

Shatin Family Life

A monthly newsletter by and for the Shatin Anglican Church family
September 2019

Following Christ in Such a Time as This

Rev. Heewoo Han

“Since the peaceful march on June 9th, divided Hong Kongers have retreated further to their positions. The issue has affected our travels, work, sleep and even our family life. Sadly, this division has come to the Church as well.



I certainly sympathize with Christians who are on the streets calling for a more just and fair society. They have pointed to and spoken against police brutality and unfair application of the justice system. They rightly have tapped into the rich Christian tradition that advocates for righteousness and justice. “Let justice roll

on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!” (Amos 5:24) has been the vision that informed the prophet Amos as well as Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Jesus died and rose again to empower the Church to be a community that embodies such justice, and they would like to see this justice spill over to the wider society in Hong Kong.

Some Christians in this camp have started to advocate for democracy. It’s not an exaggeration to say that the basic concepts of human rights that undergird democratic societies have come from Christian beliefs. Christians assert that all human beings have dignity, because we are all made in the image of God. This idea has given birth to freedom of speech, press, assembly and religion. Many see these basic rights under threat and believe that Christians should be advocates for them.

Others Christians have taken a different approach to these events. It's not that they don't care about God's justice, of course, but they do not see democracy as the answer to the problem. The Bible is clear that as long as human beings are sinful, there is no system of government that will actualize God's vision of justice. We need only look at the widening wealth gap in the West or great injustice written into the political systems.

They also point out that the New Testament doesn't have examples of people fighting to establish a more just government. Rather, most of the New Testament, written during times of intense persecution, commands Christians to bless those who persecute and insult them (Matt 5:44, Rom 12:14), to submit to the authorities (Rom 13:5), to pray for them so that Christians can live 'peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness' (1 Tim 2:2), and to "show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor" (1 Peter 2:17).

Basic human rights are a concern, but these Christians fear that siding with protesters who often resort to violence might make Christianity seem unnecessarily anti-authoritarian. They worry that the precious freedom to worship God might even be taken away from Hong Kong.

No matter which side you lean towards, I hope you see that there are good theological and biblical reasons for taking either side. Both can legitimately claim to stand on solid biblical grounds.

What must we do, then, as Christians?

Thankfully the New Testament has plenty to say about what kind of people we must be in times of social turmoil.

We must refine our gospel priority, work hard at gospel unity and seek to grow as gospel people.

Modern Christians find it puzzling that early Christians weren't more socially active. Why didn't Paul advocate for emancipation of slaves? Why didn't the apostles organize marches against the Roman Empire's persecution of Christians?

These questions are complicated, but the main reason is clear – for the sake of the gospel. For Christians to have been so disruptive would have made them 'bad citizens', making it more difficult to point people to the gospel. So they submitted, suffered and prayed for those who persecuted them, in order that even while they accused Christians of doing wrong, they could see their goodness (1 Peter 2:12).

As Christ's people, we must put Christ and *his* cause before all else. Ask, what is best for our witness to the world: participating in protests, minimizing disruptions or something

else? Can some forms of protest point to the goodness of the gospel? How can we talk about the police, protesters or our Chief Executive that puts the gospel in a positive light?

These are difficult questions, but the good news that has been entrusted to us is so valuable that we must prioritize it over all else. Christians are gospel-first people who live to point people to it.

Secondly, we also need to guard our gospel unity. The good news of Jesus is not simply that *my* sins are forgiven that *I* can go to heaven. The gospel has created a new community of people who call Jesus as their Lord from all backgrounds, ethnicities and political stripes. Matthew the ex-tax collector and Simon the Zealot (Luke 6:15) certainly had differing political outlooks towards the Roman Empire. Gentiles and Jews didn't interact with each other. But under Christ, Christians became one, "no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (Eph 2:19-20).

Many believe that 'politics' is something that happens in LegCo building or on the streets. But God's Kingdom is a real, and the Church is a political entity that shows that God's kingdom has already come. **When brothers and sisters from different sides of the current turmoil come together to talk, worship and love each other, that is a political act. Our love across the political spectrum will bear witness to this divided city that the Lordship of Jesus Christ is real (John 13:35).** We must not let current issues divide the Church.

In order to maintain such unity, we must grow at this time as gospel people. Let's put off the old self and put on the new (Eph 4:22-24). Church, we need to become more Christ-like. We need to be grounded in our identity in Christ above all else and seek to become like him. We need to be gracious to each other in the church and to all those we meet. We need to turn the other cheek, love our neighbors, and make sure we act out of love, not fear or anger. Let's heed our Lord's call to be peacemakers in this city that longs for God's *shalom*.

I don't know how this political crisis will end. But I know that our sovereign God doesn't waste a good crisis. It's a difficult and painful time in Hong Kong, but even now, we can rejoice for "these have come so that the proven genuineness of faith – of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire – may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed" (1 Peter 1:7).



Get to Know our Mission Partners

Christian Action - Migrant Workers Program

Christian Action's migrant workers programme was established in 1993 to support migrant workers who are vulnerable to abuse. We provide a platform for migrant workers to access justice and advice when they encounter problems during their employment.



Sadly, since last year 2018, the current situation of migrant workers that come to seek our assistance have not seen many positive changes. We still have migrant workers seeking assistance for:

1. Physical assault case (hit by employer and/or employer's other family members).
2. Illegal and irresponsible agency acts, which include excessive agency fees (e.g. workers from Kenya need to pay \$24,000 for the agent to process the employment visa and this does not include training). Agents continue to send workers from Sri Lanka without providing them any proper training, and we find agents keeping the worker documents.
3. Not being provided proper and reasonable sleeping accommodations and/or not being provided adequate or reasonable food.
4. Complex cases where one worker requires assistance from three departments at the same time.

Yet there have been some successful cases this year. Some clients have started their new employment after settling their cases or while the case is still ongoing. Some went back to their country of origin and started new lives in there with the assistance from reintegration fund from International Organization Migration.



The challenges we are facing this year include a shortage of staff to handle the clients as we only have two full time staff, and

have just recruited a new one on 2 September. It has also been difficult to assist Sri Lankan clients due to the language barrier (they often cannot speak either Cantonese or English).



Language class (with HKU students for Indonesian migrant workers)

I am so grateful and always praise God and thank you to Him for sending us good people who have a heart to support our programme. It affects the staff emotionally and physically when we are dealing with some physical abuse or rap case, or when we see people being treated unfairly. The staff also understand that our clients depend on us, so we are very careful with all the

advice and action taken related to the case. However, the staff are also aware that God works at just the right time. He will send us a pro bono lawyer, or volunteer during the summer time to help.

Prayer Requests

Please pray for God to give CMDW's staff wisdom and knowledge to deal with the cases and clients. We want to always involve Him in our work, to ask for the Holy Spirit's guidance and to pray for the health of the staff.



With Aids Conver providing health talks, basic medical check-up and HIV testing to migrant workers

Get to Know the Church Family

Natalie Goh, Solid Rock



Tell us about yourself!

“Hi! I’m Natalie Goh (from the Goh family) and this year I’m 17 years old, in 12th grade in ICS. I’m from Singapore, and I’ve been in Hong Kong for 5 years but in Shatin church for around 4. Also, I really like to draw (original drawing on the left).”

What's your biggest challenge as a teenager? How does your faith in Jesus help you?

My biggest challenge as a teenager in general is time management. Being in High School, it's pretty hard trying to toggle between the things I need to do and the side projects that I also want to do. Sometimes, I don't have time for either!



In addition, there's also that question of how much time I should I spend on learning God's word and worshipping him. At the beginning of freshman year, I wasn't keen on doing these kinds of things at all, but my journey through high school has taught me to learn to love worship. Having faith in Jesus and trusting in his word means that when I have done all I can, I can leave the rest up to him. I know I don't really have to stress out about test results or the like when I know that ultimately, God has the final say.

What do you love about the church and/or Solid Rock?

Other than the fact that I get to play smash bros with my friends at solid rock saturdays (wink wink shameless plug), I really love playing the cajon at solid rock and being a part of the youth band! It's really fun getting to worship God and sing praises to him. Also, I really love the people here, and the friends I've made being in the church.

How can we pray for you?

As I'm looking to start applying to colleges, prayer for God's guidance and his plan for my life would be okay! I'm quite worried about how everything is going to turn out, but I think that if I trust in the Lord, it'll turn out okay.

Praying for the Church

*"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread **and to prayer.**" Acts 2:42*

From the Book of Common Prayer in Times of Conflict

"O God, you have bound us together in a common life. Help us, in the midst of our struggles for justice and truth, to confront one another without hatred or bitterness,

and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.”

Prayers for Hong Kong - Political Situation

- End to violence and unlawful use of force
- An end to anger, suspicion, bullying and division in society
- Humility & wisdom for the government and other leaders
- Comfort and healing for those hurt and traumatized
- A swift political resolution
- Positive changes - in the Lord's mercy

Prayers for Hong Kong - the Church

- For idols of our hearts to be revealed through turmoil, whether it is security, prosperity or freedom; that it will be replaced by Christ.
- Putting the gospel of Christ's kingdom first
- Unity in Christ across political divides
- Christians to be active in holding out the hope of the gospel; we wouldn't waste the opportunity to share Christ
- Knowing how to be salt and light in this situation
- Wisdom for leaders in guiding the Church in short and long term

Prayers for Shatin Church

- Newcomers to settle in, church to be welcoming
- Day Away 12 Oct. - for many to sign up and have a great day of fellowship and learning
- For a new Links term, for newcomers to settle in well, to grow in their relationship with each other and God.
- Sai Yik Wong (goes by Sai) as he starts as MAP trainee
- Ladies Brunch 14 September
- For wisdom for church leaders to guide the Church short and long term.

This newsletter is put together by and for the Shatin Church family to share life and bless one another. If you have anything you'd like to share on this newsletter, please email mary@shatinchurch.org.hk.



Growing in Jesus • Sharing our Lives • Reaching the World

SIGN UP TODAY!
SHATIN CHURCH DAY AWAY '19

Follow Me

OCTOBER 12, 2019 | BREAKTHROUGH YOUTH VILLAGE

	Adult	Child/Youth /Student	Family rate
Early bird (until Sept 15th)	\$450	\$200	\$1200
Regular (Sept 16th to Oct 6th)	\$550	\$300	\$1400

*Children 3yo and under go free!

**Financial assistance is available. Please email mary@shatinchurch.org.hk.

SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER BARRY COOPER

Barry is an author, teacher and filmmaker who helped create Christianity Explored and its follow-up courses.

www.shatinchurch.org.hk/dayaway19

