Amity’s New General Secretary Calls For Creativity

"Communication, cooperation, and creativity" are three central ingredients for Amity’s new General Secretary to cope with the challenges the organization is facing. As a development agency that is still growing, Amity is confronted with both external and internal challenges. Externally, the widening gap between urban and rural incomes, increasing environmental degradation and issues of urban poverty are among the problems that touch on development work.

These external challenges, as well as the growing volume of projects handled, reflect on Amity’s work and organizational structure, bringing along internal challenges. In the following interview, Qiu Zhonghui shares some of his ideas on leadership and organizational growth with ANL. For Amity, as an NGO with strong links to the Protestant Church, maintaining and strengthening this ever-evolving bond is another important task and the foundation’s new General Secretary makes this very clear. Interview conducted by Katrin Fiedler.

Participatory development starts "at home"

How would you describe your leadership style?

In response, Qiu Zhonghui sets off to show how it works. "Look at this - another suggestion from our staff!" With these words, Qiu pulls out a two-page article that arrived through Amity’s internal e-mail system. This latest wave of staff suggestions was triggered by the upcoming construction project for a new Amity office building. Technically speaking, the easiest solution would be to tear down the old building and erect a new, bigger one instead. "Only foreigners bemoan the demise of the straw hut when they come to a village. We have to look ahead," some at Amity say, while others point out the historic value of the building, not only for the foundation, but also in Nanjing’s 20th century history. "It would really be a great pity if we cannot keep the old building," Qiu says.

Whether it is a new office building or more momentous organizational changes, it is important for Qiu that all those affected feel free to voice their ideas and suggestions. Years ago, his division introduced the participatory approach for rural development projects. Today, as Amity’s new General Secretary, he pursues the same approach in his leadership. "It is important to give people the assurance that their voices will be heard," he explains, "and we have to make sure that no suggestions fall through the cracks. If something cannot be implemented, it is important to explain why we reject a suggestion."

So far, staff have reacted very positively to this approach, voicing their opinions in meetings and bringing forth well-thought out suggestions. For Qiu, a
participatory management approach has a number of advantages: “As the old saying goes, ‘Two heads are better than one.’ It is always better to make decisions based on suggestions and ideas of the staff, which can avoid individual possible wrong decisions and promote democracy in our organizations. The staff can improve themselves through the whole process of engaging and participating in organizational management.”

“If a bird wants to fly higher, it needs to grow.”

What are some of the challenges facing Amity?

“Some of the challenges Amity is facing result from the ongoing changes in China, such as environmental degradation or the widening gap between the eastern and the western provinces. However, as a growing organization we have to face organizational challenges,” says Qiu. “Capacity building and organizational development are among our urgent tasks. For example, we should strive for even more professional project management.” Like a bird that wants to fly higher, he says, Amity needs to develop as an organization if it wants to be able to cope with the tasks ahead.

Committed staff is an important asset for any organization. Amity staff pride themselves on their culture of the “three Cs”, compassion, commitment, and competence. Qiu reiterates that Amity will continue to emphasize these basic qualities of all Amity staff. However, Qiu Zhonghui has added “three new Cs”: communication, cooperation, and creativity.

Does the emphasis on communication refer to the “divisionism” within Amity?

“It is true that we work with strong divisions,” Qiu concedes, “and that the strength of the divisions within Amity has sometimes been criticized as the establishment of ‘kingdoms’. I would like to use a positive word for this situation, because Amity’s work was strengthened due to the rapid expansion of its work in different divisions. We have to take them seriously and must not dampen their enthusiasm.”

“For the same reason,” he adds, “we need to strengthen communication and cooperation so as to ensure a coordinated development between Amity as an organization and its different divisions. To meet this end, we need to strengthen not only the capabilities of our staff but the capacity of our organization as well. After all, the reason why some individuals pursue such an independent working style is because they want to enhance efficiency and help even more of the poor.”

“There are parts of our office culture that need to change. An organization should preserve and further good traditions. But at the same time there should be constant innovation as well. Innovation is the core competitiveness of an organization and helps maintain its vitality. We should commit ourselves to fostering a good atmosphere for innovation.”

Apart from the “six Cs”, Qiu wants to emphasize another element that unites all those working for Amity: the idea of love. “God is love. The idea of love is something everybody can relate to, whatever his or her faith background,” explains Qiu. Amity’s setup as an organization that employs both Christians and non-Christians can be seen as a model for the cooperation of different groups within Chinese society, but it also springs from a pragmatic approach: “We cannot expect to fill all our staff vacancies from among the 1% Christian population in China,” Qiu states matter-of-factly.

Strengthening the relationship with the church

How do you see Amity’s relations with the church?

“Some people fear that because of the leadership change at CCC and Amity, the relationship with the church will be weak. But I think that if anything, it will be strengthened.” Just recently, Presbyter Ji Jianhong, Chairman of the National Three Self Patriotic Movement, visited Amity for a two-day seminar, where he presented the church’s ongoing efforts at theological reconstruction, and explained some of the issues the church leadership is facing. “It was the first meeting of this kind for us here in Amity. Presbyter Ji was very open, and it was very helpful for us,” Qiu summarizes the experience. “Besides, Rev. Cao Shengjie, President of the China Christian Council (CCC) and Rev. Deng Fucun, Vice Chair of the National Three Self Patriotic Movement, have also remarked on various occasions that CCC and Amity are complimentary to each other and that Amity’s work has helped CCC a lot.”

The recent establishment of the Social Welfare Department by the China Christian Council has brought up the question of how the newly created department and Amity will relate to each other. “Of course, questions are unavoidable, maybe not so much for us but for our donors - they have to decide how to allocate their limited funds. We think that whether given to Amity or the CCC, all support will serve the Chinese church and the Chinese people. Recently, at the Roundtable in Geneva, the CCC has reiterated its position that Amity’s work strengthens the CCC and the other way around.”

Bridging differences in faith and the ecumenical sharing of resources will remain central elements of Amity’s mission, Qiu asserts, but he also makes it clear that Amity needs to further develop ties within the secular nonprofit community: “Apart from strengthening the relationship with the church, we also need to develop our links with the network of other nonprofit organizations in China. This is somewhat like the two wings of a bird. Amity, the bird of love, can then fly higher and further.”

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Rounding Up Amity's Friends - And Support

The WCC Amity Roundtable Meeting In Geneva

Have you ever managed to get all your friends around one big table? Well, the Amity Foundation nearly got there. Hosted by the World Council of Churches (WCC), altogether forty representatives from Amity and its major partner organizations gathered for a Roundtable in Geneva from December 7-9, 2003. Amity is linked to the WCC through its close relationship with the China Christian Council as well as the WCC's support for Amity's work.

In the past, the WCC had already hosted similar roundtables for other WCC partners. They are intended as a platform for partner organizations to meet on a multilateral basis, offering a framework for donor agencies and recipients to engage in long-term planning, rather than planning on a bilateral basis.

Representing one longstanding Amity partner, Diane J. Allen attended the Amity Roundtable in Geneva on behalf of the General Board of Global Ministries from the United Methodist Church. Below, we reprint some of her impressions from the meeting.

Growth - but at what human cost?

Chinese leaders have concentrated on, and succeeded beyond many a wildest dream, putting rice on the table, roofs overhead and tellies in the living room. Citizens of the People's Republic of China enjoy more political stability, greater economic success, and more international influence than they have in the past 150 years.

"This is all fine and well," says Stephen Ting, Vice-President of the Amity Foundation, "but the question we'd like to address is at what human cost?" An exploration into the challenges of China's growth and globalization efforts was an underlying theme at the Amity Roundtable, hosted by the World Council of Churches in December 2003. Over 20 organizations worldwide gathered in Geneva, in partnership and solidarity with the Amity staff and directors, as Amity presented its vision for a "just and equal sharing" in a society where the gap between the rich and the poor is widening at an alarming rate.

Zhang Liwei, Assistant to the General Secretary, pointed out that while reforms in China have brought about tremendous economic and social changes in China, they have also led to serious inequalities between the rich and the poor, urban and rural areas, and the coastal areas and inland provinces particularly in China's western region. (See also "A Well-Off Versus A Just Society" in this issue.)

Stephen Ting added, "Millions of farmers and workers who have contributed the most to society, have suffered the most. We at Amity are for the most part privileged in comparison. We have every reason to work for, and with them."

Amity's response: A vision for a "just and equal sharing"

A glance at Amity's 2004 Annual Work Plan reveals a wide range of innovative projects in 31 provinces that are aimed at evening out some of these economic and social imbalances. To name a few found in the booklet: HIV/ Aids training for church workers, a Back To School project that enables poverty-stricken children to return to primary school; correspondence courses for village doctors; biogas and solar programs in western China; a small hydroelectric power station in west Hunan; an extension wing for the Nanjing Counselling Centre, a Christian-based service; and continued work in over 60 orphanages, including the Amity Grandma project, foster care, equipment purchase and education sponsorship.

Partners at the WCC Roundtable were also briefed on an additional focus for Amity's work: the urban poor and marginalized such as laid-off workers, the differently-abled, and migrant workers. Also called China's 'floating population,' indicating a lack of permanent residence status, the latter have no entitlement to housing, healthcare, pension, social welfare benefits and subsidies. They become 'double victims,' suffering decreased agricultural incomes (a result of World Trade Organization regulations that favour cheaper imports), and exile from secure urban employment adventures.

As China itself undergoes a move to change the function of the government from one based on central power to one based on laws and regulations, Amity's work has also shifted to include more advocacy work such as lobbying on behalf of the migrant workers. Said the Rev. Deng Fucun, a member of Amity's Board of Directors, "Christianity is not only about individual salvation. When Jesus talked about feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, healing the sick, and advocating for the imprisoned, that's exactly what he meant."
A Well-Off Versus A Just Society (Part I)

Zhang Liwei

Zhang Liwei, a Vice General Secretary at Amity, presented this speech as an introductory statement for the ENAP/Round Table Meetings in Geneva, Switzerland, on December 8, 2003. For a full version of this paper, please go to the Amity Foundation's website: www.amityfoundation.org

In our next edition, we will bring the second half of this paper, which focuses on the growing imbalances in China's development and Amity's response to the social challenges China is facing.

I. An Overview

China has embarked on the road to a "well-off society" since November of 2002, when the central government mapped out a blueprint for a national dream to build up an affluent society with an average GDP of USD 3,000 per capita by the year 2020. Other goals include further development of the economy; improvement of democracy; advancement of science and education; enrichment of culture; fostering of social harmony; and upgrading of the quality of life for people. What are the implications of such a policy on NGOs in China? Where are NGOs like Amity on the landscape of Chinese society? What kind of role can we play in this national endeavor? I ask these questions at the start because this is a theme that we have to deal with in the next two decades or so.

Let's look briefly at the history of the past 25 years before we answer this question. As all of you know, China's reform and opening-up to the outside world were started in 1978 after the first phase, the focus was mainly on agricultural reform, which was still characterized by the planned economy. The reform policy focused on domestic re-adjustment and internal reform while the policy of opening up was secondary. The break-through was the introduction of the household contract responsibility system in the vast rural areas, which laid down the cornerstone for further opening up and reform in China. The reform was then gradually expanded into other areas of Chinese society, including urban areas, state-owned enterprises and government structure. In the second phase, one prominent aspect was the fact that the market oriented economy burgeoned in China, especially in the eastern coastal areas. This was a period that was characterized by the saying of "doing to learn" (or a period of chemin faisant). It was also a time when the private economy enjoyed a boom and gradually gained a foothold. It is reported that the private economy now accounts for 40% of the total economic volume in China. Some even claim that China has a burgeoning middle class.

Now it seems that we are standing at the threshold of a third phase of China's reform and opening at the beginning of a new century and a new millennium. Externally, we are met with many new unprecedented challenges after China gained entry into the World Trade Organization (WTO). Internally, we are faced with
the old problems left behind by the first two reforms, e.g., reform into the financial structure, the state-owned enterprises and government structure, but are also challenged by new issues, like food security, degradation of the environment, medical care, social safety networks, unemployment, etc. Despite these issues, the market-oriented reforms are an irreversible historical decision. China will continue her endeavour down the line.

II. Major Problems in Social Development

The whole process of the Chinese reform and opening up can be summarized as the following two historic transitions: from a rural, agricultural society to an urban, industrial one and from a planned economy to a market-based one. Undoubtedly, the transitions have brought about tremendous economic and social changes in China. They, however, have also led to some serious problems in social development, which should draw our immediate attention. It is very hard to say what China now looks like. I prefer to describe it as a kaleidoscope. I would like to quote Prof. Hu Angang of Qinghua University in summarizing the characteristics of Chinese society as it is now.

a) A country with two systems. This is somewhat different from the policy of “one country two systems” practiced in Hong Kong and Macao. The two systems mean a clear-cut demarcation between the rural areas and the urban areas. Since the 1950s, the government has been carrying out two systems of identity, education, employment, public service and public expenditure towards rural residents and urban residents. For example, China’s rural population accounts for two thirds of the whole population while the central government only spends about one seventh to one tenth of its tax revenue in the rural areas.

b) A country with four “worlds”. Chairman Mao put forth a theory of “three worlds”, which classified the countries in the world into the three categories. Here it actually means four different groups of people in China divided according to their income level. The first group is from areas like Shanghai, Beijing, Shenzhen, who enjoy the highest income level. It accounts for 2.2% of the whole population. The second group is from the eastern coastal areas, like Tianjin, Guangdong, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, etc., who enjoy a middle income level (22%). The third world takes up 26% of the whole population who have a lower middle income. The fourth group is from poorer areas in the western part of China and accounts for 50% of the whole population.

c) A country with four societies. Chinese society is characterized with a mixture of four distinctive sectors. First, there is an agricultural sector, for the farmers account for 50% of the population, most of whom lead a very ordinary life. Secondly, there is an industrial sector, taking up 23% of the population. Thirdly, there is a service sector, for it takes up 22% of the population. Fourthly, there is a knowledge sector, accounting for 5% of the population.

Some anecdotal recordings from Chinese society may illustrate what the real China today looks like: 1) In some of the most luxurious restaurants in Beijing, dishes prepared according to the Ming Dynasty empresses’ menu cost a small dinner party upwards of 15,000 RMB (US$1,807 approx.). 2) In Shanghai’s Xin Tiandi (New Heaven and Earth) district, clubs and music meet the standards of any cosmopolitan city in the world. 3) Meanwhile, just a few kilometres away, new university graduates are making less than 1,500 RMB (US$181 approx.) in the China offices of even the most well-known multinational corporations. 4) A couple of more kilometres down the road, in the city’s working class living districts of 30 years ago, unemployed workers are living on around 500 RMB (US$60.24 approx.) a month in social welfare.  

(to be continued)
Round-The-Clock-Care For The Impaired Takes Off
A Second Home Of Blessings Opens In Nanjing

Having spare time to enjoy your hobbies is one thing. Being bored to death because you cannot take up a regular job is quite another. 18-year-old Hu Yufang, who has one younger brother, did not have any special tasks before moving into the Home of Blessings. "I used to help at home," the girl explains. Now, Hu can enjoy her free time again: "I like reading comics, especially the Chinese classic Pilgrim to the West."

Her classmate Jiang Jin is 17. After graduating from a Special Education School, he joined the Home of Blessings together with a classmate from school. "Jiang Jin writes a very good diary and is a good student," Teacher Gu reveals. When he goes home to his parents over the weekend, Jiang likes to go swimming and play computer games. "His parents hope that his social skills will further develop through the contact with his fellow students in this centre." The benefits for the children of staying in the Home of Blessings may be apparent. Yet, talking to the caretakers at the home, it soon becomes clear that the parents benefit at least as much as their offspring.

"The concern over these children is something that accompanies us as they grow up. Who will take care of them one day when we parents can't do this any longer?" Shao Shunhua says, herself close to tears as she remembers her eternal worry. Her son is part of the group, and Shao serves as cook and homemaker for the home's inhabitants. "She is like a mother for the students," says Teacher Gu, "We all call her Mother Shao."

"Most parents here have only one child," Mother Shao continues her story, "although they would be allowed to have a second child, since the first child is handicapped. However, these parents prefer to devote their energy onto one child and take care of him or her properly."

For some of the families, the costs of enrolling their children in the Home of Blessings constitute a heavy burden, but they still continue sending them because of the benefits for the young people. Currently, the home charges 500 RMB [US$62.5 approx.] a month including full board and tuition. Only over the weekends do the students go home to stay with their families, an arrangement that gives the three teachers and caretakers at the home a much needed break at the end of the week.

On a normal day, the six boys and four girls get up at 6.40am and have breakfast at 7.30am. Some reading and self-study follow in the morning, interrupted by study sessions with Teacher Gu. Every day, she picks each of the students for a one-on-one session to brush up their maths, Chinese, and general life skills. Gu Jing's job is demanding, not only because she lives on site and hers is pretty much a 24-hour job. As a recent Nanjing Special Education School graduate, she is younger than some of her students (the oldest is 28) and finds it difficult to establish the right kind of authority with the young adults in her care.

One of the aims of the Home of Blessings is to provide the young inhabitants with some useful work to do. Unfortunately, suitable tasks are not easy to find. However, these days the group is lucky. The Amity Printing Press has delivered boxes full of bookmarks that need to be sorted before being bundled into mixed packages. For a small remuneration, the ten students diligently assemble the bookmarks, supervised by Teacher Gao and a colleague. "They really enjoy this task, they work hard and hardly take any breaks," observes Gao. After dinner, the young people usually watch the news and write in their diaries. Occasionally, they also join in singing and dancing activities before they enjoy an early bedtime at 9.30pm.

"Many parents wished the home had been established earlier," says Tan Lijing, who oversees the home from Amity's side and functions as director. "During the parents-teacher meetings, they always express their gratitude that this kind of service is finally available. But we are also confronted with many expectations, and we still lack professional training in some areas."

Recently, a number of rooms at the centre are still empty, waiting to be fitted with gym appliances and other equipment. Obviously, there is still much room for further development.
Interviewing Amity’s Partners

John Strong

Brenda Lisenby is Director of the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) office in Hong Kong, and CBF’s representative designated to liaise with Amity. “Many of the projects and the work that I’ve done and continue to do relates to work in Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region with the Guangxi Christian Council and other local government bodies and schools in that province. Amity is our other major partner.” Below, she shares some of her reflections on CBF’s relationship with Amity.

How long has CBF been cooperating with Amity?

Our organization has been cooperating with Amity since about 1998. In that summer we began sending teachers to participate in the Summer English Program and since that time we’ve sent teachers to every Summer English Program. In addition, at that time we helped support a teacher in Amity’s two-year Teachers Program [the Regular Program], and recently we’ve been able to introduce two more teachers to Amity in the Regular Program.

Other than these teachers, occasionally we are able to make donations to disaster relief projects when that happens (earthquakes, floods, etc.). Moreover, the teachers we send are very interested in Amity’s other projects and occasionally they send money to CBF to be forwarded for helping poor children, for example, via Amity’s Back To School Project. This February we will be able to introduce a special education teacher from the United States who will be helping to do some training at the Home of Blessings in Nanjing (See “Round-The-Clock-Care For the Impaired Takes Off” in this issue.) She will be working with the teachers there: observing and giving them some ideas and suggestions about their program. Tan Liying at the Amity headquarters is helping to coordinate bringing volunteers from overseas for this.

What are CBF’s hopes for how the Chinese will benefit, and what are the benefits that CBF gets from doing its work in China?

I think our greatest desire is to be able to partner with Chinese people to do things that are of mutual benefit. There is a great need to help develop society and to do some community development, because right now Amity is developing so quickly that they don’t have enough resources. We are able to provide resources and help in those ways, whether it’s funds for rebuilding schools, medical clinics or even churches. We have been able to partner with some churches and provide some material support.

But I think the people that we bring here to visit and teach go back home with open eyes about what China is, where she is and what she is doing. So many people in the United States have a vision of China that is very stereotypical and negative, leftover from the Cultural Revolution. It is hard to tell the story of what China is really going through now, so we are always asking volunteers to “Come and See.” Then we receive a blessing when our people come and develop rewarding relationships, and they see Chinese people as they are and realize they have mutual interests and can become friends. They go back and share this with others at home and that, in turn, benefits Chinese people, that they are having their story told in a positive manner. Also, as we are a Christian organization, we do hope to be able to be an example of Christ’s love in action and share that as a part of our motivation for what we do.

CBF has a number of independent initiatives in China besides its partnerships with Amity. What is the value of partnering with Amity?

I think it’s very important because Amity is a Chinese organization and they have many things to teach us for working in China. A lot of the things that I use in building relationships working in Guangxi with the local churches and local government I have learned from interacting with Amity; asking their advice and watching how they work in their own projects. And so I think they provide a very good model for organizations such as ours who want to be involved with China.

CBF has mostly been involved with Amity’s Summer English Program, rather than the Regular Teachers Program.

The reason why the SEP is so attractive is that it is short-term and it is affordable for many volunteers. It is only one month each summer and it costs about 2500 US dollars (which includes round-trip airfare, and the stipend for training). For a Regular Program teacher you have to have a five thousand dollar stipend per year. CBF is a small organization and we don’t have reserves of funds, or even churches that can commit that much.

We are exploring ways to build a network of churches and an awareness of Amity and its Teachers Program so that we can begin to raise funds more effectively. But for now, when we team up with Amity, it is just easier for us to commit people to the SEP. That’s an attractive option for us.

What do you see as the challenges facing Amity in general and the Teachers Program in particular?

Funding is one thing. The Amity Teachers Program is an excellent program. The goals and vision are excellent, and strengthening English education in China is a very important thing, especially in the poorer and rural areas, to give those students an equal opportunity at higher education. The challenge will be finding
effective ways of raising support for the teachers' stipends. Another challenge will be moving west. In my understanding, there are a lot of schools in the eastern part of China who have depended on Amity teachers for many years. By now they should have developed their own programs to be able to train their own teachers. Ideally, their level of self-sufficiency should be raised, allowing Amity to move its resources on to other places. The challenge, then, is in how to find the right way to even out the human resources to be able to use them in new areas - in needier areas.

In general, I think Amity has a good understanding of what the challenges are that lie ahead. In the beginning Amity was really focused on the rural areas and the need in the countryside, and that need is still there, but they have also realized the need now for ministry in the city, to the unemployed, the displaced workers and the migrant population. They have come to face other issues, like perhaps social justice issues, and so I think Amity's challenge will be to continue to grow, to engage with society and its ever-changing needs and make a positive contribution toward the progress of Chinese society.

The changing perception of people outside of China seems to be itself a big challenge to the work. China is not perceived quite so much today as being a needy, developing country. China has sent a man to space, after all. Do they really need so much assistance in their development?

There is still a great need. Now there is a growing gap in Chinese society, and organizations like Amity are going to be very important in fostering an understanding of that, and in helping to find ways to bridge that gap. It cannot be ignored.

Amity Leadership Visits Hong Kong

"W hat on earth is that?" The unfamiliar sights and sounds of Cantonese culture may have produced a puzzled look or two, but the Amity delegation felt quickly at home on this recent visit to China's southern metropolis. From February 11-16 of this year, Rev. Cao Shengjie, President of the China Christian Council and an Amity board member, and Qiu Zhonghui, General Secretary of The Amity Foundation, visited a number of Hong Kong partner organizations. They were accompanied by Associate General Secretaries Rev. Li Enlin, Gu Renfa and Zhang Liwei, as well as He Wen, head of Amity's Rural Development Division.

The visit was kicked off with a seminar on church-run social service projects and poverty alleviation work. Professor Sinas Kwan Shui-man from the Department of Religion at the Chinese University of Hong Kong offered a theoretical perspective on social work in relation to the mission of the church. Other speakers were Mr. Wu Leung-hei, who shared experiences doing social service work in St. James Settlement in Hong Kong, and Mr. Ng Shui-la from Hong Kong Christian Service. From the visitors' side, Rev. Cao Shengjie reflected on the calling of the church for social service, while Rev. Li Enlin shared some examples she had encountered in her work of the church reaching out to local communities. Qiu Zhonghui talked on the current challenges and opportunities presented by social development on the Chinese mainland. Finally, Amity's poverty reduction strategies and approaches were presented by He Wen.

Hosted by the Hong Kong Christian Council, the visitors from Nanjing had numerous formal and informal opportunities to talk with partner organizations and friends, including World Vision, Oxfam Hong Kong, "Friends of Project Torch" and "Hong Kong Friends of Amity". Exposure visits took the group to social service projects run by Hong Kong Christian Service, the Anglican church, CWM/Nethersole Fund and UNICEF. On their final day, the Amity guests were invited to share stories and insights from their work with members of the Ward Memorial Methodist Church in Yau Ma Tei.

The group was especially honoured to meet with the most Rev. Dr. Peter Kwong, Prior of Hong Kong Sheng Kung Hui Province and Ms. Ko Siu-wah O.B.E.J.P., who both served as consultants of Amity, and other church leaders like Elder Simon P.K. Sit, Rev. Ralph Lee and Rev. Lee Cheekong. The delegation not only enjoyed the fellowship with these church leaders, but also shared stories and latest developments in Amity's work with them. Archbishop Peter Kwong called on the church in Hong Kong to show more love, more concern and more support for Amity in the future.

While some observers had feared that Hong Kong would lose in strategic importance after returning to the mainland, for the Amity Foundation Hong Kong has, if anything, only gained in importance. Supported through the work of its Hong Kong office and in cooperation with partners like the Hong Kong Christian Council, project revenue from Hong Kong constitutes 27% of Amity's overall project budget. In particular the "Back to School" project is very popular among Hong Kong donors. As a city embracing both East and West, for the Amity leadership exposure to Hong Kong services can serve as a window of inspiration for future developments on the mainland. Migrant workers and a huge gap in incomes are examples of problems that affect both Hong Kong and many mainland Chinese cities.

The Amity Foundation was created at the initiative of Chinese Christian 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.

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Editor: Katrin Fiedler

Hong Kong Office:

The Amity Foundation
13th Floor, Ultima One Commercial Building
5 Jordan Road
Kowloon, Hong Kong
Phone: (852) 2723-8011
Fax: (852) 2766-7569
E-mail: amityhk@pacific.net.hk

The Amity Newsletter is prepared by the staff of the Amity Foundation and printed by the Amity Printing Company, Ltd.

Editor: Katrin Fiedler

Website: www.amityfoundation.org

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