New Hope for Disabled Children

A boy of about ten contracted muscular dystrophy. His healthy ankles grew progressively weaker and the merciless course of the disease robbed him of the ability to run and jump. His parents sought treatment everywhere, but they received the frightening diagnosis that this was an incurable disease. When they thought about death claiming their beloved son in a year or two, they felt as if a knife had pierced their hearts.

Yet, two years later, this child is not only alive, his condition is under control. The Director of the Nanjing Rehabilitation Centre for Disabled Children, Zuo Chengzhi, says: “We must credit the Amity Foundation for this, for introducing to us specialists in rehabilitative medicine from Hong Kong and the United States. With their instruction, we now have a solid grasp of treatment methods to slow down the destructive progress of this type of disease. These methods have been highly successful in clinical practice.”

The Nanjing facility is one of China’s first rehabilitation centres for treating children with physical and mental disabilities. Rehabilitation therapy as a medical field did not appear in China until after World War II, and rehabilitative pediatric medicine even later.

As the personnel in Nanjing had almost no training in pediatric rehabilitative medicine, the Amity Foundation sent them foreign experts for short term training courses. In 1987, four specialists in physical disabilities, sponsored by the Wheatridge Foundation, a Missouri Synod Lutheran Welfare group from the USA gave them a six weeks’ course on therapy and operation techniques. In the same year, two clinic psychologists and one rehabilitation counselor from the Yang Memorial Centre in Hong Kong held two training courses of two and three weeks. They lectured on human development, abnormal behavior and mental retardation, led workshops on behavior modification and taught new methods of play therapy. In mid 1988, one of these experts came again to supervise staff and help implement the newly adopted rehabilitation programs.

Following the training courses, the leaders of this centre placed great stress on the application of what had been learned, and results were quickly apparent in clinical practice.

Case histories reflect the efforts put forth by the staff. One severely retarded sixteen-year-old girl, unable even to tie her own shoelaces, was wearing a shoddy pair of sneakers when she entered the hospital. Dr. Lu and her colleagues set about raising the patient’s ability to take care of herself, and settled on a plan of teaching her to tie her shoelaces. They identified eleven different movements involved. With the doctor acting as model and guiding her by the hand, the patient was able to master this skill in the short space of eight days. When her mother saw her tying shoelaces for the other young patients in the ward, she was both amazed and delighted. The twenty mentally retarded children currently at the centre have all experienced some level of improvement, anywhere from 5-10% over their previous intelligence levels.

Another child lay paralyzed in bed all day. Treatment had no effect on her. Therapist Ding Ti applied a method he had learned from the American expert in the training course. In the course of therapy involving use of a medicine ball he strengthened stimulation and a marked improvement was seen. The child is now able to sit up.

The centre has also opened a clinic for the early detection and treatment of disabilities, using diagnostic methods for childhood retardation which were introduced by the foreign specialists. Case histories here show that many newborn babies suffer from symptoms that have formerly been detected too late. Contact is established with the parents, who are asked to bring the children for examination. Prompt efforts at rehabilitation and the spread of information about pediatric rehabilitative medicine will open up a new world for these children.
Chinese Expertise Plus Western Management Make Bible Printing a Success

Interview with The General Manager of The Amity Printing Company

The following interview with Peter MacInnis provides an update on Amity's printing press. Mr. MacInnis and his family are from the USA, and have been living in Nanjing since August 1988, when he became the general manager.

Q: Since the Amity Printing Company started its production in late 1987, it has printed, as a first priority, more than 600,000 Bibles of different types. Other types of printed material have also produced revenue for the plant. What is the present proportion of income from Bibles and from other work?

A: Now our revenue is about 90 percent from Bibles and 10 percent from other work. In our projections for the next few years at least we expect the ratio to be about eight to one, Bibles to other work.

Q: What other kinds of material do you print?

A: We print textbooks for publishers, but these bring in relatively little revenue. We also print brochures, calendars, and other commercial jobs on our colour presses. These provide a larger source of income, relatively.

Q: Are your machines running at full capacity?

A: We have two major types of printing presses. One is the Timson, a very efficient press for printing books, especially Bibles. The Timson is fully used on a two-shift basis. A third shift was tried, but found to be inefficient. We also have two Roland colour presses, which are not yet running at capacity, because our sales staff is still learning how to price and sell colour printing jobs.

Q: Is the Printing Company still dependent on foreign donations from overseas, and if so, how dependent?

A: Foreign donations play a significant role in allowing us to run the company as a joint venture, in making, high quality paper available, and in keeping down the price of Bibles. They also make possible the unique cooperation we see between Christians outside China and those inside China in the effort to print and distribute Bibles. And that cooperation has been a blessing to everyone involved. But I don't think of the donations as something the company is "dependent" upon. If for some unforeseen reason they were to dry up tomorrow, the opportunity for cooperation and the way Bibles are being produced now would take a huge setback. But the church in China would continue to print Bibles for its believers...as it was doing before the company was ever established.

Q: As far as I understand the structure of the Printing Company, the Amity Foundation is only part of it. Who are the other owners, and how do they relate to each other?

A: When the project first began in 1987, the equipment and paper were donated by the United Bible Societies (UBS) to Amity. The Amity Foundation in turn found a Chinese partner; because Amity is not structured to run a printing business. Their partner from the start was the Jiangning County Industrial Corporation, which made the land available, worked with the construction companies, and provided all of the staff. Last year these Chinese partners together requested that the UBS become a third, full partner—not just a donating agency—in running the joint venture. This move provides some tax benefits to the company, gives it a more open access to export, and brings in more capital. Also, it gives Amity a stronger voice in the management of the press. In the beginning, the day-to-day operations were dominated by the people from Jiangning County. The joint venture provided a way to get management representation on site and gain control over day-to-day operations.

Q: You are the general manager of the printing company. What is expected from your work?

A: Probably most important is what I have to contribute to helping the project become a truly "joint" venture. The legal and financial aspects are new ground for both Amity Foundation and UBS. In some respects we are groping our way, trying to take the best of what the West offers in terms of management and blend it with the demands of the situation here. I think my most important responsibility both to the board and to my Chinese colleagues is in facilitating that transition.

Q: Has there been any pressure to reduce the printing of Bibles?

A: No, not at all. None of the involved parties has ever objected to the printing of Bibles.

Q: What are your most urgent tasks toward increasing efficiency while maintaining high quality standards?

A: Well, apart from restructuring the management relationships, I have to get an effective sales force who can bring in the high paying jobs and also to raise the level of the technical staff to do these jobs. Because most of our current staff has comparatively superficial training, I want to hire more printing experts. However, I also have to trim the staff, to raise efficiency.

Q: Is that a legal possibility in socialist China?

A: Oh yes, the joint venture law gives me that right. But I have to do that carefully, because those people who are out of work become the responsibility of the Jiangning County Government. So I have to work out an arrangement with the County in order to find new jobs for those we no longer can employ. On the other hand we find expertise in high demand and short supply since there is so much printing done in China and people are hesitant to leave a secure job to take a chance with a joint venture, even if the salary is more attractive.

Difficulties aside, we have a marvelous opportunity to set an example of cooperation between the West and China taking the best of what each has to offer. We are not under the same pressure as other joint ventures to show a high return on investment in their first few years. On the contrary, we have virtually unqualified support from both Chinese and UBS board members to make this company a success not simply from a production and income standpoint, but also as a model of what is possible when people committed to printing the Bible work together.
Looking Beyond Amity:
Agape Kindergarten Opens
Doors for Hepatitis Stricken Children

At first sight, the kindergarten in Guangzhou's 4th Zhong Shan Road No. 34 looks like any other in China: bouncing and vivacious children romping about the playground and gliding down the slide-ladder, a teacher playing the piano as a group of well disciplined youngsters sing a folk song, and other classes listening to stories or painting pictures.

But upon looking further, a visitor finds that under the playground is a huge sewage tank, and in an adjacent building, well equipped sanitation rooms, a laboratory for sewage treatment, a medical room, and a kitchen with special hygienic facilities. This kindergarten, run by the Guangzhou Agape Social Center is a very special one, most likely the first of its kind in China. All of the three-to-six year-old kindergarteners have a Hepatitis B problem. Without being acutely ill or showing any severe symptoms, they carry the Hepatitis B virus which, especially in a poor hygienic environment, can infect others. To put it scientifically, they are Hepatitis B Antigen Surface positive carriers (HBsAg+ without symptom).

Hepatitis B is endemic throughout the country, and 70% of China's total population carry antibodies. In order to get the disease under control, Chinese health regulations do not permit children carrying the Hepatitis B virus to attend a boarding school or a kindergarten where children have meals together and a nap after lunch. Communal meals and sleeping in dormitories would increase the risk of infection.

In Guangzhou alone, an estimated ten thousand children are Hepatitis carriers, as was learned when regular and improved Hepatitis check ups for children were introduced.

However, while isolating Hepatitis carriers is important for the health level of the society as a whole, it causes problems for the affected children. They suffer from loneliness and are often stigmatized by their families, friends and neighbors. Moreover, after being excluded from a proper kindergarten education, they usually lag behind their classmates once they go to primary school.

This problem deeply concerned some of the leading Christians in Guangzhou. In response, the Agape Social Center, run by the Guangzhou Three Self Committee and the Guangzhou Christian Council, erected an additional two-story building on their small compound in the inner city, and had all the necessary facilities installed for a special kindergarten. This was opened in September 1988, enrolling 110 children, divided into three classes.

Mr. Gao Yangzhong (高仰忠), Director of the Center, recalls the first planning procedures: "In the beginning the people living in the neighborhood of our center strongly rejected our plans. They were naturally afraid of contracting Hepatitis themselves. But we have established high standards of environmental protection and epidemic control. For instance, all garbage and sewage, even the rainwater, have to go through disinfection treatment. That's what we have this 600 Cubicmeter underground tank for. One can say, that all of us, including our neighbors and the concerned government officials, underwent a process of learning and conscientization in this matter. Today our neighbors are very sympathetic. We have received firm support and a great deal of appreciation from the Party and the municipal government."

The kindergarten employs eleven persons, among them teachers, nurses, and a retired woman doctor from the Guangzhou Hospital for Infectious Diseases, an institution the kindergarten cooperates closely with. The initial costs of nearly RMB 300,000 (equivalent to US$80,000) have been covered by donations from within and without China. Among the overseas donors are the Church of Sweden Mission, the Norwegian Missionary Society and the Hong Kong Christian Council. Day-to-day expenses are mainly met by the income through kindergarten fees of RMB 80 per child per month. In hiring staff members, the kindergarten especially seeks recently retired persons from Guangzhou in order to minimize expenditure.

"Considering how wide spread this problem of Hepatitis B among children is", Gao comments, "our center can make only a modest contribution. We are far from coping with this problem. But we hope that we can be an incentive to other institutions so that they may eventually start similar undertakings. We know of one case in Guangzhou where this is already being considered."

Apart from this project, the Guangzhou Agape Social Center runs a kindergarten for healthy children and is involved in youth work as well as in care for the elderly. Although the Center and Amity have no formal relationship, both their spirit and endeavours are very much the same: serving the Chinese society by engaging in social welfare and innovative projects, making use of solidarity and support coming from Christians abroad and thus providing a Christian witness through deeds outside the walls of the church. The Agape Social Center undertakes locally what Amity tries to establish nationwide.

Says Director Gao: "Although our center in Guangzhou has no direct structural relationship with the Amity Foundation, we want to learn from Amity, and feel encouraged by Amity's contributions to society. In this respect I am happy with our connections thus far. Amity has helped us a lot, and we want to continue to cooperate with one another."

Amity Equips Christian Hospital

A church building is good for more than just a few worship services and Bible classes. It is a talent from god of which we should make most by using it for the service of our neighbors." When in 1986 the Christians of Zhong Xian Church in Sichuan Province were given back their church building that had been occupied by a factory during the Cultural Revolution, they pursued this idea and reserved 300 square metres for setting up a clinic. "Renji Clinic" (Clinic of Benevolent Aid), as they named it, is run under the sole responsibility of the church. They employ five retired Christian doctors, all specialists in different fields of medicine, and the local Christians collected funds to purchase the most urgently needed equipment. Although the county also has a government hospital, the church clinic met an apparent need of the people: In 1988 alone, they counted about twenty thousand appointments with patients, including simple surgery and child birth.

The Amity Foundation has equipped the Renji Clinic with a Laboratory for RMB 5,000 (US$1,400) and plans to donate an X-ray machine for RMB 40,000 (US$11,000) as soon as the clinic has found a radiologist.
NEWS IN BRIEF

Simplified Character Bibles Now on Sale

On March 7, 1989, Peter MacInnis, General Manager of the Amity Printing Company, presented Han Wenzao, Executive Vice President of the China Christian Council, the first bound copy of the simplified character edition of the Chinese Bible ever printed in China.

By mid March more than 30,000 copies of this new edition were shipped to churches in time for special dedication services held over the Easter season. Over the rest of this year more than 400,000 copies of this Bible will be produced. Since the opening of the printing press in December 1987 more than 700,000 Bibles have been printed, and the total is expected to exceed 1,200,000 by the end of 1989.

The simplified character edition of the Chinese Bible was phototypeset at the Amity Printing Company and proofread by staff members of the China Christian Council with assistance of translation consultants sent through the United Bible Societies. The task was completed in a much shorter time than originally anticipated.

Amity Board Meets in Nanjing

The third meeting of the Board of Directors of the Amity Foundation was held in Nanjing on March 6th and 7th, 1989. Board members reviewed reports on the work of the Amity Foundation over the last two years, reaffirmed their commitment to the existing programs and discussed plans for future Amity initiatives in social service and rural development.

Board members were most enthusiastic about the "Amity Spirit" and working style. Said President K. H. Ting: "At so many meetings, we hear all about the backdoors and corruption in our society. It was therefore refreshing to attend a recent Amity staff meeting and hear of the hopes of our young staff members, and their plans for future programs." Honorary President Kuang Yaming spoke of the spirit of service, of dedication and of selflessness which has shaped Amity's working style. "This spirit can be used to resist and change the unhealthy tendencies which we see in our society," he said. Other board members affirmed that the "Amity Spirit" can make an important contribution to the building up of socialist spiritual civilization.

It was reported at the board meeting that Amity has begun to give special attention to projects initiated by Chinese Christians at the local level. These include support for two small clinics started by Christian doctors in Sichuan and Anhui.

The majority of Amity's twenty-one board members are prominent Christian leaders from Nanjing, Shanghai, Beijing, Shandong and Zhejiang. Men and women who have distinguished themselves in other walks of life are also represented on the Amity Board, including Kuang Yaming (丘亚明), President Emeritus of Nanjing University and Su Dqing (苏步青), President Emeritus of Fudan University in Shanghai.

Aid For Typhoon And Earthquake Areas Arrived

In our last newsletter, we appealed for rehabilitation funds for the typhoon stricken area in Zhejiang Province (East China) and for Yunnan Province (Southwest China), hit by an earthquake in November 1988. So far, the Amity Foundation has received more than RMB 506,000 (US$60,000) for Zhejiang, with funds still coming in for Yunnan. In both cases, provincial Church leaders have served as Amity liaisons. Deng Fucun (邓福村), General Secretary of the Zhejiang Christian Council, and Gu Huaiqiong (谷怀琼), Vice-Chairman of the Yunnan Christian Council and Three-Self Committee, identified the projects and channeled the funds.

In Zhejiang, Amity has helped to restore two rural clinics and to replace their medical equipment that had been ruined. Amity has also supported reconstructing and refurbishing Shaliu Middle School in Sannan County and Xiaolin Xiang Middle School in Yuhang County.

In Yunnan, funds will go towards the rebuilding of three churches that had been completely destroyed, and into the repair of ten others, all of them belonging to Christians from minority nationalities.