



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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ACM

Cover photo: Red flower, ACM,
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Praise and prayer points

Praise points

- Thank God for all His goodness and for providing all our needs
- Give thanks for our new office building in Yerevan
- Thank God for enabling us to help the poor and needy
- Give thanks for all the goods received from Australia for Armenia
- Thank God for help given during the recent children's outreach
- Thank God for providing for the needs of the sick

Prayer points

- Pray the mission team visiting Armenia in August
- Pray for the guidance of the Spirit in all we do
- Ask the Lord to bless our sponsors and supporters

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

Are your hospitable?

God encourages us to use hospitality to minister every day. “Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality” (Romans 12:13). “Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it” (Hebrews 13:2). “Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling” (1 Peter 4:9). I love these verses that encourage us to be hospitable.

The good Samaritan went out of his way to help. He brought the attacked man to an inn and took care of him. The next day he gave two denarii to the innkeeper saying, “Look after him, and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have”.

What does it cost to be hospitable?

1. Money. Many times, our excuse is expense. Yes, it costs money to witness to someone, but we forget that the Lord provides all our needs. Inviting people to dinner prepares the way for witness to tell them of the love of Christ. But think of the joy God blesses us with is when they come to know the Saviour. The expense is nothing compared with the salvation of the lost.
2. Time. Make time to be hospitable. We have 168 hours in a week. Inviting a friend for two hours could change a life, heal a wound, or bring comfort and joy to someone. Are you prepared to give the time needed to lead someone to Christ?
3. Effort. Yes, we put a lot of effort in many things in life but making an effort to be hospitable is something that God loves to see in believers. The Lord will bless your efforts and reward you accordingly.

Before you invite your friends, pray for wisdom from the Lord. Pray that you will be a blessing to them and that they in return will be a blessing to you. Be careful to see where the conversation is heading and make sure it will not turn into a gossip, but that the Lord will be glorified through everything.

I was once invited to a dinner with my wife. On arrival we found other friends had been invited. I usually pray that the Lord will control our conversation and that we will bring glory to Him. This is what has happened. At the end we read a passage we prayed and the conversation was about God's Word. Each person present was blessed, and God was glorified. We all left the house comforted and blessed, saying we should do this again.

When was it last you invited some friends over for dinner?

H. K.

"Acquainted With Grief"

By Oswald Chambers

"He is...a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." (Isaiah 53:3)

We are not "acquainted with grief" in the same way our Lord was acquainted with it. We endure it and live through it, but we do not become intimate with it. At the beginning of our lives we do not bring ourselves to the point of dealing with the reality of sin. We look at life through the eyes of reason and say that if a person will control his instincts, and educate himself, he can produce a life that will slowly evolve into the life of God. But as we continue on through life, we find the presence of something which we have not yet taken into account, namely, sin - and it upsets all of our thinking and our plans. Sin has made the foundation of our thinking unpredictable, uncontrollable, and irrational.

We have to recognize that sin is a fact of life, not just a shortcoming. Sin is blatant mutiny against God, and either sin or God must die in my life. The New Testament brings us right down to this one issue - if sin rules in me, God's life in me will be killed; if God rules in me, sin in me will be killed. There is nothing more fundamental than that. The culmination of sin was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ, and what was true in the history of God on earth will also be true in your history and in mine - that is, sin will kill the life of God in us. We must mentally bring ourselves to terms with this fact of sin. It is the only explanation why Jesus Christ came to earth, and it is the explanation of the grief and sorrow of life.

The setbacks Moses faced - part 2

Exodus 4:26-5:23

God had already appeared to Moses and revealed Himself as Yahweh – the Lord. God had emphasised one aspect of His name: He is the eternally existent one, I AM. He is the one who is and who was and who ever will be. Now the Lord added to His revelation to Moses by reminding him that He is the covenant keeping God. He had established His covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, promising to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners.

God had heard the groaning of the people of Israel in their slavery and because He is a covenant keeping God, He had remembered the unchanging covenant made with Abraham. He would bring them into the land He had given Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as an inheritance. This meant that He would bring the Israelites out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. He would deliver them from slavery to the Egyptians, redeeming them with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.

What more could they ask for? The encouraging truth is that God's promises will never be cancelled. He said that He would take them to be His people and He would be their God. In turn Israel would learn who God was. He was the Lord their God, the one who would bring them out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

God repeated His promise to bring His people into the land He swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This would be their possession. God also repeated His name: I am the Lord.

Israel's response

Moses spoke to the Israelites but they would not listen to him because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery. Solomon was later to write that "By sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed" (Proverbs 15:13) and "A crushed spirit dries up the bones" (Proverbs 17:22). It is easy

to sit in judgment on the Israelites but we need to examine our own hearts whether we would have been any different.

Moses re-commissioned

It is not surprising that Moses was despondent. Although initially encouraged by the response of his people, they had virtually turned against him. Moses was opposed by both Pharaoh and his own people. But God intended Moses to continue his God given task.

Moses objected, sensing great difficulties in the task God gave him. Israel had not listened to him and he could not imagine Pharaoh listening to him, describing himself as a man of uncircumcised lips. Like Isaiah, who many years later described himself as a man of unclean lips, Moses sensed his own limitations.

But God persisted with Moses giving him and Aaron a charge about both the people of Israel and Pharaoh. Moses and Aaron were to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt. There was no release from their responsibilities. God still intended that Moses do what He had asked him to do.

To us today

One of the constant challenges we face is the way to react when things go wrong. We find it difficult to face setbacks. What do we do? Do we just throw in the towel? How much effort do we make to master the situation? Do we simply try to avoid our responsibilities? This is not the way to knowing the blessing God has for us. We must resolve by God's grace to continue the work He has given us to do, always remembering that His grace is sufficient for all our needs.

Don Stormer



“Faith is deliberate confidence in the character of God whose ways you may not understand at the time.”

— Oswald Chambers

Turning the Titanic

Have you seen the movie Titanic? I was gripped by the story of this so-called unsinkable ship and the people who travelled on her. There is one scene in particular that I cannot forget. It is night time in the mid-Atlantic. The sea is perfectly calm, and the stars are brilliant in the bitterly cold night. The Titanic is steaming at full speed despite the captain having been warned of icebergs. This is not just a sea trip; it is also an ego trip. When the lookout crew see an iceberg directly ahead, the engines are reversed, and the rudder is put hard over. But it takes time for a huge ship to turn. There is chilling silence and suspense as the ship keeps moving straight ahead under her own momentum towards the towering iceberg. The precious seconds tick by as the crew watch in frozen horror, wondering if the rudder will turn the ship in time to avoid a collision. Slowly the rudder, which is actually too small for the size of the ship, begins to take effect. The bow begins to turn, but not quickly enough. The iceberg slices down the side of the ship breaching the hull, which finally results in the death of the ship and most of her passengers and crew. The Titanic was simply unable to change course fast enough. The ship which people claimed even God could not sink did in fact sink to the bottom of the Atlantic.

I don't want to sound pessimistic, but this stunning re-creation of a true event made me think hard about our ability as individuals or churches to change direction when necessary. I wonder how often we have been reluctant to change because of human ego. It is difficult to admit that the way things are presently done is no longer appropriate. Or perhaps we are unable to change direction quickly enough because of the momentum created by the past and "the way we have always done it". Some churches have finally sunk because they could not change direction quickly enough when it was clearly necessary or, like the Titanic, they began to change course too late. Like the lookout crew, those whose task it is to be constantly looking ahead into the future just did not have the vision to see far enough.

Let's be discerning. Sometimes what looks like faithfulness may turn out to be more inflexibility or fear of the new or different. The Bible gives us a great central core of non-negotiable truth, but we are also given a great deal of flexibility on how we go about presenting and practising it.

In the early part of Christ's ministry, He taught in the traditional setting of the synagogue. As time went by He was rejected by the authorities of Judaism. No longer welcome in the synagogues, Christ innovated. He taught in the fields, the market places or even from a boat. Where a change of course would advance His work, He did not hesitate. Christ did not allow Himself to be confined by the tradition of the synagogue.

John Wesley was at first horrified when George Whitefield wrote to him suggesting that he preach in the open air. Wesley wrote, "I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church" Willingness to change was essential in the development of his life and ministry. Willingness to change was essential to ours too. Change will feel strange, but that's how it always feels when you start doing things differently.

What changes is God calling us to in our personal lives and in our churches at this moment? The first step to answering that is indicated in each of the letters to the seven churches in the book of Revelation. "He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches" (Revelation 2:7). What is the Spirit saying to us through His Word right now? The big question we must ask when contemplating change is not "Is this way we have always done it?" but rather "Is God in this?"

If God is in it there is nothing to fear. It is His way forward.

Rex Dearlove



"Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrows; it empties today of its strength."

— Corrie Ten Boom

Follow Jesus

A lady went to the pastor and said, "I won't be attending Church anymore".

He said, "May I ask why?"

She said, "I see people on their cell phones during the service, some are gossiping, some just aren't living right; they are all just hypocrites."

The pastor became silent and then said, "OK. But can I ask you to do something for me before you make your final decision?"

She said, "What's that?"

He said, "Take a glass of water and walk around the church twice and don't let any water fall out the glass."

She said, "Yes I can do that".

She came back and said, "It's done".

He asked her three questions:

1. Did you see anybody on their phones?
2. Did you see anybody gossiping?
3. Was anybody living wrong?

She said, "I didn't see anything because I was so focused on this glass, so the water wouldn't fall".

He told her, "When you come to Church, you should be so focused on God that you don't fall. That's why Jesus said, 'Follow me'. He did not say follow Christians. Don't let your relationship with God be determined by how others relate to God. Let it be determined by how focused YOU are on God."

Selected



Putting God back in first place

Is God in second place?

At any point of time in our lives it is important to stop and consider our priorities and the choices we make. This is because the circumstances of life can cause us to settle for second best. When faced with the challenges of our life we can default back to placing our priorities in first place and leaving God in second place.

This was a problem addressed in the Book of Haggai. The prophet Haggai was called to deliver a message from God to the people of Judah who had returned from exile in Babylon about BC 538 for the express purpose of rebuilding the temple. However, by BC 520 the temple still remained in ruins.

To understand why Haggai was commissioned to deliver this message to the people of Judah, it is important to understand that when King Cyrus assumed control of the Babylonian empire he decreed that the temple was to be rebuilt. He sent Zerubbabel and others back to Jerusalem with gold and silver along with the necessary goods and livestock. In addition, and importantly, they also returned with the articles from the temple that King Nebuchadnezzar had taken back to Babylon at the time he took Daniel captive (see Ezra 1:2-4, 7). Thus, Zerubbabel and the people had the authority and the means to accomplish the task of rebuilding the temple.

The people returned and completed the foundations according to plan. This was a momentous occasion, and all the people gave a great shout of praise to God (Ezra 3:11). But then the building work stopped, and the temple remained in ruins. This was the symbol of God's presence and fellowship with His chosen people. But despite its importance, both symbolically and practically, it was in a state of ruin. It was a monument of dishonour to God.

Fast forward to BC 520 and the temple was still in ruins with the people getting on with their lives and focussed on other things.

God now speaks into this situation through his prophet Haggai. In Haggai 1 we see that Haggai's message was to get the people back to work in obedience to God.

The charge is delivered

On a precise date described in Haggai 1:1 (which in our calendar is generally understood to be 29 August BC 520) Haggai delivered God's message. It was the first day of the month, a day for sacrifices to God by the people (see Numbers 28:11) as they were gathered together. On this day of worship to God it may have come as a surprise to understand that all was not well between God and His people. Haggai first delivered a message to both Zerubbabel, the governor of Judah, and Joshua, the High Priest. In verse 2 we read:

"...These people say, 'The time has not yet come to rebuild the LORD's house.'"

While it is correct that the people had encountered challenges and difficulties in their return to Judah, they were still claiming that after so many years it was still not the right time to rebuild. But this delay ignored the purpose for their return to Jerusalem. Further the passage of much time – at least 16 years – represented a failure to trust in God to undertake the task that He had charged them to do.

When we stand back and examine this, we should take into account that a command delayed until a better time is no different from a command disobeyed.

This was a serious position for the people. But the position was even worse than first appeared. When Haggai addressed the people we are given further insights into the priorities the people had set for themselves. Listen to what Haggai says to the people in verse 4:

"Is it a time for you yourselves to be living in your panelled houses, while this house remains in ruin?"

Haggai reveals that the delay was evidence of a problem of priorities. We are told that despite the challenges the people may have faced, they still had managed to build their own houses and decorate

them in a manner associated with royal palaces – this is the significance of the reference to “panelled houses” (verse 4). In other words, the time and effort devoted to their own houses was contrasted to the “ruin” of God’s house. The comparison between the states of the two houses was striking, leaving everyone to see clearly that building and decorating their own houses had been their priority.

God doesn’t accept second place

The history of the nation of Israel shows that God does not accept second place. This dishonoured God; for the nation of Israel this was a breach of their agreement (covenant) with God.

God’s displeasure is evident in the economic disaster that the people were experiencing. Twice they are called to “give careful thought” to the circumstances in which they found themselves (verses 5 and 7). The point of verses 5-11 is that despite of all their planning, effort, and action their economic position was going backwards. Note the use of the contrasting words of “much” and “little” in this section (verses 5 and 9). Despite their efforts and plans we see the reason for their economic peril is God’s actions as described in verse 11:

“I called for a drought on the fields and the mountains, and the grain, the new wine, the olive oil, and everything else the ground produces, on people and livestock, and on all the labour of your hands.”

The description of the drought is complete and comprehensive. This was the consequence of their breach of the covenant relationship with God and their having failed to follow the command of God (see Leviticus 26:3-4, 14-16 and 19-20). Through Haggai’s words the people would have understood that their predicament was because they had not put God first and had failed to rebuild the temple.

What were the people of Judah to do?

The central verse of Haggai chapter 1 and the central point of the first message is verse 8:

“Go up into the mountains and bring down timber and build my

house, so that I may take pleasure in it and be honoured...”

The central message for the people was to put their faith to work and finish God's temple. If they did, God would take pleasure in it and be honoured. God was calling for a response of faith and obedience because this brings pleasure and honour to God.

Having been confronted with the reality of their position and the need to “give careful thought” (verses 5 and 7) to the consequences of their misplaced priorities, the people were now ready to respond.

The right response

Zerubbabel, the High Priest, and the people recognised that this was the call of God and that they must obey the commands in verse 8 (see also verse 12). They recognised the authority of Haggai and that he was God's prophet. The attitude of obedience generated a response of “fear” in God (verse 12). This was a reverent fear recognising who He was and the consequences of not following His commands.

God is the answer

But God now steps in to encourage His people. The ultimate encouragement was for God to remind His people that “I am with you” (verse 13). The presence of God promised that His will would prevail. But God does more than just encourage. He also motivates. In verse 14 we read that God “stirred” Zerubbabel the governor, Joshua the High Priest, and the people into action. God moved the people into action. This was a gift of God to fulfil His command.

How do we bring about change in our own lives?

Haggai came with a message that shocked the people and motivated them to take their “shelved” dream of a rebuilt temple off the shelf and start the rebuilding. When God wants to bring change in our lives and challenge our priorities, the same pattern will apply.

Notice the sixfold process that applied to the process of change with the people of Judah:

- Hearing the word of God and respecting the authority of the Word of God

- Obeying the word of God
- Having a reverent fear for God
- Being encouraged by God
- Being stirred or motivated by God
- Acting in response

Change in the priorities by which we live our lives comes about by following this same pattern.

What about our priorities?

We are called to consider our priorities of life and whether we have put God in second place. This was a message delivered by Haggai in BC 520 and was also a message delivered by Jesus. Listen to the similar words of Matthew 6:31-33:

“...So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as a well...”

Have we said, “the time is not right” to a call of God or something we know is a priority for God? When God’s priorities are in second place we need to heed the charge to seek first the kingdom of God, consider our circumstances and then change. May this lesson from Haggai stir us to change what we need to change.

Stephen Trew



“Faith does not eliminate questions. But faith knows where to take them.”

— Elisabeth Elliot.

A little faith can move mountains

The work of ACM started some 24 years ago. We started by investing \$100 a month not knowing where this could take us. Looking back, we can only see how God cares and provides for His ministry, and we have been blessed for being eyewitnesses to all this. ACM is about taking the gospel to the poor in Armenia.

In Gyumri, Armenia's second largest city, we have Cornerstone Chapel serving the people of Gyumri, Spitak and Vanadzor. In Yerevan, the capital city of Armenia, the Lord has just granted us a building to be used as our headquarters. We now have four fulltime workers and five part time. We conduct many Bible study groups on a regular basis for adults and children in several villages, involving many volunteers and much travelling. We also have a co-worker in the war-torn area of Stepanakert taking care of the families we sponsor.

Recent activities

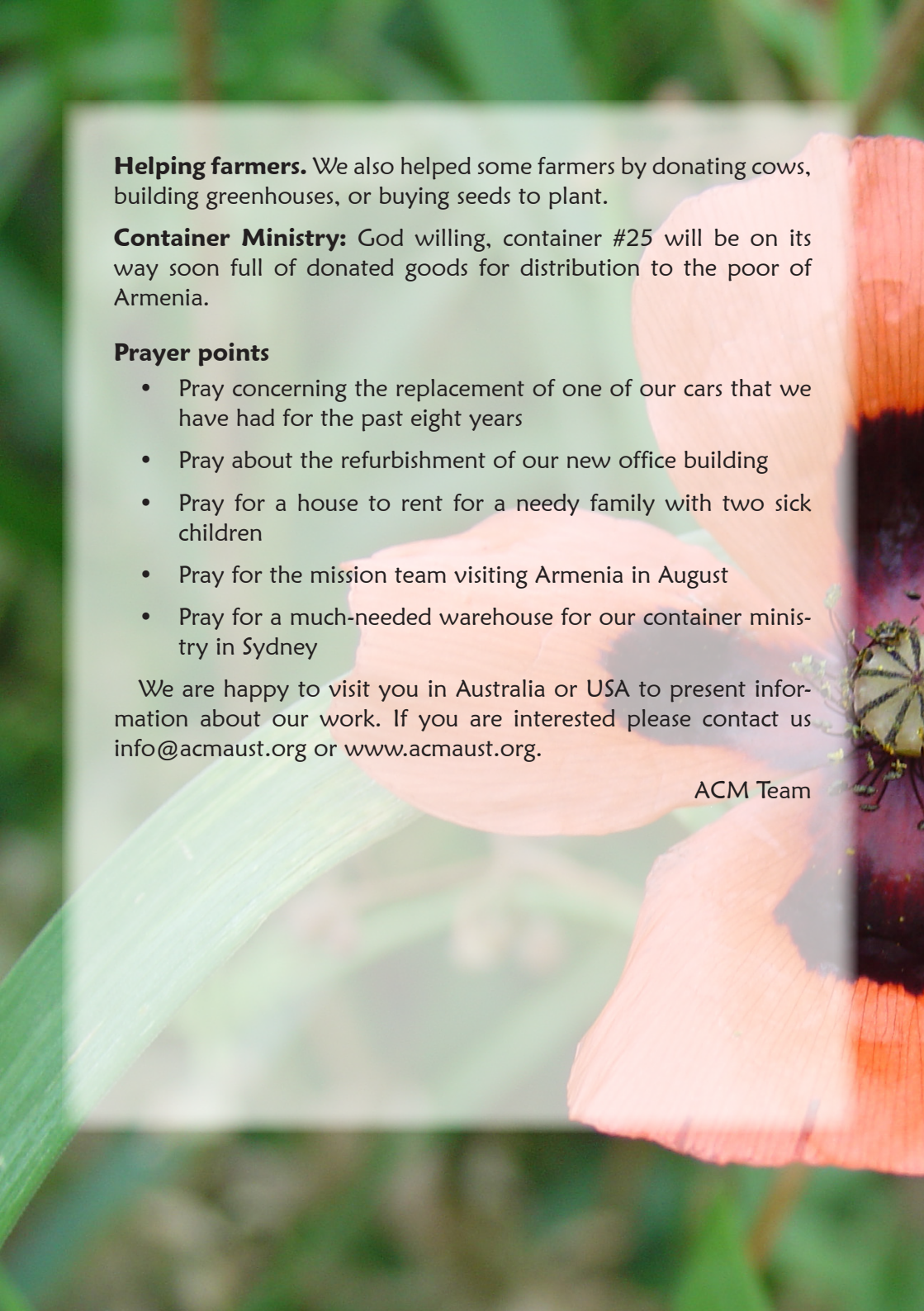
Children. Over 600 children participated in a gospel outreach in eight different villages. We are grateful for all this and blessed in seeing the children's joy as they come to sing and learn God's word.

Adult Bible study groups. We rejoice in the Lord to see more and more people coming to the Lord. God willing, some believers will be baptised soon.

Literature. We are always looking for Christian literature for Armenia, sourcing material from different countries, and at times translating it into Armenian and printing it. All literature is given out free including Bibles, and the Trumpet's Sound magazine which goes to many churches.

Helping the sick. This has been one of the important and expensive ministries as we help with medication and operation costs.

Winter heat. Winter is harsh in Armenia at times with temperatures as low as -35o with heavy snowfalls. Some of the poor live in metal containers so that the supply of heat for winter becomes vital.



Helping farmers. We also helped some farmers by donating cows, building greenhouses, or buying seeds to plant.

Container Ministry: God willing, container #25 will be on its way soon full of donated goods for distribution to the poor of Armenia.

Prayer points

- Pray concerning the replacement of one of our cars that we have had for the past eight years
- Pray about the refurbishment of our new office building
- Pray for a house to rent for a needy family with two sick children
- Pray for the mission team visiting Armenia in August
- Pray for a much-needed warehouse for our container ministry in Sydney

We are happy to visit you in Australia or USA to present information about our work. If you are interested please contact us info@acmaust.org or www.acmaust.org.

ACM Team