



Autumn 2007

LIGHTHOUSE PAROS

A NEW MINISTRY PROJECT...

Project PAROS is a short-term mission opportunity (in JULY of each year) sponsored by HOPE Armenia Ministries. "Paros" in Eastern Armenian means "Lighthouse." For further information about how church groups or individuals may participate in this hands-on ministry program: paros@wayofhope.am



Our first Project PAROS team from Massachusetts: Julia, Scott & Paul, with Kaarina

Project PAROS July 1-14, 2007

Here are perspectives from our first Project PAROS participants:

After a long flight, we arrived in Armenia late at night, welcomed by Kaarina and Tatevik. Piling into the vehicle named "Henry IV" (a.k.a. "Hendo 4"), we drove through downtown Yerevan and headed northeast toward the Lighthouse (retreat house) at Lake Sevan in the early morning hours.

When we rolled out of bed the next day and walked out on the balcony, we were taken by the beauty of Lake Sevan and the nearby mountains. In fact, mountains seemed to be a constant background to our busy two weeks in Armenia... dramatic grass-covered ranges, rugged canyons, snow-covered Mt. Ararat and other peaks in the far distance.

We had quite a time getting started in our painting tasks at the Lighthouse, not being sure of Armenian paints and tools. The building itself (although not completely finished inside) is a wonderful place for young adults to spend time in spiritual retreat, away from the noise of the city, in the clear air of Sevan. With its dorm rooms, large dining room and wonderful kitchen, it can handle quite a crowd.

The days alternated between painting at the Lighthouse and running off to Yerevan (one hour away) for various activities. We met several ministry volunteers, did sightseeing with Tatevik and Narine (three museums in one day!), and saw some ancient sites important to Armenian history. Tigran explained the fascinating interior of Etchmiadzin Cathedral (begun in 303 A.D.). We also worshipped at Yerevan International Church (English speaking) with Christians from several countries. The Armenian cuisine was wonderful (fresh vegetables, fresh fruit, and lots of barbecue), but we never mastered the Armenian word for ice cream! Kaarina's birthday was celebrated with a late-night party with gifts from Massachusetts. As our trip was nearing its end, we raced to finish our work at the Lighthouse, staying up late into the night. May the Lord use the staff and the programs and the Lighthouse to draw young Armenians closer to Him!

---Paul Ham, South Ashburnham, Massachusetts

As our plane landed in Yerevan, I had no idea what to expect. After a warm greeting from Kaarina and Tatevik, we were on our way to the northern region known as Sevan. For the next two weeks, I saw how God has been blessing HOPE mission and its team. Tatevik, Narina, Tigran, and all the volunteers were so helpful in showing us around and teaching us about Armenia and its 4,000-year history. I found the history of the early church especially interesting. It was a great feeling knowing God was using me to help this ministry grow. By painting three rooms at the Lighthouse, giving my testimony at the Yerevan International Church, and ministering to teens, I saw that the love of Christ knows no borders or language barriers. Thanks (*Schnorhakalutjun*) to all who donated their time and money for our trip! May God bless you all. ---Scott McGowan, Ashburnham, Massachusetts

(Greenville College, Illinois)



Julia and Paul painting the blue room at the "Lighthouse"



Summer youth program, Yerevan's 3rd district

Armenia was unlike any place I had ever imagined. This ancient land, kissed by God's grandeur, shone radiantly with His light. But nothing shone brighter than His work through Hope Armenia Ministries. Witnessing and experiencing the efforts of this mission really revealed to me an understanding of true servanthood. Whether we were painting rooms at "Paros" (Lighthouse) or leading the youth program for the inner city kids, it was all for the glory of God. Even though we were distanced by our languages, the truth of Christ united us, for His love transcends all languages and knows no cultural bounds! Thank you Aunt Kaarina and everyone on the team for welcoming us and having such heart, humility, and indomitable spirit for the Lord. We are praying for you.

---Julia Ham, Ashburnham, Massachusetts (Gordon College)

HOPE NEWS

Arsen & Narine's WEDDING
(see page 3)



Tigran & Gayane's BABY BOY Sarkis
(see page 4)



Table of contents

A New Ministry Project	1
Perspectives on HOPE Ministries	2
LIGHTHOUSE Training Center	3
Project PAROS	3
HOPE Seminar Schedule	3
Armenian Apostolic Church History & Tradition	3
Armenian History & Culture	4
Answers to Prayers & Prayer Concerns	4

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PERSPECTIVES ON HOPE

According to the Bible, hope is a matter of continuity. The Psalmist wrote, "For you, O Lord, are my hope, my trust... from my youth" (Psalm 71:5). Isaiah the prophet reminded Israel, "...even when you turn gray I will carry you..." (Isaiah 46:4a). These are wonderful, calming reassurances for each believer---especially as the white on top continues to multiply!

Hope is also an everyday proposition. As any pianist will attest, any piece of music---no matter how magnificently composed---is brittle and staccato without a sustaining pedal to hold the tune and carry it out smoothly.

Such is the life of faith. Concerning the Lord Jesus, the Apostle Paul stated: "...in him all things hold together" (Colossians 1:16b). This includes not only the entire cosmos, but also our personal, routine, daily lives! Without the Lord's carrying, supporting, nourishing, sustaining love, all that we face each morning would be just unglued "busy-ness." Imagine His arms underneath, pulling everything together!

Praise God, hope is also a perpetual reality. Because of the Lord's abiding, enduring love, each stage of my life (and yours) does not dangle out somewhere, unrelated to the whole, heading nowhere. Instead, each of our variegated pasts are meaningful; each detail of our present, multi-tasking realities are fully known to Him; each of our bright futures in His presence are fully assured.

These are more than enough reasons to be eternally grateful during this Thanks-giving season!

**In the Hope of Jesus,
Kaarina A. Ham, Ph.D
General Director**



MINISTRIES

YOUTH PROGRAM

Yerevan's 3rd district

Our team has begun its second year of youth ministry in Yerevan's 3rd District. Around 20 faithful early teens (ages 12 - 14) are once again eagerly anticipating our team's visits to their youth center. They enter well into discussion about spiritual themes and enjoy the lively related activities. They are quite familiar with Bible passages by now, and step by step we can see evidence of their spiritual growth.



3rd District youth team
Tatevik, Tigran, Anna, Anna

YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP

Jrashen School # 107 (outside Yerevan)

We've started a new 15-week discipleship program in Jerashen village, a Yerevan suburb, with 15 teenagers (14 - 16 years of age). This program is a weekly 2-hour intensive after-school study of biblical principles. These kids have lots of questions about spiritual issues (such as the spread of Jehovah's Witness teaching in their region; practical issues of right and wrong; the importance of Christian baptism, etc.). It's been fun during these first few sessions to see their excitement as they find specific verses in the Bible for the very first time! We're pleased so far with their responsiveness, and pray that God's Word will bring spiritual fruit in their lives.



Jrashen youth team
Gagik, Mher, Tatevik, Tigran

NEW YOUTH PROGRAM

City of Metsamor

A door opened in early November to start a new youth program in the city of Metsamor (one hour's drive west from Yerevan). Tatevik quickly formed a team with Narine, Mher, and two graduates of our third discipleship program, Susannah and Gohar. We are gratified already with the warm response from leaders in the state church there to our outreach toward teenagers in this region where the Jehovah's Witnesses cult has been very active.



Metsamor youth team
Mher, Tigran, Susanna, Narine, Tatevik, Gohar

YOUNG ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Armenian Apostolic Church in Yerevan Center

This is already the third young adult discipleship course that HOPE mission has organized in central Yerevan. The first course took place during autumn 2006, and the second in the spring of 2007. Twenty-two individuals (from 16 - 38 years of age) are now attending the third course (autumn 2007)---this time we have eight more people than before. All participants have a Christian background, but most do not realize what Christianity means for them and how it can impact their lives. But they hope to find some answers to their life questions during our course. We are pleased that four participants from the last course have become team members. We pray and believe that God will work in each person's life, and that Christianity will become for them not only a "religion," but also a lifestyle.



Discipleship Group #3 team
Samvel, Arman, Lilie, Zaven, Tatevik,
Narine, Arsen, Arpine, Sona.

*Իսկ Հոգու պտուղն այս է՝ սեր, խնդուէին,
խաղաղութիւն, Համբերութիւն, քաղցրութիւն,
բարութիւն, Հավատարմութիւն, Հեղութիւն,
ժողկալութիւն. այսպիսի բաներն օրէնք չկայ:*

Գաղատացիներ 5:22-23

*"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy,
peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, meekness, self-control."
Galatians 5:22,23*

DISCIPLESHIP FOLLOW-UP

HOPE Mission Office

After learning the basics of faith in the Lord Jesus, the next step is studying God's Word at a deeper level. For this reason, Narine and Zaven have begun a Bible study looking at the "Fruits of the Spirit" for graduates of our discipleship courses, which will meet at our office on Tuesday evenings during the winter months. Later we're hoping to examine the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.

LIGHTHOUSE / "PAROS" Training Center

Tsovagyugh village (near Lake Sevan)

Recent progress: inside stairway
Funds given by Grace Church
Filipino Fellowship in Vienna, Austria
were applied to this project
Salamat (many thanks) to the
Christian friends in Vienna!



Julie and Scott (from Massachusetts) enjoying the summer sun on our LIGHTHOUSE balcony



Project PAROS

Short-term
summer (JULY) mission
opportunity in Armenia

Armenian Volunteer Team -
Group 1 ~ July 21-22, 2007
(above right)

Armenian Volunteer Team -
Group 2 ~ July 28-29, 2007
(bottom right)



HOPE picture gallery

www.wayofhope.am



2007 - 2008 Seminar Schedule (tentative) at the LIGHTHOUSE Training Center

- November 2007** DISCIPLESHIP
"Basics of the Christian Faith"
- December 2007** 2nd SINGLE'S SEMINAR
"Building a Christian Identity"

- January 2008** HOPE staff retreat
- February 2008** LEADERSHIP
Small Group Ministry
- March 2008** LITURGY ~ Christian Worship
- April 2008** YOUNG FAMILIES
"Building a Christian Family"
- May 2008** DISCIPLESHIP
"Basics of the Christian Faith"
- June 2008** SPORT & FAITH
Young Teenage Boys
- July 2008** Project PAROS

ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH HISTORY & TRADITION The Sacrament of Holy Matrimony

By *Narine Sinanyan*



Holy Matrimony is one of the seven sacraments of the Armenian Apostolic Church. Marriage is a solemn covenant between the couple and God. They promise to be faithful to each other in both easy and hard times throughout their lives. During the marriage ceremony, the

pastor tells everyone present, "what God has joined together, let not anyone separate."

Marriage is also a covenant to form a family, the foundation of society. As strong as the foundation is; the stronger will be the structure over it. God himself is the originator of marriage. He instituted it in the Garden of Eden by saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth" (Genesis 1:28).

The doctrine of the sacrament of marriage in the Armenian Apostolic Church is based on Ephesians 5:22-23. During the marriage ceremony, this passage is read as the main lesson.



In the Armenian tradition, crowns are placed on the heads of the husband and wife, signifying their becoming "King" and "Queen"

Here the Apostle Paul compares the relationship of husband and wife with the relationship of Christ and His Church.

The purpose of the marriage sacrament is to sanctify the union of man and woman for the preservation of the human race, and for the upbringing of children as Christians. But besides the aim of bringing children into the world, marriage is also for the mutual support of man and woman. Husband and wife must comfort and support each other. They must love each other as

Christ loved His Church. As a sacrament, marriage is the act by which the Church blesses the vows and binds the new couple with a spiritual bond to each other and to the Church. It is really a mystery that the two become one, but at the same time they keep their personalities.

Having been married already one month, I can say that marriage is both enjoyable and sacrificial. Marriage is full of compromises, challenges and struggles. It requires lots of hard and new things from each partner. But there is only one thing that can transform these hard things into a great feast. This is LOVE, which is "patient, kind, not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends..."

(1 Corinthians 13:4-8).



After the marriage ceremony, as they exit the church, the couple releases doves into the air.

***Narine is an M.A. graduate of Yerevan State University, Faculty of Theology. Her special interest is Armenian church history and tradition.

ARMENIAN HISTORY & CULTURE

The Spread of Christianity in Armenia

By Tatevik Ghazaryan



Christianity was officially adopted in Armenia at the beginning of the 4th century, in 301 A.D. Armenia became the first nation where Christianity was declared a state religion. It was only in 313 A.D., for

example, that the Roman Emperor Constantine the Great, with his famous Edict, officially allowed Christianity to flourish.

The spread of Christianity in Armenia was not easy. Soldiers of the court fought against the pagans, destroying their centers of worship throughout the country. King Trdat worked to remove paganism from the minds and hearts of the people. As a result, the leaders of their temples also

reacted with force. The struggle became all-out war, as the temples of the pagan gods were destroyed one after another.

Gradually, Christian churches were built in the places where pagan temples once stood. Armenian evangelist Gregory ("The Illuminator") became the overall spiritual leader of the Armenian Church. After being ordained as the Armenian Catholicos (patriarchal leader) in Cappadocia, at the beginning of the 4th century, Gregory came back to Armenia and organized the structure of the Armenian Church.

Thus paganism gave way to Christianity only with great difficulty. As time passed, some pagan rituals and traditions were kept and led toward syncretism at the grassroots level. We still see some evidences of this today in the form of amulets, superstitious practices such as the sacrificing of sheep, jumping over fire, and even some holidays.

But step by step the Armenian Church asserted its power. The king gave land and properties to the Church. The Church also received a tithe (10%) of all that was harvested. In response, the Church helped the king unite all governmental ministries. Later, during various struggles for survival and protection of the national culture, when there was no Armenian government (for example, during the 5th century, when there was no dynasty; during the 7th century Arabic invasion; and during the 12th century Seljuk Turk invasion), the Church performed the role of state and was a constant pillar of strength for the Armenian people.



Armenian Apostolic Mother Church in Etchmiadzin (303 A.D.)

***Tatevik is an M.A. graduate of the Yerevan State Philological Institute and former high school history teacher.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

1. God is with us, sustaining us, guiding us, opening new doors
2. Tigran & Gayane's little boy Sarkis (born October 3) is doing fine
3. Arsen & Narine are happily married
4. We now have 3 youth ministry programs: Yerevan's 3rd district, Jrashen, Metsamor
5. There are 22 participants (+9 team members) in our 3rd student discipleship program
6. A good response to "Fruits of the Spirit" discipleship follow-up Bible study

PRAYER CONCERNS

1. That staff & volunteers would grow in faith as they use their spiritual gifts
2. That all ministry participants would hunger and thirst for God's Word
3. That HOPE would continue to find favor with state church leaders
4. That our LIGHTHOUSE Training Center would be a place of warmth, learning, and fellowship
5. Early December Single's Seminar at the LIGHTHOUSE
6. Suren & Tatevik's December wedding

Tigran ("Proud Papa"), Gayane, and newborn baby Sarkis



American 4th of July Celebration, Armenian-style!

"Be strong and courageous, all you who HOPE in the Lord." Psalm 31:24

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