



# 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: "Armenian landscapes", Photo by ACM team 2015.



## Prayer and praise points

- We are blessed to see what God is doing through ACM and CEF.
- Please continue your prayers for the children and youth of Armenia.
- As we take the Gospel to the poor, we ask you to be our prayer partner. Prayer for the work of ACM is vital. As the Lord leads, please support the work financially.
- Pray for the Australian mission team visiting Armenia in October.
- Pray for the Lord to provide a warehouse in Sydney for the container ministry.
- Pray for the directors in Australia, USA and Armenia.

**If you would like to be on ACM's e-mail list to receive prayer letters please send an email to. [info@acmaust.org](mailto:info@acmaust.org)**

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

## **Trust**

*“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go” (Joshua 1:9).*

*“Who do you trust?” is an important question. In today’s world it’s so hard to trust; some people have given up trusting even family members. Others trust in themselves, their strength and wisdom, but the Bible is very clear: “Those who trust in themselves are fools, but those who walk in wisdom are kept safe” (Proverbs 28:26).*

*Life is so difficult and hard and at times it’s scary. Unless we have faith and trust in the Lord Jesus, how pitiful we are as humans. Think of natural disasters, wars, fear, lack of trust, lack of love, financial losses, family breakdowns, poverty, homelessness, the loss of a loved one... The list keeps growing. Let me ask you one question. Who do you go to, who do you trust in times of need? The bottle? Drugs? Possibly just giving up and running away?*

### **Have you thought about Jesus?**

*I have been through so many situations in my life. At times it looked impossible to come out of them unharmed, impossible to be free again, impossible to run and rejoice again, but the Lord is faithful to all His children. Trust Him, hold on to Him, never let Him go, and never lose your hope because He is a faithful Father.*

*“The king was overjoyed and gave orders to lift Daniel out of the den. And when Daniel was lifted from the den, no wound was found on him, because he had trusted in his God” (Daniel 6:23).*

*Yes, I have been so many times to a place where there was not even a glimpse of hope, but God stretched His arm and saved me. I praise Him today. Jesus is the only hope we have, and He is the one who reaches out when we cry to Him. I write this with rejoicing because my Redeemer lives. I was lost without hope but He turned my mourning to dancing.*



*“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit” (Romans 15:13).*

*Trust in Jesus no matter what happens, and you will never be disappointed.*

H. K.

## **When God arranges...**

### **Read Luke 2:1-7**

**O**ften things do not go according to plan. Yet at the same time all things work together for good for those who love God. Why? God is in control. He oversees the details of life to accomplish His glory and our good. We may wonder about Joseph and Mary and the kind of wedding they had planned. Then Mary was with child of the Holy Spirit. At the time for Mary's child to be born, Caesar issued a command for an empire wide census to be held. What happened was, almost certainly, not in Joseph's original plan. Yet God was in charge and was ensuring that His will was done.

The decision by Caesar Augustus, a secular ruler, to hold a census (possibly for economic reasons) occurred at the time God wanted Joseph and Mary to be in Bethlehem. Micah had said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem Ephrathah. The census is dated as evidence of the time when the Lord was born. Luke had taken good care to check out all his facts for Theophilus.

### **Joseph**

Matthew gives us a picture of what kind of person Joseph was. He didn't plan a family as early as it happened! He even took Mary into his home earlier than he planned! Matthew not only portrays Joseph as a righteous man but also as one who was compassionate; his initial response on learning Mary was pregnant was to divorce her quietly. However, Joseph was also obedient to the angel's command when he

*learned that the Child was conceived of the Holy Spirit. All this meant he was a man of faith.*

*Luke adds to this picture. Some commentators wonder if Mary may not have been legally required to be enrolled. But Joseph had no intention of leaving Mary alone at that stage of her pregnancy while he went about 100km south. Luke strengthens our understanding of a compassionate man. At the same time, it was important that Mary was in Bethlehem at the time of the birth of the baby for prophecy to be fulfilled.*

*Paul tells us that the Messiah came in the fullness of time. God's timing was right. Caesar's plans for a census meant Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem in order that the Lord would be born according to Micah's prophecy.*

*There are significant differences between the birth of the Lord Jesus and that of John. John was presumably born at home whereas Jesus was a long way from Nazareth. The neighbours of Zechariah and Elizabeth were near to rejoice with the new parents. However, even in this God had His plans. The Lord Jesus had not come to earth to live a comfortable life. This is seen right from the time of His birth. There was nothing to make Mary's condition comfortable; there was no room in the inn. Instead, Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger – a feeding trough. All this was symbolic of the Lord's coming. He did not come into aristocratic circles; He was not born into royalty. He was with the humble in His birth, as will be seen in the visit of the shepherds.*

*No room in the inn was a fitting situation for the Lord Jesus. Later He would say that foxes had holes and birds had nests but He had nowhere to lay His head. In His birth He lay in a borrowed manger; in His death He was laid in a borrowed tomb. During the years of His ministry He had nowhere to call His own.*

*Who can fathom the depths of the grace of God, that the Son of God would allow Himself to enter this world in this way? Having done so, He continued to live in the same way, without any of the comforts that we would consider to be essential.*

*Yet through all this, we see God in control, working out His purposes and bringing blessing to His people.*

## **To us today**

*We must never forget that God is in control. If He has a plan, He will carry it out. This is just as true today as ever. He can bring changes in our circumstances so that what looks impossible one day is plainly obvious the next. It is therefore our responsibility to allow God to work His plans out in our lives. Too often we try to take a hand in order to ensure the success of some venture we are interested in. If God is not in our plans, we cannot expect Him to bless them. But if it is His will that a project succeed, we can expect Him to work all things together for good to those who love Him.*

*Don Stormer*

## **Timeless quotes**

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*“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."*

*Never spend your time in such a way that you would not like to have God say, "What are you doing?"*

*J. C. Ryle*

*“There are times when solitude is better than society, and silence is wiser than speech. We should be better Christians if we were more alone, waiting upon God, and gathering through meditation on His Word spiritual strength for labour in his service. We ought to muse upon the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them... Why is it that some Christians, although they hear many sermons, make but slow advances in the divine life? Because they neglect their closets, and do not thoughtfully meditate on God's Word. They love the wheat, but they do not grind it; they would have the corn, but they will not go forth into the fields to gather it; the fruit hangs upon the tree, but they will not pluck it; the water flows at their feet, but they will not stoop to drink it. From such folly deliver us, O Lord...”*

*C. H. Spurgeon*

## ***Is God really good?***

**I**sn't it a great feeling when something in life is going (even momentarily) just how we hoped it would? When our children pass their exams or get the job they wanted, when family and church life is satisfying and our health is good, we glow with relief and gratitude. We remark to our friends "Isn't God good!" Recognising God's intimate involvement in our daily lives and giving thanks to Him is hardly something that can be argued with. And yet there are times when I wonder just what we mean when we say "Isn't God good!" Imagine Christian motorists who narrowly avoid being hit by another car. As they reflect on the near miss, it is highly likely that they will think "Isn't God good!" What does that mean? If my children passing their exams, or safety on the road, or a good medical report are evidences that God is good, what does it imply about God when my children fail, or I am involved in a road accident, or there is a shadow on my CT scan? Would that be evidence that God is not good? I fear that for many of us that is often the case. Like most people, I can think back to times in my life when desperate prayers for things that seemed to me to be both vital and good were apparently ignored. In those dark moments it is frighteningly easy to come to the conclusion that God's character is far from good.

We all have a natural tendency to make statements about what God is like based on our experience of life. When life is good, we are far more inclined to assert that God is good than when we are facing pain and difficulty. The person who says that God is good because life is turning out well is in danger of interpreting God's character through his or her life experiences. If their lives move into a period of tragedy, they will be forced to either conclude that God is not good or enter a very steep learning curve about what God is really like. The problem with this unbiblical approach to life is that it leaves us with a god whose character seems to change according to our experiences of life. He seems good when life is good and he seems bad when life is bad. Who needs a god like that? What we need is a God who unchangingly

*is what He is within Himself regardless of how we are experiencing life at any given time. Of course it would be the worst form of stupidity and cruelty to confront a person pondering the shadow on his CT scan with a theological statement about the goodness of God! But it is also true that recognising the character of God as something independent of our experience is vital to spiritual survival. God provides an eternal fixed point on which to stand while dealing with the confusing and often painful data of life. It may seem difficult to assert that God is good when life seems to be going tragically wrong, but it is even worse to have a god who appears to change between good and bad along with the varying experiences of life.*

*Instead of viewing God through our experiences, God teaches us to view our experiences through His unchanging character which, as it turns out, is unimaginably good beyond our wildest dreams.*

*While suffering, Job learned that whatever was happening in his life, God was good and worthy of worship. At first blush this assertion seems brutally uncaring and insensitive to a suffering man. But there is a curious therapy in this. Recognising that God is always good and worthy of worship was the first step to reconciliation and healing for Job. And it is for us too. Worshipping God for His goodness is to be the great backdrop against which all the experiences of life are to be lived. It protects us from the dangers of both the good times and the bad times. Worshipping God in the good times keeps us humbly and dependently enjoying Him above all else. Worshipping God in the bad times doesn't take away the pain, but it gives us an unchanging fixed place outside our circumstances, where we can stand secure while we work through them.*

*Don't be moved. God is always good.*

*Extract from "Is God Really Good?"  
by Rex Dearlove*





## ***Opportunities for spiritual development***

**G**od can seem so distant when we are going through difficult times of trial and trouble. Yet the Bible teaches us that God is always at work for our good (Romans 8:28).

The Christian faith, like the human body, requires exercise in order to keep healthy. Otherwise it grows weak and becomes useless (James 2:14-26). The trials in our lives can be viewed as opportunities to develop our “spiritual muscles” in four areas of our lives.

### **Trials develop patience and maturity**

Besides prayer, the most common theme associated with suffering is that of developing patience, perseverance and endurance. In such times our faith is being exercised and tested and we become more mature (James 1:2-4; 1 Peter 1:6-7).

God does not want weak Christians who give up when they face difficulties. Instead, Paul says “we do not lose heart”, and he reminds others that they stood their ground in a great contest in the face of suffering (2 Corinthians 4:16-17; Hebrews 10:32 NIV). The illustration in these verses is that of a contest or a battle. Near the end of his life Paul stated “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith” (2 Timothy 4:7).

Christ is the greatest example of perseverance: “Consider Him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart” (Hebrews 12:3).

Patience is a characteristic of the divine nature (Galatians 5:22). Paul told the Thessalonians: “We boast about your perseverance and faith in all the persecutions and trials you are enduring” (2 Thessalonians 1:4). He also urged them to continue to persevere: “May the Lord direct your hearts into God’s love and Christ’s perseverance” (2 Thessalonians 3:5).

*Another illustration is that of training and discipline within a family. Here God is viewed as a parent disciplining a child: "God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in His holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it" (Hebrews 12:10-11).*

*So God uses trials and hardships to mould and refine our character in the way metal is refined and moulded in a furnace. Through these we learn what is most important in life, and our values, priorities, attitudes and behaviour are developed. We are transformed and God's image and likeness are more evident in us (2 Corinthians 3:18). This vision of maturity enables believers to joyfully endure trials and suffering (Romans 5:3-5; James 1:2-4).*

*For example, David faced adversities in preparation for being king of Israel. His perseverance in facing the opposition of wild animals (like the lion and bear), enemies (like Goliath), and countrymen (like Saul and his men), gave him the experience which developed his skill to lead his nation.*

### **Trials increase reliance on God**

*Paul saw that the reason for the hardships that threatened his life in Asia was, "that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead" (2 Corinthians 1:9). He knew that God supplies all our needs (Philippians 4:19).*

*The Bible also states: "He who has suffered in his body is done with sin. As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God" (1 Peter 4:1-2). Physical suffering makes us realise that we are accountable to God and we need to live for Him.*

*Paul understood that he was given the thorn in the flesh so that he would acknowledge Christ's power rather than take the credit himself and become proud. As Christ's power is more evident in times of human weakness, Paul delighted "in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties" (2 Corinthians 12:7-10).*

Similarly, Paul could write that our bodies are likened to “jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus’ sake, so that his life may be revealed in our mortal body” (2 Corinthians 4:7-11). Through physical weakness we learn to persevere by God’s power and not by our own strength.

### **Trials encourage care for one another**

God calls on His people to support those facing trials and troubles through helping, praying and comforting.

**Helping:** We are to “share with God’s people who are in need” (Romans 12:13; 2 Corinthians 8:13-14; 2 Corinthians 9:12). In fact, “if anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him”, he is not behaving as a Christian should (1 John 3:17).

Paul thanked the Philippians for sharing in his troubles and sending him aid (Philippians 4:14-18). He also remembered those who helped him when he was in prison (Philemon 12-13). The principle is to “remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering” (Hebrews 13:3). This could include standing side by side with those who are being persecuted (Hebrews 10:33).

**Praying:** When Peter was in prison “the church was earnestly praying to God for him” although they were surprised by his miraculous escape (Acts 12:5). And Paul was confident that the Corinthian church’s prayers helped to deliver him from hardships and suffering (2 Corinthians 1:10-11). He also asked others to pray for his struggle against unbelievers (Romans 15:30-31).

**Comforting:** We are told to “rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn” (Romans 12:15). As God comforts us in our

troubles, we in turn can comfort those facing trials and difficulties (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

### **Trials strengthen the church**

*Christianity has flourished under persecution. For example, when the early Church was being persecuted, the Christians left Jerusalem and evangelised wherever they went (Acts 8:1, 4). This resulted in Christianity being spread across the Roman Empire. When Paul was imprisoned he was glad that the gospel was being preached by others and that his Christian faith was widely known (Philippians 1:12-18).*

*The Church is also strengthened in difficult times as more believers grow towards maturity and realize their dependence upon God and express this through prayer and praise. There is also an increase in care for each other by helping, praying, and comforting.*

*Finally, we must keep in mind that our troubles are insignificant when compared with eternity in the presence of Christ (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). We always need to view the present in the context of a vision of the eternal.*

George Hawke  
([www.georgesjournal.net](http://www.georgesjournal.net))

## ***Do you believe in Jesus?***

*“Believe in Jesus Christ, and you will be saved!” We all have heard this statement, or even have said it ourselves at one point or another. Surely, we have read it in the Bible! Paul and Silas, looking at the jailor while they were in prison, said “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved”. The Apostle John said, “He that hath the Son hath life”. Jesus said to Nicodemus, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life”.*

*So, what does it really mean to believe in Jesus? Does it mean one of the following?*

- *that He existed?*
- *that He changed the world?*
- *that He is a prophet?*
- *that He died?*

*Does it mean the same as when a person asks if we believe in Santa Claus or in extra-terrestrial aliens?*

*A more accurate way of asking the question is “Do you believe Jesus Christ is who the Bible says He is, and are you trusting Him, and only Him as your Saviour?”*

*You see, as human beings, we all have a world view of life, and a set of beliefs on things like finance, politics, history, relationships. We all have beliefs on spiritual matters, whether those beliefs are theist or atheist. This belief is implanted in us from many different sources. It could be from our upbringing by our parents, grandparents, and other relatives. It could be from school, friends, books we have read, or the media. Possibly all these sources have worked together in our life time to develop our beliefs on spiritual matters.*

*And one day, we come face to face with the “Truth” – Jesus! At that point, we realize that what we had believed on spiritual matters were not all true. Some of it, in fact, was just myth or fairy tale. Some of it was only partially true – most of our beliefs were man-made opinions and errors. Therefore, we acknowledge that Jesus is Truth and the only truth. Consequently, we make a conscious decision, from that point on, to believe in Jesus, the Truth! Friends, once we believe in Jesus who is the Truth, we automatically forgo, or reject, or deny the beliefs we have had ever since childhood. We no longer believe what we used to believe. We no longer believe what had been developed in us as belief on spiritual matters because we now know the truth.*

*Whether the word is used or not, do you know what occurs at that point when a person begins to believe in Jesus? Repentance! Yes, people repent because they no longer believe in what they believed before. They have turned from believing what they used to believe, and turned to Jesus. This is repentance.*



*So, do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe that Jesus is God in human form (John 1:1, 14)? Do you believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for your sin (1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21), for which you deserve eternal separation from God (Romans 6:23)? Do you believe that the sacrifice of Jesus, God incarnate, is the only adequate payment for your sins (1 John 2:2; John 14:6; Acts 4:12)? Do you believe that there is nothing that you can do to be saved (Ephesians 2:8-9)?*

*Do you believe these things? You must know however that believing the facts about Jesus is only part of the equation. Biblical faith is far more than believing certain things to be true. Biblical saving faith is also trusting or relying on those facts.*

*Let us consider a chair. You can look at a chair and believe it is strong enough to support your weight, and you can even believe that it was assembled correctly. However, biblical faith requires more than just a mental knowledge of some facts. Biblical faith is like sitting in the chair. It is actually relying on the chair that it will hold you and support your weight. Are you trusting that Jesus is your Saviour? Are you relying on His death as the full payment for the debt of your sin? Are you depending on His resurrection as the guarantee that you will be raised to eternal life after death? Or, are you also relying on things in addition to Jesus, and what He has done for your salvation? If you understand and believe what the Bible says about Jesus, and if you are trusting in those truths as the basis for salvation – you are saved! You “believe in Jesus” in the biblical sense. However, if you have not trusted Jesus to this point in your life, and you want to trust Him to be saved because now you believe in your heart that Jesus is what the Bible teaches about Him, all you have to do is to express it verbally. The Bible clearly states that if a person believes in his heart and confesses with his mouth, he will be saved (Romans 10:9-10).*

*Raffi Chaparian*



## ***Taking the Gospel to the poor***

**I**t was not our plan but God's to reach the poorest of the poor in Armenia. Many rich people enjoy a good life in Armenia. Sometimes we are asked if there are poor people in Armenia. According to a humanitarian organisation, conditions are harshest when the winter is -30° and summer is +40° and people have nothing to protect themselves. According to the United Nations, 30% of the population lives below the poverty line. In the past 19 years, I have seen people die of cold, children suffer from hunger, sick people live without medication, and the aged suffer with no one to care. During the years we have become eye witnesses of many who live in these harsh conditions.

Physical needs are one thing but spiritual needs and hunger are great. These questions are important:

- How do I receive eternal life?
- Who will save me from my sins?
- Where can I find peace for my soul?

These questions haunt us day and night. The ACM team is committed not only to do its best to support, help, clothe and feed people, but to take the Gospel to the most vulnerable people of Armenia: children, youth, married couples, and the aged.

Each time we visit, many come to the Lord, many hear the Gospel, many are encouraged and blessed. It was very encouraging to hear about the ACM mission team from USA, which visited Armenia under the guidance of Pastor Raffi Chaparian. Many gave their hearts to the Lord and the team's visit was indeed a blessing.

Your financial support is very important as the work is expanding and more and more families are in need. 100% of all donations are used to help the needy; all work is done by volunteers.

You may also join a mission team to take part and be a witness to what the Lord is doing in Armenia.

*Thank you to all who have helped us in the past. Please continue to pray for us.*

*May God bless you all.*

*H. K.*



*Living conditions in Vanadzor*

