

BRIDGE OVER TROUBLED WATERS (Fall 2005)

In recent months, U.S.-China relations have been hitting the headlines. Newsweek, BusinessWeek, Time, U.S. News & World Report have all come out with feature articles on China.



"China's rise is no longer a prediction. It is a fact." "The balance of power will shift to the East ... " "Its exploding economy has tipped the world on its axis. At what point does it become a real danger?" "Will the rise of the People's Republic mean the decline of the U.S.?" "... there is probably going to be a soft war, a quiet competition for power and influence across the globe. America and China will be friends one day, rivals another, cooperate in one area, compete in another." "The U.S. and China are intimately linked—for better or worse. Can we make room for each other?"

As you can see, now more than ever before, we need to promote communication and understanding between these two great nations. Their people need to meet, as friends, face to face. People in China are curious about the U.S., the richest country in the world. They like KFC and NBA, but only know America à la Hollywood. Americans enjoy kungpao chicken and kung-fu movies, but know precious little about China's 1.3 billion people. The lack of knowledge and understanding on both sides can lead to suspicion and fear, especially in times of international tension.

A few years ago, banners all over China carried this slogan: "Let China become a part of the world community. Let the world come to understand China." For 15 years, this has been an important mission of PESI—to build bridges of understanding between China and the West through student exchange programs, visiting professorships, conferences, translation and publications, etc.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God." This is our calling—not only to offer service, but to do so in a way that promotes peace and understanding between peoples.