

Day 1, Saturday May 13th 2006

*May the Lord make your love increase and overflow to each other and to everyone else, just as our love does toward you. (1 Thessalonians 3:12)*

Our path took us through Hong Kong (one of the cleanest and well laid out airports I have seen) to Kunming. We were exhausted. David Console our psychiatrist was able to reminisce back to the days of his internship due to his sleep deprivation. David concluded that sleep deprivation was much easier to handle when he was 25 years old.

Welcome to China.

Carolyn our Chinese interpreter met us at the airport with Bob and Doris Arrington our Northern California team leaders

Our entire luggage arrived safely. Our next chore was to get our luggage into the bus for some reason unknown to us the regular luggage compartment of the bus was not available to us and the men in our group quickly joined together to hand our luggage in through the back window of the bus. The bonding began and it was so wonderful to see that no matter our titles or degrees we all worked together as a team. This momentum of bonding was to continue the whole trip. While we sent a few of our team to the bank to exchange monies the bus took off and left the airport without them. After going down the street the bus stopped on the side of the road. The bus driver hopped out of the bus and wandered down the street to the befuddlement of the remaining team members. We arrived at our hotel situated inside the Kunming Medical center. We ate at the dining room for the Medical center the long flights were taking their tolls and many of us began to fade.

Tomorrow Reveille is at 7:00 AM so that we can be ready to go to the Three Self and International churches in the morning. We all went our merry ways to prepare and read over our lectures which would start Monday

Mother's Day China. Sunday May 14th 2006.

We headed out after a breakfast of yoghurt and instant coffee to the Three self church. Some believers in China say they enjoy relative freedom to live out their faith. However the picture I saw was one of fear and oppression. Yes, they are able to practice their faith without much fear of persecution. However, freedom in China is not quite the same as freedom in the U.S. After Chairman Mao Zedong declared China the People's Republic of China in 1949, stringent government regulations – enforced in varying degrees in different places – were imposed on the church.

In the early 1950s, many government and church leaders supported the new Communist regime which founded the official state Three-Self Church. Its name comes from the principles of self-government, self-propagation and self-support. These churches are governed by the Communist party and members are not allowed to evangelize outside the church. Unregistered churches (underground Christian churches) often function without government intervention. Still, believers are careful not to be perceived as a threat to the government or to local authorities. We attended a three self church and found people worshipping, singing hymns as we would in church here in the US. So why then is their fear?

The team went to the Kunming Three Self Church. The Three Self Church is the only Protestant Church approved by the Chinese government. Besides the Catholic Church, other churches are considered "underground churches" and are not tolerated by the government. The church that we went to today would look at home in any community in the United States – a large brick building with a green steeple on top. On the inside, the building has three levels. At the time we arrived, five minutes before the church service all levels were almost completely full. Attendance was probably more than 2500 people. There were even families sitting in the vestibule watching television monitors which simulcast the services. At least in that small way the service was similar to Harvest Christian Fellowship and Menlo Park Presbyterian and Saddleback Church. A large choir sang and the congregation sang old hymn book standards familiar to anyone who has attended Protestant churches in the United State. Eva Fanous sat next to an older Chinese man. As he was praying during the pastor's prayer, Eva felt tears come to her eyes. It is striking to know that while we sit in our churches at home, that half a world a way sits a brother or sister in Christ who is praying, singing songs and listening to sermons just like we do.

We then went to the International Church which meets in a nice new hotel. The congregation of around 300-400 people comes from all around the world including, United Kingdom, Thailand, Sweden, New Zealand and the United States. After a wonderful sermon about the mother who seeks Jesus help in expelling the demons from her daughter, (it was mother's day in Yunnan) we met in the atrium for a buffet lunch.

I was introduced to the leader and head of HIV/AIDS program in Kunming Rob Cheeley of YARN.

Our two missing members, Brynn and Guia returned just in time for the lunch buffet. Their trip took them to Lijiang and Xishuangbanna. During their time in Xishuangbanna, they stayed with a village doctor who took them on a motorcycle ride to the local temple. They returned to Kunming with a large number of village doctors via a sleeper bus which drove back to Kunming. Brynn noted that the bus was very nice and had seats that reclined all the way back to a flat position. Guia was as unflappable as usual and returned with smile on her face. The team was complete for the first time!

The afternoon was spent reviewing the translated seminar material and strategizing how best to conduct the conference. Dr Tan Lai Yong has suggested a few changes given that the number of University Doctors who want to attend the seminar has increased so that they now outnumber the village doctors. When they come to the conference there will be PowerPoint slides, skits and case presentations. Andy and Jackie Hopper and Margaret Lee found time to get to the Bird and Flower Market and made some purchases.

Peter, Doris, Guia, Eva and Brynn found their way to the Traditional Chinese Medicine Clinic across the street (nobody ended up as Frogger) where we met with an English-speaking doctor. The physical examination largely consists of determining the pulse and looking at the patient's tongue (We suspect that patient charts are somewhat shorter than they are in the United States). The doctor briefly talks with the patient and prescribes a number of herbs and other plant/animal life, which are taken home by the patient and boiled in tea. The tea, which usually has a bad flavor, is taken 2-3 times per day.

To conclude the day, we went to a Muslim restaurant less than a block down the street. The food was plentiful and really yummy. So many things were so different. Has anyone that you know made chicken soup with red dried dates before? That concluded our transcultural experience for the day.

The team concluded the night with a team meeting and prayer.

I was now getting nervous about tomorrow's presentations. I was to help with two different workshops "How to prevent the spread of germs" with Vickie Console and Lisa Yorgin. We were told by our organizer that this was the first time that the groups we would work with were introduced to workshops and skits. We were not sure how they would interpret this type of teaching. I was then to present Joanie's case on HIV/AIDS.

Vickie, Lisa and I met to prepare for the workshops and we went on a shopping spree to find a kettle and other essentials for our teaching.

Day 3, Monday May 15 2006

*I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)*

This verses were to be my focus for today. Little did I know that they would be my strength for today?

Six AM wake-up calls and more grey skies and drizzle greeted our team this Monday morning. After a hasty breakfast of fresh mango, pastries, liquid yogurt and more, we all trooped the several blocks uptown to the First Affiliate Hospital for the beginning of our conference. Dr. Lai Yong Tan gave a warm welcome to about 100 attendees and then our teams went to work. It had been decided that the teachers would rotate classrooms and that the students would stay put. Blue group Eva, Brynn, Vickie, Lisa and I taught sessions about TB, ear diseases and prevention of the spread of germs and handwashing techniques. Red group Peter, Andrew, Guia and Bob spoke on shock and resuscitation for newborns and about oral rehydration. David, Doris, Sally and Jackie on the green team tackled depression, healing through arts and communication

We all enjoyed lunch at 2 round tables in a nearby restaurant then after a brief tour of Wal-Mart, we returned to the hospital and did our 2nd round of presentations.

Previous to this trip members of our team traveled to Kunming and implanted Cochlear implants on 5 children. Cache and that team were reevaluating their work. Cache our audiologist worked with four of the five cochlear implant candidates today and felt that their progress was very good. Tonal languages are more difficult than non-tonal languages for cochlear implant patients.

Cache found the absolutely best garlic chili eggplant dish today! It is true all you single girls out there that the way to a man's heart is through his stomach.

Dr Margaret Lee went to work with the dental clinic at Hua Xia School today. She was feeling a bit under the weather this morning but after some cipro (an antibiotic) seemed to be feeling better this evening.

We were all extremely pleased with the way the conference went. All comments were positive and we felt we'd had such a productive day both teaching and learning. Our translators did a marvelous job. We appreciate them so much! The students were attentive and participated with enthusiasm.

As we prepared and taught our workshops we were relieved to see that although they were not used to this type of teaching style, they enjoyed it and there were many smiles and much laughter as I demonstrated the handwashing technique to the tune of twinkle twinkle little star sung by Lisa.

All of our lectures went well. I finished with our lectures at approx 4 pm and went out to prepare and read through my slides one last time before I was due to present at 4.30pm

I was engrossed in my reading when our Kunming Medical coordinator came and talked with me and said Eithne, I want to ask you to change your presentation and not talk about HIV/AIDS but on your experience in working around the world with AIDS patients. He stated that although Yunnan is one of the worst hit provinces with HIV, people are scared. They have had SARS, The Avian Flu, and other terrible crisis including earthquakes, he did not want to cause panic with his people. (This is how Satan our enemy works) What was I to do at this short notice? How was I to refocus and prepare for this sudden change? I paced the floor and prayed. Ron Edwards came and walked with me. I remember how God always stretches me on a mission trip and how important it is to be flexible.

I went back to the verse for today.

*I can do everything through Him who gives me strength. (Philippians 4:13)*

I walked down to the Assembly Hall, prepared to present a short two minute video on The face of Aids around the world and again the technology failed for me. This I realized was to be the thorn in our sides throughout the entire trip. I went ahead and presented my talk and poured out the Holy Spirits words. My team listened and wondered why I changed my presentation.

After we finished I was feeling like the enemy wanted me to feel and that was that I was not able to do what God called me to do. I took a few minutes in a quiet place with tears in my eyes and asked God to bind up Satan and to bring good out of the work he called me to do. My interpreter was a wonderful man and not knowing if he was a government official or Christian I handed him a copy of Joanie's book " In His Shadow" ( a devotional for Christians living with HIV) written by Joanie Yorba-Gray. I asked God to use this book to help those infected and affected with HIV/AIDS. The team cheered me on and encouraged me.

After this final session the teams plus most of the village doctors were taken by bus to an art gallery/restaurant called Nordica. After dinner there was singing and lively dancing of the Hokey Pokey. Spirits are high because of the success of our first official day of the conference and also because of the cohesive and cooperative nature of our group. We are having a wonderful time here together.

## Day 4, Tuesday, May 16th

A little girl no more than four years of age sat on a large white leather couch in the hotel lobby sipping on a glass of hot-pink colored milk-like liquid. The color of her drink complemented the color of her pink outfit. This must have been art day, as her nose and forehead bore two bright green marker stains. Despite the incoming masses of people at the hotel, including a large group of different-looking Americans, she sat unfazed as she slurped her drink.

It may be a generalization but it seems that the Chinese people have learned to create a bit of personal space in the midst of proximity to a large number of people. On the streets, one occasionally makes eye contact with passers-by. In the small towns in the United States, this chance sidewalk meeting with someone unknown might elicit a brief nod or even a hello. In Kunming, if one were to engage in such behaviors they certainly would be considered odd. The sheer numbers of people of the street would render such behaviors inefficient and overly time consuming. Even waiters in restaurants seem surprised by eye contact and a thank you. All of this seems to be at contrast with the generous hospitality displayed by most everyone we know. The hospitality of the Chinese people can be even more impressive in the villages where there is little from which to give.

Seven hours away is a small village serviced by a dirt road. The village doctor explained that one would ride a bus for four hours south on a paved road, and then would ride three hours on a bus, 47 kilometers on the dirt road, to reach home. The houses of the minority people there have straw roofs and mud brick walls. The people, who grow corn and barley and sell chicken eggs, make perhaps one dollar per day. The sale of high protein chicken eggs means that there is little protein left for the family. Malnutrition is common. School only goes to 6th grade. While the Chinese government has provided a department to help people and there has been HIV/AIDS education for the town, the town is in need of help to raise farm production, thus hopefully raising the standard of living for the people who live there. Even the village doctor was unable to live well. She and her daughter live with her mother and father-in-law while her husband works as a government official in another town 140 kilometers away. They only see each other for one week a month.

Today's weather was sunny with clear blue skies, our umbrellas were stowed away.

The conference moved into the second day with a moving plenary session featuring the four of the five children who received cochlear implants. Some of the families talked about how their children lost their hearing due to aminoglycoside therapy. They explained that it was the lack of money and their doctor's advice that led to their decision to agree to streptomycin or gentamicin injections. The impact of the decision was devastating. In one family, both children were deaf as a result of aminoglycoside-induced hearing loss. One mother expressed gratitude that her daughter could now have a normal life and QuiZhe sang eagerly for the crowd. Li Bing's father stood up and talked about how God brought people, who were not their relatives or friends, to help LiBing. Many of the village doctors were touched and had tears in their eyes when LiBing recited a poem about blue skies, flowers, and the tears in his mother's eyes due to his deafness. He spoke of how he was healed again. LuiMei thanked the medical group for their kindness and for the gift of hearing. She was joy-filled and talked a mile a minute as usual. One of the children said, all I have ever wanted was to hear my mother's voice and hear her say I love you. Now that has happened. I am very happy.

As all of this was going on I was sitting listening and took a few more minutes out to pray about Joanie's book. As I was praying my interpreter from last night walked up and asked to speak with me in private. I said Oh Lord, protect me I gave the book to this man and perhaps I will have to pay the consequences of this action. I thought perhaps he was a government official and I was to be arrested. That was not the case. He told me he read Joanie's book and it was such an inspiration to him that he wished to ask permission for the book to be translated into Chinese and stated it would be a great help for his people in the village who were infected or affected by HIV/AIDS. Now I know and feel the fear that the Chinese people feel when they walk with faith and share the gospel. To God goes the glory again. Another WOW moment. What a blessing.

The conference speakers rotated from group to group. With the exception of the village doctor group, the other two groups are a mix of community physicians, village doctors and academic physicians. We used different teaching techniques – skits, mannequins, audience participation to keep the audiences involved and interested. All of the slides have been translated so that there are combined English and Chinese characters which are displayed side-by-side on each slide. The nursing group has had fun showing how germs are spread. With silly string (showing the effect of nasal droplets) and powder (the spread of germs with a cough) as teaching materials – the audience was educated, entertained and engaged. Bob Arrington has powered-up his face so that he appears sick. For the sake of education, he has pretended to have severe sepsis (a blood infection). Usually sometime during the presentation Bob jokes that the doctor's better hurry-up and figure out what he has or else he will croak! Guia had village doctors mixing home-made oral rehydration solution, which is a combination of clean water, salt, sugar and citrus.

Today again our technology failed us. It appears it stops each time I try to present. It was time to present my Wound care lecture and again I realized that someone had picked up my notes and we had no idea where he was. I had not brought my laptop today and therefore was in a panic. God came through again and answered my prayers. The group of village doctors was very receptive. I handed out wound dressings which generated a large number of questions. We heard about boiling wound dressings and herbal remedies. They had not seen our type of wound dressings before. Doris Arrington had her students coloring, David Console talked about depression and Sally gave case presentations to demonstrate the importance of good listening skills. What an awesome God we have.

At the end of the day, certificates were handed-out, photos were taken and we said farewell to the conference participants. We have gotten to know some of them pretty well. We have great admiration for their abilities given the limited resources – some of the village doctors live in towns where there is no running water. The doctors at the First Affiliated Hospital seem to be very pleased with the conference – and have invited us back again next year.

The final sessions of our presentations went as planned. Tomorrow an all-day clinic is planned that promises to be a busy and exciting day.

### Day 5, Wednesday May 17th

Today we head out to a village in the hills of Kunming to staff a clinic at a seventh Day Adventist church the team morning devotion reflected on John 15. We discussed the importance of prayer, reading the Word, and being intentional about walking side-by-side with Jesus. As we nibbled on Chinese pastries and fruit, the team seemed to be abuzz with excitement about going out to the village.

About 20 kilometers from downtown Kunming, the scenery changed to fertile fields, forests and back country lanes. The bus finally pulled up outside of a steel fabrication factory. We were met by Daniel Jiao and Pastor Zhang and a group of sturdy men who immediately began to carry the medical equipment towards the church. The team walked down a red-dust covered narrow lane by small shops and houses. We were greeted by the church choir which was lined-up on both sides of the entrance outside of the church. An accordion played and all 50+ voices were raised in a clear joyful Chinese-sounding song. Faces were beaming. Some people were dressed in their native Miao and Yi clothing. The men wore intricate, brightly colored embroidered capes over white gowns. The choir was dressed in white robes with bright red crosses embroidered on the stoves (the front of their gowns). Nobody held back in their singing. This was a welcome that was unlike anything that you will get in the American churches! It was overwhelming – several team members could be seen mopping tears from their faces. According to Margaret Lee, "it felt as if the Holy Spirit was enveloping the whole community". The team was then treated to another five songs once they were seated. About 200-300 additional people were in the church waiting for medical evaluations. After a brief time of greetings and team introductions, the team sprang into action.

The church provided tables and seating outside under umbrellas for the team and the people who wanted to be evaluated. As the team began to set-up, there was a crush of people who wanted to be seen. Sally Edwards handed out numbers to 120 people. I, Vicki Console and Lisa Yorgin engaged in patient screening and obtained key vital signs. The team decided to limit the visits to children and people older than 50 years of age. By the end of the day, 200 patients had been seen, mostly older people. The main complaints were chronic headaches or abdominal pain, hypertension, diabetes and dental disease. We did a significant amount of person-to-person teaching – reviewing blood pressures, glucose values and medications with people. Our role was patient advocate. Most all of the older people had received very good care (some of our patients were in their 80s-90s after all!) from their local doctors. Given that the patient population was Christian, we were able to pray with our patients.

As Vickie and I were screening patients, we were at number 50 when a cute little lady pops into the middle seat and presented her number 111. I tried to show her the difference but she pretended she did not understand. I looked at her and saw her toothless grin and all my heart could say is give her a hug. She was touched as were we.

Doctors Guia Escuro, Andy Hopper and Eva Fanous saw only a few children. Otherwise they were engaged seeing geriatric patients, most of who were over 70 years old - or looked that way. Andy and Eva decided that pediatrics and geriatrics were closely related. Some team members joked that Andy was really dedicated to following-up those now 70 year old term babies! Patients with psychological problems were routed to David Console. We hope that all of the people received good physical and spiritual healing.

Margaret Lee worked with the BCI dental team. Twenty teeth were extracted. Periodontal disease was rampant in the population. Doctor Brynn Stirling began to think about ways that the church could start a program of self-help with congregational healthcare education. Jimmy Console, the son of Vicki and David Console, donned the dental jacket, gloves and face mask, to assist Margaret Lee. After a busy day, Jimmy commented that he thought that dentistry would not be his career choice.

We were honored to have Ms Helen Lee, age 92 years, with us as a translator. She came to the village in 1936 and helped to plant the church, which now has more than 2000 members. She was forced to leave in 1944, and escaped "over the hump" to India. Helen brought black and white photos of her time in Kunming during the 1930s. Amazingly, Peter Yorgin provided care for Ms Lee's houseboy, Peter, who is now an 84 year old gentleman that lives in Sichuanbanna, an eight hour bus ride south of Kunming.

Jackie Hopper and Ron Edwards worked in the pharmacy dispensing over one hundred sample medications to people. They ran out of only one medication – ranitidine, which is used to treat patients with gastritis, gastric ulcers and heartburn. A Chinese high school student, Gary, helped to translate for the pharmacy. Ron and Jackie learned how to say "one pill a day" in Chinese! Ron and Jackie quickly developed a system to keep people from returning and getting second or third prescriptions.

It was with sadness that the team concluded its work and returned to the bus. The choir accompanied us from the church to the bus – singing all of the way.

While the team was in the village, Doris and Bob Arrington taught the psychologists at the New Perspective Counseling Response Center at Kunming. The teaching, Instinctual Trauma Response, focused on recognition and treatment of emotional trauma. There was a great deal of interest in the protocol.

The team had dinner at the Wicker Basket and found many items to purchase at Hands and Hearts, a store that sells beautiful hand-crafted items made by the hearing impaired. A tired happy team returned to the hotel to rest-up prior to going to the Western Hills and the flight to Zhongdian.

### Day 6, Thursday May 18th 2006

We decided to head out to Western Hills and have a picnic before our flight to Zhongdian (Shangri-La). After breakfast and devotions, our luggage was loaded through the bus's back windows again and the team hopped aboard. We all bid a fond farewell to our capable team member, translator and friend Yvonne. We stopped at our translator Carolyn's office to stow suitcases not going to Zhongdian. The elevator was being serviced but the seven storey climb was not too bad. We dropped by the Wicker Basket to collect our picnic lunch and proceeded to Western Hills, a Chinese national park on the outskirts of town. There we visited a temple and passed many vendors where we practiced our bartering skills. We struck out on an unforgettable hike up stone stairways on

the edge of cliffs and through cramped passageways cut into the stone. Here we give thanks to the Lord for allowing me to make it up all the 1500 steep stone steps to the upper pagoda. God bless Dr Andy he carried my backpack as my breathing was very labored and my heart was beating at approx 175 beats per minute. It took several stops before I could make it to the top and our team cheered me on. What an amazing team. Everybody was caring and loving to each other. God definitely picked this team. We stopped frequently to marvel at views of the city and lake below and to catch our breath. The intrepid team all made the summit where we celebrated with lunch and many photos. The decent was leisurely; we took the chairlift down. Three cheers for our skilled bus driver, who left us at Kunming airport where we met up with Peter, Lisa, Hannah Lilly, plus Sharon, David, and Felicia who will translate in Zhongdian. Our 40 minute flight to Zhongdian included spectacular views of mountains and valleys. As we saw the mountains peak through the clouds, it made me ponder on what heaven would be like. Dear Doris and Bob, who had left before sunrise to make last-minute preparations for our Zhongdian stay, met us at the airport along with Doug Briggs. Soon we were all very comfortably situated in the Shiner Hotel. We all gathered for a congenial team dinner at Noah's Cafe. What a full, wonderful day!

## Day 7, Friday May 19th 2006

Northern Yunan in the footsteps of the Himalayas I had to stop and pinch myself. Lord I am really here working for you.

As I ponder back on this particular day, I see the mountains high above and I felt God's hands as if he were bowing down and grasping my hands. He was saying I will never let go of my grasp on you. As you see me bow down to you' listen for my still soft voice saying Come walk with me awhile. Come seek me. Close your eyes and see the beauty of the heavens. Hear my voice say "come my child and kneel before me. Grasp my hand and walk with me. There is no mountain so high that you cannot scale when you surrender to me and have faith in me, one more step, Yes! Yes! You did it. See what the faith of a mustard seed can do for you. 12,000 feet above sea level, is easy with me by your side.

*Isaiah 30: 21 Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, this is the way; walk in it.*

The team got-up later this morning. After team devotion, the morning was at leisure. Old town Zhongdian is growing rapidly. There were a large number of shops selling tourist items. The narrow stone streets are lined with old-style Tibetan homes. During the evenings Tibetans gather at the square to dance and sing.

We walked over to the Dequin Prefectural Health School to meet with George who has worked hard to arrange the conference. We met a couple of our English Language translators who will be working with the team to facilitate interactions with the students at the school. We want to get to know the students, where they live, about their families and about their hopes and dreams. The team gobbled-down lunch and particularly liked a dish with wood ears , which is a type of edible fungus. We have brought four translators with us from Kunming.

The team spent most of the afternoon at the Tibetan Buddhist Monastery slightly north of town. After everyone paid their one yuan for the bus ride, the team started the trek up the steps to the lamasery. Doris and Bob Arrington, Sally and Ron Edwards, David and Sharon and Peter and Lisa went up the hill by a less well known sloping route. The team visited the temple to the Guardians of the Gates of Hell. The two demon statues are depicted spearing two women through their hearts. Blood graphically spills off of their mortally wounded bodies. A group of young monks, thirteen to twenty one years of age, pray to the demons every day in an effort to pacify them. As our team walked along, we came to the courtyard of a larger temple. About one hundred monks had gathered outside – talk about a team meeting! Although we do not speak Chinese or Tibetan, it seemed as if they were discussing the preparations for the Panchan Lama who was to visit Zhongdian on May 20th – the same day our conference is to start. There was some concern that the students would not attend the conference in large numbers since the Panchan Lama would be available to dispense blessings. I was informed that He is the highest ranking religious leader in China. As Cache and I waited for the group to assemble we walked around the town and up some side streets. We saw women carrying heavy loads on their backs, buckets of water and supplies for their villages. They came over and touched my white arms and rubbed them and giggled. They pulled at Caches hair on his arms in amazement and wondered what it was.

A portion of our team waited at the lamasery for Dr. Doug Briggs. Doug led the team back up the paved street, then onto a dirt road to a small group of Tibetan homes. We spoke to women who were carrying water on their backs to their homes. Each bucket-full of water weighs one hundred pounds or more. The faucet nearer their homes stopped working a few months ago.

We knocked on the outer door of one home. Tibetan homes are typically constructed so that there are three stories and a large exterior courtyard. The lower story is used to house animals. The middle floor houses the family and the upper floor is used as an area to dry and store food. As one enters the home, one is greeted by photos of the family. Because Doug Briggs took many of the photos, he is always a welcome guest. As we enter the home, drying pork fat is overhead. We walk up the wooden stairs with a steep pitch.

We were greeted by a young woman she could not have been more than 18 years old. She had just married into a well-respected Tibetan family. She wore the typical Tibetan clothing. A fuchsia colored wrap of yarn braided into the hair, an embroidered top and apron covered a pair of jeans. Thin and wiry, no more than five foot four inches, she hauled dipper after dipper of water from a cabinet fifteen feet away to a large pot on the wood burning stove. Dr Doug Briggs spoke with the family asking about medical and dental problems, and followed-up on children and older people in the family. Two little boys scurried around the visitors. They took great interest in Cache Pitt's hairy forearms. Cache sat patiently as the two boys "petted" the furry forearms. They giggled and looked at each other with glee.

No welcome would be considered sufficient without yak butter tea. Hot black tea is mixed with salt and about eight ounces of yak butter. Yak butter varies widely. Sometimes it has been fermented for a long time, in which case the butter has a rancid, gamey taste. At other times it is very mild, like regular butter. Thankfully this was the mild version. The butter, tea and salt are placed in a blender. The blender starts off with a slow whirl, only to end with frappe. The tea is poured into a kettle with a long spout. The hot tea is poured into small bowls and is consumed with barley flour. The barley flour tastes somewhat like toasted Cheerios that have been ground to a powder. The barley flour is taken with a teaspoon, and then tossed back onto the tongue. A quick slurp of yak butter tea washes it all down.

The interior of the house was spacious, measuring perhaps thirty by twenty feet. While the exterior is made of rammed earth, the interior is of constructed of wood which is hauled from the forests north of Zhongdian. On the west-facing wall, was a Tibetan style painting with an old man and cranes? A Chinese television show was on. The little girl, who was only 18 months of age, toddled around the house with split-bottom pants. Her brothers took her arm-in-arm as they circled the central vertical post in the house, which was at least three feet in diameter. There was a small amount of cabinet space along two walls. All of the wood in the house was unstained. After we left the home we wondered down the road towards town and watched as tourist paid yuan to enter a field and have their picture taken with a large white yak.

For dinner the team split up and went to try different delicacies. Several returned to the comfortable surroundings of Noah's and then shopping while a group of us accompanied Doug Briggs and his family to a Hot Pot restaurant and heard about daily life in Zhongdian.

## Day 8, Saturday May 20th 2006.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. (2 Corinthians 4:7)

Today we began our conference in Zhongdian. The morning started off a little overcast with rain-slicked streets but soon the sun came out. We were welcomed through the gates of the Health School by many of the students who were dressed in traditional Tibetan clothing. Each of the members of our team received an honorary white scarf. This scarf to them represented a token of their appreciation and signified success for the conference. They sang and danced as we entered the school grounds.

After locating the auditorium we settled down to be greeted by the school officials. Two hundred and sixty-five students and Village doctors listened to Doug Briggs challenge us to "not be afraid" by preventing or effectively several diseases including hepatitis, SARS, leprosy, lung cancer and HIV/AIDS in the Yunnan province.

We then divided the students into 3 groups. In our three workshop rooms, the students eagerly awaited our arrival. The students were very attentive and seemed to enjoy our lectures which feature skits and PowerPoint slides. Many were shy at first but were willing to participate with encouragement.

At lunch time we went out onto the front grounds to wait for our lunch. With the help of our interpreters, we were able to converse with the students finding out where they were from and about their family life. Conference lunch arrived in a small truck. The students eagerly begin passing out boxes of rice and a separate box of stir fried vegetables, with yak meat. Although we Americans chose to sit on the concrete wall and eat our lunch in our lap, the majority of the natives used the wall as their table and squatted in front of it. These wonderful people are limber!

When lunch was over we returned to our rooms to continue our lectures. Once again the students listened eagerly. We then went back to the auditorium for our final talk. After several technical difficulties, I began my case presentation on HIV/AIDS. I was just really getting started when we were all asked to go outside to have our picture taken with the Principle of the school and the governmental health secretary. We had a brief photo session on the front steps of the school, and then returned to the auditorium for our final lecture. One person stated they felt as if they were participating in a fire drill (just like we experienced when we were in school).

Joanie's case was finally presented with a few technology snags.

While we were at the school all day Cache Pitt evaluated three people for hearing loss and Margaret Lee performed 4 evaluations and 10 dental procedures which included fillings, root canals and extractions. As we walked back to the hotel we found out that Andy Hopper had made a house call during lunch to evaluate a one year old child. The child's mother was concerned about her growth.

This evening we all went to the Old Town area of Shangri-la (Zhongdian) and was treated to a wonderful Tibetan / Indian dinner. We ate until we were stuffed and many of our team, who had not visited the Tibetan home the day before, had the opportunity to sample the Tibetan Yak Butter Tea.

Cache and I went up to the top of one of the hills to visit the first revolving Prayer wheel brought to Shangri-La. It was lit up and was a sight to behold. Among the Buddhist, animistic and other religions this was a welcome sight.

Day 9, Sunday May 21st 2006

*The Lord your God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing. (Zephaniah 3:17)*

The team started the morning with devotion as we prepared for the final day of the Zhongdian seminar. Once we got beyond the technical difficulties of showing a slide show, Cache talked to the 200+ crowd of nurses and village doctors about the early recognition and treatment of hearing loss. The audience was in awe about the number of people in Yunnan with hearing loss, which is about 740,000, and cost of the cochlear implants (about \$25,000). Sally

We have had significant problems with showing our slides due to computers and projectors shutting down mid-presentation. For a while, there was concern that the GO Peds projector was fried (it is fine, Whew!). The electrical voltage in the school occasionally spikes up to around 250-300 volts instead of the expected 220 volts. At one point, there was a smell of smoke from the projector and it totally shut down. Peter was feeling pretty depressed and was beginning to wonder if the team would need to purchase a new projector. Bob suggested that we should try to start it again. We were overjoyed that the projector started-up again! It appears that I bore the brunt of our computer malfunctions. I was last seen at the end of the conference laughing and shaking my head. "Live by technology, Die by technology", has been proposed as a team motto. As Lisa started the last presentation of the seminar, the electricity went off in the auditorium. Un-phased, Lisa called upon Margaret Lee, I and Doris Arrington to be her "slides". Each were handed a piece of paper with a colored face representing a portion of the Wong-Baker pain scale. The audience howled in laughter as Doris, Margaret and I hammed it up. Meanwhile Peter was trying-out his acting skills as a backpacker with severe (8 on the Wong Baker pain scale) back pain. Many of us may be able to try out for the next Hollywood movies after this trip!!! Not quite

Lunch outside of the school consisted of spicy noodles, potatoes, fried pork fat and vegetables. Peter and Lisa sat with a Tibetan nurse, NanJie DriMa, from Dequin, a village five hours away on a dirt road. Peter recognized her as the same nurse who had been so interested in the lectures given in Dequin in 2001. NanJie talked about how nurses go out to the remote villages to give health lectures to the villagers. She asked if we might be able to return to Dequin next year with another healthcare education team. We also got to visit with LeoShan, a village doctor in a remote valley a 2-3 hours away from Dequin. LeoShan and his wife have been continuing their studying in Zhongdian so that they can pass the Chinese licensing test for village doctors.

The conference ended this afternoon, with certificates being given to the village doctors. Everyone hailed the conference as a tremendously useful. We also received some very good recommendations for next year's conference topics. Overall this has been wonderful conference with enthusiastic students who have a real desire to learn, not to mention a wonderful sense of humor. It is with some sadness that we begin to pack-up our teaching materials and luggage and said our Good-bye In addition to affirmation, each of the speakers will receive a yak bell – we think that it is appropriate gift since we have all been yakking so much!

We started our debrief and our wonderful leaders Peter and Lisa Yorgin, Bob and Doris Arrington and Sally and Ron Edwards affirmed all of us and gave us a big hurra. We saw how God worked despite the technology breakdowns; our anxieties and lack of sleep and the 12,000 feet altitude; many seeds were planted and to God go the glory.

The team with sadness ended the conference and headed back to the hotel to pack and fly out the next morning bright and early.

Day 10, Monday May 22nd 2006.

*"The Lord blesses you and keeps you; the Lord makes His face shine upon you and is gracious to you; the Lord turns His face toward you and gives you peace." (Numbers 6:24-26)*

*Trust the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him and He will make straight your paths. (Proverbs 3:5-6)*

Every morning in Zhongdian the military school music would start at 6:00 AM. The music was loud enough that it was certain to wake even the most tired of the team. Asking the Chinese front desk staff for a wake-up call can be a daunting task. Someone on the team decided that the music would be the perfect alarm to make sure that they would wake at the right time. As usual, the military march music blared through the windows and walls of the hotel – but this time it started at 4:30 AM!

The team members came to the table with fried eggs, noodle soup, fried doughnuts, watermelon, warm soy milk, breakfast sausages, fried rice and steamed cauliflower. This was the last Chinese breakfast for the team before returning home. Bob completed the last minute financial negotiations with the hotel staff while the team loaded into the bus. The list of things that will be missed included close team friendships, our Chinese friends, shopping, great Chinese food, and taxi rides. We all have especially fond memories of our time with our Tibetan friends.

After a short flight to Kunming, the team boarded the bus to go back to downtown Kunming. Dr. Andy Hopper and Peter Yorgin hopped off to go to the neonatal intensive care unit at the First Affiliated Hospital in Kunming. Two ENT residents helped Andy and Peter get to the Pediatric floor. Each room in the Pediatric Inpatient Ward had 2-3 children. There was a single VIP suite. We saw children with cardiac disease and nephrotic syndrome. We went upstairs to the NICU. Doctors Hopper and Yorgin did not walk inside the unit, but were allowed to peer through the outer windows. The unit, for about 16 neonates, had what looked like a nursing staff of eight (with nursing caps, masks and gloves) taking care of the neonates. A couple of neonates were under the bilirubin lights. Dr Hurd (sp?), who spoke beautiful English, explained that they need an additional ventilator and would welcome increased interaction with Loma Linda University physicians. We met with the department Chairman of Pediatrics who expressed an interest in enhancing learning opportunities for doctors there by having a teaching team return. After exchanging e-mails, Peter and Andy walked to the Harbor Plaza to meet the rest of the team. On to Hong Kong and Los Angeles later today!

Returning home always causes a mix of emotions and thoughts. While we have all missed our families and friends, we know that we will miss our team members -we have become so close. Although we do not understand why certain things happened or may not see the fruits of our labor all of our team left behind a part of themselves as we left to fly home and back to our daily lives.

I believe that "We will never be the same again"

For me as I ponder and debrief after this trip, I must say the Chinese people touched my heart in a way I never expected and I know that if God calls me back I will go with a willing heart .

I was touched by how God worked in all our hearts as we handled the technology failures, the difficulties that stem from being at an elevation of 12,000 feet above sea level. We all showed flexibility that comes from believing in God's strength and not ours.

More importantly I did not expect my heart to be touched by the people of China. I have been so blessed to learn of their warmth and their diverse cultural differences. I know many seeds were planted and we may not see the fruits of our labor. One thing I do know is to God goes the glory. I was honored to be a part of this team of special people, ministering in a land I never dreamed of being in let alone ministering in the way we did.

As Hebrews 11:8 says "And he went out not knowing where he was going"

I know that if God calls me back I will go with a willing heart.