UK Church News

Elgin

During Preacher Michael Chan’s pastoral visit, between 11–30 March, he conducted evangelism training classes and a married couples fellowship. He also led evangelical services in house and visited brethren in Aberdeen.

On the 14–15 March, the UKGA Truth Study Committee Meeting was held in Elgin. The participants devoted their hearts and physical strength to the gospel, working for the heavenly business diligently and quietly. During the meeting, Preacher Fook Falt Chung shared with us the sermon “Purchase the Truth.” The truth is honest, good, and true. We have to use wisdom to live out the truth in our daily life so others will see the source of the joy in our heart (Ps 66:14). Also, we must obey God’s words and avoid being choked by the worries, riches and pleasures of life (Lk 6:14). We must buy the truth and not let it go, as Paul encouraged Timothy: “Hold fast the pattern of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith and love which are in Christ Jesus.” (2 Tim 1:13).

During Preacher Johnny Liu’s pastoral visit on the 19–30 April, the preacher led fellowships for church workers and married couples, gave joint lessons to combined RE classes, and visited church members. He led sermons on: “The Song of Pilgrimage,” “Great Joy in Jerusalem,” “Daughter, your faith has saved you,” “Wake up: it had been a dream” and “The Baptism of Rebirth” for evangelism.

On the 21–24 February, the preacher led sermons on “The Song of Pilgrimage,” “Great Joy in Jerusalem,” “Daughter, your faith has saved you,” “Wake up: it had been a dream” and “The Baptism of Rebirth” for evangelism.

The inheritance of faith

The Lord Jesus commissioned the church with this great mission: “... [teach] them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matt 28:20).

Firstly, we must understand what the foundation of the truth is the mission of the church is the household of God and “the pillar and foundation of the truth.” The Lord Jesus is the truth; the church redeemed through His blood is therefore called the pillar and foundation and standard are not based on others to understand. After that, we can then lead people to accept, learn and understand truth. Holding on to the mystery of the truth is the mission of every servant of God. The church is the household of God and “the pillar and foundation of the truth.” The Lord Jesus is the truth; the church redeemed through His blood is therefore called the pillar and foundation of the truth. That is to say, the mission of the church is to preach the gospel and hold fast the truth.

We must not only inherit the history, but also the faith. “O God, You have taught me from my youth; and to this day I declare Your wondrous works. Now also when I am old and grayheaded, O God, do not forsake me, until I declare Your strength to this generation, Your power to everyone who is to come” (Ps 71:17–18).

The First Theological Training Course

Speaking of receiving theological training, today we are more fortunate than those of any previous age. This is because as long as we are willing, we can learn the grace of the truth from many good teachers. For the first time in thirty-five years, the UK Adult Theological Training Course was held from 21–24 February 2011. The weather is usually unpredictable in the UK this time of year, but the tender sunshine welcomed Elder Yong Ji Lin and Preacher Hong Hsiung Ko, from the International Assembly, and hundreds of ministers and brethren as they gathered in Newcastle for this event. Brothers and sisters came from all over the UK, including Portsmouth and London in the south, Leicester in the Midlands, Newcastle and Sunderland in the northeast, and Elgin, Edinburgh and Gifford Park in Scotland. The students were of a wide range of ages and social backgrounds. Most of them worked in the restaurant business, and some of them were white-collar workers. Nonetheless, the bright smiles on their faces showed how much they all looked forward to and valued the training they were about to receive. And the ones who travelled from afar were refreshed from their tiredness through the kindness of the local members who picked them up. Yes, they were truly happy in the Lord.

The course:

The four-day course was comprised of thirty sessions in total; each session consisted of a 45-minute lesson and a 15-minute rest. All the lessons were given in Mandarin by Elder Yong Ji Lin and Preacher Hong Hsiung Ko, and interpreted into Cantonese and English. Cantonese interpretation was conducted in the classroom by ministers and brothers by turn, whilst English interpretation was done inside the Interpreting Room and the students who needed this service wore a radio receiver headset to hear the interpretation. Brother Michael Hsu and two sisters took turns to interpret the lessons into English.

Lectures:

Leading lecturer: Preacher Hong Hsiung Ko
Course content: The Book of Revelation, chapters 1–5; the living criteria and servitude handbook for the servants in the end time.
Number of lessons: 18

Leading lecturer: Elder Yong Ji Lin
Course content: The challenges of the restoration of faith in the Book of Malachi.
Number of lessons: 12

Homework: The purpose of homework is for students to enhance, review and digest what was learnt. Through this exercise, the student will become more familiar with what they have learnt. In this case, doing homework also gave the students the opportunity to refer to the Bible again, which reinforced their ability to further understand the word of God. The True Jesus Church emphasises the importance of interpreting Scripture using Scripture. Therefore, assignments had to be complete with biblically supported arguments. Generally speaking, the students had a positive learning attitude and worked hard on their homework. They often made use of their 15-minute breaks to stretch their legs, eat some snacks, or discuss the homework. When lessons were finished for the day, most of the students continued to focus on their assignments. They were diligent, hard
I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord” (Psalms 122:1)

UK Church News (continued)

Edinburgh

Preacher Johnny Liu came to pastor in Edinburgh throughout April to June. He assisted us with the visitation work, held family services, and supported the pastoral work in the Glasgow area. He also led a youth cultivation seminar on the topic “Marriage and I”, where he shared with the youths his experiences of marriage and teachings that were encouraging and practical. Preacher Johnny also encouraged the members with his messages from the Books of 1 and 2 Kings and on family ethics. May the Lord remember his labour of love, and we look forward to continuing our work together so that the Lord’s name may be preserved.

On Monday 25 April we held a Do-Re-Me fellowship. This was an opportunity to enjoy singing together, and was led by Preacher Steven Shek and Sister June Chan. By the end of the fellowship, members had learned about how to bring out the meaning of a hymn and praise God through their singing.

Edinburgh Church was able to witness the holy matrimony of Brother Edward Shek and Sister Maria Liu on the 1 May. Many members came from near and far to witness this marriage, and we thank the Lord for a smooth and beautiful day. May the Lord bless this newly wedded couple and direct their path.

In the month of May, the members paid their last respects to two elderly members who were called to rest: Sister Ng Kiu Lee and Brother Tai Chang. May the Lord continue to comfort and guide their respective families.

By the grace of God, Edinburgh Church was able to hold a Praise & Worship event on the 29 May. Preacher Johnny Liu took the opportunity to share the word of God with our friends and family on the topic of “importance of receiving the Holy Spirit”. The service included choir presentations and a short prayer session where members and visitors alike were able to pray for the Holy Spirit and the grace of God. A follow up event was then organised a few weeks later where we invited our friends back for a fun and relaxing session of hymn singing, ice-breakers and sharing on a chosen passage in the Bible. Thank God for His guidance in this work and may all do glorify His holy name.

In the month of June, Sister Julie Leung from Gifford Park Church came over to Edinburgh Church to bear testimony for the Lord. She shared about how God granted her strength and a peaceful heart throughout her two and a half years of illness from stomach cancer and encouraged the members to turn to the Lord in times of tribulation. Her faith brought much comfort to the members, and she truly was a light in God’s household, worthy for us to imitate. In the following month she was received back by the Lord.

Sunderland

In the run up to the evangelical event in April, the local youths and the Evangelical Planning Group put their hearts into leafleting and inviting their friends. Praise God that we received seven truthseekers—two existing and five new. Another evangelist was held in June; on this occasion another two new truthseekers came and stayed after the event to engage in discussion with the resident preacher. Thank God, visitors such as John, Joseph and Gan Ying, with her two young children, have been consistently coming along with Shukura who is seeking after God.
This year’s theme for the Junior Youth Fellowship is “Loving My Family in Christ”. Our focus is to encourage the junior youths to bond through having monthly fellowship in the Lord. Thank God for stirring the hearts of a few more youths to serve as leaders.

Timothy Youth Fellowship has now concluded their study of the Book of Joshua, from which they have learnt how to live a life of victory in the Lord. TFY has also worked alongside EPG to help in the distribution of leaflets. Praise God, the youths were eager to do this work, and long may it continue!

Youth Society Service, which is held fortightly, has continued with their study of the Book of Nehemiah. Youths from the ages of 18 to 40+ have been in attendance, and we have had sessions led by the YSC coordinators and pastoring preachers.

By God’s grace, Sister Joe Tsai, who lives in Leeds and is originally from Taiwan, started attending Sabbath services almost a year ago. Thank God, He extended His mercy to her husband and son, Tariq and Ethan Mahmood, who were baptised in January 2011. A Sabbath Fellowship has now been set up for after the main Sabbath services, for brothers and sisters who are able to stay behind to fellowship with Joe’s family and truthseekers. The members work together to cook meals and take turns to lead prayers and fellowships. There is a cozy family atmosphere, and we also have a children’s hymnal and fellowship. The fellowship is open to everyone and we encourage members who are free to join us.

Thank God for providing the opportunity for Sister Joe Tsai to run a Mandarin class every Sabbath, where she teaches us to read Bible verses and to sing hymns in Mandarin. With an average attendance of twenty-five students, all enjoy praising the Lord’s name in Mandarin. Our aim is to use Mandarin class to assist the EPG works.

In April, Sisters’ Fellowship organised a special lunch for all sisters at church, where each member brought their own signature dish. We were able to taste the fruit of each other’s God-given talents. In May, Preacher Thien Kew Chiong also led a service aimed at sisters who work in 9-to-5 jobs, sharing words of edification from the Book of Ruth. The older generation also gave a “Cha Gor” cookery lesson to the younger sisters in the same month.

In June, we were blessed with the opportunity to host the 21st National Sisters’ Fellowship. May God bless Elder Hu and Preacher Thien Kew Chiong for their devotion and dedication in nurturing the sisters with the words of God. We were also edified by five courageous sisters, who bore very touching testimonies for our Lord Jesus.

Leicester

Jehovah Jireh (“The Lord will provide”). That is the phrase that sums up the developments in Leicester from the beginning of this year. After nearly twenty years of searching and a few disappointments along the way, God finally opened the way for the church to secure the purchase of 5 Granville Road at the end of February 2011. The cost was £1.4 million.

The four-storey, 16,758 sq ft former office building is in a prime location in central Leicester, within walking distance of Leicester Train Station. At last, we will have adequate RE classrooms, more space for local and national events, a central location for evangelical work, car parking, excellent transport links for the congregation and visitors, and a better environment all round compared to our existing Victorian building on Humberstone Road.

Throughout the purchase process, we witnessed God’s wonderful hand at work. Despite competition from other parties, the vendor—an investment company—agreed to sell the building to the church. God enabled us to make this purchase at an opportune time, when property prices were low enough for us to contemplate such an undertaking. We were well aware that, in a stronger market, the building would have been far beyond our reach. Also, our planning applications for change of use went through smoothly and quickly. God is indeed gracious.

The church board has since been calculating budgets for the refurbishment of the building. For Phase 1, it is expected to be £160,000. This figure is based on the most competitive quotes we have received from tradesmen and suppliers and will cover works that will enable the congregation to move into the building, re-commissioning essential services, fitting a new kitchen, tiling the dining hall floor, carpeting the chapel, buying furniture for the chapel and dining room, installing new audio equipment, and installing a new toilet block on the ground floor. Phase 2 work will be done at a later date, as funds allow; converting a number of toilets into shower rooms, damp-proofing the basement, buying bookshelves and classroom furniture, and doing repairs. The cost will be an estimated £76,500.

Both budgets will be discussed with the congregation in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, Leicester members have been doing whatever they can themselves: painting, removing old carpet tiles, dismantling IT cabling and equipment (and selling these off), dismantling kitchenettes and some partitions, and doing minor repairs. Thank God, the work has been done with a heart of joy and willingness.

We wish to thank all the churches and brethren in the UK for your support this year. You rallied to our request for loans to secure the initial purchase so quickly and so generously, and some have also given donations. We have been very touched. May God remember your love and your spirit of one body in Christ.

Donations are still very much needed and can be made to the Leicester Church Building Fund through your local Church Financial Affairs Officer. This will make it easier for us to track the funds coming in.

Please continue to pray for us, so that God will continue to bless us with the funds we need to enable us to complete His work and give glory to His name here in Leicester.

London

Hallelujah! Following our purchase of a permanent chapel for South London on 23 March, our South London members observed Sabbath at the rented facilities in Bellingham for the last time, before moving to our new home near Forest Hill station on 2 April. We have since settled into our new surroundings, with more space from Central London coming to visit, as well as Deacons Silas Chan.

Over the past few months, small-scale renovation works have been planned to provide additional RE classrooms. Approximately thirty members attend Sabbath services in this new location.

Our annual Spring Convocation & Evangelical Services were held on the 8–10 April. Themed “A Life of Prayer & Living by the Word of God”, we were much encouraged by the word of God shared by our Preacher Joseph Shek and Preacher Fook Fah Chong. Three members were bestowed the gift of the Holy Spirit, praise God! The two evangelical services were entitled “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink”, with hymnal presentations from our Song of Songs Choir and London Choir. A third evangelical service, with the same title, was held in South London the following Sabbath.

Altogether, there were thirteen new brethren (seven adults, four toddlers and two newborn babies) added to our spiritual family in the month of April, following the baptism on the final day of the congregation and a further baptism held on 30 April. All of the adults had been searching into the truth with us for some time. These include our Sister Tohko, Sister Anthoana, Sister Lindy and Brother Ruban. We have had three arrivals: Nissi and Sophia’s daughter, Eliza; born in February; Jack and Hazel’s son, Jza, born in April; and Timmy and Celia’s daughter, Audina, born in April.

On Sunday 24 April, London Church held its first ever “double wedding”. Our Brother Jacob Zhang and Sister Mandy Pan, and Brother Zheng Bing Bing and Sister Wang Mei Qin, were joined in Holy Matrimony during a joint wedding ceremony. We are all excited by the coming weddings of our Brother Lik San Chan and Sister Marilyn Liu, and Brother Lawrence Chan and Sister Belinda Ko in July. With sadness, we also say farewell to our Brother Moses Zuang who has returned to Taiwan following a three-year working stint in London.

We are grateful that Preacher Joseph Shek was in London to assist in the pastoral ministry from 29 April to 15 May. We thank God for His providence and pray that He will continue to oversee the growth and development of London Church.

Portsmouth

During our Spiritual and Evangelical Convocation on 25–27 April, we were joined by many friends and visitors who shared in the message of our evangelical services of “Come and See”. Just as Philip invited Nathanael to see Jesus (John 1:45–46), we too extended an invitation to come to see God and His gospel of salvation. Preacher Joseph Shek and Preacher Fook Fah Chong also encouraged us on how to share our hearts to God, giving Him our full devotion and love.

We thank God for His wonderful blessing that two more souls were added to His fold on the last day of the convocation—young Sister Rachael Tang and Brother Ken Leung were baptized on 27 April. We pray that God will guide their footsteps in their journey of faith.

During 6–19 June, we were blessed with the encouragements of Elder Hu from Taiwan. He exhorted us with messages of “God’s Grace”, “What is Truth?” and “The Heart of Loving God”. During Elder Hu’s visit, we were given many opportunities for fellowship and sharing.

Forthcoming divine works

11–12 Sept Spiritual Advancement Seminar for RE Teachers (Northern Region), Gifford Park
18–19 Sept Spiritual Advancement Seminar for RE Teachers (Midland Region), Sunderland
25–27 Sept Spiritual Convocation & Evangelical Services, Edinburgh
2 Oct National Evangelical Group meeting, Newcastle
7–9 Oct Spiritual Convocation & Evangelical Services, London
9–10 Oct Spiritual Advancement Seminar for RE Teachers (Southern Region), Portsmouth
17–18 Oct UKGA Board meeting, Newcastle
24–26 Sept Spiritual Convocation & Evangelical Services, Sunderland
27–28 Oct UKGA Board meeting, Sunderland
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Weddings

Vincent Kwok (Leicester) and Susanna Shek (Elgin)
Leicester TJC, 10 April

Jacob Zhang and Mandy Pan (London), and Zheng Bing Bing and Wang Mei Qin (London)
London TJC, 24 April

Nathan He (Elgin) and Rebecca Chan (London)
Elgin TJC, 26 April

Andy Shek and Sueky Shek (Newcastle)
Newcastle TJC, 9 May

Gershom Chan (Gifford Park) and Joanna Liu (Newcastle)
Gifford Park TJC, 24 May

Edward Shek (Gifford Park) and Maria Liu (Leicester)
Edinburgh TJC, 1 May

Jameson Lai (Newcastle) and Christine Kwok (Edinburgh)
Newcastle TJC, 7 June

Max Zhang (Moscow) and Yenni Chan (Leicester)
Leicester TJC, 12 June

William Chan and Wincy Shek (Newcastle)
Newcastle TJC, 14 June