



CHINA
OUTREACH
MINISTRIES

WINTER 2021

IMPACT

Together, Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders



It Takes a Community

A Group That
Treats You Like
Family

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IMPACT

We encourage you to keep this issue of IMPACT in your favorite prayer place that the content may guide you to pray steadfastly for our work together in giving Christ to China's future leaders.

Together, Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders

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Please share your stories!

How has God given you opportunity to be involved in the work of China Outreach Ministries?
Email Editor Tara Miller: tmiller@chinaoutreach.net.



What Does It Take?

By Daniel Su, COM President

When I picked up Bob Chen and his family of four with my Dodge minivan at the Philadelphia airport, they told me this was their first time being in America. They did not know anyone beyond email contacts. So I called my wife Beth to let her know I was bringing this family home for dinner.

To make the long story short, before he completed his PhD degree, Bob came to know Christ and was baptized. Looking back, who were the people God had used to lead his family to faith? The list was long.

I introduced Bob and his family to our Chinese Bible study group. Many in the group invited them to their homes. A local church by the campus generously let us use their facilities for free. Bob's wife, Helen, joined the ladies group for fellowship and prayers. We took turns opening our homes for meals, celebrating Chinese as well American holidays. A Chinese church welcomed Bob and his family to their Sunday services.

And the reason I've been able to touch the lives of people like Bob is because many people have been praying and financially supporting my ministry.

To make COM ministry possible, it takes prayers, dedicated staff on campus, faithful donors and supporting churches, the COM board, our leadership team, and our administration team, along with many volunteers across the country. In short, it takes the whole Christian community! Ultimately, God is the one who draws people to faith, and in the process, he uses all of us. What an honor! ■



A Group That Treats You Like Family

One Student's Spiritual Journey

Shared by an anonymous staff member

IT DIDN'T TAKE LONG for a Chinese student named Wang to feel welcome in an American home. He happily accepted an invitation to eat dinner in the home of a COM staff member, and he soon became a regular attendee for weekly dinners that attracted 20 to 25 international students and several American Christians.

"I felt a warm feeling in this group, like being with a family," says Wang. "When you're alone and studying abroad, and suddenly you find a group that treats you like family, you feel valued and encouraged."

But it was a much more prolonged process for Wang to understand the gospel and receive Jesus as his Savior. That took five years.

Time Among Friends

At first, says Wang, his curiosity about Christian faith was countered by his skepticism. A PhD student in engineering, he had lived enough of life to be wary when offered something that seemed too good to be true. "I come from China, a non-religious country," he says, "so I thought that maybe they were trying to sell me something."

Wang's journey to faith included many people along the way—a community. Friends, ministry volunteers, and COM staff are all part of his story.

Wang continued to make his way to the staff member's home on most Friday nights, however—and not just for a free meal. In fact, he says his favorite part of those gatherings was the post-dinner chance to play Settlers of Catan, a popular board game. “This wasn't just about playing a game,” he says. “If you do anything with friends, that's a lot of fun.”

Eventually, Wang's attendance at the weekly dinners morphed into other activities with the group—hiking, playing basketball, attending Bible studies. Continued friendships with Christians in the group put an end to Wang's original skepticism and helped create openness to faith.

Life Impact of Volunteers

One person who played a key role in Wang's journey was a fellow international student named Daniel who also volunteers with the ministry. “Daniel had just started his PhD studies,” notes Wang, “but he's my senior in a lot of ways, especially in faith. He taught me a lot.”

Also influential was an American volunteer named Mark. His wife had battled cancer for several years so when she passed away, Wang saw a Christian's response to a major tragedy. “Mark had some kind of special strength,” says Wang. “I would say it was from his faith. He trusted that his wife went to heaven, and she was in a better place.”

Focused Bible Teaching

Meanwhile, the staff member on Wang's campus contributed more to his welfare

than just providing weekly dinners. Because of his Bible teaching, Ephesians 2:8-9 stands alongside John 3:16 as one of Wang's favorite Scripture passages.

“He really encouraged me,” Wang says of the staff member. “I thought I needed to be 100 percent qualified to become a Christian. But then I realized you're never going to be 100 percent faithful because of the sin nature. Instead, you need to admit your sin and be humble before God.”

And that's why Wang appreciates Scripture passages like the one in Ephesians 2. “You have to be humble,” he says in describing the gospel's emphasis on grace. “This is a gift from God; this is not a thing you can boast about.”

When All the Pieces Came Together

It was last year that Wang finally declared his faith in Jesus. And because of COVID-19 concerns, that commitment was made during a Zoom call with Daniel and the COM staff member.

Just a few months later, Wang passed the finish line for his PhD. He is now working as a research specialist at a university in another country, but he is forever grateful for the things that happened while he was studying in America.

“My daily activity used to be so meaningless,” he says. “My lifestyle now has totally changed. I'm not serving my sinful nature. I'm serving the Holy Spirit.”





Try New Things

As social distancing continued in the fall and now stretches into the new year, campus staff teams and volunteers have embraced the challenge from COM leadership to “try new things.” Here are just a few of the uplifting stories of creative ministry.

■ We enjoyed a beautiful outdoor worship time and picnic at the park hosted by my home church. In spite of the pandemic, many students and volunteers came and enjoyed music, fellowship, and food. We had three music major students play “Amazing Grace,” “Jesus Loves Me,” and “How Great Thou Art” with their instruments of lute, double bass, and saxophone. The beautiful music

brought us to the throne of our one true God, who is the source of peace, joy, and every blessing. The pastor gave a short, powerful message titled, “The Joy of the Lord Is My Strength.” I thank God for giving us a restful fall day to enjoy the sunshine and music in our Father’s world.

— **Jessica Ren**
Texas

■ For many years, I teamed up with a local bike shop that salvages and gives away hundreds of bikes that just need repairs. We met so many new students this way who wanted the bikes for getting around campus. Now the students are interested in recreational biking, so I am getting busy with bikes again! In recent months we supplied 35+ recycled free bicycles which has also led to a new tradition of Friday morning bike rides together.

— **Tom Lindstrom**
Minnesota



■ Considering the wavering faith of several truth seekers in our fellowship, I think watching movies based on a Christian worldview is a good way to strengthen them. So, we started the first movie night via videoconference and watched *Facing the Giants* followed by a one-hour discussion. We will now make movie night a regular event!

— **Merlyne Wu**
Pennsylvania

■ We have a volunteer, Connie, who loves to teach, so in the beginning of COVID-19 she asked me if I knew of any Chinese kids that needed tutoring in English. I asked several of our friends back in China about this for their primary school-aged children. Connie now teaches five Chinese kids over Zoom every week. Depending on their level of English, she sometimes uses *Narnia* to spark conversation.

— **Erin Niedergall**
Ohio

■ Some Chinese graduates who have moved away decided to start an alumni fellowship group so they can share their experiences in their graduate programs and internships. Our first meeting was

online, and most of them were keen to meet once a month after that. Since I am moving to New York, four of the alumni are planning to visit me there. We will have our next meeting in person during their visit, and we will do a Zoom fellowship with those in China.

— **Pauline Lim**
Pennsylvania/New York

■ This Fall we were looking for more outdoor activities to do with Chinese students, scholars, and family members, so we continued our English Cafe Walking Club from the summer. As we walked in the late afternoons, we used this opportunity to practice conversational English, expand vocabulary, and meet new friends. We found new places to walk and talked about how God provides so much beauty during this season in upstate New York. God was so faithful in that HE allowed us to enter into deeper relationships and conversations about his love for us. Please pray that the fruit of these walks will result in these precious souls coming to a saving relationship with our Lord Jesus.

— **Susan and Danny Forte**
New York



■ Because in-person activities in large groups have been curtailed, we have been seeking to connect more individually. Recently, we offered our Chinese friends care packages and personally delivered each one. In each package, we included snacks, a bottle of hand sanitizer, and a brochure about our group, all enclosed in decorative boxes and bags. One delivery led to a two-hour conversation and opened the door for discussion about God.

— **Dorothy Boothe**
Georgia

■ For the students who participate in our online ministry, their spiritual conditions are greatly varied. This requires us to faithfully carry out a personalized follow-up plan for each student. For some we are building friendship by offering counseling talks or reaching out with care packages. Where we are sowing seeds, we hold online tea parties. For cultivating new believers and training disciples, we offer a Bible Study Journey and one-on-one discipleship by Zoom. Although the breadth of our campus ministry has been severely traumatized since the outbreak of COVID-19, God has blessed us with a major breakthrough in depth.

— **Xiaolin Dong**
Pennsylvania

■ Our new backyard firepit has become a welcoming space for gathering with Chinese friends! As the weather began to cool, we invited small groups of students/scholars to roast marshmallows and eat their first s'mores as we spread

out around the fire. This was an ideal setting for relaxed conversation, laughter, and sharing about fall traditions in the US. At these events we've seen our teenage daughter help entertain the young children and our teenage son coached guests in throwing a football!

— **Beau Miller**
Maryland

■ During the pandemic, we have gathered more often online and finished the studies of Genesis 1-14, Deuteronomy, Matthew, Romans 1-8, Hosea, and Isaiah. We did a survey of the whole Bible during the summer. Also, a few of us prayed together, 40 days for the nations in the pandemic and 30 days for Muslims during Ramadan. Through daily morning and evening devotions and studies together, students' appetites for God's Word have increased, and their spiritual lives have grown. We thank God for His grace working in both students' lives and ours.

— **Chris Deng**
California

Volunteers Are Vital to the COM Community

By Tara Miller, *IMPACT* Editor

For Sam, his favorite hobbies are a natural bridge to friendship with Chinese students. It all began when Sam was sharing about his love for outdoor adventure during a conversational English class, and he quickly discovered the students' curiosity. So for the last few years, Sam has been taking some of them out for fishing, hiking, or target practice. "They really seem to appreciate the things we take for granted," he says. In the process, enduring relationships have grown.

Sam fondly shares about one Chinese friend who spent a lot of time fishing with him. Through that relationship, the friend learned about Christian faith and eventually accepted Jesus as his Savior before returning to China. They are still friends, and they stay in touch through social media. When his friend traveled back to the US recently for a meeting, he invited Sam for a visit with the executive leaders of his company who were with him.

Sam's interest in reaching out to Chinese students stems from his own experience in the Navy. "I remember the feeling of loneliness when I was overseas," he shares. It was meaningful to Sam when he found a local friend or fellowship, and he now he wants to help Chinese students feel at home while they are visiting here.

Along with conversational English class and recreational outings, Sam's volunteer engagement includes participation in church-based outreach to Chinese students. Activities include holiday events, lunches, English Bible studies, and sightseeing. When he first got involved, he didn't have any experience, but right away he found it easy to connect with the students and was eager to continue.

We have "the privilege of serving our Great God who gave everything for us," Sam says. He encourages others who might consider volunteering in international student ministry, "It's a chance to be that one friend the student may have."

(continued on next page)



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Dan and Kory wanted to find a “better” way to celebrate Christmas.

So they stepped out of their routines and invited people to their home—people who didn’t have a place to go, including local internationals. That first Christmas Eve party about 20 years ago was a “phenomenal” experience for them, and it quickly became an annual tradition. Friends helped with driving, and others provided food and joined in welcoming guests. Dan and Kory’s parents quickly warmed to the idea and became favorites at every party.

But that was just the beginning.

When asked how many Chinese friends they regularly communicate with now, it takes Dan and Kory some time to count. Scrolling through their contacts, they identify about 40—many who are back in China or have moved to other countries. In a typical week, they spend about half an hour a day checking on many of these friends.

How did Dan and Kory’s outreach grow to become such an integral part of their lives?

Those first Christmas parties were the catalyst. After a few years, someone suggested they invite the students who attended COM’s friendship dinners, and in recent years, their guests have been mostly Chinese students and scholars. They gather at Dan and Kory’s home, attend a church service together, and

return for a big meal, sharing, singing Christmas carols, and playing games.

Before long, Dan and Kory’s outreach carried on year round. For many years, they have picked up new students at the airport and served as a host home for the initial days after their arrival. They’ve taken students on day trips to farms in rural Minnesota and engaged them as volunteers at church festivals.

Most important, Dan and Kory say, is getting the students involved in their lives. For at least one Chinese family, Dan and Kory are “grandma and grandpa” to the children.

Dan and Kory want other Christians to understand how seldom international students are invited to an American home—and how important this is. They have helped other church members get involved in hosting students, and for new volunteers, they encourage attending a planned event, like a friendship dinner, to get started. “The ice is broken very quickly.” Dan says about meeting international students. “They appreciate you, and you appreciate them.”

Though Dan and Kory have had to pause in-person events due to COVID-19 distancing, they press on and look forward to being together again. “Once you’ve done it,” Kory says, “you get hooked.”





The best part about ministry with Chinese students and scholars, Jordan says, “is when you see in them a passion for God’s Word and a willingness to be changed.”

Jordan doesn’t see his volunteer story as deserving of special honor. “I feel I am doing something very normal,” he says.

Four years ago, Jordan’s friend from Taiwan was serving at a local church, reaching out to Chinese students at the nearby university. The friend asked Jordan to help with a Bible study, and soon he started attending regularly. Though it was a one-hour drive for him, Jordan was still eager to go. When his friend returned to Taiwan and most of the Christian leaders graduated, Jordan felt he needed to get more involved. For the last two years now, this ministry has been a big part of his life.

Each week, Jordan and other leaders meet to prepare the Bible study lesson and identify the main points of the passage. Jordan says he looks to see how that week’s Scripture “leads us to Christ and shows the beauty of the gospel.” He identifies questions for the small group leaders to use to trigger conversation.

The weekly Bible study has met by Zoom since the COVID-19 isolation began. It has been difficult to be separated, Jordan says, but the format has also

opened doors for graduates who have moved to re-connect with the group. Some weeks as many as 20 students attend.

Another part of the ministry Jordan leads is a morning devotion time twice a week. He started this practice to improve his own prayer life, and then other leaders wanted to join.

Getting over barriers in spiritual discussions doesn’t always come easily with Chinese students and scholars, Jordan recognizes. Because they are smart, believe in materialism, and grew up in an atheist culture, he says it takes time to share the gospel and for their views to change. For newer volunteers, he advises, “Don’t be discouraged when they challenge you.”

Jordan hopes his story will encourage others to volunteer, too. The best part about ministry with Chinese students and scholars, Jordan says, “is when you see in them a passion for God’s Word and a willingness to be changed.” ■

Each workday, the COM Leadership Center is buzzing with activity, and other national and area leaders work from their offices in other cities. This critical administrative and leadership service supports the front-line work of campus ministry across the country.



COM President Daniel Su (left) leads a vision-casting meeting with staff members.

(top right page) Accountant Susan Anthony (left) and Donor Services Specialist Joan Malick (right) carefully review financial documents to ensure accuracy.

Kim Baer, COM Office Manager (right), batches COM brochures and extra copies of IMPACT to send to staff members for special requests.



Mobilization team members Jesse Burns, Don Hines, and Myrna Hines meet to discuss new campus ministry staff candidates.





Kirk Zuercher, Director of Development, discusses investment transfer options with a COM donor.



As a regular volunteer, Julie Zuercher answers phone calls and greets guests in the COM lobby.

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IRA Rollovers

Saving Taxes and Furthering God's Kingdom

By Kirk Zuercher, Director of Development

If you are **70.5 years** of age or older, you are likely aware of the Internal Revenue Service's required minimum distribution. If you have a traditional IRA, the IRS requires you to withdraw a calculated amount annually from your IRA, regardless of whether you want to take a withdrawal or not. At the time of the withdrawal, you pay income tax on the amount withdrawn. For many, the taxes can be significant and a heavy burden each year.

By making an IRA rollover gift to a nonprofit group like COM, you can make a great impact in advancing our mission to reach more Chinese students and scholars with the gospel. Additionally, you benefit from not having to pay the tax on the donated rollover amount. The benefit stems from the provision that this distribution is not required to be included as taxable income.

If you are 70.5 or older, you can transfer up to \$100,000 per year from an IRA directly to a qualified charity. If you file a joint tax return, your spouse can also make such a rollover of up to \$100,000, meaning couples can exclude up to \$200,000 of their retirement savings from income tax if they roll over to charity directly. Giving to COM in this way can significantly lower your taxes while providing a substantial financial gift to our ministry.

Check with your financial advisor to be sure this way of giving is right for you. If you have questions, please feel free to email Kirk Zuercher, Director of Development, at kzuercher@chinaoutreach.net or call 717-591-3500.

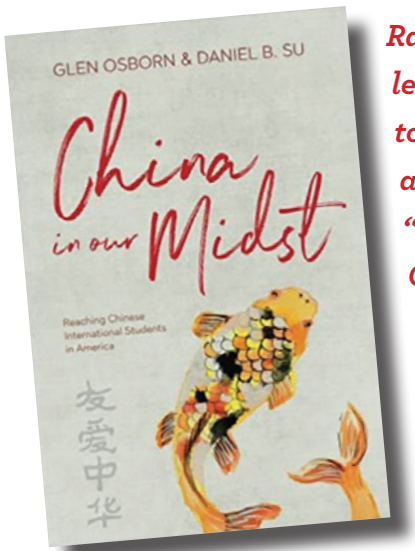
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Rarely does God use just one person to lead someone to Christ from beginning to end. If that is the case, it means we all need to be faithful in doing our “part” in the faith journey of our Chinese friend.

—from *China in our Midst: Reaching Chinese International Students in America*
by Glen Osborn and Daniel Su