

A Poetic Homecoming—A Dialogue between the Chinese Search and the Gospel of Jesus Christ

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Abstract

Contemporary China has been going through a renewed time of social and economic transformation since the ‘Open Door Policy’ was introduced in 1978. Poetry, which occupies a special space within Chinese culture, has been employed by Chinese intellectuals of the Post-Mao era to express their yearnings and struggles to find cultural and existential identity. This paper explores how poetry can be used as a culturally appropriate means to bring contemporary Chinese people on a homecoming journey towards conversion and transformation through a genuine dialogue. It selects a legendary poet Haizi (1964-1989), and argues that his poetry is not simply a symbol of the current generation and era; his existential quest for transcendence is germane to the contemporary Chinese mindset. This study takes an interdisciplinary approach—literary study, inter-cultural dialogue and comparative theology. It creates a contextual poetic lens to appreciate a generation of the Chinese homecoming journey through Haizi’s poetry, and to explore its relationship with Jesus Christ through Luke’s testimony. The dialogue concludes that the common language between the poet Haizi and the Lukan Jesus provides a crucial and rich source of data for an ongoing table conversation between culture and faith. It aims to show that the shared language becomes the communion between the two where truth and understanding arise, leading to deep, meaningful and lasting change.