

Armenian Evangelical Church

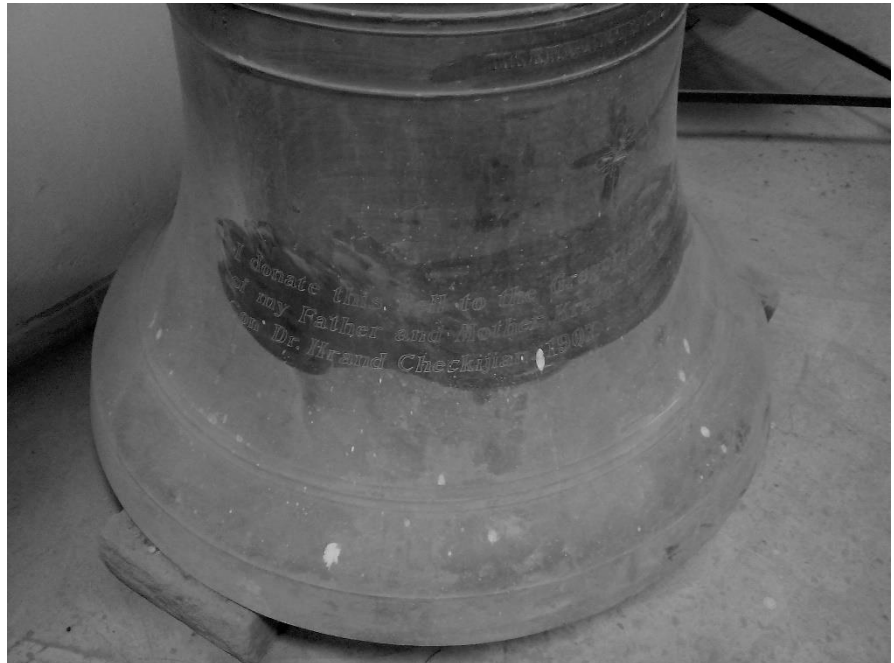
By: Cesar Jacques Chekijian

The origin of its foundation goes back to 1865, Aintab, Turkey. When the members of the First Armenian Evangelical church in Aintab (known as Kayajik church) grew in number, the congregation and the serving pastors decided to split into two groups.

One of the groups moved to a nearby neighborhood called Hayik and established a separate church, which became known as The Second Armenian Evangelical Church, consecrated on October 17, 1907.

The church bell on the right was donated for it in 1907 by Dr. Hrand Krikor Chekijian (see inscription on it, with dedication to his parents).

Since evacuation of all Armenians out of Aintab late in 1922, this bell has been at the storage section of Gaziantep Museum, until someone who knows me has noticed it, and sent me a photo of it on April 24, 2017!



The first pastor of this new congregation was Rev. Kara-Krikor Harutyunian, who served the church until he died before end of the year the same year of the consecration of the new church in 1907, with whom Rev. Manaseh Papazian had collaterally served as an associate pastor from 1892–1907.

Followed by Rev. Bedros Topalian (1907–1912). During these years, the church had run an elementary and intermediate Niziblian School (founded by the benevolent Mr. Adoor Niziblian).

Then several pastors took over the leadership of the church until 1922, when all the Armenians of Aintab left Aintab.

Rev. Kara-Krikor Harutyunian (Pastor - 1865–1907)

Rev. Manaseh Papazian (Pastor - 1892–1907) as an associate pastor.

Rev. Bedros Topalian (Pastor - 1908–1912)
Prof. Lutfi Levonian (Preacher - 1912–1915)

Who was Dr. Hrand Krikor Chekijian:

Born in Aintab in 1871 (photo on right), his father Krikor Chekijian was born in Caesarea/Kayseri, Cappadocia.

Hrand had an older brother named Hagop Chekijian who settled in Montevideo, Uruguay in 1925.

Krikor had a younger brother named Kevork (also born in Caesarea), who had four sons; Hagop, Manoog, Nazaret and Hovannes.

After graduating from the American College in Aintab (a Free Mason by then), Hrand arrived in USA (via Egypt) at Ellis Island port of entry in 1888, to attend Cleveland College of Physics & Surgery in Ohio (now known as Case Western Reserve Medical University) being certified as a Medical Doctor on March 17, 1897 in Osteopathy.

Had completed his internship in St. Louis, Missouri two years before.

Settled in Los Angeles, CA in 1897 and had married Elizabeth of English origins and changed his name to Dr. Henry Krikor Emerson. Possible that he adopted his wife's maiden name.

Apparently, he kept in touch with his family in Aintab, as he has gone back in 1907, along with his wife Elizabeth, taking with him the above church bell, which seems to be manufactured in U.S.A., for the new Armenian Evangelical Church in the Armenian section of Aintab. Ellis Island records indicate that he returned to USA with his wife, late in 1907.

He lived and practiced as an M.D. in Downtown Los Angeles until he passed away in 1934 at age 63.

Said to have been an active member of "Compatriots of Aintab" participated regularly in Aintabtsi picnics

