

Amity Outlook

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US Ambassador Gary Lock Visits Amity Bakery

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Dear friends,

Amity Bakery, a social enterprise with participation from young adults with developmental delays have attracted much of attention. After the visit of the Head of Mission of the U.S. Embassy in Beijing, an influential business tycoon, Mr. Tao Ran, President of Alibaba Group, commented the bakery in his microblog as having bread and love. His comment has soon attracted more than 20,000 reposts and 1,500 comments over just four days. In this issue, we presented to the readers stories of love from the bakery.

We are appreciative of contribution from Ms. Rebecca Asedillo on her visit to an voluntary Amity teacher that her organization Global Board of General Ministries sent. With the development of philanthropy in China, volunteerism becomes popular, particular among high school and university students. How can organizations motive people with expertise to share their knowhow and time comes a new topic for the developing third sector. A teacher of English who volunteered in a translation service for Amity-Madagascar Lutheran Church biogas project could probably be an example of better utilizing and mobilizing voluntary resources.

2013 Amity Easter Study Tour finished leaving group members deep impressions on the church and the need of Chinese society in the changing era. We bring to the readers reflective articles from members of the 2013 tour group. We look forward to having more friends interested in China join the future Easter tour and reflect together during the journey.



She Hongyu
Chief Editor

ON THE COVER:

US Ambassador Gary Lock Visits Amity Bakery



US Ambassador Gary Lock Visits Amity Bakery



Making cookies with Amity bakers

On June 21, 2013, US Ambassador to China, Gary Locke and his delegation visited Amity Bakery. Together with some Amity staffers, Mr. Qiu Zhonghui, Vice Board Chair and General Secretary of the Amity Foundation warmly welcomed the distinguished guests.

At Amity Bakery, Ambassador Locke was delighted with the experience of working with mentally challenged young bakers to make cookies. He also shared the excitement of enjoying the freshly baked Grandpa Jimmy's Apple Pie with

Amity bakers. Grandpa Jimmy's Apple Pie is made according to the family recipe provided by Ambassador Locke as a philanthropy contribution to the disabled.

When asked by the media if he had any more expectations upon the Amity Foundation, Ambassador Lock said, "The Amity Foundation does great work, because they are known for printing Bibles for Christians in China and all around the world and creating jobs for Chinese people. Their charitable efforts are really a model that should be copied

by people all over the world. Trying to train people with disabilities, whether physical or mental disabilities, to lead as normal a life as possible, to give them hope and joy, is something that organizations throughout China, and the United States, and around the world, should try to do. I thank Amity for the great leadership and example they are providing for people and organizations all around the world."

After the visit, Ambassador Lock wrote Mr. Qiu a letter which says, "Thank you for organizing such a wonderful event at your bakery in Nanjing. I very much enjoyed rolling up my sleeves and making cookies with your bakers. I was very impressed to learn all of the work Amity Foundation is doing throughout China, and I was pleased to see for myself the difference you are making in lives of the intellectually disabled through your Amity Bakery project."

The good news from Amity Bakery is that Grandpa Jimmy's Apple Pie has become the best seller among all Amity Bakery products.



Mr. Qiu Zhonghui presenting a commemorative Bible printed for Amity's 100 Millionth Bible Celebration to Ambassador Locke

About Amity Bakery

In 2007 the Amity Foundation established Mainland China's first bakery run with involvement of mentally disabled people.

Amity Bakery is actually a project under the Amity Home of Blessings (AHB). AHB started its operations in early 2002 with a mission to care and educate mentally disabled people ranging in age from 16 to 40. By providing various professional job skills training programs, Amity hopes to help mentally challenged people to be more integrated into society and even live an independent life. At present, the most common training offered to mentally challenged people in China is life skills training, enhancing their ability to care for themselves. However, it still doesn't change the fact that they are among the

underprivileged people in China and are not viewed as valuable in society.

At the beginning, AHB only offered simple handicraft work to the students, such as making greeting cards and bookmarks. The students could earn some pocket money by doing this work; however, their opportunities remained very limited. Amity carefully researched examples from organizations serving the same group of disadvantaged people and discovered the Hong Kong Baking Association. With their support, the Amity Foundation started Amity Bakery as another platform to provide job skills training for the mentally challenged.

Amity believes that Amity Bakery is suitable for mentally disabled people, because the whole baking process involves a lot of procedures, from fermenting, molding, baking to the final

packaging. For each recipe, there is a simple repetitive operation, and this is very suitable for people with mental disorders because for them the most important thing is to develop a work habit. Though this sounds very normal for us, it is a breakthrough for the mentally disabled to step into society and get a job. Since Hong Kong Baking Association has helped us from the beginning, Amity Bakery has had a great foundation for making competitive bakeries with high quality baked goods.

In 2008, Amity Bakery started selling its products in a small supply mainly to meet the need of other branches under Amity Foundation. The bakery provided bread, cookies, and biscuits for some Three-Self Churches in Nanjing. In addition, during holidays, the bakery also provided products for Amity's volunteers to give as gifts when they visited orphans and the elderly. Starting in 2009, Amity Bakery began receiving limited orders. One of its biggest successes is "Amity Moon Cakes" (a traditional snack eaten during the Chinese Mid-Autumn Festival).

In 2012, Amity Bakery opened two new outlets. Of 22 employees of Amity Bakery, eight were with disabilities, including seven with mental disabilities and one with hearing disability. While receiving donations, Amity Bakery has a goal of being self-sustaining in the long run. It is getting closer to its goal.

A Letter from Huihui to Customers

Huihui, a girl suffering Down syndrome, is now a happy baker working at Amity Bakery.

之遇见,不再错过

爱德面包坊是一家小小的社会企业,在南京有着小小的门面,小到您可能路过,却没有发现。然而,就在这小小的一片天地里,是我每天工作的地方。我是一名“喜憨儿”,来这儿之前,我从未有过工作,也没有收入,因为没有人才是供这样的机会。曾经以为自己的一生只会是父母的拖累,直到来到了这里。可以想象吗?我花了一个半月的时间学会了工作服的穿戴,猜猜多久我才学会做曲奇?时间漫长得都记不清了,但我永远忘不了自己做的第一盘曲奇出炉时那诱人的香气~~

上帝总是让我花费常人几倍甚至几十倍的时间学会一样技能,我相信那是因为他希望我要女孩子的用心,女孩子的对待学会的这项技能,把学到的绝不走样地运用到工作中。师傅说,食品的卫生和安全是重中之重,我一定要保证所有吃到产品的人安心,师傅教我估欠的时候用最干净的原料,不可以放防腐剂,我记住了,也学会了。以前只能在家里看看电视,女马女马已秀秀,我也不开心。王姐在每天早上去上班,邻居就会打招呼说,慧慧去上班啊。这让我女子开心!我矢口道这木羊一份工作来之不易,因为很多热心人的帮助,我才能获得这样的机会。

我很珍惜普贤更容的肯定和女子评,希望送到您手上的这一份份曲奇,让您品尝到的不只是食物的美味,还有深深的感谢~

我很幸运,生在南京,遇到很多关心爱护我的人,中国还有很多和我一样的喜憨儿没有这样的幸运,希望他们也能获得工作机会,让更多的人知道我们可以发挥自己不多的天赋,也能自食其力。请关注和支持我们,告诉身边的家人和明友:有这样一面包坊,有这样一群人,让我们一起做更女子的自己!

慧慧

了解更多慧慧和她的朋友们故事,请登录:
腾讯网:中国人的一天 2013年6月27日 第1274期,慧慧的一天
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Huihui (left) and her special education teacher

Amity Bakery is a small social enterprise in Nanjing. It has two small outlets, which are too small to be noticed by passers-by. However, one of the small outlets is the place where I work every day. I am a Down syndrome suffer. Before coming here, I had never got a job or earned any income, because no one offered me such an opportunity. I once thought that my life would only be a burden on my parents. Can you imagine that I spent a month and a half to learn to wear work clothes? Guess how long it took me to learn making cookies? It's too long for me to remember how long it is. But I will never forget the sweet smell of the first batch of cookies I made.

Original text of the letter from Huihui

God always takes me several times or even dozens times the time for an ordinary person to learn the same skills. I believe He expects me to learn the skills patiently and use them perfectly. The master in the bakery told me that food cleanness and safety are the top priorities. I must ensure peace of mind for all people who eat our products. The master taught me to make products with the best food materials and without preservatives. I have remembered what the master said and taught.

Previously, the only thing I did everyday was watching TV at home. My mother



Master Kwong Chun Chung from Hong Kong Baking Association and slow learning trainees at Amity Bakery



A new outlet of Amity Bakery

worried about me. I was not happy. Now things are different. When I go to work at morning every workday, neighbors greet me by asking “Huihui, are you going to work?” It makes me so happy! I know this job is precious to me. Without help from kindhearted people, I can’t get such an opportunity.

I cherish the customers’ recognition and praise. I hope the cookies in your hands present you not only sweetness of the delicious food but also our deep gratitude.

Born in Nanjing, I am lucky. I have met a lot of people who care for me. In China, there are many Down syndrome suffers who are not as lucky as I am. I hope they could get jobs. I hope more people would know that we can earn our own living with our limited talent. Please pay attention to us and support us. Please tell your family and friends that there are such a bakery and such a group of people. Let’s make a better world!

Teaching English, Living Her Faith

By Rebecca C. Asedillo



From left to right: Robert, Bethany, Rebecca and Ruhong

The town of Jining in Inner Mongolia, China, is more than 7,000 miles from the Richmond, Ky., home of Bethany and Robert Keith, but the couple is happy to be in Jining. Even when the roads turn icy and the temperature can drop to 3 degrees Fahrenheit in December.

To get to Jining from the United States, one usually flies to Beijing and then to Hohhot, the capital of Inner Mongolia. From Hohhot, it is a three-hour train ride to Jining. The trains tend to be crowded,

especially after snowstorms that make the roads impassable. No elevators or escalators ease the burden of carrying one's luggage down to the station platform and up several stairs onto what could be, on days after a snowstorm, a frozen parking lot. But Bethany Keith doesn't mind.

Several years ago, Bethany Keith participated in a student volunteer program in Shandong province. She returned to the United States convinced of her call to serve in China. "I have a heart

to be in China," she said. Against great odds, she is now in China again, teaching English and living her faith.

In August 2012, the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries sent Bethany Keith to teach English for two years with the Amity Foundation. Amity placed her at Jining Teachers College, a local school with a student population of 8,000. She teaches English Monday through Thursday and once a month conducts classes for teachers.

Why teach English in China? Is this missional? Amity Foundation and Global Ministries agree it is. Founded in 1985 by Bishop K.H. Ting, who died recently, and other Chinese Protestant church leaders, Amity Foundation set out with a mission to make God's love visible in Chinese society through education, health, rural development and social services.

Promoting peace, understanding

"Knowledge of a foreign language, especially English, is vital to good further study and career prospects in China today," said Liu Ruhong, director of Amity's Education and Cultural Exchange Division who supervises the Amity Teachers Program

In the 1980s, the foundation sent the first Amity teachers to key universities in the big cities of China. In the 1990s, Amity shifted its focus to smaller teacher-training colleges in rural areas of eastern and central China. Today, Amity has identified the more remote and underdeveloped western and border regions of China as the areas of greatest need. Provinces such as Inner Mongolia, Gansu and Guangxi are home to large minority nationality populations who are ethnically and linguistically different

from the dominant Han Chinese population. Access to good English instruction in such places is more limited than in the more developed provinces.

"The presence of Christian Amity teachers in such locations helps to promote peace, understanding, tolerance and harmony between peoples of different ethnic and faith backgrounds," Ruhong said.

The program is a cooperative partnership between Amity, the local school and Amity's overseas partners such as Global Ministries. The school covers housing and the costs of utilities and provides a supplementary stipend in addition to the monthly volunteer stipend Amity offers through grants from its partners.

Following in Jesus' footsteps

In preparation for their move to China, the couple participated in Global Ministries-sponsored Individual Volunteers training in June. "It was a blast," Robert Keith said. In a collaborative arrangement, Church World Service facilitated Bethany Keith's Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) certification and the logistics of travel, visa, air tickets and insurance.

As members of the Northridge United Methodist Church, Richmond, Ky., the Keiths have been actively involved in mission and outreach. In China, foreign teachers must abide by the rules and guidelines that prohibit active proselytizing, especially in government-run schools. However, Bethany Keith said, Jesus "lived among the people and loved them, and by these means, people sought God." She believes she and her husband can do the same.

Zhao Haizhong, the president of Jining Teachers College, affirmed appreciation and respect for the Amity teachers' Christian belief, seeing their presence at the school as an avenue to cultural exchanges.

Although Robert Keith is not officially an Amity teacher, the school occasionally asks him to help with special English programs. Skilled in computers and web design, he is seeking opportunities to use his gifts in China.

Please pray for Bethany and Robert Keith, and support the Amity Teachers Program.

(Rebecca C. Asedillo is the executive secretary of mission relationship in the Asia Pacific region for the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries.)

The Very-First-Best Voluntary Journey

By Guangqiu Shen

A service report by a volunteer interpreter for Yongshun Training Workshop 2012 of Amity's International Biogas Exchange Program (June - August 2012)

Never had I expected that my first voluntary service would be so closely linked to the swamp gas, to the picturesque, but the seemingly distant Western Hunan, and, most importantly to such wonderful, professional and efficient working troop in Amity and its local partner. All these have destined to bring an experience that will always be fondly recollected even years will have elapsed.

Voluntary service has long been my cherished dream. However, as a full-time college teacher, teaching and researching have taken up most of my working days. As a mother of a 6-year, house-holding and maternal responsibilities have kept me occupied in every work-free day. Anyway, as an effort to testify my commitment, I registered as a volunteer of Amity in 2011, and then was waiting hopefully for an opportunity to embark on a voluntary service. Then came the recruiting notice from Amity website. Biogas, western

Hunan, Madagascar! a gust of gas flow, a mysterious destination, with people from a country representing exotic culture and adventures! All these first-minute expectation flooded into my head. With a click of mouse, I saw my name on the list of applicants for that voluntary interpreting position.

The interview on June 15, 2012 unfolded in front of me the venerable seat of Amity headquarter buildings as well as the much-praised working ethics of Amity staff. Born and brought up in rural Guizhou, the neighbor of Hunan province, I was considered to be a practical candidate for that undertaking. Decisions were made quickly and a few minutes later, I read on my phone the text message of air ticket confirmation. After a rearrangement with all the office and curriculum routines, I found myself on the way to a new adventure at six sharp in the early brisk morning of June 21.

Looking back this one and a half month's experience, I can't help wondering the nature of voluntary service. Is it an act of impulsive and simple-minded good will? Or an act of rationality and sensibility? Should we advocate the notion of professionalism in voluntary service? Take interpreting as an example. A good interpreter, voluntary or not, is expected to be communicative, skillfully verbal, craving for new knowledge beside both source and target language proficiency. Therefore, a competent voluntary interpreter shall be equipped not only with good will but also the makings of an interpreter. During this adventure, I have bridged communications and exchanges in a great variety of venues including train and bus stations, airports, restaurants and hotels, churches and basketball courts, meeting rooms and construction sites. Through all these efforts, the code of ethics for professional interpreting has been observed in every possible means.

This journey has since then been cherished for the representation of long-lasting friendship as well as a significant influence on my interpreting teaching career.

Bio-gas, Our gas

The mere mention of biogas reminds me always of the annual winter pig-

pen hollowing in my home village. The steaming and fermenting association has impressed me so regularly and deeply that a few days before embarking on this feat, one of the kitchen talks of mother and me even centered on this gaseous topic.

She has apparently been aware of the presence of a certain heat-producing gas in livestock pens, yet without the potential integrated energy recycle in this regard. That proved to be a chance for me to share with her my prepared ad-hoc knowledge in that regard, e.g. the intensive application of biogas in public lighting system in England in the

1890s, its more daily use in heating bath water in ancient Persia, the discovery of methane in gas composite produced in waste fermentation in 1808, and the 1884 Pasteur proposition to the Academy of its possible benefits in cooking and lighting, and more recent biogas-driven cars in the UK and trains in India and Sweden, more importantly, the more widespread digesters



Yongshun Workshop

in the world. These casual talks played a much desired warming-up role for my work both technologically and psychologically.

The 2012 Yongshun workshop hosted five Malagasy male technicians, Andry, Jaona, Donne, Patrick and Thierry. They represented an extensive coverage in a

full range Malagasy endeavors in biogas projects. All of them have been experienced rural development practitioners. Strong and stout, they were filled with ambition and expectation to acquire technique and expertise in biogas digester projects in China.

What has guaranteed the success of the training program was a highly customized

training plan, which embodied the theoretical and practical aspects involved. Some knowledge and skills were taught and demonstrated while some were drilled and manually learned. This program included digester construction lessons, material input, digester

maintenance, biogas piping and slough and slurry reusing. Moreover, considering the strong interests with the technicians in other rural development, the local partners organized such wonderful visits to rural drinking water project, tobacco baking plants, organic chili farm, tofu (bean curd) mill. Besides, some recreational events

sparkled their stay there, such as friendship basketball game, farewell gathering of local school. All these have enriched their life rhythms.

What deserves special mention is the systematic arrangement with the digester construction. A rationale of theoretical impartation followed by site work and later feedback was adopted. From June 24 to 27, they were familiarized with the basics of biogas projects. June 28 to July 27 saw them building three digesters from very beginning of lofting, pit-digging, pit readjustment, steel mold mounting, digester wall and dome concrete casting, mold dismounting, water pressure room (WPR) building with concrete bricks, plastering and water-proofing of digester and WPR, inner and outer covers casting, piping and gas lamp installation. They moved from full to partly, to non-structural levels gradually, acquiring fast the tricks in tool use, the devotion, sense of responsibility of bio-gas engineers, and the multiple approaches taken to ensure high efficiency. As far as I can see, their learning could not be so rewarding without the terrific mentor, Mr. Jiahai Chen, a highly reputed technician in Yongshun.

Mr. Chen was in Madagascar in 2011 to share his steel mold design and making expertise. He pooled together his Chinese experience and Malagasy knowledge, and did his best in role-modeling both technically and professionally. He has greatly exemplified an ideal trainer-trainee connection, which combined friendliness, interaction and constructiveness.

For me, a voluntary interpreter witnessing the whole process, this biogas training is a huge success which can be attributed to an intermingling of a well-designed training program, flexible implementation, and skillful coordination. I believe the dedication and hard-work of all parties involved can contribute to the end of raising people's awareness of the phantom menace of the draining fossil fuels in our age and spurring more diversified and extensive coverage of biogas projects in different parts of the world because biogas can be another alternative energy that human kind can turn to in the future.

Friendship Forged

Once at dinner table, Thierry relayed a question from Jaona on the presumption of my absence. My first-minute response was that they would have achieve better

Chinese proficiency and our local partners better Malagasy. Then I proceeded quickly to reflect on the case of not accepting this voluntary undertaking. I affirmed myself that that would be my life-long regret in that case because I have contributed, shared, and struck up many friendships, including those devotional coordinators and logistic providers in Yongshun. They have been so gracious, considerate and always ready to offer helping hands. Never have those moments, no matter how physically stretching, or technically challenging, left my mind since then.

I here would like to mention the co-farmers we worked with. With the evolvement of agricultural production models, rural households shrink in size. Surplus labor flooded into cities to earn bread as workers in construction sites, mass production lines, or other labor services. All the three families we came into contact had members working in distant cities. Left behind with the home land are wives, kids and grandparents. Throughout digester construction, they have shown great resilience in household chores and farm field works. In particular, they have tried every means to assist with our digester construction. That assistance involved some extremely physically demanding works,

such as cement and mold preparation, concrete mixing and carrying, and pit-digging. Their strength and determination have deeply impressed both Malagasy technicians and me. As I see, the longing for better life has sustained the pursuits of rural Chinese.

I also harvested the lasting friendship of the five trainees from Madagascar. All of them have been so highly-motivated in acquiring digester technology because they fully understood the importance of spreading their learning on to their home regions. Their spontaneity rose from the expectation of transforming Malagasy people's way of life into a more sanitary and eco-friendly degree. As the recipients and initiators of my interpreting work, they have been so supportive, and tolerant to me.

Madagascar had only been an island thousands of miles away months ago, and was once the heaven of zoo animal carnival in the DreamWorks animation. This biogas experience brought a true, vivid Malagasy culture to me. A yearning of both economic and ecological development of an island, where habitants curiously regard themselves as a Indian Ocean nation rather than a affiliation to the African continent. Whatever it

may belong to, the Malagasy, to me, are definitely, fun-loving, friendly, and candid. As an in-and-outlet of information during the training, I had learned to work with them as a group and as individuals.

Life on the sites of digester construction was hard. Differently designed tools, exotic land and people, and rigorous techniques, all constituted challenges so demanding. Yet, the five Malagasy men had manifested praiseworthy motivation and hard work. Our battle against the notorious warmth, and mosquitoes and the glaring sunlight in summer Hunan was won with determination. Besides, their in-born rhythmic latsitanana dances blew cooling and soothing night draft across the rural guest houses. Down in the humid and cement-smelling digester, they staged many vocal concerts. Hence, the training life was full of hopes and achievements.

We also had many dinner-table symposiums on rural development in China and back to Madagascar. These talks were carried with friendship and frankness on topics covering importance of education, township administration, improvements of rural lives, environmental issues in economic growth. Jaona once said never had he expected such a prolonged stay

and such a close perspective in viewing China and Chinese. He thought that his connection with us would be eternal and far-reaching. I couldn't agree more. The ties, once made, will continue to bind us through the rest of our lives.

Be Eco-idyllic

As a tourist destination, Western Hunan symbolizes the most poetic yearning for urbanities in China. I was brought directly to the core part of this legacy through this voluntary service, not in the sense of relaxation and escapism from daily hassles, but a total immersion of the local tradition.

The digesters we worked on were found along the mountain streams where local housewives were found washing clothes in the crystal clear spring water. We also were very lucky to be joined by the local coordinators in a few hiking and rafting adventures among the valleys. The rich natural endowment in this region has been kept largely intact for centuries. However, the industrialization wave also has always broken on the shore of this haven. Households in the village were seen with their husbands and fathers away working elsewhere. All incomes are accumulated in renovating, or rebuilding new houses.

Lined along the countryside roads, those two or three-storey new style houses are erected. All of them, unexceptionally have functional living spaces clearly defined. Flushing toilet, integrated stove pieces, living and leisure areas and other furnishings are adopted for more convenient house-holding routines. My eyes were fed with the adequately provisioned life of the local farmers, who are advancing on the way to family well-being in the future.

Of course, the evolvement of rural life structure also has come with problems. Biogas digester maintenance is one of them. From material input to output, to the operation of biogas stoves and related facilities, to trouble-shooting for problematic digesters, all of these need the digester owners to be equipped with applicable knowledge and experience. More efforts are to be made in training of local farmers in those regards. Other issues like the schooling of left-behind children, unhealthy and monotonous recreation and community activities, the inadequate or even absent sewage and garbage collection and disposition system are catching more and more attention.

Nowadays, there is a prevalent inclination of being reminiscent of the good old days when people breathed fresher air, ate natural and safer food, lived in more constructive neighborhoods, we simply do not expect an imbalance of material wealth and moral poverty. In rural China, I can clearly hear the cry for prompt eco-idyllic endeavors in the light of its relatively more vulnerable eco-system and insufficient infrastructures.

I was born in rural China, and have always carried the birthmark of the simplicity and kindness that 13-year of rural life gave to me. An all-round life amelioration and upgrading of social and educational

awareness is my dream and life-long pursuit. I hope my participation in public welfare can contribute to this end.

Now I am practically coming to the end. Please let me show my gratitude to the Amity Foundation, a long-standing and trust-worthy partner. It is for its efficient and considerate initiation and the coordination and management of its workers and partners that I could reach the destination of my first voluntary journey. My thanks also goes to my family. My parents, husband and daughter have shown great patience and consideration for my choice and offered me the greatest support all the way.



Fruit of Yongshun Workshop: a biogas digester built in Madagascar under Amity's support

Mr. Qiu Zhonghui Elected as President of Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council



The Ninth Christian Conference of Jiangsu Province was held in Nanjing on June 7, 2013. The conference was attended by 246 representatives from all Protestant churches in Jiangsu Province of China. The two-day conference discussed and adopted important resolutions and elected new leadership for Protestant Christians in Jiangsu Province. Mr. Qiu Zhonghui, Vice Board Chair

and General Secretary of the Amity Foundation, was elected as President of Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council. On June 8, newly elected President Qiu chaired the closing ceremony of the conference. In last five years, Mr. Qiu had been serving as Vice Chair of Jiangsu Provincial Committee of Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches.

Amity Launches New Projects on Integrated Rural Development and HIV/AIDS Prevention in Yunnan and Guangxi

Supported by Bread for the Word (Brot für die Welt), the Amity Foundation launched Yunnan Cangyuan Banlao Integrated Rural Community Development Project in Kunming of Yunnan Province on March 25, Yunnan Dehong Lianghe Community-based HIV/AIDS Prevention and Health Improvement Project in Dehong of Yunnan Province on March 26, and Guangxi Luzhai Community-based HIV/AIDS Prevention Project in Nanning of Guangxi Autonomous Region on March 29 respectively. The launching ceremonies were attended by representatives of project beneficiaries, Amity's local partners, and Amity's management staffers.

Yunnan Cangyuan Banlao Integrated Rural Community Development Project aims to improve the efficiency of using natural resources inside and outside the communities, better the health and education situations for local residents, and enable changes of villagers' mindset to facilitate harmony between human and nature.

Yunnan Dehong Lianghe Community-based HIV/AIDS Prevention and Health Improvement Project aims to control the spread of HIV/AIDS and drug in the project area, improve local residents' living conditions and health awareness, gradually establish a community-based

HIV/AIDS prevention and monitoring system, and build harmonious, stable and healthy communities.

Guangxi Luzhai Community-based HIV/AIDS Prevention Project aims to control the spread of HIV/AIDS and drug in the project area, improve local residents' living conditions and health awareness, establish a community-based HIV/AIDS prevention and monitoring system, and provide help and services to vulnerable groups, including HIV/AIDS-affected women, children and senior citizens.

Working for A Better World

By Martin Lachmann

Chinese Pastor Shen Zhanqing gives a series of lectures in Bavaria



Until end of March 2013, Pastor Shen Zhanqing from the Amity Foundation is traveling around Bavaria to report about faith and ecclesial life in China. The timetable of the Teaching and Preaching Program of Mission One World (Mission EineWelt) designed for her is quite ambitious. The 33 year old pastor, who graduated from Nanjing Union Theological Seminary will deliver 21 lectures throughout Bavaria in communities and church-related groups.

Grown up in a time of social changes in Chinese Society, Shen was searching for the sense and origin of human life in her teenager years. She found the answer within Christian faith. “Later, during my study of theology, I recognized that the doubts were a sign and calling of God”, she says today. When she decided to study theology, friends and relatives often asked her

the following question: “Are you allowed to marry if you are becoming a nun?” At the same time, Christianity is established in China. It is no longer considered as a foreign religion so much.

Christianity is among the fastest growing religious community in China. It is increasingly popular among the countryside’s population. Also the interconnected younger generation, which is living more and more in an competitive society, gets more and more into contact with Christianity. Young people are asking themselves about the sense and purpose of their lives and often find answers in Christian faith.

Furthermore, Chinese government considers Christianity more and more as a religion which undertakes important social functions and supports a harmonious society, pastor Zhanqing says. The number of Christians in China is about 10 to 80 million because many Christians are organized in house churches. Often they are not registered officially because of the repression during the cultural revolution. Shen Zhanqing hopes that those Christian communities will increasingly open up and are becoming part of the official Chinese Christian Community.

Being fond of reading books and listening to classical music during after hours and doing community work on weekends, Shen Zhanqing works with Amity's Church and Social Services Program as an newly ordained pastor. Besides numerous aid projects for sustainable poverty reduction, Amity is also supporting diakonical facilities. As one of a few independent charity organizations in China, Amity appreciates expertise and support of oversee partners. The organization is cooperating with local partners in implementation and evaluation of their projects. One of these partners is Mission One World in Germany.

At the moment Shen Zhanqing’s work is focused on the education and training of assistants to pastors in the countryside as well as diakonical staff of homes for the elderly. At the same time she is working for a project to interconnect Christian communities in China.

The Chinese name of the Amity Foundation consists of the two Chinese characters “love” and “virtue”. For Shen Zhanqing, it means to work for a better life and a better world. In Germany, the dedicated pastor hopes to get new impulses for the buildup of diakonial work in China.

Shen Zhanqing’s response to the question what the evangelical church in Germany can learn of Chinese Christians is that people should share and advocate their faith with enthusiasm.

About Amity's Church and Social Services Program

Serving as a bridge between Christians and secular communities, the Amity Foundation works with Christian churches to launch social service programs, build capacity of church-based social service programs, improve efficiency of church-run social service institutions, and provide a new means for Chinese Christian churches to participate in social work.

Amity's Church and Social Services Program aims to facilitate Christians’ participation in social affairs and enable secular society a better understanding of Christian community. Amity promotes unity among religions and churches through inter-faith dialogues, exchanges, cooperation and mutual help. In the hope that Christianity will make greater contributions to harmonious social development, Amity advocates Christians’ engagement in environmental protection and health improvement initiatives as well as social services and public welfare efforts.

A Visit to Chongwenmen Church in Beijing

By She Hongyu

Aiming at introducing to the outside world an overall picture of Chinese church, Chinese society and Amity Foundation's work, the Amity Foundation organizes Easter Study Tour every year around Easter time for international visitors with church and development work background. The 2013 Easter Tour brought us to Beijing and Shaanxi Province with five wonderful representatives respectively from Anglican Board of Mission, Australia, Church of Scotland, U.K, the American Baptist Church, U.S.A., the General Board of Global Ministries, United Methodist Church, as well as an independent Fulbright scholar.



A group picture of the tour team at the gate of Chongwenmen Church in Beijing

Visiting the church is no doubt a highlight of the tour. In Beijing, on a bright sunny spring day, we visited Chongwenmen Church in Beijing. Built in 1870, with the Methodist tradition, Chongwenmen Church was the very first church established in Beijing and even the whole of North China. The main building of the church that has survived the wars and chaos in

the last decades stood quietly in the warm spring sun. A few groups of people, mostly women of retirement or early retirement age gathered in the courtyard of the church. Their singing and discussion broke the morning quietness.

Chongwenmen Church has eight pastors and two preachers for over 10,000

members, of whom, 6,000 come for worship regularly on Sundays. There are six worship services on Sundays. The first one starts at 7:30 am and the final one ends at 9:30 pm. However, this is still far from meeting needs of the members. Pastor Han, a clergy of Chongwenmen Church said that they were pasturing more than 20 meeting points in different parts of Beijing for

those who have difficulties to travel to the centre of the City. The ratio of 1:1000 between pastors and members have given challenges to the pasturing staff to provide good spiritual care and support to the members. To help with the problem, Chongwenmen Church gives training to people to help with the spreading of Gospel. On the other hand, there seems to be more spiritual needs from the lay leaders on their theological learning and reflections.

With the economic and social development, religions including Christianity are experiencing rapid

growth. In this development, one important phenomenon is probably the taking up of clergy as a profession by women. Take Beijing for example, there are more than 120 pastors in Beijing and around 60% of the pastors are women. On the other hand, churches like Chongwenmen found increasing number of male Christians. Pastor Han dedicates this change to the easier access to Christian literature and greater space for religious belief.

A few ladies gathered around us with great curiosity. Christianity, for decades, was referred as a

“foreign religion”, however, ordinary Christians are eager to find out how this “foreign religion” is in a foreign country. Although many churches, including Chongwenmen Church offer simultaneous translation during the worship, members of the congregation are very interested in finding out more about Christianity in another setting.

Chongwenmen Church is one of those typical churches in urban China. Leaving the old church courtyard, we whisper in our heart: may the church in China flourish to glory HIS name!



Rev. Han (fourth from left) and her followers at Chongwenmen Church



The tour team and the choir of Qishan County Church in Shaanxi Province

Easter Tour 2013 Reflection

By Brad Chapman

Swapping my kangaroo for Beijing's subways and the gravel tracks of rural Shannxi Province has helped me to see the world from a more Chinese perspective.

I come from Australia. This simple statement may conjure a thousand possibilities in the minds of those who read it. Perhaps you imagine that I live by the beach, surf before breakfast and cook shrimps on the barbeque. Recently I was sorry to disappoint a new friend when they realised that I didn't know how to ride a kangaroo or wrestle a crocodile.

Most of our cultural preconceptions are subconscious. It is only in hindsight that I realise that many of my own ideas about China were as silly as the notion of Australians riding to work on kangaroos. The Amity Easter Tour has been an invaluable opportunity to understand more about China and the exceptional work of The Amity Foundation. It has also left me with a humbling appreciation for just how

little I understand about this significant nation that is home to almost one fifth of the world's people.

Several years ago I came across the following words on a noticeboard in St John's Cathedral, Hong Kong:

*Our first task in approaching
another people,
another culture,
another religion;
is to take off our shoes.
For the place we are approaching is HOLY.
Else we may find ourselves treading on
another's dreams.
More serious still, we may forget that God
was there before our arrival.*

Somehow I had forgotten this advice when

it came to China. Western media reporting and 5th-hand stories about Christianity in China had made me dull to the real-life stories of my brothers and sisters in China. Participating in the Amity Easter Tour afforded me the enormous privilege of hearing first-hand accounts of life in China from those who know it best. Swapping my kangaroo for Beijing's subways and the gravel tracks of rural Shaanxi Province has helped me to see the world from a more Chinese perspective. It has also impressed me with the vital importance of The Amity Foundation's work.

One of the aspects of the Easter Tour which surprised and impressed me was the senior and generous reception we received from the Beijing Christian Council, Shaanxi Christian Council, local communities and



Visiting an Amity-funded water tower project



Children studying in a school supported by Amity's education program

government officials wherever we visited. The people we met were keen to engage with international friends and magnanimous in their wiliness to answer questions and converse together in a spirit of goodwill and partnership.

The broad spectrum of projects we visited covered livelihoods, education, water, sanitation, child protection, aged care and disaster recovery. Our indefatigable Amity hosts crafted each day with professionalism and insight. She Hongyu would expound the nuances of a rapidly evolving social policy environment in one breathe and order a sumptuous feast of local delicacies in the next. Miao Jianbing came forth with a seemingly constant supply of train tickets, hotel reservations, subway vouchers and other papers – always the right piece of paper at precisely the right moment.

The projects we visited profoundly impressed me with the ability of Amity to work with local Christian Churches and Government to identify marginalised communities and respond to human need with loving service. I was struck by the broad geographic and sectoral scope of projects which had been implemented across Shaanxi Province in recent years. Far from being limited to Christian areas, the projects testified to the church's broader concern for all people



Visiting a village in rural Shannxi Province

who are struggling with poverty. In one predominately Muslim village we saw a water tower, walnut trees and homes which had been constructed with Amity's help.

The Easter Tour has also opened my eyes to the importance of civil society linkages between China and countries like Australia. Partnership is a dynamic, two-way interchange of friendship, ideas, resources and people. There are many things that the church in Australia can learn from its relationship with The Amity Foundation and the church in China. By working together we strengthen and invigorate one another. The Amity Easter Tour is a reminder that the global body of the church connects us all with the richness of love, culture, innovation

and compassion that we find in one another. It is a tangible expression of mission and a symbol of God's great love.

So next time I am riding my kangaroo through Melbourne's Chinatown (swerving carefully to avoid the crocodiles) I will remember the vastness of all I still do not understand about China. But also the strong bonds of partnership that bind us together. The Amity Easter Tour has awakened me to the possibilities that exist for linking people and communities in Australia and China, confident that God is accomplishing a great work in us all.

(Brad Chapman is Education Missioner at the Anglican Board of Mission – Australia)

A Plan for Amity Easter Tour 2014

Beijing & Guizhou, April 19-27

A Brief Introduction to Guizhou Province

Guizhou, isolated from the rest of the world for centuries by its stunning mountainous terrain, remains one of China's most unspoiled provinces. With a population of 40 million, Guizhou covers a total area of 67,992 square miles. Eighty-seven percent of the province is mountainous, ten percent hilly and the remaining three percent a flat plain. Situated between Hunan, Guangxi, Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, it is known for its beautiful countryside, local festivals and ethnic minorities. Yi, Dong, Miao, Buyi, Shui, Gelao, Bai, Zhuang, Hui and others make up 37 percent of the population. One of China's lesser known provinces and best kept secrets, Guizhou is also one of the most beautiful provinces, offering dramatic karst limestone scenery, a spectacular plateau landscape cut by great gorges and canyons, terraced hillsides and enchanting vistas.

Even though only 12 percent of the land is arable, farmers make the most of it by harvesting two crops a year in a patchwork of fields between limestone hills and low granite mountains. Homes, walls, terraces,

bridges, aqueducts, roads, dikes and dams are all built from stone. Travel is not easy. Guizhou is one of China's poorest provinces. Around 70 percent of the population is illiterate or semi-illiterate and a third of the people live in severe poverty.

Guiyang is the capital and largest city in Guizhou.

Tour Schedule (Draft)

April 19-27

Date	Time	Activities	Lodging
Day 1 Saturday	All day	Arrival in Beijing	Beijing
Day 2 Sunday	Morning Afternoon Evening	Sunday worship at Chongwenmen Church; Orientation for the Amity Easter Tour; Visiting the Great Wall; Visiting the Tian'anmen Square	Beijing
Day 3 Monday (Easter Day)	Morning Afternoon	Visiting Beijing Christian Council; Traveling from Beijing to Guiyang by air	Guiyang
Day 4 Tuesday	Morning Afternoon	Visiting Guizhou Province Christian Council; Visiting Guizhou Bible School; Traveling from Guiyang to Sansui County by bus and enjoying scenic views on the way	Sansui
Day 5 Wednesday	All day	Visiting Amity-funded projects in Sansui County	Sansui
Day 6 Thursday	All day	Traveling from Sansui County to Anshun by bus (Visiting the Tower of Cultural Prosperity and the Chamber of the Finest Elegance midway)	Anshun
Day 7 Friday	Morning Afternoon	Visiting Amity-funded projects in Puding County, Anshun Visiting Xianma Church in Puding County Traveling from Xianma Church to Anshun by bus	Anshun
Day 8 Saturday	Morning Afternoon	Traveling from Anshun to Guiyang Airport by bus Traveling from Guiyang to Beijing by air	Beijing
Day 9 Sunday	All day	Departure	

If you are interested in joining the tour, please contact Mr. Miao Jianbing at the Amity Foundation.

E-mail: miaojianbing@amity.org.cn / Tel: (86-25) 83260838



This map locates Beijing, the capital of China, Guizhou Province, and Guiyang, the capital city of Guizhou.



The Great Wall



Chongwenmen Church, also known as Asbury Church, is the largest Protestant Church in existence in Beijing. The church was built in 1870 and rebuilt in 1906.

Tour Details (Draft)

Day 1

Arrival in Beijing

Beijing is the capital of the People's Republic of China and one of the most populous cities in the world. Being the nation's political, cultural, and educational center, Beijing is also home to the headquarters of most of China's largest state-owned companies, and a major hub for the national highway, expressway, railway, and high-speed rail networks, while Beijing Capital International Airport is the second busiest in the world by passenger traffic. As one of the "Four Great Ancient Capitals of China", Beijing has been the political center of China for centuries. The city is renowned for its opulent palaces, temples, gates of city



Tian'anmen Square

walls, and royal gardens, and its art treasures and universities have made it a center of art and culture in China.

Day 2

Morning: Sunday worship at Chongwenmen Church; Orientation for the Amity Easter Tour

Afternoon: Visiting the Great Wall

Evening: Visiting the Tian'anmen Square

Day 3

Morning: Visiting Beijing Christian Council;

Afternoon: Traveling from Beijing Airport to Guiyang Airport

Day 4

Morning: Visiting Guizhou Province Christian Council; Visiting Guizhou Bible School;

Afternoon: Traveling from Guiyang to Sansui County by bus and enjoying scenic views on the way

Christianity was first preached in Guizhou in 1887. There were missionaries from more than 10 denominations including China Inland Mission, the Methodist Church and the Anglican Church. Believers in Guizhou are mainly located in remote minority areas. The Christians in ethnic minority areas are well-known for their innate talent for dancing and singing.

Established in 1993, Guizhou Bible School is the base for theological education in Guizhou. Most of the students are from ethnic minority groups. The majority Han Chinese only account for 15% while 50% of the students are from Miao, 30% from Yi, and 5% from other ethnic groups.



Guizhou Bible School

Day 5

Visiting Amity-funded projects in Sansui County

Integrated rural development projects in Sansui County aim to improve rural infrastructure, planting conditions, living environment in the project area, and local people's, especially women's, capacity of community-based self-management. The projects also lead to increase of income, ecological balance and sustainable development for local residents.



An Amity-funded village road enables villagers' access to outer world

What's Coming Up>>

The integrated projects cover drinking water system building, village road construction, anti-flood dam building and maintenance, irrigation ditch construction, biogas digest building, village medical worker training, village clinic building, promotion of improved varieties, training on agricultural technology, and capacity building for local residents.

The projects have resulted in improved environment, better rural infrastructure, reduced soil erosion, increased income, access to convenient medical services, and confidence in future prosperity for local residents.



The Tower of Cultural Prosperity (Wen Chang Ge)



Local residents benefited from the integrated rural development projects in Sansui County



The Chamber of the Finest Elegance (Jia Xiu Lou)

Day 6

Traveling from Sansui County to Anshun by bus

As Guiyang is located on the way from Sansui to Anshun, the tour will stop at Guiyang for lunch and visit the Tower of Cultural Prosperity (Wen Chang Ge) and the Chamber of the Finest Elegance (Jia Xiu Lou), two landmarks in Guiyang, before leaving for Anshun again.



An Amity-funded dam project in Xuedong Town, Sansui County



Wooden house dwellers now have access to tap water enabled by Amity-funded drinking water project in Sansui County

Day 7

Morning: Visiting Amity-funded projects in Puding County, Anshun
Afternoon: Visiting Xianma Church in Puding County
Traveling from Xianma Village to Anshun by bus

Xianma Village lies in the northeast part of Houchang Township and is categorized as a Class-I target village for poverty alleviation. Ethnic minority (Miao) residents (1,455) count for 97 % of the village's total population.

Xianma is nicknamed “God’s Village”. A writer says, “Xianma is not frustrated by its inaccessible location, nor defeated by the poverty. Every blade of grass and every tree demonstrate the meaning of survival and the rays of humanity. It is God’s miracle, left in the deepest of mountains.” 99% of Xianma residents believe in Christ. Xianma villagers are honest and unsophisticated. In Xianma, doors are unbolted at night and belongings left by roadside remain intact.

In the late 19th century, the Gospel was brought to Guizhou. Missionaries came to Puding County, establishing churches,



Miao Christians singing songs to welcome guests visiting Xianma Church

running schools, and teaching hymns. They also created the written form for the Miao language and preached in Miao language. Christianity has profoundly influenced generations of local Miao people. Xianma Christians practice God’s doctrines in their songs. They developed a multi-voice-part chorus, which mixes bel canto with Chinese folk singing and combines faith and art perfectly.

Day 8

Morning: Traveling from Anshun to Guiyang Airport by bus
Afternoon: Traveling from Guiyang Airport to Beijing Airport

Day 9

Departure

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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. Amity projects have benefited more than ten million people both at home and abroad.

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