



forum



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Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

- 2 Corinthians 5:17



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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

ԽՄԲԱԳՐԻ ԳՐԱՍԵՂԱՆԵՆ

Dear Reader,

If you had a choice, which would you rather experience: the Christmas of those shepherds at Bethlehem, or your own Christmas in this twenty-first century?

The believers who were there at the time of the birth of our Lord had a most marvelous experience. They saw and heard the herald angel who appeared in a blaze of light to announce the arrival of the promised Messiah who was destined to be the Light of the world. The shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem were directed to the Good Shepherd who would give His life for His sheep; the Good Shepherd who was descended from David, the shepherd king who, as a young boy, watched over and cared for his father's flocks in the vicinity of that same little town, and later wrote the Shepherd's Psalm (Psalm 23).

The Magi came later carrying with them precious gifts for the newborn King, They brought gifts to the One who is the Greatest Gift of all time; God's love gift to the whole world. The Wise Men came from the East to the True Source of all wisdom, but they did not have the privilege of hearing the words of wisdom from His lips.

But, you say, that was long ago. The angels are gone and the mysterious star that guided the Magi is no longer visible in the night sky. The Judean shepherds and the wise men have passed from the stage of history. Those people belonged to another age, a distant age, and their appearances cannot be matched in our day.

True, the shepherds of Bethlehem's fields are gone, but the Good Shepherd is still with us, and because of this reality, every one of us can affirm: "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not lack anything." True, the star that led the Magi is no more here, but today we have a greater Guiding Light - the Light of the world who illuminates every person who comes into the world.

In many ways, our Christmas can be more wonderful and exceedingly more meaningful than that first Christmas experienced by the shepherds and the Magi because we today have the whole Redemption Story displayed for us in the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation; whereas, they had only bits and pieces.

May this year's Christmas celebration refresh your faith, renew your vision and deepen your love for the Redeemer who came to make you an heir of His eternal Kingdom.

Rev. Kevork George Terian

Յարգելի Ընթերցող,

Եթէ ընտրութեան հնարաւորութիւն ունենայիք, ո՞րը պիտի նախընտրէիք՝ Բեթղեհեմի այդ հովիւներու Սուրբ Ծննդեան փորձառութիւնը, թէ՛ ձեր Սուրբ Ծննդեան տօնակատարութիւնը այս քսանմէկերորդ դարուն մէջ:

Այն հաւատացեալները, որոնք այնտեղ էին մեր Տիրոջ Ծննդեան պահին, ունեցան հիասքանչ փորձառութիւն մը: Անոնք տեսան և լսեցին պատգամաբեր հրեշտակին, որ յայտնուեցաւ փառաւոր լոյսով, որպէսզի ազդարարէ խոստացուած Մեսիայի գալուստը, որուն վիճակուած էր ըլլալու աշխարհի Լոյսը: Բեթղեհեմի մերձակայ դաշտերուն հովիւները առաջնորդուեցան դէպի Բարի Հովիւը, որ Իր կեանքը կու տայ իր ոչխարներուն համար. բարի հովիւը, որ սեռած էր Դաւիթէն, հովիւ թագաւորէն, որ երիտասարդ ժամանակ կը հսկէր և կ'արածէր իր հօր հօտերը այդ նոյն փոքրիկ քաղաքի շրջակայքին մէջ, և յետագային գրեց Հովիւի Սաղմոսը (Սաղմոս 23):

Մոգերը աւելի ուշ եկան՝ իրենց հետ բերելով թանկարժէք նուէրներ նորածին Թագաւորին համար: Անոնք նուէրներ բերին Անոր՝ որ բոլոր ժամանակներու մեծագոյն Սուէրն է. Աստուծոյ սիրոյ Սուէրը ամբողջ աշխարհին. Իմաստունները եկան Արեւելքէն դէպի բոլոր իմաստութեան ճշմարիտ Աղբիւրը, բայց անոնք առիթը չունեցան լսելու իմաստութեան խօսքերը Անոր բերանէն:

Բայց, կ'ըսէք, այդ հին ժամանակ էր: Չրեշտակները չկան, եւ մոգերուն առաջնորդող խորհրդաւոր աստղը այլևս տեսանելի չէ գիշերային երկնքին մէջ: Յուդայի հովիւները ու իմաստուն մոգերը հեռացած են պատմութեան բեմէն: Այդ մարդիկ կը պատկանէին ուրիշ դարաշրջանի, հեռաւոր դարաշրջանի մը, և անոնց երեւոյթը չենք կրնար համեմատել մեր օրերուն հետ:

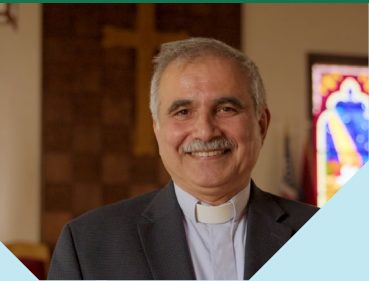
Ճիշտ է, Բեթղեհեմի դաշտերու հովիւները չկան, բայց Բարի Հովիւը դեռ մեզ հետ է եւ այս իրականութեան շնորհիւ՝ մեզմէ իւրաքանչիւրը կարող է հաստատել. «Տէրը իմ հովիւն է եւ ես որեւէ բանի մը կարիք պիտի չունենամ»: Ճիշտ է, աստղը որ կ'առաջնորդէր մոգերուն, այլևս այստեղ չկայ, բայց այսօր մենք ունինք աւելի մեծ առաջնորդող լոյս՝ բովանդակ աշխարհի Լոյսը, որ կը լուսաւորէ մարդոց միտքը:

Շատ կերպերով մեր Սուրբ Ծննդեան Տօնը կարող է ըլլայ աւելի հիասքանչ և շատ աւելի իմաստալից, քան հովիւներու և մոգերու ունեցած փորձառութիւնը, որովհետև այսօր մենք ունինք փրկութեան լրիւ պատմութիւնը մեզ համար յայտնուած ամբողջ Աստուածաշունչին մէջ՝ Ծննդոց գիրքէն սկսեալ մինչև Յայտնութիւն. մինչդեռ անոնք ունէին միայն փոքրիկ պատառիկներ:

Լիայոյս եմ որ այս տարուայ Սուրբ Ծննդեան Տօնը թարմացնէ ձեր հաւատքը, վերանորոգէ ձեր տեսիլքը եւ խորացնէ ձեր սէրը՝ ձեր Փրկչին որ եկաւ որպէսզի ժառանգորդը ըլլաք իր անվախճան Թագաւորութեան:

Վեր. Գեորգ Թէրեան

FROM THE MINISTER TO THE UNION



Great Advice for a New Start

Romans 12:1-2

By Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian

...Paul focuses on how that right relationship with God should be reflected in one's daily life and relationships with other people.

“The teacher” sounding like a depressed person, starts the book of Ecclesiastes with these words: “there is nothing new under the sun.” “What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done.” (1:9). Each year on this day we celebrate the New Year. But what is new about the year that we are starting? Is there anything new other than the date on the calendar? Can we have newness in our lives? I can never forget what my theology teacher said once. “There is nothing categorically new in our history other than the coming of our Lord into our history” and the renewal of our lives that comes through His sacrifice. Today I want to remind us of that newness that God wants each of us experience, not only once a year, but every day of our lives.

If you read the letter to the Romans in one sitting, you can't miss the break in the line of thought that comes in Chapter 12. The first eleven chapters focus on explaining the problem of sin and how man can enter into a right relationship with God. Starting from chapter twelve, verse one, Paul focuses on how that right relationship with God should be reflected in one's daily life and relationships with other people. In the first eleven chapters God's provision for humanity is explained in detail. The last five chapters deal with how Christians should live as children of God in this world. The first part is theology, while the second part is practical advice. The key word in the first eleven chapters is “righteousness,” which means being considered right in the eyes of God, having a right relationship with Him. The word is not so common in the second part. It is used only once and it refers to the right relationship we are to have with others. The first eleven chapters are about God's mercy, while the last five chapters describe how we should respond, with acts of mercy and service. It is important to remember that the holy living is our gratitude to God's grace. It is well said that “In the New Testament, religion is grace, and ethics is gratitude.”

Verses one and two are a great introduction to the discussion of right living as a Christian. To live as a believer in this world, experiencing the Light of God's gift of salvation, we need to 1) offer ourselves as a sacrifice and 2) be transformed by the renewing of our minds.



Using a liturgical language, Paul encourages Christians to be committed to a life of obedience to the will of God. Jewish priests were expected to sanctify themselves first and then offer unblemished sacrifices on behalf of the community. Here he asks Christians to offer their own bodies, themselves in their totality, as an offering pleasing to God. Paul urges them, appeals to them with authority, to live a life of service to God. Our lives belong to God, because we were bought with a price. This is our reasonable or adequate response to the sacrifice God has offered. More than that, our sacrifice should be our intelligent and deliberate response to God's gracious act, as opposed to the cultic sacrifices, where the objects had no role in deciding what was done to them.

Verse one is about dedication while verse two is about transformation, which is the result of the living out of that commitment. A life dedicated to the Lord needs continual vigilance, because we live in a world that can impact our life and weaken our dedication. What Paul requires from the believers is a call to nonconformity and holiness, which is addressed to the people of God throughout Scriptures. The verb used for "transformation" is the same used for the transfiguration of Jesus in the gospels. It refers to a complete change. So the change that Paul talks about here "is a fundamental transformation of character and conduct, away from the standards of the world and into the image of Christ Himself." God's purpose for life and His

A life dedicated to the Lord needs continual vigilance, because we live in a world that can impact our life and weaken our dedication.

values for everything, including greatness, sex, money, community, success or anything else are different from the value system that our surrounding culture offers. This transformation is possible only through the renewal of our minds by the Holy Spirit and the Word of God. This is not a onetime experience, but a continuous process. "First our mind is renewed by the Word and the Spirit of God, then we are able to discern the will of God; then we are increasingly transformed by it."

For some, if not most of us, there is nothing new in the New Year other than the change of date on our calendars. For some of us and hopefully for most, if not all of us, any Sunday worship service, Bible Study or quiet time is an occasion for renewal, for a new start, for a positive change in our lives, our relationship with the Lord, our family, our friends, and the people around us. Today, and every day of our life can be an occasion for starting anew. God has prepared the path for that newness. Are you aware of His Mercy and have you received it? "*The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.*"

God is in the business of creating newness. What He wants from us is to worship Him by offering to Him our bodies and all that we do every day. Are you willing and ready to do your part? ■



Խրատ նոր սկզբնաւորութեան համար Հռովմայեցիս 12:1-2

«Ուսուցիչը», որ ընկճուած անձի մը պէս կը թուի, «Ժողովող» գիրքը կը սկսի սա խօսքերով. «Ոչինչ նոր է արեւին տակ:» «Ինչ որ եղած է, նոյնը պիտի ըլլայ. ինչ որ կատարուած է, նոյնը պիտի կատարուի» (1: 9): Ամէն տարի Յունուարի մէկը կը նշենք որպէս Ամանոր: Բայց ի՞նչ նորութիւն կայ այս տարուայ մէջ, որ կը սկսինք: Օրացոյցի տարեթիւէն զատ նոր բան կա՞յ: Կրնա՞ք նորութիւն մը ունենալ մեր կեանքին մէջ: Ես երբեք չեմ կրնար մոռնալ մեր աստուածաբանութեան ուսուցիչին ըսածը՝ *մեր պատմութեան մէջ բացարձակապէս նոր բան չկայ, մեր Տիրոջը մեր պատմութեան մէջ մուտք գործելէն զատ* եւ մեր կեանքերու վերանորոգուելէն զատ, որ կ'իրականանայ Անոր զրհաբերութեան միջոցաւ: Այսօր կ'ուզեմ կեդրոնանալ այն նորութեան վրայ, որ Աստուած կը փափաքի մեզմէ իւրաքանչիւրը փորձարկել ո՛չ միայն տարին մէկ անգամ, այլեւ մեր կեանքի ամէն մէկ օրուան մէջ:

Հռովմեացիներուն ուղղուած նամակի 12-րդ գլուխը կը սկսի «ուրեմն» շաղկապով եւ մեծ տարբերութիւն կը տեսնենք առաջին տասնըմէկ գլուխներու եւ մնացեալ հինգ գլուխներու բովանդակութեան մէջ: Առաջին տասնըմէկ գլուխները կեդրոնացած են մեղքի խնդիրը բացատրելու վրայ եւ թէ մարդը ինչպէս կրնայ ճիշդ յարաբերութեան մէջ մտնել Աստուծոյ հետ: Տասներկորդ գլուխէն սկսեալ Պօղոս կը բացատրէ, թէ Աստուծոյ հետ ճիշդ փոխյարաբերութիւնը պէտք է արտացոլայ մեր առօրեայ կեանքին մէջ եւ մարդոց հետ մեր ունեցած փոխյարաբերութիւններուն մէջ: Առաջին տասնըմէկ գլուխներու մէջ մանրամասնօրէն բացատրուած է Աստուծոյ նախատեսած հոգատարութիւնը մարդու փրկութեան համար: Վերջին հինգ գլուխներու մէջ առաքեալը կը բացատրէ թէ քրիստոնէականները, որպէս Աստուծոյ զաւակներ, ինչպէս ապրելու են այս աշխարհին մէջ: Առաջին մասը աստուածաբանութիւն է, իսկ երկրորդ մասը՝ գործնական խրատներ: Առաջին տասնըմէկ գլուխներու կեդրոնական գաղափարը «արդարութիւն» է, որ կը նշանակէ ճիշդ համարուիլ Աստուծոյ աչքին, Անոր հետ ունենալ շիտակ յարաբերութիւն: Առաջին տասնըմէկ գլուխները մարդու վիճակի եւ Աստուծոյ ողորմութեան մասին է, մինչդեռ վերջին հինգ գլուխները կը բացատրեն թէ ողորմած ըլլալն ու ծառայութիւնը մարդուս յարմարագոյն պատասխանն են Աստուծոյ ողորմութեան: Կարելոր է յիշել, որ սուրբ կեանքը մեր երախտագիտութիւնն է Աստուծոյ շնորհքին: Լաւ ըսուած է, որ «Նոր Կտակարանի կրօնքը՝ շնորհքն է են, եւ բարոյական արժէքը՝ երախտագիտութիւն»:

*...ամէն կիրակնօրեայ
պաշտամունք,
Աստուածաշունչի
սերտողութիւն կամ մենիկ
պահ, նոյնիսկ կեանքի
ամէն մէկ փորձառութիւն՝
վերանորոգման առիթ է:*

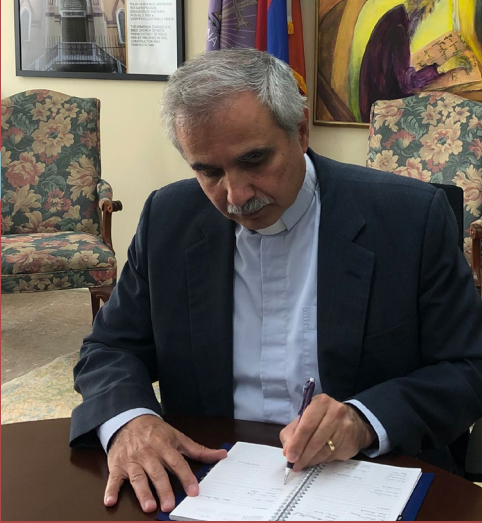
Առաջին եւ երկրորդ համարները յարմար ներածութիւն մըն է ճիշդ քրիստոնէական կեանք ապրելու նիւթին համար: Այս աշխարհին մէջ որպէս հաւատացեալ ապրելու համար պէտք է 1) ինքզինքնիս որպէս զոհ մատուցանենք եւ 2) փոխակերպուինք միտքով:

Օգտագործելով Հրեական ծիսական լեզուն, Պօղոս կը խրախուսէ



քրիստոնեաները Աստուծոյ կամքին հնազանդ կեանք ապրելու: Չրեայ քահանաները համայնքի կողմէ անարատ զոհեր մատուցանելէ առաջ պետք է ինքզինքնին սրբագործէին: Չոս Պօղոս կը խնդրէ որ քրիստոնեաները իրենց մարմինները ամբողջութեամբ ներկայացնեն որպէս Աստուծոյ հաճելի զոհ: Պօղոս կը յորդորէ զանոնք Աստուծոյ նուիրուած ծառայութեան կեանք մը ապրելու: Մեր կեանքը կը պատկանի Աստուծոյ, որովհետեւ մեծ գնով մը գնուեցանք: Ասմեր պատշաճ պատասխանը ըլլալու է Աստուծոյ զոհաբերութեանը: Աւելին, մեր զոհաբերութիւնը պետք է ըլլայ մեր գիտակից եւ միտումնաւոր պատասխանը Աստուծոյ շնորհին, ի տարբերութիւն կրօնական զոհերու, որոնք դեր մը չեն ունեցած որոշելու, թէ ինչ կատարուելու է անոնց համար:

Առաջին համարը նուիրման մասին է, իսկ երկրորդը՝ կերպարանափոխման մասին, որ արդիւնքն է այդ տեսակ նուիրման: Տիրոջը նուիրուած կեանքը կարիք ունի շարունակական զգաստութեան, քանի որ կ'ապրինք աշխարհի մը մէջ, որը կարող է ազդել մեր կեանքի վրայ եւ տկարացնել մեր նուիրումը: Պօղոս կոչ կ'ընէ աշխարհին չնմանելու, հապա բարեփոխուելու՝ սուրբ կեանք ապրելու: Բարեփոխուիլ բայը նոյն բառն է որ Աւետարանին մէջ գործածուած է Յիսուսի պայծառակերպուիլը բացատրելու: Ան կը բնութագրէ ամբողջական փոփոխութիւն: Ուրեմն, այն փոփոխութիւնը, որու մասին կը խօսի Պօղոս Առաքեալ բնաւորութեան եւ վարմունքի հիմնական փոխակերպումն է՝ հեռու աշխարհի չափանիշներէն՝ Քրիստոսի պատկերին նմանելու: Աստուծոյ նպատակը կեանքի համար եւ Անոր արժէքները մեծութեան, մեր յարաբերութիւններու, դրամի, համայնքի, յաջողութեանը կամ որեւէ այլ բանի մասին, կը տարբերի մեզ շրջապատող մշակոյթէն: Այս փոխակերպումը հնարաւոր է միայն Սուրբ Չոգիին եւ Աստուծոյ Խօսքին միջոցաւ մեր միտքին նորոգումովը: Աս մէկ անգամ պատահելիք դէպք չէ, այլ շարունակական գործընթաց: Նախ մեր միտքը կը նորոգուի Աստուծոյ Խօսքին եւ Աստուծոյ Չոգիին միջոցաւ, ապա պիտի



Վեր. Շենրիկ Շանազարեան
Միութեան Չովի
Չիւսիսային Ամերիկայի
Չայ Աւետարանական
Միութիւն

կարենանք զանազանել եւ ձգտիլ Աստուծոյ կամքը կատարելու: Ժամանակի ընթացքին աւելի ու աւելի պիտի կերպարանափոխուինք Անոր միջոցաւ:

Ոմանց համար, Նոր Տարուայ մէջ ոչ մէկ նոր բան կայ, մեր օրացոյցներու վրայ տարբերութիւն փոփոխութենէն զատ: Իսկ ուրիշներու համար ամէն կիրակնօրեայ պաշտամունք, Աստուածաշունչի սերտողութիւն կամ մենիկ պահ, նոյնիսկ կեանքի ամէն մէկ փորձառութիւն՝ վերանորոգման առիթ է: Նոր սկիզբ մը՝ մեր կեանքին մէջ դրական փոփոխութեան համար՝ Տիրոջ հետ ունեցած մեր փոխյարաբերութեան մէջ, մեր ընտանիքի եւ ընկերներու հետ, կամ մեր շրջապատի հետ, նոյնիսկ մեր անձերուն համար: Այսօր, եւ մեր կեանքի իւրաքանչիւր օրը կրնայ վերսկսելու առիթ մը ըլլալ: Աստուած պատրաստած է այդ նորութեան ճամբան: Արդեօք տեղեա՞կ ես Անոր ողորմութեան մասին, ճաշակե՞ր ես զայն: *Տիրոջ անսասան սէրը երբեք չի դադրիր, Անոր ողորմութիւնը երբեք չի սպառիր, ամէն առաւօտ նոր են, մեծ է Անոր հաւատարմութիւնը:*

Նորոգելը Անոր գործն է: Ան հաւատարիմ այլ է: Իր ակնկալածը մեզմէ այն է որ երկրպագենք Անոր, նուիրելով մեր մարմինները եւ այն ինչ որ կ'ընենք ամէն օր, ոչ միայն կիրակի օրերը, այլ շաբթուայ ամէն մէկ օրը, ուր որ ալ ըլլանք եւ ինչ որ ալ ընենք: Արդեօք պատրա՞ստ ես եւ կը կամենա՞ս քու բաժինը ընելու: ■

FROM THE FIELD PASTOR



CREATING THANKSGIVING!

By Rev. Ron Tovmassian, D. Min.

*You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion,
and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*

*This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people
but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God.*

2 Corinthians 9:11-12

In the verses above, the Apostle Paul instructs the Corinthian church about collections to be made for the needy in Jerusalem. He explains that God's generosity in extending grace to us should cause us to well up in gratitude and express our thanksgiving to Him. Our generosity in sharing the blessings God has given us will in turn cause others to be thankful as well.

This raised an interesting thought in my mind. This time of year, we usually talk about how to be more thankful in our lives for all the blessings God has given us. Today, I'd like to take a different perspective and talk instead about how we can create thankfulness in others. What would happen if we were to consider thanksgiving as a commodity, something that exists in the world in a certain quality. If we don't produce more of it, there will be a shortage. If we are able to create more, there will be a surplus. From this perspective we can ask ourselves - How can I help to increase that commodity? How can I create a new Thanksgiving in the world around me? Paul's analogy is meant to show that it is all in our hands. It is within our power to both increase our own thankfulness, and also to create more thankfulness in others, if we will only do what he says in this passage.

In Vs. 6 Paul compares God's blessings in our lives to seeds and says - **Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.** His point is that the purpose of a seed is to be sown in order to grow. Holding onto a seed for the sake of itself is pointless. So if blessings are like seeds, we should not keep them to ourselves, but rather spread them out like seeds so that blessings may grow in the lives of others.

Imagine a man with a plot of land and plenty of seeds to plant, but for some reason, instead of planting all the seed, he holds some back. He sows sparingly, only planting a portion of the fields on his property. When the harvest comes in, it is very small and does not produce enough seeds for the coming year. He was counting on the seeds he had saved, but they are all spoiled now. The purpose of seeds is not to be put on a shelf until they rot but to be planted in the ground to multiply.

This year, instead of asking questions like: What am I thankful for? ... Let's flip the switch and ask ... How much thankfulness have I created in the world this year?



Clearly, if the farmer has an abundance of seeds, he should plant all he can and use every possible plot of land available to him. That way he will reap the best harvest possible and it will produce more new seeds than he could imagine. It is a simple and logical choice. Plant sparingly and keep the extra seeds only to watch them spoil, or plant generously and fill the entire plot so you can watch as a bountiful harvest comes in as a blessing to you and others as well.

As he continues in Vs. 7, Paul says - ***Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.*** Sharing your blessings is an act of faith, out of gratitude to God, that should be done gladly. God loves a cheerful giver, because the one who is cheerful in giving is faithful. The idea seems to be that if we plant the seeds He has given us, God will bless the harvest and give more seeds. Notice the goal in verse 11 is that we might prove ourselves to be generous in sowing the seeds, so that He can give us more. Then we will be enabled to ***be generous on every occasion.***

This generous sowing of the seeds brings blessing to the sower but it also causes others to give thanksgiving to God. In every way, this principle acknowledges that both the seed and the harvest belong to God. As we are more obedient in sharing God's blessings, others will overflow with expressions of praise to God and thanksgiving will grow. This heartfelt generosity, when seen as an expression of our own love for Christ, confirms our testimony as we share the gospel

Paul says - ***Through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.*** In other words, they will take this particular gift to Jerusalem, and tell them it came from the Corinthians. But notice that the thanksgiving is not directed back to the sower. This is not so the recipients of these gifts will thank the church family in Corinth, but that they may praise God for their faith. The bottom line of this whole passage is that God has given us an unlimited field in which to plant our seeds and an abundant supply of seed to plant. We can plant as much, or as little as our faith allows, but the more we sow, the more He will bless us in return and the more thanksgiving we create in others

This year, instead of asking questions like: *What am I thankful for?* or *How can I be more thankful for what God has given me?* Let's flip the switch and ask some different questions: *How much thankfulness have I created in the world this year? Have I sown the seeds of blessing God has*

given me? Am I making full use of the field and planting all the seeds I can for God's glory? Who, out there, is thankful because of seeds I have sown gladly in obedience to God?

Paul gives us two ways to answer these questions. 1) Perhaps you have sown your seed directly by sharing blessings of kindness, love, compassion or a willing ear with someone in your life. Whether it is a relative, a friend or a stranger, this kind of sowing is a good way to see the thankfulness first hand. 2) Or perhaps you have sowed your seed in a different way, indirectly through the work of missionaries or compassionate organizations around the world. Like the Corinthians, your gifts of food, shelter, medical aid and education will be carried to other places where you don't know the people, but you will see the thankfulness in their eyes when you receive the reports and see the pictures and videos.

Paul is teaching us that thanksgiving to God is a commodity and that we have the power in our hands, to create more of it in the world. Generosity grounded in love and thankfulness to God and done cheerfully for God's glory, can change the world. I don't think any of us would disagree with that statement, it is only a matter of degree.

Paul tells us to consider in our hearts and decide for ourselves. His hope is that the overwhelming joy of God's love and grace in our lives will result in overflowing generosity as we sow the seeds of blessing God has given us. Often, however, we consider what we believe to be the realities of life. We are deterred by the many strains on our time, energy and financial resources, so we hold on to our seed and sow it sparingly instead.

I am sure that most of us can reflect and feel confident that there are at least some people, somewhere in the world, who are thankful this year because of blessings I have shared or an act of kindness I have done. Someone somewhere is smiling because I sowed my seed faithfully. That being said, Paul would challenge us all to imagine how much more of the commodity of thankfulness we could create in the world for God's glory if we would only determine gladly in our hearts to sow generously instead of sparingly.

May we all celebrate Thanksgiving and Christmas this year with joyful hearts and do all that God has called us to do in order to create an abundance of thanksgiving around us that brings glory to Him. ■



Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Matthew 9:37-38

Rev. Ron Tovmassian, Field Pastor

UPDATE ON AEUNA IN CARE STUDENTS

If we look back just a few years, our Union was struggling with a crisis of pastoral leadership. There were 8-10 churches with empty pulpits, representing almost 1/3 of our AEUNA Churches, and only three In Care students studying for full time pastoral ministry. Two of those students were already filling pulpits by serving as pastoral interns, so only one would eventually be available to serve one of the churches in need.

It doesn't take a genius to do the math and realize that the numbers didn't add up. Something needed to be done quickly to remedy this situation. It is also important to realize that this was not a situation unique to Armenian Evangelical Churches. Seminaries throughout North America have continued struggling to gain new students and churches of all denominations are scrambling to seek solutions for the lack of pastoral leadership.

In response to this situation the AEUNA responded by undertaking

several important initiatives and adding new staff positions to address the issues. A great deal of effort was undertaken to study the problems and determine effective ways to deal with them. Since 2022 we have seen some significant results that are a cause for rejoicing.

While we must continue to work hard and be intentional about raising up and training new pastoral leaders, we are thankful to be celebrating a new group of young In Care students who have been called to full time pastoral ministry. Today we have 2-3 empty pulpits in our churches and seven students in our program preparing to serve. Three of those students are already pastoral interns, filling vacancies in our churches, while the other four are students in seminary. We anticipate two more applicants coming on board in 2025, bringing the total to 9. The way the numbers add up now, we can be thinking, not only of filling vacant pulpits, but of growing our union by planting new churches where these young leaders may serve. ■

GIVE TO THE AEUNA



Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of heavenly lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.

James: 1:17

AEUNA is grateful for our Union churches' ongoing support

It is AEUNA's great joy to offer services to uplift our Union churches and various ministries through the work of the Minister to the Union and Field Pastor, In Care program, youth programs, training and conferences, C2C gatherings, and outreach efforts.

However, the **AEUNA requires extra help from you to keep these programs going.** As we approach the end of 2024 and show gratitude for our many blessings, please consider giving to the AEUNA and encouraging your church to give (or if possible increase) their church dues.

Our God generously graces us with His abundance. When we give, we do so knowing we are giving what is His.

Kindly use the QR code below to give. We thank you in advance!



DONATE

Here is a rundown of the In Care Interns/Students at this point, what school they are attending and where they are serving in our Union:



1

1. Zohrab Sarkissian will be graduating from Tyndale Theological Seminary in Toronto, Canada. He was recently licensed by the AEUNA to serve as a Pastoral Intern at the Armenian Evangelical Church of Toronto, starting on September 1, 2024. Zohrab and his wife Lori have two young children, Gassia and Hamo.



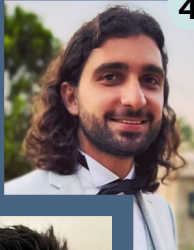
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2. Aram Bedrossian graduated in June with an M.Div. from Westminster Seminary in Glenside, Pennsylvania. The AEUNA approved a license for him to serve as a Pastoral Intern at the Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown, Massachusetts. Over the summer, Aram, his wife Naomi and their son Jonah all moved into the church parsonage as his service to the church began in August.



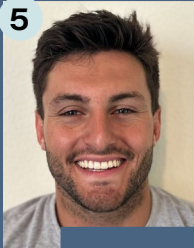
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3. Sevag Melkonian will be graduating from Tyndale Seminary in Toronto, Canada. The First Armenian Church in Belmont is eagerly awaiting his arrival to begin serving as a Pastoral Intern in January 2025. The AEUNA has approved his license and is working in cooperation with the church leadership to facilitate his immigration into the United States from Canada.



4

4. Minas Atamian started his seminary education at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California in September 2024. While pursuing his education, Minas is serving as the youth pastor at the Armenian Christian Fellowship of Orange County in Huntington Beach, California.



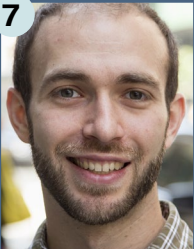
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5. Nicholas (Nico) Hanessian started his seminary education at Talbot School of Theology in La Mirada, California in September 2024. While pursuing his education, Nico is serving as a volunteer youth leader at the Armenian Christian Fellowship of Orange County in Huntington Beach, California.



6

6. Shervin Youssefian began last spring at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. He will pursue his theological studies part time as he continues to serve as the youth pastor at Christ Armenian Church in La Crescenta, California.



7

7. Obed Bazikian began his theological studies at Alliance Theological Seminary in Manhattan, New York. When Alliance closed recently, Obed transferred to Asbury Seminary in Wilmore, Kentucky where he will complete his education remotely. Obed currently serves as a volunteer leader at the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York, New York.

God is raising up leaders for our community and we are doing our best to train them for His work. Please keep praying to the Lord of the Harvest that He would send even more workers into His harvest field.



DID YOU KNOW?

The **AEUNA** is developing initiatives to...

UNITE our Armenian Evangelical Church community
EQUIP our pastors and lay leaders to serve in their ministries
SUPPORT our Union churches & AEUNA ministries in their missions

The AEUNA is organizing gatherings, retreats, and targeted training sessions to meet the specific needs of our pastors, ministry leaders and Union churches.

- **SEMINARS AND TRAINING SESSIONS**
to increase ministry and leadership skills
- **CHURCH TO CHURCH (C2C) GATHERINGS**
to build deeper relationships
- **PUBLICATIONS AND EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES**
to equip church and ministry leaders

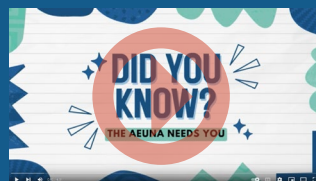
AEUNA NEEDS YOUR HELP

The hard truth is that these initiatives, including the current work and administration of our Union office, cannot move forward effectively without your financial support.



To Give:

Scan or click the QR Code to the left. Checks payable to the **AEUNA** (Memo: General Fund) may be mailed to **AEUNA**, 411 E Acacia Ave. #200, Glendale, CA 91205-5609.



DO YOU KNOW HOW THE AEUNA STAFF SUPPORTS OUR COMMUNITY?

◀ WATCH AND LEARN

And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that ... you may abound in every good work. – 2 Corinthians 9:8

FEATURE

How To Make a Happy New Year



By Rev. George Terian

Editor
Forum Magazine

Senior Pastor
Immanuel Armenian
Congregational Church
Downey, CA



“This one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forward to those things that are ahead, I press toward the goal to the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus”

Philippians 3:13-14

An unknown author has said, “I wish there was some place called **The Land of Beginning Again**, where all our mistakes, heartaches, failures and grief could be dropped, like a shabby old coat, and never be put on again.” In reality, there is such a place: it is the beginning of a New Year, where we can wipe clean our record of regret and begin all over again.

When the Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians, he was not writing about the New Year; nevertheless, he gave us some excellent advice about dealing with the past, the present and the future.

First, he tells us not to live in the past. I know some people who are constantly digging up their past failures and reminiscing about their sad memories. I also know others who repeatedly dwell upon a pleasant past and how wonderful life was back in the good old days, as compared to life right now.

In a sense, there is value in examining our past life to see where and why we failed, in order to avoid repeating the foolish mistakes of the past. It is a good practice at the end of each day to examine whether we have drawn closer to Christ, or we have drifted farther away from Him. However, it is wrong to keep our mind focused entirely on the past.

In Psalm 90:12, we read, “Teach us to number our days so that we may apply our hearts to wisdom.” We have to remind ourselves that we are not going to remain forever on this earth. If we waste even one day, that is time forever wasted. We have to bear in mind the fact that wasted time is a wasted life! We have the responsibility to examine periodically how we are spending the time the Lord has given us. Have we progressed

The Irreparable Humpty Dumpty

By Rev. George Terian



in our Christian life, or have we lost ground?

Second, we should never forget that it is destructive to look back in nostalgia, or in sentimental longing for the past. Mrs. Lot looked back when leaving the city of Sodom and, consequently, she lost her life. In Luke 9:62, Jesus says, “No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God.” The plowman must keep looking straight before him if he wants the furrow which he is making to be straight, not crooked.

Third, Paul tells us, “I press forward.” **We must advance to avoid stagnation.** We simply cannot stop progressing, developing and growing. Don’t allow discouragement to stop your growth and forward march. The New Year gives us a unique opportunity to make an inventory of what we would like to do better in the days to come.

We should concentrate our thoughts on the present and the future by striving to make our present life meaningful and productive. The Apostle Paul counsels us to keep looking forward in faith.

Fourth, “Stand fast.” Do not let anyone or anything shake you. The confidence found in verse 13, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me,” will enable you to stand firm. Differences of opinion and misunderstandings happen in this life; however, we must learn to settle such problems amicably and in a loving manner. Since we will spend eternity together, let us learn to live in peace now.

Finally, “Rejoice in the Lord.” Paul’s life was characterized by contentment, no matter what state he was in, because he was confident that God would supply every need he had. Such an attitude will cause us to rejoice.

Dear reader, a brand New Year awaits you. Like a blank page, there is nothing written on it yet. You can either compose a tragedy or a triumph. Armed with a positive attitude and an unwavering faith in Jesus Christ, you can make this New Year the best year of your life. ■

Humpty Dumpty is a character in a well-known English nursery rhyme that some people think was originally written as a riddle to stimulate the minds of youngsters and encourage them to develop skills in deductive reasoning. The original text runs as follows:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall,
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall.
All the king’s horses and all the king’s men,
Couldn’t put Humpty Dumpty together again.

The challenging problem we have today is fixing the identity of Humpty Dumpty. Over the years, literary people have advanced the following three suggestions:

Humpty Dumpty was King Richard III of England
Humpty Dumpty was a cannon
Humpty Dumpty was an anthropomorphic egg.

Let us scrutinize these three possibilities to determine which one is the most plausible. The last is the most improbable because why, of all places, would an egg be set on a wall?

The first suggestion is the oldest and makes the most sense because King Richard III was known to have a hunched back, or a badly deformed spine that was plainly visible as a hump on the upper backbone. Historical records indicate that he was killed at the battle of Bosworth Field in 1485 by falling off his horse whom he had named “Wall.” His opponents then hacked his body to pieces, as an act of revenge, because this despicable monarch was a ruthless villain.

The only objection that is advanced against linking Humpty Dumpty to the unpopular King Richard III is the fact that the first emergence of the nursery rhyme appeared in books some 300 years after the occurrence of the event. This objection can be countered by the



Richard III and the Earl of Richmond at the Battle of Bosworth

logical argument that the rhyme had survived in oral tradition before it was recorded in books.

The second probability was presented in 1930 by Katherine Thomas, who claimed that Humpty Dumpty was a cannon that the Royalists had placed on a wall of a castle blasted during the English Civil War of 1648 by the Parliamentarians during the siege of Colchester. Most scholars consider this argument unconvincing because they say it is unlikely that a popular nursery rhyme was created to commemorate military hardware destroyed during a siege.

So we are left with assuming Humpty-Dumpty must be a reference to a real historical figure of great prominence, because all the king's soldiers tried to revive him, but all their attempts were futile.

In our world today, many evil people exist who, like King Richard III, are incorrigible, and whose moral character is irreparable by human means. Alongside them are enablers — “all the king's men” — who tolerate such evil and try to revive their source of power and influence. What is God's response to these evildoers? People whose lives are dominated by sin can only be freed from the shackles of their bondage when they turn away from evil, and recognize they are vile sinners who need the saving grace of Jesus Christ. He can save, restore and renew the souls of sinners who seek His help.

Shortly after Jesus launched His public ministry, following His baptism at the Jordan River, He visited his hometown of Nazareth, and on the Sabbath day He went to the local synagogue, whose superintendent asked Jesus to read the Scriptures. Jesus picked up Isaiah's scroll and read a passage that described His Messianic mission. According to Luke 4:18., this is what Jesus read: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel (the Good News) to the poor, He has sent

me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them who are bruised.”

Jesus' mission to our world is a huge rescue operation. He came to save: not the self-righteous, but those who are spiritually poor, who recognize their faults, who admit their failures, accept their brokenness and seek to be made whole again.

Jesus continues His mission today through His mystical body, the church. Through the unselfish activities of those who were baptized into His body, Jesus continues to bring hope to the despairing, freedom to the captives who are caught in the artfully spun webs of sin, and the blinding scales of prejudice are falling off the eyes of bigots.

After World War II ended, a group of German students volunteered to repair in London an English Cathedral that had been ruined by German air raids. The restoration work progressed rather smoothly until they discovered a Jesus statue that had been shattered to many small pieces. They were able to reconstruct the whole marble statue, except for the hands.

When they completed their task, they had a large statue of Jesus with outstretched arms and no hands. Some suggested making new hands and attaching them to Jesus' arms. But the majority decided to leave as it was, with the following inscription on its pedestal: “**Jesus has no hands but ours.**”

We are the hands of Jesus to do what He has commanded, we are His voice to proclaim His truth, and we are His feet to run His errands. We are His ambassadors, His representatives to this perishing world, and it is incumbent upon us to reflect His love and compassion wherever we go. ■



Past and Present: Renewal in the Armenian Evangelical Church

By Rev. Joseph Garabedian

... no church becomes
a beacon of light, hope
or love without its
seasons of renewal.

We all love to imagine a church that is vibrant, life-giving in its worship, crowded with people working for the Kingdom of God. A Christ-focused, other-focused, serving and loving church is something we all long for. Yet, no church becomes a beacon of light, hope or love without its seasons of renewal. I define renewal as the revitalization of the church, as it pertains to individual and corporate fervency toward the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and its application on an individual and collective level. Renewal is a transformation that happens by the Holy Spirit's power. There are steps that any church can take, then, to spur on renewal.

Having said the above and as we think about what it means to have renewal in our Armenian Evangelical Churches, we are going to take a glance back at the inception of our movement, back in the Ottoman Empire, when the beginnings of a spiritual awakening began to simmer in the background of a non-evangelical atmosphere. The reason for this brief foray is my introduction to the book entitled *Christianity in Turkey: A Narrative of the Protestant Reformation in The Armenian Church*, by Rev. H. G. O. Dwight¹ by a parishioner at my church. I pray that this brief introduction to the topic of church renewal will get you thinking, brainstorming, praying, and talking about what your specific church can do in this 21st century after Christ to become a vibrant, life-giving, growing and influential center of light and life to all around it. Let's dive in and take a look at a few important principles that were part of the awakening of Evangelical life among Armenians...

The first foundation of the Armenian Evangelical Renewal was the accessibility to and the availability of intelligible Scriptures. According to the account of Rev. Dwight, the first editions of printed Armenian Bibles were simply reprints of whatever classical Armenian version was available in the early 19th century. In 1813, the British and Russian Bible Societies had become interested in disseminating Bibles among Armenians. In 1815 the mass-printing of the Classical Armenian Bible was undertaken, from presses in Calcutta, India and St. Petersburg, Russia. Then in 1818, the press at St. Lazarus island in Italy published the Classical Armenian New Testament by itself. Then came the first attempt at making the Scriptures more intelligible with the "Armeno-Turkish" Bibles in 1822, with Armenian letters but Turkish words. And finally,

¹ Dwight, Harrison Gary Otis. *Christianity in Turkey: A Narrative of the Protestant Reformation in the Armenian Church*. London: James Nisbet & Co., 1854

a Western Armenian version was attempted in the same year.

All this activity was important for people to hear God's Word. In other words, renewal could not and cannot come without God's Word being available to all. The Bible must be read and heard, it must be available and present in people's personal and corporate lives of worship. Without an intelligible Bible, we cannot easily understand God's Word to us. The beginning of any kind of church renewal requires a return to the preaching of Scripture, and the encouragement to read the Bible regularly.

Second, the Armenian Evangelical Renewal could not move forwards without the preaching of the Word of God by his servants. In 1821, two missionaries that found themselves in the Boston area became catalysts for other missionaries to begin to look in the direction of the Ottoman Empire. There was much apathy and ignorance to God's Word, but there were cries for help coming from a rare Scripture-focused Armenian here and there, both in the homeland and in the Boston area in the USA. I would be remiss, however, to posit that it was only non-Armenian missionaries who drove the Evangelical renewal forward. If it wasn't for Professor Krikor Peshtimaljian, who taught Scriptures in the Patriarchate of Constantinople to prepare men for priesthood to serve the Armenian Church, much of the fervor would not have been sparked. The study and sharing of the Scriptures led to the students' awareness of discrepancies between the contents of the Bible and certain religious practices of the Mother Church. Needless to say, the movement would gain steam and form *The Society of the Pious* in 1836, and even with official debates about Evangelical beliefs hosted and sponsored by the Patriarchate, the Word of God was preached freely. The Bible preached made a great impression on many.

In other words, the preaching of Scripture is essential for renewal – if God's Word is not preached in a church, renewal and revival cannot come. The substance of our spiritual food is God's Word. If we feed on anything else, we become spiritually malnourished and headed towards serious spiritual sickness and weakness of faith. If the saving Gospel of Jesus Christ is our central theme, however, then we cannot go wrong. If Christ crucified, risen from the dead, ascended to the Father's right hand,

and returning one day to claim His church is not preached, then the people will not have the bedrock upon which to build a renewed life. Praise the Lord, that the Gospel was indeed being preached at first by a few, but then many from both lay and even clergy in the Armenian community. The preaching caused a stirring of hearts, which caused many to come to Christ. Preaching of the Gospel caused personal renewal and expanded the scope of ministry as more and more people warmed up to the simplicity and forthrightness of the Gospel of our Lord.

Third, relevant communication is indispensable for a renewal movement to build and establish a fresh momentum of

evangelization and Gospel ministry. In 1832, Rev. Goodell settled among Armenians to begin the work of learning their modes of communication and their culture. As he began to get acquainted with many, the work began to move forwards, even if by fits and starts, as the accounts are full of interruptions by attempted stoppages of schools, prayer meetings, and the pressuring of Armenian participants to stay away from the missionaries.

Today, many churches struggle because they have not taken an honest look at what mode of communication, singing, worship and ministry connect best with the people. Many congregations complain of younger people going to other churches and giving various reasons for their lack of consistency in attending worship at one of our Armenian Evangelical churches. The reason always seems to be a communication/community reason. Armenian Evangelical churches with such issues need to sit down and take an honest and hard look about how they are doing ministry and whether or not they are truly willing to invite a new way of preaching the same Gospel. It should not surprise any congregation if no changes occur because no significant attempt has been done to speak the language of those who are younger or unchurched.

Fourth, Renewal in a church must affect the society at large, at least regionally. The missionaries worked feverishly not only to learn or use either

Today, many churches struggle because they have not taken an honest look at what mode of communication, singing, worship and ministry connect best with the people.

Today, we as Armenian Evangelicals must challenge ourselves to “get out there”, to be in the greater Armenian (and American!) community, not just to “make ourselves known,” but to make Christ known to all.

Turkish or Armenian to preach, but also to establish schools, prayer meetings, and a social network among non-Evangelicals and even non-Christians. There was simply no way of moving the Gospel work forward without engaging both government and culture, as well as the established churches, since these were the gatekeepers of freedom in that society in those early decades of the 1800s.

Today, we as Armenian Evangelicals must challenge ourselves to “get out there”, to be in the greater Armenian (and American!) community, not just to “make ourselves known,” but to make Christ known to all. We are ultimately serving our Lord out of our Armenian Christian heritage, but if we constrain ourselves to the Armenian community, we must not then complain of our low numbers, especially if we are not evangelizing or making disciples of other Armenians. We must not only be “out there,” but also ministering, building relationships, participating in government, economics, the arts, business, education, entertainment, and so many other spheres. The goal is the Gospel. It comes in an Armenian Evangelical package because of who we are – but the Gospel is still first and foremost. We must not withhold the Gospel from any human being who needs Christ.

Each Armenian Evangelical church in the AEUNA has already, *de facto*, made a decision about their scope of influence. Some have an expansive presence in their region – they influence government, culture, and many other such spheres. They have become agents of transformation for Christ. Others of our churches are siloed off, content to continue hanging on to being what once was, but which doesn't connect with either younger Armenians or anyone else, except for their small, cozy community that they once enjoyed, but has dwindled down in recent years. This latter group of churches needs a bigger vision desperately – a vision of a bigger field of Armenians, if nothing else, and perhaps even as big as jumping into the ministry field of all human beings.

Finally, and perhaps most necessarily, ...the renewal of the Armenian Evangelical Church had and must always have prayer and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit as a pillar of its practice and theology. This comes from the example of the missionaries having a section of their quarters where they held frequent prayer meetings for the Holy Spirit to pour Himself out on believers and themselves. Notice these prayer meetings had a specific purpose – they were not for any other reason than to have more of God within each servant of the Lord. It is instructive to see that the work of preaching, teaching, bearing witness and affecting the society as a whole had a strong foundation of openness to prayer. That focus had a profound impact on leadership, planning, and vision for both missionaries and newly ordained Armenian pastors and other installed leaders within the Evangelical movement.

Today, depending on the church community, each church has a slightly overbalanced focus when it comes to being a body that emphasizes both the Word and the Spirit in a healthy balance. Too many churches are focused excessively on teaching Scripture to the detriment of prayer, while others pray so much, but lack solid, substantive Scriptural teaching. We need not only fervently praying or educated church leaders, but also well-prayed and God-seasoned leaders. Notice, I said leaders, and not just pastors. Whether lay or ordained, it is not enough to know the Bible cover to cover if we do not know its Author intimately via prayer, Scripture meditation, and worship. We are called to believe in and worship God the Holy Trinity, whom the Scriptures reveal. It is heresy to relegate the Holy Spirit to a secondary teaching and try to replace Him with the Bible. We must be praying, “Holy Spirit, fall upon us as you did on Jesus’ disciples on that Day of Pentecost, that the Gospel work may be done, to the glory of the Father.”

Intelligible Scriptures, Bible preachers, relevant communication, regional ministry scope, prayer with the focus on the outpouring of the Holy Spirit; these were five things that the American missionaries did to help spread the Gospel among Armenians in the early 19th century. Needless to say, it was wildly successful, even if met with great resistance.

My prayer is to see us as Armenian Evangelical churches make sure all five of the above are major focus points for development and maturity of our congregations. May we all have that vibrant, evil-conquering, truth-in-love Scripture teaching, Holy Spirit praying, evangelizing atmosphere once again... in Jesus’ name. ■



Հովիւներուն Պատգամը

SERMONS BY OUR UNION PASTORS

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Մատթ. 7.7-8, Եւ. 40. 28-31,
Սաղմ. 103. 1-5



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Մկրտիչեան
Կլէնտէ,
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Worcester, MA
pgs 22-23



ՆՈՐ ՏԱՐՈՒԱՅ ՄԱՐՏԱՀՐԱԲԵՐ՝

ՀՈԳԻՆ ՆՈՐՈԳՈՒԹԻՒՆ

Մատթ. 7.7-8, Ես. 40. 28-31, Սաղմ. 103. 1-5

Վեր. Սերոբ Ճ. Մկրտիչեան

Կլէնտէ, Քալիֆօրնիա

Մարդ արարածը իր ապրած կեանքի ընթացքին կը փորձէ գործիքներ նորոգել եւ նոյնիսկ վերջերս, գիտութեան զարգացումով, մարդ սկսաւ իր մարմին կարգ մը մասերն ալ նորոգել, ինչպէս.- ձեռք, ոտք, ծունկ, սիրտ, եւայլն...

Արդեօք մարդ արարածը կարիքը չունի՞ հոգիի նորոգութեան: Ի՞նչ կը հասկնանք հոգիի նորոգութեամբ:

Հոգիի նորոգութիւն, կը նշանակէ ներքնապէս բարեփոխուիլ: Մարդ արարածի ներաշխարհը, այսինքն՝ հոգին նորոգել: Այլ խօսքով, հոգիին վրայ ծանրացած եւ կուտակուած մեղքերէն եւ աղտերէն փրկել ու մաքրել հոգին, նաեւ ամէն տեսակի վնասակար ազդեցութիւններէն եւ նորոգուած հոգի ունենալ:

Ինչպէ՞ս է առողջութիւնը:

Բայց ո՞վ կրնայ մարդուն հոգին նորոգել, եթէ ոչ մարդը Ստեղծող եւ Փրկող Տէր Աստուածը:

Ինչպէս որ մեր ֆիզիքական մարմինները ենթակայ են հիւանդութեան եւ հետեւաբար՝ մաշումի, իսկ լուծումը՝ դիմել բժիշկներուն դարմանումի եւ նորոգման համար: Նոյնպէս, մեր հոգիները ենթակայ են տկարութեան եւ հիւանդութեան ու կարիքը կայ բժշկութեան եւ նորոգման, բայց այս պարագային կարիքը կայ դիմելու հոգիի բժիշկին՝ Տէր Աստուծոյ:

Սակայն, մարտահրաւերը այն է, թէ մարդ արարածը ակելի մտահոգ է իր ֆիզիքական առողջութեամբ եւ նորոգութեամբ, փոխանակ՝ հոգիի առողջութեամբ եւ նորոգութեամբ: Եւ երբ մարդ արարածին ֆիզիքական մարմինը առողջ է, հետեւաբար կարիք չ'զգար քննել եւ ստուգել հոգիին առողջութիւնը:

Այլ խօսքով, մարդ արարածը ամէն ատեն ջանք կը թափէ որպէսզի մարմինը առողջ ըլլայ եւ առողջ մնայ, ինչ որ շատ կարեւոր է, եւ հաւանաբար այդ պատճառաւ, երբ երկու անձեր կամ բարեկամներ իրարու հետ տեսնուին նախ կը հարցնեն իրարու «Ինչպէ՞ս է առողջութիւնդ»:

Իրականութեան մէջ, միշտ Աստուծմէ կը խնդրենք առողջութիւն եւ կ'աղօթենք հիւանդներուն ֆիզիքական առողջութեան համար, բայց կը մոռնանք Աստուծմէ խնդրել առողջութիւն եւ բժշկութիւն հիւանդ հոգիներուն համար:

Տէր Յիսուս ըսաւ. «Խնդրեցէք եւ պիտի տրուի ձեզի» (Մատթ. 7.7): Հաւատացեալը կանչուած է դիմել Անոր որ կը բժշկէ եւ կը նորոգէ հիւանդ հոգիները:

Կենդանիներու աշխարհին մէջ առիւծը կը նկատուի թագաւոր: Իսկ թռչուններու թագաւորութեան մէջ, արծիւը կը նկատուի թռչուններու թագաւոր իր զօրութեան եւ գերազանցութեան համար:

Եթէ արծիւի կեանքը նկատի առնենք, կը տեսնենք թէ՛

1- Արծիւը իր բոյնը կը շինէ բարձր լեռներու ժայռերու ճեղքերուն մէջ: Որպէս զի ըլլայ ապահով եւ հաստատուն (Յոր. 39. 27 -28):

2-Արծիւը փոթորիկներէն չ'ազդուիր եւ միշտ ակելի բարձր կը թռչի, որովհետեւ աչքերը կը սեւեռէ եւ կ'ուղղուի դէպի արեւ:

Աստուածաշունչին մէջ արծիւը կը յիշուի 32 անգամներ: Եսայի Մարգարէն կը շեշտէ թէ բոլոր անոնք որոնք իրենց կեանքը Տէրոջը կը վստահին, անոնց ուժը պիտի նորոգուի եւ արծիւի պէս պիտի ըլլան. «Տէրոջը ապաւինողներուն ոյժը պիտի նորոգուի եւ անոնք արծիւներու պէս թռչելով վեր պիտի ելլեն» (Ես. 40. 31):

Աստուած ստեղծեց մեզ եւ արծիւէն ակելի գիտակցութիւն տուաւ մեզի հաստատելու մեր կեանքը Վեմի վրայ որպէս զի ըլլայ հաստատուն եւ ապահով եւ այդ Վեմը Տէր Յիսուս Քրիստոս Ինքն է, միա՛կ Ապաւենը եւ Վեմը:

Սաղմոսերգուն կ'աղօթե եւ կը յիշէ զԱստուած որպէս իր ապաւէնը. «Երկրի ծայրէն քեզի պիտի կանչեմ... Վասնզի դուն ինծի ապաւէն եղար» (Սաղմ. 61. 2-3):

Երբ հաստատուած ըլլանք Վեմի վրայ եւ մեր աչքերը սեւեռենք Անոր որ զօրութիւն եւ ուժ կու տայ, այն ատեն փոթորիկներէն եւ մեր չորս կողմի դժուարութիւններէն չենք ազդուիր, այլ համբերութեամբ կը դիմագրաւենք ու կը յաղթահարենք, որովհետեւ հաւատացեալին ուժը կը նորոգուի Աստուծոյ Սուրբ Շոգիին զօրութեամբ:

3- Արծիւը իր թռչանքներէն հեռանալու համար դէպի արեւը կը սուրայ եւ արեւի ճառագայթներուն պատճառաւ անտեսանելի կը դառնայ: Նոյնպէս մենք ամէն օր կը փորձուինք չարէն, սատանայէն, բայց երբ միշտ Աստուծոյ՝ Տէր Յիսուսի նայինք, Անոր ուժը պիտի չ'արտօնէ որ յանձնուինք ու պարտուինք:

Սաղմոսերգուն կ'ըսէ. «Բարձրելոյն ծածկոցին տակ բնակողը՝ Ամենակարողին հովանաւորութեանը տակ պիտի հանգչի» (Սաղմ. 91. 1): Այսինքն՝ Աստուած է պաշտպանը բոլոր անոնց որոնք Աստուծով կ'ապրին, որովհետեւ ինքն է կեանքին ուժը:

4- Արծիւը յատուկ ձեւով կը խնամէ իր զաւակները: Բ. Օրինաց 32.11-ին մէջ կը կարդանք. «Արծիւը իր բոյնը կը խառնէ, կը շարժի իր ձագերուն վրայ, իր թեւերը կը տարածէ, զանոնք վրան կ'առնէ ու թեւերովը կը վերցնէ»: Ու այդ ձեւով կը սորվեցնէ իրենց թռչիլ:

Աստուած ստեղծեց եւ կեանք տուաւ մեզի: Սակայն մարդ արարածի կեանքը լեցուն է տարբեր տեսակի նեղութիւններով եւ տագնապներով: Իսկ երբ դժուարութիւններու մէջ ըլլանք, յաճախ կ'այպանենք զԱստուած:

Յիշենք թէ Ելից գիրքին մէջ Աստուած կը խօսի իր ժողովուրդին եւ կը յիշեցնէ թէ ինչպէս կը հոգայ եւ կը խնամէ իր զաւակները դժուարութեան, նեղութեան եւ տագնապներու ատեն. «Դուք տեսաք թէ ինչպէս ձեզ արծիւի թեւերուն վրայ վերցուցի ու քովս բերի, եւ հիմա եթէ իրաւցնէ իմ ձայնիս հնազանդիք ու իմ ուխտս պահէք, դուք ինծի սեպհական ժողովուրդ պիտի ըլլաք» (Ելից 19. 4-5):

Միշտ յիշենք թէ Աստուած կը հոգայ եւ կը խնամէ, պայմանաւ՝ վստահինք իրեն:

5- Արծիւը կ'ապրի երկար տարիներ, մօտաւորապէս 70 տարի նոյնիսկ եթէ վանդակի մէջ ըլլայ: Ամէն տարի իր փետուրներէն մաս մը կը փոխէ եւ նոր կ'երեւի: Բնագէտներու համաձայն երբ արծիւ մը 40 տարեկան ըլլայ իր բոլոր փետուրները

կը թափին եւ լման նոր փետուրներ կ'ունենայ: Կը նորոգուի եւ ակելի երիտասարդ կը դառնայ:

Աստուած նոյն ձեւով կը նորոգէ մեզ նոր ուժ կու տայ մեզի իր Սուրբ Շոգիով «Թէպէտ այս մեր դուրսի մարդը ապականի, սակայն մեր ներսի մարդը օրէ օր պիտի նորոգուի» (Բ. Կորնթ. 4. 16): Եւ ոչ թէ միայն 70 տարիներ, այլ՝ յաւիտենական կեանք:

Գրող Վիքթօր Հիւկօ իր հաւատքի մասին հետեւեալը կ'ըսէ. «Կրնայ ըլլալ որ ձմռան պաղէն գլուխս պաղի, բայց յաւիտենական գարունը սրտիս մէջ է»:

Ուրեմն,

Ահաւասիկ Տէրը շնորհք ըրաւ մեզի եւ կը պատրաստուինք Նոր Տարի մը դիմաւորել: Որ կը նշանակէ թէ մեր ֆիզիքական մարմինները մէկ տարի ակելի մեծցան ու ծերացան, եւ միեւնոյն ատեն, այս աշխարհի մէջ, Աստուծոյ մեզի շնորհած ֆիզիքական կեանքէն տարի մըն ալ պակսեցաւ: Եւ շատ հաւանաբար ալ ակելիով պիտի ուշադրութիւն դարձնենք մեր ֆիզիքական կեանքին եւ ըստ բժիշկներու եւ մասնագէտներու թելադրութիւններուն նորոգութիւններ ալ ընել, որպէս զի փորձենք առողջ մնալ:

Իսկ ինչ պիտի ըլլայ մեր հոգիի՞ն առողջութիւնը եւ անոր նորոգութիւնը:

Ժամանակն է որ ֆիզիքականին հետ միասին եւ ալ ակելիով մեր հոգիներուն ուշադրութիւն ընենք եւ քաջ գիտնանք թէ մեզ հիւանդացնող հոգերը եւ մտահոգութիւնները կը ման մեր մէջ այնքան ատեն որ մեր աչքերը լարուած կը պահենք մեզ պաշարող մտահոգութիւններուն վրայ:

Բայց երբ մեր աչքերը ուղղենք հոգիներու մասնագէտին՝ Տէր Աստուծոյ եւ Անոր Սուրբ Շոգիին նորոգիչ ուժին եւ մեր հոգիները յանձնենք Իրեն, այն ատեն պիտի սկսինք բժշկուիլ, նորոգուիլ եւ մեր հոգիները պիտի բժշկուին եւ նոր կեանք պիտի ստանան:

Աղօթքս եւ մաղթանքս է որ այս նոր տարուան մէջ եւ ամէն օր, բժիշկներուն Բժիշկ եղող Փրկիչ Տէր Աստուածը նորոգէ մեր հոգիները եւ միանալով Ներսէս Շնորհալիին մեր աղօթքը ըլլայ.

Տէր Յիսուս Քրիստոս,
«Նորոգող հնութեանց. նորոգեա եւ զիս,
նորոգ զարդարեա»:
Հիները նորոգող Տէր Յիսուս Քրիստոս, մեզ ալ նորոգէ: Ամէն ■

Վեր. Սերոբ Ճ. Մկրտիչեան
Կլէնտէլ Քալիֆօրնիա



Forgiveness Is Costly

Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian

One day Peter came up to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?" (Matthew 18:21).

Here's Peter, the one who needed forgiveness himself, concerned with how many times he had to forgive someone else. Let's face it, we all have our difficulties that keep us from forgiving others. We have a limit that we do not want to exceed.

A person who has an unforgiving heart, says, "I will forgive, but I will never forget!"

We all have asked the question that Peter raised: "How many times do I have to forgive? I am getting tired of it. Why do they keep hurting me?" Peter may have been thinking of a time when somebody wronged him and he had extended forgiveness.

Peter wanted Jesus to help him set some limits and boundaries for forgiveness. He wanted to know when it's OK to say, "That's it! You have messed up one too many times!"

Whatever the case, before Jesus could answer, Peter responded to his own question and suggested that seven times would be a good limit. That's not a bad answer. The rabbis back then taught that you had to forgive someone three times and then you could retaliate. The fourth time, you could do whatever you liked. In fact, they mistakenly taught that God forgives only three times. Peter raised that number from three to seven thinking his answer would impress Jesus.

Forgiving someone seven times is commendable. Most of us get frustrated if we have to forgive someone twice or three times. By human standards, what Peter said was commendable and generous. But Peter wanted a number, a limit, a place where he could finally say, "That's it! You are not getting away with this any longer. Our friendship is now over."

As Jesus often does, His answer to Peter was unexpected. Jesus said to Peter, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy times seven times" (Matthew 18:22). Peter could not believe his ears! He was not expecting this! Seventy times seven? Peter got out his calculator and punched in the numbers. That's 490 times!

Jesus is not suggesting that we count the number of

times we forgive someone. Seventy times seven means there is no limit to the number of times we are to forgive someone. Actually, if we were to count, by the time we reach 490, we would be in the habit of extending continuous and unlimited forgiveness. That's exactly the point Jesus is making. We do not keep score, when it comes to forgiveness. We forgive and forget!

Since the truth of forgiveness, without limits, is hard for us to understand, Jesus told a story to help illustrate what He meant. In the first half of the story, Jesus deals with those of us who need forgiveness. In the second half, He targets those of us who need to forgive others.

Let's start: "The kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. As he began the settlement, a man who owed him 10,000 talents was brought to him" (Matthew 18:23-24). Here's the picture. The king decided to call in all his debts. He sent out his collection agents and they came back with a man who owed the king a huge amount of money. Since the man could not pay the debt, "the master ordered that he, his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt (Matthew 18:25). Since the king knew he could never recover all his losses, he just wanted to get back whatever he could.

At this point, the servant did what most of us would have done. He fell on his knees and said, "Be patient with me, and I will pay back everything." Even though he could never pay it back, he's now desperate. The king was moved with compassion. He did something the man did not even ask for. The king not only released him, he also forgave his entire debt. This was at great personal cost to the king. He wiped the slate clean by canceling the debt.

Now, the man owed the king nothing! This is exactly what forgiveness is all about. To forgive is to cancel a debt. In the Lord's Prayer, we say, "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors."

When we have wronged someone and he chooses to forgive us, in essence he is saying, "I cancel your debt. You do not owe me anything. I release you from ever having to pay me back." The servant did not deserve this forgiveness; it was purely an act of grace and mercy on the part of the king.

C. S. Lewis, the English professor and author, said, "Forgiveness by its nature is for the unworthy." He also said, "Everyone thinks forgiveness is a lovely idea until

they have someone to forgive.”

Having said that, let us look at the following three action steps for those who are in need of forgiveness:

1 - Face your friend- The first step you need to take, if you are the guilty party, is to meet with your friend or foe face-to-face. Is there anyone you need to face? Anyone you need to call?

2 - Own the wrong- The second step is to own the wrong that has been done. When you mess up in your relationships, Jesus wants you to own your wrong and say, “I am sorry. It’s my mistake.”

3 - Ask for release- The third step is to ask for release. You actually say, “Please, forgive me. It was my mistake.” If your friend says something like, “It’s no big deal, do not worry about it.” You might want to say, “I appreciate that, but I need to have your forgiveness. Do you forgive me?” It’s really important to be released from the debt.

Well, how about when we need to forgive others. Let’s go back to the story. As this humbled man walked away with this wonderful gift of forgiveness, he ran into a friend who owed him about ten dollars. Instead of canceling his friend’s debt, he grabbed him and began to choke him saying, “Pay back what you owe me!” (Matthew 18:28). We are a lot like that, aren’t we? When someone does something wrong, we want to see them punished and pay for the damage they have done to us.

Jesus continues by telling us that the forgiven man’s friend fell to his knees and asked for some time: In fact, his plea was almost identical to the other man’s, when he was before the king: He said, “Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.” But there’s one big difference. Instead of forgiving the wrong out of gratitude for the forgiveness he had received, “he went off and had the man thrown in prison until he could repay the debt” (Matthew 18:30).

You may enjoy putting people in prison, if they have wronged you. You may want them to suffer as badly as they hurt you. This man threw his friend in prison and the word got out to the king. The king was really angry now. He sent his soldiers to bring the man before him. He said: “I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to do so. Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?” In anger, his master turned him over to the torturers until he paid back all he owed (Matthew 18:32-34).

What happened to that man will happen to you and me, unless we learn to forgive. We may be tortured by anger and bitterness. We may lie awake at night worrying over every wrong that someone has done to us just because we will not sincerely forgive them.

Here’s the message: While you often try to punish and to imprison those who hurt you, the reverse actually happens. When you do not forgive, you end up being tortured.

Do you know where the worst prison is? It’s the

prison of an unforgiving heart. A professor of theology has said, “When I genuinely forgive, I set a prisoner free and then discover that the prisoner I set free was me.” When you choose not to forgive, you imprison yourself. Have you ever noticed that some of the most miserable people are those who are unwilling to forgive others?

Two men, who were in a nursing home, had been quarreling for years. One of them thought he was on his deathbed. So, he called his foe over to his bed and said, “Bill, I forgive you for what you have said and done against me over the years, and I want you to do the same for me.” The other man, with tears in his eyes, agreed that he too would like to forgive and to be forgiven. Then the man in the bed said, “But if I get better, this deal does not count!”

To forgive is a process of giving up. That’s exactly what the word forgiveness means. It means “to give” to someone by releasing them from their debt. It also carries the idea of “releasing and freeing yourself.” It’s like saying, “You did something that really hurt me. But I care enough about you. So, I release you from all obligations to ever pay me back. I forgive you completely.” We extend forgiveness because all of us are imperfect human beings who are in need of being forgiven.

Here’s a definition of forgiveness: “Forgiveness is like meeting someone for the first time.” That means there is no baggage, no history, no grudges and no hidden resentments. To forgive means to start over by giving someone a fresh start. The Bible says: “Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you” (Colossians 3:13).

You can tolerate those who irritate you and forgive them when they wrong you, precisely because Jesus has forgiven you. Since Jesus has forgiven you and me, then, out of gratitude, we should forgive one another. Where are you today?

1. Do you need to ask someone to forgive you? If so, decide to face them, own your wrong and ask for release.

2. Do you need to forgive anyone? Are you tired of living with an unforgiving heart? If so, cancel that debt today and restore that friendship by offering forgiveness.

I earnestly pray and hope that you will not leave this service without making a decision that can change your life and the quality of your friendships by asking forgiveness from someone and extending forgiveness to others. A Christian’s life is a two way street: First, we receive and second, we give.

Let’s, therefore, forgive and ask to be forgiven! ■

Rev. Dr. Avedis Boynerian delivered this sermon at the Church of the Martyrs, Worcester, MA on Sunday, June 16, 2024.



A Reflection on Archaeology and Armenian Christian Heritage

By Catherine Momjian

When the word 'archaeology' is heard, there is often an assumption that historical objects and structures are principally in the past and carry little significance to our present lived reality. Scholar Norman Yoffee, however, has posited that the study of identity, memory, and landscape cannot be done in separate categories.¹ Yoffee suggests that studying these together move investigators away from abstractions and toward research into how people lived and understood their lives.² Modern archaeological scholarship has become aware of archaeology's propensity to be used as objects to fuel the legitimacy of any given ideology. Armenian archaeology is an example of this: when we view depictions of ancient Armenian churches and church ruins, the experience affects how we understand our lives, our history, and our faith.

In Armenia, we observe numerous instances in which history has been remembered, forgotten, subverted, or omitted. Archaeology's subservience to a dominant ideology is manifested in Armenia and its historical ruins. The earliest scholarly investigations of the region's classical ruins were conducted by European travelers who "provided a basic foundation for an archaeological approach to the region's classical past. [...] Their site plans and sketches constitute the earliest known renderings of the classical art and archaeology of the South Caucasus."³

By the early 1930s, a new generation emerged of archaeologists and classicists who were trained in Marxist thought. Consequently, archaeology as a discipline struggled greatly, and there was a complete breakdown of the possibility (and reality) of sociocultural change that was specific to different ethnic groups.

During Soviet times, in opposition to Western

scholars, Soviet historians refused to attribute any influence from Hellenistic society to the Armenian people, especially as it related to interpreting archaeological phenomena that bore traces of such influence, like the temple at Garni. Because of this shift, Armenian art and architecture began to be seen in the wider scope of ancient art in the Mediterranean and Iran.

Scholar Adam Smith discusses the careful consideration given to the architecture in the construction of new buildings in Armenia during the 20th century and states, "The Soviet National assemblage was invested first and foremost in the promise of a new kind of public."⁴ Therefore, by the erection of new statues, memorials, and monuments, Soviet architects were attempting to create a new shared identity that emphasized the reliance of Armenians on the Soviet regime for identity and protection. The style and subject matter for these buildings and statues are prominent in directing varied and tumultuous Armenian identity into one cohesive thread. However, upon Armenia gaining its independence in 1991, we saw a new era in Armenian materiality. In this era, architects chose to omit Soviet influences and instead create a history that is not sullied by such events. "Yerevan's invented tradition now leads a more ambitious archaeological rhetoric for all of Armenia, collecting and disseminating the shards of diverse genealogies and rededicating them to the singular narrative of the nation-state."⁵

By discussing the materiality of public spheres, Smith argues that the architecture of Armenia, has been molded in particular ways to elicit ideologies and identity within a population. He states,

"The city's public assemblage reinforces the observation that the making of citizens and consumers is not a work of pure abstraction but one built into

¹ Norman Yoffee, "Peering into the Palimpsest", in Norman Yoffee (ed.) *Negotiating the Past in the Past: Identity, Memory, and Landscape in Archaeological Theory*, (Tucson, Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 3.

² Yoffee, "Peering into the Palimpsest", 3-4.

³ Lori Khatchadourian, "Making Nations from the Ground up: Traditions of Classical Archaeology in the South Caucasus," (*American Journal of Archaeology*, Vol. 112, No. 2, April, 2008), 253-4.

⁴ Adam T. Smith, "'Erevan, my Ancient Erebuni': Archaeological Repertoires, Public Assemblages, and the Manufacture of a (Post-) Soviet Nation, in Hartley, Charles W., G. Bike Yazicioglu, and Adam T. Smith (eds.) *The Archaeology of Power and Politics in Eurasia. Regimes and Revolutions*, (Cambridge: CUP 2012), 70.

⁵ Smith, "'Erevan, my Ancient Erebuni', 73.

the physical experience of daily life. [Therefore,] A public assemblage is formed not in the design or manufacture of a single architectural work or isolated brand icon, but in the articulation of salient linkages across domains."⁶

Archeology is no stranger to conflict. This is especially the case at the ancient site of Ani in historical Armenia, now Turkey. Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, writing on the historical site of the Ani Cathedral, argues that "In such situations, it is not possible to preserve a cultural heritage site while avoiding questions about painful histories."⁷ The tumultuous history and ideology that has arisen cannot, therefore, be separated from the material reality of the site at Ani. And because of disagreements about such ideology of origins and claim to ownership, the archaeology of this site has suffered. Moreover, Watenpaugh states, "The presence of Armenian communities or monuments was until recently either silenced in official Turkish historiography or actively repressed."⁸ Even when historical monuments or artifacts clearly indicate Armenian rulers, churches, publications, etc., they are often purposely omitted in official Turkish archeological publications and research.⁹ This conflict might be the clearest example of what might arise when you have to suppress the presence of archaeology; it is very clear that it has something to say; however, the object cannot speak and tell the truth unmarred by the ideological constraints it must operate under.

Ideology can not only be misleading to the historicity of the object or structure but moreover, it can be dangerous to the people who are being silenced. The Armenian people are no stranger to this silencing. However, by adopting the holistic archeological framework of identity, memory, and landscape, we are able to more deeply understand the Armenian experience. Viewing archaeological locations with Armenian Christian significance, whether on site, in artwork, or in our mind's eye, strongly impacts the way we understand our heritage of faith. This exploration has aimed to show that structures of the past speak to our spiritual understanding of ourselves as Armenian Christians. We are not silent, and we are still here. ■

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⁶ Ibid, 75.

⁷ Heghnar Zeitlian Watenpaugh, "The Cathedral of Ani, Turkey. From Church to Monument", in Mohammad Gharipour (ed.), *Sacred Precincts. The religious Architecture of Non-Muslim Communities across the Islamic World*, (Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2014), 464.

⁸ Watenpaugh, "The Cathedral of Ani, Turkey. From Church to Monument", 468.

⁹ Ibid, 468.



The Crucible of Sanctification: Death as the Gateway to Renewal

Harout Necessian AMAA Field Director

“...unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”

Jesus, John 12:24

Abstract

Christian salvation is a three-phase process: 1) justification - becoming a child of God through confessing Christ as Lord, 2) sanctification - spiritual renewal, growth, and transformation into Christlikeness, and 3) glorification - the replacement of our physical bodies with eternal, incorruptible ones at the promised resurrection. God’s will for Christians is to focus on the second phase—sanctification. This involves confronting our sins and flaws, which Jesus carried on the cross. By accepting, learning about and confronting our individual flaws and sins, we can, with God’s help, neutralize them one at a time and cultivate a godly character. This process is described as “taking off” the “old self” and putting on the “new self.” Confronting our sins and shortcomings is imperative, yet it is an excruciatingly painful exercise that many avoid, to their spiritual, social, and emotional detriment.

The early Christians, justified by faith, hoped for their glorification—their transformation into Christlikeness, promised at the resurrection when Jesus’ Kingdom is established. This hope sustained them through persecution and continues to inspire us today, offering solace in our struggles as we await the resurrection.

However, God’s salvation plan includes more than justification and glorification.

God calls His children to pursue sanctification, which begins when we “die to sin.” Just as Christ’s resurrection followed His death, our spiritual rebirth starts by putting off our “old self.”¹

Jesus called his followers to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow Him, making it clear that

following Him requires a form of death: “Whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for My sake will find it.”²

This may seem confusing, given that Jesus came so we “may have life, and have it to the full.” So, why does He call us to die?

The death of our old selves is essential for our Christ-like selves to emerge. Paul echoes this call, urging us to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice,”³ followed by a transformation through the “renewing of your mind.” This death leads to renewal and rebirth.

Paul, in Ephesians, urges believers to “put off your old self” and “put on the new self” designed in God’s image.⁴

¹ Eph 4:22

² Matt 16:24-25

³ Romans 12:1

⁴ Eph 4:22-24

Sanctification is central to God's plan, requiring intentional effort. Those who cling to sin and destructive habits resist God's will and risk stepping outside His redemptive plan.

Why, then, do so many Christians leave this life still carrying the ungodly patterns and counterproductive behaviors they came to Christ with?

We assume that everyone who claims to be Christian has faith and believes. However, true evidence for faith goes beyond merely affirming doctrinal statements. Jesus makes it clear: Christians are not those who simply cry "Lord, Lord," but those who do "the will of my Father."⁵ The true evidence of faith is demonstrated by how we live, not just by what we proclaim.

As young Christians, we began our new life journey with great enthusiasm and a sincere desire to obey God. However, over time, our sincere zeal often fades due to the pressures, pleasures, perplexities, pessimism, and distractions of daily life.⁶

Another cause of stalled sanctification is our reluctance to confront our sinful nature.

To overcome sinful habits, we must confront our flawed values, thoughts, and behaviors. This is an excruciating process as it can dismantle our self-esteem and challenge the pride of our untamed egos. We thus avoid this necessary step.

How then do we overcome our internal obstacles and embark on the renewal journey?

Unfortunately, there is no simple "3-easy-steps-to-sanctification" formula. However, there are biblical, time-tested principles that guide us towards sanctification.

To overcome our inner obstacles, we must subdue our ego, with genuine faith as the antidote. True faith humbles us, dismantling our self-deceptive pride and allowing us to see our sins and weaknesses more clearly.

When unchecked, ego becomes our greatest enemy, damaging relationships with God and others. It blinds us to our faults, hinders admitting mistakes, and blocks the humility needed for growth, stifling maturity. A common example of ego at work is found in family dynamics. For example, when a wife points out her husband's mistake, his wounded ego may make him

defensive or lead him to shift blame, damaging the relationship.

The Holy Spirit helps subdue our ego by reminding us that our true worth is based on God's image engraved on our souls, not human approval. When ego seeks to project faultlessness or strength, it reveals inner weakness and insecurity.

To begin the renewal journey, we must cultivate a thirst for sanctification, a yearning that fuels perseverance through challenges and flows naturally from our love for God. This desire motivates deep self-examination, the transformation of vices into virtues, and the replacement of bad habits with good ones, all guided by God's penetrating Word⁷ as expounded by the Holy Spirit.

However, we cannot take this thirst for granted. Its hold on our will can weaken as competing loves vie for our hearts. We must regularly remind ourselves of our first love for God and the priceless value of sanctification, along with the lasting benefits it brings.

Sanctification sounds difficult, even impossible. How do we endure?

Indeed. It's often called "the race of endurance." We enter through a narrow door, bowing in humility. The path is hard to navigate, but the excruciating pain of confronting our sins, borne by Christ, is part of the journey.

Yet, there is encouragement. Along the way, we glimpse cheering crowds in the stands, urging us to keep going. These are the ones who have already finished the race and know the joy of crossing the finish line. With their encouragement, we find the strength to keep running.

What can we expect at the finish line?

As we near the finish line, we begin to notice positive changes both internally and externally. Our worldviews, attitudes, demeanors, habits, and speeches all reflect this transformation. Our loved ones notice, appreciate, and compliment us, and our lives become more fulfilling as our relationships deepen and our job performance improves. The sweet aroma of victory over our inner struggles is truly delightful.

Looking back at the narrow door and the painful journey, we remind ourselves, "It was all worth it." ■

⁵ Matt 7:21

⁶ Jesus alludes to this in the parable of the Sower Matthew 13:1-23

⁷ Heb 4:12



What We Owe to Our Holy Translators

(On The Feast of the Holy Translators)

By Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian

The month of October is known as “The Cultural Month” for Armenians throughout the world. It is during this month and, especially on the second weekend of October, that Armenian churches, organizations, and people pay tribute to the memory of the *Holy Translators* who created the Golden Age of Armenian Literature in the fifth century. Subsequent glorious periods of literary accomplishments were inspired by the work of the Translators, who were headed by the two most brilliant literary minds – *St. Sahak* (c. 350-440) and *St. Mesrop* (345-440). These two spiritual giants were later called *Spiritual Enlighteners of the Mind*.

The partition of Armenia between the superpowers of the region — the Byzantine and the Persian Empires — toward the end of the fourth century A. D. had created a potential political and cultural threat for the Armenian people. On the ecclesiastical front, there was another potential danger. The Armenian Church was dependent on the Byzantine and Syriac Churches for using their liturgies because it had no alphabet of its own. Didn't the Armenians have an alphabet before the fifth century A.D.? Yes, they did. According to historians and philologists, the Armenian language must have had its own letters, but they must have been lost, and fallen into disuse. We know that in the Christian era, the church language was Greek and Syriac. Thus, Armenians were educated in foreign tongues and literature.

The centers of education and learning were the universities of Caesarea, where the Greek language was taught, and Edessa, where Syriac was prominent. The students from northern Armenia usually attended the University of Caesarea, and students from the southern provinces of Armenia received their training in Edessa.

The necessity for an Armenian alphabet was keenly felt by almost everybody. The common people were hungry and thirsty for the Word of God in their own language, and the leaders were in great sympathy with the sentiment of their people.

Without an Armenian alphabet, there was reasonable fear and inevitable danger of losing the Christian faith, which was still at war with paganism. At the same time, the use of the Syriac and Greek languages would have placed the Armenian Church under the influence of the Syrian and Byzantine Churches. The latter, the Byzantine Orthodox Church, had been attempting to dominate the Armenian Church persistently for some time.

Both the temporal and religious leaders of Armenia, King Vramshabouh and Catholicos Sahak had the far-sightedness to see the necessity for the Armenian language as a unifying factor in the partitioned land, as well as an effective tool of communication for the propagation of the Gospel.

The task of inventing an Armenian alphabet was entrusted to Mesrop Mashtots, who had become famous as a well-versed linguist and an erudite cleric. St. Mesrop and some of his students traveled extensively, examined different alphabets and consulted many calligraphers, in order to devise a new Armenian alphabet. Mesrop finally succeeded. In 404 A.D., he invented the alphabet which attained its final form two years later, in 406. Armenian tradition claims that it was during a time of prayer and meditation that the long-sought characters of the Armenian alphabet were revealed to him in a heavenly vision. This explains the centuries-old legend of the Armenian people that their alphabet was of divine origin.

Whether the alphabet was of divine or human origin, has no great significance for us; however, one thing is certain, those 36 letters (later two more were added) became St. Mesrop's greatest gift to the Armenian nation — a granite rock foundation upon which our culture was built.

The invention of the Armenian alphabet ushered in a new age of intellectual and spiritual enlightenment. St. Sahak and St. Mesrop, recruiting a select team of translators, successfully translated the Bible into Armenian. This led the way to an unprecedented spiritual awakening for the Armenian people, and gave birth to an educational and literary movement. This provided the long-awaited impetus for unusual literary activity, culminating in the yet unparalleled "Golden Age" of the fifth century.

Thus, the Armenian language and literature, not only became conducive for the spiritual renaissance of the nation, but it also freed her from the cultural domination of her powerful neighbors, and solidified her national consciousness.

Looking back at our history, we become convinced that the secret of the endurance of the Armenian people is not found in external, but internal factors. The secret of the survival of our people is not found in geography, economics or sociology. The key is how Armenians have perceived themselves in relation to God and to the world. Other nations were larger and mightier than we; but Armenians had an image of themselves that gave them a moral stature. They saw themselves as capable of achievement and acted generally in such a way as to fulfill that aspiration. And that self-image would not be thwarted by any fate, however adverse, nor by any hardship however grievous. They lived in the midst of, and often under, the tyrannical rule of mighty empires — Assyria, Babylon, Rome, Persia, Egypt, Turkey, Tsarist and Soviet Russia—but they never perceived themselves

to be ineffective, handicapped or disadvantaged.

Many of us have lost the sense that we are bearers of a vital spiritual message that speaks to the world. Every Armenian needs to ask, "Who am I?" Before any other question in life can be answered, this one must be considered. What is the nature of my Armenian identity? Why should I wish it on my children and grandchildren? What is the meaning of my Armenian distinctiveness?

The answer that issues from the entire Armenian tradition is that we are a small nation, but we are God's witnesses, Christ's ambassadors. We are as great and glorious as our faith, spirit and commitment.

Being a Christian Armenian involves a unique quality, a spiritual experience that is the very essence of being an Armenian.

For why else have Armenians survived and withstood the power of time, fortune and defeat, but to stick to their Christian faith, to be part of the great Armenian heritage, to participate in the life and culture of our people as self-respecting people? The essence of this religious and cultural experience is religio-cultural identification. Alas, there are other voices in Armenian life loudly clamoring for priority — ultra-nationalists, chauvinists, secularists, assimilationists, etc. But our commitment as Christian Armenians, "Hye Christonianer", must be neither to a party, nor to a social class, nor the checkbook variety of "Armenianisms." Like that of the Holy Translators, our commitment belongs to God and to our nation.

For the past 1600 years, our language has survived our tumultuous history and continues to ring as sweetly in our day as in previous centuries. Since its creation, the Armenian written language has continued to evolve and flourish through the hands of our most able and dedicated writers and translators, cementing our past to our present.

Armenians owe an eternal debt to the Holy Translators, especially to Saints Sahak and Mesrop, for their precious legacy. The Holy Translators have also become a source of inspiration to numerous Armenian intellectuals, from the fifth century to the present. Generation after generation, new "Translators" have walked in the footsteps of the fifth-century Holy Translators and have given us a wonderful heritage. To preserve, perpetuate and enrich that heritage is our challenge today. ■

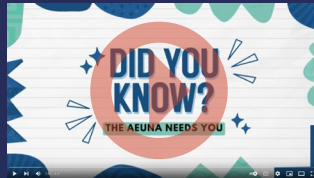
2024 AEUNA & AEYF BIENNIAL

SAN FRANCISCO, CA

FOR JUST AS THE BODY IS ONE AND HAS MANY MEMBERS, AND ALL THE MEMBERS OF THE BODY, THOUGH MANY, ARE ONE BODY, SO IT IS WITH CHRIST
1 CORINTHIANS 12:12



WATCH



DO YOU KNOW THE AEUNA STAFF? Watch a video and learn who they are and what they do for our community family



The 2024 AEUNA & AEYF Biennial Conference and Post-Conference Tour in late June/early July was a truly meaningful experience. I continued to build relationships with some of my close friends from the East Coast, and I also had the chance to meet so many amazing new people from the West Coast. We enjoyed our time together through worship, discussion groups, and even Armenian dancing. Pastor Rob, the conference speaker, was phenomenal, and his messages were inspirational and thought-provoking. I felt they were applicable to both young and old. Throughout the weekend, I was able to strengthen my faith and relationship with God.

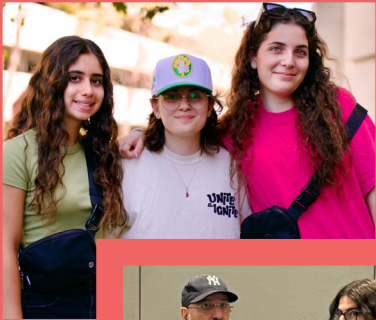
This was my first visit to San Francisco, so it was extra special to tour the city with my Armenian friends. We visited the Golden Gate Bridge, Alcatraz, the Redwoods, and many other famous tourist attractions. The highlight of the tour was visiting the Mt. Davidson Cross at the highest point in San Francisco. The steep hike was challenging, but a jaw-dropping view of the city made the trek to this significant landmark worth it. It was even more special to learn that the cross is now owned by the Armenian community.

I have so many fond memories from this trip, despite getting very little sleep! I cannot wait for the next biennial on the East Coast in 2026. ■

2024 AEUNA & AEYF BIENNIAL

SEMINAR TOPICS: Ask the Armenian Matchmaker: How to Navigate Modern Dating / Interpreting, Understanding, and Applying the Word of God in Today's World / Everyday Evangelism

ROUNDTABLE TOPICS: Armenian Culture / Ministry Programming / Raising Up Leaders / Church Participation with the AEUNA / Financial Awareness / Outreach/Evangelism / Technology



Why is dating so hard?

- We're all still learning!
- Dating in Armenian Culture
 - Arranged Marriages
 - Matchmakers
 - Dowries
 - Engagements & Courtship
- "Modern Courtship": Family Involvement & preservation of traditions and heritage
- Dating as a Christian...
 - How the world dates contradicts many Scriptural values

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ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSIONS



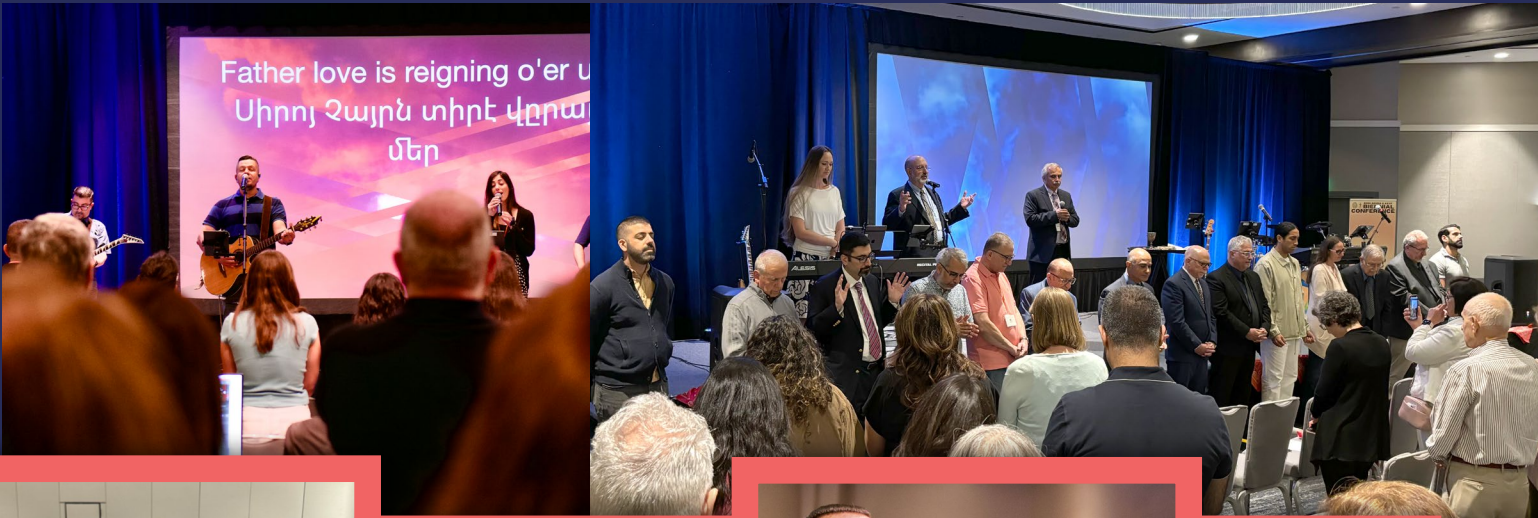
2024 AEUNA & AEYF BIENNIAL

27TH GENERAL CONVENTION

ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL UNION OF NORTH AMERICA

23RD CONVENTION

ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL YOUTH FELLOWSHIP





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 Advancing the Mission of the AEUNA
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- Methods of prayer and prayer order
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- Christ centered group strategies to make the the efficiency of your support

FACILITATORS: Rev. Hendrik Shadrachian, Moderator of the AEUNA, Sunday, September 23, 2024
 Pastor Ian Grahm, Training Chair AEUNA, Monday, September 24, 2024
 Greg Sarkis, CFF/CMA, The Moderator of the AEUNA, Tuesday, September 25, 2024
 Rev. Alan Tomasiak, Past Moderator AEUNA

Learn what the AEUNA has been doing to fill pulpits and how you can help!



2024 AEUNA & AEYF BIENNIAL

ARMENIAN EVANGELICAL YOUTH FELLOWSHIP BIENNIAL TOUR



AEYF ER



AEYF WR



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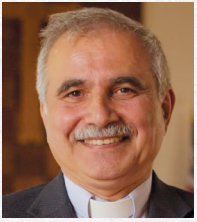
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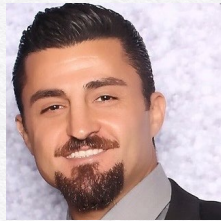


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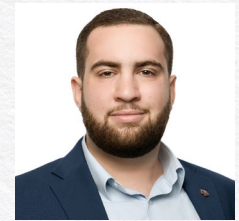
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The Nature of the Copula and its Relevance to Biblical Interpretation

By Berj Manoushagian, Waltham, MA

The linking verb **IS** is one of the most commonly used and misused words in English. The word **IS** is an essential part of a proposition or a declaration. A proposition is a sentence of the form **A is B**; (A is called the Subject, **is** is the Copula, and B is the complement, the term which completes the proposition.) e.g. God **is** Love. (1 John 4:8)... faith **is** the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of *things not seen*. (Heb. 11:1); Love is kind. (1 Cor 13:5). The copula is an ambiguous word because it can stand for at least nine different known meanings or uses. Sadly, this important topic is rarely if ever addressed in schools. I hope that this short essay will help the reader to gain a better insight into its nature and uses, and help him to better interpret biblical propositions. The study of the nature of the copula goes back centuries before Christ when the Greek philosophers noticed the ambiguous nature of the copula. Interest in the nature of the copula did not come to the fore again until the beginning of the 20th century when the German philosopher and logician Gottlob Frege noted up to four different uses of the copula. During my studies on the nature of truth, I have come across five additional unique uses of the copula. Below I explain each one with a simple example, so that the reader is better equipped to deal with this ambiguous term.

The nine known uses of the copula:

1. The IS of Existence > e.g. "God **IS**"; by which we mean to say "God **Exists**".
2. The IS of Predication > e.g. "Laura is beautiful"; Predication is the **ascription of an attribute**, in this case, Beauty.
3. The IS of Group Belonging > e.g. "Lisa is married"; Lisa **belongs** to the class of people who are married.
4. The IS of Finding Oneself > e.g. "Mariam is in Armenia"; Mariam **finds** herself in Armenia.
5. The IS of Consequence > e.g. "Knowledge is Power"; The **consequence** of being knowledgeable is to have power over the difficulties we might face.
6. The IS of a Metaphor > e.g. "Time is Money"; a Metaphor asserts that one thing is something that **it literally is not**.
7. The IS of a Simile > e.g. "She is as cute as a kitten."; a Simile **likens one thing to another unlike thing**; the copula links a non-literal attribute to the subject.
8. The IS of an Idiom > e.g. "It is a piece of cake."; an idiom is a commonly used expression whose **meaning does not relate to the literal meaning**

of its words.

9. The IS of Identity > e.g. "Mark Twain is Samuel Clemens"; both proper **names refer to the same person**.

The IS of identity has a feature which cannot be applied to the other uses of the copula called **Convertibility**. Convertibility means that we can switch the places of the subject and complement without altering its correct message. Thus, "Mark Twain is Samuel Clemens" can be converted to "Samuel Clemens is Mark Twain" and the meaning of the proposition remains valid.

Analysis of Scripture

"**God is Love**" uses the **IS of Predication**. The sentence means that Love is one of God's attributes, just as are Justice, Holiness and Jealousy. This is one of the most misinterpreted sentences about God. Love is NOT God's identity. If God and Love were identicates, then we could convert the sentence to "Love is God" and have a valid proposition. But the conversion is incorrect because Love is not God. Love is only one of God's several attributes. God and Love are not identicates.

Another proposition from scripture which has been misinterpreted is from Hebrews 11: "Faith **is** the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." It is a common error that as soon as we see a sentence of the form **A is B**, we assume that B is a definition of A, that A & B are identicates.

The Bible rarely gives definitions of terms, and in this verse, it is not defining the word Faith. Here the copula is the **IS of consequence**. The Consequence of having faith in Christ is to be filled with hope and to have assurance of things which cannot be seen. The correct definition of Faith on the other hand is rather simple: Faith is the voluntary mental assent to a given and understood proposition. Faith is absolutely necessary to acquire knowledge. Without the exercise of faith, we cannot know anything.

Another easily misunderstood set of propositions can be found in 1 Cor 13, the chapter on Love. The apostle is not trying to define Love, but is declaring the consequences of being a loving person. "Love is kind." Is not a definition of love, but the IS in that sentence is again the **IS of consequence**. The consequence of being a loving person is to be kind, not boastful, not delighting in evil, trustful, hopeful, etc. These complements are the result of being filled with love.

More on this important topic and a list of references can be found here:

<https://www.truth-defined.com/TheNatureOfTheCopula.htm> ■

Revive Us Again

By Deacon Dan Bazikian

The Armenian Evangelical Movement finds itself at a crossroads. Its members have concerns about its future. Will our congregations dwindle down to extinction? Will we have enough pastoral leaders to occupy our pulpits? Will we retain our young people in the face of a secularized culture?

What should be our response to these challenging circumstances? I think it is time to reflect seriously on our abiding principles, what motivated the Armenian Protestant/Evangelical Movement to begin in the first place. I believe that would provide the needed guidance on the actions we need to take now.

The early Armenian Evangelicals were people of the Book, the Bible. They studied it, preached and proclaimed it, and sought to live by it. A general comment among Armenians years ago when you brought up the subject of the Scriptures was something like this: "That is a Protestant book." We need to be people of the Book again, and proclaim it in an uncompromising way.

Next, the early Armenian Evangelicals were known for their piety. Before the Armenian Evangelical Movement was officially established, the early followers had formed, the "Society of the Pious" (*Parebashdoutian Miapanoutune*).¹ I remember my mother saying that in those early days people would say, "They are Protestants; they do not lie." Do we uphold such standards today? Maybe if we did, it just might attract people to join our ranks. ("I want what they have," they might say to themselves.)

Third, as people of the Book, people of piety, I suspect that our Armenian Evangelical forebears were also people of prayer. Prayer kept them in close touch with our Triune God as they sought His direction in their proceedings.

We need to be people of prayer as well in order to gain God's guidance in these troubling times. We need to encourage a ministry of prayer in our churches and in our homes.

In 1857 New York City's downtown North Dutch Church hired a city missionary named Jeremiah Lanphier to reach out to the nearby community. He decided to start a noontime weekly prayer meeting. At first, only a few came, but gradually the numbers increased; it became a daily gathering. (An economic downturn, the Panic of 1857, had occurred, and many people became inclined to turn to God for help.)² This was perhaps the most prominent of other similar meetings taking place (or about to take place) not only in New York but in many places around the nation. Many people, as a result, were added to the membership of the churches. According to revival historian Frank Beardsley, the people of the United States were also providentially prepared for the traumatic event of the American Civil War, which soon followed.³

We are also living in troubled times. We need such an awakening and revival today. We need it in our Armenian Evangelical community, in our beloved nation, and around our turbulent, troubled world. Let us pray that it fervently comes.

Revive us again—
Fill each heart with Thy love;
May each soul be rekindled
With fire from above.

Hallelujah, Thine the glory!
Hallelujah, amen!
Hallelujah, Thine the glory!
Revive us again.

Words by William P. Mackay ■

¹ Giragos H. Chopourian, *The Armenian Evangelical Reformation: Causes and Effects* (New York: Armenian Missionary Association of America, Inc., 1972), pp.44-45.

² Timothy L. Smith, *Revivalism and Social Reform in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: Abingdon Press, 1957), pp.63-64. The entire Chapter IV, "Annus Mirabilis-1858," is worth reading.

³ Frank Grenville Beardsley, *A History of American Revivals*, third edition, revised and enlarged (New York: American Tract Society, 1912), pp. 235-39.

Restoration in Christ: A Journey of Healing and Growth

by David Hernandez, AECNYC, NY

Introduction

In the Garden of Eden, humanity's disobedience sparked a legacy of brokenness, introducing pain, shame, and guilt. Today, we still grapple with physical, emotional, and spiritual suffering. Yet, God's redemptive plan offers healing and restoration through Jesus Christ, reconciling us to Himself and revitalizing our lives.

The Origin of Brokenness

The story of humanity's need for healing and restoration begins in the Garden of Eden. When Adam and Eve disobeyed God, it damaged their relationship with Him and introduced pain, shame, and guilt into the world (Genesis 3:7). This event changed everything, affecting every person since that time. Today, we still experience the consequences: physical suffering, emotional wounds, and a deep sense of spiritual disconnection. We need healing and restoration in all these areas - body, mind, and spirit. This brokenness is a reminder that we need to be reconciled with God, and that's exactly what God offers us through Jesus Christ - a path to wholeness, redemption, and a restored relationship.

Old Testament Healing and Restoration

Throughout the Old Testament, we see a God who is passionate about healing and restoration. Psalm 103:2-3 reminds us, "Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits - who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases." God longs for a deep, loving relationship with each of us. Yet, we often try to find healing and fulfillment on our own terms. We may idolize things like money, status, or possessions, especially in today's world of social media and comparison. But true and lasting healing can only be found in Jesus Christ.

Deep down, we know we need healing. Our hearts are wired to crave restoration, but we often ignore this inner voice. Instead, we chase after temporary fixes, unaware that our souls are crying out for something more - a connection with God. We were made to serve and love Him, but our priorities often get twisted.

The Great Physician

At the heart of our faith is Jesus, the "Great Physician," who understands our struggles because He experienced them too. He knew physical pain, emotional turmoil, and spiritual conflict, just like us. This shared humanity makes Him deeply relatable and empathetic. But what sets Him apart is His victory over adversity. The New Testament is filled with stories of Jesus' healing miracles: restoring sight, calming storms, and bringing hope to those suffering. But His greatest act of healing was His sacrifice on the cross. By willingly suffering and dying, Jesus bridged the gap

between humanity and God, reconciling us with our Creator. In Jesus, we find a Savior who gets us and offers a way out of our predicament. His resurrection defeated sin, death, and despair, offering us redemption, healing, and eternal life. This legacy is the foundation of our faith, inspiring trust, and devotion to the One who truly understands and heals.

AECNYC Healing Ministry

At the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York City, we have recently launched a "Healing Ministry". The ministry provides a safe space for people to experience God's healing and restoration. We have successfully created an open and transparent environment in which empathetic and active listening takes place. We emphasize that there is healing and restoration in Jesus Christ and acknowledge those who experience physical, emotional, and spiritual pain. Through prayer, counseling, and community support, we've had powerful encounters every time we have met. We look forward to the work God has in store for the future.

Restoration in Christ

Through Jesus Christ, restoration brings transformation to every aspect of our lives: our inner selves, relationships, and spirits. This renewal happens through prayer, repentance, forgiveness, and growth in faith. The gospel is the powerful foundation for this change, helping us move from brokenness to wholeness. Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection make three types of restoration possible:

Personal: healing emotional wounds, finding new purpose, and renewing our sense of self

Relational: reconciling with others, forgiving and being forgiven, and building harmonious connections

Spiritual: deepening our faith, drawing closer to God, and gaining strength to serve others

As we share this message with others, we become part of God's plan to heal and restore the world. This creates a ripple effect of transformed lives, revitalized relationships, and a community of redeemed people. By spreading the gospel, we spread hope, freedom, and the life-changing power of Christ's love.

Conclusion

Restoration in Christ is a lifelong journey of growth, healing, and service. As we walk in His transformative power, may our lives become beacons of hope, shining God's light into a broken world. May His redemptive love compel us to share the gospel, spreading restoration to all who seek healing. ■

45th Anniversary of the Glendale Armenian Church of the Nazarene

By Andy Magdesian, Glendale, CA



This year our church is celebrating its 45th anniversary, and we planned many activities to celebrate this milestone, thanking God for His grace and for all those who served and still serve Him and His church.

Family Camp

This year, our congregation gathered at the beloved Camp AREV for our family camp. The trip itinerary consisted of games, intergenerational fellowship, delicious food, and sessions led by our pastor Rev. Serop Megerditchian. We heard about Armenia and the ministry there from our guests from Armenia: pastor of the Dilijan church Rev. Garnik Toutikian, Mrs. Toutikian, and their daughter Anush, who is Social Program Manager of AMAA Armenia.



Vacation Bible School

"Start the Party" was this year's Vacation Bible School theme. As always, the children partook in many games, arts and crafts, singing, and most importantly learning lessons from the Bible. We believe that VBS and children's ministry is essential to raise up the future generation of believers.

Family Day at the Park

Every year, the congregation plans a gathering outside of the church to share in food and fellowship. Last year, we took a trip to Catalina Island and this year we had a lovely picnic at Brace Canyon Park in Burbank, CA.



45th Celebratory Banquet

One of the major milestones of this year was the 45th anniversary of the Glendale Armenian Church of the Nazarene. Every year, we celebrate our church serving the Lord for another year at a banquet that highlights our service to our community and our members who serve in various areas of the church. It is also a chance to look forward to growing our church. The October 5th banquet was sold out, with a record of over 200 people attending this year. A handful of attendees were also present at the very first service held at this church in 1979. The program included a video of the church ministries, words of greetings and memories from families, and a message by our church pastor Rev. Serop Megerditchian.



Armenian Genocide Memorial Khatchkar Dedication

Sunday, October 6, 2024, after the worship service, Rev. Serop Megerditchian prayerfully dedicated a Khatchkar monument in memory of the one and a half million Armenians who perished during the Armenian Genocide of 1915. The Khatchkar was prepared in Gyumri, Armenia. The Genocide Monument - Khatchkar is located at the entrance near the sanctuary and stands as a symbol of the united body of Armenian Christians both near and afar. It reminds us of our roots in Armenia and stands as a reminder of the faith we have maintained throughout our history of persecution and suffering. AEUNA Field Pastor Rev. Ron Tovmassian participated in the dedication and prayed in English.



We pray that God uses our church, along with the other churches in the AEUNA, to spread the gospel to our local communities and shepherd the body of believers towards a deeper relationship with our Lord Jesus Christ. Events such as these serve as opportunities to thank God for His blessings and have fellowship with one another and remind us of our mission as a church and body of believers. Praise God for His church. ■

Սուրբ Ծնունդը. որո՞ւն մասին է եւ ի՞նչ է անոր նշանակութիւնը:

Սուրբ Ծնունդը մը անցաւ, եւ ահա կը դիմաւորենք նոր տարի մը ու կը պատրաստուինք տօնելու Ս. Ծնունդը: Սակայն ի՞նչ կը նշանակէ տօնել Ս. Ծնունդ (Christmas). ի՞նչի մասին է, կամ աւելի ճշգրիտ արտայայտուելու համար, որո՞ւն մասին է եւ ի՞նչ է անոր նշանակութիւնը:

Մէկ կողմէն աշխարհը կ'առնէ Ս. Ծնունդը կաղանդ պապային հետ: Առասպելական հսկայ, գիրուկ, հարուստ, տարեց անձին հետ, որ ունի կարմիր հագուստ եւ ճերմակ մօրուք: Ան, որ տարին միայն մէկ անգամ նուէր կը բաժնէ «բարիներուն», սակայն չի կրնար մեզի հետ ժամանակ անցնել, բացի շուկային մէջ նկարուելէ... եւ յետոյ կ'անհետանայ մէկ տարուան տեւողութեամբ:

Հիմնուելով այս մօտեցումին վրայ, շատերս կը վերագրենք Ս. Ծննդեան օրը կամ տօնը նուէր գնելու հետ: Այլ խօսքով, Ս. Ծնունդը կը կապակցուի «առեւտրականութեան» (commercialization) հետ: Այս իմաստով, ան կը վերածուի գնումի եւ չափազանցուած ծախսելու բեռի մը: Վերջինս կը դառնայ հիասթափութիւն, յոգնութիւն եւ պարտականութիւն: Մեծ մասամբ, բոլորս ժամերով կը սպասենք շուկաներու կանգառներուն (parking lot) մէջ, որպէսզի կարենանք շուկայ մտնել եւ նուէրներ գնել, եւ կամ ժամերով համացանցի վրայ (online) ժամանակ կ'անցնենք լաւագոյն գնումը կատարելու: Կարծես թէ Ս. Ծնունդը դարձած է նիւթականի եւ ժամանակի սպառումի առիթ, եւ, հետեւաբար, շեղած է իր հիմնական իմաստէն եւ նպատակէն:

Միւս կողմէն, ուրիշներուն համար Ս. Ծնունդը կ'առնչուի ընդունելի աւանդութիւններու հետ, օրինակ՝ ընտանիքներով, հարազատներով եւ կամ ընկերներով հաւաքուելու, արձակուրդի մեկնելու, հանգստանալու, նախապիւրած ֆիլմեր դիտելու, ձիւն եւ սպիտակ փողոցներ տեսնելու, տօնածառեր զարդարելու եւ լուսաւոր տուններ եւ թաղեր պտղտելու: Անշուշտ ասոնք յարգելի սովորութիւններ են, որ կը կատարենք Ս. Ծնունդի եղանակին եւ անուան տակ: Սակայն, վերոյիշեալ աւանդութիւնները Ս. Ծնունդի երեւոյթային եւ արտաքին դիմագիծներն են, եւ պատեհ է որ պահենք: Այսուհանդերձ, անոնք պէտք չէ փոխարինեն եւ կամ նսեմացնեն Ս. Ծննդեան տօնին իսկական իմաստն ու նպատակը: Յիշենք՝ ինչո՞ւ կը պահենք այս սովորութիւնները, ի՞նչ են շարժառիթները եւ խորհուրդը նուէր գնելու եւ ստանալու: Պատասխանը՝ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի Ծնունդն է:

Թոյլ տուէք օրինակով մը բացատրեմ տեսանկիւնս: Երեւակայէ, որ քու Ծննդեան տօնն է. տարեդարձդ է, սակայն հրաւիրուած տօնախմբողները իրենց ուշադրութիւնը կը դարձնեն օդի վիճակին, սենեակի զարդարումին, սեղանի վրայի նուէրներուն, երգի նուագին, ճաշի տեսականիին եւ այլ հիւրերուն: Այսինքն՝ անոնց կեդրոնացումը ամէն ինչի վրայ է՝ բացի քու տարեդարձէդ: Այլ խօսքով, եկած են տօնելու քու տարեդարձդ, առանց քեզի:

Կարծես թէ ամէն ոք ներկայ է, բացի քեզմէ: Այնպէս թէ դուն ներկայ չես այս տօնակատարութեան եւ անոր կեդրոնացումը դուն չես, հապա, քեզմէ զատ ամէն ինչ: Կիզակէտը դուն չես կամ քու ծնիւղ չէ, ոչ ալ քու Ծնունդիդ նշանակութիւնը շուրջիններուդ համար: Չնշենք տակաւին թէ «Բարի տարեդարձ» ալ չ'երգուի քեզի, ոչ ալ շնորհակալութիւն կը յայտնուի, որ դուն իրենց զաւակը, ամուսինը, հայրը, մայրը, քոյրը, եղբայրը, ազգականը եւ կամ բարեկամն ես: Միթէ մենք այսպէ՞ս կը տօնենք մեր տարեդարձները: Վստահ եմ՝ ոչ:

Այս բոլոր երեւոյթները որ նշեցի, միջոցներ են տարեդարձ մը յիշելու եւ տօնելու, ոչ թէ նպատակը: Յիշատակին նպատակը այդ անձն է, եւ անոր Ծննդեան նշանակութիւնը: Միջոցները տօնին արտաքին տուեալներն են, անոնք լրացուցիչ են: Տնօրին տօնակատարութեան հիմնական եւ կարեւորագոյն պատճառը որոշ անձի մը տարեդարձը յիշելու ուրախութիւնն է, անոր Ծննդեան եւ կեանքին ուրախութիւնը:

Նոյնը կը վերաբերի Ս. Ծննդեան տօնին նկատմամբ: Ս. Ծնունդը իրարու հետ

հաւաքուելու, բնակարաններ զարդարելու, նուէրներ գնելու, եւ Կաղանդ պապային մասին չէ միայն, հապա ցնծութեամբ, հրեշտակներուն հետ՝ տօնելու եւ հռչակելու Աստուծոյ Աւետիսը, Բարի լուրը, Փրկչին՝ Յիսուս Քրիստոսի ծնունդը:

Ս. Ծննդեան եղանակը եւ օրը նախ եւ առաջ պէտք է ըլլայ Աստուծոյ սիրոյ արտայայտութեան յիշեցումը: Իսկապէս, Ս. Ծնունդով մենք կը մտաբերենք եւ կը տօնենք Էմմանուէլ (Աստուած մեր հետ): Ամենակարող յաւիտենական Աստուած, իր վստահութեան մէջ, կամաւորապէս մարդացաւ եւ յայտնուեցաւ մեզի Իր միածին որդիին միջոցաւ՝ ծնելով Ս. կոյս Մարիամէն իբրեւ փոքրիկ մանուկ մը, համեստ մուրի մը մէջ, որպէսզի ապրի եւ զրհուի եւ բանայ դրախտի դռները մեզի համար «Վասն զի Աստուած այնպէս սիրեց աշխարհը, մինչեւ իր միածին Որդին տուաւ, որպէս զի ամէն ո՛վ որ անոր հաւատայ՝ չկորսուի, հապա յաւիտենական կեանք ունենայ» (Յովհաննէս 3:16):

Ս. Ծնունդը կը խորհրդանշէ Աստուծոյ անսահման սէրը, բարութիւնը, հաւատարմութիւնը, գուրգուրանքը, ողորմածութիւնը, բարեգթութիւնը մեզի հանդէպ: Ս. Ծնունդը սուրբ օր է. «Աւելին՝ ան մեր հաւատքի սրբազան օրն է, «Քանզի մեզի մանուկ մը ծնաւ... Ան Աքանչեյի խորհրդակից, Չզօր Աստուած, Յաւիտենական հայր, եւ Խաղաղութեան իշխան» է: Աւելի քան երկու հազար տարիներ առաջ, Դաւիթի քաղաքին մէջ, Փրկիչ մը ծնաւ, ան է Քրիստոս տէրը: Այս է Ս. Ծննդեան տօնին ցնծալի ճշմարտութիւնը: Չկայ Ս. Ծնունդ առանց Քրիստոսի (There is no Christmas without Christ):

Սակայն այսօր ի՞նչ կը նշանակէ Ս. Ծնունդը մեզի համար: Ան Աստուծոյ Աւետիսն է, որ մեզի մանուկ մը ծնաւ, որովհետեւ՝

ա. Ան կը բերէ Աստուծոյ լոյսը մեր մտքերուն, հոգիներուն, սրտերուն եւ կեանքերուն մէջ՝ յաղթահարելու հոգեւոր խաւարը. Յիսուսն է աշխարհի լոյսը. Թող որ այս տարուան Ս. Ծնունդը քեզի համար դառնայ բարի լոյս, որպէսզի լուսաւորուիս ճշմարտութեամբ եւ լուսաւորես շուրջիններդ:

բ. Ս. Ծնունդը Աստուծոյ Աւետիսն է, թէ մեզի մանուկ մը ծնաւ, որ խաղաղութեան իշխանն է: Ան է որ կրնայ ներքին խաղաղութիւն տալ մեր անհատական կեանքերուն եւ հայրենիքին: Թող որ այս Աւետիսը տայ քեզի խաղաղութիւն՝ ընդունելով խաղաղութեան իշխանը ու դուն ալ քու կարգիդ բերես խաղաղութիւն ուրիշներուն կեանքերուն մէջ՝ սփոփանքով, օրհնելով եւ կամ ականջալուր ըլլալով իրենց ցաւերուն կամ հոգերուն:

գ. Ս. Ծնունդը Աստուծոյ Աւետիսն է թէ մեզի մանուկ մը ծնաւ, որ կը շնորհէ կենդանի յոյս եւ փրկութիւն: Յիսուս (եաշուայ) անունը կը նշանակէ «Աստուած կը փրկէ»:

Խոստացուած Մեսիան Քրիստոս ինքը՝ փրկիչը ծնաւ. իրով կայ յաւիտենական կեանք: Խորհէ եւ խոկա այս սքանչելի ճշմարտութեան վրայ: Եւ եթէ ունիս այդ կենդանի յոյսը եւ փրկութիւնը, բաժնեկցի՛ր ցնծութեամբ հռչակելով այդ: Այս ծելով դուն կը դառնաս Աստուծոյ Աւետիսի պատգամաբերը:

դ. Ս. Ծնունդը Աստուծոյ Աւետիսն է թէ մեզի մանուկ մը ծնաւ որն է Աստուծոյ անպատում պարգեւը: Մենք ի վիճակի չենք գնելու այս նուէրը, ոչ ալ կրնանք վաստակիլ կամ շահիլ զայն, սակայն կրնանք միայն ծրօրէն ստանալ զայն: Այս պարգեւը սուրբ է, անգին է, ծրի է, անթառամ եւ յաւիտենական: Ուրեմն՝ ստացի՛ր եւ բաժնեկցի՛ր զայն (2 կորթ 9:15):

Եւ վերջապէս, այո, Ս. Ծնունդը տալու եւ նուիրելու մասին ալ է նաեւ:

Աստուածաշունչը կը սորվեցնէ, թէ «Աւելի երջանկաբեր է տալը քան առնելը»: Տալու եղանակն է, որովհետեւ նախ Աստուած տուաւ Իր որդին մեզի: Մենք կու տանք, որովհետեւ Աստուած տուաւ. Ան է նախաձեռնողը: Ուստի տանք ինչ որ ենք եւ ունինք: Տանք մեր ընտանիքին, բարեկամներուն, դպրոցին, եկեղեցւոյ, ազգին, հայրենիքին եւ անշուշտ կարօտեալին: Նուիրելը միայն ֆիզիքական նուէր տալուն մէջ չէ. մենք կրնանք տալ սէր, խաղաղութիւն, սփոփանք, յոյս, օգնութիւն, նիւթական դրամ, ժամանակ եւ կամ որեւէ բարի արարք կամ խօսք: Ուստի, առատապէս տանք, որովհետեւ Աստուած առատապէս տուաւ ինքզինք՝ մղուած Իր սէրէն մեզի հանդէպ:

Եզրափակելով կ'ուզեմ յիշեցնել, թէ Ս. Ծնունդը մեր մասին կամ մեր չորս կողմի մասին չէ. չապա Աստուծոյ Աւետիսին, թէ Աստուած ինչ կատարեց մարդկութեան համար Իր մարդեղութեամբ (Incarnation): Կը մաղթեմ, որ Ս. Ծնունդը ցնծութեան եւ ուրախութեան տօն ըլլայ, յիշելով թէ Աստուած ֆիզիքապէս մեր մէջ բնակեցաւ անցեալին եւ հիմա կը բնակի իր Սուրբ հոգիով: Աղօթքս է, թէ Էմմանուէլը բերէ սէր, լոյս, յոյս, խաղաղութիւն, խնդութիւն եւ փրկութիւն մեր անհատական եւ հաւաքական կեանքերուն մէջ, Իր որդիին միջոցով:

«Երկնքի բարձրութեան մէջ Աստուծոյ փառք, երկրի վրայ խաղաղութիւն, մարդոց մէջ հաճութիւն» (Ղուկաս 2:14): Շնորհաւոր Սուրբ Ծնունդ.

«Քրիստոս ծնաւ եւ յայտնեցաւ. Ձեզի մեզի մեծ Աւետիս»: ☺

Թորոնթոյի Չայ Աւետ. Եկեղեցւոյ պատուելի Չոհրապ Սարգիսեանը- «Թինստէյլ» համալսարանի (Tyndale University) Աստուածաբանական բաժնի Մագիստրոսի թեկնածու է: ■

YOUTH MINISTRIES



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS OF CAMP AREVELK

Camp Arevelk turns 25! As you might have heard, the AEUNA East Coast camping ministry, Camp Arevelk, turned 25 this year and we thank God for His guidance and blessings. While this ministry has had many faithful volunteers, counselors and staff that have

served over the years, Sylvia Jizmejian has been there as Camp Director from the very beginning. At the celebratory BBQ, former camp committee Chair Silva Orchanian, and Sona Borekjian on behalf of all the counselors and staff and the current camp committee, honored Sylvia for her many years of sacrificial service. They described her as a humble servant, a mentor, a calm and graceful leader who nurtures, protects and empowers the counselors and faithfully loves and supports the campers. Through her faith in Christ and devotion to the Armenian Evangelical youth on the East Coast, she has guided this ministry for many years, alongside her late husband Rev. Dr. Ara Jizmejian. We praise God for Sylvia's commitment and love, and pray for His continued guidance for the future growth of this ministry. ■





What is Camp Arevlk? Camp Arevlk is a summer week everyone within the East Coast Armenian Evangelical community looks forward to. It is our home, where everyone is treated as family, with a mixture of laughter, happiness and spiritual growth.

In the heart of summer, August 4-10, 2024, 81 campers and 24 staff gathered together in Greenville, New York for this year's Camp Arevlk, this year's great experiences.

Each day, we start off with breakfast, where laughter, smiles and chatter begin. After breakfast is quiet time, allowing campers to prepare for meaningful discussions. As a camp counselor, I have the opportunity to sit with my campers and go through questions that were prepared for that day. After quiet time, is one of my personal favorites: gathering for uplifting worship singing the word of the Lord. Then it is time to get serious.

Our speaker this year was Pastor Aram Bedrossian, an AEUNA In Care student and current pastor of Armenian Memorial Church in Watertown, MA. This year at camp he focused on how we are God's people, in God's place, in God's presence. He also explained a few of the verses in the Bible. A verse that spoke to me was Romans 1:25: "Idolatry is when we trust in the gift more than the giver." We have all learned so much during camp, and we want to learn more year after year.

The daily schedule is packed with engaging activities. After our morning message, the campers rotate between craft, sports, and Bible lessons. This year craft was taught by Ani Tourosian. Bible lessons were taught by Arpi Sarmazian, Kim Heghinian and Darren Getzoyan. Sports were planned by Ara Naljian,

Anthony Arabian, Jacob Eglenceyan, Arek Sarmazian and Arev Kazanjian.

After a fulfilling day of learning and fun, everyone comes together for team games, followed by free time filled with friendly competitions. We gather everyone into the pavilion so we can start. The first night of camp, the sports team comes up with fun activities. Once we're done with team games, we have free time and then dinner. During free time, there are a lot of team tournaments going on. Once we hear the bell we make our way to dinner.

Evenings are particularly special, featuring quiet cabin time where campers reflect on their experiences and close in a prayer. We make our way to our cabins to change into warmer clothes. This is the time almost every camper looks forward to: night games, also planned by the sports team. Our favorites are the talent show, Bible trivia, night crossing, and counselor hunt, just to name a few. We finish off the day by coming together and singing worship songs. Once it hits 11:00 pm, it's time for "lights out."

The week ends in a heartfelt campfire gathering on Friday night, where the entire camp family shares songs, stories, and s'mores, celebrating the bonds they've formed all week.

As Saturday approaches, goodbyes are bittersweet, reminding everyone of the deep connections and spiritual growth experienced throughout the week. Camp Arevlk is more than just an event, it's a transformative journey that campers eagerly anticipate year after year. ■

Lara Tourosian

YOUTH MINISTRIES



“Come and see what the Lord has done!” Psalm 46:8

If you live in the Eastern Region of North America, you know that the beginning of August is a much anticipated time for our Armenian Evangelical community. Traditionally, during the second week, youth ages 10-17 come together for an unforgettable 6 days of camping ministry in the beautiful Catskill mountains of New York State. This summer was extra special: we celebrated our 25th year of Camp Arevelk!

Although the faces have changed over the years, one thing remains the same: God continues to use Camp Arevelk to change the lives of our young people. This year was no exception. We experienced tremendous growth with 80 campers and 23 counselors. Our speaker, Aram Bedrossian, shared powerful daily messages on the promises of God. From the Garden of Eden, to the Temple, to the hearts of believers, God's presence continually “tabernacles” with His people even into eternity.

We thank God for all our volunteers and staff who put their heart and soul into the success of Camp Arevelk. Our weeklong schedule was filled with Bible

lessons led by Arpi Sarmazian, Kim Heghinian, and Darren Getzoyan, each exploring the attributes of God with the campers. Mrs. Ani Adourian ran our beloved Arts & Crafts sessions, which traditionally incorporate Armenian cultural influences. Thank you also to Sona Borekjian and Moses Kazanjian for leading us in our favorite songs of worship.

With Ara Naljian heading our “Game Squad,” Anthony Arabian, Arek Sarmazian, Jacob Eglenceyan, Arev Kazanjian prepared and led epic games and challenges for our campers. Although their determination was put to the test with all the rain, they always made sure the kids were having the best time!

Finally, campers can always trust that they will receive the best care and extra TLC from our Nurse Talin Barsoumian. We are so very grateful for her expertise and her commitment over the years.

We celebrated our 25th anniversary as a community on Saturday, August 10 with a family BBQ. Thank you to our alumni who joined and served on this very special



Growing up in church, I was introduced to God multiple times, but it was at Camp AREV where I truly met Christ, and learned just how much of a loving and all powerful God he is. Having parents who were camp alumni, I was always excited to participate in every camp event and activity. Every year, my time at camp has been

something I eagerly anticipated. I learned about God's grace and mercy from different speakers, the incredible worship teams, art activities, and so much more. I was also introduced to what it is truly like to be a part of a ministry.

At camp, you're always surrounded by fellow Christians who understand the troubles of living in worldly atmospheres. In that wonderful environment, you can make friendships and have experiences that will last a lifetime. I made some of my best friends and memories at camp, worshipping, laughing, eating the delicious food, and reveling in God's creation.

Every year as a camper has been memorable and unique. Campers get to be a part of a team, play games, get thrown in the mud pit, all while learning what it truly means to be a child of God. I was also able to discover more about my culture, through Armenian songs, dance, art, and lessons. Not only do we get the full Christian camp experience, Camp AREV ties in the importance of honoring our culture, and how proud we should be of our Armenian heritage. We campers are always welcomed by the cabin leaders, coordinators, staff, and everyone else who makes Camp AREV the wonderful place it is. Camp AREV reintroduced me to Christ in more ways than I could imagine, and I know that without it, I wouldn't be as strong a believer as I am today. ■

Katya Hakopian
Holy Trinity Armenian Church
North Hollywood, CA



occasion, especially Aram and Shant Shishmanian who took the lead on our BBQ team this summer. Testimonies were given by Rev. Dr. Ara Heghinian, Silva Orchanian and Dave Shahbazian (one of the original founders of Camp Arevelk!) including a special time of appreciation for the many years of service of our camp Director Sylvia Jizmejian.

A special thank you to the AEUNA, the AMAA, and our Camp Arevelk families who have been so generous with their financial support, dedication and service. It is truly a blessing to be a part of such an incredible ministry that has served our AEUNA churches for so many years. We look forward to the next 25 years God has set before us. Come and see what the Lord CAN do!

Parent testimony: I am so very thankful for the counselors who are spectacular in their devotion to God and to each young person they are entrusted with. They continue to be strong mentors away from the camp environment and it is special and important. ■

Sylvia Jizmejian, Camp Director, AEYF ER MTY

Support the
Armenian Evangelical
Union of North America



BOLDLY GIVE TO THE AEUNA

Your donations will allow:

- The Minister to the Union and Field Pastor to travel and visit Union churches, support their events, and meet with ministry leaders
- The work to recruit, educate, and supervise the training of In-Care Students and lay leaders
- Acquiring new pastors
- Church planting and evangelism events
- Travel to and support for AEUNA camps, AEYF leadership training events, and retreats
- Support for Armenian Evangelical Women's Fellowship (AEWF) events
- Union-sponsored seminars, retreats and C2C in-person gatherings
- Enhancements to the AEUNA website, production of videos, and development of digital tools used to inform and unify
- The FORUM magazine and other publications
- Development of materials to educate our youth in Armenian Evangelical history
- AEUNA biennial activities

GIVE



DONATE

Please use the enclosed envelope or visit: aeuna.org/donate

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

Donations to the AEUNA are tax-deductible.

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 in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8

SAVE THE DATE

SEPT. 19-21, 2025



AEWFER
Armenian Evangelical Women's Fellowship
A Ministry of the AEUNA



NEW JERSEY

SEE YOU THERE!

CONTACT: AEWFEASTCOAST@AEUNA.ORG



EVERY CHILD DESERVES CHRISTMAS JOY

AMAA's treasured Christmas Joy Program is on track to once again bring smiles and fun to 10,000 underprivileged children in Armenia. But this can only be fully accomplished with the loving donations from our generous donors!

Christmas is a joyous season to remember how God revealed to us the importance of showing our love to others when He sent His Son for us. In addition to giving these children a reason to smile, every Christmas Joy package brings the gift of joy and love into the hands of each child.

Every package is filled with a variety of small toys, school supplies, personal care items, candy and a Christmas story activity booklet, which is distributed at Christmas presentations throughout Armenia. This is the one time of year that these children, who live in extreme poverty, can count on receiving a gift.

For as little as \$20 per package, help spread the joy of Christmas and share God's love to our precious children in the Homeland!



Join us and be a part of sharing God's love
Enclosed is my/our donation.

Select one: \$20 \$30 \$50 \$75 \$100 \$125 Other \$ _____

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Scan and donate now!

Make check payable to: Armenian Missionary Association of America, memo: *Christmas Joy*
Mail to: 31 W. Century Road, Paramus, NJ 07652 or make a secure donation online at www.amaa.org



Women's Fellowship Renewal and Restoration

The renewal of Christian faith and restoration is a vital theme within women's fellowship that resonates deeply in today's world. By focusing on spiritual growth through community, prayer, and service, Christian women can experience profound transformations in their lives. As we embark on this journey together, we not only renew our own faith but also strengthen the body of Christ, fostering a vibrant community of believers committed to living out our faith with purpose and joy.

As we walk this path, we can rest assured that we are not alone: God is ever-present, ready to renew our spirits and restore our hearts.

This journey that we take with the women of the Armenian Evangelical churches not only deepens our personal spirituality but also fosters a supportive community among believers.

These gatherings, whether in our own churches or as the Armenian Evangelical Women's Fellowship, as a whole provide a safe space for women to share their experiences, seek guidance, and support one another in their spiritual journeys.

I am so blessed to be a part of this wonderful organization that is making a difference. ■

Lena Garabedian, Chairwoman
AEWF (West Coast)



IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Matthew John Silverman October 16, 1983 - June 10, 2024 By Matt's loving family



Matthew John Silverman, a faithful servant of the Lord whose Christian impact was manifested in Armenian Evangelical churches in San Francisco and Los Angeles, at Camp Arev, and in missions work in Haiti and Vietnam, passed away at the age of forty on June 10, 2024 after a three-year battle with intestinal cancer.

Matt was born in Mountain View, California on October 16, 1983 to parents Joel and Anna (Sarafian) Silverman. He was the oldest of three children in the family, which grew to include brother Jeffrey and sister Lauren. Matt was a light in the eyes of his grandmother, Arshalous Sarafian, grandparents Millie and Herman Silverman, and godparents Arpi and George Banerian. Matt attended Bubb Elementary, Graham Middle School, and Mountain View High School. He was an exceptional student, excelling in math and science in particular.

As a freshman in high school, Matt was diagnosed with stage 4 Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He underwent a year of chemotherapy while still attending classes, not willing to give up any of his Advanced Placement courses. Members of his grandmother Arshalous's church, Calvary Armenian Congregational Church, prayed faithfully for his healing. After a year of surgeries, chemo and great pain, Matt was said to be cured of this cancer. He excelled in his high school classes, played the flute in Marching Band, and even achieved the Eagle Scout rank. He was an amazingly gifted and resilient young man.

Matt began college at UCLA in 2002, majoring in Chemical Engineering and playing flute in the UCLA Marching Band. He began attending the United Armenian Congregational Church with his Sarafian cousins, and soon was a regular participant in Bible Studies and youth activities. Matt was not shy about asking tough questions and delving deeply into Scripture. While his intellectual knowledge of Scripture grew, Matt realized during his second year of college at a Camp Arev retreat that "any plan God had for my life would be a better plan than anything I could come up with on my own, and it was time to face the reality that this God was real and was in control!" Then and there, Matt accepted Jesus as his Savior, and prayed a prayer of faith.



From that moment, as Matt later [shared in his testimony](#), everything changed. While he continued to pursue his education at UCLA, doing well and eventually earning B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees in Chemical and Biomolecular Engineering, his real focus was on serving the Lord and sharing the Gospel. He became active in Christian groups at UCLA, primarily Chi Alpha, a missions-oriented ministry. At UACC, Matt began teaching Sunday School with his cousin, Joey Sarafian, and was elected to the church's Board of Christian Education. He led an after-school tutoring program at UACC, outreach activities to serve the homeless in Skid Row, and Christian revival events. Faithfully, each summer and each winter for over fifteen years, Matt served as a counselor at Camp Arev. His fruitful ministry during his time in Los Angeles



reached countless children and young adults for the Lord. And his ministry with Chi Alpha led to his taking numerous mission trips to poverty-stricken Haiti and Vietnam, where he regularly preached to hundreds of people while helping to meet their physical needs.

Matt received his Ph.D. in 2014, publishing his dissertation on PET imaging for the detection of pancreatic cancer. He then returned to the Bay Area and was hired at San Francisco State University to teach Clinical Laboratory Science in the Medical Diagnostics graduate program. There, he helped train hundreds of graduates who now work in hospitals all over California. His many gifts in teaching were appreciated by countless students and colleagues over the years.

Upon his return to the Bay Area, Matt joined his beloved grandmother's church, Calvary Armenian Congregational Church. With the encouragement of then-CACC pastor, Rev. Nerses Balabanian, Matt began serving as the church's volunteer youth pastor. As a direct result of his engaging devotional programs and leadership, Matt drew in scores of teens and their families to the CACC community, growing the youth group from three to forty kids in ten years. The youth of CACC adored Matthew for his caring and compassionate disposition; he was "always just a phone call away" for them. CACC also regularly called upon Matt to preach, and his enriching sermons encouraged others to grow closer to Christ, with novel and unique examples that were often science-based. When the COVID pandemic hit, Matt provided online updates on the science behind the disease and its treatment, answering questions and calming fears while encouraging his audience to trust the Lord with their future. He also recorded dozens of Christian devotional messages on YouTube, bringing deep spiritual insights to youth and adults alike.

In May 2021, Matt was diagnosed with a very rare form of intestinal cancer, at stage 4. He immediately began researching experimental treatments and clinical trials while enduring chemotherapy for the second time in his young life. But even amidst his great pain and weakness, Matt continued to serve as CACC youth pastor and periodically to preach sermons. And during this time, as a CACC Deacon, Matt started to visit a young lady from church, Lara Palanjian, who was suffering from her own severe illness. The two rapidly fell in love, discussing theological topics for hours and providing each other great comfort about persevering in suffering. The two wed on March 4, 2023,



with a wedding theme focusing on the latter part of Isaiah 43:20, "I provide water in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland, to give drink to my people, my chosen." Matt and Lara's story was truly a God-designed love story.

After they were married, Matt and Lara lived in their Daly City home, where they spent as much time as possible enjoying and encouraging one another amidst their pain. They started a YouTube channel called "The Silverman Show," which became a platform for sharing spiritual ideas in addition to Lara and Matt's musical and comedy skits and performances. The couple celebrated their one-year wedding anniversary at CACC with friends and family, using it as an opportunity to raise support for one of Matt's favorite charities, Impactful Missions, which is seeking to build a school in Haiti. Matt and Lara also performed for their guests, playing flute and violin. It was a special and memorable evening, raising \$13,000 for the Haiti mission.



Not long after their anniversary celebration, and after a painful three-year battle with cancer, no hope for successful treatment, and many challenges in even being able to eat or drink, Matthew Silverman made the brave decision to enter hospice. He and Lara stayed at

IN MEMORIAM

his parents' home in Mountain View, under the loving care of his parents and devoted brother and sister, who left their "normal" lives to be with Matt around the clock. Matt's last 9 weeks of life during hospice were as impactful for the Lord as any before then. He met personally with family and friends, including many who traveled from around the country to be with him one last time. There were songs of praise and comfort that encouraged everyone. He held one last impactful session with his beloved CACC youth group, encouraging them to remain connected to Jesus as the True Vine. Matt told them, "Do not let things like death scare you. Death is the victory and ultimate reward for the Christian." Despite his great pain, Matt's last days were dedicated wholly to the Lord and to his family.

On June 10, 2024, surrounded by his loving family, Matthew Silverman entered into eternity with his Savior. Matt is survived by his parents, Anna and Joel Silverman, brother Jeff, sister Lauren and her husband Simon Margolis, nieces Addison and Emma, and by his adoring wife, Lara. A meaningful and emotional memorial service was held for Matt on July 13, 2024 at the Calvary Armenian Congregational Church in San Francisco, and the link to the video can be found here: <https://youtu.be/PnnS2xdGjqY?si=XpTCSjtg4jv1XaO1>. A separate memorial service was held at Camp Arev on July 27, 2024 for close family members.

Matthew's final wish was to continue to serve God through others' donations in his memory to any of the following organizations: Calvary Armenian Congregational Church in San Francisco, and his two missionary groups: Impactful Missions, and Hope Beyond Borders. In addition, the Camp Arev Executive Committee has approved naming their campership program in memory of Matthew Silverman. Contributions in Matt's memory thus may also be made to the Camp Arev Campership Fund to benefit young campers with financial needs. Of Matt, we can surely say, "Well done, good and faithful servant... enter into the joy of your Master" (Matthew 25:21).



Contributions in Matt's memory may be made to the **Camp Arev Campership Fund** to benefit young campers with financial needs.

(CLICK HERE OR USE THE QR CODE ON LEFT)

GRATEFUL FOR OUR BROTHER, ZAVEN KHANJIAN

July 31, 1944 – August 9, 2024



The sad news of Mr. Zaven Khanjian's unexpected death shook the whole Armenian community in the USA and the Armenian world. The last few months have been very difficult for all of us who worked closely with him. We know he is with the Lord and free of pain, but the pain of his absence is very real.

Zaven was a dedicated, fearless, visionary leader and a devout Armenian Evangelical, who loved the Lord, the Evangelical Church, Armenia and Armenian people all over the world. He offered his best to serve God, our churches and our people. As an Armenian, he was unable to sit still if there was unrest in Armenia and Artsakh, or any Armenian in the homeland or the diaspora was in need. He was a committed Armenian Evangelical

*...he is in the presence of
his beloved Lord, singing
with the angels the hymns
he enjoyed singing and
encouraged others to do so.*

who valued the traditions and heritage of our movement founders and was saddened to see the younger generation departing from those roots, heritage, practice and message.

He was thinking ahead, and planning and taking steps to prevent the unwanted from happening. At church, with the AEUNA, at the AMAA, and in the community, he offered his best and played a pivotal role when we faced a challenge or threat as a community or as a nation. He was always present, never shy to express what he thought was right, and was always one of the first to react or come up with a remedy when there was a problem.

He was such a person that his presence in any gathering made a big difference, that is why his absence is very noteworthy. It will be very difficult to fill the vacuum. The reactions to his death from all over the world are a testimony to the scope of his impact. His departure is painful for us, but we believe he is in the presence of his beloved Lord, singing with the angels the hymns he enjoyed singing and encouraged others to do so.

On behalf of the AEUNA leadership, staff, churches and congregations, we express our heartfelt condolences to his family members, especially Sona, and all his colleagues at AMAA and AEUNA, and friends. May the presence of the Resurrected Lord and the promise of eternal life for the faithful comfort us all. May our Lord strengthen us to keep his legacy alive.

Prayerfully,

Rev. Hendrik Shanazarian
AEUNA MTTU

Zaven Khanjian was a visionary person with immense conviction in his values and beliefs. Having been both a young person when he was a leader in the church and then later his pastor for 26 years, I witnessed this first hand. I can still remember when the Merdinian School was just a dream. God put a passion in the hearts of a few people, including Zaven. They worked tirelessly to get the school started. At first it was just a few classrooms borrowed from the UACC Sunday School. Over the years it has grown into an amazing educational institution. When Zaven believed in something never said "can't" he always believed, by God's grace, we could do it. As the AMAA Director, he exemplified that same drive and godly determination. The achievements that were accomplished through his leadership are incredible and have been a blessing to so many people. I am thankful God raised up such a steadfast leader to be a shining beacon as we move forward into the future.

Rev. Ron Tovmassian
AEUNA Field Pastor

Չաւէնը Շայ Աւետարանական համայնքի Զանուշարոյր Վարդն էր: Իր ազգային և աւետարանական համոզումները անխախտ էին: Միշտ պատրաստ էր ի նպաստ ազգին ու համայնքին ծառայելու իր հմտութեամբ ու իմաստութեամբ: Տասը տարիներ առաջ, Շայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը զինք հրաւիրեց որպէս առաջնորդ բազմատեսակ ծրագիրներ իրականացնելու համար: Ան բազմաթիւ պարտականութիւններ իր ուսին վրայ կը կրէր հայ ժողովուրդին ծառայելու համար: Չաւէնը հմուտ եւ խելացի էր, կազմակերպուած ձեւով կ'աշխատէր՝ իր տաղանդները ի սպաս դնելով զանազան ծրագիրներու: Առանց տրտունջի ծառայեց ամեն տեղ մանաւանդ՝ Շայաստանի, Արցախի եւ Մերձաւոր Արեւելքի երկիրներուն մէջ ուր արձանագրեց բարոյական ու հոգեւոր մեծ յաջողութիւններ: Իր ծառայութեան ձեռքը երկարեց անխտիր հայ համայնքին՝ իր լաւագոյնը կատարելով: Իր կողակիցը Սոնան իր աջ բազուկն էր բոլոր ծառայութիւններուն մէջ: Չաւէնը տասը տարուան մէջ հսկայական ծառայութիւններ մատուց հայ ժողովուրդին: Թող իր յիշատակը օրհնեալ ըլլայ:

Վեր Պերճ Ծամպազեան

IN MEMORIAM

Remembering Zaven Khanjian July 31, 1944 – August 9, 2024

--Rev. Dr. Vahan H. Tootikian

Whenever death walks through our homes, it always leaves behind it a trail of tears and a sense of loss. We are left a bit poorer for it. That feeling is very strong when we lose someone we love very much, someone we desperately need. Such are our feelings at the passing of our dear colleague and friend, Zaven Khanjian.

My friendship with Zaven goes back 45 years. During this span of time we have fellowshiped together, prayed together, played together, and served together the same organizations, such as AEUNA, AMAA and Armenian Evangelical World Council.

On personal level, there are many memories that gather around our lives. But today, I will try to share briefly with you my impressions of Zaven on a professional level.

First, Zaven Khanjian was a man of superb leadership qualities. He was endowed with executive talent. Undoubtedly he was a great Armenian Evangelical leader. He was also a great Armenian community leader in his own right, who directed his talents toward all Armenians channeled through many Armenian organizations, including primarily the AMAA.

Zaven had administrative and organizational capacity. He had a unique mind in organizing methodically his entire work. Every detail was planned ahead of time. Almost every telephone call and every email was answered right away.

A passionate person, Zaven could always generate momentum for change and improvement, and inspired those around him to commit them totally to a project and work collaboratively, toward its successful implementation.

With Zaven's passing, the Armenian Evangelical community loses an outstanding leader, and the Armenian community loses an extraordinary man with exceptional talent, love and dedication for the Armenian people.

Second, Zaven Khanjian was a man of sound judgment and a great heart. In him were combined two qualities that do not usually meet: the shrewdness of a businessman and the moral insight of a man of God. He was endowed with a sixth sense to size up individuals and situations quickly and act accordingly. (In Armenian colloquial language we call that Martoo sarraf). He had

the wisdom, vision and determination to envision new projects, new fields, and new trails to blaze by which the AMAA could be served more fully and efficiently. In short, God had endowed Zaven with rare gifts and remarkable talents which he shaped as instruments of Christian ministry.

Third, Zaven Khanjian was a man of sublime principles. He had the courage to take a stand he felt would be best overall, even if that stand was not politically popular. He never compromised his principles. He was a noble and fearless warrior who fought for justice and human dignity. He was gentle, caring and most understanding toward the underdog and the unprivileged. But he thundered in prophetic cadences to protest social injustice, callousness and moral lethargy. In all walks of his life, Zaven showed no signs of weakness, uncertainty or negligence. On the contrary, as a good-hearted person he remained courageous, determined and convinced in what he did.

This list of Zaven's remarkable qualities can go on but time does not allow us to cite all of them, except to say that here was a man endowed with numerous qualities of greatness, such as intelligence, industry, faith, imagination and an iron will.

Zaven Khanjian never ceased to fascinate all who knew him. His restless personality would permit no pause. He displayed a vast talent and boundless energy, which were reflected in his achievements that make up a rich legacy.

We thank God for giving us Zaven Khanjian for a period of time, to enrich our lives and the lives of those he touched through his ministry. Today with tearful eyes but grateful hearts, like Job of the Old Testament, we say, "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away; may the name of the Lord be praised" (Job 1:21).

On behalf of the Armenian Evangelical World Council and myself, we extend our heartfelt sympathies: to his wife Sona; his children and grandchildren; to his sisters, brother and to his other immediate families, relatives and friends. May God comfort and strengthen them all, and may God bless Zaven's Khanjian's memory. ■

Չաւէն Խանճեանի Յիշատակին

Յուլիս 31, 1944 — Օգոստոս 9, 2024

Վեր. Դոսկ. Վահան Յ. Թութիկեան

Չաւէն Խանճեան, Չայց. Աւետարանական Եկեղեցւոյ կարկառուն աշխարհական ղեկավարներէն մէկը, այս աշխահէն երկինք փոխադրուեցաւ Ուրբաթ, Օգոստոս 9, 2024-ին:

Հանգուցեալին հետ ունէի 45 երկար տարիներու բարեկամութիւն մը: Ան իր անձին մէջ կը խտացներ նկարագրի ազնուագոյն տարրերու ներկայութիւն մը: Իր բազմաբեղուն վաստակը այնքան ծաւալուն է, որուն անդրադառնալը անկարելի պիտի ըլլայ այս մահագրութեան էջերու սահմաններուն մէջ: Այսուհանդերձ, ստորեւ սեղմ ու ամփոփ տողերու մէջ կու տանք իր կենսագրականն ու նկարագրի բարեմասնութիւնները:

Չաւէն Խանճեան ծնած է Հալէպ, Սուրիա, 1944 թուականին: Մեծցած է Հալէպի Էմմանուէլ Հայ Աւետ. Եկեղեցիին մէջ: Կանուխէն գործօն դեր ունեցած է Պատանեաց եւ Երիտասարդաց խումբերու մէջ: Երկրորդական եւ գոլճական ուսումը ստացած է Հալէպ Գոլճի մէջ, ապա աւարտած է Պէյրութի Ամերիկեան Համալսարանը (AUB) արժանանալով Պսակաւոր Արուեստից տիտղոսին Առետարական Վարչագիտութեան մէջ:

1967-1979 աշխատած է Արաբական Օղի երկիրներու մէջ, ուր պատասխանատու պաշտօններ վարած է թէ՛ իր գործին մէջ եւ թէ՛ իր ապրած երկիրներու հայկական շրջանակներու մէջ:

1973-ին ամուսնացած է Սոնա Քէլիկեանի հետ: Աստուած օրհնած է այս ամուլը երեք զաւակներով, որոնք իրենց կարգին բազմացուցած են ընտանիքը 6 թոռներով:

1979-ին ընտանեօք փոխադրուած է Գալիֆորնիա եւ կալուածներու առուծախի գործով զբաղած է, միայնգամայն գործօն դեր ունեցած է գաղութեկեղեցական, կրթական եւ հասարակական կեանքին մէջ վարելով ղեկավար դերեր տասնեակ մը կազմակերպութիւններու մէջ:

2014-ի Յուլիսին հրաւիրուած է վարելու Ամերիկայի Հայ Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութեան (ԱՀԱԸ) Գործադիր Տնօրէնի պաշտօնը, ուր գործեց մինչեւ իր մահը: Չաւէն պատասխանատուութեան մեծ գիտակցութեամբ վարեց իր ծանր պարտականութիւնը գրեթէ 10 տարի: Իր պաշտօնավարութեան ընթացքին ան դրսեւորեց ղեկավարի բարձր ձեռնհասութիւն: Իր մտաւորական պաշարով, իր վարչական ընտիր ձիրքերով, իր նկարագրի ազնիւ յատկանիշներով, իր յանդուգն ու անկեղծ ելոյթներով ան շահեցաւ ԱՀԱԸ-ի

բազմահազար անդամներու սէրն ու յարգանքը:

Իր անհատականութեան, նկարագրի, իմացական, բարոյական եւ հոգեւոր բարեմասնութիւններու ցանկը երկար է: Այս առթիւ յիշենք հետեւեալները.-

Առաջին, Չաւէն Խանճեան ընտիր ղեկավար մըն էր: Ան կազմակերպչական-վարչական ընդունակութիւններով օժտուած էր: Ան նաեւ օժտուած էր ընտիր նկարագրով արթուն մտքով եւ զգայուն խիղճով: Չաւէն շարունակաբար հետաքրքրուած էր ոչ միայն շրջապատի, այլ համաշխարհային տարբեր բնագաւառներու զարգացումներով:

Անցնող տասնամեակին Հայաստանի, ինչպէս նաեւ սփիւռքահայութեան համար եղաւ վերիվայրումներով լեցուն ժամանակամիջոց մը: Հայ ժողովուրդը ենթարկուեցաւ ֆիզիքական, քաղաքական եւ ընկերային ցնցումներու: Նման այլ հայ կազմակերպութիւններու, Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնն ալ որոշ մարտահրաւերներ դիմակայեց: Չաւէն Խանճեան իմաստութեամբ եւ քաջութեամբ վճռական որոշումներ տուաւ յանուն Աւետարանչականի եւ իր կարեւոր ներդրումը ունեցաւ մեր հաւաքական կեանքին մէջ: Տազնապնդուն առջեւ քաջասիրտ, վհատութեան փոխարէն կորովամիտ, Չաւէն երբեք չկթոտեցաւ դժուարութիւններուն դիմաց, այլ մարմնացումը եղաւ աննկուն կամքի եւ անսահման զոհաբերութեան:

Երկրորդ, Չաւէն Խանճեան տեսիլքի եւ նուիրումի տէր մարդ էր: Ան հեռատեսութիւնը ունէր գուշակելու ապագայ իրադարձութիւններ, վերլուծելու եւ ըստ այնմ ծրագրելու: Կարծես վեցերորդ զգայարանը մը ունէր անձերն ու իրերը կշռադատելու եւ անոնց համեմատ որոշումներ տալու: Շնորհիւ իր Աստուածատուր տաղանդին, յաճախ ԱՀԱԸ-ի առջեւ ներկայացող պատեհութիւններէն օգտուելով, Չաւէն սատարեց անոր յարաճուն վերելքին:

ԱՀԱԸ-ի համար անկիւնադարձ մը եղաւ Չաւէն Խանճեանը ունենալ որպէս Գործադիր Տնօրէն: Իր պաշտօնավարութեան տասնամեայ շրջանին, Աւետարանչական Ընկերակցութիւնը մեծցաւ ու բարգաւաճեցաւ թէ՛ բաղապէս եւ թէ՛ մանաւանդ նիւթապէս:

Երրորդ, Չաւէն Խանճեան հաստատ եւ աննկուն կամքի տէր էր: Շրջապատի բիրտ պայմաններուն մէջ իսկ ան քարը ճեղքող եւ անոր վրայ արմատ նետող տունկի պէս մարդ էր: Իր բոլոր նախաձեռնութեանց

մէջ ո՛չ տկարութիւն, ո՛չ ալ յոգնութիւն ճանչցաւ, անսպառ եռանդով եւ բացառիկ ոգեւորութեամբ բոլորին ծառայեց: Գրեթէ մինչեւ մահ՝ իր տարիքը հերքով աշխոյժ կայտառութեամբ սահման չըրաւ իր նուիրումի ու զոհաբերութեան ոգիին:

Չորրորդ, Չաւէն Խանճեան իր համոզումներուն մէջ եղաւ անխախտ եւ խիզախ: Չաւատաւոր եւ պատուական այս հայորդին մինչեւ իր մահը ընկրկում չճանչցաւ իր կրօնական եւ ազգային համոզումներուն մէջ: Վարչական ժողովներուն մէջ եղաւ սկզբունքի մարդը, դատումի օրինական ըմբռնումներու նախաձայնողը: Քաղաքական կարգ մը հարցերու մէջ մնաց անզիջող:

Չինգերորդ, Չաւէն Խանճեան հոգեւոր եւ հայրենասէր անձ մըն էր: Իր ներշնչումը կուգար կրօնասիրութեան եւ ազգասիրութեան զոյգ ակունքներէ: Իր քրիստոնէական անսահան հաւատքին հետ զուգահեռ քալեց իր անշահախնդիր հայրենասիրութիւնը: Այս վարձագիծով ան սերտօրէն գործակցեցաւ հայ քոյր համայնքներու առաջնորդներուն հետ՝ վայելելով անոնց անվերապահ սէրն ու գործակցութիւնը:

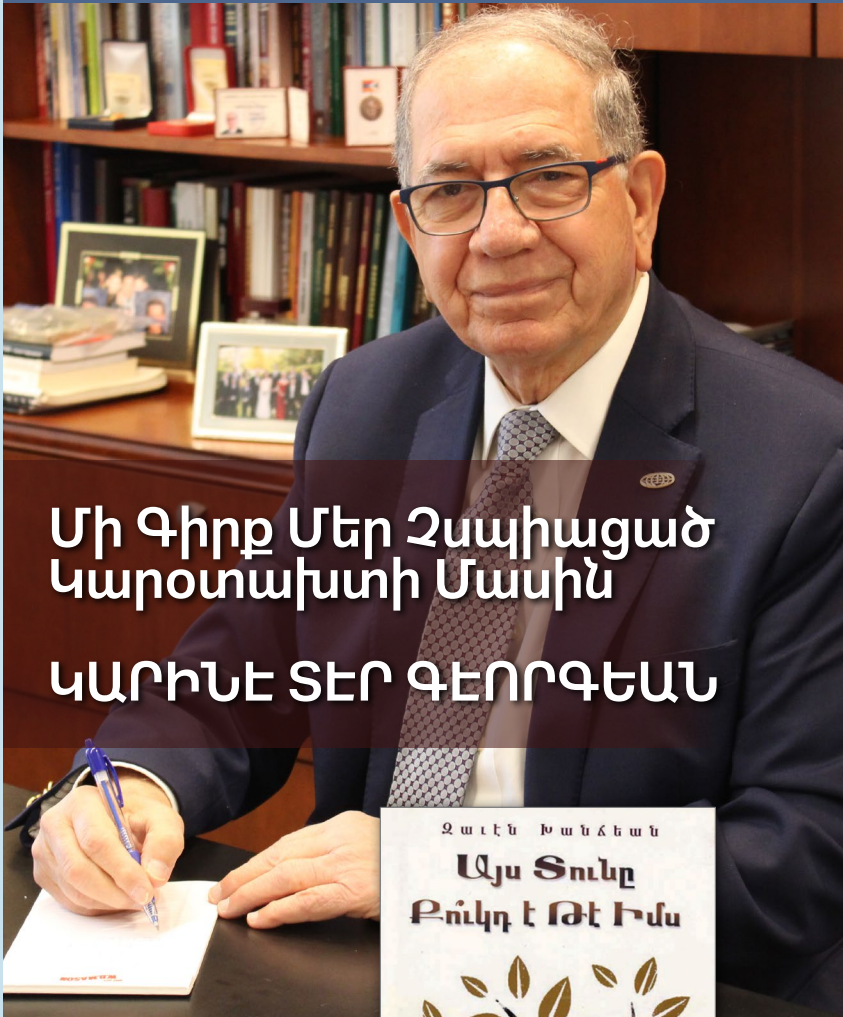
Իր ամբողջ կեանքի ընթացքին, Չաւէն անաչառ եւ անկեղծ կերպով իր մասնակցութիւնը բերաւ հայ հասարակական գործունէութիւններուն եւ աչքառու դէր խաղցաւ հայրենասիրական ճակատի վրայ: Ան ամենաջերմ սիրով կապուած էր Շայաստանի հետ եւ աշխատեցաւ սատարել անոր վերելքին:

Վեցերորդ, Չաւէն Խանճեան գրական շնորհներով օժտուած մարդ մըն էր: Սրտի ու հոգիի խուզարկու գաղափարապաշտ նկրտումներու այս նուիրեալ հայորդին եղաւ նաեւ հայ գրականութեան եւ դպրութեան ածուն ծաղկեցնող հաւատաւոր մշակ մը: Ան հեղինակեց երեք գիրքեր- «Սրտի եւ Մտքի Ցոլքեր» (2011), «Չալէպ՝ Առաջին Կայարան» (2013) եւ «Այս Տունը Քու Լիզ է Թէ Իմս» (2017): Չանազան թերթերու եւ պարբերաթերթերու մէջ ստորագրած իր յօդուածները, բայց յատկապէս AMAA News-ի խմբագրականներու եւ այլազան գրութիւններու շարքը եկան հաստատելու իր մտաւորականի անժխտելի տաղանդը:

Չաւէն Խանճեանի մահով մեր հաւաքական կեանքէն կ'անհետի գաղափարապաշտ եւ ընտիր ղեկավար մը, հայրենասէր եւ բարոյատիպ աշխարհական առաջնորդ մը, որուն յիշատակը վառ պիտի մնայ միշտ ԱՀԱԸ-ի աշխարհատարած անդամներուն, ինչպէս նաեւ Շայաստանի եւ Սփիւռքի հայորդիներու սրտին մէջ:

Մեր խորագրած ցաւակցութիւնը կը յայտնենք հանգուցեալի սգակիր իր հարազատներուն, իր տիկնոջ Սոնային, զաւակներուն, թոռներուն, քոյրերուն, եղբօր, գործակիցներուն բարեկամներուն եւ համայն վշտակից պարագաներուն:

Յիշատակն արդարոյն օրհնութեամբ եղիցի: ■



Մի Գիրք Մեր Չապիացած Կարօտախտի Մասին ԿԱՐԻՆԷ ՏԵՐ ԳԵՈՐԳԵԱՆ



ԳՐԱԽՕՍԱԿԱՆ

Յարգելի ընթերցող, սոյն գրութիւնը պատրաստել էինք Չաւէն Խանճեանի «Այս Տունը Քու Լիզ է Թէ Իմս» հատորի լոյս ընծայման տարին՝ 2007 թուականին: Օրին կային բաւականին գրախօսականներ, իսկ մեր այս մէկը չէր տպագրուէլ: Այժմ, երբ հեղինակը յաւետ բաժանուած է այս աշխարհից, կ'ուզէինք ներկայացնել զայն, որպէս վերյուշ նրա գրական գործունէութեան եւ՝ յարգանք իր յիշատակին:

Այդ երեկոյ մենակ էի եւ թեւաթափ: Շերթական տեղատուութիւն, որ ինքդ էլ չես կարող բացատրել: Պիտի փորձես չյանձնուել եւ այն վերափոխել մակընթացութեան. ինչպէս ազատուել մինակութիւնից: Առաջարկուել էր

մի ընկերակցութիւն, մի նորատիպ գրքի բարեկամութիւն, եւ կարծես ժամանակն էր ընդունելու առաջարկը: Գրատնից վերցրի այն եւ թեւանցուկ արած գնացիւք տուն:

Եղել էի գրքի ներկայացմանը: Գիտէի, որ բովանդակութիւնն ինձ ուրախութիւն չէր պատճառելու: Սակայն զգում էի, թէ իմ թախիծը պիտի մանրանար եւ փշրուէր այն հարցերի առջեւ, որ արծարծուած էին գրքում: Կան անձնականից վեր խնդիրներ, որոնք զգաստացնում են քեզ:

Վերջապէս բացայայտեմ ընկերակցիս. «Այս Տունը Քո՛ւկո՛ւ է Թէ՛ Իմս», Չաւէն Խանճեան, 2007, Լոս Անջելէս: Շեղինակը դէպի Արեւմտեան Հայաստան՝ Կիլիկիա եւ Պոլիս կատարած ուխտագնացութեան օրագրային էջերը վերածել է գրքի, ուր ճամբորդութեան քարտէսը համեմուել է տեղերի եւ դէպքերի վաւերական վկայութիւններով, գեղարուեստական համարներով, որպէս արդիւնք՝ նրա գիտելիքների եւ պրպտումների:

Չաւէն Խանճեանը «կամովին ջարդարարի բերդն է ուղղւում» եւ նոյնիսկ յուսաբաբում՝ թշնամուն չտեսնելով: Նա կարծես տանն է, «միակ անհարազատը մահիկով դրոշակն է», որի ներքոյ կքած է մեր որդեկորոյս հայրենիքը: Անձնական մտորումները, գլխապտոյտ պատճառող հանելուկները յաճախ ընդմիջում են պատկերներին: Խանճեանը մտածում է. «Ո՛վ պիտի վերադառնայ բնակելու այս հողերուն վրայ»: Սակայն միեւնոյն ժամանակ գրում է. «Այս հողին է շաղախուած մեր նախնիքներուն քրտինքն ու արիւնը, եւ ո՛չ անուանափոխութիւն, ո՛չ դրոշափոխութիւն եւ ո՛չ դարափոխութիւն մեզ կրնան բաժանել այս հողերէն»: Վերջին քառասնամեակին ամբողջ Թուրքիայի բնակչութիւնը կրկնապատկուել, հասել է 73 միլիոնի: Եթէ մնայինք այնտեղ, արդեօ՞ք կը կրկնապատկուէինք մենք եւս: Այնթապի եկեղեցին կեղտոտ ու փոշոտ բանտից մզկիթի վերածելը նոյնիսկ նա համարում է համեմատաբար ողջունելի: Միւս կողմից, ինքնակոչ առեւտրականը փորձում է հայատառ թուրքերէնով փաստաթղթեր «նուիրել» իր նոր որսերին: Հանելուկներ, հանելուկներ: Ինը տասնամեակից աւելի քանդում եւ բնաջնջում են հայկականութիւնը: Խանճեանն ասում է. «Ի՛նչ է արդեօք պետութեան պաշտօնական դիրքը այս ուղղութեամբ: Տառապող վիրաւորեալի մը նման գոյութիւն մը կը քաջքշեն, յուսալով որ կարեկցող փամփուշտ մը վերջ տայ այս տառապանքին: Բայց ի՞նչն է, որ արգելք է այդ վախճանին: Չեմ գիտեր»:

Ու այսպէս ոլորում է հարցերի կծիկը: Ոչ ոք չգիտի Թուրքիայի

տարածքում գտնուող մշակութային գանձերի տարողութիւնը. ո՛չ պետութիւնը, ո՛չ հայութիւնը, ո՛չ էլ տեղացի ժողովուրդը: Ո՛վ պիտի նախաձեռնի: Ո՛վ աւելի երգ ունի Մշոյ դաշտը գովերգելու, Սասունը ներբողելու. ներկայ բնակիչ թո՛ւրքը, թի՛ւրդը, «թէ՛ անոր կարոտով այրող եւ անոր կորուստով տառապող պանդուխտ հայը»: Չաւէնը հաւատում է պատմութեան արմատական փոփոխութիւններին, քանի դեռ մեր հաւատքի անթիւ ջահերն իր ստեղծագործ ժողովրդի բացակայութեանն իսկ շարունակում են հանդիսանալ այդ հաւատքի անսասան վկաները: Իսկ մեր ամենամեծ անձեռակերտ ջահը՝ Մեծ Մասիսը, «կարծես ամչնալով մեզ «այս» կողմէն տեսած ըլլալուն համար», լուռ ու անխօս խոկում է անցեալի, ներկայի եւ ապագայի մասին: Շրջագայութեան ընթացքում Խանճեանը տեսնում էր հայ ժողովրդին պատկանող ժառանգութիւնը, սակայն նա ունէր մի այլ ցանկութիւն եւ նպատակ. նա պիտի այցելէր «գյուղին մէջ եզակի պատշգամբով զատորոշուող երկու յարկանի տունը», Խանճեան գերդաստանի պապենական օճախը: Մասիս սարը բոլորին էր, իսկ այս տունը միայն «իրն էր»: Ներկայ տանտիրոջ՝ Չուսէյնի մայրը պատուիրել էր. «Այս ընտանիքի անդամներէն ոեւէ մէկը, որեւէ ատէն եթէ այցելեն ձեզ, զիրենք տանտիրոջ պէս կ'ընդունիք»: Չուսէյնը գիտենալով իսկ իրականութիւնը, խռովուած հոգով հարցնում է Չաւէնին. «Չիմայ ըսէ ինձի, այս տունը քո՛ւկո՛ւ է, թէ իմս»: Պատասխան չկայ: Չաւէնը պատասխանի

փոխարէն ցոյց է տալիս ընկուզենու ծառը, որ պիտի տնկէր այս բակում բոլոր նրանց յիշատակին, «որոնք նահատակուեցան իրենց հայ ծնած ըլլալու մեղքին համար»: Նա ուզում էր չարը յարթել բարիով:

Եւ այսպէս՝ ուխտագնացութիւն, ուղեկցութիւն, ուսուցում, միաւորում են Խանճեանի գրքում: Արեւմտահայաստանը դառնում է անսպառ մի նիւթ, որի հետ առնչում են ուխտաւորները: Բորբոքում է մարած կարօտը, չսպիացած կարօտախտը: Ահաւոր է կորուստը, սակայն Խանճեանը հաւատում է Թուրքի հոգեփոխմանը, արդարութեան յաղթանակին: Իսկ մինչ այդ, հեղինակը յանգում է տրամաբանական եզրակացութեան. «Ամրապնդել հայրենիքի պետականութիւնը՝ հզօր տնտեսութեամբ, անբասիր եւ անշահախնդիր ղեկավարութեամբ եւ հայրենի հողին վրայ ապրող ժողովուրդի երջանկութեամբ»:

Սրտամօտ հարցերի վերլուծման մի տարբերակ, որն արտայայտուած է գեղարուեստական գրքով: Կ' ողջունենք հեղինակին՝ Չաւէն Խանճեանին: ■



CELEBRATING OVER
53 Years

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



A Christmas Thought

Jesus Christ was born in a stable,
A birthplace of humblest degree,
So that no one could say, "I am poorer,
More lacking in comforts than He."

His mother, in swaddling bands wrapped Him,
The wardrobe of One who was Divine,
That no one could say of his raiment,
"Christ's garments were better than mine."

His home and His comforts were borrowed,
No pillow for resting His head!
But He lived, and He suffered and sorrowed,
To give us true comforts instead.

In glory, His wealth had been boundless,
He laid all those riches aside,
That we might have riches eternal,
And with Him forever abide.

- Author Anonymous

