

April 2009

Dear Friends,

Two recent proposed amendments to Armenia's Religion Law, if adopted, would pose a threat to religious minorities. The changes are believed to have been influenced by the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church —recognized in 2005 as the official state church— and target religious groups that pose a threat to the Church. Approximately 90% of Armenians belong to the Armenian Apostolic Church which over the centuries has been central to forging Armenian national identity and Armenian culture.

The most controversial changes to the current law include prohibiting groups or individuals from proselytizing without official permission, (including the distribution of written materials) and increasing the membership requirement for religious entities to be able to gain legal status from 200 to 1000 members. Although these amendments are primarily aimed at curtailing the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses (which have proliferated and worry Armenian leaders because their refusal to serve in the military is seen as aiming to destroy Armenia), Evangelical leaders in Armenia are worried.

What will this mean for the ministry of Reformed Faith and Life? As of yet we do not know, and are waiting to hear from our colleagues on the field. We need your prayers that God would thwart this unsettling development.

Much work and many challenges lay ahead of us, but God continues to bless the ministry by touching the hearts of those who come into contact with the materials and programs of Reformed Faith and Life. Arthur Minasyan reports that since the beginning of the year, more than half of the letters they have received are from new readers who mention a strong desire to become permanent members of the ministry.

Many listeners and readers, instead of writing, choose to visit our office in person to receive individualized counsel and spiritual guidance. We are also able to send written materials and CDs to Turkey via relatives or friends who travel there. Please pray especially for Christians living in Turkey.

A member of our team in Armenia writes to us about the effects the economic crisis has on the Armenian population and how the ministry of Reformed Faith and Life is crucial during this time:

“And during difficulties when solutions to the problems are above the abilities of human consciousness, human beings turn to God and by strengthening their belief they accept all the challenges of life as ordeals sent by Him. ...Rev. Kayayan physically is not with us but he has left such a huge literary and spiritual inheritance to us that by using it we can serve as a spiritual support for the believers, can confirm and strengthen their belief to confront their stress, depression and difficulties.”

We praise God for the gift of his living and transformative Word.

We continue to work on finishing the written materials undertaken by Rev. Kayayan and are thankful for the recent publication of *Theology and Christology*. We are finishing the book on Calvin, *The Man and the Reformer*, a crucial work which will explain the life and role of the great Reformer to Armenians. In a newsletter dated March 2008, Rev. Kayayan mentions an enthusiastic letter received from Etchmiatzin, the See of the Armenian Apostolic Holy Church, praising the efficiency of the message of the Reformation which, he writes, contributed not only to the Reformation of the Church but also established an almost new Culture and Civilization.

We have also remodeled our website to provide additional information on the ministry of Reformed Faith and Life and on the country and history of Armenia, and will be adding a news page about Armenia to help keep this small, far-away country relevant for our North American supporters.

We want to express our deep gratitude for your commitment to the work of Reformed Faith and Life both through your faithful donations and prayers.

In Christ,

Alix Kayayan
For the Christians for Armenia team