

Trumpet's Sound

53rd year, Australia

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“Trumpet's Sound” is a bi-monthly publication of the Armenian Evangelical Brethren Church in Sydney, Australia.

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In this issue...

No eyes has seen 3
Pastor Harry Kiujian

Armenia - an open letter 4
Kevin Honore

God against Egypt's gods 6
Don Stormer

Standing firm when we encounter challenges 10
Stephen Trew

Mission Trip to Armenia #24 . . 15
ACM

My tears are for Lebanon 15
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Praise and prayer points

PRAISE POINTS

- Praise the Lord for blessing us so richly
- Thank the Lord for His protection and guidance during our mission trip

PRAYER POINTS: pray for

- the families we support in Armenia and Lebanon
- the many sufferers in Lebanon
- peace for Armenia and its neighbouring countries
- the processing of the new container that has landed in Armenia
- the container in Lebanon to clear customs
- the Lord's guidance and protection of our co-workers

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No eyes has seen

“No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no heart has conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him”. 1 Corinthians 2:9

Let me start with a question. Do you love God? Then this message is for you. There is a place specially prepared for you that no eye has seen, no ear has heard about, no heart of man has imagined.

Some time ago a friend gave me a small cutting and asked me to put it in a pot. It was to give me an unusual plant that flowers once a year only at night time. I followed this plant day and night. In one year it had grown with much foliage. When I could see a bud, I knew it was going to flower,

The flower head started to grow bigger and bigger. I took the plant indoors as I could see it was about to open. Yes, on that night about 9.00pm the bud opened to a very unusual and most beautiful white flower such as I had never seen before. It was as large as my palm and I remained awake till midnight admiring its beauty. At 3.00am I went to look again and the flower was still in full bloom but at 6.00am it was totally dead. It was hanging down and all the foliage was dead.

I find God so amazing to create such a beautiful plant that flowers once a year and only at night time. But now when I read that what no eye has seen, nor ear has heard, nor heart has conceived, is what God has prepared for those who love Him, I can just imagine how beautifully the Lord has prepared everything for those who love Him.

Yes, one day the hardship and pain will all disappear. When we see Him in His glory, I will be up all night admiring the beauty of my precious Lord Jesus.

If He can put so much beauty in a flower that bloomed for only eight hours then what about eternity. Oh precious Lord, how much we are loved and blessed by you.

H. K.

Armenia - an open letter

Hello friends,

Armenia, what a depressing place. To be fair, some parts of the centre of Yerevan are booming and no one seems to know how! But I've not been there yet, I've been out into two smaller cities, Vanadzor and Gyumri. There's not much flourishing there. And the people we've been visiting are as poor and down as it's possible to imagine.

This trip has driven home to me something which we think about at Bright Hope World. Poverty is not just an economic thing. It has its roots in broken relationships; in every family I've met, that understanding has been confirmed. Yesterday this was epitomised by Gohar's situation. She is a single mum with three children. Two of them are seriously sick and in need of medical attention. Gohar herself is not well and they live in a small room infested with mould that makes breathing very difficult. You can smell the mould before you enter the two-room hovel. At 18, her parents forced her into marriage to a brutal, violent man. She lasted 8 years before she had to get out. She had been bashed and with 23 stitches in her head and 3 little kids she left. But now she's in constant crisis and very vulnerable as she attempts to survive and feed her kids. Broken relationship with her parents first and then with her husband, what hope is there for Gohar? There's a picture of her and her kids and her "house." Look and weep.

A group of us went to visit her and see what could be done. She was in tears that someone would want to come into her house and show her love. The poverty is palpable and assaults all the senses. You cannot help but be moved; how do you not do something about it? I'll need to think about this one.

I've been with a team of nine people here. I landed in Yerevan on Friday morning and was whisked from the airport to a meeting with about 60 people and then on to a camp with some youngsters. They are pretty much like Kiwi kids, full of mischief and energy!

The next morning we boarded a bus and headed to the city of Vanadzor where we met 25 families we are involved with. Lots of food – this seems to be the theme of this trip. We then visited a couple of families and headed off to the city of Gyumri where we stayed for 2 nights. Another restaurant in the evening, this time Syrian food at the Aleppo restaurant. Ate at 9:30 pm and bed at midnight. Pretty bushed.

Anyway, the next day was food, church, writing and more food! Man, these guys can eat!

Yesterday we met Gohar and another family and drove back to Yerevan. It was a quiet, two hour journey after the visit with Gohar. The main man I'm with is so frustrated by the mindset of the men here. They are violent and abusive, and their attitude to women is appalling. Last night he was very passionate about it and fuming.

I'll finish by talking about the team members. I've included a photo of us all standing in front of a white van. Starting from right to left as you look at it:

Edmon is an Armenian guy who was born in Syria but who now lives in The Netherlands. He's a church pastor and has visited here a few times. He also travels to places like Sudan, Egypt, Morocco and has friends in Yemen. Beside him is his mother. She's originally from Syria but escaped in 2012 to live with another son in Germany. This is the first visit she has ever made to Armenia and it's interesting watching her – she doesn't know a lot of her mother tongue. She's a lovely woman, 74 years old.

Next are Hratsh and Clara Kuijian, the leaders and founders of Armenian Christian Mission. They are Armenian. Hratsh was born in Egypt and Clara in Iran and they live in Sydney, Australia. They love their people and want the best for them. They have been visiting regularly and packing containers of goods in Australia and sending them to support poor families here for the past 26 years.

Then yours truly and beside me 3 people from an Australian family, Bronwyn and Robert and between them their son Steven. They've taken an interest in Armenia and visited several times.

Beside them is Dr Daniel James, a medical doctor from Australia, originally from Singapore. He's been coming here regularly for years. It's good to have a doctor on the team. The amount of illness you come across is appalling and he's been able to help and get the right stuff for people. You can buy drugs here across the counter for a minuscule amount compared to home.

So, I'm spending the day trying to finish writing things up. The next time you hear from me I'll hopefully be home.

Much love
Kevin Honore
Bright World Hope

God against Egypt's gods

The message of Exodus 7-12

There are several important themes in chapters 7-12. These record the great display of God in performing miracles. This display showed that God was the one and only God and that the gods of Egypt were utterly powerless. In the process Pharaoh's magicians were soon shown to have very limited power. Simultaneously we have the stories of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart and his very limited offers of release to the Israelite slaves.

We begin with the truth that God, and God alone, is the one true God. But the question arises about how God demonstrates that He is God. If someone came to us claiming to have a new message from God how would he prove to us that he had the truth? The only way is by the miracles he performs. If no miracles are performed then as far as we are concerned the man with the new revelation is no different from us. We could also develop a philosophy and say that it was a message from God. What distinguishes a person with a revelation from God is that he is able to support his claim by showing the power of God.

There have been four periods in history when God had demonstrated the truth of His message by miracles. The first was against Egypt when God wanted the Israelites to know that He was their God and He wanted Pharaoh to know that He was the only God and that He must be obeyed. The second time was during the time of Elijah and Elisha when God was authenticating His message through the prophets. The third was during the ministry of the Lord Jesus to support His claim to be the Son of God. This was immediately followed by the miracles during the early church period as evidence that salvation was now only through faith in Jesus Christ.

Against all the gods of Egypt...

It was a common belief in ancient times that the gods of a nation were superior in the territory controlled by that nation. The Egyptians were no different; they believed their gods to be superior certainly within their country. God intended to demonstrate that the gods of Egypt were powerless; He alone is God. But more than that. As we come to the end of the conflict between Moses and Pharaoh – really between God and Pharaoh – God's message to Moses was "On all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the Lord" (Exodus 12:12).

By a series of miracles the gods of Egypt were, one by one, shown to be powerless. In total there were eleven miracles – and ten plagues.

Miracle	Plague	The event	Directed against
1		A rod changed into a serpent	Objects of worship
2	1	Water of Nile to blood	The Nile
3	2	Frogs everywhere	The Nile
4	3	Gnats / lice	Priests' purity
5	4	Flies	Beelzebub, the fly god
6	5	Death of livestock	The sacred bull

7	6	Boils	Typhon, the Evil Principle
8	7	Hail	Isis and Osiris
9	8	Locusts	Serapis
10	9	Darkness	Isis and Osiris
11	10	Judgment on the first-born	Pharaoh's constant rebellion

The first sign – a staff becomes a serpent

We have seen that God did not release Moses from his commission to go to Pharaoh. When he went to Pharaoh his task was to say what God was commanding him to do and to demonstrate by miracles that God expected Pharaoh to obey. In the presence of Pharaoh and his servants, Moses and Aaron did as God commanded, casting Moses' staff on the floor. It became a serpent.

The magicians' response

Unfortunately, performing a miracle is no guarantee a message will be believed. Satan will do his utmost to nullify the truth. On this occasion he used counterfeit miracles to convince Pharaoh that Moses and Aaron had not done anything extraordinary. Pharaoh's magicians – Jannes and Jambres, according to 2 Timothy 3:8 – could apparently do the same thing.

However, they were using mesmerised snakes who reverted to their normal activities when released. To people who would not believe, Aaron's miracle had no effect. Even the fact that Aaron's snake swallowed up the magicians' snakes had no effect. Pharaoh's heart was basically hardened, and he refused to believe.

The plagues

1. Water turned to blood

Because Pharaoh refused to believe and obey God, Moses was told to go with Aaron to the Nile when Pharaoh went there the next day

to bathe. In the presence of Pharaoh he was to instruct Aaron to take the staff and stretch his hand out over the water of the Nile; the water would become blood. This judgment would result in the death of fish in the river, the Nile would become putrid and the water in the stone vessels would turn to blood. This first plague was directed against one of the major gods of Egypt – the Nile.

A person who doesn't want to believe the truth can soon find excuses. Once again the magicians used their sleight of hand to convince Pharaoh that Moses should not be believed. They used their magic arts to apparently do the same as Aaron had done. Pharaoh believed his magicians and ignored Moses.

2. Frogs

Because of Pharaoh's disobedience, God instructed Moses to bring about a second plague and since the Nile was an important god for the Egyptians, this second plague was also directed against it. If Pharaoh refused to obey the Lord, the Nile would swarm with frogs and make the life of the people unbearable. This indeed happened.

Once again the magicians were able to make frogs appear. However, in view of the abundance of frogs, this would not appear to have been a difficult task. What was more difficult was getting rid of them! This was something the magicians were powerless to do. Pharaoh had to ask Moses to remove the frogs!

Moses even asked Pharaoh to nominate the time when the frogs were to go! This happened so that Pharaoh was left in no doubt that God was in control. However, Pharaoh still did not believe or obey. Once the frogs were removed, and Pharaoh saw that there was relief, he again hardened his heart.

Don Stormer

(To be continued next issue)



Standing firm when we encounter challenges

Avoiding the temptation to slow down

Haggai 2 shows us how we can stand firm in the work the LORD has called us to complete, even when we encounter challenges. It reminds us that we can only do this with the resources of the LORD.

Haggai 1 addressed the need for the right priority. In chapter 2 there is an encouragement, then a challenge and finally a further encouragement. Each of these sections begins with a separate word of the LORD on a specified date (2:1, 10, 20). The LORD was encouraging the people to keep going with rebuilding the temple despite the challenges of the day.

One challenge was that the people now realised that the rebuilt temple would be smaller and a shadow of the spectacular temple that King Solomon had built (verse 4). This would have threatened the will of the people to keep going.

The encouragement to keep working (verses 3-5)

God now speaks. It was about the same time of the year (2:1) as the original temple was dedicated by King Solomon (1 Kings 8:1-3), highlighting this comparison with King Solomon's temple. The LORD speaks and says (2:4-5):

"But now be strong, Zerubbabel" declares the LORD. "Be strong" Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest. Be strong, all you people of the land" declares the LORD "and work. For I am with you" declares the LORD Almighty... And my Spirit remains among you. Do not fear." [Emphasis added]

Notice the four key statements in these verses.

The first was to "be strong". These words evoke an image of a focused and determined mindset. Again, this is a link to King Solomon's temple where the same charge was given to Solomon when he was

called to build the first temple (1 Chronicles 22:13; 28: 10, 20). God's message was that He was equally at work this time as He was at the time of King Solomon.

Second, if God was at work, then His people are called to "work". This was a simple message to get on with the task. They were to trust in the LORD and get on with the task.

The command to "be strong" and to "work" was not made in a vacuum. Note the promise "For I am with you..." which should determine their mindset. As God was with His people when He took them out of Egypt and entered into a covenant with them (see Exodus 20:45-46) so He (My Spirit) "remains among you" (verse 5). The LORD Almighty was acting through them, and He was the source of their power and strength.

Verse 5 ends with the comment "Do not fear". The continuing presence of the LORD Almighty was a reminder that He remained in full control and was the answer to their fear.

We would do well to live by the same four statements in fulfilling the call of God in our lives.

Be encouraged by God's wonderful plans (verses 6-9)

The LORD then focused on the future, showing what He will bring about. The LORD stated that He would exercise His sovereign and creative power by shaking the heavens and the earth (verse 6). In this context, His power will also be used to provide the resources needed to rebuild the temple (verses 7-8).

Their perspective was not just to be limited to God's present plans but was to stretch into the future. The LORD promised that the temple would be even more glorious than they could imagine (see verse 9) surpassing that of Solomon's Temple. This would be fulfilled in two ways:

- a) In the future the temple was described as being "magnificent" (Mark 13:1).
- b) The "glory" would also be greater when Jesus was present in

the temple during His ministry on earth. He also claimed He was greater than the temple (Matthew 12:6) and exercised authority over the temple (John 2:13-22).

A further fulfilment of the promise (see verse 9) would be that Jerusalem would be the place where Jesus would bring peace with God through His death (Colossians 1:19-20) and a final peace at the time of His final rule (Revelation 21:22-23).

So, the work God called the people to do was significant for their day and into the future. It was part of God's plans! We should also look at the work God has called us to do in the same way. It is all part of God's great plans that He is sovereignly working out.

A challenge to reflect on the consequences of disobedience (verses 10-19)

In verses 10-19 the LORD teaches a lesson on the consequences of disobedience. He says that it is like a contagion, something that we are familiar with in these times with COVID-19. This particular message is addressed to the priests who were responsible for leading the people in obedience to God and His laws.

Verses 11-13 raise questions that were familiar to priests concerning what the Law said on how the state of being consecrated or defiled is transmitted (see Leviticus 6:27, 7:16, 22:4-6; Exodus 29:36-37). The point of these verses is that under the Law defilement was transmitted much easier, and was therefore more pervasive than consecration.

So what did this lesson mean for the people when for many years they had failed to follow the command to rebuild the temple? Look at verse 14: "...whatever they do and whatever they offer there is defiled." Disobedience left them in a continual state of being defiled in the eyes of God.

These are harsh words. Neither the works of their hands nor what they offered were acceptable to God when they were in a state of disobedience. In verses 15-17 Haggai points out that the drought and famine they experienced were a consequence of their disobedience.

But now that the people had returned to obedience, in the last part of verse 18 and 19 the people are called to “give careful thought” to, or take stock of, their changed circumstances. Despite their experiencing a drought they had at that time planted a winter crop. This represented the hope of a crop that had yet to be harvested. In response to their renewed obedience the people now receive a promise from God in verse 19: “From this day on I will bless you.” This was a statement of hope for the people.

This reminds us that it is not the practice of religion that brings blessing – you can’t compel this merely by your conduct – but the attitude of your heart and humble obedience (consider 1 Samuel 15:22 regarding what pleases God).

The encouragement for Zerubbabel (verses 20-23)

God was not finished. He also had a message for Zerubbabel. God reminded him again of His control over creation (verse 21) and sovereignty over royal thrones and their armies (verse 22). But, as we see in verse 23, God also had a specific encouragement for Zerubbabel whom He had chosen to lead the people in rebuilding the temple (see the reference in verse 23 to the words “take” and “chosen”).

Importantly, this represented God acting through Zerubbabel to restore King David’s lineage to be the rulers of Judah. This had been taken away from Zerubbabel’s grandfather (see Jeremiah 22:24-27). But now Zerubbabel is described as “my servant” (verse 23), which was a term used of David (2 Samuel 3:18; Psalm 78:70). This affirmed that he had the same characteristic as David as a servant of the LORD. Zerubbabel is also described to be “like my signet ring” (verse 23). In ancient times this represented the authority as king (see for example, Esther 3:10-11; 8:8). Thus, he is described with “kingly” authority. Both points emphasised the restoration of David’s lineage to be rulers of Judah.

Zerubbabel was only a type who looked forward to the true and final “servant” and ruler. See the reference to the future through the phrase, “On that day” in verse 23. “Servant” was a term used for the Messiah (see for example, Zechariah 3:8 and 6:9-15; Isaiah 42:1).

The ultimate fulfilment of God choosing Zerubbabel was to be in Jesus the Messiah. Jesus took on the title of “servant” (see Acts 4:27; 4:30; Philippians 2:7). Jesus was also described as having a kingdom (John 18:36) and the Son who was the ruler (Isaiah 9:6-7). He is described as being the King of kings and Lord of lords (Revelation 17:14 and 19:16). Each aspect of “king” and “servant” were brought back together in Zerubbabel and fulfilled in Jesus, with the Gospels of Matthew and Luke recording that Zerubbabel and David were in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:12-13; Luke 3:27). Jesus is both our king and servant.

God was, is and will be true to His word. This was an encouragement to Zerubbabel and should also be an encouragement to us too.

What about us?

We too can be both servants of the LORD and like His “signet” ring. We are Christ’s ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20) when we apply the principles of Haggai 2:4-5. Christ works through us as part of extending His kingdom. When we are strong, when we work in the presence of the LORD (through the Holy Spirit) and work without fear, we are Christ’s ambassadors.

May we also be encouraged to do the work God has called us to undertake.

Stephen Trew

“Do nothing that you would not like God to see. Say nothing you would not like God to hear. Write nothing you would not like God to read. Go no place where you would not like God to find you. Read no book of which you would not like God to say, “Show it to Me.”

“Guard your thoughts, and there will be little fear about your actions.”

J.C. Ryle

Mission Trip to Armenia #24

We praise the Lord that there were nine of us in this year's mission team. There were friends from the Netherlands, New Zealand, South Australia, and New South Wales.

Our co-workers and the many families that we support in Armenia were looking forward to seeing us again after the three year break caused by the pandemic.

Among us were six preachers who visited many churches, held open-air gospel meetings and conducted children's gatherings. One of the highlights was the baptism of 22 people who came to the Lord during the pandemic.

In Yerevan we also dedicated our new building "PAROS" to the Lord. This will be our central office where we will be able to run our children's ministry, conduct adult Bible studies, house some of our guests and store some of the goods we receive from time to time from Australia.

This time again many accepted Christ as their Saviour. Martun and Ashdod will continue to follow them and nurture them in Christ.

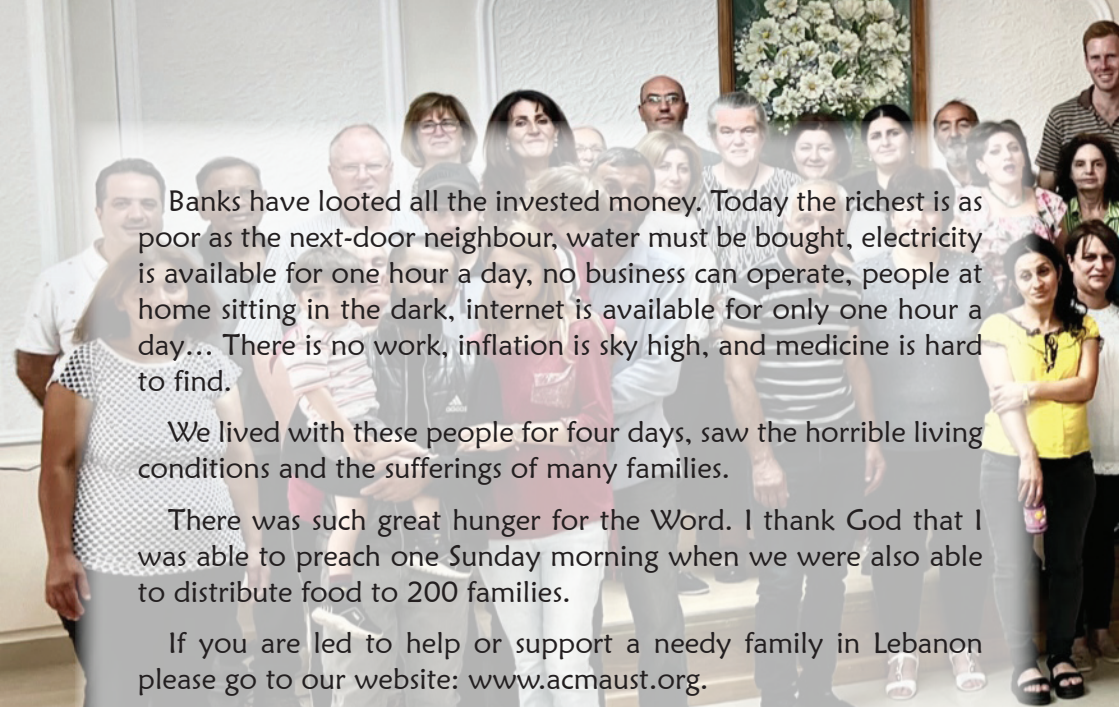
We were able to visit many of our needy families to encourage them and pray for them. Please keep ACM in your prayers. Pray especially for peace in Armenia with the neighbouring countries.

If you are led to sponsor a family, please go to our website: www.acmaust.org.

My tears are for Lebanon

ACM supports some needy families in Lebanon, and we have two co-workers who support us in this ministry.

God blessed Lebanon with nature and beauty, but it's hard looking at what humans have done to this beautiful country.



Banks have looted all the invested money. Today the richest is as poor as the next-door neighbour, water must be bought, electricity is available for one hour a day, no business can operate, people at home sitting in the dark, internet is available for only one hour a day... There is no work, inflation is sky high, and medicine is hard to find.

We lived with these people for four days, saw the horrible living conditions and the sufferings of many families.

There was such great hunger for the Word. I thank God that I was able to preach one Sunday morning when we were also able to distribute food to 200 families.

If you are led to help or support a needy family in Lebanon please go to our website: www.acmaust.org.

