

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Spreading the Gospel
in a viral way | 1

Bible studies of Genesis
and New Testament
translation | 2

“Are we spreading the Gospel in a viral way?”

Spreading the Gospel in a viral way

Dear friends,

A few weeks ago, Armenia had to shut down its borders with Iran, due to the very fast spread of the Covid-19 disease there and the threat it represents for the tiny Armenian nation. The amount of casualties has been skyrocketing in Iran. Even high ranking officials of the government have died due to this disease.

When we consider the way a virus and all kinds of bad news related to it have spread all over the world in such a short time, we should perhaps ask ourselves the following question: are we equipped and ready to spread the Gospel of truth and of life in a viral way? Are Christian churches which proclaim their allegiance to our Lord Jesus-Christ, eager enough to preach the Good News of the Kingdom to all nations, as He commanded his disciples to do (Matthew 28:18-20)? Perhaps this is what the current world crisis should also motivate us to think about. While papers and social media are filled with so-called apocalyptic talk, we should remember the words of the Lord about the end of times and the signs that would accompany them after his Ascension and Pentecost: *And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.*

Armenian tradition has it that Christianity was first brought to Armenia by two disciples of Jesus: Bartholomew and Thaddeus (mentioned in Matthew 10:3). Which is why the traditional Armenian church is known as Apostolic. In any event, there are testimonies that Christianity was already established in Armenia at least fifty years before its adoption by king Tiridates 3 in AD 301. In his Ecclesiastical History (VI, 46), written in the early fourth century, Church historian Eusebius of Caesarea mentions a letter of bishop Denys of Alexandria addressed to the Armenians on the theme of penance while a certain Merusane was their bishop. This would have happened under the reign of Roman emperor Gallus (251-253), thus shortly after the brief albeit violent persecution of Christians under his predecessor Decius. To be connected to this ancient history of Christianization is no warrant of faithfulness to the Gospel, though. Without a living bond with Christ, rooted in the Word of God, no tradition whatsoever will ensure that the life giving Spirit of God is working out true renewal in the lives of individuals and communities. Tracing back your Christian genealogy as far as can be done and





boasting about it won't help you when you will appear before the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end who is coming soon, bringing his recompense with him to repay everyone for what he has done (Rev. 22:12-13).

“ Make the best use of time”
(Col. 4:5)

Bible studies of Genesis and New Testament translation

We are thankful to report that with the means entrusted to us by the Lord of the mission, we were able to publish a second book of studies on Genesis (25-49) by Rev. Mark Vander Hart, a member of *Christians for Armenia's* committee. May these Bible studies on the life of Jacob, his election, trials, faith and also failures, strengthen the hope of our Armenian readers in the faithfulness of the God of the Covenant.

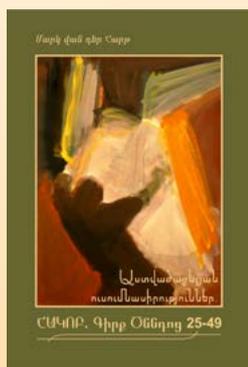
In the meantime, the translation of the whole New Testament has also been completed. However, there is still much careful redactional work to be done by our editing team in collaboration with our translator before getting to the printing and publication stages. Translation of the study material (footnotes and theological arti-

cles) kindly provided by Ligonier Ministries (from the 2015 Reformation Study Bible) must also be completed. We therefore have set ourselves another year and a half to bring us to these final stages. Our policy remains to provide not only a faithful translation, but also a clear and readable text. In order to achieve our goal we need to take as much time as needed.

Make the best use of time, the apostle Paul exhorts his readers in Colossians 4:5 from the jail where he was confined. With or without Covid-19, with or without wars, famines and earthquakes (Matt. 24:7) we should not relent proclaiming that our Lord is coming soon, and – in the very words of the Nicene Creed – that *his Kingdom will have no end*.

The committee for Christians for Armenia

Rev. Vander Hart's study on Gen. 25-49 has just been released



The church of Noravank, nestled in a narrow gorge, goes back to the 13th century

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