



Summer 2021

# LIGHTHOUSE PAROS



www.wayofhope.am



## Through Many Dangers, Toils, and Snares. . .

By Dr. Kaarina A. Ham

What better way to describe these challenging times for our world, nations, families, mission! **Where to begin** in recounting the new and tragic circumstances we have all been called to endure in 2020 and into 2021. **Where to begin** in analyzing the amazing new “tech toys” which have proliferated much too fast for some, marvelously for others, as we’ve all tried our best to ride the crest of such turbulent waves.

The missionary narrative covering the forty years 1979-2019 which has occupied much of my time throughout Covid months, highlights the plight of God’s people throughout East-Central Europe and Russia during the Late Soviet Period, and now through the first three decades of the tumultuous post-Soviet Period. Yet it is the **Republic of Armenia** which continues to be the primary focus of our mission these days.

**Where to begin** in recounting the captivating yet confusing carousel of historic experience surrounding this former empire, subjugated people, fledgling democracy still struggling to find its way into a viable future! These are the issues which I’ve tried to address as the book is nearing completion and will hopefully be given soon to the publisher.

During these 15 years, that Way of HOPE has been registered in Armenia and 16 years that HOPE Armenia Ministries has been registered in the USA, there have indeed been many vexing *dangers, toils, and snares* quite different from those which inspired the famous composer John Newton in 1773 in his well-known hymn *Amazing Grace*.

When stepping out by faith in 2005, we didn’t say to ourselves, we’ll follow God’s leading if these basic criteria are met, or if post-Soviet Armenia continues on an upward economic trajectory, or if a more positive political stance is achieved devoid of the ethnic, territorial, genocidal horrors of the nation’s past. . .

We just reminded ourselves that God had been with us so far, that He clearly led us to step out by faith with new opportunities, that He would provide for His work so long as it was pleasing to Him, and that He would surely open the doors of His choosing for new, fledgling ministry programs. We simply undertook the twin steps of registering in both locales and procuring the LIGHTHOUSE center near Lake Sevan, whose full renovation challenges over the next decade we had no way of fathoming beforehand.

We praise God for the blessings He has bestowed:

- Ours is a fine, committed staff, dedicated volunteers have stepped up to assist, and capable Bible teachers have taught God’s Word at various programs, serving the Lord faithfully without remuneration.
- We are grateful for the blessing of local leaders in Yerevan, Sevan, and Massis who are supportive of the work God has called us to.
- Yerevan office and Sevan LIGHTHOUSE are equipped and ready for action.
- Our vehicles continue to behave well.
- HOPE Family “core group” members in Armenia are committed to studying

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## Perspectives on HOPE



Recently I've been observing several important milestones. One is the 40<sup>th</sup> year of cross-cultural ministry focused on former Soviet lands. Another is the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of our mission's New Ministry Chapter, with Tatevik Ghazaryan serving as full-time administrator of Way of HOPE in Armenia, and me serving full-time as executive director of HOPE Armenia Ministries here in NE-USA. Still another is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of quadruple heart by-pass surgery at UMASS Medical Center in Worcester in September 2011. **Hasn't God been good in allowing such personal and ministry longevity!**

The theme for the lead article *Through Many Dangers, Toils, and Snares* came earlier this spring with a look back at the entire Soviet experience, ongoing post-Soviet traumas, and now tragic Covid-19 pandemic--coupled tragically with renewed war between Azerbaijan and Armenia. I mentioned to Tatevik that many in the West would recognize this line from the Christian hymn *Amazing Grace*. **Hasn't God been good in reassuring His people throughout Scripture of His many and great promises!**

He promises to never leave us or forsake us. He promises to sustain us by His mercy and grace. He promises to forgive our sins and heal our diseases. He promises to watch over our going out and our coming in both now and evermore.

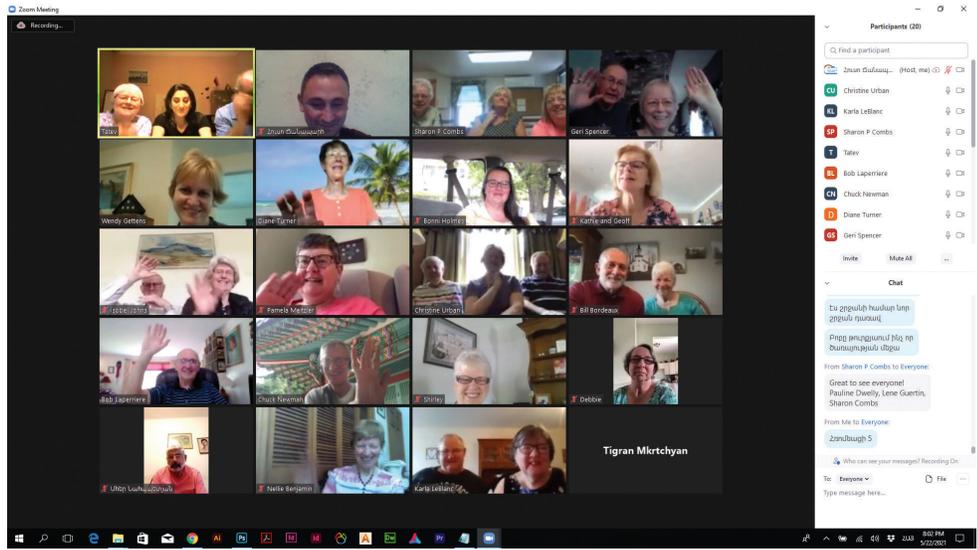
**No "marching in step" for His people!** We move forward relying on those daily mercies and those daily provisions which signal His close *watch-care* in our lives. Our hope is in Him! And our hearts are full of gratitude for His willingness and ability to use us in advancing His Kingdom here on earth.

*Kaarina*

**Kaarina A. Ham, Ph.D.**  
**Executive Director**

## NE Prayer & Support Group 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting via ZOOM

**2021**  
**Saturday, 22 May**  
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon



HOPE staff enjoyed two fine online interactions via ZOOM with friends of our mission during the second half of May. The first was the **16<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting**, with astute questions, responses, reflections, and genuine prayerful concern coming from a fine group of HOPE friends.

The Armenian experience of Covid-19 pandemic and the **44-Day War** during Autumn 2020 between Azerbaijan and Armenia were, of course, foremost in their hearts and minds, as in ours. Many thanks to those who took time on a busy spring Saturday to hear how God has sustained His work through this tumultuous season of multiple crises.

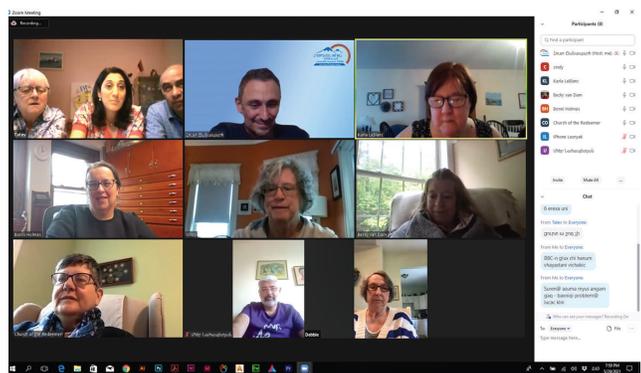
## Project PAROS ZOOM Reunion

**2021**  
**Saturday, 29 May**  
11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

The second online interaction was designated as a **Spring Conversation** with several team members who came to Armenia to assist with Project PAROS. It was good for HOPE staff members to reconnect with familiar friends in the USA, and vice versa.

Dr. Kaarina reiterated what great changes she'd seen in "our kids" Mane and Avetis, and Sarkis and Vahe, after over two years away! They're approaching teenage years already, and showing individual interest and talents which their parents Suren and Tatevik, and Tigran and Gayane, work hard to keep up with.

We were all prayerful concerning the possibility of having a **Project PAROS 2022** team come to Armenia from July 2 – 18, and ask your prayer that God will call those whose hearts are open to serving Him for two weeks along with us.



God’s Word regularly and reaching out toward those in need, particularly at Christmas and Eastertime.

- Participants in the NE Prayer & Support Group in the NE-USA meet each April for the annual meeting (temporarily by ZOOM), and in November now as well for prayer and updates, and assist in providing resources and personnel for carrying out ministry programs in Hayastan-Armenia.
- The NE-USA administrative base is working effectively as a communication and recruiting platform.

Yet there are day to day aspects of life in Armenia for which prayer is needed:

- Covid-19 pandemic continues to disrupt family, school, work, ministry realities.
- Political unrest and displacement in the aftermath of the 44-Day War continue as priority concerns.
- There is uncertainty concerning historic, territorial (Turkic) expansionist aspirations, and controlling (Russian “new Soviet”) ambitions of near neighbors which have come forcibly to light.
- Emigration to Russia or the West in search of employment continues apace.
- Unabated fear continues about the future prospects for this First Christian Nation (301 A.D.) which is deeply loved by God, yet one in which its people feel demoralized from historic and present losses of life and territory, and squeezed relentlessly on all fronts---spiritual, social, political, economic.

Wisdom is needed also concerning the priorities for our mission going forward:

- Discerning where we can best assist in reassuring God’s people in the midst of suffering, loss, displacement, hopelessness.
- Strengthening the faith of people of all ages through the study of God’s Word.
- Expanding ministry programs to appeal meaningfully to

those at all levels---children, youth, young adults, older adults.

- Training young leaders to follow God’s call to practical Christian service.

We trust that even now friends in Christian fellowships in Western Europe and the USA will pray about specific individuals from their number who they might sponsor to ***Come over and help!*** (as illustrated in Acts 16:9) as **Project PAROS** summer mission short-term team members from **July 2-18, 2022:**

- to encourage HOPE staff in the work of the Lord
- to participate in warm weather camps and special programs
- to assist with hands-on projects at the LIGHTHOUSE
- to learn vital aspects of Armenian culture
- to visit major historic sites
- to carry back meaningfully to local fellowships the good news of God’s work halfway around the world

Project PAROS is a great opportunity for those with a heart for mission eager to put their talents and spiritual gifts to work cross-culturally. It is also a great first opportunity to experience Christian ministry half-way around the world for those who may feel called to either short-term or full-time missionary service. And it’s a great way to assist with maintenance or gardening or hospitality at the LIGHTHOUSE center near Lake Sevan.

*Through many dangers, toils, and snares we have already come, as the well-known hymn goes. As Long As It Is Called Today (Hebrews 13:3), as long as there are opportunities to teach God’s Word in Hayastan-Armenia, as long as God makes it clear that we are called to this important mission; it is ours to be faithful stewards of all that He has entrusted to us. And so, we step forward into more unknowns, knowing that God works all things together for good to those who are called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28), and that ‘Tis indeed God’s grace that will lead us finally Home.*



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# HOPE Armenia Ministries Project PAROS 2022



**Tentative dates:** July 2 – 18, 2022  
**Projected cost:** US \$2,100

## APPLICATION PROCESS 2022

- 15 January** last date applications will be received  
(current passport required)
- 25 January** \$1,450 full flight payment due  
(tentative)
- 28 February** short-term mission schedule
- 31 March** what to bring
- 30 April** team preparations
- 15 June** \$50 travel insurance (approximate)
- 3 July** \$600 accommodations + expenses in Armenia



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*May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.  
Hebrews 13:20,21*





### Christmas With Refugee Kids from Artsakh - Sis Village School



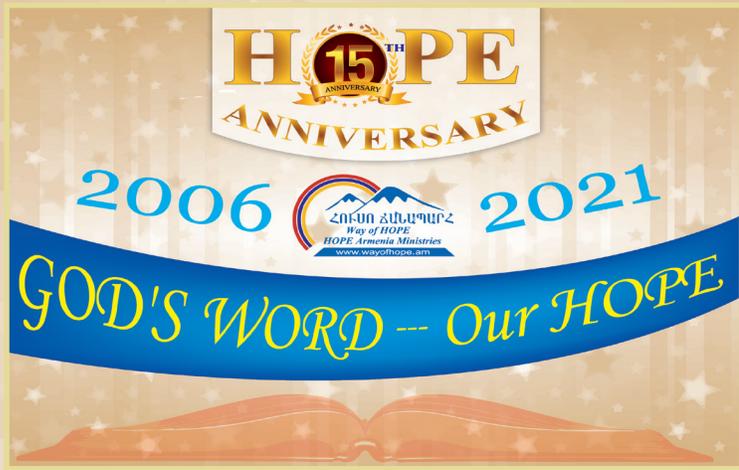
### Youth Program - Spring 2021

#### BASICS of Christian Faith - Sis Village School



#### Excursion to St. Karapet Church - Ararat Region





Way of HOPE  
15th Anniversary Celebration  
Elite Plaza Center, Yerevan - Friday Evening, June 18

# Summer 2021 Adult Bible Study

online   
zoom



## Summer Youth Day Camps July 2021



1<sup>st</sup> Camp: Sis Village School - Masis Region



2<sup>nd</sup> Camp: Dityavan Village School - Tavush Region

## Summer Adult Seminar *Lessons From the Book of Hebrews* LIGHTHOUSE, Tsovaghyugh village - Saturday-Sunday, July 24-25



## HISTORIC OVERVIEW – Armenian Artsakh *By Sooren Khangaldian*



Let’s have a brief historical overview. Armenians have been in this area for 3000 years. There is much historical evidence to support this claim. “Artsakh” means gardens of Aran (Caucasus). Artsakh was one of the ancient Armenian provinces. We have more than 80 ancient churches dating back to the 4<sup>th</sup> century in this area.

With the creation of the Soviet Union, the Republic of Azerbaijan was born. It should be noted that there was no country with this name before. (Even Coca-Cola is older than Azerbaijan.) By decision of the government of the Soviet Union, on July 23, 1923 the Nagorno Karabakh (Mountainous Karabakh) Autonomous Region, with a 94% Armenian population, joined the Republic of Azerbaijan. This was Stalin’s black deal, “Divide and rule.”

Since the 1960s, the people of Karabakh have repeatedly called for reunification with the Republic of Armenia, but the central government in Moscow has refused to even discuss these requests. Finally during Gorbachov’s reforms and reconstruction times, (*glasnost* and *perestroika*), the Artsakh regional council decided to leave Azerbaijan on February 20, 1988. The Azerbaijani government was completely opposed to this decision and responded with very violent methods. On February 28 in Sumgait (the third city of Azerbaijan), Azerbaijanis carried out a massacre and displacement of Armenians. 113 Armenians were killed. This ethnic cleansing continued for two years in other cities and regions of Azerbaijan, including Ganja, and ended with the January 1990 massacre and displacement in Baku (capital of Azerbaijan). Because of these tragic consequences, more than 300,000 refugees came to Armenia.

In 1991, the first war began. During 3 years, Armenia was able to liberate Artsakh and 7 regions of Azerbaijan as a safety belt or buffer zone for Armenia and Artsakh. In 1992, the OSCE

(Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe) Minsk Group was created, with USA France and Russia co-chairing, to encourage a peaceful negotiated resolution to the conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Karabakh. In May 1994, a ceasefire agreement was signed between Armenia, Nagorno-Karabakh and Azerbaijan at the request of Azerbaijan. During recent decades, the OSCE Minsk group offered many solutions, but these were not accepted, because Azerbaijan only pushed to release 7 regions without any status for Karabakh, and Armenia tried to make a compromise: 7 regions in return for Artsakh independence. In sum, Azerbaijan wants Territorial Integrity while Armenia wants Self-determination (The right of a people to self-determination, based on International Law) for Artsakh people.

During recent years, Azerbaijan has carried out many military provocations in Armenia and Artsakh, with only very negative results. Finally, in spite of the Covid-19 pandemic, Azerbaijan initiated another full-scale war against Armenia on September 27, 2020. This time were involved Turkish military weapons and forces (one of the most powerful armies in the world), Syrian, Libyan, Afghan and other terrorist mercenaries. This was a “fifth generation war” which included drones and other modern technologies from the Azeri side. They even used weapons prohibited by Geneva Conventions, like cluster and chemical (white phosphorous) bombs, and advanced missiles to destroy civil buildings, hospitals, schools, etc. Many civilians were killed and injured. We now have more than 50,000 refugees in need of assistance. 3 times attempts at a ceasefire (tried by Russia, France and USA) were violated by Azerbaijan.

At last on November 9, both sides signed a ceasefire agreement mediated by Russia. Without this, our people and soldiers would have continued to be completely blockaded. After this, Russian peacekeeping troops came to the conflicted region. USA and France aren’t in agreement with some points of this agreement. They want to keep negotiations in the Minsk Group format. There is no point in this agreement about the future status of Artsakh, and the USA and France are concerned about this. Therefore the USA, European countries, and the Armenian Diaspora continue to provide humanitarian aid for Artsakh.

We are living through a very difficult period in our nation’s history. The Covid-19 pandemic, numerous refugees, hundreds of wounded soldiers, political crisis, and a collapsed economy all contribute to a bleak outlook. Because Prime minister Nikol Pashinyan signed this agreement, he lost much of his political rating. If someone asks opposition leaders “What would you do?” they haven’t any better solution.

All we have to do is Trust The Lord.

November 2020

Unless the LORD BUILDS THE HOUSE, the builders labor in vain.  
Unless the LORD WATCHES OVER THE CITY, the guards stand watch in vain.

Psalm 127:1

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