

NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2004

Summer 2004 has been a busy one for MSI Canada. We sent 3 English teaching teams, 1 cultural exchange team and 1 rehabilitation team to China. Twenty-four from as far west as Victoria, British Columbia to as far east as Whitby, Ontario went forth to serve in the spirit of Christ. God blessed each team and each team member in unique ways. Each team and each team member in turn brought blessings to people they came into contact with in unique ways.

In this issue of the Newsletter, 5 members of the cultural exchange team shared their experiences of serving in the Youth Center in Zhaojue, Sichuan. The Youth Center is a joint venture with the county government providing vocational training and wholesome recreation to the youths in the county. MSI has a team of long-term workers in the Youth Center. It aims to meet the needs of unemployed youths by developing programs that will enable them to find gainful employment or set up their own micro enterprises. The Canadian team spent 3 weeks there in July and taught carpentry, computer skills, sewing, English and home economics. Here are the reflections of five of the team members.

~Wendy Cheung

A Selection of My Experiences to Zhaojue, Sichuan

Adeline Leung

Zhaojue, a beautiful mountainous county, situated in the heart of Liangshan, southern Sichuan was the place I went for Cultural Exchange this summer. The people there are 97% Yi and 3 % Han. A majority of them are traditional farmers. They are very friendly, warm and hospitable. They love to talk to us and teach us about their culture, their food, as well as their songs and dances. One lady lent us her beautiful costume to take photos. Another lady, whom I had met only once in a store, came to say goodbye and presented me with a gift as she learned that our team was leaving.

Our cultural exchange team consisted of 7 members from Edmonton, Vancouver, and Toronto. Two of the members served in the English teaching program, while the rest served in the Youth Center, teaching computer, sewing, woodworks and home economics. The students were very respectful of the teachers and were very hard working. We had not only conveyed skills and knowledge to the students, but also built a very good relationship with them during our three weeks stay. The mutual trust and friendship that we had established and experienced was truly a gift from God.



Adeline in the beautiful Yi traditional costume.

You would have never imagined that there were inhabitants up on top of the mountains near Zhaojue at the most remote areas. These are the homes of people with Hansen's disease. While they are forgotten and rejected by the people, the Lord had heard their cries and seen their suffering. He had sought them out by sending his servants to bring healing and hope to them. I was utterly in awe of God's amazing grace as I heard of the many wonderful stories that happened in these areas. It reminded me of the passage in I Corinthians 1:26-31, "Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish

things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things -- and the things that are not -- to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” As I ponder the astonishing work that was done in these places, I can’t help but praise God for He alone does great wonders and His love endures forever.



The Cultural Exchange team with some of the long term workers at the Youth Center

I also met many faithful and diligent MSI servants of the Lord during this trip. There were two particular people whose lives and ministries had given me so much encouragement and inspiration. One of them was a doctor who brought his family of four to Zhaojue to serve the poor and the sick with such unreserved love, great compassion, and humble spirit. He always reminded us that it wasn’t our profession, our knowledge, or our qualification that help the people, but our love in Christ Jesus. He has demonstrated this love by living among the people and reaching out to them. Another person first came to serve in Zhaojue in 1949. Her love and compassion for the people never ceases even after she left. She is now in her late eighties, and she still comes all the way from England to teach English every two years. You could feel her energy and her passion burning for the Lord as you get to know her. These people had touched

my heart so deeply that they were like “a great cloud of witnesses surrounding me, reminding me to throw off everything that hinders and the sin so easily entangles me, cheering me to run with perseverance the race marked out for me.” (Hebrews 12:1-2)

I thank God for the opportunity to participate in this trip. Through this trip, I have a taste of His goodness, a deeper understanding of His love for this world, and His desire to bless all nations.

~Adeline Leung works as a secretary in Edmonton, Alberta. She will be attending Taylor Seminary full time in September. She taught computer skills at the Youth Center in July 2004.

Trip to Zhaojue, Sichuan

Jeannette Huen

“Wow! What an inspiring, memorable trip of rich learning and rewarding experience!”

“Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!” (II Cor. 9: 15) I thank God for the opportunity to meet so many great people and experience His great love, compassion and His work. I thank Him for His blessings and mercy.

I was honored to be the roommate of an 87-year old sister who came to teach English for 2 months. She was so agile, energetic, and full of passion and love of Christ. I felt ashamed of my weaknesses and inadequacy. I heard that on her first trip to Zhaojue in 1949, she had to ride on horseback through the mountains from Xichang to Zhaojue for three days. She came back in year 2000 and 2002 again. She has shared some of the miracles she experienced. One of them was about her failing vision. Three years ago, she had macular degeneration in both eyes. One eye was blind and the other one was almost blind. Her Family had been praying for her for some months. While she babysat her pastor’s son one night, she heard the boy’s prayer requesting for her healing. A month later she could see again. Her ophthalmologist friend had prepared Braille books for her to learn and was very surprised she could read even small print again.



Jeannette teaching infant care.

I was really moved by the works of the dedicated servants there, who are full of love and compassion, and serve so humbly and joyfully. They have a great leader and mentor. I perceived that he has the wisdom and strength from above and is very creative in administering the programs. "I can do everything through Him who gives me strength" (Philippians 4:13). I admire their courage. Despite all the difficulties and working under unfavorable conditions, they work hard. They have developed very good relationships with all levels of people. "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (I Cor. 8:1b). In a short period of time, they have done great works with wonderful fruits. "Whoever sows generously will also reap generously." (II Cor. 9:6). They are great models for me.

When our team and the English team left Zhaojue, I did not feel lonely. The brothers and sisters received me warmly in their homes and took good care of me. I felt right at home. We are Family.

The local people, especially the Yi people are so warm, friendly and helpful. Amazingly, despite the language barrier (our broken Mandarin) we could establish friendships. I felt so privileged to be invited to their homes up in the hills for dinner or for a visit. The women put on their best costumes to receive us. They killed one of their young pigs or chickens to serve us. You have to understand that most of them cannot afford to have meat in their daily meals. Having pork or chicken is a luxury they enjoy a few times a year.

At the end of my visit, the locals asked me to bring a message back to Canada, "We need more workers for various programs, especially farmers, shepherds, well drillers or water drainage workers."

Do you hear the call and are you willing to let God use you to take up the challenge?

I pray to our Father that He will give us courage, wisdom and strength!

~Jeannette Huen is a community nurse from Edmonton who served in Zhaojue for 6 weeks in July and August. She taught prenatal care, post-natal care, infant care, care of the elderly and first aid in the Home Economics classes at the Youth Center.

昭覺服侍的心路歷程

袁家強 (Yuen Ka Keung)

感謝神，給我機會參與這次 MSI 主辦的「中國四川昭覺青年中心文化交流活動」。

回想去年除夕時許下的 2004 年願望是回中國服侍。雖然是許下願望，但沒有積極的去推動自己，使願望成真。在五月中旬，在偶然的機會下，參加 MSI 的一個聚會，從而認識 MSI 在中國的工作，特別是昭覺青年中心的需要，心裏感覺是這是神給我的一個呼召，叫我去事奉祂。經禱告及多方印證後，在家人的鼓勵下，便報名參加，雖然是遲了報名，感謝 MSI 的同工，仍接受我的申請。據聞在我的申請後，有一位弟兄因事需要退出，我的加入，正好填補他的空缺。這給我看到神的計劃及豐富預備。

MSI 是本著基督的愛，以工作服務形式，去服侍有需要的中國同胞，這種形式，對於我是一個新的嘗試，新的體驗。透過生活表現，見證，與人接觸，活出主耶穌的愛，使人的生命有所改變，有所追求。

起初的計劃，我是被安排在青年中心教燒焊 (Welding) 及水務設備 (Plumbing) 這兩個科目，這是我有經驗及有把握的。接到任務後，便開始預備教材，在加拿大找尋有關中文資料很困難，我便電郵香港的朋友和舊同事，請求他們幫手，很快的，他們便將資料托人帶過來或空郵給我，出錢出力，令我非常感動，也給我看見神的供應，在有需要時，差遣天使來幫助我。出發前的幾星期，接到通知，青年中心因缺乏器材及報名人數，燒焊及水務設備這兩科將不能舉辦，而我會被安排協助初級木工班的教學工作。初聽到這消息時，心中有些失落的感覺，準備的工夫白費了，自己也不能一展所長。「神卻揀選了世上愚拙的，叫有智慧的羞愧；又揀選了世上軟弱的，叫那強壯的羞愧。」（林前 1:27），神從聖經中教導我，我們事奉，不是靠自己的才能，乃是靠神的能力，需要倒空自己，才能為主使用。再回想神最近安排我在一中學工作，每星期有七，八節協助工藝課程，使我有機會接觸木工，這明顯是神的預備。明白之後，整個人也輕鬆起來，開心的接受神的安排。「我的恩典殼你用的，因為我的能力是在人的軟弱上顯得完全。」（林後 12:9）



KK Yuen (far right with orange cap) and some of his students proudly displaying the finished woodwork products.

七月上旬，懷着緊張，戰驚，興奮的心情開始在昭覺青年中心的教學工作，面對著我所不大了解的彝族朋友，如何與他們溝通？他們的文化程度，學習態度如何？這些事情都成為我的憂慮。工作開始後，才發覺這些憂慮都是自己拿來背的重担。班上學員來自昭覺附近不同的地方，多來自農村，有些普通話比較好，有些比較差，但藉着手勢，學員間的互相翻譯，溝通是沒有問題的。他們的學習態度是積極及認真，學員的年齡和文化程度分別很大，但有共同點，就是對木工的認識不深，很多從未操作過木工的工具，從未使用過電鑽，電鋸等；所以每一個簡單的工序，操作電動工具，都能吸引他們的興趣。有時他們喜歡用自己的方法去闖，需要從旁加以指導及提醒，才能跟着工作指示去做。有時他們把工件做壞了，會從新的再做一次，直至掌握到技術為止。看到他們對

自己的成品的自豪感，是我最大的收獲。「我會成功，我會失敗，但我決不放棄。」這句是他們的口號，也是他們的學習精神。同樣，這也是對我的一個提醒，雖然有些學員的吸收能力比較慢，無論需要重覆教導多少次，我也樂意。

與學員間的交談，成為我的鼓勵。曾問一學員他學會木工，回家後有什麼打算？他說他會造一張牀給自己睡。彝族山區農民的生活是非常窮困，住的多是用泥造的房屋，沒有窗，冬天時，家畜也需要住在屋內，所以傢俱很少；一張牀，對他們已是一件奢侈品。另一學員分享說報讀青年中心課程，是他唯一可以接觸外國人的機會，他很嚮往外邊的世界，雖然他知道自己沒有機會出外去見識，能夠知多一點點，也是好的。就讀青年中心後，他明白人生的目的和意義，以前他和大多數的彝族男性一般，整天都是喝酒，抽煙，很少處理家中的事，下田、家務、多由太太做，現在他已減少了喝酒和抽煙，也負擔起了家裏粗重的工作，因為他知道這是他的本份。從他們的分享中，使我確定 MSI 的工作果效，藉生命去影響生命。也學習到應如何珍惜神的供應，在任何環境中也需感恩，正如保羅的教導：「我知道怎樣處卑賤，也知道怎樣處豐富；或飽足，或飢餓；或有餘，或缺乏，隨事隨在，我都得了秘訣。（腓 4:12）」

MSI 的長期同工，是最令我欣賞及敬佩的。他們放棄舒適的環境，高薪的職位，離別親友，默默的在這貧乏的山區服務。有些是孤身上路，有些是夫婦同行，有些更是整個家庭的前往。如果這不是出於主耶穌愛的呼喚，有誰願意這樣的付出呢？一個同工分享他曾到一個很遠的山區診症，有兩個婦人來求診，她們患不同的病，但因藥物缺乏，只好給她們同樣的抗生素和止痛藥，這兩個

婦人見到她們的藥物相同，便懷疑他是否真正的醫生，負責繙譯的問她們，以往曾否有人像他們一樣，不辭勞苦，長途跋涉的到她們的村莊為她們診治？這兩個婦人聽完後，便歡歡喜喜的離去，因她們明白，是愛驅使他們到她們中服侍，他是否醫生，這也不重要了。整個旅程，無論是交通，住宿，飲食，工作，長期同工都為我們安排妥當，這是他們日常工作外的額外工作，他們的愛心，實在令我們非常感動。在我來說，這些安排都並不是最重要，最重要的是他們對待我們的態度，他們不因我們是過客而輕看我們，對待我們如同工一般，互尊互助，幾天的相處，便好像一同工作了很久一樣。感謝神，給我們預備這麼多的榜樣，好叫我可以效法。

短短的三星期在昭覺，便好像住了很久一樣，不是渡日如年，而是對這小小的山城，有一種難以形容的親切感。街道的店鋪，來往行人的臉孔，都是那麼熟識，很多時在街上行走，會有人與我們打招呼，有些是表示親切，有些是我們的學生，朋友。甚至回到成都後，與別人交談中，也用到「我們昭覺」這些字眼，感情已不知不覺地種下在昭覺這地方。如果神容許，我願意再到昭覺去服侍。

~KK Yuen is trained as an engineer. He currently resides in Edmonton and works as a teacher assistant. He joined the July 2004 Cultural Exchange team to teach woodwork in Zhaojue Youth Center.

My Trip to Zhaojue

Stella Chu

“You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life.” Psalm 23:5-6a.

“But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” Matthew 6:33.

I heard about the work of MSI in China a few years ago. Since I am not in the medical profession, I have always thought that it is impossible for me to serve with MSI. It caught me by surprise when I learnt that they have a cultural exchange team to China this year. When I was approached and realized that they needed people to teach sewing of children's clothing, I was more than happy to join the team.

Zhaojue is a beautiful place full of wonderful people. As soon as I arrived there I felt peace in my heart. We experienced warm welcomes from the locals despite the language barrier. I taught an intermediate sewing class for three weeks at the Youth Center. My students were girls ranging from sixteen to twenty years of age. It was the first time they were taught how to make children's clothing. They were very excited and eager to learn. We sang songs together and built up wonderful relationships in no time. It was very difficult when I had to say goodbye to them. May God's blessings pour upon this little town called Zhaojue.



Even though I am now back in Canada, the memories of the warm smiles of the locals, the somewhat scary picture of children playing by the roadside, the mud houses and hard working farmers on the field will stay with me for a long time. I am forever grateful to have the opportunity to work with my husband, the local staff and especially the long-term workers. Their love and sacrifice for the people of Zhaojue is a constant reminder to me. If My Father calls me again, I would love to return to Zhaojue.

Stella (center with denim jacket), and her students from the Sewing class. Behind them are the finished products of their hard work.

Where is Zhaojue?

Ron Chu

“In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.” Matthew 5:16.

“We love because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19.

“Where is Zhaojue?” was the typical response whenever I told my friends that I was going there as a MSI volunteer worker. Geographically Zhaojue is a very long way from Canada. It takes two days to travel by air and bus from Edmonton to Zhaojue. The experience I gained from teaching computer skills, small business and accounting courses at the Youth Center taught me to say that Zhaojue is a place full of love, warmth and friendship.



Ron teaching local youths how to set up small businesses.

In addition to teaching classes, the Cultural Exchange team hosted special cultural events for the youths at the Youth Center. The Canadian Movie Night gave the youths a better understanding of Canadian geography, demographics, sports and culture. The Canadian Food Fair introduced them to a variety of Canadian food with a Sichuan hot and spicy twist. The Song and Dance Evening gave everyone the opportunity to sing and dance to their native songs. The youths were just fabulous in their Yi singing and dancing!

Our short-term trip would not be possible without the careful planning and coordination of the long-term MSI workers at the Youth Center. They are faithful servants with a big heart for the youths. The long-term workers have devoted full time to serving them. It is inspiring to see their love for the local youths.

MSI has a community health program to help promote a healthy living environment in Zhaojue and vicinity. Training and education are provided to the Yi people, focusing on hygiene, child delivery, antenatal and postnatal care. The community health program is run by MSI's long-term workers who are social workers, nurses and doctors by profession. One afternoon at the Youth Center, I watched a skit competition about AIDS prevention and the caring of the victims and families. Senior high students wrote and performed in the skits under the guidance of the community health workers. I was really touched by the messages that were conveyed by the students. Their messages were full of love and genuine care. MSI and the community health workers have made a real difference in these youths.

I thank God for the opportunity to serve and to learn in Zhaojue. My service may be small. It could however be an encouragement to someone, and a small light in the darkness. If there are many small lights, darkness will be dispelled. Are you willing to step out and be part of this light? Are you ready to serve and plant a seed of hope in someone's heart? Glory and praise to our Father on High!

~Ron and Stella Chu are from Edmonton, Alberta. Ron is an Engineering Manager and Stella is a homemaker. Ron is the team leader of the Cultural Exchange team.

Please contact us if you would like to find out more about MSI's youth program or other programs.

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