



MINUTE FOR MISSION

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Stitches in Relationships: Amity Teachers in China

For the past twenty years the PC(USA) has sent English teachers to China under the auspices of the Amity Teachers Program of the Amity Foundation. English is a required subject for college entrance, and the lack of qualified English teachers in poorer middle schools in China places many students in inland areas at a disadvantage. A typical Amity placement—a teacher-training school in a medium-sized city—helps train Chinese young adults as teachers for disadvantaged areas. This meets a critical need and often lifts the morale of the entire community.



Rebecca Montgomery serves with the Amity Foundation as an English teacher in China.

In addition to their educational role in China, Amity teachers serve as bridge builders. While recent years have seen a more open and cooperative understanding between China and the United States, the foundation of mutual understanding and trust on which this relationship is based is still relatively new and often troubled by incidents that lead to tension and anger. Christians on both sides play a constructive role, working toward peace by building better understanding and keeping relationships and communication lines open when incidents threaten to tear them apart.

The importance of this role is most obvious when some incident or policy decision causes a rift in the China-United States relationship. PC(USA) mission worker Don Snow, former educational consultant to the Amity program, writes, "Just as wounds often require stitches to hold the parts of the wound together long enough to let them heal, on such days PC(USA) teachers serve as 'stitches,' helping hold the relationship together and keeping communication lines open. The presence of these American teachers serves as an especially important reminder of the desire many Americans have to maintain friendly ties with China, and also of the commitment of Christians—both Chinese and American—to peace."

In regard to the daily work of building better relations and understanding between the Chinese and American people, Don continues, "Through their teaching work, PC(USA) teachers directly and indirectly help Chinese people gain a better understanding of the West. Equally important, through their interpretation work with churches back in the United States, these teachers help Americans gain a deeper and fairer understanding of China and the life of the Chinese church."

Do you have a mission story to tell? Would you like to read inspiring stories of Presbyterians in mission? Visit the Witness Season Web site: www.pcusa.org/witness. New minutes for mission are posted on the 1st and 15th of each month.

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