Learning Through Sight, Sound And Touch
A Visit To Wuding County

In early February this year, the Amity Foundation arranged a field trip for its language teachers to Wuding County (Yunnan Province). Since 1992, Amity has been involved in the area supporting various rural development projects, including bio-facilities for peasant households, village clinics, primary schools and the provision of drinking water and electricity. In addition, Amity assisted with relief and rehabilitation funds after the county was hit by a severe earthquake in October last year. All in all, Amity has so far transferred more than one million yuan (US$120,000) to Wuding County. Canadian Amity teacher Gary MacDonald led the following report on the group visit.

Few, if any, of us had been in a motor vehicle procession escorted by police cars before and it seemed a bit strange to be in one then. Red lights flashed and sirens wailed. "Is it so dangerous that we need police with us?" someone asked. "No," came the reply, "it's their way of welcoming you."

There were about 70 of us from various western countries on our way to visit small villages in Wuding County about 100 kilometers from the city of Kunming in Yunnan Province. It was an opportunity to see some of the work of Amity. Seventy foreigners together in that area of China was a rare sight indeed. As one of those 70 I wondered what this all meant, so many foreigners descending upon three small villages.

The first designated visit was to the village of Maliyuan, where Amity had been involved in the creation of bio-gas facilities as an alternative energy source. We wandered through the neat and tidy village. People smiled and spoke. A funeral procession wound its way to the ancestral hall. Life and death went on. It was an easy, comfortable visit to a community where a project had gone well.

Next day we climbed higher into the mountains to the village of Kangzhou, which had suffered much damage as a result of last October's earthquake. The destruction was evident. Few buildings were left standing. A glance at the people so poorly dressed and small in stature spoke of their poverty.

But there was something more in that village. A deep calmness filled the air. People were smiling. The school children chanted a chorus of warm welcome. Here we were in this small village where there was so much suffering, where people had lost their homes, but somehow it was so peaceful. Here too, life went on. In spite of the continued difficulties of rebuilding physical structures the community was still there. I watched as a bare-foot doctor attended to a child. The children, having lost their school, attend classes in a cave. Tents were set up for shelter.

People had lost the little they had. But they did not give up. They went on in a struggle as a people of hope.

The final visit took us higher into the mountains to Xiaolongtang. In this place, 2,300 meters above sea level, Amity was involved in a slope terracing project. And here the experience became even more incredible. As we approached, soft and gentle music greeted us. We found ourselves walking on a deep carpet of pine needles the people had laid for us. As we came into sight they began to dance.

With the experience of the previous village and now this, I was becoming...
confused. I thought we had come to see people suffering from natural disaster and poverty but we saw so much smiling and now - music and dancing? The dancers led us to a gentle slope and the continuing carpet of pine needles. There was more music and dancing. We were fed. It was a picnic! It was a party!

It wasn't supposed to happen this way. I thought that coming here would make me sad or depressed. Somehow it should have made me feel guilty. But it didn't. There was joy in those mountains. There was hope and there was peace.

In reflection I realize all the more that it is not so much that we may learn in the form of words but from the people themselves, the places and the actions. It is the knowledge gained by sight, by sound and by touch. There is the disaster, the suffering and the struggle. It's all there. But there is also the hope, the love and the victory. This is what life is. It is the human experience of oneself, of others and of this earth we inhabit.

And now I still hear the music as the school children. I see the dance. My feet feel the soft carpet of pine needles. In my mind it all comes together weaving me into its created whole. In this I rejoice.

Gary MacDonell

Assessing, Co-operating, Encouraging
Amity's Approach to Development

The Amity Foundation's development perspective must be set in the context of China's broader approach to development as it has emerged in the years since 1978.

Before this time, there were no "development projects" in China as this term is commonly understood. Instead, government assistance was provided in the form of direct grants and grain subsidies, beginning with counties which were "old revolutionary base areas, with minority populations, in poor and remote areas." For more than thirty years, massive amounts of relief were distributed to poorer counties in China, and it is now seen that these programs resulted in the perpetuation of underdevelopment. There was no incentive to build up local resources or provide education for people. In addition, sustainable income generation projects were discouraged, and so many of these same counties are still impoverished and still dependent upon central government relief.

Chinese policy changed in 1978 when the government began to encourage international development aid, in the form of technical assistance from the United Nations Development Pro-

gram. In the process, the development project was introduced to China, and this led to increased co-operation with international agencies. Within two years, the UN was supporting 200 projects and other projects were soon to follow, supported by the IMF and the World Bank. International development agencies and NGOs also began to get involved in China, including Christian organizations, such as the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the German-based Protestant Association for Cooperation in Development (EZE), and large private charities, such as the Ford Foundation. In all of these efforts, the role of foreigners in development has been kept to a minimum, limited to short visits for consultation, planning and evaluation. This is one important way in which development projects in China differ as compared to those in other parts of the world.

A new overall approach to government poverty alleviation and rural development began with the Seventh Five Year Plan (1986-1990). At the national level, poverty alleviation was now coordinated by the Poverty Alleviation Office (PAO) under the State Council. Undesignated aid had formerly been given to individual counties, but now designated grants and loans were offered for particular development projects in order to encourage greater initiative and self-reliance.

At the provincial and county levels, a great deal of poverty alleviation money goes into basic infrastructure (water, roads and electrification); the building of schools and other institutions; and the construction of factories. Recent studies have shown that these programs are having a positive impact and are helping to break the cycle of rural poverty. However, money is often wasted on unworkable projects, the construction of fancy buildings and the purchase of needless equipment and furnishings. There is also an inadequate emphasis on education, training and popular participation.

The problem of corruption in government poverty alleviation efforts is generally acknowledged, and it involves officials at the national, provincial and county levels. At each level there is opportunity to divert funds for personal or other uses. The problem is a serious one, but it should not be exaggerated. One foreign researcher investigating poverty alleviation in Fujian Province estimated that only 65% of central government funds reached the grassroots. But he went on to say that this was not bad in comparison with other countries, and that some of the remaining funds were still used for development work, although not in the intended way. It should also be remembered that some high profile international NGOs spend up to 40% on overhead.

The PAO defines poverty in terms of per capita income and grain consumption, which are set at a minimum standard of 300 yuan and 300 catties of grain. (One catty = 0.5 kg.) At the local level, there is some confusion over whether this is really the national standard. For provinces along the east coast, the poverty level may be as high as 500 yuan, whereas it may be only 200 or 250 yuan in the southwest and northwest. Suffice it to say that the "Double 300" figure does represent an order of magnitude, which is supposed to ensure an adequate level of food and
shelter. Using this measurement, there were 376 poor counties in China in 1995, and an estimated 70 million rural poor. (The 376 counties do not include Tibet, where all 77 counties are below the poverty line, and where poverty alleviation funds are administered by a different organization.) This is down from 90 million in the early 1990s, according to the State Council. Other estimates say that the poverty level may be over 100 million.

There are two basic problems with defining poverty in this way: (1) Many counties have higher average incomes than the set figure, but within them, there are towns and villages which are quite poor. Provincial governments have therefore had to set their own poverty levels for such towns and villages, which is one reason why the number of poor may be much higher than 70 or 80 million. Similarly, the definition excludes the rural poor of China's "floating population." (2) The designation of poverty in terms of income level and grain consumption does not give an adequate indication of other socio-economic indices, including life expectancy, infant and maternal mortality, education, literacy and school drop-out rates, access to medical care, etc. These indicators also suggest that poverty is unequally distributed according to gender, as is true in all parts of the world.

Guangming Daily reported on a development conference in early 1995 in which participants urged a shift in emphasis in poverty alleviation from poverty areas to poverty stricken people. The change is more than semantic, for it involves a transition to a more humanistic and people-oriented approach in poverty alleviation. The development initiatives of the Amity Foundation have always been people-oriented insofar as the people of a given area are seen as the main actors in the effort to eradicate poverty, implement development programs and work for change. This is related to Amity's humanistic stance, its origins as a Christian-initiated people's organization, and to relationships with donor organizations and international partners who share a common perspective.

In this light, what does it mean to speak of an Amity development project? The vast majority of Amity development funding comes from partner agencies in Europe and North America. They also provide other kinds of support to Amity, and give much valuable advice. Overseas partner agencies, however, do not see Amity projects as their projects. It is of course the Amity staff that approves, co-ordinates, plans, and evaluates these projects in China. In addition, provincial and county governments provide oversight and guidance for projects. But the real project beneficiaries are the people themselves. They are the ones who implement and make decisions about projects whose broader purpose is the overall development of their communities. Amity's integrated development projects are really the projects of the people at the grassroots, and it is to them that Amity is ultimately accountable. All Amity projects involve relationships between Amity, overseas partners, government bodies and grassroots people, and it is this relationship which defines what is special about an Amity project.

In practical terms, Amity's approach to development involves three things:

(1) Meeting Basic Human Needs: These are usually defined as sufficient food, convenient and safe water supply, basic medical facilities and opportunities for education. The government is responsible for meeting these basic needs, but officials have admitted that they are not always able to do so, and NGOs like Amity are able to play a role.

(2) Emphasizing People's Participation in Development: This is what it means to have a people-oriented approach. The people themselves must participate in defining the problem and creating the solution, or else the project will not be successful. Integrated development, therefore, involves generating people's enthusiasm to help themselves. Time must be spent with people at the grassroots, and attention must be given to education, training and consultation.

(3) Co-operating with the Government and the People: It is expected that local people must make a contribution to development projects, usually in the form of labor; and that the government must also make a contribution, usually in the form of financial support. Amity provides additional financial support, and participates in planning and evaluation.

Amity does not at present have a program of advocacy and popular education on development. But within these three areas of emphasis, a great deal of discussion takes place on the broader issues. What should be the government's role in meeting people's basic needs, and what role should be left to the private sector? What is the relationship between "socialism with Chinese characteristics," the use of market mechanisms and economic planning? What is the role, responsibility and purpose of NGOs in China? What is the proper role of international organizations such as the UNDP, the World Bank and the IMF in China's social development? How should churches, development agencies and NGOs in the developing world respond to China's development needs? How can south-south sharing be further developed in ways which are mutually beneficial? How can an emphasis on people's participation be broadened to include greater involvement of women, minorities, the young, the churches and the disabled? How can an approach based on co-operation address situations in which there are problems with the local officials' perspective, implementation and approach?

These are among the many questions which Amity staff discuss with partners at the local level and overseas. Such questions are helping to define and enhance Amity's overall perspective on development work in rural China.

Amity cultivates a work style of co-operation. Gu Xiuhui (right) discusses project plans with local officials.

Philip Wickeri
(Based in Hong Kong, Philip Wickeri serves as Amity Overseas Coordinator)
Why Amity Goes West
Chinese Statistics Show The Country's Uneven Development

Amity staff members responsible for project implementation travel a lot. Though their office is located in Nanjing, the capital of coastal Jiangsu Province, most Amity projects are to be found in western China, because Amity goes where the poverty is greatest. While coastal China is booming, interior provinces are lagging behind. Investments follow the beaten track of a highly developed transport infrastructure, whereas many of Amity's rural development projects can only be reached by winding gravel roads or even steep mountain paths.

How do eastern, central and western China compare in economic statistics? The following figures are taken from Guangming Daily, June 16, 1996. If not otherwise indicated, all details refer to the year 1994.

How is China divided into East, Central and West?

WEST
Xinjiang, Tibet, Qinghai, Gansu, Ningxia, Sha' anxi, Sichuan, Yunnan, Guizhou

CENTRAL
Inner Mongolia, Heilongjiang, Jilin, Shanxi, Henan, Hubei, Anhui, Hunan, Jiangxi

EAST
Liaoning, Beijing, Tianjin, Hebei, Shandong, Jiangsu, Shanghai, Zhejiang, Fujian, Guangdong, Guangxi, Hainan

What are the economic growth rates of these regions?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>GDP average annual growth rate between 1978 and 1994:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>4.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL</td>
<td>5.20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>6.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Level of socio-economic development in 1994, calculated on the basis of 40 index figures:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1994 level of socio-economic development (index)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>43.4 : 0.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL</td>
<td>52.1 : 0.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>83.6 : 1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Based on this calculation, the development ratio between the regions in 1994 was more unfavorable to the West than in 1990:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Development ratio (1994/1990)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>0.73 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL</td>
<td>0.93 : 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What is the pattern of investment allocation?

In 1994, foreign investment totalled US$420.9 billion, but was distributed in a highly unequal way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1994 foreign investment distribution (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>86.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>4.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

State investment was a bit more evenly distributed, but still heavily favored the East:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>1994 state investment distribution (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EAST</td>
<td>68.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WEST</td>
<td>15.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CENTRAL</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is the situation within education?

- People with junior high school education or above in the total population over the age of 15:
  - WEST: 36.0%
  - EAST: 48.7%
  - WEST: 28.7%
  - EAST: 19.4%
- College graduates per 10,000 people:
  - WEST: 9.3% (Guizhou)
  - EAST: 42.3% (Liaoning)
- Per-capita public spending on education:
  - WEST: 40 yuan (Sichuan)
  - EAST: 100 yuan (Liaoning)

What is the situation for production?

- Per-capita GDP (gross domestic product):
  - WEST: 2,403 yuan
  - EAST: 5,340 yuan
- Per-capita GDP (Guizhou):
  - WEST: 1,553 yuan
  - EAST: 6,380 yuan (Guangdong)
- Industrial productivity per person and year:
  - WEST: 19,000 yuan
  - EAST: 24,000 yuan (Shanghai/Guangdong)

West/East ratio of GDAP (gross domestic agricultural product):

- WEST: 1
- EAST: 2.7

While Wuxi County in Jiangsu province has a population of only 1 million, the annual production value of its rural industry reached 68.4 billion yuan, the same as the value for the western provinces of Guizhou, Yunnan, Gansu, Qinghai, Ningxia and Xinjiang combined.

Where are people below the poverty line to be found?

Location of the 592 counties classified as poor by the central government:

- Central and western China are home to over 80% of the 70 million people officially classed as below the poverty line, and to most of the 120 million rural Chinese without access to electricity.

Income gaps are higher in the west than elsewhere. In 1994, the income ratio between the wealthiest 20% and the poorest 20% of the population was 4.5 in the cities of Xinjiang and 3.3 in the cities of Guizhou, higher than the national average of 3.1.

News in Brief

Staff Changes:

The Nanjing office hired Mr. Zhang Liwei in the Education Division. For the past decade, Zhang worked at Nanjing University, where, among other things, he was involved in the publication of several English dictionaries and the translation of works on Jewish history.

The Hong Kong office was joined by Ian Groves (UK), who for the past four years taught as an Amity teacher in Ganzhou (Jiangxi Province). Ian, who holds a degree in linguistics (including Chinese and German languages), is sponsored by the Council of Churches in Britain & Ireland, with some financial assistance coming from the Northhembian Centre for World Mission in Germany. Another addition to the Hong Kong office is Judy Sutterlin (USA), who works on a part-time basis and is mainly involved with the Teachers Program. She is an ordained pastor sponsored by the American Baptist Churches and served for three years as an Amity teacher in Hangzhou. Susan Raeburn-Cherradi (Canada) and Lois Cole (USA) have both finished their contracts and returned to their respective countries.
A Visit To Wuli

On a Saturday morning I get off a small bus along the main road and walk with one of my students to visit his home in the village of Wuli. With its mud-brick homes scattered amid narrow, muddy paths it is typical of many of the villages in this area. There is a temple built in honor of the local gods, a few shops and an elementary school. It is neat and tidy, perhaps a little better off than many.

Soon, everyone knows I am there. Children come running to look through the wide door-way of my student's home at the first foreigner who has come to their village. Old grannies smile and chuckle. My student tells everyone that I am from Canada, a country near America. Everyone wants to know how I could travel so far to come to their part of the world.

The family looks on in pride as their son, the first to go beyond elementary school, speaks to me in English. Four or five young boys rush in thrusting a small cake into my hand. They have just bought it at a local shop as a gift of welcome to me.

The women begin to prepare a meal. I remember to mentally practice my polite responses to the inevitable "we have only poor dishes to give you." Later, I eat with the men. Then, my student invites me to see the village. He wants me to meet a special person he has told me about. It is Jiang Yong.

Jiang Yong has never been able to walk. At the age of one, a high fever robbed him of the use of his legs. "Of course," my student explains, "Jiang Yong could never go to school and he can never marry. How could he? He cannot walk." But Jiang Yong is the village success story.

Educating himself, Jiang Yong learned to read and write, taught himself electronics and later began his own business. Now, he sits in a small shop while the people of the village bring their radios and television sets for him to repair. As his business grew, Jiang Yong added a video games room and a pool table.

I am taken there and introduced. Jiang Yong is smiling and gracious. It is obvious that everyone knows and likes this thirty-year-old man. His shop is a hive of activity. Sitting together we have our photo taken. Jiang Yong asks me for my address. Jiang Yong is the village cripple. Jiang Yong is a successful business person.

I pass the day visiting my student's relatives and drinking endless cups of tea. There is the oldest brother who attended school for only three years but is now responsible for the functioning of the electricity in the village. Another brother can find no job and so will leave the next day with his wife to look for work in a neighboring province. Their six-year-old daughter will stay behind with the grandparents.

"Now," my student explains, "you can see many men in my village. In autumn there will only be the children and the old people. After the harvest everyone who can, goes to the large cities to look for work."

That night as I lie in bed, I open my eyes to the deep darkness. A pig grunts somewhere on the other side of the mud-brick wall. I think about the story of Jiang Yong. It is a story my student has told me in detail, so impressed it is upon his own mind. Now, I try to mentally visualize one of the scenes.

In my student's final year at the village elementary school, Jiang Yong was invited to speak to the senior class. ...The bigger boys in the class are sent with a hand cart to Jiang Yong's home. Carefully lifting him into the back of the cart, they take him through the narrow lanes of the village to the school. Because it is raining, someone holds an umbrella over Jiang Yong's head.

Jiang Yong is carried into the classroom and set upon a stool. It is his first day at school. The teacher asks the students to listen quietly and carefully. Jiang Yong begins to talk. It is to be a speech on how hard work and endurance can overcome all obstacles...

Thinking of this, I wonder what was on Jiang Yong's mind that day. How did he feel as the one who never went to school himself but was now speaking to the senior class? And what about the teacher who knew how important all this was?

As foreign teachers in China we all tell stories of injustice, unfairness, and suffering. Yet, every so often they come along those individuals who triumph over what may seem to be the impossible. We look into their eyes and see a soul burning with that hope and faith which can only be found within.

With this we continue our own work hoping to kindle the flame.

Gary MacDonald
News in Brief

Overseas Relations:

The Dao Xin Foundation, established by overseas Chinese in San Francisco, has given considerable support to Amity's social development projects in Henan Province over the past year. Dao Xin's representatives, who recently visited church clinics and other rural projects in the province, showed particular satisfaction with the grassroots approach of Amity's work. Dao Xin Foundation also sponsored school education for 100 children in Zhaotong Prefecture, Yunnan Province.

From the Social Welfare Division:

Almost 10,000 children participated in the "Shanghai Children's Painting Contest," which closed on May 26 and was co-sponsored by the Amity Foundation and the Children's Palace of the China Welfare Institute. The set theme for all paintings was "The World of Love." In early July, the 15 prize-winners from the age groups visited the Amity Foundation in Nanjing as well as a number of Amity projects in the rural areas of Huai'an (north Jiangsu). Living conditions there formed a sharp contrast to affluent Shanghai, the children's home base. They also met with pupils who have been re-enrolled in school after their families received financial support under the Amity "Love for the School-less" Project.

Miss Qian Ying, an orphan who grew up in the Suzhou Social Welfare Institute, has passed the national college entrance examination and now studies English and Foreign Trade at the Suzhou Silk Engineering Institute. As a newborn baby, Qian was abandoned by her parents because of a severe pre-natal deformity of her right hand. She graduated from Suzhou No. 11 Middle School and is the second orphanage-raised girl to receive her higher education with financial support from the Amity Foundation. The first orphan on an Amity scholarship, Yang Hongxia, grew up in the Gaochun Social Welfare Institute and is now a student of International Accounting at Jinling Vocational University in Nanjing. Both welfare institutes have been long-term partners of the Amity Foundation. Qian's and Yang's educational careers are rather exceptional, as most children from orphanages do not come to top in high school and enter the work force as soon as they graduate.

From the Rural Development Division:

Consultation on Poverty Alleviation and Sustainable Development was held in Puding County, Guizhou Province, August 19 - 25. Staff members from Nanjing and Amity rural development project coordinators from Guizhou, Hunan, Jiangxi, Shandong, Jiangsu, Henan and Gansu provinces discussed the latest trends in China's poverty alleviation programs and the concept of sustainable development. Agricultural specialists from Beijing participated as guest speakers. In a more practical level, Amity re-emphasized its procedures of project application, screening, monitoring and valuation. In Puding, Amity is currently running its largest integrated rural development project.

Project Proposals Available

In the latest Project Proposals, the Amity Medical and Health Division is seeking a total of US$6,167 million for four different programs. They involve the training of 15,000 village health workers in 18-month courses, the training of 3,000 township and county health workers in six-month programs, the provision of simple teaching facilities for 30 health training schools, the production of a video program on community-run health insurance systems, as well as the publication and distribution of the Village Doctor Quarterly for four years.

The Rural Development Division has plans ready for a new integrated rural development project, which will involve Yao minority people in Lingyun County, Guangxi Province (southwestern China). In nine selected villages, Amity intends to spend a total of US$687,000 on a wide variety of poverty alleviation activities. They include afforestation, the introduction of sustainable farming methods and women's training programs, the establishing of drinking water systems and village clinics, as well as the strengthening of primary school education. Amity's contribution will cover 37% of total project costs. For eight additional projects in Guangxi, Yunnan, Guizhou, Gansu and Jiangsu, the Rural Development Division is seeking another US$1.35 million.

For the support of 39 social service projects run by local churches in 17 different provinces, the Amity Foundation is seeking funds totalling US$308,000. The projects include 22 clinics, eight homes for the aged, five kindergartens, three agricultural projects and one computer class. The detailed Project Proposals are available from either of the two Amity offices.
From the Blindness Prevention Division:

A Workshop on Community Ophthalmology, co-sponsored by the Amity Foundation and the Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM) was held in Chengdu, Sichuan Province, July 1-5, 1996. Over 40 ophthalmologists from 15 Chinese provinces attended the workshop, which focused on the question of how to provide accessible and affordable ophthalmological services to China’s less developed regions. Topics also included eye disease prevention, eye care education and community-based rehabilitation (CBR) services for the incurably blind.

In coordination with the German-based partner Christoffel-Blindenmission (CBM), the Amity Foundation decided to start a community-based rehabilitation (CBR) model project in Luzhou Prefecture (southern Sichuan). The project will be the second of its kind, after Amity’s CBR project in Yixing (southern Jiangsu), which was started three years ago, turned out to be very successful and won great acclaim locally as well as nationally (see previous issue of the Amity Newsletter). As in Yixing, the CBR project in Luzhou will combine blindness prevention with the rehabilitation of the blind, which includes treatment, counselling, training in mobilization and employment, as well as the granting of soft loans to facilitate economic self-reliance. All these programs are carried out in the homes and the normal environments of the clients. In August, CBM consultant Robert Jaoelek visited China to help evaluate the project in Yixing and to plan the new one in Luzhou.

Flood Relief

After this year’s summer floods, the Amity Foundation pledged a total of US$200,000 for rehabilitation efforts in disaster-stricken areas. The floods affected four million people in a third of China’s provinces, killing at least 710 people and leaving hundreds of thousands homeless. Targeting particularly hard-hit and poor areas, Amity has selected Guichi, Dongzhi, Shitai and Huiyuan counties in Anhui Province, as well as Zhen’ning County in Guizhou Province. Projects include the reconstruction of nine villages and township schools and one home for the elderly, the restoration of a pumping station for drinking water supply, and financial assistance to 165 poor families who lost their homes. However, fund raising for these projects proved to be much more difficult than after floods in previous years. So far, Amity has only received US$65,000, less than a third of what is needed for identified projects.

From the Education Division:

In the current academic year (1996/97), 77 foreign language teachers are participating in the Amity Teachers Program. They are from the United States (45), the United Kingdom (8), Sweden (7), Norway (5), Japan (4), Canada (3), Germany (2), the Netherlands (1), Denmark (1) and Finland (1). With the exception of the teachers from Japan and Germany, they all teach English, 59 of them at teacher training colleges in the provinces of Jiangsu, Jiangxi, Fujian, Zhejiang, Anhui and Shandong. Two of this year’s 48 schools have been newly added to the program. They are the Wuxi Institute of Education (Jiangsu) and the Longyan Teachers College (Fujian), which brings the number of teachers colleges to 34.

During the summer vacation, the Amity Education Division organized 16 training programs for middle-school English teachers. Over 1,600 trainees from village and township schools and over 40 students from the Nanjing Theological Seminary attended the four-week classes given by 91 language instructors from the USA, who were sponsored by the Southern Baptists, the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, East Gate Ministries, China Connection and Columbia Theological Seminary.

The Amity Foundation was created at the initiative of Chinese Christians for the purpose of promoting health, education and welfare in the People’s Republic of China. It is an independent Chinese voluntary organization in which people from all walks of life may participate. Amity represents a new form of Chinese Christian involvement in society, through which Chinese Christians are joining hands with friends from around the world to serve the needs of China’s modernization.

The Amity Newsletter is distributed free of charge four times a year. If you would like to receive the Newsletter, or desire further information on any of our projects, please feel free to write. Institutions receiving the Newsletter are welcome to reprint any article from it. Credit should be given to the Amity Newsletter, Quarterly Bulletin of the Amity Foundation.

Funding for the work of the Amity Foundation comes from sources, both Chinese and foreign, religious and nonreligious, individual and organizational. Inquiries and suggestions concerning possibilities for new project initiatives are welcomed, as are contributions for the direct support of the Amity Foundation. Checks or bank drafts made payable to the Amity Foundation may be sent to the Nanjing Office.

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