

Amity Outlook

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**Working on the Grassroots for
Alzheimer's Alleviation**



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Dear readers,

The fast expansion of the elderly population is becoming an increasingly important social issue in China and world wide. According to Human Resources and Social Security Ministry in China, each day, China has about 25,000 more people turning 60. It is estimated that by year 2050, the total population of the elderly will reach 480 million, accounting for 1/3 of the population of the country and 1/4 of that of the world. At the same time, the prevalence of Alzheimer and dementia gets higher rapidly. For the many families and care centres, one impelling problem is how to take good care of the members of family/clients with these diseases with correct methods. An analytic article on the Alzheimer will give us some reflection on and hope for the alleviation of such diseases.

In this issue, we also bring to the readers an article by Rev. Li Dong, President of Sichuan Christian Council on the “difficult issues in establishing Christian meeting places”. The article gives objective analysis on the problem in establishing meeting places and gives suggestions policy-wise.

As time brings us to the end of 2013, on behalf of Amity, we would like to give our heartfelt appreciations to your support throughout the year and may 2014 brings you abundant blessings.

She Hongyu
Chief Editor

ON THE COVER:

The elderly cared at Amity's Rengu Home for the Elderly are taking physical exercise to build physical fitness, which diminishes risk factors for the outbreak of Alzheimer's disease.



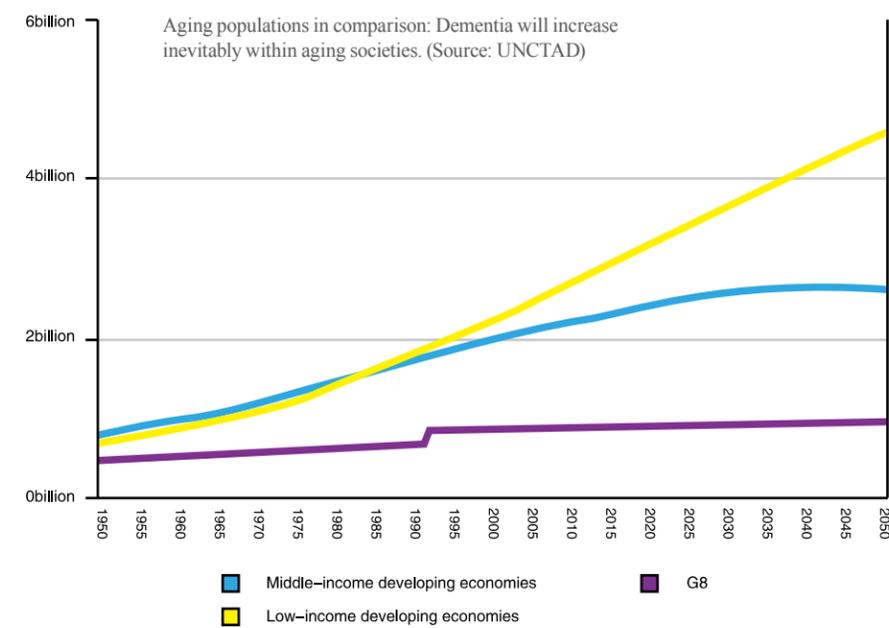
Working on the Grassroots for Alzheimer's Alleviation

By Martin Lachmann

Experts declare Alzheimer's disease as the coming epidemic of the 21st century. More than half of the sufferers live in countries without sufficient care. To alleviate impacts, immediate and coordinated action is necessary - particularly in aging countries like China. A people-centered approach is what Amity now advocates for this underprivileged group.

Former actor and president of the United States Ronald Reagan or African-American rights activist Rosa Parks have been affected, as well as English novelist Terry Pratchett is diagnosed with Alzheimer's. Often the disease gains the center stage when celebrities are concerned.

But Alzheimer's and its consequence dementia is a spreading condition that affects societies all over the world. Experts now declare Alzheimer's disease as a coming epidemic of the 21st century. Most people are facing cases within their families, circle of relatives or friends.



A disease not to be confused with aging

Dementia is not a single disease but rather a state of neural capacity. The outcomes are a loss of cognitive abilities. Affected areas are attention, language, logic and memory. This leads to a progressive decline of orientation and self-sufficiency. There are several causes of dementia. The most common form is Alzheimer's disease, which contributes 60-70% of

the cases. Therefore, it is important to recognize that dementia is not part of a normal aging process but a disease that can and should be arrested.

If Alzheimer's disease is the cause of dementia, it cannot be cured and usually leads to death after 7 years on average. The earlier the disease is recognized and appropriately treated, the better and longer the quality of life and health of the

patient can be maintained. Unfortunately, people still think that dementia is a normal part of the aging process and that nothing can be done to slow it down or bring improvements.

A global health challenge gets the center stage

WHO report classifies Alzheimer's as a coming epidemic.

Increasingly there is media coverage and discussion about Alzheimer's and dementia in the public domain. During the last few years, the topic starts to take center stage in politics. In 2012, the World Health Organization published an extensive study named "Dementia, a public health priority". Besides calling for further research efforts, experts nowadays agree that immediate actions are necessary as cases of dementia are expected to triple worldwide by 2050 from currently more than 40 million to more than 115 million.

Worldwide expenses for care are now estimated at US\$ 600 billion. By 2030, this number is estimated almost to double to US\$1,117 billion. Consequently, the costs of care for dementia threaten to

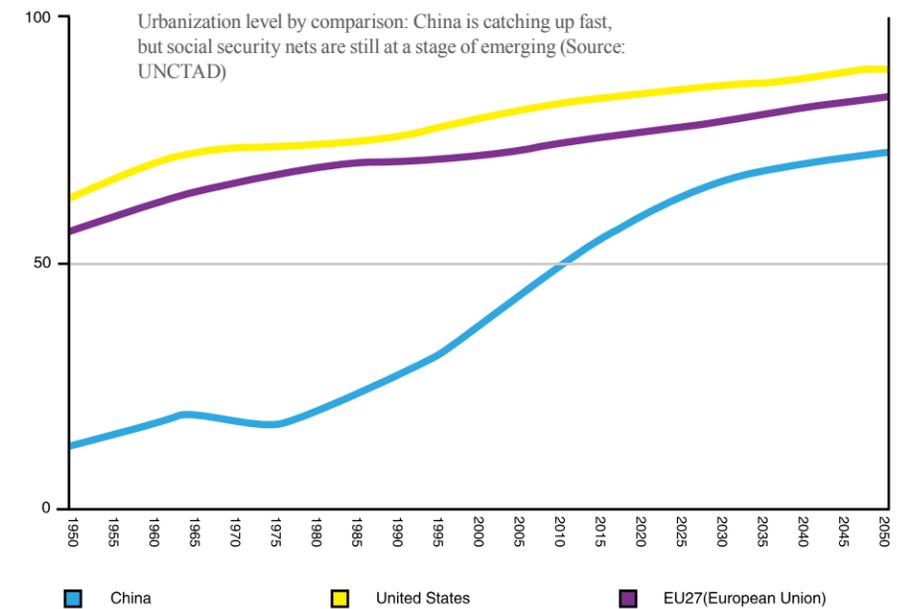
burst the national budgets and health care systems. Hence, experts are calling for efforts and campaigns just like against AIDS. While risk factors for dementia as age, genetics and family history cannot be changed, a healthy lifestyle including physical and social activities, stress reduction and healthy diet may be the best strategy to lower the risk of an outbreak.

Different and equal challenges

In Western Europe and North America 1.3% of the GDP is spent for the treatment of dementia patients while in Central Asia it is so far only 0.36% of the GDP. About

80% of the worldwide costs are spent in high-income countries. However, people of affluent countries facing similar strains as poor caregivers because the nature of the disease causes stigma and blame within all societies.

The consumption of time and high amount of costs caused by a care-dependent patient leads to the situation that relatives have to shoulder a significant part of the care. In high-income countries, 45% of the care is informal and unpaid. Although, as part of a longer life expectancy and an aging population, Europe and China are facing the same problem, the scale, cultural



implications and the remedial measures differ. In middle-income countries like China, the social safety net is just in the stage of being built up and almost all care burdens the family.

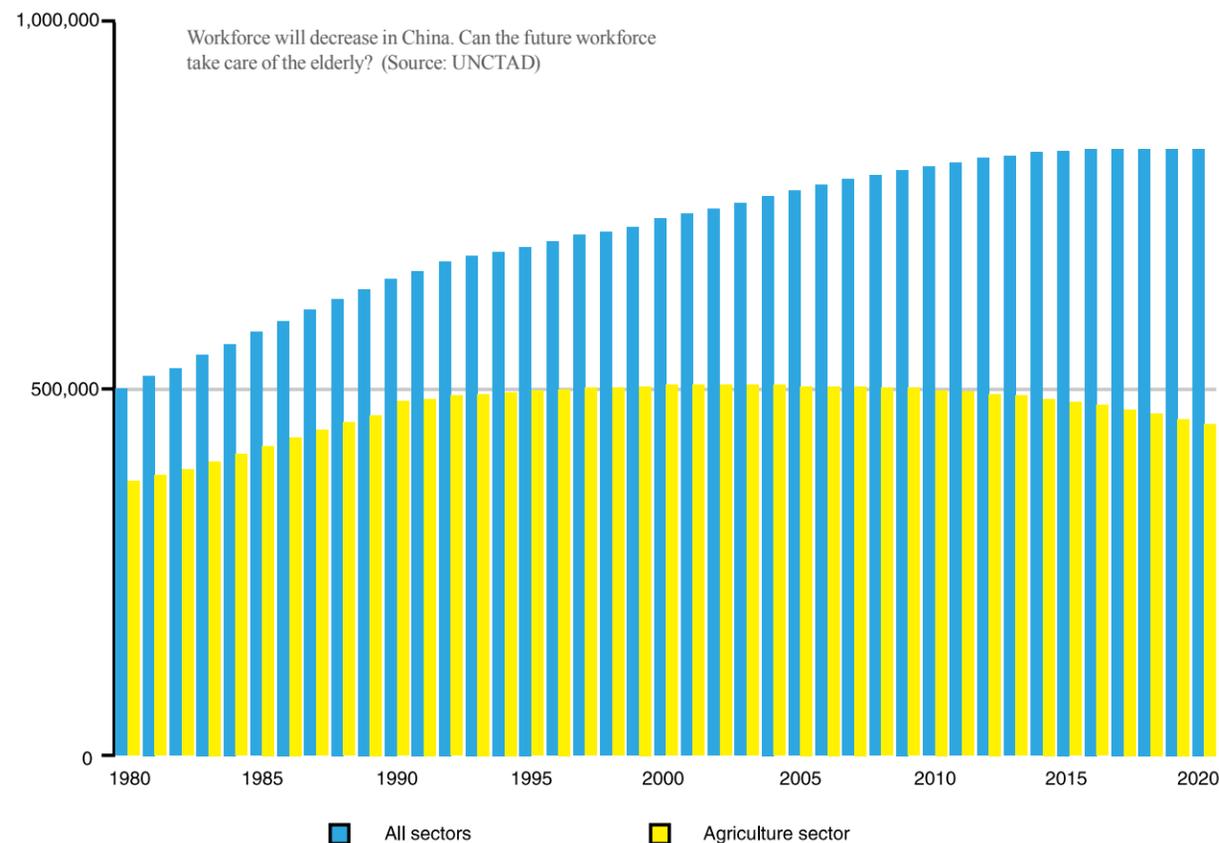
varying local policies are exacerbating the problem and make reliable figures hard to obtain.

The drawback of China's success

In China, the retirement age is 60 for male and 50 for female workers. In 1951, the life expectancy was 46, while it went up to 73 at present. The 1950s to 1970s baby boomer come into the retirement age and now the other side of the coin of China's success since the Opening-Up

policy is seen. Soon China's work force will decline and the question arises as to how a young working force can afford the care for a large aging society?

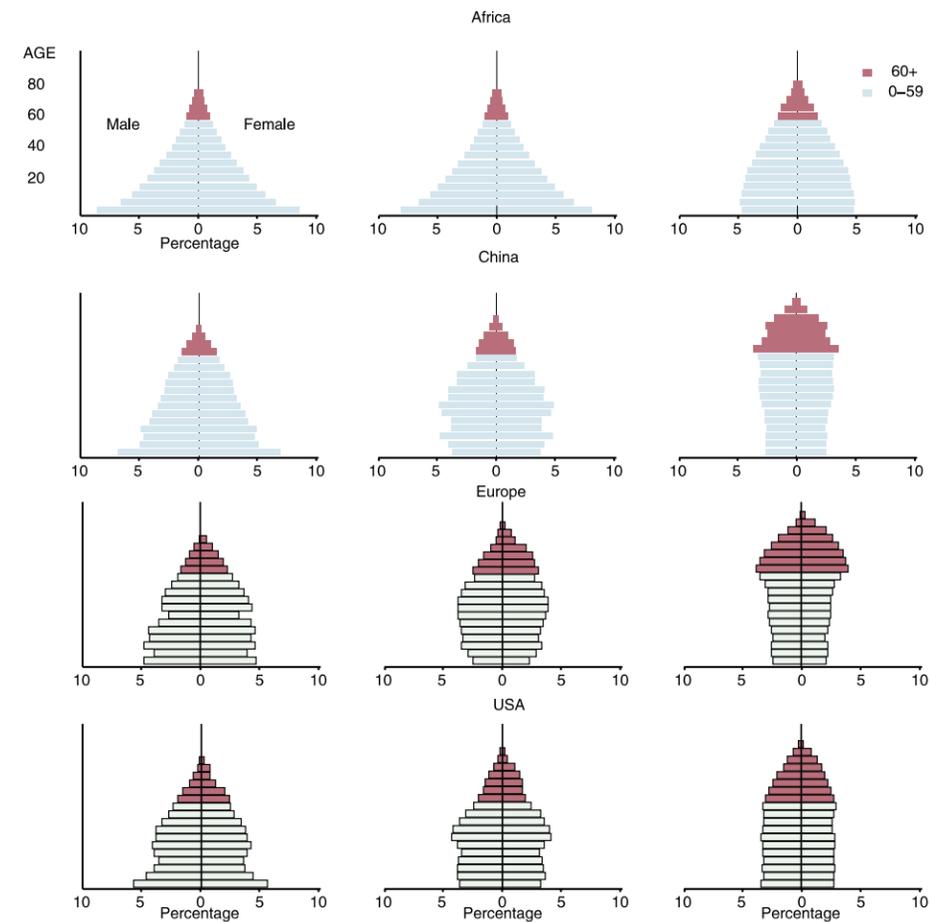
In 2010, five workers supported one pensioner. In 2020, this figure will decrease to three. This dilemma is often associated with the concise question "Is China getting old before it is getting rich?" Considering the rising amount of intensive-care patients, we see this question as becoming increasingly urgent and important.



Overview and comparison of aging societies by regions

According to a document issued by the State Council on September 14th, there were already 194 million people in China aged over 60 in late 2012. Working on the estimate that 4-6% of these people will have Alzheimer's means that in China there are more than seven million affected people. Nanjing is considered to have more than 100,000 sufferers of dementia.

Running an elderly home and a community center for the elderly, Amity staff experiences daily that Alzheimer's places a heavy burden on patients and their beloved ones. Caring for Alzheimer's patients is a long and arduous process. People who are affected ought to be especially recognized by society and their wider families.



Population pyramids by comparison: The biggest imbalances between a young and an old population will occur in China and Europe. Just as low-income countries, China is in the urgent need to develop campaigns and strategies for social care of the elderly. Source: Population Division, DESA, United Nations

Love doesn't forget

Getting the message out in the community



As part of Amity's "Love doesn't forget" - program the poster tells the reader: "When memories slowly slip away, love becomes increasingly clearer."

A movie provides information about Alzheimer's disease



Physical fitness diminishes risk factors for the outbreak.

Therefore, in September 2013 Amity worked in six city districts with a team of 30 work units putting together an ongoing charitable program called "Love doesn't forget". The work units were working hand-in-hand with several partner organizations conducting various activities. Thereby Amity did not simply present information about Alzheimer's but also teach practical activities to alleviate the impacts to the affected families.



People visiting Amity's Home for the Elderly to inform themselves about Amity's elderly care engagement.

Although, at the present stage there are no ways to cure the many causes of dementia, it is possible to prolong and eventually prevent it as well as to improve one's ability to effectively avoid some distressing symptoms. Brain gym exercises are easy to understand and can be done anywhere at any time without requiring special equipment. This also reduces the pressure on the family members of sufferers or at least give them more time to interact with the patients as they help them do exercises.



Simple brain activity is said to impede Alzheimer's onset.

Alzheimer's actually begins during the middle age with symptoms appearing and their related repercussions. If one does not realize and seek treatment early, it is impossible to treat it once it has progressed to a serious stage. Thus, Amity organized free medical services in the main square of Nanjing including measuring blood pressure and conducting simple intelligence tests. By knowing that cerebral vascular disease, high blood pressure and nutritional metabolic disorders can easily bring on Alzheimer's, specific recommendation of nutrition, physical exercise and intelligence training were given to residents in the areas.



Exercise as a preventive measure prolongs the outbreak of Alzheimer's



Early diagnostic enables to take necessary measures at an early stage.

Because family members often feel perplexed and helpless, experts were invited to give advice and support to the families of Alzheimer's sufferers and give suggestions about treatment. Families from Nanjing participated in person and by live interaction through the internet. This activity encouraged families to exchange their experience and to access medical help.

The Amity Social Services Network, a social network of charitable and volunteering organizations in Nanjing were cooperating in social activities, organized volunteers to visit families with Alzheimer's sufferers during Mid-Autumn Festival.



Families of Alzheimer's patients discuss and exchange experiences



Volunteers visiting homes of Alzheimer's patients helping to relieve the family's burden.



Parties concerned raising awareness about Alzheimer's

Getting the attention of policy makers

Medical treatment is necessary and beneficial for controlling psychological symptoms of Alzheimer's. The families of many patients choose to delay or give up medical intervention because it is too expensive. Studies show that only 14% of those in the early stages of Alzheimer's in China are formally diagnosed as such, and there are only several thousand patients formally diagnosed with Alzheimer's in Nanjing.

As part of the "Love Never Forgets" effort, there was a call for Alzheimer's being added to the list of chronic diseases to be covered by health insurance. Participants included representative of family members of sufferers, a local broadcasting program and Amity Foundation members.

Together we took the initiative to the streets inviting people to join in calling on relevant government bodies add Alzheimer's to the list of chronic diseases, thus guaranteeing medical treatment for sufferers. At first, residents did not understand what we were advocating, but they came along out of curiosity. After the teams of advocates explained to all passers-by by what the movement was about, residents signed their names on the banner.

Some older people said, "Although I don't know how to write, I'd like to draw a heart to express my support. If I end up with Alzheimer's one day, I very much hope that the medication I need will be on the list of approved medications."

Amity hopes that the relevant government bodies will consider the petition and discuss it - not only to benefit people financially, but even more important, to give affected people the feeling that the society do care about Alzheimer's sufferers and recognize and appreciate the efforts of their families and caregivers.



People signing a banner to advocate for the financial situation of Alzheimer's patients.



The sign says 'Please add Alzheimer's to the list of "chronic diseases"'.
 请让“老年痴呆”进“门慢”

Putting the people into the center

Amity will continue pushing this topic into the spotlight of modern societies, where striving for efficiency and functionality seems to stand in sharp contrast towards the physical and often disturbing outcomes of Alzheimer's on women and men.

Developed countries have already accomplished high standards of institutionalizing and bureaucracy to cope with this challenge. Amity hopes to draw further on the support and exchange of our international partner's expertise and experience on our efforts for the elderly in China. Amity wants to remind that behind the inconceivable figures of the disease and besides the needs for more institutionalized structures, we should not forget the fate of the individual people. They are served best with our sympathy, passion and love.

When memories slowly slip away, love becomes increasingly clearer

Memories disappear from your mind over time. Can you imagine this torment? Past experiences no longer exist. People you know slowly become strangers, to the point that you have no recollection of them at all. And nothing can be done about it.

Alzheimer's sufferers are terribly fearful; loneliness fills the hearts of those who lose their memories. They desperately and even fiercely try to retrieve the tiniest wisp of a memory but lose hope after coming up with nothing.

Many sufferers put slips of paper everywhere to remind them of things in order to try to retain their rapidly fading memories; this is the start of a helpless battle. As the disease gets worse, people they see each day, faces they've known for years, streets they have traversed many times each day slowly slip from their memories. "Where are we? Where am I going?" Places they knew so well change and become strange; a man may even look around and ask his wife, "Who are you? What is your name?"

These are not just scenes from a movie. Family members of sufferers, workers in the community and volunteers all have similar stories about Alzheimer's sufferers and their families. Perhaps they are the ones who best understand the phrase, "When memories slowly slip away, love becomes increasingly clearer."

If you have read this article, if those close to you need this type of care and love or if you would like to offer such love yourself, please get in touch with us!

(Amity's appeal on its Chinese website)

(Sincere gratitude is extended to Mr. Anthony Tong for revising the article and to Suzanne Rowe for translating materials for the article.)

Amity Holds Project Management Seminar on Rural Communities and Ethnic Minorities

In December 2013, the Amity Foundation held Project Management Seminar on integrated rural development and protection of cultural heritages of ethnic minorities in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Nearly 70 local partners of Amity, scholars and experts, and staff of Amity's Project Management Centre discussed and exchanged ideas and experiences.

From December 10th to 12th, 2013, the Amity Foundation held its annual Project Management Seminar in Yinchuan, capital city of the Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region. Nearly 70 local partners of Amity, scholars and experts, and staff of Amity's Project Management Centre attended the seminar. The participants from eight Chinese provinces, which have a high percentage of ethnic diversity, discussed how to protect traditional culture of minorities, the establishment

of farmer organizations and how to conduct project management.

Amity's partners, who themselves belong to the ethnic community of the Naxi, Wa and Zhuang from Yunnan and Guanxi presented their activities on protecting traditional minority culture in ethnic communities. Over the last years, they promoted local people's awareness for their traditional culture. This includes advocating traditional ethnic costumes and the use of native language. Furthermore, the efforts aimed at preserving folk songs and local customs of the communities. In this way, the consciousness of local communities in preserving their cultural heritage could be enhanced.

Delegates discussed ways of improving sustainability by enhancing those activities in minority communities.

The experts and representatives from Yunnan, Guangxi, Hunan, Guizhou, Sichuan, Ningxia, Inner Mongolia, Gansu and Qinghai agreed that protection of ethnic minority culture should be enhanced. Thereby they agreed to jointly emphasize and promote education on preservation of customs and the importance of common policies that aim on consensus and respect among each other.

The discussion session for the development of agricultural organizations mainly focused on the marketing aspect of agricultural products and the way to establish and register agricultural organizations. Staff from P.M. center explained the project design, ideas and methods, writing requirements of project proposals and reports, while emphasized on the differences

among project activities, outputs and effects. Considering the progressive urbanization and the need for the development of rural areas in China, these two topics are of highly significance. Amity Foundation invited scholars and experts of the Jiangsu Provincial Academy of Social Science who gave lectures on these topics.

Local partners of Amity also referred to their own experiences of establishing village associations. Part of Amity's integrated rural development projects are the establishment of rural cooperatives and community associations that contributed for the sustainable development of the local community. Amity Foundation P.M. Center Seminar is hold once a year to promote the sharing of experiences among partners from different regional areas and professions. Amity invites relevant experts to attend and to promote discussions between theory and practice, between researcher and grassroots organizations, to provide a platform for capacity building.



The representatives discussing and exchanging ideas.



Mr. He Wen, Director of Amity's Project Management Center, welcoming participants from different provinces.

Facing the Difficult Issues in Establishing Christian Meeting Places

By Li Dong

It is recognized that a place where two or more believers gather constitutes a "church." The formerly used term "underground churches" instead of "house gatherings", "house churches" or "non-mainstream churches" is derogatory. But their existence is a basic fact. Solutions should be developed according to the reasons of the existence.



A "house gathering" of rural believers

I. Face up to existing problems

In Christian theological terms, "the church" is by nature "spiritual." The word "church" does not necessarily refer to a physical entity or a building. The basic meaning of the Greek word for "church" is "a group of people called out." It is also recognized that a place where two or more believers gather constitutes a "church." As to what name should be used—house gathering, house church, non-mainstream church—this is not the essence of the problem. The formerly used "underground churches" is derogatory. Because unlike legitimate churches, these meetings have

no name plate and their gatherings are not "open," but are held in a relatively "secret" manner, they inevitably give rise to much speculation. But their existence is a basic fact. Once the state issued the "Regulations on Religious Affairs", all unapproved gatherings are illegal, which implies that they should be abolished.

Over years of discussing the basic reasons for the existence of the so-called "privately established meeting places", our findings can be summed up as follows:

(1) The number of formally approved existing churches (meeting points) is insufficient to meet the needs of religious believers. In Chengdu, for example, there are only two churches in the urban area. According to statistics, there are about 4 million baptized believers in the urban area of Chengdu, but space for weekly worship is available for only about five or six thousand people. To accommodate believers' needs and avoid overcrowding, three services are scheduled each weekend. Urban life is increasingly spread out, and though some believers live in urban areas, many others

live in the suburbs. In order to cut down on commuting time, these believers hope to establish churches (meeting points) relatively close to their homes.

(2) Sectarian factors. There have been many sects throughout the history of the Church, with special emphasis on their own forms of worship. After the churches in China implemented unified worship, they based their liturgy on that of the mainstream Protestant denominations. This made it difficult to satisfy believers from some sects with highly individual characteristics (such as the Seventh Day Adventists, the True Jesus Church, and the Christian Assembly [Little Flock]) and to integrate them into the liturgy of the mainstream churches. They have continued to fight for separate gatherings.

(3) Dissatisfaction with sermons. As the saying goes, to each his own. In addition to the different "tastes" in liturgy resulting from denominational backgrounds, as believers' educational level rises so do their expectations for the preacher's message from the pulpit. If their expectations are not met, they would rather gather for mutual sharing on their own to meet their spiritual needs.



A "house gathering" of urban believers

(4) The preachers at legitimate churches (meeting points) are often of low quality both in their beliefs and in their educational backgrounds. It may be that they do not run the church according to biblical teachings, cliques and power struggles result, and the preacher fails to take an exemplary role. The church's failure to show love it should has hurt some believers, such that they are unwilling to go be involved in the legitimate church or participate in worship there.

(5) Theological bias and even political hostility. Some people think that the Church should have no association at all with government or politics since the head of the Church is Jesus Christ. Only God's "approval" is needed to establish churches or meeting points, not the government's. The church should be separated from politics. Some people regard churches run according to the Three-Self principles

as the "government-run" or "official" church. They allege that the "Three-Self Church" is not spiritual in nature and that those who worship in the "Three-Self Church" are not saved. Of course, we do not rule out the possibility that some of these critics establish so-called "house churches" for the purpose of opposing the government and the principle of "an independently run church."

Thanks to the increasingly relaxed social environment and the implementation of the party's policy of religious freedom since the beginning of the era of Reform and Opening up, people now enjoy more freedom to choose their beliefs, including



A woman preacher at a "house church"

religious beliefs. The Regulations on Religious Affairs promulgated in 2005 contain the principle provisions guaranteeing citizens' religious freedom and maintaining religious harmony and social harmony. These regulations have enhanced people's confidence in their freedom to make religious choices in today's socialist China. Believers are optimistic about their future. But not all believers are in agreement about how to express their religious beliefs and sentiments, nor about whether such matters should be bound by the laws of the state. Moreover, the establishment of China's legal system has been an ongoing, long-term process; likewise, people's legal awareness has also been evolving slowly. During this process, any number of things may interfere with the implementation of existing laws.

In the 1950s, Chinese Christians began to implement "unified worship" within the context of their national ethos and the denominationalism of the past was to some extent overcome. Moreover the years of Theological Reconstruction and experience of unified worship has strengthened awareness. However, we have to realize that the Protestant tradition has always been one of sectarianism and



A rural meeting place at Jianwei County in China's inland province of Sichuan

the proliferation of denominations. We can see this in the independent practices of churches overseas. After the Reform and Opening up, contact between Chinese churches and overseas churches increased and denominationalism re-emerged, seriously affecting efforts at unified worship. Considering all this, we know that there is still a long way to go to complete unification under the banner of "One Lord, One Faith, One Baptism, and One God". The key lies in the way in which we face with this situation and the measures with which we resolve the problem properly under the guidance of the principles of law.

II. The "New Perspective" under the "New Concept"

The Regulations on Religious Affairs were officially promulgated and implemented. Both churches and government departments were pleased

with the introduction of the Regulations. For many years, the church too has been pondering how to run the church better within our given national situation, and how, through increased engagement in social services, in serving the overall national development goals, and contributing to the building of "two civilizations", more people may come to understand and accept the Protestant Church.

The article "Socialist Religious Theory" published in the journal Seeking Truth in 2003 stated that, "Comrade Jiang Zemin (former president of China) has pointed out that 'There are more than one hundred million believers of various religions in China. They are also a positive force in building socialism with Chinese characteristics.' Proper handling of religious affairs helps to improve the close ties between the Party and the masses." Jiang's remarks can be described as a "new perspective". Identifying with this "positive force" and an approach based on "close ties" may guide us in the way we treat believers outside the legitimate church and deal with the issue of "privately established meeting places." From a practical point of view, making simple judgments or taking arbitrary measures can only exacerbate



Rev. Chen (right) from Shaanxi Provincial Christian Council visiting a meeting place at Suide County in China's inland province of Shaanxi

the contradictions rather than facilitate unity among religious believers, the implementation of the party's policy of religious freedom, or the building of a harmonious society. We should maximize unity with all those willing to join with us and bring them into present efforts in support of national development. This is a formidable task facing both government departments and religious organizations in handling the issue of "privately established gathering places."

We should be policy-sensitive when handling religious issues and dealing with religious believers. Dealing properly with religious issues also means dealing properly with the mass of believers. When observing and dealing with religious issues, proletarian revolutionary leaders put great emphasis on making right policies to ally with religious believers. The article also mentioned former CPC chairman Mao Zedong's remarks: "There are so many believers in the masses. As we are working on affairs relevant

to the masses, we should not fail to understand the religions." When dealing with the believers gathering at privately established churches or sites, we should be very careful in taking proper methods and measures. Religious harmony is relevant to social harmony. Therefore, we have many things to do.

We know that many believers gathering at "privately established sites" hope that their gathering sites could become above-ground ones with legal standing. We are



Rev. Zhang (left) and members of his church at Xianma Village of Miao ethnic minority in China's inland province of Guizhou

all aware that the Regulations enable us to run the church in a rule-based and law-abiding manner. Meanwhile, the Regulations empower the church to protect its own legal rights and interests. Many meeting places that have not been approved are eager to get governmental approval in order to lead a normal religious life with "legitimate" standing. We need to consider how to guide them from an "underground" position to an "above-ground" one and thus turn "negative" forces to "positive" forces.

For churches with legal standing, caring for "privately established gathering

places" and the religious life of believers who gather there is very natural; is, indeed, necessary. Generally, we regard believers outside the legitimate church as our brothers and sisters. If our brothers and sisters are in trouble, our hearts will be troubled. A church has its own canons of doctrine. Is the situation at "privately established gathering places" in line with the canons of doctrine? Is what is preached there in compliance with biblical truth? These are considerations that relate to the Church's reputation. Religious organizations have a bounden duty to maintain the reputation of the Church.

Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, our people's standard of living improves daily. Religious believers are aware of this and enjoy the improvement. Our hopes for our country and for better, happier lives are inseparable from our support of the leadership of the Chinese Communist Party. The majority of believers and clergy believe that "Faith differences between religious and non-religious people are minor when compared with the consistency of their fundamental political and economic interests under the historical conditions of China's socialism." We do not see ourselves as "special citizens". Over the years, educational efforts at adapting religions to the context of socialist society have enabled believers to come to an in-depth understanding of the Christian concepts of glorifying God, serving as light and salt, and being active contributors to socialist economic construction. We believe that there is a close relationship between the prosperity of the country and the prosperity of the Church. We are conscious of supporting the leadership of the Communist Party of China and socialist society.

At the same time, in casting off the shackles of the old theology, we



A newly established rural church at Datang Village in China's coastal province of Zhejiang

eliminated the influence of political disagreement due to different beliefs caused by the old theology. We are closer to the contemporary era and society. Consciously integrated into society, we adapt ourselves to socialism and make the church socially acceptable. We should maximize our unity with all like-minded groups and together engage in the core efforts of current national development. When handling the issue of "privately established gathering places," both government departments and religious organizations should follow these guidelines.

III. Working together on standardized management in accordance with the Regulations

According to the provisions of the Regulations, a religious site should be

application ready before applying for legal status.

"A religious body may begin the preparatory work for establishing a site for religious activities only after the application for such establishment is approved."

Article 14 A site for religious activities to be established shall meet the following conditions:

(I) Religious organizations, sites for religious activities and religious citizens shall abide by the Constitution, laws and regulations and safeguard national unity, ethnic unity and social stability. — This provision emphasizes and highlights the supremacy of national interests. It is a rigid, directional and fundamental provision. Words and deeds of religious believers, as well as establishment of churches and sites, should not deviate from this fundamental.

(II) Local religious citizens have a need to frequently carry out collective religious activities.— This is a consideration of the actual needs of believers. At present, most privately established gathering sites are located within or near the areas

where believers live. The availability of gathering sites will be conducive to the normalization of their religious life.

(III) There are religious personnel or other persons who are qualified under the prescriptions of the religion concerned to preside over the religious activities.

- This is a consideration of site organization and regulative management. Religious organizations should be more concerned about this issue. In our view, religious personnel qualified to officiate at religious activities should have at least received a formal theological education. It is reported that a mixture of qualified and unqualified people officiates at religious activities at "privately established gathering places." This damages the image of the church.

(IV) There are the necessary funds. — This touches on basic material conditions for maintaining a site. The decision as to what the "necessary funds" is flexible. We have discussed other qualifications listed in the application, including a church's grade, size and availability of funds. But we failed in drawing a agreed conclusion. However, this provision indicates that the party and the government have fully considered the material conditions

necessary to sustain a religious place. Churches and sites without legitimate status may be unable to open a bank account. The lack of a legitimate status may cause problems in regulative management, at least in management of finances. In this case, the Financial Supervision and Management Measures for Sites for Religious Activities (Trial) issued by the State Administration for Religious Affairs in 2010 is not executable.

(V) It is rationally located without interfering with the normal production and livelihood of the neighboring units and residents.

This relates to social harmony and stability, which is a hope of the churches. A church without harmonious relations with its neighbors, fail to witness everywhere to the glory of God, and cares only for its own interests rather sharing love with others. Such a church would not be regarded as a good church.

Following the Regulations on Religious Affairs promulgated by the State Administration for Religious Affairs (March 1 2005), the Decision on Amending the Regulations on Religious

Affairs Management in Sichuan was promulgated by the Bureau of Religious Affairs of Sichuan Province in November 2006. Based on the Regulations on Religious Affairs Management in Sichuan issued in May 2000, it is a targeted policy-oriented legal document more relevant to the actual situation of Sichuan Province. The Regulations should be used as the yardstick to standardize management. To standardize means to play by the rules.

In Chengdu, the capital city of Sichuan province, there are 27 formal gathering sites for religious occasions. These sites currently exist under the name “contact

points”. We regard these as "meeting points led by churches," which clarifies their relationship with the Protestant Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee of Chengdu City should be clarified. In cities and counties of Sichuan province, the pattern of "sites led by churches" is adopted largely to reflect the guidance on subordinate sites given by the formal legitimate churches (mostly located in the cities or county seats), ensuring that the sites will stay on track in confirming the direction for running churches, practicing the canons and doctrines, preaching the pure gospel, and implementing standardized management.

More importantly, we should take the initiative to empower qualified meeting places with legal status. We should also be concerned with unqualified places, guiding them to become qualified for legal status.

When facing the problem squarely, we may take the following measures: positive guidance, active persuasion, and strengthened management. We should make more research efforts, sum up experiences, make detailed analyses, and progress gradually. We should not let

matters slide or turn a blind eye to the situation. Religious organizations should also take the initiative to participate. We should avoid the situation that bad old practices die hard, which may result in be in a dilemma of governance.

On July 1, 2004, the Administrative Licensing Law of the People's Republic of China was officially implemented. This law brought both opportunities and challenges to two players in the religious sector. It requires that we should apply for an administrative license under existing laws and regulations. The implementation of administrative licensing aims to protect the legitimate rights and interests of citizens, legal persons and other organizations, safeguard public interests and social order, and ensure effective implementation of administrative management. The establishment of a new church should be approved according to applicable legal provisions, namely, the Regulations. The government should follow the Regulations to decide if an administrative license is applicable to a church or site.

The two players in the religious sector should make efforts in this regard.

IV. Being people-oriented

Laws currently in effect, including the Regulations on Religious Affairs and the Administrative Licensing Law, are fully people-oriented. Governing for the people, mobilizing all positive factors that can be mobilized, and turning negative factors into positive ones will guide the masses of the people toward the common goal set by the Party.

Management is a process of interaction and coordination between the administrators and the administrated. In the process of implementing the Regulations, we should properly integrate the so-called rigidity of laws and flexibility of policies. Religious issues feature a special complexity. Some should be handled by legal means or policy means while the others should be handled both legal and policy means.

Sometimes it's difficult to find a solution which balances law, emotion and reason. That is to say, illegal things may sometimes be emotionally reasonable. In such a situation, we should pay patience, love and care in finding a legally and emotionally reasonable solution according to applicable policies, laws and



A well-established urban church at Xiangshan County in China's costal province of Zhejiang



Sunday service at Datang Church, a newly established rural church in China's coastal province of Zhejiang

regulations. In some areas in Chengdu, some sites have not been formally recognized due to certain reasons. Considering the fact that these orderly gatherings of believers exist, the local authority takes an acquiescence attitude. It is a people-oriented approach. However, acquiescence does not make a permanent solution. On the one hand, we see the faith needs of local religious believers. On the other hand the establishment of new churches and sites should be in compliance with the existing laws of the state. We need a positive and viable solution.

To solve these problems, we should first squarely face the issues and see the contradictions in a positive manner rather than avoiding problems and contradictions. Then, following analysis, we may find the solution. This is the right way to proceed.

(Translated from an article written by Rev. Li Dong, President of the Christian Council of Sichuan Province and President of Sichuan Theological Seminary)

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