



Grace across China NOW

“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son.” John 3:16

District Convention Report – Summer 2026

A farmer scatters seed. Then he sleeps. He gets up. He goes about his days. Meanwhile... without his help, without his understanding, without his control, the seed is doing something remarkable beneath the soil. That's exactly what Jesus describes in Mark 4:26-29, and it's exactly what we see in the work of 316NOW.

Our calling is simple: scatter the seed of the Gospel among Chinese people. We plant it through **online courses**, translating and broadcasting the Word into living rooms and onto phone screens across the Chinese-speaking world. We plant it through **outreach**, raising up leaders to carefully and kindly share the truth wherever they can. We plant it through **leadership training**, equipping Chinese lay leaders to sow that same seed among the generations to come. We plant it through **Bible interpretation and materials distribution**, putting God's living Word into the hands that have never held it before. And then? We trust.

Jesus is clear: the farmer doesn't make the seed grow. He doesn't lie awake at night figuring out the biology of germination. He plants. Yet it is God who produces. *All by itself, the soil produces grain.* That is our confidence. Every course, every class, every conversation, every printed material — these are seeds scattered in faith. God's Word carries its own power. The harvest belongs to him. So, we plant on, faithfully, patiently, joyfully.

Grace Bible Institute (Pastor Kevin S, Administrator)

Spring Grace Bible Institute (GBI) Program – Most of the classes began after the Chinese New Year break, so around the second week of March. Our Fall participation was higher than at any time since COVID hit. Our liaison pastor has reviewed the student roster, gained contact information for our new students, and classified where they were in China or beyond. There were many new students who could be considered Expats.



Website Work - The website for Grace Bible Institute will continue to grow in usage for our teachers & students. This new, built-from-the-ground-up website, using current technology, has made it easier for students to see and get materials, teachers to know who their students are, and volunteers to keep it up to date. The new website has been curated and is now available.

Student Communication - Our liaison has been working through a network of sub-liaisons in order for us to maintain communication with our student body. Our goal is for all of our students to use email for this purpose. (That is a major undertaking because most of our students have never used email.) WeChat is carefully monitored by the authorities, and if our students use it, they could jeopardize our entire student body. We are gently but consistently encouraging our students to only use email for communication about GBI.

Repression of Christianity in China - One of our goals is to facilitate and train laity for confessional Lutheran church groups in China. Achieving that goal is becoming more and more difficult because Chinese authorities have been strengthening their control over all religious communities, increasingly cracking down on unregistered places of worship, faith leaders, and religious activities. And yet the Lord allows the seed to be sown and take root, sometimes in the most unusual places.

Expatriate Outreach (Pastor James E, Administrator)

Our plan currently is to try to recruit and start a new cohort of N. American students in one of our basic classes. Pastor Paul has been following up on those who show interest. A couple of examples were included in this recent Ministry Blog: [MINISTRY / Seeds of the gospel sown in Europe](#). Pastor Paul will also be the one to vet them as potential students and direct them if/when they want to enter classes.

Engagement – We continue to make changes in order to get expatriate students involved. We continue to post ads through Facebook. Plus, we analyzed the landing page and added our curriculum so that they can see we have a serious and thoughtful approach to our training. In the last few weeks, we have seen a great uptick in contacts by Chinese-speaking people. Overall, our ads perform at a high rate, and our response rate is not bad for our target audience.

Videos – Ruth (pseudonym) has helped us enhance the introductory videos with PowerPoint, illustrations, and B-roll (generic pictures and film footage). Our goal is that when a student visits our website, we will give them some options to explore our teachings in Mandarin and hopefully want further information.

Connecting with Chinese ministries – We are getting to know our expatriate ministries better. Through these dialogues, we will find ways to work together with established North American groups so we can learn from them. It is our goal to grow leaders who will creatively and passionately share the gospel with their brothers and sisters from China.



*The **Diaspora of the Chinese people** (this is a Greek word that means the “dispersion or spread of a people from their original homeland”) has opened doors all over the world as huge numbers of people leave the mainland for a better life. Click this link [DIASPORA](#) for a detailed explanation of the numbers, and this for the [impact on expatriate strategies](#) across Christianity.*

Mentoring Counseling Ministry (Pastor Adam G, Administrator)

Monthly Interaction – our monthly meetings help us to focus on issues in the field and build a collaboration with WELS missionaries. Our WELS’s mainland China “champion” has joined us regularly, offering a wider perspective for planning and encouragement.

Island interest – We met with friends from our sister church in Hong Kong to get a perspective on what they’ve done over the past 15+ years in teaching/training these church leaders in this location. First, we have to gauge our capacity (enough teachers, interpreters) to be able to pick up on what they have been doing. We’re comparing our curriculum with what has been taught in the past. We’re particularly interested in whether there are any security concerns for any of our Chinese brothers who might interact with them.

Counseling – Whenever we can assist pastors, congregations, or house churches on how to develop their ministry, we rejoice. We are, as the Apostle Paul described in 2 Corinthians 5, ambassadors of reconciliation.

Mission Advancement (Pastor Jim K, Administrator)

Fall Activity – This was a very busy season for our Advancement work. We completed the Surprise Capital Campaign. Our leaders assembled with our Board of Directors' secretary to review the overall campaign report and determine what our responses might be. We are already beginning to pursue recommendations from that meeting.

Endowment & Legacy gifts – Jim K has published a new brochure called *Your Plan*, which we will add to our displays and send out in our 2027 IRS mailing. Jim K continues to develop the background documents and procedures that we need to build an endowment fund and offer estate planning help through our synod's gift counselors. Right now, Rick Kneser, a former WELS Giving Counselor, is our lead for anyone who inquires about advanced planning or legacy gifts. Our Mission Advancement Team often consults Bloomerang advisors to learn how we can advance our advancement work, learn best practices to benefit our online giving relationships, and streamline our communication.

Family & Marriage (No Current Administrator)

316NOW continues to work on a clearinghouse for marriage and family materials that Chinese church leaders can use to train families for a better, more biblical balance in marriage and parenting. Up to this point, we have defined our strategy and gathered resources. We're in a holding pattern as we recruit a leader for this work. We continue to pray that we might find the right person at the right time to move this effort forward.

Sheep to Lambs (Bob F, Administrator)

This division equips Chinese Christians to teach children about God's grace in Jesus. This is important in China because it's illegal to teach anyone under 18 about the Bible. Sunday schools, Christian camps, and Christian schools no longer exist in China. *Sheep to Lambs* provides training and lesson materials so any teacher can be successful. It also provides age-appropriate and biblically sound materials for students. Parents will be directed to these lessons by church leaders (pastors, deaconesses, teachers) for use in their homes. In addition, lessons have been written instructing leaders in the best way to guide parents in their efforts.



From our Liaison (Pastor Paul, pseudonym)

Translations – the AI revolution has truly lightened our load in terms of raw translation, as its accuracy from English into Mandarin has improved. As a result, Pastor Paul was able to add a new bilingual study during this cycle of preparation (Evangelism) by finishing and reviewing the translation. He also coordinates and assigns interpreters for instructional sessions as needed.

Sub-Liaisons - Pastor Paul has been in touch with and is building a relationship with our sub-liaisons. These are our communicators to various groups around the mainland, the ones who get the word out to the students when we recruit for new classes or when we need to alert/share something with each study group. Many of them also serve as interpreters for us.

Student Body - Pastor Paul will continue to search out students when he has their contact information and when they are comfortable with communication coming from the US. He is working with Kevin S to further expand our email addresses, to keep a student contact list (very private), and to keep them informed through the sub-liaisons

Our student body has continued to grow, and we're discussing the island situation as a separate and distinct study group, if that relationship develops. We are continuing discussions with ALS in order to clarify which prospective students are best suited for GBI and which individuals would be better directed toward ALS programs and resources.



Class & Security – Pastor Paul will continue to interpret/teach alongside Kevin S and Bob B in our curriculum. He is also advising us on how to tie the classes and curriculum into the Expatriate outreach efforts. Late in 2025, after several evangelical pastors were arrested, he researched and reviewed safety concerns. His Security Research Report was given to our Board of Directors.

Annual Meeting — Our Board of Directors will meet again in June to review the overall health of our organization, adjust our strategic plans for future ministry, and advise our executive team on how to improve our daily

operations.

Informing Confessional Lutherans

316NOW shares information about Chinese culture with American Christians. God has been remarkably generous to China, the most populous nation in the world. We share the stories of those blessings.

We also highlight the spiritual challenges there so believers here can consider how God has positioned them to help. You'll find our blog at 316NOW.org/connect.

316NOW makes presentations to congregations, Bible study groups, Sunday schools, elementary schools, youth groups, and gatherings of friends. Our pastors are also available for preaching at worship services or handling a Mission Festival. Depending on the number of questions and comments during the presentation, our presentation will be between 45 and 60 minutes. Our presentations can be in-person or online. We prefer that our travel costs be covered; that allows us to use those funds for ministry in China. However, we are happy to work with any groups as we are able.

We completed our annual [15 Days of Prayer](#) effort on March 3. Thank you for inviting your members to participate. We offer a [free prayer guide](#) that can be used during any month.

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. 1 Corinthians 15:58

More information

You'll find more information about 316NOW on our website: 316NOW.org.

Email us at 316NOW@316NOW.org

Sign up to receive occasional email updates here:



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Rev. Kevin S -Education; **Rev. James K** – Advancement; **Rev. James E** – Expat; **Rev. Adam G** - Mentor/Counsel; **Bob F** -Sheep to Lambs

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