

The Calvary Messenger

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The Newsletter of the
Calvary Armenian Congregational Church of San Francisco
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A View From Calvary

Nothing Impossible With God

It is the month of June. It is the season of summer and vacations. It is also the season of graduation. At CACC, I thank God for our graduates of all ages. I look back at the school year and I am thankful for our ministry. Back in September, we had committed ourselves "to plug in to God." Many of you did that and are growing in your spiritual life.



One of the unforgettable moments of our year was our 81st Annual Banquet with our dear guest speaker Rev. Krikor Aghabaloglou from Istanbul, Turkey. Badveli Krikor is the pastor of the Gedig Pasha Church, which is where the Armenian Evangelical Church was born 160 years ago.

After the tragic Armenian Genocide in 1915, the Armenians who remained in Turkey tried to reorganize their lives. I found an interesting document which is a report given at the 1922 General Assembly of the Armenian Evangelical Churches, in the Gedig Pasha church. The report describes in detail the condition of the Armenian Evangelical churches, schools, and colleges at the time. Of the 137 churches (14,000 members), only 31 churches (4200 members) survived the Genocide. Of the 270 Sunday schools in 1913, only 32 existed in 1922. At the end of the report, the writer says the 2/3 of the Armenian Evangelicals were massacred.

I never thought that the Gedig Pasha Church would be alive again. I was wrong. I did not have any idea that one day there would be Christians gathering, evangelizing and worshiping in four languages, that the pastor of that church would visit us in San Francisco to tell us about the faith of our fathers.

There is nothing impossible with God.

Badveli Krikor stunned us with his bold testimony of the work of Jesus Christ in his life experiences. He said that as a child his Armenian and Christian identity was stolen from him. However, after meeting Jesus as personal Savior, he found the meaning of his life and dedicated it to his Lord.

2007 Coming Events

Monday - Friday, July 23 - 27

Vacation Bible School

Sunday, August 19

Annual Picnic

Sunday, September 16

Renewal Sunday

Saturday, November 10

Annual Food Festival

Saturday, December 15

11th Christmas Banquet

One thing was very clear in Badveli's message. He continues living as an Armenian Christian in Turkey because God's Spirit is alive in him. He gives all the credit to Jesus Christ for whom he lives. Krikor even finds meaning in his suffering, because he lives and suffers for Christ.

In his writings to the Romans says, Paul says, "For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (8:38-39)

These verses are a reality for Badveli Krikor, the man of God. There are many like him who live in difficult places as witnesses for our Lord Jesus Christ. We who are living in the USA, let us renew our faith in God. Let us continue to pray that God will bring justice to this unjust world. Let us continue supporting brothers and sisters who are living in tougher areas. There is hope in the Word of God.

Let us take the torch of our fathers and continue in spreading the light of God in the dark world.

Rev. Nerses Balabanian, Pastor

Reverend Aghabaloghlu: A Testament to Grace

It is rare to hear powerful, life-changing words spoken by a man who begins his unwritten, yet eloquent, speeches with salutations conveying grace and peace of Christ. Then, again, it is rare to come across a man like Arapkir-born Reverend Krikor Aghabaloghlu, who captured the attention of all who recently attended Calvary Armenian Congregational Church's (C.A.C.C.) 81st annual banquet in San Francisco on May 19. Ironically, his message of peace brings anything but that to some Turks from Reverend Aghabaloghlu's homeland. On the contrary, it is this very message of grace and peace, coupled with truth about the Armenians, which unsettles the hearts of the very people who wished death upon the late *Agos* journalist, Hrant Dink, Reverend Aghabaloghlu's friend and member of his parish, Gedik Pasha Armenian Evangelical Church in Istanbul, Turkey.



Reverend Aghabaloghlu is keenly aware that officials are hanging onto every word he utters on Turkish radio, television, and to anyone who happens to be within earshot. Visits by uniformed Turkish police have failed to silence him. He is also aware that his fate can very well be that which befell Dink who was shot dead outside the *Agos* newspaper office building, where he served as editor. Since

then, others have fallen victim to targeted violence. For Reverend Aghabaloghlu, asking him to remain silent, for the sake of ensuring his safety, is as absurd as asking him to deny the very essence of his being.

So convincing is Reverend Aghabaloghlu's philosophy that one wonders how anyone can walk away from him unchanged. Hundreds can attest to that as he has been the catalyst in empowering them to reclaim ownership of their heritage and Christian religion. At C.A.C.C. that evening, he shared the irony of how Armenians are being told repeatedly that they enjoy many freedoms living in Turkey, but in reality, they are held captive. Armenians are ordered to forget their language and history, and at the same time, encouraged to support their oppressive leaders.

Reverend Aghabaloghlu lamented, "Psalms says that in a land of captivity, our captors asked us to sing. They told us, 'Sing. Sing the Lord's songs.' Psalms says that in the land of captivity, we sat by the rivers; our harps hanging in the trees. How were we to sing the Lord's songs?" Reverend Aghabaloghlu quoted Scripture and emphasized the importance of never abandoning one's Armenian and Christian identity. He quoted, "If I forget thee, my Jerusalem, my right hand will forget its skill." (*Psalms 137*) He added, "If I forget you, my tongue will be silenced. Alas, in a land of captivity, singing the Lord's song is very difficult."

No one can accuse Reverend Aghabaloghlu of forgetting who he is. It is because of who he is that he lost two of his young children when they ate poisoned food. It is because of whom he is and who his ancestors were that one and a half million Armenians were massacred. According to the Reverend, Armenians were targeted for genocide for two reasons, which are the same reasons they are persecuted today: 1. they are Armenian. 2. they are Christian. For Reverend Aghabaloghlu, to forget either is as bad as cutting off one's right hand. To captive listeners, he asked that when that day comes when Armenians are reunited with their fathers and mothers in heaven, those same fathers and mothers who shed their blood in the genocide; can they do so while denying their being?

With great seriousness, Reverend Aghabaloghlu is committed to keeping true to his faith and heritage, and is convinced that it is by God's grace that one lives. His desire to study the Bible inspired him to learn the Armenian language, which he did only six years ago. With a warm smile, he told his audience, "I love it [Armenian]. It is our mother tongue. It is very sweet to me."

It is easy to appear fearless and strong among lambs, but Reverend Krikor Aghabaloghlu has proven to be both among wolves. Reverend Aghabaloghlu had probably never thought that by "simply" speaking the truth about the Armenian Genocide and God's message of grace, he would achieve international heroic status. So great is his need to keep alive who he is as an Armenian Christian, he allows it to overshadow his own safety in a country whose government disdains Armenians and Christians despite claiming otherwise. So confident he is in his faith, that the Reverend warmly receives police officers who knock on his door to question him in the middle of the night. He shared an incident as if it was just another anecdote, but the gravity of the situation was unmistakably real. With his uninvited "guests" seated and served coffee by his wife, Reverend Aghabaloghlu was asked if he kept any weapons. He pointed to a box on the table at which they sat, replied that he did; and asked if they would like to see it. With peaked curiosity, the policemen agreed. Happily, the Reverend obliged, and pulled out the Bible. He explained that he held the strongest weapon on earth. With a broad smile, Reverend Aghabaloghlu explained that sensing a sermon, the policemen quickly excused themselves from the Aghabaloghlu home.

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Reverend Aghabaloghlu graduated from the University of Istanbul in 1979, majoring in Turkish history and receiving his Bachelor's degree in Education. Being denied a teaching position at any school in Turkey, which he attributes to his ethnicity and religion, he eventually graduated from Bitinia Bible School, becoming ordained as a minister in 2002. As pastor, Reverend Aghabaloghlu practices what he preaches, professing the virtues of honesty and faithfulness. Ever since his honest poignant remarks on live Turkish television in 2005, he has been a hero to Armenians and a threat to "Turkishness." Not ignorant of the risks, this courageous shepherd's faithfulness and acceptance of God's grace allows him to be at peace with the truth and its outcome.

Tabeen Nazarian

Mother's Day

First I'd like to thank the deacons for recognizing the aunties today. I really thought it was very sweet. I hope that at some point you will recognize the uncles as well.

Since I was asked to speak about being an auntie, I'd like to share a couple of stories with you; one is sweet and a little humorous and the other is more serious and poignant. They both involve my nephew, James.

One Saturday morning, as James and I were making oatmeal cookies together, he shared with me the fact that he had a *girlfriend*. First, you have to understand that he was only 5 years old, and at the time, according to him, *he never thought he'd be in love*. When I mentioned this exciting development to my sister-in-law, she was quite taken aback! It seems she and my brother had no idea what was going on at Mother Goose Nursery School!

My point is that many times children feel more comfortable sharing things with their aunties and uncles, and I felt privileged to be the first one to find out about this budding romance.

The second incident took place while James and I were hunting for *bugs* in the garden. Quite out of the blue James asked me *if anything were to happen to his mom and dad if he could come and live with me or if I would come and live with him*. Very seriously he said, *"Auntie, I don't want to be alone."* Immediately, I told him that, of course, if anything were to happen to his parents, either he would come and live with me or I would come and live with him.

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81st Annual Banquet

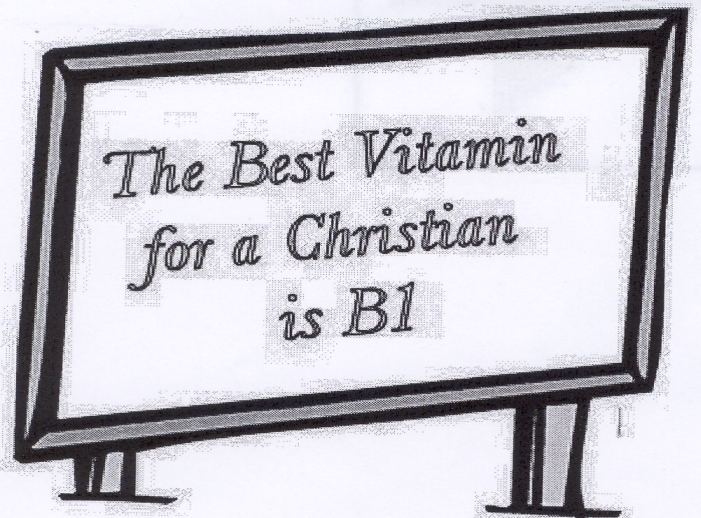


The CACC family praises God for the 81st Annual Banquet that took place on Saturday, May 19. A record number of guests, more than 220, filled the Halajian Hall.



Several things made the banquet a very special one. Stephanie Adrouny emceed the evening. Anahid Yeremian translated for the guest speaker. The well-known Armenian Christian singer, Salpi Keleshian, sang several beautiful songs sometimes joined by a group of CACC musicians. Paul Kullukian was honored for many years of dedicated service at the Church. The highlight was, of course, the presence of Rev. Krikor Aghabaloghlu who had come from Turkey to give us a message of faith and courage.

Many thanks to the Banquet Committee for a truly unforgettable evening!



CACC Bible Study Interviews

Which Bible Study do you attend? How do you like it?

"I attend the Wednesday night dinner and Bible Study. I have a great time. The discussions are very stimulating and interesting and I love my leader and I like the food too."

Armine Adrouny, Retired Teacher

"I used to attend Coffee time with God on Thursday mornings. Oh I love it. I used to wait for Thursday mornings. We really discussed the Word verse by verse, and then we discuss it and share it. It's amazing, everybody learns."

Lara Khoury, Housewife

"The Coffee Time with God on Thursdays. I love it because it's a small coffee with Jesus. We drink coffee with Jesus! We're so close that we're like a family and we're open with each other. It's a small group but we love each other."

Rosalie Kalebjian, Business Manager

"I attend the College and Career Bible Study on Wednesdays. I like it because it's a very small group, so it's intimate and you're not afraid to share anything. However, it would be great if more people would join."

Sevan Palanjian, High School Teacher

"I go to the CACC College and Career Bible Study. It's kind of like a family and all the people have been here for a long time and when new people enter they feel welcomed."

Ara Kullukian, Computer Engineer

"What I like about HomeBuilders is how they have organized readings. If you miss out, you know what's going on by reading the book. It's helpful for me."

Marianne Ghatta, Optometrist

"The Friday Bible Study in the East Bay gives me an example so that I can try to live it the following week."

Rosanne Bosnoyan, Administrator

"I attend both Homebuilders and Bagel Time with God. I think that it is very essential for couples to attend HomeBuilders because seeing other couples going through the same challenges confirms that you are not alone."

Dikran Tokmakjian, Engineer

Nanor Balabarian



The College and Career Group meets regularly every Wednesday night for fellowship and Bible study. During the last year, we studied characters of the New Testament, the Sermon on the Mount, and did a video series from "The Purpose Driven Life." We are now studying the amazing chapters of the Acts of the Apostles.

The picture on the left was taken at the farewell party of Caroline Chaderjian who was married to Ed Zamanian and moved to Michigan. Congratulations!

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Those who are serious about being parents know that they would do anything to protect their children and to make sure that they are safe and secure and feel loved. But the reality of life is that, as parents, you can't always be there. Something serious may happen to you, and your children need to know that there are other adults who love them and will care for them.

In my own life, my brothers and I were fortunate that we had aunts and uncles with whom we shared many happy times, but who also stepped in to care for us under some very serious circumstances.

We were also blessed with a group of people that were very dear friends of my parents and who my mother described to us as "aunties and uncles out of love". A number of those people were members of our church, such as, my Uncle Eddie and Auntie Gloria, Uncle Stanley and Auntie Vivian, Uncle Peter and Auntie Elsie, Uncle Frank and Auntie Lee, Uncle Clarence and Auntie Gladys and Uncle Henry and Auntie Eunice. I shared many happy times with these aunties and uncles, but again, these people were also there in times of difficulty and sadness.

If I had one wish on this Mother's Day it would be that each one of us here, whatever our circumstances, would be *aunties and uncles out of love* to the children in our church. This is going to take some effort on our part as adults. It is really up to us to get to know these children; to know their names, to welcome them when they come to church and to encourage them when they participate in our worship.

If we do this I know from personal experience that it will be a blessing to those children and a blessing to us.

Margaret Shamlian

Youth Ministries



On May 25-27, AEYF organized a sports weekend in Fresno, called the IRONMAN Games. Churches from L.A., Orange County and

throughout California joined to compete in soccer, basketball and volleyball.

The weekend was full of fun, with every person showing their talent in the sport they play. On Saturday evening, we had

worship and Chris Tozlian gave a message about the body of Christ and how everyone essential with the specific talent that God has given them.



The youth of our church played basketball and soccer, ending up in the basketball semi-finals and achieving first place in soccer! It was exciting, fun and tiring for everyone, but everyone left with smiles on their faces. Again friendships were built and renewed, and we are looking forward to the next IRONMAN games in two years!

Jennifer Bosnoyan

Aunties

Mothers Day is always a very special day at CACC. This year it was even more special because the Deacons had decided to honor six outstanding aunties!

The Deacons presented the life, testimony and service of each auntie and decorated them with corsages. Margaret Shamlian shared her testimony; Anahid Yeremian preached.

The honored aunties were: Anayis Adrouny, Armine Eurejjan, Violet Jamgotchian, Alidz Nazarian, Margaret Shamlian, and Anahid Yeremian.



CACC 2007 Graduates



Aaron Avanesian (Pre-K)



Karina Bender (Pre-K)



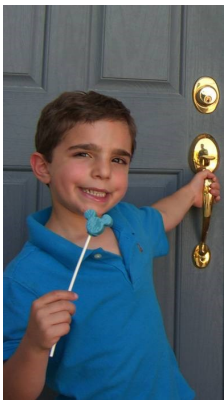
Aren & Hagop Chinchinian (K)



Haig Kassarian (K)



Armen Krakirian (K)



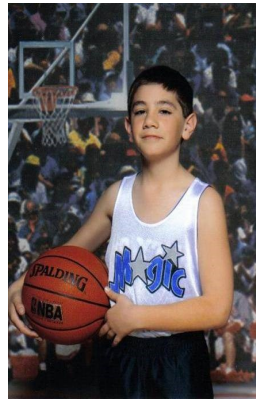
Jacob Manoukian (K)



Maria Amirkhanian (Elem)



Izek Avanesian (Elem)



Garen Getsoyan (Elem)



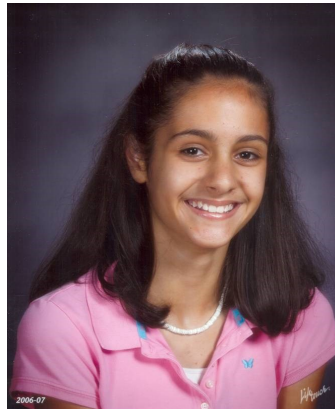
Rebecca Sagherian (Elem)



Jenny Balabanian (J.High)



Lori Krakirian (J.High)



Michelle Sagherian (J.High)



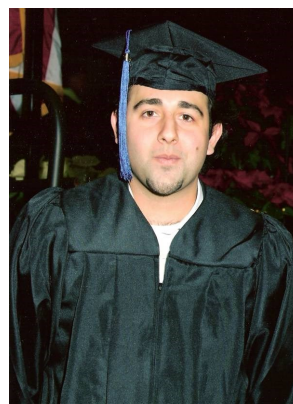
Daniel Asdourian (High School)



Lauren Silverman (H.Sch.)



Alex Bunch (B.A.)



Armen Ekmekji (B.A.)



Hovnatan Khoshafian (B.A.)

Prayer & Renewal

“Seven days without prayer makes one weak.”

SUNDAY MORNINGS

Join us in the Library for prayer 10:30 a.m.-10:45 a.m. All are welcome. Below and on the next page are suggestions for your daily prayer. Please see the weekly Sunday bulletin for updated information.

MISSIONS MINISTRIES FOR THE QUARTER

Please remember to pray for God’s world-wide ministry of evangelism. Please continue to pray for the persecuted Church.

The Armenian Evangelical Social Service Center in Hollywood is dedicated to meeting the needs of immigrant Armenians in the Los Angeles area. Since its inception, thousands of people have benefited from the center’s outreach. Through assisting with the social needs of our people a means is provided through which the gospel of Jesus Christ is shared. Please pray for the A.E.S.S.C. board of directors, staff, and those they minister to.

Drs. Tom and Cynthia Hale for many years were medical missionaries in the Himalayan country of Nepal. While in medical school they vowed to work together among primitive people to share the love of Jesus by way of their medical practice. Currently they are traveling around the world sharing their experiences as missionaries, training others and encouraging ongoing support and participation in missions especially in Nepal.

Armenian Evangelical Church - Hrazdan, Armenia. Our sister church in Hrazdan has about 150 members. Brother Edik Tadevosian is the pastor. The church gathers in a small apartment converted into a sanctuary that seats about 130 people. The church is involved in local home Bible studies and thriving children’s and youth ministries. Pastor Tadevosian is also very involved in assisting the needy in the community.

Camp AREV and the E.J.M. Armenian Evangelical Conference Center minister year-round to individuals and churches, youth and adults, sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thousands have been reached, hundreds have come to salvation, a tremendous number of lives have been changed for eternity. Pray for Executive Director Jennifer Abadjian and her fellow workers and the adults and children they minister to.

AEUNA SISTER CHURCHES FOR THE QUARTER

- * **First Armenian Evangelical Church**
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
Rev. Georges Dabbo, Pastor
- * **Armenian Evangelical Church**
New York, NY
Rev. Peter Doghramji, Pastor
- * **Armenian Presbyterian Church**
Paramus, NJ
Rev. Berj Gulleyan, Pastor
- * **Armenian Cilicia Evangelical Church**
Pasadena, CA
Rev. Kevoork George Terian, Pastor
- * **Armenian Euphrates Evangelical Church** Providence, RI
Searching for a Pastor
- * **Ararat Armenian Congregational Church**
Salem, NH
Rev. Ara Heghinian, Pastor
- * **Armenian Evangelical Church**
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
Rev. Sam Albarian, Pastor
- * **United Armenian Calvary Congregational Church**
Troy, NY
Searching for a Pastor

OUR SISTER CHURCH IN ARMENIA

- * **Armenian Evangelical Church of Hrazdan**
Edik Tadevosian, Pastor

EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP IN ARMENIA

- * **Armenian Evangelical Fellowship of Gayaran and Aintab**
Hovhanness Frangoulian, Pastor

The Calvary Messenger is produced as a quarterly ministry update for our congregation and friends. Donations to offset printing and mailing costs are appreciated. Any comments, errors, omissions and/or newsworthy items may be addressed to the editors, care of the church office or sent via email to our box at cacc@cacc-sf.org. Please check our website for current ministry information. <http://www.cacc-sf.org>

Job Posting

Camp AREV is seeking a full time executive director who has a strong personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Desired background should include either a BA/BS in Christian Education, a Masters in divinity or comparable experience in youth/camping ministries. Candidate must have strong leadership skills and the ability to originate, plan, organize, and implement camp programs. He/She must exude interest and work effectively with all age groups. Armenian language skills are strongly desired. Compensation depending upon experience. Send resumes and any inquiries to searchcommittee@camparev.org.



Graduation Sunday

It is a great tradition at CACC to celebrate the graduation of our children together. On Sunday, June 10 the Children’s ministries organized a luncheon honoring graduates of Sunday School and all other graduates from Pre-K to University. A short program followed the lunch. Sunday School and Youth presented worship and Armenian songs. There was a PowerPoint presentation of all the graduates. Finally three children who graduated from Sunday school were recognized. The Sunday School graduates were Maria Amirkhanian, Izek Avanesian, and Garen Getsoyan.

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Church News

BIRTH



We congratulate Hrag and Taleen Kalebjian for their newborn son, Daron Christopher Kalebjian, born on Tuesday, March 13, 2007. Congratulations also to the grandparents, Kalebjian and Kojaian.

We congratulate Simon and Tania Orchanian for their newborn son, Jake Arsen Orchanian, born on Wednesday, April 18, 2007. Congratulations also to the grandparents, Orchanian and Alikian.

BAPTISM

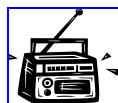
Our congratulations to Alec and Anahid Gulesserian on the baptism of their daughter, Andrea Anna Shakeh Gulesserian on Sunday, April 1, 2007. Please pray for them.

Our congratulations to Joseph and Marianne Ghatta on the baptism of their daughter, Chloe Anne Ghatta on Sunday, May 27, 2007. Please pray for them.

CONDOLENCES

Rev. Harry Missak Missirlian who passed away in Fresno, California on Wednesday, April 11, 2007. Our condolences and prayers to the Missirlian and Tovmassian families.

Mrs. Yevnig Diane Torunian who passed away on Monday, June 4, 2007. Our condolences and prayers to the Torunian, Bryant, Iskikian and Fustukjian families.



Announcing Bashde.org



Announcing the world's first Armenian Christian Internet radio station: Bashde.org. (Bashde means Worship in Armenian).

It is a radio station that streams 24 x 7 Armenian Christian music glorifying the Lord in uplifting music and songs. It features many of the known Armenian Christian artists.

Stay tuned to upcoming Bashde.org programs and events....