is really true then another investigation should be done; why did the Armenian president refuse to open the Armenian archives?

In conclusion, only one thing can be said: the only way towards the solution of this problem is this international commission. Turks and Armenians should open their archives as well as the archive of those nations which were involved in this conflict in front of the international commission. This case should not and can not be investigated from only an Armenian or from only a Turkish side, since each side presents the problem from the perspective of its benefits or wounds or suffering.

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APPENDIX A

GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR ARMENIANS

1. What do you think is the main problem between Turks and Armenians? How does the 100 year commemoration of massacres in 1915 relate to the problem?
2. What do you think are the core elements of the problem? (Political, religious, social, ethnic, etc.)
3. Are there other nations or ethnicities who have contributed to the conflict between Armenians and Turks? If so what interest is promoted in maintaining a poor relationship between Armenians and Turks?
4. What have been the contributions of both governments to this continuing conflict?
5. What does the Armenian Gregorian Church (In Istanbul as well as in Armenia) do towards providing a solution to this problem?
6. What do you feel when you remember the Genocide (anger (towards people or God), confusion, questions raised? Or what else)?
7. What do you feel and what is your psychological response, when every year you take part in the commemoration (April 24)?
8. What do you think about Turks?
9. How do you view the further relationship/cooperation between Turks and Armenians?
10. What is the main reason (psychological, spiritual, and political) of the annual commemoration of the Genocide?

APENDIX B

DATA ANALYSIS

Key Terms

Truth and Justice
Forgiveness and violence
Forgiveness and redemption
Forgiveness and suffering
Forgiveness and memory
Exclusion and embrace
The commemoration and the Armenian identity

Out of about twenty informants only seven responded to my questionnaire. All those who responded are Christians, and several of them have experience working in international settings. Cheryl and Ken Touryans live in US but are very active in ministry in Armenia and abroad. Dr. Ken Touryan is a physicist; he is more than 70 years old. He used to work and support scientists from the former USSR. He also has written several books about science and faith. Cheryl and Ken Touryans do many other activities in Armenia. They are concerned about Armenia, and are interested in its well being. Additionally, they support one Turkish couple (converted into Christianity) in their work. Bruce Baloian also is a person who is very dedicated to God . He is a professor of Biblical studies at Azusa Pacific University (APU) in California. Mr. Karen Azaryan used to be a missionary in Batumi, Georgia. Now he works in a hospital. Azaryan has several times been in Turkey, and thus his response is based in his personal experience with Turks and with the Turkish culture. Ara Kogoyan is a very active member of Nazarene Church in Armenia. Ruzanna

Ghurbanyan is an Office manager of FINCA Armenia organization; she is a business woman and a dedicated Christian. Two of my informants are just my friends and I do not know much about their activities,

It was very interesting to see the responses to the research questions. To the question “What is the main problem between Turks and Armenians, and what is the core of that problem?” my informants have said the following: “In my opinion, the main problem is how Turkey has always treated their neighbors, the Arabs, the Greeks, those in Cyprus, and the fact that the Turkish government refuses to acknowledge the genocide against the Armenians and others in WWI.” “The main problem is Turkish denial of mass killing as ‘genocide’. Should Turks admit to ‘genocide’ this will cause them economic turmoil, and their admission to the EU will be denied and the UN will enforce a sanction against them,” “Denial – is the main problem. Denial by the Turks and the Turkish government. Although they acknowledge that Armenians were killed during that time, they deny that it was due to a premeditated, top-down policy which promoted the elimination of all Armenians from Turkish lands,” “The main problem is that Turks do not recognize the Armenian genocide.”

Thus, responses from my informants indicate that the main problem is the denial: the Turkish government keeps denying the genocide, since the recognition of genocide in 1915 has negative consequences for Turkey, as they must pay compensation for lives and property to the relatives of victims. Thus we see that the core of the problem is injustice; Turks are not willing to reveal the truth. The Armenians’ main cry is for justice and truth. Armenians want the genocide to be recognized by Turks as well as by other nations; this is the Armenian demand of truth and justice.

Is it really easy to reveal the truth, particularly the truth from God's perspective? Are we able to engage the only one absolute truth of God? Is it really possible for a human being to face violence and still be able to see the truth the way God sees it?

What kind of truth can we speak about in the 20th century which was full of violence: the Armenian genocide, the Jewish holocaust, the Sudan war, Rwanda, Palestine/Israel, Lebanon, Sri Lanka, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Latin America? What is the application of truth and justice in relation to this violence?

Any war conflict or genocide is violence against God's creation. In the book of Genesis God gives the following mission to both men and women: to increase in number and fill the earth and to rule over creation and to subdue the earth (Adeyemo 2006, 11). God did not intend destruction to his creation, but rather he wanted people to care about it. Human history shows exactly the opposite: destruction, injustice and abuse are down the pages of history. What is the solution against this violence to God's creation? Is it possible to stop this violence? If yes, then how? Violence gives birth to vengeance and vengeance desires destruction. Destruction is an action against God's creation. The exclusion of love gives birth to non-forgiveness and the non-forgiving heart enslaves the victim and the enemy into a mutual relationship of destruction. Volf writes, "If perpetrators were repentant, forgiveness would come more easily. But too often they are not. So both victim and perpetrator are imprisoned in the automatism of mutual exclusion, unable to forgive and repent and united in a perverse communion of mutual hatred" (1996, 120).

Armenians demand justice and truth. Justice of compensation for what was taken from them: their lives, their possessions, their children, their wives and

husbands, and even their identity. Armenians say that this was not just, and truly this was not just. Let us try to see how Armenians understand the concept of justice? Instead of embracing the Turks, the Armenians have excluded them. The suffering and forgiving cry of Jesus has been abused by the Armenians. The universal embrace of Jesus has been excluded from Armenian identity. Why does embrace flounder? Maybe it is because Armenians exclude Turks from the community of humans even as they exclude themselves from the community of sinners? One of my informants writes, "I am reminded that there are people who make the planet a nicer place to live and there are some inhuman and brutal 'people' like Turks to bring sorrow to the people and drink the blood of people." Is there any clear line between the Armenians' justice and the Turks' injustice? Armenians want justice. God too delights in justice. Wright says, "Truth and justice are of the very essence of the Character of the God of the Bible (Isaiah 5:16). His spirit inevitably highlights truth and justice whenever he speaks" (Wright 2006, 82). What is just to Armenians is injustice to the Turks, what is just to Turks is injustice to the Armenians. What is just to God is not just to both Armenians and Turks; the Armenians can not forgive the genocide, and the Turks can not receive forgiveness, since according to them the genocide never occurred.

How do other nations relate to the problem of this exclusion? Are there other nations or ethnicities who have contributed to the conflict between Armenians and Turks? To these questions many of my informants indicate that there are other nations involved in this problem. My informants write, "There is non-stop tension and competition between the USA and Russia in an attempt to spread their influence in the world. One of the territories in question is the Caucasus. Taking into consideration the fact that Turkey is a member of NATO and a close partner of the USA, it is obvious that the USA is not interested in a healthy pro-Russian Armenia,"

“I assume the Americans did not formally push the acknowledgement of the genocide because for years the Americans needed their military bases in Turkey in their attempt to contain communism. Therefore, they did not want to risk angering the Turks over the ‘Armenian Question,’ “The country that contributed most to the actual genocide in 1915 was Germany. There were many Germans in Turkey at the time and there are documents showing that they also looked down on the Armenians and some even promoted the elimination of this ethnic minority. Of course, that same spirit was later practiced in their own country and the connection can be seen when Hitler said regarding the Jewish elimination: ‘Who today remembers the Armenians?’ Today, the U.S. State Department contributes to the problem because of the ‘friendly’ relationship the US has with Turkey and it is afraid of offending Turkey. Israel also contributes today because 1) they are friendly with Turkey and need it for trade and water, and 2) they are zealous of guarding their own Holocaust, and don’t want to ‘share the stage’ with another ethnic group.” The reasons given above are mainly political, religious, ethnic and economic, which directly reflects on the problem of justice. As we see the Turko-Armenian conflict is many-sided, and thus it is very complicated to speak about one justice. In order to come up with a relatively just solution all the nations involved in this conflict should gather together with their representatives and discuss this issue from political, historical, psychological, and spiritual perspectives. There is no other way to address this problem except by involving all participants in the discussion.

It is also interesting to note the role of both governments in this continuing conflict? What is the application of justice and truth in the political realm? Are the Armenian and Turkish governments concerned to bring forth the truth about genocide? The common opinion about politics is that it is corrupted. Let us see how

my informants respond towards this issue: One of them said, “The Government of Armenia with the assistance of many international organizations have tried to build a democratic relationship with the Turkish government: however, such a relationship will never be built, as long as there is no acknowledgement of mass killing.” Another said, “...one of the ‘contributions’ of Turkey has been to tell the Armenian government to stop the ‘falsified’ genocide accusations so that they can start a healthy relationship with us.” As mentioned before, Turkey is not interested in normalizations of relationship because of a fear that Armenia will demand its territory, and compensation and a demarcation of borders.

The Armenian government says that it wants to have normal relations with Turkey without any conditions, but at the same time “we recognize, that as soon as the diplomatic relations will be restored the matter of borders and genocide will arise.” “Armenia has been trying to seek some kind of understanding and acknowledgement. Turkey continues its denial, to the point of even passing a law that forbids speaking negatively about the country, which especially applies to speaking about the Armenian genocide.” The Armenians’ response is that the government of Armenia with the assistance of many international organizations has tried to build a democratic relationship with the Turkish government; the Armenian government has always tried to find some kind of understanding and acknowledgment, but never was able to succeed due to the Turk’s denial of genocide. Some of my informants did not give any comment, since they were not informed in this area. In relation to the Turkish government Armenians have negative opinions: they are not willing to speak the historical truth. Again we face the problem of truth and justice. In this particular case the truth is always on the Armenians’ side. It is interesting that Armenians do not question their government; they have complete trust in their government.

Armenians again exclude themselves from the community of sinners. The fault is only from the side of the Turks. This is not to say that Turks are innocent, but rather this is to say that Armenians should question themselves too. Without questioning and criticizing themselves, Armenians will never get to know the truth.

In September of 2006, I was able to organize a meeting with a Turkish politician in the Turkish embassy in Nairobi. At this meeting, I discovered that on 8th March 2005, the Prime Minister of Turkey and the opposition party chairman made a historical call that Turkish and Armenian historians and other specialists form a group to carry out research in all pertinent archives including the Turkish archives of 1915, in order to find out the realities. Unfortunately, no positive reply has been received from the Government of Armenia to date. I was not able to reaffirm this document during my meeting with the ambassador and the third secretary of the Turkish embassy. However, based on other accounts (again needs to be confirmed) I would assume that this document is true. If this is so, then the Armenians should try to discover the main reason why Armenians refuse to open their archives in front of an international commission? What is hidden behind history?

As we know, the role of the Church should be to bring justice, love and reconciliation to the nation and among nations. The Church should teach the nation how to forgive and embrace. What does the Armenian Church do to fulfil this mission? It was very interesting to me to see my informants' responses about this issue. Five of them had no idea what the Church is doing towards the solution of this problem. One of my informants mentioned the following: "As you know the patriarch of the Armenian Church in Istanbul is appointed by the Turkish government, and what do you think? Will this person oppose the Turks... my answer is no way." Later this informant continues, "The Armenian Church in Armenia has a very silent position.

There are several reasons for that: a) the Church is not a political institution, b) there is fear for the Armenians living in Turkey, c) The Church has no real tool to bring about a solution to the conflict.” It is very sad that the Church has no real tool to bring about a solution to the conflict. This indicates that the Church is not relevant to the Armenian problem at all. Also this reflects the spiritual maturity of national Church. It needs revival, because it does not fulfill its mission. The Church should not act out of fear because in love there is no fear. Rather, the Church should be actively involved in finding solutions to this conflict. Ironically the topic of conflict, reconciliation and forgiveness first of all should be addressed by the Church. Although the Church is not a political institution, it should have its impact and influence on politics.

It was also interesting to see the psychological part of this problem. What do people feel when they participate in the commemoration activity to remember the genocide? The answers of this question are quite varied. Some people feel sadness and sorrow for all the victims, and pain for human kind, but they do not feel anger or confusion towards God. Interestingly one of my informants writes that he has forgiven the Turks, since God loves them and he is also supposed to love them. Another informant writes, “I now see the Turks as people in need of Christ, and in need of forgiveness and their need is no greater than that of the Americans, French or Chinese. I see Armenians as victims, much as the Blacks were victimized in America, and the native Indians were victimized in South and Central America. It has made me more sensitive to anyone who is put down as a group and more sensitive to individuals who are oppressed.” Next to this answer there are some who again stress the topic of justice and truth. They say something like this, “...however, there is somewhat of a resentment towards international communities” or “First of all, there is

anger because there has *still* been *no justice*, and then there is frustration that the problem *has continued* for so long. There is also a wish that the Turks would somehow recognize their need to acknowledge this injustice which could lead to relations between the countries and lead to a win-win situation.” In addition to anger and frustration towards the Turks, the topic of genocide also creates an inner conflict among Armenians, and anger towards God; “Some non-Christian Armenians are angry with God and are promoting a return to paganism. Their argument is that ever since Armenians have become Christians they have suffered very much, with no help from the Christian God.”

My informants’ responses show that Armenians still struggle and even suffer when they remember the genocide. One said, “I feel sorry for all victims and pain for human kind, [and] confusion for people who...follow the principles of Islam, which [they believe] is loyal and peaceful. At times I want to cry out “people how evil you are”. The remembrance of genocide has negative aspects even for the society. As we see this is not an easy topic for Armenians and it still hurts. This is understandable and this is a natural reaction. Armenians want a solution to this problem, and they want the world to speak the truth about the genocide. This is a right desire, since without speaking the truth, reconciliation is not possible. Reconciliation is not possible without forgiveness. Does forgiveness relate to the problem of justice and truth? Can forgiveness redeem the justice through embrace?

What is the application of forgiveness in relation to mass killing in general? For instance, how are the victims of a horrible mass killing such as took place in Rwanda supposed to love their enemies or to forgive them. In the Rwanda case, Mamdani writes, “Each village of this country has been affected by the tragedy, either because the whole population was mobilized to go and kill elsewhere, or because one

section undertook or was pushed to hunt and kill their fellow villagers. The survey conducted in Kigali, Kibungo, Byumba, Gitarama and Buture Prefectures showed that genocide had been characterized by torture and utmost cruelty. About forty-eight methods of torture were used countrywide. They ranged from burying people alive in graves they have dug up themselves, to cutting and opening wombs of pregnant mothers. People were quartered, impaled or roasted to death” (Mamdani 2001, 6).

The question can be asked; “Why such senseless killing?” Song writes that these crimes are not committed in the name of politics alone, but they can also be committed in the name of religion. He states, “In the name of religion and on behalf of its God, the human community has committed holocausts. Practically no religion is innocent of religious persecution. This is a supreme irony. A religion that preaches love can turn itself into an instrument of hate. It can resort to destruction of lives in defense of salvation of the soul. And when politics and religion join forces for the destruction of enemies and opponents, fear and anguish fill the hearts of people and stifle their humanity. This, as we shall see, is the story of Jesus’ crucifixion” (Song 1990, 18). Even Christianity as a religion can not be excluded from this list. The crusades testify about this. A religion which is called to love and bring justice has caused hatred, destruction and injustice. The history of colonialism in Africa is a bright witness what Christians can do in the name of their false and fake gods. These gods have nothing to do with Jesus. They are idols created by idol worshipers. They are idols of power and hatred which tempt to dominate and control others, and which exclude others from rights to be human. This attitude is wrong, since Jesus never excluded humans from rights to be human, but just the opposite: at the heart of the cross is Christ’s stance of not letting the other remain the enemy and of creating space

in himself for the offender to come in (Volf 1996, 126). This is forgiveness and the fruits of forgiveness are embrace and a new future for humanity.

In a “Madman’s diary” Lu Xun, a Chinese writer writes about the history of China as history of cannibalism and the history of a society made up of “eaters” of human beings. In relation to this Song writes the following “The history of China, often extolled as a glorious history of five thousand years of high civilization, is in fact a history of cannibalism! Is this not also true of the history of other nations? Is this not the history of humanity as a whole? And does not the cross of Jesus stand out in the history of cannibalism as a most hideous manifestation of human sinfulness?” (Song 1990, 22). In addition, Erich Fromm, an American psychoanalyst, makes this observation in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness*: “...and the human being is, in contrast to most animals, a real ‘killer.’ Only human beings seem to take pleasure in destroying life without any reason or purpose other than that of destroying” (Song 1990, 24). In the face of this violence how are we supposed to understand forgiveness? Is it possible to forgive such violence? If yes, then what is forgiveness? How does forgiveness relate to violence? Can Armenians rally forgive the genocide?

Some Armenians see Turks simply as people who need Christ. Several of my informants mentioned the concept of forgiveness, saying that Turks do need forgiveness. “God loves Turks, therefore I am also called to love them. I have forgiven them for their wrongdoings.” But what is forgiveness, what are the fruits of forgiveness? What is forgiveness towards those who deliberately excluded themselves from a community of humanity? If I am to use Lu Xun’s vocabulary, I would ask, how can a person forgive cannibalism? How can one redeem and liberate humanity? Jesus’ redemption is not enough; we are supposed to join Jesus in his redemptive work. But how?

How does the commemoration shape Armenian identity? Does the commemoration reflect God's truth, the only absolute one? What are the main psychological, spiritual and political reasons for the annual commemoration of the Genocide? Additionally, what are the results of the remembrance of the genocide? One of my informants had very interesting answer, "the stress that Armenians experience is psychological and psychical. Further, there is also one thing that is impossible to explain: the remembrance of the genocide is in the blood of Armenians." Interestingly, the remembrance has penetrated into the blood of Armenians. The Armenian expression "in the blood" usually reflects the Armenian identity. The commemoration had entered into the blood of Armenians, and thus into their identity. Is this just, and is this really what God wants us to be?

Another informant says, "I think the commemoration is political and psychological. I am not against the commemoration. The genocide should not be forgotten, but for me personally, the "one day" of April 24 is not the only time to speak of it.

I do not wish to live my life captive to the genocide, but rather as one who knows that suffering is part of my nation's past. I should respect deeply those who died, and weep for those brutalized, and pity those who did such horrible things. However, I do not want to be filled with anger against a people who are now long dead and who are now in the "hands of the living God". Yes, we should remember, but we should not abide and live in the past. This again indicates that Armenians can not forget the suffering of their past, and truly it can not be forgotten. Suffering cannot be forgotten, but it can be used for God's glory. This informant continues by saying, "Suffering can make me a wiser individual; it can make me strong and potentially more loving. My model in handling suffering is Christ. How I understand

the genocide should be reflected in how I deal with daily injustices which I personally face (we all have them in our lives).” Truly, the model of handling the Armenian suffering should be Christ. The Armenian suffering should make Armenians more loving. This shows that several Armenians are open to forgive through suffering. Redemption through active suffering (forgiveness) is possible, it is the path to the cross and resurrection. They do not see suffering as an end point, but rather as a means to make them more loving. Moreover, according to the informant, the problem of genocide is the Armenians’ daily problem. It is not something happened in the past, but it happens every day. Every day we face the problem of embrace or exclusion.

Other informants state, “Universally, [it is another chance] to remember the forgotten and to bring awareness to them and our cause and [it is] another chance to ask, for instance, that the U.S. recognize the Armenian Genocide,” “First of all I think it has political, but for sure it has basic reason is the memory of victims” or “to always remember, to not forget, to avoid future genocides, to keep the issue alive as we continue to seek justice, to acknowledge that forgiveness and reconciliation must be accompanied by truth.”

Thus, the purpose of commemoration is many-sided and very complex. Different Armenians respond differently. I agree with Karen that the commemoration should be observed in memory of the victims. However, how do Armenians use their memory? Memory is powerful, and if it is not used properly it can destroy both the victim as well as the perpetrator. Is this what Jesus did on the cross and after the cross? Armenians want to bring forth justice through exclusion, which is against what Jesus did on the cross: he embraced the enemy. The Armenians’ desire to bring justice is truly just; truth and justice should be brought forth. The truth should be spoken out loud. But what justice and what truth? The justice of cross or the justice

of revenge, the justice of embrace or the justice of exclusion? Somehow the commemoration provides security for Armenians. Jesus' love cost him his life; for God so loved humanity that he sacrificed himself for the sake of humanity. Armenians want to be safe from the results of love. Love itself is not safe, let alone loving the enemy.

Even giving our hearts to God does not rescue us from being broken. God works through broken hearts. Even loving God is not safe. It leads us to the cross. Even walking with God is not safe, because all God's great servants had extremely difficult lives. Thus, God does not want us to be secure, or to build our security on the event of commemoration, but rather he wants us to have him be our security only. MacArthur says, "There is no security in this life, only opportunity" (Great quotes from great leaders 1997, 103). Thus, for Armenians, loving Turks will not be safe, but rather it will be their only opportunity to testify to the crucified Messiah by embracing the enemy.