

FALL
2024

iMPACT

Together, Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders

Experiencing *God* in Ministry

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the Generations**

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CHINA
OUTREACH
MINISTRIES





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Experiencing God in Ministry

By Daniel Su, COM President

Since Chinese students come from backgrounds where they have been indoctrinated with atheism, how do they ever come to faith in Christ? I hear this question asked quite often. My answer is: It truly takes God's touch to turn their hearts around. This is a miracle!

Experiencing God often comes in unexpected ways. One missionary recently shared how a simple act of kindness—picking up students from the airport upon their arrival in America—opened the door to meaningful conversations about Christian hospitality. Another recounted a moment of prayer where a student felt an overwhelming sense of inner peace for the first time, leading her to explore a deeper relationship with God.

These encounters remind us that God's presence isn't confined to church walls. He also moves in cafeterias, over tea times, and during road trips. Even seeing how our missionaries deal with trials often profoundly impacts the students around them. God's Spirit works through our circumstances, often in mysterious ways beyond our expectations.

We are encouraged by 1 Corinthians 3:6: "I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God has been making it grow." Our role is to seize every opportunity to faithfully plant, water, weed, or harvest; God's role is to give the growth.

In this issue of *IMPACT*, you'll read how God surprises us in our ministry. He hears our prayers as we seek to experience him. Your prayers and support make a difference in these students' lives. It takes all of us to expand God's kingdom among Chinese students and scholars in America. Thank you!

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Experiencing God in Our Outreach

In campus communities across the United States, God is at work in the hearts of Chinese students and scholars. Our staff members and volunteers experience God in ministry as they join his work.

Mark, Northeast Area

In my city, thousands of Chinese students have yet to hear the joyful news of the gospel. This significant field, ripe for harvest, presents a profound opportunity for ministry, where I feel called to engage and serve Chinese students in response to God's calling.

Staff member in the Midwest Area

Although they have many barriers to understanding the gospel, students continue to come regularly to our Bible course and ask thought-provoking questions. Not only that, but they listen to each other, offer insights, and help answer others' questions from their limited Bible knowledge.

Angelia, Ministry volunteer with staff member Phoebe Hoyle in the Southeast Area

I love how our church family loves and welcomes Chinese students and visiting scholars. It has been a THRILL to get to know these beautiful and kind Chinese people and to present the gospel to people who have not had many opportunities to hear the gospel. We are so grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside COM.



Lee, North Central Area

Attending the university's graduation ceremony this year, the most incredible moment was seeing those students who had embraced Jesus as their Lord and Savior! Many I had met through airport pickups and outreach events over the past two years. I have witnessed God's Kingdom being built, one student at a time.

Xin and Ying, North Central Area

Xi, a visiting scholar, decided to be baptized, and for security reasons, the baptism was not public. Only acquaintances were invited to witness it, scheduled after the Sunday service. Unexpectedly, the number of witnesses almost equaled that of the morning service. It turns out that Xi invited all those who had helped him on his journey to seek God.



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Jessica, Mountain West Area

It is a delight to meet with Faith in our weekly Bible studies. I am grateful I can answer her questions in Mandarin. Sometimes we talk for hours, and she always has a little notebook with her questions. Recently, she shared with me how she encountered God in a new way—realizing she is a sinner and needs God to forgive her sins. I rejoiced with her!

God at Work through the Generations

By Timothy, formerly
a Chinese Student in
America

“

One of the best parts of my new life is that I have a newfound fellowship with my mother. Before I followed Jesus, I didn't understand her faith, but now I do.

I grew up in a Christian family in China. My mother and my grandmother were both Christians. (That's why I like to call myself Timothy now!) I saw that my mother had a joyful heart, but I didn't understand why—until much later when I began to know God myself.

Until a few years ago, I didn't know much about the Bible or how to trust God. Instead, with continual pressure in my studies, I worried a lot.

Soon after I arrived in the United States, I met Dan, a worker with China Outreach Ministries in our university community. I began visiting Dan's house for English lessons, attending parties with his group, and then going to Bible studies.

Participating in these activities, I developed relationships and grew to understand more about God. Dan helped me to start reading the Bible. Brothers and sisters in the group shared their difficulties and encouraged each other. I saw that Christians are a special group, like family members.

I began to realize something about me was changing—I *didn't feel so nervous or anxious anymore*. Gradually, over the next couple of years, I began to think I wanted to become a believer too.

Dan took me and another friend, Lu, on a weeklong beach trip. Two of Dan's Chinese friends from another city joined us. One day during the trip when we were all together for fellowship, *Lu and I both committed to be God's children*. Later, I was baptized.

I continued in the local ministry group until I finished my degree,



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Timothy asks that we pray for him—that he will always have joyful heart, and that he will be obedient, with big faith to always trust in God.

and then I moved back to China. I have continued my everyday habits of reading the Bible and praying, and I have stayed in communication with Dan.

I see evidence of God's work in my life as I trust him and no longer worry so much. I am always trying to figure out his plans for me and to be obedient. And he keeps me from being anxious. My brothers and cousins are not yet believers, and I share my stories with them.

One of the best parts of my new life is that I have a newfound fellowship with my mother. Before I followed Jesus, I didn't understand her faith, but now I do. She sees the change in me, and together we can talk about God and faith. Like her, now I have a joyful heart.

My Turn as an International Guest

By Seth, A COM Ministry Partner
in the North Central Area since 2001

Seth recently had the amazing opportunity to travel with a COM staff member, Bob Simon, to visit returnees in China. We rejoice to share these glimpses of his experience.



Our arrival in Shanghai began a nearly two-week trek visiting returnee students and scholars in five Chinese cities.

I had only this year seriously considered a trip to China, as one of the students I had met at Bob's home Bible studies insisted I return the visit. He and I had become friends during his time in the United States, when he was far from his family and appreciated opportunities to connect. While he was living here, he and I had spent time together riding bikes, going to a 14-inning baseball game, and comparing pop music knowledge.

My Chinese friend and I had also discussed our beliefs, including his Daoist background. He had expressed interest in the Christian faith before leaving, and Bob was able to follow up with an in-depth conversation while we were visiting. We are now planning further online discussions with him and another student.

During our trip, we visited other students who had participated in Bob's Bible study, and I was even

surprised to meet a student from at least ten years back. We met new Chinese friends, too, and even had some deep philosophical discussions.

Various Chinese friends managed to free up days to take us to museums and cultural sites like the Forbidden City and Imperial Summer Palace in Beijing and the tomb of the Terra Cotta Warriors in Xian. We encountered "squid on a stick" offered by street vendors and festive decorations from the recent Chinese New Year celebrations.

In Shanghai, the "Wall Street of China" and the world's third largest city, we saw contemporary ways of reclaiming a sense of cultural identity. Outside our hotel, a red Porsche flashed yellow stars of the Chinese flag across its hood. A motorcycle waving Chinese flags sped along the highway.

We also witnessed how China has been working hard in lifting many from poverty. Our hosts affirmed the current culture of "9-9-6"—work from 9 'til 9, six days a week.

We learned that the people of China play hard as well, taking outdoor breaks from the clusters of high-rises. This makes public spaces and parks busy and vibrant.

We visited only a state-sanctioned church one Sunday. Our guide, a professor, avoided going in, as that would not "look good" for him. We observed that attendees were primarily retirees.

The house churches, however, are vibrant and alive, as one returned student we met showed us. After their church had been closed, the people simply moved, feeling compelled to minister openly on the streets, even singing hymns to passersby.

In spending time with our Chinese hosts, I sensed their struggles. I could see how elite, well-educated citizens in the big cities could so easily get caught up in the pressures of everyday life, and how often the space for spiritual reflection could get squelched by busy days and family and community obligations.

My experiences gave me an even

deeper appreciation for the opportunity for such souls to find a place while in the United States to ask their questions of meaning and significance. As a dependent foreign visitor (I only recognized one actual Chinese word while I was there), I also realized the value of helping our international guests in even the smallest of ways while they are in America.

Back at home, I am thankful for the ongoing opportunities to connect with Chinese students and scholars from our local university, and I am thankful for open doors for faith-sharing friendships. Moved by this trip, I look forward now to finding more local Chinese students to befriend.

I am reminded of Hudson Taylor's famous words, "If I had a thousand lives, China should have them. No! Not China, but Christ." How fitting is this application of Jesus's words: "Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest (John 4:35)" and "We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work (John 9:4)."



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Following Where God Leads

By Yongming Tian, COM Campus Staff Leader in the Northeast Area

➔
Moving our young family across the country to an unfamiliar place was not an easy decision. Over the last year, though, as God has led us, we have experienced him at work—in ways beyond our imagination.

I first trusted Jesus as my savior when I was a PhD student in an American university. As I grew in my faith, God put in my heart a desire to care for other Chinese students, and four years ago I joined China Outreach Ministries as a full-time staff member. God blessed us with a fruitful ministry in the Mountain West Area where my wife and I, with our two young children, made our home.

In early 2023, COM President Daniel Su presented us with a new possibility. There was a need for a

new campus staff leader in a large city in the Northeast Area, and he asked me to consider this role. We learned that this prominent university has more than 1,500 Chinese students and scholars.

We understood the need for new workers—and the great opportunity. We didn't want to follow our own desires, however, but God's leading.

So for almost an entire year, we prayed and consulted with spiritual mentors, including our pastor. We visited the university campus and met with people there. By the end of

the year, we clearly concluded that indeed God was leading us.

We had many big decisions to make, and God began to confirm our move in miraculous ways. First, we chose a Christian school for our daughters, but tuition charges were high, and we were told admission is very competitive. We interviewed with the principal, and we shared our purpose for moving. Later that day, the school accepted our daughters and offered double scholarships, making the total cost comparable to the amount we were currently paying.

Next, we needed to sell our house. One morning before we put our house on the market, we had a yard sale. A Chinese Christian neighbor came over to talk, and we told her about our plans. She later brought her husband, with some surprising news: They wanted to buy our house. Not only did they offer a fair price, but they said we didn't need to make any repairs. Then, they told us we could continue living there until time for our cross-country move, and we were able to continue the regular Bible study that met at our house.

Finally, it was time to find a place to live in our new city. We knew that buying would be difficult in a seller's market. Then the house we had wanted went off the market because the seller decided to do a full renovation. But we still had a feeling this was the house God would provide.

Though the house was still off the market, we decided to visit. By this time, the renovation was almost finished. In God's providence, our current pastor was flying to Washington, DC, that same day. This pastor who had shepherded us through our decision to move could now go with us to check the house and pray. The blessings continued. It turned out the neighbors are a Christian couple, and they had been praying for Christians to buy the house.

We researched the house price, realizing that the renovations had increased the value. But the seller agreed to reduce the price, and the realtor wanted to return part of the commission to us.

Through all of this, we had also been trusting God to provide for our financial support, since we would be moving to an area of the country with a higher cost of living. Though I am not good at fundraising, we knew if God wanted us to go, he would provide. Soon, as my ministry partners and friends were sharing the news of our move, many people we do not even know began to give.

The Lord is so faithful, so good. He gives us blessings we don't deserve and prepares for details we don't even think of. When we **seek first his kingdom and his righteousness**, he will provide everything—more than we can imagine.

Our God Is Working!



"God is always at work," guest speaker Rick Fisher reminded COM staff and affiliates. Drawing from Jesus's words in John 5, "My Father is working until now, and I am working," Fisher shared examples from Jesus's ministry, fellow believers, and his own experience to demonstrate this truth.

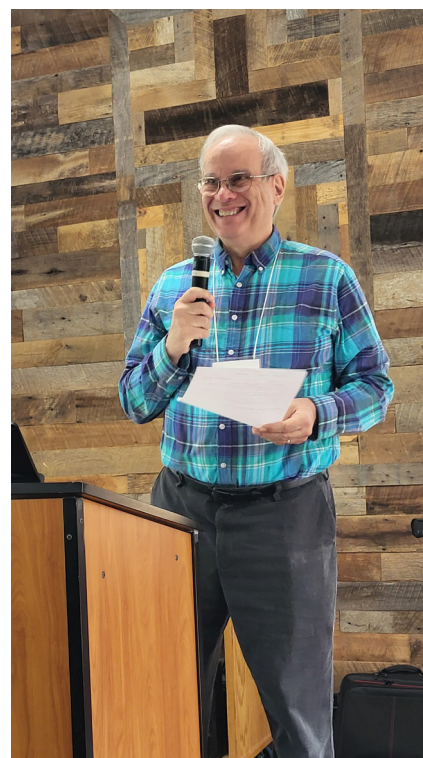
Fisher, who serves with Blackaby Ministries International, reminded us of Henry Blackaby's teaching in *Experiencing God*: not only is God at work around us, but he also invites us to join him! He does this in the context of our relationship with him, so we need to "... dig deep the well of this daily tending of the relationship ... to place our [lives] in a position to hear from him and then understand the assignment."

Another crucial aspect of experiencing God is obeying him. We learn to obey as we take in his Word, where God speaks. Fisher pointed out that when we open Scripture, we encounter God himself (Hebrews 4:12).

When God is working in our lives, we come to what Fisher calls "crossroads of faith." This is where we need to exercise trust—remembering that God holds the needed resources.

Fully embracing all that God has for us involves surrender, and surrendering to Jesus requires making adjustments. Fisher reassured us, however, "when we adjust, that's when we begin to move to experiencing God in a new way ... or in a deeper way, or in a way that just confirms to us again that he is the one worth surrendering to—and following."

Here at COM, as we have shifted our focus more towards undergraduate students due to demographic changes, rather than visiting scholars, we have experienced God's faithfulness and are a testament to his work through us.



Words from Our Team

How has this year's conference better equipped you for "experiencing God" in ministry?

The Experiencing God study started me on a journey of learning to love God with all my heart, soul, strength, and mind. Rick Fisher's messages furthered that journey.

—a staff member in the Northeast Area

The Experiencing God study has been practical. To experience God, we really need to examine the lens through which we observe, or attempt to observe, God's work.

—Tom Lindstrom, Midwest Area

I was deeply reminded that Jesus can help me go through various challenges. The theme message has inspired me to obey God more fully.

—Merlyne Wu, Northeast Area

With God's help, I can pursue a love relationship with my Abba daily. God is always at work, so I need to be sensitive to his leading.

—Pauline Lim, Northeast Area

Remembering that God is far more concerned with my relationship with him over anything I could do for him puts my ministry work in its proper place, with Christ at the center.

—Anna Seeger, West Coast

Staff members from across the country came together in Indiana in April for a time of learning and fellowship at the COM Annual Staff Conference.

Welcome New Staff Member

Zi Ferraris, Maryland

An experienced missionary and teacher, Zi has served the last 20+ years primarily teaching English in Asia. She has worked extensively in university settings.

Zi is currently completing a master's degree in Marriage, Couple and Family Counseling at Lancaster Bible College. She also previously earned a bachelor's degree from the University of the Philippines and a master's degree from Regent University.

Zi will serve in the University of Maryland community.



Why Use a Donor-Advised Fund?

By Kirk Zuercher,
Director of
Development



A popular way to give to many ministries—including gifts to China Outreach Ministries—is a donor-advised fund (DAF). Giving through a DAF can be a strategic way to build a charitable legacy. Let's look at some of the benefits.

Tax Advantages: Donors can generally receive an immediate tax deduction for contributions, and the fund's investment gains accumulate tax-free.

Flexibility: Donors can use a DAF to support multiple charities over time, with no requirement to select charities at the time the fund is established.

Administrative Ease: DAFs are managed by a financial professional, and donors can handle account administration and grants online.

How Does a Donor-Advised Fund Work?

- Establish a giving account with a public charity that serves as a "sponsoring organization."
- Contribute to the account at any time.
- As you choose, recommend grants from the fund to eligible organizations.
- Add to the fund as frequently as you like and continue to recommend grants as you choose.

A Potentially Tax-Efficient Strategy

Some donors prefer to take the standard tax deduction in most years. However, in a specific year, they contribute a larger sum—especially from their appreciated investment holdings—to their DAF, exceeding the standard deduction amount. This allows the donor to itemize deductions (higher than the standard deduction) for that year, potentially resulting in greater tax savings.

This is not considered tax, legal, or financial advice. Always consult a financial professional for specifics on your personal situation or to be sure this way of giving is right for you.

Memorial Gifts

Memorials are contributions to China Outreach Ministries in memory of a person specified by the donor.

IN MEMORY OF

John and Alberta Armant

Brian Greene

Elmer Hess

Rosie Wagoner

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COM is a member of the
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**WE'D BE HONORED TO TALK WITH YOU
ABOUT YOUR PLANNED GIVING!**

Reach out to Kirk Zuercher at
KZuercher@chinaoutreach.net or 717-591-3500.

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2024 CELEBRATION DINNERS

PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

Thursday, September 19

Doors Open at 6:00 and Dinner Served at 6:30
Drexelbrook
4700 Drexelbrook Drive, Drexel Hills

BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

Friday, September 27

Doors Open at 6:00 and Dinner Served at 6:30
Loch Raven Presbyterian Church
9318 Old Harford Rd, Parkville

DUBOIS, PENNSYLVANIA

Thursday, October 17

Lunch Served at Noon
Luigi's
32 North Brady Street, DuBois

**Our celebration events
are complimentary,
and we welcome you
as our guest.**

Please register at
www.chinaoutreach.org
or by calling
717.591.3500.

