

- Pastor's Sharing -- Revival and Excitement
- New Outreaching and Evangelistic Ministries
- Deeper Lifer: Caring For Your Soul weekends
- HCAC 19th Anniversary Celebration
- Young-Couple Families Fellowship
- Journey of Faith -- Phoebe Tu
- Knowing HCAC (13) : Elders and Board of Elders



Expanding the tabernacle
Reviving by the fire of the Holy Spirit

**Hills Christian Alliance
Church Newsletter**

November 2019, Issue No. 35

Pastor's Sharing -- Revival and Excitement

Rev. Almon Li

The church theme of this year is "Reviving by the Fire of the Holy Spirit". I think many believers misunderstand that revival is the same as excitement. They think having attended a revival rally organized by church, they are revived as they felt very happy when they were crying and screaming in the rally.

In fact, the meaning of the word "revival" in the Bible is not "to invigorate", but "to make people live". When you read Psalm 119, you will realize how this word is used. "Revive me by your word" (119:25), the word "revive" appears many times in this psalm. The origin of this word is from two Latin words, one is "re" which means "again", and "vive" means "live". Therefore, the original meaning of "revival" is "to live again".

Why do we need to live again? It is because there is death, or you can say there is a phenomenon of people walking towards death. Like a man who is very sick and almost dies, we need to find a way to save him. Today our church needs to be revived and we personally also need to be revived, because we are all facing death. A pastor once said, "Many churches today are facing death". Why did he say so? It was because he found that some churches were lifeless. They seemed to be neither dead nor alive.

Brothers and sisters, we really have to reflect on ourselves. Is our church neither dead nor alive? Nevertheless, we need to pray for our church and our spiritual life that may the Holy Spirit once again fan into flame ourselves and our church.

If we look at the churches today seriously, we will find that there are many churches which are lifeless, powerless and do not bear good witnesses to God. To be honest, if today we, the followers of Jesus, really have Jesus in our lives, I believe we will have a great impact on the world, and the world will follow the church, not the church follows the world.

However, the fact shows us that today's churches are following in the footsteps of the world. As you can see, in our thoughts, our doings and even our clothes, we Christians are not leading the world. Why is this so? The reason is that all of us are sinners. Although we have repented, when time passes, even though we have believed in Jesus for a long time, our lively spiritual life would gradually get boring and become lifeless. Moreover, since the influence and power of sin are still in the hearts of believers, spiritual weaknesses and corruption are

inevitable. The only weapon that can help believers resist attacks is persistent prayer, confession and asking for spiritual revival.

What is a revival? First of all, we must remember that spiritual revival is not ecstasy or temporary excitement. It is also not a slogan, a cry or a jump. Our spiritual life cannot be revived by just attending church meetings for fun. Revival is a change of life and a deepening of spiritual life. So a real revival must bring long-term spiritual effects.

Rev C H Spurgeon, who is known as the "Prince of Preachers" in England, mentions eight signs of life with a true revival.

1. Unusual hunger for the word of God;
2. Extreme sensitivity to sin, deep awareness of self-unworthiness, and eagerness to pray for forgiveness and the pursuit of holiness;
3. Eagerly grateful for Christ's salvation and His sacrifice, and glad to accept Jesus Christ as personal saviour;
4. Through the change of life, offer yourself to God and make covenants with Him by grace;
5. Love praying and participate in church prayer meetings;
6. Feel extremely close to God, fill with joy in the Holy Spirit, and full of gratitude and praise;
7. Have a greater love and deeply feel a sense of unity with other Christians;
8. Bear a heavy burden for the salvation of people, and boldly witness to the grace that God has given through His son Jesus Christ.

Today I would like to emphasize that believers should be hungry for the Word of God. I know that a long time ago, it was very difficult for believers to get a bible in China. However, believers were still very hungry for God's Word. If they wanted to spread the Word in the Bible to others, they had to copy the Bible first or memorize it. Some believers copied the book of Matthew and even the whole Bible. These manuscripts of the Bible tell us that the believers at that time were very hungry for God's word. Brothers and sisters, do you know why the number of Christians in China is growing fast today? It is because when the believers do not have freedom of religion, they are unable to read the Bible in public. What they can do is to copy the only Bible that they have and memorize it. These actions indicate that they love God's Word so much that they seize every opportunity to memorize the Bible so that they can study it all the times and know it well. These are the long-term spiritual effects.

I think nowadays every person has more than one copy of the Bible at home. People can even read the Bible from mobile phones and computers. But do we often read the Bible? Are we familiar with the Word of God? Brothers

and sisters, I really hope that we are always hungry for God's Word. Trust that God will give us strength and revival in our hearts when we thirst for His Word.

English Translation: Eve Kwan

New Outreaching and Evangelistic Ministries

C&MA is a denomination which emphasises on evangelism and mission. HCAC has actively organises evangelistic ministries and encourages the congregations to spread the gospel. The outreaching ministries being held constantly or regularly include: Chinese Dancing Class, Knitting for Christ, Nursing Home Visitation, share Light Ministry, Table Tennis Ministry, Prison Visitation, and Abundance Fellowship etc. This year our three congregations have introduced new or strengthened existing outreaching ministries as follows:

Cantonese Congregation

1. Nursing Home Visitation

Over the past years, there have been two visitation teams, one on every 4th Wednesday to a nursing home at Pennant Hills and the other on every 2nd and 4th Saturdays to another nursing home at Thornleigh. Since July this year, the 3rd team has been set up to visit a nursing home at Castle Hills. In each visit, members will sing hymns, chat with the residents and share the good news, hoping that the seniors, who live in the nursing home in loneliness, may feel God's caring love and hear the gospel.

Contact: Deacon Carter Li (Evangelism Department) or Marianna Li (0414 600 732)

2. Outreaching Bush Walking Ministry

The ministry, organised by the Evangelism Department since August this year, aims at both church members and new comers: through bush walking activities church members may know each other better and new comers may be outreached and brought to our church. All church members and their friends and relatives are welcome to join. The activities will be arranged around once every two months subject to weather condition.

Contact: Eric Li (0414 587261)

Mandarin Congregation

3. Harmonious Home



Bush Walking Activity



Distributing gospel leaflets



Pennant Hills High School Breakfast Club

The program is held on every 2nd Friday from 10:30 am to 12:30 pm at the Church Building. The activities include: message, singing, sharing, and tips on daily living etc. All interested parties are welcome to join.

Contact: Jenny Yiu, Student Pastor (0416 266 828)

4. Guitar Class for Beginners

This was a program organised by the Abundance Fellowship during March to October 2019, held on every 4th Saturday from 7 to 8:30 pm at the Church Building. The instructor was Deacon Leo Lai and a total of 7 trainees enrolled.

5. Distributing gospel leaflets

The goals and plans of the Mandarin Congregation for the 2nd half of 2019 include: spreading the gospel, distributing gospel leaflet and leading people to the Lord. Starting from August this year, members of the Mandarin Congregation would go out to distribute gospel leaflets after the 3rd Sunday Service every month. For the first 3 months, the target venues are Railway Station, shopping centres and households in Pennant Hills.

Contact: Pastor Don Huang (0431 856 822)

English Congregation

6. Pennant Hills High School Breakfast Club

The ministry, starting from January 2019, is to provide breakfast to overseas students, mainly from the Mainland China, on every Tuesday at 8:00 am. There are 8 -15 students joining every time. 11 volunteers from the English Congregation are on roster to man this ministry, including preparing meals, cleansing, and chatting with students. So far through this ministry two participating students have joined the Youth Fellowship. Please pray that the team can build good relationship with the students so as to open more opportunities for the gospel.

Contact: Pastor Fredrick Song (0407 050 160)

Deeper Lifer: Caring For Your Soul weekends

[Editor's Note: During June to October 2019, the C&MA of Australia organised a total of 6 Deeper Life Seminars (from Friday night and Saturday) in Canberra, Brisbane, Sydney, Perth, Melbourne and Adelaide. The speakers of the Seminar are Rev. Ken Graham, President C&MA of Australia and Rev. Dr Peter Laughlin, Dean of the Alliance Institute for Mission (Academic Team Leader ACOM). The contents of this article are extracted, with permission, from the C&MA of Australia website. Some members of our English Congregation have attended these weekend seminars.]



Overview:

The Deeper Life Seminars bring to our focus one of the central pillars of the teaching of the Christian and Missionary Alliance. It is often said that the C&MA is a movement focusing on the Deeper Life and

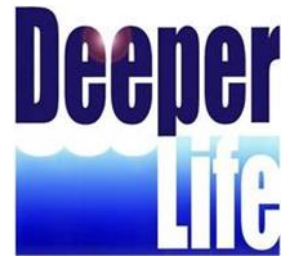
Mission. That is true. Our relationship and walk with Jesus affects all aspects of our lives, including our desire to be on mission.

At these gatherings we will be making a strategic life investment together that will further strengthen and enable you to live out your deeper walk with God. We anticipate that many of you will be encountered spiritually like you have not been encountered before.

You need a healthy soul to be a healthy, fully-functioning disciple. You need a healthy soul to be a healthy, fully-functioning leader. Our stories have the power to reveal the events that have shaped and wounded us, lies that bind us, strongholds that haunt us, bitterness and anger that eat away at us; and the roots to our troubling sin patterns. We are going to examine what it takes to have and maintain a healthy soul, and how our story powerfully impacts our relationships and current circumstances. We must look at what is true, for we cannot heal that which we will not admit.

Program:

Friday night from 7:30-9:00pm and through Saturday 9:00am-4:00pm we will gather for prayer, teaching and practical ministry. On Sunday morning our facilitators will visit some local churches.



Sessions will include:

- The Work of the Spirit – Whole and Holy.
- The Spirit Controlled Life
- Overcoming Darkness with Light
- Caring for our souls: Dealing with Lies
- Caring for our souls: Repentance
- Caring for our souls: Forgiveness

We want to see every believer set free and enabled to live the deeper life and mission walk that Dr. Simpson spoke of.

These Deeper Life: Caring for your Soul Weekends will encourage us to experience an "abundant life" walk with God, freed up from many of the things that weigh us down and trip us up, and encourage us to truly be free indeed!

The weekend is designed to help you experience more of God by intentionally exploring what may be holding you back from a flourishing life with Him. Regardless of where you are at in your journey with Jesus, we believe He always has more layers of personal freedom for us if we will courageously follow His gentle leadership.

This is a weekend that will change your life!

"... let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus..." Hebrews.12:1-2:
"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."
John 8:36

Young-Couple Families Fellowship

Sharon Ki

The "Young-Couple Families Fellowship" was finally established in April this year.

The purposes of this fellowship are to spiritually cater for families with young children and young couples; and to set up a support network for the word of God to help them in building a marriage and family pleasing to God.

Fellowship meetings include worship, ice-breaking games, sharing, prayers and bible study led by Rev. Li.

During meetings, young children are being taken care of by a group of enthusiastic young helpers and are taught by professional children's pastors. Through games and crafts, kids will know more about God. This arrangement allows our members with kids to enjoy their time of fellowship with a peace of mind and without distraction. And after the Bible study, delicious dinner would be served, taking care of both our mind and body.



Although it has only been five months since April, the number of families participating has already grown from four to six. We really want to thank Rev. Li, Marianna Li and Rachel for their hard work and efforts towards this fellowship. Thank God for allowing me to be a part of this fellowship. Fellowship became my most anticipated event for every month. (I'm telling the truth!) The reason is very simple because purely reading the Bible and commentaries is no comparison to bible study led by Rev. Li which we can better understand the truth using the shortest time. Although eating is not most important, in addition to being fed spiritually, after each fellowship

meeting, we have an extra reward in being fed wholesomely by master chefs behind-the-scenes who prepare delicious food for us. In fact, our fellowship and sharing session extends into dinner time. Through our dinner table conversation, we naturally bond with each other and deepen our relationships. No wonder people say, "eating" is the root of fellowship. This seems to be a pearl of wisdom.

On behalf of our church, we welcome families with young children and young couples to attend our "Young-Couple Families Fellowship".

Fellowship Meetings: Every third Saturday

Time: 4:30pm Sharing

5:00pm Meeting Commences

6:30pm Dinner

Location: Church Building, 3/340 Pennant Hills Road, Pennant Hills (Adjacent Train Station)

English Translation: Iris Chau

HCAC 19th Anniversary Celebration

The 19th Anniversary Combined Sunday Service was held on 7 October, with a total attendance of 160 people. The programs included: worship, sermon, choir presentation, Holy Communion, certificate presentation ceremony for CTP and presentation of souvenirs to brothers and sisters attending HCAC services for 10 years. Using the passage about the Church in Ephesus (Revelation 2:1-7), Rev. Li reminds us that we should restore the first love. He concludes that love is above all ministries and hopes that HCAC will be a church which is full of love.



The Sharing and Thanksgiving Meeting was held Immediately after the Sunday Service. The meeting started with a group singing by the Mandarin Congregation and a cake cutting ceremony officiated by Rev. Li, together with the church leadership. Then 9 brothers and sisters, including Pastor Paul Chan and Student Pastor Phoebe Tu, took turn to give thanks to God by sharing their testimonies.



I was born into an atheist family in Guangzhou, China. We migrated to Hong Kong when I was 11. After the O-Level examination, I studied Year 12 at Perth in 1989. Being invited to a Christian camp organised by the Overseas Christian Fellowship, I was able to hear the whole gospel and the Holy Spirit touched my heart for conversion to Christ in the camp. Early in 1990, I came to Sydney for an undergraduate business degree at UTS. I knew more about God after going to CCC Milson's Point and was baptised there in Nov 1990.



After graduation, I went back to Hong Kong in Dec 1992 and stayed in a local Free Methodist church before returning to Australia as an independent migrant in 1996. I continued to serve my Lord at CCC. God granted me a faithful husband, Stephen and we started our family in 1999. During my time at CCC, I was a deaconess from 1997 till 2004, two months before Chloe was born. Initially, I was the secretary and then the responsible deaconess for women's ministry. I also taught in Adult Sunday school, led a fellowship for young workers and took care of two bible study groups for ladies. After the birth of Chloe, I stepped down from the official leadership role but still shared my life with some young people till 2007. In Sep 2007, God led us to Castle Hill for a bigger living space after the arrival of Isaac. Considering the great travel distance and the age of our children, we decided to stay in Baulkham Hills Chinese Alliance Church as our second spiritual home.

My first ministry at BHCAC was to teach the young people in English. That was certainly out of my comfort zone. I have never taught in English. I understood if it was God's will, I could handle the language. Through serving these young people, God made me become more inquisitive to information relating to the biblical texts. I have started to read more articles in English and looked up various explanations for certain difficult biblical texts. God has indeed prepared this mindset and searching skill for my study at Morling.

When two children were in primary school, I was moved to study theology. By various affirmations, I have become a part-time student for the Master of Divinity at Morling College since 2014. God is gracious and amazing! By His Grace, I have completed twenty one subjects so far (including all compulsory units). This semester, I am

doing Pastoral Skills and Methods, focusing on youth ministry.

I was invited by Rev. Suen to teach the Cantonese Adult Sunday School in the last quarter of 2014 and then by Pastor Ma to teach the Mandarin Adult Sunday School in 2015. From 2015 to 2018, I was committed to teach both congregations, one book in the Bible each year. Due to a syllabus change in the Mandarin Adult Sunday school this year, I only taught the Cantonese Adult Sunday School before I came to HCAC as a student pastor.

Apart from teaching Sunday school, I have the opportunity to share God's word. I took a preaching subject at Morling in 2017 and God gave me some preaching opportunities at St. Mark's Mandarin congregation and at BHCAC's Cantonese and Mandarin congregations.

As for the pastoring experience, together with my husband, we are the small shepherds for the cell group of young families since 2009. By God's grace, the cell has doubled its size from eight to sixteen families in 2015 and it has been split. We continue to serve a cell group of eleven families till the end of 2019. I was also moved to start a monthly Bible study group for ladies since 2014.

Coming to HCAC as a student pastor, is guided by God. In my past two months, I am able to serve God in some new areas, e.g. working with children, sharing my faith with young teachers at the Kids Church. Apart from that, I also have the opportunities to share the word of God in the Mandarin congregation. It is a joyful experience to work with the pastoral team at HCAC and share life with brothers and sisters here. I still do not know what God will lead me to but one of my favourite Bible verses is always in my mind.

Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.
(Ps 119:105)

I do not need to know every step to the destination, but reply on God's guidance. He knows my path. What I need to do is to walk by faith to the step that He has already shown to me. Do my best for every task that is given. Wait for God's direction for the next step. God is faithful and trustworthy. He is my Shepherd and I shall not be in want (Ps 23:1).

The Christian & Missionary Alliance (C&MA), a worldwide Christian missionary and church planting movement, was founded in 1887 by Dr. A. B. Simpson. In 1881, he left his Presbyterian Church to establish a new church. Dr. Simpson and, later, the C&MA, have been influenced considerably by the Presbyterian rituals, as evidenced by the fact that the C&MA has basically adopted the **Presbyterian polity**.

[Note: There are basically three types of church polity: episcopal, presbyterian, and congregational. The episcopal form of church government functions with a single leader, often called a bishop, who is assisted by clergy. Under the congregational form of church government, there is no bishop but usually a chairman under the congregation. The church leaders are lay believers. The third type of church polity is the presbyterian form where authority rest with the body of elected and ordained elders.]

“Elder” is one of the officers of a local church mentioned in the New Testament; other officers include: overseers, pastors and deacons. The Bible uses Elder and Overseer interchangeably and both refer to a single office in the church. The “shepherding” and “managing” roles of a pastor are exactly the major functions of “elders” and “overseers”. Therefore, the terms “pastor”, “elder” and “overseer” refer to the same spiritual position. In today’s churches, “pastors” refer mainly to those full time workers who have formal theological training; while “elders” are usually volunteers. Elders can work with pastors to share the latter’s responsibilities.

The duties of elders can be generally categorised into managing, pastoring and teaching. Apart from these general duties, elders may take up some specific ministries based on the church’s needs. An elder must be a man of God, live and serve in God’s will, and serve in a local church for years, and well accepted and respected by the congregation. Although wisdom and gifts are valuable assets of elders, their spiritual maturity, good testimonies on morality and sacrificing attitude towards serving God and men are more important.

The church must be extremely careful in electing and ordaining elders because this is a position relating to the spiritual leadership of the whole church and good elders may lead to stable church growth. The Bible has a very



detailed description on the qualifications for elders. 1 Timothy (3:1-7) and Titus (1:5-9) list out at least 24 qualifications, which can be categorised into: spiritual personality, external testimony, performance at home and capability to serve. It is obvious that the Bible puts much emphasis on spiritual personality over others. Since the election of elders has much impact on the church’s development, the principles and the process of elder election must be clearly set up.

However, the Bible does not specify the “form” – age, number, term of office – which a local church may decide by itself based on its own needs.

The Clause 4 of the Sample Constitution for Local Churches (on Board of Elders) provided by the C&MA of Australia specifies that “the spiritual work and leadership of the church shall be in the care of a Board of Elders”. The Board is responsible for the provision of pastoral care including visitation, counselling, anointing and prayer for the sick. It shall also watch over the church’s programs to ensure their harmony and contribution to the purposes of the church. The Board of Elders shall comprise male elected elders and pastors of the church, with the Senior Pastor being the Chairman. The Board shall conduct at least monthly meetings for prayers and business. It shall receive reports to aid it in fulfilling its role. Just like other offices of the church such as deacons, trustees, elders must be elected at the Annual General Meeting.

The HCAC has fully adopted the C&MA of Australia’s Sample Constitution for Local Churches [a copy of which is being kept in the Reference Section of the Church’s Library]. The Clause 18 of the HCAC Constitution provides that: “Local By-Laws not in conflict with the provisions of the Constitution may be adopted by the Annual Meeting of the church. A copy of such By-Laws shall be filed with the National Board.” Our church is in the course of drafting our own By-Laws, which shall include the details for elder election, such as nomination method, number and terms of office.

May God bless HCAC that, in the coming few years, brothers with spiritual maturity may be called and trained up to take on this position; that they may work together with our pastors to lead our church’s ministries, to shepherd the congregations and to manage the church.

Publisher: Hills Christian Alliance Church
Editor: Sherwood Kwok
Proof-reading: Sherwood Kwok, Anna Kwok

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Translators: Eve & Ivan Kwan, Iris Chau, Sherwood Kwok
Design/Printing: Ruth Yu