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Հիսիսային Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանական Միութեան Պաշտօնաթերթ
The Quarterly Journal of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America



Reflections on the
Birth of Jesus
and the **New Year**

**90th Annual Meeting
of the AMAA**

&

**20th Anniversary of the
Armenian Children's
Milk Fund**

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Cover: The twin peaks of Ararat are a fitting symbol of our national identity; whereas, the open Bible reveals the foundation of our Christian faith. The two columns represent the Old and the New Testaments. In Armenian miniature art, the two peacocks with their intertwined necks symbolize love, which is the supreme virtue in Christianity.

Forum

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Lisa Turner's birthday was coming up and she was excited to see what special thing her husband was going to do. She secretly hoped for breakfast-in-bed or a bouquet of roses. When the special day finally arrived, no breakfast was served and no roses had been delivered. In fact, it seemed that her husband had completely forgotten her birthday!

In the afternoon of that day, her husband handed to her their baby boy and said, "He's got a present for you." She cringed because she knew that meant the baby had a messy diaper. Though it irritated her that she had to change diapers on her birthday, she grabbed the baby and diaper wipes and prepared for the worst. To her delight, she found, in the perfectly clean diaper, a jewelry box containing an exquisite necklace of string pearls, a wonderful present from her laughing husband. Well, that was a wonderful surprise, even if it was a bit unorthodox. There are some surprises that are plain fun, while others leave us shaking our head.

The crude environment of Jesus' birth is certainly a surprise. Doesn't it seem a little bit absurd that the Creator of life would be born in a damp, foul-smelling stable? I don't mean to be rude by this line of questioning, but is that the way you would have planned the birth of your son? Would you have arranged the birth of your son to take place among animals? Would you have planned to announce the birth of your son to some despised shepherds who were at the lowest rung of the social ladder? I would not have planned it that way.

If you were searching for a king, you would not be looking for someone like Jesus. Who would have guessed that the King of kings would be born in a stable like an animal? Who would have guessed that the King of kings would be a

carpenter in a tiny village? Jesus was not the kind of king that the world was used to. Kings were born on silk sheets in ornate palaces. Kings led mighty armies; Jesus led a bunch of uneducated fishermen. Kings rode on pure-bred stallions; Jesus walked the dusty roads. Kings lived in well fortified castles; Jesus had no place to lay His head. Kings wore fancy clothes adorned with jewels; Jesus never wore a glamorous garment. Kings were followed by princes and nobles; Jesus was followed by sinners, tax collectors and social outcasts. Jesus was not the kind of king the world expected.

Those who rule the world through power, wealth, or manipulation, feel threatened by King Jesus because He is opposed to injustice and the oppression of the weak.

Did you ever wonder about the reaction of those Magi who came from the East? They noticed an unusual star in the night sky and knew that a heavenly King had been born. The bright star led them to Jerusalem, and they headed straight for the palace of King Herod. They must have been surprised to find out there had been no new births at Herod's palace. They must have been surprised when they did not see any festivals welcoming the newborn King. So, they asked with great surprise, "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? We saw His star in the East and have come to worship Him." Nobody in Jerusalem seemed to know who and where the new King was.

In fact, Herod was greatly disturbed. He was the reigning king and if a new king were born outside of his family, it meant he could be deposed. Matthew the evangelist informs us that all Jerusalem was disturbed as well (Matthew 2:3). If there were a new king born while the current king was still on the throne, it meant trouble and bloodshed to come.

King Herod summoned his scholars to an urgent meeting at the palace and asked them where the new king would be born. The scholars dug out the prophecies and concluded that the new king must have been born in Bethlehem, a sleepy little town seven miles south-east of Jerusalem.

Imagine how surprised the Magi must have been when, upon their arrival in Bethlehem, they were led to the place where Jesus lay, and instead of a royal household, they encountered a poor peasant family. The Magi must have been dumbfounded! They must have scratched their heads wondering if this was indeed the King they were searching for! The humble surroundings seemed incredible!

We, today, face the same dilemma: will we worship Jesus as King? Those who rule the world through power, wealth, or manipulation, feel threatened by King Jesus because He is opposed to injustice and the oppression of the weak.

The only reason the Magi found Jesus was because they actively search for Him. There were Jews living in Persia at that time and it is logical to conclude that the Magi, in their pursuit of knowledge, studied the religious literature of the Jews and became acquainted with their Messianic expectations. The term "Magi" is a title the Zoroastrian Persians gave to learned men who had attained the highest level of education in theology, science and astronomy.

The first people who visited and

worshiped the Christ Child were humble Judean shepherds who represented the lowest social class. The Magi, on the other hand, represented the aristocratic class, the nobility and the social elite. The shepherds represented the Jews, while the Magi represented the Gentiles. The shepherds represented the illiterate people with no formal education, while the Magi represented the scholars who had attained the highest education. This is very significant because it shows that Jesus can save both Jews and Gentiles, people from all social classes and from all levels of education.

In the summer of 1975, when we lived in Bloomington, Indiana, my younger sister who resides in Jerusalem visited us. My wife and I decided to give our guest a special treat by taking her and her two children to the King's Island Family Entertainment Center, near Cincinnati, Ohio. The journey eastward began on an early Monday afternoon, and after a trip that seemed long and tedious, the shadows of the evening found us in the northern suburbs of Cincinnati. My two children and their two nieces jumped for joy when I announced that we would


possibility of getting lost in a large, unfamiliar city.

By now, all the children were sound asleep and the adults were exhausted. To make matters worse, during our search for a motel in Cincinnati, we had a blow-out, a punctured tire. What had begun as a joyous vacation was soon transformed into torture. A pick-up truck driver, who happened to pass by, noticed two women and four children were left stranded by the roadside, while a helpless man was trying to fix a flat tire. He was kind enough to stop, inquire about our problem, and lend us a hand. To make a long story short, this stranger guided us to a lack-luster motel where, to our great joy, a vacant room was found. At last, we found a place of rest for our bone-weary limbs.


In recalling this experience, I wonder how Mary and Joseph must have felt when they were turned away from the inn in Bethlehem after they had traveled 90 miles on the back of a donkey over hilly terrain! During this Christmas season, a "No Vacancy" sign is still posted on the hearts of many men and women. There are, of course, many reasons for the flashing of a "No Vacancy" sign. Let us consider a few of them.

Unfortunately, Christ is rejected by many people because of their preoccupation with worldly matters. The inn-keeper, who refused to provide accommodation, harbored no ill-will toward Mary and Joseph. It was simply a matter of other guests arriving first. How true this is of many today. They are not intentionally irreligious, but their hearts are occupied by so many earthly concerns, there is no room left for Christ. The demands of modern living press upon us from so many directions that there is no time left for prayer, Bible study, and religious contemplation. We have to be careful not to allow the cares of the world to choke up our spiritual life.

About five decades ago in England, primary-age children were fascinated by a radio program, during which contestants tried to reach a parent by telephone, and the one completing the call first, won a prize. Many times, the most enthusiastic caller lost because of receiving a busy signal. Often when God tries to communicate with us, He receives many



Often when God tries to communicate with us, He receives many busy signals from us, because we waste our precious time discussing trivial matters of no eternal significance.




busy signals from us, because we waste our precious time discussing trivial matters of no eternal significance.


Christ will never force His way into our lives. In Revelation 3:20, He is portrayed as gently knocking and patiently waiting at the door of our heart which must be opened from within. It is important to notice that Christ never knocks down the door to get to us. We must choose to either invite Him in, or keep the door tightly shut. Those who are concerned only about earthly matters will always display a "No Vacancy" sign to Christ.

Other people refuse Christ because He arrives at an unexpected time when they do not feel the need of a Savior. To those in the prime of life, enjoying prosperity and a good fortune, Christ comes too soon with His demand of allegiance. Their attitude seems to say, "Come back, Lord, when I am old and gray, and I will give you the remainder of my life that is shattered and wrecked by riotous living." Regretfully, for such procrastinators a more convenient day may never come. I have witnessed numerous people who came to accept Christ through tragedy, but seldom have I seen a conversion because of super-abundance. It is sad that some see no farther than the nose on their face, and lack the wisdom to make the right choice.

Another group ignores Christ because of poor priorities. The inn-keeper of Bethlehem misjudged his priorities. Had he been willing to accommodate the Holy Family, he would have enjoyed greater success. Pilgrims visiting shrines in the Holy Land would still be arriving at his



The only reason the Magi found Jesus was because they actively searched for Him.



begin looking for overnight accommodations.

Our enthusiasm, however, was short-lived, for we soon discovered that all motels in the vicinity of King's Island had posted "No Vacancy" signs. As the children became restless, we reasoned among ourselves, that the best thing to do was to drive into Cincinnati and try our luck there. We thought that a large city, like Cincinnati, would certainly have a vacant hotel-room for the night. What we did not take into account was the

inn. Many tourist attractions in this country have historical significance today because they can boast that "George Washington slept here." Opportunities often knock once and then disappear forever. One of the most urgent needs today is the wisdom to choose the important things in life.

The story is told of a little, crippled boy who desired to have a leading role in the Christmas play organized by his class. He longed to be Joseph, but that part was awarded to the teacher's favorite student.



We have to bear in mind the fact that a vacancy is the only place that Christ can fill.



He would have been satisfied to be one of the wise men, but those parts went to rich students who could dress in exquisite garments that made them look like kings. He was even rejected as a shepherd, for no one could imagine a shepherd on crutches. The only part that remained to him was that of the inn-keeper. His little heart ached as he dreaded the act of being rude and uncaring for weary travelers.

When the night for the play arrived, the school auditorium was packed. The curtains were pulled aside and the play began with Joseph's knock on the door of the inn. The crippled boy flung open the door of the inn and shouted at the top of his voice, "Come in! I have been expecting you." The audience roared and a thunderous applause broke out.

What a wonderful world this would be if all signs above the hearts of professed Christians flashed "Vacancy!" We have to bear in mind the fact that a vacancy is the

only place that Christ can fill. No Christian need be lonely, for our Savior's name is Immanuel which means "God with us." The supreme assurance of Christmas is that God has not forgotten to fulfill human need.

I am reminded of a senior American prisoner of war who always saw the good signs in life. Torture was a good sign because it would eventually end. Fridays were good signs because fish was served. The approaching of Christmas was always a good sign because prisoners of war might be released during the holidays. A total of seven Christmases passed before he was released from a Japanese jail. His perpetual optimism saved his life and served as an inspiration to those around him. If there could be good signs in a miserable Japanese POW camp, there certainly are many around us. The person who does not have Christmas in his heart, will never find it under a tree. Christmas is not a date, but a state of mind.

Usually, the Christmas spirit fades away when the Christmas decorations are taken down, but it should not be this way among true believers. Every Christian ought to have a constant Christmas in his/her heart filled with a spirit of goodwill, friendship and generosity.

In a cartoon a man says, "Every year I am despondent through Thanksgiving, depressed through Christmas, and suicidal through the New Year's Day. The one lesson in life I hope to teach my children is 'If you can survive December, you will be able to survive anything.'" Admittedly the accelerated pace and activities of the holiday season can take their toll. However, instead of getting caught up in other people's expectations, we have to make a decision about what the celebration of Christ's birth means personally to us. Christmas is not something to survive but rather to celebrate.

I read about two women who were feasting on a sumptuous dinner at a grand hotel. When asked what the special



The supreme assurance of Christmas is that God has not forgotten to fulfill human need.



occasion was, one of them said, "We are celebrating the baby's birthday." Since no child was visible, the inquisitive waiter asked, "But where is the baby?" "Oh," replied the mother, "he is sleeping comfortably in his crib and does not know anything about our celebration." In the rush of Christmas shopping, dinner parties and gaiety, it is easy to forget the Christ Child who should be at the center of all our festive celebrations. Let us expect to find Jesus present at His own birthday party.

I want to emphasize that the historical event of Christ's birth does not save us. To be saved, we must allow Jesus Christ to be re-born in us. Phillip Brooks brings out this thought in a beautiful Christmas hymn: "O holy child of Bethlehem!

Descend to us, we pray;
Cast out our sin and enter in;
Be born in us today."

This Christmas, may you join the angels in rejoicing, the shepherds in believing, and the wise men in seeking. 🕯️

Editor's Note: Due to the deteriorating financial condition of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA), the executive officers decided to have the *Forum* published biannually (twice a year), instead of quarterly. Therefore, in 2010, the *Forum* will be published only twice: once in April, and the second time in October. We hope that the financial status of our Union will soon start to improve, and when that happens, we will revert to our practice of publishing the *Forum* every quarter beginning in 2011.

Life's Journey

By Asien Surmeian

The story is told of a frustrated woman on a train. From the moment she stepped on she made a scene just about everything. She was rude, crude and agitated with everyone. Nothing seemed to please her. When she arrived at the station where she was to finally get off, the conductor said, "Ma'am, you left something behind." Frowning, she turned back and asked the conductor what it was. The conductor responded, "A very bad impression!"

Our life on earth is like a train ride. We each get on the train of life at different stations and at different times. The length of our life's journey is in God's hands. Some get off unexpectedly early; others enjoy a longer ride. Nevertheless, sooner or later we all arrive at a station where, ready or not, it's time to get off. The important question is: What have we left behind? With the beginning of a new year, this question becomes even more important. As we look forward to the coming twelve months, the all-important question should be: How can

we live so that some day the memory we leave behind would be a blessed one for those we love?

Setting a good Christian example is the most precious legacy any parent can leave his children—an eternal inheritance of a personal relationship with God taught at home. Although a child may eventually make his own choice, statistics show that the majority of devoted Christians owe their early commitment to God to their parents and their early Christian training. Many materially over-privileged children are, at the same time, spiritually underprivileged.

The Apostle Paul instructs young Timothy, "Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12). And for Christian household rules, he says in Colossians 4:5–6, "Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone." As Christ's followers, it is



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important to always be gracious in all that we say, and be an example in all that we do. "Seasoned with salt" means that our conversation should be in good taste. Just as salt adds flavor to food, our conduct and conversation should encourage further dialogue—make others "thirsty" for what we say so that they would want to hear more of the Good News of eternal life through Jesus Christ.

As we continue our journey in this New Year, and since we haven't yet arrived at our "station," let's keep in mind that the greatest legacy we can leave behind is a spiritual one that no amount of money can buy. Then whenever our train reaches its final station, we won't be concerned about what impression we left behind! 🎯

Resolutions

for the New Year

By Rev. Kevork George Terian

It is that time of the year when many of us make great promises to ourselves about what we are going to do in the New Year, and then we abandon our new resolutions before the end of January. I want to suggest that you make four commitments that will make a radical difference in your life if you follow through on them.

(1) Commit yourself to forget your failures. The Apostle Paul advises us “to forget what is behind and strain forward to what lies ahead, to press on towards the goal for which God has called us in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 3:13-14). I don’t know of a more relevant and practical advice for us at the start of 2010. God does not want you to live your life

If you have caused a rift in a relationship by your selfish actions and unkind remarks, then you have the responsibility to do everything you can to restore it.

imprisoned by your past. For many of us failures are painful memories. God’s Word urges us not to allow ourselves to be bogged down by our past failures. Stop torturing yourself about what you did or did not do. God does not want you to go through life branding yourself as a failure.

(2) Commit yourself to give up your grudges. “Bear with each other and forgive each other whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13). A grudge is a deep and ongoing resentment that we cultivate in our hearts against someone else. A grudge is an unforgiving spirit that leads to negative attitudes and harmful actions.

I want to remind you that grudges are self-destructive. When you hold a grudge against someone, you will hurt yourself as much, if not more, than the person against whom your hatred is directed. Eight years ago, a man was killed in Utah by a parcel bomb, and then a couple committed suicide a week later. It turned out that the couple who killed themselves had sent the bomb because of a grudge they had against the targeted victim. Make no mistake about it, if you keep harboring a grudge, it will eventually destroy you, if not physically, certainly emotionally and spiritually. It will make you a bitter and twisted person.

(3) Commit yourself to restore ruptured relationships. “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone” (Romans 12:18). If you have caused a rift in a relationship by your selfish actions and unkind remarks, then you have the responsibility to do everything you can to restore it. Keith Drury, who is a brilliant writer from the Wesleyan Church says, “Restitution deals with more than property. It is also going back and making things right for hurtful things you have said or done.”

(4) Commit yourself to turn your back on your transgressions. After the American Civil War was over, and all the slaves had been set free, some slaves chose to remain with their masters and continue to do what they were told. They were emancipated, but they chose to live as slaves. Jesus came to our world to liberate us from the slavery and tyranny of sin, yet many of us choose to live in subjection to it. “Do not let sin control the way you live, and do not give in to its hurtful desires” (Romans 6:2). 📌

- ✓ Commit yourself to forget your failures.
- ✓ Commit yourself to give up your grudges.
- ✓ Commit yourself to restore ruptured relationships.
- ✓ Commit yourself to turn your back on your transgressions.

God's Spirit

By Maynard Kuljian

A few years ago, we visited the beautiful Cathedral of our Lady of the Angels in central Los Angeles. It wasn't the magnificent twelve-story structure, which seats 3000 worshippers, nor the architecture designed without right angles, nor the stunning three million dollar bronze doors that most impressed me. It was a water feature that caught my attention as I walked toward the cathedral: a dedication to the story of *The Woman at the Well*.

One of the most powerful narratives during Jesus's life is His encounter with an unnamed Samaritan woman of questionable repute who approached Jacob's well where Jesus sat resting after a long journey. The story is told in exquisite detail in John's gospel, chapter four. Jesus asks the woman to give Him a drink. She is taken aback, asking "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?" At that time, the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans. Furthermore, Jewish orthodoxy stated that water would be unclean from a container that had been handled by Samaritans and other gentiles.

Jesus uses the opportunity to lead the woman gently away from physical thirst when he says, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked Him and He would have given you living water." This leads to quite an exchange that ends with the woman saying, "Sir, give me this water so that I won't get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water."

Having brought her along to this point, Jesus delivers a coup de grace: "Go, call your husband, and come back." This leads her to confess that she has no husband, after which Jesus affirms her honesty and tells her He knows about her previous five husbands and her present live-in. This evokes an amazed exclamation, "Sir, I can see that you are a prophet."

Now that she thinks He is a prophet, she brings up what was a well known difference of opinion between Jews and Samaritans: "Our fathers worshipped on

worshippers the Father seeks. **GOD IS SPIRIT, AND HIS WORSHIPERS MUST WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH.**

The impact of this discussion so impressed the woman that she, believing Him to be a prophet, said, "I know that the Messiah, called Christ, is coming. When He comes, He will explain everything to us". Then follows what is one of the few times Jesus actually declared who He was: "**I WHO SPEAK TO YOU AM HE.**" For Jesus to offer this pearl to this lone, unknown, probably disrespected woman, speaks volumes about Himself and His ministry.

Having emphasized that God is Spirit, I exit the story of the woman at the well. She excitedly leaves her water jar at the well and hurries back to her neighbors to tell them what happened. The ending is highly successful. Jesus stays with the Samaritans for two days and many in the village come to believe in Him.


I shift now to modern day phenomena which I believe relate to God's Spirit in our world. The first mention that God's Spirit was involved in the Creation appears in the earliest words in the Genesis narrative.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless, and empty; darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters."


One of the few times Jesus actually revealed His identity was to an unknown and disrespected Samaritan woman.

this mountain; but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus declares, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming, when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain, nor in JerusalemYet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of

At this time, when we know so much about our universe, one of the greatest questions challenging astronomers is the nature of so-called Dark Energy and Dark Matter, which pervade all of space. Both of these are invisible to any of our senses



Could it be that the Spirit of God everywhere surrounds us, holding every atom in our bodies and in the universe together?



or instruments, but have been observed and even measured by their effects. The mass of Dark Matter, as currently calculated, far exceeds the total mass of all the observed galaxies in the universe. The mere fact that space itself has “mass” is foreign to science. No one has the slightest idea what Dark Matter is.

Dark Energy has been likened to “gravity in reverse,” and is causing all the galaxies to be accelerating outward into space and away from each other. A hundred years ago, Einstein’s equations required a “fudge factor,” what he called a “cosmological constant,” to make them work. Today we recognize that he was correct (in spite of his own doubts back then) that this corresponds exactly to Dark Energy! Again, our ignorance is total.

Gravity and Magnetism are two phenomena we live with every day, yet we have no idea what they are. As confident as we are about the physical laws and formulas concerning them,

gravity stubbornly refuses to fit into a “Theory of Everything”, a goal of General Relativity that continues to baffle the minds of our most brilliant physicists.

We have no idea what is the field around an ordinary permanent magnet. We simply call this field “lines of force.” Nor do we understand electromagnetism, the relation between electrons and the magnetic field. Basically, whenever an electron moves, whether in a conductor or in a vacuum, or in free space, or in our brain and nerves, a magnetic field develops around such a current. Every electric motor depends on this fact. Conversely, whenever a magnetic field is moved relative to a conductor, such as the magnetic field in a generator rotating past the stationary field wires in that generator, electrons in those wires are forced to move, generating an electromotive force, or voltage. We do not have even a hypothesis to explain these relationships.

Could there be higher physical laws we do not know and cannot detect? Could it be that the Spirit of God everywhere surrounds us, holding every atom in our bodies and in the universe together? In the New Testament, there are several allusions: Hebrews 1:3: “The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, **sustaining all things by His powerful word...**” Colossians 1:16: “For by Him were all things created; things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible...and **in Him all things hold together**”. Though science has named two forces inside atoms, from which we and the universe are all made, nobody knows what they are.

Jesus’s words: “Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God.

Indeed, the very hairs of your head

are all numbered. Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (Luke 12:6,7). We are known in infinite detail.

Further affirmation that God’s Spirit is closer than we think is stated by Jesus:

“Where two or three come together in my name, **there am I with them**.”(Matthew 18:20).

Great comfort and strength come from knowing that **God is not far off**. Paul, in Acts 17:28 declares, “For in Him we live and move and have our being.”

King David, a very imperfect man, finally realized this when he acknowledged God’s presence in his life:

“Praise the Lord, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name.

Praise the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits—

Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases,

Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion,

Who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s”

(Psalm 103).

About Our Author: Maynard Kuljian is a retired electronics engineer/inventor. His talent in this area was evident as a young student at Caltech, where he interrupted his studies to attend seminary. He pastored a church in Laguna Beach for a time until his natural gift for electronics took priority. His inventions have been sprinkled throughout many well-known electronics firms. He retired to his vineyard home following the sale of his electronics manufacturing company that marketed his latest invention. Maynard and his wife Grace live in Healdsburg, California.

Have you ever wondered why God announced the greatest birth in human history to a few shepherds on a hillside overlooking the town of Bethlehem, and to a few wise men from the East?

Perhaps it was because they were quiet enough to listen, eager enough to learn, and available enough to follow.



How Will They Know?

By Laurie Konyalian



I still remember the very first time I plucked up my courage and decided to take the challenge of going to an inner city neighbourhood with a team of believers to share my faith with others. At that time, evangelizing was a nerve-racking experience for me; not only was I coming out of my box, but I was coming out of what felt like a million comfort zones! But on that particular evening, despite feeling a little nervous, I knew

that this was what I really wanted to do and was compelled to do it! Taking all the encouragement I had received from two dear friends of mine, I was excited to take the plunge and was ready to go! Apartment after apartment, as my team mate and I knocked on people's doors in the attempt to share Jesus with a few of them, I was not only shocked to find that people were actually willing to talk to perfect strangers on the subject of faith, God and the purpose of life, but I was astonished to see how so many people in a North American city like Montreal, were completely ignorant of the Gospel!

If we think about it for a moment, we cross paths with people every day—whether they be extended family members, friends, co-workers, clients, or random strangers that we rush by as we scurry through our day—life is all about people and our interaction with them. The question is what kind of impact do we have on the people who come into our lives? If we take a look at the book of Acts, we see that Jesus Himself calls us to be

people of eternal impact. Acts 1:8 in the Amplified version says:

“But you shall receive power (ability, efficiency, and might) when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, **and you shall be My witnesses in Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria and to the ends (the very bounds) of the earth.**”

In this verse we see that Jesus Himself is calling us to be people of eternal impact by being His witnesses! But have you ever wondered what it means to be a witness for Christ? Simply put, a witness gives credible evidence to the truth! We are called to be witnesses for Christ by reflecting Him in the way we live our lives and also by the words that we speak. In the book of Acts we see that the disciples lived lives that reflected Christ but they also spoke out boldly and proclaimed Jesus to the people around them!

By talking with people at their door or on the street, I have had the chance to

We are called to be witnesses for Christ by reflecting Him in the way we live our lives and also by the words we speak.

share Christ with university students, tourists, couples and teenagers; with Muslims, Buddhists, Atheists, Jews, Hindus, Satan worshippers, and nominal Christians alike. The more I share my faith with people, the more I am confronted with two inescapable truths.

We need to verbally communicate the Good News to people.

Firstly, there are *still* people *beyond count* in North America who have serious misconceptions concerning who Jesus is and what He has done for them; and secondly, that we, as believers, cannot expect unbelievers around us to be able to grasp and believe the Gospel by simply observing the way we live our lives as Christians. How will they know, understand and believe the Gospel unless someone stops them in their tracks and explains it to them? The Great Commission at the end of the book of Mark, which has been to all believers, is so simple:

“And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Mark 16:15 (NKJ)

In the verse above, the word “Go” is a verb that speaks of movement and action, and is coupled with the verb to “preach” which means to be a herald, to publish, to proclaim, to announce openly something which has been done. This means that we need to verbally communicate the Good News to people!

Much to my surprise, I have come across people who have *actually* thanked me for sharing my faith with them. One incident that I will never forget was when I shared my faith with a woman who had just recently emigrated from China to Canada whom I will call Ruth. Ruth had no friends at that time and was rather lonely in her small apartment. But that particular

day when I sat across from her and shared the Gospel with her, I was both moved and shocked to hear that she had never heard of the Name of Jesus before and didn’t even know who He was but asked me, “Who is Jesus?” As I explained to Ruth who Jesus is and what He did on the Cross out of His unconditional love for her, tears welled up in her eyes! She was so moved that by the end of the conversation we prayed together, and she invited Christ into her heart! I kept in touch with Ruth after that to see how she was growing in her faith. She told me that she was happy to be going to Church and thanked me for sharing Jesus with her!

Another story worth recounting was when I was passing out tracts one Friday night downtown. That hot summer evening, I spent a long time just handing out tracts to passers-by and did not have the chance to speak with anyone. Having the desire to converse with people, I prayed that the Lord would make a way so that I could share Him with someone-*anyone!* A couple of minutes after I prayed, I gave a tract to a tall French Canadian whom I will call Pierre. Pierre did not stop to talk with me, but returned a couple of minutes later to ask me what Church I attend! I answered Pierre’s question and spoke briefly with him only to tell him how much God loves him. As soon as I said that simple sentence, this big, tall man began to shed tears as he stood before me. He told me of how he had been running away from God because of marital problems, was no longer going to Church and felt far away from God. After listening to his story, I encouraged Pierre to go to God with his problems and not run away from Him! By the end of the conversation, Pierre thanked me and went on his way, his countenance was lifted!

It has been about two years since I first started evangelizing door to door and on the street. It has been a great adventure that has been so rewarding. Other team members and I have had the chance to hug strangers on the street who felt abandoned, to visit the lonely who had not been visited in a long time, to share the peace of Jesus with the confused and troubled! The stories could go on and on. But each and every story speaks of who Jesus is and how He touches people’s

lives with His love. In essence it’s all about Jesus and He gets all the glory!

As you read this article, you may be thinking that sharing the Gospel with others is a good idea but is not necessarily something you should busy your schedule with or make a priority in your list of things to do during the week; and that the task of sharing the Gospel with others is something that only church Pastors and Theology school graduates should strive to fulfill. But I am fully persuaded that the extraordinary God we worship wants to use ordinary people like you and I to be carriers of the Gospel as well! The Bible clearly says that we are the light of the world (Matthew 5:14) and the

I have had the chance to hug strangers, to visit the lonely and to share the peace of Jesus with the confused and troubled.

salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)! We are ambassadors of Christ (2 Corinthians 5:20); that means that we, as believers, are His representatives and messengers on this earth to those who are lost and without Christ! Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 5:18, states that God Himself has given *every* believer the ministry of reconciliation. This means that by both deed and word we are to aim at bringing others back into fellowship with their Creator. This verse in the amplified Bible reads as follows:

“But all things are from God, Who through Jesus Christ reconciled us to Himself [received us into favor, brought us into harmony with Himself] and gave to us the ministry of reconciliation [that by word and deed we might aim to bring others into harmony with Him].”

In addition to this, 2 Timothy 4: 2a in the NKJV states: “Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season.” This means we are to be ready and to seize every

possible opportunity to preach Christ! There may be people in your vicinity that God wants YOU to reach out to with His love. Whether they are family members or coworkers, God wants YOU specifically to reach out to them because He has placed them in YOUR sphere of influence!

Talking to people around us about Jesus may be intimidating; after all, they may snigger at what we have to say and may reject Him entirely. This has definitely happened to me on many occasions. But when I go out to share my faith with others, I refuse to focus on the possibility that people may reject the Good News. Rather I focus on the privilege of sharing the Truth with them, who Christ is to me and how He has changed my life. Many people are lonely and are looking for others to listen to them. Therefore, when the opportunity arises, I take the time to just listen to what they have to say before I begin to speak - to understand where they are coming from, their views on God, and their search for life's meaning, so that when I begin to share with them, it will be effective and Christ will become real to them. No one would want to listen to us as believers if we were to just bash them with Bible verses. People all around us are starving for God's love and need to see that we are sharing Christ with them because we genuinely care for them! Sharing Jesus with others has not only strengthened my faith, but it has brought me so much joy as well!

There are may be other thoughts that cross our minds when we think of sharing

our faith with others. Here are just a few of them:

-“I haven’t been trained to share Gospel with people, so I wouldn’t want to do so because I wouldn’t know what to say”; or

-“I am too young/too old to do this”; or

-“You don’t know the difficulties I am facing in my personal life, I have way too many problems of my own to be thinking about sharing the gospel with others”; or

-“I am too busy with work to be thinking about doing this.”

All these thoughts are simply excuses that we, as believers, make in order to avoid stepping out and sharing our faith with others! Sharing the Gospel with others is not a cumbersome task; it is easy and can be integrated in a practical way in everyday life. For example, you can build a friendship with a co-worker and share your testimony of how you came to Christ with them one day over lunch. Or you can give a Gospel tract along with the tip you leave for the waiter when you dine out. You can give a tract to the attendant at the gas station when you pay for gas. If you are a university student, you can share Christ with one of your professors at the end of the semester, by sharing your testimony in a Christmas card or a letter along with giving a Bible as a Christmas gift! If you commute to work by bus, train or subway, you can share Christ with the person that sits next to you along the way. All these are examples that I have personally done and have found to be effective!

I would like to encourage you that no

matter how young or old you are, or whatever circumstance or trial you face in life, God wants to use you as you are, so the glory of who He is will be displayed through you! When I first ventured out to share my faith with others, I felt inadequate and wasn’t sure how I was going to say what I wanted to say ,or what it would sound like to the people who would listen to me. But one thing propelled me to move forward and that was that I had met Jesus Christ Himself, whose love had changed my life and He had become a true Treasure to me. It was this Treasure that I wanted to share with my world!

Paul writes in Romans 1:16 in the NKJV:

“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes,”

And again in 2 Timothy 1:7 (NKJV):
“For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.”

As you step out in faith and share Jesus with your world, God will give you everything you need in order to be a witness for Him- the boldness, the courage and all the words that He wants you to say! Today is a brand new opportunity for you to shine brightly for Jesus! Today you can do all things through the One who empowers you from within! 🙌

An APPEAL

If you enjoy reading the *FORUM*, and derive a spiritual benefit from it, we appeal to you to help us defray part of the cost of publishing by sending a tax-deductible gift to the following address:

AEUNA Office

616 N. Glendale Ave., Suite 23
Glendale, CA 91206

Please specify that your gift is for the *FORUM*.



Dr. Puzant C. Krikorian

Puzant Krikorian was born in Aintab, Turkey, on July 18, 1909, to Coffing and Lucia Krikorian. In 1919, having survived the genocide, the family was deported and moved to Aleppo Syria, Beirut Lebanon and Larnaca Cyprus, for short periods of time before settling in Jerusalem, Palestine. Because of all the events in his life, Puzant did not receive a formal education until he was a teenager. Showing academic achievement, and upon the advice of his oldest brother, Samuel, his parents sent him to Beirut, Lebanon, to study medicine at the American University of Beirut.

In 1935, he graduated from medical school and moved to Tripoli, Lebanon, to work at the Presbyterian Mission Hospital as second in command under Dr. Boys. In 1941, he married Margaret Badeer. While in Tripoli, two of their children, Jane and Eileen, were born.

In 1949, they moved to Beirut, Lebanon, where they established the Christian Medical Center hospital. He partnered with Dr. Peter Manoogian, and Augustine Badeer, Margaret's brother, who acted as the hospital administrator. For twenty-six years the CMC hospital served primarily the Armenian community, and all others who walked through the doors of the hospital. Their third and fourth children, John and Claire, were born in Beirut.

During the years in Lebanon, Puzant Krikorian served in many ecclesiastical, communal, educational and medical organizations to improve the state of the Armenian population that arrived in Beirut after the genocide, and demonstrated the love of Christ by his actions. In 1975 Puzant and Margaret moved to Fresno California where they have lived ever since. Margaret passed away on August 1, 2008. Puzant followed her on October 31, 2009.

Jane Havoonjian, Eileen Shahbazian, John Krikorian, Claire Shakelian and their families would like to thank all who have expressed their love and prayers. We celebrate Puzant's life and the rich legacy he left us of loving God and unselfishly serving people. If there is one verse in the Bible that would characterize Dad's life, it would be 1 Thessalonians 4:11-12, "Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders, and so that you will not be dependent on anybody."

Donations, in lieu of flowers, may be made to AMAA for the benefit of KCHAG, the Christian Endeavor Summer Camp in Lebanon. Please make checks to the AMAA KCHAG Fund. Checks may be sent to AMAA, 31 W. Century Rd., Paramus, NJ 07652. Credit card donations may also be made at www.amaa.org.

- Submitted by Hovannes and Jane Havoonjian



Rakel Dink Inspires Crowds at **First Armenian Prebyterian Church** in Fresno

Hundreds of people from throughout the Golden State visited First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Fresno on October 2 and 3, 2009, to hear the inspiring testimony of Rakel Yagbasan Dink. Mrs. Dink, widow of the martyred Istanbul journalist Hrant Dink, visited FAPC as part of the church's harvest season focus on the persecuted church, worldwide.

Arriving early in the week of September 30, 2009, Mrs. Dink called on the clergy of the Armenian churches in Fresno and Fowler, visited leading organizations in the Armenian community and toured a number of businesses. She also spent time in fellowship with the FAPC Session and Board of Deacons.

Mrs. Dink's October 2, 2009 presentation was in the Armenian language and her October 3, 2009 presentation was primarily in the English language. Each talk was preceded by special music and a screening of the acclaimed European documentary, "Hrant Dink: Mercy and Truth Have Met Together". This October 2008 motion picture was a production of Net for God, part of the Chemin Neuf Community of Lyon, France.

A native of Malatya, Hrant Dink grew up in the Gedikpasha Armenian Orphanage of Istanbul and the Tuzla Armenian Children's Camp of Marmara, where he met his future bride. In the Lenten season of 1996, Dink founded AGOS Weekly, the only newspaper in the Republic of Turkey to be published in



Mrs. Rakel Dink at FAPC



both Armenian and Turkish. As the founding editor-in-chief, Dink focused on Turkish-Armenian relations, the need for democratization of the nation, and the rights and roles of minority communities in Anatolia.

Prosecuted three times for allegedly denigrating Turkishness under the Penal Code, Dink was assassinated on January 19, 2007 as he returned to the AGOS editorial offices. Four days later, more than 100,000 citizens marched in his funeral procession, many carrying signs reading, "We are all Armenians, we are all Hrant Dink."

Since Hrant Dink's passing, Rakel Dink

has spoken at home and abroad about her husband's ideals and aims, her enduring Christian faith, and the pressing need for greater justice in the land of her birth. Appearing before Turkish judicial authorities, she prayed for mercy for her husband's killers, "with the love and justice of Jesus Christ, one who knows and sees all."

Mrs. Rakel Dink called Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian personally after the event to thank him and FAPC, and to note that she had been very blessed by the time she shared with FAPC.

- Reported by Philip Tavlian, Esq.

90th Annual Meeting of AMAA Celebrates 20th Anniversary of Armenian Children's Milk Fund

By Ani A. Janbazian, DMD

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) held its 90th annual meeting in Providence, Rhode Island, from October 16-18, marking a significant milestone not just for the missionary organization, but also for the Armenian Children's Milk Fund, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year. The Armenian Children's Milk Fund, an all-volunteer organization, which works in partnership with the AMAA, has been sending life-saving infant formula to Armenia since 1989 and was AMAA's highlighted affiliated organization at their annual banquet this year.

Over 100 people attended the AMAA meeting, including AMAA board members, Armenian Evangelical ministers, church representatives, chapter delegates, worldwide mission partners and friends from all over the world. On Friday, October 16, all were welcomed by Rev. Mgo Mekredijian, pastor of the host church, The Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church of Providence, R.I.,

with introductory greetings by Dr. H. Steven Aharonian, President of the AMAA. A seminar *Investing and Financial Stewardship* was presented by speakers Harold Nahigian, President of Nationwide Investments & Insurance, Inc. as well as Todd Polyniak, CPA, Principal and Director of accounting and auditing at Sax, Macy, Fromm & Co., AMAA's independent auditors. Following the seminar, the AMAA Board of Directors meeting began where all who were present heard the updates and reports of the activities as well as a discussion of future plans.

The 90th annual meeting began on Saturday, at 9:30 am at the *Crowne Plaza* in Warwick, R.I., with reports from officers and administrators, as well as from the numerous committees, affiliated boards, organizations, churches and chapters. The names of the newly elected members were announced as follows: H. Steven Aharonian M.D., Charles Bilezikian, Rev. Ara Guekguezian, Berjouhy Gulesserian, Lucy Janjigian, Aram R. Minnetian, Robert Messerlian, Carol Bezirgian Perez, M.D., and Michael Voskian, D.M.D.

The annual meeting banquet was held that evening in *The Bristol Ballroom* at the *Crowne Plaza* where all members and guests were welcomed by Andrew Torigian, Executive Director of AMAA, followed by an invocation by Rev. Mgo Mekredijian.

Guests of the evening and the participants in



Jean Marie Papelian, Esq., Armenian Children's Milk Fund Chair with Lilit Galstyan of Vanadzor, Armenia

the program were introduced by the Master of Ceremonies, Melanie Zeitounian of the host church. Warm greetings were given by H. Steven Aharonian, M.D. (AMAA President), Rev. Joseph Matossian (Minister to Armenian Evangelical Union of North America), Rev. Joel Mikaelian (Armenian Evangelical Union of France President), Rev. Harout Selimian (Armenian Evangelical World Council President) and Rev. Dr. René Leonian (AMAA Armenia Representative). The highlight of the evening was the celebration of the 20th anniversary of the Armenian Children's Milk Fund, where the organization's chair Jeanmarie Papelian, Esq. acknowledged the fund's milestone with a video presentation that depicted the 20 years of bringing life-saving infant formula to the children of Armenia. In addition to the video presentation, a special guest, Lilit Galstyan, from Vanadzor, Armenia, was introduced. Lilit was one of the thousands of infants from Armenia who received the infant formula during the first few years



Andy Torigian, AMAA Executive Director presenting a Certificate of Appreciation to Dr. & Mrs. Albert & Sue Phillips



Andy Torigian, AMAA Executive Director a Framed letter from Mr. Henry Morganthau to Mr. Stephen Philibosian from 1916 and picture of Mr. Morganthau to Mrs. Joyce Philibosian Stein in honor of the generosity of her father, Mr. Stephen Philibosian

beautiful musical program followed with soloist Gohar Manjelijian and pianist Levon Hovsepian. Andy Torigian presented to Dr. Albert Phillips and his wife Sue a certificate of appreciation for all their work in coordinating and leading a medical team to Armenia in July 2009. They gave a presentation of the work accomplished there and shared their appreciation for the hard work of their entire team. Also, a letter from Mr. Henry Morganthau to Mr. Stephen Philibosian from 1916 and picture of Mr. Morganthau were beautifully mounted and presented by Andy

Torigian to Mrs. Joyce Stein in honor of the generosity of her father, Mr. Stephen Philibosian, in both time and finances to assist needy Armenians. A benediction by the Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian concluded the evening's banquet.

The 90th Annual Meeting Worship Service and Installation of AMAA officers were held the next morning at The Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church. Rev. Avedis Boynerian, moderator of the

AEUNA, presented the Armenian sermon with Rev. Greg Haroutunian delivering the English sermon. Executive Director Andy Torigian gave a service of remembrance "to those AMAA members who concluded their earthly pilgrimage during the past year and joined the heavenly audience." The service was concluded with the installation of the newly elected AMAA Board members by the Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian, Executive Director of the Armenian Evangelical World Council.

The entire weekend would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of the AMAA staff, The Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church, their minister Rev. Mgo Mekredijian and the Church Council for hosting the meeting and the ladies of the church for preparing the lunches and dinners, as well as Carlos and Nancy Taraktzian of the host church for playing a key role in handling the weekend's logistics.

This year's 90th annual meeting was once again a success, bringing all participants together in fellowship to praise God for the AMAA and its services in 24 countries around the world.

The AMAA serves the religious, educational and social needs of Armenian communities around the world. The AMAA was founded in 1918 in Worcester, MA and was incorporated in New York in 1920. AMAA is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

of her life when she was unable to breast feed because she and her mother were both suffering a life threatening infection from tainted well water. Without the formula, she may not have been alive today. Now 17 years old and healthy, Lilit gave an emotional testimony and a word of gratitude and thanked the AMAA and the Milk Fund for their support. A

Merдинian Student's Astounding Aptitude in Math



GREGOR GRIGORIAN, a 6th grade student, took the Johns Hopkins University Talent Search SCAT Test, which is rendered to 9th graders. His results are notable.

Gregor has performed in the 99th percentile in the Math section, scoring higher than 99% of the 9th graders on a national scale. The Merдинian Administration, Faculty, and Staff are extremely

proud of Gregor's profound accomplishment and success.

Every year the Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth recognizes students' high academic talents through their participation in challenging above-level tests designed to measure a student's mathematical and/or verbal reasoning abilities. Each year a number of Merдинian Middle School students participate in this contest.

2009 AEWFF Retreat: Serving the Lord with Gladness

By Lisa Kradjian

The 11th Biennial Conference of the Armenian Evangelical Women's Fellowship Western Region, was held in September 25-27, 2009, at the Embassy Suites Hotel, in San Luis Obispo, California. The weekend was filled with loving fellowship, insightful teaching and energized worship. The theme was "Serve the Lord with Gladness" (Psalm 100:2).

Chaplain Major Lucy Der Garabedian, our keynote speaker, is a chaplain in the U.S. Army, currently stationed in Hawaii. Originally from Beirut and a graduate of Haigazian University and the Near East School of Theology, Major Lucy is also presently working on her Doctor of Divinity Degree at Erskine Theological Seminary in South Carolina.

She shared some of the highs and lows of her ministry experiences in the military.

Despite dealing with death and the psychological turmoil of soldiers and their families every day, she is still able, through Jesus Christ's grace, love and power, to serve Him with gladness.

Major Lucy also cited Genesis 29 and the story of Rachel and Leah, comparing their experiences as women (the beautiful and the unwanted) and what the attendees could learn from both sisters when they choose to focus on serving and praising the Lord, instead of dwelling on their circumstances.

Straight from the retreat, Major Lucy headed to Arizona, to meet with a homecoming troop of soldiers from Afghanistan, and their families, to assist with counseling and re-integrating them into family and civilian life.

Outgoing AEWFF Chair, Houri Melkonian, led the group with her

wonderful brand of energy, love and humor. The worship team of Cynthia Ketenjian, Melissa Ishkanian and Searan Salibian kept the group's minds and hearts set on the Lord with a combination of both old and new hymns and songs, with the lyrics projected onscreen by Nyri Minassian.

Seminars included "Seeing Life's Challenges from God's Perspective" led by Dr. Ann Karagozian Sarafian, and "Sharing Testimonials," led by Rouzan Bosnoyan. For the first time, the conference also provided a professional nurse, Rosig Der Tavitian, and a professional counselor, AEWFF Founder Roseann Emerzian Saliba.

The banquet, put on by the ladies of Calvary Armenian Congregational Church in San Francisco, was an enjoyable evening featuring a prime rib buffet, a





The new office for the 2010 term

talent show, an Armenian Evangelical Church quiz, a “Guess the Pastor’s Wife” baby picture quiz, and a slide show of AEWf conferences over the years.

The Sunday morning worship service was led by Minister to the Union, Rev. Joseph Matossian, who preached sermons in Armenian and English and administered Holy Communion.

The outgoing board of AEWf was commended for their years of service: Houri Melkonian, Chair; Grace Kurkjian, Vice Chair; Maral Arikian, Secretary; Souzi Baghdikian, Treasurer; Suzie Matossian, Advisor; and Members at Large Mary Lou Bagdasarian, Geraldine Tahejian, Rouzan Bosnoyan, Sevan Balabanian, Angel Bedirian, and Marie Birebirian.



The 2009 committee with Speaker Lucy



The incoming AEWf Board was elected and installed as follows: Diana Jamgotchian, Chair; Marie Birebirian, Vice Chair; Maral Arikian, Secretary; Hasmig Sherbetjian, Treasurer; Leda Kissoyan, Historian; Advisors Suzie Matossian and Houri Melkonian; and Members at Large Renee Tovmassian, Sue Khushigian, Arpi Haleblian, Angel Bedirian, Kathy Jenanian and Nora Balabanian.

More than 110 ladies attended the conference, and the AEWf looks forward to everyone returning for the retreat in 2011. As Chairman, Houri stated: “God willing, we will see you in two years – and you will bring a friend with you.”

Profile of a Dedicated Christian

Anie Manoushagian Brings Her Skills and Compassion to Elderly Armenians in the Community



Anie Manoushagian's kind and nurturing nature is not only part of her personality, but is what has aided in her success as a nurse for more than 35 years. She earned her degree at the American University of Beirut, Lebanon, in the early 70's and remained there working in a surgical unit. After a few years, she traveled to Saudi Arabia where she worked as a triage nurse and a midwife. Upon returning to Beirut, she refined her skills by working as an operating room nurse. When Anie came to

the U.S. in 1979, she arrived in Boston with a wealth of experience, and had the opportunity to work at some of our major hospitals in their intensive care units.

When Anie married Berj Manoushagian in 1987, she chose to work with him at his printing business in Cambridge, while she continued to take courses to maintain her nursing license. While she wasn't actively looking to return to nursing, she was approached about a unique nursing position at *Arevik*, a new Adult Day Healthcare Facility located in the heart of Watertown. She felt it was a natural fit for her and a pleasant transition back to her love of nursing. She is very pleased with her work at the center and believes that she is able to help improve the lives of the participants who visit each day.

Each morning at *Arevik*, Anie checks each participant's blood pressure and other health indicators, while she keeps the kitchen staff up to date on each person's food needs or restrictions. Anie also lectures on health issues, speaking in Armenian so there will not be any vital

information that participants cannot understand.

What's unique about *Arevik* is that everyone is Armenian; the staff members are Armenian, the door to door transportation is provided by Armenian speaking drivers, and even the television programming obtained through satellite is all in Armenian. Moreover, members of the local Armenian clergy come to visit regularly. Our own Dr. Arpi Boynerian has visited the center and lectured about eye health.

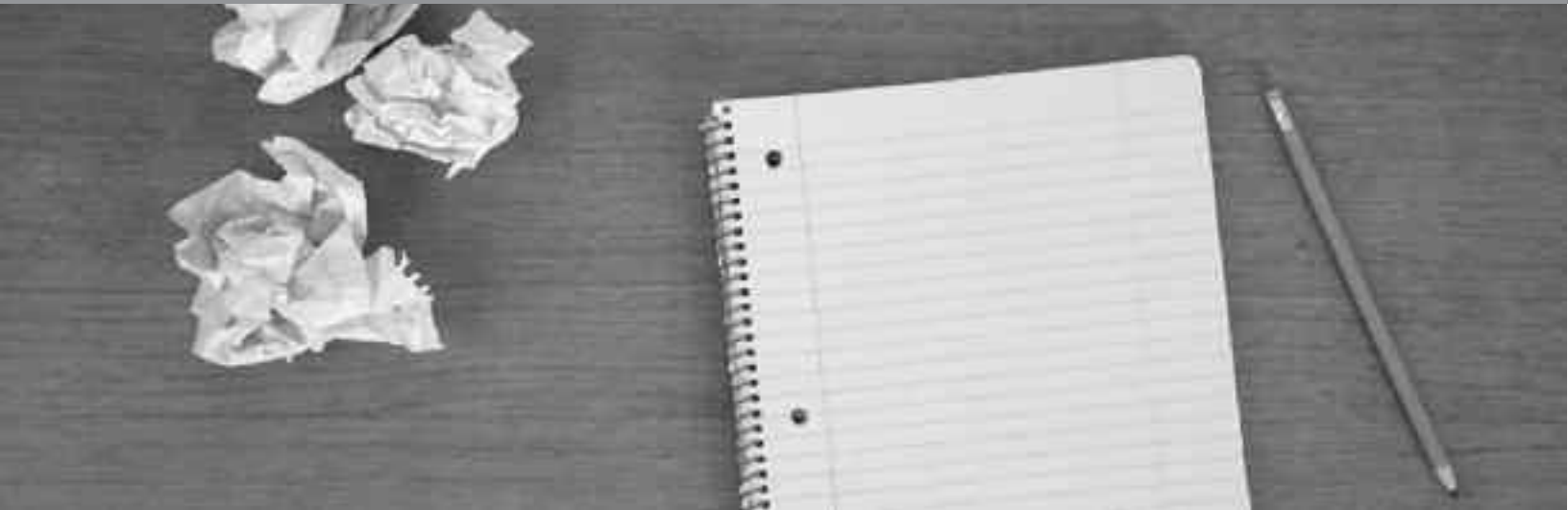
Anie is the daughter of the Rev. Barkev Orchanian who visits the center twice a week to share God's Word.

Anie has served on many Boards and Committees at the Armenian Memorial Church, and for two consecutive years, she was elected to serve as Moderator. Her smile and sweet, caring disposition always brighten the halls of the church and her workplace.

- Reported by Donna Boole Yerganian

A Renowned Researcher

A research paper titled, *Religious Beliefs, Social Support, Self-Efficacy and Adjustment to Cancer*, written by **Dr. Barbara Hovsepian**, member of First Armenian Presbyterian Church in Fresno, was first published in the journal *Psycho-Oncology* and then provided in summary form to nearly 20,000 readers in the October 8, 2009 issue of the BCN (BreastCancer.Net) News. The BCN News is read in nearly every major cancer and health organization, all the major breast cancer organizations, and major research laboratories and universities around the world.



« Գոհությի՛ն Աստուծոյ »

Վեր. Պարգեւ Ն. Տարագճեան

« Բայց գոհությիւն Աստուծոյ, որովհետեւ Քրիստոսի հետ միացած՝ միշտ կ'առաջնորդուինք Աստուծով՝ իբրեւ գերիները Քրիստոսի յաղթական թափորին: Անոյշ բոյրի անան՝ որ կը տարածուի ամէն տեղ՝ Աստուած կը գործածէ մեզ որպէսզի ճանչցնենք Քրիստոսը բոլոր մարդոց » (Բ. Կորնթ. 2.14)

Good News for Modern Man – 1996.

Ներածական.-

Կորնթոսի եկեղեցին պառակտումներու թատերավայր հանդիսացած էր: Հակամարտ տարրեր - « Պօղոսեան », « Ապողոսեան », Կեփասեան », ելն. - ահագին դժուարութիւններ կը յարուցանէին՝ արգելք դառնալով եկեղեցիին հոգեւոր յառաջդիմութեան: Պօղոս Առաքեալ շատ վատ կը զգար ինքզինքն հոն տիրող կացութեան շուրջ տեղեկութիւններ ստանալով, մանաւանդ որ իր անունն ալ կը ծամծմուէր: Ու քանի որ ան չէր կրնար իր ծառայութեան դաշտը թողուլ, իրեն գործակից Տիտոսը որկեց հոն, որպէսզի խաղաղութիւն հաստատէ: Տիտոս, շնորհիւ իր հասուն հաւատացեալ, ու բնատրոյթեամբ խաղաղասէր ըլլալուն, յաջողեցաւ Սուրբ Հոգիին օգնութեամբ խաղաղութիւնը վերահաստատել: Ու սպա, ան վերադարձաւ Մակեդոնիա՝ Պօղոսի մօտ:

- « Գոհությի՛ն Աստուծոյ », աղաղակեց Առաքեալը: Եկեղեցին խաղաղած էր: Ան գոհությիւն տուաւ Աստուծոյ անսխտոսի համար որ Իր շնորհքով կրցած էր խաղաղութիւնը վերահաստատել այդ փոթորկած եկեղեցիին մէջ: Տարեվերջի առիթով՝ երբ շատ բաներու համար գոհությիւն կը յայտնենք Աստուծոյ, կրնա՞նք մենքզմեզ լուրջ քննարկութեան

ենթարկել, ու գոհությիւն յայտնել Իրեն՝ որ յաղթական հանած է մեզ՝ մեր միշտ հոգեւոր պայքարներուն մէջ: Անշո՛ւշտ թէ չենք մոռնար, եւ պէտք չէ մոռնանք գոհությիւն տալ միութեան այն բոլոր օրհնութիւններուն, այն բոլոր նուաճումներուն եւ յաջողութիւններուն համար զորս ունեցանք Աստուծոյ շնորհքով: Անշո՛ւշտ թէ գոհությիւն կուտանք Աստուծոյ որ այս երկրին մէջ խաղաղ ու երջանիկ տարի մը եւս բոլորեցինք, հոգ չէ թէ յարաբերաբար տնտեսական նեղ դրութեան ենթարկուեցանք: Բայց տարբեր է դրդապատճառը Պօղոս Առաքեալի արձակած գոհունակութեան: Ան գոհությիւն կը յայտնէ որ հոգեւոր պատերազմ մը շահուած է Կորնթոսի եկեղեցիին մէջ, ու Աստուծոյ շնորհքով՝ հանդարտած են փոթորկած կիրքերը, ու յաղթանակ տարուած՝ անոնց վրայ:

Տարուան այս եղանակին, կը հրապիրուինք մեր անձերը լուրջ ինքնաքննութեան ենթարկել ու մէկիկ մէկիկ թուել այն բոլոր փորձութիւնները որոնց ենթարկուեցանք, ու յաղթական ելանք, եւ կամ պարտուեցանք: Աստուծոյ ներկայութեան մէջ կատարուած այս ինքնաքննութիւնը կրնայ մեզ ամօթահար թողուլ, կրնայ յուսահատութեան մատնել, եւ կամ անելի խոնարհութիւն շնորհել մեզի՝ որ ապաշխարութեան առաջին քայլը պիտի հանդիսանայ: Խօսի՛նք օրինակներով.

ա. Կրնա՞նք գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ որ Ան նուաճած է մեր խոշոր ու սին *հպարտութիւնը*: Թերեւս այնքա՛ն հպարտացած ենք մեր կատարած նիւթական նուաճումներով, ու դիզած հարստութիւնով որ սկսած ենք անարգել աղքատն ու անօթին, ու վերէն դիտել զանոնք: Մենք մեզ շնորհատրած ենք մեր ճարպիկութեան, ու բացառիկ տաղանդին համար որոնք շնորհի տիրացած ենք մեծ հարստութեան: Հպարտացած ենք մեր սրամտութիւնով՝ ինչ որ մղած է մեզ արհամարհելու, ու ծիծաղելու ամէն անոնք վրայ որոնք գրկուած են այդ շնորհքէն: Այո՛, հպարտացած ենք որ կրցած ենք մեր սուր խօսքով ու գրիչով անուանարկել մեր

հակառակորդը, ու «ցեխին մէջ տապալել» զայն՝ որպէսզի ակ չհամարձակի խօսիլ մեզի դէմ: Ա՛հ, որքա՛ն խոշոր, որքա՛ն սին ու ամբարտաւան դարձած է մեր հպարտութիւնը: Արդեօք կրցա՞ծ ենք յաղթանակ տանիլ մեր հպարտութեան վրայ, ու գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ:

բ. Կրնա՞նք գոհությւն յայտնել Աստուծոյ որ նուաճած ենք մեր ժխտութիւնը եւ ազահութիւնը: Ո՛րքան ժխտ եղած ենք զնահատելու մէջ՝ մեր պաշտօնեաները, մեր գործակիցները, հոգեւորականները, կրթական գործիչներն ու բարերարները: Մեր այս ժխտութեան պատճառաւ ո՛չ միայն զԱստուած վշտացուցած ենք, հապա ապերախտ գտնուած ենք: Մենք կորսնցուցած ենք մեր դիրքը, նաեւ ծառայութեան առիթներ՝ եկեղեցիին ու ընկերութեան մէջ: Կորսնցուցած ենք նաեւ իրա՛ւ բարեկամներ: Հապա՞ մեր *ազահութիւնն* ու *կծծիութիւնը*...: Կ'արժէ հարց տալ. Աստուած նուաճա՞ծ է մեր կծծիութիւնը, նուաճա՞ծ է ու տիրացա՞ծ մեր դրամապահականներուն եւ տնտեսական աղբիւրներուն: Կրնա՞նք գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ որ շնորհք կ'ընէ մեզի որպէսզի Իր Տան՝ Եկեղեցիին՝ նիւթական կարիքները հոգանք: Կրնա՞նք գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ որ մեզ մղած է բարեգործութիւն ընելու, եւ հոգալու կարիքները մեզմէ նուազ բախտատու եղող ազգակիցին ե՛ւ օտարին:

գ. Կրնա՞նք գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ որ Ան նուաճած է մեր հաճոյսպաշտութիւնը: Անշուշտ թէ հաճոյքը աստուածային շնորհք եւ օրհնութիւն է. սակայն աաա՛հ. մենք կը մոռնանք գոհությւն յայտնել Աստուծոյ որ Ի՛նք է իրա՛ւ հաճոյքներու եւ ուրախութեան աղբիւրը, ու փոխարէն՝ կը պաշտենք հաճոյքը ու կը դառնանք հաճոյսպաշտ: Երբ հաճոյքը դառնայ նպատակ, ու պաշտամունքի առարկայ, այդ պարագային ան կը տիրանայ մեր կեանքին, ու մենք կը դառնանք անոր գերիները: Հաճոյքներու տիրանալու մեր տենչին մէջ՝ մենք կը փորձուինք ուրիշները միջոց դարձնել մեր քմահաճոյքին, ու կը վերածենք զանոնք լոկ առարկաներու, եւ ոչ թէ Աստուծոյ պատկերովը ստեղծուած անձերու:

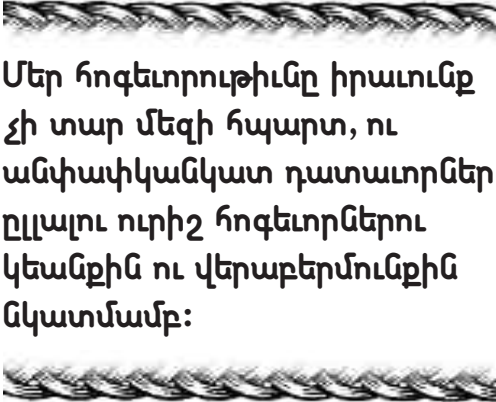
դ. Վերջապէս, կրնա՞նք գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ որ մեզ փրկած է Իր Որդւոյն Յիսուս Քրիստոսի կեանքին ընծայաբերումովը, Անոր ենթարկուած խաչի մահով, բայց նաեւ յաղթական յարութիւնով: Կրնա՞նք գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ որ Տէր Յիսուս կ'ապրի մեր սրտին մէջ, ու Իր Սուրբ Հոգիով կը դաստիարակէ մեզ որպէսզի իրա՛ւ հոգեւորներ ըլլանք: Սակայն զգո՛ւշ. հոգեւորութիւնը վկայագիր մը չէ որ մենք կատարելութեան հասած ենք: Հոգեւորութիւնը պէտք չէ որ անձնականացուի այն աստիճան որ մեզի իրաւունք տայ ուրիշներու վրայ «հոգեւոր» բռնութիւն բանեցնելու, զանոնք ոչ-

հոգեւոր կամ՝ նուազ հոգեւոր նկատելու: Մեր հոգեւորութիւնը իրաւունք չի տար մեզի հպարտ, ու անփափկանկատ դատաւորներ ըլլալու ուրիշ հոգեւորներու կեանքին ու վերաբերմունքին նկատմամբ: Մենք, իբրեւ հոգեւորներ, կը փորձուինք մտածել ու գործել այնպէ՛ս՝ որպէս թէ ճշմարտութիւնը մե՛ր կողմն է, ու եթէ ուրիշ հոգեւորներ տարբեր մտածեն՝ անոնք սխալ են, հոգեւոր չեն, ու դժոխքի արժանի են: Անկասկած ա՛յս էր Կորնթոսի եկեղեցիին մէջ ծագած վէճին ու փոթորիկին պատճառը, այսինքն, զիրար քննադատել, իրարու

հոգեւոր կեանքն ու գաղափարները դատապարտել, ու զիրար դժոխք դրկել իրա՛ւ հոգեւոր չըլլալուն համար...:

Հոգեւոր հպարտութիւնը ամենէն ահաւոր մեղքն է որ աներներ կը գործէ եկեղեցիներու եւ հասարակացեանքներու փոխ-յարաբերութեան մէջ: Հիմնապաշտութիւնը մերթ իբրեւ դիմակ կամ զգեստ գործածելով՝ դատապարտութեան կ'ենթարկենք ու կը մեկուսացնենք այլախոհ բայց ճշմարտապէս հոգեւոր անձեր եւ հասարականութիւններ: Որքա՛ն պէտք ունինք Տէր Յիսուսի խնամարհութեան, եւ սիրոյ անկեղծ ու ճշմարիտ վարուեցողութեան: Մենք կրնանք իսկապէս գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ եթէ Իր շնորհքով յաջողած ենք յաղթել մեր հոգեւոր հպարտութեան, եւ ուրիշները դատապարտելու փորձութեան: «Ընդունեցէ՛ք զիրար այնպէ՛ս ինչպէս որ Քրիստոս ընդունեց մեզ Հօր Աստուծոյ փառքին համար»: Ա՛յս է Պօղոս Առաքեալին պատուէրը Հռովմի եկեղեցիին: Մենք իսկապէս կարենալու ենք ընդունիլ զիրար Քրիստոսի հոգիով, ու կարենալու ենք նաեւ սիրով գործակցիլ նոյնի՛սկ հոգեւոր հարցերու մէջ մեզի տարակարծիք եղող հոգեւոր եղբայրներու եւ քոյրերու հետ: Մենք կրնա՞նք գոհությւն տալ Աստուծոյ որ Իր շնորհքով յաղթած ենք հոգեւոր հպարտութեան, ըսե՛նք՝ սնանկութեան՝ որ կը բաժնէ մեզ ուրիշ հոգեւոր անձերէ, ու կը մղէ մեզ դատապարտելու զանոնք որոնք մեզի պէս չեն խորհիր:

Տա՛լ Աստուած որ զայիք նոր տարեշրջանին մէջ Քրիստոսի յաղթական թափորին միանանք, ու գոհությւն տանք որ մեզի յաղթական կը դարձնէ մեր դիմագրասած փորձութիւններուն մէջ՝ որպէսզի խաղաղութեան մէջ ապրինք, ու գործակցիք իրարու հետ, ու Ի՛ր փառքին համար: Ամէն: 🙏



Իմաստութիւնը՝ Իմաստութենէ Ծագում Կ'առնէ

Վեր. Արա Չաքրեան

Sermon preached at Holy Trinity Armenian Church
November 22, 2009

Gen. 1:26-31 “Wisdom Comes from Wisdom”



Տեր Յիսուս Քրիստոսի Ծնունդէն եօթը դարեր առաջ, Չինացիներ կառուցեցին իրենց այդ հոշակաւոր եւ հոյակապ պարիսպը, որուն երկարութիւնը 4000 մղոնէն աւելի է եւ զայն ամբողջացնելու աշոխատանքը տեւեց հարիւր տարի. սակայն մէկ միլիոն անձեր մահացան այդ ընթացքին:

Պարիսպին նպատակն էր՝ իրենք զիրենք պաշտպանել թշնամիներու (Մոնկոլներու) յարձակումներէն եւ կասեցնել զանոնք որ երկիրը չկարենան մտնել:

Սակայն՝ հակառակ այս բոլորին, հետաքրքրական էր որ թշնամին այս հարիւր տարիներու ընթացքին 3 անգամներ յաջողեցաւ յարձակիլ առանց պարիսպը քանդելու եւ կամ ալ անոր պատերուն վնաս հասցնելու: Ի՞նչպէս:

Կ'ընտի թէ մինչ ծնողները զբաղ էին ապահովութեան համար գործելու (այդ պարիսպները կառուցելով)՝ անոնք մոռցած էին իրենց զաւակներուն ուղղամտութիւն սորվեցնել: Որովհետեւ պատմութիւնը կը յայտնէ թէ թշնամին, պարզապէս դռնապանը կաշատելով կարողացած էր երկիրը մտնել:

Այսօր ալ, նոյնանման բաներ կը պատահին որոնք կը պահանջեն մեր անմիջական ուշադրութիւնը: Այսօր ալ, մինչ ծնողներ զգաղուած են իրենց օրապահիկը շահելով եւ աշխատանքի լծուելով, բաւարար ժամանակ չեն ունենար իրենց զաւակներուն հոգեւոր դաստիարակութիւն հայթայթելու:

Մինչ այդ՝ այս մեր նոր սերունդին, (յատկապէս պետական վարժարաններու մէջ) մտքերը կը պղտորուին սխալ եւ մարդոց կողմէ հնարուած եզրակացութիւններով: Այնպիսի միջոցներ կը սորվին որոնք մեր ընդունած վարդապետութեան եւ ընտանեկան կեանքի սահմանները կը վտանգեն:

Օրինակ, կարգ մը անհաւատ պատմաբաններ կ'ուսուցանեն որ կրօնը ծագում ունեցաւ երբ մարդիկ երկինքը դիտելով սկսան Արեւն ու Լուսինը պաշտել: Վերջապէս անոնք կը պնդեն թէ Աստուած մարդ արարածը չ'ստեղծեց, այլ մարդիկ զԱստուած ստեղծեցին:

Անոնք կ'ըսեն թէ Աստուծոյ գոյութեան փաստեր բնա

չկան: Առաւել, աշխարհի մէջ գտնուող ցարը, տառապանքը, ու դժբախտութիւնը, ապացոյց են բարի Աստուծոյ գոյութիւն չունենալուն:

Ով սիրելի Հայրենակիցներ, ինչպէս անցեալի Չինացիներուն պատահեցաւ, մենք ալ երկրորդական եւ ժամանակաւոր զբաղումներու պատճառաւ չտարուինք ու չմոռանք փոխանցել մեր հաւատքի ճշմարտութիւնները, մեր զաւակներուն:

Այսօր Աստուծոյ Հոգին բոլորիս կոչ կ'ուղղէ դէպի հոգեզարթում: Թշնամին այսօր խորամանկ կերպով, ոչ թէ միայն մեր նոր սերունդին մտքերը կը պղտորէ այսպիսի գաղափարներով՝ այլ անցեալին ալ ըրած է, եւ շատերուն հաւատքը կործանած է Համայնավարական կամ այլ եւ այլ փիլիսոփայութիւններով:

Սակայն Աստուծոյ խօսքը դարեր առաջ բացայայտօրէն զգուշացուցեր է մեզ՝ որ թոյլ չտանք թշնամիին որ խուժէ մեր ընտանեկան եւ հաւատքի պարիսպներէն ներս: Հապա քաջաբար սերտենք ու ընթրենք կեանքի իրողութիւնը ու անոր նշանակութեան ճշմարտութիւնները:

Հետեւաբար պէտք չունինք շատ հեռուն երթալու որպէսզի Աստուծոյ մատերու հետքերուն սկանաւտա ըլլանք:

Ծննդոց գրքի առաջին գլուխին մէջ կը կարդանք ստեղծագործութեան մասին: Երբ մարդը ստեղծելու ժամանակը հասաւ, Աստուած ըսաւ. «Մեր պատկերով, մեր նմանութեան պէս մարդ ընենք, որ տիրապետեն ծովու ձուկերուն, երկինքի թռչուններուն եւ ընտանի անասուններուն, ամբողջ երկրին, ու երկրի վրայ սողացող բոլոր սողուններուն»:

Այսօր եթէ մարդ արարած թոյլ տայ որ ճշմարտութեան հոգին զինք մղէ, ան պիտի կարողանայ նշմարել որ անկարելի է Աստուծոյ գոյութիւնը ուրանալ, որքան ալ աշխարհ ջանայ մեզ համոզել մարդկային գաղափարներով:

Մենք պէտք է անդրադառնանք որ մեր մէջ կարգ մը յատկանիշներ կան առաւելութիւններ կան որոնք ուրացումը անկարելի է: Նոյնիսկ գիտնականներ՝ մինչեւ այսօր կը

ջանան անոնց յարմար բացատրություններ գտնել:

Ի հարկե ես կարող եմ մի քանի նախադասություններով կարգ մը օրինակներ տալ՝ սկսելով տիեզերքէն որուն հաստատումն է բժախնություն մարում օրէնքները ամէնախելացի մարդն ալ կը հիացնէ:

Սակայն որովհետեւ մասնագէտը չեմ այդ գիտութեան, ինձի համար նախընտրելի է որ Աստուածաբանական առումով մօտենամ այս հարցին:

Ուրեմն մեր ուշադրութիւնը դարձնելով այսօրուայ հատուածին, պիտի տեսնենք թէ Աստուծոյ խօսքը կ'ըսէ թէ Աստուած «Իր նմանութիւնովը մեզ ստեղծեց»: Ուրեմն այս ո՛չ թէ միայն հոգեւոր նշանակութիւն մը ունի, այլ կարող է նոյնիսկ մեր այսօրուայ հարցին պատասխաններ տալ որոնք 3 հակիրճ կէտերէ կը բաղկանան:

Ա. Ապացոյցը որ մարդ կարող է անդրադասումալ իր ինքնութեան ծագումին. երբ մարդ արարածը գիտական առումով հարց կ'ընէ ստեղծագործութեան մասին, կը հարցնէ ի՞նչպէս իմաստութիւնը յառաջ եկաւ անհիմաստէն»:

Հակառակ այդ պատմաբաններու ըսածին, մարդուն միտքը Աստուած ստեղծեց: Եթէ ճշմարտութիւնը ընդունինք՝ նոյնիսկ այս 21րդ դարուն մէջ ալ, մարդ միշտ մերժած է զԱստուած: Նոյնիսկ Պօղոս Առաքեալը կը բացատրէ (Գաղ. 5:17), թէ մարդ արարածը անելի կը նախնորէ մեղքի մէջ ապրիլ քան զԱստուած դաւանիլ ու Անոր հաշտուիլ ըլլալ:

Ուրեմն, անելի շիտակ հարցը պէտք է ըլլայ թէ մարդ ի՞նչպէս Աստուծոյ գաղափարը նոյնիսկ կարողացաւ հնարել, կամ ի՞նչու պիտի ուզէ զԱյն պաշտել: Չէ՞ որ մարդուն բուն բնատրոփութիւնը հպարտութեամբ լեցուած է եւ ինք կ'ուզէ իշխել, հսկել եւ Աստուած ըլլալ:

Արդեօ՞ք կարելի է որ Աստուած ինք ստեղծեց մեզ, եւ որքան ալ մեղքի մէջ ընկնամք ըլլանք, կարծես մեր մէջ զգացում մը կայ որ մեր հետաքրքրութիւնը եւ ամբողջ էութիւնը կ'ուղղէ իր Ստեղծիչին:

Ուրեմն, մեր ինքնութիւնն է որ կը յայտնէ մեզի թէ որքան ալ մեղքով ինկած ըլլանք, մեր խղճի յանդիմանութիւնը եւ մեր էութեան մէջ հաստատումն ճշմարտութեան հետաքրքրութիւնը, կարող են ցոյց տալ որ մենք անհիմաստ պայթումի մը արդիւնքը չենք եւ ոչ ալ միայն մկաններէ եւ բջիջներէ բաղկացած տոպրակ մըն ենք:

Քանի որ մենք կենդանի Աստուծոյ նմանութիւնով ստեղծուած ենք, մեքենայի պէս չենք, այլ օժտուած ենք ազատ կամքով ապրելու, որ մեր երկրորդ կէտն է -

Բ. Տէրը մեզի Ազատ Կամք տուաւ, որովհետեւ ճշմարիտ ու անկեղծ սէրը այդ կը պահանջէ:

Այո, Տէրը գիտակցաբար մեզ այստէս ստեղծեց, որպէսզի մեր յարաբերութիւնը պայմաններով չտարուի, ու ոչ ալ մէկը կարողանայ ըսել Աստուծոյ թէ «Դուն կամեցար որ ես մեղաւոր ըլլամ, ուրեմն իմ յանցանքը չէ եւ զիս պատժելը արդարութիւն պիտի չըլլայ»:

Անհաստուններ համոզուած են թէ ամբողջ տիեզերքը ու անոր մէջ եղած կեանքը յառաջացաւ անջրպետին մէջ պատահած «Պայթումի» մը հետեւանքով, եւ ինչ որ այսօր տեղի կ'ունենայ բնական եղափոխութեան (evolution) պատճառաւ է:

Ուրեմն՝ մարդ արարածի կեանքի պատճառը եւ նպատակը անհիմաստ ըլլալու է: Որովհետեւ կեանքը պարզապէս եղափոխութեան հետ կախում ունեցող կերպերուն կը հետեւի:

Բայց հոս պարզ հարց մը ընելու ենք: Եթէ մարդկանց ապրած կեանքը անհիմաստ դէպքերէ յառաջ եկաւ, մարդ ի՞նչու օրէնքներ հնարեց, կամ անելի շիտակը, ի՞նչու կը մեղադրենք մարդոց երբ սխալներ կը գործեն: Չ՞է որ անոնց ըրածները պարզ կեանքի պահանջած կարիքներէն յառաջ եկած են:

Մէկը կարող է ըսել, այդ օրէնքները ժամանակի ընթացքին գոյացան որպէսզի ժողովուրդներ խաղաղ ու համերաշխ ապրին: Հետեւաբար երկիրներ եւ համայնքներ հաւաքական համաձայնութեամբ օրէնքներ հաստատեցին որպէսզի մարդիկ քաղաքավար կերպով ապրին իրար հետ:

Եթէ այդպէս է, ուրեմն հոս կ'արժէ հարց մը ես ընել: Ի՞նչու համար համայն աշխարհը Գերմանացիներուն դատապարտեց Հրեանարուն ողջակիզման համար: Ի՞նչու Թուրքերուն ըրածը չարութիւն կը նկատենք կամ նոյնիսկ ներկայիս, Տարֆուրի մէջ տեղի ունեցող կոտորածը անընդունելի կը թուի մարդկանց:

Թէպէտ անոնք այդ երկիրներու քաղաքացիներու հաւաքական որոշումներն էին, ինչ գործ ունի մնացած աշխարհը անոնց որոշումները սխալ համարելու, եւ կամ անոնց հաւաքական համոզումները քննադատելու, եւ յանցատրները արդար դատի կանչելու: Մեր մէջ հաստատուած Աստուծոյ բարոյական յատկանիշներն են որոնք մեզի գիտակցութիւն կու տան չարը բարիէն զանազանելու:

Գ. Մեր Յրդ ու վերջին կէտը: Մարդ արարածի խիղճը եւ կամքը արթուն են որովհետեւ անոր Արարիչը Սուրբ եւ Բարոյական անձնատրոփութիւն մըն է:

Տէրը կ'ակնկալէ որ հաւատացեալներս անելի բարձր մակարդակի կեանքի անցնինք, սրբութեան յատկանիշներով մղուինք, երկնային պարգէներով առաջնորդուինք եւ Իր բոլոր խօսքերովը ապրինք:

Ուրեմն, ով յարգելի հայրենակիցներ, երբ դուք ձեզի հարցնէք, «Ես ո՞վ եմ», «Ի՞նչ է կեանքի նշանակութիւնը», «Ի՞նչու շիտակը պէտք է ընենք», «Ի՞նչու հոգիս ճշմարտութեան կը ծարալի», իմացիր որ դուն կենդանի Աստուծոյ նմանութիւնովը ստեղծուած ես եւ ինչ որ ալ այսօրուայ «խելացի» կոչուած մարդիկը ըսեն, դուն պատրաստ եղիր Սուրբ Հոգիին ձայնը լսելու, քու Տիրոջ կամքը իմանալու, Անոր Խօսքին առաջնորդութեան հետեւելու, եւ մի միայն Անոր փառք ու պատիւ բերելու: ❶



Մշակույթի Ամիս՝ Մերտիներան Վարժարանէն Ներս

«Ով իմ թանկագին Ուսուցիչս, անմահ է քու գործդ»:

Հոկտեմբեր է կրկին - ամիս բերքի, առատութեան, բայց մանաւանդ՝ «Հայ Մշակույթի» ամիս, որ առիթ կ'ընծայէ հայ ժողովուրդին փառաբանելու իր հազարամեայ մշակույթը, հպարտանալու անով եւ հաւատքով կրկնելու Կորին Աքանչելիին, Մերոպ Մաշտոցի աշակերտին խօսքը՝ «Ով իմ թանկագին Ուսուցիչս, անմահ է քու գործդ»: Արդարեւ, ոչ միայն հրաշք գործը անմահ է, այլ նաեւ անով բիրեղացած հայերէն լեզուն, անով ծնունդ առած գրականութիւնը անմահ են, իսկ անոնցմով սնուող սերունդները պիտի շարունակեն գոյատեւել անմահութեան մէջ:

Մերտիներան Հայ Աւետարանական Վարժարանէն ներս եւս Հայ Մշակույթը յիշատակուեցաւ բազմաթիւ առիթներով եւ այլազան ձեւերով:

21 Հոկտ. 2009-ին սկսաւ հայերէն գրքերու, Հայկական արուեստի նմուշներու եւ յուշանուէրներու ցուցահանդէս-վաճառքը՝ որ շարունակուեցաւ 3 օրեր:

23 Հոկտեմբերին դասաւանդութիւնը դադրեցաւ եւ աշակերտներ, ուսուցիչներ, ծնողներ եւ հիւրեր հանդիպով ճաշակեցին հայկական համադամ ճաշեր: Ծաշերու վաճառքը կազմակերպուած էր Ծնողա-Ուսուցչական Կազմի կողմէ, իսկ ուսելիքները նուիրուած էին աշակերտութեան եւ իրենց ծնողաց կողմէ: Ծաշէն ետք, շուրջ 2 ժամ, վարժարանի շրջափակին մէջ կը լսուէր Հայկական երաժշտութիւն, եւ պարի եղանակներ: Բակին մէկ անկիւնը աշակերտներ մեծ տաշտերու մէջ խաղող կը ճզմէին, ու կը սորվէին ռուպ եւ գինի պատրաստել:

Կէսօրէ ետք ժամը 2-ին, վարժարանի սրահին մէջ հաւաքուած աշակերտներուն, ծնողներուն եւ հիւրերուն

ներկայացուեցաւ գեղարուեստական յայտագիր մը նուիրուած «Հայ Մշակույթի Օր»-ուան, կատարողութեամբ Ծաղիկէն մինչեւ Զ. կարգերու աշակերտութեան. անոնք խանդավառ կերպով արտասանեցին, երգեցին եւ ներկայացուցին Յովհաննէս Թումանեանի «Կաթիլ մը Մեղր»ը: Հանդիսութեան ներկայ էին նաեւ հոգաբարձական կազմի անդամներ եւ հիւրեր, Գիղե Գոնդրոլլէր Ուէնտի Կրուէլ, շրջանի ստիկանութեան 2 ներկայասուցիչներ, Տէր եւ Տիկ. Ծանի եւ Մարինէ Մարթայեան եւ Տէր եւ Տիկ. Կրէկ եւ Սիլվա Մարթայեան:

Յայտագրի մէջ յատուկ տեղ տրուած էր գնահատանքի արարողութեան մը: Մերտիներան վարժարանի նախկին աշակերտներէն՝ Կրէկ Մարթայեանի եւ իր տիկնոջ Սիլվայի կողմէ հաստատուած 1000 տոլարի կրթանպաստ մը յանձնուեցաւ ուսումնական գետնի վրայ փայլուն արդիւնք ձեռք բերող աշակերտի մը, եւ Լոս Անճելըսի քաղաքապետութեան կողմէ տրուած 4 գնահատագրեր յանձնուեցան Միջնակարգի այն աշակերտներուն որոնք իրենց շրջապատին ծառայելու եւ սուսնորդելու կարողութիւններ ցուցաբերած են: Արժանատր աշակերտներու ընտրութիւնը կատարեցին Կրէկ եւ Սիլվա Մարթայեանները՝ հիմնուելով աշակերտներուն տրուած հարցարաններու եւ շարադրութեանց վրայ: Կրթանպաստը ստացաւ 6-րդ կարգէն Յարութ Նազարեան, իսկ Գիղե Գոնդրոլլէր Ուէնտի Կրուէլի ձեռամբ գնահատագրեր ստացան Յարութ Նազարեան, Նարեկ Աթիօքեանեան, Ռօզ Աւագեան եւ Ծուշան Գալստեան:

Յայտագիրը վերջ գտաւ վարժարանի տնօրէն Պր. Յովսէփ Ինճէճիքեանի փակման խօսքով:

Մերտիներան Վարժարանի 2009–2010 Տարեշրջանի Վերամուտը

«Առաւօտ Լուսոյ,
Արեգակն, Արդար,
Առ իս Լոյս Ծագեա՛».

Այս է իրաքանչիւր ծնողքի ցանկութիւնը՝ իր գաւազներուն համար, խնդրանքը, աղօթքը՝ Աստուծոյ ուղղուած, լոյս՝ իր հոգեհատորներուն, լոյսի մէջ ապրիլ, լոյսով առաջնորդուիլ: Եւ հաւատալով որ Հայ դպրոցը լոյսի աղբիւր է, Սուրբ Մերոպի անմար լոյսը սփռող փարոս է, ամէն Սեպտեմբերին, հայ ծնողներ իրենց անգին գաւազները կը յանձնեն Հայ դպրոցին:

Անցնող 27 տարիներուն նման, այս տարի եւս Մերտիներան Հայ Աւետարանական Վարժարանը դռները լայն բացած վերամուտի առաջին օրը՝ Սեպտեմբեր 3, 2009-ին գրկաբաց ընդունեց իր հին ու նոր աշակերտներն ու անոնց ծնողները:

Առաւօտեան ժամը 8-ին, Մանկապարտեզէն մինչեւ Միջնակարգի 8-րդ կարգի աշակերտներու շարքերը ուղղուեցան վարժարանի հանդիսասրահը: Անոնց կը հետեւէր ծնողներու ստուար բազմութիւն մը: Վերամուտի բացման հանդիսութիւնը սկսաւ աշակերտներու կատարած Ամերիկեան եւ Հայկական զոյգ ուփստերով, 23-րդ Սաղմոսի արտասանութեամբ եւ քանի մը հոգետր երգերու երգեցողութեամբ:

Միացեալ Հայ Ժողովական Եկեղեցոյ հովիւ՝ Վեր. Ճէյրն Մաթոսեանը բացման աղօթքէն ետք ներկաներուն փոխանցեց իր պատգամը՝ Աստուածաշունչի հետեւեալ խօսքերով՝ «Իմաստութեան սկիզբը Տէրոջը վախն է, բայց յիմարները իմաստութիւնն ու կրթութիւնը կ'անարգեն»:

մատնանշելով որ Մերտիներան Վարժարանը քրիստոնէական դաստիարակութեամբ եւ Տէրոջը վախով իմաստութիւն կը ջամբէ հայ մատղաշ սերունդին:

Վարժարանի հոգաբարձութեան ատենապետ՝ Տօթթ. Հրայր Աթիքեան ողջունեց ներկաները՝ շնորհակալութիւն յայտնեց հայ ծնողներուն, որ հակառակ տնտեսական դժուար պայմաններու՝ իրենց գաւազները կը յանձնեն Հայ դպրոցին, եւ վստահեցուց զանոնք, որ վարժարանի պատկան մարմինները իրենց կարելին պիտի ընեն որպէսզի իրենց յանձնուած մանուկները անցընեն հեզասահ տարեշրջան մը եւս, որովհետեւ, ըսաւ ան մէջբերում մը կատարելով հանգուցեալ Թէտ Քէնէտիէն, «բոլոր անոնց համար, որոնց հոգածութիւնը մեր պարտականութիւնն է, աշխատանքը կը շարունակուի, նպատակը կը գոյատեւէ, լոյսը վառ կը մնայ եւ երազը երբեք չմեռնիր»:

Վերջին խօսք առնողը եղաւ վարժարանի տնօրէն՝ Պր. Յովսէփ Ինճէճիքեանը, որ իր կարգին բարի գալուստ մաղթեց աշակերտութեան եւ ծնողաց, զեկուցեց հաստատութենէն ներս կատարուած նորոգութիւններուն մասին եւ ապա ներկայացուց վարժարանի ուսուցչակազմն որ պաշտօնէութիւնը, բոլորին մաղթելով առողջ, ուրախ եւ արդիւնաւէտ տարի մը:

Հանդիսութիւնը փակուեցաւ Տէրունական աղօթքով, որմէ ետք աշակերտները ուղղուեցան դէպի դասարանները՝ իրենց ուսուցիչներու առաջնորդութեամբ:

Նախամանկապարտեզը եւս ունեցաւ իր վերամուտի հանդիսութիւնը, նոյն օրը, ժամը 9:30-ին, բարի գալուստի խօսքերով ելոյթ ունեցան վարժարանի տնօրէն՝ Պր. Յովսէփ Ինճէճիքեանը եւ նախամանկապարտեզի պատասխանատու՝ Տիկ. Մակի Թովալեանը, ապա իրաքանչիւր ուսուցիչ կարդաց իր դասարանի անուանացանկը, որմէ ետք տեղի ունեցաւ ծանօթացման պահ մը:

Նախամանկապարտեզի 2009–2010 ուսումնական տարեշրջանը սկսաւ յաջորդ օրը՝ Ուրբաթ՝ Սեպտ. 4-ին:

Բարի ընթացք՝ բոլորին:



Չորեքշաբթի, Սեպտեմբեր 9, 2009, ժամը 10:00-ին Մերտիներան վարժարան այցելեցին Հայկական «Արմենիա» առագաստանաւի անձնակազմէն 5 անդամներ, որոնք աշխարհի շուրջ կը դառնան՝ սփիւքի գաղութները այցելելու

եւ զանոնք իրար կապելու համար:

Հիսիսալին Ամերիկայի Միացեալ Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիներու Միութեան աագ հովի՝ Վեր. Յովսէփ Մաթոսեան, հոգաբարձութեան կարգ մը անդամներ, առաջինէն մինչեւ 8-րդ կարգերու աշակերտները հաաքուեցան հանդիսասարան եւ ծափողջոյններով դիմաւորեցին հիւրերը: Բարի գալուստի խօսքեր ուղղեցին Վեր. Յովսէփ Մաթոսեան, վարժարանիս հոգաբարձութեան աստենապետ Տօթթ. Հրայր

Աթիքեան եւ տնօրէն Պր. Յովսէփ Ինճէճիքեան, ապա խօսք առաւ առտագաստանաւի անձնակազմի ղեկավար, յայտնի գրագէտ Զօրի Բալայեան, որ մէկ առ մէկ ներկայացուց իր ընկերակիցները, ապա աշակերտութեան բացատրեց Ղարաբաղի դրօշակին ու զինանշանին մասին, մատնանշելով որ Հայը միշտ ազատատենչ եղած է եւ պահանջատէր պիտի մնայ:



FOR THE PERSON WHO HAS EVERYTHING

Some gifts you can give this Christmas are beyond monetary value:

- Mend a quarrel, dismiss suspicion, tell someone, "I love you."
- Give something away—anonously.
- Forgive someone who has treated you wrong.
- Turn away wrath with a soft answer.
- Visit someone in a nursing home.
- Apologize if you were wrong.
- Be especially kind to someone with whom you work.
- Give as God gave to you in Christ, without obligation, or announcement, or reservation, or hypocrisy.

- C. Swindoll, *Growing Strong*, pp. 400-1

Rev. Markarian's 'The Thirsty Enemy': A Story of War, Faith and Passion

By Ed Ackerman

From *The Sunday Dispatch*

PARAMUS, NJ—A rocket propelled grenade slams into the terrace outside of the bedroom window of the apartment he and his wife share in West Beirut, Lebanon. It makes a much louder sound than the routine gunfire to which they've become accustomed.

A half-dozen members of a Communist militia group, all brandishing AK 47s, pound on the door in the middle of the night. This scene is repeated over and over throughout a seven-year period, with armed militia representing the Mourabitoun, Saiqua, Druze, Fatah, Kurds, PPS (Partie Populaire Syrienne) and Syrian army. One night, a group storms in with fixed bayonets, their leader ripping the phone line out of the wall and threatening their lives.

Abu Abed, a powerfully built militia leader nearly as broad as he is tall, with a .45 on each hip, who speaks with a mechanical voice box because his own was lost in battle, becomes an ally in smuggling tons of food through armed blockades in order to feed thousands of refugees.

These are just some of the events which make the book "The Thirsty Enemy" read like an adventure novel.

But "The Thirsty Enemy" is not a novel. It is a memoir, the life story of John Markarian, of West Pittston, PA.

Markarian, the 92-year-old retired college president and ordained Presbyterian minister who occasionally preaches at First United Presbyterian Church on Exeter Avenue, West Pittston, has resided in that community with

his wife Inge since 1987.

According to the book's cover, "The Thirsty Enemy" is "a story in which a growing faith in God and awareness of purpose in life meet to form the adventure. The primary setting for the book is the city of Beirut. It tells about the beginning steps in the creation of an institute of higher learning and finds its theme in seven years of war, giving a drink to the thirsty enemy."

Electing to remain in Beirut for the purpose of protecting Haigazian College (now University), of which he was founding president, John Markarian and Inge manage to survive a seven-year period of war, during which life was cheap on the streets of West Beirut, by inviting groups most would label "terrorists" to sit down and talk over coffee.

Markarian, who has a doctorate in theology, took inspiration from an Old Testament proverb and repeated in the New Testament Epistle of Paul to the Romans: "If your enemy is hungry, give him something to eat, if he is thirsty give him a drink for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head."

Interwoven throughout the book are Markarian's personal memories of growing up as a son of a pastor, being trained in a family member's Oriental rug business, working as an accountant for a public utility, graduating with two degrees from Lafayette College and then from Princeton Theological Seminary and of, in 1955, accepting a challenge to launch a new university program in Beirut.

It was the Armenian Evangelical Church that



invited Markarian, at the time in his ninth year of teaching at Lafayette, also the alma mater of his father and two older brothers, to launch a new university program in Beirut for the purpose of training leaders for the Armenian Evangelical Church in the Near East. His first and founding presidency of Haigazian College ended in 1966. He served as Dean of the Chapel and Chairman of the Religion Department at Central College in Pella, Iowa, for three years, returning to Beirut in 1969 to become Director of Development and Professor at the Near East School of Theology. He returned to the helm of Haigazian College in 1971 and retired in 1982.

The Markarians returned to the United States residing in Los Angeles from 1982 until 1987 when they moved to Pennsylvania. At 92, John Markarian is an avid tennis player and golfer.

"The Thirsty Enemy" (pb, 450 pp, Item #335) is published by The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA), headquartered at 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ. Each copy of the book is \$22.95. To order, Please contact the AMAA at 201.265.2607, E-mail: amaa@amaa.org or visit the website www.amaa.org

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