

Dear friends and supporters,

A queue had been formed in the village hall of Arteni, where AM holds weekly Bible clubs for about 140 children. Following the club the children were waiting to receive their very own copy of the “New Testament and Psalms”. A little boy had just received his copy. He was standing clutching the colourful book mark that he had painstakingly formed in the craft session. He had patterned it himself and carefully stuck on it the words of the memory verse that he had learnt that week. Now he was curious about his new book. He simply couldn't believe what his teacher, one of Ruth's team, was telling him. This book contained all those amazing adventure stories, challenging stories about being obedient to God and trusting God. By way of proving the teacher's words he sat down and carefully looked for his own memory verse. Satisfied he put his bookmark in that page and skipped home. That day a home which had never received God's Word suddenly did!



We are grateful to the Lord that once again we can report to you that there is much work going on in Armenia. The cold season is always one of the hardest times for the Armenians. Despite the cold the charity workers still sort through clothes and take them to needy individuals, chop and bag large quantities of wood and weigh out hampers of basic foods. These are distributed to poverty-stricken families, often house-bound and ill. The church work also continues and it is truly amazing how the various church members brave the snow and ice and battle their way to church. In a country where Christian literature is very hard to come by, the fellowship and teaching found within the church is invaluable.

Sending help from England

During the month of March, we were able to send a 40-foot container full of humanitarian aid to Armenia. We are so grateful to everyone who donated clothes, shoes, toys, chairs and schoolbags. We were able to send many brand new schoolbags packed full of school materials in this shipment and many more are already accumulating to be sent in the next shipment. We also sent Sunday school craft materials, such as colourful materials, several tonnes of coloured papers and cards, wobbly eyes and colourful stickers



and pictures. These will be invaluable during camp time in the summer and Bible club time during the year. During these times the craft materials and teaching materials for the children are completely provided and financed by AM and any materials sent from here save us an enormous amount of money. There were also several boxes of beautifully knitted clothes, blankets and toys. We are very grateful to our team of dedicated voluntary knitters, all over the country, who are diligently putting their spare time to use. We owe special thanks to the team who come and faithfully pack all the goods into boxes. We also thank those who come and load the container ready for shipment.

A day in the life of...

by
Ruth
Pambakian



“It is a pleasant Wednesday morning in Yerevan. The snow is melting and the promise of spring is in the air. A small band of AM charity workers set out from the centre armed with a car-boot load of rice, potatoes, vegetable oil, pasta, and a list of addresses, the unemployed, sick, invalid or single parents, people whom AM help regularly with food and clothing. One new family has come to the attention of the charity; a young widow with three small children who lives in a run down hovel in Saritagh, a five minute drive from Yerevan’s up-and-coming city centre.

I am left behind to put the finishing touches on the day’s children’s program. At half past one I will be setting out with my helper, Sarkis, to a village in the north of Yerevan where a number of children are eagerly awaiting our arrival in Marine’s house. Marine is also a widow lady with eight children! She used to live in Russia, but when her husband died there she returned to her homeland where she has no home, no income, and no connections. The government has lent her a room on the first floor of a dilapidated looking building. AM heard about her from a television broadcast depicting her hopeless condition. We started visiting the family with food, clothing and toys for the children, and a friendship sprang up so soon, that when we suggested visiting her regularly to hold Children’s Bible Clubs in her house (considering she has an entire club in the one family!) she threw the doors of her – err – house? wide open, not only to ourselves but to the neighbours and their children as well. I don’t know who enjoys the Bible stories, memory verses and games more, the children, or the parents who insist on accompanying them and participating alongside their children. As with most things, the beginning was hard. The parents were disruptive; the children slow to learn even the simplest truths of the gospel. But

slowly Sarkis and I have noticed a change. They remember stories we’ve told them in the past, truths from God’s Word are sinking in. Eyes are being opened to who the Lord Jesus truly is, and repeatedly the children confirm their love and trust toward Him. Today they will be taught, through the story of the Samaritan woman, that if they only come to Jesus as a sinner and ask for his grace and pardon they will receive eternal life. Some already profess to have done so. I pause in my preparations to pray for the salvation of each soul and to commend them to a loving Saviour. Then Sarkis and I prepare to set off. We’re a small team today; the only one’s who can be spared from the clubs in Yerevan. As we take the Word of God to the small village of Ardavazd, about forty children will be gathering in our own building in Yerevan to hear the same wonderful message of the gospel. But before we go the visiting team returns. Their faces tell a story already, so I take a moment to question them on the new lady. One of the team, a lady who herself lives in a small, undecorated house where the kitchen is a two minute walk *outdoors* away from the rest of the house and the facilities are shared with two other homes, exclaimed to me, “I never knew anyone was still living like that in Yerevan! It was like walking into a cave! There was an earth floor and stone walls, and the place was freezing! They haven’t



had electricity for seven years! And there is not a stick of furniture in the house apart from three bedsteads, which had no mattress or bedding. Nothing! They must sleep in their clothes!” Another lady interrupts to continue the story. “There were three pegs nailed into the wall, where they hang their clothes in plastic bags.

There were one or two plates in the stone window-sill. That must have been their kitchen.” “The children looked so sweet,” exclaimed another, “But they were very dirty. The whole place was dirty and unkempt. The lady has obviously long since lost hope, or the ability to do something about the situation.” The widow lady lives with her three children, aged three, five and seven, her seventeen year old brother and her grandmother. (For those whose curiosity works the same way as mine, the mum sleeps in one single bed with two children, the grandmother sleeps in a single bed with the other child, and the brother gets a bed all to himself!) The seventeen year old brother *never went* to school for lack of clothes. Now the seven year old has begun to follow in the same pattern. He has not yet had any schooling, for lack of physical needs. Although the family has been registered with us for monthly aid, I immediately requested to visit them myself, and for them to be taken some extra supplies, particularly bedding! Sadly, we

have none in store now, but the GOOD NEWS is that a container is already on its way to us from the UK, and we in Yerevan are already squinting with our eyes to see it. Actually, mine have just filled with tears! If ever anyone doubted whether their part toward collecting, packing and sending these containers was appreciated, let me take this opportunity to thank you on behalf of those in Armenia who have nothing, and receive with tears the gifts of love from distant brothers and sisters. Love covers many miles. The most encouraging thing for me was the response of our charity workers. Already three people have asked if they can come with me, when I go to visit the widow lady. Sharing material goods with those who have none is a great blessing. Sharing friendship and care with those who have no hope is an even greater blessing. Sharing God’s Word of Life with sinners on the road to eternal death is the greatest blessing of all! *Therefore, let us not be weary in well doing, for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.*”

My observations



by Robert Lankey
Trustee of
Armenian
Ministries

I’ve been involved as a trustee of Armenian Ministries for many years now. I am one of 8 trustees but you may be asking, what does a trustee actually do? Trustees of any charity have responsibility for the decision making and direction of the charity, however, the trustees of Armenian Ministries also support the charity spiritually through prayer. From a variety of backgrounds, we also try to use the abilities and skills that God has given us, to support the work. We meet regularly to pray for and discuss the work and I found it fascinating at our last meeting to see how God’s provision continues to help the charity ‘stretch’, so to speak, its financial resources in spite of the so-called “credit crunch”. Have you ever stopped to think what it costs to maintain a car in Armenia? I had the privilege of visiting Armenia 4 years ago and saw the work of the charity first hand. When I saw the condition of Armenian roads,

I realised it must be expensive to maintain a car there. Recently, whilst driving at night, Ruth Pambakian hit a rock lying in the road which had presumably fallen from a lorry. It caused considerable damage to her car and it would have cost a lot to repair. We all know too well that cars are expensive to maintain but, without vehicles, the work of the charity would be unable to continue throughout the country of Armenia. Thanks be to God that He provided someone in the work in Armenia who could repair the car at a fraction of the normal cost so that Ruth could be back on the road again!

Few of us have escaped the news of the so called “credit crunch”. It is easy for us to be absorbed by our own needs close to home, yet the needs of those in Armenia continue to be great and, as a trustee, I am praying that God’s arm will reach out to all those in need, strengthening the workers and meeting their every day needs, like in Ruth’s case mentioned above. We thank our God, that despite economic uncertainty throughout the world, He is able to provide the ongoing needs of the charity and I look forward to continuing to support and work in it.

Charity update

“It is so pleasant to see the spring arriving at last; more so in Armenia, where the winters are so cold. It is a time of insecurity for most Armenians. Aside from the problem of finding their daily bread, the winter brings the even more significant worry of warming themselves. We praise God, that He has enabled the charity to help a lot of these families by distributing clothes, food, and wood for fuel. However, day by day, the number of people applying to our charity for help is increasing, as the worldwide financial crisis is seriously affecting Armenia. Many men have been impatiently waiting for the coming of spring, in order to find work in the building and maintenance industries. However, because of the financial crisis, it seems that no one wants to start any building work, or even to continue the works left unfinished from the autumn. Nowadays, the situation of semi-destitute and destitute families has become much worse. In one day, the prices of food and other necessities were put up appreciably. As if this was not enough, the government has announced that from the 1st April, the prices of gas, electricity, and water will be going up too.

We praise God, He is strengthening the charity workers to be of physical and spiritual help to these needy families. When our team visits these desperate families, we take with us the good news of the Gospel, proclaiming that the Lord Jesus continues to save sinners today. It is difficult to imagine what the condition of these needy people would be without any help. Therefore we look to our Lord to continue to enable us to work. Even so come Lord Jesus.”

Gevork Minassian, Local Director, Armenia

Christian literature

The translation of the Old Testament has reached an exciting stage – proofreading. It's exciting to report that all the books are now in the process of checking, adding footnotes, cross-references and checking titles and sub-headings. They are then individually being handed to an external proof-reader. However, the remaining work is tedious and requires much concentration. Please pray in particular for Sona as this work has drained her health and stamina noticeably over the past year. She suffers from continual headaches, eye strain and back ache.



The New Testament and Psalms are being rapidly distributed amongst individuals and organisations which have requested multiple copies. It is very encouraging when we get feedback on how God's Word has gone into homes and changed lives.

We are also pleased to announce that “Read for Joy” has made some good sales during the winter with a number of orders of “The Three Trees”. With what we have sold so far, we have been able to hand out a couple of hundred Armenian copies.

Thank you so much to all our supporters for your friendship, encouragement and prayers during 2008. We look forward to another year of working with you in Armenia. We depend very much on your prayers. I would like to encourage everyone who thinks they “play only a small part” that every warm blanket knitted, every child helped, every bag of flour given to a family, every schoolbag packed or shoe-box filled with goodies, every penny donated, is seen by God and never forgotten. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

Yours by Grace alone,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'P. Harrison'.

Perouz Harrison

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