

Armenia Tree Project

Planting New Trees to Commemorate the 17th Centenary of Christianity in Armenia

STATUS REPORT

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Prepared by Regina Eddy, ATP Executive Director

Bringing hope and new life to historic church sites through trees: The ATP tree planting division in Yerevan has just completed the planting of 5,854 trees this spring, planting over 14,000 trees to date at designated church sites. The balance of trees needed to achieve our goal (3,000) will be planted this fall, pending the availability of funds. A system has been set in place to monitor these sites for a 2 year period and to selectively replace trees when necessary.

Promoting a meaningful visit to the Homeland: Our vision is to engage every visitor to Armenia in a simple act that contributes to the rebuilding of the homeland. Hands-on opportunities will be offered to visitors to the centennial celebration. At every official event, ATP staff and volunteers will help enthusiasts, young and old, to dig in and plant tree seeds for future church plantings. In the first half of June, the launch of this program, we raised \$1,317 for tree planting and engaged 140 visitors.

Encouraging worldwide participation: For those who may not be able to travel to Armenia, we are striving to bring this exciting celebration to them. A worldwide invitation to participate in the 17th Centenary tree planting was sent to the Diaspora via a 15-minute English/Armenian videotape. Mailed to 210 Armenian churches in the United States, Canada, and Europe this spring, it has been viewed by an audience of 1,543 via 30 church events and raised over \$3,983 from 62 individuals.

Financial Overview: The project is operating at a current deficit of \$39,242 which can be attributed to two fundraising initiatives which did not yield the income originally projected. We had hoped that the distribution of video "Trees of Hope" to Armenian churches would generate \$20,000 in funds (based on 20% of all churches scheduling a viewing, i.e. 40 events, and each one raising \$500). We had also hoped to find 10 donors interested in adopting a specific church site for \$5,000; instead, to date, we have only raised funds from 5. The total projected budget for the tree planting program is \$289,000, leaving \$70,000 in funds to be raised. The current deficit threatens our ability to meet the stated goals of 17,000 trees by December 2001.

Communiqué from The 1700th Anniversary Youth Pilgrimage Office

The Youth Pilgrimage Office is delighted to announce that only seven days remain until the Pan-Armenian Youth Pilgrimage. This communiqué will outline the ten-day schedule of the Youth Pilgrimage.

The first day of the Pilgrimage, July 10, is set-aside for the Diocese of Aragatsotn. The pilgrims will be visiting the St. Mesrob Mashtots Church in the town of Oshakan. During this and every other daily pilgrimage, the local youth associations involved in planning the pilgrimage and the primate of the diocese will greet the pilgrims. The pilgrims will stop over at one of the churches of the diocese and visit the homes of the local population where they will be introduced to the lifestyle of that region. A casual atmosphere of interaction and the participation of clergymen throughout the pilgrimage will help to strengthen the ties between the Armenian youth from all over the world and the Armenian Apostolic Church.

After visiting the Diocese of Armavir on July 11 and the Diocese of Gougark on July 12, Garni and Geghart will be the featured pilgrimage sites on July 13.

July 14-16 mark the days of the unprecedented Pan-Armenian Youth Pilgrimage. The Etchmiadzin leg of this pilgrimage will begin with the welcoming message of His Holiness Karekin II, Catholicos of All Armenians.

May our pilgrimage be blessed and accepted by God

July 16 will be dedicated to paying respect to the martyrs of the Armenian Genocide of 1915, where the youth will give their oath. This oath will confirm the importance of a national memory and preservation of an Armenian national identity.

Visits to the diocese will continue on July 17, where each day will be devoted to the Dioceses of Kotayk, Shirak, and Siunik. Special events are planned for the closing of the pilgrimage, which include a pilgrimage to Karabagh.

Communiqué from The 1700th Anniversary Youth Pilgrimage Office

With this communiqué we start a new string of daily communiqués that will give updates about our planned activities up until July 20.

The deadline to register as a participant of the July Youth Pilgrimage is set for July 5. We are happy to inform that youth from over 10 countries will be participating in the Pilgrimage.

Over 200 pilgrims will be journeying to Armenia just from the eastern and western regions of the United States and from Canada.

Even the European countries, such as Germany, where it is school examinations season, will send their representatives to take part in this exciting youth movement. The list of all countries include, the United States, Canada, Germany, France, Sweden, Egypt, Russia, Algeria, Cyprus, Iran, Turkey, Spain, Italy, and China. This is proof that the Armenian youth have a need for a central organizing force and that that force is the Armenian Apostolic Church. Only through the realization of the importance of pan-Armenian unity can the Armenian youth of the world preserve its national identity.

From July 14-16, 2001, 800 Diasporan youth and over 1000 youth from Armenia and Karabagh will unite in a covenant of unity, hand in hand towards God.