



SHIC Family Retreat

My wife, Dayna, and I (Kevin) and our two kids have been living in Shenyang, China now for a year and a half. Our main focus has been disability ministry, although a large component of this focus is on our local volunteers. We have many volunteers from area universities and social clubs who join us to make a difference. Our prayer is to make a lasting eternal impact on both the volunteers and the families affected by disabilities.

One ministry project that we offer is the Family Retreat. We partner with Joni and Friends International to minister to children with special needs and their families. This year, we held the retreat at a four-star hotel and a total of 22 families attended. Several of the children had multiple disabilities. We had children with Autism, Down's syndrome and emotional disorders. We had a few who were blind or deaf. Our kids ranged from 17 years old to 3 years old. We had to really increase our group of volunteers to be able to double up for many of the kids. Especially at the beginning, we were overwhelmed. A day of training was provided before the retreat began, but volunteers often lamented to me, "We just don't know what to do." It was hard. In all, we brought in 50 local volunteers to help at the retreat.

Thankfully, there were some great victories with the kids. One girl with multiple disabilities could not talk, although she could say "Mama," which she often did. She could only stay strapped in her wheelchair. A Christian Chinese family had adopted her from the orphanage; her biological parents had literally thrown her away. At one point during performances for the parents, the girl started crying. Her volunteer sought to soothe her when her mother explained, "She is moved by the song." Five children were singing the Chinese theme song of Max Lucado's "You are special," which was the retreat's focus for the kids.

A boy named Leo was also in tears. On Sunday morning, he was crying because he was so upset. We never could figure out why exactly. Then, on Monday morning, during the closing ceremony, he was crying again, seemingly inconsolable. *(Continued on page 3)*



IVM Becomes a 501(c) (3) Corporation

As the Board of Directors, Kevin, Dave & I, are pleased to announce that the International Village Inc qualifies as a public charity under section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. Internal Revenue Code effective June 12, 2013. This allows for contributions to the ministry to be considered tax deductible for U.S. taxpayers.

The IVM primary objective is to increase communication across ethnic cultures for the sake of the Gospel. The specific purpose is to create/locate gospel resources and reach out in friendship to their ethnic neighbors, to share stories of followers of Jesus around the world with business owners and professionals.

There are Six (6) Primary Activities:

1. Preach and teach the Word of God John and Kevin preach in area churches, where there is strong focus on international student ministry. Delivering the message in their mother tongues is critical. The purpose of the activity is sharing God's message in a culturally sensitive manner helps build bridges between different cultures to change lives of these international students. *(Continued on page 2)*

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The SIF: My first visit was on Oct 21, 2012, and I (John) worshipped in this beautiful church building numerous times. My prayer, however, is that our One and Only True God is known in the hearts of all Chinese rather than a magnificent facility. This government sponsored (Suzhou Committee of Three-Self Patriotic Movement of the Protestant Churches in China, National TSPM) and China Christian Council (CCC) built beautiful church (picture) by the Dushu Lake on an acre land 5600 square meters (62,278 sq ft) housing 2100 worshipers, costing 39 million RMB (or about US\$6.5 million) and dedicated on May 28, 2010.



Wedding of Ji Haifeng & Wang Lu on Aug 5, 2012

Trinity Chinese Baptist Church held a Wedding recognition ceremony on August 5 celebrating the union of this precious couple. The day before the ceremony the couple came to May & John's home for a counseling session. When Pastor Long officiated the Wedding Recognition Program, sister Li-Wen Huang and brother Michael Hsing acted as witnesses in signing Haifeng Ji/Lu Wang's Wedding Certificate. Many of Haifeng's friends attended the ceremony (as shown in the picture).

IVM Becomes a 501(c) (3) Corporation (continued from page 1)

2. Making resources available through the internet. People may access Biblical resources in many languages by web links. They will also receive discipleship help in various languages. Chinese believers may also benefit from John's bi-lingual sermons in English and Chinese.

3. Enhancing communications and assisting Chinese speaking International students on US campuses desiring to learn English. The purpose of the activity is helping people grow in English language skills to close cultural gaps. In the past, we encouraged believers, who are native English speakers, to go be on campus where international students come and learn spoken English. People came to know the Lord as time went by, when 'we earned the right to be heard'.

4. Working with international church in China with missionaries in the group, take root in China and establish home study group or educational opportunities. This will help bridge the gap between various cultures in church and educational settings. John Long returned from China on August 12, 2013 from a 21-day trip (and Feb 8, 2012 after a 19-day visit), during which he visited and encouraged local Chinese churches. Kevin and Dayna left for China in March 2012 where they would 100% focus on evangelism although working as a professional in humanitarian aid. By working with a group of special needs children in China, they reach out also to their parents and local community.

5. Network with other ethnic leaders. John knows most of the ethnic pastors in Oklahoma churches and has regular fellowship with them. Ethnic people, specifically in Oklahoma, believers and non-believers; lay leaders or pastors will benefit from further consultation and resources across all denominations. People with ethnicity tend to have weaker connection with mainstream culture in America. Including them in an ethnic church or ministry opportunity grants us a chance to witness for Christ.

6. Helping missionaries build web pages to increase communications. Missionaries who approach us or whom we would be able to support will find us helpful in communicating and furthering their purpose of missions. Foreign missionaries tend to lack resources to bridge cultural gaps. Web pages established for missionaries in Uganda, Zambia, and Mozambique have proven to be helpful in communicating their purpose of missions to the US groups of believers.

TCBC family of God

What a joyful moment it was on Easter Sunday, April 9, 2012 when TCBC celebrated the baptism service for sister LIU Wen, and her mom sister CHEN Yonghong, as well as brother WANG Jie!

I (John) was reminded of the Scriptures in Romans 6:3-4, "Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life." (NIV)

We who are baptized live a new life in Christ, are buried or crucified with Christ, and enjoy victory in Christ through baptism into Him! Paul contended that those who have been justified by Christ have died to the power of sin, which no longer has enslaving power. Since we are dead to sin and its power, we must realize that we have new life in Christ and not yield ourselves to unrighteousness (Romans 6:8-14). Paul declared the duty of every Christian to reject sin and do what is right, such as being baptized, as baptism marks this experience of new life received in Christ.

Chen Yonghong found her new life through an unintentional plan – to watch over her daughter out of concern for her safety. As a teenager, Liu Wen and her girlfriends liked to go to Christian church in Shenzhen, and went a long way across town to do this. When Yonghong decided one day to follow her daughter up, she found herself in a worship service crying like a baby upon hearing a moving message.

Let's encourage one another to continue the good work for Christ's sake!

His mother, who chose to follow Christ this weekend, explained what was happening. She said that prior to this retreat, her son had distanced himself emotionally. He hardly ever cried. Now, he was opening up, showing when he was sad and when he was happy. His tears of happiness stemmed from the cloth bags that the children in Texas decorated for the children. He was so happy that a child in America would care enough to give him a bag.



In addition to ministering to the families, we had a very special addition to our family retreat. This year was the first time our retreat offered seminars and a banquet to adults with disabilities. So as the children with disabilities were enjoying the outdoors, and their parents were receiving training and encouragement, 60 adults were in a different conference room to hear "Fly Higher" inspirational speeches. We had asked four of our guest speakers to share twice: once for the parents and once for the 60 adults.

This special addition was something God clearly wanted. Up until a few weeks before the retreat, it wasn't in our plans at all. We hadn't budgeted for it. We hadn't made preparations for it with the hotel. We hadn't received permission from government authorities to host such seminars for the adults. The fact that it happened at all is remarkable; it just fell in our laps, so to speak.

The first three speakers of the morning were part of the Joni and Friends (JAF) team. They did great. Jodie taught ideas related holistic health. Laurie taught exercises adapted for their needs. Mike King, the leader of the JAF team, told about his life-changing wheelchair journey from Alaska to Washington D.C., and he talked about the impact of helping others who were disabled. He had coached a girl who became a gold medalist at the 2008 Beijing Paralympics. His story is truly inspiring.

Then it was time for Dr. Zhang Xu to speak. He is a doctor who was paralyzed from a diving accident and who translated Joni Eareckson Tada's autobiography into simplified Chinese (the language used for mainland China). We had been earnestly praying for him because his health had been too poor to travel. We did not know until two days before the retreat began whether he could come. We were so glad that he was able to.

When he first began to speak, only a few could hear him. The conference room was large, and his voice is soft. There was not an adequate microphone stand that could reach him. A general murmur around the room grew louder, making things worse. My friend Samuel, who had been translating for Mike King and me earlier, indicated that someone needed to hold the microphone for him. "I'll do it," I said. Samuel tried to stop me, saying he would do it. "No," I said. "It's important that I do it."

Especially in Chinese culture, I knew that it would make a loud statement if I were the one to hold the microphone. In my own mind, I'm just Kevin; holding a microphone was miniscule. It's the least I could do. But in the eyes of the audience, I was the leader and organizer of the event. I was the American. For me to hold the microphone would be profound. I would be showing that Dr. Zhang was the honored one, higher than me. With eagerness, I sat down and held the microphone for Dr. Zhang. "It's my joy to do this," I told him. And indeed, it was my favorite moment of the family retreat.

The reaction was larger than I had expected. The room went silent. Numerous cameras came out, including one belonging to a reporter (with the Chinese equivalent of the Associated Press). And everyone listened intently to what Dr. Zhang had to say. Within five minutes, a man from among the audience came and asked to take a turn. Then several minutes later, one of our new volunteers took over. It became a privilege to hold the microphone for Dr. Zhang. After Dr. Zhang's message was finished, the adults thankfully received a copy of the book Joni. In all, including the parents later, we gave out 100 copies of Joni Eareckson Tada's story translated by Dr. Zhang.



Encouragements in Fruits Unseen

On Dec 15, 2012, May and I were invited to lead a Bible Study group hosted by Youfang & Fengjun Zhang family. We were asked to share the topic of Marriage Enrichment with a group of former TU Students: Yaqing & Yannong Dong, Mae & Huanwen Cui, Yi-Li & Yong Zhao, Nancy & Guohua Gao, Yongqian Fan & Yongfeng Kang – amongst other new friends they made over the years.

Most of these people left Tulsa as non-believers, but are now planted in area churches of Houston and not only they are strong believers, but also leaders in many ways and many capacities! Among the most inspiring stories are Hua Zhang & Weihong Meng's daughter, who was born premature, with many disabilities, still couldn't stand up but was used by God mightily as the parents bore the burdens, faithfully led Bible Studies at home. Numerous cell groups grew out from that family because of the little girl's faith and her parents' faithful stewardship and beautiful testimonies!

Our spirit was revitalized as we witnessed the growth of this amazing group of people. By God's grace, we get to see these in our lifetime. Forgive us for our little faith, and dependence upon faith by sight.

(Note: Six months prior to this time, I was truly delighted to have met many of them including also Anna & Tom Shi in Jingjiang restaurant and appreciated greatly their hospitality and warm reception.)

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God's Leading for John

Something interesting and exciting happened on Sunday, July 14th, and I thought it would be good to share with you. A lady by the name of Holly Hair came to Trinity Chinese Fellowship for a testimony (she is a Global Leaders Trainer for Perspectives). And it was obvious that the Spirit came upon her, and she was so anointed as she shared her life story. She talked about a life map and a quote from Watchman Née - the breaking of outer man for the release of inner spirit. I identified with her on many life events which are clear marks of God. Yet, for many years, I've not felt empowered and used by God like I once was! I felt so settled for less - even though God has already blessed us with so much. He has more to offer, and yet I have not yielded (or broken my outer man)...yes sometimes more is less.

Several times in that hour, I wept, and then cried like a baby - tears literally were pouring out. That is OK - it was an encounter with God. It is the Spirit working in my life. He moved me to my emotions to be more easily connected with Him and get my attention.

Now, I'm wide open - even if am going into full-time ministry! Yes, that is to quit my job for Him if need be! In the ensuing months, my life happenings have led to a clear choice: starting my own consulting firm, which will build a platform for ministry to operate from and sustain. This will allow for continued passion in marketplace ministry working with both corporate America and corporate China like where I have been in the past 25 years, ministering to business owners and professionals. A friend of mine recently introduced me to a great ministry in Grand Rapids, MI which is to strongly focus on China and have truly global operations. I would like to be a part of that. Whatever it is, so long as it is the Spirit leading, I'll go. My heart is for the nations to come to Him (Isaiah 60).

At this time, I have a shared vision and burden to reach out to Chinese students & scholars with several local churches in OKC. John's current ministry focuses of preaching and teaching in Trinity Chinese Baptist Church ministering to OK City Univ. <http://www.okctcbc.org/> and Univ. of OK thru <http://www.trinitynorman.org/chinese.html> as well as Southern Oklahoma Chinese Baptist Church www.socbc.org. And the para-church ministry I've the privilege of leading is found at <http://www.international-village.org/> along with my book and literature evangelism emphasis thru <http://www.wherestrangerscross.org/>.

My wife lately keeps telling me God is up to something and although we don't know what it is, she has been praying for me daily to seek His will for my life. We pray for you too, and if there is anything specific we can pray for you about, please let us know. Keep me in prayer also. Until then, may God bless you richly! John

Get Involved!

You can be a part of International Village by praying, telling others about IVM, and financial partnership. Please let us know if you would be willing to be a partner by mailing this form, calling or emailing. God bless

Prayer Partner

Financial Partner

Share The Vision

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Prayer

- God's leading in John's life.
- Kevin & family health, safety and ministry life.
- Dave's time management and ministry balance.
- IVM's ministry outreach.
- Leadership for Oklahoma City Chinese churches.
- Wisdom and humility as we live "Coram Deo".
- SHIC ministry to disabled children and youth.
- Internet ministry effectiveness and growth.
- International student ministry in the US.
- That each of us would love God and His people.





Baptism of 5 people on July 30, 2010

I (John) was invited to speak a couple of times at a house church in Shenzhen. My late mother-in-law asked me then if I could share a message with the usual group of fellowship she had been a part of. It is a tent meeting. I asked 'what do the people like to learn?' 'Baptism and communion,' she said. Wow!

They didn't ask about getting out of some troubles, or how to overcome financial burdens, or like any of those we often ask here. I said I would be glad to teach on the meaning and purpose of baptism and would officiate a Holy Communion so that they experience both ordinances on the same day. My wife, May, got busy with preparing the bread and wine. These kinds of supplies were not readily available in China (at least where I was). May did a really good job making for the first time in her life 'tasteless bread without yeast.' That afternoon, three people were baptized! To God be the glory!

There was absolutely no credit on my part, as I didn't invest my life in them; I didn't even know them until that day. Before stepping into that room of about 15 people, I was a little fearful. But as I began to interact with them, I could see God with them - this fellowship of believers was truly seeking God! And the leader, Sister Sun, was a huge blessing to us. She is a realtor, but between works, she made the phone calls for invitation, prepared the rooms, got snacks ready, and helped everybody get situated, then joint-led the songs! (Two days later, I baptized two more people.)

Shenyang, China on August 4, 2013

Can you imagine a restaurant in a major city of northeast China, to which the clients will be prayed for and hymns be sung while food is being served (out in the public)?! This is the restaurant as reported in the documentary video 'Cross - Jesus in China' and one I experienced with the Averys when I visited them on August 4. In this Christian-run Chinese business (Huaxia People's Village), Bible verses are displayed on the walls, and biblical stories are pictured. The People's Village is located on a mountaintop on the outskirts of Shenyang and next to it is a Seminary.



Casual Encounter - Exceptional Experiences in Suzhou

Subway, China: I (John) got on Suzhou Subway Line 1 and a young man sat next to me. He flipped his iPhone up and immediately started reading. I figured that this was typical of almost all youngsters today. There were scores of them playing games, listening to music, or texting. This young man was kind of quiet, and attentive in reading something on his phone. Out of curiosity, I peeked on his screen, and amazingly, he was reading the Bible! I later came to know that he was doing his assignment as a part of local house church Bible study. As you see, the atmosphere towards Christianity is rather open nowadays in most coastal cities!

Alipay on March 4, 2013

Another experience with I had with major Chinese corporation is Alipay, in which an 'Alipay Bible Study group' was housed in their corporate towers in Hangzhou, China. On Monday, March 4, I spoke to a fine group of young people in a Bible study format as follows:

6:45-7:15p.m. Hymnal Slides

7:15-7:30p.m. Testimony

7:30-8:15p.m. Message on 'Faith'

8:15-8:30p.m. Question & Response (Open format - any biblical or personal questions)

8:30-8:45p.m. Prayers (praise report from previous week, and new request of this week)



Bible verses are displayed on the walls, and biblical stories are pictured