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2024

# iMPACT

Together, Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders

## He Directs Our Paths

**Ministry Pivots**

Pg 2

**Purposeful  
Retirement**

Pg 6

**Glimpses of a  
Different China**

Pg 10



CHINA  
OUTREACH  
MINISTRIES



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# He Directs Our Paths

By Daniel Su, COM President

In this fallen world filled with uncertainties, turmoil, and tensions, as God's children, we find peace and strength in the reassuring truth that God directs our path. This is true for an individual, for a family, and for our ministry as well.

Proverbs 3:5-6 reminds us, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." When we feel overwhelmed by news headlines or personal trials, we must maintain our perspective of faith, knowing that God is with us in the midst of the struggle. Not only is he in control, but he is actively at work advancing his kingdom purpose.

As a ministry, COM's outreach to Chinese students is a matter of hearts and souls. As we navigate the ebb and flow of US-China tensions, we re-affirm that God's love is for all people groups and that God has a good purpose for the whole world. His plan is not thwarted by human powers.

In times like these, we pray for wisdom as we engage with students who are far away from home and find themselves in a world of uncertainties. We seek His guidance in our interactions and conversations with Chinese students. It's easy to succumb to anxiety and negativity, but our God is the Almighty One who holds the world in his hands, and nothing can frustrate his plan. We just need to firmly plant our trust in him, knowing he works all things for good.

Light shines the brightest in the dark. Our ministry is about sharing the light and hope of Christ. Pray that our COM missionaries' actions and words continue to reflect the peace and faith that come from knowing God. We want to share the good news that transcends borders and divisions. God still guides us to be beacons of his love and hope. With him as our shepherd, we can confidently face the future.

*When the storm surges over the sea, may we be found anchored in Christ!*

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

pg 2

**SNAPSHOTS FROM THE FIELD**  
Ministry Pivots



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pg 4

**CHINESE MINISTRY TESTIMONY**  
Finding a God Full of Love



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“Our God is the Almighty One who holds the world in his hands.”

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pg 6

**VOLUNTEER TESTIMONY**  
Purposeful Retirement

pg 8

**STAFF STORIES**  
Where His Path Leads

pg 10

**CULTURE-WISE**  
Glimpses of a Different China

pg 12

**MEMORIAL GIFTS**

**NEW STAFF**

pg 13

**CHINESE MINISTRY TESTIMONY**  
Continued from page 5



Ministry  
Pivots



As the landscape of Chinese student ministry is continually changing, COM staffers are discovering new ways to reach out and to build relationships. Though ministry approaches may evolve with the changing needs and interests of students, the vision remains: *Giving Christ to China's Future Leaders.*

**Phoebe Hoyle, Northeast Area**

Passionate for missions, Phoebe has been working with COM for more than 25 years. During this time she has experienced many changes in student ministry.

In the last few years, the number of Chinese students on Phoebe's local campus has decreased. Also, she finds that today's students are more independent and less likely to come to ministry events. Resilient, however, Phoebe presses forward in new ways. She goes to where the students are. And rather than prioritizing numbers, she and her team of volunteers focus individually on the students who respond.

Each week, Phoebe and her COM ministry team now host a small, informal lunch at the student center on campus. Phoebe uses social media to reach out individually to Chinese students and invite them. Having about three to five students attending

allows for one-to-one connections.

Phoebe finds that if she and other team members are too quick to talk about spiritual topics, the students may not come back. So instead, they build relationships and find opportunities to introduce the gospel in ways that apply directly to an individual student's situation.

For example, one student recently shared that she worked and studied 12 hours a day, seven days a week, until her brain could no longer function. Phoebe took this opportunity to explain how God created a Sabbath day for our rest, and she gave the young lady an inspirational autobiography of a Christian who shares of his life-changing encounter with Jesus.

Phoebe is encouraged and motivated as she sees the impact of intentional relationships. God keeps her going, she says, as he directs her path.

**Rebecca Daulton, Xin Luan and Ying Deng, Mid-Atlantic Area**

At one campus with historically large numbers of Chinese visiting scholars, the COM ministry team has seen a significant change—a growing number of undergraduates and young graduate students.

These students are often lonely. Rebecca and her teammates, married couple Xin and Ying, wanted to create a space for them to find community. Now, Xin and Ying open their home weekly for a multi-course Chinese meal and discussion time designed for this younger generation.

Rebecca says the students find the home space comfortable and the setting allows them to ask honest questions. They're now putting down their phones and talking to each other and to the leaders. They're trying to figure out life and steps for their future.

One student shared that he never had real friends before. Recently, he accepted Christ with one of the volunteers!

**Jessica, Mountain West Area**

Though the number of Chinese students has recently been decreasing at her campus, Jessica is thankful for the opportunity to go deeper with those who are here. One key to this success has been partnering with volunteers.

Jessica says she is so grateful for a growing number of volunteers in the local ministry. This fosters personal relationships and opportunities to care for the students individually. In response, it is exciting to see some students are moving from just having conversation partners to now attending Bible study after one or two semesters of friendship with the volunteers. "They are more open to faith," Jessica says, "and God is answering our prayers for students in very direct ways."

As Jessica and the volunteers are sharing the gospel, they are seeing people come to Christ. Jessica says, "I know it is God opening the doors, and I see his hand at work in the students' lives as he draws them closer."

# Finding a God Full of LOVE

By Rachel,  
A Chinese Sister in America

“I wanted to be a person who could smile beautifully.”

*When my husband, David, and I arrived in the United States one year ago, the first few weeks were tough for me. David was busy with his work as a post-doctoral scholar, but I had left behind my career in China. I had no friends here, and I was inexperienced with conversational English.*

*David wanted me to make friends, so he took me to a Chinese church. I also met an American couple, Marie and Lou, and their co-worker, Luke, with China Outreach Ministries.*

## My Faith Journey to Jesus

At first, I felt uncomfortable with church. I didn't want to feel controlled. I was cautious, and I asked challenging questions. I found that people were open to my questions, though. I could freely discuss my thoughts and be myself.

As I started to feel relaxed and safe, I began to make friends. I felt loved, and soon I realized I was not lonely anymore. Worship time was special for me also, and I felt peaceful affection in my heart.

During this time, I wanted to believe God, but I still struggled to believe. I felt strong emotions as I met with these caring people, however. I wanted to belong and to live in hope as they did.

I also started to join Marie, Lou, and Luke for weekly meetings. I saw again that Christians were full of love. Most impressive were their beautiful smiles. I wanted to be with these kind of people, and I wanted to be a person who could smile beautifully, too.

Then one day at Marie's house, my heart finally opened. I believed! I could pray from my heart, and God became real to me at that moment. It was like opening the door to a new world.

I wanted to know more about God, so I started reading the Bible myself. To understand the big picture, I started with Genesis, listening to audio recordings. In about three months, I listened to the whole Bible. As I trusted Jesus, my views—and the pursuit of my life—started to change.

## The Highs and Lows

Those early days of being a believer were an amazing high point in my life.

At one of our weekly meetings, Luke asked, "Is there anything you need God's help with that you can't achieve by yourself?" I realized yes, I did. I wanted to have a baby, but after six years of marriage, I was still waiting. As the group prayed, by a special power I had never known, I

drew closer to God. It was like having a heavy burden released. I couldn't help crying.

Then came the good news that I was going to have a baby. I was excited and full of hope. I still felt a little worried about the pregnancy, but Scripture eased the fears of my heart. At nine weeks in my pregnancy, however, there was no heartbeat. I knew that children are God's gift. How could this be? After miscarrying, I grieved my loss by staying home alone. I cried and didn't read the Bible.

David encouraged me to go back to church, and eventually I agreed. There were the same smiling people there, but my smile felt fake.

continued on pg 13...



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## Purposeful Retirement

By IMPACT Editor Tara Miller

**When Bob and Joanne Kraftson entered the “empty nest” stage almost 30 years ago, they were open to ideas for how they would invest their time during this new place in life. As God was directing their path, they didn’t realize then all he had in store for them.**

During their time of discovery, the Kraftsons visited a couple of churches that talked about international student ministry. “That struck a chord with us,” Bob said. And soon the new story began.

Bob and Joanne reached out to a campus ministry at the University of Minnesota, and they were referred to Glenn Kenadjian, a local staff member with China Outreach Ministries. At Glenn’s invitation, they attended a Chinese friendship dinner. During the event, they exchanged contact

information with two Chinese students, sparking what would become lifelong friendships.

The Kraftsons invited their new Chinese friend, Wei, to a Bible study they were starting. At Christmas, they had a gift exchange game, and Wei went home with a Christian book for skeptics. Before long he was answering questions that others in the study were asking. It was exciting and encouraging to watch Wei grow in faith. Bob and Joanne connected more and more to the local COM

ministry for the next several years, working alongside Glenn and COM staffers Tom and Kathy Lindstrom. They realized this was an ideal way for them to serve together as a couple.

The Kraftsons loved getting to know the students and learning about their culture. “We were aware of our call to share the gospel,” they said, “and this gave us a relationship-oriented opportunity to do that.” Along the way, they were blessed to see fruit from the ministry, such as their friend Wei becoming a Christian and growing to become active in ministry outreach himself.

As Bob and Joanne approached retirement, they began to think about next steps. Glenn encouraged them to transition into part-time ministry, and they agreed. They joined COM as “tentmakers,” unpaid staff members. They found that participating in staff retreats and conferences was an opportunity to be part of a larger ministry, and they developed meaningful relationships within the extended COM community.

In their expanded role, the Kraftsons served as local volunteer coordinators, organizing a network of more than 100 volunteers from about 20 churches. With each influx of students, volunteers provided airport pickups and homestays for large numbers of new arrivals. These bridge-building activities led to many students attending weekly friendship dinners and Bible study meetings.

When Glenn transitioned to a new

ministry assignment with COM in another state, the Kraftsons continued their volunteer engagement as team members with Tom and Kathy. Over the years, the COM Minneapolis team adapted to new ways of doing ministry as the needs of students changed.

A core part of the Kraftsons’ ministry now is a regular Bible study by Zoom. In this contemporary context, they are able to continue relationships with students who have moved away—including many who are back in China.

Along with their ongoing COM ministry involvement, the Kraftsons still have time for a variety of other interests, too—such as spending time with their adult children, traveling, and biking. Encouraging others who are approaching retirement, they recommend finding meaningful engagement such as they have found with COM. “Life expectancy is going up, and many people will have a long retirement,” they explain. “You’ll need something more to do than play golf.”

### IMAGINE YOUR OWN VOLUNTEERING JOURNEY

To explore possibilities in your area, reach out to a local COM staff member or contact Beau Miller, Director of Volunteer and Church Engagement:  
[bmiller@chinaoutreach.net](mailto:bmiller@chinaoutreach.net).

For more information, see [www.chinaoutreach.org](http://www.chinaoutreach.org) and go to “Serve.”

# Where His Path Leads

By Tara Miller, *IMPACT* Editor

Staff members with China Outreach Ministries come from varied backgrounds, and all have one-of-a-kind stories. Yet in every testimony, one shared truth shines.

*God is directing their paths.*



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*“God has led me to trust in him, not my own strength.”*

## Jessica

Mountain West Area  
Serving with COM since 2019

In China, Jessica had worked in the business world, but as a volunteer in her house church, she found a new calling. She knew God was leading her to a vocation in Christian Education.

Jessica came to pursue her master’s degree in Christian Education at an American university. During her first year of study, she experienced God’s amazing grace and assurance. She asked God, “Where do you want me to serve?” She then sensed his clear response: *The opportunity is right here on campus.*

One day, after Jessica prayed for God to open doors, she went to the international office and began to meet international students. God answered her prayers by bringing students into her life, eventually leading to part-time college ministry with her local church. As she connected with others in outreach, she got to know a staff worker with China Outreach Ministries and began to consider full-time service.

Exploring ministry possibilities, Jessica attended a COM staff conference. She was moved to see so many of the staff were Americans who cannot speak Chinese but love Chinese people so much. She was attracted by the love and support they showed one another like a family. She also realized—*I have no language barrier. Why not?* And so her COM journey began.

—Read more about Jessica’s ministry on page 3.



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## Zhiyuan

Mountain West Area  
Serving with COM since 2021

*“As I considered my calling, I asked God—What is the meaning of my life?”*

Graduating from seminary, Zhiyuan was planning for vocational church ministry. Then he began to rethink his direction, asking himself—*Where is my passion? Where is God leading?*

After a long struggle, God began to show Zhiyuan the meaning of his calling: *Only the gospel can save China.* But where would this lead him? Around this time, he also had vivid dreams about his college life. Thinking of his classmates, he remembered that some of the best times of his life were in college.

Zhiyuan contacted a friend who was serving students and scholars. His friend introduced him to COM, and Zhiyuan was willing to consider this path. When Daniel Su explained COM’s vision—reaching young professionals who would be the future of China—this resonated deeply with Zhiyuan. He realized—*this is my calling.*

Since joining COM staff, Zhiyuan says he has cherished the gospel-based culture of the organization, and he is energized by the students. Being Chinese himself gives Zhiyuan a language and culture advantage, he says, and he is excited about passing the faith to the next generation.

## Joe May

Southeast Area  
Serving with COM since 2007

*“I realized right away—this was the kind of group I wanted to be with.”*

Twenty-five years ago, serving in campus ministry with American students, Joe and his wife Liz reached a pivotal point. Their organization was encouraging overseas work, so when they learned about a faith-based company with schools and business offices in rapidly changing East Asia, they decided to make the move.

Living internationally was a reframing experience for the May family. As they began to consider a return to America nine years later, East Asia was, by then, forever in their hearts.

Soon a providential Google search led them to China Outreach Ministries.

After contacting the COM office, Joe met with the organization’s leaders and his prospective teammate, Dorothy Boothe, in Georgia. When they all “really hit it off,” the pathway was clear. This led Joe and Liz to what has now been 15 years in Chinese student ministry.

Today, Joe says he is still “loving COM.” He is blessed by the relationships and grateful for open opportunities to share the gospel. “I’ve never encountered another group I’d rather be part of,” he concludes.





# GLIMPSES OF A DIFFERENT CHINA

By an anonymous staff member in the Mountain West Area



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## MOBILE PAYMENTS, HIGH-SPEED TRAINS, AND EXPRESS FOOD DELIVERY.

During a visit to China last summer, I was struck by a scene markedly different from my previous trips, even four years ago.

As I observed how modern technology and conveniences have reshaped everyday life in such a short time, I began to think about Chinese students in the United States who are coming from this new context. *How will this super-charged environment affect their worldview and their expectations in America?*

Newly arriving students from China have been immersed in a high-tech, high-speed way of life. Understanding this and responding thoughtfully helps us in building relationships with them. Here are just a few glimpses of the new China.

**Glimpse 1:** Installing popular apps on your cellphone and linking them to your bank account can fulfill almost all your purchasing needs. Users are willing to accept the trade-off of sacrificing personal privacy for the benefits of these services.

**Glimpse 2:** The efficiency of high-speed trains is truly impressive. The cities I visited span the northeast, north, and east provinces of China, and the modern train network seamlessly connects them. Today's younger students are accustomed to travel and enthusiastic for new experiences.

**Glimpse 3:** Food express delivery workers can be spotted all over the streets, swiftly navigating the city at all hours, often on electric bikes. Students enjoy the convenience of these deliveries, and they continue to utilize these services when they arrive in America.

*All the glitz, however, is a façade for what's happening in people's lives.*

After almost four years of wrestling with COVID-19, most people recognize the pandemic's deep impact on society and personal lives. Further, China's economic outlook is far from optimistic. Many people are actively pursuing career changes and willingly extending their work hours for financial gain.

It's against this hectic backdrop that I came to realize the profound extent of the spiritual needs in China. As the entire society is engulfed in a pervasive atmosphere of materialism and the worship of wealth, it is difficult for people to engage in deep contemplation of faith.

Despite the many challenges, however, I also witnessed God's unwavering faithfulness throughout our journey. The Almighty Lord reigns, and he is eager to deliver the gospel through us, despite our unworthiness.

## Applications for Reaching Out to Chinese Students in America

➤ Regardless of technology, relevant ministry approaches are grounded in relationships. Go where students are and make friends with the attitude of learning from them.

➤ If students have travel plans for the holidays, connect with them on ordinary days instead. A well-designed day trip, outdoor recreation, or going to the gym together are all good opportunities.

➤ Effective gospel discussions will require a solid foundation of personal relationships. Invest meaningful time in a few key individuals. They may become your faithful co-workers!

## Memorial Gifts

### Charles Jacoby

*Mr. Jesse Burns*

### William Rowley

*Mr. Jesse Burns*

### Carl Sanders

*Mr. Jeron Rhodes*

### Rosie Wagoner

*Rev. and Mrs. Robert Bedison Jr.*

*Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Kalina*

*Dr. and Mrs. Terrence R. Snyder*

### Robert Walz

*Mr. and Mrs. Kjell Eriksson*

*Ms. Rosalie Townsend*



COM is a member of the  
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Financial Accountability.

## Welcome New Staff Members

COM is delighted to welcome two new staff members. Please include these workers in your prayers.

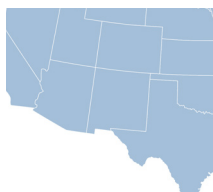
### Northeast Area

After serving as a COM affiliate for the last several months, Mark now joins our staff. He will continue ministry in his current location, working in a university community with a large population of Chinese students and young professionals. With an educational and vocational background in business, Mark was led through his active church involvement to serve in full-time ministry.



### Mountain West Area

Another new staffer joins COM after completing a seminary degree and working as an affiliate in a local COM ministry for the last year. With many years of experience in media and the arts, she continues to use her professional talents and heart for outreach in campus ministry.



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*Continued from pg 5...*

I wanted to return to the high point of when I had first believed. I felt I was falling apart. I tried to read the Bible, but a voice was telling me this was not real. I asked God, "Did you give up on me?" I had believed God had chosen me. But now I doubted, which left me feeling guilty for having little faith.

### Returning to a Loving God

Then I heard a sermon about Peter denying Jesus. But Jesus didn't give up on him, I realized. My guilt was lifted, and I began to rediscover God's love. The wall I had built was broken. I was free and could believe anew.

Gradually, I started to grow in my faith again. It took me a long time to realize that not having a baby must be God's plan, at least for now. Though I was still sad about the

miscarriage, I felt peace—like a soft hand on me.

Now, God is still at work in my life as I follow Jesus. I recognize when I fail to forgive or when I am selfish, and I confess my sin. I also rejoice to share that David and I were recently baptized! We trust God to guide us, and more and more, I see that he is full of love.



Please pray for Rachel and David as they continue to grow in faith, and for God's guidance in their careers and the possibilities for their future. Public professions of faith could bring negative consequences professionally, so please pray they will be wise in sharing their faith and that God would remove barriers.



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## 2024 Celebration *Dinners!*

### **Dallas, Texas**

*Thursday, March 7*

Doors open at 6 pm

Southfork Ranch, Parker

### **Harrisburg, Pennsylvania**

*Thursday, April 4*

Doors open at 6 pm

Sheraton Hotel, Swatara Exit

### **Washington, DC**

*Friday, April 5*

Doors open at 6:45 pm

Fairview Park Marriott, Falls Church

### **Canton, Ohio**

*Monday, April 15*

Doors open at 6 pm

Hartville Kitchen

### **Erie, Pennsylvania**

*Tuesday, April 16*

Doors open at 6 pm

Ambassador Center

*Dinner is complimentary. Look for registration information coming to you soon. If you have any questions, please call 717.591.3500.*