

TEMPLE NEWS

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH

OCTOBER 2013

Pastor Joseph Hovsepien speaking with children in the farming village of Horom, following a Friday afternoon meeting at the church. The local pastor, Tigran Muradyan, is to his left.

(More about the mission trip in this issue.)



***Mission
Armenia
2013 Update***

Thoughts from the Editor

Will You Give Your Life Away?

Four days after my return from Armenia, I was listening to the song “Give My Life Away” by the Christian group Big Daddy Weave. The song talks about how we tend to earn just to spend our money, how we throw things out when they’re broken and how we’re often like hamsters on a wheel, relentlessly pursuing—and being trapped by—possessions.

Echoing what the Bible says in Luke 17:33, the song points out that “life’s not the kind of gift that you can hold; the only way you can keep it is to let it go.”

After spending three weeks among people who have learned to hold their few earthly possessions very loosely and focus their energies instead on family, on ministry and, in some cases, on simply making it through life one day at a time, I could really relate to this song.

As a freelance writer, I don’t have the high salary I could have if I worked for a publishing house or a large corporation, but I’m aware that most people in the world would see my lifestyle as affluent and privileged. I try to be thankful for everything I have but simple gratitude isn’t enough, is it? Sometimes I feel like Queen Esther who was swept into a

world of luxury and pampering that her young girlfriends might have been in awe of. But she was placed in that strategic position and given those resources for a very special purpose: to be influential in saving her people.

Though I haven’t figured it all out yet (and maybe I never will), I believe God has brought me to this place in my life “for such a time as this.” I believe that’s true for *all* of us. Contrary to what prosperity theology teaches, I believe that we are stewards of the gifts God has blessed us with. We don’t deserve them. We didn’t earn them.

Just as Jesus gave His life away—not holding anything back but giving up every right and privilege He had for people who didn’t even deserve such mercy—I believe I have to give my life away, too.

“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?” (Mark 8:34b-36)

What about you? Are you ready to give your life away? Or will you lose it by holding it too tightly?

Ann-Margret Hovsepian

TEMPLE NEWS Vol. 29 No. 9

Published by Temple Baptist Church
5815 Durocher Ave., Outremont, QC, H2V 3Y5
Phone: 514-279-9626 / 1-888-909-9626
Web: www.templebaptistmontreal.com
Mail: 5945 Park Ave., Montreal, QC, H2V 4H4
E-mail: templegoodnews@gmail.com

Publisher: Joseph Hovsepian
Editor: Ann-Margret Hovsepian
Printing: PositiveMarketing.ca
Contributors: Guy Beauchamp
Elise Guekgeuzian
William Neal

This newsletter is given out freely... but we appreciate your gifts to help with printing costs!

Letters

Editor's Note: Since we have so many notes and messages to share with you this month, we're changing the format of this page to save space. We received some other short messages about Armenia but couldn't possibly print them all. We've selected the most representative samples.

Greetings in the name of our Lord. Summer is over and it's back to Sunday School and school and regular service schedule. I pray that this session will keep up the good work of praise and worship and that new members will be encouraged to join the force and stand up for the Lord.

It is my continual prayer that the young people will be strong in their faith and carry out the work of our Lord. You are all in my thoughts and prayers, that you will be the future ambassadors of the gospel. The world needs it very much.

God bless, guide and keep you all. Enclosed is my regular contribution.

June Ross (Montreal, QC)

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ. Pastor Hovsepien, my sincere congratulations for your faithful ministry for the past 28 years. Looking at the pictures [of Temple Baptist Church], I see a family church with various nationalities joined together as a lighthouse for the city of Montreal, for the glory of God.

Rose Daghlian (Clovis, CA)

I am really looking forward to receiving the next issue of the Temple News. It is a wonderful read with encouraging and challenging words for my walk with God.

Bob Harder (Edmonton, AB)

The Lord is good indeed. I really enjoyed being back at Temple. Your church has a special place in my heart, as do you! I'll be praying for the rest of your mission trip, especially the baptisms...always one of my favourite services!

Have a "Holy Spirit-drenched" day,

Pastor Russ Hopkins

(Lennoxville, QC)

Thanks so much for the updates and the beautiful pictures. I thank God for the opportunity you have to encourage and serve the people of Armenia.

Carlos Castaneda (Montreal, QC)

Saw ALL of your photos [of Armenia]... it is nearly midnight! Thank you so much for sharing these; this was a blessing.

(Three days later) I have read the write-up of your trip and it has been truly a blessed time for you both in Armenia; so rich in Christian unity. I pray that God will bless each person you minister to and give you health and strength as well as everything you need to carry out this mission. Would love to hear more.

Wendy Vanderbroeke (Ottawa, ON)

We are thinking of you [in Armenia]. May God bless you and protect you for your obedience. I pray that many lives will be transformed through your witnessing.

Jacques Denommee (Montreal, QC)

It was so wonderful to see you both in Armenia. Thanks for the encouragement in your prayers and your gifts but most of all your presence. I was so happy that we were able to spend some time together in fellowship. Thanks for also encouraging

...continued on page 10

Goodbye...For Now

In September we had to say “see you later” to two of our church family members. **Richard Didsbury** has made his annual pilgrimage to China for three months and we pray that the Lord will use him to be a blessing to the Christian brothers and sisters there.

Nathalie Etienne has made a more permanent move to Haiti, where she recently was offered a new job. She has promised to visit once in a while and to keep in touch. Please keep her in your prayers as she makes this transition.

Thinking of Baptism?

We recently received a request for baptism so we'd like to extend an invitation to others who have not yet been baptized: Please prayerfully consider taking this step.

If you have any questions about baptism and its importance, please speak with the pastor or one of our deacons.



An expectant mother being baptized by Pastor Joseph in Spitak, Armenia, this past August. See page 5 for more about the mission trip.

Pastor's 25 Years Recognized

This summer, the Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec recognized Pastor **Joseph Hovsepien's** 25 years of service as the ordained pastor of our church (though he has actually been involved in the ministry for over 50 years). In a letter accompanying the certificate that Pastor Joseph received, Brian Craig (Director of Leadership Development) wrote:

“Given the rapid and constant changes that occur around us these days, it's wonderful to see how God enables people to remain faithful and consistent in serving Him in Christian ministry...Thank you for your 25 years of ordained ministry serving Christ and the reign of God. We recognize the commitment, the continued learning and the dedication to loving God and others that this requires.”

Women's Events

Ladies, please note that the regular Women's Fellowship meetings for the months of October and November are being replaced by other events.

The October meeting is cancelled because about a dozen of our women will be attending the Quebec Baptist Women Fall Retreat.

In November, our ladies will be joining ladies from a few of our sister Quebec Association Baptist churches

Celebrating a



Joke Saliba - October 2
Tiago Chiavegatti - 8
Pastor Joseph Hovsepien - 9
Alicia Osei - 10

Wilson Exantus - 13
Liliane Arbour - 16
Quentin Newhouse - 20
Vahe Dzaghgouni - 28

for the annual World Day of Prayer. We will gather at Westmount Baptist Church on November 16. Further details will be provided soon but please plan from now to join us.

Nursery & Junior Church

After a few quiet years, there's a new wave of excitement in the children's area of our ministry. **Wheng Cofino**, **Katteline Osei** and **Theresa Piercy** have been working together to develop a more intentionally Bible-teaching program for our young children (between the ages of 2 and 7 at the moment). Wheng is also beginning to organize a roster of volunteers to help in the nursery when parents with babies need to use it.

With nearly a dozen preschool and early elementary aged children now attending church regularly, we have also decided to reintroduce a weekly mid-service children's story. Every Sunday, the children sit upstairs during the worship service and then, right after their story, go downstairs to the library for a Bible lesson. Please pray for all those involved. For more information, you can speak to Wheng.

Food & Clothing Banks

We'd like to remind you that we have some limited resources in terms of non-perishable food items and clothing for men and women. If you are aware of anyone—particularly within our own congregation—who needs some assistance in either of these areas, please speak with **Ann-Margret Hovsepien**.

If you would like to make donations to either of these banks, please speak to Ann-Margret before bringing your items

to the church. Since storage space can be an issue, we would like to make sure we are not stockpiling too many of the same or unneeded items. Let her know what you can donate and she'll make arrangements with you when a need arises.

Mission Armenia 2013

From August 13 to September 3, Pastor **Joseph Hovsepien** and **Ann-Margret** were very busy in Yerevan and some of its surrounding towns and villages. They visited several churches and many homes, each occasion providing an opportunity for Pastor Joseph to either preach, lead a Bible study, offer counseling or pray for those present.

The full report of their 20 days, as well as photos and video clips (please note that these are still being organized and uploaded), can be found at www.josephhovsepienministries.com. However, if you do not have Internet access, Ann-Margret will gladly give you a print-out of the reports.

Two and a half suitcases of clothing and reading glasses, mostly donated by our members, were given out, along with some monetary gifts to those in greatest need. Those who were helped expressed deep gratitude.

Sixteen were baptized in Spitak (though several others had planned to be baptized and couldn't). This was a full day's event!

As well, highly positive feedback was given about our tracts and Pastor Joseph's book (*God's Workshop*). We are encouraged to see how God is blessing our efforts in Armenia. We will share more blessings and testimonies in upcoming issues.

Personal Testimony

Whether I Live or Die...

By William "Cody" Lee Neal (Colorado)

When I was a child, my parents took me to Sunday School and we always prayed before meals. I remember singing Jesus Loves Me and believing, throughout my life, that I was a Christian...all the way until the day I was locked up in the Colorado Jefferson County Jail in July 1998, having been arrested after turning myself in to the authorities for murdering three people. This was after a rampage of revenge in which I had fully intended to murder a total of 30 people... until the Lord gave me, in my heart, 1 John 4:4. After I said it out loud, He made it clear to me that I was to turn myself in and not kill anyone else or myself, and I was to take full responsibility for my actions even though it was clear I would face the death penalty.

I remember that, even then, I still believed I was a Christian. In a cold, dark cell, I was alone and afraid—mostly of myself—knowing I had lived such a violent and crazy life. The drugs, the drinking, the women (including four wives), four divorces, the lies, the hate, the anger, the crimes, the money, etc. Worst of all, I missed my only child, whom I loved beyond measure.

It all flashed before me and weighed heavy upon me: a life without hope. That was until, one day, a jail deputy who was a Christian brought me a Bible to read and I did. Next I found a Bible Study called *Born to Win*. I soaked it all in, and still I thought I was Christian. Next, the Lord brought other people and prisoners

around me who talked to me about Jesus. One Mexican prisoner witnessed to me and, for the first time in my life, I really prayed and sought the Lord!

In that dark and lonely cell, I got on my knees and the Lord showed me I was *not* a Christian but a sinner who had made his bed in hell and was lost and headed to hell! I cried out to Jesus and asked for His help and He opened my eyes and set me free as I confessed and repented of my sins and received Him as my Lord and Saviour.

That was on September 14, 1998. I no longer felt that great weight or burden; I was no longer alone or afraid. I was set free and filled with joy, peace and love. All I wanted was to serve and love Him who died for me. I was saved by the grace of God and my past sins were forgiven! Second Corinthians 5:17 says: *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, the old has gone the new has come."*

When my attorneys asked me to lie to help save my life from the death penalty by pleading not guilty, I fired them even though it meant death for me. I refused to lie to save my life because I was Christian now and I trusted the Lord to care for me. I pled guilty and I received three death sentences. Later "out of the blue," a U.S. Supreme Court ruling came and my three death sentences were revoked. I was resentenced to three life sentences without parole.

Nothing is impossible for the Lord! Even though my attorneys told me it is very likely the state will seek the death penalty again, I trust the Lord's will to be done, for whether I live or die I am the Lord's! Praise the Lord!

See Editor's Note on page 9.

Personal Testimony

God's Grace

By Guy Beauchamp

"Grace" is my favourite word. It's defined as "getting favour when one does not merit it." We can all agree that the ultimate expression of grace was demonstrated by God through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross.

God bestows grace on us in many ways, every day, even though we may not make note of it each time. The amazing thing about grace is that it also has other effects on different aspects of our being. One of these effects that particularly stands out in my mind is how grace can serve to increase one's faith. I say this based on personal experience.

Over the past several years, I've succumbed to various ailments that lasted for fairly long periods of time. Looking back, each incident could be considered more severe than the previous one. Yet I've also realized that, even though the medical severity became progressively greater, my peace in the given situation was also progressively greater.

The only way for this peace to exist is to trust that God has a purpose for my circumstances even though I may not fully comprehend it at that moment. Knowing that God never allows us to go through trials He won't help us endure, I couldn't justify a reason for me to be anxious or to worry. Sometimes we may feel that a situation is more than we can bear; however, it is never too great for Him to see us through it...if we allow Him to do so.

A parallel to the effect of trials on one's faith is weightlifting. In order to lift the weights, one will strain and struggle,

even to the point of pain. The end result, however, is that one's muscles become stronger and increase in endurance. As the weight being lifted becomes heavier, the strength and endurance of the muscles also grow. When God "exercises" our faith in Him, and we are able persevere through it because of His grace, our faith is further strengthened as a result.

Previously, when going through difficult situations, I would often ask: "God, why me?" I'll regretfully admit that some of those times when I was questioning God's purpose, I was angry at Him. However, because of His patient love and grace, I've been able to walk through dark times and come out the other side stronger, knowing that I can cast all of my fears and anxieties on Him because He cares for me (as stated in 1 Peter 5:7).

It also has a compounding effect: Not only is my faith encouraged and strengthened, but I'm also able to encourage others facing trials by sharing with them my own experiences of God's grace.

We all have trials and challenges of different forms and varying degrees. But one thing is common for all of us, and we find it in Hebrews 8:28. *"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."*

I am humbled and honoured by what God has allowed me to endure. Now, instead of asking, "God, why me?" I can look back at my past circumstances and say, "God, thank you for choosing me!"

Editor's Note: *The testimony on page 8 was sent to us by an inmate our congregation has been praying for over the past year. (We've printed his letters in previous issues.) Please continue to pray for William.*

Inspirations

Praise God!

By Elise Guekquezian

God is our Father and we must worship, praise and honour Him. We can claim to know and love God, but if we're not praising Him every day, we're in the dark about who He really is (Romans 1:21). Your relationship with God must always have priority over everything else (Exodus 20:3).

Going to church whenever it pleases *us* does not please *God*. He expects all believes to come together, always, for worship, Bible study and fellowship.

...Letters continued from page 3

many Christians all over the world through your visit to the broadcasting studio. I hope that your visit was a time of refreshment to you as well. I know that God has many more wonderful things in store for all of us as we surrender to His will.

Peter Nigoghossian (Armenia)

The Lord richly bless you and the spiritual seeds you planted. May they grow and bear abundant fruit. With our prayers we will constantly water the seeds so that they grow quickly.

Pastor Suren Shahumyan (Armenia)

I want to congratulate you on publishing God's Workshop. I am very thankful to [Pastor Hovsepien] for writing such a nice and wonderful book.

This book is truly God's workshop. It has strengthened my faith more and more. I want to share my gratitude with you and thank God for creating a person like you

When we worship God, it's like being hooked up to a spiritual IV. As long as we have our hearts and eyes lifted to God in praise, the joy of the Lord can pour into our bodies, minds and souls.

I thank the Lord that His plans for my life are good. He has a future for me that is full of hope. How can we not thank Him and praise Him for all the things He has done for us? He loves us so much He suffered and died on the cross for our sins. What a Saviour!

Don't wait until you get to heaven to praise your Creator. Now is the time to worship Him with your whole heart.

for our nation, for Armenians.

I have read many books, but this book is a real blessing for me. Dear Pastor Joseph, congratulations once more! I wish for you to have a more victorious life. God bless you. AMEN

Rima Yengoyan (Armenia)

We thank our Lord Jesus Christ for your visit to Armenia. Everything that took place was in His name. It was pleasing to see your seriousness—your priority was the Word of God and then the salvation of sinners through teaching, preaching and printed materials. Pure love was shon through your visits, the baptismal service and financial help. Small groups of "sheep" in Armenia need such help.

We are greatly impressed by your sincerity. You were so connected with us, as if we knew each other for many years. In other words, our hearts rejoiced.

We are praying for you—our 17 members plus 14 children and our family.

Pastor Tigran Muradyan (Armenia)

The Pastor's Page

3. Jesus reaching the helpless (John 5:1-8)

In Jerusalem, at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus met a very sick man. "Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, 'Do you want to get well?' 'Sir,' the sick man replied, 'I have no one to help me...'" (John 5:3-7)

Many today are spiritually confused or troubled and need someone to help them. But there is no one to help them! It seems that Christians are too busy. They need someone to lead them to Jesus, who can meet their needs.

Bring someone to Jesus

People today have friends, acquaintances at work, at school, at play...but no one who cares about their spiritual condition and their future in eternity. They need a friend, someone who will care. Will you be that friend?

Andrew does not seem to have become a prominent disciple. He was not one of those in the inner circle of Peter,

James and John. He was not at the transfiguration site, nor in Gethsemane. He did not lead a group, nor did he write any recorded epistles. He was not an evangelist or teacher. But Andrew is well known and remembered as one who brought others to Jesus.

Do not underestimate the impact of your efforts to bring someone to Jesus. You may be the one God will use to touch someone's life. You may be the spark that lights up the soul of someone in spiritual darkness.

Pastor Joseph Hovsepian

GOOD NEWS!

Tune in to WCHP 760AM every weekday at noon to hear a short inspirational message by Pastor Joseph Hovsepian.

We'd love to hear your comments or suggestions about the program.



PHOTO: Pastor Joseph and Ann-Margret Hovsepian met this woman, Hasmig, while in Armenia. She attends Jesus Is Lord Church in a town called Zeytun. Hasmig pointed to the dozens of apartment buildings visible from the church's third-storey window and shared that she has distributed tracts in every one of those buildings. What a great example of a commitment to outreach!

The Pastor's Page



Reach Out

John 1:40-42; 4:25-30; 39-42

For many people, it was not a sudden desire to go to church that brought them to church but, rather, a personal invitation by a friend, co-worker, classmate or even a total stranger.

The greatest rewards in ministry do not come from extraordinary church events but from everyday person-to-person witness—something all Christians can do, regardless of our gifts or position.

Jesus expects *all* His followers to reach out. In Matthew 28:18-20, we read: *“Then Jesus came to them and said, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.’”*

Statistics show that Andrew’s kind of outreach-evangelism is the most effective. Pollsters indicate that 75 to 90 per cent come to church because someone invited them.

Not everyone will have the gift of evangelism. But Jesus’ command is that all the believers must be His witnesses.

Acts 1:8 says: *“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you: and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”*

Even though evangelism, in general, is essential to the church, personal evangelism is of vital importance; every believer telling another person about Christ and inviting them to meet Him.

Let’s look at three examples.

1. Andrew reaching his brother (John 1:40)

Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

Not only did Andrew meet Jesus, but he also followed Him.

Not only did Andrew follow Jesus, but he was also eager to share the good news with his brother. *“The first thing Andrew did, was to find his brother Simon and tell him, ‘We have found the Messiah’ (that is, the Christ) and brought him to Jesus.”* (John 1:41-42) Andrew understood the urgency and importance of this good news.

Not only did Andrew find his brother and share the good news with him, but he also brought him to Jesus.

2. The Samaritan woman reaching many (John 4:1-42)

In verse 7 we read: *“When a Samaritan woman came to draw water...”* She met Jesus and Jesus met her spiritual need. She was so blessed and excited about the good news that Jesus was the Messiah that she forgot why she had come to the well. She ran back to town and told everyone: *“Come, and see”* and *“they came out of the town and made their way toward Him.”* (verses 29-30)

Not only did these people come and see, but they also believed in Jesus because of the woman’s testimony.

The third example is one that Jesus Himself set for us...

...continued on page 11