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2016 Church Theme: Renewing the mind, Revitalising the spirit

Sub-theme: Jan-Apr To know Jehovah; May-Aug: Remove old self, build up new self; Sep-Dec: To serve Jehovah

Hills Christian Alliance Church Newsletter

Issue 23

Pastor's Sharing - To Serve the Lord

Our church's sub-theme for September to December this year is "To serve the Lord". In fact, when we were baptised into His name, we had already become God's family members. As family members, we have the duty to serve God.

Service and work are different in nature because service includes the implication of worship. We have to admit in our mind that Jesus is my Lord and also my God, I have to listen to Him and worship Him. Service also means to become God's servant, to serve God, to be God-centred, and to obey God's orders.

We serve God because we are grateful for God's grace. Service is a kind of voluntary work, not necessarily rewarded materially. Service is to work secretly, not expecting any applause in return. We must learn that our service can only sustain with the purpose to glorify God; otherwise we may discontinue our service due to others' misunderstanding or doubts.

Christians' service should take that of Jesus Christ as example – He served people willingly, even sacrificed for them. Jesus ever told disciples, *'Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.'* (Mark 10:42-45)

Even Jesus was their teacher and their lord, He still put off his robe, wrapped a towel around His waist, and washed His disciples' feet. He demonstrated Himself to disciples so that they could follow to do what He had done. (See John: 13-1-15)

Jesus has adopted the "Servant's approach" to serve. He accepted to forsake the majestic status, claimed to be God's servant and served people willingly for their benefit; even sacrificed His life for others. Although the path of serving is difficult, He willingly submitted to God's will to walk this painful way so as to leave us a good example.

Lord Jesus not only shows us the example of service, He also sends the Holy Spirit to live in our heart that we are blessed with the serving gifts through the Holy Spirit. Therefore every believer should possess at least one gift blessed from God.

Spiritual gifts are operated by the Holy Spirit, being blessed to individuals according to God's will. The purpose is to rear believers, build the church and serve God. Gifts can be divided into three kinds:

1. Leading Gifts: including pastors, elders, deacons, ministries-in-charge... (Romans 12:7)

2. Preaching Gift: including spreading gospels, teaching truths and admonishing others... (Romans 12:7)
3. Serving Gifts: including giving and showing mercy to others... (Roman 12:8)

Today I encourage you to exercise the spiritual gifts to serve God, and also drill for the good spiritual characters; because this is the serving attitude to please God. Disciple Paul said, *'Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.'* (Roman 12:1-2)

We now live in the sinful world, encountering different temptations daily. If not building an intimate relationship with God, not always keeping alert and striving to grow our spiritual life, then we cannot become the dear vessel in God's heart. That vessel is 'holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work. Flee the evil desires of youth and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, along with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.' (See 2 Timothy 2:21-22) When we become a person with an abundant life, we can bring to others an enriching life, and we can achieve the serving standard of pleasing God.

Brothers and sisters, today we are always influenced by the world's wrong view on the definition of 'success' and tend to focus on the external successful performance and apparent effect on every service. Because of the emphasis on quantity rather than quality, this exactly overlooks what God really regards. In fact, service is internal in nature, life testimony is better than witness in words. However, we always think that in order to glorify the Lord's name, we have to do an astonishing thing. Yet the Lord said, *'Does the Lord delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as much as in obeying the Lord. To obey is better than sacrifice and to heed is better than the fat of rams.'* (1 Samuel 15:22)

Dear brothers and sisters, do remember in heart that as long as we faithfully exercise the blessed gifts to serve God, not to mind the apparent reward; then God would be pleased to bless us and accept our service. Hoping that all of us are willing to stand up, to become a faithful minister in God's family, to serve God and to build the church in unity with love. Amen!

Author: Rev. Almon Li

Men's Ministry & Young Family Fellowship

Who should be leading a family?



Who should be leading a family? There is never a straight answer to this question. In many cultures and traditions, men always have a superior position in families, community and country. Males always have better opportunities in education and career.

Husbands are the dominant leaders of the household, who are in-charge of the finance and all major decision making. A husband having a few wives is normal in some cultures, but rarely a wife has a few husbands.

In modern day, the picture is very different. There are female CEOs, who are in charge of multi-million companies, and also many female members of parliament in many countries. Men are no longer exclusively has the superior position in many aspects of life. Nowadays, girls and women have proven that they can out compete boys and men when there are opportunities for education and training. Female are ready for the leadership in any aspects of life.

Then what does the Bible teach about the gender leadership in family? Ephesians 5 gives us principles and wisdom in how practically husband and wife should live together and partnership in marriage in order to build up a family.

“Wives submit to their own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of church.”(Ephesians 5:22) God instructs that wives submit to husbands because husbands represent Christ. Head and body are always together, they are one body but different parts. Christ is the head and Saviour of the church.

V. 25-29 continue to explain this relationship, “Husbands love your wives as Christ loves the church and gave himself up for her.” (v. 25) “.....husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” (v. 28) The words “love ... wives” are found thrice in these four verses.

Submission and love are the keys of these relationships. Every ship or plane needs a captain. Captains are entrusted with the responsibility to take care of the people and direct the ship or plane safely to the destination. Husbands are entrusted with this very same important responsibility by God, i.e. to lead and take care of their wives and families. Their responsibility is to lead their wives through love and sacrifice. They are called to earn the trust and respect from their wives through love and sacrifice. Absolutely husbands are not ruling their wives and families by authority or muscle.

Although husbands are trying the best to take care and love their wives, but they may make mistakes and fall short from the expectation of their wives and families. Wives ought not to disrespect their husbands when they made mistakes, but be supportive and helpful. With these supports and help, their husbands will be equipped to be a stronger leader.

Men, don't be afraid to be the leader. There is a huge responsibility to be a leader and to be the head of your wife but there is a way to achieve it. The keys are: (1) follow closely our Lord Jesus every day and apply His words; (2) read the Bible and pray every day and (3) walk closely with other Christian men. So, by doing these every day, each husband is enabled to love the whole person of his wife with hope and power.

Young Family Fellowship

6 years ago, we were invited to join the fortnightly gatherings of Zechariah Group. There were six families and their primary aged children. It has been both fruitful and encouraging in the cell group meetings and fellowship.

Our leaders and members in the cell have given us enormous support in many aspects of our life and have also encouraged my family to grow in the likeness of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our family is very thankful to God.



Throughout this time, our cell group has been inviting other families with young children to join in. However, due to the increasing number of families with young children in our church in recent years, more opportunities of support and fellowship are needed to facilitate the growth of these families.

With the guidance from Rev. L and support of the Zechariah group leaders, as well as prayers over several months, the first Young Family Fellowship gathering was held in end 2015. We met in the Community Centre on Sunday from 11:30am to 1:00pm once a month. The aim of this fellowship is to gather and reach out to the families with young children. At present, there are four families with nine children. The parents are grateful that their children are getting to know more friends and able to develop a great friendship with each other in the HCAC family.

Towards the end of 2015, four families discussed and prayed for the plan in 2016. We all felt that we would love to continue the Young Family Fellowship. Wing Sze and I proposed that it would be good if there were helpers who could serve in a crèche capability so that the parents were able to have bible study and prayers during the lunch gathering. We all agreed to the plan and proposal. The first gathering in 2016 was held in March in the Church Building.

We are very thankful to God that we are able to gather and to encourage each other during these monthly fellowship gatherings. We are also very thankful to the guidance and supports from Rev. Li, the pastors and the deacons. We pray that God would raise more leaders and helpers to serve and support the families with young children in future.

Author: Pastor Freddie Li

The 4th Deacon Board Series (1) : Evangelism Department



Some new comers of HCAC may know little about the “Evangelism Department”. In fact, it has been a standing ministry of the HCAC but it was taken on by the Senior Pastor instead of a deacon in the last term of Deacon Board due to lack of deacons.

I am willing to take up this ministry in this term of Deacon Board because God has let me see the need and importance of evangelisation. God’s will is that He wants all men to be saved -- after hearing the good news. To evangelise is the commission that the Lord has given to His followers and also a grace that we can work with Him in evangelisation. As believers, we should respond to His love and grace by spreading the gospel.

Therefore, the two important tasks of the Evangelism Department are to motivate brothers and sisters to evangelise with passion, and to arrange various kinds of evangelistic gathering and activities. We hope that brothers and sisters will grow in their spirituality by joining our church’s “Believers’ Equipping Program” and that their passion in evangelism will be rekindled by the pastors’ messages. As such, more and more matured believers are willing to be our partners in HCAC’s evangelism ministry.

In the coming two years, the Evangelism Department will have the following planned programs:

1. Short-term missions to Dubbo: We shall continue this ministry by co-working with the new missionary of CCMA (Chinese Christian Mission Australia). In our plan, there will be 4 trips to Dubbo every year. At present, we have 3 core members, with Calvin Hsu being the coordinator.
2. Evangelism programs: There are two coming evangelistic gatherings in 2016, i.e. “Abundant Life” Evangelistic Gathering and Christmas Eve Evangelistic Gathering to be held on 29 October and 24 December respectively. Other planned programs include: evangelistic movie night, street evangelism, sacred music evangelistic gathering, etc.

3. Outreach ministry: The “Share Light Ministry” shall continue to organize various programs (such as short-term courses) to attract non-believers. The coordinator of this ministry is Jeanie Wong.
4. “Alpha Course”: The course, to be taken up by Pastor Kenneth Leung, will be held again in early 2017 at the Church Building.
5. Others:
 - a) To promote personal evangelistic activities by “Evangelism Explosion” team members; to be coordinated by Susanna Lee.
 - b) Aged Care Facilities Visitation Ministry: evangelistic element to be enhanced; to be coordinated by Yan Young.
 - c) To support the “Children Play Group” project of the English Congregation so as to attract more young couples.
 - d) To provide sound and multi-media support to evangelistic gatherings/activities; to be taken charge by Bowen Chen.
 - e) To organize the annual Missionary Week and to arrange accommodation for the speaker.
 - f) To encourage wider participation by cell group members in evangelism e.g. to spread the gospel to relatives, friends and colleagues.

The committee of the Evangelism Department shall comprise of the Deacon i/c and the five coordinators/responsible persons mentioned above. I hope that we can work together to implement the various programs and activities. I also hope that more and more matured brothers and sisters will become Christian soldiers who are willing to spread the gospel in unity.

* Anita served as deacon in the 1st and 2nd terms of Deacon Board, responsible for Membership & Caring Department and Education Department respectively; she is also a member of the Church Choir and Worship Team.

Author: Deacon Anita Chan

Sharing by a Group Leader – Love and be Loved

The training program for HCAC Cell Group Leaders, conducted by the 3C Centre, started in April and completed in June this year. Thanks to the 3C trainers, namely, Anna Kwok, Cecy Chan and Agnes Lung, for their efforts.

In the first session, the trainers demonstrated, through games, how to encourage participants to express their views and feelings. They mentioned the importance of ice-breaking which is to be used not only for knowing new friends but also for knowing members more deeply. In the last two sessions, the trainers explained, with examples, our primary and secondary emotions.

They let me know that what I usually see are the secondary emotions (for example, a person who expresses his emotion by criticising other people). In fact, we should understand them before we can identify their primary emotions (for example, the person is in a lonely and helpless situation). They show their secondary emotions because their deeper needs have not been satisfied.

How can leaders enable their cell members to share openly? I think we should constantly pray for them, listen to and understand them, encourage and accept them. We should also let them have trust and security to share in the group. I sincerely hope that all members can express their love and feel that they are being loved in the cell group.

Author: Ruth Yu (Group Zechariah)

Knowing HCAC (3) The 4th Deacon Board

At the 15th Annual General Meeting held on 5 June 2016 (Sunday), the following members were elected deacons for the 4th term: Kenneth Chiu, Roy Ho, Nicky Lee (re-elected), Anita Chan, Ling Chiu, Anna Kwok and James Wong (newly elected).

The joint Deacon Board meeting was held at the Church Building on 29 June 2016. The postings of deacons and the ministry areas of pastors in the new term are as follows:

Pastor /Deacon	Post	Designated Pastor
Rev. Almon Li	Chairman, Cell Group Ministry	
Deacon Anita Chan	Evangelism Department	Rev. Almon Li
Deacon Anna Kwok	Education Department & Publication Team	
Deacon Nicky Lee	Finance Department	Pastor Freddie Li*
Deacon Roy Ho	Worship Department & Multi-media Team	Asst. Pastor Paul Chan*
Deacon James Wong	Building Management /Development Department	
Deacon Ling Chiu	Membership & Caring Department	Mrs. Marianna Li*
Deacon Kenneth Chiu	English Ministry	Pastor Fredrick Song
Pastor Fredrick Song	English Ministry, Kids Church, Church Website	
Pastor Freddie Li*	Men ministry	
Mrs. Marianna Li*	Women's Ministry, Communication Team, Choir	
Asst. Pastor Don Huang*	Mandarin Ministry	



**Voluntary*

Thanks to Deacon Karen Chan and Deacon Carter Li, who retired from the Deacon Board upon the completion of their term, for their faithful services in the past two years.

Church's Planning Day



and 10 from Cantonese and English Congregations respectively), including 5 pastors, 4 serving deacons and 4 incoming deacons.

The last Church Planning Day was held in 2010. After 6 years, Rev. Almon Li convened the Church Planning Day again with a view to plan for our church through collective thinking by church leaders and members.

In the morning session, Rev. Li delivered a message entitled "God-pleasing services" before he conducted a diagnostic exercise on "the characteristics of a healthy church" and a SWOT Analysis (SWOT = Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) on our church. All the participants did the exercises in 4 groups, each led by deacons/pastors randomly assigned.

The Church's Planning Day was held at the Church Building from 10:00 am to 4:00 pm on 13 June 2016, with an attendance of about 45 leaders and members (around 35

The morning session ended with sharing and reporting from the various small groups. All attendants then enjoyed a scrumptious lunch prepared by Ling, Marianna and Leona as well as her husband Ki. In the afternoon there was another discussion session chaired by Rev. Li, focusing on the practicality of planned improvement in the Church's six main ministry areas for the coming year.



Like the discussion session in the morning, the afternoon discussion session was conducted in 3 groups for the Cantonese Congregation (while the English discussion session, led by Pastor Fredrick, was held separately). As Rev. Li had assigned two focus areas to each group for priority discussion, each group had a more detailed discussion and was able to propose some specific and practical improvement plans. Each group took turn to report their discussion.

Having consolidated and summarised by Rev. Li, the agreed improvement plans were recorded by the Church Administrator in the form of photos, which were sent to all deacons and pastors for reference and further study in future.

God is in Control – Unexpected Joy

Living in Australia, driving is necessary and getting lost is unpreventable. So when we are confronted with a dilemma, how do we face it?

One day when I went to Eastwood to do some shopping, I accidentally turned into a one-way street with double lines. Although there was no incoming traffic, the huge arrow pointing toward me indicated that I was in trouble. Since I had no intention of obstructing traffic, I parked my car illegally on the side of the street. As I ponder on how to drive back into the right street, a police car caught my eye. The police appeared to be executing some task at hand. So I waited in my car for the police to come and hand me my penalty, which might consist of fines and demerit points since I had broken the road rules. But after a few minutes, no one came. This gave me an opportunity to calm down and pray: "Lord! Our mighty God! I know that you are King over all things big and small. All these are in your hands. I pray that you forgive me my sins and guide me in this difficult situation. In Jesus' name, Amen!"

A verse came to mind. Proverbs 28:13 says "Whoever conceals their sins does not prosper, but the one who confesses and renounces them finds mercy." I knew I did not have to wait any longer. I got out of my car and confessed to the police that I had accidentally driven into this one-way street and asked them how I should drive out of this street. The police officer did not ask for my driver licence, but politely said: "Just make a U-turn where your car is". After thanking them, I made my way back to my car and ready to make a U-turn. It was no easy task as it was a one-way street with double lines and the amount of cars had increased. But I felt peace because I knew God was with me and I waited patiently for an opportunity to make the turn.

My sister, who was sitting next to me in the car, saw a police officer coming toward us. He was probably coming to give me the penalty notice that he had forgotten, which I will accept as I had broken the rules. Who would have thought that God's grace will befall once again? The police officer walked toward us, smiled and waved before stopping in the middle of the road. He signalled all the incoming vehicles to a stop so that I could make a turn safely. The rest of my drive was without hindrance, but I was still cautious as I did not want to break the rules again. Psalms 144:3 says "Lord, what are human beings that you care for them, mere mortals that you think of them?" What am I, that you, Lord, care for me? I was definitely left flattered and overjoyed.

God is so great. His love is inscrutable and his works are so wonderful and surpasses all that I could imagine and ask for. He is worthy of our praise. But humans love to walk in their own ways and become lost sheep. Some are even unrepentant and love to bury themselves in their own sins until they could no longer extricate themselves. Then they complain and moan about why they were chosen. But God says: "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9a). I thank God for his teaching, help, mercy and guidance. These enable us to know Him deeper through His Word and experience him in our daily lives. These accumulated experiences lead to increased gratefulness and joy. Looking back, if I were to count God's blessings, the list would be never-ending. All I can do is to proclaim His goodness with a grateful heart.

Author: Wylie Tam

Random Thoughts – Forget

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you!" (Isaiah 49:15)

I could not fall asleep the night before, so I sat before my desk, staring into space. I could hear my wife sleeping soundly, and even the lazy cat was asleep in the corner. Darkness surrounded me, but it was peacefully quiet, except for an occasional car, penetrating this empty void.

I remembered asking my wife one night the name of my ex-colleague who was fired three months ago. Over the years, she weaved tales about her bitter life and took regular sick leaves. Her workload was then passed on to me. I have chronic arm and wrist problems, which cannot not be cured with either Chinese or Western medicine. I had tried acupuncture and cupping, but they did not work. My only solution was to have an early retirement!



"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment'. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell." (Matthew 5:21-22)

In the Bible, Jesus taught his disciples. I heard his teaching too, and for that, I am really grateful to God! I cannot even remember the name of the one who had wounded me! My prayers have also been answered. I can still continue to go to work daily in this exhausted body. Because "for his anger lasts only a moment, but his favour lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning." (Psalm 30:5)

I was shocked at the number of things I forgot over the last few years. I forgot something as I walked out of the door; I left something in the kitchen as I walked into my room, and when I walked into the kitchen, I forgot what I need to take;

I asked where my bag was when I was carrying it; I could not make small or big decisions, even though I had pondered on them for a while; I kept forgetting my easy-to-remember home phone number; I forgot the books I read; I forgot how to write a word and often did not know how to begin. I became obstinate, hot-tempered and my mood fluctuated greatly night and day.

O God, “forget yesterday, seize today and look forward to a hopeful tomorrow” is a very good motto. I am afraid that one day I may even forget who You are. Who am I? Am I God’s child? Am I a Christian? Jesus is my saviour? Forgetting everything and everyone I know, even the one who spent life with me? Even so, I believe that God will never forget me, ‘the baby at her breast’

Author: Daniel Li

Cell Group Activity -- Knit in Supporting Wrap with Love



Two wraps (or blankets), one was finished and the other in progress, were displayed in the Church Building on 31 July 2016.

They are the products of a charity action of

the Group Malachi B in response to the call of Hornby Library in its Annual Knit Program. All the wraps and squares collected will be given to people in need.

According to Fione, a member of Group Malachi B who coordinated this group activity, the knitters joining this activity include: Sylvia, Fione, Wylie, Juanita, Jessie (group members), Anita, Marianna and two other sisters (of whom one is non-believer). They worked hard for over one month and completed 60 squares to form two completed wraps, each made up of 28 squares. Another three group members sponsored 20 balls of yarn because they were not free to knit.

Sylvia, Group Leader of Malachi B, was the one who initiated this group activity. Early this year she had an idea to organise a group activity so that her group members could serve the society together. She noticed the promotion leaflet at Hornsby Library and promoted the activity to her group with positive response.

The above is a good example of cell group activities – all



members of a group work together in a task in which non-believer can also join as a way to integrate into the group.

Apart from remembering the needs of our church, brothers and sisters, cell groups may consider to show our social concerns and to serve the communities, even by giving “a cup of cold water”. (Matthew 10:42)

Mandarin Congregation Mid-Autumn Festival Gathering



Editor’s Word

Upon the confirmation of posts of the 4th term of the Deacon Board, the Newsletter shall introduce the work plan of individual ministries, with Evangelism Department under Deacon Anita being the first in this series.

With effect from July 2016, the Publication Team has been under the Education Department organisationally. In addition to the Newsletter, the Team shall be responsible for editing the church-wide publications such as the Sunday Service bulletin, annual report, anniversary special booklet and baptismal service booklet. We hope that members who are interested in this ministry shall join us to serve; we also welcome brothers and sisters to submit your articles or give your opinions on the Newsletter.

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