

A MESSAGE FROM PASTOR NERSES BALABANIAN

## The Cost of Discipleship Աշակերտութեան Գինը



**Robert Turner** told a story about a hen and a pig who became very good friends. One seldom saw them apart. One day the hen suggested to have breakfast together.

The pig agreed and asked, "What will we eat?"

The hen said, "Let each of us contribute something." The pig agreed.

The hen said: "Let us have ham and egg. I'll provide the eggs and you the ham." "Hold on," said the pig, "What you offer to contribute is the **fruit of your labor**, but what you're asking of me **requires total commitment!**"

My topic is **the cost of discipleship**. You can read a book by this title written by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He stood against Hitler's evil regime. It was highly costly; it cost him his life.

In Luke 9:57-62, we read that three disciples came to Jesus. The first and the third volunteered, and the second was invited by Jesus.

### **The first disciple**

The first volunteer came and said two things: "I will **follow** you wherever you **go**."

Two verbs: to **follow** and to **go**. Jesus replied with a **parable**.

If I were Jesus, I would do it differently. I would probably ask, "Are you sure? Do you know what it means to follow me? This is a serious commitment..." and so on.

Jesus has his way to respond to this man. He uses a parable, and his response is stronger.

The parable has three characters.

- The first animal is the **fox**. "Foxes have holes." Foxes represent the **Herodians**, a large ruling family. In the Bible, Herod is described as a fox. Jesus was actually telling this volunteer that if he wanted political authority, he could get it from the well-known "foxes."
- The second animal is the **bird**. "The birds of the air have nests." We can find First Century literature that describes the **Romans** as birds. One could not **express negative** things about the Romans directly, so they used the word "birds" to refer to them. It is possible that Jesus was telling this volunteer that if he wanted military authority he could turn to the "birds."
- The third scene is about the **Son of Man**. "The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." The title "The Son of Man" comes from the book of Daniel chapter 7. The Son of Man comes from God. He comes with power and authority over all nations. Yet, this "Son of Man" will be rejected. According to Isaiah's description, he will be the **suffering servant**. The question Jesus is asking this unnamed volunteer is, "**Are you ready to follow this kind of 'authority'?**"

### **The second disciple**

This time Jesus asks this person to **follow** him. Instead of responding, "OK", he says "But Lord, let me **go** first and **bury** my father."

In the Middle East, when someone's father dies, we

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## PACC EVENTS OF 2023

Rally (Renewal)  
Sunday..... September 10  
Iron Man  
Games ..... September 15-17  
Harvest Banquet.. October 7  
Thanksgiving Sunday  
..... November 19  
Congregational Budget  
Meeting .....December 3  
Christmas Worship  
Celebration.....December 24



### SEPTEMBER 7, 2023 Dorcas Guild Luncheon

11:00pm • Free to all  
ladies of PACC  
All you have to do is  
make your reservation to  
Maxine.

## Discipleship

*Continued from page 1*

do not go around, meet with people and chat with them around the day. Burying a dear person is a priority. I mean if this man's father was dead, he would be at the funeral by his father's coffin.

Dr. K. Bailey illustrates this with such a story. Suppose someone likes to emigrate from their community. The community will ask them, "Aren't you going to stay until your parents die and then feel free to move on?"

Thus, the response of the second person is like this: "OK, I would love to follow **you**. **But first I need to get** permission from my community. First, **I should fulfill the expectations of my peers**, my community. I should finish my community duties, and then I can follow you."

Jesus cannot be second place. Jesus was direct. There are enough people to "bury" dead people. Jesus challenged the person: "**I want you to come and proclaim the Kingdom of God.**"

### The Third Disciple

Like the first disciple, we have a new volunteer to follow Jesus.

"I will **follow** you, Lord, but first let me **go** and **take leave of** those at my home."

The verb **GO** appears in this sentence, yet instead of asking Jesus **where he would be going**, this person has another agenda.

The Greek word for **farewell** that is used in this sentence is not simple a goodbye. The word is **apotassō** and it has various explanations: to set apart, separate, to separate oneself, withdraw oneself from anyone, to take leave of (Thayer's Lexicon). In Arabic there are two ways for saying farewell: Goodbye, I am leaving, bye. Or take leave of, with your permission, *bikhaterkon*, *biiznkom*, (in Arabic) *tzer ardonoutyamp* (in Armenian), and usually the answer is "May God go with you", *Allah maak* (Arabic). I think this disciple likes to ask permission first from his family, and then follow Jesus. The authority of his family is more important than God's calling.

Let us not misjudge Jesus. In the Bible, it is required that we honor our father and

mother. **Taking care of our family is an important priority.**

Listen to what Paul says to Timothy:

**"If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever."** (1 Tim 5:8)

Having said this, we should come back to our context. Jesus is not against supporting our families and communities. In fact, we should minister to them also. That is our duty. **Yet, nothing can come before the calling of Jesus, nothing.**

I felt bad when I was leaving home to serve the Lord. Always I tried to reach out to my family and make time for them. But I could not compromise my calling in order to be with them all the time. **People (including my family members) misunderstood my move from one church to another, and until now they do not understand.** That is sad, but I am accountable to our Lord.

In the end, Jesus finished these encounters by telling these three disciples a new parable. The story comes from **agriculture**. No one can plow by looking back or around. One must look forward when the plow is in action. "No one who puts his hand to the plow and **looks back** is of any use in the kingdom of God." Focus, and look at Jesus who invited you in the first place.

In summary, many are called but few are ready to carry the cross and follow Jesus. It is not easy to be disciples of our Lord. However, it is not impossible; it is possible not through our efforts, but because of His GRACE.

There are many authorities.

**"Foxes,"** political maneuvers, **"Birds,"** powerful authorities, **community pressures**, family pressures are always chasing us. We follow the **Son of Man, the supreme authority**. What is demanded of us is not success. What is demanded of us is our faithfulness to our Lord in all circumstances.

Dr. Bailey concludes: "In Christ, there is no authority higher than the authority of Our Lord Himself." Are you a disciple of Jesus? Will you volunteer to be his disciple? Are there any obstacles that do not allow you to follow Him?



## MODERATOR'S REPORT

Greetings Pilgrim Church Family!

I am excited to begin my term as Moderator serving alongside our staff and leadership team to support our church family in their spiritual growth and express God's love and salvation message to others through our various activities and ministries. Our first Council meeting will be on August 22. Council meetings are when the church leadership meet to conduct any necessary business and discuss any upcoming church activities. I will have more to report after our meeting in August; however, I can say, we have an amazing church family and as we work together this year, we will accomplish much to advance His Kingdom at Pilgrim Church and for those whom we serve in the community at-large.

-- By Moderator Cristel Tufenkjian

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### BIRTHS

**Theodore Grant Boyajian Branche** – July 28, 2023  
Father: *Andy Boyajian Branche*; Mother: *Caroline Cruz*  
Grandmother: *Phyllis Boyajian Branche*

**Afton Cecil Esser** – August 1, 2023  
Parents: *Travis & Hannah Thomas Esser*  
Grandmother: *Linda Thomas Matoian*

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### WITH SYMPATHY

**Elysa Altounian** – June 10, 2023  
**Hagop Kerkezian** – July 6, 2023  
**Eva Shahinian** – July 10, 2023

*Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master. (Matthew 25:21)*

*Please join us for an afternoon of faith, friends & fellowship at our..*

## Sister Churches Luncheon

Hosted by  
Holy Trinity Armenian Apostolic Church Ladies' Guild

**Saturday, September 16, 2023**

Holy Trinity Social Hall

537 M Street, Fresno, CA 93721

11:30 AM \$85 per guest

### Guest Speaker

**Julianne Williams, MPH**

International Best Selling Author, Certified Grief Educator, Health Care Consultant

**Paid reservations should be sent to your church representative by September 9th.  
Please make your check payable to your organization.**

Contact Madeline at (559)246-7701 or Linda at (559)779-3803 with any questions

## PACC FAMILY CAMPING AT DINKEY CREEK

Early July a group of us from church camped out under the stars at Dinkey Creek. We had a lot of fun watching the kids play, hanging out having snacks, sitting around the campfire for song and s'mores, and playing Crokinole (a Canadian board game) at night with the light from our lanterns and head lamps. Saturday was time for leisure. Some of us caravanned to McKinley Grove to see the spot of Giant Sequoias towering over head, some of us went all the way up to Huntington Lake to play, some of us went into Shaver Lake for lunch, and some of us ventured down to the not-so-dinky creek. Saturday evening, a group of fellow church-goers drove up for the evening to join us in a potluck and night of worship through song where we also heard words of praise and testimony of how God is working their lives. Sunday, Badveli Kevin delivered a message, then we packed up and said our goodbyes. – Elyse Jaramishian







## MEMORIAL DAY PICNIC

On May 28, over 250 PACC members and guests enjoyed an eventful Memorial Day Picnic. Our members were successful in bringing a friend to church and to our Memorial Picnic. Jerry Janigian, was the chairman of the event and he made sure we had a lot of homemade beans, potato salad with our hotdogs and hamburgers. The members of the Trustees worked very hard to make this event fruitful. The Men's Forum was instrumental in barbecuing delicious hamburger and hotdogs. Thank you to Joyce K. and Deborah H. for doctoring-up the lemonade to perfection and making the potato salad and helping out where needed.

Our members had fun playing BINGO for prizes. Thank you to the Dorcas Guild who made and brought bingo prizes and cakes and cupcakes for all of us to eat with our meal. Thank you to all of you who helped make this day such a fun event.

PACC children had so much fun playing on an inflatable obstacle course, and a small bounce house for all the little children.

The Kef Band sounded amazing. PACC is so lucky to have such talented musicians in our church to entertain us.

I have never seen our members having so much fun together. We are planning for next year's Memorial Day Picnic with some new surprises.

– Carla Hartunian, Trustee

## YOUTH MISSION TRIP

Our mission trip this year was to Houston, Texas. A group of eleven people went and served with an organization called the Restoration Team. They help people whose homes have been affected by the winter freeze or hurricanes.

We all worked on one home for five days. We removed shiplap and insulation and replaced it. We also replaced the front door; the house had a lot of rotten wood to the point where the wood would crumble making it very difficult to remove. On the panels that we didn't have to remove, we scraped off the paint so that the paint primer could adhere to the wood.

On our first day of work many people from the neighborhood came out to see what we were doing and were asking questions. It was really cool to see God working in that way in the whole neighborhood.


Every night we would do our devotion, and Badveli Kevin led us through the book of Galatians.

Eventually we got the entire house prepped and ready to be painted and looking a lot better than we started out. Some fun things that we got to do included kayaking down the Colorado River, and after that we went into Austin, Texas, and we visited the Capitol Building.

I'm thankful I had the opportunity to go and help others who needed help. I want to thank you all for your support and for all your prayers. I'd like to thank Badveli Kevin for putting this trip together for all of us.

– Naomi Eritzian, mission member



SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			PACC CALENDAR OF EVENTS August 2023			
July 30	July 31	1	2	3	4	5
5:30-8:00 VBS						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
10:30 am Worship/Communion	8:30-4:00 pm FUSD	8:30-4:00 pm FUSD	8:00-4:00 pm FUSD		8:00-4:00 pm FUSD	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
10:30 am Worship,		6:30 pm Trustees, Overflow Room 6:30 pm Deacons, Fireside 6:30 pm CE Meeting, Library		8:00-4:00 pm FUSD	8:30-4:00 pm FUSD	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
10:30 am Worship	Pilgrim's Progress Articles Due 8:30-4:00 pm FUSD	6:30 pm Council Meeting, Overflow		11:00-2:00 pm FUSD		
27	28	29	30	31	Badveli Kevin is on vacation August 11-25	
10:30 am Worship				12:00-4:00 pm FUSD		

**PILGRIM**  
*Armenian*  
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

3673 North First Street  
Fresno, California 93726-6870

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP**

In-person 10:30 am

Online at 10:30 am

On our website: [pilgrimchurch.com](http://pilgrimchurch.com)

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