

Thursday, February 25, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Following, you will find a letter from Jamie Stadler, the current director of the Hilltown Creative Arts Academy. Please read the letter and let me know if you have any questions. You can call me or email me @ [jcbpa@verzion.net](mailto:jcbpa@verzion.net).

The leadership of Hilltown is grateful for the tireless effort and the excellent leadership Jamie has provided. The impact into our community is amazing as are the personal testimonies from the teachers.

We are thankful that the Lord has brought Graeme Burgan here and we are confident that he will serve the Academy and HBC well. As Graeme completes his studies at Westminster Choir College he will have the additional time available to direct the Academy and continue to lead us and develop our worship ministry. In fact, the dynamic between the Academy and the church will undoubtedly be palpable, and we see this as a benefit to the Academy and HBC's Worship Ministry. It is very exciting to see God's hand in all of this. Please be in prayer as the Academy seeks the right individual to handle the administrative tasks.

Hilltown's investment in this important outreach ministry will remain the same and the increased costs in hiring an administrator will be born by the Academy. Praise God with us for this incredible ministry birthed by Him at just the right time.

I look forward to worshipping with you on Sunday.

Soli Deo Gloria,

Pastor J



*“All these men were under the supervision of their fathers for the music of the temple of the Lord,  
with cymbals, lyres and harps, for the ministry of the house of God...  
Along with their relatives – all of them trained and skilled in music for the Lord – they numbered 288.  
Young and old alike, teacher as well as student, cast lots for their duties.”  
I Chronicles 25:6-8*

February 24, 2010

Dear Hilltown Baptist Church,

I was in seminary when I first studied the passage above in depth. This is what originally lit a fire in me that education in the arts should begin with the local church, and that it should be offered up with skill (not mediocrity) for the Lord's glory. So it was during seminary while I studied God's plans for the temple that the desire was first born in me to run a school of music within a church. I've had the privilege of living that dream in two churches for the last 15 years, and it has been very rewarding.

I remember back to when Karen Burgman and I first met and started our discussions about the possibility of opening an Academy here. I was new to the area with zero contacts, yet had experience in administrating this type of ministry. Karen did not have the time or experience in administration, but a list of contacts a mile long and a very special gift at spreading vision to those around her. I firmly believe that meeting Karen was a *divine* appointment. Ultimately, the Academy is not my ministry or anyone else's – it is *God's* ministry.

My husband and I have prayed and made a decision that it is time for me to pass the torch of leadership to someone else. We both have a peace that this is God's will for us. I will continue to teach in the Academy, which has always been my first love. And so long as our family situation permits, I plan to continue to be very involved in the Academy, actively and happily supporting our new leaders.

What a blessing the last two and a half years has been! We started from scratch, with a concept new to this area, and the Lord has blessed us with increasing enrollments, widespread community recognition – especially among homeschoolers, and most importantly changed lives of students. Directing this Academy has been very fulfilling, and I'm very grateful to the leadership of Hilltown Baptist Church for all their support and for the trust they put in to start a unique ministry like the Hilltown Creative Arts Academy.  
Thank you.

With all that blessing comes things we need to manage. Most important is that HCAA is no longer a concept or a pilot. It has become a ministry that people rely upon. As such, we need to prepare to grow more and also make ourselves more sustainable in the long-term, and that is only possible if we reduce dependency on one key person. A complete whole is made up of many parts, each functioning in their own gifting. Leadership in the Academy must include more than one individual for it to continue its success and flourish.

With this in mind, I put together an Advisory Board whose primary short-term goal was to develop more sustainability in the Academy. The Advisory Board does not mandate decisions or policy, but communicates with the leadership of the church and is directly responsible to them. In October 2009, I proposed to the Advisory Board that we pursue additional staff to divide up leadership responsibilities. I recommended that we create new positions to divide responsibilities: a Director, an Administrator/Office Manager to cover day to day operations, and Department Heads (e.g. Music Director, Drama Director, Art Director, etc.) who would be responsible for the oversight and development of their departments. I believe this spreading of responsibilities by adding multiple leaders is crucial to the overall health of the Academy. Growth has created a bottleneck in many areas already. Proper administrative support will free the Academy up for more growth and allow the Director to invest more energy into new programs, networking in the community, executing vision, and overall leadership.

To that end, we have developed a restructuring plan. The first step in implementing that plan begins today with me transitioning my administrative responsibilities to others and Graeme Burgan assuming my role as Director as of May 17. I will remain the Director until that time. I am enthusiastically in support of the Elders' approval to affirm Graeme as the new HCAA Director, which came at my recommendation. The next step in this plan will be to appoint an administrator by summer to handle day to day operations.

I believe Graeme will be a perfect fit for the director position. Graeme understands the vision of HCAA and has expressed a desire to redeem the arts for Christ. He has a unique background educationally and experientially, which is good preparation for directing this unique type of ministry. Graeme has degrees in Music, Biblical Studies, and Economics and professional experience as a pianist, musical director, music educator, church minister, and businessman. Furthermore, his position as Director of Worship at HBC will certainly aide in interaction between the church and the academy, all of which will be helpful to him as the HCAA Director. I am excited to see all that transpires under his leadership!

Thank you, Hilltown Baptist Church, for taking the step of faith you took in 2007 to take on this ministry. I look forward to seeing how God will bless this next step of faith in the life of the Academy.

Love in Christ,  
*Jamie Stadler*