

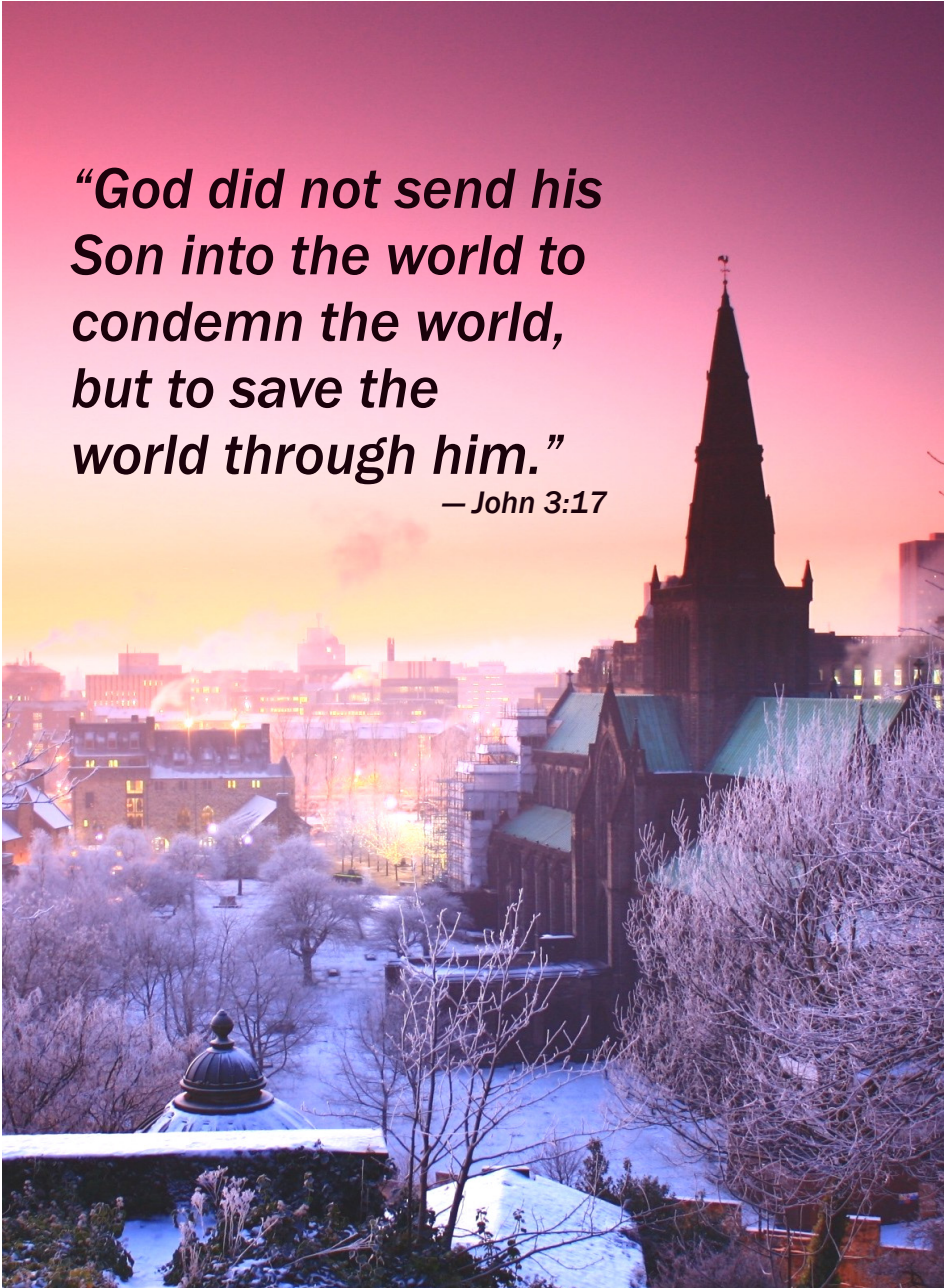
TEMPLE NEWS

THE MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH

DECEMBER 2013

***“God did not send his
Son into the world to
condemn the world,
but to save the
world through him.”***

— John 3:17



Thoughts from the Editor

Thankful for the Thorn

This message may seem more appropriate for Thanksgiving than Christmas but I'm guessing I'm not the only one who, toward the end of the year, looks back and reflects on all the things I can be thankful for. Most of us will do some kind of mental inventory of the past year and assess what went wrong, what went right and all the ways God has blessed us.

I read something last night, however, that reminded me of a crucial biblical truth we sometimes ignore—or at least forget: We are to thank God for *everything*, not only the things we like or feel thankful for (1 Thessalonians 5:18). We can take no credit for thanking God for the easy and pleasant things.

George Matheson, a Scottish minister and hymn writer who lived from 1842 to 1906, once wrote:

My God, I have never thanked thee for my thorn. I have thanked thee a thousand times for my roses, but not once for my thorn. I have been looking forward to a world where I shall get compensation for my cross, but I have never thought of my cross as itself a present glory. Thou divine Love, whose human path has been perfected through

sufferings, teach me the glory of my cross, teach me the value of my thorn.

I don't know about you, but I had a few thorns in my life in 2013. Despite our best efforts, we all have to deal with unexpected circumstances at some point: people who lash out at us not because of anything we've done but because of their own issues, medical problems that seem to come from nowhere, responsibilities that get dumped on us when we feel like our burden is already too heavy...

We may comfort ourselves by taking time each day to thank God for what we see as blessings in our lives. We may make a valiant effort at having attitudes of gratitude. But if we're not thanking God for the thorns in our lives, we're not really thanking Him. If we can't look at a difficult situation and praise God for allowing it to be part of our life, we're missing out on His greatest blessings.

The Apostle Paul understood this: *"I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want."* (Philippians 4:12)

As you celebrate Christmas and the New Year in the coming weeks, I urge you to take time to thank God for your thorn. I know I will.

Ann-Margret Hovsepian

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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

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Letters from our Mission Fields

The Philippines

In the wake of the disastrous typhoon that hit the Philippines last month, we were naturally concerned about some of our church members' families in the Philippines, as well as Jonah Bishop (the missionary our church supports) and his family and ministry.

We were glad to receive a few reports (and photos) from Jonah as he joined others to provide support and help Tacloban, a city about 580 kilometres southeast of Manila. Here are a few excerpts from his reports.

November 20 — Just getting the 1-2 tons of goods onto the plane was a miracle. At the airport, we were told we could only jointly carry 100 kilos. We unloaded everything, brought it inside the airport and began asking passengers to give us their luggage allowance. When the airlines saw this, some people decided to work it out for all our luggage to get on. Then the plane was delayed and we were informed that unless clearance was given in 30 minutes they would cancel, as it would be dark and there are no lights at the Tacloban airport. We prayed and, within five minutes, we had the go-ahead to take off.

Once there, a couple of us headed to a warehouse for relief goods. We found out there was no way they could help us with a truck to move our goods. A police officer with a machine gun told us about a warehouse down the road where he had seen



trucks parked. We walked through the darkness looking for this place. When we found it, the manager had just arrived and, after a 20-second explanation of our plight, he agreed to give us a truck.

We initially had thought to work as a team distributing our own goods and talking with people, but it immediately became clear that the scope of the situation was so vast that we needed to join up with the many groups already there or coming in. Each day, we visited up to 10 villages, distributing mats, slippers, blankets, water, rice and canned goods to between five and six thousand families. The overall situation for those down there is beyond description. People are either all in evacuation centres

...continued on page 8

Check our Web site regularly for updates, as well as for helpful resources and archives of sermons and messages.

www.templebaptistmontreal.com

Season's Meetings

Please plan to join us at the following special events.

Christmas Lunch & Celebration

Sunday, December 15 — After a potluck lunch, we will have a time of carol singing and an inspiring program that everyone can participate in.

To help us organize the lunch, please let us know by December 8 whether you plan to attend (and how many will be with you) and what you can contribute toward the meal. You can speak to Ann-Margret Hovsepian about this.

Women's Christmas Brunch

Saturday, December 21 — Just like last year, the Women's Fellowship will have continental-style brunch and a Christmas theme during the last meeting of the year. Ladies, please invite a friend to join you!

Christmas Day Service

Wednesday, December 25 — Please join us at 10:00 a.m. on Christmas Day for worship. We hope that many of you will use this opportunity to invite a friend to church.

Please note that because of this service, Bible study will be cancelled the night before (Christmas Eve).

New Year's Eve Service

As it has been our tradition for many years, we will gather at the church at 11:00 p.m. on December 31 to end one year and begin the next in an atmosphere of worship, fellowship and prayer. This is a very memorable way to mark the changing of the calendar year so we hope that many of you will join us.

Baptismal Service

We rejoice with our sister **Mary Dias** who will be baptized on Sunday, December 8. She has patiently waited for this special day and we are glad to be able to celebrate it with her. Please pray for her as she continues to grow in her relationship with Christ.

You Can Help

As many of you know, we have a food bank and, more recently, a clothing bank, which enable us to help those who find themselves in a position of urgent need. We appreciate the generous donations we have received until now and would like to suggest an even more practical way to help (since storage can become an issue when we receive many material goods).

We encourage those of you who would like to help to donate gift cards



Priscille Clerveaux - Dec. 3
Brian Norton - 3
Anna Vlassova - 15
Katteline Osei - 12
Alexis Livingston - 13
Mireille Maurice - 14
Rogerio Peres - 14

Bedros Guekguezian - 17
Billie Paris - 21
Kosille Swamy - 22
Wencis Cofino - 25
Lucille Hinds - 25
Sirirat Nanakorn - 30

News

from grocery stores or pharmacies. These will allow families in difficult circumstances to purchase the items they need the most.

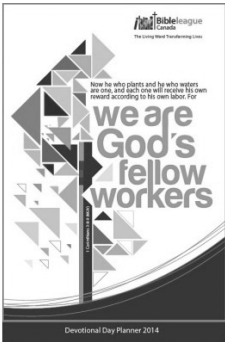
You can drop these gift cards directly into the offering basket or use the donation can on the literature table in our welcoming area. (Please note that we cannot issue receipts for these donations.)

Bible League Agendas

Back by popular demand, we have ordered a case of devotional agendas from the Bible League of Canada. We only have 20 copies at this time so please take only one for now and let us know

if you need more. If there are enough requests, we can order another case.

The agendas cost \$2 each. You can speak to one of our greeters to receive your copy.



Couples' Fellowship

Please note that because it falls right between Christmas and New Years, the December Married Couples' Fellowship meeting is cancelled. The next gathering will be on Saturday, January 25.

Men's Fellowship

Breakfast and fellowship on Saturday, December 14 at 9:00 a.m.

Armenia Mission Trip: Who's In?

Pastor Joseph Hovsepien hasn't yet decided when the next mission trip to Armenia will take place but we know that a few people have shown interest in participating the next time he goes.

We would like to know whether any of you might prayerfully consider making a commitment to go to Armenia and help with the projects we are involved with and are supporting there.

If you have a serious interest and would like to be involved in the plans for the next trip, please speak to Pastor Hovsepien by the end of January. We would be overjoyed to be able to form a team to go to Armenia and work together for a few weeks.

New Bible Study Topic

At our Tuesday night Bible studies, we've just finished our series on the epistle to the Romans. Now we're going to move along the map from Rome to Ephesus! We hope you'll join us as we begin exploring the letter Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

We meet at 7:15 p.m. and begin with worship and sharing answers to prayer. Then we move into an in-depth, discussion-oriented study, followed by a time of small-group prayer.

Why not start a new habit this week?

Women's Fellowship

Next meeting on Saturday, December 21 at 10:00 a.m.

Letters from our Mission Fields

...continued from page 3

or staying by what's left of their homes, building makeshift shelters or living in their non-functioning vehicles.

The government is beginning to get organized, but there is so much to do and things are moving slowly. The people are coming out of their shock and are beginning to look for ways to cope with their situation. Thank you all for your help and prayers. I hope this update gives a little picture of what is happening and how your prayers and donations are a blessing.

November 23 — I'm headed back to Tacloban. Airasia, which had promised to fly our cargo down free of charge, was forced by two government agencies to cancel all their flights. When I was told this by the head of cargo division, I told him I was going to pray for a reversal of that decision and invited him and his staff to pray with me. I told him people there need the goods I'm bringing and God answers my prayers.

He and his staff rolled their eyes and looked a bit uncomfortable but then agreed to pray with me. I prayed with the five people there and then told them I believed that Jesus heard and would answer.

Well, on Friday night I got a text from the airline stating that all their flights were resuming. I called the head of cargo and, after he assured me that our goods would be on the plane, he said with a sort of awed tone of voice: "Your prayer works." He was really shocked. So I'm off. Do keep me in your prayers. God bless you.

November 26 — Today is my last day in Tacloban. Thanks for all your prayers. Please continue to pray for the people here, for their physical wellbeing and for the spiritual strength and emotional heal-

ing to continue to make it through this very difficult time.

Today I prayed with a city councillor whose brother's wife died rescuing her three young children. It made me cry to realize that there is almost no one here without a husband, wife, relative or close friend who died in this typhoon. Thank God for hope in heaven.

Jonah Bishop

Armenia

You will occasionally read or hear us talk about a booklet called *Does Your Life Have Meaning?* This is a small book that we had published in Armenia this summer. Similar to Pastor Hovsepian's book, *God's Workshop*, this booklet is a compilation of devotionals and messages.

The purpose of this book is to help believers in Armenia grow spiritually and also to give them an evangelism tool. Please pray that the Lord will bless this outreach project. The books are being provided to churches and individuals at no charge.

Three letters from Armenia follow...

Warmest greetings from Armenia and from our family! It has been for quite a long time, since we first met (praise God!), that we are being blessed continuously by you, by your ministries and by your spiritual and financial help. It is amazing to see day by day how many tracts, books and booklets are shared and distributed among people here in Armenia. God is working all the time!

I have always said that God uses various methods and various people in His ministry. Just four days ago, my mom and I decided to visit my grandmother and to

Letters from our Mission Fields

have a three-day vacation in one of the towns of Armenia. I was very tired of my city, of people and noise, so I decided to focus that short time on my spiritual hunger and need. When I used to visit my grandma as a child, I used to evangelize in that exact town, so some people already know us there. Some are still living for God, some are not. Well, God again used us and that short time for evangelizing new people there.

Some women came to see us there. I used that opportunity, with God's help, and introduced to them the new booklets and tracts printed by Joseph Hovsepian Ministries. While I was talking and explaining what our mission is and what these booklets are about, I saw one woman already reading "Does your Life Have Meaning?" I was impressed!

I told her she would have time to read that booklet and tracts at home, but she said that some devotionals really captured her and she could not stop reading! Please, pray for these people who look for God and want to have a real and complete relationship with Him. May God bless your ministries abundantly, endlessly.

Lilit Mantashyan (Yerevan)



We are again and again blessed to have the new booklets (Does Your Life Have Meaning?) at our disposal. Praise God! It is really an encouraging booklet, full of advice, especially for spiritual growth. While evangelizing and talking with people during our visits, we meet many people who have a lot of questions concerning everyday life.

I am sure this book will be very useful for these people. We hope and pray that this booklet will satisfy our spiritual hunger and also will make many souls realize that they need to repent while the doors of God's grace are still open. We are going to distribute the 70 copies of the booklets, giving joy and happiness to 70 families.

I would like also to mention that all five devotionals written by Sister Annig [Ann-Margret Hovsepian] are indeed very clear and direct. There is one devotional among the other ones that spoke to my heart directly: "Contentment Doesn't Depend on Circumstances" [reprinted from the June 2013 Temple News].

May God bless you and strengthen you in all your ministries!

Tigran Muradyan (Horom)

Every day, I give out your tracts at my workplace and miracles are happening. People eagerly accept the tracts, as if it is medicine — for both their physical and spiritual illnesses. And it's true!

We live in an age of computers and new technologies but all of that is not able to remove one sin or to give peace. Only God's Word can give the health and eternal peace. People are taking these tracts with great hunger. God be glorified!

Samuel Hakobyan (Yerevan)

Inspirations

What Will You Give?

By Pastor Joseph Hovsepian

*“What can I give to our King?” you ask
sadly.*

*“I have nothing worthwhile to bring,”
you say with tears.*

*“I have nothing that the Lord Jesus
would want,” you whisper in disap-
pointment.*

Oh, but listen dear friend!

*We all have gifts that we may bring,
We all have songs that we may sing,
We all have words that we may say,*

*We all have prayers that we may pray,
We all have love and joy that we may
give.*

*And what a joy life is when we scatter
about
The things God has given us to share.*

So, dear friend,

If you want to give a gift, give it!

If it is a song, sing it!

If it is a talent, use it!

If it is love, spread it!

If you have religion, live it!

If you have gladness, share it!

If you have a prayer, pray it!



Priceless Gifts

Some gifts you can give this Christmas are beyond monetary value: Mend a quarrel, dismiss suspicion, tell someone, “I love you.” Give something away, anonymously. Forgive someone who has treated you wrong. Turn away wrath with a soft answer. Visit someone in a nursing home. Apologize if you were wrong. Be especially kind to someone with whom you work. Give as God gave to you in Christ, without obligation, or announcement, or reservation, or hypocrisy.

— Chuck Swindoll, *Growing Strong*

Jesus, the Saviour

When Mary was engaged to Joseph, she experienced a day so extraordinary that it would take a lifetime to ponder the depths of its meaning. A visiting angel told her she would conceive a child even though she was a virgin and that this child would be the long-awaited Messiah.

Mary didn’t need a book of baby names to find one she liked. The angel gave her the name. When we name our children, we don’t always think about the meaning of the name. But whenever God named a baby in the Bible, there was always a significant meaning.

Mary’s child would be called Jesus, a name that meant He would be the Saviour—a title that belonged to God alone. Therefore, Jesus’ name meant that He was not only man but that He was also God in the flesh.

There is a church with a large neon sign that reads, “Jesus Saves.” Some ask, “Jesus saves from what?” The answer is simple: Jesus saves from the sin we would otherwise be hopelessly bound in.

— author unknown

Inspirations

The Cost of Christmas

It cost Mary and Joseph the comforts of home during a long period of exile in Egypt to protect their little baby.

It cost mothers, in and around Bethlehem, the massacre of their babies by the cruel order of Herod.

It cost the shepherds the complacency of their shepherd's life when they were called to the manger and to tell the good news.

It cost the wise men a long journey and expensive gifts and changed lives.

It cost the early apostles and the early church persecution and sometimes even death.

It cost missionaries of Christ untold suffering and hardship to spread the Good News.

It cost Christian martyrs in all ages their lives for Christ's sake.

More than all this, it cost God the Father His own Son, He sent Him to the

earth to save men. It cost Jesus a life of sacrifice and service, a death cruel and unmatched in history.

— author unknown

We Want to Hear from YOU!

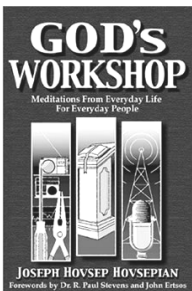
We are always looking for fresh material, especially personal testimonies and insights by our own church members and other readers connected with our ministry. That includes you!

Has God taught you something special recently? Why not tell others about it so that they can be blessed, challenged and inspired, too? Please send in your thoughts and testimonies, whether you write a paragraph or a whole page! For next issue, please submit your material by December 15. Our contact information is on page 2.

GOD'S WORKSHOP

God's Workshop, by Pastor Joseph Hovsepien, is available for a suggested donation of \$10. This collection of "meditations from

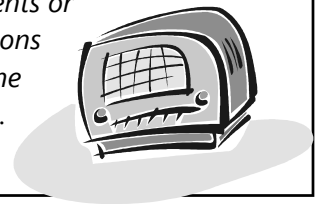
everyday life for everyday people," taken from Pastor Joseph's sermons and radio messages, would make a great gift!



GOOD NEWS!

Did you know you can tune in to WCHP 760AM every weekday at noon to hear a short inspirational message by Pastor Joseph Hovsepien?

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



The Pastor's Page

Emmanuel

Isaiah 9:2-7

If you were God and you had a very important message for the human race, how would you say it? Would you use a loud, booming voice from heaven? Would you broadcast it on every television channel at once? Would you write the message across the sky? Or would you spread the news on social media?

God sent the message through a person — delivered in a manger, nailed to a cross and then raised up from the grave. In fact, Jesus is God's message. Verses 1 and 14 of John 1 say, *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only."*

Christ was before Bethlehem. He said in John 8:58, *"Before Abraham was born, I AM!"* Jesus appears in the first verse of the Bible and remains throughout the Old Testament until His appearance in the flesh.

"He became flesh" is the key to understanding the true meaning of Christmas. The prophet Isaiah, 760 years before Christ's birth in Bethlehem, made a very clear distinction when he said, *"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given"* (Isaiah 9:6). A child was *born* but a son was *given*.

God takes Isaiah into the future and shows him the people of the world who, for a long time, walked in darkness and in the shadow of death. Suddenly they see a great light, a light which will set them free and break their chains of bondage, both physical and spiritual.



"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:2,6)

In Matthew 1:23, we have a direct quote from Isaiah 7:14. *"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Emmanuel, which means 'God with us'."* Here, the name Emmanuel is clearly describing the divinity of Christ. But let's look at four other names given to the child in Bethlehem.

- **Wonderful Counselor** — in Hebrew, *Pele Yoetz*. Christ is not our prosecutor, but our counselor and defender.
- **Mighty God** — in Hebrew, *El Gibbor*. Jesus is given the name as God!
- **Everlasting Father** — in Hebrew, *Abhi Ad* which is literally translated as "Father of Eternity."
- **Prince of Peace** — in Hebrew, *Sar Shalom*. Shalom means more than the peace obtained from the absence of war. It includes prosperity, well-being, harmony, peace in one's heart and peace with God. It is the perfect state of being.

God, in the person of His Son, came to this world in the flesh as a poor, humble child to save the world and bring peace. Have you found the Prince of Peace yet?

Pastor Joseph Hovsepien