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SPRING/  
SUMMER  
—  
2023

# iMPACT

Together, Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders

## The Joy of Serving

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**CHINA  
OUTREACH  
MINISTRIES**



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## THE JOY OF SERVING

By Daniel Su, COM President

*"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve . . ." —Mark 10:45*

This passage highlights the value of serving—one of the hallmarks of being a Christian. Though running contrary to the culture of our fallen world, throughout centuries, these words have inspired Christ followers to serve our fellow human beings.

Serving is an act of generous giving and humble selflessness. To serve well is to be motivated by love and to serve with joy.

For our COM missionaries, we serve in a variety of ways—such as providing hospitality when new students and scholars arrive in America. We serve by helping them with language skills and other practical needs as they navigate their lives in a new country. We serve by engaging them with questions about life and faith, and by studying the Bible with them so they can experience the love and hope of Christ.

Of course, serving others is not always easy. For many of us, it requires us to cross a cultural divide. It requires sacrifice and humility. But in the end, the rewards far outweigh any challenges we may encounter. We experience a deep sense of purpose and fulfillment that gives profound joy, knowing that we answer God's call to serve when we reach out and positively impact people's lives.

We give because we have first received; we recognize our blessings, and we are willing to share. Therefore, we give and serve from our gratitude. And in so doing, we experience the truth of St. Francis's words, "For it is in giving that we receive." Paradoxically, the more we give in serving, the more we find ourselves living an abundant life!

May it be so with you as well, as you seek to follow the one who has blessed us and called us to serve.

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Serving



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“For even the  
Son of Man did  
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served, but to  
serve . . .”

Mark 10:45

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**CHINESE SCHOLAR  
TESTIMONY**  
Life Impacts Life



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## Healing and Hope in Serving

When traumatic events invade the lives of the students around us, joy may seem lost. Even in times of great pain, COM staff members serve with the love and hope of Jesus.

### Confronted with Life and Death

Dale Voelker, Michigan

The peaceful campus of Michigan State University changed abruptly when a gunman opened fire in a classroom and shot eight students, killing three. The five students who survived were taken to a local hospital in critical condition.

Being an MSU Religious Advisor took on new meaning in the days following, as I spent many hours meeting with students, talking with them and listening to them.

One student was in a cafeteria when FBI agents with weapons, but no uniforms, burst in. The students all scattered, thinking the agents were gunmen. One friend herded his entire 75-member class into a restroom, where they stayed for four hours as he kept them safe by holding the door shut.



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Classes were canceled for the entire week, and many students went home to be with their families.

I later discovered that one of the students who had been injured in the gunfire was a personable and energetic young Chinese man I had met at the Chinese New Year party on campus. I have been regularly praying for him since, that he would fully recover his ability to walk and that he would receive a special stem cell treatment to help him regain all functions.

Students here have been thinking about life and death, wondering: *What if I had been in that classroom? Is God there? What happens after death? Do I have a purpose in living?*

Please pray that the Lord would draw many Chinese students to himself through this tragedy.

### "A Kind Heart and Great Love"

Carla Sanders, Mid-Atlantic

Our Chinese friend Ian waited unsuspectingly in the car he had borrowed from a friend for the summer. Parked outside his apartment building waiting for his roommate, he was excited by the opportunity to drive other students.

Then suddenly, two youths appeared beside Ian's car. They put a gun to his head and demanded his car, keys, and phone. The carjackers drove off in haste, leaving Ian in shock.

When my husband, Carl, heard the news, he called to check on Ian, and he continued to reach out to him in the following weeks. Traumatized, Ian would desperately watch out his window, afraid someone would break into the apartment. It was difficult for him to talk about anything else.

Though Carl was terminally ill with cancer at the time, God gave him the grace to continue serving his friends. He compassionately ministered to Ian, speaking words of comfort and praying. He helped him deal with insurance matters and find a body shop for repairs when the car was found. Eventually, Ian realized, "I don't really think I'm afraid anymore." He also shared, "Because of Carl's friendship, the USA is no longer foreign."

A few months later, Carl's fight with cancer ended as he passed on to eternal life with the Lord. Ian, moved by the impact of Carl's friendship, asked if he could share a tribute at the memorial service.

I close with a brief excerpt of Ian's words.

*"When I experienced the darkest moment of my life, Carl was there for me. Carl was a man with a kind heart and great love. I take comfort in knowing that he is now resting in peace in heaven, free from the pain and suffering of this world."*



Carl Sanders went to be with his Savior on March 6, 2023. Our COM staff members greatly miss our dear colleague, whose legacy of humble service and boundless love will always inspire us to love more and serve better.



## LIFE IMPACTS LIFE

By G, a Chinese  
Scholar in the  
Midwest Area

*This morning, my wife, Z, handed me a bag of fruit and asked me to visit Karen, a long-time friend and sister in Christ who currently lives in an assisted living facility nearby. Since that visit today, I've been reflecting on the story of how God brought Karen into our lives and the journey we have shared.*

### Reflecting on God's Work in Our Lives

We first met Karen and her husband, Carl, long ago when we had just arrived in the United States from mainland China. They had just moved back from Hong Kong, where they had lived as missionaries, and we were all attending a friendship dinner with China Outreach Ministries (COM).

Tom, the local staff leader for COM,

still remembers that my visit to that COM dinner wasn't fun! I had accidentally parked my old Toyota Camry on the wrong side of a shared parking lot, and the car was towed. COM staff, including Tom, quickly helped us find the towing company, and I got my car back. The cost was \$300, though, a huge amount of money for someone who had just arrived here. Tom's wife, Kathy, prayed for us, "Oh, God, please don't let them not come back to us."

At that time, neither Z nor I knew much about Christianity. We were just so impressed by the friendliness and hospitality of everyone at the dinner.

Z once asked me, "Why do they love Chinese people so much?" I didn't know the answer until I became a Christian later.

### Remembering How Our Journey Began

I grew up in a rural area in southern China, and Z grew up in central China by the Yellow River. Neither of us had ever heard of Christianity before we moved to the United States. I was even proud of myself as an atheist and materialist.

The first day when I visited the lab where I worked, my research supervisor asked me, "Do you believe in God?"

"No," I answered without hesitation, startling my supervisor.

Not long after, however, we attended that providential COM dinner. Then we were welcomed to a local Chinese Christian church by the students and scholars we had met at the dinner.

Three years after we moved here, by God's grace, both of us decided to follow Jesus.

God's work through COM's staff and volunteers helped us grow spiritually early in our faith journey. Z still remembers how Kathy led her in her first prayer aloud during a prayer meeting on campus. Karen and Carl led a small group Bible study at our cozy home for at least two years, and many of the group members later became Christians.

Life always impacts life.

Since those early days, we have continued to be involved in COM's

friendship dinners and outreach field trips, and we have become friends with many of COM's staff and volunteers. Though hosting a stranger is not common in Chinese culture, by God's grace and the examples from many COM host families, we have often hosted Chinese students and scholars.

We have also been actively involved in our church's ministries to serve Chinese students, scholars, and local Chinese communities. And we have shared the gospel with our family members and friends back in China. Praise the Lord! Many of them have received Jesus as their Savior!

*I had a great conversation with Karen when I visited her today. The conversation vividly brought back my fading memories. I felt so grateful that we have been surrounded and helped by faithful servants of Jesus.*

*When I was leaving Karen's home, she said, "We love you!"*

*"We love you, too," I gently replied.*

*"God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8), and "we love because he loved us first" (1 John 4:19). God blessed us through COM's great work, and we became a blessing to others who continue to pass on the blessings. This is life impacting life. Glory to the Lord!*



# Ministering Among Gen Z Chinese Students

An interview with COM campus staff members David Dorrough (North Carolina), Pauline Lim (New York), Yongming Tian (New Mexico), and Alden (Midwest), compiled by IMPACT Editor Tara Miller

With shifting dynamics in geopolitical relationships, along with the aftermath of the global pandemic, the makeup of the Chinese student/scholar population in the United States has changed dramatically in the last few years. While significantly fewer visiting scholars are coming, COM campus staffers have seen a sharp increase in the proportion of younger graduate and undergraduate students. As ministry teams navigate the changing landscape, they are discovering new insights and approaches to ministry.

## HOW HAVE WORLDVIEWS CHANGED?

**Yongming:** Moral relativism is a general belief among Chinese Gen Z, and tolerance may be their ultimate value. They also have complicated feelings about the United States and China, embracing Western culture while also clinging to nationalistic identity. They may be intrigued by Christianity, but hesitant to open themselves to it.

**Alden:** The younger generation is definitely one in transition. More Chinese young people today sound like their American counterparts, echoing phrases like “building your better self.” They generally have a strong desire to learn from others’ perspectives, though this often stops short of belief in objective truth.

**David:** In general, they are more

loyal to government ideology and collectivism. Many are caught in-between and wondering, “How do I critically think about what I want to do with my life?”

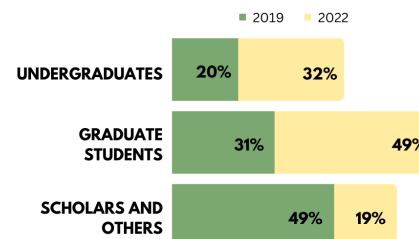
## HOW HAVE THEIR NEEDS AND INTERESTS CHANGED?

**Alden:** The undergrads coming in are financially stable, even wealthy. Physical needs are rare today. Traveling and finding new experiences seem to be at the top of the list for younger students.

**David:** They are much more self-sufficient, and this is hard to overcome. Most have cars, only a small percentage live on campus, and they don’t need English help. There is also an awareness that Big Brother is watching. Chinese leaders want these students to return home and not get too attached here.

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## 2019 / 2022 COM Campus Ministry Trends



## WHAT DIFFERENCES HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED IN MINISTRY?

**David:** Relationship development is exponentially more difficult. There are super-high “front walls” as students are coming from a culture of distrust and misinformation.

**Pauline:** They are not motivated to go to church because they feel that religious sermons are old-fashioned. They are seeking authenticity, and they learn well through exploring. We desire to be creative in giving Christ to them.

**Yongming:** Their need might not be for material help, but an affinity group goes together quite well with a heartfelt meal. A home is the best place to experience the power of faith in life because it is a real, non-religious environment.

## WHAT TYPES OF OUTREACH HAVE YOU FOUND EFFECTIVE?

**Pauline:** Though this is a generation of technology, their favorite form of communication is in-person. God has provided opportunities to build

friendships with them individually at my home or their homes.

**Alden:** Overall, it’s easy to connect—just hold a unique event like archery, ice fishing, or boating. The harder part is transitioning from “fun” to meeting for serious conversation. Regular fellowship is best, like having a relevant discussion topic and bringing in biblical perspective. Most students are more expressive one-to-one or in small group settings.

**David:** When I look at the example Jesus set, he met people where they were. I, too, meet people where they are and build on that foundation.

**Yongming:** Facilitating meaningful conversations about faith works well when you communicate truth in the context of their real-life difficulties. We demonstrate that we are genuinely curious about them, not just inviting them to Bible study.

## WHAT ENCOURAGING RESPONSES ARE YOU SEEING?

**Yongming:** Once a genuine relationship has been established, you might rank among their most trusted non-family members. I have relationships like this with a good number of students, which truly encourages me to keep up the good work.

**Alden:** God has his people on every campus. Ministry may look wildly different numbers-wise than it did 10 years ago. However, God is still bringing seekers in.

# What Brings True JOY?

By Brenda Harris, Campus Staff Member, California

"Joy" is often defined as a feeling of great pleasure and happiness. But I think of joy as a quiet, underlying peace that comes from knowing I am doing what I was designed for—serving God. I can be at peace even if ministry doesn't go how I thought it would.

*"Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance"*  
— James 1:2

When I asked my fellow COM staffer, Casey Liu, to describe joy, she said, "I experience joy because I love to serve others. Students are amazed that I serve not because I need to, but because I want to do it." She feels that joy comes from doing what God created her to do. "A serving heart is what God gave me, and I love doing it."

It is sometimes challenging, though, to serve. Another fellow staffer, Tom Lindstrom, says that for day-to-day ministry, you need perseverance, or "grit." You have to serve in quiet humility. Many students don't come to English Corner, or they cancel last minute. Then one will get sick, or have midterms, or labs will run late.

Casey laughed, "They're so BUSY!" She lives in Florida, and I live in southern California. Both areas are well known for their many attractions. Who wants to go to a full-day retreat when you can go to Disneyland?!

What keeps Casey motivated is her memory of what it was like to be an international student herself and how Christians helped her. "So many poured love into us, and we enjoyed being served. Now I enjoy serving. I see myself in them. I can teach them what I learned."

When I feel discouraged, God reminds me that his timing is not mine, and he calls to mind students who came to believe in Jesus, were



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baptized, returned to Bible study after months of doubt, or are still deeply seeking truth. I hear God's words, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost." There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:6-7).

Because results are not up to us, it's okay when students don't show up, cancel last minute, or decide to have nothing to do with us because of warnings to stay away from Christians. Maybe we are suspected of working with government agencies to trap them, or we are just thought of as crazy religious people.

We have comfort in understanding that service is complex, and that's okay. That's joy. "Consider it all joy, my brethren, when you encounter various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces endurance" (James 1:2). It is this endurance that brings us joy.

Some of these trials come in the form of an age gap. Tom laments that younger students are not looking for friendship. But teaming up with

fellow mission-minded people and younger volunteers brings joy and bridges the gap in our ages.

For Casey, what brings her the greatest joy in serving students and scholars is "seeing their amazement" when she serves them for free. "They always want to know why, and then I can tell them it is the love of Christ."

Tom said it is seeing his Chinese friends flourishing in China that brings joy. "One former visiting scholar we visited is particularly fruitful in leading his family members and patients to Christ. He is working to please the Lord, not me, and that is good."

Joy for me comes from special memories—like when my Chinese friend suddenly announced she was a follower of Christ. In my surprise, I nearly spit out my water! Now, more than a year later, I have been watching her grow in her faith and fearlessly share it. This faith had come without any special challenge or fancy words from me, without any fanfare or emotional calling. Seeing God work in her heart — that is true joy.



## Practical Tips for Discussions with Chinese Friends

- Take the time to build trust and gradually develop deeper relationships.
- Allow for discussions about differences, but avoid arguments. If tension arises, divert the conversation to something less controversial.
- Acknowledge our national shortcomings that may be pointed out by Chinese friends. If there are inaccuracies, graciously offer a different viewpoint.
- Introduce discussions of worldview, including materialism, rather than directly confronting Communism.

## Relating to Chinese Students and Scholars Despite Geopolitical Tensions

By Joe Lorencz  
Campus Staff Member,  
California

Though there are issues of serious concern between our countries, Chinese students are still far and away the largest international student population in the United States. Christ is the only true hope for them as well as for us, and we have the opportunity to share this good news with them. May the Lord give us wisdom and love in giving Christ to China's future leaders.



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Most conversations with Chinese citizens who are friends in the academic world are not difficult—unless one brings up US-China relations.

Talking about education, family, community, personal interests, or social customs is usually good enough for a surface relationship. However, as we develop deeper friendships, serious topics arise that show differences between our countries.

If we develop a deeper friendship, which is nearly always desirable, each person should be free to share what they believe and their perspectives on important issues. I think only in this way can we develop deep friendships that lead to sharing real applications of the gospel.

I'll offer some observations to provide context for relationships with Chinese students and scholars:

- I find my Chinese friends sometimes express certain viewpoints largely due to their limited access to information, and even misinformation they receive, before coming to America. They may still prefer Chinese sources of information when they reside here because it is easily understood and accessible. They may become products of the information they consume—just as we do.
- Most contemporary Chinese students consider themselves materialists, philosophically speaking, because they are taught that science proves there is no spiritual world, and that all reality is materialistic in essence. Still, many may be superstitious because of their family and residual culture and may be open to religious concepts. While they are given an anti-supernatural bias, I find that serious literature about documented contemporary miracles often gets their attention.
- Visiting scholars are funded by Chinese institutions or the government and have to report about their experiences, including anything religious. As a result, they may be reluctant to gather in groups sponsored by Christians, especially if there is overt spiritual content, but they may be more relaxed in private situations.



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## Memorial Gifts

### Dolores Greenawalt

Ms. Holly Forrest

### Earnest Hummer

Mr. and Mrs. Ben Bidelsbach Jr.

### Ping Jiang

Zhiguo Ye

### Virginia Krecker

Mr. William Krecker

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### Dr. Molly Smith

Ms. Victoria Smith

### Ellen C. Tung

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## Notes from IMPACT Readers

“I must comment on your message, “It Takes a Process—Step by Step” (by Daniel Su, Winter 2023 issue). It was excellent—perfectly expressed. And as I think about it, the idea pertains to all people we want to reach for Christ. Your message really gave me a better grasp of the process of salvation. Thank you for your close walk with the Lord which gives you spiritual insights to edify others.  
—“Cookie,” Mid-Atlantic Area

### To our readers:

Will you share with us how a story in *IMPACT* has touched you? Email Tara Miller, [tmiller@chinaoutreach.net](mailto:tmiller@chinaoutreach.net).

## MINISTRY UPDATES

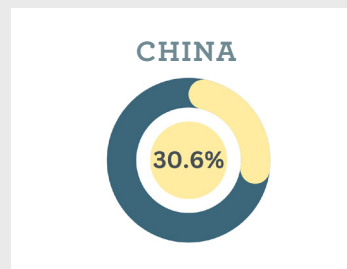
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## International Students in the United States

Despite tensions between Washington, DC, and Beijing, we praise God that the door remains open for students from China to study at American universities. We pray many will discover the message of love and hope in Christ. Our COM campus staff members continue to have opportunities to reach out and build relationships with students and scholars, pointing them to our loving creator.

### PLACES OF ORIGIN OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

2021/22 TOTAL STUDENTS: 948,519

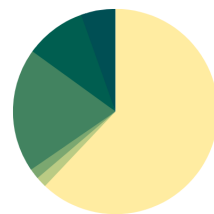


CHINA	290,086	30.6%
INDIA	199,182	21.0%
SOUTH KOREA	40,755	4.3%
CANADA	27,013	2.8%
VIETNAM	20,713	2.2%
TAIWAN	20,487	2.2%
SAUDI ARABIA	18,206	1.9%
BRAZIL	14,897	1.6%
MEXICO	14,500	1.5%
NIGERIA	14,438	1.5%

Open Doors “2022 Fast Facts”

## Annual Report 2022

Thank you for your partnership with China Outreach Ministries.



### 2022 Sources of Contributions

Total  
\$4,156,676

● Individuals  
\$2,580,212

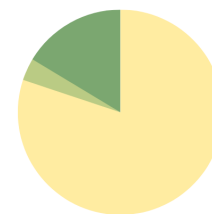
● Directors  
\$70,117

● Staff  
\$68,777

● Churches  
\$812,899

● Foundations  
\$398,691

● Businesses  
\$225,980



### Distribution of Funds

Total  
\$4,413,503

● Campus and  
returnee  
ministries  
\$3,535,415

● Development  
\$154,785

● Administration  
\$723,303

The information above is unaudited.

To obtain a copy of the audited version when available, please contact the COM Leadership Center at 717-591-3500 or [com@chinaoutreach.net](mailto:com@chinaoutreach.net).



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED



## 2023 CELEBRATION DINNER

**"God's work is always full of surprises!"**

*I am thankful to the brothers and sisters  
who have helped me know the Lord.  
May God bless you all!"*

— From a testimony at a  
Spring Celebration Event