Dear Reader,

"The Chinese church needs more Love in Action", Tian Feng editor Mei Kangjun exhorts in a recent article which we reproduce on p6. For Mei, the true meaning of social service goes beyond helping individuals, and social involvement is one way of building a harmonious society. Inspired by needs in their community, many grassroots churches are already embarking on initiatives in areas such as care for the elderly, hospitals and children's education. On p4, you find the story of one home for the elderly in Henan's Puyang City.

One man who early on embodied and fostered a sense of social service within the Chinese church was Dr. Wenzao Han, former president of the CCC and founding general secretary of the Amity Foundation. You find the CCC's official biography of Han on p13. We also reprint the WCC's tribute to Han Wanzao, a symbol not only of the high personal regard this eminent church leader enjoyed, but also the growing integration of the Chinese church in the church ecumenical, of which Han was a big part.

With kind regards from the editorial desk,

[Signature]

If you read Chinese, check out the Chinese Protestant Church's website. Surfing to

http://www.chineseprotestantchurch.org.cn

will give you access to latest news and views from the China Christian Council and the National TSPM Committee. The CCC has also recently launched an English addition to its website, accessible under the same address. Check it out!
Chinese Protestants Celebrate Printing Of 40 Million Bibles

(ANS) Few people are aware that China is a Bible-producing country, yet over the past two decades, 40 million complete volumes of Scripture have been produced by the Amity Printing Company alone, not counting Bibles produced for the Catholic market in China. During the recent groundbreaking ceremony for the new Amity Printing Press facilities, the existing press was hailed as one of Nanjing’s most advanced printing companies with some of the finest Bible printers in the world. Below, we report from the celebration marking the completion of 40 million Bibles at the Amity Printing Company.

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On January 17, 2006, the National CCC/TSPM Committee, together with the Amity Foundation, jointly celebrated the completion of 40 million Bibles at the Amity Printing Press. 22 representatives from Bible Societies around the world had come to Nanjing to join the festivities. The Amity Printing Company is a joint venture between Amity and the United Bibles Societies. Also present were board members and staff from the printing company and the Amity Foundation. Before the opening of the formal celebration, delegates had an opportunity to visit the future site of the Amity Printing Press on the outskirts of Nanjing, which is scheduled to be completed in mid-2007.

Presbyter Ji Jianhong, Chairman of the National Three Self Patriotic Movement, brought congratulations on behalf of the National CCC/TSPM Committee. In his address, he also expressed the hope for enhanced future cooperation between the CCC/TSPM, Amity and the United Bible Societies so as to create an even better atmosphere for Scripture reading, to meet the needs of the Chinese church and to further promote the development of Bible ministries in China.

On behalf of all member countries of the United Bible Societies, General Secretary Rev. A. Miller Milloy and board member Rev. Markku Kotila brought congratulatory greetings. They praised the eagerness and love of Chinese Christians for Bible study and reading, and they called the establishment of the Amity Printing Press, with 40 million Bibles printed to date, a miracle. The fact that a new site had been chosen for even bigger printing facilities was a second miracle, the United Bible Societies delegates said, adding that they would join Amity and the CCC/TSPM in their efforts to make that second miracle happen.

Qiu Zhonghui, Chairman of the Board of the Amity Printing Company and also General Secretary of the Amity Foundation, thanked the United Bible Societies for twenty years of smooth cooperation, and expressed the hope for enhanced cooperation in the future.

Later, guests brought gifts and further congratulatory messages and used the opportunity to skim over the various types of Bibles and other publications displayed on stage.
Studying Theology In The USA: A Chinese Perspective

(ANS) "... leaving my country, my family and my church gave me a sense of drifting about, yet it also increased my love for them. And the experience of being in an environment with an alien language drew me closer to the one God venerated by the Church ecumenical..." With only one seminary offering a masters degree in theology, options for post-graduate theological education in China are limited. Some have the opportunity to go for theological studies abroad, like Fu Xianji, who shares his experience of studying theology in the U.S. in Tian Feng No.279. Now based at China Eastern Theological Seminary, Fu spent two years in Columbia pursuing a masters degree in Theology prior to his return to China.

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With the support of China Eastern Theological Seminary, the Shanghai TSPM/CCC committee, the national church leadership and the Shanghai Citizens Religious Committee, I spent two years studying at the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia pursuing a masters degree in Sacred Theology. Two weeks after graduating in May 2005, I returned to China to serve my home church.

Initially, the language barrier and different lifestyle created a lot of pressure for me, but with the help and support of my teachers and fellow students, I was able to quickly take up regular studies. While outside nature was blossoming into summer, I delved into my Greek language studies. Our Greek professor was a Swedish lady with a strong accent, and the students were always joking that we were learning "Swedish Greek". I do have a good foundation in Greek, but who would have thought that my ability to read Greek was better than that of most of my classmates! Later, when we had to take Hebrew, I felt like coming across an old friend. Although I had never studied Hebrew before, the script made me feel that this truly is an Oriental language. It was a bit like seeing Chinese products in an American store. Although I would not buy them, the encounter would produce a feeling of intimacy and happiness in me.

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary offers three different masters programmes, the most advanced of which is the Master of Sacred Theology. The fact that I was studying for the latter greatly raised my standing among my fellow students. In the end, I managed to graduate with good marks, and the Lutheran church was even prepared to support me for doctoral studies had the Chinese national church leadership endorsed this plan. Overall, the tremendous support I received from the seminary and the Lutheran church beautifully illustrate the respect and recognition of many American friends for the Chinese church.

Among the things that impressed me as an exchange student is the fact that students in the U.S. are encouraged to study independently, to reflect on problems and pronounce their opinions, and professors have an accepting attitude towards divergent opinions. However, the verbal battles during classes do not impede students and teachers from being friends, maybe also because as Christians they accept the equality of all human beings.
Every day around noon, the seminary community would gather for a worship service, and on Thursdays, a communion service would be held. Both served as bridges between our academic studies and our church and faith lives.

As seminaries in the U.S. do not receive any financial support from the government and are under increasing financial pressure due to shrinking church membership, the schools have to offer high-quality teaching as well as different specialties in order to attract students and financial support. Each semester, the performance of individual professors is assessed both by the school and their students. A seminary chaplain is in charge of the worship services and also guides students in their individual spiritual lives. Not only the chaplain, but also the seminary president and the teachers had a caring attitude towards the students, and the common saying that Americans are indifferent or superficial did certainly not prove true for this seminary community.

The seminary library was truly astounding; not only because of its collections of materials, but also because of its services. Students can borrow up to 50 books at a time for one semester, unless somebody else requires the books, and all parts of the library are freely accessible to the students.

During my stay in the U.S., I had a number of opportunities where I was asked to share some information about the churches in China with my audience. While many people have a concerned interest in church life in China, they often fail to truly understand the situation, and my talks helped to clarify some misconceptions about religious freedom in China and the ability of churches to manage their own affairs. Occasionally, American media would also report about developments in China, and while reports about my country's economic development and technological progress would make me proud, news about mining accidents would remind me that there is less concern for the protection of individual lives in China.

Returning to Shanghai after two years abroad, I once again feel glad to be dedicating myself to theological education in this time and age, and it is my silent prayer that China's theological education may reach international standards.

2006.3/4.3

Henan Christians Reach Out To The Elderly

(ANS) Churches in China are increasingly becoming involved in social services, and the national church leadership is encouraging such activities. Kindergartens, homes for the elderly and clinics are among the most common services offered by local congregations. In Tian Feng issue No.279, Wang Rongwei visits a church-run home for the elderly in Henan Province.

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On 28 December 2005, I had opportunity to interview Brother Li Chongmin from Puyang, who acts as Vice Director of Aihua Home for the Elderly in a township nearby the city. Situated in north-eastern Henan, Puyang borders on Hebei and Shandong Provinces and is blessed with a beautiful landscape and rich natural resources.

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The Home caters to all elderly people regardless of their ethnicity, faith background, regional origin or physical condition, and ever since its opening, the home has been richly blessed and also enjoys the support of local brothers and sisters.

The history of this initiative goes back to the year 2000, when sister Wang Zhenfeng was confronted with the problem of caring for her husband, who had been bedridden for a number of years already. On a visit to Luoyang, she felt much inspired by the local homes for the elderly, which played an important role in addressing the problems of the elderly and of an aging population in general. Realizing that her home township did not have a similar institution, she became aware that many rural elderly spent the evening of their lives in misery. Although an elderly lady of 75 herself, she decided to do something about this. When she approached her 35-year-old neighbour Li Chongmin with this idea, she was surprised to find out that he had been having the same idea.

In June 2000, they spent 11,000 RMB [USD 1,375 approx.] on an old factory building of about 260 square metres living space; on top of this sum, they had to pay a yearly rent of 1,000 RMB for the grounds. With a monthly income of less than 1,000 RMB per person, they undertook to open an old people's home without any institutional funding and without charging the home's residents... for the love of God.

As Li told me during the interview, the beginning was very difficult. He and his co-workers were busy clearing out and repairing the facilities as well as praying for the venture. After a few months of prayer, when they had the feeling that now they were seeing God's will clearly and had also gained the support of other sisters and brothers, a number of rules regarding the running of the home were set up. In this way, a charge-free home was established built entirely on faith, ready to take in clients over 60 and without family.

To provide for the various needs of its inhabitants, the home has a chapel, a meditation room and a computer room and also offers facilities for laundry, receiving visitors and watching TV. Not only the elderly, but also some blind clients and visiting church members enjoy the facilities. Healthy food and activities such as joint cooking sessions are intended to keep the clients healthy and active. Today, 30 persons are staying at the home, among them six blind persons who have set up a band to enrich their own and the other inhabitants' leisure time.

With a 3,000 RMB overhead to cover every month, the past six years have been a rocky road for the home, and in order to deal with the financial difficulties, the rule of "Elderly taking care of the elderly, and elderly taking care of the Home" is being implemented. This means that those elderly in reasonable physical health collect firewood and help with cooking, while others take turns to buy vegetables at the market. Donations help to keep the home going. Thanks to contributions from local villagers and workers, food and clothing for the home's inhabitants have been basically secured. Many people give anonymously in kind or cash; others help in more practical ways.

Looking to the future, Brother Li reminds me that planning for the home has to rely on God's will, just as the venture's development over the past six years has been thanks to God's enduring grace and blessings.
The Chinese Church Needs More 'Love in Action' 

(ANS) "As Chinese Christians, we believe that God's will manifests itself in history. As Chinese society strives for harmony, we believe that the Chinese church needs more "Love in Action" so as to bring about harmonious and balanced relationships in society," Tian Feng editor Mei Kangjun reflects in a piece taken from Tian Feng No. 279. The following article is based on a translation provided by Mok Wai Fung from Hong Kong's Baptist University as part of a Community Based Instruction Program.

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Christmas is an occasion when we think of others; when Santa Claus delivers presents on our behalf, this is not only an expression of our care for individuals, but also of our concern for the wider community. It was in such a spirit that Christians from Fuzhou's Pujian Church joined a "Love in Action" campaign implemented in conjunction with the Fuzhou Red Cross and the Fuzhou Daily in support of disaster victims. Both organizations took part in a brief donation ceremony and also helped arrange transportation of the donated goods to the affected areas. By late afternoon of December 25th, dozens of packages of clothing had been received, as well as 65 bed quilts. One member of the local Christian community brought 70 brand new items of padded clothing that the family had been unable to sell.

Christ's incarnation means that Christ's existence on earth becomes visible for all, just as Martin Luther exclaimed: "To this man, you have to point and say, God is here." Following the example of Jesus Christ therefore means that as Christians, we should not separate ourselves from others, but should make our actions known. The brothers and sisters from Pujian Church phrase it like this: "When Jesus Christ was born in a stable, he represented the poor, and revealed his love for all people. We believe that God will accept and repay our actions when we express our concern and care for the poor at Christmas."

As China's pursuit of modernization enters a new stage, our methods and outlook with which we care about society need to change. Concern and help for those who suffer are not only an expression of sympathy but also our responsibility. With the sale of luxury cars skyrocketing in China these days, have we ever thought of the poor and needy who still long for society's love and care? It is this type of reasoning that caused the brothers and sisters from Pujian Church to extend a loving hand from their local church to the community through "Love in Action".

Research by sociologists such as Emile Durkheim has analyzed the relationship between religious emotions and interpersonal relationships, and it has been shown that empathy in its different forms according to the persons concerned affects human behaviour and has an influence on the cohesion of groups. Martin Luther once said that like a mother who goes to the cradle to find her child, we have to read the Bible to find Christ. Scripture reading aims at fostering our faith and guiding us to do good. In his first letter to Timothy, Paul reminds us of the inextricable link between faith and good deeds; both are important and cannot replace one another, because if we fail to do good, this will influence our faith.
For members of the Church, the body of Christ on earth, following Christ will mean that more and more Christians feel the great motivation of emotion. Therefore, when establishing a relationship of mutual help with others, we are encouraged by the example of the brothers and sisters in Puqian with their willingness to serve the community through "Love in Action". Spontaneous actions of love and affection such as this one contribute to the spiritual renewal of Chinese Christians and bear witness to their faith; at the same time they provide ways of building a harmonious society.

When Chinese Christianity was to be rebuilt after its liberation from colonial oppression, this created an awakening of emotion that was rooted in the social reality of that time. Wu Yaozong phrased it like this: "The 'Kingdom of Heaven' and 'God' that Jesus Christ talked about when he started to preach were not invented by him, but are basic notions inherited from the Old Testament prophets. Many of their social ideals, including the abovementioned concepts, were aimed at liberating their people from alien oppression, to bring about a just political environment and to establish a glorious kingdom of freedom, order, and wealth, a splendid holy temple in this new environment."

As Chinese Christians, we believe that God's will manifests itself in history. As Chinese society strives for harmony, we believe that the Chinese church needs more "Love in Action" so as to bring about harmonious and balanced relationships in society. The church is not an exclusive community outside of society, but part of it, and in all its actions, whether individual or communal, the church has to give testimony to Christ. Initiatives like "Love in Action" will help to immerse the church in society. With his example, Christ established a foundation for people to cooperate and live in harmony, and more "Love in Action" will help in our pursuit of a modern harmonious environment.

2006.3/4.5

Thoughts On Building Of A Church

(ANS) Building the Chinese church is a venture with many dimensions. Below, Chen Dazhi from Anhui Province reflects in Tian Fong No. 279 on a spiritual foundation that can guide China's Christians in their endeavour of building the church. Chan Pui Chi from Hong Kong's Baptist University provided the translation that was the basis for this article as part of a Community Based Instruction Program.

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As we all know, the Church is God's house. We are born in Him, and God is our parent. The thriving growth of our Church is God's own work, His gift and His blessing. Yet if today's Church wants to have the same blessings as before, when "the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved," our life and our worship must likewise be pleasing to God. Therefore, today, one of the most important responsibilities in building up the Church is to "know Whom we have believed," to determine clearly and understand what is God's will. For this reason Paul taught us, "discern what is pleasing to the Lord" (Eph. 5:10), "Do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:17). In other words, the Church's great mission is this: How to lead believers to know what the Lord is calling us to do. To be more precise, the Church must set up the right goals and direction, thus leading the way for believers to walk in the center of God's way.

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A goal comes first, before anything else. Its correctness determines the development of everything. It is the same for building our spiritual temple. We should first seek God's commission and His revelation given to the Church and thereby clearly work out God's will, so that the church is built in the proper way. Jesus Christ told his disciples: before following God, you have to know whether you can make the sacrifice or not. We can make a steadfast response only after we realize, with a thoughtful reflection, what we can give to the Lord. Therefore, the accuracy of our goal is very important to the Church. It reflects the integrity of the church and the strength and maturity of the believers' spiritual growth. In other words, if the Church loses her goal and mission, suffocation and spiritual death are the consequences. Proverbs 29:18 shows us a spiritual principle: "Where there is no revelation, the people are unrestrained". As Paul knew this point very clearly, he put all his time and effort on one thing, "Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal." (Philippians 3:13). His goal was so clear that he concluded, "I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air." Therefore, those believers were willing to participate in his church. Especially in Philippi, Paul's work attracted many believers. They were willing to support him financially. From his experience, we can see that believers love joining a church which has a clear direction.

Of course, the Church's ultimate goal and direction are to become God's witness, to lead people to come before our Lord, and to pursue the likeness of God. However, God's plan for each individual church in each period is very different, as they each have their own unique environment and background. Therefore, churches are given their own commissions and guidance and vision in various times. However, there is a principle we cannot violate: all revelations and goals must come from our Lord. They all must be built on the Word of God. If the Church is not led by God, it will be easily ruined.

Let us, like Paul, set our goals very clearly on a steadfast foundation – that of Jesus Christ – even more enduring than precious stones.

The Church has two natures. It is Christ's body and a spiritual fellowship. At the same time, it exists in the world in the form of a structured social organization. To manage a church in the proper way, besides having light and wisdom from God, a structured management system is a must. The management system has one purpose: to "individualize" the goal of worship. All believers in the church can participate in worship and use their own gifts to serve the others (1 Peter 4:10). And so the goal is for "the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ" (Ephesians 4:12). In this way, the management system of a church acts as oil to help the organism flow and grow efficiently.

Many believers have the misunderstanding that worship is just the work of bishops, pastors, presbyters, deacons and ministers. This is an Old Testament mindset. The Levites and priests used to represent the people in worship. Since the blessed time of the New Testament, however, every one of us is a priest. If you have been saved by the grace of God, you can give the service of worship before our Lord. We are all "living stones". We are given different gifts. Therefore, it is no longer a problem of qualification or the presence of gifts for worship, but only our own loyalty. The
relationship between the church leaders and the laity should not be limited only to fellowship, but to relate together in worship is also very important.

A major problem in today's Church is that the work really involves only a few people. When passively accepted as the unfortunate status-quo, this deters many potentially active members, hinders worship and limits the Church's work. Many then feel dissatisfied and lose their sense of unity with each other. Actually, one of the purposes of a management system is to strengthen cohesion in the church. In consideration of limited time and effort, the leading "workers" of a church really need to find more members to delegate roles to. Then they can themselves focus on their main tasks and help the church advance toward its goals.

In the Old Testament, after Moses brought the Israelites out of Egypt, he had to be the judge for the people and settle a lot of disputes. The task soon overwhelmed him. His father-in-law, Jethro, then gave him some good advice: select capable men from all the people and appoint them as officials. Difficult cases were brought to him, but simple cases could be handled by the others. This was the beginning of an efficiently structured management system, which is a very practical model for today's Church. Therefore, the Church should seek those gifted brothers and sisters who are eager to give their service to God, and let them help build the Church's unity. It has been said, "A good guide is not a dictator, but an organizer and a discoverer. His progress is not judged by how much he has done, but by how well he assigns the work to others."

The management system of today's church is occupied with leadership development, but at the expense of overall support for everyone else. One possible solution is to develop cell groups. We can encourage each church member to join a cell group so that a sense of intimacy can be preserved, and everyone can feel the sense of fellowship. Then it becomes easier to discover believers' individual gifts and nurture them. "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others" (1 Peter 4:10). In this way, the Church becomes strong, steadfast and energetic.

Based on the Bible, today's Church should do all things "in a fitting and orderly way" to build up a structured management system, and rely on the greatest love on the cross to encourage every believer to serve our God. Then the church will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, even Christ, and grow and build itself up in love to become a graceful Church to honor the name of Jesus Christ. May God bless his church. May God help us and give us grace to have the spiritual wisdom to be good housekeepers of his home.

How To Reconcile Material Wealth With Spiritual Riches

(ANS) "...how can wealthy Christians lead a meaningful, fulfilled and blessed life?" asks Fan Aishi from Zhejiang Province, one of China's wealthiest provinces, in Tian Feng No.279. With China's wealth gap opening wider and wider, Christian congregations throughout the country vary greatly in their socio-economic make up. While many believers belong to the rural poor, there are also those who are members of well-off city congregations and wealthy themselves.

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China’s society is on the fast lane towards a moderately well-off society. Many people already have become wealthy. Wealth is of course something to rejoice about, but all things have two sides, like water that can both carry and capsize boats. So how can wealthy Christians lead a meaningful, fulfilled and blessed life?

It is natural that we want to improve our quality of life as soon as we can afford it, but this should not cause us to lead a wasteful life, or to strive for a life of extravagance. Nowadays, there is a frightening tendency for waste when it comes to food, drink and entertainment. When Chinese travel to Europe, their purchases of luxury items such as jewellery, brand name watches and clothing exceed even those of Japanese tourists. While in many developed countries a cautious attitude towards free spending has taken hold, in China, which is still a developing country, many people do their utmost to imitate the lifestyle of those in developed nations, and in some cases even those who cannot afford it spend recklessly in pursuit of a luxurious lifestyle. How can we tolerate this in a world where many people still live below the poverty line?

Our global resources are limited, and our wasting of resources will result in destroying the livelihood of our descendants. This kind of behaviour does not only go against our human conscience, but also violates God’s love. What is more, many forms of wasteful spending also constitute criminal offences! Young people who witness this kind of behaviour are easily led astray. And even after China will have become a developed nation, we will have to avoid reckless spending if we want to preserve our wealth. Accordingly, Christians and the church should be at the forefront of preserving resources and opposing waste. Likewise, Christians should be careful not to fall prey to habits such as keeping mistresses, having extramarital affairs or visiting prostitutes; habits that some people are taking to after becoming wealthy. The first Book of Kings describes King Solomon’s lavish and extravagant lifestyle in chapters 11 and 12, and how this brings about the destruction of his kingdom.

Judging from per capita income, Switzerland is the world’s richest country, yet its inhabitants maintain a modest lifestyle, a way of life inherited from their Calvinist ancestors.

We should also be careful not to become proud after becoming rich; the Bible describes money as “uncertain things” (1 Tim 6:17) and also warns that “Your money can been gone in a flash, as if it had grown wings and flown away like an eagle” (Proverbs 23:5). Having become wealthy is no reason for arrogance.

To reciprocate what we have received in riches through giving is a beautiful virtue, and since the beginning of the politics of reform and opening in China, many people have been "giving back" in many different ways and to many different institutions, be it their alma mater, the church, a seminary or our nation. To share with others and to engage in good deeds are also beautiful Christian virtues, and there are numerous passages in the Bible that exhort us to do good, such as Jesus’ teaching in Matthews 25:40: "Whenever you did this for one of the least of my brothers, you did it for me." Wealthy Christians should always be mindful of their blessings and control their desires and their pride in favour of good deeds.
A Guide To Christian Behaviour In Personal Relationships

(ANS) With the majority of China’s Protestants being first-generation believers, many embrace their new faith with fervour, yet also many questions regarding “appropriate” Christian behaviour. In Tian Feng edition No.280, Shanghai-based Zhu Minrong gives tips on how to handle personal relationships as a responsible Christian.

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As Christians who live in this world, we have to interact with other people, including non-believers. To limit ourselves entirely to our relationship with God would certainly be a mistake. This means that we should be aware of how we handle our personal relationships.

As Christians, we cannot live as "free-floating" individuals, but have to immerse and engage ourselves in society and live up to our various responsibilities. Personal relationships, in particular family relationships, are especially important. So how should these relationships be handled?

First of all, we should honour and respect our parents, as Ephesians 6:2 reminds us: "Respect your father and mother is the first commandment." Above all else, this means to cater to their every physical need, so as to make sure that they spend the evening of their lives worry-free.

Secondly, we need to respect the elderly and be polite. Today, many young people are better educated than their parents or other elders, but in terms of life experience, they are by no means superior. Accordingly, we should take the opinions of our elders seriously and not regard ourselves as infallible.

Thirdly, mutual love is the basis of our relationship in marriage. Husbands ought to love their wives, and wives ought to obey their husbands, because husbands and wives become one in marriage. Nobody is perfect, and we should focus on our partners’ strengths rather than blame the other one for his or her faults. Mutual tolerance and acceptance should rule. Conflicts are inevitable, the important thing is to be able to give in or compromise when necessary. Under no circumstances should disagreements lead to divorce; this would not only be a bad witness to our faith, but is also harmful for the children involved. In times of marital difficulties, we should ask the Lord for guidance on how to solve our problems.

Among brothers and sisters, harmony should be treasured. We should cultivate a style of mutual help and support, in particular with our older siblings.

When it comes to our own children, we should educate them well and bring them in touch with our faith through Bible reading, prayer and so on. It is also important to respect our children, as well as be respected by them. To achieve this, we need to be models of good behaviour ourselves, we must not vent our anger on our children or burst into unreasonable fits of anger.
Relationships with friends and colleagues are also part of our lives, and it is unavoidable that there may be non-Christians among them. In that case, we should never hide our Christian identity, but be brave and give witness to our Lord. In unjust or illegal situations, Christians ought to speak up so as to help combat sin. We should strive to establish a good relationship with non-believers and be loyal to them. Whoever is in need is our neighbour and deserves our compassionate help, while those who offend us give us an opportunity to extend our Christian love to them. It is our duty to bring the good news to our friends and colleagues and share God's love with them.

Finally, as Christians we ought to respect our superiors and other leaders. We should not oppose our superiors or the duties and tasks they arrange for us, but try to fulfill our duties in the best possible way. However, we should not follow instructions that are in opposition with official policies or the law.

2006.3/4.8

A Tribute To Han Wenzao From The World Council Of Churches (WCC)

(ANS) "Deeply saddened" by news of the death of Dr. Han Wenzao, WCC general secretary Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobbia addressed the following letter of condolence to Cao Shengjie, President of the China Christian Council.

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Geneva, 7 February 2006

Dear Rev. Cao,

We are deeply saddened by the news of the death of Dr. Han Wenzao, former President of the China Christian Council (CCC) and General Secretary of the Amity Foundation.

Dr. Han, a devout Christian, will always be remembered as one of the great personalities who provided leadership to the church in China in the post-revolutionary era. He discharged his duties at various important levels in Chinese society over the past several decades through his deep and passionate involvement in church and society, especially through his role as President of the China Christian Council, General Secretary of the Amity Foundation, Vice-Chairperson of the Jiangsu Provincial Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, and Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Protestant Churches in China. Dr. Han always tried to strengthen and forge the church-state relationships in the People's Republic of China. He passionately articulated the integrity and dignity of the church in China. Along with a few other church leaders, he also helped create the official "Patriotic Protestant Church in China" during the period after the liberation in 1949. He was convinced that the historical, progressive transition from pre-revolutionary ecclesiastical structures through the period of the formation of the Three-Self Patriotic Movement, "was politically necessary to repudiate the imperialist sponsorship of foreign missionaries" in China.

The World Council of Churches has had the privilege of working very closely with him for many years. Dr. Han, along with Bishop K.H.Ting, played a significant role in re-establishing the official links between the church in China and the WCC. He was deeply involved in the planning and preparation of the first and second official visits of the China Christian Council (CCC) to the WCC in 1983 and 1988 and CCC's subsequent decision to bring the church in China back into full membership in the WCC. He was WCC's main contact within the CCC for several years and helped to facilitate the official visits to China undertaken by two of my predecessors.

As a patriotic religious leader, Wenzao actively promoted the church's mission in Chinese society, encouraged its members to take part in nation-building without compromising their faith, and helped them adapt their religious values to socialist society. He played an important role in the creation of the
Amity Foundation and provided dynamic leadership in developing the Amity Foundation as a professional, social-development agency by ensuring Christian participation in social development. He was a man of great insight and personality.

We thank God for the life and witness of Dr. Han Wenzao. Please convey our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, the members of the CCC and the Amity Foundation.

May his soul rest in peace.
Yours in His Service,
Rev. Dr. Samuel Kobia
General Secretary

ANS Documentation

(ANS) Following the death of Dr. Wenzao Han, the CCC published the following official biography of the former President of the China Christian Council and founding General Secretary of the Amity Foundation.

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The Life Of Dr. Wenzao Han

Part I Brief Biography and Official Positions

Dr. Wenzao Han was called to heaven in Nanjing because of illness at 10:20 a.m., February 3, 2006, at the age of 83. He served as a member of the Seventh Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, member of the Eighth and Ninth Standing Committees of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, Vice Chairman of the Sixth, Seventh and Eighth Jiangsu Provincial Committees of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference, former President of the China Christian Council, Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Protestant Churches and Vice President of the Amity Foundation.

Dr. Han was born in Shanghai in 1923, graduated from St. John’s University of Shanghai in 1944, and then served on the staff of the YMCA in Shanghai. Beginning in 1947, Dr. Han successively took the posts of Student Secretary and Vice General Secretary of the YMCA of Nanjing, General Secretary for the Reform Promotion Commission of the Nanjing Christian Three-Self Movement, and then General Secretary of the Jiangsu Christian Three-Self Movement Committee. From 1961, he began to serve as President and Office Director of the Student Council of Nanjing Union Theological Seminary, and Vice Director of the Institute of Religion of Nanjing University. From 1980 Dr. Han was appointed Vice General Secretary of the Chinese Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee, Vice General Secretary of the China Christian Council, Chairman of the Jiangsu Christian Three-Self Patriotic Movement Committee, and Standing Committee member and Vice General Secretary of the Jiangsu Political Consultative Conference. In 1985 he became the Executive Vice Chairman of the board of directors and General Secretary of the Amity Foundation, and in 1991 he was appointed Vice President of the China Christian Council and Vice President of the Jiangsu Political Consultative Conference. Dr. Han was selected President of the China Christian Council at the Sixth National Conference of the China Christian Council in 1997.

Part II

Though Dr. Han has left us, his witness will forever be cherished in our memories.

A Choice for Faith
In his early years, Wenzao Han specialized in civil engineering first at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou and then at St. John’s University in Shanghai. During his university years, he actively participated in religious activities organized by the Christian Students’ League of these universities. Responding to Jesus Christ’s call "Not to be served, but to serve," he put his faith in God. On Christmas Day 1940, he was baptized as a Christian.
On the occasion of his university graduation, he was faced with the choice of whether to be an engineer or to be a Christian worker. After careful consideration, he finally decided to turn from civil engineering to work with the human spirit, and joined the staff of the YMCA in Shanghai. From then on, his life was closely connected with Chinese Christianity. In 1947, led by God, he came to Nanjing, his second hometown, and worked as a staff member in the Nanjing YMCA.

After the foundation of the People’s Republic of China, Christian churches in China adapted to the new situation and, under the guidance and leadership of Mr. Wu Yaozong and others, they launched the “Three-Self” campaign aimed at cutting the ties between Chinese churches and imperialism, and also at leading churches in China on the road of patriotism and faithfulness. Dr. Han was devoted to the “Three-Self” patriotic campaign, and was among the first group of 1,527 who signed the Christian Manifesto; he was also one of the 25 committee members of the Chinese Christian Churches Three-Self Oppose America and Support Korea Preparation Committee which was formed in 1951. In August 1951, he was elected Secretary-General of the Nanjing Christian Churches Three-Self and Reform Promotion Commission, which was the first city-level Three-Self organization in China. Through his efforts, the church in Nanjing did well in the Three-Self patriotic campaign, and was noted as a progressive work unit. In 1958, the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Churches Three-Self Patriotic Campaign Committee was founded and he was elected Secretary-General.

A New Beginning
After the turmoil of the “cultural revolution” period, the Communist Party’s freedom of religion policy was re-established. Christian churches in China which had “walked through the valley of death” came into a new period of springtime. In 1979, churches in China resumed worship services, and the China Christian Council was founded in the autumn of 1980. During the next twenty years, Dr. Han was utterly devoted to the reconstruction and development of the church. In 2002, he retired from his position as President of the China Christian Council, but continued working as the Director of the Consultative Committee for the National CCC and Three-Self Committee. Even when suffering from serious illness, he continued to be concerned about church matters, and devoted his energy to guiding the development of the church. He devoted all his life and talent to the church, and spared no effort in the performance of his duty to the end of his days.

For over twenty years, Dr. Han was in charge of foreign affairs for the National CCC and Three-Self Committee of China, as well as managing the work of the Nanjing office. During his years of overseas relations work, he became fully experienced in international diplomacy. In the complex world of international relations, he always insisted on the independence of the Chinese church and on the Three-Self principles. He did not believe that independence meant self isolation or unthinking anti-foreignness. He managed both inter-church cooperation and Amity programs under the principles of openness, legality and straightforwardness. He was a man of principle. Among foreign friends who worked with him, it was known that Dr. Han was not a "yes-man." Dr. Han's approach was to convince people through reasoning instead of pressure. He confronted problems while emphasizing achievements. He made great efforts to promote communication and lessen misunderstandings and estrangement between China and the outside world. In short, Dr. Han made a lasting contribution to the return of Chinese churches to the international arena and global church family, building friendship with global churches, promoting the image of the Chinese church, and enlarging the influence of Chinese churches. He was truly a statesman for the Chinese church, and made important contributions to the establishing of friendships with the church worldwide and enhancing the image and influence of the church in China. In order to recognize Dr. Han's contributions and fine reputation in the international church community, he was awarded an honorary Doctor of Arts degree by Concordia Theological Seminary in Indiana, and also an honorary Doctor of Humanities degree by Samford University in Birmingham, Alabama (USA).

Managing the Church
During his tenure as President of the China Christian Council, Dr. Han followed the motto “Prudently and diligently carry out duties given by the Lord.” He persevered in the principle of "independent management of the Church", actively promoting the theological construction ideology initiated by Bishop K.H. Ting, promoted positive elements in church doctrine, and worked toward a harmonious relationship between Christianity and socialist society. Dr. Han stressed internal capacity building among churches. To accomplish the goal of good management in the churches in China, he traveled regularly throughout China, from bustling cities to remote villages. He preferred to realize the goal of effective church management through visible practice rather than focusing on slogans. His schedule
was always tight and full, even after he passed his 70th year. He spent considerable time visiting and investigating in grass-roots churches, churches in poor areas and churches in ethnic minority areas, trying to solve the concrete problems in these churches. Weekends, holidays, and birthdays were nothing to him - his attention was focused entirely on the tasks before him. In fact, he was so busy that missing breakfast became frequent and meeting and talking with his family members became rare.

A Beautiful Path
Dr. Han loved the churches of China, and was well aware that money did not come easily. Therefore, he was a good example of thrift in the church and never spent an extra unnecessary cent. He never required special treatment during his visits and trips. His only requirements were simplicity and functional working conditions, rather than luxurious accommodations, elegant food or travel comfort. During the long overseas trip before his serious illness began, he traveled in an economy seat, sitting there for hours just like everyone else. He often told young colleagues that money was contributed by believers cent by cent, and no coin should ever be put to meaningless use. Despite his range of duties, Dr. Han did not require a private office or a secretary. Most of the time he just used an 8 square meter room at his home as his office. Not until the Nanjing Office of the Chinese Christian Council moved into its new building did he possess an office of his own for desk work and meeting guests.

Dr. Han was a man of vision, and much of that vision concerned how to run the church in China well. For him, the key was human resources. He felt the next generation of church leaders should be mature believers who also had patriotic love for their country, people of upright character and behavior who would also persist in upholding the Three-Self principles. Therefore, Dr. Han was concerned about training in virtue and character for church personnel, areas which he believed were far too important to be overlooked. Once he joked to foreign friends, "I never drive myself. I prefer sitting in the back seat to appreciate how our young colleagues drive." This example illustrates his confidence in and respect for young colleagues. Often he chose not to intervene, but rather to let young people exercise their talents and potential. "Learn swimming by swimming." Learning through practice was his way to train the young. When he visited various projects and programs, he liked to bring young colleagues with him so that they could learn from first-hand experience. He was concerned not only about work performance, but also the personal lives of young colleagues. He spared no effort in providing a comfortable working and living environment for young people, so that young colleagues could devote all their efforts to the church.

Creating New Models
Dr. Han never forgot the social responsibility of the Christian Church in China. In the early 1980s, Dr. Han and Bishop K.H. Ting seized an opportunity to contact foreign Christian friends with the idea of using overseas support from foreign Christian churches to help poor people in China. With Dr. Han's organizational talent, he assisted Bishop K.H. Ting in founding the Amity Foundation in 1985. This was a new model for international ecumenical sharing of the resources of Christians, and also provided a new way for Chinese Christians to join in the construction of China and its social welfare. Over the past 20 years, the Amity Foundation has channeled 800 million yuan to help people in 32 provinces in the fields of education, medicine and health, social welfare and rural development. Thousands upon thousands of people have benefited, and this effort has been greatly appreciated and respected by Chinese society. As an NGO, the Amity Foundation has become well-known both in and outside China, especially after Amity was able to raise 20 million yuan for urgent salvage and rehabilitation work when a large area of China was stricken by a disastrous flood in 1998. The government commended the Amity Foundation for the great help it provided. Dr. Han wholeheartedly contributed to the foundation and the development of the Amity Foundation.

A Joint Venture for Bible Printing
During mid-1980s, as the Christian community in China grew, so also did the need for Bibles. People abroad who were hostile to the Chinese government took advantage of this issue to criticize China's policy of religious freedom and to smuggle Bibles to Christian churches in mainland China. Under these circumstances, Bishop K. H. Ting and Dr. Wenzao Han took a far-sighted approach, insisting that Chinese should depend on themselves in Bible publishing and printing, but also exploring avenues for drawing on existing overseas resources. After overcoming a variety of difficulties, they were able to arrange a joint venture with the United Bible Societies, the world's largest Bible translation and publishing organization, in order to establish the Amity Printing Company (APC) and
commence large-scale publishing and printing of Bibles in mainland China. Dr. Han played an
extremely important role in this project and plunged himself into the establishment and development
of APC. APC has now become a modern enterprise that is both technologically advanced and also
impressive in size and scale, with capital assets valued at 70 million yuan. During the past 18 years,
APC has printed over 36 million Bibles for churches in China, including Bibles printed in minority
languages such as Korean, Dai, Jingpo, Li, Miao, Lisu, Wa and Lahu. Braille Bibles are also printed
by APC. Furthermore, APC has also printed millions of hymnals and other Christian books, and in
recent years has also printed over 4 million Bibles for churches outside China. Dr. Han made great
contributions to all these achievements.

A Noble Man
As a Christian, Dr. Han strived to live his life as a follower of Jesus Christ. Despite his many important
official posts, he always made people around him feel that he was just an ordinary elder. As a man he
was humble, approachable, and generous with others. Through his life and own experience, he
understood, practiced, lived out, and bore witness to his faith. Even as a leader of the church, of the
Provincial Peoples Congress, or of the Amity Foundation, he always viewed himself as an ordinary
servant as he fulfilled all his duties and responsibilities. He often said, "I am able to live well, so I
should help others to live well, too." Furthermore, as a church leader he was always considerate of
others. For example, during one international visit, he went into the bathroom in the middle of the
night to write out the draft of lecture rather than turning on the room light and disturbing his roommate.
Likewise, on the first night of his hospitalization, he wasn't able to sleep well all night because he
knew that the nurse had only few chairs instead of a proper sleeping place. The first thing he did the
following morning was arrange for a family member to buy a folding bed in order that the nurse might
have a better rest at night. All who have ever worked with Dr. Han, especially the younger generation,
have been filled with admiration for his faithful virtues and noble personality.

Prayers in the Hospital Bed
Dr. Han's faith in God never diminished even as he faced the reality that his condition was seriously
deteriorating; on the contrary, he faced impending mortality with calmness. His prayer to God was
always "Lord, I will follow you wherever you lead me." At the same time, he actively cooperated with
therapies in his own distinctly optimistic way. He showed his deep love for life through his strong
will and perseverance in the face of serious illness. He would force himself to take food bite by bite
with great difficulty in order to alleviate the worries of his household and strengthen his weak physical
body, even though he had no appetite at all. Rather than be dependent on sedative drugs and their
mind-clouding side effects, he would listen to hymns to regulate himself and find spiritual release.
Even despite the pain of his final illness, his sense of humor never failed to bring smiles to the faces
of his doctors and nurses. During his hospitalization and periods of remission, his computer was
ready at the side of his bed so that he could start to work once his infusion treatment was over.

Epilogue
Dr. Wenzao Han has finished walking his earthly path and has now left us. His loss is a loss to both
the churches in China and also to the nation. For him, Paul's words are fitting: "I have fought the good
fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith (2 Tim 4:7)," and in his beautiful heavenly home
"there is reserved for him the crown of righteousness" (2 Tim 4:8). We will remember the charm of Dr.
Wenzao Han's Christian personality, his spirit of sacrifice, and his integrity and righteousness. His
deep love for and extraordinary contributions to churches in China and to Chinese society shall live in
our memories forever.

We strongly believe that although Dr. Wenzao Han has now rested from his earthly toil, the fruits of
his labors are still with him.

We strongly believe that God used him for the sake of churches in China, and God will remember him
for what he has done for churches in China and for Chinese society.

Dr. Wenzao Han, may you rest in the arms of the Lord!

February 9, 2006.
Volunteer training. Churches in various provinces conducted volunteer training sessions in October and November of last year. The Christian Council of Baoji City in Shaanxi organized a two-week training course for pastoral workers that covered subjects such as theological reconstruction, Old and New Testament, personal conduct of evangelists, management of grassroots churches, knowledge of legal issues relating to religious affairs, and financial administration. In Sichuan, churches from Luzhou, Yibin, Zigong and Neijiang jointly organized a similar Church worker training course, which was attended by 59 volunteers, and in Hubei's Hanchuan City, 40 participants joined a volunteer training programme.

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Autism seminar. On November 23 and 24, 2005, two behavioural analysts from the Judevine Center for Autism in the U.S. facilitated a seminar on autism rehabilitation organized by the CCC's Social Service Department. Paediatricians from hospitals in five different provinces as well as a representative of Qingdao's Training Center for Autistic Children attended the meeting.
Places Mentioned in This Issue of ANS

1) Puyang (Henan)
2) Nanjing (Jiangsu)
3) Fuzhou (Fujian)
4) Shanghai

5) Hangzhou (Zhejiang)
6) Baoji (Shaanxi)
7) Luzhou (Sichuan)
8) Hanchuan (Hubei)