

China Report

Al Dueck
May 21, 2009

Nestorians brought Christianity to China in the 7th century. It was our privilege thirteen centuries later to meet believers in vibrant Christian communities, students in seminaries engaged in fervent study of the Bible, and pastors in congregations who make incredible sacrifices for their congregants. Truly, the Western church has much to learn from these Chinese Christians. In the picture below, Pastor Gu (on the right) left her seminary training to help a church in the earthquake devastated city of Mianzhu.

After 13 trips to China in the last six years, this was clearly the most complicated so far. We traveled to five cities with a team of 14 people and gave more than forty presentations. We almost missed one flight and usually spent two hours a day in a van commuting to seminaries. We met together regularly before leaving for China, giving each other feedback on presentations. We translated all presentations into Chinese and had simultaneous translation for many presentations. We were ready. But in the end the success of the trip lay in the people we met and grew to love.



The Seminaries:

One of the goals of our trip was to make contact with provincial and regional seminaries as we had served the national level Nanjing Union Theological seminary over the past several years. Meilin Chen, former administrator at the China Christian Council made the contacts for us at in Guangzhou, Chengdu and Wuhan.

The China Christian Council (CCC) of Guangzhou invited us to present to some thirty pastors. I focused on the Acts 6, a text that empowers leaders for pastoral care in the congregation. At each of the seminaries I explored a simple model of four levels of pastoral care: laity, lay leaders, pastors and pastoral counselors. The pastors were very attentive, responding to my queries, and volunteering issues they faced. As pastors they are very stressed with most of them pastoring congregations of 2-5 thousand members, which makes pastoral care very complex. Most are expected to be available 24/7 and to give advice on major ethical matters.

In the afternoon we met with the Guangdong CCC led by Rev. Chen. The three leaders present were alternately humorous, transparent, and profound. They spent some two and a half hours in relaxed conversation with us. Rev. Chen outlined the history of the church in Guangdong province. After we introduced ourselves, the three leaders, at our request, shared their personal stories of coming to faith. It was a sacred time. Rev. Chen told of being inspired to become a Christian by story of a missionary who stayed to help during a cholera outbreak. His children and wife died and then he too succumbed to the disease. Chen was moved by their faithfulness and persistence. The meeting closed with a sincere invitation to return.

In the picture below, an American Chinese weekly reported on our training in pastoral counseling at the Guangzhou seminary led by Dr. Chen Yilu and assisted by Rev. Cai.



Next we flew to Chengdu. The Sichuan Theological Seminary experience was wonderful. I presented to some 45 upper level students my basic model of pastoral care in the congregation followed by a pastoral counseling case presented by Dr. Wang Xuefu, a visiting scholar at Fuller this year and a pastoral counselor. He walked the students, step by step, through the process of pastoral counseling, encouraging conversation along the way. In the small groups that our Fuller team led, the discussion was lively and some talked of applying the model in their congregations. The mood in the seminary matched the self-identification of Sichuanese--relaxed and happy.



At left is a picture of the Sichuan seminary group and below is a report written by the vice president of the seminary:

A team of 13 from Fuller Seminary, Graduate School of Psychology came

to visit us on 4/18-19/2009. Dr. Alvin Dueck, Dr. Xuefu Wang, Dr. Martin Hsia, Ms. Esther Liu and Dr. SingKiat Ting each gave a topical training to the students present. Below is a summary of our time together.

The teaching of the application of professional counseling knowledge is great guidance and help for those of us who practice the traditional pastoral counseling model. Abroad, churches have moved beyond simply praying for those with psychological disorders (inside and outside of the church), but within China, such simplistic and traditional model still exists. Moreover, in more secluded or conservative churches, there are no alternative methods of intervention, and prayer is seen as a mark of spirituality. In the two days of instruction, the lectures emphasized on counseling those with psychological disorders, and this greatly broadened the horizons of our students, not only intellectually but also theologically.

Although sound exegesis is a crucial skill for ministers today, due to various limitations at our seminary, exegetical education has been weak for us. Dr. Dueck's exegetical interpretations of Acts and other parts of the NT were great examples for our students.

The lecture process was lively and engaging for the students, with never a dull moment. The lecturers employed techniques such as role-play, discussions, and audience feedback to ensure that students absorbed the most amount of information. We noticed that our students responded freely in class, which is a rare scene, and it also inspired our faculty to consider our own teaching approaches.

The students responded very positively to the daily small group discussions which allowed them to voice questions and concerns they had about applications of the materials presented; they were also challenged to think through the struggles they have in integrating the material studied in class and real issues they face in churches. This is of great assistance to the students for their future ministries as they apply the skills obtained to individual cases they encounter later.

*As the lectures by Fuller Seminary this time around were all specialties of the school, we as a seminary regard the visit highly and hope for future opportunities for your visit. Lastly, please accept our warmest greetings and thanks from President, Yangsan Mao, all the faculty and students' to the team.
Dong Lee, Vice President, Chengdu Seminary, 2009/ 4/ 21*

Our third seminary was in Wuhan where again we received a most warm welcome. Wang Xuefu is well known here and loved. The president was eager for Fuller to collaborate in pastoral counseling and in theology. A pleasant surprise here was to meet two persons who had been in workshops I had led in Shanghai. The president's wife, Rev. Ge, and a faculty member (Sarah) were excited we were with them in Wuhan. Rev. Ge introduced us to a businessman who then took us that afternoon to see his recovery center for deaf children which was amazing. In the picture to the right, the children are fascinated with my beard! The businessman has only recently become a Christian but comes from a family of five generations of Anglican Christians. I spent the afternoon envisioning the nature of the church and what issues pastoral counseling might address. Paul Xu is the Dean of the fourth year class sent us this report.



The arrival of the team from Fuller Theological Seminary has been a great help to us. In the past we have long heard of Fuller. Within your short stay at Center China Theological Seminary, we have had a wonderful exchange. We really hope that in the future we can learn from you more systematically. Regarding the learning experience in that few days, I would like to bring up some of my thoughts and let you know of our needs:

Dr. Dueck, who taught pastoral counseling classes told us the importance of pastoral counseling. We have the same understanding in this area. Most of the time we have applied the model he described -- starting from lay counselors to formal coworkers to pastors to professional counselors. Caring and counseling is the thing that we do the most in the church. We hope that in the future he can talk about why oftentimes we do not obtain good results from our counseling or care ministry? Besides, why our counseling oftentimes make people fall into the habits of only wanting to receive instead of getting motivated to do something for themselves? Or maybe we can put it this way -- why sometimes caring or counseling make those who are being counseled become less resilient? What are the negatives in the counseling ministry? How to avoid them to make counseling more effective?

The lesson on the map of family relations (genogram) is still vivid in my mind until this day. It made a great impact on us, especially the part about the personal history of the teacher. We know how important family relationships are in our church life. Families are great influences to both individuals and communities.

Good families make better lives. Whether in the society or at church, people do not know how to do better in family life because they do not have the opportunity to receive counseling. Who would not want to have a happy family? Who would not want to be a good wife or husband? These people need some guidelines. We hope that in the future, Fuller can provide some classes that teach systematically about family and marriage counseling so that we can systematically apply them. Also, we need to consider the difference between Chinese churches and western churches.



We sincerely appreciate your visit and the teachings that you have brought us. We hope that we will have even better exchanges on the foundation of Chinese indigenous culture in the future.

Paul Xu (Dean of the Fourth Year Class)

The Academic Setting: Fudan University

I lectured at Fudan University on community mental health as disaster relief. WenChing Niou (HR director at SemiConductor International Corporation) made the arrangements with Dr. Sun who is the head of the psychology department. The audience was substantial and diverse. Participants included social workers, consultants, and religious folk. I spoke for an hour and then had two hours of discussion! I had removed from the lecture religious references since I had been asked to do so and this was a public lecture. Then during the discussion THEY raised religious questions. Why is the religiosity of the earthquake victims not taken seriously? What if the caregiver is Buddhist and the recipients of care are not? Are there not implicitly different models of healing in different religious traditions? What if the healer becomes a preacher? I was asked to share about Fuller's program and there was much interest. Xuefu Wang spoke

glowingly about his experience with us. In the afternoon Dr. Sun (left in picture below) took us to see the new



Fudan University. Colossal buildings made of limestone exterior and marble interior rose from the well-landscaped land. Only four buildings are up now with many more to complete the 1500-acre project. Fudan is one China's top universities together with Peking and Tsinghua.

Corporate Setting: SemiConductor International Corporation (SMIC)

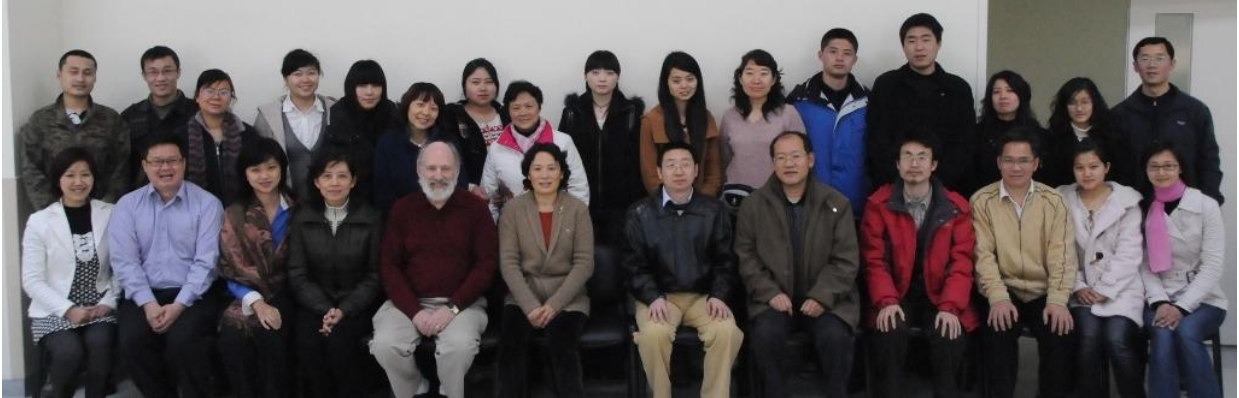
SMIC is China's largest computer chip manufacturer with more than five plants and some 20,000 employees. For the past four years we have provided training in stress management, leadership and administration, parenting, etc. This year we gave presentations in the SMIC plants in Chengdu, Wuhan and Shanghai. SMIC asked us to focus on the same topic in each location--communication. I provided case consultation to (picture to the right) counselors in the Human Resources department which provides counseling services to employees 24/7. We met with Dr. Richard Chang, CEO of SMIC, and he shared how SMIC is building schools, being sensitive to the environment, and recruiting new employees. When he discovered that Yok Choi, our School of Psychology grad, was also a lawyer he all but offered her a job on the spot. He asked later to interview her. Apparently a government monitor had been sitting in on one of the student presentations and was so excited about the content that she immediately talked with Richard about it. Richard (below with WenChing Niou) was pleased. By the end of our conversation and trip, he offered employment to three of our graduates!!



The Psychology of Religion Conference

Just after the Sichuan earthquake, Fuller was encouraged to provide

assistance in some way. When I was asked to help, I found myself reluctant. What did I know about disaster relief in another culture? Since then we have engaged in conversation with West China hospital. They have overseen a large portion of the government's response to the disaster. They asked if we could help. One of our grads, Dr. Sing-Kiat Ting, went to the sites for two weeks making friends with local caregivers. We have consulted several times with the hospital administration and interns.



When we planned the next psychology of religion conference, the West China Hospital was a natural venue. The chief psychiatrist, Dr. Yang (sitting to my left), extended an invitation and hosted the conference at considerable personal risk given that the conference was on religion. Their report to the conferees began with the statement that they sought to work indigenously. They had their team leaders from the sites share their experiences. That was followed by a summary of the theory that guided their approach. One volunteer we met came from Guangzhou having just completed his medical degree. He serves without pay and lives in his office. He works at a grass roots level empowering local people.

Han Buxin, who spent a year at Fuller as visiting scholar, reported on the response of elderly to the earthquake losses. He discovered that religious elderly did more poorly on standard measures of mental health. Now that generated some discussion! It certainly qualifies the research that makes the case that religious coping strategies are effective. The discussion after the presentation suggested that religious persons may have experienced at a deeper level the collective suffering of the communities affected by the disaster.

Dr. Mark Yang, a Fuller SOP graduate ('90), focused on existential and spiritual themes in disaster relief work. Mark is now Clinical Director at Alliant University in Hong Kong and reported on training he and his students from Alliant provided to West China Hospital volunteers in the earthquake damaged areas.

Dr. Sing-Kiat, our Fuller SOP graduate ('08), is now teaching at the University of Kuala Lumpur, and gave a stellar presentation on her impressions from her trip. Her response to local issues was profoundly sensitive; her approach to possible interventions indigenously intuitive. She did Fuller and herself proud.



Particularly satisfying was the fact that the Chinese hosts of the conference essentially took over. Often I did not know what was going to happen next. The speakers gave all presentations in Chinese and sometimes someone

would translate for me. However, it still seems we are long way though from an established association of psychologists of religion.

Shanghai Art Museum

With a little down time at the end of the two weeks, I explored (with Nathan Chau, an SOT graduate) the Shanghai Art Museum where there was an exhibition of the work of Xue Song's paintings over the past 30 years. It was a celebration of Chinese culture in spite of the Western cultural invasion.

In particular we found ourselves moved by his “Dialogue” series, in which Xue Song used pastiches of the classic works of iconic Chinese artists (e.g. Xu Beihong, Feng Zikai, Hong Ren, etc., each of whose style is unmistakable) as the outlines his primary compositions, functioning sort of like those of children's coloring books. But instead of using plain colors, Xue used mosaics of thoughtfully selected materials, powerful symbols that can recall social and political memories of different times and cultures (such as photographs, newspapers, Chinese calligraphy arts, money bills) to fill in the areas and backgrounds, creating provoking juxtapositions and interactions of the old and the new, the classic and the modern, the east and the west.



The “Coca-Cola” series was impressive. On each canvas, there was a frame of a coca cola bottle at the center. Outside the bottles was an impressionistic background comprised of broken fragments of Chinese art elements (e.g. unreadable Chinese calligraphy). But inside were some perfectly identifiable ancient Chinese style paintings. In all the work displayed in that exhibition, inside the coke bottles was the only place one found unaltered and coherent Chinese art in the entire exhibition.

Team Reflections on the China Trip

I went back to China at least once a year during the past 4 years; however, this China trip is special to me. There are several scenarios left me a profound impression: During the small group discussion after Dr. Dueck's lecture in Guangzhou seminary, a senior student bravely told his personal depression story before he came to study in seminary, which moved other group members who went up to him and hugged him to express comfort and compassion. The scene was so touching because it seemed in the beginning the boy was not appreciated by his peers and the depression was generally perceived as the work of a demon. The topic that day opened up for him new questions and new approaches to his problems.

Our presentations in Chengdu seminary seemed novel and urgent for the students. Some students are experienced pastors and some are completely new to ministry. However, the need for pastoral care in their churches is urgent and some even complained that because of the lack of the training, the pastoral ministry causes chaos in their churches. I believe our lectures gave them a glance how the pastoral care would facilitate church growth in a fundamental way on the basis of cultural sensitivity. Students in my small group raised many practical questions about different topics from our presentations and never thought they were culturally irrelevant or insensitive. To my surprise, quite a few students in Wuhan seminary have acquired their counseling licensure from the Chinese government and the response to our presentations was enthusiastic and practical. They requested more training of this kind in future and showed disappointment in only one-day lectures.

As an overall impression, our presentations accented communication in their cultural situation and were welcomed by the audience; every presenter took serious consideration of contextualization. I believe that in the future some case studies and role plays to demonstrate the whole process of how to deal with the specific pastoral cases and a longer training such as three days at each place would be helpful to these seminary students. I am excited to find out that these future Chinese ministers are more ready than I expected to serve their generation with pastoral care and I am eager to commit myself to serve them with what I have learnt in Fuller. I am looking forward to seeing them soon!

By Esther Liu, Doctoral student in Pastoral Counseling. An advisee of Drs. Augsburg and Dueck

Some 6 years ago, Dr. Sing-Kiat Ting, then Fuller doctoral student studying with Prof. Al Dueck, came to Zhi Mian Counseling Center (Nanjing, China) to work with us for two weeks. I came to know that she was sent by a professor from Fuller Seminary School of

psychology, Al Dueck, whom I met the next year. This was the first time I made contact with Fuller. In subsequent years, as the leader of Zhi Mian Counseling Center and the guest professor at Nanjing Union Theological Seminary (where I started the course on pastoral counseling from 2002-2007), I became a collaborator with Fuller professors and students in many occasions. Many Chinese individuals and organizations have heard more about Fuller through our *Zhi Mian Report*, a simple journal that reaches widely to people in the field of counseling and churches in China. During the period that psychology and pastoral counseling are most needed in China, Fuller's School of Psychology has, for recent years, become a significant force that influences China in the field of psychology and pastoral counseling through training sessions, seminars, lectures and conferences.

As visiting scholar at Fuller, I cherish this precious opportunity to know more about Fuller and to learn much from Fuller's rich resource spiritually and professionally. One of the best experiences was the China Trip which has just ended. Since 2002 I have been extensively involved in promoting psychology and pastoral counseling in China. Especially our extended counseling program (ECP) has reached out to many churches all across China. However, this was the first opportunity for me to teach at Sichuan Seminary (Chengdu) and Zhongnan Seminary (Wuhan). This experience strengthened even more my understanding of the urgent need of, and people's enthusiasm for pastoral counseling in Chinese Church.

I would express my thankfulness for being asked to join the Fuller China Trip where we gained better understanding, friendship, and all happy moments shared with team members and rich, and the meaningful experiences. I appreciate the genuineness and courage of Fuller to venture into China for making wide connections with local churches and regional seminaries.

Xuefu Wang, PhD

Founder and Executive Director of Zhi Mian Institute for Psychotherapy
Current visiting scholar at Fuller Seminary School of Psychology

As I shared during one of our times of debriefing during this last trip to China, I found the time I spent in the seminaries during the small groups extremely significant for me. Serving in a Chinese context, I felt especially close to my mother and my own Chinese heritage and roots. Her life has always been an inspiration to me, particularly her lifelong devotion to spreading the gospel to the Chinese people around the world. During this trip, I was able to live out this inspiration myself. I felt so privileged to be able to sit with the seminary students and listen to their stories, exchange advice and questions, and attempt to integrate psychological concepts within the Chinese Christian setting. I learned that Christians in China serve God in sacrificial ways. They give up family and homes and travel to distant places to learn more about God and how to return back to their provinces with a new set of practical knowledge. They are eager and

thirsty to figure out how to engage in pastoral counseling. In fact, I was often surprised by the amount of knowledge the students already had regarding how to care for and minister within their church homes. I was so moved by their passion and even by their burnout. I knew these people had given themselves completely over to God, sometimes perhaps at the expense of their own family life, their health, their psychological well-being. Emotionally, I was humbled by the Chinese people's simple faith and their clutch of Christianity as a precious entity after many years of a moral vacuum. At the earthquake site near the Mianzhu church we visited, I was touched to tears by our driver's recounting of his experience post-earthquake. The earthquake and its effects became real to me in a way I had not experienced until then. I saw the pain in his eyes and heard it in his words as he talked about how a school collapsed killing all the students within (except for the few who had actually been in class on the first floor). My heart broke as he talked about the despondency of their situation - unable to rebuild yet having to move on with their lives. However, I also experienced a deep-seated joy in the Mianzhu population when we all sat together and shared a lunch with them in their church. They were talkative, hopeful, and their pastor exuded an attitude of optimism and joy in the midst of suffering.

This trip confirmed for me the great need present in many seminaries around the world - the need for a contextualized curriculum of pastoral counseling during seminary students' training. One of my own dreams is to someday have the opportunity to create a curriculum that will provide seminarians with the ability to understand basic psychological constructs while equipping them with the tools necessary to handle prevalent mental health issues they will encounter as leaders in their churches. I hope that someday I will be able to return to China and share what I have learned myself at Fuller.

I've already shared much of what I've learned in my small group experiences with you verbally (e.g., the need for marital v. premarital counseling, the language of counseling in the church, the urgent need for self-care in church leaders, the continued differentiation between mental illness and the spiritualization of such disorders, etc.). Other issues that surfaced in my small groups included questions on how to keep young people in a church dominated by older individuals, how to talk about suicide with individuals who are suicidal v. family members of individuals who've attempted suicide or succeeded in committing suicide. Many times I was pleasantly surprised by the specific examples group members gave about how their churches were already caring for their congregations. Nevertheless, there were also instances where I was a bit shocked by their theological assumptions and their seemingly conservative views on issues like divorce. For the future, I think it would be helpful to offer practical advice/interventions that pastoral counselors could use in different commonplace situations that many of these leaders already face in their ministries (e.g., how to counsel in life-and-death situations; how to engage in non-judgmental client-centered interactions; how to provide grief counseling after an acute crisis such as the recent earthquake; etc.).

Again, I just want to reiterate that I was so blessed by this trip. I learned so much and I was truly inspired by the people we met along the way within and outside our own group. Thanks for letting me come along!

By Jenel Ramos, Third year PsyD student

It is a blessing to have the opportunities to spend 2.5 weeks, even in the mist of busyness with school and practicum, to serve and to get to know the people in China. This is the second time I've been on this trip, however, it continued to touch me and inspire me. This year we have the opportunities to visit, teach, and have conversations with the local Chinese and seminarians in various cities. In each site, I learnt something new about China and the needs of the people. The psychological needs and hunger for spirituality continues to surprise me, whether they are pastors, seminary students, or earthquake survivors. They are desperately searching for answers, from traditional Chinese folk culture to western psychology and theology, to fill the void and emptiness that was created resulting from rapid modernization as well as natural disaster (e.g., 512 earthquakes). Their needs are tremendous and overwhelming. Toward the first week of the trip, I remember feeling paralyzed by their needs. I felt paralyzed because even though I have a heart for China, their needs are tremendous and I do not know where to start; I felt paralyzed because I do not know enough about their culture to provide help in a culturally sensitive way (even though I'm Chinese!); I felt paralyzed because in a real-life situation like aftermath of 512 earthquakes, I am not sure what I have learned in the U.S. is applicable cross-culturally. Thankfully, through continued conversation with the local Chinese and my team mates; I began to realize that I do have something to offer to these people, as we began to hear their needs, and allow them to slowly get to know us and learn from one another. At the end of this trip, the feeling of paralyzed was replaced by a sense of humbleness. Thank you for your generosity and your continue support for these trips, it has been an encouragement to me to have the opportunity to have the experience to work with the Chinese while I'm in the U.S., and have the chance to explore various options for future opportunities working in China. And I strongly believe that through our many presentations and personal contacts with people there, we had been witness and had touched many lives.

By Tracy Lo, fourth year PhD student

"最好不要看" - "It would be best not to look (at the pictures from the earthquake site)".

This was the response of Mr. Guan, a therapist who had done relief work for earthquake survivors in rural Sichuan, upon being asked if he would show us some of his pictures from the disaster areas last year. Over dinner, his tone and face conveyed suffering as he teared up, talking about some of his experiences there. I had sat next to him for about 20 minutes, and he had been noticeably quiet and withdrawn, even for someone I

had just met. I initially wondered if he was merely tired or very shy and quiet by nature, but I began to see that his being reserved was at least in part due to the deep emotional pain he was carrying, and which he shared with hundreds of thousands in the provinces of Sichuan and Gansu. As we were leaving Mr. Guan's office at the end of the evening, I casually put my hand on his shoulder and said "照顾吧, 神祝福你" - "Take care, God bless you". He turned toward me and embraced me with both arms. I did not expect such a tender gesture, given that we had shared few words all evening. Yet I was again struck by how touched he was that we had come to hear his story, and it was evident that the trauma, pain, and widespread suffering caused by last year's earthquake weighed deeply on him.

Traveling to China with Dr. Dueck and Fuller as a representative of God's work through pastoral counseling has become the highlight of my year. This was my fourth trip with Dr. Dueck, and definitely the most personally meaningful and impacting, in large part due to being exposed to the needs and recent suffering of the Sichuan area. I happen to be in the midst of a Postdoctoral Fellowship specializing in the treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. How the timing of this happened to correspond with the immense trauma of the Sichuan earthquake, I certainly do not know. However, I was quite moved and blessed to be able to contribute perspective on something I have come to know much about to people with a deep need to learn about it. Being able to speak on PTSD for pastors in the small town of 绵竹/Mianzhu, a town severely damaged by the earthquake, was most moving for me, especially after walking amidst some of their empty homes and alleys, with caved in roofs, rubble on the ground, and toys abandoned by children.

Also evident on this trip as usual was the profound yearning and curiosity of the Chinese pastoral community regarding psychology and mental health issues as they relate to pastoral care. The warmth, friendliness, and hospitality extended to us by the church and seminary communities in Guangzhou and Chengdu even exceeded the welcome we have received in past years. Having even a brief opportunity to contribute to the formation of young seminary students' thought regarding pastoral care and counseling felt like both a tremendous responsibility and a great privilege.

As always, I was reminded of the great heart and dedication among colleagues at Fuller. This year's team of students, faculty, and alumni worked exceptionally hard to organize and prepare thorough material to present to our audiences in China. It was truly a gift to be a part of this team, a very introspective and reflective group of individuals with a heavy heart for China. Dr. Dueck was, as always, very intentional about presenting information with an air of humility and invitation to dialogue, careful not to be presumptuous or impose a Western context onto that of the Chinese. For myself and others who have traveled with him in China, Dr. Dueck continues to model curiosity, modesty, appreciation for nuance, and cultural sensitivity for his students. Even as I develop and feel more competent as a professional consultant in China, I find there is

always more to learn from Chinese culture, its pastoral community and churches, Dr. Dueck, and my colleagues from Fuller.

By Dr. Martin Hsia, SOP graduate