

HARVEST Asia

Training China's future pastors: ACOM

"If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free" John 8: 31-32.

Today the contribution of overseas Christian organisations for the Church in China does not lie in front-line evangelisation (the local church members are more effective than foreigners) but pastoral training and discipleship.

The traditional one-to-one discipleship model is no longer able to keep pace with the fast-growing church in China, especially in the urban areas. As for the churches in village and rural areas, they face the challenge of cults, such as the Eastern Lighting Cult. What churches in urban and village settings need is a wholistic and systematic pastoral training program.

To cater for this, AEFI was invited by several local churches to tailor-make its Asia College of Ministry (ACOM) curriculum to fit the current need of the Church in China. Thus, ACOM China was prayerfully established three years ago. ACOM China is the latest member to join the Asia-wide ACOM family and is a joint venture between AEFI and Christian Communications Singapore (CCS) since late 2014. Today, we have two ACOM training centres in China. One is at Jiangsu (Central East) and the other is at Yunnan (South West).

Jiangsu

The Jiangsu centre provides a 3-year part time Christian Study and Ministry Certificate consisting of 12 subjects (36 credit hours in total). This centre targets village preachers from house church in Jiangsu and the Chinese migrant workers who were converted while working in Singapore and have now returned to China with a call to serve the Lord. The Jiangsu centre started in December 2016 and conducts intensive courses on February, August and December each year. Currently, we have 20 students enrolled.

At Jiangsu for the school year of 2016-17, we have sent teachers from Singapore to teach 4 subjects (NT survey, OT survey, Spiritual Formation and Genesis). Future courses will be conducted by Singapore teachers in four subjects: Life of Christ, Romans, Systematic Theology and Church Music in the months of August and December 2017.



Jiangsu ACOM 2016-17



Chinese Migrant workers Singapore

Magnify Christ

“...according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death” Phil. 1: 20. (NKJV).

A wealthy property developer was once asked, “what can you tell us about your life?”. To the surprise of the interviewer, the businessman replied: “well, half my life was a mistake”.

When we compare the businessman’s words to that of Paul, the apostle of Christ, we see a huge difference. Paul had a unique single mindedness in obeying and glorifying Christ both in life and death. He declared: “For me to live is Christ and to die is gain” (Phil. 1:21). Heaven was Paul’s goal – for in heaven he would be in face-to-face fellowship with his heavenly father and Christ his lord. Yet, Paul was willing to postpone going to heaven, so that he could advance Christ’s purposes here on earth.

Paul’s great desire in life or death was to magnify Christ.

But why would Christ need magnification?

Objects in our far-away galaxy may appear large through the lens of a telescope. In the same way, particles that are minute appear big through the help of a magnifying glass. In our world, there are many people who do not know Christ Jesus -- they do not see him for who he is because the things of this world -- celebrities and powerful men and women seem more attractive than Jesus Christ.

Therefore, Paul’s one consuming ambition is that as both unbelievers and believers watch his life, they will ultimately realise how significant Christ Jesus is. Indeed, Paul’s life was nothing but a ‘lens’ bringing the distant Christ closer to the hearts and minds of people around him.

The passion of Paul was that despite all circumstances, even imprisonment and critics who hampered his ministry, Christ would be glorified in his life (Phil. 1: 13; 15-16).

Let us pray that we will be men and women of such devotion that come what may, our one passion would be to hold Christ up to full view and comprehension. May our friends, family and neighbors see the perfection of Christ in and through us.



Jonathan James
International Director, AEF



ACOM Yunnan Centre 2016-17 Batch



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Asia Evangelistic Fellowship International Inc.
(ABN 14 813 025 675)
P. O. BOX 16 Duncraig East, WA, 6023,
AUSTRALIA

Phone: (08) 9203 8303

Fax: (08) 9243 5104

Email: aefi@iinet.net.au

Web: www.aefi.asia

Editor-cum-Layout Designer:

Rev. Dr. Moody Nehemiah

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Asia Evangelistic Fellowship International is an indigenous, interdenominational mission founded in 1960 by the late Dr. G.D. James.

AEF identifies, trains, and commissions national workers to carry out pioneer mission work in their own Asian countries. These national workers are organized, supervised and supported by national boards set up in each country under the pastoral care of the AEF International Office.

International President: Dr. Met. Castillo

Chairman of the Board: Dr. Ray Dallin

International Director: Dr. Jonathan James

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Yunnan

The Yunnan Centre provides a 2-year full time higher Christian Study and Ministry Diploma of 48 subjects (144 credit hours in total). The centre targets young workers from ethnic minority groups from South West China. The centre started in 2015. Our first batch of 19 students graduated last year and this year we have 29 students from 5 ethnic minority groups enrolled besides Han, namely: Dai, Jingpo, Lisu, Yi and Zhuang.

In the school year of 2016-17, we have taught 10 courses at the Yunnan centre and another 2 (Christian Education and Hermeneutics) in November. Each school year, we will teach 12-15 courses and the rest are conducted by our local partner-teachers.

While every effort is being made to raise local funding; we are looking to the Lord for God’s people outside China to make up our shortfall. On an average, it costs AUD \$60 per month to support one student per year. We are humbled by wonderful way God is using us to raise a generation of godly and effective leaders for the Church in China (Rev D Lee). ■

Word and Deed Ministry in East Java (Indonesia)



Blitar is a small district around 180 kilometres from Surabaya in East Java, Indonesia. It is surrounded by remote villages.

Some six years ago, we identified the region of Blitar in one of our survey visits. The AEF East Java team recognised that village pastors are not able to live according to the village standards of living because most of the young people flock to the towns and cities for education and work leaving the village churches with congregations made up solely of children and old folk. We realised that for pastors to continue their ministry in Blitar, we need to give them a means of livelihood.



A goat rearing scheme was introduced. Today some 40 pastors under AEF East Java have a means of livelihood and the ability to minister the Gospel to people in the immediate vicinity as well as travel to areas 50-60 kilometres to share the good news. Typically, the wives take care of the goats in consultation with their husbands.

Our capital plus profit from the goat sales currently stands at AUD \$ 35,000. Once we reach the mark of AUD \$ 50,000 in our total capital and profit, we will move on to another nearby district and replicate this scheme with another set of 40 pastors. In this way, we hope to reach East Java, one district at a time, empowering pastors and impacting the community. In Indonesia our strategy must reflect an incarnational approach.



In our coordinator's home -- which is a training centre for goat rearing, we also have fish farming ponds for pastors to have an additional source of income (for the pastors who have enough land). Those without sufficient land are encouraged to go talk to their neighbours and enter a profit-sharing scheme. This has also proved to be a community empowering strategy and according to Bro Henry "it also opens the door for sharing the Gospel to neighbours who may have negative ideas of Christians".

It is humbling to know that the Lord who used the loaves and fishes when he was on earth, has chosen to use the humble goat to minister his bounty to these local pastors in East Java.

AEF East Java has its own board made up of Mr Henry Tong (Chairman), Pastor Matius, Pak Petrus Munama and Sister Esnah. The 40 pastors are divided into 5 zones and each zone has a local coordinator. The group meets quarterly for sharing, financial reporting, prayer and ministry. Pastor Petrus Munama travels from Surabaya as the pastoral overseer to encourage the pastors in the word and to encourage ministry through word and deed.

Sharing with 40 pastors



Baptism, Evangelism Training and Leadership Succession in the Philippines

Twenty-three days after, the President of the Philippines declared Martial Law in Mindanao (the Southern frontier of the Philippines where most of the Muslim population live), Dr & Mrs. Met Castillo flew into General Santos City in South Cotabato, and headed to Surallah, Mindanao where a scheduled youth rally awaited them. Praise God that a former military officer escorted them to the youth camp site which helped the Castillos forgo several compulsory military check points along the way.

Young people baptised

When the Castillos arrived at the camp site, they were met by cheering young people from seven church groups. Inside the camp were co-workers in prayer asking for the Lord's blessings and protection. Realising that these youths were already believers, on the third and final day of the camp, we focused on the topic of obeying the Lord through water baptism. We concluded the camp with a baptismal service in a nearby pool, where 14 young people followed Christ as their Savior and Lord through baptism.

Evangelism training

Dr Met reports of a great opportunity to engage with local pastors: "Before we returned to Manila on June 2, five church leaders requested a brief meeting with me. They heard of the Consultation on Missions & Evangelism (COME) which was recently held in eastern Manila and they wanted me to also consider holding a COME in their area. We agreed to hold a COME in South Cotabato but the date will be set, after martial law is lifted. Praise God for the opportunity to assist church leaders in reaching more people with the good news. In times like these, we need to speed up the spread of the Gospel. I believe that church leaders play a significant role in evangelism and missions. What Philippines needs is not more bullets, but the love of God overflowing from the churches".

Leadership succession

Two weeks prior to COME in Antipolo, Dr Met had the privilege of passing on the mantle of leadership of Phil Flock Ministry, Inc. to Rev. Ruelson Bruce Lee, one of his "Timothys" for 8 years. Dr Met organised Phil Flock Ministry around 8 years ago as a mission and church planting entity to focus on reaching unevangelised people groups in rural Philippines. Phil Flock has been the unofficial Church planting arm of our AEFI entity in the Philippines (ADMI). Phil Flock now has 8 churches -- five in South Cotabato, Mindanao, 2 in Rizal Province and one in Isabela province, both in Luzon. Each of these 8 churches have their own pastors, all of whom have been trained by the AEF leaders and Dr Met Castillo. AEF Destiny Ministry Inc (ADMI) will continue the partnership with Phil Flock, particularly in leadership training and church planting.

"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come" Matthews 24:14.



Baptism



Dr Met at Youth Rally



Dr Met with Cotabato Church Leaders



Leadership Succession