



LIGHTHOUSE PAROS

OUR HEARTS --- WELLSPRING OF LIFE

"... Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Proverbs 4:23

By Dr. Kaarina Ham

Sometimes furlough just isn't what you expect! Having returned home to Massachusetts last August, eager to enjoy family and friends and share about the Lord's work in Armenia; we had no idea that quadruple heart bypass surgery and several months of recuperation and cardiac rehabilitation were instead on the docket!

Scripture has much to say about our hearts. Here are a few passages from the Gospel of Matthew, where our Lord focused on the heart 23 times: **"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God." (5:8)** **"Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart..." (11:29)** **"...out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks." (15:18)** **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." (22:37)** What beautiful admonitions. Certainly our Lord knew how crucial it is for his followers

to guard their hearts and guard their relationship with Him and with others, as long as He gives us life.

Almost losing the battle with our physical hearts is a sobering experience. Guarding our physical hearts requires great diligence in avoiding harmful stress, foods, habits---anything that would work against the natural flow that God intended. Oxygen and energy levels suffer without proper discipline, exercise, self-control.

Praying to keep our spiritual hearts in tune is equally sobering! Guarding our spiritual hearts too requires discipline, exercise, self-control---keeping the channels open to God's profound mercy in our lives. Our walk of faith is hampered by unhealthy attitudes, a tendency to focus on deficits, and a general lack of gratitude.

May God give us grace to diligently study His Word, exercise power through prayer, and reverse crippling thoughts and emotions. May our daily communion with Him be uplifting and unbroken, and our interaction with others full of grace, seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6), fragrant with the aroma of Christ (II Corinthians 2:15).

SPIRITUAL LIFE IN ARMENIA TODAY



"... However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?" Luke 18:8

By Mher Nahapetyan

About two thousand years ago, during the time that our Lord Jesus walked the earth, a burning question was whether, at the time of His Second Coming, He would find a faithful remnant of followers. The same question is true today! When He returns for His Church (the Body of Christ), will He find us faithful? This is difficult to answer.

I live in a small country, far from the world's big events. Yet every Armenian knows that this small nation, our Fatherland, was the first to accept Christianity as the state religion 1,700 years ago, in 301 A.D. This is a great source of (warranted) historical pride. Over ensuing centuries, a great Christian culture was built. Proof of this fact is the multitude of stone churches which have remained---scientific, structural works of our church fathers.

Unfortunately, the Republic of Armenia of today exists far from the spiritually rich heritage of our forefathers. The 20th century in particular had a detrimental influence on our Christian society. From 1915 - 1918, Ottoman Turkey unleashed the horrific Genocide which not only decimated 1.5 million people, but cast a huge, noxious shadow over Armenian spiritual culture. Thousands of churches were plundered or destroyed, and thousands of spiritual leaders were martyred.

Not long after this terrible shock, in the 1920s, the Soviet regime was established in Armenia, promoting militant atheism. Once again, hundreds of churches were closed or turned into warehouses. Hundreds more spiritual leaders were martyred or exiled to Siberia. Later, in 1988, during the late Soviet period, northwestern Armenia suffered a devastating earthquake that claimed the lives of 53,000 people. Then in the early 1990s, just as Armenia was gaining independence from Soviet hegemony, the Nagorno-Karabakh War between Azerbaijan and Armenia was waged simultaneously with the blocking of gas pipelines to Armenia by Turkey and Azerbaijan.

Through all these recent tragedies, Armenian national pride has been strengthened; but so too have the twin evils of materialism and consumerism, which easily lure people away from true faith. Today our church is recovering step by step, and believers are being multiplied. Yet this is not enough. Many have simply forgotten Jesus' words: **"Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).**

The most pernicious reality today is that many people are putting their hope in political figures, rich benefactors, and even relatives living abroad---forgetting that it is the living Word of God that feeds our souls. But glory to God! Not everything is lost. Each time at our ministry programs, there are new young people eager to open His Word and learn eternal truths. We make sure that all who are hungry may feed on the True Bread of Life, and all who are thirsty may drink of His Life-giving Water.

HOPE WEBSITE

222 friends in Armenia
82 friends outside Armenia



www.wayofhope.am

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Outside Armenia:

HOPE Armenia Ministries

P.O. Box 4009

San Dimas, CA 91773, USA

Board Chairman:

David Dunbar, Georgia

NE Prayer & Support Group:

Steve Willard, Massachusetts

In Armenia:

Way of HOPE

P. O. Box 41

0010 Yerevan, ARMENIA

Fax: Tel/Fax: +(37410) 275978

E-mail: staff@wayofhope.am

Website: www.wayofhope.am

General Director:

Dr. Kaarina Ham

Administrator/Ministry

Coordinator: **Tatevik Ghazaryan**

Computer Technician/Media:

Tigran Apikyan

Ministry Assistant/Special Events:

Mher Nahapetyan



PERSPECTIVES ON HOPE

During crises, when our lives flash before our eyes, the privilege for believers is **not to be afraid of sudden fear**, for the Lord Himself will be our confidence (*Proverbs 3:25,26*). We instinctively look to the Lord, our Eternal HOPE, for reassurance, just when everything seems to fail. We also look to our present lives and have the audacity to ask for just a little more time, a few more years, another chance to enjoy the blessings of our earthly pilgrimage.

This is what happened last autumn, when confronted with the possibility of nearer immortality than I'd imagined! Immediate confidence in the Lord Jesus, the One who gave His life on the Cross so that I could live eternally, was the first impulse. Then, pleading with my Heavenly Father for more time to help build on the ministry foundation established in the former Soviet Republic of Armenia, **if it would be in accordance with His will**, was the next impulse.

Miraculously, He agreed and has granted more time to participate in leading HOPE Armenia Ministries / Way of HOPE! You can imagine the excitement this brings as I head off for another term of cross-cultural mission service centered in Yerevan. Praise Him for leading His people on from strength to strength, grace to grace, blessing to blessing. Stay tuned to this same channel for more news of His work in the hearts and lives of young people **eager to know Him, walk with Him, and serve Him**.

Kaarina A. Ham, Ph.D
General Director



HOPE NE PRAYER & SUPPORT GROUP ~ 7th ANNUAL MEETING

People's Evangelical Congregational Church (CCCC)
South Ashburnham, Massachusetts, USA

HOPE Armenia Ministries' 7th annual meeting was held at Dr. Kaarina's home church on Saturday, April 21, 2012. There was a fine group present to hear the ministry update, pray for specific needs, and re-dedicate Kaarina to the Lord's work in Armenia. Also dedicated to service on HOPE governing board was Sharon Combs of North Brookfield, Massachusetts.



HOPE GOVERNING BOARD

Special Thanks to Richard Nicholson

HOPE Family wishes to thank Richard Nicholson (California) for serving as governing board chairman for two 3-year terms, as our new mission was established from 2006 – 2012. We wish Richard and Linda well in their ongoing "retirement travels" to other countries, and especially in their grand-parenting pursuits! May God's blessing continue in your lives. Please continue to hold HOPE ministries in your prayers.

HOPE Board Members

Currently HOPE governing board consists of the following members, who meet quarterly to guide policies and strategies. Please keep them in prayer as they lead us forward.



David Dunbar
Board Chairman
consultant
Georgia, USA

David brings a wealth of business and management experience to HOPE, along with clear vision for God's work in Armenia, and a committed servant's heart.



Hugh Woodward
Board Vice Chairman
management consultant
Ohio, USA

Hugh also brings a wealth of business and management expertise to HOPE, along with a prayerful spirit of trust.



Heather Thrall
Board Financial Secretary
home-maker, accountant
California, USA

Over six years already, Heather has proved herself to be a faithful, gracious overseer for HOPE budgets and accounts.



Sharon Combs
Board Secretary
group home director,
Christian Education director
Massachusetts, USA

Sharon brings years of management and practical ministry experience, along with a positive spirit of trust.



WHO ARE OUR HEROES?

by Tigran Apikyan

By His grace, and after much prayer, God has given my wife Gayane and me two precious sons: Sarkis (4½ years old) and Vahe (4 months old). At the outset, the burden of responsibility with children goes to the mother. But gradually the father's role increases. By the age of 2½, Sarkis had learned to recite the Lord's Prayer. Hearing this certainly brought delight to his parents. We have always prayed for his protection through the night, and as a non-stop toddler, through the dangerous daytime as well!

I remember hearing Gayane tell Sarkis one time that "**Jesus is the Hero of the Universe!**" This made me think. As a father, I know that the bond between father and son is very important. As a

Christian, I know that the behavior I model to my son should mirror the special bond I have with my Heavenly Father. But how can I live up this high standard, since I'm just an earthly father? How can I answer the difficult questions Sarkis constantly poses?

Here is the key. When children from a young age can listen to parents and grandparents share the principles of God's Word, gradually they come to understand His ways. Of course, on television and with other kids, they learn often about many false heroes such as Spiderman, Superman, Batman. But why shouldn't parents relate to their children the wonderful truths about the real Hero, the Lord Jesus!

Of course our son Sarkis is not perfect. He is sometimes deceptive, capricious, disobedient. But there is a warmth to his character too as he listens carefully to what we teach, shows love for his infant brother, and **obeys his parents in the Lord, for this is right (Ephesians 6:1)**.

Autumn 2011 Ministries



Youth Discipleship Excursion
Karin village school
Ashtarak region ~ *October*



Young Adult Discipleship program
Vernatun ("Upper Room")
Yerevan local church ~ *November*



Couples' Seminar
LIGHTHOUSE Training Center
October



Young Adult Discipleship Retreat
LIGHTHOUSE Training Center
November



Gospel of MARK
Young Adult Bible Study
Excursion ~ *December*



Gospel of MARK
Young Adult Bible Study Finale
HOPE Office ~ *December*

Winter - Spring 2012 Ministries



Celebrating HOPE 6th Anniversary ~ *February 10*



2nd Easter Outreach
Helping poor families
Yerevan ~ *7 April*



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



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



Cleaning Day
LIGHTHOUSE Training Center
May 5



Young Adult Discipleship Retreat
LIGHTHOUSE ~ *May 12 - 13*



Young Adult Discipleship Finale
Yerevan local church ~ *May 23*

Summer 2012 Ministries



6th HOPE Family Annual Excursion
Jukhtak Church, 11th century
17 June



Tsovagyugh village school
25-26 June



Norashen village school
27-28 June



Lchashen village school
29-30 June

Summer Youth Camps, Sevan region

ARMENIAN CHURCH HISTORY

37 VIRGIN MARTYRS



By Tatevik Ghazaryan

As is well known, Christianity was disseminated in the 1st century in Armenia by two Apostles of our Lord Jesus: Thaddeus and Bartholomew. Yet before Christianity was

established as the state religion in Rome, the Emperor Diocletian initiated a brutal persecution of Christians throughout the Roman Empire (303-311 A.D.). Among the masses of those persecuted were women who devoted themselves to the work of our Lord and refused to accept Roman paganism. One such virgin was **Gayane**, Abbess of St. Paul's Monastery.

Since she was very beautiful, another virgin named **Hripsime** caught the eye of Emperor Diocletian, who wanted to marry her. When she refused, Hripsime, together with Gayane and other women devoted to the Lord's work, were forced to escape from Rome. First they came to the ancient city of Alexandria, and then eventually to Armenia.

After hearing their story, Armenian King Trdat too wanted to marry beautiful Hripsime, but his plan also failed. So he became angry and issued a command that all of the virgins devoted to God's work should be killed. Thus Hripsime, Gayane, and many others were martyred through beheading. Gayane's body was buried in a tomb by St. Gregory the Illuminator (Enlightener), the 4th century evangelist credited with converting Armenia from paganism to Christianity (301 A.D.).

Eventually churches were built and dedicated to the memory of Hripsime (7th century), Gayane (7th century), Shoghakat (17th century), and others of the martyred virgins in the Armenian Cathedral City of Etchmiadzin, at the exact locations where they were martyred.

Among the noted 37 Virgins was another godly woman named **Nune** (in Georgian sources she is called *Nino*), who upon entering Armenia immediately fled north to the territory of Georgia, in order to escape Armenian King Trdat's persecution. Upon arriving in Georgia, Nune lived a spiritual life and effectively preached God's Word to the Georgian people.

In response to the miraculous signs and wonders accomplished through her ministry, Nune was summoned to the royal palace, where she healed the queen through her prayers. Then giving up all luxurious rewards, she continued to preach the Gospel of the Lord Jesus. Georgian King Mihran too felt the Lord's miraculous power at work through her, so he repented and came to faith as well!

Later, when Christianity was already established in Armenia as the state religion, Nune was instrumental in sending a delegation to Armenia, asking St. Gregory and King Trdat to send spiritual leaders north to Georgia to conduct official work of baptizing new believers, thus strengthening the Church there.

A beautiful verse in the Old Testament is **Psalm 116:15, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints."** I'm glad that our Armenian Church continues to honor these precious servants who were long ago faithful, even to the point of death. It's our privilege to bring visitors to Armenia to these special churches which honor their cherished memories.

YOU ARE INVITED... to join us in Armenia!
Project PAROS ~ July 12 - 27, 2013

- * summer youth day camps
 - * hands-on work at the LIGHTHOUSE
- Information & application:

www.wayofhope.am



ANSWERS TO PRAYER

- 1) newborns David, Avetis, Vahe
- 2) winter-spring-summer ministries
- 3) 6th HOPE Family Excursion-Jukhtak
- 4) 3 summer village youth day camps
- 5) new HOPE governing board members
Hugh Woodward and Sharon Combs

PRAYER CONCERNS

- 1) Tatevik, Mher, Dr. Kaarina's health
- 2) autumn youth & young adult ministries
- 3) Project PAROS participants - July 2013
- 4) water situation - LIGHTHOUSE
- 5) political situation - Armenia
- 6) Dr. Kaarina's flight back to Armenia

HOPE NEWS



David
born 8 November 2011
to Armen & Armine



Avetis
born 6 January 2012
to Suren & Tatevik



Vahe
born 5 April 2012
to Tigran & Gayane

Welcome, little men, to the HOPE Family!

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



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