

Amity Outlook

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Coming As A Stranger, Leaving As A Friend

Amity Summer English Program 2012 Page 07

The
Inaugural
Issue



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Dear friends,

Warm greetings from the editorial team of *Amity Outlook*!

As a combination of the former *Amity Newsletter (ANL)* and the *Amity News Service (ANS)*, our new quarterly bulletin *Amity Outlook (AOL)* serves as a new channel for overseas readers to gain insights into the Chinese society and Chinese churches. While continuing to focus on the news from an organizational perspective, the *Amity Outlook* also covers church news and theological reflections. Just as in *Amity News Service*, some of the articles are translated from Tian Feng, the monthly magazine of the protestant churches in China published by the China Christian Council (CCC) and the National Committee of Three-Self Patriotic Movement of Protestant Churches in China (TSPM). We would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to CCC/TSPM for allowing us to have access to the articles on Tian Feng to communicate with a wider audience on the situation of the church in China.

Our appreciation also goes to all who have given extraordinary support to the publication of *ANL* and *ANS* in the past, the partner organizations and editors who have extended wonderful support. We sincerely hope that we will have your continued prayers and support for our new publication.

As members of the editorial board, we welcome your valuable suggestions and comments to help make *AOL* a popular medium in serving the needs of our partners and friends.

With appreciation,

Sincerely,

She Hongyu
Chief Editor

ON THE COVER:

An aspiring Chinese teacher of English joining Ms. Marcia Seyler's class at a Summer English Program site in Shan County of Shandong Province



A Message from the General Secretary

The world we live in keeps changing, and changing fast. Outside China, the debt crisis in Europe leads to economic downturn in a number of European countries, many of our overseas partners suffer financial hardship, getting smaller annual budget and having smaller staff. Within China, the crisis of confidence in government-organized NGOs (GONGOs) that unfolded last year unveiled a long-standing lack of transparency for the philanthropy sector and triggered a significant downturn in donations. All these changes are calling for a more transparent, more accountable and more public welfare-based philanthropy in the country.

The Amity Foundation is changing in this changing environment. As a Christian initiated development organization with a history of 27 years, Amity serves as an advocator of transparent philanthropy and institutional reform of charity in China.



Mr. Qiu Zhonghui announcing Amity's Proposal on Transparent Philanthropy at the opening ceremony of the NGO Expo Nanjing 2012 hosted by the Amity Foundation in June.

To keep pace with the changing dynamics of the world, we are presenting you our new quarterly bulletin, the Amity Outlook. We hope the Amity Outlook will communicate the Amity's outlook on social development of China and the world. We hope that together with our partners both at home and abroad, more care and concern will be given to the marginalized in the changing world.

Let's join our hands to serve the society, benefit the people and glorify HIS name.

Vice Chair of the Board
General Secretary
The Amity Foundation

Inaugural Meeting of the Amity Social Service Network Held in Nanjing

Organized by the Amity Foundation, the eldercare service management training and the inaugural meeting of the Amity Social Service Network was successfully held during March 12-15.

Leaders of 28 eldercare service organizations from eight provinces of the country participated in the training and the meeting.

Elsa Lee, director of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Welfare Council, and Hiuchi Fung lectured at the Amity eldercare service management training sessions. Focusing on the concept of "whole person care", the two lecturers detailed the new trends in the roles social workers should play, employee care, and supporting services. Jin Ping, vice president of the Social Welfare Association of Nanjing, and Professor Wu Yiming from the Development School of Nanjing Normal University also presented participants an overview of standardized management of eldercare institutions and policies on social eldercare service.



Mr. Qiu Zhonghui and Rev. An Xinyi speaking at the meeting

Mr. Qiu Zhonghui, Vice Chair of the Board and General Secretary of the Amity Foundation, made an important speech at the inaugural meeting of the Amity Social Service Network held on March 15. According to Mr. Qiu, the establishment of the Amity Social Service Network aims to integrate the efforts of all interested groups base on compassion and the desire to enable love among people. It will build a high-end platform for social service ministry. The Amity Foundation will do everything it can to provide the latest information and desired technical training services to the member organizations.

Pastor An Xinyi, Chairman of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) Committee of Protestant Churches in Jiangsu Province, remarked that the church should practice the belief of "not to be served but to serve others" through the eldercare services and continuously improve its services by arranging exchanges and training workshops.

Amity's new eldercare project settled in Qixia District of Nanjing

By the end of last year, the population of elderly residents aged 60 and over in Nanjing had reached 1.1116 million, with an aging population rate of 20%. According to estimation, the population of elderly residents aged 60 and over in Nanjing will exceed 1.5 million in 2015. As a result of the trends of miniaturized family structure and gradually falling birth rate, more and more elderly residents join the “empty nest” population. The proportion of “empty nest” families will rise to 50% after another 5 to 10 years and reach a peak in 2025. Once a simple family issue, eldercare has now become a complex social problem. Keenly aware of the needs of the community, the Amity Foundation communicated and negotiated with the government for running an exemplary eldercare project.

On September 10, 2012, the cooperation agreement on Amity's new eldercare project, the Amity International Philanthropy Valley, was signed at the agreement signing and cooperation negotiation meeting for philanthropic projects run by NGOs held in Qixia District, Nanjing.

Leaders of provincial, municipal and district-level authorities attended the meeting. Mr. Qiu Zhonghui, Vice Chair



Mr. Qiu Zhonghui signing the agreement with the Civil Affairs Bureau of Qixia District

of the Board and General Secretary of the Amity Foundation, was invited to attend the meeting. On behalf of the Amity Foundation, Mr. Qiu signed the “Entrusted Management Agreement on the Home for the Elderly in Qixia District” and the “Cooperation Agreement on the Philanthropic Service Project Named Amity International Benevolence Valley in Qixia District” with the Civil Affairs Bureau of Qixia District. Mr. Qiu made a speech at the meeting as an NGO representative.

Mr. Qiu remarked that he was deeply touched by the government's endeavor in conducting the early investigation. Under the leadership of the District Government, the District Civil Affairs Bureau and the residential communities had made in-depth and meticulous investigation on the most urgent needs

of local residents in Qixia District and the situations of relevant NGOs including the Amity Foundation. They had made plenty of preparation efforts for the meeting.

According to Mr. Qiu, the signing of the agreements would further clarify Amity's mission and goals and lead to the establishment of a service demonstration base focusing on eldercare and rehabilitation services. Based on that establishment, Amity would implement initiatives highlighting social entrepreneurship, NGO incubation, HR training for philanthropy and social services, exchanges among domestic and international volunteers, as well as international forum on philanthropy. Amity would build an internationally innovative and exemplary complex for philanthropy.

Robert S. Wang, Deputy Chief of Mission at U.S. Embassy in China, visits Amity



The delegation and some Amity staffers

On June 15th, 2012, a delegation led by Robert S. Wang, the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in China, visited the Amity Foundation. Mr. Qiu Zhonghui, Vice Chair of the Board and General Secretary of the Amity Foundation, together with some Amity staffers, warmly received the delegation.

After a brief review of the pleasant cooperation on NGO development between Amity and the U.S. Embassy and Consulate General in Shanghai, Mr. Qiu shared Amity's vision on the future development of NGOs and civil society in China with the delegation. In response, Dr. Wang remarked, “What Amity is doing is most commendable and inspiring for all of us. I hope we can continue our cooperation in years ahead.”

Dr. Wang continued, “China seems to be at the beginning of changes that will lead to a more vibrant civil society. I think one criteria or standard that I used to look at societies is not how tall the buildings are, or how modern the buildings are, or how well they dress, it's really how much compassion the people have for each other. That is my criteria for a society that is civilized and mature. The strongest impression is, when I go around to talk with students and young people working in different areas, I'm beginning to see so many people do have that compassion for others. So I really want to congratulate China and your organization.”

Mr. Qiu responded that the term “Compassion” Dr. Wang mentioned as a criteria is also a significant element of Amity's organizational culture, which is interpreted as “6 Cs”, namely Compassion, Commitment, Competence, Communication, Cooperation, and Creativity. Dr. Wang applauded the 6 Cs.



Dr. Wang enjoying the dessert made by mentally challenged bakers and having an intimate chat with one of the Down syndrome sufferers

Ms. She Hongyu, Assistant General Secretary of Amity and Director of Amity's Research and Development Center, made a presentation on the Amity NGO Development Center covering the Centre's origin, project development, achievement, and its future plan. Ms. She sincerely hoped that the project would get continuous support and help from the U.S. Embassy and Consulates.

Mr. Qiu added that Amity seeks not only financial resources but also best

practices of NGO development in the United States. Communication and exchange between NGOs in the United States and their counterparts in China will be conducive to the development of bilateral relations. More importantly, the best practices of NGO development in the United States will be very helpful to the development of Chinese NGOs.

After the meeting, the delegation visited an outlet of Amity Bakery. Dr. Wang watched the baking process and had

pleasant talks with the bakery staff. When interviewed there by Ms. She, Dr. Wang highly praised Amity's efforts in helping people who have challenges to become useful contributors to society. After enjoying the delicious dessert made by mentally challenged bakers, especially Down syndrome sufferers, Dr. Wang signed the guestbook, "This is a fantastic bakery that I hope to come to frequently! Good luck!"

Cover Story

Coming as a Stranger, Leaving as a Friend Amity Summer English Program (SEP) 2012

Amity's Education and International Exchange Division aims to contribute to educational development in China, to promote cultural exchange between Chinese youth and those from overseas, while bridging the gap in education opportunities between eastern and western areas of China. The projects of the Education and International Exchange Division give priority to less-developed areas, in particular, to minority regions. Disadvantaged groups in comparatively developed areas in China also number among our beneficiaries.

The Amity Summer English Program (SEP) invites English speakers to volunteer in training Chinese teachers of English in less-developed parts of China. In July 2012, 42 volunteers from the USA, the UK, Canada and Germany came to China to provide a three-week oral English training course to teachers of English from primary and middle schools. The volunteers



One of the orientation workshops in Nanjing

were grouped into 10 teams and placed in 10 sites in 4 provinces and autonomous regions. Six out of the ten sites are in ethnic minority areas, and approximately 1,000 Chinese teachers benefited from the program.

You have a China Dream? Free for four weeks over July and August? The SEP could be your opportunity.

Below is a typical SEP story recorded by Anne Saunders and Gordon Timbers from Canada in their blog at <http://pccweb.ca/amity/> :

1. Orientation

We are in Nanjing participating with 40 other volunteer English teachers in Amity's orientation for its 2012 Summer English Program.

We arrived in Shanghai early Saturday morning. This gave us the day for sightseeing. On Sunday we travelled from Shanghai to Nanjing very comfortably by high speed train. This gave us a glimpse of the dense and ongoing urban and industrial development with some scenes of canals and paddy fields. As we approached Nanjing, hills appeared on the landscape, and then Purple Mountain that overlooks the city.

Nanjing is a beautiful and historic city and our hotel is located in a very scenic part, next to Xuanwu Lake and park. However, there is little time for sightseeing for we have much to learn at this orientation. This year's theme is "Conversations" based on the Chinese saying, "A conversation with a good teacher is better than ten years of study."

We have participated in workshops not only about teaching in China, but also on such topics as The Church in China, Survival Chinese, Social Expectations towards Women in China, and 400 Years of Christianity in Nanjing; and

we have had trips around the city to see some of Amity's other programs like its Printing Company, Senior Care Center, and Bakery.

2. Placement

Last Friday evening we were warmly welcomed by our hosts at the Baotou airport and then driven to our hotel where we are comfortably accommodated. Our rooms are air-conditioned and there is a computer and a flat screen TV in each of them. Unfortunately the internet connection is not always working, but we now have access to the school's computer lab, equipped with about 75 desktop computers.

Last weekend we settled into our "home" for the next three weeks, went for walks on Saturday to orient ourselves and on Sunday morning we attended a one hour Chinese church service – along with perhaps 1000 other people! The first hymn was the familiar sound of "Praise Him, Praise Him." We felt warmly welcomed as other worshippers gave us Chinese hymn books, opened to the Chinese words and showing the music in the tonic sol-fa format, and afterwards a choir member who spoke some English talked with us.

On Sunday afternoon in the school's large auditorium, the opening ceremony was held for the 2012 Baotou Amity Summer English Program. After this we went to our classrooms and interviewed the 100 Chinese teachers to assess language ability and to divide them into four classes. Finally we were in the school and meeting the people we would be working closely with for three weeks!

On Sunday evening our hosts organized a visit to a Mongolian cultural theme park. We saw deer as we drove into this grassland area, and then yurts in which people were dining, and male and female hosts in Mongolian traditional dress. We walked around the area which included a small lake, an archery range, a horse corral, two camels, views of fields of grassland with the cityscape of highrises in the distance, and a memorial to the Mongolians. When we sat down to dine there were 14 of us including two school personnel who could speak English and translate. We were entertained by Mongolian singers and dancers and enjoyed a delicious Mongolian banquet with many toasts to each other!



Small group speaking English

3. Teaching Chinese teachers of English

The Baotou program was held at one of the best resourced secondary schools in the city. Each classroom had a computer console enabling us to teach with Power Point presentations, audio clips, and scenes from movies.

Both the opening and closing ceremonies were formal events. We were seated at the head table on stage with the Chinese teachers – our students – sitting in the audience. These teachers came from various parts of the Baotou region; many of them teach in remote, rural schools.

The 100 Chinese teachers were divided into four classes. Each "foreign teacher," as they called us, taught one course. The courses and their outlines were provided by Amity. A fifth course, "English Corner," was taught jointly by us the first week with all 100 Chinese teachers together; the following weeks small groups of the Chinese teachers had the opportunity to lead the class. The content included activities, games and songs using English vocabulary of course (e.g. Simon Says, tongue twisters, word scrambles, charades).

Our teaching objective was always to improve the oral English of the Chinese



Chinese teacher led class

teachers. We encouraged learning activities that required dialogue with a partner or discussion in small groups.

4. The first week of teaching

It has been a fascinating experience to work with the teachers and to get to know them as individuals. They are generally competent in reading and writing but some were initially hesitant in speaking English because they haven't had much experience of conversation with natural English speakers.

Because of a new national education policy of starting English language learning in the third year of schooling many English language teachers have been needed in a hurry. Many people found themselves assigned this task without much preparation. The Amity Summer English Project is a

great opportunity for reinforcing and extending teachers' English language skills. The Amity Foundation has many grassroots service and ministry projects besides this English language training program that enable Chinese Christians - and their international partners - to make a difference in Chinese society.

The English teachers we are working with are wonderful people, and it is amazing to see what a difference there is in our relationship since first meeting at the formal opening ceremony. In our classroom sessions we have found many opportunities for learning about each other and our countries, and there has been much laughter as preconceived notions are revealed and discussed. We look forward to what we will yet learn together in the coming days.

5. We are in our third week of teaching!

It is hard to believe that we have been teaching in Baotou now for more than two weeks! How the situation has changed with each day, as friendships have formed – not only between the “foreign teachers” and the Chinese teachers, but also among the Chinese teachers for they were all strangers to each other.

We have made friends particularly with those in our homeroom. Each morning as we climb the last stair to the 4th floor and walk around the corner to the hallway, many of the teachers await us, warmly greeting us and walking into homeroom with us, talking casually in English with new confidence.

This past Monday there was talk about the weather as it was raining quite hard and some of the roads were flooded. And each morning now we are brought up-to-date about the Olympics.

As we have come to know each other better, we have had longer conversations about our day-to-day lives and found many similarities with respect to our goals as educators, our experiences teaching young people, and our hopes for our families.

Last week there was great activity in taking homeroom class photos, photos of each Chinese teacher with their



Reluctant to part, with tears in the eyes

foreign teacher, and candid shots while classes were in session. To our surprise and delight last Friday one class took our team -- Bob, Helen, Gordon and Anne -- out for a lunch of Mongolian hot pot. And this week, our last week of teaching, the three other classes are doing the same, but for dinner on different evenings. It is great to be eating and conversing together, in English, for a couple of hours. What progress these teachers have made!

On Friday we have our Closing Ceremony and lunch with the Baotou Bureau of Education officials. Then late afternoon we depart for Shanghai for the weekend Amity Debriefing. What a wonderful learning experience this has been!

6. Outings

Each class took the four of us out for a delicious meal before we left. Our hosts from the Bureau of Education also took us out -- to the grasslands on the outskirts of the city, where Mongolian culture is featured, and to the desert about an hour from Baotou.

7. Churches are alive and well in China

We went to three church services at three different churches; each time the congregation numbered at least 1500, with the sermon lasting 30-40 minutes. In one case everyone applauded the minister after he spoke!



Sunday service with the choir singing an anthem

8. Homeward bound

We are now on the last stretch of our journey. We have learned a lot first-hand about China and its people. But most memorable are the personal stories we and the Chinese teachers have shared about our day-to-day lives, our families, and our careers against a backdrop of rapid social change. What an experience we have had!

(If you are interested in teaching in China for a short-term period, please contact Ruhong Liu at Amity's Education and International Exchange Division: liuruhong@amity.org.cn)

Growing Partnerships – Amity Goes Multilateral

Isabel Hess-Friemann

For 25 years Amity has worked exclusively in Mainland China. Even as the Foundation maintained cooperation with international partners and supporters, mainly from wealthy Western countries, all Amity projects were run to serve the Chinese people and to trigger national developments in different areas. Why did Amity conduct several multilateral cooperation projects in 2011, sending their staff to Micronesia, Madagascar and North Korea? As He Wen, Director of Amity project management, concedes, this is a question many local people ask. It's not easy to give an answer in the face of urgent needs in their own country, nor to raise public sympathy for these kinds of projects. Nevertheless, it is a small but essential step reflecting a fundamental change in partnership models worldwide. He Wen points out, that development is only possible through cooperation and mutual trust. All new projects are joint projects, centered around human development.



Mr. He Wen, Assistant General Secretary of Amity and Director of Amity's Project Management Centre

Love Triangle

Amity Foundation has been asked by some of its longstanding partners, all of them oversea churches, to share its experience with third parties. In Micronesia, Amity joined efforts with the United Church of Christ in America (UCCA) to implement training and management programs

in small biogas plants. Another biogas project in Madagascar was initiated by the Norwegian Mission Society (NMS) and intensified through a 10 day study visit to China by a delegation from the Lutheran Church in Madagascar. Amity Foundation was approached by the Ecumenical Forum of Peace and Reconciliation of the Korean Peninsula to help transfer a food-donation from the National Council of Churches in Korea (NCKK) and other ecumenical partners to starving children in North Korea. The transfer was followed up by a meeting in Nanjing a few months later, where all partners came together at one table.

This kind of complex church work partnership promotes a spirit of openness and mutual care. He Wen describes it as the realization of God's work of love carried out through the churches. The exchange between people of different cultural backgrounds starts with learning the host country's eating habits and

conventions on how to treat guests, but leads to a much deeper level of mutual understanding. The personal encounter contains the seed to correct old prejudices. Foreign guests may change their picture of the hosting country through individual contact with its people.

Limitations and prospects

The multilateral partnerships of Amity Foundation face several challenges due to different national laws and regulations, unknown languages and cultures, lack of experience, and communication limits. It is challenging to maintain a high quality standard or sustainability of the applied methods, explains She Hongyu, Director of Amity's research and development center. This is why Amity Foundation is not actively searching for multilateral projects, but is willing to cooperate when asked and the conditions seem to be manageable. After 27 years of experience, Amity is more mature to share its knowledge and to help others to build up capacity. Mrs. She points out that the foundation has received so much support from Western experts in the past that its

is very glad to pass it on. But the effectiveness of each project depends to a high degree on the willingness and cooperation of all parties involved.

Amity Foundation proposes to further its multilateral partnership work by still using a cautious approach to cooperate when an opportunity arises, while widening the network of friendships through old partners. The future lies unmistakably in this direction. Amity, like other organizations and Chinese society as a whole, has a proper desire to develop itself further, to complement its national experience with opportunities for multidimensional international learning.



The Malagasy delegation visiting a biogas project in Hunan

Biogas Cooperation Project with Micronesia

Gong Sheng

Background of the project

Global Ministries of the United Church of Christ (UCC) is a long-term partner of Amity Foundation, and its partner in Federated States of Micronesia, known as Ohwa International Christian Academy, has long been engaged in social service ministry particularly in the field of new energy resource promotion. With the help of UCC, Amity is building friendly and cooperative relations with OICA who warmly welcomes Amity colleagues to come to Micronesia for biogas projects.

Amity has been working with Renewable Green Energy for many years and gained much theoretical and practical experience in the process. We feel very happy to share what we have learnt particularly in the area of biogas system construction with our friends in FSM, so that the green energy concept could be better promoted in places outside China. Amity hopes that the trip would be beneficial not only to future biogas system construction in FSM, but also to the promotion of mutual communication between China and FSM.



Basic Information of FSM and Pohnpei

The Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) is a grouping of 607 small islands in the Western Pacific, lying just above the Equator. While the country's total land area amounts to only 270.8 square miles, it occupies more than one million square miles of the Pacific Ocean.

By the most recent count (2000) the total population of FSM stands at about 107,000, an increase of about 24,000 since the 1980 census. Historically, the southern municipalities have been mostly Protestant while the northern areas have been mainly Catholic.

Overview of my Trip

During the 18-day visit, I had the opportunity to travel on two major islands- Pohnpei and Chuuk, with most of the time in Pohnpei, capital of FSM. Most of my efforts went to the evaluation of current biogas systems that the Chinese government has helped with three years ago, training for teachers and students of OICA and meeting with governmental officials in FSM. It was an interesting and fruitful experience by and large.

The evaluation of current biogas systems is the most important task of this trip. I was able to see all four biogas systems in Pohnpei and Chuuk and really talk with the beneficiaries.

It is found that most families on Pohnpei Island are using chemical substances for fuel. They are not aware that the slurry and sludge are very good organic fertilizers.. Even those families with biogas systems had no idea how to make use of slurry and sludge. This is a big pity.

A total of 60 copies of questionnaires were handed out to Ohwa community and 42 copies were collected for scientific analysis. Results show that most families are raising pigs and nearly 43% of them raise more than three pigs. Three pigs are good enough to produce biogas for three meals for a family of 4-6.

All the families dispose of human and animal waste in the sea or river, or in a pit dug underground. Everybody I met in FSM said it was disgusting to see the waste water flowing here and there when the rainy season comes. They all admit that the sea or river has been polluted to some extent, although the miles of sea water would purify the water at last.

Firewood collection is a waste of time and energy. I had this strong feeling when I did the interview with Mr. Pherty Thowe, a cook in OICA. He said that he had almost no time to take a rest in the past because the spare time had to be spent in fetching firewood. He now has some problems with his back and legs. Some women and children are constrained to stay at home to fetch firewood and they lose self-development opportunities.

Reflections

I. Amity has gained much experience in biogas system construction, and we have a good network of cooperation with our local partners. Each year, more than 1,500 biogas systems are constructed across the country. There will be no problem for us to do biogas projects in FSM from a technical and human resource side.

II. Amity, if not in a position of helping construct biogas systems, could work in the field of technical training. With the support of local governments, Amity has been able to train over 1,000 villagers each year and they become very good technicians after they pass the national exam. Amity is very experienced in this field.

III. Amity seeks a biogas system with "Three-in-one Combination", which means biogas tank, pig pen and lavatory in one biogas system. However, we find that the lavatory is not connected into the current biogas system and the human waste is a main source of pollution. Our suggestion is that the lavatory renovation could also be taken into

consideration and the "Three-in-one Combination" could be realized.

V. Results from the investigation show that more than 90% of the interviewees know nothing about biogas systems. The training program will be very important for them. If not, some families may refuse to use the biogas systems. More importantly, the training should be facilitated in an interesting way that attention shall be drawn. Most of the Micronesians have not received very high education, so the facilitator must be very patient sometimes. Local culture should also be taken into consideration in the training course.

VI. It is necessary to form a complete biogas maintenance system. There should be at least one biogas shop on each island that sells basic accessories, and there should be a group of people who specialize in biogas who could provide service. A biogas system could last for many years if it's maintained well. If possible, this could be done by means of the establishment of biogas associations.

Training Workshop on Ministry to People with Disabilities Held at Amity

With the cosponsorship of Joni and Friends, Jiangsu Christian Fund for Social Service held a training workshop on "Ministering to People with Disabilities" at the Amity Foundation, June 4th-6th. Its aim was to facilitate capacity building for the church and inspire enthusiasm on ministry to the disabled. Pastors from churches in eight provinces of China participated in the training.

The three-day workshop had lectures by pastoral and administrative staff members of Joni & Friends on the following subjects: 1. Why Minister to People with Disabilities? 2. The Global Reach of Disability; 3. The Gospel of Luke: A Framework for a Theology of Suffering and Disability; 4. Major Challenges of the Church on the Path to Maturity; 5. Outreach and Evangelism to Families Affected by Disability; 6. The Problem of Evil and Suffering in Our World.

Ms. She Hongyu, assistant general secretary of Amity and director of Amity's Research and Development Center, interviewed some of the participants. Pastor Yan Xinjian from Shangqiu TSPM/CC Committee

in Henan Province responded that the training had brought positive information to him. The training enabled him to realize that God loves both ordinary people and those with disabilities. He would like to pass the positive information to brothers and sisters, especially those with disabilities. Pastor Yang Jianli from Chongwenmen Church in Beijing remarked that the workshop inspired his theological reflections on the ministry to people with disabilities. He would initiate practical efforts at his church soon.

Ms. She also interviewed some of the lecturers. The following paragraphs are extracts from the interviews.

The interview with Rev. Dr. Jeff McNair

Ms. She: As you said, the ministry for people with disability is still at its infantile stage. But there are more "mature" and less "mature" infants. Could you give us some examples, the best practices, in the most developed areas, in this regard?

Rev. Dr. McNair: With the ministry that I have facilitated for 20 years, I can describe what it's like. There are regular church members who pick up individuals with disability in the community and bring them to the church. That is significant, because it's not we who take the disability bus and go out and pick people up. It's individuals developing relationships with other people within the church, and collecting them, and bringing them to the church. That's important.



Ms. She Hongyu, Assistant General Secretary of Amity, Director of Amity's Research & Development Center and Chief Editor of Amity Outlook

Ms. She: You said earlier during our conversation that there are about 1500 members in your congregation, more or less. How many members with disability or impairment are now participating in the Sunday services on a regular basis?

Rev. Dr. McNair: The group that we have is focused on intellectual disability. The most focuses that we do are on adults, the age 50-80 adults.

Ms. She: The church needs to be pioneering, and needs to be doing advocating work. For your church, do you see changes in your community with people who are not church goers, the people who are non-Christians, or atheistic people? Do you see impact on these people?

Rev. Dr. McNair: I think we are beginning to have a very small impact. But the issue is, in the United States, that the secular world is the head of the Christian world. The secular world is more accepting. There are more children in public schools. It breaks your heart. So the churches need to catch up. They want to catch up with those with potential because the church has tremendous potential to offer things the state can not offer. But it has not reached that potential. I have been

doing lots of lectures in America. One of the recent lectures that I gave was for a secular human service agency. I tried to explain to them that the state won't be able to provide friendship for people. That's the most important thing. The most important thing in life is friendship. The human service agency didn't know that. The state didn't know that. So the issue is how do we facilitate one to develop friendships and where will they find the friendships for people with disabilities. A psychologist said, "The state provides services, but what is needed is caring."

The interview with Rev. Dr. Larry Waters

Ms. She: As a professor on biblical studies, what is your expectation for this training course?

Rev. Dr. Waters: My expectation for the course is for people to get a biblical idea of our responsibility toward suffering and disabled people. Also to try to answer the very difficult question of why God allows suffering. Why not just take it away? Why does it still remain? How can we, as Christians, use the suffering in our lives to witness for the Lord Jesus Christ? If I'm suffering or if I have disability, how can

I use that to represent Jesus Christ to the world? How can I use my disability or my suffering to glorify God without blaming him or getting angry or getting bitter? All of these things normally happen to people who suffer or have disability. So the Bible teaches us that we can use the disability and use the suffering for the glory of God. My objective is to help the people who are attending the course to pick that. The other is that we would like to influence the Christian church here in China for their responsibility toward the disabled. Not just the government's responsibility, or somebody else's responsibility, but the church's responsibility. become at the forefront, the major organization that is helping those disabled and those suffering. We think that's a biblical idea as well, because the Bible tells us that God expects us to take care of the orphans, the poor, the widows, and those who are lame, those who are lonely, those who are lost. We, as Christian church, have a responsibility to take care of them. It's well exemplified and documented in the scripture about our responsibility. Suffering is the No.1 reason why people drop out of Christianity or reject Christ. We can give the biblical concept and exemplify what Christ did with that. It will help us to do the right thing. The two ways to put that are,

No.1, if I use my suffering rightly, I can bring faith to people, or I can use my suffering properly to bring people to faith. Either I teach them to faith or I can bring them to faith. That's kind of the objective of my study today.

The interview with Rev. Steve Bundy

Ms. She: Would you please share with us the challenges to minister to people with disabilities?

Rev. Mr. Bundy: I think the biggest challenge by far is the world view in a society, the world view and perspective of people with disabilities. In our training, we often talk about that people think one of the largest barriers to ministry to the disabled is not physical construction of buildings, like access. The largest barrier is the attitude. We call it attitudinal barrier. It can be felt or understood in many cultures that people with disabilities are cursed. Or it's because of the sin, or wrongdoing, or evil that their family has done. The World Health Organization estimates that now one billion people are affected by disabilities in the world, 15% of the world's population. And out of that, 80% live in developing countries. Out of that number, 1/3 will be children.

You've got roughly 300 million disabled children. A lot of these kids will be given up for adoption. A lot of studies indicate that a number of those children will be neglected or abused. It's a huge opportunity for the church. The church can address some, not all, of the resources. But more importantly, the church can help to change the attitude and perspective towards disability. The church is very influential around the world. Ministers can develop programs for the disabled and speak out for them in society.



Mr. Steve Bundy, Vice President of Joni and Friends

Ms. She: Joni & Friends started to cooperate with The Amity Foundation officially in 2008. Now it has developed a long way from merely hardware giving to capacity building of church leaders and ordinary people.

Rev. Mr. Bundy: Like family retreats. So now Amity is going to be holding family retreats, bring families together, to encourage them, to support them, to build them up, to help their marriages, to help them to be better parents.

Ms. She: What do you foresee in the cooperation between the Joni & Friends and Amity?

Rev. Mr. Bundy: I foresee the future growing deeper and wider, because Amity is the leading philanthropy organization in China. You are already established in working in significant ways. Our desire is to increasingly come alongside you in the ways we can support the work you are doing, including social programs, especially in helping the church to develop those programs. Joni & Friends has been very impressed and enthusiastic about what Amity is doing. I think Amity is getting an amazing opportunity to influence the church and society of China. You've got the position uniquely to be a significant influence throughout the society and churches of China for people who are marginalized, people who are affected by disability.

How Faith-based Charity Can Contribute to a Harmonious Society?

International Ecumenical Conference Held in Nanjing

Gotthard Oblau

For two intensive days, about 60 academics and religious representatives from China and the international world convened in Nanjing to discuss Christian-based charity work in China and its impact on the building of a harmonious society. The conference, which was organized by the Amity Foundation in cooperation with Nanjing University and took place on May 11 and 12, and was seen by both participants and outside observers as a milestone in the unfolding of Christian involvement in China's society.

Whereas a former conference, organized by Amity in 1994, dealt with the impact of Christian "culture" on modernization processes in general and discussed international and Chinese cases both in history and the present, this year's conference clearly focused on "religion", its role in present-day China and its contribution to social development. This more focused approach was widely understood as an indicator of how much China's opening and reform policy had progressed since then. Today, religious organizations are increasingly accepted by the broader public as agents of an emerging



Rev. Dr. Gotthard Oblau at the conference

civil society and as advocates for the common good.

Many speakers mentioned that social contributions by religious organizations are today not only tolerated but officially welcome and encouraged. In February of this year, six ministries of the Central Government convened to establish a policy on religious charity meant to more profoundly tap the moral and social capacities of China's religious organizations for the benefit of the society at large.

The conference, which saw a tight sequence of sociological and theological reflections as well as experience-based

reports on faith-based project work, was ecumenical in at least four different aspects. It brought together both Protestant and Catholic Christians, Christians and believers of other faiths, religious people and secular academics, as well as Chinese and international participants.

Many contributions revolved around the tension between religious identity and social involvement. To what extent should faith-based charity projects make their religious background known to the public? What is the role of religious mission with regard to direct evangelisation and the more indirect approach of witnessing through deeds of love? How do the care for body and soul relate to each other?

Discussions were lively, and the self-esteem with which religious participants involved themselves was heartening. Catholic sisters gave a report as to how they were drawn into the care for abandoned babies and how their love for these children turned them into advocates for their legal rights. A Hong Kong theologian seconded by emphasising that each diaconical act is in itself a prophetic critique of a given situation.

In light of China's growing social disparities, the conference stressed that a harmonious society in China has not yet been realized but must be taken as a vision and yardstick for any social involvement. While the politically motivated catch-phrase of a harmonious society was never explicitly analyzed, the conference's implicit message became clear enough: A truly harmonious society will exclude no-one and never judge people according to their commercial value. The weak and the disadvantaged, the abandoned and the specially challenged will all be held dear, will have a role to play and a contribution to give. In this sense, a harmonious society will be an inclusive one, and harmony could never be achieved through exclusion of any kind.

Religion and Cultural Strategy

Zhuo Xinping

Culture is the soul of a nation and the spiritual pillar structured under joint efforts of society as a whole. What is the "Tao" of Chinese culture? The consistency, inheritance and further development of such "Orthodoxy" are almost forgotten or suspended in today's modern and secular society. As cultural development and cultural prosperity are highlighted nowadays, it becomes particularly timely and very important to reflect on Chinese culture and its spiritual resources and develop China's cultural strategy to deal with complex domestic and international political situations and social transmutation.

First, we should make in-depth reflection on practical significance of religion from the perspective of China's current cultural strategy. Elements of religious culture are indispensable to building cultural soft power. The social and faith appeal and influence of religious culture are difficult to be replaced with those of cultures at other levels. Religion always exists in society and history with diversified forms. The



Mr. Zhuo Xinping, director of Institute of World Religions, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

basic aspect of cultural strategy relevant to religion is to prevent or abate the religious strife and enable religious harmony. The religious harmony of a country poses direct impact on its social security, political security and cultural security. Facing the development trend of "culture-driven rejuvenation of the nation", we should explore the issues of social harmony and cultural harmony from a perspective of enabling religious harmony, linking the issue of religious harmony to cultural strategy considerations.

Secondly, reviews should be made on the Chinese tradition of social and religious integrity and unity and its development inertia. Chinese society is a "universally united" society under a super-steady state. Such a concept

prevails from past to present and is still fresh. The culture of "universal union" emphasized by Chinese tradition enjoys great vitality due to its spiritual essence of harmony, co-construction, and being tolerant to diversity, namely, the culture of harmony advocated today. The adherence to "universal union" seeks common ground while reserving differences and allows harmony with differences. Coexistence of diversities makes harmony. As a result, Chinese religions feature tolerance and interoperability. The principal traditional Chinese religions, namely, Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism enjoy interwoven existence and mutual penetration. The existence and development of Chinese folk religions and folk beliefs are more interwoven, reflecting and covering and even expanding ideological, spiritual and cultural content of the three major religions. Christianity, Islam and other religions introduced from areas outside the traditional areas of Chinese culture must face and adapt to such a layout of universal union, inclusiveness and communion, which form their Chinese characteristics. An integrated Chinese society may enjoy long-term stability. If separated, it will be dismembered and will enter troubled times. It is

extremely challenging to maintain the integration and stability of society in today's diversification atmosphere. The idea of building a harmonious society launched in China today aims to enable and maintain the "integration" of Chinese culture and the "stability" of Chinese society. It serves as the general direction and the overall goal. All thinking efforts and practical work should be around and follow the direction and goal. Similarly, cognitive understanding of and policy initiatives on Chinese religions should not deviate from the direction and goal. How to better unite the religious community and turn them into an important force for social stability maintenance and cultural development? It's not a simple academic debate but a critical matter determining the continuance of the Chinese community as well as the survival and development of the Chinese nation and culture.

At present, the international environment is complex. To cope with the complexity and severity of international situations, we should become stronger and form an internal cohesion. Therefore, we should encourage dialogue and communication to enable religious harmony. Indeed,

there are discordant factors and many problems in religion. However, we deal with these issues not for intensifying disputes and conflicts to turn religion into a hostile force. We should try to eliminate contradictions, disputes and conflicts, turning religion into an intrinsic part of our social structure and ideological culture. We should take religion as our own force and our cultural soft power.

From the perspective of the world's process of modernization, the United States, Europe and Japan have experienced the transition from the middle ages to modern times. They did not abandon or deny religion in their cultural traditions. Instead, they integrated religion into today's social structure and turned it into their cultural heritage and spiritual support, enabling a bottom line of psychological security for the public and preparing necessary soft power for their outward expansion. China should research and learn from these experiences when developing its own cultural strategy.

(Translated by Miao Jianbing from Tian Feng No. 385, January 2012.)

The development, reform and innovation of the philanthropy sector in China

Qiu Zhonghui



Mr. Qiu Zhonghui introducing Amity Bakery products to visitors at the NGO Expo Nanjing 2012, which was followed by a series of philanthropic events composing the Philanthropy Season 2012 launched by Amity in June under the cosponsorship of Nanjing Municipal Government and local media.

In 2011, China's philanthropy sector featured the coexistence of crisis and opportunities. Compared to China's economic development, the development of China's philanthropy sector is relatively slow due to the following constraints:

The first constraint comes from the allocation of philanthropy resources. The total amount of philanthropy resources is inadequate. There is a

general reduction of international aid. The government rarely purchase services. The public's enthusiasm in making donations shrinks dramatically. Government-run organizations monopolize the resources. Donations flow back into the government's cashbox. The second constraint can be interpreted with the theory of three sectors. The existing government run philanthropy organizations enjoy adequacy of fund due to fiscal

allocations from the government. Their staffers are civil servants or enjoy desirable salary and job security equivalent to what enjoyed by civil servants. Hence a lack of internal motivation for reform prevails. Non-government philanthropy organizations suffer small size, scarcity of resources and funds, and shortage of expertise and management professionals. Non-institutional personal philanthropy efforts serve as fertile soil for the

growth of the whole philanthropy sector. However, they should not and can not become the mainstream due to their lack of specialization, organized management and sustainability.

Therefore, in order to meet the requirements of social development, it is necessary for China's philanthropy sector to carry out reform and innovation. The macroscopic target of being non-governmental, socialized and market-oriented should be achieved while the microscopic requirement of being specialized, standardized, and professional should be met.

From a macroscopic perspective, the target of being non-governmental means to let the philanthropy return to the non-government sector. Government-run philanthropy organizations should gradually turn into private-run ones to reduce their economic dependency and enhance their organizational independence. They should be able to make their own decisions. More room for healthy competition and joint development of non-government organizations should be released. The target of being socialized means to let the philanthropy

return to society. Great efforts should be made in building non-government organizations and removing the ambiguity of their identities. The target of being market-oriented means that the organizations in different sectors should be treated equally. De-administration should be implemented in government-run philanthropy organizations. Uniform rules should be established. Competition should be encouraged to ensure the survival of the fittest. All sorts of philanthropy organizations carry out their philanthropy undertakings under equal rules. The legislation and strict law enforcement for philanthropy should be promoted to establish the government's regulatory authority on philanthropy organizations.

From a microscopic perspective, the requirement of being specialized emphasizes that philanthropy is not a simple act of charity. Efforts should be made in spreading the philanthropy philosophy and applying expertise. The requirement of being professional means that philanthropy needs professional management and teams of professionals. The requirement of being standardized means self-regulation

within the sector on the one hand and internal governance of philanthropy organizations on the other hand. The board of directors should play its role in deciding the goals of a philanthropy organization's mission and strategic development. The internal management of a philanthropy organization should be improved to enable scientific management, transparent information disclosure and high credibility.

To facilitate innovations of philanthropy, we should boost the development of non-government organizations, create a fair and orderly environment for development, release more room for social services, develop various preferential policies, make greater efforts in providing financial support, and build the platform for the development of non-government organizations. Moreover, philanthropy organizations should actively make innovations, introduce the development concept of social enterprises, and take effective commercial measures. By doing so, they will be able to have more social donations directly used in the projects, serve more groups of vulnerable people in society, and solve social problems.

A Top-down Design Is Also Needed for the Institutional Reform of Charity

Xu Yongguang

The Guo Meimei scandal (concerning the misuse of funds) which broke out in 2011 had a great impact on the charity sector in China and triggered reflections among the public.

As I asserted, "Seemingly happening by chance, such incidents are inevitable. What should be blamed is the ambiguity between the government-run and the non-government nature of the charity system." I also sketched the roadmap of the institutional reform of charity in China. Six of the eleven operational suggestions I made are for the government. The 6 suggestions include: to promote charity legislation to protect the citizens' rights of doing good lawfully; to issue a government decree on the de-administration of government-run charitable organizations; to rebuild the regulatory authority of the government on charitable organizations; to break the monopoly of charitable resources; to implement generalized preferential tax policies on charitable donations; and to establish a coordination mechanism at the national level to support and regulate the development

of non-governmental charity. During the sessions of NPC/CPPCC, many delegates and committee members actively provided advice and suggestions on institutional reform and development of charity to the relevant government departments. Concerns occurred both inside and outside the sessions: the institutional reform of charity should be put on the agenda.

Major issues associated with the charity institutions, including the legislation issue, the government power and functional transition issue, the social management innovation issue, and the issue of the relationship between the government and non-government organizations, are all inseparable from the government administration system reform and should be included into the overall plan of the administration system reform for a top-down design.

The existing charity system in China was initiated in the early 1980s. Driven by the government system reform, a number of government-backed charity organizations were established. The mode of civic mobilization of



Mr. Xu Yongguang, Founder and Secretary General of the Narada Foundation

the situation that the government monopolized all social resources and took care of all public affairs before the reform. The public would have the opportunity to participate in public welfare efforts by voluntarily spending money and manpower in fields where the community had needs and which the government was unable to take into account. In such a context, the Chinese charity sector was born and raised, resulting in the rise of a number of outstanding philanthropy brands like the Project Hope and the Spring Buds Program and great contributions to the promotion of charity culture and volunteerism.

After 30 years of reform and opening up, economic and social development in China has undergone enormous changes. However, the government-led reform of the charity system has lagged behind. As a result, charitable

organizations still feature strong characteristics of being government-run. The trend of flow of charitable resources from the private sector to the government continues.

According to the China Charitable Contributions Report 2011 released by the China Charity & Donation Information Center, 58.3% of donations in China flowed to the government and government-backed CCF (the China Charity Federation) and RCSC (the Red Cross Society of China) in 2010. Only 1.3% was directed into the sector consisting of non-CCF organizations, NPOs and nursing homes. Within this, there are still many institutions with government background. In addition, most donations raised by more than 1,300 public fundraising foundations are also “executed” by the administrative system under the government.

The practice that the government buys services from non-government organizations is accepted in almost all countries in the world. The only exception is China where the civic sector pays the money while the government works on implementation. The monopoly of charitable resources makes civic charitable organizations

without any government background suffer "cooking meals without rice".

Both civic charity and government-run charity provide society with public goods and services. However, their operational mechanisms and input mode are remarkably different. The government-run charity relies on fiscal and tax incomes while the civic charity relies on civic donations or service incomes. The government may buy public services from non-government charity organizations with fiscal money. But it should not take civic charitable donations as “the second source of tax” to make up for the lack of public fiscal input. The input made by the government-run charity features compulsoriness, monopoly and general preferentiality while the input made by civic charity is voluntary, competitive and differentiated. The government should develop regulations and policies to support the independent development of civic charity and assume the responsibility of a supervisor and regulator. It should not act as both the player and the rule-maker or both the athlete and the referee.

The government background of charitable organizations tends to make government regulation into mere

formality, resulting in the exclusion of equal competition and existence of abuse. The worst situation of bad money driving out good money even occurs. Those designated by the government as the only one or two institutions entitled to accept donations do not depend the transparency and public humility to obtain donations. The decline in their credibility is not only possible but also inevitable. The advantage given by the system to such charitable organizations can instantly be transformed into a disadvantage.

Premier Wen Jiabao remarked, “The reform and opening up in the field of social undertakings in China is still lagging behind. The more prominent problem is the coexistence of inadequate performance of the government’s responsibilities and its over-governing. What should be governed is not governed adequately while what should be released is not really released”. He also noted that a distinction should be made between "essential" and "non-essential" for various social undertakings, “Non-essential” social undertakings should be left to society and the market to meet multi-leveled and personalized needs. The government should perform its regulatory responsibilities.

Some local governments fail in providing adequate management and services to the “essential” social undertakings that everyone needs. Instead, they monopolize the "non-essential" social undertakings, such as civic charity. They seemingly dominate with more resources. But in fact, what they do is more harm than good. Their lack of respect for the civic and voluntary nature of charitable fundraising is bound to damage the public’s enthusiasm for charity. It is as unsustainable as draining the pond to get all the fish. As a result of a series of incidents occurring in 2011 concerning the accountability of charitable organizations, all public opinions have targeted the lack of transparency and credibility of government-run charity. The image of the government has been compromised to a certain extent. Without institutional reform of charity, more troubles will be faced by the public and the government sooner or later.

At present, China is facing the major challenge of deepening reform. “The further forward the reform is pushed, the more furious conflict, the more complex interests and the greater resistance there will be. As the easy jobs of reform have been done, the rest are all hard nuts to crack. (Quoted from the People’s Daily’s comments). Is the institutional reform of charity in

China also a hard nut to crack? Where are the difficulties and resistance? The answer: the difficulties and resistance lie in the interests of the government departments. Should charitable donations which reach hundreds of billion RMB each year be mainly dominated by the government or returned to civil society organizations?

Some people say that the core of the charitable reform is de-administration and de-monopolization. It’s easy to perform de-administration. Canceling the national institutional status of the charitable organizations and the administrative rank of the leaders of these organizations will work. It’s hard to perform de-monopolization. Considering the "loss" of huge resources and interests, where does the momentum for reform come from? However, if it is recognized that there will be a crisis to long-term interests if there is no reform and the reform only hurts immediate partial interests, there will be determination and solutions to reform.

At the seminar on social management and its innovation for the provincial and ministerial leaders held in February 2011, President Hu Jintao required the party and government institutions at all levels to “strengthen and innovate social management and activate social vitality to a maximum extent.

Only when returning to civil society, can China's charity system get out of trouble and become rejuvenated. For government-rooted charitable organizations, the government should support their top-down reform featuring a transition from government-run organizations to civic ones and their independent development. It is the only chance for the government-run charitable organizations to rebound. Civil society's willingness public mutual-assistance, volunteerism, civic awareness and good deeds provide the fundamental driving force for the endless development of charity. Under the guidance of the government’s Institutional Reform Order for charity, the rivers and creeks of two development paths of charity will approach the same destination, converging into a powerful and vital civic charitable force. Following the charity sector’s ecological principles of “regulation by laws, governance by government, management by organizations, self-regulation by the sector, supervision by society, selection by the public, cooperation between the government and civil society, equal competition and survival of the fittest”, civic charity in China will certainly enjoy a rapid and healthy development.

(Translated by Miao Jianbing from Mr. Xu Yongguang's blog at <http://xuyongguangvip.blog.sohu.com/rss/>.)

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The Amity Foundation is an independent Chinese voluntary organization founded in 1985 on the initiative of Chinese Christians to promote education, social services, health, rural development, environmental protection, disaster relief, and poverty reduction in the underdeveloped areas of China. Up to now, Amity projects have benefited more than ten million people in 31 provinces, municipalities, and autonomous regions in China.

The Amity Foundation has more than 70 full-time staffers at its Nanjing headquarters. Hundreds of volunteers work with Amity all over China. The Foundation receives funds from partners abroad as well as in Hong Kong and mainland China.