Fight the good fight

This charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare (1 Timothy 1:18)

One of the main themes in 1 and 2 Timothy is to “Wage the Good Warfare” NKJV or “Fight the Good Fight” NIV. Paul encouraged Timothy to fight the good fight and also gave him a command, which was revealed to Timothy through prophecy (1 Tim 4:1-4). The prophecy, relating to his blessings, was revealed when the elders laid hands on him. These blessings were the wisdom of the Holy Spirit to understand the secrets of salvation, and to have the eloquence to spread the gospel in the midst of the people of Judah. The Holy Spirit also entrusted him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. In addition to the blessings given, he was sent by the Holy Spirit to fulfil his duty, just like Barnabas and Paul were also commissioned (Acts 13:2-3). While Barnabas and Paul were serving the Lord at Antioch, they fasted and prayed, and then the Holy Spirit sent them to do the Lord's work. After they had hands laid on them, they departed.

Paul, therefore, reminded Timothy that if he wanted to fight the good fight, he needed to fulfil the duty that the Lord entrusted to him. Not only that, Timothy was taught that in order to fulfil his duty, he had to have faith and a good conscience (1 Tim 1:19). There are some who have believed in God for a very long time and have served God for many years, but in the end they still lose their way. Why would this be? This is because they have lost the faith they initially had. Not only that, they have also lost their good conscience. Once they have lost their conscience, not only they cannot walk in the Truth, but they also conduct evil to harm those who walk in the Truth. Paul likens those type of people to have suffered from a shipwreck concerning their faith; examples are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom Paul had delivered to Satan (1Tim 1:20). Hymenaeus, having lost his faith, strayed away from the Truth saying, “The resurrection is already past.”, therefore supplanting the faith of many (2 Tim 2:16-18).

In 1 Timothy, Paul told Timothy that in order to fight the good fight, he must keep his faith, and at the same time, not lose his good conscience. In addition, in 2 Timothy, Paul reiterated the need for Timothy to be a soldier of Christ in order to fight the good fight. Therefore, he encouraged young Timothy not to be timid, but be strong. While Paul was imprisoned for the second time, he faced execution imminently, but worried that his imprisonment could adversely affect Timothy. For this reason, he told Timothy that his imprisonment was for the sake of the gospel, and told him not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord. He therefore charged Timothy not to forget the gift and the mission that were given to him, and be strong to fight the good fight (2 Tim 1:8).

How did Paul encourage Timothy to be strong? First, he must be a soldier of Christ, and willing to suffer for Christ (2 Tim 2:1-3). He told Timothy that in order to be strong in Christ, he must endure hardship for The Lord. Paul reminded Timothy to preach the gospel of Jesus’ resurrection, and be willing to suffer for Christ even to the point of chains. This would mean that more people could receive the gospel of salvation through their chains, for the gospel would not be bound by the same chains (2 Tim 2:8-10). Apart from being able to suffer, Paul told Timothy to have the mentality of a soldier, having the willingness to sacrifice, just like a soldier is willing to sacrifice his own life on the battlefield to protect his family and country. Therefore, Paul explained that a good soldier should not entangle himself in the affairs of this life, but be prepared to be sacrificed, that he may please the one who enlisted him as a soldier (2 Tim 2:4). A strong soldier of Christ must possess the willingness to sacrifice, and be prepared to die with Christ. However, Paul further adds that if we died with Christ, we shall also live with Christ (2 Tim 2:11). The reason is that Jesus has now been revealed as Christ the Saviour, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, to which Paul was appointed as a preacher; an apostle and a teacher for the Gentiles. He was willing to suffer for the gospel because he believed that the Lord’s promise would save him; even he were to die for the gospel, he would be resurrected in the future (2 Tim 1:10-12).

Secondly, Paul reminded Timothy that in order to be strong, he should be likened to a competitor on a race track. For one to be seen as strong, not only he needs to be able to compete in athletics, but he has to also finish the race according to the rules in order to receive the crown (2 Tim 2:5). To see whether one is able to reign with Christ, we must see if one is able to endure till the end and finish the race (2 Tim 2:12). If one can, then they will attain the crown of life. Paul urged Timothy to be strong and endure, just like a father would encourage, help and teach his young son, hoping that his son would successfully endure. Paul also told him to endure during the preaching of the gospel because there would be people wanting to obstruct and harm Timothy. These types of people could appear at anytime from anywhere (2 Tim 4:14). The Alexander that is mentioned here should be the same person as the one recorded in 1 Timothy 1:20. While Paul was out on his ministry, Alexander caused Paul a great deal of harm. However, Paul told Timothy to not be afraid, but to endure because God will repay those who do such works.

Thirdly, Paul told Timothy to remain steadfast like a farmer, and to keep faith like a farmer (2 Tim 2:6). Why does a farmer go out to plough the land and sow the seeds? It is because he hopes he will be able to reap the harvest when the time comes. Even though during the sowing of the seeds he is unable to see the fruit, he believes that the seeds will grow and bear fruit to become his food and reward. In reality, a farmer is always the first to reap the reward; therefore Paul reminded Timothy that he must be like a farmer and work hard to preach the Gospel for the Lord. If he keeps the faith, he will then achieve the prize in heaven. As long as he does not lose faith, he will not end up losing sight of the Lord’s promised prize. God is not a God that loses faith and He will keep all His promises (2 Tim 2:13).

Today, if we are to fight the good fight, we must remain steadfast as in the three teachings given by Paul. Firstly, we must be willing to suffer and make sacrifices like a soldier. Secondly, we must be able to endure and finish the race like a competitive runner. Lastly, we must be like a farmer who keeps his faith. Paul tells us that he succeeded in these three points by relying on the Lord (2 Tim 4:7-8).
Elgin

8-12 June 2015: Brother Daniel Chu led a RE teachers and parents seminar; the theme was “Maturity” with adults as the target audience during the daytime and youths the target in the evening respectively. Thank God for motivating the members to grasp hold of the learning opportunity to promote spiritual maturity.

6 June 2015: Bro. Tin Fook Kwok of Leicester came to observe the Sabbath with us; thank God for His bountiful grace.

15 June 2015: we attended the memorial service of Bro Hung Fung Ho who lived to 74 years old. More than 100 people attended the service. May the Lord guide and console his family to follow the Lord diligently and faithfully.

26 June to 1 July 2015: the 30th Spiritual and Evangelical Convocation began with the hymn “Showers of Blessing”. The theme was “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst after righteousness”! The speakers were Pr Ming Yang Chao, Pr Steven Shek, On Silas Chan and On Stephan Shek. They expounded and elucidated the teaching of hunger and thirst after righteousness and the blessings that accompany them. We, along with more than twenty members from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Paris, Leicester, Newcastle and Edinburgh and more than ten truth seeking friends, we’re greatly blessed. The temple of God was full and every participant attended the great feast with joy. Five members were baptised and 84 members partook the Holy Communion. Many received the Holy Spirit and one lost sheep returned to the fold. May all the glory and praises be attributed to God. Amen.

7 July 2015: We bid farewell to Sis Zi Ling Shek who left us to return to Leicester to work. We thank her for her labour in The Lord; may the Lord continue to bless her with bountiful grace.

15 July 2015: a number of members from abroad visited us. They include Sister Siu Yin Shek, Siu ling Shek and Suk Kim Tang from Hong Kong; the family of Bro Ji Fai Chan from Gifford Park; On Ezra Chong from London, On Nicodemus Tam and wife and their daughter of Tawau church, Sabah, and Bro Charlie Tan and wife of Kolombong church, Sabah. Thank God, these visits brought us abundant spiritual joy and love.

20 July 2015: 46 members went on an outing to an old castle in the north. We thank God for His guidance. We had a peaceful and joyous trip. The smiles on our face confirmed that we had all enjoyed every single moment, every single activity with much laughter.

2 August 2015: we hosted the YTTC for the second year students. More than forty students, counsellors and teachers from USA, France, Germany, Taiwan and UK attended the event. Thanks to the guidance of God, the two weeks’ course went uneventfully and peacefully. With the dedication of the teachers, diligent learning of the students and the servitude of the local members, the event concluded successfully giving all glory to the holy name of The Lord.

8 August 2015: six brethren from France, London and Edinburgh attended Sabbath services and shared God’s grace with us.

Edinburgh

On 31 May, we welcomed the birth of Zoe Ho to Bro. Shao Lun Ho and Sis. Michelle Shek.

During 1 – 3 June, Bro. Daniel Chu led several counselling and parental seminars jointly with Gifford Park church. He shared his knowledge and wisdom on how best to counsel youths as well as on family life.

By God’s grace, eight people (seven children and one adult from Glasgow and Edinburgh) were baptised into the name of the Lord and added to his fold on 1 August. May the Lord bless the newly baptised and guide them on their faith journey.

Edinburgh church also had the opportunity of hosting the 3rd and 4th Year YTTC students from 2 – 23 August. The theme this year was “One Hope” and we were joined by around 30 students all thirsting for the words of God. Thank God for giving the members of Edinburgh church the opportunity to serve Him and the students.

In September we held an annual evangelical campus fellowship in partnership with Gifford Park church. This involved youths doing street leafleting in the student areas leading up to the event and thank God several truth-seekers joined us to learn about our beliefs.

Religious Education (RE)

Pr. Stephen Shek

Be life-long learners of God’s Fiery Law

Deut 33:1-3 is part of the blessing with which Moses the man of God blessed the children of Israel before His death. First point, it says, “From His right hand came a fiery law for them” (v2) and second point, “They sit down at your feet; everyone receives your words” (v3). All teachers should be life-long learners of God’s words; taking the responsibility seriously includes not just teaching but continually seeking to advance ourselves through attending fellowships, seminars, national events, etc.

Take time to learn to avoid being hard-hearted

Sandwiched in between these two points, we can see God’s love for His people in providing the fiery law. The fiery law is not used to condemn, but rather it is used to protect the people’s hearts to humbly follow God on the journey; it tells of what will happen if they continue to be hard hearted. The fiery law helped God’s people to know where they went or were going wrong so that they could turn back to God in repentance and seek God’s forgiveness. All students of God’s word must take time to let his word speak to us.

Organise well for the spiritual well-being of this spiritual family

RE must be practised not only once a week, but through the leadership of parents at home regularly. Imparting spiritual understanding empowers believers to stay on the right track and pursue to bear fruits for the glory of God. All RE in charges should increase their awareness that teachers are their flock and therefore should organise events to give opportunity for teachers to advance further. This action affects the RE system as a whole. So let us organise our family and make sure our church members are fed in due season (cf. Lk 12:42).

National Student Spiritual Convocations (NSSC)

26 July - 1 August 2015

Thank God, the NSSC has just ended, with all three classes in Sunderland and Portsmouth. The rejoicing in Christ is seeing the members tirelessly toil and partake in the labour to show love for these young people. In Sunderland we had the Junior Youth and Intermediate Youth classes and in Portsmouth we had the College Youth. The theme for this year’s convocation was “One hope”. We hope all churches will conduct post-NSSC gatherings so that the students can reflect and share to mutually encourage one another.
Gifford Park

In early June we were blessed to have Bro Daniel Chu visiting us and once again sharing with us his knowledge and experience in counselling. The counselling seminars were well attended by members from Gifford Park and Edinburgh churches. May the Lord continue to guide and bless Bro Chu in his voluntary work and we look forward to seeing him again soon.

We had our annual spiritual and evangelical convocation in June led by Pr Johnny Liu and Pr Steven Shek. The theme was “The Truth shall make you free”. Thank God with the guidance of Holy Spirit and brethren working together the event was a success.

Gifford Park church was one of the hosting churches in Scotland for this year’s YTTC. We were thankful to have the opportunity to receive the first year students. May the students be more equipped in the knowledge of Christ and grow stronger in faith, to overcome the challenges that lie ahead.

Immediately following the YTTC, we held our RE end of year service. We are greatly comforted as we witnessed God’s guidance in the RE students’ lives - they are growing in wisdom and faith, in favour with God and man.

Thank God for giving us the opportunity of a joint Evangelical Planning Group (EPG) training session for Gifford Park and Edinburgh church led by Pr FF Chong. We studied the topic “One True Church”. As future pillars of the church, the youths are encouraged to equip themselves with the Truth and spiritually cultivate themselves, that they may be empowered to evangelise others and tend the Lord’s flock.

We welcome three youths to the family of Gifford Park church - Bro Jacob Ho from Newcastle, Sis Samantha Yau from Ireland and Bro Jonathan Kang from Malaysia. Both Jacob and Samantha are studying at the University of Strathclyde, and Jonathan at the University of Dundee. May the Lord continue to strengthen their faith, even though they are far from their own homes, and guide them in their studies.

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We had to say a reluctant farewell to Sis Suekey Ho who will be working in Newcastle starting August. We wish her the very best and ask God to guide her in every step of her life.

Congratulations to Bro Vun Heng Chong and Sis Shamina Chan who got married in the Lord in July. May the Lord continue to guide them in this next chapter of their lives.

Newcastle

We welcomed many brothers and sisters from all over the UK and Europe to the 22nd National Evergreen Fellowship on 8 June. Pr Johnny Liu shared biblical teachings on the theme of “Renewed Day by Day”, based on 2 Corinthians 4:16.

The YCC co-organised a regional youth fellowship with our Sunderland counterparts. Held on 14 June, the lessons and discussion topics centred on the theme of “Being Holy in the Midst of Struggles”.

The following day on 15 June, Evergreen Fellowship invited all the elderly members to a day out on a short cruise on the River Tyne.

From 19-21 June, the UKGA arranged for Br Daniel Chu (USA) to lead various counselling seminars and a parents and children fellowship at Newcastle church.

Our church open day and outreach at the neighbouring Ouseburn Festival was held on 5 July. With many old and new friends through our doors, the EPG and local members shared the gospel with them, and the Children’s Choir sang praises to God at the Ouseburn Festival.

From 9–12 July, a youth divine workers seminar was led by visiting preacher Ming Yang Chao (Taiwan) and Pr Johnny Liu. Working youths all over the UK gathered together in mind and spirit to learn how to “Rise Up and Shine” in their family, church work and other areas of their daily life.

Our annual spiritual and evangelical convocation was held on 19–21 July, based on the theme “Church of Salvation”. Pr Johnny Liu, Pr FF Chong and Pr Ming Yang Chao assisted in the works. Praise God that nineteen new sheep—both adults and infants—were baptised into his fold.

On 22 July, we held the burial ceremony for our beloved Dn Cephas Yau. The RE Department has had a very busy summer! On 16 August, we had our RE family fun day where each class teacher arranged a funfair stall for the students of the class. The RE end of year service was held on 30 August to celebrate the successful end of the academic year in the spiritual accomplishments of the teachers and students, and to encourage everyone to strive spiritually forward in the new year, starting in September. An RE teachers fellowship on 20 September unified the teachers’ hearts and voices in prayer and hymns of praise.

The church joyfully witnessed the holy matrimony of three couples: Br Jet Lai and Sis Jessica Chan (Hong Kong) on 13 July, Br Mark Chan and Sis Hilmon Shek on 28 July, and Br Michael Chan and Sis Jessica Leung on 13 September.

Sunderland

June

From 15 to 18 June, Bro Daniel Chu revisited Sunderland. He taught the members how to recognise their enemies and how and when they may be open to attack.

He came specifically to share with the members that each RE teacher is also a counsellor, a vital support to each and every child.

July

Sunderland church held a spiritual convocation from 6 to 8 July. The theme this year was “Examine Our Ways” with services led by Pr Johnny Liu and visiting preacher from Taiwan, Pr Ming Yang Chao. Thank God, two infants and one adult from Leeds, and one infant from London were baptised and added to the fold.

Youth Coordination Centre

Pr. Stephen Shek

Thanks be to God, Pr Ming Yang Chao from IA and Pr Johnny Liu of GAUK helped in the conducting of the youth seminar held in Newcastle church 9-12th July, 2015. It was attended by more than forty participants from different age groups. The theme for this year’s seminar was, “Arise and Shine” (Isa 60:1). The attendees gave feedback that they felt edified and received good reminders with regards to their faith and service to God. We can rejoice in Christ for truly he is calling more workers into the fold to stand up and step up to humbly serve Him. On behalf of the youths in UK, we would like to thank the hosting church as well as the preachers themselves who helped our youths to grow. May God remember your love. Amen.
November 2015

“...this charge I commit to you, son Timothy, according to the prophecies previously made concerning you, that by them you may wage the good warfare...” (1 Timothy 1:18)

From 26 to 30 July, the Junior Youth and Intermediate Youth Classes of the National Student Spiritual Convocation (NSSC) were held in Sunderland. The theme this year was “One Hope” with thirty four students attending Junior Youth Class and thirty eight students attending Intermediate Youth Class. Students came from all corners of the world, including Morecambe, Europe and Hong Kong. A total of thirteen team leaders supported the work of four lectures (Pr FF Chong, Pr TK Chia, Pr Johnny Liu and Bro Raymond Leacock). Thank God! Four students received the Holy Spirit.

August

Sunderland church held her RE end of year service on 30 August. A report was given by head of RE as well as words of encouragement from church board, student and parent representatives. Hymns of praise were presented by all RE students, teachers and YTTC students, followed by the formal introduction of the new RE classes, teachers and helpers for the New Year.

September

Sunderland church hosted the annual National RE Class In Charges Meeting on Sunday 27 September. Twelve heads met via audio link with Deaconess Priscilla Shek from Elgin to debrief on NSSC and YTTC, and discuss training opportunities, problems and encouragement for the year ahead. Please continue to pray for each other, for all teachers, students and parents, as Ephesians 5:15–17 tells us: “...see then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.”

Leicester

From 20 – 24 June, the church in Leicester hosted this year’s literary ministry seminar which was attended by four participants and two lecturers. Despite the low numbers, it was a very fruitful event. In a short space of time, the participants produced a good number of devotional articles and draft articles for potential use by the UKGA’s editorial team and further afield. This was surely on account of God’s inspiration and help.

We thank God that the members in Birmingham were able to successfully complete one of the first units of worship in September. The building at 47-49 George Street in Balsall Heath was bought for £175,000. It was previously used as a place of worship, but was left empty for a while and so will need refurbishment. Please contact Leicester church board if you would like to offer funds to support this work.

On 4 September, the church shared in the happiness of Simon Chan (Leicester) and Michelle Ho (Elgin) as they were joined in marriage before God and in the company of brethren, family and relatives. This was the first wedding ceremony in the new church building on Granville Road since our move there in 2012, which made it particularly exciting and special.

With the start of the new academic year, we welcome back the previous year’s university students plus the arrival of two new ones: Bro William Wong from Malaysia and Bro Christian Tang from Newcastle. We ask that God help them to settle in smoothly and to bless their studies.

Microsoft Prayer House

In July, Cambridge Prayer house (CPH) held its annual spiritual and evangelical convocation at Caxton Village Hall. This year’s theme was “Take root, bear fruit”, encouraging members to establish their faith in the Lord as we expand and look for a church building in Cambridge. Forty-eight members participated in Holy Communion and we held one baptism this year for baby Jason Zhang, Sister Xiaolan Lin’s son. We were thankful and joyful to receive members from London, Leicester, Peterborough and Sabah.

This summer we have also had visitors from other churches including the Nam family from Leicester and the Pélard family from Paris. During this quarter we were able to host several youth fellowships, including a BBD fellowship which was attended by all CPH members and visiting members, while we are a recent “Char Siu Bau” fellowship. We hope to continue these activities to support the youth and also to bolster our faith in the Lord.

We ask the Lord to continue to support and cultivate the faith of CPH members.

All glory be unto God.

London

We warmly welcomed an addition to London Church, baby Miles Chan was born to Bro Colin and sis Jennifer Chan on 26 June.

On 27 - 28 June we held a joint RE training session with Forest Hill Church, led by Bro Daniel Chu. The training focussed on self-reflection, on how to transform us to become better RE teachers so we can help our students to grow.

On 5 July we had the pleasure of visiting and having a hymnals fellowship with Portsmouth Church brethren followed by a trip to the beach. We were warmly received through their generous hospitality and pray that God remembers their love.

In July the first floor refurbishment works were completed. We now have a secondary chapel, meeting room, large conference room, an extra RE classroom, library and additional storage space. We are already making good use of the refurbished floor for various meetings and fellowships.

“A new creation in Christ” was our theme for our RE end of year service (29 August). The RE students presented hymns, memory verse recitals and plays showcasing what they have learnt over the past year. We ask God to continue to help them to grow spiritually.

On 30 August we held our annual RE day outing to Clissold Park. As always we held a family picnic, followed by team games. Even the little children participated in their own games. Thank God it was a lovely day that was enjoyed by all.

We also welcome new students and youths to London: Kelvin Cheung (Newcastle), Vicky Tsai (Taiwan), Evangeline Sue (Taiwan), Mei Ho Tao (Taiwan), Le Leng Kang (Malaysia) and Daniel Chin (Malaysia). We pray that God guides them during their stay in London.

Portsmouth

Brother Daniel Chu led an RE teachers and parents seminar from 22 to 26 June. On 5 July the London brethren visited us, we held a hymnals fellowship and spent time to get to know each other.

We hosted the College Youth NSSC between 26 July and 1 August and 43 students and five counselors attended the event.

In the morning of 9 August we invited our friends and family to our gospel tea to share and testify to God’s word, and to demonstrate our love, devotion and servitude for the Lord.

The RE end of year service was held on 30 August. Teachers, parents and RE students, RE in-charges and the Religious Affairs encouraged one another, and respective RE classes dedicated hymns and praises to God.

On 31 August Bank Holiday, Portsmouth church organised a one day outing fellowship to enhance the bonds between members, to praise God for his creations, and to understand his will and learn to rely even more on him.

Dn and Mrs Chung Pok Chan, and Dn and Mrs Joseph Shek, visited us on 18-23 September. They had a discussion with the committee members to understand the state of the local Church, making many useful suggestions on how we should deploy our resources. In addition they visited a number of members.

Weddings

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Church Events

2nd Year YTTC Students in Elgin

National Students Spiritual Convocation 2015 (Sunderland)

Birmingham bought a new place of worship

National Student Spiritual Convocation 2015 INTERMEDIATE YOUTH CLASS

National Student Spiritual Convocation 2015 (Sunderland)

Birmingham bought a new place of worship

National Student Spiritual Convocation 2015 JUNIOR YOUTH CLASS

National RE Class In Charges meeting

Forthcoming Events
(November 2015 – January 2016)

UK:
November 15-20: Preachers Spiritual Cultivation Retreat | Sunderland | Pr. Fuming Tse
November 23-25: UKGA Board Meeting /Church Delegates Conference | Newcastle | UKGA Board/Church Delegates
December 24-26: End of Year Special Services | London | Pr. TK Chin
December 25-26: Special Services | Cardiff | Dn. Luke Chan
December 25-26: Special Services | Birmingham | Dn. Ezra Chong
January 1-8: Africa Volunteer Ministry Training | London | AMC

Europe:
October 30-November 1: Spiritual Convocation | Salzburg | Pr. FF Chong/Pr. H H Ko
December 26-31: Europe continent spiritual cultivation | Germany | Pr. FF Chong
January 1-3: Spiritual Convocation | Greece | Pr. FF Chong

Africa:
November 27-December 31: Student Spiritual Convocation | Kenya/Tanzania | Pr Michael Chan, Volunteer
December 1-January 1: Student Spiritual Convocation | Zambia, Malawi | Pr Steven Shek, Volunteer
December 3-January 1: Student Spiritual Convocation | Ghana, Togo | Pr Johnny Liu, Br Raymond Leacock