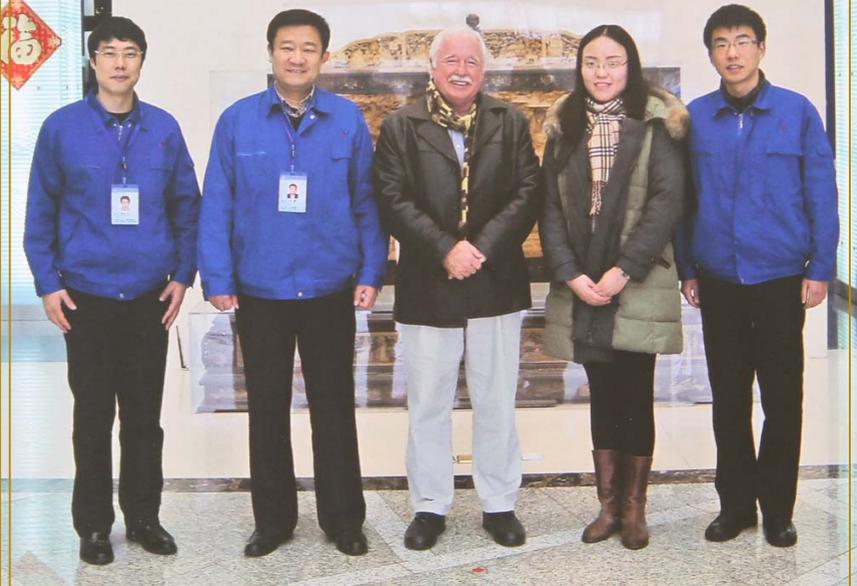


南京愛德印刷有限公司
AMITY PRINTING CO.,LTD

WARMLY WELCOME DR. ROGER E. DICKSON
FROM AFRICA INTERNATIONAL MISSIONS



PASSAGE TO CHINA

A Great Door Is Opening

Roger E. Dickson

2014

Cover Page Introductions

(From left to right)

Gary Chou Ge

Manager of Export Sales

Luke Liu

General Manager

Roger Dickson

(Foreigner, warmed by a neck scarf given by Nancy)

Nancy Ou

Supervisor of Europe & Africa

Will Yang

Sales Advisor of Africa



**Cape Town, South Africa
Hutchinson, Kansas U.S.A.**

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The following are excerpts from an address by Ms. Guo Wei, Director, Department of Foreign Affairs, State Administration of Religious Affairs of the People's Republic of China. The statements were made at the Amity Printing Company's 100 Millionth Bible Celebration in 2012.



Ms. Guo Wei

On behalf of the State Administration of Religious Affairs, I would like to warmly congratulate Amity Printing Co. for printing and distributing one hundred million Bibles, and extend heartfelt thanks to the United Bible Societies and all friends at home and abroad for your long-standing support to the Chinese church!

Today, China has become the largest producer of the Bible in the world. Amity's printing of the Bible fully meets the needs of Chinese Christians. With the growing overseas orders, more and more Bibles "made in China" are provided to overseas churches. It is proved that the Chinese government sincerely implements the policy of religious freedom.

The Bible printing ministry enhances and expands the understanding and cooperation be-

tween the Chinese church and overseas churches.

Dear friends, the State Administration of Religious Affairs will continue to encourage and support the Chinese church to print and distribute the Bible. We'll continue to support the China Christian Council and the TSPM Committee to communicate and exchange with overseas churches on the basis of independence, equality, friendship and mutual respect. We also encourage and support Chinese Christians and the Amity Foundation to cooperate further to serve the church and contribute to society. Finally, I sincerely wish the Amity Printing Co., Ltd. to constantly make new achievements! I also hope all friends at home and abroad to continue to support the Chinese church, especially the Bible printing ministry and contribute to harmony, peace and development of the world.



PASSAGE TO CHINA

– God Is Still Opening Doors–

Would you ever in your wildest imagination think that the statement on the preceding page would come from a government official in America, or your own country?

The planning for my odyssey to China began about five years ago. It is necessary here to explain first a few things concerning this trip because there are thousands of partners involved in the ministry of Africa International Missions (AIM). This book report is sent out to those thousands around the world who are involved in either supporting or distributing the materials that are offered by AIM. And since we are making a paradigm shift in our printing and network of distribution, it is important that everyone understands where we feel God is leading us. As we look back, our only conclusion to the events that have transpired throughout the years is that God powerfully works in our lives to accomplish His work. There is absolutely no other answer to the tremendous amount of tonnage of materials from AIM that have been sent out worldwide over the years. Only God can do things like this. And such He continues to do. We are overjoyed to be on His side of this massive outreach. His work with AIM is to print and distribute the word of God, as well as the “literary teachers” that we send out with the Bibles. God

has done well, and thus, He must receive all the glory for what has been accomplished. And to our Christian friends we now have in China, welcome aboard this wonderful work of God.

MAKING THE MOVE

At least five years ago we were thinking of moving our printing operations to China. Printing books in South Africa was rising in cost above the ability of the normal citizen in the developing world to pay for a copy of the Bible. So back in those days of thinking, we started looking. In our initial planning, we contacted two printing companies in China, who in turn, produced sample copies of the *Teacher’s Bible*. They also gave us a quote on how much it would cost to print in China. When Martha and I compared the quotes with the cost of printing in Cape Town, we were quite shocked. There was a 30% difference, that is, 30% cheaper to print in China. But we were faithful to our printer in Cape Town, and thus, persisted in paying the bills.

Printing in Cape Town did give us the opportunity to work more di-

rectly with the distribution and the sending out in 20-foot containers of *Teacher's Bibles* and *Biblical Research Libraries*. But 30% was a difficult percentage in cost with which to live. Nevertheless, we maintained our commitment, though the price of printing continued to increase.

The crunch came in 2013 when the cost of printing in Cape Town jumped about 20% for the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library*. Now we were getting serious about getting to know China. Besides the printing of these two volumes, we are planning to move into producing a whole Bible.

In 2012 we were seriously considering the move of our printing to China. So I again started asking around for a printing company. Several years ago I learned that the United Bible Societies were printing their Bibles in China, but had no idea where. Having known Johan Cloete, who was the former director of the South Africa Bible Society, I asked him for advice. He directed me to the head office of the SA Bible Society in Johannesburg. I made contact, and was given the contact details of Amity Printing that was somewhere in a city called Nanjing, China, which at the time I knew was probably somewhere near the edge of the world, if not the universe.

I went to the website of Amity Printing, and began to understand a few things about their printing opera-

tion, though I was somewhat still apprehensive about moving our printing to a far, far away universe. After all, it was in China, and everyone knows that China is in another galaxy. I was thinking like a Westerner.

TIME TO JUMP IN

So it was time to walk by faith. The email of faith went out to the only email address I had in reference to Amity, and immediately it came back with the signature of one named Nancy Ou. I thought that was interesting, "Nancy" Ou. The last part of the name was Chinese enough. But "Nancy?" Anyway, Nancy and I, with others from Amity who were named Will and Luke and Greg, emailed at different times in order to encourage me. (Yes, you are thinking the same thing I am. From where did all these western names come?)

And I needed some encouragement. The printing company we were using in Cape Town was in financial trouble at the time, so I was being urged on to get looking somewhere else. The Cape Town company closed down the first of 2014, so now I was really encouraged.

Nancy was more than encouraging and helpful. She was my Macedonian angel who beckoned me to China. If China had a good public relations person to represent the country, then here she is.

So I bought a "Passage to China."

I just went down to the travel

agent, picked out some dates in February 2014, emailed them to Nancy, and said I was coming. Of course, one had to have a visa for China, but I trusted that the Lord would provide this. I paid for the ticket and hoped for the visa. I emailed the dates to Nancy, and unfortunately, I would be landing in China right in the middle of the China New Year, the time of everyone's vacation. It would be like flying in on New Year's Day. But who am I in all my ignorance of China to know that I should probably ask before I leaping. (There is a little apostle Peter in me.) But you will see how gracious Nancy was in representing the hospitality of folks in China and how gracious the people of Amity were to help me accomplish my mission.

GETTING READY TO LEAP

The month before I left, Matthew, my son, and I were hard into developing the new website for AIM with a new theme and concept. The concept was to make the site a resource for teachers by taking the teacher, yours truly, electronically into all the world. I was working 10 - 12 hours a day just formatting 122 books for the site. It was intense work. So China was back there somewhere in my mind. In all the formatting and designing of the new site, I would give an occasional thought concerning the visa, knowing that I would eventually end up in China.

If it were not for Matthew, the new website would never have happened. I had delayed over five years before deciding to dump the old site in order to go with a new concept. The design and mechanics of the site were Matthew's, while I worked with the new content.

I just could not think about China because of my focus on the new website. I had a passage to China and knew when I was to show up at the airport to leave, but no visa.

So about five days before I was to leave, I still had no visa. I was wondering if this was one of those times when God wanted me to trust in Him to the very last moment. I kept telling myself that the visa would come through, even if I did not add my worry to speed up its approval. So I did not worry about it much since I was intensely into the website production.

But four days before departure, VISA! I was on my way, but still I could not shift my mind from website to China. Even in the morning of the day I left, Matthew and I sent about five or six emails back and forth concerning the site. On the way to the airport in the afternoon of my departure, I said to Martha, "I can't seem to get my mind on going to China, though I know this is necessary." She replied, "Then get ready for God's surprises." She was a prophetess at that moment.

CHINA, HERE I COME

I said to Martha on the way to the airport, “You know, there is no adventure in traveling by air. Along the way, one cannot get into the people and food, stand up close to the culture and experience the serenity of a campsite.” I can’t help myself. I love driving Africa.

Maybe I was being somewhat cynical because of my dislike of commercial travel. Or maybe it was the disconnection from the surroundings in order to get from one point to another without savoring the experience of the last encounter with a new one coming up too quickly.

Nevertheless, or whatever, I was sitting on the front seat of a Boeing, staring at a bulkhead wall in front of my face as the tires of that tin tube lifted off the runway of Cape Town International.

So there I was, trapped in a flying tube and destined to someplace where I had never ventured before. It was a mission. It was a mission to a land where writing was born, but never got past what some have referred to as “sophisticated stick figures,” though when written in calligraphy, it is the most beautifully written language in the world.

I had in my pocket an address of a printer in Nanjing, that city at the edge of the universe. The only email contact I had before forsaking the beautiful Mother City of Cape Town, was the address of Amity Printing. I

did not have any knowledge of the Amity Printing folks except that which I had from a survey of their website, and the emails with Luke and Nancy and Greg and Will, the “English Chinese.” Nevertheless, it was a time to leap into the depths of unknown waters in an unknown land. At least it was for me.

Somehow, I could not initially get my excitement switch turned on for this trip. For previous adventures into the unknown I had always prepared for weeks for an expectant trip, savoring every detail in preparation. But for some reason I was simply mechanical about this one. I know it was all the website stuff, but now I had to flip a switch in my mind in order to set my face toward China.

My daughter, Angella, had visited China over a decade ago. When I announced to her my intended trip, she gave me all sorts of advice. One was in reference to food. She cautioned, “The food will be different, so take some of the goodies you like.” So I did. But when I returned from the food store before I left, and started packing my goodies, I threw in the suitcase rice cakes and noodles. I reconsidered, “I think I have taken her advice a little too far.” I wondered, “What will the customs official say when he sees this foreigner coming into China with rice cakes and noodles?” Oh well, what can I say. I have traveled Africa way too much, gone to places where there is no food

but rats and ants. (Before I forget, when I returned home from China, I still had in my suitcase almost all those “goodies.” When I was in China, I simply ate as China. China is simply an adventure in eating for a Westerner.)

THE CHINA WELCOME

It was a laborious fight. Cape Town ... Johannesburg, and then seventeen hours to Beijing. I just followed the fight itinerary, for I had not been this way before. But after enduring endless hours of being cocooned in an elongated Boeing tube, I heard the pilot ease off those monstrous Pratt-Whitneys and we began our descent into Beijing.

It was about 9:00^{pm} as the flight



One thing I really like about China are the colors, red being the favorite color. When there was a festival, colors made the day.

came in over Beijing, whose city lights seemed to extend over the horizon. As we came closer to the ground, there were explosions of fireworks everywhere, constantly. It was a surreal sight throughout the entire city for as far as one could see from the air in any direction. There were tens of thousands going off, lighting up the sky. In my sleepless state of mind, I thought, “They sure know how to welcome someone to China.” But then I awoke to reality by realizing that this was the China New Year. And for the six days I was in China, the fireworks did not cease. Every day and every night until about 10:00^{pm} fireworks were going off. China knows how to celebrate.

Enduring a twelve hour layover in Beijing was not really fun. I sought to force sleep in every bodily configuration possible in airport seats that were designed by someone who never had a flight layover.

Now you must believe me on this. I arrived at one terminal and it was a twenty minute drive on to the local flights terminal. But this was where I first experienced the China hospitality. This is interesting. First of all, I looked around and I could see no gray headed people. None! Most of the weary travelers were in their twenties and thirties, with a few older people with only a sprinkle of gray hair. With my white hair I stuck out like a helpless old man in a confused state of mind, wandering here and

there trying to figure out where to go in that monstrous airport. I asked here and there for directions from people who knew no English. “Terminal 2,” was eventually the reply I was seeking. How do I get there? “Bus.”

So once I could say, Terminal 2, everyone was so helpful. I finally found the commute bus, and on my way I went. While on the bus I must have looked somewhat confused, for when we arrived at Terminal 2, which was not marked, some gentlemen on the bus just nodded, “Here,” deduct-

ing that this old man with all his luggage was certainly flying on to another destination. So I got off the bus and wandered somehow to the right place. Like I said, I had not slept for some time.

(I later made a comment to my host about their being no gray headed people in the airport. I was informed that it was the young who were becoming the mobile generation of China. Parents were not travelers as the young. The rising economy has made it possible for the young to



Welcome to the Wanda Shopping Center in Nanjing, China. As you count the floors of this mall, keep in mind that there is also an underground level below all this you see above ground. What is interesting about the development of China is that the economy started at the same economic condition where most African economies were fifty years ago. But now, with lightning speed, they have far outpaced their African competitors. Wonder what the problem is in Africa?

move about while the aged remained at home. And indeed, the majority of the travelers at the airport were in their twenties and thirties. This certainly made me an anomaly.)

“CHECKED ALL THE WAY”

That’s what she said, as my suitcase rolled onto the conveyor belt of the Cape Town International Airport. I was assured that I would not have to worry about that suitcase until I arrived in Nanjing. After all, it was “checked through to my destination.” And what was my destination? Nanjing, China. Right?

So I landed in Beijing. We all scramble out of the tube through various openings, having survived the ordeal for over seventeen hours. I immediately see the signs, “Transit Passengers.” So I head that way, knowing that I did not have to go to baggage claim to fetch and recheck my suitcase on to Nanjing. After all, didn’t that lady in Cape Town say,

“Checked all the way through to your destination”? Why do we feel so good and over-confident when those words are spoken at the check in counter?

So I am walking to the “Transit Passengers” area. I have a twelve hour layover, so there is no hurry to do anything, even to get over to local “Terminal 2.” I wander some, checking out the mega-size of the airport terminal building with the thousands of people going here and there, even in the middle of the night ... searching for gray-headed old people with whom I could identify. But I have this urge. Can’t explain it. It was just there. You have had them, right? The urge was to go over to baggage claim and just check. So I did. I stood there in unbelief before the conveyor belt that brought the baggage in. And there was my lonely suitcase going around and around all by itself.

What if I had lost my rice cakes and noodles in the lost baggage? I thought of having to explain the contents of my baggage to the “lost baggage” department in Nanjing, who would have certainly have asked, “What are the contents of your baggage?” I would have had to say, “Rice cakes and noodles.”



And some would place China in the “developing world” of countries. Well, maybe in some places of China, but not in the urban centers.

THE “VOMIT” FLIGHT

Now I find myself sitting on this plane headed to Nanjing. Remember how those flight attendants come over the intercom and say to the passengers, “If you will follow the demon-

stration, buckle and release your seat belt ... air mask pop down ... life vests are under the seat, etc. ...”? Frequent flyers can repeat the monolog in their sleep.

Evidently, with a population of over one billion people, China probably has a lot of first-time fliers. This is especially true during the one week New Year period when young people of the city fly back to visit parents on the farms and small towns.

So I am taking a local flight from Beijing to Nanjing. The flight attendant comes on the intercom and gives her normal spill. Nothing out of the ordinary. Then at the end she says, “If you have to vomit, the vomit bag is in the seat before you. Take out the vomit bag and vomit in it. Once you have vomited, seal the bag and call the flight attendant.” At about that time and with all the “vomit talk,” I was reaching for the vomit bag in order to vomit. I am sure that flight attendant had cleaned up someone’s vomit on the previous flight.

Now on this trip, and after the vomit introduction, I began my training in different Chinese food. Before I left, Nancy had asked, “What do you eat?” I emailed back, “If it’s cooked and does not crawl off the table, I will eat it.” So on this flight, I had my first test.

The food came in a small box. I opened the box and there was some white stuff in a plastic container. There was some other stuff in another

container. So off with the top of the white stuff, and with the first spoon full, it went into my mouth. Oh, it was flat and nasty. And when Dickson says “nasty,” you know it was nasty. So I thought, “The other stuff has to be better.” So into the chops went the other stuff, and I almost shriveled up, it was so salty and tart. I thought, “Where’s the vomit bag.”

I knew something must be wrong with this picture. So what do you do in situations as this? You very nonchalantly look around and see what other people are doing. And sure enough, with a couple of glances the picture becomes clear. One mixes the salty and tart stuff with the white nasty stuff. And you know, it was very good after it was mixed. Really! My first meal of Chinese airplane food ended with conquest and a good taste in my mouth.

ABOVE GRASSHOPPERS AND CAMEL’S HAIR

If you have read some of my previous writings, I think by now you understand the type of character I am. If I had room in my suitcase, I probably would have thrown in my tent for this trip. You must understand that though the Kansas boy as long left the farm, the farm has had a difficult time leaving the boy. I am not one of those who feels that he is entitled to anything above “tatters and gravy,” and a roof over his head, even though it may be made of canvass. I just believe that those who are of an entitlement cul-

ture bar themselves from so many places to which God can take them. And when they get somewhere, it is difficult for them to embrace the blessings to be blessings from God.

I say the preceding to prepare you to understand the shock I received with my encounter with China. As I previously stated, I simply bought a passage to China, was graciously permitted a visa, and then climbed on an airtube to go where I had never gone before. And going alone on an odyssey as this has a way of extracting faith that you did not know was in the depths of your soul. With journeys into the unknown, you are sensitive to the work of God in your travels. So I was prepared for surprises from God on this trip, just as the prophetess had proclaimed.

I do not seek to test God on some of my treks. I simply feel that we are to walk by faith, and walking by faith means that we serve a God who works off the edges of our spreadsheets. I know this seems totally strange to Western minds. But how would one ever determine that you lived within the power of God if you never placed your foot into unknown stormy waters? So as I unloaded my suitcase from the car on departure, I knew that Martha had become more apprehensive about being left alone at home. I said to her, "We have to do what we have to do to get the job done." She reluctantly replied, "Yes," and so we departed from one another, she to re-

turn home and me to uncharted areas of our work and the possibly of a paradigm shift in the printing ministry.

"GOOD LUCK" VISITOR

I was the good luck visitor. The first of something in China is always good luck for that which follows. Since I was the first visitor to Amity Printing for the year, I had the opportunity of bringing good luck by being the first of about one thousand visitors they would entertain for the year.

Admittedly, I had a peanut knowledge of Amity Printing, as well as China. I am certainly no expert on China and its culture. After all, I have hibernated in my own world as most residents of the West. You must un-



Will Yang showed me China. He is my correspondent with Amity Printing, the one through whom I work with all quotes and shipping.

derstand that I was going to China on the suggestion of others. But if the Bible Societies were printing their Bibles with Amity in China, then surely this is where I needed to go if we were going to print Bibles.

But as I write these words two months later, I am still overwhelmed with the experience. I had a surreal encounter that totally caught me off guard. In these few words I would like to convey some of my thoughts

and feelings for all of you who were praying so earnestly for this trip. I want you to know that God went far beyond your prayers. This was one of those life-changing encounters where one understands Paul's statement that we serve a God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we think (Ephesians 3:20). It was an exceedingly fantastic trip, topped off with abundant possibilities, most of which are yet to be experienced.



Can one ever become weary of visiting museums? Not really when you truly want to learn a culture. Present-day culture is a reflection of history. And in order to understand present-day culture, you have to know the history of that culture. Before I went to China I emailed Nancy and said that I wanted to learn China. And boy did she deliver on that request. It was a thrilling adventure going from one historical site to another. Nanjing, a city I never knew existed before going to the website of Amity Printing, is truly a historical city. The most historical city I have ever visited. (Keep in mind that the museums were mostly outside and in minus 20 degree centigrade temperature (-4° F.). This is in the teens in Fahrenheit. Yes, it was cold.

About fifty years ago – really – when I was a teenager, I read a *Reader's Digest* article about Egypt. The article was a published interview between Anwar Sadat, the president of Egypt, and a reporter for *Reader's Digest*. I remember that it was an exclusive interview, one that took place right after Sadat kicked the Russians out of Egypt. I remember one statement clearly in my mind that Sadat said to the American interviewer, “The Russians, you can't trust the Russians. But the Chinese, they have history. My advice to America is that you can trust the Chinese.”

And history they have. I joked with my hosts while in Nanjing. This was after I had visited Gan's Grand Courtyard Museum, the Ming Tomb Museum, the Great City Wall, the Confucius Temple, the Presidential Residence Garden Palace Museum, the Nanjing Museum and the Nanjing Massacre Memorial. I said to Will and Nancy, my hosts, “I am glad I had only about 250 years of history to study in school in America. My history book was small. But your history book covers thousands of years of history. I'm sure glad I did not have to study your history book and take your history final exam.”

ARRIVAL! WOW!

Being in Beijing was fine, except for the twelve hours crunched in a terminal chair, pretending to sleep. I had the address of a hotel in Nanjing, two

hours flight to the south. But it was the wrong address in reference to my arrangements with Nancy, the representative of Amity. I did not know where Amity was located, but did have a phone number. So upon arrival in Nanjing, I supposed I would make my way to some hotel, and then, proceed to call Amity to let Nancy know that I was in town. So for caution, I exchanged US\$100, thinking that would get me a taxi to a hotel somewhere in Nanjing.

So I was somewhat apprehensive on the flight from Beijing to Nanjing. But after going through the “vomit introduction,” the airplane food that almost brought the thought to reality, I landed in Nanjing. Now I cannot really explain this in words, but as we all crowded out the airplane – Chinese do not do well standing in lines – I headed into the receiving area. What was going through my mind was, “What's next?” But as I looked at the masses of people receiving friends and family, there was this one woman who just stood out from the crowd. She had a sign in front of her, but I was too far away to read the sign. She saw me and I saw her at the same time. I waved – I thought, “This could be someone's wife receiving her husband” – and she waved. As I walked closer I realized this was Nancy. I glanced at the sign she was holding. It read, “Welcome Dr. Roger Dickson.” God had sent His angel to fetch me.



It was really great eating in those out-of-the-way places. I wanted to eat local food, not tourist food that is served in a hotel. Don't ask me what was in that pot on the table, I just ate it. Yes, you can eat a lot of things if you ask no questions about what it is. Just eat it!

So after our greetings, Nancy said, "Come with me." Somehow those words sounded so reassuring to a lonely traveler who knew not where he was. Out of the terminal she led me to the Amity van that was being driven by her husband, Tony. We were on our way to a hotel she had booked for me. From the back seat I looked to Nancy in the front and she had a spreadsheet in her hand. It was her planning of my life for the next six days. And from that moment, I did not touch ground until six days later when I boarded my return flight for home. Don't ever say that the Chinese folks are not hospitable or organized.

For six days I had an Amity vehicle every day with a driver and guide. I had emailed Nancy before

going that I wanted to learn China. I wanted to eat China and experience China history. I was not a tourist, but a visiting student of history and culture. I wanted to totally submerge myself into China. Did she ever deliver. And concerning hospitality, that exchanged US\$100 was still in my pocket on the day of my departure from Nanjing.

In the later part of the visit, Nancy said to me, "You are not like others who visit. They don't want to eat this or that, and they want to buy this and that souvenir. You are an easy visitor."

And eat this and that we did. I wanted to eat the real Chinese food. She made it possible for me to go to those out-of-the-way restaurants. I remember one time my driver and Will were walking around the middle



I liked the Chinese culture of eating out. The different foods are ordered, and then, it is everybody for himself as the main courses are shared. It is real community oriented. I remember thirty years ago eating a meal out of one pot in Takoradi, Ghana. About five of us ate with our right hands by dipping in the pot, and the pot was stewed rats. Not bad. Really!

of downtown Nanjing, trying to find this small out-of-the-way restaurant that someone had suggested. They just could not find the place. As we walked, I said, “That one looks small and quaint, why don’t we just go there?” But they were determined to take me to this “small and quaint” place that the locals said was great.

After some asking of questions for directions from the local folks, we walked back a couple blocks, and would you believe, my suggestion was the place. And it was good. It was just a good feeling being with the folks eating what the folks eat. I am really not a hotel restaurant eater.

I said to Nancy and Will, “Chinese have the reputation of eating everything.” I then said, “But after being here for a week, it is not that Chinese eat everything, it is that everything they eat we Westerners do not recognize.” For example, I was in a fruit and vegetable store in Nanjing.



It’s a family ordeal. Order the main plates and share. Sounds like culture out of the New Testament, doesn’t it? Nancy and Tony, and others, fed me everywhere in China.

But I have to confess that I did not recognize anything that was for sale. Everything was different. When we went out to eat, I just wanted some rice, but the way rice is cooked, you would not recognize it.

Everything seemed to be vegetarian. I have to give witness to you that I did not see one obese person in China. Not one! I said to Nancy, “After the Westerners obese themselves out of existence, China will have to repopulate the world.”

When going out to eat at any restaurant, there were several customs that I really liked. One was so totally non-western, but totally communal. The dishes of food would be ordered and placed in the middle of the table. Everyone would have their individual bowl or plate, and then take from the communal food in the middle of the table. We once ate where there was a lazy-Susan on the table. It constantly moved around and everyone took from the dishes on the lazy-Susan. I just thought this was community. In the West we order our individual plates that expresses our individualism, and then we go for it. We even think it is rude to eat out of one another’s plate. I think the West could use a little Chinese culture at the table.

Now I know that Nancy, Will and Tony will be reading this book. So I have a confession to make to them. As we drove here and there, I noticed that McDonalds was in China. I said to Nancy, “I would like to eat at



The Golden Arches, a reminder from where I had come. Tony (left) and I just stood here for a picture by Nancy. They just would not allow me to eat at such places. I asked several times, but the answer was, “Nop.”

McDonalds and see how it tastes compared to the McDonalds in Cape Town.” She and the others I asked always responded, “No, you are in China and you have to eat good Chinese food.”

After some persistence, I asked, “Have you ever eaten there and did you like it?” “No,” they said. “It is not good food.”

I would ask Nancy or Will if I could just try it. They would not let me near the place. They took me to every Chinese place possible, but just drove by McDonalds.

But I had to do the comparison test. So one evening when I returned to the hotel early, I covertly went out by stealth to a McDonalds that was about two blocks from my hotel. I did my order ... Big Mac, of course, to make the comparison in taste. Well, what can I say. I owe Nancy and Will

an apology. The McDonalds Big Mac lived up to its reputation of being JUNK FOOD! It was just nasty. I drank the coke, for in China I drank no cokes anywhere. But would you believe that that was the last coke I have drunk since the time of the writing of this book. Again, I should have listen to Nancy, Tony and Will. It was junk. So I apologize to all three.

THE STATE OF FAITH

Now it is time to test my western compatriots. I am going to ask a question, but before I ask it, you must answer it from the viewpoint of what you think God is thinking. And before you answer, think of the history of Israel in the Old Testament. Here’s the question:

Which is worse, having first a faith in society upon which your country was built, and then voluntarily giving it up, or having a faith that is taken from you by the state, but you are trying to get it back?

I would like to relate to you some of my experiences in China. I went to China to find a printer for Bibles. (Who would ever believe that?) But also, I wanted to experience the religious atmosphere the best I could in such a short time. I knew that there were millions meeting in house churches throughout the nation. And I knew that there were the traditional

churches that were recognized by the government, being registered as churches, as many nations in the West require. In America, churches are registered with the government in that they have a tax number. Many countries of the world require this for churches. So there is nothing unusual about registering a church with the government or the tax system of the government. Somehow, however, such seems to be wrong when this is what the China government requires.

FINDING SPIRITUAL ROOTS

In order to find the Christian spiritual roots of any country, you have to follow the Bible, the source of Christian faith. And since Amity printed Bibles, then it seemed to be the place to start. One determines the state of Christian faith in any society by the distribution of the Bible within the society. And today, China prints more Bibles than any other nation of the world. Go figure.

Access to copies of the Scriptures reveals the desires of any society. No Bibles, no spiritual yearnings for the God of heaven. And without any Bibles, men simply create a god after their own imaginations. It is a natural inclination of man. Oppressive governments can try to stamp out religious faith, and replace such with an obsession over government, the new god. But once men are set free by their own government, they will return to their natural God-given de-

sire to grope for the God of heaven (See Acts 17:16-31). When governments stand back and let their people go, faith will naturally arise in the human spirit. It is not a spirit of anarchy, but appreciation for the protective sword of government that allows the individual to freely seek God (Romans 13:1-7). For this reason, we thank governments who protect our freedom to believe, doing always as Paul wrote, *“Therefore, I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty”* (1 Timothy 2:1-3). Christians pray for government, not work against the government. One can tell when he is seeking to live after Jesus by his prayers for the government under which he remains submissive.

I believe the West misunderstands China on this point. I believe the West violates a principle that we are taught in Culture 101, that is, **do not use one’s native culture to judge other cultures**. This, I perceive, to be one of the problems with the communication between the West and East. The West has an unfortunate cultural practice of judging everyone according to the norms of their own culture, and particularly, their own government. And unfortunately, if there is a disagreement, it is assumed that the West is right and everyone

else is in error. I have experienced too many Westerners coming to Africa and making this mistake. So before we judge the East concerning faith, it might be good to read again the statement by Ms. Guo Wei, Director, Department of Foreign Affairs of China, at the beginning of this book. This statement was made in reference to the printing and distribution of Bibles in China! While the West is running from the Bible, China, even at the government level, is allowing people to run toward it. Now keep in mind, that the Chinese appreciate the Bible, but some of the nonsense into which western "Christianity" has evolved itself is political and religious nonsense, least this is true of many South African religionists. Many churches in South Africa seek to be a small political party. Others see religion as an opportunity to make money. I have a problem with the wave of miracle religions that have sprung up across the world, promising false hopes to the people. Many in China see this commercial religiosity and want nothing to do with it. Neither do I, and I assume, neither do you.

One of the tragic mistakes the United States made after the Great War was to appoint a former missionary in China to be the American ambassador to China. This was a fatal error of judgment on the part of America. What it did was give the Chinese at the end of WW II the mis-

understanding that there was an inseparable connection between the government of America and religion. What America did was actually give the impression to China something that was contrary to the American constitution, that there is a separation between church and state. For many years, China lived with the false impression that the West sought to impose their government on the world through "their religion." No wonder the China dictionary defined a missionary as a pre-western imperialistic representative of the West.

So putting all those mistakes aside, I was greatly encouraged by the rise of faith in China. I had time to visit only one of the traditional churches in downtown Nanjing, but a great deal of time talking with your believers. It was a cold, snowy morning. We made our way, with the guidance of Will, a new disciple, to an old stone church building in the center of the Nanjing.

Now go with me. We finally arrived at the building that was over one hundred years old. It had an international service that followed the service in Mandrin. But I told Will that I wanted to go first to the Mandrin service.

As I entered the auditorium of the building, I was overwhelmed. Shocked! There must have been 600 people crammed into a building that could seat only about 300-400. There was no standing room. It was packed.

When I entered, they recognize me as a foreigner, and immediately found a seat for me. And I sat there in awe. "Am I in China?" I looked out over the masses and there were people from every walk of life. Even as I write these words two months later a lump comes in my throat as I give witness to the yearning for faith in a nation that has had such a bad report on the subject.

Before the service was over, Will directed me to the annex where the international service would be conducted. As I entered this hall, there was a large screen in front, bringing in the service of the main auditorium. This was the overflow of the masses that were meeting in the auditorium. "Am I in China?"

After the Mandarin service was concluded, the annex hall was emptied and in came the foreigners, a mix of orientals from everywhere. There were only two Americans, me and another chap who was there working on a contract.

Now you have to somehow visualize this. This was a service in English. But it was not a service that was conducted by foreigners who spoke English. It was conducted by Chinese folks who spoke English. Are you with me? One person stood and gave a testimony of how God worked in her life as a new mother. Others sang English songs to us. Others read the Bible. Some taught a short lesson. They were seeking to

minister to us as foreigners in their land. During the assembly, about thirty people went to the front. This was the choir group. They began to sing in English the beautiful old songs that ran in my ears from yesteryear. You just cannot imagine how awesome this was. In perfect melodious English this group of Chinese men and women burst forth in song as heavenly angels. I sat there overcome. I was ministered to by that of which I thought I had a copyright. This was definitely not the China about which I had been led to believe existed through the western news media. This is faith in China. Perfect? None of us are. But it was faith struggling to survive after a cultural revolution decades ago when a misguided government tried to eradicate faith from the culture. But the Cultural Revolution failed. Faith survived and was reviving again.



You would not believe this, but this is Starbucks across the street from my hotel. And, the carmel macchiato is just as good in China as it is in Dallas, Texas.

Will said to me that all the church buildings are full. One of the problems is that there are not enough approved buildings in which people can worship. Faith is expanding in China. It is a nation whose faith was taken away, but is now struggling to find it again.

China is young. Those in their twenties and thirties are taking this country into the future. They have their smart phones and ipads, and even, Starbucks. They are headed for the future. In less than fifty years, if this country continues on its slow and sure transition, it will salvage simple Christianity from the institutional churchianity of the West, and possibly be the last bastion of simple Christianity meeting and serving in the world.



Confucius says, "Visit my museum." And I did. It was cold there, but I walked the grounds of history. This one man probably has had more influence on the philosophical and moral thought of China than any other person.

CONFUCIUS SAYS

This trip to China was very educational to me. This was an educational experience as I walked through the residences of emperors and philosophers who formed the historical foundation upon which the thinking of China is built today. One of these experiences was the Confucius Temple south of Nanjing on the Qinhuai River. The temple was built during the Song Dynasty and eventually became a place of ritual worship and offering of sacrifices to Confucius. Today, the temple area has been restored to emulate the architecture of the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Those who built the temple took special care to reflect the era of China history from A.D. 229 to A. D. 589, many centuries after the life of Confucius.

Confucius was more of a philosopher who formulated moral and ethical principles upon which a healthy society and politic could be based. It is believed that he was born in 551 B.C. and died in 479 B.C. While Israel was sitting in Babylonian captivity in the Near East, Confucius, through his disciples, was establishing through his teaching a moral behavior and ethical way of life in the Far East.

Confucius' thinking was fundamental in reference to life behavior. He focused first on being a good person, and by being a good person, one was to have a good family. He be-



A picture of the future? America does not have a trademark on the Millennial Generation. Nancy operates two smart phones as her husband, Tony, fingers away on his. This is the China of the future, ... or maybe the present.

lieved that respect to the elders is shown through how we respect children. Respect for husbands was manifested through the respect of their wives. His belief was that the family was the foundation for the ideal government. The nature of one's life-style should first consist in being a good person. Such would be reflected in having a good family. One should then be a moral and ethical citizen of his community. And finally, one should seek to teach moral and ethical principles internationally to other people. In order to promote his teachings, Confucius taught disciples, who in turn, spread his thinking to others. Because of his desire to help society through moral and ethical principles, he focused on study. His disciples were encouraged to study ancient and current philosophical thought in order to enhance their knowledge and ability to influence others.

Confucius was more of a philosophical leader, not a religious leader. But in the void of religious influences within Chinese society following his death, his influence and teachings were elevated to principles of religion, and thus worship was extended toward him.

Confucius was the master of anecdotes, the one thing for which he is probably known best in western societies. He stated, "Never impose on others what you would not choose for yourself." Not bad advice. And then probably the most well known of his anecdotes would be an early expression of the Golden Rule. "Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself." And we know that that is good advice, since the principle came in a positive statement from our Master.

GOVERNMENT, NOT GOD

One of the most distinguishing differences between cultures as China, and most of the West, is in the area of moral accountability. In order to maintain social order, every individual of a society must feel accountable for his deeds in reference to his neighbor. Society cannot exist without this sense of accountability. If we sin against our neighbor, there must be a feeling that we will give account of our sin.

In most societies of the world there are two "judges" before whom each individual of society has a re-

vered conscience before whom one will give account. There is the judge of a Higher Power and there is the judge down at the local court house. If one wrongs his neighbor, and if caught, he knows that he will immediately meet the judge at the court house. If the person is religious, he knows that he will eventually meet the Judge in a final judgment. Within the conscience of most societies a great sense of accountability before these two judges has always been vital to the moral and economic development of society.

Unfortunately, communism sought to eradicate from the conscience of citizens a sense of accountability before the Judge in heaven. It was believed and taught that the judge of government would be sufficient to be the center of reference of all accountability. But when communism fell, with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the eastern block countries, including Russia, found that government was not sufficient enough to govern the relationships between citizens. Thus, there was the rise of the noted "Russian Maffia," and all sorts of questionable behavior between citizens. This is the problem with a country that does not have a leadership that is God-conscious. The economy of the country is often a basket case because the nation has been looted by "unscrupulous" (nonreligious) embezzlers.

So we come to China in a similar situation. During the decade of

Chairman Mao, and his Cultural Revolution, one of the feats of the revolution was to eradicate a religious conscience from society. What happened, therefore, was that accountability to a Higher Power was taken out of society and replaced with the state.

The West has a very difficult time understanding China on this one point. As a result, some of the harsh treatment of citizens by government is not understood by the West. But the West must understand that the state is the only sense of accountability that is in the minds of most people, and if the state is not harsh, then anarchy would prevail in the absence of a God-consciousness in most of society. It is important to understand this point in order to understand China. But as the government seeks to maintain control in the absence of a sense of accountability before a Higher Power, the Higher Power is returning to the citizens of China. This is the encouraging thing about China today. There is a restoration of God-consciousness that seems to be arising among the young people.

On my trip to China, I realized that many in the West are living with a 50-year old impression of China. Our impressions go back to the days of the Cultural Revolution, not knowing that the government, as the people, are seeking to restore a God-consciousness, and the personal accountability that comes with such a con-

sciousness. Not only has the system of government radically changed from former years, but also, there has been a revival of faith among many. Keep in mind that much of the present leadership of the country was molded during the Cultural Revolution when an attempt was made to eradicate a religious conscience from the people. Therefore, much of the “religious persecution” today comes from these leaders. But this will change, and is changing. When the new leadership arises to govern the people, things will change.

Here is one point that might help the West to understand the predicament in which the Chinese government finds itself. It is God’s ordained plan that government exist among the people of this world. There are no perfect governments because there are no perfect people. Therefore, I would be very cautious about using the system of one government as the universal standard by which one would judge other governments. The West is often too quick to use their system of government as the ultimate standard by which they would determine whether another government is either good or bad. But such is certainly not fair, neither objective. Even God’s people of the Old Testament existed under different forms of government throughout their history, even though God in the beginning of national Israel sought to maintain a theocratic system of government among His

people. So we keep in mind that democracy is a recent political institution that did not exist for thousands of years among thousands of peoples.

Now consider the fact that we, as a government, are trying to govern 1.3 billion people. China is like Africa. China is a country of many cultural groups, as Africa is a continent of thousands of cultural groups. One of the unfortunate judgments that the West makes in reference to Africa is that Africa is one nation. South Africa’s Minister of Tourism once said, and correctly so, that “Americans are geographical challenged.” This is brought out in the fact that many Americans think that Africa is a country with one government, Nelson Mandela being the first freely elected president of Africa. But Africa is not a country. It is a continent of fifty-two nations with a combined population of about one billion people. But on the other hand, China is a country. As the continent of Africa, China is a country of many, many cultures. There are massive differences between the cultures throughout the vast territory of the land mass of China. Some of these cultural groups want to break away and form their own countries. At least two groups want to break away and be governed by religionists. Both would break away and take their people back to the Dark Ages and be governed by misguided religionists who would impose all sorts of nonsense on the

people. Now if you would govern such a divergent conglomeration of people as China, what would you do?

It is easy to govern a society that has a great deal of similarities among all the people. But this is not the case in China. For this reason, the government of China must behave differently from those countries that are composed of societies with similar cultural traits throughout a nation. In the absence of a strong sense of accountability to a Higher Power, control of the country as a whole must be maintained by a strong central government. If you do not have this sense of a strong central control of the government, then you would have anarchy.

The West must keep in mind that the social struggle of the people of society as a whole is in many ways different between America and China. America struggles against the practice of a central control of government. China must have a strong central government in order to fight against corruption and the rise of anarchist groups that would pull away from the country in order to start their own favorite societies of people after misguided religious. My caution to the West, therefore, is to be cautious about making judgments in reference to the government of China, especially in trying to compare systems of government. I personally think that the China government is doing pretty good in reference to the challenge they have before them.

Now bring this into a religious context. One glaring misunderstanding that I found in the thinking of the West in reference to China is that the West is living with a dated concept of religion in China. (Please read again the statements by Ms. Guo Wei on page 3.) At the 2012 celebration of the 100 millionth Bible printed by Amity Printing, Tan Weimin, vice president of the China Christian Council (the government wing of registered churches in China), made the following statement:

The course of development of the Amity Printing Company is also a showcase of the growth of the Chinese church. Before 1986, the Chinese church had printed 3 million Bibles. Neither the quality nor printing schedule was able to meet the needs of the development of the church. The establishment of the Amity Printing Co., Ltd. enabled faster printing, higher quality, and increasing varieties of Bibles. **One hundred million Bibles printed by the Amity Printing Co., Ltd. proves that the Chinese government's implementation of the policy of religious freedom is the reality. The Chinese church and Christians enjoy real freedom of religious belief.** The 100 Millionth Bible Celebration held today, proclaims to the world again that China has indeed implemented the policy of religious freedom. (*Amity Outlook*, No. 2, Dec. 2012, p. 11). [Emphasis mine, R.E.D.]

It might be good to read that statement again. Now keep in mind that the old leadership of the Cultural Revolution fifty years ago is fast dying away. To recover from such radical cultural changes that transpired during that decade will take decades to overcome. But the religious yearnings of the country are coming alive.

We must not forget that the government has to deal with those religious groups who would seek to break pieces off China. One thing I learned about the past 2,000 years of history of China is that the country went through tremendous struggles in war in order to come to where it is today as one united nation. The West must understand, therefore, that 2,000 years of struggle have brought the people to the brink of great economic advantage. Should this be reversed because the West is suspicious of anything that is not western? I think not. Neither does the China government. Why would we even consider that two thousand years of struggle to be one nation should be undone by the whims of those who would start their own religious empires?

America went through a century to become fifty UNITED States. And a little over a century after the feat was accomplished, she gave over 500,000 of her population to death in a civil war to break it apart again. Why would the West judge China for behaving in a way not to reverse the result of 2,000 years of struggle?

(Those who are ignorant of their own history are often hypocritical in judging others who are living their own history – Dickson, not Confucius.)

Now if you were trying to prevent religious coups, what would you do? You would probably be very suspicious of any religious gatherings. Right? Therefore, any religious group can meet in China. The only thing is that the government asks them to please register with the government. Fair enough? But we know that registering small groups of five or fifteen can be somewhat tedious. What happens is that there are tens of thousands of religious groups harmlessly meeting in homes throughout the country. But if one tries to assemble a large religious group without registering with the China Christian Council (the religious wing of the government), then you will have problems. If the group is not registered, then the government could view such a group as one of those religious separatists groups seeking to organize a protest against the government. And when one considers the Islamists of the northwestern regions of China, then the government has just cause to be cautious. After all, it is religionists as these who unleash horrid attacks on society as a whole.

Tang Weimin concluded in his statement,

The cooperation between the China Christian Council and the United Bible



The Amity Foundation was first established in 1985. It was an initiative of Chinese believers to help the people. The shop that I visited above, used mentally challenged individuals to run a bakery. The Foundation focuses on helping in the development of social welfare through education, health care, community development, disaster management, and a host of other social programs. The Foundation was established in order to manifest the behavior of Christians in society by being known for doing good to all men. There are now non-profit Amity Foundation centers established throughout every province of China. At the head office of all the centers, I was asked to visit some of these centers when I returned to China. (Would that I were twenty years younger.)

Societies continues to expand and grow. To print the Bible and preach the Word of God is not only the purpose of the United Bible Societies, but also the responsibility of the Chinese church. We believe that, under the guidance of a common intention, our future cooperation will be more effective and more conducive to the development of the Chinese church (*Amity Outlook*, No. 2, Dec. 2012, p. 11).

AMITY PRINTING

The Amity Foundation was founded in 1985 by K. H. Ting. It was founded as a benevolent ministry, for the founder believed that Christians must manifest their behavior to be from Christ through their service to their communities. In 1986 the United Bibles Societies signed an agreement with the Amity Foundation, to begin the printing of the Bible in Chinese for the churches in China. The first Chinese Bible came off the press in 1987. All profits that come from the printing of Bibles goes to the benevolent work that is accomplished through the non-profit Amity Foundation. It is a win, win concept for China.

Today, Amity Printing prints over **13,000,000 Bibles a year**. With its six web presses and eight flat sheet presses on a two-city block factory, the company puts out over **3,000,000 Bibles in Chinese** every year. The Chinese Bibles are paid for by the Chinese Christian Council, distributed to all the churches that are registered with the CCC, and then sold to the members. **Anyone in China can own a copy of the Bible**. Whatever you have heard before in reference to the prohibition of personal acquisition of Bibles by the individual in China is simply not true. When I visited the traditional church in Nanjing, there were Bibles everywhere. If one wanted a Bible, they could buy one.

Amity Printing is the only authorized printing company to print Chinese Bibles because the government religious department, the Chinese Christian Council, is the only distributor of Chinese Bibles. But to think that people in China cannot buy and own a Bible is not true. Over 3,000,000 Chinese Bibles are being printed and sold in China every year. Someone is buying and using these Bibles.

So to the western resident who is often so impatient to have change, please be patient. I would remind you of the thought that I stated before that faith was taken from China during the Cultural Revolution, but slowly, it is being restored. And must I say again, faith in the West is quickly being given up. Forty-six percent of my baby-boomer generation attended churches in America in the 50s. But according to Rainer and Rainer, only 13% of the American Millennial Generation claim any kind of faith, with faith includes Islam, Hinduism, spiritism, etc. (See *The Millennials*, Rainer and Rainer, B & H Publishing Group, 2011). Only half of this 13% have any “Christian” convictions to assemble with others of a similar faith (church attendance). It seems to me that in matters of faith, America is going backwards and China is coming forward. Now you know why I was so very, very encouraged by my trip to China. China is a young generation of people who are trying to restore the simple principles of Jesus.

Be a good person. Be a good family. Be a good civic citizen. Be an international influence of the good of your country to other countries. And the reason to be good, is because Jesus led the way in life and into eternity. With Confucius in the background, China is starting here.

It might be good to quote a statement made by Josh Sanburn in his classic review of the Millennial Generation in the May 20, 2013 issue of *Time Magazine*. I give the quote here in view of the fact that it seems that America is moving into a cultural era that will have less understanding of cultures as China. Sanburn wrote,

Not only do millennials lack the kind of empathy that allows them to feel concern for others, but they also have trouble even intellectually understanding others’ points of view.

It is hard for a narcissistic generation absorbed in its own entitlement to engage and understand other cultures (Dickson, again).

INTO A NEW PARADIGM

Africa International Missions is moving into new and dynamic paradigms of getting its “products” distributed throughout the world. My trip to China played a significant role in establishing this new paradigm of taking the word of God to all the world. Because the cost of printing in Cape Town was becoming increas-

ingly too high for the pocketbooks of the common citizens of the developing world, it was necessary to make a change in printing plans in order to come within the economic of the common believer of the developing world. Amity Printing offers this new pricing range of printing for the new paradigms of distributing the word of God and teaching material of AIM.

The concern from the West for the developing world is growing colder. This means that contributions to missions is decreasing. As the generally unspiritual Millennial Generation in America (80 million strong), comes into the leadership of western churches, financial contributions to missions will decrease significantly. Therefore, I would say to my brethren in the developing world, we must take it from here. Europe, from whom Africa received her initial spiritual roots, has grown antagonistic to faith. America is headed in the same direction. Therefore, Africa, and other developing areas of the world, must give up their “foreign aid mentality,” and take ownership of their own spiritual destiny.

All this infers that raising funds from the West to support missions in the developing world is greatly decreasing. I have experienced this particularly in the area of finding funds for printing Bibles. I can understand when people become weary of contributing funds for church buildings, but when one has to raise funds to



Loading out a container to be sent to a “partner” in Africa who has sent in their partnership funds to pay for the printing of the materials and/or shipping. In February 2014, we shipping out our first container for the year.

print the word of God, then you know that times are not good. I am not a prophet, but this trend in America will continue in the way of ungodly Europe. Remember, there is a generation of 80 million strong in America now between the ages of 25 and 35, who have little spiritual inclinations, and little desire to “go to church.” This is the future of the West.

A positive factor to consider is the economic environment of the developing world. It has changed from the 6% to 8% economic growth in the last decade to about half that percentage today. Economic growth is slowing down worldwide. Nevertheless, past strong growth of some countries in the developing world brought great

deal of finances into the developing world. This is especially true of the urban centers. It is now time for the urban churches in the developing world to help the rural churches of their countries in promoting evangelism. What is encouraging is that we have two distribution centers that have been selling the *Teacher's Bible* and *Biblical Research Library*. Those who operate these centers are paying to print their stock of Bibles at a subsidized cost, but are successfully marketing the AIM Bible material within their own countries. This is very encouraging and an option into which we are seriously considering that we should go. If we can raise funds to subsidize the cost of printing and shipping, then it is possible to set up similar distribution systems in other countries.

What all of us who are doing with the work of AIM is to produce a line of literary products, and then moving into establishing centers from which these products can be made available to Bible teachers of all religious groups. Because we have such a faithful network of brethren scattered throughout the world, it is time to move on to helping them get started in marketing the products that we have developed over the past forty years. Our move to print in China was for the purpose of bringing the printing cost of our material within the financial range of the developing world where all partners of AIM could make the products affordable.

The unfortunate drawback of printing in China is that those countries that do not have sea ports cannot participate in receiving and distributing the materials. Everything will be shipped out of Nanjing in 20-foot shipping containers. Many years ago we focused on sending out mail bags from Cape Town. But this has become almost financially impossible in comparison to the cost of sending material in shipping containers to distribution centers within key countries. The cost of one shipping container is about **US\$3,800** from Nanjing, China to any sea port in Africa. Now make a comparison. If we shipped out the same weight of material that is in a 20-foot container (20 tons) by mail bag from Cape Town, the cost would be **US\$80,000**. So all of you who are living in inland countries of Africa, and thus have no sea port, unless you are willing to partner in the cost for mail bag postage, then there will be little material coming your way.

We will diminish our stock of material in Cape Town throughout 2014. And once the stock here is finished, all books that we offer will be shipped in 20-foot containers from Nanjing. In the change of the operations of AIM we are talking about going from mail bags to containers, and thus only those countries that have sea ports will be receiving the bulk of the material that we send out. At least at this time this is the plan of distribution.

THE PARTNERSHIP LIST

We have changed from two lists of reporting the AIM activities. We previously had a list for supporters and one for receivers. Since we are changing to everyone participating in the financial support of printing and distribution, the list is now a list of partners.

For the traditional receivers, when we use the name “partner,” you need to understand that there are funds involved. By partnering, we mean that everyone has to come up with some funds in order to make the system work. If the receivers want to freely distribute, this does not mean that they will freely receive. In a partnership, everyone contributes to the success of the program. We now present the opportunities with which everyone has the opportunity to partner. Everyone now has the opportunity to join together in order to partner financially to distribute Bible resource material.

RAISING FUNDS

We will continue to raise funds to distribute the AIM materials. The point is that we cannot raise enough funds to meet the tremendous number of requests that constantly come to us. We need the help of everyone. Few people in the land where our contributors live truly understand the dearth of Bible study resources that exists in the developing world. To those in the developing world, let me

repeat that they just do not understand. And those who do contribute are doing so sacrificially and sincerely in order help. So when funds are contributed for printing and shipping, all of us rejoice and praise God. For the moment, everything that goes out from AIM is subsidized by contributors. Therefore, all of us truly thank those who are contributing the most they can in order to preach the gospel to the world, and to aid Bible preachers and teachers who are giving themselves to the edification of the saints. But the days of the recipients receiving everything totally free are over.

THE PRODUCTS

Because we have new partners on our partnership list, and have made changes in distribution and costing, we need to go through again the list of materials that we will be sending out from AIM. 2014 is a year of transition, but from 2015 these materials will be printed by Amity Printing and shipped out in 20-foot containers to distributors throughout the world. We are trying to establish the “subsidized cost,” which cost depends on the amount of funds that are contributed. So for some items, we can give only an estimate, which estimate is good only for 2014.

1. *The Study New Testament:* The *SNT* is a 510-page New Testament of the *International King James Version*, the version for which AIM holds the



Hundreds of thousands of the *Study New Testaments* have been printed and distributed over the last ten years. These “little evangelists” go into schools and throughout communities with the “teacher,” the *Encyclopedic Study Guide*. This is the most inexpensive way to evangelize one’s community.

copyright. This edition contains the 80-page *Encyclopedic Study Guide*. We have distributed over 500,000 printed copies of the *SNT* and pray to distribute at least 100,000 in 2014, depending on the funds we receive from contributors. The purpose of this product is **evangelistic** in that the *SNT* goes forth as our “little evangelist” to teach the people. At this time we are working on sending out 50,000 *SNTs* in containers to areas for mass distribution. We send out a container when a sponsor is found to cover the cost of printing. Recipients must pay for the shipping.

We will be able to print and distribute the *SNT* for about **US\$.75** cents each. We are at this time working on the subsidized cost which will be around **US\$.40** each, depending on the contributions to this effort.

2. *The Holy Bible:* For years people have been pleading from AIM for a copy of the whole Bible. We have held off on the development of a whole Bible because of financial reasons. But by the middle of 2014, we will have the *International King James* easy-to-read Bible formatted and ready to print for distribution.

We have received an initial estimate cost of printing and shipping of the Bible. The printing and shipping cost per volume will be about **US\$3.00**. This is the entire Bible, plus the *Encyclopedic Study Guide*.

We have not yet determined the final subsidized cost of this volume, the cost for which we will distribute it worldwide. This depends on how much contributors want to give for the printing and distribution costs. But we are praying that the initial subsidized cost for 2014 will be about **US\$1.50** each.

3. *The Teacher’s Bible:* The *Teacher’s New Testament* was first published in 1982. We waited until



The *Teacher’s Bible* is a complete study Bible of the Old and New Testament in one volume. This volume has had tremendous reception from preachers and Bible school teachers. It is also the textbook for many Bible schools for training preachers.

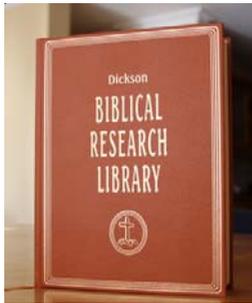
2006 to come to publish the *Teacher's Bible*. This is the complete study Bible for preachers and teachers. It is a one-volume commentary, with Bible text, footnoted scriptures, and the *Encyclopedic Study Guide*. Combined with the *Teacher's New Testament*, well over 100,000 volumes of this material have been distributed since the initial release of the New Testament edition in 1982.

The printing and shipping cost of the *Teacher's Bible* is about **US\$8.00** each. With the subsidized contributions, we will be able to distribute this volume for **US\$5.00** each.

4. *The Biblical Research Library*:

This volume to date has become the most requested product that is produced by AIM. The *Biblical Research Library* is now a 3,300-page volume of 54 books. We add about four books a year to each printing of this volume. Because preachers and teachers have little time to prepare for lessons, the *Biblical Research Library* has become the primary source of material for presentations.

Combined with all methods of distribution of the *Biblical Research*



The Biblical Research Library has been a tremendous success. It is now the most requested product that is offered by AIM.

Library material (including the *BRL* disk), well over **700,000 copies** of either the printed or electronic format have been distributed. Now that we have established the new website, more copies of this material are being downloaded every month.

The printing and shipping cost of this volume is about **US\$9.00**. We will be distributing it at a subsidized cost of **US\$5.00**.

THE BIBLE MARKER

We must mention this new product in view of the awesome reception it is having. The purpose of the *Bible Marker* was to develop a very concise statement for study of the gospel, obedience thereof, and a brief description of the body of Christ. This is not a tract, but a concise study guide to fundamental truths that is retained by recipients in their Bibles for years. It is printed in four-color front and back on 350 milligram cardstock, with varnishing front and back. The objective is to distribute to Bible believers this page marker that will be in Bibles around the world.

WOW! We printed 100,000 to begin the worldwide “Bible Marker Campaign.” Within eight weeks after the delivery of the first 100,000 Bible Markers to our Cape Town warehouse, **they were gone!** We had not yet gone to Phase 2 of the distribution, that is, sending out the ad that they were available to everyone on our postal mailing list. Phase 1 was to

notify everyone on the email partnership list. As of April 2014, we have printed another 100,000 *Bible Markers* and are into Phase 2 of the campaign.

Now the good news to all our partners is that the Bible Marker Campaign will continue to be carried out from Cape Town. We will print and mail bag these out from Cape Town in 5-kilogram (about 12 pounds) mail bags for some time to come.

Here is what so very, very interesting and encouraging about the campaign. It is in reference to those who are requesting and distributing the *Bible Markers*. As an example of the requests, below is a list of some of the churches, mission organizations and Bible training institutions of the more than 150 mail bags we have sent out to fulfill requests:

Ghana Association of Pastors, Evangelical Anglicans of Nigeria, Windows of Heaven Fellowship, Friends of Jesus Missions, Ghana National Ministry Forum, Vision Baptist Churches, Higher Ground Bible College, Central College of Preaching, Revival Mission, Churches of Christ, Lusaka Christian Churches, Nazarene churches of Namibia, University of Namibia, Alshadai Bible School, Christ Resurrection Ministries, Higher Life Ministries, Mbeya Youth Group, Faith University Seminary, International Bible College, Anyiga Bible Institute, Mbanabo Mission, Philadelphia Bible Churches, Ariel Theological Seminary, Saints Ministries, Grace Mercy Holdings, Word Alive Bible Institute, Shoestring Backpackers, Assemblies of God, Life Theological Seminary, Forward in Faith Ministries, St. John's Methodist Society, Living King Churches, AEGM Ministries International, Dutch Reformed Church

These and many other Bible colleges, seminaries and institutes represent networks of thousands of churches. Just the few names above, therefore, represent thousands of churches, and tens of thousands of individuals. Now as you read through these names, what comes to your mind? What comes to our mind is that the message of the *Bible Marker* is agreed upon by thousands of believers in all different religious groups. Something is happening here. Something wonderful! We see God working to bring together those who believe on Jesus as the Son of God and His word as His message to us. The *Bible Marker* is the gospel upon which all of us must be united. And from what is revealed in the list of those who are requesting and distributing the *Bible Marker*, many in the world of Christendom are coming together on the foundation of the gospel. What is so incredibly encouraging is a host of differing folks out there with different backgrounds, **that are coming together to agree on the first page of the Christian walk of life, that is the gospel and obedience to the gospel.** It is just an incredible movement of restoration to the foundation of the gospel, not our unique religious heritages. This is something about which all of us must give glory to God, for only God can do things as this through the power of the gospel.

Africa International Missions has the prime objective of being the re-

source center for Bible study to everyone who wants encouragement on this journey to unity that is based on the gospel. All of you who have partnered with us on this incredible journey need to rejoice with us, for God is doing something marvelous. You may not understand this in the isolation of your own small group, but God is globally doing something wonderful. My suggestion is the following: You need to get on board the spiritual train of restoration while it is passing by, or you will be passed by when it is gone. (Dickson, not Confucius)

THE MASSACRE OF 300,000

One of the most heart-wrenching experiences I had while in China was visiting the Nanjing Massacre Memorial. One does not visit this memorial without being emotionally affected. As the Chinese say, “We can forgive, but we do not have to forget.”

In August 1937, the Japanese faced strong resistance as they invaded China in order to occupy Shanghai. Because of the strong resistance, after they occupied Shanghai, they turned to the south to the capital of China at that time, Nanjing. They entered the city on December 13, 1937, and subsequently slaughtered over 300,000 people in the first six weeks of the occupation. Murder and rape was the plan of war. The Nanjing Massacre Memorial was built on the site of a mass grave of 10,000

of these murdered souls in order to commemorate the holocaust. The late Premier Zhou Enlai said, “Past not forgotten can be the teacher for the future.” And so, Jiang Zemin, a past President of China, said, “... with history as a mirror, let’s build a bridge for the future.”

What is so revealing about the memorial is the work of the sculptors who sought to portray in their works the agony of the weeks of invasion. In one sculptor a mother is anxiously searching for a lost child. In another, a father weeps in agony. True-life pictures of the time paint the walls of the horror of the event. Thousands of case files of trials after the holocaust fill book shelves that stand a full story high. It was a six-week event that changed the relationship between China and Japan forever. I can only imagine how much forgiveness was necessary in order to move past this horrific tragedy of history. Though forgiveness can be realized, that does not mean that we should forget such atrocities, lest we doom ourselves to live them again.

We are reminded of what Paul wrote to some Corinthians. “*Now such were some of you. But you were washed. But you were sanctified. But you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and in the Spirit of our God*” (1 Co 11:6). Though each of us may have formerly lived after the sins of the flesh, we have been forgiven. That forgiveness was strik-

ingly illustrated to me by the Chinese and their relationship with Japan. Going through the Nanjing Massacre Memorial exemplified how hard it must have been for China to forgive Japan. But they did. And as God forgives us of all our past atrocities against Him, we forgive others. This is the spirit of Christianity. And this was the spirit that I witnessed in China. It is a people who are looking to the future. It is a country that has

faith in its future. There was no fatalism there, as I have often witness in other countries. It is a society of people who can still remember the hard times of the past, but now have faith in a dynamic future. If you would obey Paul's exhortation of 1 Timothy 2:1,2, then this is a country whose leaders you need to put in your prayers. The best is yet to be for China, both economically and as a bastion of faith.