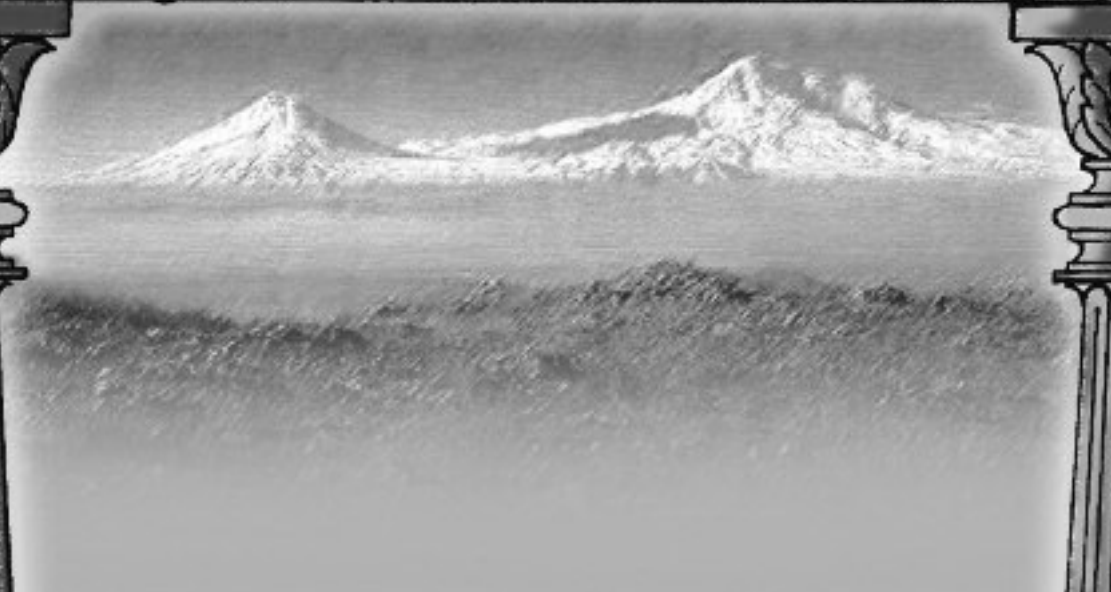




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The Quarterly Journal of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America



The Trials of Life and the **Response of Faith**

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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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Publications Committee and Editorial Board:

Rev. Kevork George Terian (*Chair and Forum Editor-in-Chief*)
E-Mail: agter@adelphia.net

Rev. Barkev N. Darakjian (*Armenian Editor*)
Elise Kalfayan (*Assistant to the Editor-in-Chief*)
Rev. Yesayi Sarmazian
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Brief letters (400 words or less) are strongly encouraged, and must include the writer's name and address. Letters may be edited for space and clarity. Please send to the editor:

Kevork George Terian
2940 Sparrow Dr.
Fullerton, CA 92835 - USA
E-mail: agter@adelphia.net

Unsolicited articles are also welcomed. However, before preparing manuscripts for submission, please contact the editor at the above address for authors' guidelines. Submitted materials are subject to editorial review and modification prior to publication.

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If you have ever been to a cardiologist, you probably know what a stress test is. They hook you up to a monitor, put you on a treadmill, turning up the speed until the monitor reveals the physical condition of your heart.

In a similar manner, God puts us all through stress tests at different times in our lives. He does this, not to cause us suffer a heart attack, but to give us a correct diagnosis concerning the condition of our faith. When we see an actual printout of an EKG, we stop fooling ourselves about the real condition of our heart. Similarly, the results of God's tests force us to come to grips with the condition of our faith. God's strenuous testing is designed, not only to reveal the weakness of our faith, but also strengthen it.

In 2 Corinthians 4:8-9 we discover that there are four basic levels of tests. The Apostle Paul says, "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not despairing; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed."

The most moderate level of testing is affliction. The original Greek term suggests "pressure." This level includes tests that come from deadlines, frustrating delays and irritating interruptions.

The second level is being perplexed. The Greek word suggests being in a state of utter confusion; not knowing where to go, or who to turn to. This level of testing includes circumstances where we are subjected to unfair treatment, and we have difficulty making sense of it all.

The third level is persecution. This is when not only the treadmill is running at high speed, but a pit bull is also at your heels, pursuing you relentlessly. Persecution has different dimensions: physical, when you are forced to endure torture; emotional and mental, when you are subjected to ridicule and humiliation; social, when you are ostracized and your friends desert you.

The fourth level of testing is being struck

down. The Greek term means to be shoved aside as a direct result of being rejected. This happens when no one appreciates your talents, and no one gives you credit for your work; furthermore, you are made a villain and stripped of your self-esteem, honor and respect. This is when your enemies succeed in rubbing your nose in the dirt.

The Bible records Abraham's excruciating test in two separate places. The telescopic overview is recorded in chapter 11 of the Epistle to the Hebrews, but the microscopic analysis is found in Genesis chapter 22. Let us look through both lenses to see what we can learn from Abraham's experience.



God's strenuous testing is designed, not only to reveal the weakness of our faith, but also to strengthen it.



Imagine the shock Abraham must have felt when God told him to sacrifice his son, Isaac. Put yourself in Abraham's shoes and try to make sense of God's command. Could you fathom the old patriarch's great disappointment and confusion? How could a compassionate God impose such a cruel test? How could a God who is faithful to His promise, seemingly retract that promise? Shock and disappointment are common reactions to a stressful test.

Look at the way God refers to Isaac: "Your only son whom you love" (Genesis 22:2). Don't think for a moment that God does not know about those things in our lives that we come close to idolizing. He can name every idol that we are worshipping and every

relationship that competes for His love. This test was designed to help Abraham put his priorities in proper perspective.

Abraham's response, however, was one of unquestioning trust. Since Abraham was sure that God could not be capricious with His gifts, he logically concluded that the Almighty Creator would raise Isaac from the dead (see Hebrews 11:17-19). This was a reasonable hope because God had previously promised to make a great nation from Isaac's seed, and Isaac had not yet produced any offspring.

In Genesis 22:3-10, we notice that Abraham's faith had four characteristics.

First, it was immediate. He did not postpone the inevitable by pacing the floor of his tent. He neither worried nor tried to renegotiate a different deal with God. He never presented any excuses even though he could have invented some convincing ones. He never attempted to circumvent God's will. Early in the morning, when he got up from bed, he was determined to fully obey God's command.

Second, Abraham's faith was characterized by unwavering confidence. In Genesis 22:5, he told his servants to wait at a certain location while he and Isaac ascended Mount Moriah. Then he made a remarkable statement: "We will worship at the mountain and return to you." Did you catch the vibrant hope couched in that utterance? He knew he was going up that mountain to sacrifice his son, but he was just as sure that he would be bringing that son back alive. That is why he told his servants, "We will return to you." I want you to notice that he did not say, "I will return to you." He was so confident that he viewed this expedition, not as an act involving teeth-gritting pain, but as an opportunity for worship.

Third, Abraham's faith was based on his prior knowledge of God's true character. Could any question be more heart-wrenching than Isaac's in verse 7? "But Dad,

where is the animal for the sacrifice?" The young man had offered up sacrifices with his father before this event and he was thoroughly acquainted with the whole process; therefore, it was easy for him to notice that something was missing. Abraham gave the only possible reply: "God knows what we need and He will supply it for us at the right time." Is there a better response that we can offer our children in the face of need? Abraham had an unshakeable faith in God's ability to supply adequate provisions for every legitimate human need.

The fourth characteristic of Abraham's



Faith enables us to trust our past to the mercy of God, the present to His love, and the future to His compassionate care.



faith is that it was thorough, not half-hearted. He did not leave for himself an escape hatch. He went as far as binding his son and raising the knife. Then God came through confirming the genuineness of Abraham's faith. "Now I know that your obedience to Me is greater than your love for your son" (see Genesis 22:11-13). The test was over and Abraham passed with flying colors. Faith is attitude, conviction and conduct based on a right relationship with God. It is not static, but grows in strength and depth as we nourish that relationship with our Creator throughout our lives.

Since I did all my post-graduate studies in Biblical languages, I frequently use them as an effective tool to bring out the hidden meaning of Biblical texts that the translators have missed. The Hebrew word for "faith" and "belief" conveys the idea of carrying a suckling child, and thus illustrates, very graphically, God's benevolent care for us and our confident dependence on Him. Faith enables us to trust our past to the mercy of God, the present to His love, and the future to His compassionate care.

Of one thing we can be sure. One day, our faith will be tested, just as Abraham's faith

was tested. The ultimate test will come when we are asked to give up our most precious possessions, or our most treasured relationships. In Matthew 10:37, Jesus says, "Whoever loves his father or mother, his son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me." Our supreme love and allegiance must be reserved for the Lord. God's plan for our life is never fully explained. When Joseph was sold into slavery, falsely accused and unjustly imprisoned, he maintained his faith in God even though he could not understand what was happening to him. Faith makes things possible, but it does not make them easy.

How often have you tried to second-guess God's intentions? In the depth of your pain and anguish, how often have you cried, "Why my God have you allowed this misfortune to happen to me?" Even Jesus, when nailed to the cross, in anguish and excruciating pain cried out, "My God, why have you forsaken me?" God does not explain the end at the beginning. He expects us to exercise our faith and if, in the darkest hour of our fiery trial, we remain loyal to Him, He will transform every apparent tragedy to a great advantage for us (see Romans 8:28).

Whether you are a believer or an unbeliever, a Christian or an agnostic, you have a personal theology. The word "theology" means "a belief about God." When calamities strike and the bottom falls out, your theology will be the only thing left, and it will be either the life-preserver that keeps you afloat, or it will be the weights strapped around your feet that will drag you down and submerge you under the raging waters.

A treadmill test can mean only a little perspiration on your forehead if you are in good shape. How steady will your faith be when the hurdles appear? Now is the time to build up your faith before the speed on the treadmill accelerates and the test becomes more strenuous.

Years ago, the Timex Company had a slogan for their watches: "Timex takes a licking and keeps ticking." The idea was that no matter what you did to a Timex watch, it would keep working. They even had a commercial that showed a wasteland after a nuclear explosion. Lying on the ground in the midst of the rubble was a Timex watch ticking away!

Faith is like that; it takes a licking and keeps

ticking! Many things try to disrupt our faith, but it seems that we as the church just keep ticking away. Even though our faith is shaken at times, it keeps functioning because its foundation is our explicit trust in God.

Several months ago, our faith was tested, not as severely as Abraham's, but the ordeal was strong enough to shock us. We took a licking when we were told that our sponsoring organization, the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America (AEUNA) would reduce their funding for the *Forum* by 50% because of a precipitous decline in their income. For this reason, we reluctantly canceled the June issue and kept wondering about our ability to devise a rescue plan for our venerable publication which is the official organ of the Union of Armenian Evangelical churches in North America.

We are grateful to you, our esteemed readers, for responding to our appeal and lifting us out of our quandary. The future of the *Forum* is now secure; however, we had to



Faith makes things possible, but it does not make them easy.



reduce its size from 40 pages to 28 pages in order to avoid incurring a debt that we might not be able to liquidate. Gone are the days when we were able to mail the *Forum* free of charge to anyone who requested it. It pained us to eliminate 1,500 names from our mailing list, but due to our limited resources, we had to take this step and formulate a policy stipulating that every recipient of the *Forum* is expected to make a minimum donation of \$30 per year to help us cover the soaring publication and mailing costs. For the time being we are saved from oblivion and extinction, but our future will depend largely on your continuous support. Yes, your *Forum* has shrunk in size, but its quality has been preserved. Faith has carried the day once again. 🙏

Dear Editor



Dear editor of the "Forum" and brothers and sisters in Christ:

We send you greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ bless you with grace and peace.

Let us share with you the story of our churches. First, we would like to write a little about ourselves. We are people of Armenian descent who were living in different villages of Anatolia, Turkey, until we migrated to Europe. As you may know, Anatolia is a location where many Christian Armenians once lived.

In 1960, the situation radically changed. As a result of the political state of affairs in Turkey, Christians began to migrate to other countries. Conditions for Christians were becoming increasingly difficult because of their faith. Therefore, they began to migrate to other lands, such as various European countries, the USA, and Canada.

It was in 1978 that we accepted Jesus Christ. When we arrived in Istanbul, Turkey's largest city, we had no knowledge of the Holy Bible. One of the best pastors in Istanbul at that time, Vartkes Bogosyan, found us. He began sharing the Gospel with us. When we received Jesus Christ into our lives, it was as if we had received the greatest treasure in the world. At the beginning, Vartkes Bogosyan instructed us about starting a "House Church". We began worshipping together and were excited to learn more about the Gospel.

In Istanbul there were three places of worship:

- 1- Bible House
- 2- Karaköy Church
- 3- House churches in Samathya (a section in Istanbul)

We remember this time very well -- as if it were yesterday! Pastors from different areas came to visit us. Some of the visitors were: Bedros Nasanian, Jean

Agopian, Manuel Bizdikian, Thomas Cosmades, Garabet Topalian and others. They were a great encouragement to us in our new-found faith. That was a time of great blessing in our lives.

In 1983, Sarkis Pachaian was the first believer from our group to move to Belgium. He left his family in Istanbul, went to Brussels and began learning the local language (French). At the same time, he learned his native language (Armenian) as well. He gave his life completely to Jesus Christ. In three years, he graduated from a Theological seminary. Then, his family -- parents, brothers, sisters and cousins -- began their move to Brussels. Thus our community was formed.

In Brussels, our worship meetings took place in house churches for a time. Eventually, we began our regular worship services on Sundays. We were not many in number, but we were deeply committed to our Lord.

In 1991, our first church was officially founded. Sarkis Pachaian was appointed to be our pastor, and Garbis Aritim and Vartivar Kum were his assistants. Rev. Movses B. Jambazian of the AMAA and the Armenian Evangelical Union of France helped support our fledgling church.

Our second community: After 1995, the immigration from Armenia to Belgium began. Our dedicated pastor Sarkis began teaching the Gospel to those Armenian immigrants. As a result of hearing the Gospel, many of them came to Jesus Christ. Now, they number approximately sixty believers.

The third community: In Liege, about 100 kilometres from Brussels, the Gospel is being shared in the Turkish language every Sunday afternoon, because the people there do not know Armenian.

Fourth community: This is in Hasselt, 60 kilometres from Brussels. The Gospel is shared in Armenian.

Fifth community: About 25 kilometres from Brussels.

The Gospel is shared in the Armenian language.

Sixth community: In Anvers, 50 kilometres from Brussels. The Gospel is shared in the Armenian language.

Seventh community: About 25 kilometres from Brussels. Their background is Assyrian. The Gospel is shared in the Turkish language every Thursday, in a house church, and once a month in a church building.

In summary, in Belgium we have 7 congregations-- 3 Turkish-speaking and 4 Armenian-speaking.

Dear sisters and brothers, although we faced many problems, the Lord has not only enabled us to overcome them, but He has also made us thrive and experience constant growth.

Currently, our activities take place in a church we are renting. Each week we pay rent in order to carry out our activities. We are permitted to use this church building only on Sundays for three hours. This is a huge obstacle to the progress of our ministry. The activities of our children and youth groups are restricted due to the limitation of time and space. We do not have the ability to use the facilities of the church building during the week. For many years we prayed that one day we might have our own church building.

Finally, the Lord answered our prayers. In December of 2008, we found a church building. The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) purchased that building for us on one condition: we pay the cost for its renovation. The building needs extensive repairs; its walls, ceilings, windows, electric and water systems need to be replaced, and the cost is quite steep, and beyond our ability to bear.

Dear friends, we will do our utmost to finish this renovation, but our financial resources are not enough to handle this major undertaking. We need your help! With gifts coming in from all over the world, the inauguration of the first Armenian Evangelical Church in Belgium will soon become a reality!

It is written in 2 Corinthians 9:7: *"You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And do not give reluctantly or in response to pressure. For God loves a person who gives cheerfully."*

We kindly request that you send your contribution to the Armenian Missionary Association of America, specifying *"Brussels' church building renovation."* The address is: 31 West Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652, USA. And for Belgium: Eglise Evangélique Arménienne de Bruxelles, Grootveld 16, 1200 Woluwe St. Lambert – Bruxelles E-mail: sarkispa@gmail.com

Thank you for your help. It is greatly appreciated. May the Lord bless you richly!

Sincerely yours,

**Rev. Sarkis Pachaian, Garbis Aritim,
Vartavar Kum, Gabriel Sagdic**

Editor's Note : Our Minister to the Union, Rev. Joseph Matossian, visited the churches in Belgium during the summer of this year. Please, read his report in the *Newsbriefs* section of this issue. By the way, the Ministerium of Armenian Evangelical Churches of Southern California contributed \$1,000 for the renovation of the newly-purchased church building in Brussels, Belgium.

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:

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

If you wish to receive the *FORUM* continually without any interruption, please make a minimum annual donation of \$30 to the AEUNA. Thank you.

Coming to Terms With God's Faithfulness!

Rev. Avedis Boynerian

“Because of the Lord’s great love we are not consumed, for His compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness”
(Lamentation 3:22-23).


We are never cut off from God’s faithfulness. He is true to His character. He is reliable and trustworthy and can be counted on at all times. He is faithful; He says what He means and means what He says. Therefore, He does everything He says He will do. In Isaiah 55:10-11 God says: “As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, so is my word that goes out from my mouth. It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”

God’s faithfulness is not some minor or secondary part of His character. To say that God is faithful is the very core of who God really is. Bill Bright, President of “Campus Crusade for Christ”, compares the attributes of God to an automobile engine. He says, “Pistons, fan belts, water pumps, and thousands of moving parts all whirl around within a small space, making power for us to drive our car. The parts all work together harmoniously as components of the whole engine.”


That’s the way God’s attributes function, too. If we took away love, God’s character would be incomplete. God’s love never fails because He is faithful. God’s love works with all His other attributes to produce the

right kind of results. God’s faithfulness means that each attribute in His character is working at full capacity at all times. A.W. Tozer puts it this way: “All of God’s acts are consistent with all of His attributes. No attribute contradicts any other, but all harmonize and blend into each other in the infinite abyss of the Godhead.”

God’s faithfulness is at the core of His very nature. He is the creator, holy, omnipotent,



All of God’s acts
are consistent
with all His
attributes.



omniscient, omnipresent, just, sovereign, unchanging, compassionate, and loving because He is faithful to His own character. He never changes any of His attributes. The apostle Paul drew on this truth when he wrote to the Thessalonians, “the one who calls you is faithful and He will do it” (1 Thessalonians 5:24).

Let us consider the book of Lamentations

and see how the prophet Jeremiah came to terms with God’s faithfulness. The book of Lamentations is a collection of sad songs, or laments. It is a mournful postscript to the book of Jeremiah who, through the use of five laments, or mournful songs that correspond to the five chapters, reminds us that sin carries with it heavy weights of sorrow, grief, misery, and deep pain.

Jeremiah ponders about the destruction of Jerusalem and about how he, known as the “weeping prophet,” had been abandoned. In Lamentations chapter 3, we see that Jeremiah opens up and pours out his despair. In the first 20 verses, he lets it all out. His pain and despair are real as we see in his nine complaints:

1. God is angry. Jeremiah has seen trouble, and he knows it because God is upset with His people: “I am the man who has seen affliction by the rod of His wrath” (3:1).
2. He is in the dark. Instead of seeing things clearly, he feels the loneliness of darkness: “He has driven me away and made me walk in darkness rather than light ... He has made me dwell in darkness like those long dead” (3:2, 6).
3. He feels God is against him. Because of God’s judgment, he feels God “has turned His hand against him again and again, all day long” (3:3). He compares God to a bear lying in wait, or like a lion ready to jump on its prey: “He drew His bow and made me the target for His arrows. He pierced my heart with arrows from His quiver” (3:10, 12-13).
4. He is tormented mentally and physically. His pain is both acute and chronic. He feels his pain intensely and cannot find a remedy for it: “He has made my skin and



my flesh grow old and has broken my bones" (3:4). In verses 15-16, he describes how his life is filled with bitterness, how his teeth have been broken, and how he has been trampled in the dust.

5. He cannot find release. He cannot figure out how to escape the pain and anguish he feels. He is "besieged and surrounded with bitterness and hardship ... He has walled me in so I cannot escape; He has weighed me down with chains" (3:5, 7). He feels like a man trapped in a maze.
6. His prayers are unanswered. He says, "Even when I call out or cry for help, He shuts out my prayer" (3:8).
7. People make fun of him. People tell jokes about him and make fun of him all the time: "I became the laughingstock of all my people; they mock me in song all day long" (3:14).
8. He is ready to give up. After all he has been through, he just wants to give up and quit. We hear his honest cry of despair: "I have been deprived of peace; I have forgotten what prosperity is" (3:17).
9. His hope is gone. He cannot forget his troubles because they trap him at every turn. In verse 18, he says, "My splendor is gone and all that I had hoped from the Lord." When he remembers all that he has gone through, he understandably gets disappointed: "I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me" (3:20).



While it is fine to be honest with God and express our real feelings like Jeremiah did, it is not fine to continuously lament and grieve.



One thing is sure: Jeremiah experienced a lot of pain, sadness, distress and agony. Perhaps we are experiencing many of these same things and secretly wondering if God is really faithful:

- We feel God is angry at us!
- We feel we are in the dark!
- We feel God is against us!
- We have mental and physical pain!

We cannot find release!
Our prayers are not being answered!
People do not understand us!
We are ready to give up!
Our hope is gone!

While it is fine to be honest with God and express our real feelings like Jeremiah did, it is not fine to stay there. Jeremiah had every reason to lament and grieve continuously, but he did not. He forced himself to think about God's nature, character – who God is. In particular, he came to terms with God's faithfulness.

Some of us may think that we cannot help how we feel. However, we do not have to allow what we have gone through to keep us mentally, emotionally and spiritually trapped forever. Jeremiah not only understands our pain and anguish, but he also decides to move on when his world falls apart. Indeed, verse 21 is the "turning point": "Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope." While his outward affliction and inward turmoil push him toward despair, he forces himself to bring truth to the forefront of his mind.

He first recalled the tragic events of his life: "I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall. I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me" (3:19-20). Then, when he shifted his focus to the attributes of God's character, he experienced a resurgence of faith and hope (3:21). Thus, he broke out of the pattern and cycle of despair.

What Jeremiah did was something we need to do as well. We need to engage our will and purposely and deliberately focus on things other than our problems. We need to force ourselves to remember the truth about God and His nature. We need to remember a time when God demonstrated His compassion to us. We need to bring God's faithfulness to the front of our mind. When we do, God will begin to restore hope to our life by driving out the hopelessness that threatens to mess up our life.

Now, what did Jeremiah call to mind? What did he focus on while he was hurting and feeling abandoned? Verses 22 and 23 contain four phrases. Each one raises and answers an important question that we need to consider.

1. Why doesn't God destroy me? We all walk closer to the edge than we think. There is a thin line between disaster and prosperity, joy and sorrow, laughter and tears, life and death. Here is Jeremiah's

answer: "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed" (3:22a).

Why doesn't God destroy us? He could and He should. He could because He is God. He should because we are sinners. Our sins would consume us if it were not for God's great love. God, because of His love, was sticking by His people. God loves His people because He promised to love them and nothing can cause Him to break His promise.



When Jeremiah shifted his focus to the attributes of God's character, he experienced a resurgence of faith and hope.



A friend of mine, who is a minister, makes the following point: "As bad as things are, if it were not for God, things would be much worse." That seems obvious, and perhaps it is. But we need to hear it again. If it were not for God, and for God's love, no matter how bad things are in our life right now, they would be much worse without God.

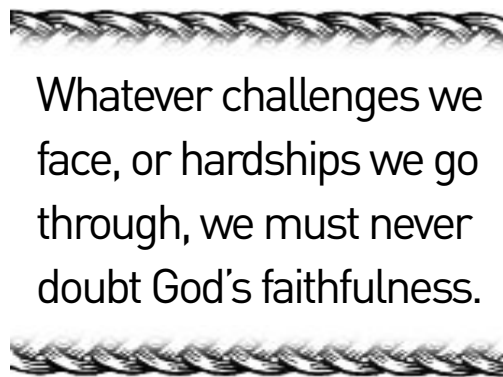
2. How do I know God will keep on loving me? The second half of verse 22 gives the answer to this question: "for His compassions never fail." "Compassions" is in the plural because His love is intense and limitless. God never runs out of love because "God is love" (1 John 4:8).

The word "compassion" comes from the Hebrew word "womb" and shows us the gentle, the innermost feeling of love, concern and care that God has for us. The word "compassion" literally means, "to be moved in the heart out of love for another." God's compassion comes from deep within Him and fills our lives. He is moved in His heart every time He thinks about us because He loves us.

3. When will God give me what I need? Verse 23a gives a word of hope for each of us to hold onto: "They (God's compassions) are new every morning." What if we woke up every morning to find our pocket full of money, our car full of gas, our refrigerator full of food, and our youth and vitality fully restored? That's the way it is with God's

compassions - "They are new every morning." We can never use them up!

We all remember the story of God providing manna for His people when they



Whatever challenges we face, or hardships we go through, we must never doubt God's faithfulness.



were in the wilderness. God sent it every day except on the Sabbath. The people were instructed to gather as much as they wanted because it would never run out. However, they were not allowed to store it except on the day before the Sabbath. In order to drive His point home, God told them that if they tried to save it, the manna would be spoiled. They were to gather just enough for each day, eat it on that day, and then gather more the next day. This is how God taught His people to trust Him day-by-day to meet their daily needs.

This means at least two things: First, we never have to live on yesterday's compassions. They are new every morning. Second, God's compassions are never early, but they are not late either. They are new every morning. We need to learn this lesson; God's compassions come day-by-day. They come when we need them - not earlier and nor later. God gives us what we need today and every day. If we needed more, He would give us more. When we need something else, He will give us that as well. Nothing we truly need, God will ever withhold from us.

4. What is my hope for living? This question is answered in the last part of verse 23: "Great is your faithfulness." Jeremiah was amazed by the limitless supply of God's compassion freely given to him. Therefore, whatever challenges we face, or hardships we go through, we must never doubt God's faithfulness. We are to celebrate His great faithfulness every day!

The following three actions can help us experience God's faithfulness in our lives.

First, when we struggle and when our mind is flooded with difficulties, we need to do what Jeremiah did. We need to choose to focus on God's great love and compassions.

God does not promise to prevent problems from coming into our lives, but He does promise to go through them with us. Can we do that right now? Can we call to our mind the truth about God - His nature, His character? God is faithful! - He will always be there for us!

Second, when we are tempted, we need to remember this: God's faithfulness will show us the way out! Some of us are faced with some incredible temptations on a daily basis. Because God is faithful, He will always provide a way out for us so that we do not have to give in to them. God's Word assures us: "No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it" (1 Corinthians 10:13).

We do not have to give in to temptation. God knows exactly the limits of what we can bear. God's faithfulness is tied directly to providing us with a way to say "no" to sin and say "yes" to God. When we give in to sin, it's because our focus is on the attractiveness of the temptation, rather than on God's faithfulness to deliver us from that terrible situation.

Third, when we mess up, we should acknowledge how desperately we need God's great love and compassions.

One of the greatest and most precious gifts that God has given us is - the gift of forgiveness. God forgives us when we confess to Him our sin. Because He is faithful, He never tires of extending forgiveness to us. 1 John 1:9 is an important reminder to us: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."

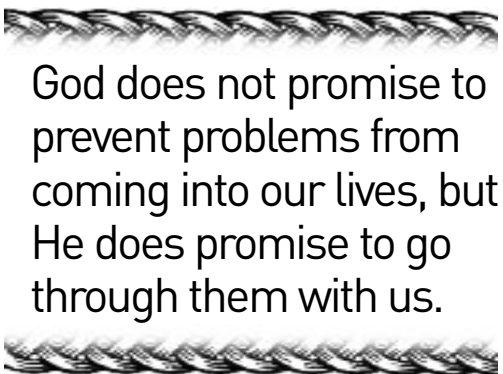
To say that God is faithful is to say that God is committed to us. He is steadfastly devoted to us and is looking to pull us out of our mess. Remembering the father in the parable of the Prodigal Son helps uplift and encourage us to go to God when we mess up things.

I will end by sharing the story of Thomas O. Chisholm who was born in 1866, in

Kentucky, and grew up in a Christian home. He went to school, studied and became a minister. After he graduated, he returned to Kentucky and served the church faithfully. In 1916, he was released from his church. According to church records, he was too sickly to be their pastor. He had respiratory problems and hence lacked a loud voice. So, they put him out of the church. Can you imagine being put out of the church for being sick and not having a loud voice?!

After Thomas O. Chisholm was put out of the church, he started selling brushes door-to-door to sustain the needs of his family. He walked the muddy and rocky roads of Kentucky year after year. In 1923, he wrote a poem, which is familiar to us: "Great is Thy Faithfulness." Can you imagine suffering from asthma, living in a log cabin, and walking all day door-to-door selling brushes and getting up the next morning and doing the same thing over again and again? How did he do it? His answer was:

"Morning by morning, new mercies I see;



God does not promise to prevent problems from coming into our lives, but He does promise to go through them with us.



All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.

Great is thy faithfulness, Lord unto me."

Thomas O. Chisholm had many reasons to mourn, lament, grieve, and lose faith and hope in God. Instead, he wrote:

"Great is Thy faithfulness, O God my father!

There is no shadow of turning with Thee;

Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not:

As Thou hast been Thou forever wilt be."

We are never cut off from God's faithfulness. That's a lesson that the prophet Jeremiah and Thomas O. Chisholm came to terms with the hard way. I pray and hope that we will, too. 🙏

Life Lessons Essay

What Is Your Achilles' Heel?

By Lacreata Scott

Myths live on. As my six-year-old son once instructed his three-year-old brother, "There's a little bit of truth in all the old sayings." One mythological story we remember is that of Achilles and his heel.

When Achilles was an infant, his mother yearned to make him immortal. So she plunged her baby boy into the magical River Styx. However, his heel did not get wet, for she held him by the heel.

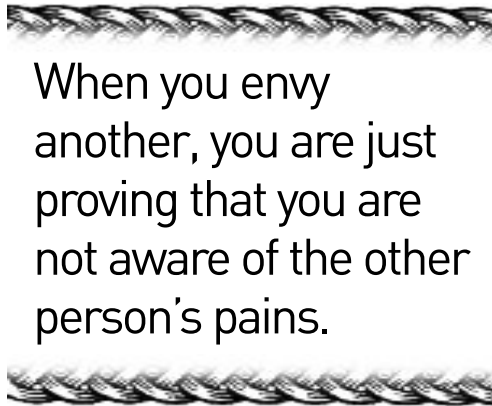
Achilles grew and became a fierce and successful warrior. Yet, in the end, the unprotected spot on his heel proved fatal. He was killed in battle when Paris shot an arrow straight into the undefended spot on his heel. Even today, we refer to an "Achilles' heel" when we speak of a human being's weak spot.

We all have them, these weak spots. Often others can see our weak spots—our fatal flaws—better than we can. Sometimes, it is hard to know where we are weakest. The drug or alcohol addicted person rarely has this problem, for these addictions are evident. But when addictions are hidden, it is harder to recognize them. Our addictions frequently manifest in attitudes that are dangerous.

One attitude problem is arrogance. Roger Ebert says of Achilles, "He was a man who believed his own press releases." Politicians, athletes, and media stars are not the only ones with press releases. We, regular people, also have them. We glow when praised by employers, family, and friends. We all need uplifting from time to time. But we must remember that we are not all the time as magnificent as others claim. Unless we remain vigilant, we can begin to believe we are somewhat superior to other people. Then we become arrogant, a fatal attitude. And arrogance leads to self-righteousness, another hazardous flaw.

Another weakness is carrying a good attribute too far. Ambition is one of those traits. Most of us admire an ambitious person. But when ambition becomes central, it can

destroy families, friendships, and the soul of the person. Lord Byron in his long epic poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, poignantly speaks of those who have too much ambition. He says these people have a fire in their bosoms, "a fever at the core." He warns that this quenchless fire is fatal.



When you envy another, you are just proving that you are not aware of the other person's pains.

Another human failing is a "woe to me" attitude. I wonder what people gain from this attitude. One thing they get is attention, but it is not positive attention. If they only knew how tiresome their complaints were to others, they would, at the least, be embarrassed. Or they should be. The truth is that no one wants to be around the self-pitying person.

The only cure I know for self-pity is gratitude. Begin listing the advantages you have. For one, if you live in the United States, you are blessed! Start with that one and continue to inventory all the pluses of your life. Soon you will change your attitude.

Self-pity often comes from envy, another Achilles' heel. When you envy another, you are just proving that you are not aware of the other person's pains. I do not know a mature life that does not have an underneath sorrow. I am reminded of Edward Arlington Robinson's poem "*Richard Cory*." Everyone in town saw Richard Cory as enviable; he had looks, wealth, and position. Yet the poem ends with Richard Cory putting a bullet

through his head. Quit comparing yourself to others. Your envy is only hurting you. And you look ugly to others when you are envious.

One of the deadliest sins is greed. How sad to see survivors quarrel and fuss over inheritances. Family ties shatter over money or possessions. Never forget that relationships trump all. We can kid ourselves about not being greedy, but when confronted with temptation, how many of us take the high road?

Once my father-in-law was asked advice about a piece of farming equipment two men claimed. He told the one who asked for his counsel, "Give the equipment to him." In other words, don't destroy a relationship over a mere trifle. No matter what the monetary value is, it is still just a trifle. Great peace of mind comes to those who just let it go, whatever it is.

Weaknesses such as being overly ambitious, self-pitying, envious, or greedy tempt us in such subtle ways. Socrates says that the unexamined life is not worth living. Examine yourself. Locate your own Achilles' heel, yield yourself to Jesus and allow Him to transform you into a better person. 🍎

If you must hate, if hatred is the leaven of your life, then hate what should be hated: falsehood, violence, selfishness.

– Karl Ludwig Boerne,
German political writer,
satirist (1786-1837)

Lessons from Gardening

By Carol Denicholas

In a group of Armenians the size of our congregation, there are, no doubt, a number of you who enjoy gardening to some extent. Some are happy with a couple of tomato plants and a few flowers; others enjoy tending their *boudoughi-dzars*; and still others are not content unless they are working toward a whole array of prize-winning produce, all in sufficient quantities to supply not only their own table, but that of the neighbors and relatives, as well, and still have enough to store away in the freezer (in various forms and mixtures), *verchihamar*. Whatever your level of interest, you know that healthy soil is as necessary as sun and water to the success of your efforts.

Before proceeding, let's be clear that *soil is not dirt*. Dirt, for our purposes, is a lifeless and unproductive aggregation of weathered clay/sand/silt, etc, devoid of organic matter. Soil, on the other hand, is the weathered rock component *plus* significant organic matter, and is literally teeming with life of all sorts. My grandfather, who was ever trying to develop the perfect composting method for his little bit of Eden, is the source of my fascination with this stuff. While researching lately about soil health, I kept coming across a theme that is very applicable to the life of our church. What could that be? Keep reading, and it will become evident.....

Imagine a group of stately trees, growing in a rural meadow. Such trees provide shade, shelter and possibly even food for numerous animals and picnickers. This very nice scene above the ground, however, is dependent on the many humble workers quietly and consistently going about their business, out of sight, below the ground.

By now, many of you are probably thinking of the very valuable work done by earthworms, various beetles, ants, etc., all of which break down large amounts of leaf litter and other organic matter, and whose tunnels help aerate the soil and make it more able to absorb water. But operating even more behind the scenes than the worms, beetles, and ants, is another set of essential workers we are not used to thinking

about. These are all the various types of fungi that inhabit the soil, and grow in mutually beneficial association with the roots of trees and plants. Yes, fungi, of all things! All the articles I have read state that this mutual association is so important that it is estimated that up to 95% of all land plants form them, and that some species simply cannot survive to maturity without their fungal associate. Those trees, no matter how



Factors that reduce diversity also reduce the resilience of ecosystems. For the church to reach its full potential, the humble and varied work of each person is necessary.



stately or majestic, cannot thrive without these tiny, invisible workers, and likewise, the fungi need the trees for their survival. Let's see very briefly what is involved here.

Beneficial fungi, attached to a tree's roots, send out extensive networks of fine, threadlike filaments in all directions. Here are just a couple of the many ways these fungal filaments help the tree:

They very greatly increase the volume of soil the roots can contact, albeit indirectly; not only accessing soil beyond the reach of the outermost roots, but also, being so small, they easily explore all the miniscule nooks and crannies of the soil, right under the tree's nose, as it were, where the actual roots cannot possibly fit.

Unlike the actual roots, they are able to produce enzymes and acids which unlock various essential elements from both organic matter and clay particles, thus making the otherwise chemically-bound nutrients available for the tree's use.

On the other hand, the trees, with their leaves in the sunshine, capture the sun's energy

through photosynthesis and make it available to the fungi in the form of glucose. The trees provide the fungi with the very energy needed for life.

Like the trees with their leaves in the sunshine, our "badvelis" spend much time in God's Word, and in prayer, and as a result of their communing with the Son, we are spiritually nourished and taught each week. Now I know we are not thrilled to be compared to fungi, but just like the work of the fungi, our behind-the-scenes efforts are just as valuable, and in order for the church to reach its full potential, the humble and varied work of each person – *according to each one's talents, training, personality, and calling* – is necessary for the whole to function as an effective unit. No single part – such as the pastoral staff, or the Deacons, or the Board of Christian Education – can do everything. They are limited in time and energy, and cannot be everywhere at once and be aware of all the needs as they arise. However, each of us, individually, wherever we are, can function as the "hands and feet" of the whole, springing into action as we see needs that we are equipped to meet. We can, thereby, just like the filaments described above, expand the reach and effectiveness of the "official" groups of the church.

There was this excellent paragraph in one of the articles I read: "Each mycorrhizal* fungus has its own array of physiological characteristics. Some are especially proficient at releasing nutrients bound in organic matter, some produce more effective antibiotics or growth regulators than others, and some are more active in cool, hot, wet, or dry times of the year than others. Healthy plant communities ... typically harbor diverse populations of mycorrhizal fungal species. This diversity is a hallmark of thriving ecosystems. Factors that reduce this diversity also reduce the resilience of ecosystems."

Does this remind you of that great passage in 1st Corinthians 12, where Paul talks about all the different parts being necessary for the proper functioning of the body, and that each part, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, is valuable and needed?

To the extent each of us develops the habit of looking around to see what needs we are able to meet, our church will thrive and be like living, productive soil, able to fulfill its mission of ministering to its members and being a light to the world. 🌱

*Perhaps you have noticed the phrase "growing medium contains *mycorrhizae*" as a selling point on the tags of plants bought from the nursery. It is simply referring to this kind of beneficial fungus, and is the botanical equivalent to the phrase "contains live and active cultures" which every good "madzoon" buyer looks for on the containers when deciding between two brands. Just as lactobacillus (a type of beneficial bacteria in yogurt) helps us to thrive, so mycorrhizae helps the plant world thrive.

Three Times

God Spoke

By Asien Surmeian

There are three remarkable occasions during Christ's ministry when God the Father spoke directly from heaven regarding His only begotten Son.

The first was while Jesus was being baptized by John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The Bible says as soon as Jesus was baptized, He came out of the water, heaven opened, and the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove. A voice came from heaven: "You are My Son, Whom I love; with You I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:15-17). The Father in audible voice reveals the Trinity as Jesus is baptized, and the Holy Spirit descends like a dove on Jesus.

Why did Jesus, the sinless Son of God, ask to be baptized by John? In humility, Jesus was about to inaugurate His public ministry.

He was being anointed by the Father for His Messianic earthly ministry. He was also identifying with humanity and supporting John's ministry.

The second time God spoke from heaven was at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17:1-8). Jesus led Peter, James and John up a high mountain. There He was transfigured before them. Jesus' face shone like the sun, and His clothes shone as light. There also appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking to Jesus! Then a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is My Son, Whom I love; with Him I am well pleased. Listen to Him!" These were the same words spoken by God at Jesus' baptism. When the disciples heard this they fell face down terrified. Jesus touched them.

"Get up," He said. "Don't be afraid." When the disciples looked up, they saw no one but Jesus!

The third time God spoke was in direct response to the prayer of His Son, at the beginning of the final week before His crucifixion. Jesus was predicting His death and said, "Now My heart is troubled, and what shall I say? Father, save Me from this hour? No, it was for this very reason that I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name." It was then that a voice came from heaven saying, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that heard it said that it had thundered. Others said an angel had spoken. But Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not Mine...and when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men to myself" (John 12:27 - 32).

The cross was the supreme exaltation of Jesus. By His death on the cross for our sins, life comes to us—life eternal—when we turn to Him by faith. God's voice during the Transfiguration said, "Listen to Him!" Do we? Jesus came to call ALL people of ALL backgrounds, without regard to nationality, ethnicity, race or status. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, our Messiah, our Savior. Let us listen, and obey His Word. 🕊

Don't Let Your Mind Trick You

The story of **how elephants are brought into captivity** is quite interesting. Have you ever been to a circus and seen a giant elephant with a small rope around its ankle? Physically speaking, there is no way that small little rope can hold back that giant elephant! And did you ever wonder how it happened that a giant elephant could be held in place by something that does not have the power to contain him.

Here's how it works. When trainers begin taming a baby elephant, they place a heavy chain around its ankle and stake the chain into the ground. Day after day, hour after hour, the baby elephant

struggles to escape. But his efforts are in vain. He simply cannot break free from the grips of that powerful chain. Eventually he surrenders. He resolves in his mind that there is no possible way he can escape that chain. So he relinquishes forever the struggle to be free.

Then when he has given up trying, his masters replace that giant chain with the small little rope. If the elephant ever opened his eyes to the truth, he could break free at any moment. All it would take is one try, but since the elephant doesn't know that, he doesn't take a step in the right direction of freedom.

And so it happens that ten, twenty,

thirty years later, the giant elephant remains held in bondage by something that really has no power to control him, except the power he chooses to give it.

Do not allow your life to be controlled by things that no longer have the power to control you, except the power that you—in your twisted little mind—are choosing to give it.

Is this true with you as well? The apostle Paul wrote, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm then and do not let yourselves be burdened again by the yoke of slavery." Galatians 5:1. 🕊



An Example of Enduring Faith

Corrie ten Boom was a courageous Dutch woman who was interned in a Nazi prison camp during World War II because her family helped to hide Jewish people from the Gestapo. During her imprisonment, Corrie endured some of the worst degradation a person can experience. Her sister, Betsy, died in the camps. Through all her suffering, Corrie never lost her faith in God. She defined faith as:

Fantastic Adventuring In Trusting Him.

The Effectiveness of a Fervent Prayer

During the dark days of the American Revolution, when the Continental Army had experienced several setbacks, a farmer who lived near the battlefield approached Washington's camp unheard. Suddenly his ears caught an earnest voice raised in agonizing prayer. On coming nearer he saw it was the great General, down on his knees in the snow, his cheeks wet with tears. He was asking God for assistance and guidance. The farmer crept away and returned home. He said to his family, "It's going to be all right. We are going to win!" "What makes you think so?" his wife asked. "Well," said the farmer, "I heard General Washington pray out in the woods today—such fervent prayer I have never heard. And God will surely hear and answer that kind of praying."

The farmer was right! It happened because Washington put his hope in God.

The All-Sufficient Christ

Jesus Christ is my bread when I am hungry
Jesus Christ is my Comfort when I am lonely
Jesus Christ is my Peace when I am feeling tense
Jesus Christ is my Rest when I am feeling weary
Jesus Christ is my Joy when I am feeling sad
Jesus Christ is my Strength when I am weak
Jesus Christ is my Living Waters when I am thirsty
Jesus Christ is my Wisdom when I am confused
Jesus Christ is my Protection when I am endangered
Jesus Christ is my Supply when I am empty

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us." Ephesians 3:20. Jesus is willing and able to exceedingly give us more than we ask or imagine!

In Jesus Christ we have riches that are immeasurable, incalculable, inestimable, unlimited, and infinite! All these rich resources are accessible to those who believe.

Faith Is a Refusal to Worry and Panic

Worry never solved a problem
Worry never paid a debt
Worry never alleviated a pain
Worry never made an enemy a friend
Worry never turned a wrong into a right
Worry is the interest paid by those who borrow trouble—sometimes the troubles of tomorrow—which may never arrive anyway!

The Necessity of Verification

Myths are easily accepted as truth because they have been around a long time. Take the case of the spider. About 350 B.C., the Greek philosopher **Aristotle classified the spider as having six legs**. And for the next 20 centuries everyone believed the spider had six legs. No one even bothered to count or to challenge the great Aristotle. And of course, everybody thought this was a scientific conclusion.

Well, along came **Lamarck**, the outstanding naturalist. He carefully counted the legs of the spider. And guess how many legs he counted? "**Exactly eight**". The myth that had been taught as truth for centuries was destroyed because Lamarck bothered to count.

The Importance of Integrity

So fearful were the ancient Chinese of their enemies on the north that they built the **Great Wall of China**, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was so high they knew no one could climb over it, and so thick that nothing could break it down. Then they settled back to enjoy their security.

However, during the first 100 years of the wall's existence, China was invaded three times. Not once did the enemy break down the wall or climb over its top. Each time they bribed a gatekeeper and marched right through the gates. According to historians, the Chinese were so busy relying upon the walls of stone that **they forgot to teach integrity to their children**.

Risk

To laugh is to risk appearing the fool.
To weep is to risk appearing sentimental.
To reach out for another is to risk involvement.
To explore feelings is to risk exposing your true self.
To place your ideas and dreams before a crowd is to risk their loss.
To love is to risk not being loved in return.
To live is to risk dying.
To hope is to risk despair.
And to try is to risk failure.

Don't Hasten to Judge

John Wesley told of a man he had little respect for because he considered him to be miserly and **covetous**. One day when this person contributed only a small gift to a worthy charity, Wesley openly criticized him.

After the incident, the man went to Wesley privately and told him he had been **living on parsnips and water for several weeks**. He explained that before his conversion, he had run up many bills. Now, by skimping on everything and buying nothing for himself he was paying off his creditors one by one. "Christ has made me an honest man," he said, "and so with all these debts to pay, I can give only a few offerings. I must settle up with my worldly neighbors and show them what the grace of God can do in the heart of a man who was once dishonest." Wesley then apologized to the man and asked his forgiveness.

Life Is

Life is a challenge - meet it.
Life is a gift - accept it.
Life is an adventure - dare it.
Life is a sorrow - overcome it.
Life is a tragedy - face it.
Life is a duty - perform it.
Life is a game - play it.
Life is a mystery - unfold it.
Life is a song - sing it.
Life is an opportunity - take it.
Life is a journey - complete it.
Life is a promise - fulfill it.
Life is a beauty - praise it.
Life is a struggle - fight it.
Life is a goal - achieve it.
Life is a puzzle - solve it.
Life is eternal - believe it.

Rev. Tootikian's Latest Book on His Golden Anniversary

William and Araxie Terian

Half A Century of Service/Guess Dar Diroch Aykeeyeen Méch.

By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian.

Armenian Heritage Committee,

3922 Yorba Linda Blvd., Royal Oak, MI 48073.

244 pages. Hard Cover. \$25.00

The year 2009 marks the 50th anniversary of Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian's ministry. "Yes, a **Half Century of Service** to God, the Armenian people, and the community at large.

Even though Rev. Tootikian officially retired several years ago, he "never" really learned how to relax and take it easy. Sometimes, Rev. Tootikian is "accused" of being a workaholic for "burning the candle at both ends" to which Rev. Tootikian replies, "that way I can generate twice the light! Retirement as a way of life does not suit everyone. That's why I am still working as hard as ever before"

As a measure of Dr. Tootikian's continued gratitude and his commitment to Christ, he has written his 31st book, entitled "**Half A Century of Service/ Guess Dar Diroch Aykeeyeen Méch.**" He is to be congratulated on this achievement "*shmorhavor ella!*"

Rev. Tootikian's book is divided into two sections: English and Armenian. The English section contains four parts, and the Armenian section contains three parts. There are also 27 articles written in English and 14 articles written in Armenian that represent Rev. Tootikian's thoughts on Christian faith and Armenian culture.

In addition, it contains 43 brief book reviews (25 in English 18 in Armenian) written about his previous publications. These are included because they represent part of Rev. Dr. Tootikian's literary career and provide the reader with a bird's eye-view about the nature and the content of his previous publications.

This book provides a rich variety of topics bringing valuable insights from the Scripture, history, and the author's observations from

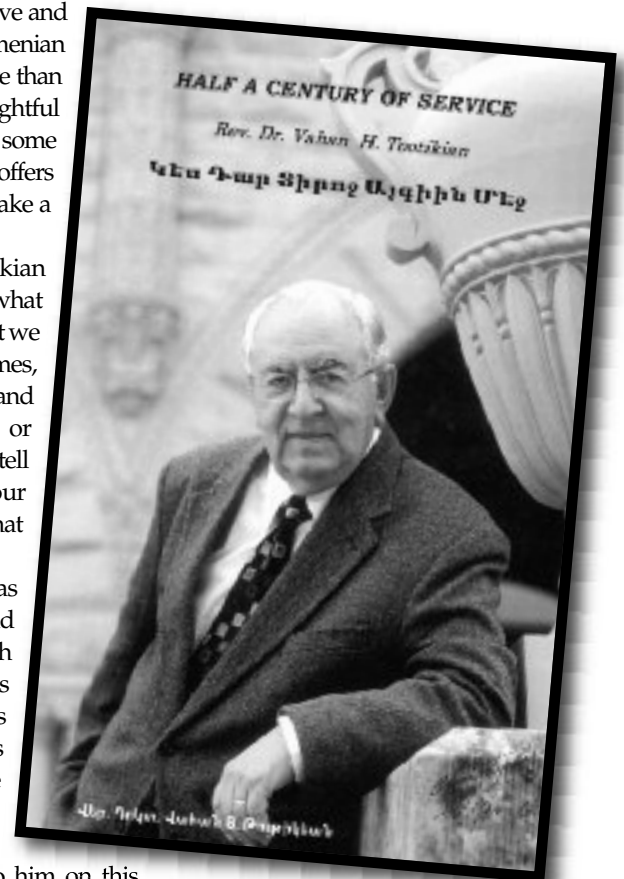
everyday "real world" to offer fresh, engaging and inspirational look at the Gospel and Armenians life.

The Armenian section consists of various aspects and thoughts of the author on a number of religious, ethical, and moral concerns, as well as an informative and interesting account on some Armenian organizations and issues. In more than a dozen lucid, compact and insightful essays, Rev. Tootikian examines some religious and ethnic issues and offers ideas on what can be done to make a difference.

In conclusion, Rev. Tootikian reminds the reader that we are what we write, what we read and what we display on the walls of our homes, and what we practice in private and in public. These symbols or pictures, act like signs, "which tell others who we are....what our basic outlook [on life is] and what motivates us."

The Rev. Dr. V. Tootikian has been preaching, teaching and writing for half a century, with fortitude and diligence. He has much to show for his efforts, as evident in these sermons, essays and meditations, each one carefully crafted, thoughtful and wise.

We extend our best wishes to him on this golden anniversary, and pray that God will continue to bless him with health, happiness and many more productive years.





Haig Minakian 1915-2009

Haig Minakian was born in Kershehir, Turkey. As a survivor of the Armenian genocide, he never knew his father, Parounak, who was murdered by the Turks. Their home was set on fire and his mother, Haiguhi Djerjerian, escaped with the rest of the family to Alexandria, Egypt. His great uncle, Mardiros Keshishian, the Patriarch of the family, raised all the orphan family members. During World War II, the family moved to Cairo. Mardiros established "Maison Mario" a very well known and highly respected business in both Alexandria and Cairo. Haig worked there all of his adult life with his maternal uncle Krikor Djerjerian, cousin Manoug Keshishian and brother Hampar Minakian.

In 1956, he married Angele Semsarian at St. Gregory the Illuminator Armenian Apostolic Church in Cairo. He was blessed with a daughter Sona and son Parounak. He wanted his children to learn about their Armenian heritage, culture and religion. He sent them to Kalousdian School and to Sunday School. He was very proud that his daughter became a pharmacist and his son a dentist.

He spoke seven languages. He enjoyed swimming and

dancing. He played tennis and billiard. He traveled frequently to Europe, Australia and the USA. He was kind and gentle. Despite all the hardships that he endured during the Armenian Genocide, he never complained or argued. He endured his losses with dignity. He always respected the family elders and their decisions.

He passed away on Tuesday, June 16, 2009, at the Italian Hospital in Cairo, after a short illness. The funeral was held the same day at the Armenian Cemetery in Heliopolis, Egypt. He was laid to rest at the family mausoleum with his grandmother Marie, great uncle Mardiros, uncle Krikor, aunt Magdalena, and mother Haiguhi.

Our resurrected Lord says, "Behold, I come quickly, and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be" (Revelation 22:12). The memory of the righteous shall be forever blessed. 🕊️

Submitted by Sona Minakian who is a member of the Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church, in Downey, California.

In 1952, Florence Chadwick tried to swim the 26 miles between Catalina Island and the California coastline. She was flanked by small boats that watched for sharks and were prepared to help her if she got hurt or grew tired. After about 15 hours, a thick fog set in. Florence began to doubt her ability to complete the swim and she told her mother, who was in one of the boats, that she didn't think she could make it. Her mother tried to encourage her. Florence swam for another hour before asking to be pulled out, unable to see the coastline due to the fog.

As she sat in the boat, she found out she had stopped swimming just one mile away from her destination.

Two months later, Chadwick tried again. This time, things were different. The same thick fog set in, but she was able to persevere. When asked why she was able to complete the swim the second time around, Ms. Chadwick said that she kept a mental image of the shoreline in her mind while she swam. What made the difference? She had the vision! Florence Chadwick had in her mind the vision of the goal that she was to achieve. She could see the shoreline!



The Minister to the Union Visits Europe and the Middle East

On my way to Europe and the Middle East, I was able to visit some churches on the East Coast. I had an opportunity to preach at the Paramus Armenian Presbyterian Church whose pastor is Rev. Berj Gulleyan. I also had the opportunity to meet Andy Torigian, the Executive Director of the AMAA, Al Depaola, the Operations Director, and Dikran Youmshakian, the Field Director. It is always inspiring to witness the great job that the AMAA is doing. May God bless all their efforts.

On a personal note, I would like to thank a very gracious family, Mr. and Mrs. John and Azadouhi Vartanian who hosted me while in New Jersey and made my visit very pleasant. Praise God for such dedicated servants of the Lord.

From New York I flew to Belgium and was met at the airport by the pastor of the Belgian Armenian Evangelical Church, Rev. Sarkis Pachaian, who provides spiritual leadership to seven churches: three Turkish-speaking and four Armenian-speaking congregations. During my short visit I observed very active and enthusiastic groups of believers whose potential is great. In Brussels, the Evangelical Armenians of Belgium were able to purchase an old building which they plan to convert into a church. The AMAA helped in the acquisition of this property. The city of Brussels has a strategic location in the heart of Europe.

In addition to Rev. Sarkis Pachaian, the following individuals assist in the operation of the Belgian churches: Garbis Aritim, Yura Alexanian, Artur Bedrossian and Arshag Arzoumanian. I was privileged to preach at several churches in Belgium.

From Brussels I took a train to Paris,



Ministers in France



Old building with plans to covert into an Evangelical Church



Brothers in Belgium



Leadership team in Belgium

France, where Rev. Joel Michaelian met me and escorted me to address a Bible Study gathering. I also had the opportunity to visit the newly-built Armenian Evangelical Church of Armourville whose pastor is the evangelist Sarkis Baroutjian. There are many Armenians who reside in this area and the church is doing a wonderful job by providing various services for them.



On Saturday morning, athletic events took place under the sponsorship of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Paris. Armenian young people, who belonged to various churches, clubs and organizations, like the Homentmen and the AGBU, participated in soccer, ping pong and volleyball competitions. I was given a brief

opportunity to greet the athletes and share the Gospel with them. We are grateful to the Armenian Evangelical Union of France for being active in every realm. May the Lord increase their strength to continue this vital ministry.

Then I returned to Belgium, and on



Meetings in Belgium

Evangelical community of the Middle East and special commendation to Dr. Paul Haidostian for providing such dynamic leadership. Of course, we cannot forget to thank the founding fathers and the AMAA for playing a major role in establishing and developing this important institution.

One of the highlights of the Haigazian University commencement exercises was when an Armenian student delivered an outstanding valedictory speech in perfect Arabic, impressing all who were present. Bravo! Another touching moment was when a cancer patient, who is blind, was brought directly from his hospital bed to the ceremony to receive his Bachelor's degree. May the light of Christ continue to shine brightly through this academic institution.

While in Beirut, I had the privilege to meet His Holiness Aram I, the Catholicos of the Great House of Cilicia. I was accompanied by the President of the UAECNE, Rev. Megerdich Karageozian. We had a cordial discussion about pertinent matters that have spiritual and national significance. Special thanks to Rev. Karageozian for his gracious hospitality and for giving me an exceptional tour of Lebanon, showing me places that I had never seen before, despite the fact of having been raised there.

On Sunday morning, I had the joy of preaching at the Armenian Evangelical Brotherhood Church, after which I had the

privilege of preaching at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Ashrafieh, whose pastor is Rev. Sghomon Kilaghbian. On Sunday afternoon, we arrived at Ainjar, where the 65th Assembly took place. Their theme was "Evangelism." Among the pastors and delegates, who represented different regions and countries, were two prominent clergymen: Rev. Krikor Aghabaloghlu of Turkey, and Rev. Krikor Youmshakian of Sydney, Australia. The assembly meetings were conducted smoothly under the capable leadership of Rev. Serop Mgerdichian, the chairman and pastor of the Emmanuel Armenian Evangelical Church of Aleppo, Syria, and Rev. Megerdich Karageozian, President of the UAECNE. It was refreshing to see a new crop of young ministers who are being prepared to fill the pulpits of our churches in the turbulent Middle East. Much work is being done to advance the Kingdom of God.

On a personal note, special thanks to Mr. Garbis Dehirmenjian who gave me a ride to Zahle where I was a boarding student at one time, and where I surrendered my life to the Lord who gave me a new direction and calling in life.

This report that I bring to you can be summed up in one sentence: Christ is being exalted in the Armenian community through the preaching of the everlasting Gospel. Let us continue to pray for strength, courage and grace to remain faithful to our high calling in Christ Jesus.

Submitted by Rev. Joseph D. Matossian

Sunday, I preached three times in three different churches. I want to commend the Belgian churches for their love and hospitality. Let us resolve to pray for these fledgling churches as they try to fulfill the Lord's will.

From Belgium I flew to Beirut, Lebanon, the country of my birth. There I was met by Rev. Megerdich Karageozian, Dr. Ed Racoubian and my brother, Sam Matossian, who was visiting Lebanon at the same time. I would like to express my gratitude to Sam Racoubian and his lovely family for extending great hospitality to me.

In Lebanon, I had an active schedule that included visiting old friends and attending events, such as the Haigazian University commencement, which was truly impressive. Government officials and a member of Parliament, representing the Lebanese President, were in attendance to witness 124 graduates receive their degrees. Congratulations to the Armenian



AEUNA Honors Reverend Bernard A. Guekguezian On Ministry Milestone

By Alexander and Philip Tavlian

More than 500 people gathered at California's oldest Armenian Church to salute a leading Armenian Evangelical cleric for 55 years of pastoral ministry in the Old and New Worlds.

The Armenian Evangelical Union of North America paid tribute to Reverend Bernard Asadoor Guekguezian at a gala banquet on Saturday evening, March 21, 2009, at the First Armenian Presbyterian Church of Fresno, boyhood church of authors William Saroyan and A.I. Bezzerides. Mrs. Roseann Emerzian Saliba served as Mistress of Ceremonies and Reverend Joseph Matossian, Minister to the AEUNA, delivered the invocation.

The celebration included music by virtuoso pianist Michael Krikorian and vocalists Hygo Ohannessian and Jennie Gray, and warm testimonials by the honoree's sons. Reverend Ara Guekguezian said of his father, "It is hard to love everyone who crosses your path—but if you do it, the results are amazing." Attorney Asbed Guekguezian of Massachusetts, in a letter read by eldest grandson, Peter Guekguezian, stated: "Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, he [his father] looks for someone to love in faithfulness to Jesus Christ."

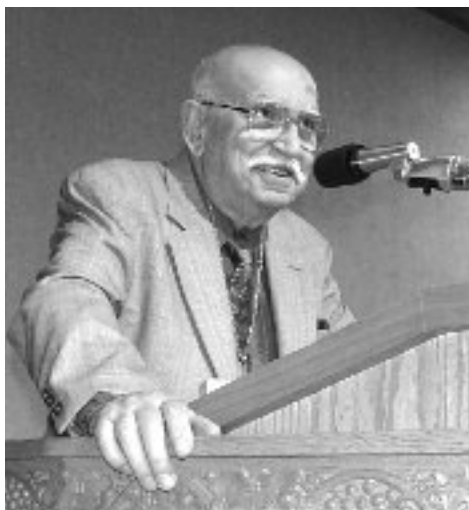
Reverends Berj Gulleyan, Gregory Haroutunian, and Mgrdich Melkonian (Reverend Bernard's pastoral successors in Paramus, Belmont, and Central California) spoke movingly about the honoree's "contagious enthusiasm for the Good News of Jesus" and his impact on the Armenian faith communities in New Jersey, Massachusetts and California.

The Minister to the AEUNA and the Moderator of the ecclesiastical confederation saluted their longtime colleague in the ministry of the Union. Reverend Joseph Matossian and Reverend Avedis Boynerian paid tribute to their colleague's faithful labor in the Old and New Worlds since his student days in the Near East. Robert Saroyan, friend of the honoree, described the warmth and passion for ministry in a pastoral career spanning six decades.

Armenian Missionary Association of America Executive Director, Andrew Torigian, praised the honoree's passion for Christian evangelism and missions work. Drawing on their friendship of four decades, Mr. Torigian warmly recounted memory after memory of a tireless shepherd, who tended and nurtured a spiritual flock of multiple generations to glorify God at home and abroad.

Edward Saliba, Chair of the AEUNA Committee on Stewardship, announced the creation of the Reverend





Bernard and Mrs. Knar Guekguezian Endowment Fund to prepare deserving graduate students for pastoral ministry in the 21st Century. In announcing the new Fund, Mr. Saliba described Reverend Guekguezian as a “Pastor-shepherd, bridge builder, and conflict resolver, who is always encouraging.”

Mrs. Roseann Saliba presented Mrs. Knar Guekguezian with a crystal cross in recognition of her efforts in establishing

the Armenian Evangelical Women’s Fellowship in both the Eastern and Western Regions.

The evening was rounded out by Mrs. Arpi Keledjian’s video presentation entitled “The Life of a Faithful Servant”, and the sharing of numerous official proclamations. These included a resolution from the Central Valley delegation of the California State Legislature and the Fresno City Council’s

declaration of “Reverend Bernard Guekguezian Day” on March 21, 2009 throughout the City of Fresno. The honoree rounded out the banquet program by thanking the audience, recognizing his early supporters Reverend Harry H. Missirlian and Dr. Puzant Krikorian; and by praising the Armenian Apostolic clergy of Central California for their Christian service and for taking time to share in the evening.

REVEREND BERNARD GUEKGUEZIAN, the youngest of nine children, was born near Antioch, Turkey, in the summer of 1927. After attending local schools, he immigrated to Syria and Lebanon in 1939 to further studies at Armenian Evangelical educational institutions in Beirut, Lebanon, and the Aleppo College of Syria.

He completed a combined course of study at the American University of Beirut and the Near East School of Theology in 1952, earning a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Diploma in Theology.

Guekguezian served as a licensed pastor at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Alexandria, Egypt, for two years and then came to the United States for additional ministerial training. He studied at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena and New York Theological Seminary, where he earned a Master of Arts degree in Christian Education.

The Congregational Conference of Massachusetts ordained Guekguezian a Minister of the Word in 1959. That same year he was called to serve as pastor of America’s oldest Armenian congregation -- the Armenian Congregational Church of the Martyrs in Worcester, Massachusetts. During his seven-year tenure there, he engaged in doctoral studies in Modern European History at Clark University.

In 1966, Reverend Guekguezian accepted a call to the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, New Jersey, where he served for a dozen inspiring years. On December 10, 1978, he was installed as the tenth pastor of Fresno’s First Armenian Presbyterian Church.

Reverend Guekguezian’s ministry at the Fresno church was marked by outreach to native Californians as well as to Armenian émigrés from the Near East and the Republic of Armenia. At the conclusion of his record 22 years in the pulpit, the Fresno congregation named him Pastor Emeritus. He then relocated to New England where he served as Interim Pastor of the First Armenian Church of Belmont for three years (2001-2003). Today he serves as Pastor of Visitation at Pilgrim Armenian Congregational Church of Fresno, where his son, Ara, serves as Senior Pastor.

In addition to his pastoral duties, Guekguezian has served multiple terms as Moderator of the AEUNA, Vice-President of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, Vice-President of the Armenian Theological Students’ Aid, Inc., and member of the Presbytery of San Joaquin Committee on New Church Development.

He is married to the former Knar Kazanjian of Aleppo, Syria, and they have five grandchildren in addition to their two sons and daughters-in-law.

Ordination of Razmig Minassian

Written by Joyce Zurnacian

The date had been set for Sunday, March 22, 2009. The invitations were mailed. Parishioners, family, friends, and esteemed clergy made plans to attend this once in a lifetime event, the Ordination and Installation Service of Razmig Minassian.

Sunshine and clear skies welcomed the day. Quiet reflective strains of organ music played by Theodora Primes filled the sanctuary.

As six o'clock approached, a hush came over a full to capacity assemblage of faithful supporters. The procession of over twenty Armenian Evangelical clergy, faithful brothers in Christ and a unique fraternity of men serving the Lord entered the sanctuary. The ordination of Razmig Minassian was about to begin.

Rev. Ron Tovmassian opened the evening service with a very special Call to Worship, followed by the Worship Team of Erika Levonian, Greg Shanoian, Tim Ketenjian, Ara Darakjian, and Robert Saldana performing "How Great is Our God," and "Before the Throne of God Above."

The service continued as Haig Darakjian, AEUNA In-Care Student, presented the invocation and Rev. Joseph Matossian, Minister to the AEUNA, welcomed everyone to this special service.

Pastor Sarkis Karaminassian, St. Nareg Church, Whittier, then read the Scripture in Armenian followed by an Armenian sermon delivered by Rev. Serop Megerditchian, brother-in-law of Razmig, from the Armenian Evangelical Emmanuel Church, Aleppo, Syria.

Under the direction of Hovan Tajerian, the choir sang the beautiful hymn "Be Thou My Vision, O Lord of My Heart."

Rev. Mgo Mekredijian, Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church, Providence, RI, and friend of Razmig, read the Scripture in English. Rev. Aren Balabanian, First Armenian Presbyterian Church, Fresno, also a friend of Razmig, delivered the English sermon.

Rev. Greg Haroutounian, First Armenian Presbyterian Church, Belmont, MA, delivered the Exhortation to the Ordinand. Rev. Greg told Razmig not to be afraid to work hard when spending time working for the Lord. "This is just the beginning," he said.

"Do not fear for the Lord thy God is with you. Have a fearless passion to speak the Truth and spread the Word of God." Rev. Greg asked that Razmig would be empowered and be a faithful servant in God's service.

Rev. Jason Matossian presented the Exhortation to the Congregation. "Razmig," Rev. Jason said, "has been called to UACC to pastor, teach, and lead the congregation as an under-shepherd of Christ.

It is the congregation's responsibility: to pray for Razmig for growth in his relationship as a child of God, for his family life, and for his ministry; to partner with Razmig by encouraging him and overwhelming him, not with requests, but with your readiness to serve Jesus; and to love Razmig for the glory of God and the growth of His kingdom at UACC.

The service then continued with a special format that included greetings from Rev. Joseph Matossian. A presentation of the candidate for Ordination by the Moderator of UACC, Darrell Levonian to the Minister of the AEUNA, and a response by the Moderator of the AEUNA, Rev. Avedis Boynerian, Armenian Memorial Church, Watertown, MA.

Rev. Ron Tovmassian read Scriptures from the Prophet Isaiah, the Apostle Paul, and from Jesus Christ to the first disciples: "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

It was now time for Razmig to proclaim that, indeed, he has been called by the voice of the church to be an ordained minister of the church of Jesus Christ. Family and friends sat contemplatively as Razmig accepted the challenges. The congregation then accepted Razmig as Pastor of Christian Education.

The esteemed clergy who had assembled to participate and witness this historic service came forward to perform the traditional "laying on of hands" as Razmig knelt in prayer.

This ceremony is awe-inspiring as a unique



fellowship of clergy welcomes with great joy another into their fraternity of believers.

Rev. Ron Tovmassian delivered the prayer of ordination in English followed by Rev. Abraham Chaparian, Armenian Evangelical Church, Hollywood, delivering the prayer in Armenian. The declaration of ordination and service was now confirmed.

Representing the Board of Deacons, George Phillips, Jr. and Joyce Zurnacian presented Razmig with his pastoral robe. His wife, Jennifer, and mother, Alice, placed the robe on Razmig. The Reverend Avedis Boynerian placed the clergy stoles on Razmig.

The service concluded with the singing of the Hyer Mer and Rev. Razmig Minassian delivering the benediction.

It is with our warmest congratulations and best wishes that we welcomed Razmig and Jennifer into our church family. May God bless this young couple and their ministry to our congregation.

An elegant reception organized by Rita Berjikly of the Young Women's Circle and Grace Kurkjian of United Women followed this special service.

64th Annual Scholarship Banquet of the Armenian Theological Students' Aid (ATSA)

A New York City narcotics prosecutor was the keynote speaker at a spring scholarship banquet in the City of Fresno.

Peter Mark Kougasian, Assistant District Attorney of the County of New York, delivered the main address at the 64th Annual Scholarship Banquet of the Armenian Theological Students' Aid, Inc. (ATSA). "Empowering Future Shepherds" was the theme.

The banquet took place Sunday, April 26, 2009, on the campus of the First Armenian Presbyterian Church. Proceeds went to graduate scholarship programs of the Fresno-based nonprofit corporation.

The April 26 event featured the vocal music of the Chamber Singers of Fresno Pacific University, under the leadership of Dr. Roy Klassen. Fresno attorney Robyn Esraelian was the Master of Ceremonies and scholarship recipient Shant Barsoumian gave a personal testimony.

A native of Rhode Island, Kougasian received his undergraduate education at the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University. He completed

his legal education at the Yale University School of Law, where he serves as Secretary of the Class of 1979.

He is leading member of the Office of Special Narcotics Prosecutor under New York County District Attorney Robert Morris Morgenthau, who recently announced his retirement after 35 years of service. Morgenthau's father was Secretary of the Treasury in the administration of Franklin Delano Roosevelt (1934-1945) and his grandfather was United States Ambassador to the Ottoman Empire in the administration of Woodrow Wilson (1913-1916).

In addition to his prosecutorial duties, Kougasian is a Vice-President of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York, a member of the House of the Delegates in the New York State Bar Association, Moderator of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York City, and Vice-President of the New Jersey-based Armenian Missionary Association of America. He is married to Elizabeth Edds Kougasian, Esq. and they have one son.

Incorporated in 1945, the Fresno-based, nonprofit ATSA provides scholarship assistance to graduate students of Armenian descent around

the globe, granting more than \$650,000 in financial aid in a span of seven decades.

The late Fresno attorney, Gaspar H. Magarian, incorporated the organization in his historic Mason Building office and served as its first counsel. Reverend Arsham K. Yeramian, Reverend Doctor Hagop A. Chakmakjian, and Ezras Tellalian were the charter directors.

The current directors are: Rafi Balabanian, D.D.S., Ann R. Karagozian-Sarafian, Ph.D., Edward Saliba, Hrant Darakjian, Arnold H. Gazarian, D.D.S., Reverend Ara R. Guekguezian, Harry Halajian, Reverend Karl Vartan Avakian, and Philip Tavlian.

ATSA is a recognized organization of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, an ecclesiastical confederation of Armenian Evangelical churches, missions, and fellowships in the United States of America and Canada.

ARMENIAN THEOLOGICAL STUDENTS' AID, INC.

7434 NORTH RECREATION AVENUE
FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93720-0163

TELEPHONE (559) 433-0746 / (559) 260-3357

Ministers' Retreat

Reported by Rev. Aren Balabanian

The Armenian Evangelical Union of North America held its biannual pastors' retreat on March 23-25 at Camp Arev. Pastors from the West Coast and East Coast churches attended. It was a tremendous time of fellowship, prayer, and studying God's Word.

The topic of the weekend was prayer. The speaker was Rev. Ben Patterson, the Campus Pastor at Westmont College in Santa Barbara. Rev. Patterson is a renowned author who has written several books on prayer. He emphasized the essential role that prayer should be playing in the life of pastors. He pointed out that prayer is "active combat." Prayer is the means by which we fight the spiritual battle that we are involved in. It is the means that God uses to get the work of ministry accomplished, while also using such prayer to transform us. It was a blessing to hear this man of God share with us, as his passion and

commitment to a faithful life of prayer was evident.

The pastors also spent a significant amount of time sharing about their ministries with one another. We spent time discussing the ways God has blessed us and our churches, while also talking about the difficulties that were occurring in different ministries. Upon hearing such joys and concerns, we spent a significant amount of time praying for one another, asking God to use each of us to be His faithful representative in our churches and ministries.

Other sessions included Rev. Avedis Boynerian, Moderator of the AEUNA, giving a presentation about the well-rounded health of a minister's life, while Rev. Joe Matossian, Minister to the Union, shared about the current state of the Union. A significant amount of time was spent discussing the AEUNA and its ministries, as well as the difficulty facing all of us in the current economic landscape. Much time

was spent brainstorming about how each of us can contribute to the ministries of the Union, and how each congregation can be encouraged to be more aware of the ministries of the AEUNA and to play an active role in them.

It was amazing to see the harmony and spirit of brotherhood shared by the pastors gathered at this retreat. There were varying generations, with a large number of younger pastors. There were pastors who were originally from the Middle East and others who were born and raised in the U.S. But even with such diversity in background and age, it was evident that the Gospel of Christ, its fundamental truths as revealed in His perfect Word, and the spread of this Gospel was the passion for these pastors. Even with the discussion of some difficulties facing our churches and Union, it was evident that God has done a great work in and through our churches, and that with the Gospel being the main source of unity and passion, God will work through His Word and His people. Therefore it was an encouraging weekend to share with brothers in Christ, and we will be praying for God to work actively in our churches for His glory.

Camp AREV's Mission: Connection to and Conviction for Christ

The 32nd Camp AREV Banquet on May 9, 2009 was another overwhelming reminder for the "Reason for Camp AREV."

The Keynote Speaker, Rev. Mgrdich Melkonian, of the Fresno Armenian Presbyterian Church, asked the question, "Why Camp AREV?"

Is it just for fun and games, as in our backyards? Or is it a place, such as an olive garden, where one retreats to relax—learn about Jesus' love and saving power? Our history over 32 years proves the latter—"I will praise Your name for You have done wonderful things." Isaiah 25:1

A beautiful brochure depicting furnishings and audio equipment sponsorships indicate how close we are to completion. The Derian Fellowship Hall and the Darakjian Chapel are shining examples of the prevailing generous spirit towards Camp AREV. For those of you who would like to be engaged in any aspect of this completion phase, please call the Camp AREV office at (818) 507-0922 or email: info@camparev.org.

Camp Committee Chairman, Hagop Ketenjian, gave a camp operations overview and was duly honored for his endless efforts on behalf of the building process. Banquet co-chairs, Debbie Levonian, Arsine Phillips, and Bennette Turpanjian are appreciated for their continuing efforts each year.

Participants in the program were: Camp Executive Director, Jennifer Abadjian; M.C. Daniel Goglanian; Rev. Daniel Albarian; the UACC Youth Choir with Mary B. Saghbazarian under the direction of Melissa Ishkarian; Projects Architect Nubar Aroyan; Rev. Joe Matosian; and Jimmy Deryeghiayan.

Every summer Camp provides the vehicle for our young people to interact in a wholesome environment by renewing friendships, making new ones, and committing their lives for Christ. THE YOUTH ARE THE FUTURE OF THE ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL CHURCH.

- By Joyce Abdulian

Sipan Armenian School Honored by Armenia's Ministry of Education

PARAMUS, N.J. - On March 15, at the annual fundraising event of Sipan Armenian School, Mrs. Louisa Janbazian, president of the school Board, announced that the school received an Honorary Award from Mr. Spartak Seyranyan, the Minister of Science and Education of the Republic of Armenia, for its legacy of educating and nurturing the young Armenian generation with the Armenian Spirit, and for the 30th Anniversary of its founding.

Mrs. Janbazian added that the school has earned this award because of the hard work and the dedication of the teachers and especially the principal, Mrs. Arpi Kevorkian, who teach the Armenian children to learn and love the Armenian language and our rich cultural heritage.

She also thanked the Board members, the guests and the donors for their continued support for the school, and praised the founding members (Armenian Evangelical College Students Association of

Beirut, Lebanon) some of whom are still on the School Board. Thirty years ago, as new emigrants from Lebanon here in New Jersey, this group had the vision to create an environment, outside of the home, where Armenian children could come together to learn their Armenian language and history.

Finally, she thanked James and Maral Sahagian, who graciously hosted this fundraising event at their home in Airmont, N.Y., where the guests spent a lovely afternoon and enjoyed a delicious Lenten luncheon. The proceeds from this event, as well as the generous donations from friends and supporters, will help the school to continue with its noble mission.

The Sipan Armenian School, which meets on Friday evenings at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus, NJ, has Pre-Nursery to seventh grades.

Sipan Armenian School Holds Yearend "Hantes"

PARAMUS, N.J. - On June 5, the Sipan Armenian School held its annual yearend *hantes* at the Hekemian Social Hall of the Armenian Presbyterian Church. Over 150 parents, grandparents, relatives and guests attended the program.

After the students' procession, principal **Arpi Panossian Kevorkian** welcomed the guests; the singing of the Armenian and American National anthems followed.

The theme of this year's program was "Spring in our Motherland *Hayasdan*." The social hall was tastefully decorated with the many colors of spring. The talented students performed poetry recitations, Armenian folk dances and songs, all of which related to celebrating springtime in Armenia.

The hard work of the students and the teachers was evident by the children's performance during the distribution of trophies to students who achieved high scores during the school year.

The program ended with remarks by board president **Louisa Janbazian**, and the closing prayer was given by **Rev. Berj Gulleyan**, minister of the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus. A reception for all students, teachers, and guests followed the program.

Sipan Armenian School holds classes for children in pre-nursery to 7th grades. All classes are bilingual, and are held on Friday evenings at the Armenian Presbyterian Church of Paramus from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.



Commemoration of a Former Armenian Evangelical Scouting Program of Beirut, Lebanon

By Zaven Demirjian

The former members of the Junior Christian Endeavor Organization of the First American Evangelical Church of Beirut, Lebanon, hosted a dinner and program on January 17, 2009 at 7:00 p.m., in the Derian Hall of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church, in Pasadena, California. The guest of honor for the evening was Rev. Dr. John Khanjian, who was the organization's prominent Youth Leader and Scoutmaster during the years of 1957 to 1962.

Rev. Kevork Terian, Pastor of the Cilicia Church, gave the invocation. He thanked God for the virtuous character and dedicated service of Dr. Khanjian, who has been a role model to his students.

Zaven Demirjian described some of the activities of the scouts. He stated that the church provided a room, that was used as a meeting place and storage area. Tents and sleeping bags were purchased at a discount from Hagop Salibian's business. The scouts went on camping trips to different mountain locations, such as Brummana. In the winter a popular trip by train was the snow covered mountain at Dahr El Baydar.

Nishan Basmadjian presented the biography of Dr. Khanjian who was born in Aleppo Syria. He graduated from Near East School of Theology and the American University of Beirut in 1962. He also graduated from Claremont Graduate School with a Ph.D. degree in 1974. He has taught at Aleppo College, Near East School of Theology, Kansas Wesleyan University and University of La Verne. He was Dean of Students from 1987 to 1993 at the Armenian International College/University of La Verne, where Nishan also worked as Librarian. From 1995 to 2002 he was President of Haigazian College, which became a University in 1997. At Haigazian University he upgraded the academic program, the infrastructure, including the renovating and moving back to the old campus in West Beirut. Presently he is the Provost of the Evangelical Theological Academy (Seminary) of Armenia in Yerevan, which aims at training ministers and Christian workers.

Some of the former scouts shared interesting events and experiences.

Dr. Steven H. Aharonian stated that he had served with Dr. Khanjian in the Haigazian University Board. As the President of AMAA he regarded the success of the Seminary in Armenia very important for him. He was confident that Dr. Khanjian will apply his administrative experience in laying a solid foundation for the Seminary.



Former Scouts with their Scoutmaster

Names of people from Left

1st Row: Zaven Demirjian, Dr. Steven H. Aharonian, Rev. Dr. John Khanjian, Raffi Aposhian, Nishan Basmadjian, Robert Meneshian,
2nd Row: Dr. Vicken Aharonian, Dr. Ivan Shnorhokian, Dr. Ara Tilkian, George Keushguerian, Vatche Kasparian, Barkev Tashjian

Dr. Vicken Aharonian appreciated the fact that his father, Rev. Hovhannes Aharonian, the President of the Near East School of Theology, had assigned Dr. Khanjian to be Youth Leader and Scoutmaster. He recalled a camping trip at the Litany River, where the scouts tried to catch frogs.

Dr. Ara Tilkian said that his father, Rev. Garabed Tilkian, being the Pastor of our church in Beirut was very busy, and he was glad that Dr. Khanjian was helping him by working with the youth. He also reminded us about "Kchag" Summer Camp, located on a beautiful Lebanese mountain covered with pine trees. Christian Endeavor groups held their summer camps and retreats in "Kchag."

Dr. Ivan Shnorhokian reminded us about an injury to his nose after a scary fall at a campsite. First aid was applied, the wound healed, and no trace of injury remained.

A plaque was given to Dr. Khanjian in appreciation of his services to our organization. He was grateful for the affection shown to him, and he said he still considered his scouts to be adolescent "badani" at heart.

The scouts were thankful to their Scoutmaster for teaching them survival skills, endurance, moral values and to be "always ready" to serve the Lord, the church and humanity.

Յովհաննէս Մանդակունի (420-491)

Վեր. Պարզեւ Ն. Տարագնեան

Հոկտեմբեր ամսուան մէջ կը տօնուի Սուրբ Թարգմանչացը, երբ կը յիշատակուին գլխաւորաբար Սուրբ Մեսրոպը, Սուրբ Սահակը, ու անոնց աշակերտող Ս. Թարգմանիչներու հոյլը: Ասոնք ո՛չ միայն հնարեցին հայերէն տառերը 404 թ.ին, հապա նաեւ հայ քրիստոնէական գրականութիւնն ու մշակոյթ ստեղծեցին իրենց ինքնագիր ու թարգմանածոյ գործերով: Այս սուրբերուն մասին յաճախ գրուած կամ խօսուած է: Հետեալաբար, այս քանի մը տողերով կ'ուզենք ներկայացնել Հինգերորդ Դարու այդ տիտան սուրբերէն մէկը՝ որ մեծապէս աստարեց եկեղեցական պաշտամունքներու գրականութեան, ժամերգութիւններու, եւ Ս. Պատարագի: Անունը՝ Ս. Յովհաննէս Մանդակունի:

Յովհաննէս Մանդակունին եղած է Ս. Մեսրոպի աշակերտներէն մէկը: Ան իրաւա՛մբ ճանչցուած է՝ Ս. Մեսրոպէն ետք՝ հինգերորդ դարու ամենէն նշանաւոր մատենագիրը: Եղած է քրիստոնէական հասարակ քաջարի ջատագովներէն մէկը: Ան ապրած է, ու գործած՝ այնպիսի ժամանակի մէջ երբ Հայաստան կոտախնձոր էր պարսիկներու եւ յոյներու (Բիզանդիոն) միջեւ: Մայր երկրին մէջ կատարեալ անիշխանութիւն կը տիրէր: Զօրաւոր էին վարդապետաց պատերազմէն «լաթթական» եղած պարսիկին ու պարսկաւեր կուսակցութեան ոտնձգութիւնները: Հայ նախարարներէն շատեր իրենց անձնական շահերէն ու փառասիրութենէն մղուած՝ կ'որսանային քրիստոնէական հաւատքն ու եկեղեցին, ու կը հետեւէին պարսից գրադաշտական կրօնին ու կրակապաշտութեան: Անբարոյութիւնը իր զագագթանկէտին հասած էր:

Ահա այսպիսի ժամանակաշրջանին էր որ Յովհաննէս Մանդակունի՝ 478 թ.ին կը բարձրանար կաթողիկոսական գահը: Իր նախորդը՝ Գիւտ Կաթողիկոս՝ կը մեռներ յուսահատ եւ վշտահար: Պարսկաւեր կուսակցութիւնը ճակատ կազմած էր Մանդակունի Հայրապետին ու Վահան Մամիկոնեանի դէմ: Ուրացող նախարարները զրպարտութիւններ կ'ընէին անոնց մասին Պարսից Պերոզ թագաւորին մօտ՝ թէ Մանդակունին եւ Վահան Մամիկոնեան կը դաւաճանէին պարսից դէմ, ու կը գործակցէին յոյներու հետ: Աւելի շիտակ պիտի ըլլար եթէ զրպարտողները ըսէին թէ Ս. Յովհաննէս Մանդակունի Հայրապետը եւ Վահան Մամիկոնեան մտադիր էին շարունակել Վարդապետաց հետոսներու կիսատ թողուցած կրօնքի ու խղճի ազատութեան համար մղած ճակատամարտը, ու առաջըը առնել դէպի գրադաշտականութիւն հակող զօրաւոր հոսանքին:

Ու արդարեւ այդպէս ալ եղաւ: Երբ պատերազմը վերակաւ, Մանդակունին նախ եկեղեցի կ'առաջնորդէ հայրուկները գունդ առ գունդ, ու կը զինէր զանոնք հոգեւորապէս: Բազմաթիւ առիթներով ան ձիւ վրայ նստած՝ մասնակցեցաւ ճակատամարտներու: Նոյնիսկ վիրաւորուելով ձիւն վար ինկաւ, ու զինուորները եկան ու տարին զայն հիւանդանոց: Սակայն ինչպէս յիշեցինք վերը, Մանդակունին դարձաւ գործօն եւ հոգեւորապէս աննկուն մէկ ջանակիրը Ս. Մեսրոպով եւ Ս. Սահակով սկսուած հայ քրիստոնէական մշակոյթի, ու անտարանչութեան:

Մանդակունի Հայրապետը եղաւ Մայր Եկեղեցիին պատարագին ու ժամերգութեան համար գործածուած «Օխարան»ի կամ

«Մաշթօց»ի հեղինակը: Հայ եկեղեցական մատենագրութեան մէջ Մանդակունիի կը վերագրուին թիով 28 վարդապետական-խրատական ճառեր որոնց մէջ այժմեական կը նկատուի սեռային անբարոյական ունակութիւններու դէմ գրած ճառը: Իսկ Գիրք Թողթօց-ի մէջ ունի հոգեւոր ցուցմունքներ ապաշխարութեան, պահերտու, եւ աղօթքի վերաբերեալ: Յատուկ ուշադրութեան արժանի է ապաշխարութեան մասին մատուցած իր բարոյական խրատականը: Այս ճառին բովանդակութիւնէն կրնանք հետեցնել որ՝ ինչպէս մեր օրերուն՝ հինգերորդ դարուն մէջ եւս սեռային անբարոյականութիւնը աներներ գործած է: Հետեալաբար, Մանդակունի ժողովուրդը ապաշխարութեան կը հրաւիրէ բարոյականութեան ճանքով: Ապաշխարութեան ամենէն կարեւոր քայլը իրեն համար ողորմածութիւն է: Մեղքը հիւանդութիւն է Մանդակունիի համար, իսկ այս հիւանդութենէն փրկուելու համար ան ամենէն կարեւոր դերը կը նկատէ ողորմածութիւնը: Մեղքը անկետաձգելի ու խիստ վտանգաւոր հիւանդութիւն մըն է, ու եթէ դարմանի մասին չմտածենք, ու ապաշխարելով առաջըը չառնենք՝ կ'ենթարկուինք խիստ ահաւոր կացութեան, ու յափտենական կորուստի: Մեղքի նկատմամբ անհոգ ըլլալը, ու դարմանը ձգձգելը կ'ունենայ ահաւոր հետեանք, այսինքն՝ յափտենական տանջանք: Ուրեմն, Պօղոս Առաքեալի նման՝ ան կոչ կ'ընէ ժողովուրդին որպէսզի «...ահով ու դողով իրենց անձերուն փրկութիւնը իրագործեն»: (Փիլիպ. 2.12): Ինչպէս յիշեցինք վերը՝ Մանդակունիին հոգը ժողովուրդին մէջ տիրող անբարոյութիւնը վերցնել էր, ու անոր համար ալ իր առաջադրած ապաշխարութիւնը բարոյական ու գործնական միջոցառումներ եղան: Անիկա ուժգին շեշտեց այդ մեղքերուն ահաւոր հետեանքը, որ կրնար անակնկալօրէն հասնիլ իրենց վրայ, ու հետեալաբար՝ թելադրեց ապաշխարել լալով, ծոմապահութիւնով, եւ նոյնիսկ զանազան չարչարանքներու ենթարկելով իրենց մարմինները:

Մենք՝ անտարանականներու՝ այնքա՛ն քարոզներ կը լսենք հասարակութեան շնորհքով փրկութեան մասին՝ որ յաճախ կը մոռնանք անի յուրի առնել մեր մեղքերը, այսինքն՝ դրական քայլ մը առնել այդ մասին, գործնապէս զղջալ ու ներում խնդրել նախ Աստուծմէ, ու ապա անոնցմէ՝ գորոնք անիրաւած ենք, եւ ցուցուցած՝ մեր քաղաքավար սուտերով, եւ խաբէութիւններով: Ու հո՛ն է Մանդակունիին պատգամը. ապաշխարութիւնը՝ որ ըստ Աճառեան Արմատական Բառարանի «լալով զղջալ» է, մեզ իրապէս մղելու է ԲԱՆ ՄԸ ԸՆԵԼՈՒ այդ մասին: Ապա թէ ոչ՝ մենք կը կործանենք մեր ներկան, ու կը կորսնցնենք մեզի խոստացուած Յափտենական Կեանքը:

Ուրեմն, Ս. Յովհաննէս Մանդակունիէն՝ հինգերորդ դարու այս տիտան քրիստոնէալ մտաւորականէն՝ սորվինք գէթ մէկ բան – Ծնորհքով փրկութիւնը ընդունելով հանդերձ՝ դարձեալ Բրիտանուի շնորհքով, բայց գործնապէս՝ ներում խնդրենք անոնցմէ գորո ցուցուցած ենք, ու լալով զղջանք մեր գործած բոլոր մեղքերուն համար: Ներում ըլլալու որպէս, բայց անբացատրելի փորձառութիւնը մեր լաւագոյն վարձատրութիւնը պիտի ըլլայ: Թող Տէրը ողորմի բոլորիս: Ամէն:

Մերտիներան Հայ Աւետարանական Վարժարանի Տարեկան Հունձքը

Ծրրմըն Օրք – 2008–2009 ուսումնական տարեշրջանի
աւարտական հանդէսը տեղի ունեցաւ 28 Յունիս, 2009-ին, կ.է.
Ժամը 4-ին՝ վարժարանիս սրահին մէջ, ի ներկայութեան անէլի քան
300 ծնողներու, հիւրերու, պատկան մարմիններու
ներկայացուցիչներու եւ հպարտօրէն տողանցող 20 Միջնակարգի
եւ 21 Նախակրթարանի ընթացաւարտներու:

Ամերիկեան եւ Հայկական զոյգ քայլերգներու կատարողութենէն
ետք հանդիսութեան բացման աղօթքը կատարեց Վեր. Գեորգ
Թէրեան, որմէ ետք 5-րդ կարգի շրջանաւարտները բեմ
բարձրանալով կատարեցին անգլերէն լեզուով խմբական
արտասանութիւն մը՝ «Keep on Learning»: Ծրջանաւարտ
աշակերտներու անունով ուղերձներ կարդացին Վիքթոր
Տարագճեանը՝ Անգլերէնով եւ Յարութ Նազարեանը՝ Հայերէնով:
Ապա, վարժարանի տնօրէն Պր. Յովսէփ Ինճէճիքեանի ձեռամբ
անոնք ստացան իրենց Նախակրթարանի վկայականներն ու
մրցանակները:



Վերջին գնահատուողը եղաւ Տիկ. Տի Զորլեանը, որ բազմիցս
եղած է Ծնողա-Ուսուցչական Կազմի անդամ, աստեանապետուհի,
Հոգաբարձական կազմի անդամ եւ որու աշխատասիրութիւնն ու
«Յոր»ի համբերութիւնը զինք դարձուցին օրինակելի գործընկեր եւ
ծնողք –

Երէք Մեծարեալները ստացան լուսատախտակներ:

Յայտագրի երկրորդ մասը սկսաւ վարժարանիս երգչախումբի
երկոթով. Ներկաները հաճոյքով ունկընդորեցին հոգետր եւ
ժողովրդական երգերու փունջ մը:

Օրուան պատգամախօսն էր Վեր. Գեորգ Թէրեանը: Անոր կտու
խօսքին թեման էր «Ամէն ինչ կարելի է անոր համար որ կը
հաւատայ»: Բազմաթիւ օրինակներ բերելով նշանատր մարդոց
կեանքերէն ան բացատրեց, որ ամէն անձ պէտք է հաւատք
ունենայ իր կարողութիւններուն վրայ, յարստեօրէն աշխատի եւ
թոյլ չտայ՝ որ խոչընդոտներ արգելք հանդիսանան իր
յաւաջացման:

Հանդիսութեան վերջին մասը նուիրուած էր Միջնակարգի
շրջանաւարտներուն՝ որոնք խմբովին արտասանեցին հատուածներ՝
Գեորգ Էմիլի «Սասունցիներու Պարը» գործէն:

Ծրջանաւարտներէն Յասմիկ Հմայակեան Անգլերէնով եւ Արմէն
Արպանեան Հայերէնով կարդացին իրենց ուղերձները. անոնց
շնորհակալութեան եւ երախտագիտութեան զգացումներով լեցուն
խօսքերը յուզումով պատեցին բոլոր ներկաները:

Վկայականներու եւ մրցանակներու բաշխումէն ետք Լորի
Շիրանեան՝ 8-րդ կարգին, տարուան մը կեանքը ներկայացնող
շրջանակուած նկարներու փունջ մը նուիրեց Պր. Ինճէճիքեանին որ
իր կարգին, վերջին անգամ ըլլալով անոնց փոխանցեց իր
պատգամը ըսելով՝ «Դուք պատահականութեան մը արդիւնք չէք,
այլ Աստուծոյ ստեղծագործութեանց մէջ գրվա գործոցնէր. դուք կը
կրէք Անոր պատկերը եւ աշխարհ եկած էք նպատակի մը համար».
ապա շարունակեց՝ «Միրելի շրջանաւարտներ, դուք կանչուած էք
նպատակաւ կեանք ապրելու, այս վարժարանը ձեզ օժտեց
երկապրի սուրով մը՝ Հայեցի եւ քրիստոնէական
դաստիարակութիւն: Յետ այսու եղէք իրաւ հայեր եւ իրաւ
քրիստոնէաներ. կառչած մնացէք այդ ատաքիմութիւններուն եւ
վստահ եղէք՝ դուք պիտի ընթանաք յաջողութեան յաջողութիւն,
որոնք պատիւ պիտի բերեն նաեւ այս հաստատութեան»:

Հանդէսը վերջ գտաւ Վեր. Թէրեանի փակման աղօթքով:



Յայտագրին մէջ առաջին խօսք անողը եղաւ Հոգաբարձութեան
ատենապետ՝ Տօթթ. Հրայր Աթիքեանը, որ իր շնորհատրական եւ
շնորհակալական խօսքերէն ետք շրջանաւարտներուն տուաւ իր
պատգամը ըսելով՝ «Կեանքը լի է ընտրութիւններով, կատարեցէ՛ք
ճիշդը, ձգտեցէ՛ք բարձրին, բայց ոչ անպայման միջակայս
բարձրութիւններու եւ վերջապէս յիշեցէ՛ք, որ ինչ որ կ'ընէք դուք ձեզ
համար, կը մեռնի ձեզի հետ, իսկ ինչ որ կ'ընէք ուրիշին համար՝
կ'ապրի յաիտեան»:

Յայտագրին բ. մասին անցնելէ առաջ՝ Մերտիներան Վարժարանի
Հոգաբարձութեան եւ Տնօրէնութեան կողմէ գնահատուեցան 3
անհատներ.–

Առաջինը՝ Տիկ. Ժանէթ Քասունի, որ հանգստեան կը կոչուի: Ան
Պէլլորի Հայ Աւետարանական Գոլէճի մէջ երկար տարիներ
պաշտօնավարելէ ետք տեղափոխուած էր Ամերիկայի Միացեալ
Նահանգներ եւ 21 տարիներէ ի վեր կը պաշտօնավարէր
վարժարանիս մէջ որպէս Հայերէն Լեզուի եւ Հայոց Պատմութեան
դասատու:

Երկրորդը՝ Մերտիներան մեծ ընտանիքի անդամներէն՝ Տիկ.
Կարինէ Ապանեանն էր, որ երկար տարիներ ուսուցչական կազմին
մաս կազմած էր, իսկ ուսուցչութենէն դարրելէ ետք շարունակեց
վարժարանիս ծառայել որպէս Ծնողա-Ուսուցչական Մարմնի
անխնջ անդամ:

Շնորհանդէս Նուիրում Միհրան Ծիզմէճեանի «Հոգեւոր Մտորումներ» Գիրքին

Թորոնքոյի Հայ Աւետ. Եկեղեցւոյ Լեւոն Ֆերմանեան Գրադարանը իր գրադարանային ընթացիկ աշխատանքներուն կողքին հաստատած է մատենաշար մը նուիրում մեր ժամանակներու հոգեւոր



կարիքներու հետ կապուած գիրքերու հրատարակութեան: Այս մատենաշարի առաջին հատորը՝ ծաղկեփունջ մը հայ աւետարանական հոգեւոր գրականութեան՝ հրատարակուեցաւ 2006-ին՝ «Կենաց Հացը» վերնագրով: Իսկ երկրորդը՝ Միհրան Ծիզմէճեանի «Հոգեւոր Մտորումներ»ը՝ լոյս տեսաւ շուրջ 4 ամիսներ առաջ:

Այս երկրորդ գիրքի լոյս աշխարհ գալուն՝ ուրախ առիթով գրադարանի վարչութիւնը կազմակերպեց պատշաճ շնորհանդէս մը (աւելի ճիշդ ու արդար բնորոշումով մը՝

ողջունահանդէս մը) Հինգշաբթի, 25 Յունիս 2009, երեկոյեան ժամը 8:00-ին, Թորոնթոյի Հայ Աւետ. Եկեղեցւոյ մէջ:

Գրասէրներու կոկիկ եւ գնահատող խումբ մը՝ շուրջ 100 հոգիներ՝ ներկայ գտնուեցաւ այս ջերմ եւ մտերմիկ գնահատանքի հանդիպումին:

Նախքան պաշտօնական բացումը՝ Խորէն Մարտոյեան մթնոլորտը ջերմացուց դաշնամուրի վրայ նուագելով հոգեպարար եղանակներ:

Բացումը կատարեց գիրքիս խմբագիր եւ օրուան հանդիսավար՝ Սարգիս Համպոյեան, որ արագօրէն պատմեց թէ ինչ պայմաններու տակ լոյս աշխարհ եկաւ այս գիրքը եւ պարզեց գրասէրներու քով-քովի գալով նորածին այս գիրքը ողջունելու գաղափարը:

Գործադրուեցաւ գեղարուեստական կոկիկ եւ որակաւոր յայտագիր մը: Սօնա Յովսէփեան իր շքեղ ձայնով մենթրօգեց «Խորհորդ Խորին»ը (Մակար Եկմպեան) եւ «Քեզմէ ի Զատ» (Ս. Գ. Էօմիլիան), դաշնակի ընկերակցութեամբ Սօնա Տօլպպեանի: Տաղանդաւոր երիտասարդ ջութակահար Յովնաթան Կարապետեան նուագեց «Ամէն Հայր Սուրբ»ը (Ե. Եկմպեան) եւ Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring (J.S. Bach) : Արտասանեց վաստակաւոր ասումնքող Մատլէն Սահակեան՝ «Սբ. Գիրքը Թող Բաց Մնայ» (Ժագ Ս. Յակոբեան):

«Հոգեւոր Մտորումներ» գիրքին ներկայացումը հանգամանօրէն կատարեց Թորոնթոհայ մտաւորական, ազգային գործիչ, արուեստագէտ եւ Միջ-Յարանուանական Յանձնախումբի վաստակաշատ Ատենապատ՝ Յակոբ Ծանապազեան:

Ան նախ ներկայացուց գիրքին հեղինակը՝ Միհրան

Ծիզմէճեան: Յիշեց անոր կեանքի ընթացքը յատկանշող իրողութիւնները ընտանեկան հոգեւոր միջավայր, աւետարանական դպրոց, աստուածաբանական ճեմարան, համալսարանական կրթութիւն, ուսուցչական ծառայութիւններ եւ տակաւին անհամար հոգեւոր ծառայութիւններ, քարոզներ եւ դասախօսութիւններ այլեւայլ երկիրներու մէջ: Ապա Ծանապազեան ներկայացուց «Հոգեւոր Մտորումներ»ու 4 գլխատր մասերը.- «Մեր Տէրը Յիսուս Քրիստոս»՝ 6 ենթամասերով, «Երանի Խաղաղութիւն Ընդունելուն»՝ 7 ենթամասերով, «Կեանքի Յորձանուտին Ընդմէջէն»՝ 16 ենթամասերով, եւ «Փոքր Ածուն Յարութեան Ծամբուն»՝ 5 ենթամասերով: Ան սեղմ գիծերու մէջ ընդգծեց իւրաքանչիւրին մէջ արծարծուած հոգեւոր նիւթերը եւ սոնձուած գաղափարները: Ապա յատկանշեց հեղինակին ունեցած մտորումներու իրաչափութիւնները եւ մանաւանդ անոնց պարզեամբ առիւնութիւնները: Ան գնահատեց նաեւ գիրքի խմբագրին կատարած աշխատանքը եւ ներդրումը: Մ'էջընդմէջ եղան դիպող եւ տպաւորիչ ընթերցումներ Անիթա Քէպապճեանի, Տարօն Քէպքինեանի, Մատլէն Սահակեանի եւ Ռուբէն Ծանապազեանի կողմէ:

Կատարուեցաւ գիրքի օրինութիւնը՝ ներկայ հոգեւոր հովիւներ Հոգշ. Տ. Հայրիկ Աբել. Յովհաննիսեանի, Հոգշ. Տ. Տաճատ Աբել. Ծատուրեանի եւ Վեր. Սամուէլ Ալլապեանի կողմէ: Անոնք աղօթեցին որ այս գիրքը իր նպատակին ծառայէ եւ դառնայ հոգեւոր սնունդ եւ մատակարարէ քրիստոնէական առողջ հաւատք եւ ներշնչում ընթերցողներուն:

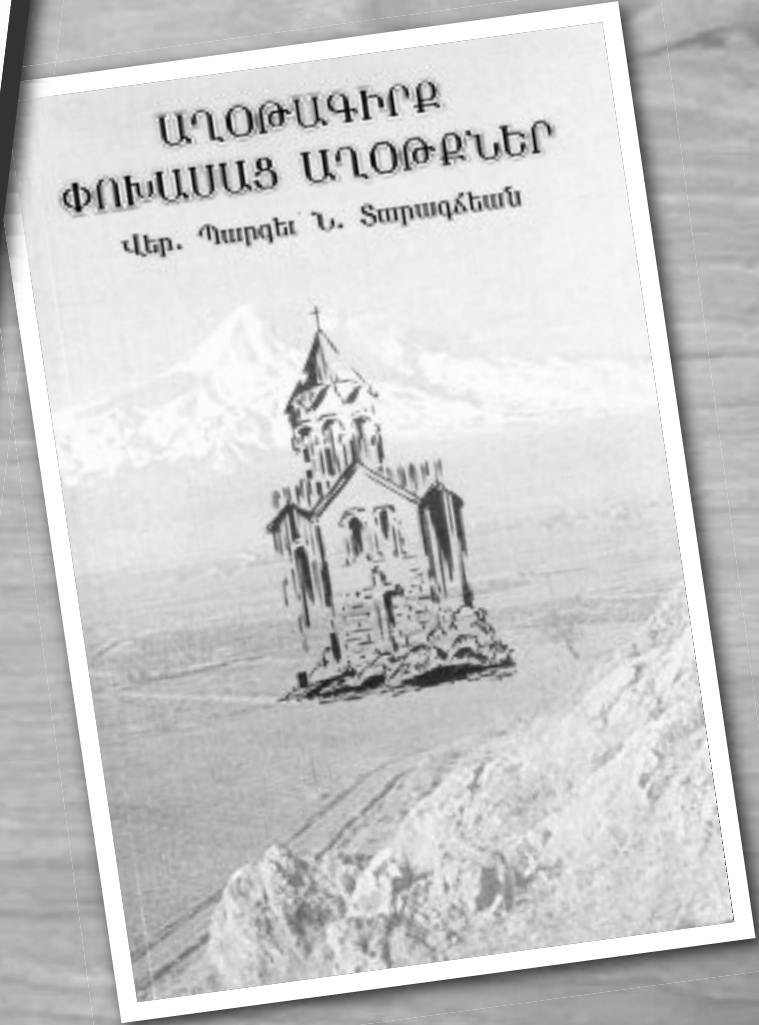
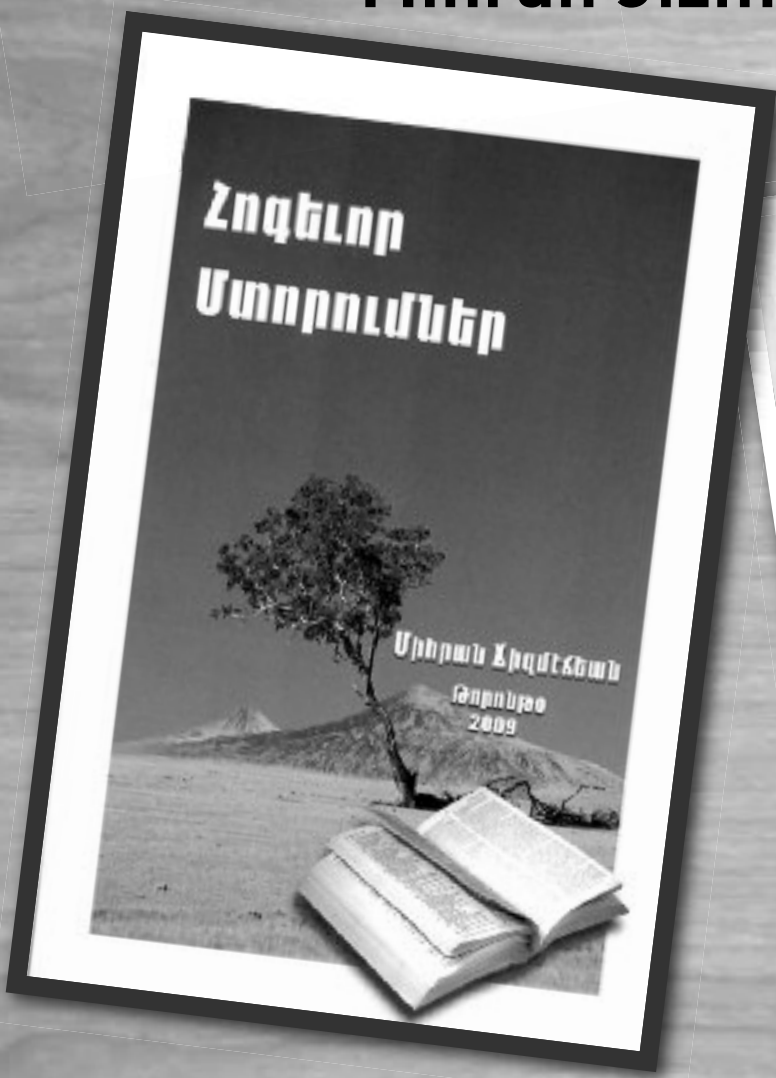
Ի վերջոյ իր սրտի խօսքը կատարեց հեղինակը՝ Միհրան Ծիզմէճեան: Ան հասկնալի լուգումով յիշեց իր կեանքի ընթացքը, իր ծնողքին, ուսուցիչներուն եւ կնոջ ներդրումները իր հոգեւոր կեանքին անման եւ ձեւաւորման մէջ: Ապա շնորհակալութիւն յայտնեց «Հոգեւոր Մտորումներ»ու խմբագրին՝ Սարգիս Համպոյեանին, նախաբան գրող Վեր. Վահան Թութիկեանին, գիրքը նկարագարող Յակոբ Ծանապազեանին եւ գիրքի հրատարակութեան նպաստող Մելգոնեան Կրթական հաստատութեան իր նախկին աշակերտներէն՝ Արա Գուլեանին, Միսաք եւ Մարօ Ներսէսեաններուն, Յակոբ Պերպերեանին, Խաչիկ Թոզնեանին, եւ Աւետիս եւ Ռիթա Օզգալեաններուն: Ծիզմէճեան շնորհակալութիւն յայտնեց նաեւ շնորհանդէսի/ողջունահանդէսի իրենց մասնակցութիւնը բերող արուեստագէտներուն եւ յատկապէս բանախօս՝ Յակոբ Ծանապազեանին:

Շնորհանդէսը պաշտօնապէս փակուեցաւ Վեր. Ս. Ալլապեանի աղօթքով:

Ապա ներկաներ հիւրասիրուեցան Ծանապազեան Սրահին մէջ ուր անոնք առիթ ունեցան գրուելու գիրքի հեղինակին հետ եւ ունենալու անոր ստորագրութիւնը իրենց անձնական օրինակներուն մէջ:

Ներկայ Գրասէր մը

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