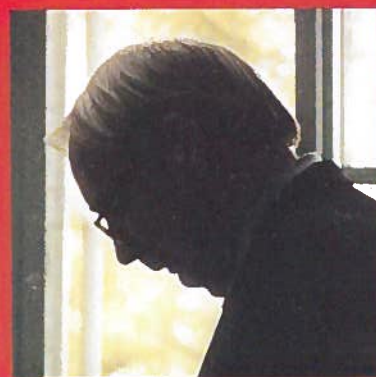
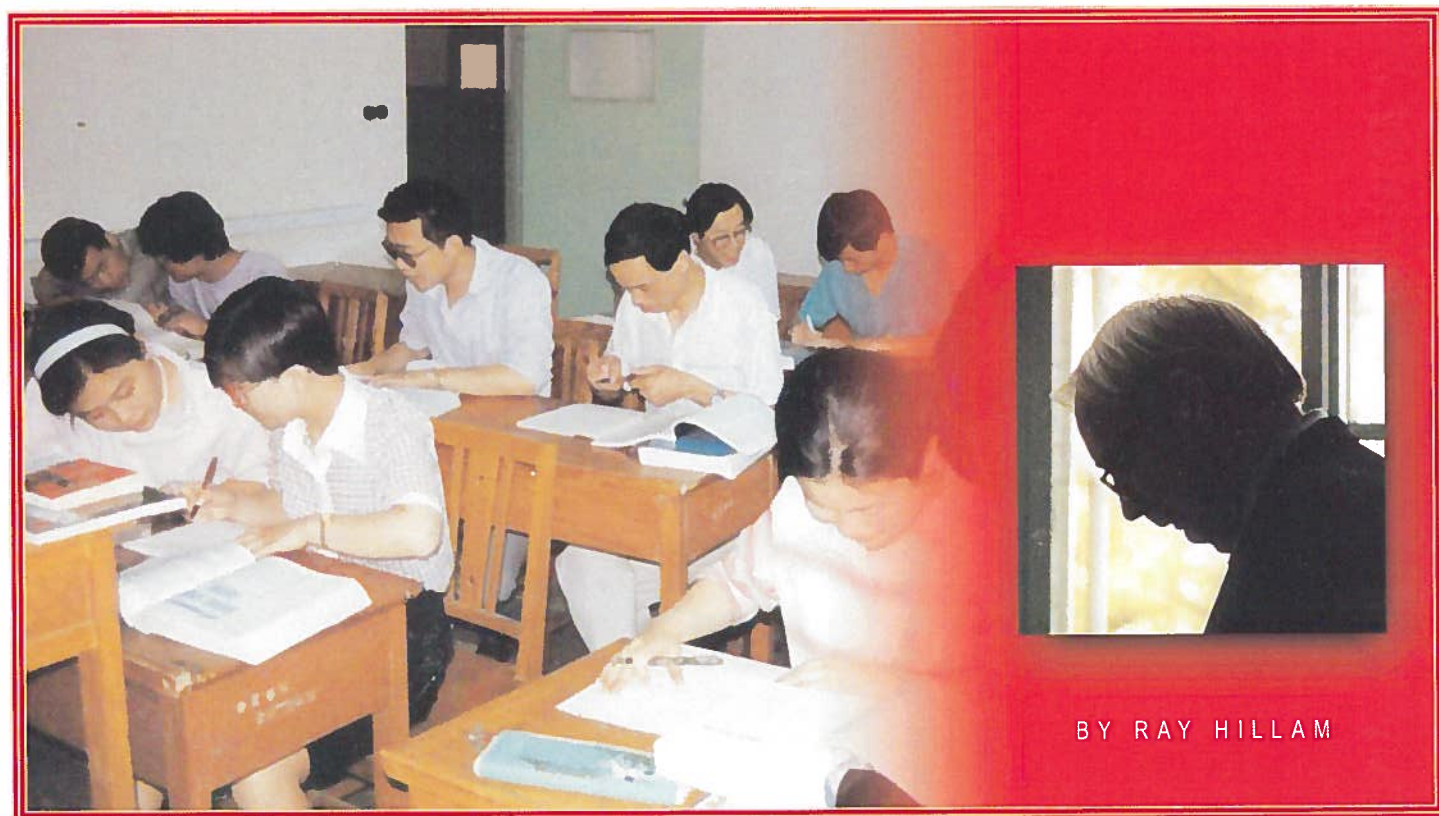


**CHINA**  
**TEACHERS**  
**PROGRAM:**  
**A PERSONAL RECORD**



BY RAY HILLAM



**“HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO SPEND A YEAR IN CHINA?”** This question was asked of Doug and Corene Parker who were enjoying retirement. “You’ve got to be kidding,” they said. They went home and prayed about it, and the next day they were ready to go. Doug said he received his inspiration while in the shower. This story has been repeated in different ways over and over again. Smith and Katie Broadbent, Ted and Doris Warner, Del and Kathryn Gardner, Morris and Donna Petersen, Sterling and Carole Otteson, and Howard and Colleen Biddulph are just a few of the retired couples who can relate much the same experience.

Each year, the China Teachers Program of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies recruits, screens, trains, and places approximately sixty volunteer professionals with two dozen or more colleges and universities in China. Most are retired professionals and teachers with graduate degrees. Some are mid-career professionals and others are students. They teach mostly English, but also current events, history, law, business, and other subjects. According to George Pace (he and his wife, Diane, were teachers and facilitated the program twice), during the last twelve years the center has sponsored more than five hundred volunteers and has had contact with as many as 100,000 Chinese students.

### Getting Under Way

This teaching program, like so many other BYU initiatives in China, was encouraged by President Spencer W. Kimball’s inquiry at the October 1978 conference for Regional Representatives. President Kimball spoke about service to the “uttermost parts of the world” followed by his observation that it was “better for something to be under way than under advisement.”

Then BYU President Dallin H. Oaks, who was present at the meeting, responded to President Kimball’s challenge by sending a BYU performing group, the Young Ambassadors, to China during the summer of 1979. It was not an easy task. The logistics were almost impossible, and adjusting to Chinese political sensitivities was a challenge. The Young Ambassadors, “competing” with Bob Hope’s “skin” show, proved to be an extraordinary success in China. Our students were young, enthusiastic, modest, and talented, which appealed to the Chinese. During the 1980s, BYU performing groups packed the theaters and their performances were televised to millions. For more than a decade several different BYU performing groups were invited to China, annually becoming a conduit for enhancing contact and publicity for the university. BYU became well known in China. However, with the arrival of our teachers, the Chinese were soon to learn that BYU was also a teaching institution and interested in Chinese studies.

During the 1980s there were also numerous visits and residencies in China by BYU faculty such as Robert Blair (linguistics),



### Time Line of Events Associated with China and the China Teachers Program as it Evolved



1921  
President David O. McKay's  
Prayer in Beijing

1966–76  
Cultural  
Revolution

1976  
Mao's death

Alan Firmage (engineering), Douglas Smoot (energy), Paul Hyer (history), Spencer Palmer (religious studies), Gary Williams (Chinese literature), Howard Barnes (business management), Ray Hillam (political science), Curt Fawsom (education), Marshall Craig and Briant Jacobs (English), and Bruce Beaman (languages).

Robert and Julia Blair, who taught at Shandong University during 1980–81, were the first to teach in China after the Cultural Revolution. They were followed the next year by Howard and Janet Barnes (1981–82).

After their return from China, the Blair's fascinated their BYU audience with their experiences in China. They spoke to an overflow crowd in the Varsity Theater in the Wilkinson Center. Those present all became addicted that day as the Blair's talked about the novelty of China and the intellectual curiosity of the Chinese students.



Our first institutional relationship with China was between the College of Humanities and X'ian Foreign Language Institute (now a university), negotiated in 1983 by Spencer Palmer and Gary Williams. Two years later, they negotiated a relationship with Nanjing University for an annual spring term study abroad

Chinese language program. Gary was its first director and Paul Hyer its second. Chinese language and Chinese studies faculty have rotated taking approximately twenty students each year to Nanjing.



Travel Study, under the direction of Robert Taylor, and Performance Scheduling, under George Bowie and Edward Blaser, developed a working relationship with China Travel Service, China Youth Corps, and other government officials. During the 1980s and 1990s, Travel Study ran several alumni study tours annually, and Performance Scheduling had one or two student performing groups each year. Both programs continue to send groups to China.

With China's "opening to the outside world," and because of the extensive publicity of BYU's activities in China, our campus became a popular stopping place for Chinese visitors to America, including ambassadors and high government officials. A former vice premier and foreign minister have visited our Hawaii campus, and a former president of China, with a former vice premier and foreign minister, has met with members of our Board of Trustees. Also, several members of BYU's Board of Trustees have accompanied BYU performing groups to China.

The Kennedy Center has hosted a steady stream of visitors from China. Many senior Communist Party members were rewarded with a trip to America. We had some of them stay in a Sundance cabin for a night and entertained them with a singing cowboy. We took them skiing. Some from southern China had never experienced snow. We served a western breakfast and gave

1977  
Deng Xiaoping  
Opens China  
to Outside  
World



1978  
President Spencer W. Kimball Inquiry;  
Carter Recognition of China



1979  
Young Ambassadors Tour

them a “Butch Cassidy and Sundance Kid” experience. These relationships facilitated Spencer Palmer visiting historic sites such as the birth place of Confucius. Paul Hyer entertained many Chinese visitors in his home, and he was in and out of China almost annually.

### Window of Opportunity

In the late 1970s, when Deng Xiaoping emerged with his second rehabilitation, he launched his Four Modernizations and “opened China to the outside world.” After years of China’s isolation, cultural and professional contacts with China seemed to become everyone’s interest. In the 1980s, the “opening” of China escalated exponentially. There were explosions of new opportunities and friendships. A huge sign in the lobby of the Beijing Hotel naively declared that “We Have Friends All Over the World.” The Chinese began talking to westerners on the streets and some would even invite you into their homes. It was exciting. “China watchers” at BYU were euphoric.

Was China becoming “democratic?” Was it really “good to be rich?” Capitalism was “on the march.” Deng defined it as “socialism with Chinese characteristics.” China’s leaders were yielding cautiously to demands for freedom—signaling a window of opportunity for BYU.

In addition to an academic interest in China, we were also interested in holding religious services and sharing our faith with the Chinese. Our Chinese hosts said, “No problem!”

In January 1989, Elders Russell M. Nelson and Dallin H. Oaks, members of the Board of Trustees, visited with government officials in Beijing and were assured that religious freedom existed. However, when they pressed their host they learned that it would be necessary for the Church to follow the “three-self” policy: self-supporting, self-administered, and self-propagating. Yet they were assured that in China citizens had a right to worship, assemble, and practice their religion. Moreover, they were told that the government did not keep records on religious affiliations and that there was no job discrimination because of religion. These assurances about religious freedom appeared in the *Deseret News*, 28 January 1989.

Some thought formal or legal recognition of the Church seemed unnecessary. President Gordon B. Hinckley’s front-door policy seemed legalistic and complicated. “Let’s do what other churches are doing,” some said. Elder Oaks would not play that game. The Church remained cautious and would not yield to the temptation of forging ahead without legal or government authorization. The Church continued to seek legal status and insisted on obeying the law and accepting government policy prohibiting the teaching of religion and proselyting.



With officials of Shandong Teacher University



1979  
President James E. Faust's  
Prayer in Beijing

1980–81  
Robert and Julia Blair  
teach in China

1981–82  
Howard and Janet Barnes  
teach in China

It was in this excitement and under the unofficial assurance of religious freedom in China that we were encouraged to submit an English-language-teaching proposal to BYU's then-President Jeffrey R. Holland. The proposal was viewed by President Holland and was on Elder Oak's desk by early January 1989.

In a 19 January 1989 letter to President Jeffrey R. Holland, Elder Oaks asked him to implement the program immediately, so it could be in place to send teachers in the coming summer or fall. Elder Oaks said this project was discussed thoroughly and approved in the meeting of the First Presidency and the Board of Trustees. Oaks added, "This is a very important project." President Holland instructed the Kennedy Center to proceed. We were budgeted forty-five thousand dollars.



We established an ad hoc committee consisting of Asian Studies Coordinator Bruce Beaman, Robert Blair and Ray Graham from linguistics, and others, to implement the program.

### The Challenge

The China Teachers Committee had five immediate challenges: defining goals, securing funding, recruiting teachers, training, and placing them at Chinese institutions.



### Goals

The most developed area studies program in the Kennedy Center was the Asian Studies program. Unfortunately, during most of the Cold War our faculty and students did not have access to China. The opening of China to the "outside world" generated a re-definition of our professional and academic interests in China. One such interest was to facilitate contact with China in order to enhance our scholarship and to provide opportunities for our faculty and students. Our interests were primarily selfish, but we also wanted to render a service to our church and country.

### Funding

Could we afford to send teachers to China? China is a poor country and visiting delegations from China were eager for exchanges, which were uneven and could be costly. Our 1983-93 Humanities-X'ian exchange became a financial burden to the college. The Kennedy Center did not have the budget to support so-called *quid pro quo* exchanges, but it could afford to participate in a partnership in which we could send teachers to China as "foreign experts." The Chinese Bureau of Foreign Experts and universities in China needed foreign experts and were willing to provide housing, pay some of the transportation costs, and provide a modest salary. We assumed the overhead costs on this end and agreed to pay part of the transportation costs. It was a workable formula.

1984-85

Briant and Barbara Jacobs teach in X'ian;  
Charolette D. Lofgreen teaches in X'ian;  
Josette B. Ashford teaches in X'ian



1985  
Study Abroad Agreement  
with Nanjing University

1985-86  
Bruce and Helen Beaman  
teach in X'ian

### Recruitment

We learned from the X'ian experience that it was necessary to broaden our recruiting base to include faculty and teachers from other disciplines and from the Latter-day Saint community as a whole. Also, we found we could recruit enough qualified teachers by word of mouth. The majority of the initial group were from BYU. This soon changed. Now a majority are from the larger community. Recruiting has not been a problem. When word got out, the Asian Studies coordinator and the Kennedy Center were flooded with inquiries. We also listed a notice in the *Church News*. This provided us with more than an adequate number of applications.

### Training

Initially, since most of our teachers would be teaching English conversation as a second language, the TESL experts challenged us—with justification. While most of our teachers were professional educators, few had TESL training. The experts said, “What are you doing, sending untrained TESL teachers?” We were defensive and argued that it seemed to make little difference to the Chinese. We also argued that some would teach their specialization such as history, economics, and law. Because of their wise counsel, we recruited them to assist us and TESL instruction became primary; ahead of language and culture, in our workshop.

We showed films and PBS documentaries on China. We had two State Department videos of Fulbright experiences that revealed some of the realities of living and teaching in China. We had no budget for instruction, so we recruited volunteers: Robert Blair did the TESL instruction, Bruce Beaman did the culture, and Mazie Lee did the language.

Robert and Julia Blair (1980–81) and Bruce and Helen Beaman (1985–86), who had taught in Jinan and X'ian for a year, were an excellent resource. Bob and Bruce were complete opposites. Bruce was pessimistic and a realist—bordering on cynicism. Bob was the world's greatest optimist. To have both their points of view was useful. Bruce and Helen were “realists” on life in China and would readily point out the down side (the garbage, the odors, the noise, waiting, crowding, and all the frustrations associated with a developing society), while Robert and Julia made you think China was just short of *nirvana*. At times some of us wondered if the Beamans and the Blairs had been to the same country. Some of the weak hearted dropped out of the program when they heard Bruce and Helen speak of some of the hardships and realities of living in China.

### Placement

Finding positions for our teachers was not easy. The Beijing Foreign Expert Bureau was helpful, but they wanted to send us to all parts of China. We wanted to restrict our initial placement



Graduate students at Beijing Foreign Affairs College, 1992

1987–88  
Tim and Ellen Richardson teach in X'ian



1988  
Ad hoc Committee Submits Proposal  
to Elder Dallin H. Oaks



of two couples per city and we had in mind five cities: Beijing, Shanghai, Nanjing, X'ian, and Guangzhou. Elder Oaks encouraged the idea and saw these groups strategically located to best benefit the Church membership. He encouraged us to form groups in the five cities with addresses that could be given to returning students who had joined the Church in the U.S. At that time, Elder Oaks said that the Church had more than one hundred inquiries from Chinese students in the U.S. seeking an address for the Church in China.

The Kennedy Center was able to recruit and place twenty-one teachers for the first year, 1989–90. They were Burnell and Lora McIntre (Nanjing Institute of Chemistry), Ross and Maurine Allen (Lioning Normal University), Marden and Bessie Clark (Qingdao University), Marshall and Ruth Craig (X'ian Foreign Language University), Elliot and Maralyn Howe (Nanjing Forest University), Timothy and Helen Richardson (X'ian Foreign Language University), Cynthia Rogers (Foreign Language Press), Gary and Jamie Evans and Todd and Suzanne Smithson (Institute of Management), Smith and Katie Broadbent (Qingdao). Tim Richardson delivered his wife Helen's baby in their X'ian University apartment. Smith Broadbent, after falling to the floor with pancreatitis, finished his lecture seated on the floor. The students were shocked. Smith calmly said it was nothing to worry about, but they insisted that they take him to the health center.

Initially, we were able to place couples in only two of the five cities we had in mind. Over the years, the program has expanded to eight cities and has placed qualified scholars at several prestigious universities. By early June 1989, most of the teachers had been recruited and a date had been set for a two-week workshop. All was set in place, but the storm of events at Tian'anmen became a serious concern.

### The Window is Closed, Almost

Hu Yaobang, the former party general secretary and reformer, died in April 1989. He had been a catalyst for change, and the students saw him as their advocate. His funeral was the occasion for a demonstration. The students called for reform and more democracy. It looked like a positive omen, but with the escalation of student impatience and violence, it led to the 3 June crackdown. CNN provided worldwide coverage, and China was humiliated.



Beijing Foreign Affairs College, 1991–92

The dictatorship of the one-party state was reaffirmed, and the newly found freedoms seemed to be slipping away. The hardliners argued that religion played a role and even became one of the regime's convenient scapegoats. It was a reversal of fortune for democracy and religious freedom. Our pro-

1989  
Proposal accepted by board

1989  
Tiananmen Incident  
Agreement with Foreign Expert Bureau



gram was placed on hold by BYU's Board of Trustees. Government officials in Washington and Beijing were consulted. Several questions were raised. Would our people be secure? Would going to China suggest that we were indifferent to alleged government atrocities? How would we be received by the universities, particularly by those whose students participated in the demonstration? Would the instability be skillfully managed? Would Washington grant annual renewal of the "most-favored-nation" status in trade? Would U.S. cultural exchanges (Fulbright Program, etc.) be terminated?

About two weeks after the 3 June crackdown, the Kennedy Center was authorized by the board to proceed. Our teachers all wanted to go, and their host institutions were eager to have them come. The workshop was held, and visas were in place for a late August departure. Their hosts were pleased to see them, and they were treated royally.



China Teachers, 1993

### Present at the Creation

Elder Oaks gave an extraordinary speech at our July workshop. Using the title of Secretary of State Dean Acheson's book, *Present at the Creation*, Elder Oaks said that we were present at the creation of an initiative that would have important consequences for the university and the Church. He talked about the uniqueness of China and that we must respond to the Chinese differently. China was not Europe or Latin America, he said. He talked about how we must be patient and understanding, that the Lord has his own timetable. He said the vastness of China and its numbers would require a different response. It was a rare moment, and we were thrilled to be part of it. He also admonished us to be law abiding and to abstain from teaching religion or proselyting.

We wrapped up the workshop and had our twenty-one teachers in China by the end of August 1989. Most traveled through Beijing and were taken on tours of historic sites such as the Great Wall, the Forbidden City, etc. We had no on-site supervisors so our teachers had to fend for themselves somewhat. In Provo, we hardly knew what to expect. Our teachers were bonafide pioneers, exploring the unknown. Fortunately, they received excellent treatment, taking the edge off of the unknown.

### China is "Open" After All

Elder Oaks gave a forum address on BYU's campus entitled "Getting to Know China." Elder Oaks argued that the door is "open" in China. He said we are "closed" because "we think China is the same as the West; the same as Canada or Chile. We must open our minds and our hearts to the people of this ancient realm and this magnificent culture. We must observe their laws and follow their example of patience. We must deserve to be their friends." He argued that many of us are "closed" to China because of ignorance. Elder Oaks, quoting President David O. McKay, who was in Beijing the same year as the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in Shanghai,

1990  
Forum Address: "Getting to Know China"  
Second group—seventeen teachers

1989  
First workshop ("Present at the Creation")  
First group—twenty-one teachers

said that we should send to this land (China) broad-minded and intelligent men and women that they might have the spirit of discernment and power to comprehend the Chinese culture. We must make a proper appeal to them, and that we are to have “keen insight into the mental and spiritual state of the Chinese mind.” On 4 July 1979, President James E. Faust, traveling with the Young Ambassadors, acknowledged and ratified President McKay’s dedicatory prayer at a spot near where President McKay had prayed on 9 January 1921.

The message was clear. We were to educate ourselves about China. What do we as a people know about China? In 1978, President Spencer W. Kimball is reported to have turned to a colleague and said, “How is your Chinese?”

Unconfirmed feedback from China said that Chinese officials, who presumably monitored Elder Oaks’ speech, did not take too well to his address. They interpreted it as intrusive. It was not. It was a great speech. It was candid, diplomatic, and sensitive. It was a plea for understanding.

Clearly, China, in a democratic sense, is not an open society. It continues to be a dictatorship with one-party rule, accommodating and tolerant toward market economics and the accompanying freedom required of such an economic system. Elder Oaks is fully aware of this and he is “right on” about our ignorance, which closes China to many of us. Like President McKay, whom he quotes, he challenges us to open our minds and respect Chinese culture and laws.

### Program Development

The committee, chaired by Bruce Beaman, managed the first three years of the program. On 1 July 1992, Jeffrey F. Ringer was appointed director of the China Teachers Program. With a part-time secretary and a modest budget, he removed some of the ambiguity in leadership and brought clearer guidelines and order to the program.



China Teachers, 1997

Jeff upgraded recruiting literature and strategy, revised applications, renegotiated new agreements with the Chinese Bureau of Foreign Experts and several universities, and upgraded the quality of the workshop. He set standards for recruitment and eventually had all the participants covered by insurance. He developed constructive

relationships with the Chinese Embassy and contacts in China. By 1996, he had couples called to serve as professional volunteers (Church Service Missions) for two years. They became part of his administrative staff. They were Ray and Carolyn Hillam (1995–97), Ted and Doris Warner (1997–99), Morris and Donna Petersen (1999–2001), George and Diane Pace (2001–02), the Petersens again in 2003, and Al and Barbara Price (2004–05).

Jeff, in consultation with a member of the Twelve, has provided guidelines for placement—increasing the number of participants and cities. With the assistance of his staff he has



1991  
Third group—twenty-eight teachers

1992  
Jeff Ringer appointed director  
Fourth group—thirty-two teachers

upgraded the quality of institutional placements in China. In recent years, since there were as many as four to twelve teachers in a city, group leaders have been called and set apart. Groups have existed in X'ian, Qingdao, Hefei, Jinan, and Nanjing. Church branches for expatriates in Shanghai, Beijing, Tientsin, and Guangzhou, have been enriched by the participation of our teachers. In Guangzhou one of our teachers has served as branch president. Another has served as a counselor in the China District Presidency. It is interesting to note that the China District covers all of the China mainland except for Hong Kong. Our teachers and groups are part of that district. Each group leader is called by the district president. Two conferences are held each year: at the workshop in Hong Kong during the lunar new year and at the BYU August workshop. These religious activities are not available to Chinese citizens.



China Teachers, 1991–92

### Has the Program Been a Success?

Early on, some branch members in Beijing felt our teachers were unprepared for such a vigorous and challenging experience. They felt that some of us were too old and that there was too little on-site supervision. These criticisms were not helpful. At the time, the Kennedy Center did not have personnel or budget and had to feel its way in those formative years. Looking back at more than a decade, the strength of the program has been its mature couples and the very fact that they could cope with the challenges.

In recruiting, we soon found that not everyone is suited for teaching in China. Our successful teachers are a special breed. One has to be mature, courageous, adaptive, culturally sensitive, and a “happy camper.” Retired couples with these qualities have been the backbone of an extraordinarily successful program. Elder Oaks has characterized them as latter-day pioneers. One Church leader, addressing our teachers, who had gathered in Hong Kong for their mid-year workshop, advised that they return to the U.S. and go on a “real” mission. Some were offended, but they were mindful of the encouragement and praise of Elder Oaks, and, later, that of Elders Maxwell and Wirthlin.



George and Diane Pace, 2001–02

Our teachers have:

1. *Established Friendships.* The teachers have made thousands of friends for themselves, the university, and the Church. A personal friendship with a Chinese is almost like a contract in western societies. It is enduring because of the respect they have for their Lao Shih (teacher). Su Ge, a Fellow at the Foreign Affairs College, and Du Ruiqing, president of X'ian Foreign Language University, have doctorates from BYU and have recently received BYU's distinguished alumni awards. Su Ge's daughter received the Helen Foster Snow scholarship as a

student at BYU. BYU's acceptance of the Helen Foster Snow papers has led to the establishment of a private school and an exhibit in X'ian. BYU has produced a PBS documentary of Snow's association with and chronicling of several communist leaders. Ted and Doris Warner opened their home to Cheng Biao of the Foreign Affairs office of the Shandong Teacher University and helped him get started with his doctoral program at BYU. Cheng

will return to Shandong once he has obtained his credentials. Morris and Donna Peterson had one of their students from Jinan in their home for a year. She was designated as a visiting scholar. She is the daughter of a well placed government official. These friendships are only a small fraction of what exists.

2. *Established an Infrastructure for Service.* The program has built a set of relationships with faculty, students, and administrators of more than thirty universities, colleges, and institutes, and with the State Bureau of Foreign Experts in Beijing. This infrastructure links BYU with a variety of prestigious institutions such as Peking University and the Foreign Affairs College in Beijing, the Shandong Medical University in Jinan, South China University in Guangzhou, Nanjing University, Jiao Tung and Fudan Universities in Shanghai, Qingdao University, and many other universities and colleges. Our infrastructure covers four levels of higher education: national universities, provincial universities, local colleges, and prestigious institutes. In the 1990s, we were told by the Bureau of Foreign Experts that

we have the largest university foreign experts (teachers) program in China.

3. *Established a Reputation.* We have established a good track record as teachers, and in some cases, as scholars. Economist Del Gardner co-authored with a Chinese scholar and Vice President Chu Guangyou, a book on development and free market economics. Scott Hammond has co-authored, with a Chinese foreign affairs staff member, articles and presented papers at professional meetings in China and the U.S. Randy Jones has conducted computer-assisted language workshops in China. Robert Blair, Mel Luthy, and Lynn Henriksen have conducted linguistic and TESL workshops in China. Ralph Barney, Cynthia Rogers, and Richard Harris have edited government documents for the Beijing Foreign Language Press. Many of our teachers have been honored with teaching awards. George Bennion won awards for teaching excellence each of the four years he taught in X'ian and Jinan. Many of the teachers such as Don and Kit Ballentine and Stan and Barbara Shakespeare, have left distinguished teaching records in China. Gordon Auguson edited a scholarly article for a Chinese counterpart.

Graduate class,  
Foreign Affairs College, 1992



China teachers on a mountain hike.

1995  
Seventh group—sixty-three teachers

1996  
Eighth group—forty-two teachers  
Ray and Carolyn Hillam volunteer

4. *Shared Values.* The teachers have impacted directly on the values of thousands of students. Their lifestyle and ideas have touched the lives of many, as evidenced by their aspirations for freedom, prosperity, and clean living. Our teachers have been impressed with the pride and humility of their students. Our teachers have been on the receiving end as well. “I will never be the same” is a common expression of those who have been asked to summarize their China experience. In some rare instances, our teachers have been asked to share our faith. Spencer Palmer and Paul Hyer have both taught religion in the philosophy department of the Central University of Minorities. The university published Spencer’s comparative religion text. Morris Peterson was asked by Shandong Teachers University to give some lectures on Christianity. Except for these isolated examples, our faculty have not taught religion. We obey the law.

5. *Acquired Cultural Understanding.* Approximately five hundred teachers have returned to their communities having had a rich cultural and educational experience. They share their educational experiences and are a constructive leaven of understanding of China in their communities. Many return to China for a second, third, and even fourth year. They return to their communities as “experts” on China, and, through their China Teachers alumni association, they remain active in helping others in “getting to know China.” Most of the returning teachers give firesides and speeches in their community. The alumni association, which is registered with the State of Utah, meets annually to promote good relations with China.

6. *Provided Humanitarian Service.* Many engage in humanitarian service which strengthens Sino–American friendship. Joye Bennion, largely at her own initiative, has raised more than fifty thousand dollars for scholarships for elementary school students and university students. In addition, she has, with the support of LDS Charities, sent books and school kits to a remote village in China. She takes a small group, at their own expense, on a “pilgrimage” of humanitarian service to a remote mountain village where they have built a class room.

7. *Facilitated Career Enhancement.* While most of the teachers have retired, there are some who are students and mid-career professionals. Their China experience has enhanced the career and professional opportunities of many. Brecken Swartz felt that a year at the Foreign Affairs College would enhance her qualifications for doctoral study. Suzanne Geyer, Ann Killian, and Gloria Munns, who were mid-career teachers, saw a year in China as a desirable sabbatical. Chris McInnes wanted a break from his engineering career. Susan Broberg believes that teaching for a year in China strengthened her application to law school. Tim Richardson



Visit with Tongji University officials, 1997



Donna Petersen with group at Shandong Teachers University, 1996

1998  
Tenth group—sixty-one teachers

1997  
Ninth group—fifty-nine teachers  
Ted and Doris Warner volunteer

is teaching English at Snow College, thanks in part to his year in China. Grant Pearse, who taught at the Guangzhou University of Traditional Medicine, interned there, and, after three years with our program, is now practicing Traditional Chinese Medicine in Los Angeles.

8. *Provided Public Relations for the University and the Church.* Sending professionals and people of high moral character is good PR for our culture and country. The Chinese Ambassador to the United States has praised our teaching program. We have had members of the Bureau of Religious Affairs visit campus as well as meet with Church leaders in Salt Lake and Washington, D.C., Brigham Young University enjoys an excellent reputation, and the Chinese are aware of its Christian sponsor. The original intention of the Kennedy Center was to take advantage of the new opportunities in China and to help in getting things “underway” for the university and the Church. From the standpoint of both parties, the program has been a remarkable success.

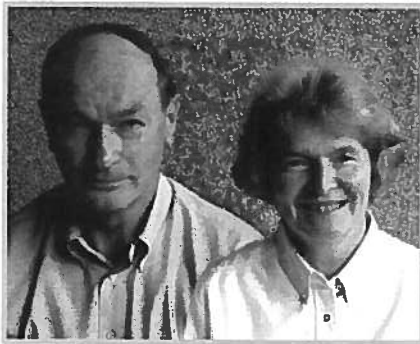


Morris Petersen giving an English lecture, 1997

### The Program Matures

During the almost-sixteen years we have been sending teachers, the political culture has changed. The students are more sophisticated, particularly at the more prestigious universities. Foreign teachers are no longer the novelty they used to be, but the students remain respectful, teachable, and better prepared. The students are more mature and our program has been strengthened. In the past, our programs have represented a solid cross section of China’s higher education system.

The China Teachers Program constantly receives requests for more teachers, from new schools as well as from some of the schools already utilizing our teachers. Yes, the program has matured since the first group of nineteen teachers were sent to China. Many of our teachers were not sure what was expected of them, and there were virtually no teaching materials or textbooks. All this has changed. One of Deng Shaoping’s “four modernizations” was education, and Chinese leaders have made good their promise regarding educational reform. They have consolidated higher education making it more efficient, launched a huge building program, modernized the classroom, and improved the student and faculty housing.



Morris and Donna Petersen,  
1999, 2000, and 2003

Al and Barbara Price, who were recently appointed to supervise the program (2004–05), report that there will be sixty-seven teachers teaching at seventeen universities located in eight cities. Five of these universities, Peking University and Tsinghua University in Beijing, Nanjing University, Fudan University in Shanghai, and Nankai University in Tianjin, raise the quality and reputation of our program. Placing teachers at prestigious universities was one of the challenges successfully pursued by the Petersens.

2000  
Twelfth group—sixty-two teachers

2001  
George and Diane Pace volunteer  
Thirteenth group—sixty-seven teachers

1999  
Eleventh group—fifty-seven teachers  
Morris and Donna Petersen volunteer

The Chinese rank their schools. For instance, they rank all of the high schools in Beijing. This is also done nationwide with universities. The five named above are ranked as the top five. All five are excellent. It is fun to run with fast company.

Can the program consistently recruit qualified “Foreign Experts” who are acceptable to such highly ranked institutions? The Petersens and Prices think it is not a problem. Morris said, “Each year we receive more applicants than we have spaces for. Clearly, the program could be expanded in the future.” Al said, if there is expansion, it would be well to have an in-country supervisor. The educational levels and teaching experience of our teachers has been improving. Consequently, we hear wonderful compliments from university officials concerning the quality of our teachers as well as their character.

The opportunities in China are almost unlimited. Our teachers are in demand in China. Also, the availability of teachers in the Latter-day Saint community, who want to teach in China, is virtually unlimited. The program has developed a momentum of its own and has established an excellent reputation in Chinese academic circles. We have improved.



Al and Barbara Price, 2004

2002  
George and Diane Pace  
Fourteenth group—sixty-six teachers

2003  
Morris and Donna Petersen  
Fifteenth group—sixty-one teachers

2004  
Al and Barbara Price volunteer  
Sixteenth group—sixty-seven teachers

A PUBLICATION OF THE

