

## Even the Stones Speak Here!



You're looking at a 16th century large stone carving crafted to speak to people's hearts and reveal God's plan for their lives. The stone's intricate details still speak to people today; telling God's story, from creation... to the fall of man... to Christ's sacrifice... and finally to a great and wonderful wedding feast that we are all invited to! Vardan, one of our hosts taught us how he tells God's story through the thousands of ancient cross stones that dot the landscape in Armenia. This amazing land has a rich tradition of Christianity, dating back to 301 AD and including the world's oldest cathedral. Yet, sadly many people in this country simply don't know God's story. They go about their day, living in a land where even the stones speak of God's glory but most don't know Him in a personal way.

AIA Sports Performance's sixth educational mission team to Armenia saw God renew old friendships and begin new ones. The team gelled very quickly into a great group willing to flex and adapt to what our hosts needed. Looking back, we saw God use the team to open doors for ministry with the National Wrestling Team, a high level wrestling club, the newly formed Armenian Sports Medicine Federation, and the National Kinesiology University! We met Nane, a Kinesiology student who follows Christ today because God worked through a previous AIA Sports Performance team. She is very active in AIA Armenia. God connected us to another student who is a follower of Christ and is now connected to the ministry there. Other kinesiology students and wrestlers at the university heard the team tell of God's love and how He has changed their lives. This has given our Armenian staff several new contacts to follow up with to share the same story the cross stones tell!

We also met and shared our stories with the President of the soccer club where two of our ministry volunteers lead a youth soccer team. He is a retired army General who is in a position to be used by God to impact many people in this country. Please pray for him to know God and be filled with the knowledge of His will. John Peterson, an Olympic gold and silver medalist, and an AIA staff member since 1973, traveled with the team. God used John to open doors for the ministry within the sport of wrestling. He shared the story of how God changed his life at an elite wrestling club in Garni. John also built deeper relationships with the National Team Coaches and wrestlers at the Olympic Training Center and an Olympic level strength coach.

Here is the text of an email from our Armenia staff a week after we left Yerevan. If you have been to Armenia on one of our teams, supported us through your prayers or given financially so our teams could go, please accept this message as written to you too!

*Yesterday I was in Garni. A massive wrestling tournament was being held there. 300 people were present. I gave them the gifts that your team left. They were very happy to see me and invited me to visit them again. I will send you some pictures later. John Peterson has opened wonderful doors of opportunity for us.*

*2 students from the Physical Institute have expressed desire and willingness to join us as volunteers! Thank you very much for helping us promote and accelerate our ministry. We greatly appreciate your efforts and are thankful to God for you. Would you please send me John Peterson's email address? I want to send him an email as well to thank him and encourage him by letting him know how God has been working through his ministry.*

*Blessings,*

*Tigran & Lusine*

Shnorhakalutyun (Thank You) and Astvats Orhni (God Bless)!

For more information and stories from this tour, visit our [team blog](#).

To view a pictorial guide to the tour keep reading through the next two pages.

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Below: Left – AIA SP Armenia Team, Paul, Tigran, Lusine, John, Noah, and Doug; Right – At almost 17,000 ft. above sea level Mt. Ararat looms above Yerevan, Armenia!



Below: Left – Noah teaching; Right – Kinesiology students listening intently.



Below: Left – Armenian Sports Medicine Federation's First-Ever Educational Conference! Right – Doug Teaching.



Below: Left – Pastor praying during Easter Worship; Right – Church congregation.



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Below: Left – Wrestlers' Greeting...John and the University President; Center – Armenian Genocide Museum tour; Right – John takes down Tigran!



Below: Left – Olympic Training Center gates which are now open for ministry! Center – John and Tigran connect with a member of the Armenian National Wrestling Team; Right – Armenian National Wrestling Team practice.



Below: Left – Woman walking to work in a typical Armenian town. Right – Traditional Easter Dinner!



Below: Left – Easter Celebration at the Kinesiology University; Center – Celebrating two missionaries' birthdays, Paul (US) and Agnes (Germany); Right – Georg and his wife, Aravit, two AIA Volunteers.

