



Summer 2006

LIGHTHOUSE PAROS

A NEW MINISTRY BEGINNING...

On April 29, 2006, **HOPE Armenia Ministries** was officially dedicated to God's service at People's Evangelical Congregational Church in South Ashburnham, Massachusetts, USA. Christian friends were present from churches in Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and New York.

A highlight before the Service of Dedication was a power point presentation, outlining ministry activities over the last two years (2004-2005) in Armenia. There was also a chance to try Armenian dolma (stuffed cabbage) around the fellowship table afterward.

Many thanks to all the friends at Dr. Kaarina's home church who helped make this entire day memorable! Special thanks to Maureen Ham Nguyen for leading our first Ministry Committee meeting; to Rev. Ed and Roberta Lindquist of Woburn, Massachusetts, for their major roles in the service (message from God's Word, ministry of

music); to Kate Martin for her new-found skills with dolma; and to David Ham (Ft. Myers, FL) and Pastor Randy and Donna Bell (Attica, NY), who traveled the farthest to share this special event with us.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



The first meeting of our Board of Directors took place on April 8, 2006 in San Gabriel, California. Praise God for bringing together such a fine group of committed believers to serve in this way! You'll be hearing about each member in subsequent issues of LIGHTHOUSE / PAROS:

Chair: Mr. Richard Nicholson, CA (back center) administrator, Los Angeles County Office of Education
Vice Chair: Mr. Paul Green, CA (far left) former school principal; real estate businessman
Secretary: Mrs. Linda Webster, GA (far right) (computer technician) mother of three
Treasurer: Mrs. Heather Thrall, CA (front center) (financial assistant) mother of three
Ms. Juliana Mirabilio, VA (second from left) attorney
Dr. Kaarina Ham, Armenia (second from right) missionary

We're pleased that our Board chair, Richard Nicholson and his wife Linda will make their first visit to Armenia this September / October! We're excited to show them the many good things God is doing among young leaders here...

The first meeting of our Ministry Committee also took place in Ashburnham, Massachusetts on April 29, 2006, just before the Service of Dedication.

Representatives from several churches were present to hear details about the board's vision and upcoming ministry initiatives, to give their input concerning policies and mailings, and to pray specifically for our new mission.

This committee will meet in Massachusetts in April of each year to receive ministry updates and pray for God's blessing on our evangelism and discipleship ministries.



We welcome participation from members of church mission committees who were unable to attend this first meeting. For regular updates and information about future meetings: kaarina@wayofhope.am

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Project PAROS Short-Term.

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Discipleship Coordinator:

Narine Sinanyan

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PERSPECTIVES ON HOPE

As I've written an Old Testament overview course over recent months, the contrast between the Old Mosaic Covenant (written on tablets of stone) and the New Covenant in Christ (written on believers' hearts) has stood out clearly. Not only is the beautiful word "covenant" ours in a new way through our Lord Jesus (Hebrews 7:19); the beautiful word "hope" is ours in a new way.

In contrast to Old Testament "forward-looking" hope, what theologians describe as New Testament believers' "already-not-yet" hope is superior:

- (1) Christian hope comes from the **Spirit of God** (Romans 15:13)
- (2) Christian hope comes from **God's calling** (Ephesians 1:18)
- (3) Christian hope comes from **God's grace** (II Thessalonians 15:4)
- (4) Christian hope comes from **God's Word** (Romans 15:4)
- (5) Christian hope comes from the **Gospel** (Colossians 1:23)

We can praise God for being the origin of our eternal hope, and also our practical, every-day hope---because there are times when we hardly know how to focus our hope by ourselves!

Concerning our training and discipleship ministries here in Armenia, we have lots of anticipation and expectancy about what God wants to do over the next weeks and months. We've made lots of plans accordingly. But the truth is that we hardly know how to focus our minds and hearts, because our knowledge, insights, and energy are all limited.

We can breathe a sigh of relief that everything is under control. The Lord himself has placed this calling in us. He is the one giving new mercies every morning. His Word is powerful even when we feel powerless. And the strength of his Gospel can bring the spiritual fruit that he desires. All thanks and praise to him---in advance!

In the HOPE of Jesus,
Kaarina A. Ham, Ph.D

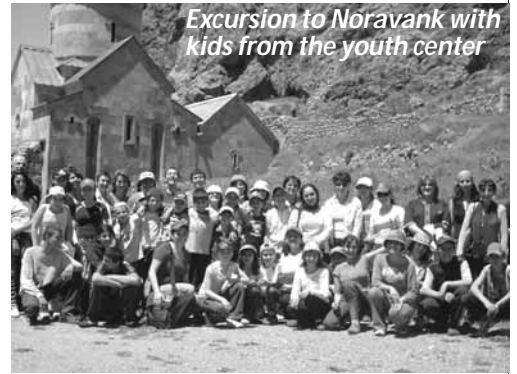


For teenagers 12-18: EVANGELISTIC PROGRAM YOUTH CENTER

Over the last two years, Tatevik has developed youth ministry teams in four villages in the Aragotsotn region of Armenia, just one hours' drive from the capital city of Yerevan.

This spring, she's been laying the groundwork for special programs in a youth center for disadvantaged kids, and in a school for kids with special needs---both here in Yerevan.

She will train two new teams and begin



Excursion to Noravank with kids from the youth center

these programs in the early autumn.

Our prayer is that these kids will be open to God's work in their hearts and lives.

For young adults 20-30: DISCIPLESHIP GROUP

"Basics of the Christian Faith"

Narine has led discipleship groups over the last several years with youth in a prison, and with adults in Saghmosavan village. In September, she will train a new discipleship team to share the basics of the Christian

faith with young adults who are nominal believers---"in name only."

Our prayer is that the truth of God's Word will go down deep into the hearts of these young professionals and begin to impact their lives in very practical ways.

Our prayer is that these new disciples will one day in turn disciple others!

For students 18-22: ENGLISH LANGUAGE BIBLE STUDY

Dr. Kaarina has completed a two-year English language Christian discipleship class with students from the Faculty of Theology at Yerevan State University.

She is looking forward to teaching the Book of Hebrews as a follow-up to this class, beginning in the autumn.

Please pray that these students will add their historical knowledge of 1,700 years of practical application of biblical principles to Christian faith in Armenia.



Excursion to Geghard with English discipleship group

"Project PAROS"

July 7 - 28, 2007

Youth Evangelism & Discipleship

Now accepting applications (through November 1, 2006)!

Plans are underway to bring a team of young leaders from churches in the USA for our first "Project PAROS" short-term mission next July.

Lessons: Armenian history, Armenian church history, Christian leadership, youth ministry

Ministry: 2 church-based youth programs, 1 discipleship program

Hands-on: help with renovations at the LIGHTHOUSE Training Center near Lake Sevan

Please pray that God will bring just the right participants

Cost: \$1,500 (plus \$100 emergency)

Further information / application: paros@wayofhope.am

LIGHTHOUSE / "PAROS" TRAINING CENT

Step by step everything is taking shape



- there's been great progress during the warm spring and summer months with interior renovations at the LIGHTHOUSE Training Center near Lake Sevan
- special thanks to the Sunday School at Highland Baptist Church in Fitchburg, Massachusetts, for sending \$1,000 toward the installation of tiles in the kitchen and bathrooms
- we look forward to having *Project PAROS* participants (July 2007) help with indoor painting



Progress to date: kitchen + 3 bathrooms - tiles, sinks, toilets, showers

Now in process: inside stairway

Immediate need: funds to complete floors & walls (circa \$3,000)

Further information: staff@wayofhope.am

ARMENIAN CHURCH HISTORY

Part II: "The Role of the Bible in Armenian Faith"

By Narine Sinanyan



Throughout the 1,700-year history of the Armenian Church, the Bible has occupied the central place in the life of the Armenian people. The full Armenian name for Bible is *Astouadsashoonch Matean*, which means "**Divinely Inspired Book.**" But the Bible is simply called *Astouadsashoonch*, which means "**The Breath of**

God." This name is used by the Apostle Paul in II Timothy 3:16.

As early as the first century, apostolic missionaries brought Christianity to our country. Missionaries came from both Cappadocia (later a Roman province in East Asia Minor) and Edessa (in northwest Mesopotamia---modern day Turkey), representing the two main traditions in Eastern Christendom: those in the Greek and Syriac languages. These missionaries trained Armenians in their evangelistic task, and the Bible was read in Greek or Syriac, depending on the area. Thus, the southern regions of Armenia received the Syriac influence, and the western and central areas heard the Bible in Greek.

Until the beginning of the fifth century, groups of monks traveled around the country and preached the Gospel, reading from the Bible in Greek or Syriac, and then commenting on it in Armenian. But this method of spreading the Word of God was ineffective. People did not have direct access to the Word of God in their own language.

A church without the Bible could not remain strong in the midst of a pagan world. Because of this, there was a deep need to translate the Bible into Armenian. But at this time, no written Armenian language existed, and therefore there was no Armenian alphabet. The creation of the national alphabet was an influential factor in preventing wholesale religious and cultural assimilation.

Finally, in 405 A.D., after two years of hard work, Mesrop Mashtots devised the Armenian alphabet. The creation of the Armenian alphabet was directly associated with the need to read and understand the Bible in one's own language. Therefore, the same spirit that led much-revered Mashtots and his disciples to invent the alphabet also led them to ini-

tiate the translation of the Holy Scriptures. The first translated sentence in the Armenian language was: "For attaining wisdom and discipline; for understanding words of insight" Proverbs 1:2.

The creation of the Armenian alphabet as well as the translation of the Bible into Armenian became the two most decisive events in the history of our nation that defined us as a people. The effects of these two events were felt not only in the fifth century, but also in succeeding centuries, until the present time. In this way, the whole of Armenian literature was deeply affected---not only in linguistic and literary ways, but also and particularly in a spiritual way.

The year 2005 marked the 1,600th anniversary of the creation of the Armenian alphabet, and it was also the 1,600th anniversary of the earliest efforts to translate the Bible into Armenian.



Ancient Armenian Bible Manuscript



Armenian Alphabet

ARMENIAN LIFE & CULTURE

Part II: "The Orontid (Ervanduni) Dynasty"

By Tatevik Ghazaryan



After many wars with Assyria, the Urartu-Araratian Kingdom ended its existence and yielded place to another old Armenian dynasty, the Ervanduni. Not long afterward, in Tushpa-Van, capital city of the Van Kingdom, a new Armenian dynasty was established. The founder was Ervand Sakavakyats, and from his name this dynasty became known as Ervanduni.

The Ervanduni Dynasty continued the unification of Armenian lands and also its supremacy over the Armenian highlands, where the population was already speaking Armenian. This dynasty thus established the first pan-Armenian state. The borders of the Armenian Kingdom were at Media in the southeast, and near the Black Sea in the northwest.

At this time, the Armenian Kingdom had 40,000 foot soldiers, 8,000 cavalry, and great riches.

King Ervand had two sons: Tigranes and Shavarsh. Tigranes played a great role in Armenian history. Through him, Armenia maintained its independence, and also acquired a powerful ally, the Persian King Cyrus the Great, who rebelled against Media. Cyrus had the power to destroy Media. The new Armenian king, Tigranes I, who was Cyrus' friend, helped him to accomplish this. In 550 B.C., Cyrus founded the greatest state in the history of that time: The Achaemenian Dominion. This newly-established dominion extended from the Mediterranean Sea and Egypt as far as India. The Armenian Kingdom had a special role in this supremacy.

But the situation changed during the reign of the Achaemenian king, Darius I. His violent power led all nearby nations (including Armenia) to rebel against him. From 522-520 B.C., Darius cruelly oppressed this rebellion. These events are written

in detail on Mount Behistun, in three languages.

In Persian and Elamian, Armenia is called "Armina," and Armenians are called "Armens." In Babylonian, Armenia is called "Urartu," and Armenians are called "Urartians."

Although the Kingdom of Van did not exist at this time, because Armenian had shown bold resistance, Darius sent two armies against the rebellion in Armenia. The Persian general broke down the Armenians' resistance, but only after the fifth try. Thus Armenia lost its independence temporarily and fell under Persian authority. *(To be continued...)*



Armenian tribute bearer carrying a metal vessel with griffin handles - 5th century B. C.

ANSWERS TO PRAYER

1. GOD IS WITH US! He sees our needs and hears our prayers...
2. God has led us to great places to begin youth programs:
YOUTH CENTER in Yerevan's 3rd district
SCHOOL for SPECIAL NEEDS in Yerevan's Erebuni district
3. DISCIPLESHIP - God is also opening new doors to teach the Basics of the Christian Faith to young adults
4. LIGHTHOUSE Training Center - funds for kitchen and bathroom tiles
5. BOARD CHAIR - upcoming visit to Armenia in September

PRAYER CONCERNS

1. STAFF / VOLUNTEERS - that God will continue to bring us the right people
2. TWO YOUTH MINISTRY TEAMS - selection and training
3. DISCIPLESHIP TEAM - selection and training
4. Project PAROS - just the right participants for July 2007
5. LIGHTHOUSE Training Center - funds for completion of floors and walls
6. OFFICE IN YEREVAN - target date January 2007

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

Return this portion with your gift
Please consider carefully a gift in support of our mission in Armenia

Thank You for Giving

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