

WINTER

2023

# iMPACT

Together, Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders

## Faith Is a Journey

Volunteers in  
Action

Pg 6

Becoming Real  
Men

Pg 8



CHINA  
OUTREACH  
MINISTRIES



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## It Takes a Process—Step by Step

By Daniel Su, COM President

If you were to ask me what it takes for a Chinese person to come to faith in Christ, I'd say for sure it takes a process.

In our fast-paced culture of instant gratification, we don't seem to appreciate patience; we can't wait to see results. Even in evangelism, we focus so much more on harvesting than other stages along the faith journey. But the Scripture teaches the value of each stage in the process:

Jesus said,

"This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain—first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come." (Mark 4:26-27)

A seed must go through each stage before becoming ripe for harvest: a sprout, a stalk, a head, and a full, ripening kernel. It is the same in our ministry with Chinese students and scholars. We help them move closer to God—one step at a time. They must overcome hurdles as their attitudes toward Christian faith change—from biased or uninterested to open, curious, interested, seeking, and finally ready to receive Christ.

So, are our missionaries seeing new conversions every day? No. But are we helping people move closer to God every day? Definitely, yes! Thank you for helping us help them in their journeys!

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By Faith

“We help them move closer to God—one step at a time.”



## STEPS IN THE JOURNEY

In our relationships with Chinese students and scholars, we meet them at different points of the faith journey. From establishing friendship connections to building deeper relationships and exploring big questions of life, our campus staffers and volunteers are there for wherever the journey leads.

### Erine Chen, Virginia

We invited students to see the beauty of Shenandoah National Park in the fall. God's presence was with us, and his divine nature could be seen in creation. I had the opportunity to get to know the three students who traveled in my car, and I believe the relationships will continue to develop in God's plan and timing.



### Rich Steiner, Michigan

For the new semester, our team picked up more than 70 students from China at the airport. We have been connecting with them through activities like Fall color tour, Thanksgiving dinner, and Christmas events. Christianity is being introduced as we build friendships with these Chinese students.

### Anonymous staff member

Since Wei came to the States, my coworkers and I have tried to befriend him. He has been interested in most of the fun events, but not any gospel-related activities. It seemed the Lord had closed the door for me to share the good news with him. However, one year later, the Lord used a can of Chinese spicy chili (Lao Gan Ma) to re-open our friendship. Wei is now attending our weekly Bible study and a Chinese fellowship.

### Alden and Olivia Ulman, Indiana

We have gradually built a close relationship with Lei. We are meeting with her weekly to discuss the Bible and Christianity. This is all new to her, and she is willing to learn and discuss with us!

### Lulu and Lucas, Texas

Our team decided to set up an evangelical Bible study group in the fall for Chinese scholars who are interested. God provided a quiet public space outside a lab on campus—even with a great view over the horizon. More and more people joined, and they were excited to invite their Chinese friends and colleagues. The atmosphere was upbeat, and they shared and discussed very seriously. We know that only the Holy Spirit working in their hearts can draw them in!

### Lee Yadav, Michigan

When I met Ben in Bible study, he was worried. He expressed his struggle with loneliness, and I grew concerned. I continued to follow up and introduce other believers to him. In Bible study, he asked many questions. I came to know Ben was afraid to return to China. He professed faith in Christ, but his conviction was weak. Then we watched the movie *The Most Reluctant Convert: The Untold Story of C.S. Lewis*. Later we watched the *Gospel of John* and discussed the message for two weeks. I asked him where he was with Jesus, and he replied "100%." The following week Ben said he was ready to return to China if the Lord wanted him to. As we were studying Acts, he asked me to baptize him. I marvel at seeing God's work in Ben's life.

### Anonymous staff member

We give praise for the connection with our Chinese church. From the Mandarin outreach group at the church, we now have six student officers—all believers—for our registered student group at the university. They are solid outreach-oriented Christians, all from China, working alongside us in planning and holding outreach activities.

## The Jesus Way

By Tara Miller, IMPACT Editor

With an anonymous Chinese scholar, Lily, and an anonymous COM campus staff member, Jing, for security purposes

**“I wanted to change my life,” Lily explained. “But I didn’t know how.” Lily had no idea at the time, but she realizes now that her struggle was the beginning of her faith journey.**

Lily had been facing difficult problems in her family for a while. Her husband didn’t have a stable job, and her marriage was in trouble. She was depressed, and so was her teenage son.

On one of those dark days, Lily received an unexpected call. It was her college roommate from more than 20 years earlier, Jing. The two friends had stayed in touch, but Jing now lived in the United States. They hadn’t seen each other in years, and with their busy schedules they didn’t talk often.

There was no ordinary explanation for the timing of Jing’s call that day, but Lily now says it was “a miracle.”

Jing had been thinking about Lily—what she now recognizes as the Holy Spirit’s prompting. She thought, *Why don’t I call her?* —And that’s what she did. To Lily’s surprise, Jing suggested she come to America to study. Eager to escape her unhappy situation in China, Lily decided to act on Jing’s idea. With Jing’s guidance, Lily applied for a visiting scholar



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position in her scientific field at a large American university. She was offered the position and received the needed research funding from her university in China. Separating from her husband temporarily, Lily moved to the United States with her son.

Soon after arriving in America, Lily began to attend Bible studies offered by China Outreach Ministries at Jing’s church. She often had questions, and others in the group helped her understand. But she found the answers confusing, and she struggled to believe.

During the first year, Lily attended an Eastern Gospel Camp with COM. The pastor asked who wanted to believe Jesus, and she hesitated, not sure which way to go. She was confronted with the weight of her family’s Buddhist identity and felt “a big conflict.” Later that night,

**Now back in China, Lily asks for these prayers: for God to lead her and keep her in faith, for her husband and son to follow Jesus, and for her witness with friends. It will be difficult to tell people that she is a Christian if she wants to advance in her career. In all of this, she emphasizes, “Power from the world is imaginary. The only true power is from God.”**

however, she experienced a sense of regret. “I didn’t know what the power was, but I cried most of the night,” she remembers.

Lily gradually came to believe that God was real and powerful. Maybe he could help her, give her hope, she reasoned. She wanted to fully believe in him, but she still had questions. The struggle continued for more than two years.

Meanwhile, Jing was burdened because she knew that Lily would be returning to China soon and still hadn’t trusted in Jesus. “It was so sad,” she remembers. When Jing shared the story in her Bible Study Fellowship group, she said, “lots of sisters wanted to pray.” She enlisted others to pray, too—COM volunteers, financial partners, and other staff.

Then another miracle happened. God opened Lily’s heart, and she acknowledged that she couldn’t save herself. She felt God leading her to understand and speak truth. Finally, she “followed Jesus entirely.”

Over the next few months, Lily began learning how to live a new way—“the Jesus way.” Reconciliation with her husband progressed. She began telling her friends in China about the difference in her thinking and in her life.

Lily says the process of change had begun three years earlier. Over time, she came to believe that God directs her in the right way. She now has hope, and she recognizes the pain of chasing the world’s values. “Only God can take me out of sin,” she says, “and now I have peace in my heart.”



# Great Joy!

By Marcia Bittner  
COM Volunteer, New York

As I approached retirement several years ago, I began asking God what he would have me do next. It was important to me to have purpose and stay connected to people.

I traveled on short-term mission trips around the world, often using my experience as a music teacher. But as doors closed in other countries for longer-term service, I realized God was opening doors where I was living. He has continued to broaden my worldview as he has led me.

Through my church's missions engagement, I knew Susan and Danny Forte, missionaries with China Outreach Ministries in our area. I began to explore how I could be part of reaching out to local international students.

Soon I realized that God was leading me to "shadow" Susan and Danny—using my spiritual gifts and time in whatever ways would be most helpful to them. In this I have found great joy!

My volunteer role now encompasses a variety of activities, like driving students, providing food for events, camping, hiking, playing the violin and keyboard, and participating in Bible studies. The Lord has also increased my passion for photography, and I record all of our events in pictures. Photography has also been a wonderful way to connect with students who share this interest.

What is most meaningful to me is that I am building relationships in all we do. As we share Christ's love with students and scholars, I get to see changed lives and also experience their love in return.

Local ministry takes everyone working together, and it is incredibly rewarding to invest yourself for the sake of the gospel. If you're thinking about getting involved with international student ministry in your area—Go for it!



# Stronger Together

By Mercy and Truth  
COM Volunteers, Texas

When we heard the gospel for the first time and began to follow Jesus as young adults in China, we were eager to share the good news. Too many people like us have not had a chance to hear the gospel!

Eventually we moved to the United States for theological study in preparation for vocational ministry. When we arrived in America, we had been thinking about reaching out to Chinese students and scholars at nearby universities. This was something we could not easily do in China.

One of our American friends in China introduced us to Jessica, a campus staff worker with China Outreach Ministries in Texas. We knew this was a good opportunity to share the gospel! Soon we became actively involved with the local ministry and



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wanted to help Jessica in whatever ways we could.

Now we participate in many regular COM activities, building relationships with the students and scholars. Truth teaches a Bible study, and Mercy leads music for the group. We often take Chinese food to events. One part we love most about this ministry is that we can participate as a family. The scholars have children, too, and our children are always with us!

The students and scholars are seeking friendship, and because we are Chinese, we share a heart language and culture connection. If our Chinese friends become Christians here, they can influence their families and take the gospel back to China. We don't have many chances like this in China.

To other Christians reading this, we need you! Ministry is not just one person doing the work. Chinese friends need to hear different people's perspectives and life stories. Bring warm food, and bring your caring heart. We are stronger together.

To learn about volunteer opportunities near you, contact Beau Miller, COM Director of Volunteer and Church Engagement, at [bmiller@chinaoutreach.net](mailto:bmiller@chinaoutreach.net).



# Becoming REAL MEN

By Danny Geng, COM Campus Staff,  
Washington State  
with Tara Miller, IMPACT Editor

Backpacking has always been a daunting sport for me—carrying a heavy bag, spending long days in the wild, climbing miles of mountain trails—until I discovered LeaderTrek.

An intensive wilderness experience, LeaderTrek was developed by Brent Hoover, a cross-cultural leadership consultant. The adventure trains brothers in Christ to become real men!

Last year, five co-workers and I joined Brent for a trek in Washington. Our crew traveled five days together in the great outdoors, but the journey began even before the trip.

First, we needed to choose participants. I emphasized the importance in our ministry of training future leaders. While I may have 10 years of leadership ahead, the Christian students have at least 30 years! Brent agreed, and I invited two PhD students, two recent graduates, and another volunteer—all Chinese believers who are part of our ministry.

**6,000-Foot  
ELEVATION GAIN**

**5 1/2  
DAYS**

**30  
MILES**

**30-Pound  
BACKPACKS**

Next, we spent intentional time preparing for the trip. Together we studied the book *Wild at Heart* by John Eldredge to explore masculinity, life, and purpose. We met by Zoom every other week, starting two months before embarkation. Brent also educated us about backpacking and encouraged physical training.

Then the day of our expedition arrived, and we set out in North Cascades National Park. Together we walked and walked through the grand mountains, enjoying both quiet meditation and lively fellowship. Brent gave us laminated Scripture cards to memorize as we walked. A gradual climb helped us adjust to the altitude, and after two days we found a perfect camping spot.



We learned to care for one another as we took turns carrying supplies and going on excursions for water. The brothers shared clothing with another brother who had not brought enough warm layers.

One brother had a terrible fear of heights. When we had to cross a deep snow-covered area, he was very nervous. One student took his backpack and he followed, carefully stepping in the compacted footsteps of his fellow travelers. At one point, though, he began to slip down a slope, and he was afraid. But God stopped the slip. Later, we wondered, “what did you ask God?” He said he had asked for a miracle, and a miracle is what he experienced!

Devotions at the campsite were a highlight of the journey, as we took turns sharing life stories.

Brent led short teaching times, and we discussed the Scriptures we were memorizing. Through these moments, we developed close relationships. How good and beautiful it is for brothers to live in harmony.

Solitude was another highlight. One day we each spent five hours alone for a dedicated time of silence and meditation. Brent surprised us with letters from friends and family he had collected before the trip. We saw God’s care for us and learned to admit our weaknesses and rely on him more.

I came home exhausted, but full of rewards! May the Lord grant me wisdom to integrate this model into my discipleship training—bringing brothers into intimacy and growing in God’s will as real men.





## Four Practical Tips for Visiting a Chinese Friend's Home

### > **Accept the invitation!**

Allow your Chinese friends to be hospitable to you. This moves any relationship to a new level.

### > **Bring a small gift.**

Taking flowers, nice chocolates, or a trinket representing your local culture is a simple way to show your appreciation.

### > **Remove your shoes when you arrive.**

The culturally appropriate thing to do when entering a Chinese friend's home is to remove your shoes. Often, they will provide slippers of some sort.

### > **Don't be afraid to try new things.**

Chinese cuisine is quite different than American cuisine. Don't shy away from trying food that your friend has prepared for you.



# Receiving Hospitality from Chinese Friends

By Mike Reynolds, Campus Staff

“These experiences always bring us to a place of wonder.”

In the field of missions, there is a concept called “person of peace.” In part, we would say that a “person of peace” within our COM context is a student or scholar who is aware that we follow Jesus and still chooses to spend time with us even as we talk about our faith. We recently had the opportunity to spend time at one such student's home as he prepared dinner for us.

This sort of reciprocal hospitality has happened before. Like when a visiting scholar and his family helped us move into our apartment when we relocated to Tennessee. Or when two students invited our family to their apartment for lunch and had even prepared some food specifically for our children. Often, the students or scholars who are the most hospitable are those whom we would describe as persons of peace—the ones most interested in the message of Jesus.

These experiences always bring us to a place of wonder. We serve with COM because we desire to be a blessing to Chinese students. We invite students to have meals and conversations together. When we joined COM, we worked under the assumption that we would be the ones being hospitable—that it was a one-way situation. As we encounter persons of peace in our ministry, and we are served by the very students and scholars we seek to serve, we are reminded of God's faithfulness as we work to do our part in making disciples of all nations.



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## Memorial Gifts

### Earnest Hummer

*Mr. and Mrs. Mike McCardle*

### Rose Krahn

*Mr. Ted Veer*

### Rev. D. T. McIntosh

*Mr. and Mrs. Donald Dyck Jr.*

### Evelyn McIntosh

*Mr. and Mrs. Crisman Myers*

### Barbara H. Snee

*Dr. and Mrs. Robert Rothermel*

### Robert Walz

*Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Deaver  
Mr. and Mrs. Kjell Eriksson*

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## Why I Give

Testimonies from COM Donors

“We believe the world needs to hear the gospel.”

“I believe in the power of the Spirit of God to draw more Chinese people to himself.”

“I thank God for this organization and its dedication to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with China's scholars and future leaders.”



COM is a member of the  
Evangelical Council for Financial  
Accountability.



## Giving by Faith

By Kirk Zuercher, Director of Development

How does God test our faith? Sometimes, through our finances.

In Hebrews 11, we see that the first person mentioned in this “Hall of Fame” is Abel. “By faith Abel brought God a better offering than Cain did. By faith he was commended as righteous, when God spoke well of his offerings” (Hebrews 11:4).

What did Abel do to deserve this mention? He gave an offering by faith. He was not listed here because of what he gave but because of how he gave it.

So, what does God care about when we give? He cares about the attitude with which we give. “Without faith it is impossible to please God” (Hebrews 11:6). God does not need our money

to accomplish anything. He wants our hearts. Learning to trust God in our finances is part of our faith journey.

In my role at COM, I am inspired and challenged by the examples of faith I see from our financial partners as they obey God and give by faith. As God tests our faith when we step out to give by faith, we learn to trust him all the more.

If you would like to talk with someone at China Outreach Ministries about the different ways to give, please reach out to me.

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## *Spring Celebration Dinners*

### **DALLAS, TEXAS**

Thursday, March 2

6:30

Renaissance Dallas

Richardson Hotel

900 E Lookout Drive

Richardson

### **HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA**

Thursday, March 30

6:30

Sheraton Hotel

Swatara Exit, I-283

Harrisburg

### **WASHINGTON, DC**

Friday, March 31

7:20

Fairview Park Marriott

3111 Fairview Park Drive

Falls Church

### **CANTON, OHIO**

Monday, April 10

6:30

Hartville Kitchen

1015 Edison Street, NW

Hartville

### **ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA**

Tuesday, April 11

6:30

Ambassador Center

2225 Downs Drive

Erie