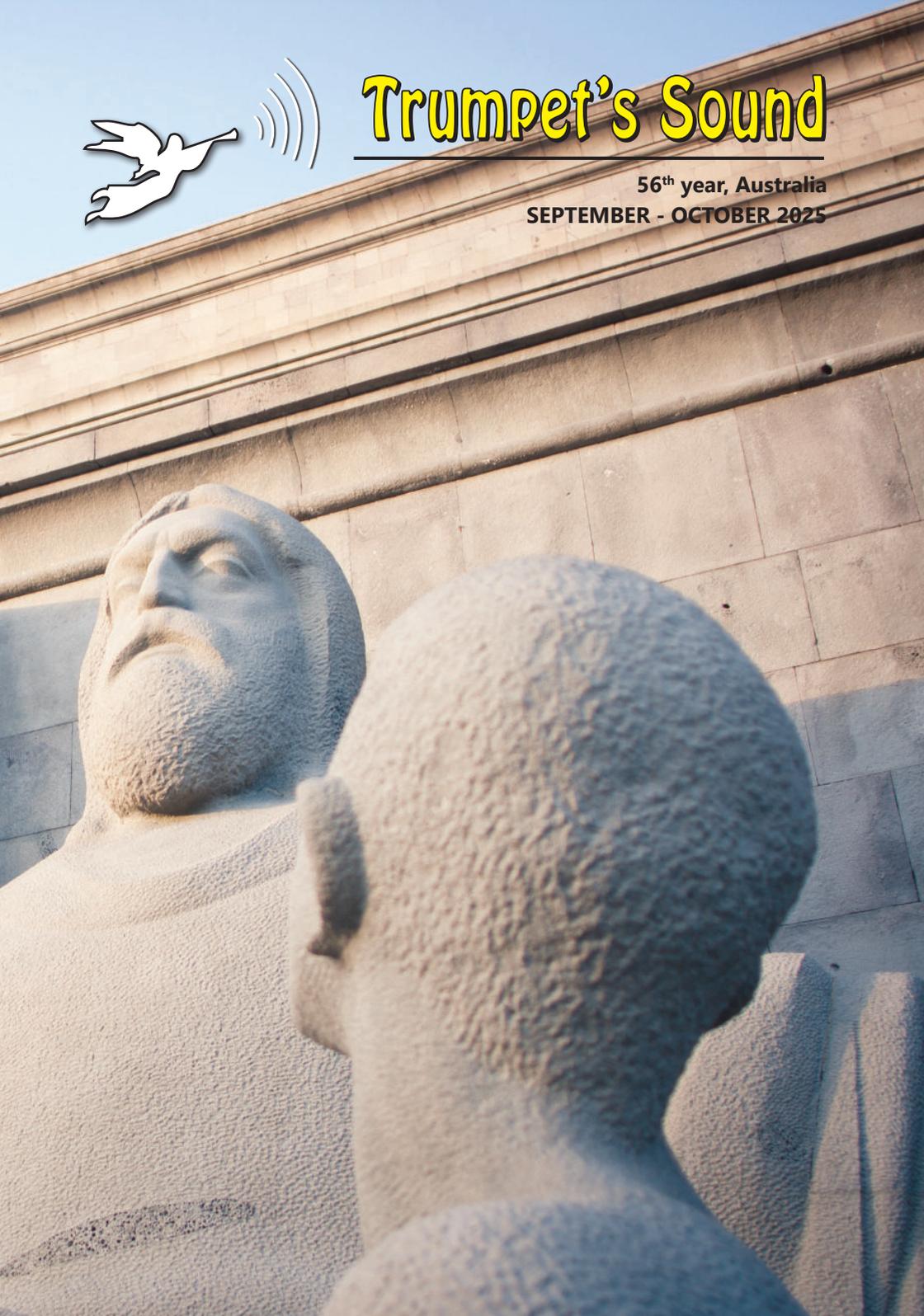




Trumpet's Sound

56th year, Australia

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Cover photo: The statue of Mesrop Mashtots in front of Matenadaran, Yerevan, Armenia.



Prayer and praise points

- Give thanks for our mission team and the blessings the Lord showered on us
- Pray for the seed that has been planted for the Lord to help it to bear fruit
- Pray for the many churches in Armenia affiliated with us that the Lord will protect them and help them grow
- Pray for the children's ministry and for our co-workers in the field
- Pray for the youth in Gyumri and Yerevan
- Pray for the many in need of financial support and medical assistance
- Pray for our expanding ministry in Armenia, Lebanon, Georgia and now in Greece

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

Rejoicing in the Lord

*This is the day the LORD has made;
We will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24*

Rejoicing should be the condition of the heart of every believer who trusts in our Lord Jesus Christ. We read in 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 that believers were "hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down but not destroyed". Yes, we may be surrounded with so much, but the heart must remain faithful

King David also writes in Psalm 9:18 that "the needy will not always be forgotten". Both passages emphasise that God remembers and cares for those who are suffering, even when circumstances seem bleak.

When our mission team visited poor villages in Armenia, it was difficult at times for them to pray when they saw the horrible conditions people lived in and the suffering of the sick. But the Lord's hand has never been shortened; we are thankful for His faithfulness and for your support of our expanding ministry. Yes we have seen many believers in poverty and in sickness, but we have also seen many who rejoice in their circumstances.

There are areas in which we may be able to, or wish to, help; this may be either by prayer or by financial assistance. There are many needy families in our care, and their needs include daily medical expenses. Contributions of aid and clothing may be made for the containers or for the provision of Christian literature. There is a work among children and youth. There are the workers in the field who need support. And there is the running cost of ACM.

Please keep ACM in your prayers, and God bless you for your support.

HK

Building the church: Acts 1-12 (4)

The themes of Acts

The apostles

The qualifications for an apostle were that he had spent three years with Jesus and that he had been a witness of the resurrection (1:21–22). They were chosen by God (1:2) to be the main witnesses of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. They were the main messengers spreading the gospel at that time.

In Acts they were changed men compared with what they were like in the gospels. How were they transformed? First, they had witnessed the resurrection of Jesus. Because of this they were willing to die for their Christian faith. Second, Jesus spent 40 days teaching them how the Old Testament taught that the Messiah would suffer and die and be raised so that “repentance for the forgiveness of sins” could be preached in His name to all nations (Luke 24:45-48). In this way, they were to bring the gospel to all nations. They understood that Jesus was the Messiah and were confident that He was alive. Third, they were empowered by the Holy Spirit.

The apostles were also the main teachers in the early church. The only written Bible they had was the Old Testament. We now have their doctrine written in the New Testament. Most of it comes from Peter, John and Paul. The church was built on the foundation of what the apostles taught (Ephesians 2:20).

Miracles

When Jesus did miracles, it was a sign that He was divine. Nicodemus told Him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the signs you are doing if God were not with him” (John 3:2). Peter said, “Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through Him, as you yourselves know” (2:22). Something that is accredited

has been tested and found to comply with established standards – the kind of thing that is done by national accrediting agencies.

Jesus demonstrated that He was the Messiah by the many miracles He performed in the power of God. Jesus said, “The works I do in my Father’s name testify about me” and “Do not believe me unless I do the works of my Father” (John 5:36; 10:25, 37; Matthew 11:3-5). The Lord’s miracles proved that He was the Messiah because they were predicted in the Old Testament and because they showed mercy and compassion.

The Holy Spirit enabled the apostles to do miracles in Jesus’ name (2 Corinthians 12:12; Hebrews 2:3-4). It was one of the signs of an apostle. These confirmed the truth of their message and that they were messengers from God (2:43; 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 14:3; 15:12). The miracles were unexpected, instantaneous and complete. They drew a crowd to hear the preaching of God’s message. And the miracles should have reminded the Jews of the promised kingdom of God (Isaiah 35:5-6).

After the apostles died an account of their teaching and their miracles was recorded in the New Testament. We can confirm the ancient message and the ancient messengers today by reading the New Testament. And we can assess teachers today by comparing what they say with what the Bible says.

The work that apostles did in the early church is done today by elders, teachers and evangelists. They lead the church, teach the church from the Bible, and spread the good news about Jesus.

The apostles and their associates wrote the New Testament. When we read the Bible, we should realise that it wasn’t written to us. The Old Testament was written to the Jews – it isn’t about the church. The gospels were written to the early church, but they describe a period before the church began. And the rest of the New Testament was written to the early church.

For the first five years, the church was Jewish. And for the next 20 years, the church was in transition from being predominantly Jewish

to being predominantly Gentile. This transition period is a bit like the 20 years of human growth to maturity.

Because there are no apostles, the gift of miracles isn't operative today. Don't be deceived by those who claim otherwise. After all, during the pandemic people still needed masks and vaccinations. There have been no miracle cures for COVID-19.

But God is working every day. Be aware of His guidance, His providence and answers to prayer.

And the complexity of God's creation is awesome and spectacular. Nature is an example of God's wonders. It's more spectacular than flying a helicopter on Mars. Do we "stop and consider God's wonders" (Job 37:14). Watch any living creature and think, "How do they do that?". We think we are clever in taking a year to manufacture a vaccine. But it's just activating what our immune systems do every day of our life. However, all the wonders of God's creation (Job 36-39) "are but the outer fringe of His works" (Job 26:14).

Next we look at the gospel message spread by the church.

George Hawke

The Second Coming of the Lord Jesus (2)

All that we have spoken about may appear to be straightforward but before long we find disagreement about the order of certain events. In particular, at what time will the church be taken to be with the Lord Jesus? Some maintain that the rapture is at the end of the tribulation – that believers will experience the time of coming judgment which will fall on this earth, while others believe that the church will be taken to be with Christ before the tribulation begins. The difficulty is that there is no verse which dogmatically states that the church will or will not experience the tribulation. Can we find some guidance?

In 1 Thessalonians 5:2 Paul tells us that the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night. Judgment will begin at a time when no one is expecting it. But then in verse 4 Paul tells us that we are not in the darkness so that the day should overtake us as a thief. How do we explain the fact that unbelievers will be caught as by a thief in the night, but believers will not be?

The explanation must be that believers will not be here when the seven year period of tribulation begins. They will have been caught up into the air to be with the Lord. This leads to tentative suggestions about the order of coming events:

- The rapture
- The emergence (at a time soon after the rapture?) of the man of sin and the signing of a seven year treaty with Israel
- The breaking of the treaty by the man of sin
- Three and a half years of intense tribulation – the great tribulation
- The return of the Lord Jesus to the Mount of Olives

Within this seven year period there will be much activity and, although the outcome of God's judgment is certain, we do not have any authority to predict the details of something which is alone known to God. We approach a study of future events with a consciousness that *"Known to God from eternity are all His works"* (Acts 15:18).

Watch!

One of the actions we are told to take is to watch for the Lord's return. The strength of our response to this call to be watchful varies from time to time and from person to person. There are some who live expecting that the Lord may come at any time while others act as if He will not come in their lifetime.

We do not expect unbelievers to behave as if the Lord were to come soon! In fact, their attitude has long been one of scepticism. Even in the days of the early church, Peter wrote "scorners will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts, and saying,

“Where is the promise of His coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation” (2 Peter 3:3-4). If this question was asked less than 40 years after the resurrection, we should not be surprised that it is still being asked today. The attitude behind such comments is something the Lord had told His disciples about when He talked about the days of Noah. At that time people lived as if judgment would never come. *“They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all”* (Luke 17:27).

Peter continues that those who scoff at the idea that the Lord will return have not learned any lessons from the people of Noah’s time. *“They wilfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth ... that then existed perished, being flooded with water”* (2 Peter 3:5-6). Peter adds that just as certainly as the flood came, so the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. The ridicule of the unbeliever is to be expected, but ridicule does not affect the truth of God’s word.

The unbeliever will ridicule the thought of the second coming; the believer must watch for it. This is one of many things that we are to be watchful about. On a number of occasions during His earthly ministry, the Lord spoke about the importance of watching. In the Garden of Gethsemane He asked three of His disciples to watch and pray, but they were unable to do as He directed.

In Luke 12:35-40 there is a parable about servants watching for their master’s return from a wedding; they would be blessed if they were awake when he returned. This message was reinforced as part of the Olivet discourse. As Mark records it, a man had gone into a far country after assigning work to his servants. They were to watch for his return lest they be caught sleeping. The Lord concluded His Olivet address with a message to us all: Watch!

What does this mean for us as believers? Peter has a clear message for us. *“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the rev-*

elation of Jesus Christ; as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, "Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:13-16). Being holy means first that we are set apart for God. We are His for Him to guide and direct as He sees best.

Paul's message is similar. "*But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober. For those who sleep, sleep at night, and those who get drunk are drunk at night. But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him*" (1 Thessalonians 5:4-10). We are not to be like those who are around us but we are to be actively serving our Lord as we watch for His coming so that whether we live or die we are in fellowship with Him.

John reinforces the message in his letters to the seven churches of Asia. "*Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die, for I have not found your works perfect before God. Remember therefore how you have received and heard; hold fast and repent. Therefore if you will not watch, I will come upon you as a thief, and you will not know what hour I will come upon you*" (Revelation 3:2-3). Revelation 16:15 also has its message to us. "Behold, I am coming as a thief. Blessed is he who watches, and keeps his garments, lest he walk naked and they see his shame."

How are we to behave in the light of the second coming? We are to live godly lives and to be active in our service for the Lord. But we are also to be watchful. The message to the church in Sardis was that they were to be watchful and strengthen the things that remained. This meant that they were to ensure that they maintained the truth and that they worked hard in their service for the Lord while expecting the Lord to come. That message is still one which is very much needed by us today.

Let us watch and work while we wait for the Lord from heaven.

Don Stormer

Note: Part of last month's article on the Second Coming needs correction. A coming world ruler will sign a seven year treaty with the nation and break it in the middle (not the beginning) of the period. It is then that the abomination of desolation will occur and the people of Judea are to escape for their lives.



I Didn't Sign Up For This

Jeremiah 45:1-5

We usually walk into situations or set out on paths with certain expectations. One goes to medical school expecting to be a doctor, another goes to law school expecting to be a lawyer or perhaps even a judge. When God causes our paths to deviate from our expectations, it can often leave us confused, frustrated, or even discouraged.

The Bible doesn't give us many details about Baruch. We're never told why he joined Jeremiah in the work or what his expectations were, but I like to imagine that Baruch recognised the power Jeremiah had and the importance of his calling. Thoughts of the great prophets of the past: Moses, Samuel, Elijah, or Isaiah were probably passing through his mind. There might have been an expectation to see great miracles and repentance; the nation of Judah turning from the sinful worship of idols and coming back to a proper worship of the one true God. Finally, after years of spiritual decay and foolish kings, Jeremiah's words and power would bring people back to the truth. And maybe, just like Elijah's power passed on to Elisha, Jeremiah's power might rub off on Baruch just a little.

I wonder what was going through his mind the day King Jehoiakim burned the scroll he had carefully scribed and faithfully read before the people of Jerusalem. A scroll that had been written in the hope that it would bring people to repentance. All that work, all that hope, dashed in an instant. Was this really what Baruch had signed up for? To spend his life trying to save people, only to watch them die from their own foolishness?

Jeremiah 45 marks a fascinating transition in the book of Jeremiah. The previous section deals primarily with the events surrounding the conquest of Judah by Babylon; the end of Zedekiah's reign and the issues the Israelites faced afterwards. After chapter 45, we see the various judgments God pronounces on the various nations: Egypt, Moab, and even Babylon. But first, God has a message to Baruch.

We're not told exactly why Baruch is feeling sorrow and despair in this moment, but maybe it was coming to the realisation that he wasn't going to see the great miracles and repentance he was hoping for. With King Jehoiakim firmly rejecting the words from God, it was clear the course of the nation wouldn't change. They were headed for judgment and destruction. What was the point of even trying anymore? In this moment of discouragement, God reaches out and answers Baruch. His emotions, his frustration, his sorrow...they aren't being ignored. God hears him, and wants to respond.

I was fifteen years old when I received my first diagnosis of cancer. Up until that point, I had a lot of expectations of what my life would look like. I was a 4.0 student in school, good at math and science, and was looking forward to the start of high school. I was getting ready for Thanksgiving with the expectation that I would be together with family. Thanksgiving day we got the news; stage 4 non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, spread all throughout my body. Pick a body part, and I had a tumour growing there. In a single day, my entire life turned upside-down.

For the next twelve months, I would be dealing with chemotherapy treatments every three weeks, with regular scans and blood tests, a weakened body and immune system, and the realisation that

I wouldn't be able to be the strong, top scoring student I was used to being. It took all my strength just to make it to school for a single, 45-minute class. I was angry, frustrated, and discouraged that my life wasn't going the way I had expected it to.

I was 37 years old when I received my second diagnosis of stage 4 cancer. I had beaten the lymphoma after a year of chemotherapy as a child, but now I was faced with a rare, incurable intestinal cancer. Once again, my life is derailed, and I don't know what the future holds. For two years now, I've continued to go through chemotherapy treatments every two weeks, going through great pain and exhaustion. There are days when it's a challenge to just eat and drink, and as of now there's no known way to beat this cancer. I could be doing this the rest of my life.

In those moments, it's normal to cry out to God in the same words of Baruch: "Lord, you have added sorrow to my pain. I am weary with my groaning and I find no rest." What is particularly interesting about this passage is that God addresses Baruch's sorrow and emotions before going into the details of the judgment to come on the various nations. Out of everything there is to talk about, God's hurting child is the priority. God sees Baruch's suffering and seeks to encourage him, and that takes priority over the judgments to be declared on the various nations.

Part of God's response may not seem like much of an encouragement. God does acknowledge that things are going to be broken down and uprooted, but also reminds Baruch that these are things that God Himself built and planted. This may remind us of interactions like the one God had with Jonah in Jonah 4:11, when God reminds Jonah that God has pity on all things He has created, and doesn't want to see them destroyed. Baruch may feel sorrow, but perhaps God feels it to even a greater degree, given that these are all things built and planted by Him.

God also has an interesting warning for Baruch: Don't seek great things for yourself, because everything is coming to ruin. Perhaps Baruch thought that his working with Jeremiah would ultimately give

him some level of prestige or admiration, and some of his despair might be coming from the realisation that this won't be happening. God tells Baruch that he won't be seeing those great things, but also gives him a promise: even though everything is going to be crashing down, God will be protecting Baruch and seeing him through to the end. As Christians, this can be an important reminder to each of us. As we live in a world that is coming to ruin, we often won't achieve the great things we were hoping to gain. Our plans fall apart, often due to circumstances far outside of our control. And as we cry out to God, saying that sorrow is being added to our pain, God reminds us that our lives will be protected as a prize of war; a prize that Jesus won with His victory over death on the cross. We are a precious prize that Jesus has sacrificed for, and while we don't have all the great treasures and fame that this world offers, we have something far more precious waiting for us in heaven.

Even as Baruch mourns, his work continues to impact people who came long after him. He stayed faithful to God's command; he never sought great things for himself, and today we rarely hear about him. I don't think I've ever heard a sermon preached about Baruch, and if you ask the average person about him they'll probably say they've never heard of him. Yet the only reason we have Jeremiah's words today is because of the work Baruch did. He never became famous, but was instrumental in ensuring that God's word was passed down for future generations. He never saw the full fruit of his labour, but we all benefit today because of it.

After so many years of battling cancer, I often find myself crying out to God in the same words of Baruch. Why do I have to go through this much suffering? Yet one of the encouraging things I get to experience during this suffering is finding out that my life has had an impact on people I haven't even met. People who have read or listened to a sermon or a message I've put together, and found hope even as I suffer with pain and exhaustion. I'm reminded that I'm not here to seek great things for my life, but rather I'm a prize that's destined for heaven. We're allowed to mourn and cry out to God just like Baruch did, and just like Baruch our lives will have an impact on others that

we might not ever see this side of eternity. But most importantly, we're a prize that Jesus fought for and won, so let that knowledge sustain us as we go through the sorrow and the pain of life.

Matt Silverman

Being Zealous

A zealous man in religion is pre-eminently a man of one thing. It is not enough to say that he is earnest, hearty, uncompromising, thorough-going, whole-hearted, fervent in spirit. He sees one thing, he cares for one thing, he lives for one thing, he is swallowed up in one thing — and that one thing is to please God. Whether he lives — or whether he dies; whether he has health — or whether he has sickness; whether he is rich — or whether he is poor; whether he pleases man — or whether he gives offence; whether he is thought wise — or whether he is thought foolish; whether he gets blame — or whether he gets praise; whether he gets honour, or whether he gets shame — for all this the zealous man cares nothing at all. He burns for one thing — and that one thing is to please God, and to advance God's glory. If he is consumed in the very burning — he is content. He feels that, like a lamp, he is made to burn, and if consumed in burning — he has but done the work for which God appointed him. Such a one will always find a sphere for his zeal. If he cannot preach, and work, and give money — he will cry, and sigh, and pray. Yes, if he is only a pauper, on a perpetual bed of sickness — he will make the wheels of sin around him drive heavily, by continually interceding against it. If he cannot fight in the valley with Joshua — then he will do the prayer-work of Moses, Aaron, and Hur, on the hill. (Exodus 17:9-13.) If he is cut off from working himself — he will give the Lord no rest until help is raised up from another quarter, and the work is done. This is what I mean when I speak of "zeal" in religion.

J.C. Ryle

Reflections on my visit to Armenia: A Forgotten Mission Field

I recently had the privilege of visiting Armenia with the Armenian Christian Mission (ACM) and leading a 2-day seminar in Yerevan. Around 80 pastors gathered to learn and share insights on Evangelism in Today's World. It was encouraging and heartwarming to meet pastors serving in Armenia, university students engaged in student ministry, and leaders from Georgia and neighbouring countries. I also had the joy of praying for three individuals who felt God's prompting to serve in ministry.

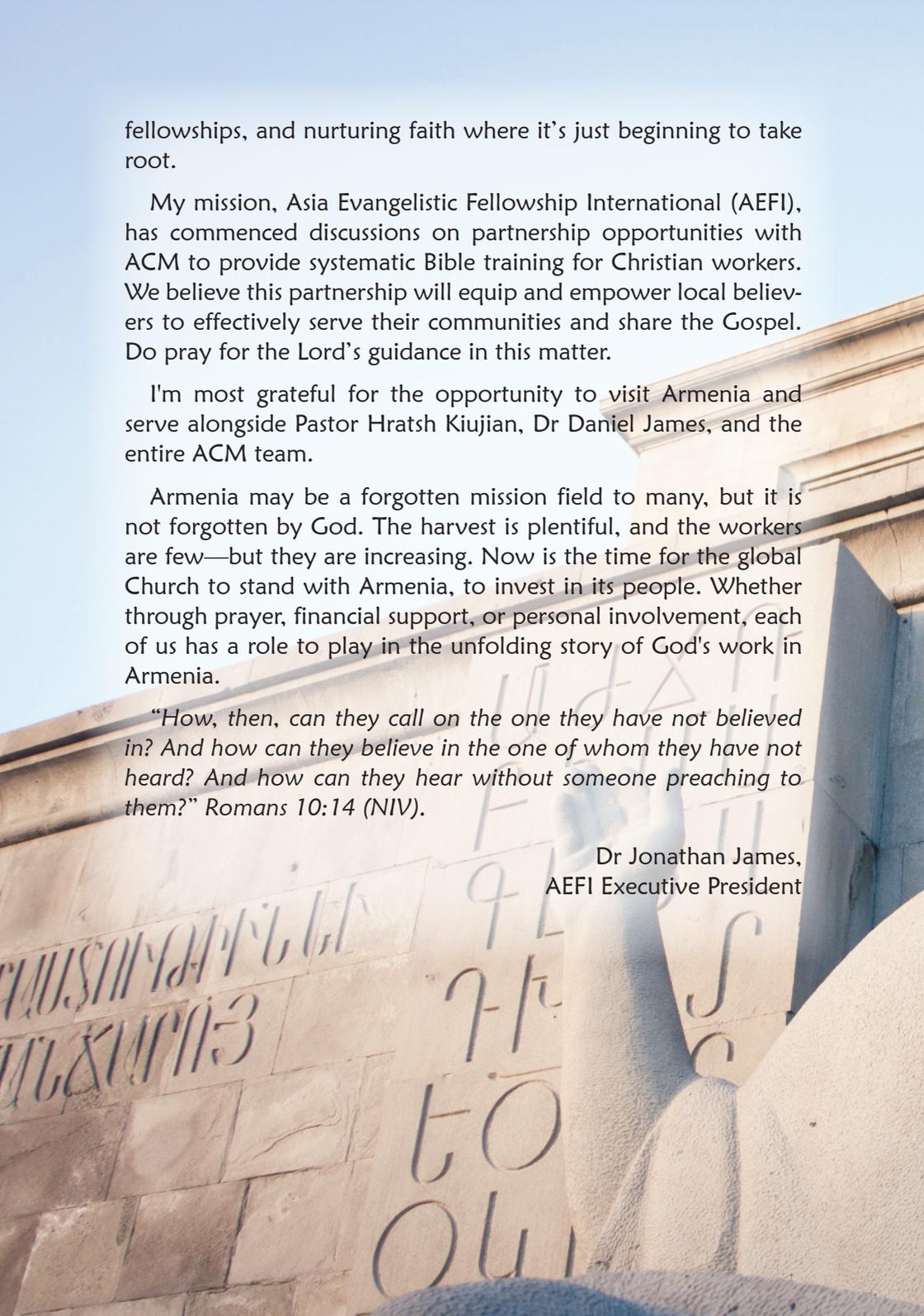
Armenia is a nation with a rich Christian heritage, but it remains largely unreached and forgotten by many mission groups and churches. Despite being a historically Christian country, only around 0.5% of the population identify as evangelical Christians (approximately 15,836 people). The population of Armenia is approximately 2.95 million people (with large diaspora communities in many parts of the world). This presents a significant opportunity for ministry and outreach.

ACM's Impact

ACM has been faithfully serving in Armenia since 1998, providing humanitarian aid, spiritual support, and discipleship to those in need. Their work is a testament to the power of the Gospel and partnership with believers across the world in fulfilling the Great Commission. What struck me most was the unwavering dedication of the ACM field workers and volunteers, who serve with passion and compassion, bringing hope and light to a nation in need.

A Vision for the Future

As I reflect on Armenia's potential, I am convinced that with God's guidance and empowerment, this nation could become the Antioch for missions in the region (Acts 13: 2-3). I picture in my mind Armenian believers stepping into neighbourhoods and towns across the country, sharing the Gospel in everyday conversations, planting small

The background of the page is a photograph of a stone wall with Armenian script. The wall is made of large, light-colored stone blocks. The script is carved into the wall and is in a traditional Armenian font. In the background, there is a classical building with a pediment and columns, suggesting a historical or religious site. The sky is a clear, light blue.

fellowships, and nurturing faith where it's just beginning to take root.

My mission, Asia Evangelistic Fellowship International (AEFI), has commenced discussions on partnership opportunities with ACM to provide systematic Bible training for Christian workers. We believe this partnership will equip and empower local believers to effectively serve their communities and share the Gospel. Do pray for the Lord's guidance in this matter.

I'm most grateful for the opportunity to visit Armenia and serve alongside Pastor Hratsh Kiujian, Dr Daniel James, and the entire ACM team.

Armenia may be a forgotten mission field to many, but it is not forgotten by God. The harvest is plentiful, and the workers are few—but they are increasing. Now is the time for the global Church to stand with Armenia, to invest in its people. Whether through prayer, financial support, or personal involvement, each of us has a role to play in the unfolding story of God's work in Armenia.

“How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Romans 10:14 (NIV).

Dr Jonathan James,
AEFI Executive President