

# Trumpet's Sound

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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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Cover photo: "Winter", Photo by ACM team 2017.

**ACM Prayer and praise points**

- Praise the Lord for all the blessings of 2018
- Pray for the Lord's guidance and leading
- Pray for safety and wisdom for our co-workers
- Pray for needy families who are listed with us but who still need sponsors
- Pray for Bible study groups
- Pray for the mission teams which will visit Armenia this year
- that the calendars which were distributed will be a blessing to many

*The costs of the publication are covered by the gifts of believers, who donate out of the generosity of their hearts.*

## ***They saw, came, worshiped and changed direction***

### **They saw**

*The wise men, the magi who saw the stars, were wiser than the people of their time realised because they knew about the Son of God who was to be born in Bethlehem. Micah 5:2 reads "But you, Bethlehem Ephrata, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." This was written by the prophet Micah in the 8th century BC. Hundreds of years later the wise men decided to go for a journey through the desert knowing well all the hardships they would face.*

### **They came**

*After all their hardships they came to see the Saviour, the King. They experienced the wonder of coming to God and finding they would not be turned away. What a joy it must have been to be an eye witness to God taking the form of a babe, coming into a sinful world for the salvation of mankind. What a joy it was for them to see the Messiah.*

### **They worshiped**

*The wise men came on their knees to worship and adore the one they came to give their gifts to. "On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh" (Matthew 2:11).*

### **They did not return the same way**

*The wise men had responded to the call of God. They had come and worshipped. However Herod wanted to use their knowledge of where the babe was in order to kill Him. So God warned them in a dream not to return to Herod. They were obedient and went home another way.*

Perhaps this has a message that is important for you. You believe what God has said in His word about sin. You have repented and accepted His salvation. The Lord Jesus came into your heart and you now worship Him as your mighty God and Saviour, knowing salvation comes only through Him.

Now we worship Him, have fellowship with Him, our mediator, Lord and master. We do not want to worship any other but Him. Now we must be obedient to Him and not go back to our old ways.

The wise men were obedient and took a different route home. Are we ready to let go of our old ways, our old desires, dreams and plans, and be fully obedient to the Lord Jesus for the sake of glorifying Him?

Today we can receive the gift of eternal life from the Lord by making him our Lord and master. My prayer is that you will become victorious in Christ and inherit eternity.

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given,*

*and the government will be on his shoulders.*

*And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,*

*Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. (Isaiah 9:6)*

H. K.

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### **PSALM 65:1-5 ESV**

*Praise is due to you, O God, in Zion, and to you shall vows be performed. O you who hear prayer, to you shall all flesh come. When iniquities prevail against me, you atone for our transgressions. Blessed is the one you choose and bring near, to dwell in your courts! We shall be satisfied with the goodness of your house, the holiness of your temple! By awesome deeds you answer us with righteousness, O God of our salvation, the hope of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest seas.*

## **Look... and count the stars**

### *Read Genesis 15*

**G**enesis 15 is primarily concerned with the covenant God made with Abraham, but the story has numerous lessons for us as we live for our Lord Jesus. We see Abraham as a man of faith and we see God as a covenant-keeping God who protects His people.

However, as the story starts there is an interesting possible link back to chapter 14 in which we see God's care for Abraham. In a vision he heard God telling him not to be afraid because He was Abraham's shield. We can well understand that Abraham may have experienced a degree of fear. Having defeated four kings from the east, he may well have wondered if they would return to attack him. The element of surprise had been an important part of Abraham's strategy and he may well have wondered if the same kings would return to regain their supremacy. He may also have wondered whether he had been foolish in returning all the spoils he had recovered to the king of Sodom. What reward was there for the risks he had taken? Would he be protected? God's message to him was "Don't be afraid, Abraham. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward". God was promising to protect Abraham. But more than that. God Himself was Abraham's reward.

However, Abraham's response to the Lord shows that his thoughts were elsewhere. If Abraham was afraid, it is more likely that he was afraid that the promise that God had made that his descendants would become a great nation would not be fulfilled. His heir was indeed someone who was born in his house, but he was not his son. This is the background to Abraham asking the Lord what He would give him. If God was his reward, would he be rewarded with a son? So God gave Abraham an assurance that Eliezer would not be his heir, but it would be someone who would come out of his own body.

God confirmed His promise to Abraham by taking him outside and challenging him to count the multitude of stars in the night sky. God promised Abraham that his descendants would be as uncountable as

the stars. Abraham believed in Yahweh, who credited Abraham's act of faith to him for righteousness.

The Lord continued His answer to Abraham by reminding him that He was the Lord who had brought him out of Ur of the Chaldees with the intention of giving him the land where he was as an inheritance. Abraham asked the Lord how he would know that he would inherit the land. The answer to this question would settle any doubts that Abraham may have had about the ability that God had to protect him and to keep His promise.

What Abraham was told to do was to bring the Lord a heifer three years old, a female goat that was also three years old, a ram three years old, a turtledove, and a young pigeon. Abraham brought all these to the Lord, and divided them in the middle, and laid each half opposite the other; but he didn't divide the birds. What was the significance of these actions?

We turn to Jeremiah's prophecy to learn about this. In Jeremiah 34:18 we read "I will give the men who have transgressed my covenant, who have not performed the words of the covenant which they made before me, when they cut the calf in two and passed between its parts". What this appears to mean is that when men made a solemn covenant, a sacrificial animal was divided and those entering the covenant walked between the two halves. In effect they were saying that if they did not keep their promise they were prepared to be cut in two as that animal had been. As Abraham prepared the sacrificial animals, he was preparing to enter into a covenant agreement with God.

We learn that as the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell on Abraham and terror and great darkness fell on him. God then spoke to Abraham to tell him what would happen to his offspring. They would receive the land where Abraham was, but not for over 400 years. His descendants would live as foreigners in a land that was not theirs, and will serve the people who owned that land. The service would not be pleasant but they would be afflicted for 400 years. But in accordance with God's earlier promise to Abraham, those who cursed Abraham would in turn come under God's curse. God would judge the nation

that afflicted Abraham's offspring. In the fourth generation Abraham's descendants would return again. They would not immediately receive their inheritance because the iniquity of the Amorite had not reached its peak and judgment was not going to fall on them immediately.

What happened then is something instructive in the ways of God. "When the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace, and a flaming torch passed between these pieces." However, Abraham did not pass between the two halves of the sacrificial animals. Instead it was as if God was going between the parts of the sacrifice alone. In this way, God was saying that He was making an unconditional covenant with Abraham. One day God would give to Abraham's offspring all the land from the river of Egypt to the great river, the Euphrates, land that at that time was possessed by ten different groups of people.

What are the truths we are meant to grasp? First, the life that pleases God is a life of faith. If God says something, then our responsibility is to believe Him.

God will keep His promise; the fulfilment may not come until the distant future, but it will come. The time when Abraham's descendants would inherit the land was some hundreds of years into the future, but the promise would be kept. God has never failed to do as He has said He would.

Many of God's promises are unconditional. If God enters an unconditional covenant, the blessings He promises depend on Himself alone. We can have a greater confidence that we will receive what He has promised because, although we often fail, He never fails.

If we respond as Abraham did and believe God, He undertakes to keep us unconditionally. We are His forever.

Don Stormer



## ***Just one more task***

**E**ven after a wonderful holiday many feel the mounting pressures of returning to the routine of work. One can't help wondering whether our society isn't dividing into two groups, the over-employed and the under-employed. I recently heard a radio program about a newly recognised health risk in New Zealand. Believe it or not, it is the problem of insufficient stress. A large group of people now have a lifestyle with little activity or challenge. These people can experience physical decline simply because they do not have good stress to stimulate them into useful action. Contrast these with the thousands of others who are dangerously over-stressed and seek relief from doctors, counsellors and seminars, or try to escape through some kind of addiction. There are the over-worked and the under-worked, the over-stressed and the under-stressed.

I can't help wondering if a similar pattern does not develop in many churches as well. The pressure some Christian families experience through church commitments frightens me. They seem to be over-worked and over-stressed. Others, on the other hand, seem under-worked and, to use a new term, "under-stressed". Either can be damaging. We are like a violin string. With too much tension it will break, but with insufficient tension it will not produce music. How do some people become so over-stressed that they break, while others are so under-stressed that they accomplish little? Whenever an opportunity to perform some ministry of Christian service comes along, there is one group of people who find it hard or even impossible to say "no" while those in the other group seem to find it equally hard to say "yes". Each has a problem.

For those who are feeling over-pressured, a useful question to reflect on would be "Why do I find it so difficult to say no?" There are many reasons why some are driven by the need to oblige and accept more activity than they should.

On the other hand, those who experience little challenge in their



*lives need to ask themselves why it is so hard for them to say "yes" when some suitable opportunity for service comes along. Accepting a new challenge means accepting the risk of doing something new. It involves faith to believe that you have something to give and that God will empower you to give it. As Christ called Peter out of the boat to walk on the water (Matthew 14:28) so He calls us out of our comfort zones. It takes a close walk with God to feel comfortable saying "no" when we need to. Likewise, to say "yes" to some new challenge God is truly leading us into. Too often these decisions are driven by our need for approval from others or from fear of failure, rather than from a rich enjoyment of who we are in Christ.*

*Only those who dwell in His presence and learn to enjoy who they are in God, will feel comfortable when they need to say "no" or have the courage to say "yes" when the right opportunity for service appears.*

*Beware of the barrenness of a busy life.*

*Rex Dearlove*

## **Timeless quotes**

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"Oh, dear friend, if you love your children, I charge you, do not let the early impression of a habit of prayer slip by. If you train your children to do anything, train them, at least, to have a habit of prayer."

J. C. Ryle

"Moses spent forty years thinking he was somebody; forty years learning he was nobody; and forty years discovering what God can do with a nobody."

D. L. Moody

"I'd rather be able to pray than to be a great preacher; Jesus Christ never taught his disciples how to preach, but only how to pray."

D. L. Moody

## ***Beware of idleness***

### **Avoiding work**

*It is often true that if a man can avoid work, he does. And yet he still wants to enjoy the fruit of his work. As Terence, the heathen poet says: "It is characteristic of all human beings to incline from work to pleasure". All people like fame and wealth. Everybody wants to rise in the world and aims at an important position. However, when they are there and feel the work and worry they soon become disappointed.*

### **The book of Proverbs on idleness**

*The Book of Proverbs shows several terrible fruits of idleness. It leads to shame: "He who gathers in summer is a wise son: but he who sleeps in harvest is a son that causes shame" (10:5). Laziness also results in poverty: "Love not sleep, lest you come to poverty: open your eyes, and you shall be satisfied with bread" (20:13). Another result of idleness is decay: "I went by the field of the slothful, and by the vineyard of the man void of understanding; and, lo, it was all grown over with thorns, and nettles had covered the face thereof, and the stone wall thereof was broken down" (24:30, 31). Sloth can even lead to death: "The desire of the slothful kills him: for his hands refuse to labour" (21:25). To continue in idleness is a sign of stupidity: "He who tills his land shall be satisfied with bread: but he who follows vain persons is void of understanding" (12:11).*

### **Idleness is a spiritual and material problem**

*Since idleness is a spiritual as well as a material problem, its solution is also spiritual. By Christ's authority the apostle Paul gave the command to work, since it is the Lord Jesus' will. When work is done for Christ, the worker has a safeguard against getting caught in the rat race and chasing after riches. This is true since the Bible teaches us to do all for the Lord Jesus, but never for money as an end in itself. For that matter, all secular occupations are really secondary to the Christian's first calling to us as disciples.*

*It is interesting to see what happens when neither the Holy Scriptures nor a government motivate people to work. More and more people feel no pangs of conscience or fear as they live off the welfare of their weakening society's economy.*

*The Christian work ethic can be implemented only in light of the entire Christian faith. Otherwise perversions and corruptions result. The apostle Paul commanded believers to work. He has pointed out how labour must be done for Christ.*

*Persevere! (2 Thessalonians 3:13)*

*When faithful workers see others who seem to coast idly along on a bed of roses, they may become discouraged, but we must remember the Lord exhorts us to persevere. God's Word gives us the strength to carry on, to follow its exhortations and examples. Without God's power, we are bound to become discouraged and bitter as we labour, especially as we work in His vineyard. Do not grow weary! Work for the Saviour until your earthly work is done.*

*Dr. Czeslaw Bassara*

## ***Failure isn't final***

### *Part 1*

**A** few years ago our car was involved in an accident and was written off by the insurance company. It wasn't worth fixing and they refunded the agreed value of money so we could buy a new car. The old car had failed. It was no longer useful for us. Sometimes if we fail, we think that we are useless to God. It's like feeling we are written off.

*It has been said that everyone makes mistakes and "the only one who never made a mistake never made anything". We all fail many times in life. We all have weaknesses. And these can lead to embarrassment, shame, guilt, disappointment, depression, giving up and wondering whether we will ever be forgiven. The important question is "How can we survive failure?"*

*Simon Peter was a fisherman who lived at Capernaum on the Sea of Galilee. He was one of Jesus' early disciples. Peter was a leader amongst the disciples as he was a natural leader and was probably the oldest one. After he spent three years following Jesus, he was an apostle who taught the church and wrote some of the New Testament, and he was an elder in his local church.*

*Peter was impulsive and impetuous. He was usually the first to act and speak his mind. He was enthusiastic, a man of action. Because of this, he often failed. Here are seven examples of this:*

### **1. Peter rebukes Jesus**

*When Peter was at Caesarea Philippi (north of the Sea of Galilee), he said that Jesus was "the Messiah, the Son of the living God". Soon after this we read: "From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life. Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him. 'Never, Lord!' he said. 'This shall never happen to you!' Jesus turned and said to Peter, 'Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns'" (Matthew 16:21-23 NIV).*

*When Jesus predicted His suffering and death, Peter rebuked Him saying "Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you!" Peter thought he knew better than Jesus. Peter thought the Messiah would be triumphant and victorious and not go through suffering, rejection, and death. But he was wrong. Jesus said that Peter was influenced by human concerns like power and status, rather than the concerns of God who was to use what Jesus went through as a suffering servant to offer salvation to humanity.*

*So Jesus rebuked him. "Get behind me, Satan!" means "get away from me". Peter protested against Christ's death, but that was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth. The cross is God's plan for delivering humanity from sin. Peter acted like Satan. He was influenced by Satan,*

*and was talking like Satan. Satan tries to discourage people from obeying God. He tempts us to take the easy path.*

*This incident shows that the death of Christ for our sins is not an option, but a divine necessity. There's no other way to get right with God.*

*So Peter failed when he rebuked Jesus and tried to get Jesus to avoid going to the cross. He was ignorant of God's plan. It's an example of his self-centred audacity.*

## **2. Peter treats Jesus like another prophet**

*About a week later, Peter was taken up a high mountain and was privileged to see a vision of what it will be like when Jesus comes to reign over the earth. Mark says, "Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There He was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, 'Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah'. (He did not know what to say, they were so frightened.) Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: 'This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to Him!'" (Mark 9:2-7).*

*Peter saw Jesus in dazzling white talking about His death with Moses and Elijah (Luke 9:30). Peter suggested putting up three shelters, one for each of them. He put Jesus on the same level as Moses and Elijah. But by speaking from a cloud God rebuked Peter for comparing Jesus with Moses and Elijah. They were not equals, because Jesus is Lord over all. When Jesus reigns, He will be pre-eminent above everyone else.*

*The Bible says that Peter "did not know what to say, they were so frightened" and "He did not know what he was saying" (Luke 9:33). So he rushed in and said the first thing that came into his mind!*

*This incident shows us that Jesus is the unique Son of God. He's not just a human prophet like Moses and Elijah.*

*So Peter failed when he spoke before thinking. It's called putting your foot in your mouth! Or shooting yourself in the foot. And he missed the bigger picture of seeing Christ's glory.*

*George Hawke  
(To be continued)*

## **GYM**

**D***o you go to the gym at all? I try to go two to three times a week! Do you want to know one thing that bothers me about gyms? It is seeing people sitting on a bench with their phones for 5-10 minutes of their time.*

*I am not against listening to music while exercising or working out, but if we are going to sit beside the equipment and not sweat, and not get tired and leave the gym refreshed and less tired then when we came in, we have a problem. The gym is not being used for what it was meant for!*

*What is even worse, is seeing people talking and socialising for a long time standing by equipment and just not working out at all. Sometimes I go into the gym and see a couple of people talking and by the time I get done, they have not accumulated a drop of sweat and they are still talking. Perhaps between their socialising they have done a set or two!*

*Now, that takes dedication, right! I mean, if you are going to pay money and join a gym, use the gym for what it was meant for!*

*I cannot stand people doing things half-heartedly. If you are going to play a sport, do it with all your heart, if you are spending time with friends and family, commit that time to them, if you are going to exercise, give it all you can.*

*I mean, just focus and be committed to whatever is at hand at that moment. Give it 100%! Even the Bible says that. "Whatsoever your hand finds to do, do it with your might" (Ecclesiastes 9:10).*

Unfortunately, even some Christians are not committed! They do not give 100% to God. They come to church but they are not focused. Some Christians do not even attend church regularly, and when they are serving in the church, do not do so with all their heart, and are not committed.

Listen, are you one of those Christians who is beside the equipment but not focused and committed to what is at hand? May I encourage you to be focused and give your best and 100% to God! Don't do anything half-heartedly! But live for God, and serve God with all your might.

Raffi Chaparian

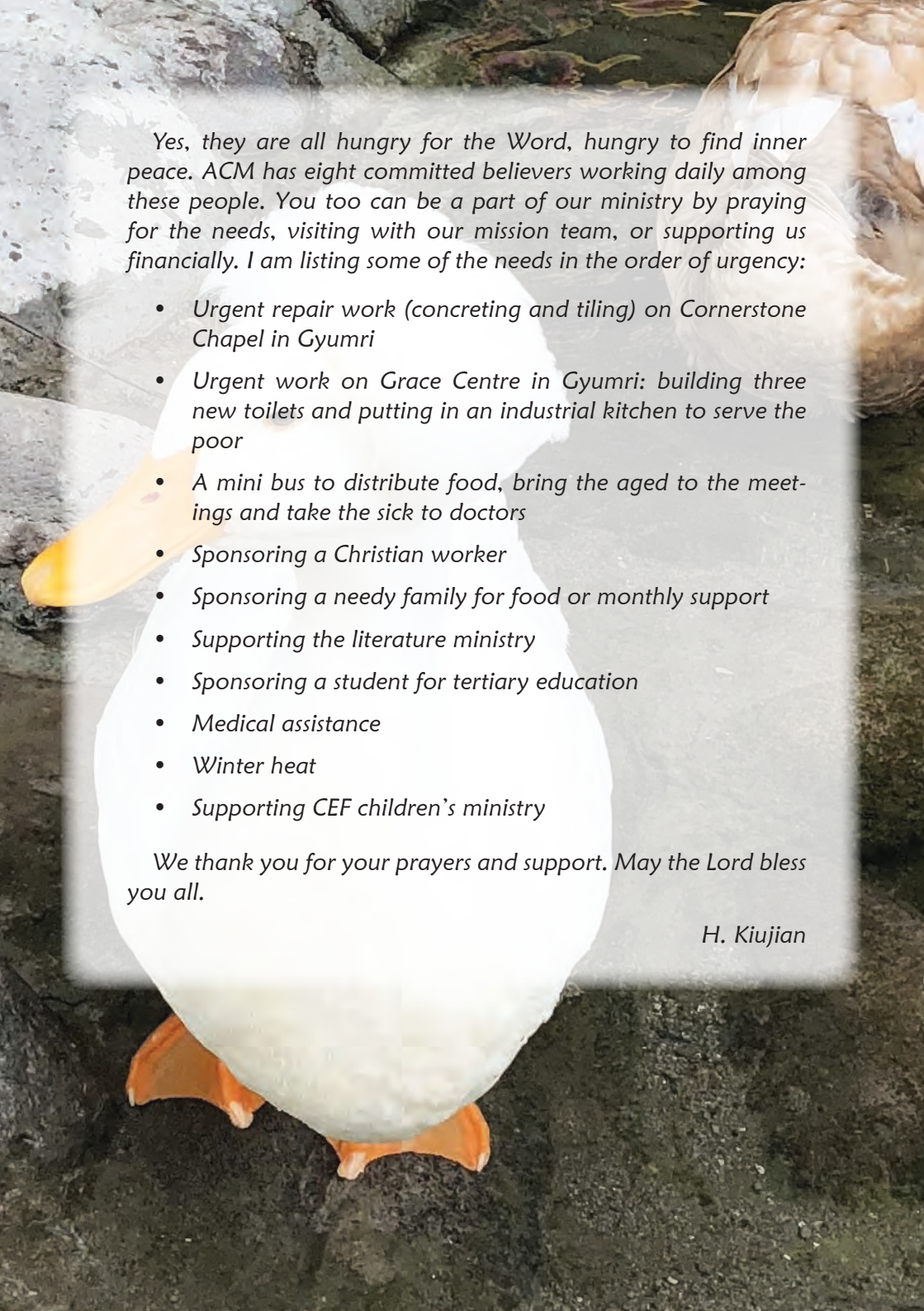
## ***An open letter to our sponsors and readers***

**B**lessed be the Lord for trusting us with the ministry in Armenia. By His grace we have been serving there for over 29 years. God has put love in our hearts for Armenian people and we have seen their pain, struggles and sickness. Their need is not just physical but also spiritual.

A saying in Armenia is “zavet danem” (let me carry your pain). Armenia is in need of people who can help and carry their pain. It does not take a lot to realise how difficult things can be when one does not have medical care or any type of income to make ends meet.

Two dollars goes a long way; it is all many people earn as an hourly rate. As westerners we will never understand their needs unless we see things with our own eyes. There is a lot of sadness and tears but the greatest joy comes when we see their hunger for Jesus.

Jesus said “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light” (Matthew 11:28-30).



*Yes, they are all hungry for the Word, hungry to find inner peace. ACM has eight committed believers working daily among these people. You too can be a part of our ministry by praying for the needs, visiting with our mission team, or supporting us financially. I am listing some of the needs in the order of urgency:*

- Urgent repair work (concreting and tiling) on Cornerstone Chapel in Gyumri*
- Urgent work on Grace Centre in Gyumri: building three new toilets and putting in an industrial kitchen to serve the poor*
- A mini bus to distribute food, bring the aged to the meetings and take the sick to doctors*
- Sponsoring a Christian worker*
- Sponsoring a needy family for food or monthly support*
- Supporting the literature ministry*
- Sponsoring a student for tertiary education*
- Medical assistance*
- Winter heat*
- Supporting CEF children's ministry*

*We thank you for your prayers and support. May the Lord bless you all.*

*H. Kiujian*