



Trumpet's Sound

49th 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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Cover photo: "Mount Ararat", Photo by ACM team 2017.



ACM prayer and praise points

We praise the Father in all things and ask for your prayers for November and December.

- Winter is approaching and many children are sick because of the cold
- Pray that the Lord will provide the much needed heat support for our poor families
- Pray for our sick and for the Lord to provide the much needed support for medication
- Give thanks for the new Bible studies which have been growing in such a short time
- Pray for and remember our co-workers in Christ as Christmas approaches
- Give thanks for the children's club and the youth gatherings in Vanadzor
- Pray that support will arrive in time to print the 2019 ACM calendars

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

Christmas: a time for giving

Go to the shopping centres and you will soon find out it's the time of the year to buy presents and exchange gifts, mostly of things we do not need. Our homes are already full of things we do not need, but children are keen to surprise mum and dad with gifts. Santa is keen to bring a gift, and grandparents are confused about what to buy and who to buy for. At times we forget and feel embarrassed for leaving someone out. Jesus teaches all Christians a message of giving – giving to the poor. This is basic Christian practice.

1. Then he looked up at his disciples and said: 'Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh?'

Luke 6:20-21

Poverty is a worldwide issue, not just for the poor but for you and me. When will we help? How will we help? By how much will we help? Jesus said "The poor you will always have with you." It is for us to care and share, and reach out. Will you help the poor this Christmas?

2. Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.'

Matthew 25:34-36

Giving is a grace from above. Some cannot part from wealth

while others are happy to help. When was the last time you gave to the poor? I remember an old lady, a regular attendee at our church, who had migrated from the Middle East and lived with her son and grandchildren. One day after church she approached me with a tissue in the hand, saying she was an old lady living with her son and without any income. However, sometimes the children played with coins and she found them on the carpet. She wanted me to take them, small one and two cent coins. It was all that she had. Will you help a needy person this Christmas?

3. Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, 'You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.' When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

Mark 10:21-22

This is a very heart-breaking story a person coming face to face with Jesus and walking away because of his love of money. Jesus did not ask him to become a beggar, or to sleep on the streets. Jesus said that he had enough wealth to share with others and was to go and sell and give to the poor. Today we see many churches with the same problem; they accumulate wealth and forget the poor. Will you help a needy person this Christmas?

4. He sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the crowd putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. A poor widow came and put in two small copper coins, which are worth a penny. Then he called his disciples and said to them, 'truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For all of them have contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, all she had to live on.'

Mark 12:41-44

God may not ask for all we have, but He asks us to help to the best of your ability. We will be rewarded accordingly; the more we give the more we receive, on earth and in heaven. Will you help the poor this Christmas?

5. He said also to the one who had invited him, 'When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbours, in case they may invite you in return, and you would be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.'

Luke 14:12-14

Helping the poor comes in many shapes and forms. As ACM works in Armenia, it finds that the needs are varied: medical assistance, winter heat, distribution of food parcels, and recently nappies for children in a hospital for mentally deformed children. None of the poor children we work with will receive a Christmas gift. Will you give to them this Christmas?

6. There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man's table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried.

Luke 16:19-25

Surely you can drop some crumbs of change from your pocket; there are many poor who can benefit from it. They will bless you, and God above will reward you if you are keen to help the poor this Christmas.

7. Then he told them a parable: 'The land of a rich man produced abundantly. And he thought to himself, 'What should I do, for I have no place to store my crops?' Then he said, 'I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, 'Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.' But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life is being demanded of you. And the things you have prepared, whose will they be?' So it is with those who store up treasures for themselves but are not rich toward God.'

Luke 12:16-21

God gave His best when He gave His only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. Christmas is about God giving His Son for the salvation of mankind. God did not hesitate; He loved us when we were sinners and was willing to give Himself. Jesus our Lord did not hesitate to give His life, to leave the glory of heaven to save of mankind. He was born in a manger, having left all the glory of heaven for lost men – us!

Will you give your heart to Jesus this Christmas? Will you become His child?

From all of us at ACM and Trumpet's Sound we wish our readers a very blessed Christmas and New Year. May God bless you all.

HK

If you wish to donate to the poor and children of Armenia contact us at info@acmaust.org. Alternatively, you can donate at www.acmaust.org. God loves a cheerful giver.

Melchizedek blesses Abraham

Read Genesis 14

The contrast between Abraham and Lot continues. Lot's troubles increased rather than decreased. He may have thought that the move to the Jordan plain would make life a lot easier for him – and he certainly didn't need the constant bickering between his herdsmen and those of his uncle Abraham. But he had allowed himself to be drawn closer to Sodom until he was living in the city. It was then that his troubles really started.

It so happened that a number of kings in the area of the Jordan plain were paying tribute to a king from the east. They did this for 12 years and in the thirteenth year they rebelled. In the fourteenth year four kings from the east attacked a large area to regain lost control and to strengthen their hold over subject kings. Genesis 14 gives details of the conflict. When the time came for the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah to defend their territory they were hopelessly outclassed; the defeat was humiliating. Even though they should have known their territory, many of their soldiers were trapped in the tar pits that existed. The kings from the east took all the goods from Sodom and Gomorrah, all the food, and all the people. Then they went their way.

One of those who escaped from the battle field went to Abraham to report the captivity of his nephew Lot. Here we see Abraham at his caring best. A lesser than Abraham might have concluded that there was nothing he could do about this. Who was he that he dare attack victorious kings like those from the east? Furthermore, hadn't Lot chosen to go this way himself? He had viewed the Jordan plain and decided that that was where he wanted to live. If things had gone pearshaped, then that was simply the inevitable consequence of a bad decision. But under no circumstances did Abraham think that way.

Abraham gathered his trained men together – over 300 men. This tells us something of Abraham's preparation for any eventuality that might arise, as well as of his organising ability. There would normally be three or four officers in charge of a force this size. Training the men required skill and knowledge. To work with his allies, Abraham required skill beyond that which men ordinarily possessed. To possess the weapons and to arm the men at short notice was a mark of foresight and ability. But Abraham was prepared.

Abraham displayed his strategic skills as he led his men into battle. If he did not arrive in the evening, he certainly waited until evening before making his attack. He then divided his troops against the enemy by night and he and his servants struck them, and pursued them to Hobah, a place near Damascus. Abraham brought back all the goods, and also his relative, Lot, and his goods, and the women also, as well as the other people.

Abraham had been successful against a much larger army. When we think of the temptation that lay ahead we realise two potential dangers. On the one hand, Abraham may have been physically exhausted and vulnerable. On the other, he may have been overconfident because of his success and been vulnerable to any temptation. But God prepared him for the coming temptation by sending the priest-king Melchizedek ahead of the king of Sodom.

Melchizedek, priest of God Most High and king of Salem, went out to meet Abraham taking him bread and wine. It appears from Nehemiah 5:15 that bread and wine were part of the taxes paid to a governor; here the king provided them for Abraham. At the same time the king-priest blessed Abraham as a servant of God Most High, possessor of heaven and earth. Abraham was strengthened for the temptation which lay ahead. At the same time Melchizedek praised God as the one who had delivered Abraham's enemies into his hand.

When the king of Sodom came to Abraham with the offer that Abraham only give him the persons but keep the goods for himself, Abraham was prepared to face the temptation. His unhesitating reply reflected the blessing of Melchizedek when he said that he had lifted up his hand to Yahweh, God Most High, that he would not take a thread nor a sandal strap nor anything that belonged to the king of Sodom, lest he should say, "I have made Abraham rich".

If we are to stand firm in times of temptation – and times of tempting come to all of us – we need the ministry of our great High Priest. We have a High Priest who understands us and our needs: Jesus, the Son of God. In using this name, the writer to the Hebrews is drawing attention to the nature of our High Priest, for Jesus was the name given to him when he became man and Son of God is His title from all eternity. The Lord Jesus became man and experienced all things that are common to mankind. He was tempted in every way that we are tempted, yet He was without sin. All this means that He knows all that we are experiencing but, since He is God, He has the almighty power to assist us when we face temptations. Therefore we can come with confidence to the throne of grace and obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Melchizedek met Abraham when Abraham had no idea of what he was about to face. God's high priest was there before the need arose. We can be grateful that our High Priest knows the outcome of our difficulties even before we face them. He is always ready to help. But there are two questions we must ask ourselves. Do we look to Him to help us when we face difficulties? Or do we think that we can handle any emergencies ourselves without turning to our High Priest for help?

We have a High Priest who appears in the presence of God on our behalf. Let us go to Him and humbly seek His protection and guidance.

Don Stormer

Repentance without conditions

“I want to be saved, but I cannot”! “I want to turn to Jesus, but it is so hard”! Have you heard other people say this? Perhaps, you may even say these things yourself. You may want to be saved, but you think it is very difficult. Many people truly know that they need Christ in order to be saved. However, they think it is impossible for them to be saved.

The reason why people think this is because they believe they need to cleanse themselves before coming to Christ to be saved. They often give as their reason that they have bad habits like smoking, gambling, bad mouths, and similar things, which they are not able to stop, and so they cannot be saved!

Two weeks ago I was speaking to a person like this, and he told me in tears that he wanted to be saved but he could not stop smoking! May I say to you that salvation is only through faith? Faith in Christ Jesus. It is not by doing or not doing something. Salvation is only obtained by believing (receiving) Christ. Believe on the work that Christ has done for your salvation.

You see, there is nothing that you and I can do to be saved. To be saved, we need only to believe in Jesus Christ because of what He did on the cross for us. Therefore, it is not what we do or do not do. It is not by stopping our bad habits. It is not by having good habits. It is not by being good, or becoming better. But it is only by believing in Jesus Christ for the work that He did for us on the Cross of Calvary!

When the multitude asked Peter what should they do to be saved, Peter replied by saying, “Believe in Jesus Christ”. When the prison guard asked Paul what to do to be saved, Paul answered, “Believe in Jesus Christ”. If you are still asking the same question, the answer is very simple and the doing of it is very easy, “Believe in Jesus Christ”! And you will be saved!

Invited to celebrate

How would you respond if God invited you to a party? If you don't like the idea of God enjoying parties, let's call it a celebration. If God invited you to a celebration would you go? Feasts, parties and celebrations never seem to be far from the heart of God. He obviously loves them. Christ told stories about feasts and He certainly made one young couple's wedding breakfast an unforgettable occasion. "The master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine" (John 2:9). In the parable of the prodigal son there is the powerful image of the Father God inviting the elder son to a home-coming party. "Let's have feast and celebrate" (Luke 15:23). Also one can't help getting the felling through the Scriptures that the wedding supper of the Lamb is something that God anticipates with divine delight. "Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb" (Revelation 19:9).

What puzzles me about God's celebrations is that many people don't want to go even when they are especially invited. You can see it in the parables, and even today the prospect of actually attending that ultimate celebration, the wedding supper of the Lamb, does not seem to generate the excitement it should. I would have thought that when God celebrates, that would be something rather special to experience. It seems there is a kind of pattern. God wants to celebrate, but we don't. Why is that?

This problem is powerfully portrayed by the father of the prodigal son. Listen to him as he leaves the joy of the homecoming party and goes out to plead with an embittered elder son to come in and enjoy the celebration. The father's concern with the elder son is not that he is having too much enjoyment, but rather the opposite, he is not having enough. I sometimes wonder whether some of us suffer the same spiritual compliant as that el-

der brother. When we gather together for worship, God invites us to celebrate a homecoming – our own – and to celebrate His generosity. But there are times when we seem reluctant to join in the celebration and worship. What does that say about us? What is wrong? Why did the elder son not want to join in the celebration? Listen to him storm at his father with anger fuelled by deep resentment built up over a lifetime. “All these years I’ve been slaving for you... yet you never gave me even a young goat to share with my friends” (Luke 15:29). In other words, “I have done so much and you owe me!”

Christians who have served God for a long time can have these same thoughts hidden and unrecognized even by themselves. So the desire for joyful celebrations and worship dies. The father and elder son speak quite different languages. The elder son rages about all he has done and what he is owed. It is the language of someone discussing a legal contract in which he has been let down. He thought his achievements had earned him some rights. In this state of mind he could never enjoy in celebration. This attitude kills celebration and worship. The father speaks the language of grace. He brushes aside all talk of contracts, rights and obligations and replaces them with dazzling, overwhelming generosity. “You are always with me, and everything I have is yours.” Luke 15:31. What this sad, embittered son had earned or hadn’t earned was quite irrelevant. All that mattered was the goodness and generosity of the father.

When we realise this is all that matters, we will gladly join in God’s “celebration parties” and joyfully worship.

Rex Dearlove

The Christmas message is that there is hope for a ruined humanity—hope of pardon, hope of peace with God, hope of glory—because at the Father’s will Jesus became poor, and was born in a stable so that thirty years later He might hang on a cross.

J.I. Packer

Why can we not get along with each other?

Someone in the crowd said to the Lord Jesus "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me" (Luke 12:13). Instead of mediating, the Lord Jesus gave a warning against greed. It seems that the man's family conflict came as a result of his greedy attitude. On another occasion, the Lord Jesus warned us against finding fault in others when there are even worse faults in ourselves, "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye" (Matthew 7:3-5).

Why can't we get along with each other? The reasons can be summarised this way:

Satanic involvement

Satan is described in the Bible as a deceiver and the father of lies who disguises himself as an angel of light and goes around the earth tempting individuals and looking for people to destroy. The Lord Jesus was clear concerning Satan. "He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). Satan and his demons are powerful, evil schemers whom Christians are taught to resist in the name of the Lord Jesus.

Personal attitudes and actions

Perfect people do not exist, even though some individuals are easier to get along with than others. Interpersonal tensions often

begin and end with people whose personality traits, attitudes, feelings, and behaviours create conflict and distrust. The prophet Habakkuk wrote: "Destruction and violence are before me; there is strife, and conflict abounds" (Habakkuk 1:3).

The faults that hinder good interpersonal relations may include:

- A self-centred need to be noticed, to be in control or to have prestige, and position. The Lord Jesus noticed this type of person. "To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everybody else, Jesus told this parable" (Luke 18:9). This is a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector (Luke 18:10-14).
- A non-forgiving and harsh approach to others. The Apostle wrote, "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you" (Ephesians 4:32).
- An inclination to be judgmental and hypercritical. The Lord Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount: "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven" (Luke 6:37).

Dr. Czeslaw Bassara

Psalm 42:1-4 (ESV)

¹As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. ²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? ³My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" ⁴These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival.

Armenian Christian Mission Inc.

Unless the LORD builds the house, the builders labour in vain.
Unless the LORD watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain (Psalm 127:1)

David was a king who knew that he needed God's help above his own power. With all the army and the guards he had, he knew that unless the Lord watched over the city, the guards watched in vain.

We have been serving in Armenia for 20 years as a mission group. We had no budget, no finance, no experience, and no knowledge of what was ahead. This was a country where 30% of the population lived in poverty. Even now, many people live in metal containers with winter temperatures of -35°C with no means of heating.

Unless the Lord provided, we had no means to help the many sick and hungry children. We faithfully prayed and our prayers were answered; the Lord is faithful to all his children. Looking at ACM today we are amazed of the wonderful work the Lord is doing in Armenia with the help of our seven co-workers and many volunteers.

With 90 families in our care we are involved with 300 people. But it is not us but His faithfulness and His response to the prayers of many.

We praise the Lord for the successful medical operations performed during the year. We praise Him for keeping our co-workers safe as they drive thousands of kilometres during summer and winter. We thank Him for the many who came to know Him and have been baptised. We thank Him for the children's and youth ministries, the Bible study groups and the container ministry.



ACM 20th anniversary in Yerevan, Armenia

We take this time and thank our supporters, sponsors, the many churches who have stood beside us, the many volunteers in Sydney and USA, and those who joined our mission team in 2018. We thank those who prayed, and gave financially to the ministry, cried with us, and displayed Christ's love to the poorest people of Armenia.

Please keep them in your prayers during this winter as the temperature drops to -30°C.

May the peace and love of the Father be with you all.

The ACM directors wish you a blessed Christmas and a happy New Year.

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