"Return to Me," says the LORD of hosts, "and I will return to you,"

Praises and thanks be to our Lord Jesus Christ for blessing us with servants who have laboured with love. The youths of Gifford Park and Edinburgh pulled out all the stops when welcoming and looking after those who attended this year’s International Youth Fellowship. From guiding the visitors in pre-fellowship tours of the city, to chauffeuring them between church and accommodation, the youths willingly put aside their own things to show love to so many people. I am so glad to see that the youths have grown from strength to strength.

Attendees came from Canada, America, Hong Kong and Taiwan, as well as from across the UK. Eighty-four was the total of participants before the fellowship started. Then more people joined. Gifford Park is not a big church, in terms of the number of members who are able to help as well as the size of the actual building. But the middle-aged members, along with the youths, helped in whatever way they could. With good organisation and effective communication, they gave us an example of how to make ourselves a blessing to others around us. From opening their homes to brethren from other churches to coming out early in the morning to prepare and serve, everything was done with a smile and a heart of willingness. Truly, they have made so many people feel welcome and warm in the spiritual fellowship. May God bless the church in Gifford Park and the youths in Edinburgh for their love of labour during IYF.

Special thanks to Gifford Park YCC, and Edinburgh YCC who supported the work, for doing a lot of the organisational legwork with the church leaders and liaising with the different teams in church. Without a doubt, there were many issues that had to be ironed out, and plans had to be clarified repeatedly to be sure things were done. Going back and forth between so many people is not easy, but they did it with grace, and have undoubtedly picked up much experience along the way, gaining a greater insight into serving in the church, which will help them grow in their ministry to the youths. Truly, they devoted themselves as vessels for God to fill with such valuable knowledge. Additional thanks to Brother Jonathan Shek of Newcastle for his help and Sister Sophia Chin of London for designing the t-shirts. May God continue to raise up more workers like them to be a blessing to church youths and the rest of the church as a whole.

The two and a half days of fellowship was based upon the theme “Make Me a Blessing to Someone Today”. Preacher Timothy Young from Canada spoke on marriage and the example of Abraham, who was a blessing to those around him as well as leading his whole household to be blessed. I spoke on “Becoming a Thankful Person” and “Becoming a Supportive Person”. The seven lectures were accompanied by hymnal sessions and activities organised by the local youths. The programme ended with a farewell fellowship of heartfelt sharing, songs of praise and precious memories. What a joy! May God guide us to have a chance to meet again in Canada in 2013!

This special fellowship was full of blessings, some seen by few and some seen by all. Though not all the youths in UK could attend because of limited space, we can see that the future of English-speaking youths across the world must become more united and closely knit. We are the future pillars of the church, and we can serve Christ by becoming a blessing to someone in another part of the world.

May our prayers be accepted before our Heavenly Father. Glory be unto His holy name. Amen.
Elgin
The 30th Anniversary Commemorative Spiritual and Evangelical Convocation was held from 3–6 July 2011, with the theme of “Passing on the Faith”. Elder EY Ho from the IA and Preacher Michael Chan helped to deliver sermons during these four days. Sister Mui Shek and Deaconess Martha Shek (Gifford Park) testified how the Lord had looked after them in their afflictions. On the second day of the convocation, around eighty brethren who were originally from Elgin joined us in a commemorative and thanksgiving service. We also visited the old prayer house where we fellowshipped and recounted the abundant grace of the Lord. Thank God, Audrina, the baby daughter of Timothy and Delta Shek (Elgin) was baptised on the final day. Thereafter, Preacher Michael Chan left for Russia to continue his ministry while Elder Ho stayed to continue a RE teachers’ advancement seminar and assist us in pastoral works.
On the 15 July 2011, thirty-seven brethren from Taiwan visited us at the start of their fortnight trip visiting the UK churches. We arranged a fellowship to introduce ourselves and to give thanks to God by recollecting His great love and singing praises to Him. The wedding ceremony of Brother Lawrence Chan (London) and Sister Belinda Ko (Taiwan) was held on the 17 July. Almost 200 brethren from Hong Kong, Taiwan and around the UK came to share in the joy of the newlyweds. May the Lord bless the couple with peace, joy and love.
Over these few months, we received many visitors from near and far: Sisters Nina Shek and Moira Shek (Hong Kong), Brother Paul Leung and his family (Edinburgh), Brother Ng and his wife (Manchester), Sister Yeung and her son (London), Brother Michael Cheung and family (Portsmouth), and Brother Liu and Brother Shek with their wives (Newcastle).

Newcastle
Many elderly members from Newcastle and Sunderland enjoyed a joyful visit to Holy Island, the Seashores and Bamburgh Castle in early July. May the Lord remember the organisers and the older generation for their steadfast faith.

On 7 July, we held the EPG Cuppa evangelical event. We thank the Lord for a plentiful day as visitors of all ages and backgrounds came seeking the truth. We give glory to God as a mistaken truthseeker received the Holy Spirit and another saw a vision. A BBG fellowship rounded off a very fruitful and encouraging day. May the Lord remember the youths for their diligent work in preparing the event and for their work in evangelism. During 18–20 July, we held our annual spiritual and evangelical convocation. We praise the Lord for His wondrous guidance and provision over the three days as Preachers TK Chin and Steven Shek encouraged the congregation to “Return their Hearts Back to God!” Twelve souls were added to the fold.

In August, we hosted this year’s Youth Theological Training Course (YTTC), with the theme “Be Obedient”. Over twenty-one days, the ninety-odd students (split into three year groups) devoted themselves with one heart to study the Word of God. Along with our resident UK preachers, we welcomed Preacher Peter Shee from Singapore. The students were encouraged to hold onto and cherish the relationship they have developed with God. May the Lord remember all the local brethren for their hospitality, the hard work of the team leaders, and the class-in-charge Brother Michael Hsu for his unfailing dedication in nurturing the next generation.

We also paid our respects to Brothers Joe Lam and Fong Loi Chan, who returned to our heavenly Father and were dearly loved by the church. May the Lord continue to grant peace and comfort to both their families.

September saw the beginning of the new terms for the Youth in Society Class, newly baptised Truth Class and Friday night’s HOPE fellowship. A new Wednesday youth fellowship was formed under the theme of “Unity” to combine youths from all age groups to “Learn in God’s Holy Temple”, hence the fellowship was named LIGHT fellowship.

Sunderland
By the grace of God, this year’s National Student Spiritual Convocation (College Youth Class) was held in Sunderland in the last week of July. God stirred up the hearts of His flock through lessons, powerful testimonies, and daily prayer sessions. May He continue to preserve their souls so that they stand strong and shine as lights.

We held a twice-weekly summer fellowship for the students who had returned from their respective NSSCs. The theme of the fellowship was “Treasure the Words of God”, and focused on reaffirming and sharing the teachings they had gained.

Timothy Fellowship (TFV) finished studying the Songs of Ascent in Psalms, and have begun to study the Book of Mark. By God’s grace, we are learning to be humble servants and students of Christ. His parables about the kingdom of God further stir us up to continue to work alongside EPG in street preaching, door-to-door and leafletting.

Unfortunately, our regular truthseekers John, Joseph and Caroline have not visited us in a while. But we shall keep them in prayer so that one day, God willing, they will come back to the truth. However, Gan Ying and her two children are still in contact with the church. A few of the sisters have been visiting them on Friday nights as it is difficult for her to come to church. Thank God, she still seems eager to be baptised after the birth of her baby. Thank God, many of the brothers and sisters have been active in bringing their classmates, workmates and tenants to the church. One such visitor is Carol. It is still difficult for her to comprehend the presence of God, but we have visited her and hope to bring her to the truth through befriending her in the Lord.

On 14 August, thank God, three people were baptised: Brothers KY Fong, Zachary Kow and Reily Shek. Also, on 23 August, Brother Colin Shek and Sister Marian Chan were joined in Holy Matrimony. We also held a memorial service on the 9 August for our beloved Brother Ah Sam Chan, who has been received back by the Lord.

Leicester
Thank God, we are joined this year by a number of new students studying in the Midlands. They are Sisters Cole Yu Ching Chang (Leicester), Huey Shan Lam (Nottingham), Iris Sau Wan Chan and Brother Rowan Joel Soh-Andu (Birmingham). They bring new skills, helping to enrich the body of Christ. Sadly, Sister Joyce Chen will be returning to Taiwan in January 2012, having completed her year-long studies. Before that, in December, she will go to Africa as a volunteer worker.

In Birmingham, around twenty members, comprising adults and children continue to worship each Sabbath in a member’s flat and on a fortnightly basis in a rented room in St. Martin’s Church in the Bull Ring. They serve God diligently and do their best to preach the gospel to friends and relatives. On 5 July, one adult and five children were baptised into Christ. May God continue to bless the members in Birmingham.

The refurbishment work of the new building at 5 Granville Road is continuing at a steady pace. The tiling of the dining hall and kitchen and much of the painting is now done, as is the re-commissioning of services and some repairs. Works scheduled for November include the fitting of the kitchen and canteen, the building of a new toilet block and the soundproofing of the parent and baby room in the chapel.

The church in Leicester wishes to thank the brethren throughout the UK and overseas for the recent donations and even offers of furniture. We are very grateful for your support. Surely, God will remember your acts of kindness.

Locally, the members in Leicester are doing their best to fundraise for the new building—through food sales of homemade jam, sauces, dumplings, cakes, pork and lamb, and home-grown vegetables; and through car-boot sales and eBaying of unwanted items. Every pound raised is precious, and the members are also having fun in the process!

Donations are still very much needed, so please contact your local Financial Affairs Officer if you can help. May God bless you.

Portsmouth
On 3 July, we welcomed over eighty brethren from London. Brother Michael Brenyah shared with us on “The Will of God and the Presence of God”, which reminded us of the fellowship that we all have as one with God. The afternoon continued with a hymnal fellowship, where we all opened up our hearts and voices in praise of God. We want to thank God for a wonderful day of fellowship with our brothers and sisters from London.
“Return to Me,” says the LORD of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the Lord of hosts (Zechariah 1:3)

London

From 22–27 July, we welcomed thirty-seven Taiwanese brethren who had come to the UK to attend the wedding of Brother Lawrence Chan (London) and Sister Belinda Ko (Taiwan) in Elgin. We had an edifying and enjoyable testimony and hymn-sharing fellowship with our Taiwanese brethren.

We also held another fellowship with overseas brethren from the USA, Canada, Hong Kong and Taiwan, led by Preacher Timothy Yeung, who had come to attend the International Youth Fellowship in Gifford Park in mid-September. We thank God for these recent opportunities to meet our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ from overseas.

This year, our annual Evergreen Fellowship was held on 27 August, attended by seventeen elderly members. The Song of Songs Choir presented two hymns and our evergreen members received personalised TJC clocks as gifts.

The following weekend was our annual RE Day and RE outing. On RE Day, the students and their parents shared their reflections on RE, followed by wonderful singing and acting presentations by the students. The next day, students, parents and teachers had a barbeque at a park near church, followed by team games in church. We thank God that our spirits remained buoyant despite the rain and that we were able to enjoy the warmth of one another’s company.

Recent additions to the church in London are: Ethan (son of Alan and Felicia Cheung) and Elena (daughter of Emma and Kris Dragan), born on 13 July and 16 September respectively. We also extend a warm welcome to Law student Sister Su Ann Yeoh from Singapore, and Brother Marcus Chang from Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, who is here to study Economics.

Forthcoming divine works

National:

• 25/12/11: China Brethren Special Services, London
• 25/12/11: Spiritual Convocation & Evangelical Services, Leicester
• 8 – 13/1/12: AMC Volunteers Workers Training, London
• 12 – 16/2/12: Adult Theological Training Course, Edinburgh
• 20 – 21/2/12: Truth Research Committee meeting, Gifford Park

Africa and Russia Ministries:

• 1/12/11 – 2/1/12: Russia holy work, Dr Luke Chan and worker
• 1 – 18/12/2011: Kenya holy work and National Student Spiritual Convocations, Pr Michael Chan, Pr Joseph Shek and 3 volunteers
• 6 – 27/12/2011: Zambia holy work, Pr Steven Shek and 3 volunteers
• 18/12/11 – 2/1/12: Ghana holy work and National Student Spiritual Convocations, Pr TK Chin and 3 volunteers
• 19/1 – 19/2/12: Kenya and Tanzania holy work, Pr FF Chong
• 23/2 – 18/3/12: Zambia holy work, Pr TK Chin

Church Events

• 3/7/11: Joint London and Portsmouth Church Fellowship
• 5/7/11: Baptism of Birmingham members
• 18 – 20/7/11: National Student Spiritual Convocation, Portsmouth
• 31/7 – 21/8/11: Youth Theological Training Course – 2011 Graduates and attendees, Newcastle
“Return to Me,” says the LORD of hosts, “and I will return to you,” says the Lord of hosts (Zechariah 1:3)

Weddings

Lik San Chan and Marilyn Liu (London)
Leicester TJC, 10 July

Lawrence Chan (London) and Belinda Ko (Taiwan)
Elgin TJC, 17 July

Colin Shek and Marian Chan (Sunderland)
Sunderland TJC, 23 August