



Trumpet's Sound

55th year, Australia

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

Editor - Pastor Harry Hratsh Kiujian

Contact Address:

ACM AUSTRALIA
PO BOX 1593,
CHATSWOOD NSW 2057
EMAIL: hkiujian@acmaust.org
URL: www.acmaust.org



Prayer and praise points

- Give thanks that it is good to serve the Master
- Praise the Lord that we have completed another year with His help
- Pray for the 750 children in Armenia who will hear the good news of the Lord’s birth
- Pray for our co-workers who will be travelling to Moldova to help CMI AID in their Christmas outreach
- Pray for the many needy families who need sponsors
- Pray for the families in our care – the old, the frail and the many sick
- Pray for container 26 which is waiting for funds so that we can ship it
- Pray for wisdom for the Directors of ACM as the world is facing difficult times

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Cover photo: the Armenian monastery of Noravank, Armenia

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The Gospel

Isaiah 9:6

What is the gospel?

It's the good news that begins with Christ being born in Bethlehem to bring salvation to mankind.

It's Christmas season again, with all its parties, holidays, shopping and presents. We believers are also likely to forget that the reason for the season is Christ, not the Christmas tree or Santa.

Have you ever imagined a world without Christ or Christianity – one without forgiveness, compassion, or the love of the Father? As we look around the world at the situations we are facing, we know why Jesus had to come.

- Jesus came to set us free from the bondage of sin
- Jesus came that we may have life and have it more abundantly
- He came to give us hope for eternity
- He came that we may live in the light, free from the darkness of this world

Because of the good news of the gospel:

- I can cry out ABBA Father
- I can rejoice in Christ
- I have victory over sin
- I am redeemed by the blood of the Lamb
- I am His sheep, and He is my shepherd
- I can celebrate Christmas by worshipping Him in spirit and truth – something we do daily

I pray you, your family and church will have a very blessed Christmas.

HK

Empty Hands

We walk by faith and not by sight (2 Cor. 5:7)

When a class was asked for a definition of faith, a young lad replied brightly, "Faith is when you believe things you know are not really true". Oh dear! Is that faith? No, of course not! But we must admit that many people, and not just children, don't understand what we mean when we speak of faith, and even many believers find it hard to understand why God has called us to walk this way.

So, let's take a moment to talk about faith.

The first thing to make clear is that our faith is in Someone. Faith has an object, a destination. We trust in God. That means much more than simply believing that He exists. Faith is trusting in Him and depending on Him, believing that He is faithful and that all His promises are sure.

Now when we think of faith in the Lord Jesus and the faith that leads to the forgiveness of sin, there is another aspect to consider. We must come to Him with empty hands. What does that mean? We read in the Scripture how Saul, as a young man, visited Samuel but was concerned that he had no gift for him (1 Samuel 9:7). Saul was ashamed to go with empty hands – he felt he needed to pay for the advice he sought from that man of God. But when we trust in Christ, we are admitting that there is nothing we can do to earn or pay for our salvation. Indeed, while we feel that we deserve His love or can earn it, even in the smallest way, we will be hindered from knowing His saving grace. We must come to Him with empty hands and trust entirely in the sufficiency of His death and resurrection alone to cover all our sin. We trust in Him because we can do nothing to merit, earn or in any other way save ourselves.

Let's go further. Why has God determined that we must be saved through faith and that we must live our lives by faith? Is faith really the best way?

See what Paul has written in his letter to the Romans,

Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed... (Romans 4:16).

Salvation is entirely God's work, and we simply trust in what He has done. Because He has done the work, and it is all of grace, the promise of salvation is absolutely sure. When we try to achieve something, it often ends in failure, but there is no risk of God's work failing. He cannot fail to fully accomplish the salvation He purposed from before the foundation of the world.

But there is another reason why we are called into the way of faith. Faith is not simply intellectual – merely a matter of agreeing with certain information. Faith is a heart matter, and sin hinders faith. As we learn to walk by faith, sins in our heart are brought to the surface. When we experience that, we can confess and overcome those things through the Holy Spirit and so be changed more and more into the likeness of the Lord Jesus.

Our faith is in the living God. We come to Him with empty hands, we rest entirely on His sure and certain grace, and we are sanctified as we learn to walk with Him in the way of faith.

As David wrote in the Psalms, “As for God, His way is perfect” (Psalm 18:30).

Neil Buckman



“Thousands each year find their desire for salvation and holiness becoming too acute to bear, and turn to the One who was born in a manger to die on a cross. Then the fleeting beauty that is Christmas enters their hearts to dwell there forever. For who is it that imparts such beauty to the Christmas story? It is none other than Jesus, the Altogether Lovely.”

— A.W. Tozer

Questions from Habakkuk

What questions do you ask?

What kind of questions do we have for which we want answers? We look at the world around us and we see increasing violence. We ask what the government will do or is doing to remedy the situation. We may even ask what God is doing about all the problems around us. Why isn't something being done?

Our question is one that has been asked many times. Over 600 years before Christ the prophet Habakkuk asked God this same question. He looked at the problems in Judah. During Uzziah's reign the merchant classes became very prosperous. But not all their wealth was earned by honest trading. Even though the people were meant to be the people of God, those with financial power were using their wealth and position to deprive the poorer classes of what few possessions they had. Widows and fatherless children in particular suffered extremely badly.

Habakkuk questioned God. He had prayed, asking that something be done. But the heavens seemed silent and he asked how many times he had to call out before he received an answer. The law seemed powerless; justice was not being done; the wicked were surrounding the righteous and perverting justice. Does this sound familiar?

When God answered Habakkuk he did not receive the answer he was expecting. God said that He had the matter under control. He was going to use the Babylonians to punish the people of Judah. That God would actually use a foreign power to punish the Israelites was something they could not complain about. While still on their journey from Egypt to Canaan Moses had warned the people of the consequences of not being faithful to the Lord, saying in Deuteronomy 28:49-50:

The LORD will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose lan-

guage you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favour to the young.

However, what horrified Habakkuk was to learn which nation God intended to use to punish His people. The Babylonians were far worse than the Jews were themselves; they were cruel and heartless and proud. And so he questioned God a second time. But even in his question there was a strong faith in the God of Israel. When he said “we shall not die” he was expressing his confidence in God that the nation of Judah did have a future; all the people would not be destroyed. But Habakkuk was shocked by the fact that a people who were worse than the Jews would be used to punish the Lord’s people.

The second question was, How could God use an even more wicked people to punish the nation of Judah? It didn’t seem right! But in asking this question Habakkuk realised that he could be seriously sinning against God. Hence he wondered what he would say when God corrected him.

The answer Habakkuk received was probably not what he was expecting. He was instructed to write the vision out so clearly that a runner could take the message to others. The fact that it was a message for a future time did not alter its truth; it would still be fulfilled. In the meantime those who followed the Lord were to live by faith. Those who were true followers of the Lord were to continue to live trusting Him to act in justice against the ungodly in His time and in His way. Living by faith was completely different from living the way of the arrogant, but those who lived by faith could be assured that God would definitely act in judgment at the right time.

Habakkuk listened carefully to God’s message and in 2:6-20 pronounced a series of woes on those who were committing the crimes that had caused Habakkuk’s original question. Then in chapter 3 he burst into a psalm of praise as he thought of God’s wondrous works in previous generations. At the same time the thought of what lay ahead for his people filled him with dread. His “lips quivered at the voice; Rottenness entered my bones” (2:16) but he knew he could rest in the day of trouble when his nation would be invaded.

As he closed his hymn of praise, the prophet expressed an absolute confidence in God:

*Though the fig tree may not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines;
though the labour of the olive may fail, and the fields yield no
food; though the flock may be cut off from the fold, and there
be no herd in the stalls – yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will joy
in the God of my salvation. The LORD God is my strength; He
will make my feet like deer's feet, and He will make me walk on
my high hills.*

Here is one of the greatest expressions of faith in God that we will ever read. Habakkuk thought of what it would be like if complete disaster overtook him. The disasters he mentions would utterly devastate any farmer. No fruit on the fruit trees, no crops in the fields and no flocks or herds. The farmer would have lost his entire livelihood; he would be ruined. But in this worst imaginable scenario, Habakkuk still said that he would rejoice in the Lord and joy in the God of his salvation.

How do we react to a story like Habakkuk's? Do we have a similar trust in the goodness of God? Do we also believe that our God holds everything in His hands and will ensure that in His time justice will be done?

But let us bring the message close to home. If we were ever put into a situation similar to the one Habakkuk envisaged, how would we react? If we lost everything and faced complete ruin would we also say that we would still rejoice in the Lord and glory in the God of our salvation? It is good for us to stop and ask ourselves how deep our faith in God really is.

Don Stormer



*How many observe Christ's birthday! How few, His precepts!
O! 'tis easier to keep holidays than commandments.*

— Benjamin Franklin

The Fruit of the Spirit is Faith

Most translators and commentators believe that faithfulness rather than faith is the force of the word in Galatians 5:22. The reason for so thinking is that it is here found in association with words that refer to our duty to others. It is so translated by the R.V., Weymouth gives "good faith", Darby gives "fidelity". Adopting this view and comparing Titus 2:10, Dr H. Moule writes: "Bright with a secret happiness, long-suffering with a deep and genuine surrender, the spiritual man will be 'faithful' in every particular of duty. He will be loyal to every promise made or trust undertaken. He will ... be depended on in the business of the day. His correspondents will receive punctual answers: his friends, faithful and careful counsel. His employers will get a service out of him in which their just interests will be as his own. His servants and dependants will find him watchfully equitable, considerate and courteous. He will take great care to 'owe no man anything'."

Faithfulness in Scripture is especially used in connection with the truth of God. Thus in 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 Paul writes, "Let a man so account of us as the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover it is required in stewards that a man be found **faithful**." Again we read in Jeremiah, "He that hath My word, let him speak my word faithfully" (23:28).

An illustration may be found in Ezra 8, where the vessels of the Lord were carried to Jerusalem. First of all the vessels were weighed. When they arrived in Jerusalem they were weighed again, the gold ones, the silver ones and the copper ones. "By number and by weight of every one; and all the weight was written at that time." So too at the Judgment Seat we shall have to give an account of the truths that have been committed to us. What shame if we find that some have been lost on the way! What joy to hear the words, "Well done thou good and faithful servant."

Faithfulness, however, is not confined to the ministry of the Word.

Like all these graces it is something that can be practised in all conditions of life. In more common language, it is trustworthiness, dependability, reliability. What a blessing it is to have those on whom we can depend! Far better a dependable person than one who is merely attractive! In Luke 16:10 our Lord said, "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust also in the least is unjust also in much."

In 3 John 5 the word is used in reference to hospitality, an excellent sphere surely for faithfulness. In Luke 16:11 it refers especially to faithfulness in money matters. Our Lord said in effect that our faithfulness in this regard was a good test of our faithfulness generally. If we are not generous in our support of the Lord's work, then who will commit to our trust the true riches? It is remarkable how much our Lord said concerning money matters. We might have imagined that as He came to reveal heavenly truths, He would not have spoken of the 'unrighteous mammon'; but we know that several of His parables have to do with money, because it is at the basis of our lives, and unfaithfulness there means unfaithfulness everywhere.

In Proverbs 20:6 we read the words, "A faithful man who can find?" Well, God has found many such, and the Scriptures furnish us with several examples of faithful men.

There is Abraham (Galatians 3:9). His faithfulness caused him to leave Ur of the Chaldees with its brilliant civilisation, and to go out, not knowing where he was going. There is Moses, who was faithful in all God's house (Numbers 12:7). His faithfulness led him to choose to suffer affliction with the people of God rather than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season (Hebrews 11:25). There is David the sweet Psalmist of Israel, of whom it was written, "And who is so faithful among all thy servants as David?" (1 Samuel 22:14). There is Daniel. His faithfulness led him to purpose in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat (Daniel 1:8), and at the risk of his life, to kneel upon his knees three times a day, and to pray and give thanks to God, as he did formerly. Space would fail us to tell of Hananiah who was a faithful man, and feared God above many (Nehemiah 7:2), of Silvanus, a faithful brother (1 Peter 5:12), or of Onesi-

mus, a faithful and beloved brother (Colossians 4:9), or of Tychicus, a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord (Ephesians 6:21), or of Antipas, who was faithful unto death (Revelation 2:10, 13), or of Paul (1 Timothy 1:12), Epaphras (Colossians 1:7), and Timothy (1 Corinthians 4:17). Only let us seek to follow these men as they were followers of God and of Christ.

For after all, the perfect pattern of all these virtues is found only in the Godhead. In Deuteronomy 7:9 we read of the faithful God, and in 1 Peter 4:19 He is spoken of as a faithful Creator. Again and again the Scriptures speak of His faithfulness. "If we believe not, yet He abides faithful: He cannot deny Himself" (2 Timothy. 2:13). So too with the Lord Jesus. In Isaiah 11:5 it is written, "Faithfulness shall be the girdle of His reins." In Hebrews 2:17 He is called "our merciful and faithful High Priest". In Revelation 3:14 He is the "Faithful and True Witness".

God help us to manifest this grace which may seem commonplace to men, but in God's sight is of great price.

Tom Carson



"All men ought to think of Christ because of the office Christ fills between God and man. He is the eternal Son of God through whom alone the Father can be known, approached, and served. He is the appointed Mediator between God and man through whom alone we can be reconciled with God, pardoned, justified, and saved."

— J.C. Ryle

"A rule I have had for years is: to treat the Lord Jesus Christ as a personal friend. His is not a creed, a mere doctrine, but it is He Himself we have."

— D.L. Moody

Repentance - turning around to follow the true God (3)

Relational repentance

John told believers, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He [God] is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make Him out to be a liar and His word is not in us” (1 John 1:8-10). And Jesus taught believers to pray, “Forgive us our sins” (Luke 11:4). So believers are told to continue to confess their failures (sins).

When Jesus washed the disciples feet He said, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean” (John 13:10). Here the bath symbolises positional repentance and forgiveness, and the foot washing, relational repentance and forgiveness. The bath doesn't need to be repeated during the day, but the foot washing does need to be repeated.

So Christians ought to keep confessing their failures (sins) and repenting in order to restore and maintain their fellowship with God. The Bible says that Christians cannot grow as followers of Jesus without regular conviction, confession and repentance of their failures (sins). For a Christian, all failure (sin) has been dealt with by the death of our Saviour. Paul said, “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus” (Romans 8:1). But God allows us to fail from time to time so our faith can be strengthened.

The process for dealing with our ongoing failures (sins) is summarised in the following list. Failures (sins) spoil a believer's relationship with God.

Conviction: The first step is to admit our failures (sins) instead of excusing them.

Confession: The next step is to confess our failure (sin) (1 John 1:9). David said, “I have sinned against the Lord” (2 Samuel 12:13). Chris-

tians need to do this regularly. It means admitting our failures (sins) and confessing them so our relationships can be restored with each other and with God. If we examine ourselves and get right with God, we will not come under His discipline. That's why the Christian life should be full of confession. So our fellowship with the Lord can be restored. The Christian life is full of restarts. Each of these involves conviction, confession, and repentance to put things right, and then putting our failures behind us and moving ahead.

Repentance: The next step is to change direction and turn around to follow God once again. It involves completely changed attitudes and behaviour. It is more than confessions or remorse. The Bible says it's having a new heart and a new spirit (Ezekiel 18:30-32). The churches in Revelation were urged to repent (Revelation 2:5, 16; 3:3, 19).

Forgiveness: After we are convicted and confess and repent, God offers forgiveness. He has great mercy. David was told "The Lord has taken away your sin" (2 Samuel 12:13). God is a Father of all those who have trusted in Him. This relational forgiveness restores a believer's fellowship with God after it has been broken by our failure (sin). The Bible says, "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Restoration: Once we are forgiven, we are restored to following Christ once again. This should be a time for celebration, like when the wayward son returned home (Luke 15:22-24).

Meghan Markle and Prince Harry, the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, reunited with members of the British Royal Family during the Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in June 2022. They joined the Royal Family in attending the thanksgiving service at St Paul's Cathedral to honour Her Majesty's 70-year reign. This was their first official engagement together since they stepped down as working royals two years earlier. Will this lead to reconciliation between Prince Harry, Meghan, and various Royal Family members after a lack of shared values seemed to distance them? Unfortunately, estrangement can occur within a family.

Discussion

A map isn't helpful if you don't know where you are on it. Do you know where you are on God's map, the Bible? And a GPS isn't helpful unless you use it. Do you read God's GPS, the Bible?

We have seen that turning around to follow God (repentance) involved a radical change in the life of King David and King Josiah in the Old Testament, and the wayward son, Zacchaeus and Paul in the New Testament.

But people can reject a message of repentance, like those in Noah's day and in the times of the Old Testament prophets.

Who are you like?

Positional repentance brings reconciliation with God. It's turning around to follow the true God to join the family of God. Zacchaeus and Paul repented to be reconciled with God. But this is not the end of the matter.

Because Christians still fail (sin), relational repentance maintains good family relationships. King David and King Josiah repented to restore their relationship with God. Paul urged believers, "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). As we read the Bible let's be ready to let the Holy Spirit transform our minds and reform our behaviour. We need to continually turn around to follow God, like a child follows a father.

Conclusion

Let's get right with God in both the long term and the short term by repenting – turning away from our failures and turning towards the true God instead. And keep on doing it to maintain our fellowship with the Lord.

Let's ask God to help us see the things we need to change in our lives.

George Hawke

***And when they had come into the house,
they saw the young Child with Mary His
mother, and fell down and worshiped Him.
And when they had opened their treasures,
they presented gifts to Him:
gold, frankincense, and myrrh.***

Matthew 2:11

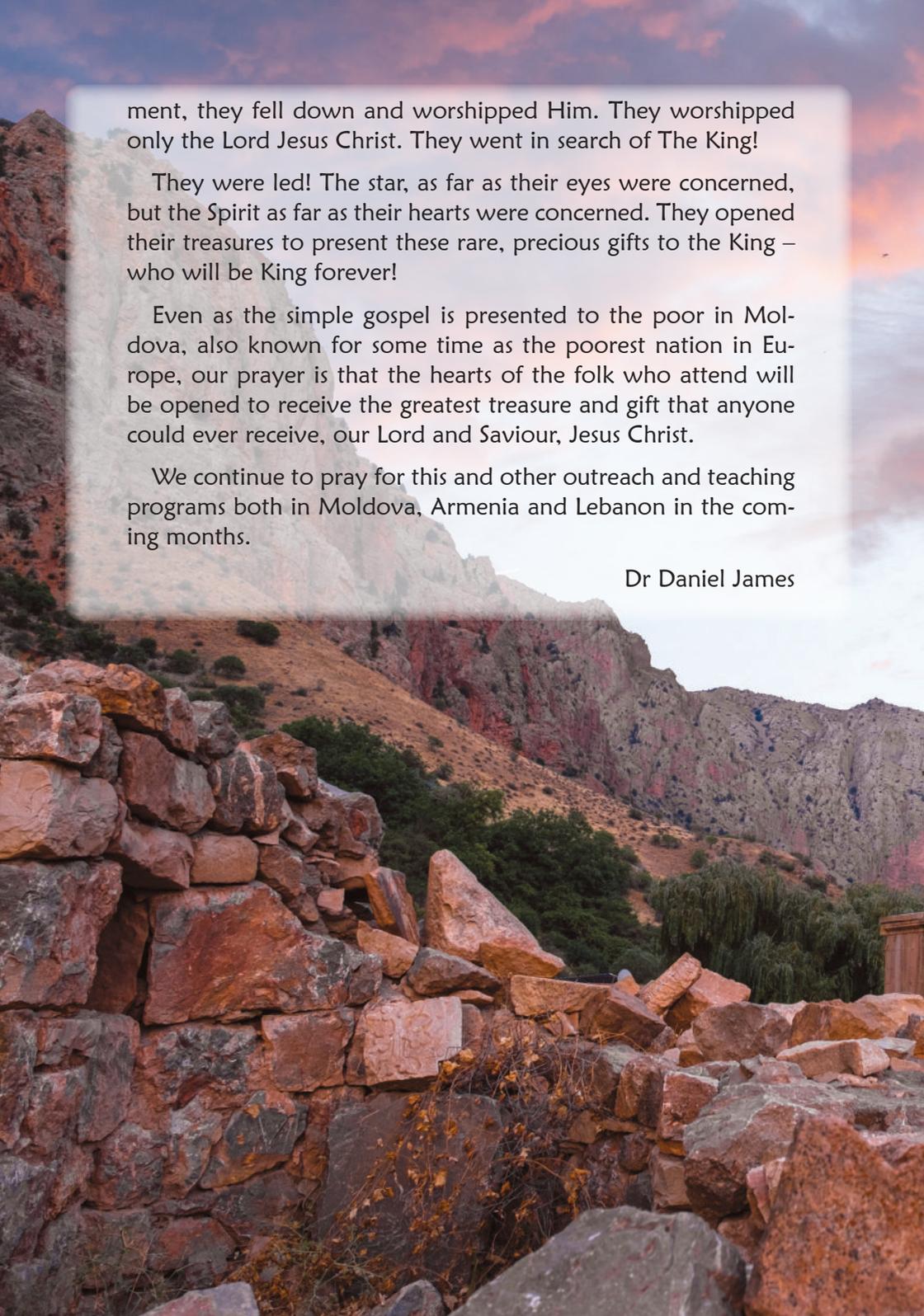
By His grace alone, we have come to the end of a very blessed year. The Lord has directed our hearts to be faithful to His calling and to stay focused on our mission to preach the gospel to the poor.

In Matthew 2:11, “they” refers to the wise men. The word used in Greek for wise men is magos and is used three times in Matthew 2. This could refer to the eastern scientist who studied the creation of God and was touched by the Spirit of the Lord to seek for the promise given to another nation, chosen of God. Interestingly the same word magos in Acts 13 refers to a sorcerer, a false prophet and of the other spirit.

The Spirit of God always leads us to the true God and His Son, as we witness the worship of the young child Jesus by these unknown foreigners. What a miracle!

Our workers in Armenia and their families will be travelling to Moldova to join in the Christmas outreach and celebration with our dear friends at Christian Mission International Aid (CMIAID) in the village of Zirnesti. This is an annual feature there as children and others gather to watch the play and participate in other activities with an evangelistic focus. This will be the first time that our ACM workers will be travelling together to participate and help the team in Moldova from the 5-23 December.

The wise men entered the house and saw the young child with Mary His mother. The Bible makes it very clear that at that very mo-

The background of the page is a scenic landscape. In the foreground, there is a rustic stone wall made of large, reddish-brown rocks. Beyond the wall, the terrain is hilly and rocky, with some green vegetation. In the distance, there are large, rugged mountains under a sky with soft, colorful clouds, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall tone is warm and natural.

ment, they fell down and worshipped Him. They worshipped only the Lord Jesus Christ. They went in search of The King!

They were led! The star, as far as their eyes were concerned, but the Spirit as far as their hearts were concerned. They opened their treasures to present these rare, precious gifts to the King – who will be King forever!

Even as the simple gospel is presented to the poor in Moldova, also known for some time as the poorest nation in Europe, our prayer is that the hearts of the folk who attend will be opened to receive the greatest treasure and gift that anyone could ever receive, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

We continue to pray for this and other outreach and teaching programs both in Moldova, Armenia and Lebanon in the coming months.

Dr Daniel James