

# IMPACT

*Together, Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders*

## Counting the Cost of Following Jesus

Chinese Returnee,  
Working for the Kingdom

Page 2

For Chinese Students and Scholars,  
the Cost May Be Great

Page 4

Volunteers Show Love in Action

Page 6

COM Staff Find Joy in the Calling

Page 8

# 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.



A higher standard  
a higher purpose

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## CONTENTS

- 1 HAVE YOU PAID ANY COST LATELY?  
*Daniel Su Reflects on the Cost of Discipleship*
- 2 EVEN IN HARDSHIP, WORKING FOR THE KINGDOM  
*A Chinese Returnee's Testimony*
- 4 SNAPSHOTS FROM COM STAFF  
*The Cost of Following Jesus for Chinese Students and Scholars*
- 6 SNAPSHOTS FROM COM STAFF  
*Ministry Partners Living Generously*
- 8 JOY IN THE CALLING  
*Staff Members Count the Cost*
- 11 NEW STAFF
- 12 PLANNED GIVING  
*Giving that Makes Sense*
- 13 GIFT BEARERS

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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](mailto:tmiller@chinaoutreach.net).

# Have You Paid Any Cost Lately?

By Daniel Su, COM President

Jesus seemed to be often skeptical of crowds. After all, we live in a fallen world, so it's not unreasonable to question crowds' motives and behaviors. When large crowds followed Jesus as he traveled, he did not thank them for coming. Instead, in Luke 14: 27, he warned them, saying: "And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple." He continued his admonition with the illustration of building a tower, challenging the crowd to *count the cost* of completing the work.

To be a disciple is to be a follower. Christian discipleship means following Jesus. It's not about our understanding of discipleship as an intellectual topic; it is about our life's values and goals and how we actually live our lives. It is sadly possible to be a professing Christian while living like an atheist!

I became a Christian in China's house church movement. I experienced the fear I had when the police came and harassed believers gathering for worship. I understood what it meant when my atheist boss knew I was a Christian. Yet I chose to follow Jesus because he has the words of eternal life. To whom else shall I go?

Discipleship is more than reading a book, joining a small group, or attending a camp. To be a believer is to be a disciple—following Jesus where he leads. Discipleship is expected in all cultures and in all ages.

We cannot just receive Jesus as our Savior without simultaneously receiving him as the Lord of our lives. While salvation is by grace, discipleship is by choice. As recipients of his grace, we choose to follow Jesus. We choose to love him. We choose the cost of discipleship.

In *The Cost of Discipleship*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes "the obligation to discipleship" as grace's "invariable corollary." How appropriate and insightful that is!

How do you follow Jesus? Have you paid any cost lately? ■

A close-up photograph of a person's hands holding an open Bible. The person is wearing a blue plaid shirt. In the background, another person is visible, also reading a Bible. The scene is set in a study group or church setting.

# Even in Hardship, Working for the Kingdom

*By Luke, a returnee to China*

**S**EVERAL YEARS AGO, my wife and I came from China to America where I was visiting a large university for one year. One week after we arrived, my friends invited us to attend a free English study group, which was hosted by a Chinese leader, Li, and Pastor Gregg.

The Bible stories from Genesis challenged me but confused me. Later, I understood that the whole story is associated with one God. You know, we have lots of local gods in my country, and in bad situations we would worship these gods. So I thought when we arrived at the new nation, maybe we should worship the new God. So step-by-step we

studied the Bible in Pastor Gregg's Friday Night Bible Study. I found this new God might be the true God, totally different from previous gods in my country. At the same time, my wife and I experienced miraculous signs from the true God. He listened to our prayers, had mercy on us, and brought us a wonderful gift—a boy, our firstborn son,

***“After returning to China, my colleague and I began to lead a small Bible study group in my university, about 20 graduate students. It is hard to do, but I think it is worthy to do.”***

after we had waited for this for many years. The true God also showed us true peace, joy, love, kindness, goodness, and faithfulness through the brothers and sisters around us.

The Friday Night Bible Study changed my view of the world to the kingdom of eternal life, and it changed my life from the wrong way to the right way. I realized I was a sinful man, and I could not save myself. I knew I needed my Savior, Jesus. I decided to trust the Lord God and to follow Jesus, and there was no turning back. Eventually, I was baptized by Pastor Gregg.

After returning to China, my colleague and I began to lead a small Bible study group in my university, about 20 graduate students. It is hard to do, but I think it is worthy to do.

The Friday Night Bible Study in America sowed the seed into my heart. I was lost, but Jesus found me. It is amazing grace, and I got it. I very much appreciate Pastor Gregg and the Chinese brother Li. So I would like to tell the good news to my friends, my students, my relatives, and strangers.

In recent years, there are more and more visiting scholars arriving in the US, and I think the Lord is giving them

the opportunity to know Jesus. Matthew 9:37 says, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few.” *So these visiting scholars are the laborers that the Lord will send back to China.* I hope more and more Bible study groups will bring these visiting scholars to see the Lord Jesus. Let them accept the amazing grace, like me, and spread the gospel in our nation. If so, these returning scholars will be the salt and the light on our campuses, in our cities, and in our country. ■



*COM staff member Gregg Smyrl has been a significant influence in Luke’s life. Luke says, “The Friday Night Bible Study in America sowed the seed into my heart.”*

*There are many students and scholars, like Luke, who have returned to China and serve God in a challenging environment, faithfully sharing the gospel. Let’s pray for these brothers and sisters, that they will remain steadfast, and that God will use them as salt and light.*



# The Cost of Following Jesus for Chinese Students and Scholars

*For Chinese who choose to follow Jesus, their conversion may come at a much greater cost than it would for most Americans. These new Christians may sacrifice relationships, social status or career positions, and sometimes even their own security. Giving up long-held worldviews, they turn, in faith, to embrace an entirely different way of life.*

*COM staff members often report of students and scholars who follow Jesus in spite of the cost. Here are just a few of those stories.*

**Jake** is a leader in at least one church in China. We got to know him when he came to the US, and he studied the Bible with us here in preparation for further ministry in China. When he became a Christian in China, he was taken outside the city by government agents

and asked to spy. He declined to go to church so he would not have to spy on the church for the government. He has suffered imprisonment a few times. He is undeterred by the government in witnessing wherever he goes.

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Tired from a busy day, some Chinese friends and I went out to dinner together. As we began to talk about spiritual things, **Ru** asked me, “Can a Christian be friends with a Buddhist?”

“Yes” I answered. “Are you Buddhist?”  
“No,” she replied, “but my family is.”

Ru was concerned that becoming a Christian could mean broken relationships with family members.

**Hong** then said, “Ru and I talked, and if we continue to go to your Bible study we will become Christians. But what about my job? If I lose my job, how can I care for my son?” We discussed these areas in detail as they are seeking God. As these scholars count the costs, pray that they will come to faith in Christ.

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**Zak** was afraid of persecution if he believed in Jesus. He said maybe he’d lose his job (at a government bureau) and then not be able to support his family. We prayed for him to not fear but to receive Christ. Finally, he decided to believe!

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**Hailey** had been in many of our activities, including camp. There were so many barriers for her to accept the Lord, including her position in the Chinese Communist Party, her background in Buddhism, her experience of Chi Kong, her anti-Christian family pressure, and her own spiritual confusion. However, the power of the Lord is greater than all of these, and both Hailey and her daughter have accepted Jesus. ■





# Ministry Partners Living Generously

*COM volunteers and financial supporters are sacrificially giving time, energy, and material resources to love Chinese students and scholars in practical ways. Though their outreach may come at a personal cost, they find joy and satisfaction in their service as they respond to God's call in their lives.*

“Live Generously” are the words on one of my favorite t-shirts. These words remind me of the volunteers in our ministry who have been giving above and beyond. On a recent trip to Washington, DC, we were hosted by local church families. Because of their love, many Chinese were moved and touched. One of our participants, who is Buddhist, said that she thinks Buddhists are selfish compared to the Christians she had met. She understood that what she experienced was generous love given by people she had never met!

—Ming-Chi (Mickey) Chuang  
Kent State University, Ohio

Every year, we have students who sign up from China for a short-term stay with a host family. This year we were able to pair 80 students with hosts. Some stayed for up to two weeks! This is what one host shared:

*Before she arrived, we had communicated by email and planned that we would get her to campus in the mornings, and we'd see her later in the evening. After she arrived, though, she wasn't feeling well, and I didn't feel right insisting that she spend so much time away. So she ate most of her meals and spent all of her free time at our house. Though*

*it was straining to cook special meals and make sure my schedule lined up with hers, there was so much we loved about the visit. The mealtimes were full of laughing and learning. She was so, so good with our kids. We had good conversations about the One True God, and she is seeking. We've said that even if the whole thing were 10x harder, we would do it all again.*

**—Nick Romanin**  
*Purdue University, Indiana*

**S**allie teaches English classes for kids every Friday night. She has been faithfully doing this for more than a year now, committed to serve even though she is the only volunteer. Recently, she was planning to miss one Friday night class because she needed to pack for a cross-country trip to visit her mom. As she was listening to the Spirit, though, she believed he was saying he wanted her to be with the children instead. She told me, “Too often I find that I have made a decision without asking his

counsel first.” Sallie gave up her time packing to continue to teach that night. I was so touched by her example.

**—Ying Deng**  
*Pennsylvania State University*

**R**ecently we've received some housing requests that were a bit bold! We have students asking for longer stays with expectations that they will be accommodated in their free time. Here's just one example: A Chinese married couple emailed this past summer, asking about longer term housing until their lease began in late September. I exchanged emails explaining we normally don't ask this of hosts, but we could check. A woman who was widowed several years ago agreed to host, and she spent time getting to know her guests during their stay. The couple was deeply moved, and they're now very involved in our ministry activities.

**—Tom Lindstrom**  
*University of Minnesota*

**T**here is a family of four that has given to the ministry since I went to China 14 years ago. They give faithfully monthly. The children are older now and I am sure have additional expenses, yet they continue to give. What an encouragement this family has been for me to serve our Lord faithfully as they give faithfully.

**—Phyllis Hendrix**  
*University of Florida*





# Joy in the Calling

## *COM Staff Have Counted the Cost*

*When God calls someone into a Christian ministry vocation, there is often a cost. Some move away from family and friends to a new place. Others give up successful careers in other fields and sometimes forfeit financial or professional status. The intensity of the work often means long hours and little margin, and it may bring new levels of spiritual warfare.*

*For China Outreach Ministries staff, counting the cost may not be easy, but if you ask any of them if it's worth it, you'll likely get a resounding, unqualified "Yes"! Each individual would have a story of God's grace, provision, and joy. We'd like to share a few of them with you.*

**By Kirk Zuercher**  
*COM Leadership Center*

**B**e comfortable or follow God? We are so glad that we chose the latter, and we continue to seek and follow him as best we can. Comfort for us was living in our dream home, enjoying a 16-year career with a great company, and having great opportunities for our two teenage kids. Following God meant giving up all of that and moving over

800 miles to a new city to begin working with Chinese scholars at Penn State University.

Hindsight is always 20/20, and this is no different. Stepping out in faith (no matter how hard it may be) and following God is always the best option. Watching God move in the lives of Chinese scholars and the lives of your family at the same time is a very humbling experience. Seeing your two teen-

age kids blossom in their new surroundings and drawing closer to your spouse than ever before is a great blessing as well.

So, when you look back on life, is there really a cost to following God as he leads? The blessings that come our way as we follow him far outweigh any cost that may be attributed to following him as he allows us to be used to reach a lost and dying world for him.

**By Dorothy Boothe**  
*University of Georgia*

**W**hile working as a research scientist in a US government facility, I met a COM staff member who asked me if God might be calling me into ministry to the Chinese. Because I had spent ten years earning three degrees and had worked in the field of microbiology for almost two decades, this question was totally unexpected. However, it became the focus of much prayer as I sought the Lord for his will.

Within a few months, God had revealed to me through a number of ways that he was calling me to leave my profession to minister to mainland Chinese. Choosing to follow his call would necessitate my relinquishment of a career

to which I would probably never be able to return, along with everything (salary, retirement benefits, etc.) associated with it.

Making this change has required my family to surrender various aspects of our lives, including finances, how our time is spent, our position in our community, and more. However, compared to being given the opportunity to labor with the Lord in watching the eternal destiny of even one of the Chinese come to Christ, these sacrifices pale in comparison.

**By Susan and Danny Forte**  
*Albany, New York*

**D**anny and I married 20 years ago because we felt we could serve our Lord better together. To celebrate our 10th wedding anniversary we thanked God for bringing us together by going on a two-week short term mission trip to China to teach English. We were changed by this trip, and when we arrived home we knew that God wanted us to respond, but we didn't know what that might be. So we explored possible mission opportunities, thinking we would consider these when we retired in the next 10-15 years.



*Continued on  
next page*

## Joy in the Calling

Susan and Danny Forte

Continued from page 9

But God had another plan. Don and Myrna Hines contacted us and told us about COM and how we could serve our Lord in a strategic way here in the US. We could share Jesus with Chinese students, scholars, and family members on American university campuses. Cathy Bidelsbach then challenged us further. When we told her this was something we would consider when we retired, she said, “Think of all those Chinese scholars who will not hear about Jesus if you wait.”

Stunned, we both said, “Why not?” So over a 12-month period, what we thought would be retirement plans became our “now” plans. We resigned from our jobs as administrators with middle-upper class incomes and wonderful benefits to become full-time campus workers with modest salaries.



We would be driving old cars and giving up elaborate vacations, *but*—to say we are much happier would be a complete understatement. We are humbled on a daily basis that our Lord chose us for this at this time to serve him in this way, and we are humbled by the churches and ministry partners whose financial sacrifices, prayers, and love have allowed us to serve them in this way. It is so worth it!

## Is God Leading You to Count the Cost?

By Tom Lindstrom, Campus Staff—University of Minnesota

What is the most valuable service you can offer today’s Chinese students? Your friendship. Not just surface-level relationships. They need friends who are willing to go deep.

Students of this new generation often come from affluent families whose primary values are education, career, and wealth. They have material resources, prestige, and the best opportunities the world offers. Yet they’re often missing meaningful relationships. Deep down, they are lonely.

These students don’t need entertainment. They need to know their worth as individuals. They need someone to guide them into a life full of purpose. We care for today’s students by investing the time for intentional relationships—a whole life kind of mentoring. As we do, we can introduce them to the abundant life that only Christ gives.

If you’re ready to invest in the life of a Chinese student, contact your local COM staff. Email [com@chinaoutreach.net](mailto:com@chinaoutreach.net), and we’ll help connect you with a ministry in your area.

# Pray for Our New Missionaries

## ■ Levi Li, Campus Staff, Texas

As a COM affiliate for the past year, Levi Li has already begun serving at Texas Christian University. He is currently attending Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, pursuing an MA in Church Music. Following his graduation next summer, he plans to become a full-time COM employee. Levi was awarded his MS in Software Engineering from Beihang University in Beijing, and he began working in college ministry as a student there. Levi is also a musician with experience teaching guitar. He and his wife, Jessie, have two young children and live in Ft. Worth, Texas.

## ■ Bob McGann, Campus Staff, Indiana

As pastor of Grace Chapel in Havertown, Pennsylvania, for many years, Bob McGann served in Chinese outreach in partnership with COM locally. Having recently moved to Indianapolis, he plans to minister as a full-time campus staff member at a central Indiana university. Through his years of pastoral ministry, he has been engaged in church planting, leadership development, and training. Bob has a BA in journalism and public relations from Temple University and an MA from Biblical Theological Seminary. Bob and his wife, Karen, have four children and six grandchildren.



## ■ Beau Miller, Director of Church Partnerships

Serving on the COM Leadership Team, Beau Miller will focus on building partnerships with churches and volunteers nationally. For the last five years, Beau was Executive Director of ACMI, where he also served as chair of the Lausanne North America Strategy Group for ISM. Previously, he led the local international outreach of Briarwood Church (PCA) in Birmingham, Alabama. Beau earned a DMin (Global Studies) from Columbia International University and an MDiv (Missions) from Reformed Theological Seminary. He is ordained as a minister in the PCA denomination. Beau's wife, Tara, is COM Communications Coordinator. They have two children and live in

Baltimore, Maryland, where they are also engaged in local ministry with students and scholars at Johns Hopkins University.



# Giving that Makes \$ense

As a friend of China Outreach Ministries, there are many ways you can support COM while also caring for your own needs and those of your loved ones. These are just a few of the planned giving options available to COM's partners:

- **Giving appreciated property, including stocks**—Giving appreciated stock (that you've owned for over one year) directly from your brokerage account to COM's account will allow you to give the full market value without paying capital gains taxes.
- **Giving through a gift annuity**—In this scenario, a donor gives cash or appreciated property (such as stock) to COM in return for an annuity for one or two lives. The donor receives an upfront tax deduction, payments that are partially tax-free, and income for the duration of one or two lives. At the time the annuitant(s) pass to their heavenly home, COM receives the remaining dollars.
- **Giving through an IRA rollover**—For anyone over 70½ with a traditional IRA—Each year there is a minimum required distribution from your IRA. By giving this distribution directly to a qualified charity, such as COM, the transfer is made tax-free, and you receive the full deduction.
- **Lastly, you can leave a legacy gift through your will**—Giving to COM through your will is a wonderful way to remember the work you've supported during your life!

If you would like to discuss any of these options, please call Kirk Zuercher at 717-591-3500. We will gladly provide the information you need to take to your financial advisor or attorney for completing your plan. Thank you for considering COM in your estate planning. **These gifts allow us to assist new staff, to underwrite healthcare for our staff, and to fund programs to reach more Chinese for Christ!**

## **Gift Bearers** *Special gifts and contributions to the ministry of COM*

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#### **Dr. Christopher Fung**

Mrs. Christopher Fung

#### **Mrs. Mary James**

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Ms. Lois Shelton

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## **Why I Give to COM**

*“My relatively small investment can make a difference for eternity. I cannot go to China, but I can invest in prayer and finances as a way of fulfilling the Great Commission.”*

*—Shared recently by a COM donor*

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## *Please join us for COM's Spring 2020 Celebration Dinners*

### **BALTIMORE**

Thursday, March 26, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**MARTINS VALLEY MANSION**

594 Cranbrook Rd, Cockeysville, MD

*RSVP by March 19th*

### **HARRISBURG**

Thursday, April 2, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**SHERATON HOTEL**

Swatara Exit, I-283, Harrisburg, PA

*RSVP by March 26th*

### **WASHINGTON, DC**

Friday, April 3, 2020 at 7:20 p.m.

**FAIRVIEW PARK MARRIOTT**

3111 Fairview Park Drive, Falls Church, VA

*RSVP by March 27th*

*Admission is complimentary.*

### **Three Ways to Make a Reservation**

Visit our website: [www.chinaoutreach.org](http://www.chinaoutreach.org)

Call our office: 717-591-3500

Email [kimbaer@chinaoutreach.net](mailto:kimbaer@chinaoutreach.net)

### **CANTON**

Monday, April 13, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**HARTVILLE KITCHEN**

1015 Edison Street, NW, Hartville, OH

*RSVP by April 6th*

### **ERIE**

Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at 6:30 p.m.

**SHERATON ERIE BAYFRONT HOTEL**

55 W. Bay Drive, Erie, PA

*RSVP by April 7th*