

The Church in China and The Outreach Foundation: 1993-2018

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The Church in China and The Outreach Foundation, Friends in God's Mission since 1993: Beginnings

In 2019 The Outreach Foundation turns forty years old. Over the next few years, I will be telling part of our history in those areas of the world where I was involved as staff liaison from 1998-2018. I will be drawing on insights of other staff and trustees, friends from both U.S. churches and the global church to tell the story of our missions in China, Egypt, Brazil, and parts of Africa. My hope is that others will add to this history by sharing what God has done through The Outreach Foundation in other countries.

We begin with China, the country to which I traveled the most. Why China? Historically, China was the first foreign mission field of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) after it established its Board of Foreign Missions in 1837. It was also the largest field for Presbyterians. "For over one hundred years 'China Missions' was the single largest item in the benevolent budget of the General Assembly," wrote G. Thompson Brown in Earthen Vessels & Transcendent Power: American Presbyterians in China, 1837-1952 (p. 6). At least 1,700 American Presbyterian missionaries served in China between 1841 and 1952 (Brown, p. 5).

The Outreach Foundation's founders, all of whom were Presbyterian pastors or elders, were aware of this heritage. Their purpose in beginning a new mission organization within the Presbyterian family was to renew the spirit that has animated American Presbyterians from the beginning. As stated by John Holt Rice, one of the early advocates of the need for a denominational Board of Foreign Missions:

"The Presbyterian Church is a missionary society, the object of which is to aid in the conversion of the world, and every member of the Church is a member for life of said society, and bound, in maintenance of his Christian character, to do all in his power for the accomplishment of the object." (Brown, p. 12)

When The Outreach Foundation began, one place we could not work was China. Although it had been the largest mission field of the Presbyterian Church, the founding of the Peoples Republic of China in 1949 ended the missionary era. Missionaries were expelled, churches were forcibly united, and finally, during the Cultural Revolution of 1966-76, all churches, mosques, and temples were closed. In 1979 when The Outreach Foundation was founded, the churches in China were just beginning to reopen as China opened itself to the world. It would take a few years for the newly formed China Christian Council to develop global connections.

But Chinese people were also in Taiwan, or the Republic of China, and that is where The Outreach Foundation started its work among Chinese. It began with

a missionary couple, the Revs. Brad and Laura Long, who were appointed as missionaries to Taiwan in 1980. After language school, they were assigned to the Hsinchu Bible College. The Bible College wanted to develop a Lay Training Center to equip lay people for evangelism.



Brad and Laura Long, first row in the middle, with their daughter, Elizabeth

Evangelism was the passion of The Outreach Foundation, and the Longs shared the vision of their Bible School with the Rev. Dr. Howard Chadwick, the first full-time Director of The Outreach Foundation. Dr. Chadwick visited the Longs in Taiwan in 1982, and he experienced a prayer movement that was sweeping over the country, including the Bible College in Hsinchu.

A church crisis had precipitated this prayer movement. In the fall of 1980, just about the time that the Longs arrived in Taiwan, the General Secretary of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, the Rev. Gao Jun Ming, had been arrested by the government of the Republic of China for his involvement in human rights. The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan came together in prayer for his release.

Alongside this urgent need of prayer, Taiwanese Presbyterians had been hearing about the deep prayer life of Korean Presbyterian Christians in local churches and in prayer retreat centers called “prayer mountains.” The Taiwanese began their own prayer mountains throughout the island and one of those was at the Bible College in Hsinchu. As Taiwanese Presbyterians sought the Lord for the release of their leader, they became open to a new touch of the Holy Spirit who filled them with power to witness. Spiritual renewal thus deepened passion for human rights and evangelism in the Church in Taiwan.



Dr. Howard Chadwick, first full-time Director of The Outreach Foundation, leading a retreat in Asia in 1983

When Dr. Chadwick saw the Spirit moving in Taiwan, he was inspired to commit The Outreach Foundation to support this work. The Bible School needed a building for the new Lay Training Center, and Dr. Chadwick shared this need with the First Presbyterian Church of Dallas, Texas. This church already had a “Taiwan Connection” through their long-time relationship with Ms. Marguerite Mizell, an

evangelistic missionary in Taiwan from 1921-1948. God's providence was further illustrated in that the pastor of First Presbyterian Church at that time, the Rev. Dr. William Carl, had previously been the homiletics professor of Brad and Laura Long at Union Seminary.

The church voted to tithe 10% of its \$2.5 million building campaign to the development of the Lay Training Center in Hsinchu. The Principal of the Bible School then went throughout the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan and said, "Look what these Americans have done. Let us complete the task!" The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan went on to raise another \$1 million to complete the Lay Training Center.

From this base, the Rev. Dr. Brad Long and the Rev. Dr. Laura Long worked for the next six years alongside Taiwanese co-workers to develop and extend the prayer movement in that country. In a recent email Brad Long shared the impact of The Outreach Foundation in Taiwan, "The Outreach Foundation played a critical role in all this great work not just in terms of major financial support but [also in terms of] friendship and encouragement."

"Friendship and encouragement" have been key roles that The Outreach Foundation has played from the beginning until now. We often say, "We make friends in the churches in the United States; we make friends with the churches around the world; then we introduce our friends to each other." That desire to connect people in mission for the spread of the Good News of Jesus Christ has been the legacy of American Presbyterian missions for over 180 years, and it is the spirit that has animated The Outreach Foundation since 1979.

The History of The Outreach Foundation in China: My Personal Introduction

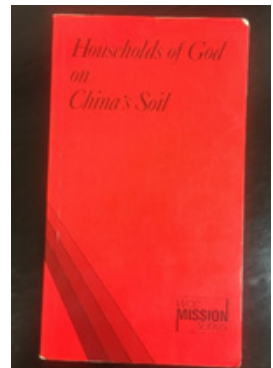
The year that the Executive Director of The Outreach Foundation, Dr. Howard Chadwick, visited Taiwan and saw the movement of the Holy Spirit in the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan, he also came to South Korea where my wife, Megan, and I were missionaries. Dr. Chadwick led a retreat for the Presbyterian missionaries and told us what was going on in Taiwan as well as introduced us to the newly formed Outreach Foundation.



Choir welcoming us in Wenzhou in 1993

Around this time, we also began hearing about the reopening of the churches in Mainland China. Some of our denominational leaders had visited China and shared what they had seen with us when they stopped by Korea on their way home. Their stories interested me, and I hoped for an opportunity to see the Church in China one day.

I continued to learn about the rebirth of the Chinese Church when I traveled with a group of Korean pastors to Hong Kong in 1983. There we spent a week at Tao Fung Shan, a center for the study of religion in China. A few years later I read *Households of God on China's Soil*, a collection of stories about grass-roots churches. The more I read, the more I thought, "This sounds like the church in Korea." It was my sense that the next great growth of the Church in Asia had already begun to take place in China, and I hoped to be part of it in some way.



*Households of God on
China's Soil*

When our missionary service in Korea ended in 1989, I became a "missionary in residence" in the new Office of International Evangelism in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) in Louisville, Kentucky. I worked within the denominational mission structure, but our office had close ties with The Outreach Foundation and Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship, which had also begun while we were in Korea. These two para-church ministries were called "Validated Mission Support Groups," and we worked in a covenant relationship with the General



Chinese believer

Assembly of the PC(USA) to support missionaries and evangelistic missions in the U.S. and around the world. As part of our covenant, we sought to include the staff of The Outreach Foundation in our programs and vice versa.

One of our General Assembly evangelistic programs was a series of “Evangelism Immersion” experiences. In 1991 we took a group of pastors and elders to experience the evangelism work and prayer life of the Church in Korea, and Mr. Jim Phillips, the Executive Director of The Outreach Foundation at the time, was part of our team.



Leaders in Hangzhou in 1993, Jeff is in the center

Two years later, we did a similar “Evangelism Immersion” trip, this time to China. I had been to China in 1990 on a PC(USA) staff trip and had seen first-hand how zealous the Chinese Christians were for evangelism. The PC(USA)’s liaison missionary to the Church in China, the Rev. Dr. Philip Wickeri, told us on that trip, “If you want to see evangelism in China first-hand, go to Zhejiang Province.” He mentioned that there was a city in that province, Wenzhou, whose percentage of Christians was higher than the percentage of Christians in “free” Hong Kong. I wanted to see this for myself.

So in 1993, a group of twelve American Presbyterians immersed ourselves in the province of Zhejiang, China for a couple of weeks. Neil Newton, an Associate Director of The Outreach Foundation, was part of our group. A future trustee of The Outreach Foundation, Mrs. Pamela Bowman, also joined us. At the time Pam was editor of ReNews, the magazine of Presbyterians for Renewal, another of the “Validated Mission Support Groups” of the Presbyterian Church (USA). We were looking to Pam to help us tell the story of our time in China.

The Church in Zhejiang Province did not disappoint us. Located on the east coast of China, its churches were growing. Many new ones were being planted, and churches were being constructed or reconstructed. Most of the rural churches we visited were run by lay leaders, as there were simply not enough pastors to go around. We saw churches in large cities such as Hangzhou and Wenzhou, and we visited churches in rural and seaside locations.

The need for training new leaders was quite evident, and the recently opened Zhejiang Theological Seminary was looking to expand its capacity to train lay leaders. As it had helped in Taiwan, The Outreach Foundation also committed to raise funds for the Lay Training Center in Zhejiang, thus setting the primary strategy of how The Outreach Foundation



Pam Bowman with children on 1993 trip

would support the Church in China: it would help build the capacity of the church for its evangelistic mission through leadership training at all levels.

At the same time another pattern for mission in China was being set, namely, that mission involves both giving and receiving, as Paul mentions in Romans 1:12. For our 1993 trip, we had not gone to China primarily to learn how we could help the church there; rather, we had gone to experience their life of faith for the renewal of the Church in America.



Pam Bowman today

By all accounts, our goal was accomplished. Some of our reactions to the Church in China were recorded in Pam Bowman's article in the Presbyterians for Renewal's ReNews (August 1993):

"Chinese Christians have internalized the gospel. They feel a sense of urgency to share the Good News with their family and friends."

"We observed people drawn into the church by the testimony of believers and their lifestyles."

"In the deeply moving testimony of our translator, Li Ya Ding, we sensed the deep faith and enduring hope of a young Christian who has known suffering in ways we could barely imagine."

"We came home inspired by our Christian brothers and sisters in China. They demonstrated evangelism and spiritual growth through prayer, hymn-singing, Bible study, and generosity. We sensed an urgency to share the gospel and a joy not based on circumstances. It's a good formula for doing evangelism and doing justice!"

It was experiences like these that motivated me to take groups to China after joining the staff of The Outreach Foundation. The Church in China has never failed to inspire and deepen the faith of those who have been on our vision trips. In my next installment, I will share another mission principle for the work of The Outreach Foundation: mission happens through relationships. We will see how Presbyterians have had unique historical connections in China which opened the doors for us when the churches reopened.



Li Ya Ding, our translator

The History of The Outreach Foundation in China: Built upon 150 Years of Relationships

The Outreach Foundation was a new missionary movement within the Presbyterian “family” when the churches in China reopened. When the time came for us to work in Mainland China, we looked to those within the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who already had connections with the Church in China. In this chapter, I want to highlight two of those people, Dr. Insik Kim and Dr. Donn McCall. Dr. Kim opened the way for us to build relationships with the Church in China, and Dr. McCall gave us confirmation of the mission strategy we would pursue.

The Rev. Dr. Insik Kim was Coordinator for East Asia and the Pacific for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) from 1973-2008. Prior to the opening of the churches in China, Dr. Kim was part of a China Working Group at the National Council of Churches in the United States and Canada (NCCCUSA) that was tasked to explore what they could do collectively in China when the churches would be permitted to open again. After

that happened in 1979 and the National China Christian Council (CCC) was formed in 1980, a small group from the CCC visited North America. Its goal was to reestablish connections with the churches that had previously sent missionaries to China. Insik Kim, as secretary of the National Council, coordinated the group’s schedule.

When the delegation visited Atlanta, Dr. Kim found out that three of the delegation had Presbyterian connections. Bishop K. H. Ting, the leader of the delegation, had been Secretary of the World Student Christian Fellowship prior to 1949. His predecessor at the WSCF had been Presbyterian missionary Francis Miller, and Bishop Ting asked about contacting the family of his former colleague. Another person in the delegation, Dr. Han Wen Zao, had graduated from Hangzhou College, which was founded by Presbyterians. He expressed the desire to see the son of the founder of Hangzhou College who was a member of the Board of the Division of International Mission of



Insik Kim with Pastor Wang in Shanghai



Donn and Virginia McCall

the PCUS at the time. The third member with Presbyterian connections was the Rev. Peter Tsai. Prior to 1949, Presbyterians in the United States had funded his studies at Princeton Seminary and those of his wife, Eleanor, at Westminster Choir College. The Rev. Tsai was eager to thank those churches for their support so long ago.

Amazingly, the newly-opened churches in China had leaders with Presbyterian connections, and they were eager to reestablish those relationships. The door thus opened for American Presbyterians to reengage in China. They began by taking official and unofficial trips to China in the 1980s and 1990s where they were warmly welcomed. Support for Bible production, health ministries, and theological training soon followed, and English teachers were recruited for schools in China.

One of those who made several unofficial trips to China in the years following the reopening of the churches in China was **the Rev. Dr. Donn McCall**, a long-term missionary to Japan and Taiwan. His wife, Virginia Montgomery McCall, had grown up in China as the daughter of missionaries. Some years after Virginia died, Donn married a recent widow, Jessie Junkin. Mrs. Junkin and her first husband, Bill, had been missionaries to China until 1949 when they were expelled following the Communist takeover.

Because of the connections of Virginia and Jessie to China, Donn was able to visit China several times, first with Virginia and later with Jessie. The last of these trips was in 1996. Accompanied this time by the son of former China missionaries, Donn visited eight seminaries scattered throughout the country. Everything was arranged by the Office of Overseas Relations of the China Christian Council.

This trip was extremely significant for the future work of The Outreach Foundation in China. Donn sent me the report of his trip, and his experiences confirmed what I had seen on our 1993 “Evangelism Immersion” trip in 1993; namely, the best way American Presbyterians could help the Church in China in its work of evangelism was to support leadership training of pastors and lay leaders through the seminaries. Prior to my joining the staff of The Outreach Foundation in 1998, we had supported the expansion of Zhejiang Seminary, as mentioned in the previous chapter. However, we did not have the personnel to build on-going relationships with the Church in China.

By 1998, however, we were ready to cross the relational bridges provided by our Presbyterian history in support of evangelism and leadership training in China. Our status as a Validated Mission Support Group of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) enabled us to be considered as part of the Presbyterian heritage and receive a warm welcome from the Church in China.

Where would we start? Would we go to those provinces in eastern China where Presbyterian missions had been strongest – Zhejiang, Jiangsu, and Shandong? Surprisingly, we began our long-term engagement in China in the far northeastern province of Heilongjiang.

The Outreach Foundation's Heilongjiang Initiative in Northeast China

Heilongjiang Province, located in the northeastern corner of China, was an unlikely place for The Outreach Foundation to begin its first sustained mission involvement. Historically, it had no Presbyterian missionaries; instead, it had a Russian heritage dating back over 100 years. But it did have a "Presbyterian Connection" through its 2,000,000 Chinese of Korean descent.



Pastors Lü and Li

Among the Christians in the Church in Heilongjiang were Korean Chinese, and one of the Korean Chinese Christians, the Rev. Li Meilan, was a leader in the Church in Harbin, the capital city of Heilongjiang Province. Pastor Li was used by God to build the bridge to American Presbyterian mission efforts when she met two American Presbyterian missionaries serving in South Korea. This is how it came about.



Rev. Dr. Art and Sue Kinsler

The Rev. Dr. Art Kinsler and Mrs. Sue Kinsler were in China in the mid-1990s visiting Korean minorities as part of a Korean mission, the Bible Club Movement. This mission had been founded by Dr. Kinsler's father, and Art was still on the Board of the mission. As the Bible Club leaders visited the Korean Chinese churches looking for ways to extend their mission into China, they met Pastor Li and her husband, the Rev. Lü De Zhi, also a pastor. This clergy couple had a great vision for the development of the Church in their province. One of the hopes they shared with the Kinslers concerned a church of over 2,000 worshipers who were meeting in a warehouse and who had been praying for six years for a sanctuary.

The Kinslers, Presbyterian missionaries who had been our neighbors in Seoul in the 1980s, were inspired and shared this vision with Dr. Insik Kim, Coordinator for East Asia and the Pacific for the PC(USA). "You must come and see this!" they urged him. Dr. Kim had already visited Liaoning, another province of Northeast China, and had sent some Korean American Koreans there to work as missionaries in partnership with a Korean Chinese Church to provide food relief to North Korea. Dr. Kim responded to the Kinslers' excitement and organized a group to visit Heilongjiang, Liaoning, and

other places where the Church was growing.

As part of the covenant relationship between The Outreach Foundation and the PC(USA), we were invited to be part of the visiting team. It would be my first overseas trip since joining the staff of The Outreach Foundation. Others on the team



Ground-breaking ceremony for the new sanctuary in Harbin

included the Kinslers who had introduced us to Harbin, Dr. Insik Kim and the Rev. Bill Young from the national staff of the PC(USA), the Rev. Harold and Mrs. Polly Kurtz from our sister mission organization, Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship, and Elder Paul Brooks and the Rev. David Bridgman from Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Wichita, Kansas. For the Rev. Bridgman, this trip was especially significant. The son of missionaries to China, David was making his first trip back to China after fifty years!

In the build-up to the trip, David Bridgman and I had been in close touch with Insik Kim about the possibility of partial support for construction of the church in Harbin about which Pastor Li had shared with the Kinslers. The Eastminster Church had committed half of its coming capital campaign, dubbed "Millennium Campaign," for mission purposes, and Bridgman was hoping to put the construction of the church in Harbin into the portfolio of the campaign. The Outreach Foundation would be the channel for this gift if it were adopted and funded.

We went to China in November 1998 with high anticipation and great hopes. We started in Shenyang, the capital of Liaoning Province (also in northeast China). After a few days of visiting Korean and Chinese churches and the regional seminary there, we flew to Harbin where we received a warm welcome from the Heilongjiang Provincial Christian Council. Art and Sue Kinsler joined our team in Harbin.

Once in Harbin, we visited two Bible Schools before participating in the main event, the ground-breaking ceremony for the new sanctuary we were hoping to support. The night before the ceremony it had snowed, and the ground was so cold that excavating equipment was needed to break up the ground enough to permit a ceremonial "first-shovel" to go into the earth! Our group joined a throng of believers, church leaders, and government officials in the long ceremony which featured worship and civic elements. The Eastminster Church team of David Bridgman and Paul Brooks represented our group, and their remarks were first translated into Korean, then into Chinese. It was a long, cold morning, but it was a joyous occasion.

The government officials congratulated the new church, and we were told that one of them even suggested the name for the church, "Hallelujah." Hearing this pleased

us as one of our concerns about working with the official churches belonging to the China Christian Council was how much government interference or opposition they might face when working with friends from abroad. We were equally concerned that we might make unintentional mistakes which would harm the work of the Church in China. We thank God that in Heilongjiang Province the relationship between the church and the government has been particularly good and that our partnership with the Church there has gone smoothly for the most part.

Before we left Heilongjiang Province, our group was privileged to have some time with Pastors Li and Lü. They shared very personally about their lives and dreams for the church in their province. They looked extremely tired, as there are so few leaders like them to carry out the work of a growing church. They asked us to pray for more leaders. They also shared a long-term vision for a retreat center for pastors and leaders to retool their skills and refresh their souls for ministry.

The excitement over being part of a new major project in China, the Hallelujah Church, and developing long-term relationships with visionary leaders like Pastors Lü and Li made us determine that Harbin in Heilongjiang Province would be a place where we would return again and again. Since that trip in 1998, The Outreach Foundation has been to Harbin over a dozen times, and we have hosted Pastors Li and Lü several times in the U.S. They have become what the Chinese call “lao peng you,” or “old friends” to us and to the American Christians who have met them on our trips.

In the next chapter, I will share some thoughts of those American Christians who have been impacted by their Chinese friends in Harbin.



Warm welcome in Heilongjiang, China

When You Follow Jesus into the World: Transforming Mission in China

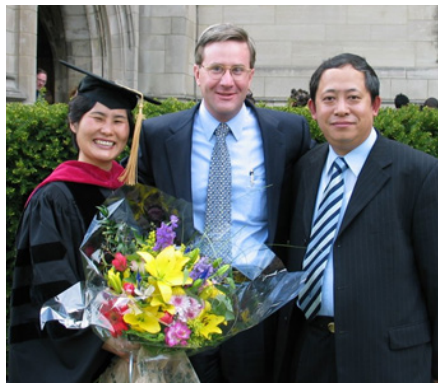
In the previous chapter, I emphasized how meeting Chinese Christians has impacted the lives of American Christians. In this chapter, I want to share two of those impact stories.

David Bridgman, the son of missionaries who returned to China on our 1998 trip after fifty years away, wrote a journal of his experiences entitled “China 1998: An Opening Door.” Our time in Harbin was especially moving for him. This is what he wrote on the meeting our group had with two of the church leaders, the Rev. Lü De Zhi and the Rev. Li Mei Lan:

As we prayed for Li and Lü and they, in turn, prayed for us, we were deeply aware of God’s presence among us. Who would have imagined such palpable evidence of the Spirit in this far-off city and among people so different from us, yet profoundly our kin in the Lord? Memories of this day are so indelibly impressed upon me that I shall count it one of the most significant of my life. (pp. 25-26)



David Bridgman praying with Church in Harbin



Walter Lewis with Pastor Li Meilan (she) and Pastor Lü De Zhi (he)

After David Bridgman returned to Eastminster Church in Kansas, the church put the Hallelujah Church project into their “Millennium” capital campaign. Over \$200,000 was given for the construction, and in August 2000, David led a team from Eastminster to celebrate the opening of the church. Shortly thereafter, Bridgman retired from Eastminster and joined Presbyterian Frontier Fellowship as an advocate for the Chinese Church’s missionary outreach among the minority peoples of China, particularly in Yunnan Province. He visited Yunnan sixteen times before his death in 2018 in support of the Church’s evangelistic and educational outreach to dozens of ethnic groups who lived there. The deep love that David felt for his Chinese co-workers and for the people of Yunnan was revealed in the marvelous photos he took. He truly lived into the meaning of his Chinese name, Qiao Ai Hua, the “bridge” (qiao) who “loves China” (ai hua).

Walter Lewis, a businessman from Wichita and member of Eastminster Presbyterian Church, was among those who joined David Bridgman in 2000 for the inauguration of the Hallelujah Church in Harbin. This is an excerpt of his testimony to the impact of

that trip and a subsequent one he took in 2002:

While I was aware of the scale and importance of China with regard to international trade and geopolitical influence, China was not high on my travel wish list. When an opportunity to visit China arose, I was intrigued because of Pastor Bridgman's knowledge of China, love of the people, and the generations that his family dedicated to serving God there. Bridgman's enthusiasm for China was something I wished to experience, so I joined him for the dedication of a great new church building in Harbin in 2000. 17,000 friends, church members, and curious neighbors attended the dedication ceremonies.



Young evangelist in Yunnan

Walter Lewis observed something else on that trip: Chinese Christians were looking for friends.

The 2000 trip to China also included a stop in Beijing where I noticed that several of the church leaders we met seemed disinterested in our visit. Their presentations were made as though they had shared the same news hundreds of times to visiting church groups. One leader seemed particularly bored until Pastor Bridgman shared the name his father gave him in Chinese at birth and told about growing up in North Jiangsu Province. The elderly church leader broke out of his stupor because he now had a visitor who was not just a religious tourist who planned to visit one time, but someone who had a heart for China. I mention this because in 2002 I returned to China, traveling with Dr. Jeff Ritchie of The Outreach Foundation and Rev. Bridgman. We revisited some of the churches and leaders from the 2000 trip. Upon entering a meeting room, Rev. Bridgman and Dr. Ritchie were warmly greeted as friends who had returned. I also was recognized, mostly because of the camera I had used to record the (2000) trip, and I also was welcomed as a returning friend. Multiple visits build relationships and friendships.

Walter returned to China with The Outreach Foundation two more times (2006 and 2008), and he journeyed to different parts of the United States on four occasions to meet Chinese who were visiting the U.S. Two of those people he met multiple times were our friends, Pastor Li and Pastor Lü from Harbin. The photograph is from 2005 on the joyous occasion of Rev. Li's receiving her Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary.

Walter Lewis also became part of the mission committee of Eastminster Church and was Eastminster's primary China advocate following the retirement of David Bridgman.

Over seventeen years Eastminster supported not only the Hallelujah Church in Harbin, but also seminaries and lay training centers throughout China, the development and publication of discipleship training materials for new believers and a Sunday School curriculum, and the Rev. Dr. Peter Lim, who became our China Mission Specialist in 2008.

Mission friendships over time have a lasting impact. The transforming effect of China upon David Bridgman following his 1998 visit was also caught by Walter Lewis, with the result that the Church in several provinces of China was strengthened in its leadership development and provided with resources for its call to make disciples. Additionally, Walter and I have become good friends over the years through our journeys to other lands besides China and through his service on the Board of Trustees of The Outreach Foundation. The blessings of friendship have multiplied over the years of mission together.

David Bridgman and Walter Lewis are not the only ones to have been impacted by China. In future chapters, we will share what others have said about their time in China. As we say in The Outreach Foundation, "Follow Jesus into the world, and the first life you change may be your own." Wherever The Outreach Foundation has gone, we have found that friendships, nurtured over time, change our lives, build the mission capacity of our global partners, and sustain mission involvement for the long term.

Early Outreach Foundation Mission Vision Trips to China: Learning by Doing

By early 2000 The Outreach Foundation was well into a major project in Northeast China, the Hallelujah Church in Harbin. Construction had begun, and we were receiving photographs of the progress of the new sanctuary. Our primary mission strategy for China, however, was not construction, but the development of leaders, and to that mission, we now turned our attention. Our next trip to China would be an exclusively Outreach Foundation trip and would be to discern which of the Bible Schools and seminaries we should support. Naturally, we also wanted to see the progress on the Hallelujah Church.

We planned our trip for the spring of 2000. We wrote the National China Christian Council asking for permission to go to specific cities and for help with arrangements, including the provision of a translator. I recruited a team that included the Rev. L. Rus Howard, an Outreach trustee, and the Rev. Carl Hamilton, Associate Pastor for Mission of First Presbyterian Church of Houston, Texas. Carl was especially interested in this trip as he had just baptized a Chinese graduate student from Mainland China who had been befriended by, and had come to faith through, members of the church.

We started our trip in Beijing and then flew northeast to Harbin. We were encouraged by the progress of the Hallelujah Church and felt the great need of the Heilongjiang Provincial Bible School for a new building to replace the leaky, moldy buildings they were temporarily using. Although we saw other seminaries and Bible Schools in each place we visited – Beijing, Shenyang, and Shanghai – we found ourselves drawn to the Heilongjiang Provincial Bible School and the Harbin Municipal Bible School as the places to invest at that time.

Following the trip, Rus Howard enthusiastically shared his experiences with fellow trustees, and two of them asked me to make another trip to China in the fall. One of the trustees requesting to go to China was former PC(USA) Moderator Elder



Trustees Marj Carpenter and Elizabeth Lancaster at overflow worship in Harbin



Heilongjiang Provincial Bible School

Marj Carpenter. She had been to China in the early 1980s after the churches had opened again, and she wanted to see the progress that had taken place since then.



Heilongjiang Bible School students

The other trustee to be part of the September 2000 trip to China was Elder Elizabeth Lancaster. Ms. Lancaster was the daughter of one of the founders of The Outreach Foundation, the Rev. Dr. Jack Lancaster. Dr. Lancaster was Pastor Emeritus of First Presbyterian Houston, which had a historical connection to China much earlier than its present interest. In the 1920s and 1930s, it supported Dr. L. Nelson Bell, Presbyterian medical missionary to China. Having heard many stories about Dr. Bell and the mission in China at First Presbyterian Houston in her youth, Elizabeth was eager to see the Church in China for herself.

Two other people on that fall 2000 trip should be mentioned. On our spring trip, we lost our good translator 2/3 of the way through the trip. His replacement spoke better English than we did Chinese, but we realized through this experience that we needed to have a Chinese speaker as part of future traveling teams. For the fall trip, I recruited a Korean-American couple, the Rev. Choon Lim and Mrs. Yenhee Lim, PC(USA) missionaries to Taiwan and friends since 1983. They had just completed Chinese language study in preparation for their work and were ideal candidates to supplement the work of our local translator/guide as needed. The Lims proved a great blessing on this trip, and Choon accompanied us on future trips as well.

By the time we arrived in China, the Hallelujah Church in Harbin had been completed and dedicated. We were thrilled to see thousands in worship in the 3000-seat sanctuary. That many such churches were needed all over China was abundantly evident as more than once we had to sit outside of buildings in an overflow area listening to a service through a loudspeaker.

The Heilongjiang Bible School, which had received support from First Presbyterian Church Houston following the spring trip, was making good progress on its new buildings. We asked the church leaders what else we could do to support theological education. Two suggestions that came up were supplying books for the libraries of these schools and scholarships for poor rural students.

After Harbin, we journeyed to Shenyang and saw the Dong Bei Seminary, several churches, and Korean Americans in Shenyang working with Korean Chinese to feed hungry people in North Korea. Marj Carpenter had been to North Korea in 1995/1996 when she was Moderator of the PC(USA). She was especially thrilled

to see the way Chinese and American Christians were cooperating on behalf of the church and people of North Korea.

As inspiring as the September trip was, however, we had the feeling that we had been an imposition to the Chinese Church by making this trip at this time. The reason is this: we scheduled our trip at the very time that the Chinese Church was marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the “Three-Self Patriotic Movement,” or “TSPM.” Chinese Christians had founded this organization in 1950 to demonstrate their commitment to be a church that was patriotic (supporting the newly-founded Peoples Republic) and to be a church that was independent of foreign influence or control. In other words, it would be self-supporting, self-propagating, and self-administering. Although the Chinese Church had officially welcomed us to come, their energies were devoted to this important milestone. In retrospect, we would have done better to honor this event by scheduling our visit at another time.

We also realized that we needed more than a language helper for our trips. We needed someone to help us with Chinese cultural cues so that we could minimize misunderstandings and mistakes in our efforts to forge a long-term relationship with the Church in China. The next several years would be spent finding such a person.

As the 21st century dawned, The Outreach Foundation was ready to make a strong commitment to the Church in China. We needed more insight on how to work well with the Church, but we had been confirmed that our basic strategy of prioritizing leadership training was also a top priority of the Chinese. The next trip would lead to a huge breakthrough for The Outreach Foundation.

“This is the Golden Age for the Church in China”: Opportunities for The Outreach Foundation at the Beginning of the New Millennium

From May 9-23, 2001 The Outreach Foundation was part of an official Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) trip to China. The group traveled to Nanjing, Yunnan Province in southwest China, Hangzhou on the east coast, and to two northeastern provinces. Everywhere we went we heard similar refrains:

“This is the golden age for the Church in China.”

“It used to be that we had to go to the people and invite them to church. Now they come to us of their own accord.”

“Six new churches open every day.”

“There is only one pastor per 10,000 believers.”

“Lay leaders are the backbone of the church, but they need more training and more resources.”

“The new believers have a weak biblical background and can fall into heresy easily.”

“We need to reflect on our faith theologically in ways that help us share the Gospel better.”

We also heard a challenge to consider a major project that would impact all the seminaries of the Church in China and many lay training centers where there was no seminary. This is how it happened.

Shortly after we arrived, we were in Nanjing being briefed on the overall state of the Church in China by the Rev. Mr. Bao, Jia Yuan, Associate General Secretary of the China Christian Council (CCC) (shown second from left). He spoke passionately about the deep commitment to God’s work of volunteer lay workers on whom the church in China depended. With only 2,000 ordained pastors (at the time of this visit) for over 50,000 churches, there was no way the churches in China could function without the 60,000-80,000 volunteer lay workers serving the churches, especially in the rural areas. Said Rev. Bao, “These dedicated workers are carrying the gospel to the people. They put the Lord’s work first.”



The Rev. Bao expressed his hope of providing these lay leaders with

more biblical and theological resources to equip them better for their ministry. Afterward, I told the Rev. Bao that The Outreach Foundation would like to help his dream of providing lay leaders in China with the kinds of resources he had mentioned: study Bibles, commentaries, Bible dictionaries, pastoral guides, etc. Bao was encouraged by my response, and we then enlarged the conversation to include Dr. Insik Kim, Coordinator for East Asia and the Pacific for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.).

Dr. Kim was also enthusiastic about what we started calling “The Mini-Library Project.” He suggested that we submit this project to the national organization of Presbyterian Women of the PC(USA) for funding through their major annual mission project, the “Birthday Offering.” Following our return to the United States, The Outreach Foundation submitted the project to Presbyterian Women. Dr.



Mini-Library

Insik Kim as PC(USA) staff endorsed it and actively advocated for it. The Rev. Bao, as representative of the intended recipients, wrote Presbyterian Women details of the project and stressed how important it would be for the Church in China.

A few months later we rejoiced when we heard that the Presbyterian Women voted to include the Mini-Library project as one of five recipients of a projected \$1,000,000 offering to be taken in the spring of 2002. We thanked God that just at a time when the growing church in China needed greater resources for its leaders, the Chinese Church, the denominational leadership of the PC(USA), and The Outreach Foundation worked together to create the Mini-Library Project.

The project’s initial funding of \$175,000 came from the 2002 Birthday Offering of Presbyterian Women. The Outreach Foundation would more than match this amount over the next several years, and that story is the subject of the next chapter.

The Church in China and the Lancaster Family

A year before the Mini-Library Project was developed, a trustee of The Outreach Foundation, Elder Elizabeth Lancaster, had participated in one of our trips to China (see Chapter 6). Ms. Lancaster had been so touched by her time in China that she was thinking about quitting her job and preparing for missionary service in China. Unfortunately, in the winter of 2002, Elizabeth contracted influenza and died suddenly.



Elizabeth Lancaster, second from left, on 2000 trip

In their grief, the Lancaster family wished to honor Elizabeth's love for China, and they chose the Mini-Library Project of The Outreach Foundation as the recipient of gifts in memory of her. Because Elizabeth Lancaster's death occurred shortly after the announcement that Presbyterian Women had adopted the Mini-Library Project as one of their Birthday Offering recipients, this project was becoming widely known at the denominational level and within the "Outreach family."



Lynne Lancaster Quinn on 2002 trip to China

As previously mentioned, Elizabeth was the daughter of one of the founders of The Outreach Foundation, the Rev. Dr. Jack Lancaster. Not only was Dr. Lancaster a former pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Houston, he was currently one of its Parish Associates. As such, many members of that 5000-member church responded generously with memorials to support the Mini-Library Project.

Because the Lancaster family were also personal friends of the leadership of The Outreach Foundation, we who were on staff wanted to honor their decision in a special way. We went to the family and invited them to send one from their family to China with us on our next trip so that they could see for themselves the church that had so impacted their daughter. The family chose a younger sister of Elizabeth, Lynne Lancaster Quinn, to be their representative.

Mrs. Lynn Quinn was a teacher and had to get permission to take off three weeks early in the 2002-2003 school year to be able to make the trip. She did so and

joined our October 2002 trip which visited the most of the same places her sister had visited plus others. Lynne too was quite touched by the trip and wrote a letter about the impact of China as her sister had done two years earlier. Here it is in its entirety:

Wednesday, November 13, 2002

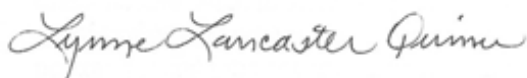
Dear Outreach Foundation,

It is hard for me to express the deep appreciation I feel for you affording me the opportunity to visit China. China was truly a miracle in my life. Not only did I see the many flames of Christ's love alive, I heard excellent Presbyterian preaching. I felt the love that my sister, Elizabeth Lancaster, felt when she went two years before. I heard musical voices unlike anything I had ever experienced in the United States. I saw truly committed Christian people working as preachers, Lay Leaders, and at the Amity Foundation. We met many chairmen and women of the China Christian Councils. Our group dined elegantly and stayed in very nice accommodations. I was surprised at the beauty of all the churches we visited. I truly could not have had a more life-changing experience.

I have returned to the regular everyday life with a new sense of God's purpose. I finally have a mission and a vision for my future. The Church in China sends a clear signal that they need religious reference books. I thank God for the Outreach Foundation, for all the new friends I met and made, and for the Church in China. It is so exciting to see so many people come to know and love the Lord right before my eyes.

Thank you for including me in the China itinerary. Thank you for the wonderful opportunity to see a part of the world I had never seen. I'm ready to go back anytime. I've had my shots and I am the only one on the trip who did not become ill. Both of my parents need to experience China. Hopefully, I can convince First Presbyterian Houston to sponsor a group to visit China.

Sincerely,



Lynne Lancaster Quinn

Lynne followed up her experience by becoming an advocate for the work of The Outreach Foundation in China in her Sunday School class, with official boards of First Presbyterian Church Houston, and in her wider circle of friends in the community. She brought her husband, Jimmy, the next time she went to China with us, and on three subsequent trips. The Quinns also hosted some of our Chinese friends from Harbin in their home on two occasions.



Jack and Helen Lancaster

Lynne and Jimmy Quinn are among the many American Christians whose lives have been transformed by the Church in China, and they have given back to their Chinese friends by their strong advocacy for the Church in China. This is what we are about as a mission. Thanks be to God.

Refining the Mission in China: Focusing on Regions with a Presbyterian History

In the first six years of our commitment to the Church in China, The Outreach Foundation supported specific projects identified by Chinese Christians to help them meet their priority goal of training more leaders for their growing church. We had begun taking groups to China to see what God was doing there and to invite their participation in that work. The connection with the Church in Heilongjiang was strong, and the “mini-library” project was in the process of being implemented at the national level.



Map of the provinces with heritage of Presbyterian mission-Shandong, Jiangsu and Zhejiang

I still felt that something more was needed for The Outreach Foundation to be as effective as it could be in China. Language is the gateway to understanding the heart of another, so I began taking Chinese in Nashville in 2003. I then asked our Executive Director, the Rev. Dr. Rob Weingartner, about the possibility of taking a sabbatical in China to study Chinese. He gave me permission to do so, and I worked with a PC(USA) missionary in Nanjing, Dr. Don Snow, to set up a program of language study at Nanjing University in the summer of 2004.



Rev. Zhang

The fruit of those two months was much more than being able to carry on a rudimentary conversation in Chinese, though I did accomplish that. The most significant result of my sabbatical in China was a more focused commitment of The Outreach Foundation in two provinces of China where there had been a Presbyterian mission presence prior to 1949. Jiangsu Province, located in eastern China near Shanghai, was where the Southern Presbyterian Mission had devoted major efforts. Shandong Province, immediately north of Jiangsu, was where the Northern Presbyterian Church had invested some of its best people and resources.

I arrived in Nanjing in mid-June of 2004. The Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council had a guest house where I could stay and eat my meals. I met with a tutor at Nanjing University each morning for two months. In addition to language learning, I took a group from First Presbyterian Church of Houston to Harbin, Shanghai, Nanjing, and Xi'an, and I did further exploration of the church in other parts of China on my own. It was a fascinating summer.



Lay leaders being trained

Particularly significant for me were the times I spent with the leaders of the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council. The Rev. An, Xin Yi was President of the Council at the time. I had met him in 2003 in California at a Chinese-American Christian Forum. Now I was on his "turf," and the Rev. An was a gracious and patient host. His welcome inspired me to learn as much as I could to be able to communicate with him and his colleagues.



*Lynne Quinn, Jia Lee, and his dad,
Chen Xiang Sheng*

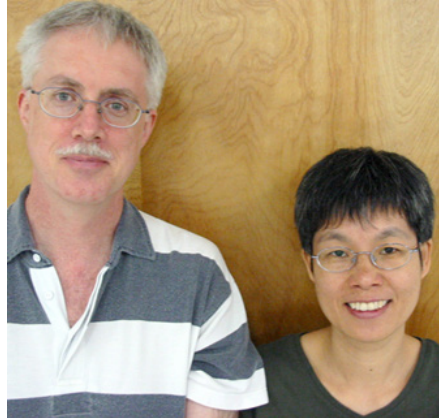
The Rev. An and the Vice-President of the Jiangsu Council, the Rev. Zhang Ke Yun, were from the northern part of Jiangsu Province, where the Southern Presbyterian presence had been strongest before 1949. The missionaries had laid a good foundation, and the Church in North Jiangsu now had 2/3 of the Christians in the province.

The downside of all this growth was that there were many churches, but few pastors. For example, one county, Xu Yi, had 100 churches but only two ordained pastors. The burden of building up the churches of necessity fell to lay leaders, many of whom had little Bible and theological training.

To meet the need to train the many volunteer lay leaders, the Jiangsu Council proposed the establishment of four lay training centers in the north where lay leaders could come once or twice a year for a month at a time (in some cases for three months). They would study the Bible and practical ministry to become better equipped to serve their churches.

On behalf of the Jiangsu Council, the Rev. Zhang shared this proposal with me, and it caught my attention. The Revs. An and Zhang asked their staff for Overseas

Relations, Mr. Chen Xiang Sheng, to take me to the cities where they wanted to establish these training centers. I enjoyed time with Mr. Chen on these trips and around the office especially when his young son, Jia Le, was with him. Children are often a gateway into the people and culture of a land, and Jia Le soon became my “hao peng you,” my good friend.



Don and Wei Hong Snow

While I was developing deeper bonds with the leadership of the Church in Jiangsu, I was having conversations with the Presbyterian missionary

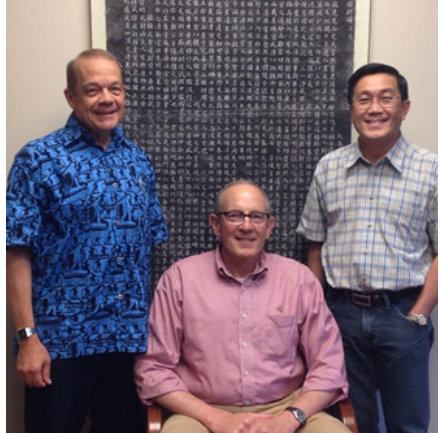
in Nanjing, Don Snow, about the next steps for The Outreach Foundation in China. Don suggested that since The Outreach Foundation was a small mission organization while China was a large country, we might be most fruitful if we were to focus our efforts on those provinces where the Presbyterian heritage was strongest, namely, Jiangsu, Shandong, and perhaps Zhejiang. That suggestion sounded right to me, and since my connection with Jiangsu was deepening, we chose to begin there.

We adopted the proposal of the Jiangsu Council to establish four lay training centers in north Jiangsu and found a strong supporter for the work in Eastminster Presbyterian Church in Wichita. This was the same church that had supported the Hallelujah Church and Lay Training Center in Heilongjiang. It was a blessing to see God at work in the clear vision of the Chinese Church for their development and in the response of American friends who had seen firsthand how God was at work in China.

I finished my sabbatical with enough Chinese to get around on my own with minimal help. At the same time, I realized that my best efforts would not be enough for effective, fruitful work in China. We needed a person on staff, full-time or part-time, who spoke fluent Chinese and who understood both the historic Chinese culture and the current political and social ethos. I was introduced to such a person, the Rev. Peter Lim, as he had come on our 2002 trip. He was, however, working with another mission organization, so we put that dream on hold for the time being.

Peter Lim, China Mission Specialist for The Outreach Foundation

The Rev. Dr. Peter Lim, a participant in our 2002 trip, profoundly impacted The Outreach Foundation's work in China before, during, and after he served as our China Mission Specialist from 2008-2015. A native of Singapore, Peter grew up speaking four Chinese languages. He was nurtured in the Presbyterian Church of Singapore, and as a young adult he spent time with the Navigators, an international ministry focused on evangelism and discipleship among college students and young adults. After emigrating to the U.S., Peter went to seminary and became pastor of one of the Chinese congregations in Portland.



Jeff Ritchie, Outreach Executive Director Rob Weingartner, and Peter Lim

As pastor, the Rev. Lim made an unusual request of his congregation. He asked them to let him "tithe" his ministry time among them so that it would include up to five weeks a year to serve the Lord in other countries. They agreed, and by the time we met him, he had been to Russia, Central Asia, and China on short-term missions.



Chinese version of the 2:7 Series (discipleship training resource) Outreach helped publish through Christian Communications Ltd.

A member of the congregation Peter served learned about our 2002 China trip and planned to participate. When she was unable to do so, she suggested to her pastor that he go instead. Peter agreed and a long and fruitful relationship between The Outreach Foundation and Peter began.

Early in the trip when we were in Harbin, Peter had a conversation with the clergy couple to whom we have referred many times, the Rev. Lu Dezhi and the Rev. Li Meilan, two of the main church leaders in Harbin. Through that conversation, Peter learned of a need in the Chinese Church we had not heard verbalized before. Revs. Li and Lu said that they lacked appropriate materials to train the many new believers who were coming to the churches. "Can you help us?" they asked Peter.

Peter thought of the way he had grown in his own faith through a discipleship

training program of the Navigators known as the “2:7 Series” (named after Colossians 2:7, which speaks of being rooted and grounded in Christ). He also knew that some Chinese Christians from a Navigator



2011 China English Exchange

background were at work on a version of the 2:7 Series that would be appropriate to the Chinese context. He told our friends in Harbin about this material and sent them a rough draft of some of the work that had already been done. They liked it and said, “Please provide this for us when it is complete.”

After our trip, Peter conferred with me to see if The Outreach Foundation would join him in getting this material published. He would be the interface between the translation team and the international Navigators organization to obtain permission to publish this contextualized version of the 2:7 Series. He also was the main negotiator with a Christian publishing organization in Hong Kong, Christian Communications, Ltd. (CCL). The Outreach Foundation would be responsible for raising \$140,000 for the publication of the first 20,000 volumes by CCL.

Thanks to the strong advocacy from people who have already been mentioned in this history of The Outreach Foundation in China, Walter Lewis and Lynne Quinn, the necessary funds were raised and 20,000 copies of the 2:7 Series were distributed through the CCL to key churches in China. As wonderful as this resource was, however, The Outreach Foundation had found an equally fine resource for the Church in China in the person of Peter Lim.

In the years following this trip, Peter and I corresponded regularly. We met in the U.S. at forums for U.S. churches and ministries to learn about the Church in China. We invited Peter to join trips to China as our cultural and linguistic informant on five occasions between 2004 and 2007. As early as 2004 I began hoping that Peter would join The Outreach Foundation team to expand and deepen our work in China, and I spoke to him about it. He was interested but was committed to another mission.

After five years of our informal partnership with Peter Lim, he shared that he felt his work with the other mission was coming to an end and was ready to explore a formal relationship with The Outreach Foundation. In the summer of 2008, he met with the Rev. Dr. Rob Weingartner, Executive Director of The Outreach Foundation and was interviewed by members of the Board of Trustees. As a result, in the fall of 2008, the Rev. Dr. Peter Lim was invited to become the China Mission Specialist of The Outreach Foundation.

From 2008-2015, Peter Lim coordinated all Outreach Foundation trips to China and several visits of Chinese delegations to the U.S. He was responsible for two major

projects, the “2:7 Series” and a Sunday School Curriculum project. Peter planned and carried out a significant program in Jiangsu Province, the “English Exchange Program,” which will be the subject of another installment. Finally, he taught short-term courses in the Jiangsu Theological Seminary.

Over and above these programs and projects, Peter Lim was an amazing source of information and insight into China, the Chinese society and the Chinese Church. His extensive network of Chinese contacts in church, government, and business provided us with discernment which helped us maximize our positive contributions to the Church in China and minimize our mistakes.

The Rev. Peter Lim loved teaching and had a Ph.D. in Intercultural Studies. As the years went on, he expressed the hope that he could do more teaching as part of his ministry. Such an opportunity came in 2015 when Fuller Seminary invited him to be part of the Global Leadership Program of their School of Intercultural Studies. We wished him well and asked only that he remain an unofficial advisor to us for our continuing work in China, which he was happy to do.

Peter Lim would often speak of our work in China as “people, programs, and projects.” He embodied the “people” part of our work. Our Chinese friends knew they could count on his frequent presence with them and his understanding, advocacy, and love for them. The Outreach Foundation is grateful for his service.

Focusing on the Historic Presbyterian Mission Areas of China: A U.S. Perspective

The previous chapter of the history of The Outreach Foundation in China was about the thirteen years that the Rev. Dr. Peter Lim was involved in our work in China, first as an informal consultant and mission partner, then as our China Mission Specialist. In this chapter, we want to return to the decision made in 2004 to focus most of our efforts in China on the parts of China where Presbyterian missions were strongest. While we did not give up our relationships in other parts of China, we pivoted toward Jiangsu Province and, to a lesser extent, Shandong Province.

We did not know at the time that God was putting the same idea on a Presbyterian congregation in North Carolina, First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington. This is a brief account of their China story.

Let us begin by turning back the clock to the year 1895. In that year Dr. and Mrs. George Worth, who were members of the First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, North Carolina, were sent by the Southern Presbyterian Church to start a medical mission in Jiangyin, a city in Jiangsu Province. From that time until 1949 First Presbyterian Church had a relationship with the Jiangyin Mission, which expanded to include education and evangelism as well as medical mission.

The advent of the Peoples Republic of China ended the missionary era, but the story began again a couple of decades after the churches were reopened in China in 1979. Chinese from Jiangyin approached the Wilmington congregation with an overture to re-establish the relationship. In 2007 the church sent a small team to Jiangyin to explore this possibility and became quite interested in reconnecting with Jiangyin.



The library of Jiangsu Seminary which First Presbyterian Wilmington supported in a major way in 2009



A visit by Jiangsu Christians to Wilmington in 2017



Worship at Jiangyin Church

The group was warmly welcomed by the leadership of the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council and the leadership of the local church in Jiangyin. Language and cultural issues, however, made it clear that they needed help in making a new start in Jiangyin. Their senior pastor, the Rev. Dr. Ernie Thompson, reached out to The Outreach Foundation, and we were glad to share what we were learning about culturally appropriate ways to develop a relationship with the Church in that part of China.

First Presbyterian Church began making trips every two or three years to China with most of their time spent in Jiangsu Province, and Jiangyin in particular. They also hosted several delegations from China to the U.S. Further, some of their members lived in Jiangsu Province because of their jobs, and their presence increased the interest of the congregation in China.

About this time the Jiangsu Provincial Bible School developed a plan to expand their campus and upgrade the quality of their education. Their hope was that they could become an accredited Bible College that could grant a bachelor's degree. To get to that status, they needed to enlarge their library.

Provisionally, First Presbyterian Church received a generous gift from a member for the church's China Mission. In consultation with The Outreach Foundation, the church decided to use a portion of the gift to upgrade Jiangsu Bible College's library. This gift and donations to the Bible School from other U.S. partners of The Outreach Foundation helped Jiangsu Provincial Bible School to receive government recognition as a college-level institution. In 2012 it became the Jiangsu Theological Seminary. The seminary has continued to develop and as of 2018 over 400 students are enrolled on three campuses. (The balance of the donation went to the Church in Jiangyin which was developing a lay training center.)

What The Outreach Foundation and First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington have learned from these years of partnership with each other and with the Church in China include the following:

- 1.** The Church in China has a different understanding from the American Church of what the basic unit of "church" is. For most American Christians – even those of us who are part of denominations with local, regional, and national structures – the basic unit of the church is the congregation. Anything above the congregational level is seen to be an entity to strengthen the life and mission of the local church. By contrast, the basic unit of "church" in China is a broader geographic area. It can be a province (e.g., Jiangsu Province), a municipality (e.g., the city of Nanjing) or a county in a rural area. The one church in these geographic areas is distributed in local assemblies throughout the region.

The Outreach Foundation saw this understanding of the church in our first major project in Heilongjiang in the period 1998-2000. We wondered why so much

attention was being paid to the construction of just one congregation in Harbin. The leadership explained that this congregation was the priority for the churches in the whole city of Harbin and even, to some extent, throughout the province of Heilongjiang. When this church was completed, the churches banded together to build the next church prioritized by the Municipal or Provincial Christian Council. Over a period of years, dozens of churches were built through this spirit of “one for all and all for one.”

First Presbyterian Church in Wilmington learned this lesson also as they saw that while the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council was happy to see them reconnect with the church in Jiangyin, the Council wanted the Wilmington Church to share the Chinese understanding of what “church” means in the current situation in China. Namely, to be connected to Jiangyin is also to be in relationship to the church in the whole province. First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington was happy to adopt that understanding, and it has balanced support for the church in Jiangyin with support for the Provincial Seminary.

2. The second thing we have learned through our experiences in China is that for both us and the Church in Jiangsu, the word “friend” describes our relationship more than “partner.” The 2018 trip to China, which included members of First Presbyterian Church, Wilmington, emphasized this point. We had come to China to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Jiangsu Theological Seminary. At the celebration, the Rev. Zhang Ke Yun, President of the Jiangsu Seminary, gave this word of thanks to The Outreach Foundation and its U.S. partners: “You were present with us when we needed help to enlarge our campus. You have not only been long-term friends; you have been good friends.”

To be called “friends,” not “partners” or “donors,” is significant for us, for indeed it is our friendships with Chinese brothers and sisters that keep us returning to China year after year. As friends we join hands in God’s mission in China, in the United States, or wherever God calls us.

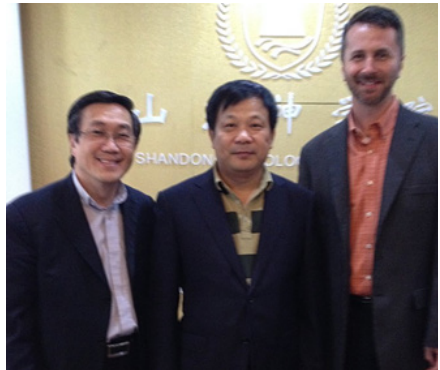
Shadyside Presbyterian Church and Its Shandong Connection

In the last chapter, we told the story of First Presbyterian Church of Wilmington, North Carolina and its historical connection with Jiangyin in Jiangsu Province. In this installment, we will share about an American church with a historical connection to the Shandong Province, just north of Jiangsu. This is the Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



Art Gilkes and Linda Leach at foundation stone of Shadyside Hospital built in 1924

Presbyterians in the northern stream of U.S. Presbyterianism began sending missionaries to Shandong in the 1860s. By 1895, the Shandong Mission had become the largest, and, in many ways, the most successful work of the PC(USA) in China (G. Thompson Brown, *Earthen Vessels and Transcendent Power*, p. 78). Some notable American Presbyterian missionaries served in Shandong, and one of them, the Rev. John L. Nevius, greatly influenced the Presbyterian missions to the Korean Peninsula that began in the 1880s.



The visionary leader of the Shandong Provincial Christian Council, the Rev. Gao Ming, shown at Shandong Seminary between Peter Lim and Shadyside's Todd Leach

Shadyside Presbyterian Church was among the churches of the PC(USA) that supported the Presbyterian missions in Shandong. By virtue of its location in the steel city of Pittsburgh, some of its members had business connections in Shandong Province as well. When the church learned that the Presbyterian Mission Hospital in Weixian (now Weifang) was expanding and needed support Shadyside responded with a gift of \$26,000, enough to build and outfit a new structure, and the hospital was renamed Shadyside Hospital.

That hospital and the Presbyterian Mission compound surrounding it was taken over by the Japanese during World War II and used as an internment camp for foreign nationals, including many missionaries. (The story of the "Shandong Compound" is told in Langdon Gilkey's *Shantung Compound: The Story of Men and Women under Pressure*.) Although I had taken groups to Weifang in 2004 and 2006, we had never seen the former hospital and its surroundings which the

Chinese government had restored as a park to honor those who had been imprisoned there.

On our 2008 trip to China, we included the Shandong Compound Memorial Park in our itinerary and brought along Dr. Scott Sunquist, a historian of the Church in Asia. Dr. Sunquist gave us a fascinating history of Presbyterian missions in Shandong Province and told us of Shadyside Presbyterian's role in that mission.



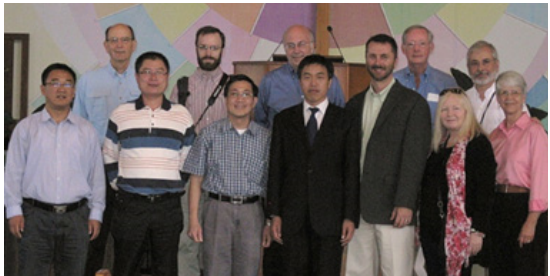
Wei Hai church leaders Rev. Tan and Rev. Lu

Upon our return to the U.S., we showed the Rev. Todd Leach, Associate Pastor for Mission at Shadyside, a photo of the cornerstone of the Shadyside Hospital. He also met Dr. Peter Lim, our China Mission Specialist, and became interested in having Shadyside reconnect with its China heritage.

A "China Mission Team" was formed at the church and began brainstorming ways to connect with the Church in Shandong Province as well as with the many Chinese studying in universities in Pittsburgh. Two of the team members joined our 2009 China trip which included time in Weifang, their historical connection, and Jinan, where the Shandong Provincial Christian Council and the Shandong Theological Seminary were located.

The following year the church sent six of its members and two Pittsburgh Seminary students to participate in The Outreach Foundation's English Exchange Program in Jiangsu Province. They hoped to learn from this experience how to set up a similar program in Shandong Province. Enthusiasm was high, but Shadyside had a decision to make: would they try to reconnect with their historical partner, Weifang Peoples Hospital, which was now a fine government-run hospital, or would they connect with the present Church in Shandong? Shadyside opted for a relationship with the Church.

Todd Leach visited China again in 2011 with Peter Lim. After visiting the Shandong Provincial Christian Council and Seminary in Jinan, they went to Wei Hai, a city on the Yellow Sea near the northeastern tip of the Shandong Peninsula. There they met a clergy couple, the Rev. Lü Zhao Shi and the Rev. Tan Gui Yun, and concluded that this was the place to establish a local relationship as part of their relationship



2012 Shadyside group

with the wider Church in Shandong Province. The Outreach Foundation took Shadyside to Shandong in 2012 and 2014. Over time they established a good working relationship with the Shandong Christian Council and planned an English Exchange program with them that brought youth throughout the province to the Wei Hai Church in the fall of 2015.



2015 Shadyside group

In a note to The Outreach Foundation, the Rev. Todd Leach shared this thought on their reconnection with the Church in Shandong Province:

We have been inspired by the work of the Church in China, especially we have seen it in the Weihai leadership and congregation. The great blessing of our efforts has been our focus on relationships. We desire stronger relationships and hope one day to show the same hospitality to Rev. Lu and Rev. Tan as they have shared with us.

While Shadyside Presbyterian Church has been the strongest partner of The Outreach Foundation in Shandong Province over the past two decades, we have introduced others to the marvelous church in this province. We supported the Shandong Seminary's expansion in 2009 and graduates from the seminary have received "mini-libraries." However, there is another Presbyterian connection with Shandong whose story we would like to share briefly.

The Presbyterian Church of Korea was just getting organized when it began sending missionaries. When it organized its first presbytery in 1907, it commissioned a domestic missionary. At its first General Assembly in 1912, the Presbyterian Church of Korea commissioned its first overseas missionaries and sent them to Shandong Province, which was across the Yellow Sea from the Korean Peninsula. Korean missionaries labored in that part of China until the beginning of the Peoples Republic.

Today there are Korean Chinese congregations who are part of the official Church in Shandong. One of which is in Wei Hai, and on a 2014 Outreach-Shadyside trip we met the pastor of the congregation. The next time I visited Shandong I brought with me the PC(USA) East Asia Regional Liaison, the Rev. Choon Lim, a Korean American who had already begun building relationships between Korean church

communions (Presbyterian and Methodist) and Chinese Christians. Now he has added Shandong Province as a place to make deeper connections between the churches in the two countries and has brought Korean Presbyterian church and seminary leaders on subsequent visits.

The Church in Shandong Province has visionary leadership that is globally informed and historically aware of its unique location in China as the birthplace of China's most distinguished thinker, Confucius. The Outreach Foundation has much to learn from this fascinating part of the body of Christ in China and will continue to introduce American friends to the Church in Shandong in the coming years.

English Camps: Going Deeper in Relationships in China

One of the most fruitful results of the decision by The Outreach Foundation to focus on the provinces where Presbyterian missions had been historically strongest in China was a program we carried out between 2009 and 2012 with the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council. We called it the Summer English Exchange. The idea for these exchange experiences came from The Amity Foundation, a social service and development organization founded by Chinese Christians in 1985. One of the contributions Amity made to Chinese society was their Summer English Program. Every year international volunteers would spend four weeks helping English teachers in Chinese Middle Schools improve their spoken English. Many U.S. Presbyterians participated in this program which continues today.



Becky Ritchey



Small groups in action

The Outreach Foundation proposed to the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council that we do a version of this program

together to deepen relationships with the churches in the Province and renew the heritage that had sent Presbyterians there for over 100 years. The idea simmered for a few years until the Rev. Dr. Peter Lim joined our staff as China Mission Specialist in late 2008. We received the go-ahead from the Jiangsu Council and began thinking of what shape and form such a camp might take.

Peter Lim and I envisioned a 1- or 2-week Summer English Exchange that would accomplish several purposes:

- meet the desire of Chinese Christians to improve the English that they had studied in school but lacked the opportunity to practice.
- give U.S. Christians significant time with Chinese Christians through which they could learn some of the history, culture, and language of their Chinese friends.
- enable both Chinese and U.S. participants to grow closer as fellow disciples of Jesus through worship, prayer, and the sharing of our faith with each other.

Peter worked with the staff of the Jiangsu Provincial Christian Council to plan the first English Exchange which was held in July 2009 in Nanjing and other cities of Jiangsu Province. There were three components to the Exchange: an English-conversation component, field trips for culture and history, and worship.

Presbyterian mission-coworker in China, Dr. Don Snow (see Installment 9, “Refining the Mission”) had been training the foreign volunteers in the Summer Amity Program for years, and so we invited him to orient the American participants to this new venture of the Jiangsu Christian Council and The Outreach Foundation. Don had also written a book designed to help foster English conversation and cultural learning, *More Than a Native Speaker*, and this book became our text for the educational component of the Exchange.

The Chinese recruited twelve participants from among pastors in churches throughout the province. We recruited laypersons from churches that were already involved in China through The Outreach Foundation (First Presbyterian Church Houston and Peachtree Presbyterian Church) and from churches or individuals who had an interest in China through another connection. One of the participants, Ms. Ann Broom, had been a missionary in Taiwan and was very familiar with the Presbyterian mission heritage in Jiangsu, including the work of medical missionary Dr. L. Nelson Bell.

For the spiritual and worship component of the Exchange, we invited a former missionary to Korea, the Rev. Dr. Rebecca Ritchey, to be our Spiritual Director. The role of the Spiritual Director was to set the tone for each day through guided worship each morning and evening. American participants shared in the leadership in the morning, and Chinese participants led the evening worship.

The cultural part of the exchange was embedded into the English conversation (e.g., How do you “do” weddings in America and China?). It also included seeing places important to the wider Chinese history and culture as well as visits to places important for the history of the American Presbyterian involvement in China prior to 1949.



Ann Broom at Memorial to Presbyterian Missionary L. Nelson Bell in Huai'an, Jiangsu Province



Pizza in China-part of the culture exchange

The first year was so successful that we increased the number of participants in 2010 and lengthened the Exchange from ten days to two weeks. We made an intentional effort to recruit young adults, especially from seminaries. We were especially blessed by two seminarians from Pittsburgh Seminary and two recent graduates of Princeton Seminary.

The program continued for two more years, but by the fourth year, there was a sense that the Exchange in its present form had run its course. Nevertheless, the relationships that had developed over four years were important both to the Chinese and to the Americans. Thus we began planning for an “alumni reunion” in the U.S. in 2013. Unfortunately, our Chinese friends did not receive their visas, and we were all disappointed.

Elsewhere in China, other churches whom The Outreach Foundation introduced to China were holding their own English Exchanges. As previously mentioned in the last installment, Shadyside Presbyterian Church from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania worked with the Shandong Provincial Christian Council to develop an English Exchange in 2015. Another congregation, the Bel Air Presbyterian Church in Los Angeles, California, began a relationship in 2007 with the churches in Harbin, Heilongjiang Province through The Outreach Foundation. The following year it organized its own Summer English Camp, and those camps have continued until the present day through the leadership of Dr. David Fung and Mrs. Clair Fung, the lay leaders who have headed Bel Air’s China partnership from the beginning.

Our history of English Exchanges has shown that they accomplish the purposes for which they were set up – friendships have been formed, understanding of the two cultures has increased, and participants in the Exchanges have shared their faith with each other. On the other hand, we have found that it is hard to sustain these kinds of programs over time. There must be key people from among the Chinese and U.S. churches who have the time to engage in the in-depth planning that is needed. They must have communication skills across the sometimes daunting language and cultural divides. Finally, they must be people who believe in the transformative nature of these exchanges. Namely, when we spend sustained time with Christians from another culture, hearing their stories of faith, sharing their food, and learning something of their history and culture, we begin to see the world and God’s mission through their eyes – and we become better Christians in the process.



2009 English Camp

Networking for Mission in China

God's mission flows into the world through relationships, and our mission in China has been marked by a plethora of such relationships, both within and beyond the Presbyterian family. This focus of this chapter will be some China-related networks in which The Outreach Foundation has participated, including a Presbyterian China Network of which we were one of the founders.



Rev. An, Xin Yi

Christian Leadership Exchange (CLE):

Shortly after The Outreach Foundation became seriously committed to mission relationships in China, we learned about a network called Christian Leadership Exchange. Its purpose was to introduce American mission organizations to the officially recognized Church in China through an annual symposium on the Church in China. CLE invited a dozen or so



Hugh Wire and Jefferson Ritchie

leaders to meet with U.S. mission organizations that had an interest in working in China. The relationships developed at these meetings resulted in many projects which contributed to the development of the Church in China and its outreach to Chinese society.

For The Outreach Foundation, the CLE symposia provided us with the opportunity to spend more time with people we had already come to know such as the Rev. An, Xin Yi of Jiangsu Province. We also met new friends from other parts of China whom we visited from time to time. Another bonus of the CLE meetings was discovering other organizations doing work similar to ours in China. One of them, Christian Communications, Ltd., a Hong Kong-based ministry, has become a significant ministry partner in our ongoing project of providing mini-libraries to graduates of seminaries and lay training centers (see Installment 7: This is the Golden Age for the Church in China).

Pacific Network for Mission Education (PNME): Another organization, the Pacific Network for Mission Education (PNME), was a West Coast network concerned with issues in East Asia. China was frequently the focus of its forums, often done in partnership with Christian Leadership Exchange. Some of those involved in PNME

had themselves been teachers in China through the Amity Foundation and were enthusiastic advocates of what they had seen and experienced. In addition to their annual conferences to which they invited representatives from Amity, they also organized trips to China as part of their work. I attended a PNME meeting in 2011, but by then my primary energy was directed toward another network within the PC(USA).



Ernie Thompson and Walt Conser

China Network of the PC(USA): In the first decade of the 21st century the PC(USA) began encouraging the formation of mission networks by country or region. Congregations, presbyteries, and people involved in the particular country through other mission organizations gathered together to hear updates on the church in their country of interest, share their mission work there, and discuss common issues of church and society in the country. The China Network of the PC(USA) was born during a national mission conference in 2007 when General Assembly staff for East Asia and the Pacific, the Rev. Dr. Insik Kim, brought together former Amity teachers, members of mission support organizations like The Outreach Foundation, and persons who had connections in China separate from the denomination.



David Fung and Pam Bowman



Wang Bin with Ken McFayden from Union Seminary

The following year at the Presbyterian General Assembly in San Jose a purpose statement was drafted and a steering committee was set up to organize the next meeting. Early leaders in the Network included the Rev. Hugh Wire, a former Amity teacher, who was part of the PNME network; Mrs. Caroline Becker, another former Amity teacher who became the first Moderator of the Network; and the Rev. Lou Haase, from First Presbyterian Church of Evanston, Illinois, whose congregation supported a U.S. seminary professor teaching in the Department of Religion at Peking University in Beijing.

Outreach Foundation staff participated enthusiastically in the China Network from its inception. We encouraged those who had been on our trips to China to come

to the annual meetings and invite others to learn what God was doing in China. First Presbyterian Wilmington and Bel Air Presbyterian Church, two partners of The Outreach Foundation in China, hosted several of the meetings. Dr. Walt Conser of the Wilmington congregation served as the second Moderator of the Network and was tireless in his support for it over five years. Jimmy Quinn, a participant on five Outreach trips to China, took care of the website for a number of years and documented the meetings through his incredible photography.

At each meeting, we heard updates on the Church in China and on the China ministries of Network members. Especially meaningful were those meetings when Chinese leaders were present. At the 2011 Network meeting hosted by First Presbyterian Wilmington, for example, we welcomed the Director of the Overseas Relations Department of the National China Christian Council, Elder Ou En Lin, and a young pastor studying for a year at Princeton Seminary, the Rev. Wang Bin. We had met both of these leaders in China, but seeing them again in the U.S. deepened the relationships.

We found that the Network was a good place to interact with churches and mission organizations whose work in China complemented ours. The North Avenue Presbyterian Church of Atlanta, Georgia, for example, had been ministering for years among Chinese scholars studying at nearby Georgia Tech University. We explored with them how we could work with them and with our friends in China to help those scholars who had come to faith in Jesus find a church home when they returned to China.

The life of mission networks goes in cycles as people and churches enter different seasons of life. For example, now that so many churches and missions have developed relationships with the Church in China, the purpose of those earlier ecumenical networks has been largely fulfilled. In the case of the China Network of the PC(USA), the continuing members are largely those who have been on Outreach Foundation trips. The most recent Outreach trip (October 2018) generated new energy for the Network, for which we are grateful. It is our firm belief that when people working with the same mission partner also connect with each other to pray together, share best practices, and find areas where we can join in mission together, our mission can be more fruitful and faithful to God's purpose of bringing all things together under one head, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:10).

The Amity Foundation, a Christian-Initiated Non-Governmental Organization

After the opening of China in the late 1970s, the Church in China was permitted freedom to worship and engage in ministry inside the church walls. It was not, however, allowed to do social ministries outside the church. Neither could it print Bibles which were scarce because so many had been destroyed during the Cultural Revolution.

The leadership of the China Christian Council found a way to address these needs by setting up a non-governmental organization (NGO), the Amity Foundation, in 1985. Its mission was to print the Bible for the churches in China and to serve the society of China through education, health, development, disaster relief, and other specialized ministries. Since Amity was set up as an “NGO” and not as a church, it was permitted to receive large donations from overseas churches and non-governmental organizations. Over thirty-three years it has leveraged those funds into projects that have blessed the Chinese people in many ways. Its work now extends beyond China into other parts of Asia and even into Africa.



Rev. Fan Jing Fang, one of our Chinese leaders from Jiangsu Seminary, beside a stack of Bibles at the Amity Printing Press when the 2009 English Exchange participants toured Amity Press



Caroline Sunquist Becker, Amity teacher 2001-2003, second row fourth from right

The Amity Printing Company: One of the first gifts the Amity Foundation received was a printing press donated by the United Bible Society with support of churches like the PC(USA). Since 1986 the Amity Printing Company has printed more than 180,000,000 Bibles in Chinese and in dozens of other languages, not only for the Church in China but also for churches and ministries throughout the world. Visitors to the Amity Printing Company are amazed by the efficiency and productivity of this division of the Amity Foundation. In a relatively short time, Amity has become one of the largest printers of the Bible in the world, and it has expanded its geographical presence by opening an office in Ethiopia.

Educational Work: The opening of the churches in China in 1979 did not include permission for missionaries to return to China. However, as an NGO, Amity

Foundation has been free to welcome English teachers for two programs they initiated. The first program brings English-speaking foreigners to teacher training colleges in China where they serve for two years. As Chinese society developed, those teachers have been increasingly sent to underserved areas of China, especially to the western part of China. The Presbyterian Church recruited both young adults and active seniors to this program. For example, as a young adult, Ms. Caroline Sunquist Becker served two years with Amity in Central China. She later became the first Moderator of the Presbyterian China Network. Among those active seniors who became Amity teachers in retirement, Ms. Marie Melrose is noteworthy. Born in China to missionary parents, Marie served twenty-seven years as a missionary in South Korea (spending a year in China during that time). After retiring from Korea, she returned to the land of her birth for two years with Amity (1989-90). She volunteered again in 2010, this time as a participant in The Outreach Foundation's English Exchange Program.



Marie Melrose, second from right



Linqu Health Project (2006)

The other English-language program is Amity's Summer English Program (SEP). For a month each summer, overseas volunteers are sent out in teams to various parts of China where they help Chinese English teachers in Middle Schools improve their spoken English. Many Presbyterians have participated in the SEP. Upon their return, they have been among the most enthusiastic advocates in their churches for the Church in China and for the Presbyterian China Network described in the last installment of our China history.

Health Work: American Presbyterians have also supported the Amity Foundation in the area of health. Grants from the PC(USA) in the late 1980s and early 1990s helped train Village Health Workers for service in government-run rural clinics in the central and western part of China.

By the 1990s Chinese churches were able to do some outreach beyond their doors, and many wanted to have health ministries. The Amity Foundation set up a training center in Linqu, a city in Shandong Province, to train Christian medical personnel how to set up sustainable church-based clinics and senior citizens homes. That project received major Presbyterian funding from a sister organization of The Outreach Foundation, the Medical Benevolence Foundation (MBF).

The main U.S. congregation to partner with MBF in this endeavor was Peachtree Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, Georgia. In 1999 it pledged \$1,000,000 for the work in Linqu to be spent over a ten-year period. For the first few years, Peachtree sent its support through MBF, and some members of the church visited the project. However, pastor of the church, the Rev. Dr. Vic Pentz, and his Director of Mission, Mrs. Marilyn Borst, were keen to involve more people in this major commitment of the church to China.



Amity leadership and members of the 2018 visiting team

Marilyn had worked with The Outreach Foundation in the previous church she had served as Mission Director (First Presbyterian Church of Houston, where Vic Pentz had also served as pastor), and she thought we could help Peachtree make a more personal connection with their work in China. As a result, Peachtree began supporting the medical work in Linqu through The Outreach Foundation and joined our trips to China in 2006 and 2008.

Ultimately, Peachtree decided to focus its efforts on the church connections it was able to make through The Outreach Foundation, particularly in Jiangsu Province. But the Amity Foundation reminded us on our recent trip to China (2018) how important that support for this project had been for one of their early church-related projects.

The Outreach Foundation and the Amity Foundation: Because the Amity Foundation was not, strictly speaking, part of the official Church in China, The Outreach Foundation has focused more of our people, programs, and projects on the work of the Church in China rather than on the Amity Foundation. However, we continue to be friends with and advocates of the Amity Foundation. We make sure to visit the Amity Printing Company each time we take a trip. We rejoice in the way that the Amity Foundation has increasingly benefited the churches in China by building their capacity to carry out social service projects in their communities. We honor the Amity Foundation as a pioneer in the field of non-governmental organizations in China and note their leadership in creating a spirit of philanthropy inside China. We see a bright future for the Amity Foundation in China and throughout the world. They make the world a better place.

What Is the Future of The Outreach Foundation in China?

In this final chapter of The Outreach Foundation's history in China, I will list a few projects that have not been previously mentioned. We will also speak of our ongoing relationships, programs, and projects which are now coordinated by the Rev. Juan Sarmiento. Finally, we will suggest some future possibilities to explore with the Church in China as well as potential challenges.

Bibles for New Christians and Study Bibles for Lay Leaders and Pastors: From the beginning, The Outreach Foundation has provided Bibles for the Church in China. In the early years of our involvement, we sent funds to the Amity Foundation for Bibles for new Christians. Later on, our focus became providing Study Bibles as part of our on-going "Mini-Library" project or as one-time gifts to training programs in various provinces.

Zhi-Mian Academy of Psychology: On my sabbatical in 2004 Dr. Don Snow, whom I have frequently mentioned as an unofficial adviser to our work in China, introduced me to Dr. Wang Xue Fu, a Christian pastoral counselor who founded the Zhi-Mian Academy of Psychology. By this time, Chinese churches were establishing medical clinics, but the ministry of counseling was undeveloped. Dr. Wang's Zhi-Mian Center was an early attempt to meet this need. He taught pastoral counseling in seminaries, held workshops, and had hot-line centers for immediate counseling needs. The Outreach Foundation supported this work for several years.



Dr. Wang Xue Fu photo from 2004

Involvement in Western China: The historic Presbyterian mission connections in China were largely in the eastern provinces, and that is where The Outreach

Foundation decided to focus our efforts. However, the western part of China is the poorest and least developed part of the country, and it is home to many of China's minority groups. The Outreach Foundation took two early trips to Yunnan Province in Southwestern China to see the work of the Church and the Amity Foundation among the many minority peoples there (2001 and 2005). We supported several Bible translation projects of the



Rev. Wang Hong (left) and Rev. Wang Jun (right), leaders in Shaanxi Province in Western China

Yunnan Provincial Christian Council for a few years. Our sister organization, Frontier Fellowship, made Yunnan their priority for mission in China, and we looked at another part of western China.

In 2004 we began visiting the Church in Shaanxi Province, which is one of the gateways to western and northwestern China. The Church there is well-organized and has a good working relationship with Amity and its projects. We looked for a lead U.S. church to partner with us in Shaanxi as we had done in Heilongjiang and Jiangsu Provinces. However, we did not find that partner, and on our own, we did not have the capacity to make Shaanxi a priority.



Rev. Juan Sarmiento, new Associate Director for Mission, shown with Jeff Ritchie in Hong Kong on 2016 trip

The Future of The Outreach Foundation in China: I retired from The Outreach Foundation at the end of 2016. Prior to my retirement, the Rev. Juan Sarmiento was called to succeed me as Associate Director for Mission and became our point person for mission relationships with the Church in China. Juan accompanied me on my last official trip to China in the fall of 2016 and has met our friends in the key provinces where we will continue our work, discern new opportunities, and respond to challenges that emerge.

Relationships: Our relationships remain strong in Jiangsu and Heilongjiang Provinces. We continue to build our relationships in Shandong Province, and we keep in regular touch with the Amity Foundation. The Outreach Foundation remains in close touch with the PCUSA's Regional Liaison for East Asia, the Rev. Choon Lim, who has a deep commitment to connect the Korean Church with China.

In the U.S., we continue to nurture U.S. partners who already have strong connections in China—Bel Air Presbyterian (Harbin, Heilongjiang), First Presbyterian Wilmington (Jiangyin, Jiangsu), University Place Presbyterian (Suzhou, Jiangsu), and Shadyside (Wei Hai, Shandong). We regularly connect with the China Initiative at Fuller Seminary and with China programs at other seminaries to see how we can increase exposure of seminarians to the amazing Church in China.

An opportunity that we see emerging is that the Church in China has increasing freedom and opportunity to connect with the non-Western Church. The Rev. Juan Sarmiento, who is also tasked with the development of The Outreach Foundation's program, "Developing South-South Mission Relationships," is already looking to connect the Church in China with partners in Korea, Brazil, and Africa.

Programs: Our annual trip to China, with occasional trips by Chinese to the U.S.,

continues to be our primary program activity to introduce new American friends to the Church in China. We support short-term courses at Jiangsu Seminary taught each year by PCUSA co-worker John McCall, a mission co-worker in Taiwan. We hope to enlarge the number of short-term teachers, for we have an open invitation from the Jiangsu Seminary.



*“Emmanuel” in Chinese, found in front of
most Chinese Churches*

Projects: We continue our mini-library project which has now expanded to include every seminary of the official Church in China and many lay training centers as well. This expansion is thanks to our cooperation with “Book-Gifting Project” of the Hong Kong-based Christian Communications, Ltd. One other on-going project is our support for continuing education for Chinese pastors on a case-by-case basis.

Challenges Facing the Church in China: As 2018 began, the Chinese government issued a new set of regulations governing religious bodies in China. We were concerned about this, and on our October trip to China, we carefully asked our key church partners about the impact of the new regulations on them. At that time they replied that they had not been impacted by the changes, even though some things were different. Leaning on trusted sources of information, we continue to monitor the situation so that the work of the Church in China is not harmed or hindered through their connection with us.

The Church in China lives and works in a context very different from us. Even after twenty years of our friendship and partnership with it, we are still learning how to ask the right questions of our Chinese friends (or ask them in the most helpful way possible) in order that our partnership may be beneficial to them.

At the same time, we realize that we are part of the same family, God’s family, and we never cease to be amazed at what God has done and is doing in and through our brothers and sisters in China. We are humbled to have the opportunity to participate in God’s work among them, from whom we have learned so much. We pray and trust that our “China Connection” will continue to glorify God as we experience Emmanuel, “God with us,” with the Church in China.