



Hills Christian Alliance Church Newsletter

2015 Theme: Reviving Worship, Spreading Gospel

Sub-Theme: Jan-Mar: Praying; Apr-Jun: Rekindling Passion to God; Jul-Sep: Committing to Christ; Oct-Dec: Spreading Gospel

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Corner of Newsletter Team

The church newsletter is to provide a place for brothers and sisters to share. This is not what our weekly bulletin or church website can achieve. The continuation of newsletter is solely relied on your support. We hope to see your sharing in our next issue. All articles can be sent to admin@hillscac.org or to Marianna, Grace, Juanita, Lincoln, Simmy or Sherwood. Articles can be either in English or Chinese. We'll translate your articles so that your sharing can reach every member of the Church family.

Pastor's Word – Rekindling Passion for God

Rev Almon Li 李智峰牧師



The subtheme of our church for the 2nd quarter is "Rekindling Passion for God". Some brothers and sisters may remember that, when our church was established, we emphasized that we should build up our church with love. Before we know how to love others, we should have a good relationship with God. The Bible reminds us that "we love because He first loved us." We know very clear that, as God's children, we should please our Lord. But what does God value most? As Jesus told us, "you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment." All the Law and the Prophets depend on "love", which is also the core value of the Christian faith. No matter how you see your relationship with God, He does value very much our relationship with Him. In the Old Testament, God made a covenant with the Israelites, using the analogy of a husband (i.e. God) and a wife (i.e. the Israelites). In the New Testament, Jesus called Himself the bridegroom who was waiting for His bride. Therefore, what God values most is the love with all our heart and with all our mind.

Brothers and sisters, let us think how wonderful it is: the Creator is so mindful of our little love to Him. Because of love, He was wounded, rejected, humiliated, and crucified for us. And what gives Him the greatest comfort and touches Him most is our love to Him. In the Bible, we see that among those faithful people commended by Jesus, only Mary really touched His heart. Jesus said, "..... but one thing is necessary.

Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her." This "one thing" is the building up of a relationship with love. Mary is thirsty for His presence, longing for His word; all her sight and mind focus on the Lord Himself, as if He is her only target and all satisfaction. Jesus was deeply moved by this kind of love.

Another person who touched Jesus' heart is John. In the Gospel of John, he called himself "the disciple whom Jesus loved". John could deeply feel Jesus' love because he loved his Lord. He wrote down Jesus' words, especially what He said during the Last Supper, because he cared what the Lord had said. John was the only disciple who followed Jesus to Golgotha, while others fled to elsewhere or disowned Jesus. The Lord entrusted His mother to John because of his love. Out of the 12 disciples, John was the only one who could live a long life and got the revelation from God to write the book of Revelation.

I think none of us would disagree to the importance of loving God. The crux is "do I love Him?" We always misconceive that serving zealously in church equals to loving God. It is true that all these things...

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Walking in God's will

Marianna Li 李劉德麗師母

"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you." (Psalms 119:11)

The moment I was born, my parents asked for me to be baptised. I am grateful to my parents for leading me to God, my Heavenly Father, at such a young age. My father passed away many years ago without leaving with me a lump sum of money or will, but he has left with me the most beautiful testimony.

As a child, I have always known to fear God, please Him and to live out the teachings taught in the Bible. But in reality, it is very hard. Every time I did something wrong or had impure thoughts, I would be rebuked by the Holy Spirit and disciplined with God's Word by my parents. And because of these reminders from the Holy Spirit and my willingness to obey God, I was able to overcome my weaknesses and sins. Thus, I was able to experience God's grace. Today, my husband and I still ask God for His guidance. We will only execute a plan if it is in God's favour. I can do this not because of how good or capable I am, but because I choose to walk in God's will.

As I look back upon my life's experiences, I am truly thankful. Let me share with you some of the little things that testify the magnitude of God's grace. It is truly a blessing to be obedient to God and walk in His will!

1. I had chosen not to date non-Christians as I have always wanted to be married to a man who loves God. There were many temptations when I was young, but I was still willing to entrust my happiness in God. After tons of struggles, prayers, and tears, God blessed me with a man who loves God, me, my family, and God's sheep. Deep down in my heart, my husband is like my father (due to their similar personalities), shepherd, teacher and a good father to my children. To me, I am the luckiest woman on Earth.
2. Since the day I met my husband, we were already serving God together. We led teens and youth groups, handed out pamphlets, learned all about evangelism, organised youth camps, etc. One of the most memorable events was the organisation of a year six graduation camp. There were 120 students in all. The process was tiring but we were very happy. We were filled with an indescribable joy and excitement when we witnessed their acceptance of Christ into their hearts. I could still remember him telling me that the feeling of "combing two swords" was great. Of course,

the ministries would never have completed so smoothly if not for all the prayers.

3. Church Planting – As I look back, I realised that I had already followed a pastor (who later became my cousin-in-law) from Kowloon City to plant a church in "Fund Wong Village" when I was much younger. Never did I know that twenty years into my marriage, my husband and I would plant a church (Hills Christian Alliance Church) in Pennant Hills, Australia. I realise that God has it all planned out from the beginning. He has planned for me to grow up in a church-environment and train in different positions in various ministries. Right from the start, my husband and I have served together; I have followed him and he has led me. He also has shared his dreams and visions with me. I understand that the Lord's training for me over years is for me to become my husband's helper and help him finish what the Lord has installed for him.



The bible says: "Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there were none of them." (Psalms 139:16) All my experiences in life, my growth, personality, emotions and feelings are all written in God's book. All I have to do to receive His great blessings is to obey Him and walk in His Will.

I am really thankful to God and to my parents for letting me know the importance of walking in God's will and to live out a Christ-like life. I have already lived out two-thirds of my life so I may not have much time left. All I ask is for God to bless me with good health so that I can continue to serve God with my husband and help him accomplish the plans God has for Him till I see God's face. May all glory and honour to be to God, our Heavenly Father!

English Translation: Carol Li 李佩恩

English Ministry Report

Deacon Kenneth Chiu 趙啟樑執事



The English ministry has been wonderfully blessed. It is exciting to see the youths growing day by day both spiritually and maturity. We have had some major events, including our Christmas party, youth camp, as well as our regular Friday youth fellowship, Wednesday uni groups, Sunday Exodus group, Sunday service and Bible study. The most encouraging sign of our growth is seeing so many youths getting baptised and committing their lives to Jesus, last November we had 7 youths getting baptised, and we should have more in the coming April.

Last December, we had a Christmas party which was a good opportunity to outreach to our non-Christian friends. We wanted to make this event more casual and fun so the young newcomers would feel more comfortable. We had a barbeque dinner, lots of fun games that involved everyone, Christmas carols, a very funny play, and a short message by Rachel. In all over 50 people came, of which 4 were visitors.

Our biennial English youth camp was held at Lutanda Yarramundi in January this year and all the youths had a great time. Our guest speaker, Peter Graham, the new president of Alliance Youth Australia, spoke on the topic of “treasures” and challenged us with God’s word. Although the organisation was quite rushed, and we struggled to achieve the minimum number of attendees based on our initial booking, we need to thank God that everything turned out quite smooth and we did achieve the required number. Most importantly, the youths learned a lot from the talks, Bible studies, devotion, and strengthened their bonding through sharing, games and group activities. We had 2 newcomers, and our youth leaders are now following up with them and hopefully bring them to church.

Our youth fellowship is aimed for high schoolers and has seen some remarkable growth over the years. Because it is on Friday nights, it is a convenient time for youths to come and have fun while learning about God at the end of their school week. This ministry is also a great opportunity to train up future leaders for the church. Our team of youth leaders have worked very hard to help the younger ones learn to serve God with their gifts, and through serving they also grow spiritually. The youth leaders themselves also benefit, as they take on more responsibilities with leading, caring and preparing the teaching material each week. We have had many newcomers at Friday youth, many of them are not yet believers and don’t come to church on Sundays, so this has become the best

opportunity for them to come to church and know Christ. This term we are studying the Lord’s Prayer and how to spread out the word of Jesus to others, which is consistent to our church’s theme.

For the out of high schoolers, we have the Wednesday night uni groups and Exodus group on every second and fourth Sunday nights. The Wednesday uni groups are split up into boys and girls groups, and they meet at different locations. This encourages more in-depth and personal sharing, which we believe is important to help the uni students get through their different uni years. But the groups do combine once every three months. The Exodus group is one group which meets at Tony and Margie’s home, where we have dinner together. We have all found the home environment very comforting, so despite the growing group, we have continued to meet at Tony and Margie’s home. In the past years we have had Bible studies each time, but because we already have Bible studies after our Sunday services, this year we have decided have more variety in our program. We will have special guest speakers, outings, and all kinds of different activities.

Finally, for the Sunday services, our average attendance has been around 40-45 people. As we are currently looking for a new English pastor, we have been inviting some potential candidates to speak and for us to know them better. We are continually praying that God will provide someone suitable for his ministry. For the brothers and sisters serving on Sundays, we are fortunate that the younger ones are willing to put their hand up and help, as the more senior ones are already quite heavily burdened with numerous other roles. This is a wonderful blessing to our congregation. Our Sunday Bible study takes place right after the service. Our junior high group (years 7-9) and senior high group (years 10-12) have just started their new study on the “four great loves”, while our uni group had just finished Revelations and have now started our new study on Timothy.



Chinese Translation: Sherwood Kwok 郭兆和

Alfred Chung's Testimony

Alfred Chung 鍾浩陽

I really forgot when I first come into contact with the Bible. If my recollection was correct, it should be my Biblical Knowledge class during my first year in secondary school which was operated by a church. "Biblical Knowledge" was a compulsory subject in the school and of the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination. I had studied this subject for 5 five years. What I could remember is that the Bible is like a historical story book, describing Jesus' biography and his stories; and the books of Matthew, Luke, Acts etc. I was quite familiarized, if not conversant, to the texts in order to cope with the examinations. At that time, my understanding on the scriptures was confined to the literal meaning, without knowing that they are God's Word or thinking their actual meaning.

As time went by, I had experienced the ups and downs of life. When I gradually "walked" on my path of life, I had a lot of unsolved mysteries, such as, "why are bad lucks always with me", "why are the rewards not commensurate with my efforts made", "why do good guys always have bad outcomes", "what is the meaning of life"? I was frustrated by these mysteries and I gradually fell into a dark valley.

I recalled that many years ago a pastor told me, "Our paths are planned and arranged by God. We might not understand His will at this moment and the path we think

we should go might not be the same as that planned by Him. We should always communicate humbly with God in prayer, asking for His guidance.

"Each of us has shouldered a lot of burdens. The longer we walk, the more burdens we have and the harder we walk. We should know how to unload the burdens. If we pray to Jesus Christ earnestly, He will take up our burdens and it will be easier for us to walk.



Over the years, when I opened the Bible and read God's word carefully, the unease and sorrow in my heart would be lessened. I deeply felt that God was looking after and guiding me. Therefore, I am willing to follow Him. At the moment when I believed in Jesus, I realized that I truly belonged to the Lord, had the Holy Spirit in my heart and grew with brothers and sisters in Christ.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Rev. and Mrs. Li for their spiritual guidance given to me, and a sister who brought me to the Hills Christian Alliance Church 2 years ago.

May God's peace be with all the brothers and sisters!

English Translation : Sherwood Kwok 郭兆和

Christy Kao's Testimony

Christy Kao 高曉芬

From a young age, I attended Sunday school, and I also went to a Christian school, so Christianity was instilled in me. I believed in Jesus on the basis that everyone around me did too, that was the kind of person I was.

I had a secret growing up, I was slightly different, and that affected me a lot. It didn't fit in society's definition of normal and it was a reality I had no control over. I hated a lot of people, even God. Everything He gave me was something I felt I deserved and that He owed me. It wasn't long before, I entered high school, I had those worries of finding friends and fitting in, but God helped me so it wasn't a problem for me. I had it all, worldly things, everything I had expected from high school I had. Little did I realize, the things I had gained so easily, could also be easily taken away from me. Unsurprisingly, that's what happened.

Being in a girl's school, petty fights and rumors were frequent, and I wasn't safe from them either. The people I once trusted with pretty much my life, hurt me so much that my hatred for God made me purposely do things to disappoint Him and people around me.

Despite being at that low point, I was adamant on getting myself back up without God's help and was so immersed in getting revenge. It wasn't long until I collapsed under the mere burden of my hatred for God, I only had two options, but being the person I was, realistically, there was only one, and it was one that I dreaded. Having built up all that hate, it wasn't easy but the moment I asked for forgiveness and help, I no longer felt the burden or the desire for revenge, I was actually relieved, however, I carried the wrong mindset of what repentance was supposed to mean and do for me.



I was always told of God's unending love for us, but being the self-centered person I was, I couldn't care less. My trust and love for God was no more or less an obligation than something I was willing to do, as I felt I could trust no one else. By this time, I had also started to attend bible study as well as the usual service. Through bible study I

came to realize the reason why God made me go through everything I went through; everything had its purpose but I was so blinded by my own worldly problems. The answer was always right in front of my eyes, Jesus' death on the cross, what more evidence of his love did I need?

In this past year, God has put many people in my life; from people I recently got to know, to people who were always there, but I never spoke to; who all facing personal

hurdles.

Each and every one contributing to making me a better person and allowing me remove my façade; especially fellow Christians. As one of many Christians whose journey of struggle is far from over knowing where I'll be at, at the end, is far greater than any struggle I'll ever face.

Chinese Translation: Janet Yu 余黎慶玲

Aged Care Ministry – Visits to Aged Care Facilities in Christmas

Edith Ip 葉謝美玲

On 20 and 27 December 2014, we, a group of 15 brothers and sisters of HCAC, visited two aged care facilities under the leadership and coordination of Brother Yan Young. The Aged Care Facilities Visitation Team was set up about four and a half years ago as a part of our church's outreach ministries, with an aim to fulfil the Great Commission that God gave us by spreading gospel in the community.



In these two visits, we conveyed the meaning of Jesus Christ's birth by singing carols and performing an English-Chinese Christmas play, of which Sister Carol Li was the screenwriter. It was our objective to let the residents know that Jesus loves the world so that He was born, incarnated and died for men. Attached below are some of the photos taken during the visits.

The Team regularly visits two aged care facilities: one at Thornleigh (address: Ashleigh Lodge, Hillmount Avenue, Thornleigh) on every 2nd and 4th Saturday from 10:30 to 11:30 am; the other at Pennant Hills (address: The Crescent, Pennant Hills) on every 4th Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30 am.



With God's grace we gained a lot from our time committed in this ministry. The residents are already advanced in age and required assistance from a group of loving and caring staff for everyday activities. We were encouraged to see that they were eager to know more about our gracious and merciful God. Our contributions paled in comparison to the efforts of the residents, who insisted on seeing our play in the common room and hearing about God, even though for some the task was physically demanding and they required assistance to move about.

We recognise that we ourselves are minute, sinful people; but our God still looks after and support us with His eternal love. I hope that we, the young and middle-age people, can walk out to the community to serve other people with our talents that God gave us, while we are still fit physically and mentally.

We pray that brothers and sisters will join us in this ministry, so as to fulfil the Lord's teaching, to love our neighbours as ourselves, to spread gospel, and to please God by what we do. May glory and praise be to our Heavenly Father. Amen!



Agnes Lung 龍麗華

I Like to Come near to God

"He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever." (Psalm 103:9) This is the attribute of our merciful Father in Heaven. I have always been reminded and comforted by the praises, fear and repentance to the Lord in David's psalms. Thank God for the precious psalms that David had left to us.

I am very exciting and do treasure the bible courses of the Equipping Program conducted after Sunday Services because I can study the Bible seriously in these courses. I learnt lessons from the figures in the Old Testament; followed Jesus' example on word and deed from the New Testament. Furthermore, I understand God's Word more thoroughly through pastors' guidance.

The last bible course was on the "1 and 2 Samuel" of the Old Testament, which gave a detailed account of David's whole life. Right from his adolescence, God had chosen and equipped David to be the king of the Kingdom of Israel. God looked after and protected David even when he escaped from King Saul for so many years. Though David

sinned and affected his next generations, God still blessed him and chose his son, King Solomon, as planned so that the Kingdom of Israel and His salvation plan could continue.

Through David's life we see that God is great, kind and righteous. Without His blessing and provision, our lives will be difficult. This does not mean that God's believers shall have a life without any problem; but at least our soul will be in quietness and peace day by day.

Studying the Bible will nurture our spiritual life, draw us closer to God and enable us to understand His will. By studying bible in group with brothers and sisters, I have been motivated to work harder and benefited much from the courses. I really look forward to the 2015 Equipping Program for Believers' Spiritual Growth so that I can "assimilate nutrients" through learning and reflection on each Sunday. Thank God for guiding the pastors and blessing us with this Program. Hallelujah!

English Translation: Sherwood Kwok 郭兆和



Congratulations to Cal and Anita Chan

Congratulations to Brother Cal Chan and Sister Anita Chan of Cantonese Congregation on the wedding of their eldest son, Gary in Hong Kong in early November last year. Cal and Anita specifically hosted a wedding banquet for Gary again in Sydney on 7 November. The venue was Deckhouse Café, a very classy function room located at the beautiful and scenery seaside in Hunters Hill.

Major Events in Brief Notes

English Translation : Sherwood Kwok 郭兆和

2015 Chinese New Year Gathering

To celebrate the Year of Goat, the church-wide Chinese New Year Gathering, organised by the Membership and Caring Department, was held on 22 February 2015. The event began at 5:00 pm with the Agape Dinner, which was well known for its wide variety of delicious food. The Chinese New Year Gathering, held at 6:30 pm, commenced with a worship, followed by games and performances by cell groups. All the participating cell group members, some with their family members, played the games fervently and performed their variety shows with their talents. Cell group members who were absent on this occasion should not miss again in the coming year.



Cal Chan 陳梁星

Christmas Evangelical Meeting

Before the ending of the final rehearsal on classic oldies at the Main Hall, I was already attracted by the tasty food and joyful sounds in the adjacent room where the Agape Dinner was held. I could not help imagining that I was enjoying with them very soon. The 2014 Christmas Evangelical Meeting of the HCAC began with this wonderful Agape Dinner.

The Dinner was immediately followed by the core program of the Evangelical Meeting – message entitled “Nothing New under the Sun” delivered by Rev. Almon Li. The congregation was quiet with a heart prepared to receive the message. May the seeds of God’s word be planted in the hearts of the newcomers.

Upon completion of Rev. Li’s calling, the entertainment program “Classic Oldies Night” started, amidst twinkling lights and misty decorations. The series of well-known classic pop songs brought the audience back to the 60’s and 70’s, as if they had found the lost memories of their teenage.

Apart from listening, the participants had the chance to sing. The last program of the event was “Classic Oldies Karaoke”, specially designed for those interested participants to show their talents in singing.

Time flew and the skies turned dark. Outside the hall, there were few pedestrians on the streets at this late evening. It was about time “to end the song”. Stopped



the program unwillingly, I went home with a very excited but tired body. I had to go to bed early to get myself prepared to celebrate the Christmas tomorrow.

Before I slept, I prayed to the Lord :

“May our Heavenly Father remember and bless all who helped and served, with all their heart and strength, in this event. May the Lord’s mercy and kindness touch the hearts of the newcomers so that they are willing to open their eyes and accept God’s word. May all glory and praise be to our God. Amen!”



English Translation: 郭兆和 Sherwood Kwok

2015 Annual General Council of Christian & Missionary Alliance of Australia

Mrs. Marianna Li & Rev. Almon Li
李劉德麗師母 & 李智峰牧師

In February this year, we represented the HCAC to attend the 2015 Annual Council of the C&MA of Australia was held at Melbourne, with the main theme “Empowering the Next Generation”.

Apart from Annual General Council meetings, there were devotional meetings by keynote speaker, Dr. Gary Benedict, from the USA and election of the new president of C&MA of Australia. The 2015 Annual Council, attended by over 100 pastors, elders and delegates from various Alliance Churches in the nation, was held from 4th to 7th February, while the Inauguration Ceremony of the new president was held on 6th February night.

Rev. Ken Graham, the new President of C&MA, delivered

his inauguration speech in which he encouraged that we should empower our next generation to continue the mission of C&MA, i.e. to spread gospel. To achieve this objective, we must take the lead. Rev. Graham used the words “Boldly Go” thrice in his message, which is partially summarized below, to encourage the congregation :

The Boldly Go - Boldly Go : on mission

While we should continue to spread gospel to local people, we should send missionaries to places where people need the gospel. We should also strengthen our social/caring services as part of our evangelism plan.

- Boldly Go : On a Deeper Life Walk

We should build up a close and deep relationship with God. We walk with Him daily to experience His love, so that we are able to love others. Ministries without love cannot please God and really help others.

“Ministry without love cheapens both the ministry and those who are touched by it, but ministry with love enriches the whole church.” (Weirby)

- Boldly Go : In the Fullness of the Spirit

Our ministries will be powerful only if we are filled fully with the Holy Spirit.

“The one who has taken up his permanent abode in us constantly and earnestly desires the whole of us, not just some bits or parts.” (Wuest)

Conclusion :

Let us set sail into a deeper life walk, showing the Fruit of the Spirit: Love.

We have been highly motivated by Rev. Graham’s message. May our Lord bless him with His power to lead the C&MA of Australia, so that the gospel can be spread widely.

English Translation :郭兆和 Sherwood Kwok

Continue...

Pastor’s Word – Rekindling Passion for God

... are important -- reading Bible, praying, serving, attending, and spreading gospel -- but none of them equals to loving God. We should ask ourselves: do I satisfy my own desires by what I pursued in Christian faith? Or do I want to burn my life for God? Is God my stepping stone for rewards (such as reputation, applause, sense of achievement) or the focus of all my passion? Without our love to Him, all our spiritual pursuits, what we equip in faith and what we do in ministries become our obligations and duties. We do all these only for doing, not because we enjoy doing. With love, we will enjoy what we do and find that it is worth giving. You may ask those who are falling in love. They would feel sweet even if they have to wait for their lovers in the rain. They would think that this is the best way to show their sacrifice to their lovers. Today our relationship with God is like boss-servant, father-son, teacher-student, or friends. But God would like to build up a bridegroom-bride relationship with us.

Brothers and sisters, have we loved God as we loved our lovers? Or have you forsaken your first love? Describing that Jesus denied and sacrificed Himself for us, Song of Solomon 8: 6 – 7 says, “Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; for love is as strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.” Not only this kind of love is strong and unchangeable, but it also persists life-long. God will never change; it is men who always change. Take a couple as example. If one party has no passion or love to the other, the latter will no longer be the one and only one in the former’s heart. The former will not consider everything for the latter or expect to stay with the latter privately. The former will be

unwilling to sacrifice anymore unless the sacrifice is the former’s duty. This is what hurts the other party most.

That is what Jesus commented the Church in Ephesus in Revelation, “I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance, and how you cannot bear with those who are evil But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent.” (Rev 2: 1 – 5) The Church in Ephesus worked very hard for God, fought for the truth, and paid the cost of toil and hardship without any complaint, But the Lord held against them for forsaking their first love.

“First love” means “good love”. What kind of love is the best and most touching? It is the “first love”. The true believers should always keep the feeling of “first love” to God. What are filled in their hearts, what they think, and what they say should be about God. They cannot help reading the Bible, thirsty for knowing His will. The first thing they do after waking up is to commune with God, to be close to Him, to worship Him, and to pray to Him. After a busy day, what they long for is to pour out their soul to the Lord. Have you had this kind of love to God? Have you forsaken this kind of love? Today, we should regain this “first love”. The sub-theme of the church for April – June is “Rekindling Passion for God”, hoping that we shall obey God, repent, and discipline our passion for God. I really hope that we will rekindle our passion for God and let HCAC be a church which loves God, loves people, and pleases God. Amen!

English Translation: Sherwood Kwok 郭兆和