

# Presbyterian Heritage Discovery in China



Nanjing - Day 7



October 23, 2012

*(left) Dean Fan presents a paper cutting to Jeff Ritchie; (center left) Tom McDow, a TOF trustee, presents a cross to Rev. An, a great friend of The Outreach Foundation; (center right) an intricate carving from camphor wood detailing one of the scenes in Jesus' life; (right) a tower of crabs comes to us at the end of our meal. The food has been wonderful!*

## Preparing for the day

“The harvest is great but the workers are few.” Matt. 9:37

Katie Widmer led devotions centered around this verse, which Pastors, Council leaders, and seminary teachers have quoted to us many times. There is so much harvest yet so few workers! To a person we have found this to be quite humbling. So Katie decided it would be appropriate for us to quiet ourselves before the Lord in an extended time in prayer, giving thanks for all the Spirit has shown to us, praying for our new friends and the Church in China. We were thankful to have an extra measure of protection as we saw our first accident on the freeways.

## Jiangsu Bible School

We were met at Jiangsu Bible School by Dean Fan, the dean (and a woman). While we often think of China of a country that places less value on their baby girls, the women at this college have a prominent seat at the table of Christian leadership. Dean Fan gave us a comprehensive view of the college. The student population of 307 is two-thirds women. Nine hundred have graduated since its founding in 1998 as a Bible Training School. Recently it received approval to transition from a three-year program to a four-year program. At that time the name will change to Jiangsu Theological Seminary. In addition to the three-year program, a two-year diploma is also offered. The full-time faculty of fifteen is supplemented by an additional ten part-time members. Core subjects are biblical studies and church history; in addition students learn how to lead worship and provide pastoral care. The library has 30,000 volumes, most of which have been received in the past five years. Plans are being developed to enlarge the classroom building which will allow the college to increase its enrollment.

Next Rev. An, Chairman of the Board of Jiangsu Bible School, made his remarks. Rev. An has served the church in many roles, currently being Vice-chairman of the National Committee of the TSPM and Chairman of Jiangsu Provincial TSPM. Rev. An was warm and gracious as he recalled the long friendship with Rev. Ritchie and Rev. Lim that has deepened as they served the church together. He recounted several projects that have been completed with The Outreach Foundation. The primary

goal of the college is to train ministers to serve a province with 4,000 churches and 1,000 meeting points. Currently there are two hundred forty ordained pastors, three hundred seventy elders and 3,000 lay leaders. Another goal is to protect the integrity of the gospel by teaching proper interpretation of the Bible and prevent heresy. Urbanization is another challenge. Some churches hold six and seven meetings each Sunday. These churches also work to care for members in a wide range of ages and education levels. How are these challenges met? By much prayer and careful thinking.

Following prayer, the team members toured the dormitories, library, chapel, and recreation field. Dr. An, Dean Fan and our interpreter joined the team for lunch. After pictures on the front steps, they gave us an enthusiastic send-off as our van left the compound.

## A step back into history

Our afternoon was a rare treat for us, as we explored the historical culture of China. A 392 stair climb brought us to the top of the Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Mausoleum. People across China regard Dr. Sun Yat-Sen as the father of modern China. A Christian, he spearheaded the revolution that brought the Qing Dynasty to an end in 1911. His Christian faith helped shape the reforms he introduced intended to bring unity to the people of China undergirded by three core values. In order, they are: ethnicity (government is for all the nationalities in China), the right of all the people to earn a livelihood, of the people, and sovereignty of the people (the Chinese should not be ruled by others).