



# forum

## THE MESSIAH HAS COME!

*"But when the fullness of time had come,  
God sent forth his Son..."*

Galatians 4:4a

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Յիշեցումսեա  
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Opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not imply the official endorsement of the AEUNA, nor of any of its constituent churches. We do consider unsolicited articles for publication. However, before preparing a manuscript for submission, please contact the Chair or Editor to obtain author guidelines. Accepted manuscripts are subject to editorial review and may be modified before publication.

## Production:

Print Solutions Inc.  
320 S Dean Street, Englewood,  
New Jersey, 07631  
201-567-9622 | [www.printsolutions.info](http://www.printsolutions.info)

The FORUM is available online at:  
[www.aeuna.org](http://www.aeuna.org).  
To be added to the AEUNA's email newsletter list, send a request to [aeuna@aeuna.org](mailto:aeuna@aeuna.org).

**FORUM: The Journal of the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America is published by the AEUNA, 411 E. Acacia Ave., Suite 200 Glendale, CA 91205, U.S.A.**

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# FROM THE PUBLICATION CHAIR

Dear Readers,

As we embark together on yet another joyful journey through the Forum magazine, my prayer is that you will take time to reflect on the theme of the arrival of our Messiah and Lord Jesus Christ. Though every article contains an important facet of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, we find that each one conveys a unique and weighty message. Each author perceives differently the gravity, the enormity, the awe and beauty of the Lord's Nativity, Incarnation and even His Epiphany.

In addition to the above, we are living in a time of great spiritual tension. While the Kingdom of God continues to be preached and expanded through the growth of the church, the kingdoms of men and darkness are always working to mute the voice of God's influence through Christ. We specifically, as Armenians, have suffered much since we last enjoyed this magazine together. Though we have stayed faithful to Christ, we have endured untold suffering with the displacement of our people from our millennia-old Artsakh. Here, however, is when the strength of the church is tested – when the spiritual enemy of our souls stirs up human beings to obey him instead of God, that is when our cry for Christ is called to intensify. Now more than ever, the birth and revelation of the Messiah Jesus Christ as He came to earth brings us to realize that God's intervention is needed once again on a historic scale. Jesus Christ came, and He is continually with us through His Spirit, but we need Him to intervene once again to vindicate us, His people.

Thus, while we war with the weapons of our warfare which are not physical, and while we stay faithful to the Gospel through thick and thin, the cry of our hearts remains, "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus," as the hymn says. Jesus was born to set His captive people free. He would do so and much more for every follower that professed Him as Lord through the ages. Today as we read and reflect on the coming of our Messiah, let us stir our hearts to cry out for His Kingdom to come again, to finish what He started, and to vindicate His people, the church worldwide, which suffers here on earth but remains faithful to Him and His Word.

May the pages that follow be a blessing to you, as you read and reflect about God's Only Son, who changed my and your history forever.

Happy reading,  
Rev. Joseph Garabedian

Սիրելի ընթերցողներ,

Մինչ կը վայելիք Ֆորում հասորը անգամ մը եւս, իմ աղօթքն է որ ձեր կարդացած ատէն խոկումի ժամանակ տրամադրեք մեր Տիրոջ ու Փրկչին Տէր Յիսուսի Քրիստոսի արաջին զալստեան: Խրաքանչիր յօդուած կը պարունակէ կարեւոր պատզամ մը մեր Տէր Յիսուսի Աւետարանին առնչուած: Հեղինակները մեր Տիրոջ Ծննդեան, Մարդեղութեան ու Աստուածայայնութեան, մեծութիւնը եւ գեղեցկութիւնը տարբեր ձեւերով կարտայայտեն:

Առաւել, այս օրերս բոլորս կապրինք հոգեւորապէս ճնշուած ժամանակներու մէջ: Հակառակ անոր որ Քրիստոսի հաւատարիմ ճացած ենք, ազգովին անհանդուրժելի չարչարանքներ կրեցինք, մանաւանդ երբ մեր հազարամեայ Արցախ հայրենիքի ժողովուրոր ստիպողական տեղահանութեան ենթարկուեցաւ: Հու է, սակայն, երբ եկեղեցւոյ հաւատքի զօրութիւնը լուսարձակի տակ կը դրուի: Երբ մեր հոգիներուն թշնամին մարդիկ կը դրդէ իրեն հնազանդելու Աստուծոյ փոխարէն, այն ատէն է որ Քրիստոսի ուղղուած մեր կանչը զօրանալու է: Հիմա աւելի քան ուեւ ժամանակ, մեր Փրկիչ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի հնքնայայտնութեան կարիքը ունինք անգամ մը եւս պատահելու մեզ պաշտպանելու եւ ազատելու, ինչպէս ըրաւ ասկէ առաջ:

Արդ, մինչ կը պայքարինք մեր հաւատքի զէնքերովը որոնք մարմաւոր չեն, ու հաւատարիմ կը ճանք Աւետարանին ամէն պարագաներու մէջ, մեր սրտի կանչը կը նոյնանայ բառերուն հետ այն հոգեւոր երգին որ կըսէ, «Եկուր, Ով Շատոնց Սպասուած Յիսուս: Ան ծնաւ որ ստրուկները ազատագրէ – բոլոր անոնք որոնք զինք իբրեւ Տէր դաւանած են դարերու ընթացքին:»

Այսօր, մինչ կը կարդանք այս եջերը ու կը խոկանք մեր Մեսիային զալստեան մասին, թող մեր սրտի կանչը ըլլայ Իր թագաւորութեան ժամանումը անգամ մը եւս: Թող զայ Ան որպէսզի վերջացնէ այն ինչ որ սկսած է, պաշտպանելու իր ժողովուրորը, այսինքն եկեղեցին, ամէն տեղ ուր Իր հետեւորդները կը չարչարուին, բայց հաւատարիմ կը ճան իրեն եւ Անոր Խօսքին:

Թող այս հասորին եջերը օրինութիւն ըլլան մինչ կը կարդաք զանոնք ու կը խոկաք Անոր մասին որ ձեր ու իմ կեանքի պատմութիւնը հիմնովին փոխակերպէց:

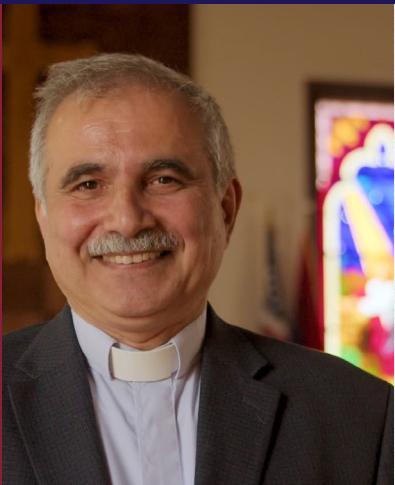
Բարի Ընթերցանութիւն,  
Վեր. Ժողկվ Կարապետեան

**SAVE  
THE DATE**

**2024 AEUNA BIENNIAL  
UNITE AND IGNITE**

**June 27-30, 2024  
1 Corinthians 12:12**

# FROM THE MINISTER TO THE UNION



## The Lord God Comes

By Rev.  
Hendrik  
Shanazarian

*“Go up on a high mountain, ...  
Shout out loudly, ...  
“Here is your God!”  
...Like a shepherd he tends his flock;  
he gathers up the lambs with his arm;  
he carries them close to his heart;  
he leads the ewes along.”*

*Isaiah 40:9-11*

Like many other Western churches, we celebrate Advent as the beginning of our church calendar. The season starts on the Sunday closest to November 30. The four Sundays of Advent are usually seen as a time of preparation for the celebration of the Birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For many of us Advent is special because of the music and joyful songs of the season. There are many favorite hymns that we hear and sing only at this time, though the powerful message they contain would be relevant at any time of year. Even those who are not devout Christians like to sing popular Christmas carols, usually without focusing on the words, just because these tunes create a sentiment or a memory of some positive experiences in the past.

*Our hymns and songs are confessions that articulate the things we believe and the doctrines to which we adhere as a church.*

My Systematic Theology professor in seminary used to teach us well-known 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century hymns, mainly Gregorian chants, so we could sing them before he started his lectures. He did this to demonstrate that theology is not just an abstract activity of the mind. Our hymns and songs are confessions that articulate the things we believe and the doctrines to which we adhere as a church. *O come, O come, Emmanuel*, a popular Advent hymn we will sing later today, is almost

1200 years old. It was written to draw attention to the hope represented by the incarnation of our Lord. It has been said that Christians learn more theology from the hymns they sing than from catechisms or Sunday School classes. However it is also true that sometimes Christian hymns can be misleading and contain false teaching. This is a danger, because we may not even notice these subtle indoctrinations into error as we joyfully sing these familiar melodies. The choice of the hymns is one of the most important aspects in the preparation for any worship service.

Advent literally means *arrival* or *coming* and is applied especially to the anticipation of something very important. In this case Advent refers to the fact that the Son of God, the Creator of the Universe, humbled Himself to take on human flesh and was born a helpless child so He could be one of us and plead for the reconciliation of fallen humanity.

The celebration of Advent has become a joyful tradition for us, including the lighting of candles, Scripture readings, musical events and special gatherings. All these things make the season beautiful and meaningful, but it is only in recent centuries that Advent began to be such a festive celebration. The Council of Saragossa (380 AD) in present day Spain can be considered the first place where the coming of God in human flesh was stressed as a right belief. This doctrine was formed in response to the heresy that denied Jesus' humanity. Though the Council did not specifically declare that churches should celebrate a time of Advent, they encouraged Christians to be present at church services every day from December 17-29. Advent was also introduced in the 8<sup>th</sup>/9<sup>th</sup> century through popularization of the hymn *O Come, O Come Emmanuel*, with references to Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:23 in the verses. These two factors helped to make Advent a significant part of the Church calendar from that day forward. Over time, liturgies were prepared and doctrines were formalized to articulate our beliefs in regard to the identity and work of Jesus Christ. Further teaching tools were developed to educate church members and respond to the false teaching that denied Jesus' humanity. Hymns have been a critical part of this educational process in church history and a powerful means for teaching theological concepts to the laity.

During the four Sundays of Advent, Christian churches thank God for sending Jesus into the world as a child in Bethlehem, but we are reminded that Advent is also about the 2<sup>nd</sup> coming of Christ in the future. Alternatively, some churches celebrate Advent as a time to thank God for His presence among us today in the form of His Holy Spirit. In this way it is a reminder

of His continuous indwelling and daily involvement in our individual and corporate lives.

So, Advent is a time to consider the *past*, the *present* and the *future*. First, we look to the *past* and remember God's gracious love expressed in His willingness to visit this fallen world as a humble child. We rejoice as we retell the story that He lived among us to reveal God's will for our salvation.

*... Advent ... is a reminder of His continuous indwelling and daily involvement in our individual and corporate lives.*

Second, we celebrate Advent in the *present* by considering God's love in His daily encounters with people. As Jesus was present in the flesh to teach the world about the kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit has been sent to be with us today, teaching and instructing us in God's will for our lives.

Finally, God's ultimate will for His people was demonstrated in the fact that He was willing for the Incarnate Son to die on the cross to pay the price for our sins and offer us hope for an eternal inheritance as His children. In this way, Advent turns our eyes toward the *future* as we prepare for His return.

This season is an opportunity for us to focus on our lives right now and rejoice in the gift of Christmas. Jesus has come into the world, and He has promised to be with us every day through eternity. Our greatest Christmas *present* is the wonderful promise that the Prince of Peace is *present* in our lives through the message of The Incarnation and the power of the child born in Bethlehem.

The Advent season is a time for prayer, fasting, repentance, anticipation and hope. As we joyfully sing Christmas carols and remember God's love, I pray that each of us will be strengthened in faith and be filled with God's peace. May God use our celebration of Advent, with its rich symbols, songs and traditions, as a means to help others experience the coming of the Lord into their lives. ■

## Ծնունդի Կարեւորութիւնը

**Ա**ստուած որ դարերի ընթացքին մարգարէների միջոցով խօսել ու հաղորդակցել էր մարդու հետ, որոշեց անձնապէս մարդու պատմութեան մէջ մտնել, իր որդուն դրկելով, որպէսզի մարդկային մարմսով մեր մէջ բնակի ու մեզնից մէկը դառնայ: Աստուած ինչո՞ւ և այս նոր միջոցը գործածեց: Աստծու Որդու գալստեան կարեւորութեանը անդրադառնալու եւ հետեւեալ համարով ու երեք կէտերով:

Յովհաննու Աւետարանի մէջ Յիսուս ասում է՝ «Ես եկայ որ կեանք ունենան եւ առաւել ևս ունենան:» Նա եկաւ որ մարդ արարածը աւելի լեցուն ու իմաստալից կեանք ունենայ: Բայց այս լեցուն կեանքը ինչպէս և կարելի դարձաւ:

**Ա- Յիսուս եկաւ Հայր Աստծուն մեզ յայտնելու-Ծնունդը** մանաւանդ մեզ հայերի համար Աստուածայայտնութեան տօն է, քանի որ սովորական մի մանուկի ծնունդ չէ որ յիշատակուում է ու տօնուում, այլ «Անբաւելին երկնի և երկրի ի խանձարուրս պատեցաւ» երկնքում և երկրում Անբաւելին խանձարարուրի մէջ տեղաւորւեց:

Ծննդեամբ, Աստուած մարմին առաւ եւ մեր մէջ բնակեց, սա մեծ խորհուրդ է եւ մարդուս համար լիովին անդրադառնալը անկարելի, բայց նաեւ անուրանալի ճշմարտութիւն է որ Յիսուսի ծնունդով, կեանքով, քարոզութեամբ, մահով ու յարութեամբ Աստծու էլութիւնն ու յատկութիւնները մարդու համար յայտնաբերւեց, եւ մարդու համար կարելի դարձաւ իր սահամանների մէջ Աստծուն ճանաչելու այնպէս որ է:

Յովհաննու Աւետարանի մէջ (1:18) «Աստծուն ոչ ոք երբէք չի տեսել, բացի միածին Որդուց, որ Զօր ծոցում է. նա է մեզ նրա մասին յայտնել:» Յիսուս մինչ առաքեալներին պատրաստում էր մարմսով նրանցից բաժանելու համար (Յովի. 14:8-9), Փիլիպպոսի խնդրանքին որ ասաց «Տէ՛ք, ցոյ յօ տուր մեզ Զօրը, և դա մեզ բաւական է», պատասխանեց. «Այսքան ժամանակ ձեզ հետ եմ, և ինձ չճանաչեցի ք, Փիլիպպոս: Ով ինձ տեսաւ, նա Զօրը տեսաւ...»:

Աստուածաբանական գրքերում կարդում ենք որ Աստուած իրեն յայտնել է ստեղծագործութեան մէջ, նաեւ մարդկութեան պատմութեան մէջ,

մարգարէների միջոցով մարդկանց հետ խօսել է եւ մարդ արարածը կարողացել է Աստծուն որոշ չափով ճանաչել, բայց Աստուած իրեն յայտնեց մարդուն իր Որդու միջոցով այն չափով որ մարդս կարող էր հասկանալ եւ այն չափով որ մարդս կարիք ունէր Աստծու հետ հաղորդակցելու: Յիսուս Հայր Աստծուն մեզ յայտնեց, Նրա խօսքերը Զօր խօսքերն էին ու գործերը Զօր գործերը (Յովի. 14:11):

Յիսուս իր կեանքով ու ուսուցումներով, ծնունդով, մահով ու յարութեամբ Աստծու էլութիւնը մեզ յայտնեց: Յիսուս Աստծու շնորհքը իւրայատուկ կերպով մեզ յայտնեց: Թէեւ կարդում ենք Աստծու շնորհքի մասին Հին Կտակարանում, Յիսուս իր յարաբերութիւնների մէջ մարդկանց ու աշակերտների հետ, իր քարոզների մէջ ներկայացրեց շնորհքի Աստծուն: Որպէս տիեզերքը ստեղծող Աստուած որ ուզում է իր ստեղծած մարդու հետ հաղորդակցել սերտ եւ մտերիմ յարաբերութիւն ունենալ, Նա պատրաստ եղաւ իր ամենայանկազինը զոհելով այդ կարելի դարձնել, Յիսուսի մահով ու յարութեամբ:

**Բ- Յիսուս եկաւ հաշտեցնելու մեղատր մարդուն Աստծու հետ, եւ մարդկանց իրաք հետ-Պողոս առաքեալ գրում է՝ «Եկաւ, խաղաղութիւն աւետարանեց և ձեզ, որ հեռու էիք նրանից, և ձեզ, որ մօս էիք նրան, որովհետու նրանով երկուս մեկ Հոգով Զօրը մօտենալու արտօնութիւն ունենք» (Եփես. 2:17-18): Սովոր Աստծու օրէնքն էր բերել, եւ մարգարէներ խօսել էին օրէնքի կարևորութեան և դրա համաձայն ապրելու մասին, մարդու մեղքի և Աստծու դատապարտութեան մասին, Նրա ողորմութեան ու ներումի մասին: Յիսուս եկաւ և յայտնաբերեց թէ սիրոյ, արդարութեան, գուրի ու ողորմութեան Աստուած, որ մեղքը չի հանդուրժում, բայց սիրում է մեղատրին ու փափազում է նրան մեղքի կապանքից ազատել, Յիսուս Քրիստոսով դա կարելի դարձրեց: Մարդը այլևս միայն ընկած, մեղատր ու դատապարտութեան արժանի չէ, այլ Քրիստոսի խաչով ու յարութեամբ, հաւատալով կարող է Աստծու ներումը ստանալ ու Հայր Աստծու զաւակը դառնալ: Քրիստոսով կարող ենք Աստծուն Հայր կանչել ու նրա հետ մտերիմ կապ հաստատել: Մարդս իր ամենաընկած վիճակում կարող է**



Քրիստոսին վստահելով Աստծուն դիմել, ներում ստանալ, սրբելու ու յաւիտենական կեանք ժառանգել: Քրիստոս մեզ հաշտեցրեց Աստծու հետ ու Աստծու զաւակներ դարձրեց, և իր հոգին տιւաւ որպէսզի շարունակենք այդ յարաբերութիւնը: Քրիստոս մարդուս Աստծու հետ հաշտեցնելով ու Աստծու զաւակներ դարձնելով կարելիութիւնը առաջ բերաւ որ բաժան բաժան ու զանազան պատճառներով իրար դէմ թշնամացած մարդկութիւնը իր միջոցով հաշտուեն իրար հետ Աստծու զաւակներ ու մէկ ընտանիքի անդամներ դառնալով: Նա նրանց միջն բաժանող պատր վերցրեց:

**Գ- Քրիստոս եկաւ որ Աստուածահանոյ կեանքի օրինակը ներկայացնի-** Աստծու Որդին մարմին հազնելով ու մեզ նման մարդ դառնալով, մեր մէջ ապրելով ներկայացրեց օրինակելի, կատարեալ մարդը, Աստծուն համելի մարդը, ու մեզ հրաւիրեց իր օրինակին հետևելու: Նա մեզ օրինակ տιւաւ թէ Աստծու պատկերն ունեցող մարդը, Քրիստոսով ներւած ու Աստծու զաւակ դարձած անձը ինչ տեսակ կեանք է ապրելու, ինչ տեսակ յարաբերութիւն է ունենալու իր ստեղծող Հայր Աստծու և իր շուրջը եղող մարդկութեան հետ: Քրիստոս եկաւ կատարեալ մարդու օրինակը յայտնելու:

Վերջին ընթրիքից առաջ ունաւայի ընթացքին Յիսուս ասաց. «Արդ եթէ ես Տէրս ու Վարդապետս, լացի ձեր ոտքերը, դուք նոյնպէս պարտաւոր էք միմեանց ոտքերը լանալ: Քանի որ ես ձեզ օրինակ ծառայեցի, որպէսզի ինչպէս ես ձեզ արեցի, դուք էլ նոյն կերպ անէք»: Պողոս առաքեալ այսպէս է գրում Կորնթացիներին. «Նմանւ ք ինձ, ինչպէս ես Քրիստոսին» (Ա Կոր. 11:1): Պէտքու առաքեալ նմանապէս իր առաջին նամակի երկրորդ գլուխ յարախուսում է հաւատացեալներին Յիսուսի օրինակին հետևելու. «Որովհետև դուք ինչ այդ բանի համար կոչւեցիք, քանի որ Քրիստոսն էլ ձեզ համար շարչարւեց և ձեզ օրինակ թողեց, որ իր հետքերով ընթանանք:» Թուելով միայն մի քանի օրինակ Յիսուս մեզ օրինակ տιւաւ սիրոյ, ներման, խոնարհութեան, ծառայութեան և Հայր Աստծու հետ հաղորդակցելու, առաջնորդութիւն խնդրելու և հնազանդելու համար:

Սա է Ծննդեան բարի լուրը. Աստուածայայտնութիւն,

**Վեր. Հենրիկ Շանազարեան  
Միութեան Հովի**

**Հիւսիսային Ամերիկայի Հայ  
Աւետարանական Միութիւն**

Աստծու և մարդկանց հետ հաշտութիւն և Աստուածահանոյ և կատարեալ կեանքի կարելիութիւն և օրինակի ներկայացում: Բայց ո՞րն է մարդու յարմարագոյն պատասխանը այս բարի լուրին:

**Դ- Մարդուս պատասխանը ծննդեան բարի լուրին-** Ծնունդը ուրախութեան մեծ աւետիս է, ուրեմն ցնծանք և տօնենք նրա զալուստը, վայելենք նրա ներկայութիւնը, մեզ հետ լինելու առանձնաշնորհումը: Փառաբանութեան հետ միասին Յիսուսին նայենք ու ապահնենք, նրան լսենք ու նրանից սովորենք ու նրան հետևենք: Նա իր Սուրբ Հոգին տιւաւ որ մեզ հետ մնայ, մեզ սովորեցնի ու զօրութիւն շնորհի ամէն օր Յիսուսին նմանելու և նրան հետևելու:

Նա եկաւ որ կեանք ունենանք և այն առաւել ունենանք: Դա կարելի դարձրեց Հայր Աստծուն յայտնելով, իր կեանքի գնով մեզ Հօրը հետ հաշտեցնելով ու մեզ օրինակ ներկայացնելով: Նա եկաւ և իրեն հրաւիրեց բոլոր յոգնած ու բեռնաւորածներին իրենից հանգիստ գտնելու և իրենից սովորելու, և իր աշակերտները դառնալու: Աղօքքս է որ մարմին առած ու մեր մէջ բնակած Քրիստոսի ներկայութեամբ ամէն օր նորոգենք կատարեալ մարդ լինելու նպատակով՝ Քրիստոսի կատարեալ հասակի շափին հասնելու, Աստծու անւան փառքի համար: Ամէն:

# FROM THE FIELD PASTOR (FP)



## Waiting for Adoption

By Rev. Ron Tovmassian

*1 What I am saying is that as long as the heir is a child, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 He is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world. 4 But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, 5 to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. 6 Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.” 7 So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.*

*Galatians 4:1-7*

Many years ago, I was listening to the testimony of the late Norita Sarian Erickson who was serving with her husband, Ken, as a missionary in Ankara, Turkey. She spoke of her shock upon visiting an orphanage in that city. The children there were not actually orphans, they were either physically or emotionally disabled and had been abandoned to this place by their parents. As she described what she encountered, it was heart-breaking. They were herded like cattle, with very little care or personal attention; tied into their small iron rail cribs/beds like prisoners and left there unattended for hours at a time; ignored and denied basic human needs.

As I listened to her story, I kept thinking of popular stories of orphans familiar to us all. Little Orphan Annie, the comic book character with curly red hair, was an endearing, cute and engaging little girl, waiting and hoping to be adopted by a loving parent. Oliver Twist, another dear, sweet, little boy who seems easy to love and was waiting for a better life to begin. We all root for them and cheer when they find a home and it is easy for us to imagine someone loving them. But who would love the disabled children in this ugly, filthy, smelly orphanage in Ankara. Thank God He put a special love for them in Norita's heart and it is amazing to see the difference she made in just a few short years.

This is a season when we remember that Christ came to deliver us and give us hope. In the passage above, Paul describes the contrast between our lives before Christ, living with no hope, and our redemption through Christ's incarnation. In Chapter 3, he teaches that before Christ came, we were locked up as prisoners under the law, helplessly waiting until Christ should be revealed. Now that Christ has come, we have been freed from the law. By faith, we are justified and clothed in Christ's righteousness rather than our own unrighteousness, no longer servants or slaves, but heirs of promise.

Here in Chapter 4, he makes himself even more clear. In the Roman and Greek culture, a custodian was assigned to each male child and charged to train him for adulthood. That child's status became the same as a servant, or a slave. Even a legitimate child of the household needed to be adopted by the father and given the status of his birthright. Paul is saying that we too were under such bondage, but our custodian was not able to bring us to a point of adoption because we had become slaves to the *“basic principles of this world.”*

It is unclear exactly what Paul means by this phrase. It does not seem to be an apt description of the law. Also, if he meant the law, he would be excluding the Gentiles, which does not seem to be his intention. He is likely referring to the basic moral/religious teachings of the world (including the law) that all fall short and cannot solve the problem and lead to adoption. Some would include here even the demonic spiritual forces at work in the world that enslave us in sin rather than leading to freedom in Christ.

Regardless, he tells us that in the fullness of time, God sent His Son. Notice

that while we are waiting for a solution, God is acting in the absolute perfection of His own sovereign design to meet our needs perfectly. What an important message of comfort for us in all the experiences of our lives.

Notice as well that Paul clearly assumes the pre-existence of Christ in this passage. It says God sent His Son, not that God created a Son, or gave birth to a Son. The Son is pre-existent and with God from the beginning, but in the fullness of time, God sent Him into the world.

Sending Jesus to be born of a woman was the ultimate humiliation. By being born of a Hebrew woman, He became a slave to the same law that was a curse to us. Yet He lived the perfect life under that law and became the perfect sacrifice to pay the price of our redemption. What the law could not do; what the basic religious ideas of the world all fail to do; what the evil spiritual forces of the world are all at work to stop us from doing; God did for us by sending His Son to redeem us.

When by faith in Him, we receive adoption He does something even more. Having sent His son to redeem us, God also sent His Spirit to indwell us, comfort us, guide us and sanctify us according to His grace. God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit are all at work to provide an end to our hopeless waiting, giving us adoption as children of God and making us heirs to an eternal hope.

Perhaps when we think of ourselves before Christ, as orphans in need of adoption, we have an image of little Orphan Annie, or Oliver Twist. Cute and loveable orphans, just waiting for some benevolent person to look down and recognize they don't belong here. When I read this passage, the haunting image of the orphanage in Ankara and the helpless, hopeless children there kept filling my mind. Custodians, unable and unwilling to provide them with any hope; stuck indefinitely living in the conviction that they can do nothing to help themselves; unable to escape from or change their situation. What must this have done to them spiritually and emotionally? Norita reported that many of them lived as if they were robots, without emotion, or any sense of the world around them. They accepted the situation without any expectation or hope that anything better may be coming in the future.

They were not loveable nor were they cute. I am reminded of the description of the coming Messiah in Isaiah 53- ***He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.*** When the scriptures tell us He came to become like us, it does not mean He came to become cute and loveable. On the contrary, He became an outcast, unlovable, like one from whom we might turn our face.

After describing the horrible conditions, Norita

showed videos of that orphanage today, after God sent her in with His gospel of love and grace. The difference was remarkable. The walls were full of colorful pictures, drawings, and life. The children were being touched and hugged and accepted. They were smiling and talking and filled with hope. Their disabilities had not changed. The mental and physical limitations were still the same, but God's grace had touched their lives. His hope had filled them with the anticipation of something greater. They understood the power of living in the advent of Christ.

God cared about those children when He saw them waiting helplessly for adoption and hope. In the fullness of His time, He sent Norita, to bring them grace and redemption through Jesus Christ. God cared about us when He looked down and saw us waiting hopelessly and helplessly for adoption. In the fullness of His time, He sent His Son to free us and bring us grace and redemption through His perfect sacrifice.

Living in the Advent of Christ means that we are still waiting. God sent His Son, born of a woman and provided redemption for our sins, but we still live in this world, awaiting His second coming and looking forward to the ultimate fulfillment of the promise. Waiting is not easy, especially when times are tough. Sometimes we can get despondent and lose hope: How long will this financial difficulty continue? Will I ever see a way out of this problem? How many years will I have to work this job that makes me miserable before I can retire? Can there be anything else that could possibly go wrong in my life? Haven't I already been through enough Lord?

Living in the Advent of Christ, means holding on to the knowledge that when, in the fullness of His time, God sent His Son to offer us grace and adoption, He also sent His Holy Spirit to abide with us daily; give us comfort and strength; and walk beside us through even the valley of the shadow of death.

The realities of day-to-day life are sometimes very hard, and we are tempted to lose hope like those children in the orphanage. Maybe there is no one who cares. Maybe there is no one who will come and meet me in my pain. Maybe there is no one who will love me, embrace me, understand me, and adopt me into their family.

The message of advent is that God has already done this for us in His Son. While we continue to live in this world, we live in the blessed hope of the promise that by faith in His Son, no matter what our condition or circumstance now, we are heirs of the King of kings, By His grace, the Child of Bethlehem has come to set us free and will come again in glory to fulfill the promise of the blessed hope we have in Him.

Christos Dzunav Yev Haitnetsav. Tzezi, Mezi  
Medz Avedis. ■



*Enlarge the place of your tent,  
stretch your tent curtains wide,  
do not hold back; lengthen your  
cords, strengthen your stakes.*

*Isaiah 54:2*

## Rev. Ron Tovmassian AEUNA Field Pastor **EXPANDING THE FOOTPRINT OF THE AEUNA**

I have been serving as the AEUNA Field Pastor for almost exactly one year. As I travel around and visit our Churches, people seem to ask me the same question - *What is it exactly that you are doing?* The best way I have found to answer that question is simply to say that I am working to expand the footprint of the AEUNA. In other words, I am reaching out to make our presence felt and our existence known to more people in more significant ways. This means both within and beyond the circles of our Armenian Evangelical community. Let me share a few ways that I am working to accomplish this goal.

### **1. Connections with Christian Universities and Seminaries**

Though most of our In Care Students, preparing for full time Christian ministry in the AEUNA attend these schools, the staff and administrators have very little knowledge of who we are and what we provide for Armenian students pursuing a theological education. Certainly, there must also be other Armenian Christians attending these institutions who have no awareness of our existence. One of my primary goals is to build relationships with at least 4-5 faculty and staff members at each of these schools. I am specifically interested in connecting with the heads of the theology/pastoral relations departments and administrators in the admissions departments. By making them aware of who we are and the programs we provide to support our seminary students, my hope is that they will help us connect with young Christian Armenian students who would be excited to consider an opportunity to serve among their own people. So far, I have built such relationships with 7 different institutions and there are many more I will add to the list as the work continues.

### **2. Connections with the AEUNA Community**

While visiting our Churches, I share details about our AEUNA programs and resources to support young people who are feeling called to ministry in some way.

The AEUNA has programs to foster the development of full-time students pursuing a vocation in pastoral ministry, as well as lay persons seeking training for a higher level of leadership within their church. The **AEUNA In Care program** includes full scholarships (including books, fees, and resources) for students preparing for pastoral ministry in the AEUNA. We also provide supervision and support for field work and internship experiences in our churches. On the other hand, the **Lay Leadership Development Program** provides  $\frac{1}{2}$  scholarship for a layperson who feels called to pursue further training for Christian service in their church.

As I share this information at our churches, our youth camps and through participation in AEYF events across the country, invariably young people come to me and share the burden for ministry God is placing on their hearts. At this point I am corresponding and meeting regularly with about 15 different young people across North America, all exploring God's call in their lives. I am glad to report that 3-4 of them are already in the process of completing applications for our In Care Program. By the end of 2024, I hope to have 8-10 people in the program preparing for pastoral ministry in the AEUNA.

### **3. Connections with In Care Students/Interns, Young Pastors and Former Pastors**

One symptom of the crisis we are facing in regard to lack of pastoral leadership, is that many of our young pastors are leaving our churches (*sometimes leaving pastoral ministry altogether*) after just a few years of service. By providing support, prayer, and mentorship for them from the time they are students in care, through their initial years of ministry, we hope to change this unwelcome trend. As the AEUNA Field Pastor, I meet monthly with our students and interns for supervision and mentorship, keep regular



Above: With East-West Coast Youth Leaders at Camp Arevelk



Above: With Leaders and Counselors at Camp Arevelk  
Above left: At the Leadership Conference in Chicago

contact with our young pastors and maintain ongoing relationships with those who have left pastoral ministry in our union. In so doing, issues are addressed in a more timely manner, additional support can be provided as needed and our younger pastors are able to share their concerns and issues in a healthy manner.

#### **4. Connections with Our AEUNA Churches**

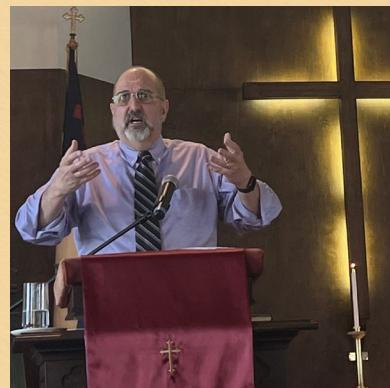
One reason our young pastors are frustrated and leave is because our churches are not willing to embrace their vision for ministry and outreach. In addition to recruiting and training young pastoral candidates, we also need to be training our churches and challenging them to accept new ways of doing ministry that will foster growth and spiritual life. The gospel never changes, but our methods of ministry must always change and adapt to meet the needs of the community. We have come to see our churches as places that serve us (i.e., the existing congregation in each church). ***We must grasp the reality that the role of our churches is not to serve us, but to train us to serve others and reach out to the community beyond our churches.*** Once we understand that important distinction, I believe our young pastors will find it a joy to serve in our churches. To that end my ministry includes teaching and educating church leaders about Christ's mission for His Church and the adjustments that need to be made in order to engage a new generation of Armenian Evangelical Christians.

#### **5. Connections with the AEUNA Ministry Committee**

As the AEUNA Field Pastor, I work very closely with the AEUNA Ministry and Executive Committees to create policies and define procedures that will facilitate the work of our Union. We are currently finalizing a program that will provide a 3–4 month residency program in the Near East for our AEUNA In Care students. A new policy is under consideration to provide a process for AEUNA pastors working outside the bounds of our union to maintain their Ordained Ministerial Standing.

This will allow us to keep a closer connection and work collaboratively with those who are not serving our churches anymore. We are creating a new organizational chart for our AEUNA Youth Programs and a Ministry Charter for our Committee on Youth to help our ministries to youth and young adults function more efficiently and effectively. New by-laws and operating charters are being prepared for the East Coast AEYF and Camp Arevelk. Other policies/guidelines are being generated regarding pastoral compensation, aid for retired ministers and background checks/security for AEUNA employees and volunteers.

The vision for our future does not come from us, it is given to us by Jesus Christ Himself. He does not tell us to create churches to be comfortable places where we serve the needs of our own people. In Matthew 28:19-20 He tells us that our churches must - ***Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.***



Preaching at Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Worcester, MA

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to serve God's kingdom in this way during a critical time in the life of our Armenian Evangelical community. I pray that God will raise up leaders for our churches, but even more importantly that He will raise up churches for our leaders.

Please continue to pray for this work and for all the ministries of the AEUNA. ■

# SUPPORT THE AEUNA



## DID YOU KNOW THE AEUNA PROVIDES NEW INITIATIVES TO UNITE, EQUIP & SUPPORT UNION CHURCHES?

The AEUNA arranges: Seminars and training to increase ministry and leadership skills; Church to Church (C2C) gatherings to unite and build relationships; and creates publications and educational resources to equip church leaders. In addition, the AEUNA is exploring new ways to organize retreats and targeted training sessions to meet the specific needs of our pastors, ministry leaders and Union churches – all to help our churches grow stronger in their calling and collective mission.

### THE AEUNA NEEDS YOUR DONATIONS

The hard truth is that these new initiatives, including the current work and administration of our Union office, cannot move forward effectively without your help. Your financial support is needed to help recruit, educate and supervise the training of ministerial candidates; send our Minister to the Union and Field Pastor into the field to visit and support our pastors and church leaders; organize AEUNA retreats, gatherings, and Biennial Conferences; support our youth, camping and women's ministries; and explore new locations for Armenian Evangelical Churches to be planted. **We depend on your support to keep the AEUNA vital and strong.**

### PLEASE GIVE BOLDLY!

The Lord is at work in our community! Simply visit [aeuna.org](http://aeuna.org) and click the DONATE button, or scan the QR Code to the right. Checks payable to the AEUNA (Memo: General Fund) may be mailed to AEUNA, 411 E Acacia Ave. #200, Glendale, CA 91205-5609.

***Let us support, pray for and love each other.***  
2 Corinthians 9:6-15



*Thank you in advance for your generous gifts and continued support of the AEUNA.*

*Donations to the AEUNA are tax-deductible.*

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*Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.*

*1 Corinthians 12:12*



# FEATURE

## THE PROMISED MESSIAH IS FULLY REVEALED

By Rev. George Terian,  
Senior Pastor  
Immanuel Armenian  
Congregational Church  
Downey, CA

There is an amazing piece of art done by a Korean artist named Elder Rhee who had spent eight years to complete this unique scroll, which is not a painting, but is an artfully created picture formed by writing thousands of words in shaded letters with a fine-tipped pen. This scroll contains the entire New Testament written out by hand.

There are about 185,000 words on the scroll with an average of a thousand words per line. Some of the letters are drawn thick while others are thin, but when combined together they display a picture of Jesus Christ, surrounded by 27 angels who represent the 27 books of the New Testament.

The figure of Christ is not imposed on the words, but when the 185,000 words of the New Testament are linked together, the image of Jesus is clearly exhibited.

This fabulous scroll is not large; it is only six feet long and four feet wide. If you magnify any segment of the picture, such as the head, you would be able to read the actual words of the Gospels. The message that the artist intends to convey to the viewers is that the New Testament reveals Jesus Christ in His full majesty.

A well-known American evangelist, Stanley Jones, says, "Jesus did not come to bring the Good News; He is the Good News." The Korean artist is essentially making the same statement: Jesus is the Gospel.

The Apostle John, in the epilogue of the 4th Gospel, utilizes the Greek word "Logos" to describe Jesus. In Greek philosophy, this term has several meanings: **word, reason, intelligence, wisdom and rationality.** The intelligence that designed and created our vast

universe is none other but the Lord Jesus Christ.

The evangelists Mark and Matthew used Jewish terms and expressions because their aim was to reach Jewish readers, or those who were brought up in the Jewish tradition. When the Apostle John wrote the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel, he was living in the city of Ephesus which was a great center of Hellenistic culture. He had to find a way of conveying the truth of the Gospel that would appeal to the Greek mind. To refer to Jesus as the "Son of David" or even the "Messiah," would have been incomprehensible to the Greeks. I firmly believe that the Holy Spirit guided the Apostle John to use the concept of the "Logos" to introduce Jesus to the Greek-speaking world that included all the countries that today border the Mediterranean Sea.

The Greek thinkers were impressed, not only by the **diversity of the universe**, but also by its **dependability**. So they asked, "who keeps the stars in their assigned orbits? Who brings back the seasons in their appointed order?" Their answer to these probing questions was that this work is done by the Logos who not only created the universe, but also sustains and operates it. Plato, one of the famous Greek philosophers says, "**The Logos stabilizes the universe.**" According to this sage, the Logos is what prevents the universe from plunging into chaos.

Philo, a Hellenized Jewish Philosopher, who lived in Alexandria, Egypt, and was a contemporary of Jesus Christ, says, "The Logos is the bridge that connects the transcendent God with the material universe." Through the "Logos" designation, the Apostle John presents Jesus, not only as the Creator and Sustainer



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of our complex universe, but also as the indispensable link that unites the recalcitrant humans with the God from whom they had become alienated.

You can imagine the tremendous impact that the 4th Gospel had on those who were deeply immersed in Greek culture and philosophy when they learned that the Logos is Jesus Christ!

In the first 18 verses of the 4<sup>th</sup> Gospel, John mentions several important facts about Jesus and His mission.

(1) He tells us who Jesus is.

Without apologizing to anyone, the Apostle boldly asserts that the Logos is the incarnate Son of God who created everything. In almost all English and Armenian versions of the Bible, the Greek "Logos"

*Through the "Logos" designation, the Apostle John presents Jesus, not only as the Creator and Sustainer of our complex universe, but also as the indispensable link that unites the recalcitrant humans with the God from whom they had become alienated.*

is rendered "the Word." Since the noun "Logos" in the original Greek has five different meanings, **James Moffatt** did not attempt to translate it and preferred to retain the Greek term "Logos" in his English Bible. I can understand the magnitude of the problem that Moffatt encountered because it is impossible to find an equivalent English word that encompasses all the various meanings of the Greek "Logos." I even venture to say that the translation of the word "Logos" requires the composition of a whole sentence to highlight the different nuances of its full meaning.

To call Jesus the Word is also an impressive designation because **a word is the expression of a thought**. We first think and then express our thought through the medium of words. So, by calling Jesus The Word, we acknowledge Him as being the true expression of God's thought, which is another way of saying that He is the complete reflection of God's mind.

Furthermore, a word is also an effective **means of**

**communication**. To call Jesus the Word is a strong affirmation of the undeniable fact that Jesus is the means whereby God communicates with human beings. This truth is amplified and verified in the Epistle to the Hebrews 1:1-2, where we are told that in ancient times God communicated with our forefathers through the prophets, but in these days, "He speaks to us through His Son," Jesus Christ, who is God's final Word to our perishing world.

As a rule of thumb, Greek proper nouns usually have the definite article in front of them, but in John 1:1, the Greek word "Theos" which means God, does not have a definite article; however, this does not justify to regard God as an indefinite being, such as a god among others. A basic rule of

Greek grammar states that whenever in a single sentence we find two nouns that are related to each other, then only one noun carries the definite article and shares it with the other noun. Now, let us apply this grammatical rule to John 1:1, where we notice the occurrence of two inter-related nouns: the Word and God. The first noun has the definite article in front of it and shares it with the second noun that is not required to have a definite article,

Fortunately, the same rule is also found in English grammar which helps us have a better grasp of the intricacies of the Greek language. For example, in English it is wrong to say, "The John, the baker, bakes our bread." The correct form is "John, the baker, bakes our bread." Similarly, in John 1:1, it is a gross violation of Greek and English grammar to say, "The Word was the God." The correct rendering of this short sentence is "The Word was God."

**Dr. Kenneth Wuest**, a highly regarded scholar in the field of New Testament studies, has made a very interesting rendition of the opening verse of the 4th Gospel: He has written, "**The Word was in the same class as God.**" In my estimation, the most beautiful rendering of this verse is found in the New English Bible: "**What God was, the Word was.**" The dominant idea is that the essence of the Word is the same as God's.

John 1:1 means that Jesus is like God in His essence and character, or conversely, that God is

like Jesus. When we see Jesus feeding the hungry, healing the sick, befriending the downtrodden and forgiving sinners, we can say, "God is like that." The attitude of God towards the wayward human race has always been that which we see in Jesus.

*When we see Jesus feeding the hungry, healing the sick, befriending the downtrodden and forgiving sinners, we can say, "God is like that." The attitude of God towards the wayward human race has always been that which we see in Jesus.*

(2) The Apostle John tells us what Jesus did.

"All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made" (John 1:3). In Colossians 1:16, we are told that all visible and invisible things were created by Jesus. The indissoluble bond between the eternal Word and creation is unmistakably clear.

The deities of the Greco-Roman world were distant, aloof and unapproachable; whereas our God is near us, and He is as close to us as our heart that beats within our chest. Moreover, our God is accessible to us at all times because He became flesh and came to dwell among us. After all, one of the most prominent names of Jesus is "Immanuel" which literally means "God with us." Jesus participated in the whole range of our human experience; He shared our sorrows and our joys, our tears and our laughter, our trials and temptations and because He triumphed over them, He is supremely qualified to assist, guide and support us in all our hardships.

Our God did not just write us a letter to tell us what to do and how to live. He did not send to us a heavenly angel to act as His representative. He came to us as one of us. Motivated by His enormous love for lost humanity, Jesus willingly set aside His divine prerogatives and consented to come to our world as a helpless baby who was born in very humble surroundings. The wonder of wonders is that **the Infinite became an infant**

who voluntarily accepted the limitations of time and space, and the restrictions of a human body, to bridge the dismal abyss that sin had caused by separating us from our loving Father.

(3) Jesus is the only source of true light.

In a crystal-clear way we are told that Jesus is the true light that dispels all darkness and enlightens everyone who comes into this world (cf. John 1:9). I would like to call your attention to the adjective "true" that describes or identifies this light. The Greek word for "true" is "alethinos" which basically means "real" or "genuine" as opposed to what is a counterfeit or fake. Jesus alone is the real light that leads to eternal life. All other lights are poor substitutes that mislead people. All other lights are fake, and eventually, they will flicker and die.

(4) The Messiah will face opposition

He came to redeem His own people but, unfortunately, they rejected Him (John 1:11).

King Herod hated Jesus and attempted to kill Him during His infancy. The Jewish religious leaders first ignored Him, but when His popularity increased, they plotted to have Him crucified.

In the following verse (John 1:12), the tragedy of those who chose to reject their Messiah is vividly contrasted with those who openly received Him. The latter were rewarded by being elevated to the privileged status of becoming God's adopted sons and daughters.

According to the nativity narratives, two distinct classes of people gladly welcomed, adored and worshiped the new-born King. They were the Judean shepherds and the Magi who came from the East. The symbolism that is portrayed here is astounding.

The Judean shepherds were, of course, Jewish and very poor; whereas the Magi were Gentiles and very wealthy. Jesus demolished the wall of separation that hostility, prejudice, ignorance and bigotry had erected, and united the rich and the poor, the Jews and the Gentiles within

# FEATURE

the fellowship of the church that He established and redeemed by His own blood.

Let us carefully analyze John 1:12. While it is true that some rejected their Messiah, others gladly received Him and believed in Him; consequently, they were given the right to become the children of God. Here we find three key words: received, believed and right.

**Received.** The people who receive Christ are those who welcome Him and accept Him into their lives. **Jesus is God's Christmas gift to us.** We can choose to ignore, reject, or accept this gracious gift that is freely offered to us.

**Believed.** To believe in Jesus is to trust Him by committing our life to Him. Commitment involves more than an emotional response, or an intellectual assent. True commitment is a total surrender of ourselves to our beloved Savior.

**Right.** The Greek word used here is “exousia” which means privilege. The moment we make room for Christ in our heart, God gives us the privilege of becoming members of His royal family.

Therefore, salvation does not run automatically from one generation to another. **Charles Spurgeon** said, “God saves individuals, not masses or groups.” **God has spoken, acted and revealed Himself in a new, splendid and unique way, through Jesus Christ.**

When it comes to the central truths of Christianity, there can be no neutrality. No one drifts or stumbles into Christianity by accident. At some point, we must consciously believe in Jesus and receive Him as our Lord and Savior.

My wish, hope and prayer for each one of you is to respond positively to the invitation that Jesus is extending to You during this Advent Season. His simple invitation that consists of two simple words, “Follow Me,” is directed to you personally. If you make the right choice, you will be blessed with a new heart, a new mind and a new life filled with the sweet delights of Heaven. ■



**A**s we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ, the Christmas season juxtaposes two contradictory behaviors: rushing and waiting. We experience the rush of the season as we hurry to purchase the perfect gifts, decorate our houses, host family and friends, and participate in a myriad of festive gatherings. But, in the midst of this chaotic time of preparation, we are called to learn one of the fundamental lessons of Advent – the meaning of waiting.

## What is the message of Advent?

Advent is a season of waiting...waiting for God's revelation to us. In the Gospel of Luke, we encounter this notion of waiting through unlikely individuals from various social strata. Mary, Simeon and the Magi, in the midst of their season of waiting, ultimately experience God's revelation “in the fullness of time.” Each facing unique circumstances and representing different sectors of society, they share in the season of waiting for God's revelation. Mary, a young Jewish girl with a humble background, low on the societal hierarchy, is chosen by God to be the mother of Christ. In the Gospel of Luke 1:26-38, the angel Gabriel reveals to Mary that she will be with child and give birth to the Messiah. This announcement ushers in her season of waiting and for the next nine months she prepares for the birth of her son, Jesus, the Messiah. Simeon, the “just and devout man” of Jerusalem, had been promised by God to see the Messiah before he died. In Luke 2:25-35, we read that Simeon, now in the twilight of his life, has experienced a lifetime of waiting for the

# "IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME" – ADVENT, A SEASON OF WAITING

By Doris Melkonian &  
Arda Melkonian

Messiah. Lastly, the Magi, astronomers from an elite class in the East, observe an unusual star in the sky. They track the star for several years, journeying from the East to a humble manger in Bethlehem. Their faith led them to the Christ child where they presented their precious gifts to him (Luke 2:1-12). Although the season of waiting varied for Mary, Simeon and the Magi, God did reveal Himself to them "in the fullness of time."

## In Our Season of Waiting

Like Mary, Simeon, and the Magi, many of us are in our own season of waiting. We wait to hear God's voice and feel His presence as we sit in silence. We wait for discernment as we seek out God's will for our lives. And we wait as we lift up our voices to God and seek answers to our prayers. We wait. And while this is a challenge for most of us, especially as we live in a fast-paced age with demands for instant responses and immediate action, we are reminded in this Advent season to wait, that God will reveal Himself "in the fullness of time."

## What does your season of waiting look like?

The season of waiting varies for each one of us: it might be a few days, a few months or even a few years; it might be a time of disruption and chaos; or it might be a time of static silence. How are you facing your season of waiting? Are you weary and heavy of heart? Have you lost direction and hope? Or, like the individuals we encountered in the Gospel of Luke, have you maintained the lifeline to Christ? Have you remained steadfast despite your long period of wait? Have you remained faithful in light of your arduous

journey? What does your season of waiting resemble? Are you waiting in hope and in joy, with the assurance that God is working in your circumstances? Is your waiting anchored in hope?

## Waiting in Faith

Mary, Simeon, and the Magi waited in faith despite the challenges and despite the arduous journey. Certainly, their season of waiting was full of heartaches and challenges, but God eventually revealed Himself to them "in the fullness of time." It is easy to lose hope while in the midst of our own season of advent - yet we are reminded to remain steadfast in our faith in the Christ Child. Wait for Him in the places of your life where there is grief, injustice, uncertainty, and disappointment. During our time of waiting, let us resist the temptation to doubt God and his promises. Let us cling to the knowledge that God will never leave us nor forsake us. Let us draw strength from the knowledge that God is at work in our lives to accomplish his perfect will.

Whatever our season of waiting might look like, God will make known Himself "in the fullness of time."

May our Season of Advent prepare us and transform us for the revelation of Christ. May we wait with hope. ■

# PRAY FOR THE PEOPLE OF ARMENIA & ARTSAKH

Let us remember those that have lost their homes and mourn their loved ones.

*We pray for the suffering people of Armenia. We pray for their safety, for their health, and for their peace. We ask that the Holy Spirit would guide them through this time of crisis and help them find stability. We pray that our Lord would grant them hope and strength.*

*We believe in your power to heal, Lord. We believe in the power of your children to bring about change in this world. We know that you are with us, even when we cannot see you. We pray that you will be with the people of Armenia during these difficult times.*

*"He makes wars cease to the ends of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire."*

—Psalm 46:9 (NIV)

Prayer from : <https://churchgists.com/prayerforarmenia/>



**AMAA Launches Project REVIVE: An unprecedented Recovery Program, providing a Lifeline to thousands of displaced Armenian families from Artsakh who took refuge in Armenia**

## Նոր Տարուայ Ամենօրեայ Յիշեցումսեր Եքրայեցիս 13. 8

Ահաւասիկ Տէրը շնորհք ըրաւ մեզի եւ այսօր նոր մըն է այս Նոր Տարուան մէջ:

Շատ հաւանաբար անցնող տարի իւրաքանչիւր անձ եւ ընտանիք բաւական վերիվայրումսեր դիմագրաւեց եւ տակաւին կը դիմագրաւէ:

Մեր ազգի զաւակները, յատկապէս՝ Արցախի, իրենց պապենական հողերը իրենց ետին ձգելով, տակաւին ծանր պայմաններու մէջ են:

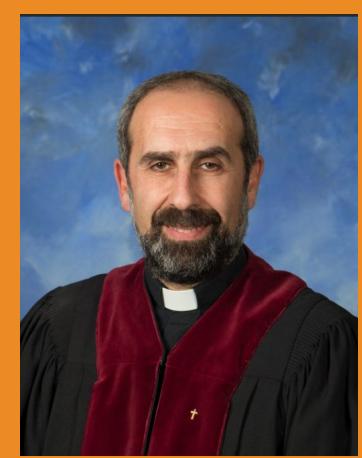
Եւ այս բոլոր սեւ եւ մութ վիճակներուն մէջ, մէկ բան յստակ է թէ Աստուած անփոփոխ է եւ ինչ վիճակներու մէջ որ գտնուինք տակաւին միեւնոյն Աստուածն է, որովհետեւ «Յիսուս Քրիստոս նոյնն է երէկ ու այսօր եւ յախտեանս» (Եքր. 13. 8):

Ահաւասիկ Նոր Տարուան սկիզբն ենք եւ չենք գիտեր թէ այս տարին ինչ վերապահած է մեզի: Սակայն մէկ բան գիտենք թէ պարագանները ինչ ալ ըլլան, յիշենք թէ Աստուած ձեռնածալ չէ: Մեր յոյսը եւ վստահութիւնը չդնենք Նոր Տարուան վրայ, ոչ ալ Նոր Տարուան յոյսերուն վրայ, այլ

մեր յոյսը եւ, վստահութիւնը դնենք Աստուած յ վրայ եւ յիշենք իր ակնկալութիւնները մեզմէ եւ խնդրենք իր կամքը մեր կեանքերուն մէջ:

Այլ խօսքով, Աստուած Ի՞նչ կ՝ ակնկալէ մարդ արարածէն:

Ա. Աստուած մարդ արարածէն կ՝ ակնկալէ հաղորդակցութիւն:



Վեր. Սերոք Ճ.  
Մկրտիչեան  
Կլինտէլ,  
Քալիֆօրնիա

Մատթեոսի աւետարանին մէջ Տէր Յիսուս կ՝ ըստ «Խնդրեցէ ք եւ պիտի տրուի ձեզի. Փնտրեցէ ք եւ պիտի գտնէք. Դուռը զարկէք եւ պիտի բացուի ձեզի» (7. 7):

Այլ խօսքով, Աստուած կ՝ ակնկալէ մարդ արարածէն որ աղօթքով իր սիրտը իրեն բանայ, ինչպէս որ զաւակ մը իր սիրտը հօրը կը բանայ:

Բայց յիշենք, որ հաւանաբար մեր ուզած պատասխանը պիտի չըստանանք, եթէ այդ իր կամքին համաձայն չէ: Սակայն վստահ ըլլանը որ Տէրը աղօթքներ լսող Աստուած է, եւ աղօթքներ պատասխանող:

Հարցումը՝ կը հաղորդակցի՞ս Աստուծոյ հետ:

Եկէք այս Նոր Տարուան մէջ, ամէն օր մեր սիրտերը բանանք եւ աղօթքով հաղորդակցի՞նք Ստեղծիչ ու Փրկիչ Աստուծոյ հետ:

Բ. Աստուած մարդ արարածէն կ՝ ակնկալէ գոհունակութիւն:

Փիլիպպեցիներու ուղղուած նամակին մէջ Պողոս Առաքեալը կ ըստ. «Ոչ թէ կարօտութեան համար կ ըսեմ. Վասն զի ես սորվեցայ զոհ ըլլալ իմ գտնուած վիճակին մէջ» (4. 11):

Առաքեալը ոչ թէ միայն յատուկ պարագաներու մէջ զոհ էր, այլ այնպիսի ձեւով աձեցաւ հաւատքին մէջ ուր շատ ծանր վիճակներու եւ պարագաներու մէջ ան գոհունակ էր: Առաքեալը Տէրոց հետ քալելով սորվեցաւ Տիրոջմով գոհունակ ըլլալ:

Հարցումը՝ գոհունա՞կ ես:

Եկէք այս Նոր տարուան մէջ, ամէն

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

# Պատգամ

օր Աստուծոյ հետ քալելով, գոհունակ ըլլանք ամէն բանի մէջ, ինչ ալ ըլլան գալիք օրերը:

Գ. Աստուած մարդ արարածէն կ' ակնկալէ հնազանդութիւն:

Յովհաննու աւետարանին մէջ մեր Տէրը Յիսուս Քրիստոս կ' ըսէ. «Ան որ իմ պատուեներս կը բռնէ ու կը պահէ զանոնք, անիկա է զիս սիրողը» (14. 21):

Այսինքն, Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ մեզմէ հնազանդութեան կեանք ապրիլ: Հնազանդ ըլլալ Իրեն, Իր պատուեներուն եւ Իր ուսուցմունքներուն եւ Ան ալ աւելիով պիտի օրինէ եւ յաղթական կեանք շնորհէ: Մեր Տէրը զիտէ եւ կը ճանչնայ մեզմէ իրաքանչիւրս, զիտէ ինչն է լաւագոյնը

## Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ մարդ արարածէն որ յաւիտենական կեանքի հեռանկար ունենայ:

մեզմէ իրաքանչիւրին եւ այդ պատճառաւ կ' ըսէ. «Ես եկայ որ կեանք ունենան եւ ա լ աւելի ունենան» (Յովհաննու 10. 10):

Ան զիտէ, ինչպէս որ ծնողը մը զիտէ ինչն է լաւագոյնը իր զաւկին եւ կ' ուզէ որ զաւակը շիտակ ճամբու մէջ ըլլայ, որովհետեւ կը սիրէ իր զաւակը: Զաւակն ալ միեւնոյն ատեն զիտէ ծնողին սէրը եւ ուրեմն այդ սէրը կը փոխանակուի ծնողին հանդէա հնազանդութեամբ:

Հարցումը՝ Աստուծոյ հնազանդ էս:

Այս Նոր Տարուան մէջ, երբ Սուրբ Հոգիին ձայնը լսես «Սիրոտ մի խստացներ» (Եբր. 3. 15): Այլ վստահէ Իր առաջնորդութեան, վստահէ Իր նախախնամութեան, հնազանդ եղի ք Իրեն, որովհետեւ միայն Ինք զիտէ թէ ինչն է լաւագոյնը քեզի համար:

Դ. Աստուած մարդ արարածէն կ' ակնկալէ գործնական հաւատը:

Եբրայեցիներուն ուղղուած նամակին մէջ առաքեալը կ' ըսէ. «Առանց հաւատքի անհնար էր Աստուծոյ հածելի ըլլալ» (11. 6):

Մեր Տէրը նախ կ' ակնկալէ զիտակից հաւատք ունենալ եւ ոչ թէ պարզապէս հաւատալ: Այլ խօսքով Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ մարդ արարածէն գործնականացնել հաւատքը: Այսինքն գործնական հաւատք, ինչպէս որ Յակոբոս առաքեալը կ' ըսէ.

«Հաւատքը, եթէ իրեն հետ գործ չունենայ, առանձինն մեռած է» (2. 17):

Յիշենք թէ հաւատքը բայ է: Հաւատքը տեսական չ' ըլլար: Հաւատքը գործնական կ' ըլլայ:

Հարցումը՝ հաւատքը տեսական է թէ գործնական ն: Այսինքն, իսօ սք թէ կեա նք:

Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ հաւատացեալէն որ իր ունեցած հաւատքը շօշափելի ըլլայ: Այսինքն, կատարեալ հաւատք եւ վստահութիւն թէ Աստուած է այս Նոր Տարուան Տէրը եւ այս հաւատքը պարզապէս խօսք չէ, այլ կեանք եւ ապրելակերպ, ինչպէս որ Յակոբոս առաքեալ կ' ըսէ. «Խօսքը կատարեցէ ք, միայն մի լսէր ինքովինքնիդ խարելով» (1. 22):

Ե. Աստուած մարդ արարածէն կ' ակնկալէ յաւիտենական կեանքի հեռանկար:

Փիլիպպեցիներուն եւ Բ. Կորնթացիներուն ուղղուած նամակներուն մէջ առաքեալը կ' ըսէ. «Մեր քաղաքականութիւնը երկինքն է» (3. 20), «Վասն զի զիտենք թէ եթէ մեր վրանի նման երկրաւոր տունը քակուի, շինուածք մը ունինք Աստուծմէ, անձեռագործ տուն մը երկնքի մէջ» (5. 1):

Այսօր մարդիկ կ' ապրին, կարծելով թէ միայն այս աշխարհն է եւ ուրիշ կեանք չկայ: Ի նշ խոճալի եւ ցաւալի վիճակ: Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ մարդ արարածէն որ յաւիտենական կեանքի հեռանկար ունենայ:

Եթէ աշխարհի ակնկալութիւններուն հետեւինք, շատ յստակ է աշխարհի ակնկալութիւնը: Ապրիլ միայն այս աշխարհի համար եւ այս աշխարհի ցանկութիւններով եւ ակնկալութիւններով առաջնորդուած, որ ժամանակաւոր է: Եւ այս պատճառաւ շատ յաճախ կը լսենք մարդիկ կ' ըսեն. «Կէ ք, իսմէ, քէֆի դ նայիր, այսօր կաս, վաղը չկայ: Վայելքիդ ետեւէ եղի ք»: Բայց Երկինքի արքայութիւնը յաւիտենական է:

Մէկ խօսքով, այս աշխարհի մէջ ամէն բան ժամանակաւոր է եւ եթէ մարդ արարածը առաջնահերթ նկատելով կապուած է այս ժամանակաւոր աշխարհին, կը նշանակէ թէ ուշ կամ կանուխ անպայման պիտի իյնայ:

Հարցումը՝ մինչ կ' ապրիս, ի՞նչ հեռանկարով կ' ապրիս: Ժամանակաւոր ք: Միայն ա յս աշխարհի համար, թէ յաւիտենական կեանքի հեռանկարով:

Այս Նոր տարուան մէջ, Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ մարդ արարածէն յաւիտենական կեանքի հեռանկար

ոնենալ եւ ըստ այնմ հաւատքի գործնական կեանքը ապրիլ:

Զ. Աստուած մարդ արարածն կ' ակնկալէ որ լեցուի Իր Խօսքով:

Շատ դիրին է մարդ արարածին համար որ իր օրը սկսի այն ինչով որ աշխարհ կ' առաջարկէ եւ կը հրամցնէ իրեն եւ հետեւաբար՝ չարին թիրախ եւ նպատակակետ կը դառնայ:

Ա Պետրոս 5. 8 րդ համարին մէջ կը կարդանք. «Արթուն կեցէք, հսկեցէք, վասն զի ձեր հակառակորդը, Սատանան մոնչող առիւծի պէս կը պտտի ու կը փնտուի թէ ո վ կլլէ»:

Ուրեմն, էական է որ հաւատացեալը հազնի

**Այս Նոր տարուան մէջ, Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ մարդ արարածն յաւիտենական կեանքի հեռանկար ունենալ եւ ըստ այնմ հաւատքի գործնական կեանքը ապրիլ:**

Աստուածոյ սպառազինութիւնը եւ կատարելապէս պաշտպանուի Աստուածոյ զրահով՝ Աստուածոյ խօսքով, ինչպէս որ առաքեալը կը թելադրէ Եփեսացիներուն ուղղուած նամակին մէջ. «Ձեր վրայ առեք Աստուածոյ սպառազինութիւնը, որպէս զի կարող ըլլաք չարութեան օրը դէմ դնել» (6. 13): Ինչու 1: Որովհետեւ, «Աստուածոյ Խօսքը կենդանի է ու գորեղ եւ ամէն երկսայրի սուրբ կտրուկ» (Եբր. 4. 12):

Այսօր չարը իր հրապոյրներով կը շլացնէ մարդ արարածը եւ կ' ուզէ մարդը իր ճիրաններուն մէջ ըլլայ:

Հարցումը՝ ո՞վ կ' առաջնորդէ ամենօրեայ կեանքը աշխարհի չափանիշներ որ եւ ակնկալութիւններ թէ Աստուածոյ Խօսքը եւ Աստուածոյ չափանիշներն ու ակնկալութիւնները:

Միշտ յիշենք թէ առանց Աստուածոյ Խօսքին անհնար է չարին եւ փորձութիւններուն դէմ դնել: Որքան հաւատքով Աստուածաշունչը սերտենք այնքան յոյսով, ուրախութեամբ եւ զօրութեամբ կը լեցուինք: Իսկ որքան աշխարհով լեցուինք այնքան աւելի վախերով եւ յուսահատութիւններով կը լեցուինք:

Այս Նոր տարուան մէջ, Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ մարդ արարածն որ լեցուի Իր Խօսքով եւ Իրմով ապրի յաղթական կեանք:

Է. Աստուած մարդ արարածն կ' ակնկալէ որ խաղաղութեամբ ապրի:

Անկասկած կ' ապրինք անխաղաղ աշխարհի մը մէջ: Ամէն կողմ կան տարբեր տեսակի հարցեր, կոհիներ, պատերազմներ, տագնապներ եւ այս բոլոր խառն վիճակներուն մէջ, Աստուած կ' ուզէ որ մարդ արարածը խաղաղութեամբ ապրի:

Պողոս առաքեալ Փիլիպպեցիներուն ուղղուած նամակին միջոցաւ, հաւատացեալին ուղղութիւն մը կու տայ թէ ինչպէս կարելի է խաղաղութեամբ ապրիլ: Ան կ ըսէ. «Բանի մը համար հոգ մի ընէք, հապա ամէն բանի մէջ աղօթքով ու աղաշանքով, գոհութիւնով մէկտեղ, ձեր խնդրանքը Աստուածոյ յայտնի ըլլայ: Աստուածոյ խաղաղութիւնը, որ ամէն մտքէ վեր է, ձեր սրտերը ու մտքերը Յիսուս Քրիստոսով պիտի պահպանէ» (4. 6-7):

Տէր Աստուածոյ  
Հ ն ո ր հ ա ծ  
խ ա դ ա դ ո ւ թ ի ւ ն ը  
մ ա ր դ կ ա յ ի ն

տրամաբանութենէն եւ ըմբռնումներէն գերիվեր է: Ինչ ալ ըլլան մեր ամենօրեայ ծանր պարազաները, վստահ ըլլանք, թէ Աստուածոյ խաղաղութիւնը մարդ արարածին սիրտը, միտքն ու հոգին Յիսուս Քրիստոսով պիտի պահէ եւ պահպանէ:

Հարցումը՝ աշխարհի փոթորկուտ վիճակներուն մէջ, որու և կը դիմես խաղաղութիւն ունենալու համար: Սրտի, մտքի եւ հոգիի խաղաղութիւն ունի ս:

Այս նոր տարուան մէջ, Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ մարդ արարածն որ ձերբազատուի իր ամենօրեայ հոգերէն եւ փոխարէնը փառաբանութեամբ եւ շնորհակալութեամբ լեցուելով, Իրեն վստահի, որպէս զի կարենայ Իր խաղաղութեամբ եւ Իրմով խաղաղ կեանք ապրի:

Ը. Աստուած մարդ արարածն կ' ակնկալէ որ գիտնայ թէ Ստեղծիչ եւ Փրկիչ Աստուածը սիրող Աստուած է:

Ընդհանրապէս մարդ արարածը կը սիրէ սիրուիլ եւ շատ յաճախ մարդիկ պայմաններ կը դնեն սիրելու կամ սիրուելու համար: Իսկ շատ մը յուսախաբութիւններու պատճառաւ, մարդ արարածը առանձին եւ մենակեաց կը զգայ:

Աստուած կ' ուզէ որ Իր ստեղծած մարդը ալ աւելիով գիտնայ թէ իր Ստեղծիչը եւ Փրկիչը, առանց

ունի պայմանի, սիրող, խնամող, հոգացող Աստուած է: Աստուած այնքան կը սիրէ մարդո որ չի նայիր մարդուն անցեալին, այլ նոր եւ յաւիտենական կեանք կը շնորհէ իրեն: «Վասն զի Աստուած այնպէս սիրեց աշխարհը, մինչեւ իր միածին Որդին տուաւ, որպէս զի ամէն ով որ անոր հաւատայ չկորսուի, հապա յաւիտենական կեանք ունենայ» (Յովհաննու 3. 16):

Նաեւ պէտք է միշտ յիշենք թէ Աստուած հեռու տեղ չի բնակիր: Ան հասանելի է: Ան կ' լսէ. «Եթէ քու Տէր Աստուածո վիստու ու զանիկա բոլոր սրտովդ եւ բոլոր հոգիովդ վիստուելու ըլլաս պիտի զոնես» (Բ Օրինաց 4. 29):

Հարցումը՝ Գիտակի՞ց ես թէ Տէրը կը սիրէ քեզ:

Այս Նոր Տարուան մէջ, Աստուած կ' ակնկալէ որ ալ աւելիով զիտակցիս թէ Ան կը սիրէ քեզ եւ թէ կանչուած ես բոլոր սրտովդ, մտքովդ եւ հոգիովդ վիստուելու սիրող, զթացող, հոգացող եւ ողորմող Ստեղծիչ ու Փրկիչ Աստուածը եւ ապրելու Իրեն վայել սիրով լեցուն կեանք սիրելով զԱստուած եւ մարդ արարածը, Իր փառքին համար:

Աստուծմով Օրինաքեր Նոր Տարի



## Perfect Timing

Rev. Calvin Sagherian

AEUNA Moderator & Pastor, Calvary Armenian Congregational Church, San Francisco, CA

I have often been intrigued with the question, 'Why did Jesus come at the time when He did?' The simple answer is found in Paul's letter to the Galatians, "But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son" (4:4a). Paul makes it clear that God had a set time, a time that "had fully come." Does this hint at the idea that God was waiting for a time, maybe the right time to send His Son?

The period of time preceding the first advent of Jesus is called the four hundred years of silence. That means God did not speak to His people or to a prophet following the ministry of Malachi until the angel of the Lord spoke to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist in preparation for the coming of Jesus, the Son of God. Those were difficult times for the Jewish people.

*When God is silent during our times of suffering and pain, we assume God is far and indifferent. And yet when we study the history of the intertestamental times - the years leading up to the birth of Jesus, we realize that God was anything but indifferent.*

When God is silent during our times of suffering and pain, we assume God is far and indifferent. And yet when we study the history of the intertestamental times - the years leading up to the birth of Jesus, we realize that God was anything but indifferent. He was at work preparing the world for the arrival of His Son through whom He would reveal Himself and communicate His love and His plan of salvation.

Consider what shaped the world for the best opportune time to spread the Good News of salvation through Jesus Christ:

The Greek culture was dominant in the years prior to the birth of Jesus when Alexander the Great conquered the known world. Following His death the generals that ruled the Middle East imposed

### UPCOMING EVENTS 2024

#### Camp AREV

Winter

HS: Jan. 12-14 JH: Jan. 26-28  
Jrs: Jan. 19-21 YA: Feb. 2-4

#### AEYF East

C&C Retreat: NY, Feb. 9-11  
Jr's Conf.: PA, Apr. 19-21  
Fall Conf.: TBD Oct. 4-6

#### Camp AREV

Summer

HS: Jul. 14-20 JH: Jul. 28-Aug. 3  
Jrs: Jul. 21-27 YA: Sep. 13-15

#### AEYF West

Ages 14+  
Spring Event: TBD Apr. 6  
Fall Retreat: TBD Nov. 8-10

#### Camp Arevelk

NY: Aug. 4-10

#### AEUNA/AEYF Biennial

San Mateo, CA  
Jun. 27-30  
Tour Jun. 30-Jul. 3



AEUNA YOUTH MINISTRIES



the Greek culture, philosophy and language on the people. The Hebrew language among the Jews was spoken by the educated few, while the common language among the people had become the Greek language. In fact, the Old Testament which was written in Hebrew was translated to Greek, (called the Septuagint for the seventy scholars who worked on it in Alexandria, Egypt) so that the common people would be able to read it and understand it. Aramaic, which is close to Hebrew, was also the common language among the Jews.<sup>1</sup>

What is unique about the Greek language is its precision, unlike the English language that has become the *lingua franca* of today. The Greek language is very precise, communicating the full meaning of what is to be said. That is why we often refer to the Original Greek when we interpret the Scriptures for accuracy.

Even when the Roman Empire conquered the known world, the dominant language remained Greek. Most people in the Roman world spoke Greek, then Latin or a dialect of Latin depending on the ethnicity of those speaking it. We know that when Pilate gave orders to crucify Jesus, he had an inscription nailed at the top of the cross in three languages: Greek, Latin and Aramaic.

As we know, not only was the Old Testament translated into Greek approximately two hundred years before Christ, but the New Testament was also written in Greek which was the common language of the day.

Another area that was being shaped and prepared for the propagation of the Gospel was transportation. The Roman Empire was known for its construction of roads through the empire, as well as transportation by ships. This made travel and the postal service accessible to the people. The Good News of Jesus Christ was spread fairly easily throughout the Roman world due to the ease in transportation. We can read about it in the book of Acts as Luke chronicled the apostle Paul's adventures as he traveled through Asia Minor and Europe to preach the gospel and establish churches.

Finally, another interesting development which began to take place among the exiled Jews following the destruction of the temple in 586 B.C. was the synagogue. In the absence of the temple, the Jews gathered for worship and

instruction wherever they were. In fact, they brought this concept back with them when they returned to Judea and Galilee. The order of worship was very similar to our services, which also paved the way for the gathering and worship of the early church.

Looking back, we see that during those silent years, God was active in preparing the world for the arrival of His Son who would pay for our sins at the cross. *"But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son"* (Gal 4:4).

We too are going through some difficult times as Armenians spread throughout the world. Going back to the Genocide which began in the latter part of the nineteenth century all the way through the civil wars in Lebanon, then in Syria, the pogroms in Baku, the aggression by Azerbaijan against Artsakh and even Armenia which have caused the displacement of thousands of people moving us from one country to another. And the question we often hear is, where is God and why does He not interfere to help us?

Reading the gospel accounts reminds us of the fact that Jesus too was displaced by aggressors who wanted Him dead. And yet, God protected Him in order for Him to fulfill the mission for which He was sent - to pay for the penalty of our sins and to offer us the free gift of forgiveness and eternal life. Those of us who have gladly received God's gracious gift of salvation have the assurance that even if we think God is silent, He is not indifferent to the plight of His people. His heart breaks when He sees the violence and the injustice and has promised that those who put their trust in Him will be victorious. We can take heart that He has already overcome the world having defeated death through His resurrection.

God prepared the world for the first advent of His Son, Jesus, in order to offer us eternal life. As we consider what has shaped our world up till now, such as the internet, we may wonder if God may be preparing the world for another great event. Could God be preparing the world for the second advent of His Son? We would be wise to be aware of the times and be prepared for the second coming of Christ.

*"But when the set time had fully come, God sent His Son"* (Galatians 4:4a). ■

<sup>1</sup> This latter point is debated by some, who say that spoken Hebrew remained among the people.

## Propagating God's Waves of Blessings

Harout Nercessian AMAA Field Director



*“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”*

Winston Churchill

*“The most satisfying thing in life is to have been able to give a large part of one’s self to others.” –*

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

We all approach God with the expectation to be blessed by Him. Indeed, the Creator lavishly gifts us with his presence, promises, instructions, reprimands, and material abundance – all intended to enrich our lives. Yet, God's coin of blessing has another side. The Father touches us with the urge and hope that we pass on his blessings to others. He invites us to join his mission to reach out and lift up our fellow humans.

**God sends his blessings in waves, and urges Christians to be the ripples that share his grace.** This model recurs throughout the Bible. Here are two Old Testament examples to illustrate it. God gave extravagant promises to Abram, renamed Abraham, and his future descendants. His name would be “great.”<sup>1</sup> He and his wife would overcome their old age and

barrenness and become “a great nation.”<sup>2</sup>

**God would bless this future Father of Faith so that he could be a conduit of Divine blessings to “all peoples on earth.”<sup>3</sup>** God gave Isaiah a vision of heaven that was beyond words<sup>4</sup>. But his awe-inspiring experience was meant to lead him to a life of prophetic service.

**We find the same ripple strategy in the New Testament.** Simon and his business partners, all expert fishermen, had spent a fruitless night of fishing. Jesus showed up in the morning and blessed them with a huge, net-breaking catch of fish. Christ used this jaw-dropping blessing as a springboard to thrust them into a world-blessing mission as His Apostles.

The widely despised Zacchaeus

was delightfully honored by an unexpected overnight visit from Jesus. The infamous tax collector who had amassed wealth by overtaxing defenseless citizens turned into an unrivaled philanthropist. He passed on the blessing of Jesus' visit to the poor and oppressed.

You justifiably ask, “What do these historic events have to do with our 21<sup>st</sup> century, technology-driven, financially independent, and comfortable lives?” The unprecedented physical comfort and conveniences achieved in modern times have not alleviated the excruciating pain and suffering brought about by the Fall. The consequences of sin still haunt us relentlessly and ferociously. Beneath the assured smiles and the falsely cheerful faces online hide wounded hearts and hopeless

<sup>1</sup> Genesis 12:2

<sup>2</sup> Genesis 12:2

<sup>3</sup> Genesis 12:3

<sup>4</sup> Isaiah 6:1-4

souls – all captive to human sin.

While the Enemy takes pleasure in tormenting us, God agonizes over human misery and actively seeks to free us from the influence of evil. God keeps asking, “Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?”<sup>5</sup> He is searching for agents of his “ripple strategy” whom he can bless and empower “to proclaim good news to the poor,” and “proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free...”<sup>6</sup>

But “what’s in it for me?” some may understandably ask. As per the Creator’s design, the full impact of God’s blessings can be experienced only as we pass them on. There is a goldmine of fulfillment and joy to be experienced in blessing others. We observe this among those whom Jesus touched. They were bursting with delight and were eager for others to enjoy Jesus’ blessings. The Samaritan woman at the well is a case in point.

Some curiously continue probing, “is there a cost in blessing others?” Yes, there is. Our parents sacrificed their comfort and pleasure to raise and nurture us. Indeed, nothing is free. Everything we received came at a price for someone.

We owe our salvation to the Gospel that was delivered to us through the sacrifice and service of faithful saints in the past. The places of worship and fellowship that we and our families cherish and benefit from were built by visionaries who invested their time and money to bless us.

We must never forget the supreme sacrifice that secured the greatest blessing. Jesus paid the price of unimaginable suffering, rejection, and isolation to save us. He set in motion the ripple of Divine Blessings that has touched us across two thousand years.

We have a duty to bless others in gratitude for those who blessed us with the faith and abundant life that we enjoy.

## Rebuilding a Vision Camp ARMEN



### Birth of Camp ARMEN



Hrant Guzelian had a vision in 1962 to gather and educate orphaned Armenian children who, forcibly separated from their cultural roots and Christian heritage, were being assimilated into foreign culture and faith. Today, the Armenian Missionary Association of America strives to revitalize this vision by helping to restore and rebuild Camp ARMEN, located in the Tuzla district outside Istanbul. In this way we will honor Hrant’s legacy and continue the impact he had on raising resilient generations of Armenian children and youth.



### Rebuilding for the Future

Camp ARMEN is being rebuilt to once again embrace Armenian children living in Turkey and connect them to their heritage, faith and inspire them to make a difference in the world around them.

**The goal is to raise \$2.5 million** to make the new Camp ARMEN the first and only Camp in Turkey to function as a state-of-the-art center serving the Armenian Evangelical, Catholic and Apostolic communities throughout the year. The new Camp will provide critical social, cultural, and religious development activities for Armenian youth, led by staff and trained volunteers.

*Please partner with the AMAA to help create a small Home for Armenian children living in Turkey to perpetuate the cultural and spiritual identity, and keep the torch burning.*



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<sup>5</sup> Isaiah 6:8

<sup>6</sup> Luke 4:18

# FEATURE

## Bible Translators' Sunday Rev. J. Bizdigian

Today, October 14, 2023, being the Armenian Bible Translators' Sunday, I am writing this article. On this day we celebrate our Armenian translators' highly commendable job, the translation of the Bible into Armenian from original languages, Hebrew and Greek.

The translators did such a superb job as to be recognized as the "Queen of translations". This title was given by modern Bible scholars, by comparing different ancient translations.

It is not an easy task to translate some intricate and complex ideas and nuances from one language to another. Case in point could be John 1:11. Actually, John 1:11-12 speaks about the coming of Jesus and his Gospel into this world, its rejection and acceptance of the Savior of mankind. We read: "He came to his own, and his own received him not" (King James). Again, "He came to his own home and his own people received him not" (RSV). RSV is known to be a word for word translation. The NIV translation is known to be translating the meaning of the original text. Here is how it reads: "He came to what was his own, but his own did not receive him."

This too, misses the point. Let us look at the original Greek text: "εἰς τὰ ἰδια ἤλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἰδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον." Transliteration: "eis ta idia elthen, kai hoi idioi auton ou parelabon." To that which was his, but his own did not receive him." This too misses the point.

In the Greek text, "his own" is a plural neuter gender, definitely not a reference to people, it is a reference to things. In this context it must be understood as the "creation"<sup>1</sup>. We read, verse 3 "through him things were made; without him nothing was made, that has been made". The second "his own" is plural masculine, i.e. men, understood as people.

Thus John 1:11 must be read and understood as "he came to his own creation, and the people, in general, rejected him. By saying "in general" must be understood as "mostly" not everyone. For the gospel writer goes to say "but those who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God." ■

<sup>1</sup> The editorial group of the FORUM wishes you to note that we do not necessarily agree with this conclusion, for the following reasons: both of the nouns in Greek (*ta idia* and *oi idioi*) are the same noun. Both are in the Nominative Case, being subjects that control the verbs. The insertion of the word "creation" is speculative because "*ta idia*" is plural, though ambiguous; but "*oi idioi*" is not ambiguous; it is masculine plural and is directly linked to "*ta idia*". The continuation of the verse answers the ambiguity of the first noun - "his own people" were the ones who did not receive Him. It is more accurate to say, "He came to his own, but his own people did not receive Him." This correlates with Matthew 15:24, "But He answered and said, I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel."

## Քրիստոնեութիւնը Ըստունող Առաջին Ազգը Ո՞ԻՐ ԵՆՔ ԱՐԴԵՕՔ ՄԵՆՔ ԱՅՍՈՒ

«Ու Իմ անունովս կոչուած ժողովուրդս երէ խոնարին ու աղօրք ընեն, ու իմ երեսս խնդրեն եւ իրենց չար ճամբաներէն դատնան, ես ալ երկինքէն պիտի լսեմ, ու անոնց մեղքը ներեմ, ու անոնց երկիրը պիտի բժշկեմ» (Բ. Մատուրդաց 7. 14):

Ըրբատանի Ոգիա թագաւորին մահէն ետք որոշ կատարակեր կառավարիչներ Յուդայի իշխաններ եղան: Եսայի մարգարէն հետեւեալ հարցումը կը հարցնէ, «Որու և կարող ենք վստահիլ»: Աստուած ուշազրաւ տեսիլքով մը կը յայտնալի մարգարէն եւ կը համոզի զինք, որ միայն Իրեն կրնան վստահիլ ապագային զալիք աւելի լաւ օրերուն համար: Մարգարէն (Եսայի 26. 4րդ համարով), կը յիշեցնէ մեզի թէ Աստուած կրնայ «Հաստատ միտքը կատարեալ խաղաղութեան մէջ պահել երբ անհատը վստահի Իրեն»: Աւելցնելով «Յաւե ոժ Տերոց վստահեցէք քանի որ Տեր Ենովան յախտենական վէմ է»:

Երբ մեր միտքը կեղրոնացած ըլլայ Աստուծոյ վրայ, մենք կրնանք վստահիլ Անոր մեր անտրոշութեան, շփրութեան եւ դժուարին կացութիւններու ժամանակ, հաստատ գիտնալով որ Անոր օգնութիւնը մօս է:

Որպէս Հայ ժողովուրդ մենք արդարօրէն մտահղուած ենք այսօր, մեր Հայաստան Աշխարհի եւ Սփիլորի տարածքին ցրուած մեր հայրենակիցներուն լինելութեամբ: Մոռնալու չենք սակայն որ մեր հայրերը իրենց արքունիքով եւ ժողովուրդով Ք. Ե. 301 թուին, Քրիստոնեութիւնը որդէգրեցին իրեն հաւատրի կանոնը եւ Աստուածաշոնչը որպէս իրենց կենցաղին եւ ապրելակերպին ուղղութիւն տուող գիրը մը:

Չատ հաւանաբար մեր մէջ գտնուին կարգ մը անհատներ, որոնք մեր ժողովուրդին կրած տառապանքներուն, յաճախակի կոտորածներուն եւ տեղահանութիւններուն պատճառ նկատեն մեր Քրիստոնեայ եղած ըլլալը: Որոշ ճշմարտութիւն մը ըլլալով հանդերձ շատ վիճելի նիւթ մըն է:

Յարմար էոր այստեղյատակացնենք Մտահղութիւն բառը:

1. Ի՞նչ չէ մտահղութիւնը: Մտահղութիւնը չի նշանակեր մեր հանապարհութեան կեանքին մասին խորհիլ եւ ապագայի համար ծրագիրներ մշակել: Յիսուս մեր Փրկիչը եւ առաջնորդը, պատերազմի ելլող թագաւորին եւ տուն շինող մարդուն օրինակներով, յստակօրէն ցոյց տուաւ թէ սիսալ պիտի ըլլար պատերազմի երթալ թշնամիին դէմ, եթէ թագաւորը բաւարար թիւնվ զօրք չունենար յաղթութիւն մը ապահովելու, եւ կամ տուն շինելու աշխատանքին սկսիլ առանց

հաշուելու թէ պիտի կարենա՞յ աւարտել այդ շինութիւնը թէ ոչ (Ղուկասի Աւետարան 14. 28-32):

2. **Ի՞նչ է մտահոգութիւնը:** **Մի՛ մտահոգուիք** խօսքին յունարէն բացատրութիւնն է անդէկ նաւու մի նմանիք, անորոշութեան մէջ ասդին անդին մի տարութերիք: Հոգեւոր տեսանկիւնէ դիտելով կրնանք ըսել թէ մտահոգութիւնը պարագաներու եւ տարբեր վիճակներու նկատմամբ սիսալ մտածելակերպ եւ զգացում մըն է: Մտահոգութիւնը մեր երշանկութեան մեծագոյն գոյն է: Մտահոգութեան միակ դեղն ու դարմանը Աստուծոյ վստահիլ եւ հաստատամիտ ըլլան է: Ըստ Սրբազնան Պօղոս Առաքեալի Փիլիափեցիներուն գրած նամակի 4րդ գիշուն 7րդ համարին մէջ այսպէս կը կարդանք «Աստուծոյ խաղաղութիւնը, որ ամէն մտք գերիվեր է, պիտի պահպանէ ձեր սիրտերն ու մտածումները Յիսուս Քրիստոսվ»: Եթէ դուն եւ ես վստահինք Աստուծոյ, Անոր խաղաղութիւնը պիտի պահպանէ եւ առաջնորդէ մեզ Իր Հայրական ապահով թեւերուն տակ պահելով մեզ:

Եթէ մենք կը փափաքինք յաղթահարել մեր մտահոգութիւնները, ենթարկուելու ենք Աստուծոյ առնելով Առաքեալին կողմէ թելադրուած հետեւեալ երեք քայլերը՝ Ռուիդ աղօթք, ուղիղ մտածումներ եւ ուղիդ կենցաղ:

#### • Ընդունելի աղօթք

Առաքեալը չի հրահանգեր որ աղօթենք մեր մտահոգութիւններուն մասին: Ան երեք տարբեր բառեր կը գործածէ բացատրելու համար ընդունելի աղօթքիձեւը Աղօթք, Աղաչանք եւ Շնորհակալութիւն: Աղօթքը Աստուծոյ ուղղուած խնդրագիրի կը նմանի ուր կարելի է տեսնել երկրպագութիւն, գոհաբերութեան եւ պաշտամունքի հոգեվիճակ: Եթը մտահոգիչ վիճակներէ կանցնինք, առաջին քայլը Աստուծոյ հետ առանձնանալով զինք պաշտել ըլլալու է: Գիտակցելու ենք թէ Ան ամենակարող Աստուծած մը ըլլալով, մեր փոքր կամ մեծ հարցերն ու դժուարութիւնները կարող է լուծել: Աղօթքը սրտի խորերէն Աստուծոյ հետ խօսք է ըստ Սր. Գրիգոր Նարեկացիի:

Ընդունելի աղօթքին առաջին պայմանն է՝ պաշտամունքի հոգին: Աղաչանք, պաղատանք եւ թախանձագին խնդրանքն է երկրորդ քայլը կամ պայմանը ընդունելի աղօթքին: Եւ երախտագիտութեան եւ շնորհակալութեան արտայայտութիւնն է երրորդ պայմանը շիտակ եւ ընդունելի աղօթքին: «Ամէն ատեն, ամէն բանի համար շնորհակալ եղէ ք Աստուծմէ եւ Զօրմէն մեր Տիրոց Յիսուս Քրիստոսի անունով» (Եփես. 5.20):

#### • Ուղիդ մտածելակերպ

«Վերջապէս եղայրնե թ, ինչ որ ճշմարիտ է, ինչ որ պատկառելի, ինչ որ արդար, ինչ որ սիրալի, ինչ որ բարի համբաւով, ինչ որ առարինութեամբ եւ ինչ որ գովելի է ասոնց մասին մտածեցիք» (Փիլ. 4. 8):

Միջինձամբայ մը գոյութիւնչունի: Կամ այն էոր մենք բոլոր միտքով եւ սիրտով կը յանձնուինք Աստուծոյ եւ կամ կը յանձնուինք այս մահկանացու մարմինին եւ մենք զմեզ կը գտնենք մեր մտահոգութիւններուն մէջ կորսուած:

Մեր Ազգը անցնող դարերու ընթացքին յաղթահարած է շատ մէծ կամ փոքր դժուարութիւններ, ջարդեր, տեղահանութիւններ, պատերազմներ (Վարդանանց, Սարդարապատ, եւն), այնպէս որ կրնանք արդարօրէն ըսել թէ «Ամէն տեղ Հայ կայ» եւ ուրեմն փառք Աստուծոյ մենք աշխարհաքաղաքացիներ ենք:

Որպէս Հայ Քրիստոնեաններ, մեր հաւաքական կեանքերու ընթացքին անցած ըլլալով յիշեալ տառապալից ճամբաններն, կարենալու ենք ամէն պարագաներու տակ ջերմ հաւատքով վստահիլ Աստուծոյ եւ սաղմոսներուին պէս խիզախօրէն յայտարարել:

«Տէր իմ լցոս ու փրկութիւնս է, ես որմէ պիտի վախնամ:

Տէրը իմ կեանքիս ապաւնն է, ես որմէ՝ պիտի դողամ:

Չարերուն իմ մարմինս ուտելու համար ինձի մօտեցած ատենք,

Իմ նեղիններս ու թշնամիններս սահեցան ու ինկան:

Եթէ վրաս օօրքի բանակ ելլէ, սիրտս պիտի չվախնայ, եթէ վրաս պատերազմի պատրաստութիւն ըլլայ, անով ալ ես վստահ պիտի ըլլամ:

Բան մը կը խնդրեմ Տէրոջմէն, եւ ասիկա կ աղաջեմ,

Որ կեանքիս բոլոր օրերը Տէրոջը տանը մէջ բնակիմ,

Տէրոջը վայելչութիւնը տեսնելու, ու անոր տաճարին մէջ զինք խնդրելու համար:

Վասնզի չար օրուան մէջ՝ իր բնակարանին մէջ պիտի պահէ զիս, Իր վրանին ծածկութովը զիս տիտի ծածկէ, վէմի վրայ պիտի վերցնէ զիս» (Սաղմու 27. 1-5):

Հերթը մերն է հիմա: Եթէ կը փափաքինք որ Աստուծած Իր հայրական հովանիին տակ պահէ մեր ժողովուրդը, Հայաստան աշխարհն ու Սփիտքը, հրաւիրուած ենք ազգովին զոջումի եւ ապաշխարութեան հոգիով Իրեն երթալ եւ հետեւեալ համարին լոյսին տակ ընդունելի իր գերակայութիւնը: «Ու Իմ պատունովս կոչուած ժողովուրդս եթէ խննարին ու աղօթք ընեն, ու իմ երես խնդրեն եւ իրենց չար ճամբաններէն դարձնան, ես ալ երկինքն պիտի լսեմ, ու անոնց մեղքը ներեմ, ու անոնց երկիքը պիտի բժշկեմ» (Բ. Մնացորդաց 7. 14): ■

Զերթը մերն է հիմա: Եթէ կը փափաքինք որ Աստուծած Իր հայրական հովանիին տակ պահէ մեր ժողովուրդը, Հայաստան աշխարհն ու Սփիտքը, հրաւիրուած ենք ազգովին զոջումի եւ ապաշխարութեան հոգիով Իրեն երթալ եւ հետեւեալ համարին լոյսին տակ ընդունելի իր գերակայութիւնը: «Ու Իմ պատունովս կոչուած ժողովուրդս եթէ խննարին ու աղօթք ընեն, ու իմ երես խնդրեն եւ իրենց չար ճամբաններէն դարձնան, ես ալ երկինքն պիտի լսեմ, ու անոնց մեղքը ներեմ, ու անոնց երկիքը պիտի բժշկեմ» (Բ. Մնացորդաց 7. 14): ■

Զերմօրէն  
Միհրան Ճիզմէճեան  
Թորոնք, 17 Հոկտեմբեր, 2023

# FEATURE

## HOPE OF CHRISTMAS

Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian



We begin the Advent season by lighting the First Advent candle, the candle of hope. It reminds us of the hope God gave His people when He promised to send them a Savior. It also reminds us that God's promise was fulfilled in the birth of Jesus and invites us to look forward in hope.

Charles Spurgeon, the great English preacher, once said, "Without Christ, there is no hope." How true of a statement! A Christian minister said, "There are no hopeless situations. There are only hopeless people." He also said, "Because God exists, there is hope." And because there is hope, anything is possible, because hope is founded on God, who is unchangeable, dependable, reliable and trustworthy.

It is very appropriate for Jesus, who is the hope of the world, to have come in the form of an infant, because babies are hope personified. They are pure potential. Their lives are all in the future. A mother or a father looks into the face of their newborn baby and wonders, "What will this child become?" "What will this child accomplish?"

Mary, the mother of Jesus, had great hope for her son. When an angel visited her, gave her this promise: "You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus" (Luke 1:31). This promise to Mary echoed the prophecy of Isaiah, given centuries earlier: "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given" (Isaiah 9:6). When Jesus was born God made it clear that Jesus was the One for whom the world had been eagerly waiting and hoping.

Unspeakable joy must have filled Mary's and Joseph's hearts, as they looked at baby Jesus lying down in the manger and know that their son was the One in whom God's promises would be fulfilled.

I mention all this because it highlights the fact that Christianity is a religion of hope. It's a faith that looks forward to the future with great hope to the time when God's promises will be fulfilled. It was true for God's people, prior to Christ's birth, as they looked forward to the birth of the promised Savior. It was true for Mary and Joseph, as they looked at their newborn son, knowing that the time, for the fulfillment of God's promises, had finally come. It's also true for us today, as we look forward to the return, the second coming of Christ. That's why we look back and say, "Christ has come!" and look forward and say, "Christ will come again!"

The Christian faith is a future-focused faith! It's a faith of what is to come! It's a faith of not yet! This, however, does not mean the Christian faith has no relevance to our daily lives right here and now. Far from it! The Christian faith is very much practical. It also means that the here and now is not our only focus, or even our primary focus. Our only and primary focus is on the world to come. This is how Jesus taught us to pray, "Your kingdom come. Your will be done."

Therefore, hope is not automatic. In fact, sometimes hope is very difficult. Sometimes our circumstances seem anything but hopeful. On the contrary, sometimes our circumstances can seem all but hopeless. G. K. Chesterton, the English writer, theologian and Christian apologist, has a helpful insight. He says, "It's only when everything is hopeless that hope begins to be a strength." The Bible says, "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."

So, how do we sustain this hope in the midst of disappointments, challenges, temptations and not be overwhelmed? How do we maintain hope when we cannot see a way out and want to give up? How do we hold on to hope during those times, when circumstances seem hopeless?

We all have faced situations where there seemed to be little hope, if any. Some of us have faced seemingly hopeless medical or financial problems. The Psalmist,

who, like any of us, faced tough circumstances and challenges, comes to the rescue. He says, "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God" (42:5).

"Putting our hope in God" may seem obvious. But too often we are willing to seek help from anyone and anything, before we turn to God. When we do that God becomes the appeal of last resort. After we have exhausted every other option, then we turn to God. So, if the problem is financial, we do not look to God first. We look to a financial advisor, or maybe a rich uncle. We try everything we can think of, and then, if nothing else works, we think of going to God in prayer. But that's backwards! We should turn to God first, not last! God should be our hope first and foremost!

When your situation starts to seem hopeless, just stop! Stop and pray! Yes, stop, to pray. By doing so, admit your need of God! A pastor and Christian author, says, "Go to the throne, before you go to the phone." The first thing we do, when we wake up, is we go to the phone. I ask that you use the word "push" as an acronym: "P" for Pray, "U" for Until, "S" for Something, "H" for "Happens". A Christian once said, "Faith moves mountains. Prayer moves God."

When you put your hope in God, He proves Himself faithful to you, every time! Putting your hope in God will not disappoint you, ever! God says in Isaiah 49:23, "Those who hope in me will not be disappointed." This kind of hope comes from God, who is faithful, every time! He does what He says He will do! He walks His talk, every time! He does not change His mind ever! He does what He promises He will do, and His promises are made on the basis of who He is and what His character is like!

When the angel visited Mary and said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled" (Luke 1:30-21, 38). May we, like Mary, be willing to submit to God and put our hope in Him, and in Him alone, as we wait for Christ's second coming.

*Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian preached this sermon at the Armenian Church of the Martyrs, Worcester on Sunday, December 3, 2023.* ■

# OUR HOMELAND



## Հովհաններու եւ Տիկիններու Համագումար Հայաստան

«Հայաստան մոռացիր այն ցաւը որ գնաց...», կը յիշենք այս կրկներգը որ երգեցինք ցեղասպանութեան հարիր ամեակի օրերուն, բայց ինչպէ՞ս մոռնալ երբ տակաւին կը տառապինք ու կը ցաւինք, որպէս Հայ ժողովուրդ, երբ կը կորսնցնենք մեր դարաւոր հայրենի հողերէն մեր թանկագին Արցախը:

Հայաստանի Աւետարանական Եկեղեցիներու Միութեան ծրագիրներէն մին է, Հովհաններու եւ իրենց տիկիններուն համար ունենալ համագումար: Այս տարուան համագումարը տեղի ունեցաւ 24-26 Սեպտեմբեր 2023- ին, Աղուերան Լեռնային շրջանին մէջ:

Այս ծրագրին համար հրաւիրուած էինք որպէս հիւր խօսողներ եւ մեր գլխաւոր նիւթն էր «Հովհաններու Ուսուցիչ եւ Աշակերտ»: Որպէս Տէր Յիսուս Քրիստոսի ծառաներ ու աղախիններ կանչուած ենք սորվիլ մեր Փրկչին ծառայութեան օրինակէն հիմսուելով

Մատթ. 11: 29 համարին. «Ինձմէ սորվեցէք որ հեզ եմ ու սրտով խոնարի»:

Օրակարգը տարբէր ընթացք ստանայ:

Ինչպէսորս կիզբէն աղօթքով պատրաստուած էինք բաժնեկցելու Աստուծոյ խօսքը նոյնն Ինքը Աստուծոյ առաջնորդութիւնն էր որ նիւթերը տարբէր ուղղութիւն ստանան, որովհետեւ իւրաքանչիւր Հայ հիասքափուած էր ու տիսուր կատարուած անարդարութեան դիմաց: Մեր հայրենակիցներուն ցաւը մեր ցան էր: Այդ ճգնաժամի օրերուն մեր հովհաններն ու անոնց տիկինները, կանգնած էին հսկայ եւ ծանր պատասխանատուութեան մը առջեւ, ձեռք երկարելու եւ հասնելու Արցախահայութեան կարիքներուն եւ պէտքերուն, որոնք բաւական ծանր վիճակներէ ետք սկսած էին հասնիլ Հայաստան, ետին ճգելով դարերու պատմութիւն, ժառանգութիւն, տուն, հող եւ ամէն բան:

Աստուծոյ նախախնամութիւնն էր որ մեր





ազգի նորագոյն պատմութեան ճակատագրական այս փուլին եւ տագնապալից ժամանակաշրջանին Հայրենիք գտնուիլ, ականատես ըլլալ Արցախապարպումին ու վկայել Աստուծոյ հրաշագործ ու փրկարար գօրութեան մասին որոնք ապրած էինք Հայէպի պատերազմին ու Քեսապի տեղահանութեան ատեն:

Երեկոյեան ջերմեռանդ աղօթքի պահերը առիթներ եղան խնդրելու Աստուծոյ ողորմութիւնը, գօրութիւնը եւ յոյսը: Բոլոր աղերսանքներն ու պաշտամունքները եւ մանաւանդ վերջի օրուան առաւտեան պաշտամունքի ընթացքին մատակարարուած Սուրբ Հաղորդութիւնը, համագումարը դարձուցին վերնատան փորձառութեան, ուր Աստուած շնորհք ըրաւ կազդուրուելու, յոյսով լեցուելու ու քաջարտութեամբ դիմաւորելու եւ ողջագուրելու իրաւագրեկուած մեր Արցախի հայրենակիցները:

Համագումարի կողքին, նաեւ հանդիպումներ ունեցանը Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան Երեւանի Գրասենեակի պատասխանատուներուն հետ եւ ականատես եղանք անոնց նուիրական ծառայութեան, երբ տուփեր կը պատրաստուէր օգնելու տեղահանուած Արցախահայերուն:

Այս համագումարէն մի քանի շաբաթներ ետք Հայաստանի երեցտիկիններէն մին այսպէս արտայայտուեցաւ. «Այդ երեք օրերը մեզ համար միակ առիթը եղաւ Տէրոջմով նորոգուելու, հանգստանալու, պատրաստուելու եւ Աստուծոյ փառքին համար գործելու»:

Այս երգեցինք՝ «Հայաստան մոռացիր այն ցաւը որ գնաց...»:

Եկէ՛ք շարունակենք երգին կրկներգը ու երգենք. «Թող Աստուած օրինի որդուց հայոց...թող օրինի Աստուած»: Ամէն ■

Վեր. եւ Բժիշկ. Սերոբ եւ Ալինա Մկրտիչեան  
Կլնսուել, Քալիֆորնիա





# Why Does God Allow Suffering?

By Rev. George Terian

**H**uman suffering is an undeniable and unavoidable fact of life. Sooner or later, we will experience pain, sorrow, and suffering. Jesus did not sugar-coat His message when He said, “Servants are not greater than their master; if they persecuted Me, they will persecute you as well” (John 15:20). Those who follow Jesus will share in His sufferings. It is inconceivable that true Christians can expect to receive a fair treatment from evil people. The entire theme of the New Testament is “**Triumph through Suffering.**”

The existence of evil has been the primary cause that leads people to question the benevolence and omnipotence of God. The classic argument that all atheists employ is as follows: “If God is a loving Father who is almighty, then why does He allow or tolerate the occurrence of suffering and injustice?” This is the perennial question that demands a logical and biblical answer.

*We must never lose sight of the fact that our moral character is developed by the free choices we make. Furthermore, if we did not possess a free will, we would have no occasion to exercise our faith, and we would be unable to attain spiritual maturity and grow toward perfection and wholeness. God is more interested in the development of our moral character than He is in our personal comfort.*

like mindless puppets incapable of developing a moral character. We must never lose sight of the fact that our moral character is developed by the free choices we make. Furthermore, if we did not possess a free will, we would have no occasion to exercise our faith, and we would be unable to attain spiritual maturity and grow toward perfection and wholeness. God is more interested in the development of our moral character than He is in our personal comfort.

One of the important teachings of Jesus is **personal accountability.**





In Matthew 12:36-37, Jesus says, "I tell you that everyone will have to give an account on the day of judgment for every idle word they have spoken." The word "idle" means careless. Then Jesus adds, "By your own words you will be justified and by your own words you will be condemned."

The Apostle Paul reiterates the same truth when he says, "We shall all appear before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for everything we have done while living in the flesh" (2 Corinthians 5:10). If we will be held responsible for our words and actions, then the logical conclusion is that God created us as free moral agents.

Some might still argue that had God not given us the freedom of choice, the possibility of sin and suffering would have been eliminated from our world. However, in such a scenario, the cultivation of any virtue would also have been impossible. Consider for instance the supreme virtue in Christianity – unselfish love – which cannot be developed by coercion, because love always involves making a choice. In the absence of free will, there could be no virtue and no personal accountability. God does not impose His will upon us by force because He desires that we willingly respond to Him in love. When God decided to grant freedom of choice to the angels and human beings, **the probability of evil became possible, but not its actualization.**

Suppose that you have a toddler who is taking her first steps without any assistance. As a concerned and loving parent, you can foresee the possibility of her falling and hurting herself; however, you do not prevent her from trying to walk because you love her and are interested in seeing her grow and become independent. In a similar way, God does not interfere with the free exercise of our will, not because He is indifferent and uncaring, but because He desires the harmonious development of all our physical, moral and spiritual faculties.

While it is true that God is sovereign and omnipotent, there are certain things that He will not do. He will never do an illogical thing – like create a square circle – and He will never lie, mislead or deceive anyone. In a nutshell, **God will never do**

**anything that is contrary to His nature and character.**

Not all human suffering is the result of the misuse of our free will. Sometimes we endure suffering due to the folly and ignorance of others.. Since we live in a fallen world that has been polluted by sin, it is not uncommon to find innocent people who suffer because of the misdeeds of others.

Natural catastrophes cannot be ascribed to God's will. It is unfortunate that insurance policies continue to refer to earthquakes and hurricanes as "Acts of God." When God created our vast universe, He set in motion certain natural laws, like the law of gravity, to govern its day-to-day operation. Seldom does God interfere with the performance of natural laws. Whenever God suspends the function of a natural law, a miracle happens. It is important for us to bear in mind that miracles are the exception and not the norm because they are rare. If God regularly stopped the operation of a natural law to rescue one of His wayward children, then the universe would no longer be orderly and reliable.

During the Old Testament period, the Jews believed that all suffering was sent by God as a divine judgment to punish wrongdoing. Job's friends who ostensibly came to comfort him, attributed his misfortune and suffering to the commission of a secret sin, therefore, they kept urging him to confess his sin in order to be released from his misery. Job, of course, was a righteous and innocent man who had done no evil deserving of severe afflictions. It was a commonly held belief by the Jews that God allowed only the wicked to suffer in this life, while He accorded special protection to the righteous whom He blessed with prosperity.

In the Gospel of Luke 13:4, Jesus alluded to the sudden collapse of the **Tower of Siloam** that buried 18 innocent passersby under its rubble. The contemporaries of Jesus believed that those who perished in that tragedy must have been guilty of the worst offenses. In other words, they deserved to suffer a violent and agonizing death. Jesus refuted this notion by pointing out that the victims of that tragedy were not greater sinners than those who survived it.



According to Jesus, the collapse of the tower could not be attributed to God because it was simply an accident that was due to the **law of cause and effect**. Either the tower had an architectural defect in its design, or it was not built right. In all likelihood, the tower collapsed because of shoddy construction. Jesus clearly tells us that as God makes His sun rise upon the just and the unjust and sends rain showers upon the wicked and the righteous, similarly no one can escape the hazards of living in a world dominated by sin and populated by imperfect but free moral agents whose actions and choices are uncoerced. **It is simply not true that natural disasters hit the bad and spare the good.**

Suffering is never decreed by God; however, He sometimes permits it to happen, not as retribution, but as a disciplinary and remedial measure to refine our character, or to develop in us a specific virtue, like fortitude and endurance, or to lead us in a new direction. If those who suffer adopt the right attitude, like Job, Joseph, Jesus and His apostles, God can transform every tragedy into a concrete benefit or advantage for them. This is the assurance that is given in Romans 8:28, that God can make all things work together for the ultimate good of those who love Him. **Although God does not need evil to produce a good result, He can make it serve His purpose.**

**The outcome of any suffering is determined by our reaction and response to it.** We all agree that it was a great calamity when Joseph was sold into slavery by his own brothers. We are also appalled by the injustice that this innocent young man suffered when he was thrown into jail for a crime that he did not commit. These twin tragedies were of such magnitude they could have devastated anyone, causing a serious depression from which it would have been extremely difficult to recover. Joseph's optimistic outlook on life and his unshakable faith in God's promise and guidance paved the way for his elevation to a very influential position in Ancient Egypt. It is hard to imagine that a former Hebrew slave could become Pharaoh's trustworthy advisor!

When famine hit the Land of Canaan, the ailing Patriarch Jacob sent his ten sons to Egypt to purchase grain. When Joseph recognized his brothers, he did not retaliate because he could trace God's guidance through all the adversities

that he had patiently endured. When he finally confronted his frightened and bewildered brothers, he said, "**The evil that you intended for me, God transformed into something good, to save many lives from starvation**" (Genesis 50:20).

Another vivid example of how God transformed an apparent tragedy into a beneficial experience is found in Acts 8:4, where we are told that when the first Christian Church, established in Jerusalem, was subjected to severe persecution after the stoning of Stephen, the believers fled from the city and "went everywhere preaching the Gospel." Suffering and persecution forced the early Christians to be scattered throughout the Greco-Roman world. That facilitated the spreading of the Gospel message among the Gentiles in Asia, Africa and Europe. Winston Churchill once said, "**Never let a good crisis go to waste.**" What this seasoned politician meant is that we can learn a beneficial lesson from every crisis that we confront. A crisis can be a stepping stone to a future victory.

**Malcolm Muggeridge**, the famous British journalist and satirist of the last century, who was a committed Christian, once stated, "I can say with complete confidence that everything that has enhanced my career and enriched my life throughout my 75 years in this world, **has come through affliction and not through an easy life.**"

In AD 325, the first ecumenical church council convened in the Byzantine city of Nicea (today's Iznik in Turkey) to address the nature of Jesus Christ. A Greek cleric, named Arius, had claimed that Jesus was human and not divine in His nature. Delegates representing all Christian churches attended the council meetings. **Aristakes**, the younger son of Saint Gregory the Illuminator, was the representative of the Armenian church.

After denouncing Arius as a heretic, the council formulated its creed acknowledging Jesus to be fully divine and fully human. An entire book can be written about the Nicene Creed, which is outside the scope of this article. The point that I want to focus on is the fact that of the 318 delegates who participated in the deliberations of the council, only 12 men had not lost an eye, or a hand, and did not limp when they walked. The other 306 delegates were maimed for life because they had suffered torture for remaining loyal to the teachings of Jesus Christ.





**God would never allow a situation to befall us that would defeat His ultimate purpose and plan for us.** Once again, I refer to the story of Joseph because it is a good illustration of this truth. It was not God's will, nor His intention, that Joseph be sold into slavery, and be thrown into jail as a result of human treachery. However, God made those circumstances, created by evil, to work for Joseph's highest good and his elevation to a prominent and influential position in ancient Egypt. Evil circumstances, created by human sin, can only hinder the realization of God's plans, but they can never defeat them permanently. Wicked men conspired to have Jesus crucified, but their victory was temporary and of a short duration.

Our national history is full of hardships, genocidal massacres, and cruel deportations, yet we have survived despite all the odds stacked against us. Nations who were numerically larger than we, militarily stronger and economically wealthier, no longer exist. The Hittites, whose empire once covered the entire Middle East, no longer exist. The Phrygians, the Hurrians, the Lydians, the Akkadians are just a few of those once mighty nations that have been wiped out. God must have preserved our existence for a specific reason. At the present time our vision is blurred and foggy, we see dimly through a glass, and our knowledge is partial, but a day will come when we will fully comprehend the reasons for our pain and suffering (cf. 1 Corinthians 13:12). **A gem cannot be polished without friction, nor can a Christian attain spiritual maturity without enduring adversity.**

Charles Spurgeon, who was called "the prince of preachers" in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, had a plaque on his desk inscribed with a verse from the Bible that constantly reminded him of the reason behind the difficulties that he confronted in his ministry: "**I have tested you in the furnace of affliction**" (Isaiah 48:10). There is no pointless suffering for those who love God.

I like the story that a British pastor, Galvin Reid tells about a young man who, in his infancy, fell down a flight of stairs and shattered his back. He underwent several complicated surgeries that required long stays at different hospitals. On his 17<sup>th</sup> birthday, a visitor asked, "Do you think that is fair?" The young man answered, "God has all eternity to make it up for me." In 1 Corinthians 15:19, the Apostle Paul says, "If we have put our hope in Christ for this life only, we should be

pitiated more than anyone."

Clyde Gordon, who was paralyzed completely from his neck down, edited a magazine called "The Triumph" where he wrote, "Christ is no security against the storms, but He is the perfect security when you are caught up in a storm. He does not promise an easy passage, but He does guarantee a safe landing."

This echoes the incident recorded in Mark 4:38-45, about the disciples in their boat, sailing across the Sea of Galilee, encountering a fierce storm that threatened their lives, while Jesus slept calmly on a cushion in the stern. Jesus' presence with the disciples

did not prevent the occurrence of the storm, but He was able to calm the storm and save the fearful disciples from drowning. Whenever we find ourselves in trouble, we must allow faith to replace fear and panic.

*At the present time our vision is blurred and foggy, we see dimly through a glass, and our knowledge is partial, but a day will come when we will fully comprehend the reasons for our pain and suffering.*

We were subjected to severe trauma and suffering during the First World War in Western Armenia and Cilicia, several times in subsequent decades, and recently in Artsakh on September 27. 2020, as well as on September 19, 2023; yet we have endured and survived. We are a tiny nation that has defied death even when major powers conspired to annihilate us. We have survived against all odds because of our unshakable Christian faith, our tenacity, resilience, ingenuity and ability to adjust to constantly changing circumstances. God has preserved us to bear witness to the sustaining power of His grace. "It's because of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed" (Lamentations 3:22). ■

# Եկեղեցին Հա՛րկ է որ Տագնապի

## Տագնապիլը գործելու զայանակն է Զաւէն Խանձեան\*



Հրանդ Միհրան Կիւզելեան բարեպաշտ եւ հաւատացեալ անձ մըն էր: Իր հաւատքի խարիսխը նետած է Պոլսոյ Կետիկ-Փաշայի Հայ Աւետարանական Ե կ ե ղ ե ց ւ ո յ Կիրակնօրեայ դպրոցի եւ նախակրթարանի դ ա ս ա ր ա ն ն ե ր ո ւ ն մէջ: Կանուխ տարիքէն վայելած է

հոգատարութիւնը կրթական եւ եկեղեցական գործիչ, հայերէն լեզուի, հայ եկեղեցոյ, մշակոյթի եւ պատմութեան ջահակիր Փրոֆ. Եղիա Քատոնիի, իր մէջ արմատացնելով ազգային գիտակցութեան եւ քրիստոնէական հաւատքի անխարդախ նկարագիր մը:

Կիւզելեան քան տարեկան հասակին գինուրագրուելով կը մտնէ թքական բանակի ծառայութեան մէջ ուղղուելով ներքին գաւառներ ուր 42 ամսուայ ընթացքին ականատես կը հանդիսանայ հայ ժողովուրդի կորսուած, աւերուած եւ թալանուած դարաւոր ժառանգութեան ինչպէս նաև մասցորդացի բեկորներու ստուերային (underground) կեանքին, «հայ ծնած ըլլալու ամօրին», հալածանքին, հետապնդումին, անարգանքին: Խմացած էր թէ «Թողարակ մէջ հայաւեաց փաշա մը խստի արգիլած հայերէնը սպառնալովոր հայերէն խօսողին լեզուն կը կտրէ»: Խմացած էր թէ «Հայ Կարողիկէ Եկեղեցի մը կար.....Զէնքի մթերանց էր, եւ ինչ զարմանք որ պահակները հայ էին: Պոլսեցի հայ գինուոր մը ըսաւ ..Անտուկներով ռազմական նիւթերը մենք կրեցինք եւ տեղաւորեցինք եկեղեցին մէջ, խորանին Ետին գետինը կափարիչ մը կար, երբ բացինք զանկերով լեցուն էր»:

Կիւզելեանի զինուրական ծառայութեան շրջանի մնաւանցի տեսիլքը, «գրաւելով, իրացնելով, նախատելով, ամենատարրական իրաւունքներէ լեզուն, հաւատքէն եւ մշակոյթէն մեզ գրկելով ազգը ընածնելու» ոճիրի գեհենական անդրադարձը զինք կը մղեն տագնապելու «ես ի նշ կրնամ ընել, իմ բաժինս բերել ազգիս մնացորդացին օգուսկար ըլլալու»: Բան մը պէտք է ընեմի տագնապը կ'ընկալէ իր ամբողջ եռթիւնը:

Կիւզելեան քան մը բրաւ: Մե՛ծ քան մը:

Հետեւելով մեր Տիրոջ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի

պատուիրանին - Մատթ. 16.24, Կիւզելեան ետին ձգեց իր արհեստն եւ մասնագիտութիւնը, ուրացաւ իր արուեստն ու երգեցողութեան տաղանդի կարողականութիւնը (potential) եւ վերցնելով խաչը իր կեանքը նուիրեց փրկելու Անտառուի տարածքին վրայ գտնուող խալամացած, քրտացած եւ կամ խալամանալու վտանգին տակ գտնուող հարիւրաւոր պարման պարմանուիիներ հաւաքելով զանոնք նախ Կետիկ Փաշայի Հայ Աւետարանական Եկեղեցոյ նկուղին մէջ ապա Աւետարանչականի այ օգնութեամբ, Թուզլայի Քէմբ Արմէնի հրաշք «Արլանդիխ»: Այդ փրկուածներէն ամենահանրածանօթ սանը հանդիսացաւ Հայ ազգի նահատակ հերոս Հրանդ Տիրքը եւ անոր կենակից Ռաքել Տիրնքը:

Երեսուն հինգ տարիներ առաջ, Հայաստանի աղիտալի երկրաշարժի մարդկային եւ ազգային ողբերգութեան գոյժը յեղաշրջեց հաւատացեալ եւ աստուածավախ ամերիկահայ ընտանիքի մը Պուրոնի հանգստաւէտ տան խաղաղ մթնոլորտը, մղելով տագնապած տան Տիկինը իր կողակիցին ուղղելու աղերսալի բայց վճռակամ կոչ մը «Բան մը պէտք է ընենք»:

Յաջորդող մի քանի շաբաթներու ընթացքին «բան մը պէտք է ընել»ու կամքը, վճռակամութիւնը եւ յանձնառութիւնը իրականացուցին Պատերազմի ճակատող կողմերու միջեւ հրաշալի, անզուգական եւ աներեւակայելի զաղտնի գործակցութեան ծրագիր մը որու արդիւնքը եղաւ միլիոնաւոր տոլարներու արժողութեամբ քաղաքացիական սարքաւորումներու - Dialysis machines, բժիշկներու եւ մասնագիտներու հերթական տեղափոխութիւնը Ամերիկեան զինուրական խարիսխներէ դէալի Երեւան, սաւառնած Սովետական օդանաւերու վրայ, որոնք առաջին անգամ ըլլալով էջ կը կատարէին ԱՄՆ-ի զինուրական խարիսխներուն մէջ: Այդ տագնապահար «Բան մը ընողներու օդակը կը բոլորէր Պուրոնի գոյգէն սկսած, Harvard եւ Եալ համալսարաններու ֆութպողի խումբներու վրայ իրար դէմ ճակատող Baxter International-ի նախազահը եւ այդ օրերու ԱՄՆ-ի ազդեցիկ քաղաքական գործի եւ տան Տիրոջ ծանօթ ազգեցիկ Ծերակուտական մը:

Վերոյիշեալ երկու օրինակները կենդանի վկայութիւններ են թէ բարեգործութեան համար տագնապիլ, Աստուծոյ սիրոյն վրայ խարսխուած հաւատքի բնական արդիւնքն է:

Մալխասեան «Հայերէն Բացատրական





Բառարան»ի մեջ հետեւեալ բացատրութիւնը կը կարդանք «տագնապ» գոյականին: «Գործերու լարուած վտանգաւոր դրույթին, որ պէտք է լուծուի այս կամ այն կողմ»:

«Բան մը պէտք է ընել»ը տագնապիլ կը պարտադրէ, իսկ տագնապիլը Քրիստոնէական հաւատքի վրայ հիմնուած մարդ արարածի Աստուծոյ սիրոյն հայելին դարնալն է, հոգալով իր համակարգի վրայ գտնուող Աստուծոյ ստեղծած զաւակները:

**Տագնապեալ** բացակայութիւնը անտարբերութիւնն է: Անտարբերութիւն որ կը յիշեցնէ Լաւողիկի եկեղեցին գրուած նամակը ուր կ'ըսէ.- «Գիտեմ քու գործերդ, որ ոչ պատ ես ու ոչ տաք. Երանի թէ պատ ըլլայիր կամ տաք (Յայտ. Յովի. 3.15)»

Մարդկային կեանքի եւ գոյութեան էութիւնը նույն է Աստուծոյ սիրոյն եւ ստեղծագործութեան: Աստուած ամբողջացուցած է հրաշքը: Ես եւ դուն կոչուած ենք ըլլայու այն ամենօրեայ լոյսը որ կը բացայալու եւ կը ծաւալէ Աստուածային ծշմարտութիւնները, ստեղծագործութեան հրաշքը, Քրիստոսի մարդեղացումի պատզամը, անոր մահուան գինով Վճարուած մեղքերու թողութիւնը, փրկութեան խոստումը եւ Իր գծած ճանապարհին վրայ մեր ուղեւորութիւնը:

Ահաւասիկ իր գծած ճանապարհին օրինակ մը: Յիսուս կ'ըսէ: «Այնպէս թող լրսաւորուի ձեր լոյսը մարդոց աջիւ որ տեսնեն ձեր բարի գործերը ու փառաւորեն ձեր Հայրը որ երկինքն է (Մտ 5.16):»

Աստուածաբանական համոզում է թէ փրկութիւնը Աստուծոյ շնորհին պտուղն է եւ ոչ մեր գործերուն վարձատրութիւնը: Բայց զգոյշ ոչ մէկ Քրիստոնէայ չպահութի այս հաստատումի քոյլին ետին եւ ծովութեամբ ու բացասական կեանքի ընթացքով առանց գործելու ակնկալէ Աստուծոյ շնորհով պարզեւուած յախտենական կեանքը: Յակորոս Առաքեալ առանց բառերը ծամծմելու կը հաստատէ այս Երկրորդ Գլուու 14րդ համարին մէջ: «Ի՞նչ օգուտ է, եղբայրներս եթէ մէկը ըսէ թէ հասատը ունի ու գործ չունենայ:»

Մարդկային ցաւը, տառապանքը, նեղութիւնը, մեղքը, անարդարութիւնը վիճակներ են որոնք հաւատացեալ մարդ արարածը մղելու են տագնապեալը որուն արդինքը բարիքի ծննդոցն է:

Տակաւին աւելի յստակացնելու համար գործելու եւ գործերու կարեւորութիւնը, դիմենք մարդեղացած Աստուծոյ Քրիստոսի, երկրի վրայ ապրած կեանքի օրինակին:

Ի՞նչ զարմանահրաշ են Քրիստոս Յիսուսի կատարած հրաշքների մարդեղութեան շրջանին: Աւետարանները նուազազոյն 37 հրաշքներ կը յիշատակեն եւ այս փոքր տոկոսը կը նկատուի Քրիստոսի գործած հրաշքներուն: Յիսուս բժշկեց

իիւանդները, ջուրը զինիի փոխեց, մեռելները կեանքի կոչեց եւ երկու ձուկով եւ հինգ նկանակով հազարաւորներ կերակրեց: Յիսուս տագնապեալ անոնց վիճակով եւ իր սիրոյն եւ հոգածութեան ծիրին մէջ ներառեց ընկերութեան լուսանցքի վրայ գտնուող մերժուածները, մեղաւորները, լրեալները: Իսկ մենք ի նչ կոչուած ենք ընելու այս աշխարհի տառապեալներուն, տանջուածներուն, զրկուածներուն, հալածուածներուն, կարօտեալներուն:

Յիսուս՝ նոյնիսկի Աստուածային առաքելութեան կատարելագործումի նախօրեակին, սպասումի նկարագրութեան մէջ կ'ըսէ.- «Բայց մկրտութիւն մը ունիմ մկրտուելու, եւ ինչպէս կը տագնապիլ մինչեւ կատարուի (Ղուկաս 12.50)»: Քրիստոս իսկ մեր փրկութեան համար իր գերազոյն զիհողութեան պատրաստութեան նախօրեակին կ'ապրի տագնապի արհաւիրքը որպէսզի հասնի իր առաքելութեան յաջող կատարելագործումին:

Մեր կեանքի եւ ստեղծագործութեան աղբիրի եւ հաւատքի կուսանին մարդեղացած Աստուծոյ կեանքի օրինակին հետեւելու ընտրութենէն երկրնտրանք չունինք: Հաւատքի կիրարկումն է աստուածային բարիքի եւ սիրոյ լոյսի ցոլացումը մեր շուրջ գտնուող մարդկութեան մինչեւ աշխարհի բոլոր ծագերը:

Հաւատքը ինձ չի թոյլատրեր հաճոյանալ փրկութեան խոստումի պատեանին մէջ, առանց ապրելու Քրիստոսի տագնապը եւ ընդօրինակելու իր սէրը, զիհողութիւնը, հոգատարութիւնը, աշխատանքը, քրտինքը եւ նոյնիսկ անարգանքը:

Խորունկ եւ արմատացած հաւատքը զապանակն է աստուածային սիրոյ հայելին հանդիսացող մարդկային սիրոյն եւ տագնապին որուն բնական եւ արդար պտուղն է գործը:

Եկեղեցին չի կրնար զարջ մնալ:

Եկեղեցին չի կրնար հանդարտ մնալ:

Հարկ է տագնապիլ սիրելու համար:

Հարկ է տագնապիլ փրկելու համար:

Հարկ է տագնապիլ գործելու համար:

Հարկ է տագնապի կատարելագործելու համար:

Եկեղեցին Քրիստոսի մարմինն է: Եկեղեցին մենք ենք, եւ դուն: Իր առաքելութիւնը կատարելապէս իրազործելու համար, Եկեղեցին հարկ է որ տագնապի:

\* Զաւէն Խանձեան Գործադիր Տնօրինն է Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան ■

Printed in AMAA News Issue LVII 3, 2023



# AEWC ISSUES STATEMENT ON THE DISPLACED POPULATION OF ARTSAKH

The Executive Committee meeting of the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) was held at the Calvary Armenian Congregational Church in San Francisco, California, on October 19-20, 2023.

Representatives of the seven member Unions and organizations participated in the two-day meeting.



**First row from left to right:** Rev. Albert Paytyan, Rev. Dr. Haoutune Selimian, Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian, Dr. Nazareth Darakjian, Mr. Zaven Khanjian and Rev. Joel Mikaelian.

**Second row from left to right:** Rev. Calvin Sagherian, Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian, Rev. Dr. Rene Leonian and Rev. Hovhaness Hovsepyan.

Following the written and oral reports, the Executive Committee, among other matters, dealt with the issue of the displaced population of Artsakh and issued the following statement.

*In the aftermath of the surrender of the Republic of Artsakh to a massive assault by Azerbaijan, the Armenian Evangelical World Council (AEWC) reaffirms its unwavering commitment to stand in solidarity with its compatriots in Artsakh.*

*Undoubtedly, the armed takeover of Artsakh stands as a stark reminder of the world's inaction during the 1915-23 Armenian Genocide.*

*While our hearts and minds are heavy due to the loss of life and land, and the mass exodus of Armenians from their thirty-century old homeland, we empathize with them wholeheartedly. We stand together to assist our displaced fellow compatriots, who have suffered more than enough in the past nine months and are yearning for the restoration of normal life.*

*We will not sit idle as we have work to do. A God-given assignment to attend to. We have a few commitments to reiterate and convictions to share.*

- We bow in unison to the memory of all martyrs who sacrificed their lives in defense of the homeland.*
- Despite a treacherous journey, we thank God for the safety of our Artsakh kin in reaching the friendly soil of the motherland.*
- We welcome them with open arms and hearts.*
- We listen to them in humility.*
- We tend to meet and provide their needs with understanding, love and compassion.*



- We uplift and help them restore their dignity.
- We pray for them with faith and inject hope.
- We stand by the democratically elected institutions in the Republic of Armenia and support the will of the people.
- We deplore the unspeakable silence and indifference of the international community.
- We deplore the unlawful and immoral detention of the Artsakh leadership in Baku and hail their service, sacrifice and struggle demonstrated while on duty.
- We will continue our struggle for the release of all political prisoners as well as POW's who were captured during the past few years.
- We lament the mournful demise of the shameful conscience of the United Nations and its Security Council.
- We denounce the miserable atmosphere of hate, violence and oppression in God's miracle creation of Earth.
- We stand by the Republic of Armenia and continue to support its efforts to develop the homeland and cultivate the spiritual growth and physical and economic development of its people.
- We expect all Armenians to recognize the gravity of the Artsakh tragedy, and with a sense of urgency to extend a helping hand to our brothers and sisters.
- We extend a brotherly hand, in the most loving Christian spirit to coordinate and cooperate in unity and camaraderie with all organizations in the service of the forcefully displaced kin.
- We call on all entities and political forces in Armenia who embrace the interest of the homeland to work in a spirit of unity and harmony.
- We anchor our faith in the spilled blood of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and perpetually aim to bring glory to God.

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian  
Executive Director,  
Armenian Evangelical World Council

# *Beloved Pastor*



**Reverend Harutyun Khachatryan**  
January 6, 1984 - January 19, 2024

*Jesus said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, yet shall he live."*

John 11:25

Our dear brother and beloved Senior Pastor of United Armenian Congregational Church, Los Angeles, CA, Reverend Harutyun Khachatryan, passed from this life into the presence of his Savior Jesus Christ, on January 19, 2024. We continue to pray for his wife Aylin, and sons Samuel and Joseph, as well as the entire Khachatryan family during this difficult time.

*"To be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord."*

We rejoice that he is with His Lord, while we weep in our great loss.

[Click here: Celebration of Life  
Rev. Harutyun Khachatryan](#)

# TESTIMONIALS

Celebrating  
Christ's birth  
in all we do



## IACC Rally Sunday 2023

What a wonderful Rally Sunday celebration we had on September 17, 2023. We had a great worship service with an English and Armenian message from Rev. George Terian. During the worship service, we had the privilege of listening to beautiful worship music led by Richard Agajanian, Luke Agajanian, Victor Darakjian, and Jimmy & Taline (Ketenjian) Jamogtchian. The music filled and enriched the sanctuary. Following the worship service, a delicious luncheon, underwritten by Anahid Terjimanian, was served by the ladies of the church. Thank you to all who brought food and made this year's Rally Sunday perfect!" ■

Debbie Fermanian  
Office Administrator

# A REFLECTION ON CHRISTMAS

## Galatians 4.1-8

As Christians, we celebrate Christmas with great joy, because through the birth and life of Jesus Christ, God was revealed to us in a unique way in history. We come to know God's grace, His forgiveness and His unconditional love through the revelation that the Son of God provided to us. This passage in Paul's letter to the Galatians allows us to reflect on an important aspect of Christ's coming to the world: a significant change in the pattern of our spiritual relationship with our heavenly Father.

In the Letter to the Galatians, Paul writes that through our union with Christ through faith, we begin to relate to God in a new way: as children, and no longer as slaves.

As children, how can we understand our relationship with the Creator? Galatians Chapter 4 illustrates the important principles that guide our relationship with God.

### I) The principle of freedom: vv.1-3

Before Christ, in the Old Covenant established by God with the nation of Israel, people depended on a series of rules (613 in total) they had to obey to get closer to God. These rules included rituals such as circumcision, the offering of animal sacrifices in the Temple, and participation in a series of religious ceremonies, in addition to very specific rules of conduct. The Temple of Jerusalem represented the presence of God among his people. With the coming of Christ and through our faith in the Son of God, we were freed from the Law, with its rituals and ceremonies. The Holy Spirit has freed us from the old system and directs us to a new, more mature relationship with God, in which we do not need legalistic principles to direct our lives, but have the freedom to approach God with a conscience purified by faith in our Savior.

### II) The principle of intimacy: vv.5,6

As our Master explained, "God is Spirit, and only by the power of his Spirit can people worship him as he really is" (John 4:24). We can now call God our Father, because we are no longer slaves, but children of God, in union with Christ by faith. As children, God expects us to grow in maturity each day.

### III) The principle of love: vv.6,7

Paul explained in his letters that God's law is summed up in love (Galatians 5:14). The principle of love is what directs our behavior now and guides the ethical standards by which we conduct ourselves throughout life. As children, belonging to the New Covenant, we do not act out of fear of punishment or to obtain rewards or favors, but our attitudes are instead shaped by love for God and our neighbor. This is what is expected of children who walk each day towards spiritual maturity in Christ.

Thanks to the Lord Jesus Christ, we changed our condition from slaves to children. Let us use our freedom to have full communion with the Father in spirit. Let us live in intimate and full communion with Christ and God. Above all, let us walk in the love of God revealed in Jesus, practicing kindness and compassion in our human relationships. This new relationship with God must be part of our understanding of Christ's coming into the world at Christmas. ■

Roy Abrahamian  
Senior Pastor  
Igreja Central Evangélica Armênia de São Paulo  
Brasil

# TESTIMONIALS

## Glendale Armenian Church of The Nazarene

By Christian Manoukian



*The First Sunday at the Church*

Glendale Armenian Church of the Nazarene (GNAZ) is the first Armenian Evangelical Church in Glendale, established in 1979. What a beautiful and fruitful period it has been in the life of our church. We are growing as a congregation, as a community, and as followers of Christ.

In May, we officially welcomed our new Senior Pastor, Rev. Serop Megerditchian. God chose to guide Rev. Megerditchian and his wife Alina, son George, and daughter Vart Vars to our church, and we are thankful for his guidance and wisdom as he leads our congregation in seeking the Lord's will. On June 4, we held an induction service for Rev. Megerditchian, officially shepherding and leading in a new era in our church's decades-long history. He becomes GNAZ's third pastor, continuing the ministry started by Rev. Habib Alajaji and Rev. Hrag Karagozian.

On Sunday, June 18, we honored the fathers and grandfathers in the church with a delicious Father's Day breakfast. From traditional foul and mamounia to manaesh and muffins, our congregation enjoyed an incredible spread of food and a fruitful time of fellowship. We are already looking forward to our next church breakfast.

From July 24 to 28, we turned our attention to ministering to the children in our church, hosting a Vacation Bible School. This is one of our favorite annual events to plan and put on. The kids love interacting with our church leaders through a time of ministry, Bible stories, games, worship and delicious food, capped off with our annual VBS Carnival. This year, we hired a local food truck to serve burgers, tacos, quesadillas, and more to the attendees, and the addition of a handful of bounce houses and entertaining carnival games made for a very fun night!

We have certainly enjoyed worshiping and fellowshipping together these past few months. On Saturday, August 5, nearly 50 members of our congregation drove to Frazier Park for Camp AREV's groundbreaking ceremony for the next phase in its ongoing expansion project. We joined hundreds of other Armenian Christians from across Southern California for a powerful worship service and beautiful time of fellowship, celebrating the transformative work Camp AREV is doing in the lives of Armenian Christian youth across California and beyond. This was the first community event for our congregation under Rev. Megerditchian's leadership, and the strong turnout was an encouraging sign that God is working in the lives of each of our members.

On Saturday, August 26, our church embarked on an exciting day trip to Catalina Island. We have hosted this family trip to Catalina several times over the years and it has always been a huge hit. We had around 80 people in attendance, including many families, all of us wearing matching apparel designed by one of our youth members, Lily Chakrian. Everyone enjoyed a variety of activities, from swimming and snorkeling to a guided golf cart trip around the island and even mini golf! Everyone left feeling reinvigorated and excited for many more outdoor adventures in the coming months with our church family.

A few weeks later in mid-September, over 30 of our youth drove to



*Church members at Camp AREV*



*Ironman Games, Fresno*



Vacation Bible School



Catalina Island



Christmas Program

Fresno for the 2023 AEYF Ironman Games. Our athletes competed valiantly, finishing as runners-up in basketball, and qualifying for the semifinals in both volleyball and soccer as well. The GNAZ teams were cheered on by a fantastic group of church spectators, who always made sure our teams were well represented at every game we competed in. We are already looking forward to the next edition of the Games in 2025.

Our church capped off an incredibly exciting and fruitful first few months under Rev. Megerditchian's leadership with our 44th Anniversary Banquet on Saturday, October 14. We hosted over 160 attendees at our church's Alajaji Hall for a memorable night of fellowship, highlighted by special musical performances and speakers, all while celebrating our church's rich history and looking forward prayerfully to the future of the Glendale ministry and beyond.

Our banquet reminded us there is much to be grateful for, and as we entered the month of November, giving thanks for all our blessings was top of mind. We kicked off the annual festive season with a fruitful Thanksgiving luncheon. We had over 150 attendees attend the Armenian service, followed by a delicious lunch of traditional Thanksgiving foods including turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, stuffing and more. Everyone left with their stomachs full and their hearts full of thanks.

As the year drew to a close, we celebrated the birth of Jesus Christ with more than 200 people at our annual Christmas program and dinner. However, this year's performance was a bit different than in years past. Previously, our church always had the Sunday school children perform a series of songs and Bible verses centered around Christmas. This year, members of our congregation joined together for a festive Christmas Cantata, singing a medley of Christmas carols and hymns while reciting the story of Jesus. The program ended with Rev. Megerditchian's sermon on "The Light" with the congregation holding candles and singing "Silent Night." It was the perfect way to round out a monumental year in the life of our church. We are eternally grateful for what God has blessed us with, and we pray that he continues to guide our congregation as we look forward to 2024.

We have much to be thankful for in this season of growth, and we invite you to join us every Sunday to experience how God is moving within our church body. We have a variety of ministries that serve our diverse congregation. Join us at 9:15 a.m. for our growing and vibrant English service, with contemporary worship and an English message from Rev. Megerditchian. At 10 a.m., join one of our Sunday morning Bible Study groups; we offer ministries ranging from preschool all the way to seniors. And finally, we invite you to attend our traditional 11 a.m. Armenian service with worship and a Biblical sermon by our pastor. All are welcome to become part of our growing church family. As Psalms 46:8 says, "Come and see what the Lord has done, the amazing things he has done on the earth." Amen ■

Christian Manoukian  
Glendale Armenian Church of the Nazarene

# Support the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America

When you give to the Armenian Evangelical Union of North America, you support the Union's activities and ministries including:

- AEUNA General Fund
- Mission & Evangelism
- Publication / FORUM
- Armenian Christian Heritage
- Ministry Committee
- Youth Ministry
- Camp AREV
- Camp Arevik
- AEUNA Rebuilding Project
- AEUNA General Assembly



Please use the enclosed envelope or visit: [aeuna.org/donate](http://aeuna.org/donate)

Thank you in advance for your generous gifts and continued support of the AEUNA.

Donations to the AEUNA are tax-deductible.

## DONATE TO THE AEUNA GENERAL FUND

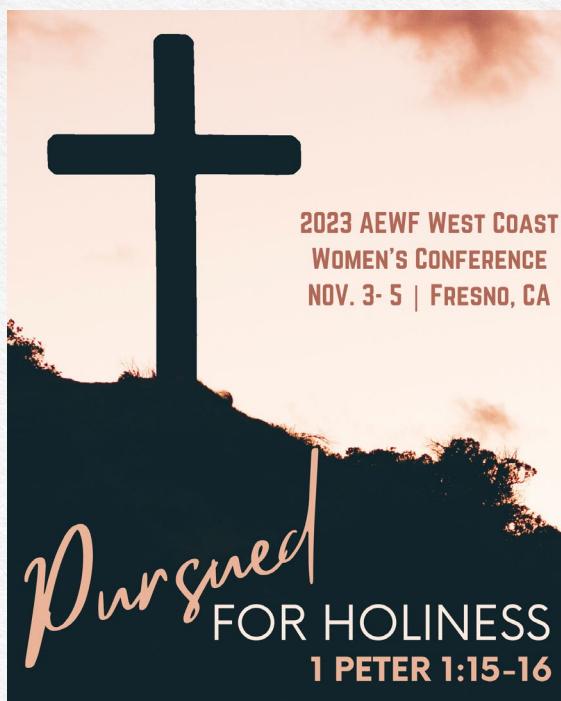
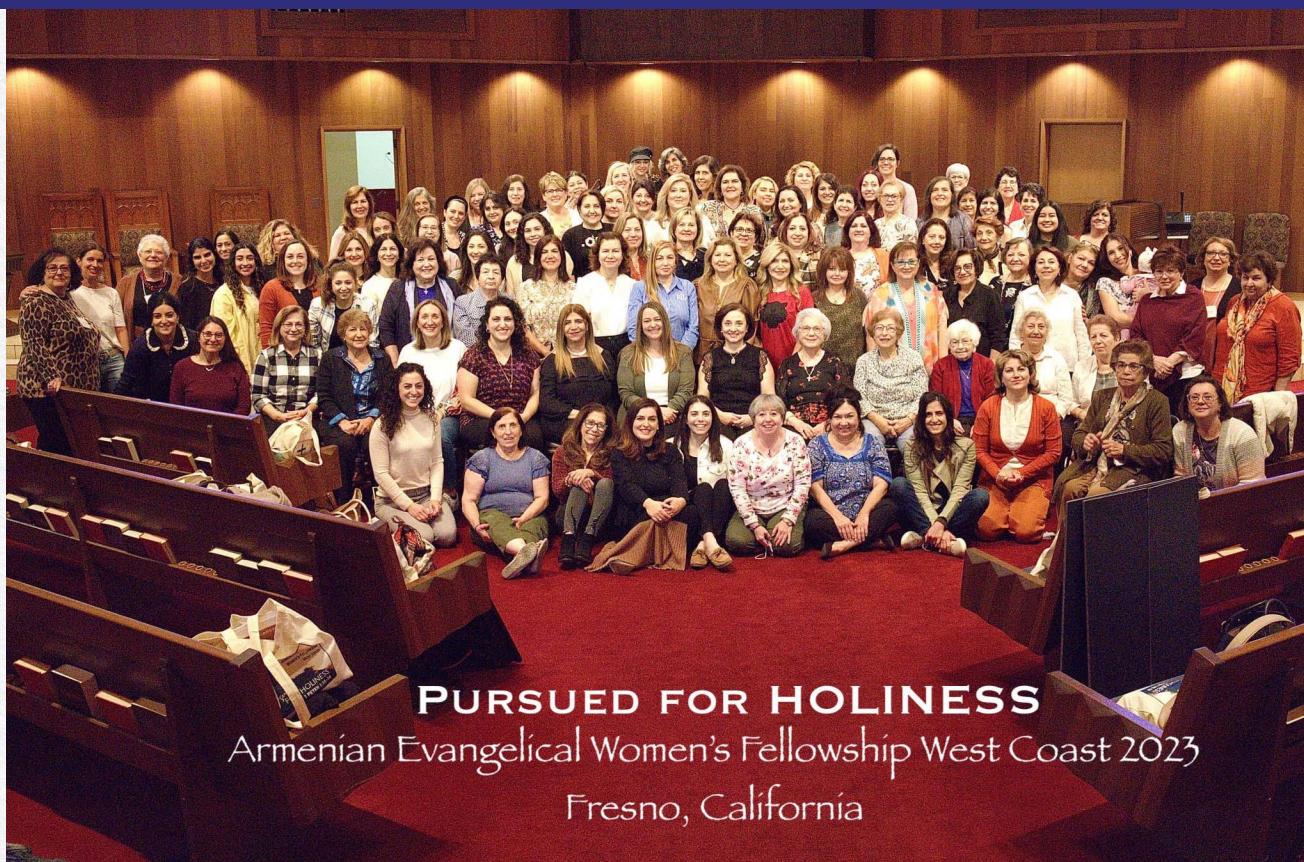
**Giving regularly to the AEUNA General Fund, means you support:**

- The Minister to the Union's and Field Pastor's travel to visit Union church and ministry leaders and participate in their events
- Church planting and Evangelism events
- Youth's and youth leadership's travel to AEUNA camps and youth retreats
- AEYF events (see pgs 48-49)
- AEWF events (see pgs 45-47)
- Union sponsored seminars, retreats and C2C in-person gatherings (read about AEUNA C2Cs on pg 55)
- Enhancements to the AEUNA Website and development of other digital tools, all to equip and support our Union churches and AEUNA ministries
- The Forum magazine and other publications to equip and support our Union churches and ministry leaders
- Christian Armenian Evangelical ministry informational and educational materials and resources to aid in acquiring new pastors
- AEUNA biennial activities and events
- AEUNA community building events

*The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency[b] in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.*

**2 Corinthians 9:6-8**

# AEWF-WR Conference Reflection



We are praising God for a blessed weekend!

What a huge gift it was to spend the weekend learning about how we are "Pursued for HOLINESS"! What an incredible time of worship and learning we had! We are still reflecting on what God did over this past weekend and we are truly in awe.

The warm fellowship, seminars, games, and sharing of meals were truly a special time! If you joined us, we are attaching the links to the sessions so you can rewatch them if you want to or share them with your family and friends. Please click on the buttons below to be directed to Session 1, Session 2, and Session 3.

If you weren't able to join us, we hope you can watch the sessions and be as blessed as we all were!

Until next time, may the Lord watch over you all.

In Christ's love,  
Alina Balabanian

TO VIEW THE SESSIONS VISIT [AEUNA.ORG](http://AEUNA.ORG)

[Pursued for HOLINESS,  
Session 1](#)

[Pursued for HOLINESS,  
Session 2](#)

[Pursued for HOLINESS,  
Session 3: Q &A](#)

# Armenian Evangelical Women's Fellowship Eastern





# AEWF-ER Conference Reflection

Natalie Arslanian

Member of Armenian Congregational Church of Southfield, MI

*"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." Romans 8:38-39*

**A**bundant Life through the power of the Holy Spirit. This was the main topic at this year's Armenian Evangelical Women's Fellowship - Eastern Region (AEWF-ER) Conference. Fifty-seven women from 12 AEUNA-affiliated churches gathered in Metro Detroit September 15-17, 2023 to fellowship with one another. Sessions were led by Lara Cholakian Khoury, from Calvary Armenian Congregational Church, San Francisco.

We started each session with worship songs which filled us with the joy and Spirit of the Lord. Throughout the weekend, we heard the powerful testimonies of six women. We learned about the ways the Lord touched their lives through their difficulties. Following the testimonies, we began our sessions. For each of the sessions, Lara dissected Romans Chapter 8 verse-by-verse, giving us detailed explanations and examples from day-to-day life. As we delved deep into Romans Chapter 8, we faced many questions. What is an abundant life? How does the world define abundance in life? How do we live an abundant life?

We then broke out into discussion groups, to collectively answer questions associated with the prior session and discuss personal experiences as Christians. As a first-time AEWF-ER conference attendee, I felt encouraged to be surrounded by so many wonderful sisters in Christ. We prayed together, we laughed together, and some of us even cried together. I experienced a beautiful sense of belonging, which was moving because it was my first time meeting most of the women at the conference.

One of my key takeaways from the weekend was that living an abundant life means that we have God's assurance that His purpose will be done through us. We can rest in the fact that if God is for us, nobody can be against us. ■

# Armenian Evangelical Youth Fellowship – Eastern



## AEYF Eastern Region Fall Conference

By Talar Sarmazian

The 2023 AEYF Eastern Region Fall Conference took place October 6-8, at the First Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal. We had a record-breaking attendance of 140 attendees, aged 12-25, from Montreal, Toronto, Boston, Paramus, Philadelphia, Cranston, Worcester, Salem and Chicago.

The weekend was a wonderful time of fellowship, fun, and learning about the Lord with one another. We praise God for the number of attendees and the lives that were touched during this conference. The speaker for the weekend was Reverend Doctor Ara Heghinian from the Armenian Evangelical Church of Cranston, Rhode Island, who spoke about unity, the AEYF theme for the year. We focused on passages from 1 Corinthians 12:12-31, 1 John 5:7-8, and 1 Corinthians 1:10-17, as we discussed conflicts and division in our churches, and what binds us together during times of conflict.

Through the sessions Pastor Ara led and the discussion groups that each attendee was placed in, we talked about how we are each a part of the body of Christ, the importance of our relationships with one another, and how we need each other. We learned that we need to come together and use our differences for the church and for God, and to remember that in times of conflict, to turn back to our foundation, unity, and relationships built through Christ.

Along with these sessions and discussion groups, we had worship, games organized by the AEYF executive committee, an outing, and free time for attendees to meet each other and create lasting bonds and memories. We hope and pray for fruitful conferences such as this one in 2024! ■

# and Western Regions

## AEYF East & West Joint Leadership Conference, Chicago, IL

By Isabella Balian

In November 2023, more than 50 passionate leaders from AEUNA churches gathered in Chicago to serve the Lord through Christ-like leadership. Young adults were appointed by their home churches within the union to attend and bring back leadership lessons to the churches. The conference was planned by the AEUNA Committee on Youth. Leaders gathered at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Chicago, and were welcomed by the members of the church for the weekend. Participants were grateful to learn from Badveli Greg Haroutunian, Senior Pastor of First Armenian Presbyterian Church, Fresno, CA. AEUNA Field Pastor Rev. Ron Tovmassian also participated at this conference in helping shape young leaders of the Union.

Badveli Greg led participants through three teaching sessions on the importance of discipleship and how to incorporate it into our lives. He helped define the five components of a disciple-making church: having a biblical foundation for relationships, being an intentional leader, cultivating a relational environment, engaging in a reproducible disciple-making process, and having church alignment. As children of God, we are designed to be in relationship with him and commit ourselves to make disciples who will themselves make disciples. In addition to hearing Badveli Greg's wisdom on making disciples and sustaining a lifestyle of leadership, participants divided into small groups to foster deeper discussion. In small groups, these young adults shared their experiences as leaders within their churches and received encouragement from each other to become Christ-like leaders.

During the last discussion group of the weekend, leaders participated in modeling a small group, in order to understand and experience the relational environment that Jesus modeled. Within the small groups, participants read the story of the Prodigal Son. They discussed what they had learned and figured out how to use this story to disciple someone. Participants also talked about applying this story within their own lives, and reflected on what God may be asking them to do. Members of a small group moved from strangers to friends to discuss the Biblical truth of this parable and live with a kingdom mindset.

In Matthew 28:18-20 Jesus says, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Leaders united over their shared mission of spreading the word of God and growing in spiritual leadership. They got the chance to explore Chicago, led by Chicago local Daniel Gueyikian. The weekend was a joyous time, full of fellowship and encouragement, as young leaders gathered to learn from God. Leaders were grateful for a blessed time of worship and discipleship and are prepared to mirror these lessons within their home churches. ■



**UPCOMING EVENTS 2024**

<b>Camp AREV</b> Winter HS: Jan. 12-14 JH: Jan. 26-28 Jrs: Jan. 19-21 YA: Feb. 2-4	<b>AEYF East</b> C&C Retreat: NY, Feb. 9-11 Jr's Conf: PA, Apr. 19-21 Fall Conf: TBD Oct. 4-6
<b>Camp AREV</b> Summer HS: Jul. 14-20 JH: Jul. 28-Aug. 3 Jrs: Jul. 21-27 YA: Sep. 13-15	<b>AEYF West</b> Ages 14+ Spring Event: TBD Apr. 6 Fall Retreat: TBD Nov. 8-10
<b>Camp Arevelk</b> NY: Aug. 4-10	<b>AEUNA/AEYF Biennial</b> San Mateo, CA Jun. 27-30 Tour Jun. 30-Jul. 3

**AEUNA YOUTH MINISTRIES**

# IN MEMORIAM

## Reflections of My Professor – Dr. Richard Hovannisian: Historian, Professor, Mentor

By Doris K. Melkonian



a conference on The Genocide of the Christian Populations of the Ottoman Empire in Thessaloniki, Greece in May 2019

The cramped office in Bunche Hall at UCLA was home to Professor Hovannisian for several decades. I would find him there engrossed in the solitary work of a scholar. Sitting behind his desk in his gray sweater, Prof. Hovannisian hovered over a mountain of books, copiously working on one of many things: a conference address, a public lecture, a class lecture or a submitted manuscript. A draft would lie on his desk, with his editing marks and scribbled notes legible only to him. He worked tirelessly, fact-checking each statement, each footnote, each bibliographic entry; and improving the draft with his poetic and succinct style of writing. It was a laborious task, a solitary one, but one he carried out relentlessly. Prof. Hovannisian spent many long hours in that small office, surrounded with his books and towering filling cabinets of Armenian Genocide survivor testimonies. This office was the nucleus of his scholarly output.

As his former graduate students and later his teaching assistants for the Armenian Genocide Survivor Oral History classes, my sister Arda and I became acquainted with this man who initially appeared to have an intimidating presence. As we worked in his office on the survivor oral history transcripts, we developed a keen understanding and a close relationship through many conversations, both academic and personal. He became more than our professor; he became our mentor. His cramped office became home to us, and we spent many hours working with and getting to know Prof. Hovannisian on a deeper level. Our preliminary impressions of an intimidating professor were dismantled, as we discovered a caring and thoughtful man.

Prof. Hovannisian was driven with a laser focus. He was demanding of himself and all those who worked with him. He was outspoken for the Armenian Cause, for justice for the Armenian people. Prof. Hovannisian was a pioneer in the field of Armenian History. Through his relentless efforts, he developed a program at UCLA to teach Armenian History and equally important, to collect and document Armenian Genocide survivor testimonies. Because of his efforts, he was instrumental in educating hundreds of students about Armenian History and the Armenian Genocide. And, as a result, he produced the next generation of professors of Armenian History.

The cramped office in Bunche Hall at UCLA was home to Professor Hovannisian for several decades. I would find him there engrossed in the solitary work of a scholar. Sitting behind his desk in his gray sweater, Prof. Hovannisian hovered over a mountain of books,

Prof. Hovannisian was a demanding professor. Although he had that reputation, his classes were always packed. Through his narrative form of delivery, each lecture brought to life the events of the past, as a story unfolding before our eyes. Often during his lectures, he would unexpectedly call on us for a thoughtful analysis or interpretation. He expected us to have a strong grasp of the politics that surrounded the decision-making of historical events. He required us to be versed in our ethnic history, to understand the events that triggered the Armenian Genocide and to recognize the extent to which it impacts our lives today.

Prof. Hovannisian was an outspoken figure, a trailblazer in the field of Armenian History and Armenian Genocide. Through the international conferences he organized on the UCLA campus, he educated multiple communities, bringing awareness to the horrific event of the Armenian Genocide.

Prof. Hovannisian was interested in the academic and personal lives of his students and enjoyed hearing of their progress. In the world of academia, where time is highly guarded and protected, Prof. Hovannisian was generous with his time and resources. He listened to his students, and he would find a way to assist them. On several occasions while Arda and I worked on the survivor testimonies in his office, we observed such interactions between the professor and his students.

As I reflect on my personal relationship with Prof. Hovannisian, first as esteemed professor and later mentor, I am reminded of the man who impacted my life and my sister's, changing the trajectory of our academic career. The unique opportunity of working tirelessly on the survivor testimonies and discussing their contents with Prof. Hovannisian was priceless, often filling a void in my life as I was deprived of the survival stories of my own grandparents. As I reflect on our conversations, I am reminded of their content being about faith and the Armenian Evangelical denomination, which he was very curious to better understand. Arda and I had the opportunity to share with him our faith and talk about the Armenian Evangelical church. It was during these rare moments that he shared his own childhood experiences attending a Baptist church in Fresno. The teachings and the songs he learned as a young boy remained with him throughout his life. In 2022, during the keynote address at the Centennial Anniversary Banquet of the Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church where I was the moderator, Prof. Hovannisian shared with the banquet attendees the impact the Baptist church had on him, even reciting one of the Sunday school songs he had learned as a child. This was the last public address he gave.

Prof. Hovannisian was a remarkable individual, an exceptional scholar, and a kind man. He will be greatly missed. ■

# In Memory of Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian

November 9, 1932 – July 10, 2023

Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian

**O**n July 10, 2023, the Armenian American community and the Armenian nation lost an outstanding intellectual and a prominent scholar, Prof. Richard G. Hovannisian.

He was one of the pioneers in the field of Armenian Studies in America, especially in the realm of Modern Armenian History in the United States. He was a superb educator, a talented writer and editor, an eloquent public speaker and a renowned torchbearer of the Armenian Cause.

I had the privilege of knowing Prof. Hovannisian for many years and enjoyed our friendship based on mutual respect. Throughout his long career, I have been impressed by his life and his work in the following ways.

**First, Prof. Hovannisian was a brilliant intellectual.** He was endowed with a good intellect. He had a creative and scholarly mind. Richard was a valiant soldier in the pursuit of knowledge and truth. I was greatly impressed by his breadth of wisdom.

Dr. Hovannisian was Professor Emeritus of Armenian and Near Eastern History at UCLA, President's Fellows at Chapman University, and adjunct Professor of History at USC, working with Shoah Foundation on testimonies of survivors of the Armenian Genocide. He published more than 30 volumes on Armenian History and culture, and more than half a dozen on Near Eastern history, society and culture.

When he was editing his 14<sup>th</sup> book, *Armenian Communities of the Northeastern Mediterranean*, he asked me, as a native son of Kessab, to read the manuscript on "Kessab and its Village." I was amazed at his rationality, objectivity and inquisitive mind. He wanted to know the "why" and "how" of things.

Prof. Hovannisian was a powerful scholarly-minded man with unmatched vitality. He never faltered in his beliefs no matter what the course of events. Even though he looked at both sides of political questions, he never wavered in his convictions, because his strong beliefs and convictions were based on his solid academic background. His unwavering belief in doing what is right carried him through all his days, and that has been a great inspiration and motivation to me and to many others.

**Second, Prof. Hovannisian was dedicated to the preservation of Armenian history and advancement of Armenian studies.** He was one of the passionate advocates who placed Armenian history in the curricula of UCLA. He spearheaded the establishment of the Society of Armenian Studies (SAS). This successful venture served as a powerful conducive factor for the expansion of Armenian Studies in other universities.

Dr. Hovannisian lent his valuable input to our nation

through his genocide denial studies. He edited 16 volumes on this subject, and made a significant contribution to international recognition of the Armenian Genocide. He became a tireless advocate for the rights of the Armenian people and built a reputation as a visionary leader who championed the Armenian Cause.

Some individuals, by their presence and leadership, lift the generations they represent, so that all whose lives come in contact with him walk on higher ground. Dr. Hovannisian was just such an individual.

**Third, Prof. Hovannisian was a great educator.** He was a man full of energy, dreams and plans. According to many of his students I talked to, Dr. Hovannisian was a perfectionist, who maintained high academic standards in the classroom. They admired his demand for rigorous scholarship, his infectious enthusiasm toward Armenian cultural heritage and his excellence in teaching.

Dr. Hovannisian was an excellent communicator. Whether it was in the classroom or in a public lecture or in a seminar, he was very articulate and eloquent. He had a persuasive tongue and an engaging personality. Being a life-long learner, he believed that his students had to grow, evolve in their thinking, and become individuals making a difference.

It was Dr. Hovannisian's undying patriotism and his reverence for the great tradition of our ancestors that inspired his students and his supporters to conduct more than one thousand genocide oral history interviews, which have been transcribed from their original Armenian as well as translated into English. He donated the collection to the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archives to be available to scholars around the world.

Prof. Hovannisian enriched his long life through unselfish and devoted service to his people. He did not waver in using his talents for the cultural uplift of his fellow Armenians.

**Fourth, Prof. Hovannisian was a dedicated family man.** He was a most loving son, husband, father and grandfather. He and his multi-talented wife, Doctor Vartiter, were not only loving life partners, but also co-laborers who worked side by side in the service of the Armenian community. As parents, they instilled in their children strong family values and principles. They had four children Raffi, Armen, Ani and Garo and their oldest son, Raffi, became the first Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Armenia in 1991-1992.

So Prof. Hovannisian departs after walking victoriously with the torch of Armenian heritage lifted high in his hand.

After almost seven decades of continuous service to the Armenian nation, he has departed leaving behind a grateful multitude. ■

# FEATURE BOOK



## Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian Authors His 49th Book: Vertical and Horizontal Relations

By Rev. Kevork (George) Terian, Senior Pastor  
Immanuel Armenian Congregational Church,  
Downey CA

Once again, the Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian surprises us with the publication of another interesting and instructive book that deals with two very important aspects of our Christian life: our vertical relationship with our Creator and Savior, and our horizontal relations with our fellowmen. As a veteran minister and an experienced professor, our author points out that these two vital relationships are inter-connected. The close correlation between the two is very obvious and undeniable. This truth becomes crystal-clear to us in Matthew 22:37, where Jesus links loving God with loving our neighbors.

For human beings who are by nature sociable creatures, relationships are necessary, important and unavoidable; however, our vertical relationship with God must precede the horizontal relationships that bind us to one another. God's pure and unselfish love for us obligates us to show the same love to one another.

*Vertical and Horizontal Relations* is a bilingual book consisting of 43 articles, 29 of which are in English and 14 in Armenian. Written in an accessible style, the author's own life experience helps him connect with his readers. The English part deals with major Armenian and American holidays and holy days, as well as views on issues such as Christian growth and maturity, pastor and parish relations, home as the first school of life and other topics. In this book he also renders a scholarly analysis of the four Gospels.

In the Armenian section entitled *Ooghahayatz yev Horizonagan Haraperoutyunner* Dr. Tootikian deals with a variety of theological, educational and patriot-

ic subjects conveying timely truths to his readers with deep pastoral sensibility and solid Biblical and cultural knowledge.

The greatest tragedy of our age is that our vertical relationship with God has become the most neglected relationship on earth. We must be cognizant of the fact that it is this vertical relationship that gives us access to God's eternal Kingdom. Establishing intimacy with God, through a perpendicular relationship, will make the existence of the spiritual world become a tangible reality for us. In Matthew 25:35-40, Jesus tells us that our acts of mercy, like feeding the hungry, providing clothes for the poor, and visiting the incarcerated, are considered to be services that are rendered to Him. By alleviating human suffering, we honor Christ Himself. Our vertical relationship with God should intersect our horizontal relationships with people.

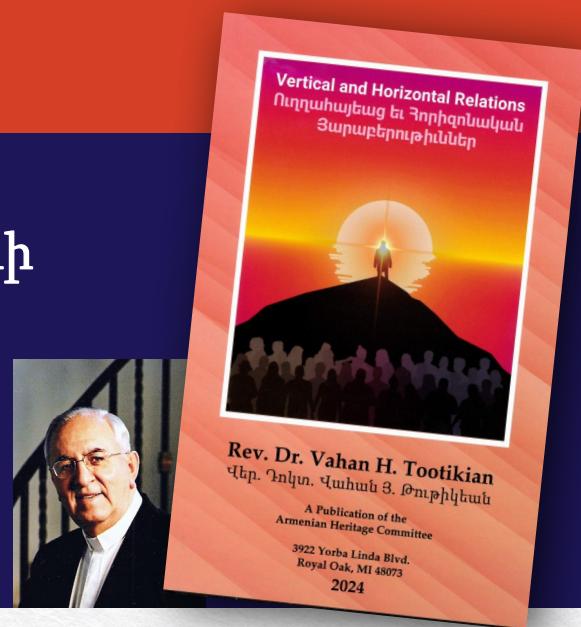
While our relationship with God is based on faith alone, we are told, in no mistakable terms, that the way we relate to other people will have a direct bearing on our experience of Him.

In a very convincing way, Dr. Tootikian shows that our relationship with our Creator, not only supersedes all of our human associations in importance, but also safeguards their moral integrity and preserves their unselfish character. In a nutshell, without establishing a close vertical relationship with God, it will be next to impossible to have healthy and robust interactions with our fellowmen on the horizontal level. ■

# Գրախոսական

## Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան Յ. Թուրիկեանի 49րդ Հատորը Լոյս Տեսաւ «Ուղղահայեաց եւ Հորիզոնական Յարաբերութիւններ»

--Դոկտ. Արի Թօվուղիսանեան



**Բ**ազմավաստակ հովի, դաստիարակ եւ հեղինակ Վեր. Դոկտ. Վահան Յ. Թուրիկեանի «Ուղղահայեաց եւ Հորիզոնական Յարաբերութիւններ» խորագրեալ 49-րդ հատորը նախորդներէն կը տարբերի: Անզլերէն թէ հայերէն բաժիններուն մէջ, կրօնական եւ ազգային տօններու յիշատակումէն բացի՝ անոնց առնչուող հարցեր աւելի մօտէն կը քննուին: Անզլերէն բաժնին մէջ խորհրդածութիւններ կը գտնենք Միացեալ Նահանգներու յատուկ տօններու մասին, ինչպէս նաև թելադրութիւններ՝ հոգեւորապէս ամելու եւ հասուննալու համար: Մտորումներ ալ առաջարկուած են եկեղեցական կեանքին եւ չորս Անետարաններու յատկանշական տարբերութիւններուն վերաբերեալ:

Ինչպէս զիրքին վերտառութիւնը կուահել կու տայ, աստուածային ու մարդկային յարաբերութիւնները քննարկուած են անոր մէջ, եւ շեշտուած է թէ զանոնք պահելու համար անհրաժեշտ է որ մարդկան քննունքին քրիստոն որպէս Տէր և Փրկիչ: Այն է որ ըրին Վարդանանք, եւ անոնց «իմացեալ մահուան» շնորհի քրիստոնեութիւնը խոր ազդեցութիւն ձգեց մէր ազգային, քաղաքական ու մշակութային կեանքին վրայ եւ սատարեց հայ ազգին վերելքին: Անոնց քաջութեան աղբիւրը՝ քրիստոնէական հաւատքն էր, որ կը բխէր Յիսուսի մարմինը օծելու գացած «իւղաբեր կանանց» տրուած պատգամէն: «Մի՛ վախնաք»:

Ուշագրաւ է Վեր. Թուրիկեանի վերլուծութիւնը «Հայ Դատի Ողիսական»ին առնչութեամբ: Ան կը գրէ: «Պահանջուածք հայկական բռնագրաւուած հողերու վերաբարձն է իր իրաւատիրոջ հայ ժողովուրդին: Հայ Դատի նկատմամբ բաւական ձամբայ կտրած

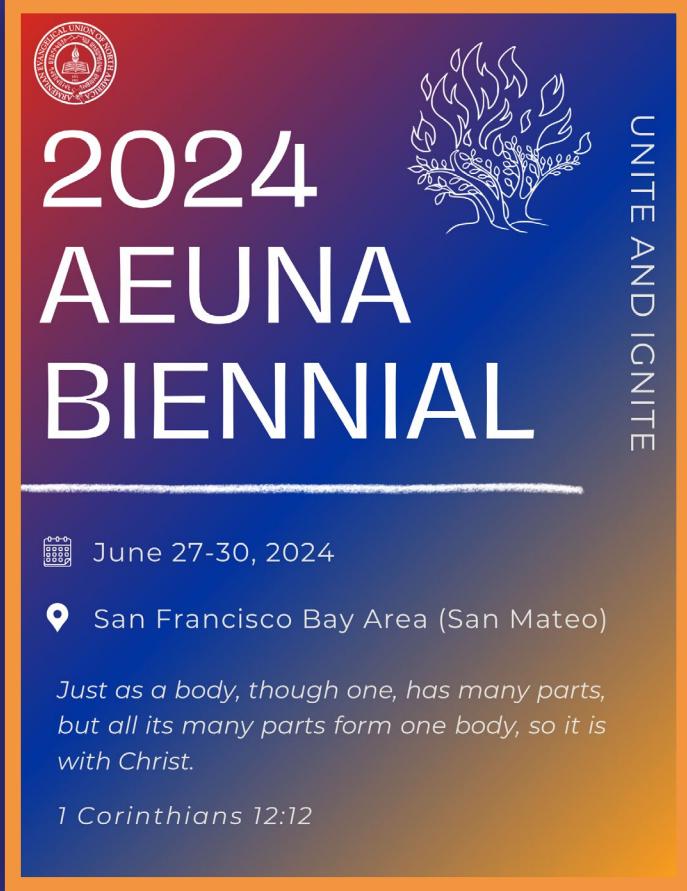
ենք, բայց դեռ բաւական ձամբայ ունինք կտրելիք: Կը մնայ մեզի իրագործել ազգային հաւաքական կազմակերպումի էական հրամայականը...: Անհրաժեշտ է, որ Հայաստան եւ Սփյուռք իրարու հետ սերտօրէն գործակցին եւ համակարգեն իրենց ճիզերը թէ ներազգային եւ թէ միջազգային մակարդակներու վրայ: Բոլորս ալ՝ միակամ եւ միաձակատ դառնալու ենք հաւաքական ոյժ»:

Հեղինակը մեծ կարեւորութիւն կու տայ Հայ Մամուլին, որ «մեր ազգային գործունեութեանց հիմնաքարերէն մէկն է. հզօր ազդակ մըն է հայ մշակոյթի վերելքին»: Սակայն ան կրնայ նսեմացնել ազգն ու հայրենիքը, եթէ հատուածական, կուսակցական եւ յարանուանական շահերը գերադասէ հայ ժողովուրդի ընդհանրական եւ հաւաքական շահերէն:

Հայ Դպրոցին դերն ալ կենսական է՝ հայեցի դաստիարակութիւն շամբելու համար նոր սերունդին: Սակայն անոր գլխաւոր նեցուկ ըլլալու է հայ լնտանիքը: Հետեւաբար ամէն գիտակից հայու պարտականութիւնն է Հայ Դպրոցը պահել իր յառաջապահ դերին մէջ, ինչ որ կը կարօսի տնտեսական եւ բարոյական գոհողութիւններու:

Այս հատորին բովանդակած 29 անզլերէն եւ 14 հայերէն յօդուածները հանրութեան մատուցանելով, Վեր. Վահան Թուրիկեան կը յուսայ «սփյուռքահայ գրականութեան հետզհետէ մթագնող երկնակամարին վրայ փոքրիկ լոյս մը» վառած ըլլալ: Կը մաղթենք որ Աստուծոյ օգնութեամբ ան շարունակէ առաջնորդել մեզ իր երկարամեայ փորձառութենէն բխած շահեկան գրութիւններով, եւ առիթը ունենանք զանոնք կարդալու իր յառաջիկայ 50-րդ գիրքին մէջ՝ շատ մօտիկ ապագային: ■

# SAVE THE DATE!



2024  
AEUNA  
BIENNIAL

UNITE AND IGNITE

June 27-30, 2024

San Francisco Bay Area (San Mateo)

*Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.*

*1 Corinthians 12:12*

## ENCOURAGEMENT IN EVANGELISM

### How Did You Come to Know Jesus?

**Share your story of how you came to know Jesus.** You may provide a short written description of what led you to follow Christ. Or you may get creative! Use your phone or computer to record a short video about how you came to Christ. Maybe you want the recording to be of a loved one interviewing you. Get out paint or water color and illustrate a scene.

However you want to convey the good news about how you received the Good News, **send your story to the committee chair Badveli Heather Ohaneson at [evangelism@aeuna.org](mailto:evangelism@aeuna.org) by April 1, 2024.** We will contact you for permission for use of your stories - including possibly at the Biennial.

We know that one of the ways we can spur each other on in our faith and in the practice of evangelism is by remembering God's saving acts of grace.

## AEUNA REBUILDING PROJECT – Phase 2: Progress and Plans

The Minister to the Union (MTTU), Field Pastor (FP), and Rebuilding Project Task Force continue working with AEUNA ministries to investigate ways to increase the awareness of the AEUNA; multiply lay leaders; unite and build relationships within our community; and practice outreach and evangelism effectively.

### INCREASING AEUNA AWARENESS

At the 2023 AEUNA Fall BOD meeting, a new Promotion and Communication Task Force was formed with the goal to create a plan for 2024 to increase the awareness of AEUNA's vision, values, ministries, and services. This includes working with AEUNA leadership and committees to develop ways to increase participation.

Members of the Task Force: AEUNA Field Pastor, Rev. Ron Tovmassian, AEYF ER President, Alex Heghinian, AEUNA Committee on Youth Chair, Arpi Sarmazian, AEUNA Administrator, Nora Wilson, and AEUNA Clerk, Jennifer Telfeyan-LaRoe. The first tasks the team will focus on: Updating the AEUNA website, creating universal calendars, developing informational material to assist the Field Pastor's work.

### MULTIPLYING LAY LEADERSHIP

Our Field Pastor, Rev. Ron Tovmassian, continues to reach out and increase the AEUNA Footprint! So far he has connected with seven to nine different institutions with plans to find Christian Armenian students who would be eager to serve our community.

While visiting Union churches and as he shares details about our AEUNA programs and resources which supports people who are feeling called to ministry in some way, Rev. Ron has welcomed 3 to 4 new applicants to the AEUNA InCare program and will have 8-10 more in the program by the end of 2024!

A hard truth is that many of our pastors are leaving their churches and some leave the ministry entirely. To remedy this issue, Rev. Ron meets regularly with our interns and students, young pastors, and those who left pastoral ministry. With these meetings, issues can be addressed and support given to allow a healthy and collaborative approach in encouraging individuals through their griefs and concerns.

Likewise, Rev. Ron is coaching church leaders to learn ways to foster their relationships with their pastors and promote healthy Biblical growth and spiritual connection. Rev. Ron's coaching includes giving seminars and educational resources to church leaders.



Working with **AEUNA** church leaders and community members to **build relationships, work collaboratively, and discover opportunities** in **rebuilding the AEUNA into a better, stronger, more robust mission** in the dynamic climate of the twenty-first century.

We are grateful for our Field Pastor and his service during a critical time in the life of our Armenian Evangelical community. We pray our Lord continues to bless him and his work. (**Read more about how our Field Pastor is making a positive difference in our community on page 10.**)

### UNITING AND BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Badveli Hendrik Shanazarian, our MTTU, continues to travel visiting Union churches. His goal is to regularly visit with every one of our 33 Union churches in Canada, USA, and Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay! As he visits he worships with and serves the churches (especially those without pastors), meets with church leadership, and attends church events. Our MTTU listens to and works with church leaders to solve issues the church is facing. Moreover, he continues to represent the Armenian Evangelical Church by attending local and international events and meetings, including the Armenian American Museum project. Pan Armenian Council and meeting with senior clergy from other Armenian Christian denominations.

Our Church to Church (C2C) Zoom Meetings where pastors and church leaders from different locations meet monthly to enjoy fellowship, share highs and lows, and pray for each other are proving to be a lovely way to build relationships within the AEUNA family! Currently AEUNA C2C small groups include: The New England group with 5 churches, the Midwest and Canadian group with 6 churches, and the South American group with 3 churches.. Pastors from the 12 Los Angeles, CA churches meet regularly as well. Since these C2C groups started, Union leadership has sponsored seminars to assist with issues our churches face. Now we hope to do more and plan in-person gatherings and retreats on off biennial years. Our next step: To include more AEUNA Union churches in C2C groups.

At the 2023 Spring AEUNA BOD meeting, our MTTU working with the Rebuilding Task Force led a workshop session on *Making Space for our Neighbors* focusing on the importance of providing a welcoming environment at church.

This past November the AEUNA held its 2023 Fall BOD meeting in Toronto, Canada. This time our MTTU, Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian and the Field Pastor, Rev. Ron Tovmassian working with Ministry Committee Chair, Rev. Ara Heghinian, Rev. Jeremy Tovmassian, and the AEUNA Evangelism Committee Chair, Badveli Heather Ohaneson led a workshop session on the causes and impacts of conflict in our Union churches. A survey was sent out to pastors and church leaders asking if they faced conflict and to share their experiences. Ten of the thirty three Union churches responded that they experienced conflict in the

following areas: Theological differences (conservative vs. liberal); Personality issues; Church politics; Generational issues (worship styles, how to bring in change). Discussions included methods to empower and support our churches and ministry groups in handling these difficult situations. This exercise provided an occasion for productive self-evaluation and ways to address the needs and challenges Union churches are facing. The BOD members learned that Union churches want Union leadership to provide: professional mediators and counselors, moderate conflict discussion, provide conflict resolution workshops and Zoom discussions on "hot topics," vetted resources, and for Union leadership to have more of a presence at Union churches.

Our next steps: To create and offer seminars and workshops on these topics working with Union pastors and professionals within our AEUNA community. In all cases our goal is to prepare biblically and prayerfully and in the power of the Holy Spirit as we move forward in these sensitive areas.

**Read more about the AEUNA BOD meetings and work at:**



### INCREASING OUTREACH AND EVANGELISM

Six devoted members of the Evangelism Committee (led by Badveli Heather Ohaneson, who is also part of the Rebuilding Task Force) meet to learn about Bible-based contemporary methods of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with our neighbors, friends, loved ones, and strangers. Presently they are studying Dave and Jon Ferguson's 2021 book, *B.L.E.S.S.: Five Ways to Love Your Neighbor and Change the World*. The committee is encouraged by the authors' focus on B, beginning with praying for people by name, and L, listening carefully to others as a way of blessing them. In its study and preparation to offer webinars to the wider AEUNA community, the committee is keeping its eyes on two crucial nodes: young people and unchurched Armenians.

A central upcoming task is conducting a survey to establish a baseline understanding of how Union churches are evangelizing and growing.

If you have a testimony that you would like to share of how you were saved and brought into one of our Union churches, **please e-mail evangelism@aeuna.org**.

**Please continue to pray for our work and for all the ministries of the AEUNA** ■



CELEBRATING OVER  
**50 Years**

411 E. Acacia St., Ste 200  
Glendale CA 91205

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**2024**  
**AEUNA**  
**BIENNIAL**

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San Francisco Bay Area (San Mateo)

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*1 Corinthians 12:12*

### UPCOMING EVENTS 2024

**Camp AREV**  
Winter  
HS: Jan. 12-14 JH: Jan. 26-28  
Jrs: Jan. 19-21 YA: Feb. 2-4

**AEYF East**  
C&C Retreat: NY, Feb. 9-11  
Jr's Conf.: PA, Apr. 19-21  
Fall Conf.: TBD Oct. 4-6

**Camp AREV**  
Summer  
HS: Jul. 14-20 JH: Jul. 28-Aug. 3  
Jrs: Jul. 21-27 YA: Sep. 13-15

**AEYF West**  
Ages 14+  
Spring Event: TBD Apr. 6  
Fall Retreat: TBD Nov. 8-10

**Camp Arevelk**  
NY: Aug. 4-10

**AEUNA/AEYF**  
**Biennial**  
San Mateo, CA  
Jun. 27-30  
Tour Jun. 30-Jul. 3



AEUNA YOUTH MINISTRIES

