



# LIGHTHOUSE PAROS

## GOD'S UNEXPECTED BLESSINGS: A personal testimony

By Armine Arshakyan



Armine helping paint the LIGHTHOUSE living room Project PAROS 2009

We learned in this past January's Staff & Helper's Retreat, while studying the *Letters to the Seven Churches* found in Revelation 1 – 3, that when the night is at its darkest point, the **Morning Star** (Jesus!) rises. Just the same thing happened in my life when I became involved with **Way of HOPE**. All the programs were very interesting, and more importantly, useful for me. I found something I had lost a long time ago - hope! The biblical seminars helped me regain my spiritual stability. Then step by step my spiritual life awakened.

On 14 June 2009, at the end of the young adult discipleship program, a spiritual pilgrimage was organized to the village of Bjni, just about an hour north from Yerevan. That day is of great importance to me. The service in the church, then the seminar conducted by deacons as we sat close to nature, filled my soul with joy. And on this very day, I met my future husband, Armen! It was like the plan of God unfolding in my life. Really, I believe that He is the one who brought us together on that significant day.

Thanks to the programs conducted by HOPE, my husband is involved in spiritual activities as well. It's wonderful that we go to God's House hand in hand. Now I know that we are much closer to God than ever. Only by having a personal relationship with Him can we be strong. I am very thankful to the whole HOPE staff for giving us these opportunities. I wish all people in the world would find their hope in Christ.



Honeymoon photo, taken in Thailand



Wedding Day, 18 October 2010

*Editor's note: Armine is a Spanish / German / English language student at Yerevan State Linguistic University named after V. Brusov. Her husband Armen is a computer programmer. They are expecting their first child in November of this year. We're grateful for their participation in our ministry programs, and especially pleased that they're one of 3 couples who have met through our ministries!*

## HOPE NEWS



Edward Jr. was born on 10 May to long-time volunteer Anna and her husband Edward Grigoryan. Welcome, little man, to the HOPE Family!

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### HIGHLIGHTS

HOPE Family Excursion  
Hayravank Church  
Sunday, 19 June 2011



events archive>>

HIGHLIGHTS is a new feature on our website homepage, showing ministry events as they happen.

We now have both English and Armenian Facebook pages which can be accessed via HOPE website:

[www.wayofhope.am](http://www.wayofhope.am)

More up-do-date pictures can be seen by clicking on the Armenian Facebook link.

Find Us On Facebook

**HOPE Armenia Ministries**

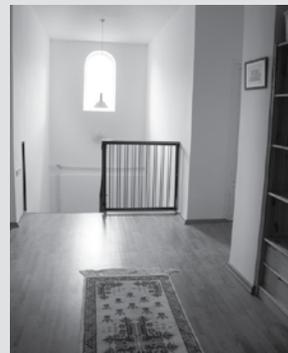
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## LIGHTHOUSE Training Center

near Lake Sevan

Second floor renovations completed



# 6th Annual Meeting: NE Prayer & Support Group

7 May 2011 ~ Athol, Massachusetts USA



## PERSPECTIVES ON HOPE

Psalm 42:5 expresses a powerful antidote to personal despair: **“Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.”**

Jeremiah 31:15-17 echoes this theme as a national plea: **“A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.” This is what the Lord says: ‘Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded,’ declares the Lord.”**

Having experienced firsthand the various revolutions across East-Central Europe and former USSR during the daring tidal waves of 1989-91, when oppressive Soviet regimes were thrown off one by one; the fast-moving **Arab Spring of 2011** has been of great personal interest.

Like you, here in Armenia we’ve been moved to tears, watching anxiously as freedom-fighters in near-neighbor nations have sacrificed their lives to shed oppression and despotism. The willingness of tyrants to sacrifice their people in order to maintain power is mind-boggling.

One journalist writes that Western interest is waning toward these historic efforts to secure freedoms throughout the Middle East, Eurasia, and Africa as casualties, costs, and political risks mount; and transitions to self-rule prove inevitably difficult. Freedom is surely a costly commodity.

My hope is that prayerful interest will never wane on the part of Christians imploring the Lord to be merciful where there is no justice, where people are putting their lives on the line for the sake of civil liberties. Hope in God is truly the antidote to despair. Especially when all seems hope-less, he is our Rock, our Fortress, our Safe Haven.

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



## By Steve Willard

On May 7th, representatives from 10 area churches gathered to pray for God’s mission to the people of Armenia through Hope Armenia Ministries. As has happened each spring, God’s people lovingly made themselves available to make this meeting possible.

Several weeks before, I spoke with James Lake at Athol-Orange Baptist Church, who responded to me like a best friend, although he didn’t even know me. Through several conversations, both while James was here, and while he was in South Korea ministering with the Gideons; he put me in contact with Ed Wheeler, who assured me that AOBC would be happy to host this year’s meeting.

With the help of these wonderful folks, as well as Ed’s son Derek, who worked out the technical side together with Dave Shipman from Kaarina’s home church in Ashburnham; we set up a big screen and had a video Skype conversation with Kaarina, Tatevik, Tigran, and Mher in Yerevan. They explained current ministry praises and prayer requests, and told also about their day to day lives. Finally, we sang a praise song with them and watched a beautiful slide show of Hope’s ministry over these first five years, 2006 – 2011.



The view by SKYPE from Armenia



For that short 30 minutes that we could see and talk with each other, the miles between Yerevan and Athol faded away, and we felt close to one another as brothers and sisters in Christ. When we finished eating, we gathered together into several small groups for prayer, asking God for His power to be at work through the staff in Armenia, and thanking Him for all that He’s done there.

Many thanks to the people of AOBC for their loving hospitality and the wonderful luncheon they prepared; to Pastor Mark Bariloni for his visit among us; and to the entire fellowship for their love and support for God’s continued work in Armenia.

## CARE-FREE GENERATION

by Mher Nahapetyan



Nearly three years ago, Way of Hope staff invited me to take part in the young adult discipleship program. The offer was a good surprise for me, but at the same time it was a bit frightening. I had had some experience working with young people, but only within the bounds of my profession, theatrical arts. But here the spiritual aspect was facing me. At any rate, I accepted the invitation with great pleasure, and we got started. A new world was being revealed to me with every passing meeting: *the fertile soil of young adults, and the opportunity of planting the Word of God in their hearts.*

All this made me retrospective concerning the years of my youth that passed through the Soviet period, in the Armenian Soviet Socialist Republic. With the illusion of **care-free living** during those youthful years, those of us who were members of the Young Communist League didn’t even think about being involved in spiritual activities. We had only one ideology created by “Grandfather Lenin,” which we

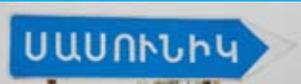
were afraid to depart from---and that was to be **care-free, sated, contented**. We were taught to love, but there was no love. There was talk of justice, but there was a complete absence of it. Everything was supposedly “free of charge,” and yet everything had to be paid for. The Soviets took many of their slogans about equality and communal living from the Bible, but they wanted to achieve everything without God. It’s shameful for me to confess it, but I was proud for not believing in God.



Thank God now those ideologically **care-free, godless** times are in the past. Today’s Armenian adolescents are faced every day with difficult life issues and the injustices of social and political life. But it is inspiring also to see that many of them are learning to survive earthly battles through biblical principles. Now with every passing day, the spiritual life of faith is becoming significant for many young people. Of course, it’s impossible to bring back one’s youth, which is lost forever. It’s for this very reason that I want to tell every young person what happiness is to be found with our Lord, and how dull and unsatisfying the **care-free, godless** life really is.

*Mher serves as assistant ministry coordinator for youth and young adult discipleship programs. His acting, administrative, and large-event organizational skills---together with a willing spirit and eagerness to share God’s Word with young people---are great assets to HOPE ministries.*

## Autumn 2010 Ministries



**Youth Discipleship program**  
Tsasunik village school  
*October - December*

**Christian Character Seminar**  
LIGHTHOUSE Training Center  
*October*



**Young Adult Discipleship follow-up program**  
Vernatun ("Upper Room") ~ Yerevan local church  
*October - December*

**Young Adult follow-up Retreat**  
LIGHTHOUSE Training Center  
*November*



**Young Adult follow-up Finale**  
Yerevan local church  
*December*

8 February

# WAY OF HOPE 5th Anniversary

*I am thankful to the Lord for giving me a chance to become acquainted with HOPE programs and young adult participants. It's been already a year that I've attended the programs. And I can I boldly say that I know the place which has filled the void which I felt before. This thought was in my mind all during the 5<sup>th</sup> Celebration, when I was no longer a guest, but one of the "masters" within the house.*

**Julieta Zurnachyan**



*Dear Way of HOPE staff, everything for this event was organized with class! I liked all the performances--especially the violin ensemble and choir. It was a good idea to present the 5-year slide show.*

**Sona Sahakyan**

*There was a warm, friendly atmosphere at Way of HOPE 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration. The spiritual atmosphere was even better. The musical part was filled with good selections. I am very thankful to Dr. Kaarina, HOPE staff, and the helpers who organized it and turned it into an unforgettable evening. Most importantly, every guest felt a special part of the entire event.*

**Tamara Arustamyan**



*It was significant celebrating HOPE's 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in a pleasing way. The ministries of HOPE, especially the way which helped transfer the doctrine of Christ's Truth for our lives.*

*There was a warm spirit of love and fellowship at the 5th Anniversary! It truly felt like everyone was celebrating what God has done from 2006 – 2011. We know...*

*Five years ago we started with hope, and God has been faithful. It seems we've just passed not 5 years, but 50 years. The testimonies and testimonials, as you can read here. **Tigran Arustamyan** 5 years - it's only a beginning. **Mher Nahapetian***



**Naregatsi Art Institute**

# January 2011 Way of HOPE 5th Anniversary

*It's been many years that I've considered myself an inseparable part of HOPE. I participate in all the programs with pleasure. And it's not by mistake that I appeared among the guests tonight. The evening brought me much pleasure, with wonderful organization and a warm atmosphere. Everything was festive, joyful, and filled with love. I am thankful to everybody.*

**Anna Andreasyan**



*I felt much pleasure at this 5<sup>th</sup> Celebration event, and I am very glad and happy that I could have a small part in the musical program.*

**Mihran Iskandaryan**



*During these 5 years, Way of HOPE has worked hard, making people feel closer to the church, welcoming everyone without age limitations. This all HOPE has done with love and mutual respect. It was an act of love that brought us all together to celebrate HOPE's 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. It was impossible to relate all that has passed through these 5 years on the way of HOPE, but we don't even need to try, because everything about that way remains in our hearts.*

**Anna and Edward Grigoryan**

*... anniversary, where the Lord was presented in a special way for young adults, were highlighted in a special way by Christ's divine grace, which for us is the bright light of HOPE.*

**Deacon Hovhannes Manukyan**

*... with participants of all ages during HOPE's 5th Anniversary. It was a pleasure to be there that evening, celebrating with you. Now to Whom praise and thanks is due...*

**Dr. Kaarina Ham**

*... has given His blessing. Tatevik Ghazaryan has been with us for 5 months only! It's impossible to relate in one sentence all that has happened professionally... All the guests gave beautiful compliments.*

**... tyan**

**... titute ~ Yerevan**



## Winter - Spring 2011 Ministries



**4th Annual Staff & Helpers' Retreat**  
**Revelation 1-3: Letters to the 7 Churches**  
 HOPE Office ~ 22 January



**1st Easter Outreach**  
**Home for the Elderly ~ Village #4**  
 Yerevan suburb ~ 22 April



**Gospel of MARK**  
**Young Adult Bible Study**  
 HOPE Office ~ March - July



**Young Adult Discipleship program**  
*Vernatun ("Upper Room")*  
 Yerevan local church ~ March - May



Retreat



Finale



**Youth Discipleship program**  
 Karin village school ~ Ashtarak region  
 March - May



Excursion



Finale

## ENJOYING GOD'S CREATION



**By Tigran Apikyan**

***"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" Genesis 1:1.***

This first verse of the Old Testament is truly amazing. Human minds can't fathom the power and possibilities of creation. As we read to verse 25, we move into the perfect building process of the world of nature, earthly

structure, animal life, and the infinite space of the universe. Here we can feel the perfect love and power of **our Creator**, who did all this within only 7 days!

Unfortunately, human beings can destroy everything He has created for our provision and pleasure, but we can never restore it back. For example, we can saw the tree, but we can never glue it back together! Yet we do have the privilege of restoring our broken relationship with **the Creator, through His perfect Son, the Lord Jesus.**

One of our most important ministries is the "HOPE Family Excursion," organized in June of each year. Why June? Because it's warm but not too hot, and everything is green and blossoming. When we escape the noise and busy-ness of the city, forgetting about e-mail and cell phones for a while, we come closer to the Lord. [Even our Lord Jesus himself sometimes went to secluded spots when He wanted to be alone with the Father.] Fortunately in Armenia there are many picturesque landscapes where centuries ago

*(continued on page 7)*

## Summer 2011 Ministries



**Adult Seminar: Revelation 1–3  
Letters to the 7 Churches**  
LIGHTHOUSE Training Center ~ 4-5 June



**5th HOPE Family Annual Excursion**  
Hayravank Church, 7th century  
19 June



**Summer Youth Camp**  
Sasunik village school, Ashtarak region  
21-22 June



**Summer Youth Camp**  
Tsovagyugh village school, Sevan region  
24-25 June



**Procession to 1st Worship Service & Celebration**  
Mrgashat Church, 20th century (Armavir region)  
24 July



**Gospel of MARK Young Adult Retreat**  
LIGHTHOUSE Training Center  
30-31 July

(continued from page 6)

beautiful Armenian Apostolic churches were built by sincere believers who hauled stones many kilometers—long before bulldozers and cranes and dump trucks existed.

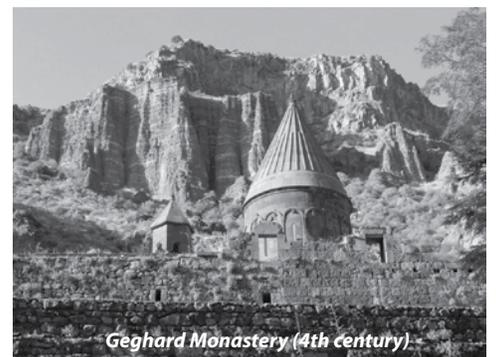
During our bus excursions, after arriving at our destination tired from the long trip, everyone is eager to enter the cool church, where spiritual songs are being sung and worship rises in praise to God. Of the 60 or 70 participants, usually about half are with us for the first time, often coming without any spiritual knowledge or personal faith. This is why it's all the more exciting to see them eagerly enter the Lord's House.

Unfortunately in the Soviet period, many churches in easily accessible areas were

destroyed, while those in virtually inaccessible areas survived, but in great disrepair. Nowadays pagan or atheist groups visit these historic sites, leaving behind trash and picnic leftovers throughout the courtyards and even inside. So part of our excursions rightly includes the "ministry of cleaning."

In these settings, I sometimes reflect on **Matthew 11:28: "Come to me, all you who are weary and heavily laden, and I will give you rest."** Taking time to rest physically and spiritually is the key! Each time, after our picnic, we all enjoy a biblical lesson given by one of our deacon friends, at the same time enjoying the amazing setting with fresh air, fragrant blossoms, and the chance to clear

our heads from all earthly distractions—renewing our vision for walking with God and serving Him back in the urban routine.



**Geghard Monastery (4th century)**

Tigran works full-time at Yerevan State University Faculty of Theology, and part-time as HOPE computer technician and media specialist. He and his wife Gayane have a 3 ½-year-old son, Sarkis.

# ARMENIAN CHURCH HISTORY & TRADITION

## “The Story of Christ’s Apostles Bartholomew and Thaddeus in Armenian Lands”



By **Tatevik Ghazaryan**

*“I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.” John 14:12*

After the Resurrection and Transfiguration of our Lord, his apostles traveled through the known world and distributed the Light of the Gospel. In this way, the Apostles Thaddeus and Bartholomew

came to Armenian lands.

Bartholomew followed the commandment of Christ by preaching in Persia, Assyria, and Media (*Marastan*—an historic region and kingdom in northwestern Iran). After effective ministries and even miracles in these regions, he came to the Armenian province of *Goght*, where he had many followers whom he baptized in Christ’s Name. He then visited the province of *Aghbak*, where he met Thaddeus. At the hill where they met, they set up a Cross and remained there. This Cross came to be called the *Otyats Cross*, which to this day is visited by believers.

In time Bartholomew and Thaddeus separated. Bartholomew came to the province of *Aghbak*, where he expanded his preaching ministry. Here the sister of King Sanatruk heard his message and turned to Christian faith. Upon hearing this, King Sanatruk sent one of his officers to kill Bartholomew, the princess, and all who had turned to Christian faith. But when this officer met Bartholomew and heard his message, he too accepted Christ and was baptized! A leper who also heard the Gospel was baptized and healed in Jesus’ Name. After learning this, King Sanatruk became even angrier and decreed that Bartholomew and all who had become Christians should be arrested.



Apostle Bartholomew

Thaddeus takes the story from here. After the Transfiguration, by the will of our Lord, Thaddeus came to King Abgar and healed him. He preached first at Edessia (“Lesser Armenia”—present-day Turkey), and then came to the Armenian province of *Artaz*, where Sandukht,

daughter of King Sanatruk, heard his message and turned to Christian faith. The king decreed that his daughter and even more who had turned to Christian faith should be arrested. Despite increased threats, Thaddeus secretly visited them in prison and tried to comfort them.

Once while praying for the new believers in prison, a miracle suddenly occurred: their chains fell apart! The prison governor, having witnessed this miracle, himself believed in the Lord Jesus and was baptized! The king then sent his deputy to the prison to persuade his sister to return to paganism. As the deputy arrived at the prison, saw the believers’ chains in tatters, and witnessed their joyful mood as they responded to the teaching of Thaddeus; the deputy too turned to Christian faith!

After these events, the king gave the command that all the Christians—except for the Apostle Thaddeus and his daughter Sandukht—should be killed. At length he found that nothing could dissuade the steady will and sincere faith of his daughter, and commanded that she too should be killed. Then he called Thaddeus and asked him, “*Why have you taken my daughter from me?*” Thaddeus answered, “*I took her from you in order to consecrate her to the Lord.*” At this, the irate king commanded him to be placed in a lion’s cage. But instead of breaking Thaddeus’ body into pieces, the lions merely licked his feet.

The king’s next command was to burn Thaddeus at the stake. But during this process, the heavens rained and the fire was extinguished. Next the hangman tried to kill the Thaddeus, but when he pulled his sword from its sheaf, the sword touched his brother, and the hangman’s brother died. Thaddeus had pity and prayed to the Lord, and the hangman’s brother was brought back to life. After this the Apostle told the hangman to fulfill the king’s command, and the hangman beheaded Thaddeus.

Every Armenian knows this rich spiritual history of how, under the influence of these two courageous first century apostles, the Armenian Apostolic Church was eventually established (301 A.D.). The symbol of our church came to be Noah’s Ark, resting atop nearby Mt. Ararat, under which our nation has (figuratively) found shelter, withstanding the ravages of time with the same faith and endurance shown by Bartholomew and Thaddeus.



Apostle Thaddeus

Tatevik, an M.A. graduate of Yerevan State Philological Institute and former high school history teacher, has served 5 years as HOPE administrator and ministry coordinator. She and her husband Suren have a 2-year-old daughter, Mane (“Maneh”).

### ANSWERS TO PRAYER

- 1) Young Adult Retreat (May)
- 2) Adult Seminar (June)
- 3) 5th HOPE Family Excursion (June) – Hayravank
- 4) Summer Youth Camps (June) – 2 villages
- 5) Gospel of MARK Bible Study & Retreat

### PRAYER CONCERNS

- 1) God’s protection on Mané (2 years old) and Sarkis (3 ½ years old)
- 2) Youth Discipleship programs (autumn)
- 3) Young Adult Discipleship programs (autumn)
- 4) safe arrival of Tatevik & Suren’s 2nd child (January)
- 5) Dr. Kaarina’s furlough in Northeast USA (September – January)

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