



LIGHTHOUSE PAROS



NOAH FOUND GRACE

By Dr. Kaarina A. Ham

But Noah Found Grace in the Eyes of the Lord. Genesis 6:8 Webster describes the word *privilege* as “a right or immunity granted as a peculiar benefit, advantage, or favor.” All these years since 2004 while going about in the Republic of Armenia, it has indeed been **a peculiar benefit, advantage, favor** to catch a glimpse of majestic Mt. Ararat, as mentioned in Genesis Chapters 6 – 9!

Often when visiting homes here in the capital city, we can see from living rooms or kitchens the magnificent biblical mountain coming into view off in the horizon, now geographically situated just over the border in Eastern Turkey. And when coming back to the capital city Yerevan from our LIGHTHOUSE center near Lake Sevan in Northern Armenia, the main highway squarely faces the snow-capped historic mountain.

All these years while living in Armenia, a wooden carving showing Noah and families coming down from Mt. Ararat after the waters receded has graced successive apartments as a first-hand reminder of the importance of this important account. K.Tigran on our HOPE staff has been blessed by perhaps *the greatest privilege of us all*, as his home in the village of *Sayat Nova* sits literally under the nose of the magnificent biblical mountain! Imagine how from birth he has wakened in all seasons, all kinds of weather, to gaze at this amazing scene.

So just what can we make of this *privileged-favored* standing which is familiar to all within Yerevan environs? It seems that a focused look at what this historic biblical image means for God’s people down through the centuries is in order. As in the time of Noah, these are challenging times for those upholding the principles put forth in God’s Word. The Book of Hebrews in the New Testament commends the ancients of old who were steadfast in their faith in the midst of astonishingly difficult circumstances. One of these was Noah: **By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is according to faith (Hebrews 11:7).**

Who was Noah?

- Noah is listed in the tenth generation from Adam in the line of Seth *Genesis 5:1-32*
- Noah lived in a day when mankind was **wicked**, when **every intent of the thoughts of the heart were only evil continually** *Genesis 6:5*
- But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord *Genesis 6:8*

What did Noah do?

- Noah **walked faithfully with God** *Genesis 6:9*
- Noah did everything just as God commanded *Genesis 6:22*
- Noah built an altar to the Lord *Genesis 8:30*

How did God respond?

- The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: **‘Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done’** *Genesis 8:21*
- God explained His covenant with Noah *Genesis 9:8-17*
 - (1) God promised never to send a flood to destroy life on earth.
 - (2) God said: **‘the sign of the covenant for all generations to come is the rainbow.’**

(continued on page 3)



Descent of Noah from Mountain Ararat
Famous painting by Hovhannes Ayvazovsky, 1889



2nd Hawaiian LUAU Outreach

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NE-USA: HOPE Armenia Ministries

P.O. Box 94
North Brookfield, Massachusetts
01535 USA
Website: www.wayofhope.am
Facebook: https://bit.ly/2Ulc3XS
Youtube: hopearmeniaministries

Board Chairperson

Sharon Combs

Executive Director

NE Prayer & Support Group
Project PAROS Summer Teams
Dr. Kaarina Ham

Cell: +(978) 549-9797

E-mail: kaarinaham@gmail.com

ARMENIA: Way of HOPE

P. O. Box 41
0010 Yerevan, ARMENIA
Office tel. (+37410) 32 04 64

Administrator/Ministry Coordinator

Tatevik Ghazaryan

Operations Manager

Suren Khangaldian

Computer Technician/Media

Tigran Apikyan

Ministry Assistant/Special Events

Mher Nahapetyan

Young Adult Ministry

K. Tigran Mkrtychyan

PERSPECTIVES ON HOPE



A recent church invitation posted online by a local pastor announced this title: **HOPE HAS A NAME**. The pastor went on to say, **And that name is Jesus Christ. Anything other than Jesus is a false hope!** Well said. Scripture makes it clear that there will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God— II Timothy 3:1-4. Sound familiar?

Scripture offers special encouragement to believers during those last days. We are not to be surprised when the **DAY OF THE LORD** arrives as a thief in the night, finding many off guard--but not those who have put their trust in Jesus (II Thessalonians 5:1-11). We therefore have hope in a world of hopelessness. It is called the **BLESSED HOPE, the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ (Titus 2:13).**

Scripture also gives special instructions for believers in the last days. We are to honor those in leadership (II Thessalonians 5:12). We are to help those within our fellowships (verse 14). We are to heal relationships (verse 15). All this is so that the Light of Christ may shine through to those around us. We have the privilege of sharing our hope with those who are confused, struggling, desperately searching for the **ETERNAL HOPE**, the hope which we possess!

In sum, the early church was admonished to be a force in the community for good and for God. How much more so in the stressful post-Pandemic era in which we live, still awaiting the return of our Lord and Savior?

Kaarina

Kaarina A. Ham, Ph.D.
Executive Director

18th

NE Annual Meeting

Elm St. Community Church
Fitchburg, Massachusetts USA

2023

Saturday, 22 April
10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.



Only God Knew!

By Frank Joyner, HOPE Board Member

Sometimes we get so caught up in ministry work and details that we forget to look back to see the larger and even more amazing story God has woven through many years... In April, the 18th annual meeting for HOPE was held at Elm Street Church in Fitchburg, MA. A huge thank you to Pastor Steve Mayo and all who helped host this wonderful event! During the meeting, we reflected on the current situation in Eastern Europe, particularly the war in Ukraine and the impact on surrounding countries (including, of course, Armenia).



We thought back to Kaarina's ministry to young people (going all the way back to 1979 with Slavic Gospel Association and Youth For Christ) in the Baltic region, the Soviet satellite nations of east central Europe, and in Samara Russia. During those years of ministry, the focus was on the immediate: the lives and spiritual welfare of young people. **Who knew that these kids would grow up to be church leaders who would be called upon to serve in a time of war in Ukraine? Only God knew!**

As we witness the incredible faithfulness of the church in caring for the people uprooted by this awful war, we must remember the faithfulness of Kaarina and others to bring the Gospel message to these kids years and even decades ago. Thanks be to God who was working through missionaries all those many years to equip the church for today's challenges! This all brings to us the critical importance of today's work in Armenia!

It's easy to focus on the current: after school programs, summer programs, project PAROS, etc., and the impact that these have on the kids who attend and on their families. That in itself is critically important and is well worthy of our prayers and support. We must remind ourselves, though, that these kids will grow up to be the church leaders of tomorrow. The teaching at a Kid's Planet event today that equips a young person for ministry is a part of how God is weaving the story of Armenia's future. **Who knows what situation they may be asked to face and under what circumstances they will be called to stand in the gap and serve in the name of Christ? Only God knows...**



Project PAROS
Tentative Dates July 5 - 22, 2024
Projected Cost US \$ 2,400

APPLICATION PROCESS 2024

- January 15 last date applications will be received (current passport required)
- January 31 \$1,300 full flight payment due (approximate)
- February 29 short-term mission schedule
- March 30 what to bring
- April 30 team preparations
- June 18 \$100 travel insurance (approximate)
- July 5 \$1,000 accommodations + expenses in Armenia

Further Information [✉ kaarinaham@gmail.com](mailto:kaarinaham@gmail.com), [📞 \(978\) 549-9797](tel:(978)549-9797)

What can we learn from the life of Noah?

- In a time of unrestrained evil, Noah had a right relationship with God *Genesis 7:1*
- The years in which the ark was being prepared highlighted God’s great patience with wicked humanity *1 Peter 3:20*
- Jesus saw the days of Noah as characterizing the days that immediately precede His second coming *Matthew 24:37-39*

Which of the traits of Noah’s life of faith stand out most meaningfully for you in our day?

- The fact that our day has become similarly wicked, *as every intent of the thoughts of the heart seem to be only evil continually?*
- The fact that in a time of unrestrained evil, it is still possible to have a right relationship with God?
- The wonder of **God’s Covenant of Promise** with His people through Noah for all generations, as signified by the rainbow?
- The fact that the **Day of God’s Mercy** is now, but that the day is coming when the door to God’s mercy will close?
- The fact that Jesus will come just in the **Fullness of Time**, known to the Father, to correct all wrongs and make all things new?

Our prayer is that our daily walk with God and our service in His Name, as Noah’s, will be found acceptable as a pleasing aroma to Him---especially for those of us privileged to go about under the shadow of this magnificent, historic, biblically-instructive mountain.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY – HOPE OFFICE, YEREVAN HOPE Adult Core Group members have met faithfully for many years on Monday evenings for fellowship and Bible study. During Covid pandemic, we switched to meeting online by ZOOM, which allowed participants from their homes, and speakers from distant locations, to join with us in the study of God’s Word. Currently the study of the **Book of James** in the New Testament is led by Fr. Abraham, with in-person meetings once per month at HOPE Office for close fellowship and Bible Study.



KIDS’ PLANET CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS Weekly Kids’ Planet programs were initiated in 2017 and proved highly effective in leading children and grand-children (7-8 years of age) of HOPE Family members in Yerevan in the truth of God’s Word. Tatevik, Mher, K.Tigran, Lusine, Suren have for several years proved effective as a team in taking this popular and much-needed program on the road as well to village schools in several regions of Armenia.

Nshavan village school, Ararat region



Horom village school, Ararat region



Ararat village school, Ararat region



BASICS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH YOUTH PROGRAMS Through the weekly after school youth program known simply as **BASICS**, our team (Tatevik, Mher, K.Tigran, Satenik, Suren) has been effective in presenting teenagers ages 11-15 in village schools with important topics from God's Word: *Who is Jesus? Why did He die? How should I read the Bible? What is the importance of the Church? Why should I pray to God? What about the problem of evil? How can I come to faith in Jesus? How can I share my faith? How can I serve Him?*

Gagarin village school
Sevan region



Kanachut village school, Ararat region



Kanachut village school Lavash Day - JESUS, Bread of Life



OUTREACH TO FAMILIES IN NEED Several years ago, HOPE introduced Adult Core Group members to the Christian principle of personal stewardship, including the giving of time, talents, and resources to God's work personally. Many have participated as team members during Christmas and Easter seasons, receiving offerings, purchasing food necessities, and visiting families in need brought to our attention by local pastors. All have learned the privilege of sharing the story of **God's Love in Coming to Earth! and Eternal Life Offered Through Jesus' Resurrection to Life!** at these special times of year with those eager to receive both physical and spiritual food.

Christmas Outreach - Dashtavan village, Ararat region



Spring Outreach - Yeghegnadzor City, Yeghegis village, Vayots Dzor region
South-east Armenia near Azeri Autonomous Republic of Nachichevan



2nd HAWAIIAN LUAU OUTREACH & TALENT EVENING – LIGHTHOUSE CENTER, SEVAN The first Hawaiian LUAU Outreach was held to much acclaim during the visit of the 2016 Project PAROS team. The second was held recently with the theme **JESUS – Way, Truth, Life!** led by Fr. Markos. Once again, there was lots of fun, games, and fine presentations by musically talented participants. Considering the overall enjoyment with this exotic theme, who knows when the third will be planned. . .

LUAU Party



Talent Evening



SUMMER YOUTH DAY CAMPS Ever since 2007, HOPE has organized summer youth day camps at 35 village schools in Gegharkunik (Sevan), Masis, Ararat, Artic regions of Armenia, involving local assistants and **Project PAROS** team members from USA, Austria, England. Once again, we were gratified recently by the welcome received by school directors and teacher in 3 village schools. This year's lessons taught by Tatevik and Mher: **DAY 1 – Christian Teamwork (Colossians 3:12-17)** **DAY 2 – The Body of Christ (Ephesians 4:1-16)** **DAY 3 – Trusting God (John 14:6).**



Biblical Mt. Ararat - Genesis Chapters 6 - 9



When I was studying at school, our teacher assigned us to write an essay about biblical Mount -Ararat. I titled it ***The Miracle of Nature***, and my essay was highly rated. All my life I have seen this beautiful mountain from our capital city of Yerevan. According to the book of Genesis, during the Great Flood, Noah’s ark landed on Ararat mountain. The name of the mountain came from the Hebrew name *Urartu*. The Urartu Kingdom or Van Kingdom was situated in the Armenian highland in the 6 - 9th centuries. In the area of Van’s Kingdom were preserved frescoes, buildings, and over 600 cuneiform recordings. Consequently, it is considered to be the national symbol and biblical mountain of the Armenian people.

Mt. Ararat is located in the eastern part of Turkey on the borders with Armenia, Iran and Azerbaijan. It is a volcanic mountain with a height of 5,165 meters (16,945 feet). It consists of two distinct volcanic cones, the biggest one called **Masis** (5,165 meters), the smallest **Sis** with a height 3,925 meters (12,877 feet). The first people to reach the top of the sacred mountain (in 1829) were Fredric Parrot (German mountaineer), Khachatur Abovyan (a great Armenian writer and public figure) and four others.

Mount Ararat is one of the important national symbols of Armenia and is considered a holy mountain. It has a great place in Armenian literature and culture. Together with Noah’s Ark, we see it on the Coat of Arms of Armenia. Mount Ararat has historically been associated with Armenia and is widely recognized as the principle national symbol. In the 19th century, when there was no Armenian state, Ararat symbolized Armenian statehood. The First Republic of Armenia, the first modern Armenian state that existed from 1918 to 1920, was often called the Republic of Ararat because it was centered in the Ararat Valley.

Modern international borders were formed in the 20th century. After the Turkish-Armenian war of 1920, the mountain came under the control of Turkey and was considered an official part of Turkey, according to the agreements of Moscow and Kars signed in 1921. In the late 1920s, in order to prevent the Ararat uprising of the Kurds, Turkey crossed the Iranian border and occupied the eastern area of Sisi. During this period, Kurdish rebels used the area as a safe zone against Turkey. According to the Tehran Convention of 1932, Iran’s border changed in favor of Turkey, and the eastern wing of Sisi was handed over to this nation to the west. The Iranian-Turkish border now passes by Sisi.

Even though not geographically occupying the biblical mountain, Armenians consider that it was and will be the silent witness of the history of Armenia. In the same way, the mountain is the eternal memorial commemorating the 1,5 million victims of Genocide Against the Armenian People 1915-1918. And despite the fact that the mountain is not officially in Armenian historic territory, the mountain demonstrates the beauty of our national homeland.

He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food, will supply and multiply your seed for sowing, and increase the harvest of your righteousness. II Corinthians 9:10

HOPE NEWS
Coming this Autumn!



A Contemporary Personal
Pioneer Missionary Narrative
WITNESS TO HISTORY
1979-2019

Assisting God’s People In East-Central
Europe, Russia, Armenia
During the Late Soviet and
Early Post-Soviet Years
Kaarina A. Ham, Ph.D

PRAISE

- (1) Safe travel during summer ministries
- (2) Three well-received Summer Youth Day Camps at village schools: *Ararat, Horom, Lchashen* with around 45 kids and several teachers and parents coming faithfully each day
- (3) Welcome August reprieve for HOPE staff

PRAYER

- (1) Current LIGHTHOUSE center projects: front patio & entrance room base
- (2) Open doors for autumn ministry programs: Kids’ Planet & BASICS of Christian Faith
- (3) Adult “Core Group” Bible Study---participants eager to learn from God’s Word and fellowship together on Monday evenings at HOPE Office
- (4) Project PAROS July 5 - 22, 2024 Pray that God will call participants to *Come Over and Help!* with summer ministries and projects at the LIGHTHOUSE center near Lake Sevan in North-Central Armenia

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