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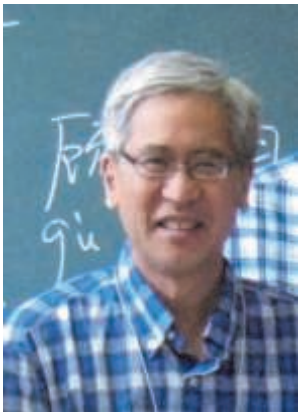
○ Winter ○ 2011

# Current

## The First Chinese Christians

Dr. Russell Moy

*Institute for the Study of Asian-American Christianity (ISAAC), Ph.D. from Claremont School of Theology, Chinese Worldview Seminar facilitator, Summer 2011*



Traveling along the Silk Road, a delegation of Christian priests from Persia appeared before the Tang emperor in Xian in 635 CE. These were Nestorians because their view of Mary

and Christ was different from the prevailing orthodox view. Yet they were invited by the Tang emperor because he was open to foreign religions. He granted their leader, Aluobin (perhaps a bishop), an edict of toleration to build churches. Their official visit and their beliefs were recorded in the Nestorian Stele, written in Chinese and Syriac, in 781 CE. One of my prized souvenirs from China is a black and white etching of it.

To illustrate its Chinese and Christian heritage, the Nestorians used the striking



Detail, Nestorian Stele

feature of a cross rising out of a lotus, a common Buddhist symbol of purity. This image was an example of how these 7<sup>th</sup> century Persians communicated their beliefs into the Chinese religious worldview. It was a symbolic point of contact between these Nestorians and Buddhism as they tackled the difficulties of translating the gospel into terms the Chinese could understand.

These earliest missionaries to China used Taoist and Buddhist terms to explain Christian doctrine. For example, Jesus, as the “compassionate knowing one,” and the raft of salvation. He suffered terrible woes so that all should be free from karma. Finally, Jesus was described in terms of a basic Buddhist belief in reincarnation, bringing us back to our original nature of goodness. Nestorians said that Jesus taught “no wanting and doing without doing” and to “walk the way of no action” as a way of adapting their message for Taoists.

What lessons could we learn from these Nestorian missionaries? First, their approach of acculturating the gospel within Taoism and Buddhism was successful. At its height, these earliest churches stretched from Baghdad to Beijing, in 25 provinces with 70 bishops, according to Marco Polo. Unfortunately, the Nestorians were caught up in the anti-Buddhist perse-

cution in the mid-ninth century and caused their decline and disappearance. Thus they lasted only two hundred years in China. What if they had been allowed to grow and develop? Would their appearance a millennium before Western missionaries have led to a more indigenous Chinese religion, like Buddhism (another foreign religion)? It is no doubt that the history and legacy of Chinese Christianity would look very different today if the Nestorian church had continued.

*Early missionaries used a cross-cultural understanding to present a gospel that the Chinese could comprehend.*

Another lesson was the importance of invitation. The Buddhists and the Nestorians came to China because the emperor invited them to share their foreign religion. How they gained the emperor’s interest to initiate this relationship was lost to history. This legacy is very different from



The Nestorian Stele (Continued on page 6)

# Adoption - How my Family Came to China - By Amanda Hostelter

*Doug and Amanda Hostelter have been ERRC teaching associates at a private school in Wuhan since 2008.*

Our journey to and love of China came to us in a surprising manner – through the adoption of a child. In 2005, our family of seven was busy living the “American dream.” My husband, Douglas, and I both had jobs we loved. We had two grown children and three more still living in the “dream home” we had built. We loved our church, lived near family, and were heavily involved in ministries in our hometown. You can imagine our shock when we heard from God: “My pattern for you is to adopt.” It was the most unexpected idea – completely off our radar!

Some weeks later we saw a picture of Naomi. When we first laid eyes on her, it was like a revelation. Knowing she had been born on the other side of the world, and was waiting for us, was a God-sized surprise!

Our entire family visited Wuhan, China in June of 2006. We thought our journey was just to bring home our daughter, but once again, God surprised us. At the end of our first week in Wuhan, Douglas said “I have a strange feeling about this place...like we’re going to be back here again...or we’re going to live here.” Though I too shared this deep, stirring thought, my mind simply could not process it.

Those first steps of faith with the adoption of Naomi ushered in a new chapter of our lives. We began to “taste and see that the Lord is good.” God began to change our hearts – deeply, profoundly, with compassion for the fatherless. Our hearts were divinely transformed.

We began to pray crazy prayers! “Lord, what do you want of us? Where do you want us to go?” We began following God, instead of just believing in Him. Through this we discovered that we are called to adoption as a ministry.

In 2007 we adopted Isaiah, while making plans to actually move to Wuhan. When we arrived there in 2008, we thought our “quiver” was full. Yet more “God nudgings” and prayer convinced us that He was asking us to open our hearts to adopt Noah Graham and Silas, two two-year-olds in Wuhan. They finally became ours in June of 2010. In our wildest imaginations, we could



The Hostelter family, with their 6 biological children (3 grown and living in the US, and 3 in Wuhan) and 4 adopted children.

not have foreseen that today we are awaiting the arrival of still two more sons to bring our family size to thirteen! With ERRC’s help, we are now in our fourth year of living in Wuhan. We have often given thanks to God that He did not reveal the entirety of this call from the beginning. We might never have left our home.

Yet, the adventure has been “exceedingly, abundantly, beyond all we could ask or imagine.” We see people differently now. In the eyes of every child who waits for a family, we see an invitation to struggle and joy, suffering and supernatural deliverance, brokenness and divine love.

## ERRC - Award-Winning Teaching



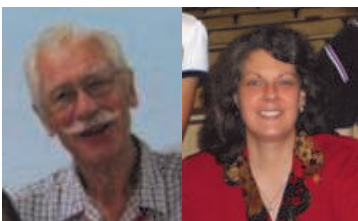
ERRC congratulates Jeanne Wynn for winning the “Hai He Friendship Award.” This award is presented by the city government to foreigners who have made “significant contributions to the social and economic development of the city.” Most of the recipients are CEOs or managers of big corporations. It is a huge honor to have been selected.

Jeanne Reports: “The certificates are bilingual and mine is addressed to Mr. Jeanne L. Wynn. The Chinese correctly identifies me as a woman. Since it is very rare for a woman to win the award, all the English versions say Mr. \_\_\_\_\_.”



↑ Beijing, middle school teachers with Chinese Co-teachers: Ethlyn Barrett, Karen Nordeng, Ann Streeter, Tracey Bennett, Karen Brookshire, Bob Treash, Michael Davis, Ron Tanikawa.

## ERRC Summer 2011 Teachers



↑ Taian, Shandong, university teaching team: Hardy Goetsch, Cindy Buchert



← Beijing, university teachers: Margery Atkinson, Steve & Shirley Easton, Paul Bradley, Julia Poole.

# Living in a Complicated Country by Paul MacFarlane



*Paul MacFarlane is in his 4th year as an ERRC field partner. He first travelled to teach in China in 1998.*

China is a big country and it's also a big subject. I first tried to talk about just one simple aspect of life here: Chinese individualism.

I realized that I had insufficient space to analyze it well enough for any Westerners to understand and put into context. This is one aspect of the complication of China. There are no generalizations that can provide a clear answer.

Most Western sinologists describe Chinese culture as collective-orientated. Consider the notion of "Chinese Individualism." What can that possibly mean in a culture so heavily steeped in collective action? Yet it exists. I hear my students express very different

opinions when they talk with me alone, even though they go along with the majority while in class. It has always been a challenge and delight to see the results when I assign them to work in teams.

The culture here is physically and spiritually changing so fast that what you thought you knew last year may no longer be relevant this year - particularly in the cities. When people here talk about a "generation gap," don't assume they are talking about parents and children. They may just as easily mean their older schoolmates or relatives born just a few years before. Consider that there are 485 million Chinese using the internet. There aren't even that many people in the US! This internet generation is very different than the students I taught in China a few years ago.

Lots of people back home still believe that China is communist and not the bastion of capitalism it has become today. They hear this "news" and wonder, "How can you say that? How did that happen? And when?" Well, glib references to Deng XiaoPing don't really tell you much about it. The 30-year-old "open and reformed" policy with its implementation of

"Chinese Authoritarianism" that he initiated, and that has been continued and developed by his party comrades, has transformed China.

My ethnic studies teachers back in college taught me that *language* is the primary expression of culture. I believe it, which is why I want to learn Chinese. But have you ever tried to learn the kind they use in day-to-day life? One reason for its notorious difficulty is that, despite the presence of a zillion willing Chinese teachers, almost no one can actually teach it to you. **How come? It's not simple to explain.**

One particularly unique (and therefore difficult) aspect of Chinese is its system of tones. These tones are changes in musical pitch, like little melodies, incorporated into each word, that create four different possible words where otherwise there would only be one. **As a musician, I've been able to hear those tones since day 1 of my Chinese learning experience.** But, my ability to hear those tones did not actually help me, since I can't reproduce them.

**Welcome to China. It's probably not what you think it is. It's probably not how you remember it.**

## Why I study Chinese Philosophy - By Jesse Ciccotti



*Jesse Ciccotti is an ERRC long-term field partner, who is pursuing a master's degree in Chinese Philosophy in Wuhan. He has been studying and teaching in China since 2005.*

When we think about Chinese philosophy and why we should study it, our first question might be, "what's in it for me?" This is the wrong place to start. When Jesus came to earth he did not ask, "What's in it for me?" He asked, "What's in it for them?"

Eager Christians who come to China should not be fooled by the apparent similarities they have with their hosts. They may wear Levi jeans or talk about the most recent Knicks game, but these surface cultural similarities sooner or later come to an end. For example, Chinese feel so much pressure to get married by age 30 that they will be willing to marry just about anyone. They honor their deceased ancestors by offering incense at their graves. In order to communicate with people of another culture we must adapt to a different set of questions and learn about our hosts to find the answers to *their* questions in the pages of Scripture. In order to know their questions we must be students of that culture. This is why I

study the Classics of *Ruism*. My studies bring me into effective contact with two groups of people.

The first are "lay" people - those who have never formally studied *Ruism* or Chinese philosophy. When I meet a Chinese person and tell them I am studying Chinese philosophy and learning classical Chinese, their eyes get wide and they often make a comment like, "You are more Chinese than me!" The Chinese people respect their own culture and history and respect those who study it. They recognize they are tied to these ancient teachings even if they don't know how these teachings relate to life in modern society. Yet even by picking up a few informative and helpful introductory resources to Chinese culture and ideas, you demonstrate to the Chinese that their culture has value. It helps you determine what is helpful in communicating on a heart-level with your Chinese neighbor.

I also interact with the second group, the "intellectual elite."

This is the small group of scholars who take time to really struggle with the questions and texts (and sometimes languages) passed down from antiquity. They are not as impressed as the average person with someone who

studies Chinese philosophy. Some of the younger students may even look down on a non-Chinese studying "their" philosophy, assuming that foreigners cannot understand it. Certainly the response is understandable, considering that some Western philosophers have earned a reputation for not taking Chinese philosophical ideas seriously and by writing very critically without much knowledge. Scholars at this second level are seeking to be transformative agents in their culture and sometimes have significant influence. Their ideas get published and are widely read and highly regarded. In order to enter this arena and have meaningful dialogue, I must study Chinese philosophy with discipline and rigor. I hope to serve the Christian community and demonstrate respect, not only for the ideas, but for the persons who hold them. Then, I will be able to help create lay-level resources that present the Chinese belief systems accurately. This is why I study Chinese philosophy.



Chinese Weddings, old and new

Ben /Lan S. from CA— 6th year with ERRC teaching undergraduate students English in Beijing



Dr. Jim and Peggy P. from CA— 2nd year with ERRC teaching Ph.D. and MA students English in Beijing



Howie and Staci S. - Children Sam, Mary, Jake, first year with ERRC teaching graduate & undergraduate students in Tianjin



Julia and John P. from B.C. Canada --1st year with ERRC teaching Ph.D. students English in Beijing



Dr. Liz C. from Boston—6th year teaching Ph.D. students English in Beijing



Dr. Bill and Anita S. from Hawaii. First year teaching English to PhD students in Beijing.



Chris & Aminta A., children — Katherine, Grace, Andrew from WA. 6<sup>th</sup> year with ERRC , second year teaching undergrad students in Beijing



Louise V., from Ontario, Canada. First year teaching English to PhD students in Beijing.



Jack T. from Illinois - veteran China teacher, second year with ERRC, first year teaching English to graduate students in Beijing



Jeff & Bobbie G., children— Savana, Lexi, & Wyatt from CA. Second year with ERRC teaching English to undergraduate students in Kunming , Yunan



Paul and Carolyn R. children — Bradley & Julie from Michigan . 13<sup>th</sup> year with ERRC, 3rd year teaching undergraduate students in Kunming , Yunan

# ERRC Field Fall





Paul M. from CA—4th year teaching graduate students in Tianjin



Dr. Jeanne W. from Iowa--13th year with ERRC teaching environmental chemistry in Tianjin



Dr. Pam H. from Texas—ERRC Field partners coordinator, 12th year teaching environmental chemistry to graduate students in Jinan, Shandong

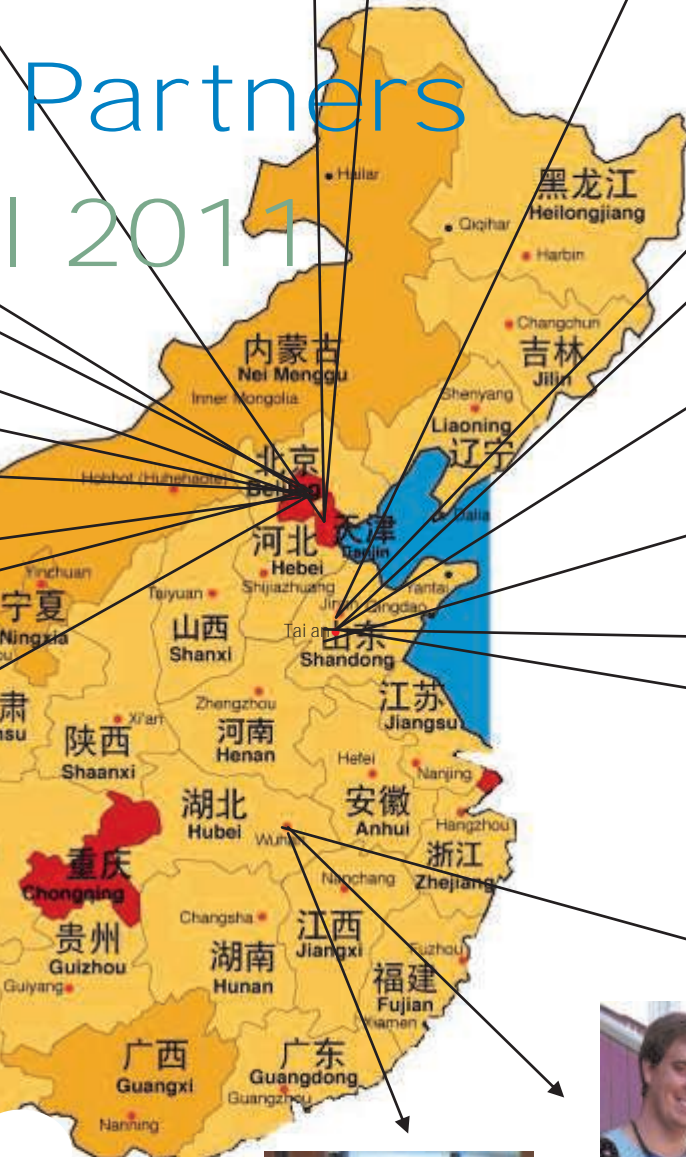


Cindy B. from WA--7th year teaching undergraduate English major students in Taian, Shandong.



Jim & Deb P. from Montana --12th year with ERRC, teaching undergrad & grad students English in Taian, Shandong

# Partners 2011



Dr. Lawrence & B.M. from B.C. Canada - Second assignment teaching marketing management to MBA students in Jinan, Shandong



Winnie N. from Canada/Hong Kong - 2nd year with ERRC, teaching undergrad & graduate students in Taian, Shandong



Dan and Olivia J. from CA--6th year with ERRC teaching undergraduate students English in Taian, Shandong



Ann S. from WA - ERRC alumni from 1990-95, first year teaching undergraduate English major students in Taian, Shandong

Jessie, Emily C. from Iowa-- 3rd year partnering with ERRC as student field partners. Jesse studies Chinese full time.



Cody & Brynn V. from Mississippi - 1st year teaching associates in Wuhan



Doug/Amanda H. children--Madelyn, Lydia, Naomi, Elynore, Isaiah, Graham & Silas from WA - 3rd year teaching associates in Wuhan

## Learning Chinese Worldview - My Journey



By Darren Hsiung CAC support staff

What do you get when you cross a Confucian, a Taoist, a Buddhist, and an atheistic Marxist, mixed in a brew of folk religion? No, I am not trying to tell a joke. This is the cultural reality of the contemporary Chinese mind.

Modernity attempted to invent a distinction between reasonable, “scientific” religion and hot-and-noisy “superstition;” Marxism attempted to stamp out religion entirely. The historical failure of both these projects is evident now across China in the booming religious landscape and in the renewed intellectual interest in the

religious question. Vincent Goosaert notes in *The Religious Question in Modern China*, “Now that China enjoys a growing influence in global society, the religious question is not China’s alone, but the world’s.” The China Academic Consortium’s summer worldview course is one way for Christians to engage thoughtfully in this larger religious question.

My previous knowledge of Chinese religion had been limited to merely the sights and smells, with perhaps a few fortune-cookie sayings from Confucius. The worldview course opened a whole new dimension for understanding the Chinese mind and its encounter with the Christian faith. Of course, as we discuss the Chinese culture, we will start to consider how culture and faith are related. How can we avoid changing the foundations of our faith to make it culturally



Diane Obenchain gives instruction at the Chinese Worldview Seminar

acceptable? How can we determine whether we are conflating some aspects of Western culture with our faith?

Understanding Chinese worldview will help us consider our faith and our approaches. Understanding culture helps us to present the gospel wisely and skillfully to the culture as Paul did at the Areopagus (Acts 17).

What was in store for a dozen Westerners, spending two weeks in Beijing (as well as two days in the ancient capital of Xi’an)? I was delighted not only to engage in stimulating lectures and discussions with Chinese and American scholars, but also to enjoy a fun, educational vacation with new friends. Whether exploring China’s cultural and religious past at the Forbidden City and various temples, sampling the tasty local cuisine, or even chatting with locals using my broken, “are you a southerner?” Mandarin, it was a two weeks that ended too soon!



Chinese Wordview Participants on Xian Trip: Jesse & Emily Ciccotti, Hannah Pang, Ronald Tanikawa, Ethlyn Bennett, Darren Hsiung, Russell Moy, Karen Brookshire, Bob Treash, Michael Davis, Martha Chan, Barry Barlow, Ann Streeter, Karen Nordeng, Tracey Bennett

## The First Chinese Christians: Nestorian Christianity in China

(Continued from page 1)

the later Protestant missionaries, who entered China with military force. It is no wonder that they were stigmatized by the Chinese government as “foreign imperialists.” Trust and friendship, not coercion, were crucial for the Chinese emperor to offer these Persian Christians the imperial privilege to open churches.

Finally, the most important lesson was that these Nestorians studied the Chinese heritage of Taoism and Buddhism. This

required a cross-cultural understanding in order to present a contextual gospel that the Chinese can comprehend. Their goal was perhaps, “Christ transforms culture” (from H. Richard Niebuhr’s famous typology) in which the gospel can uplift Chinese culture with Christian values. This transformation can only take place if one intensively studies Chinese religions and philosophy. A deeper understanding of Chinese culture would avoid misunderstandings and negative cultural contexts.

This was the goal of ERRC/CAC’s Chinese worldview class last summer. A dozen students, including myself, greatly benefited from lectures by Chinese professors and visiting Beijing’s religious sites. If you can attend this enriching class, you will be better equipped to offer a culturally-sensitive Christianity and be an understanding and supportive partner with the growing Christian population in China.

# Adapting to China's Changes



By Martha Chan  
ERRC founding president

When ERRC celebrated its 25th anniversary, many asked me *how could you not get bored doing the same work for so many years?* However, the fact is that I have not been involved in the exact same work, since China has been continuously transforming and evolving. With each new situation, new doors are opened. Even though China's minor administrative changes can cause some stress, we have been able to adapt to changes and continue our work. In the year of 2011, the main changes were new (and more difficult) visa application forms, work permit restrictions, and a new insurance policy for foreigners.

During the past 30 years of China's open and reformed history, opportunities have opened at different times. Openings to teach religious studies began in 1996 when Peking U. started a Religious Studies Department. A wider door for foreigners to teach subjects other than English also started in 1996, when China's Ministry of Education started "Project 211." The demand for business teachers happened when China entered the WTO.

In 2010, China's Prime Minister, Wen Jiabao, unveiled a draft 10-year education reform blueprint. It recognizes that China's education needs to reform in order to meet the demands of global engagement in this post-modern and technologically-advanced era. The 1950's Russian mode of training and test-driven education is no longer able to produce innovative students with problem-solving skills.

This central-government-initiated educational reform will provide another open door for international education cooperation.

ERRC/CAC is an educational and academic organization, so we follow China's trends and changes closely and pray for God's leading. We will need Christian servants and financial partners to be involved. We pray for God's wisdom and provision to explore these open doors.



*Martha Chan*

## ERRC / CAC conference appearances 2011-2012

- Oct 1 OMF "Heart for Asia" Conference, Pleasant Hill, CA
- Oct 7-8 Missions Fest Seattle, Seattle, WA
- Oct 13-14 Christian Educator Association Conference, South Bend, IN
- Oct 26-28 China Challenge Conference, Los Angeles, CA
- Oct 27-28 ACSI Educators Conference, New York, NY
- Oct 28-29 Engage Conference, Brentwood, CA
- Nov. 4 ACSI Educators Conference, Phoenix, AZ
- Nov 15-16 ACSI International Recruitment, Wheaton, IL
- Nov 18-22 ACSI International Recruitment, Anaheim & Miranda CA
- Nov 19-22 SBL/AAR Conference in San Francisco, CA
- Dec 27-30 Chinese Mission Convention West Coast, San Diego, CA
- Jan 21-22 Mission Connexion, Portland, OR
- Feb 17-20 World Christian Conference, Boulder Creek, CA
- Mar 1-3 Bay Area Sunday School Convention, Castro Valley, CA
- March 3 China Pulse, Berkeley, CA
- Mar 14-16 CAC Biola Missions Conference, Miranda, CA
- Apr 14 Cornerstone ESL Conference, Grand Rapids, MI
- Jul Conservative Congregational Christian Conference
- Jul 2-17 CAC Chinese Worldview Seminar, Beijing, China

## Finance Report 9/1/10-8/31/11 (Unaudited)

	ERRC Program	Teacher's Fund	CAC	Total
Income	\$174,946	\$169,477	\$45,972	\$390,395
Expense	\$192,624	\$160,263	\$53,336	\$406,223
Surplus/Deficit	(\$17,678)	\$9,214	(\$7,364)	(\$15,828)

## Finance Report 9/1/11-10/31/11 (Unaudited)

	ERRC Program	Teacher's Fund	CAC	Total
Income	\$43,903	(\$6,712)	\$375	\$37,566
Expense	\$29,396	\$15,201	\$2,395	\$46,992
Surplus/Deficit	\$14,507	(\$21,913)	(\$2,020)	(\$9,426)

## The Early History of China's TSPM (Open) Church

China Pulse Conference sponsored by China Academic Consortium

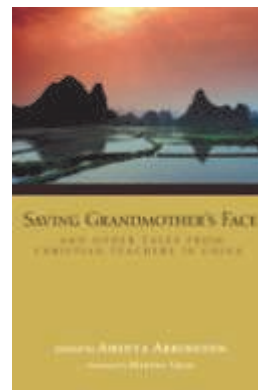
Saturday, March 3, 2011 - Berkeley, CA



Speakers: Dr. Thomas Reilly, Pepperdine University & Dr. Kevin Yao, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Learn about the background and beliefs of the founder of the TSPM church (Wu, Yaozhong) and the early development of the TSPM church in the '50s from two Chinese church historians.

## ERRC 2011 major milestones

1. 2 summer program participants earned Seattle Pacific University continuing education credits.
2. 14 enrolled in the first ever Chinese Worldview intensive seminar. Credit was available through Denver Seminary.
3. Jesse Ciccotti became the first ERRC long-term Field Partner to enter a Chinese university degree program to study Chinese philosophy.
4. ERRC moved to a more spacious office in September.



## A Collective Work of ERRC Teachers in China

Edited by Aminta Arrington  
Foreword by Martha Chan  
Published by Wipf and Stock

China is a vast and populous nation which demands our understanding. But while newspaper headlines commonly focus on politics and economics, *Saving Grandmother's Face*, written by ERRC teachers in China, recounts their experiences in the classroom and in the countryside, from celebrating a child's birth and mourning a child's death, to grading papers and discussing Chinese literature. Through these stories you will see a side of China often left out—the human side. Order online at [www.errchina.com](http://www.errchina.com) (\$16 donation).



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2010: Is Confucianism Reviving in China? Chris-  
tian Responses

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