



# The Doorstep

SERVING INTERNATIONALS ON CAMPUS

## In-Depth participant now respected missionary

by Rev. Mark Heilman, Memorial Lutheran Church, Ames, Iowa



The Ponta family  
From left, Muse, Solomon, Mariam, Workitu, Noaha,  
and Kebede

Kebede Mulatu Ponta was a graduate student in agronomy at Iowa State University and attended the 2000 In-Depth Bible Seminar held by ISM, Inc. Kebede came to Iowa State to get an advanced degree in agronomy to help him in his work at an agricultural research institute in Ethiopia. During his time in the U.S., the Ethiopian government changed and the future about his work back home was uncertain. So the people of Memorial Lutheran Church in Ames, Iowa, who had “adopted” Kebede and his family, sent him back to Ethiopia as an agricultural missionary in 2002.

This past November, I had the chance to visit Kebede and saw the work and respect he has among the mission workers in Ethiopia. He is known as “doctor” because of the admiration for his leadership.

Kebede and the Ethiopian Evangelical Church Mekane Yesus (Place of Jesus), our partner church in Ethiopia, work on the principle of holistic ministry. They want to help people with their physical needs, as well as share the Gospel. But they place primary concern on sharing the Gospel, not only because the Gospel is what we all need most, but because this allows for lasting ministry instead of the ministry dying out when outside aid is gone.

Kebede works with the Tabor Church in Awassa, Ethiopia. They have a very active mission program throughout many parts of the country. Kebede is especially working in their out-

reach to a region in the northeast that is heavily Muslim and was not reached by Christian missionaries.

Kebede helps the people learn better agricultural practices such as the best planting time, selecting good seeds and fertilizers, tools, and care of oxen. Also, he has supervised several water projects. He is involved with the purchase of land that is needed to build churches and to provide fields to help fund the churches, to provide burial plots since all other cemeteries are Muslim, and to build schools. All of this is important for making the church viable. Kebede helps church leaders to be better farmers so they have the time and money to do evangelistic work and become respected in their communities.

An important role Kebede plays for the mission-site leaders is his ability to pray and teach them. The experiences he had in the United States, like the week in the In-Depth Bible Seminar, gave him a good foundation and leadership skills for his work.

God has used ISM in a wonderful way to bless His Church in Ethiopia!

### LCMS TABOO Conference gift to ISM

ISM, Inc. was honored to be the recipient of the offering received at the Epiphany worship service during the January LCMS “TABOO” campus ministry conference in St. Louis. The offering was matched through the Office of National Mission and totaled \$3,247.48.

The Rev. Bart Day, executive director of the Office of National Mission wrote, “You are such a wonderful blessing to so many international students. We thank you for your continued dedication! ISM will continue to be in our prayers as you serve God’s people.”

### An encouraging note

Dear Mission Friends,

*God bless you as you are His ambassadors bringing hope, love and joy to international students. It is always uplifting to read the stories of students you have touched with the love of Jesus. It gives us much joy to hear how the Holy Spirit brings those to faith. All praise to the Lord!*

*Enclosed is my gift toward the ministry. God bless you as you serve Him faithfully to His call in your life.*



## Not a 'chance meeting'

by Rev. Paul Hoemann, campus pastor  
College Station, TX



Xiao Xia "Sue" Su received Holy Baptism in 2009. With her are Rev. Paul Hoemann and ISM Co-directors Anya Knodt and Meredith Wright.

On New Year's Eve day while at the campus post office, I ran into a Chinese student, Xiao Xia Su, who had been baptized at University Lutheran Chapel in College Station in February 2009. My very first conversation with Su was at a welcome dinner for internationals at the local Methodist church in early January 2009. She asked me about which kind of American cereal is the best for her. She was rather overwhelmed by all the choices at the grocery store!

She also showed a keen interest in the Bible and Christianity. Soon, she was coming to the Chapel for conversation and Bible classes. And soon after that, she was led to be baptized. Later that spring, she attended ISM, Inc.'s In-Depth Bible Seminar in St. Louis with me, where she received a week of intensive training and teaching for her Christian life.

After a semester or two at the Chapel, she decided—mainly for cultural and language reasons—to begin worshipping at one of the local Chinese congregations. Occasionally, we would still hear from Su, but not that much in recent years. When I saw her on December 31, she was mailing her last box of personal items to Taiwan. She told me that she and her husband, who is a Taiwanese Christian, were moving there so that they can do mission work in that island country. In fact, Su was to leave later that evening for San Diego for further training before heading overseas. I commented to her how much her life had changed in six years: she came to the United States as an unbeliever. She was baptized into the Christian faith. She married a Christian man from Taiwan. She received her doctoral degree from Texas A&M University. And now she was returning to a very familiar culture to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ there. She, too, marveled at the amazing things God has done in her life.

We parted with a quick hug and goodbyes. As I walked back to the Chapel from the post office, I praised God for arranging for Su and me to meet, perhaps one last time in this world. Who knows? I knew it was not a chance meeting. And I was reminded once more ... this is what international student ministry is all about. Praise God for the work that He has done and is doing in this young lady's life!

## From Bob Dickhudt, ISM Director Detroit, MI

Dear Bob,

*I have been teaching in Beijing this past year, and one of my Chinese students is planning on coming to your university to be a visiting scholar for 6 months to one year in the near future. I was wondering if you might be able to get in contact with them before they arrive, and then when they arrive invite them to any events you might know of in the area? Bible studies and/or church and/or international student events? I would be so grateful!*

*Thank you so much for your partnership in the Gospel.  
Every blessing,  
Mary*

Mary, you just made my day! How exciting to get your great note! We of ISM @ WSU have been so blessed over the years with contacts with visiting scholars and students mostly from China.

My personal mission experience in HK (1964-72) has led me to almost be as much "Chinese" as American ... and we have a son living in HK for about the past 15 years!

I'll send a note to your special student, as well as move information about us in the days ahead.

Blessings, teacher!

Bob

## From Jane Boye, ISM Director International Friendship House, Tempe, AZ

On January 4, Yiqin Xu (Qin) and Peiyun Guo (Gloria) were baptized by Rev. Gary Boye in our home. They are students at Arizona State in the engineering program and



have been a part of International Friendship House for the past two years. Qin's mother witnessed the baptisms along with Ramona and Bill Buerger. We celebrated afterward with pizza and cake.



### ISM, Inc. on Facebook ~ Join Us!



This group is for anyone who wants international students to know the love and the hope that is found in Jesus. ISM, Inc. wants to encourage, pray for and celebrate the work God is doing among international students.

## From Kate Cole, ISM Volunteer Flint, MI

I like to “break the ice” with new international students by asking questions. So I asked a newly-arrived group of students from India to tell me, “If they could have one wish, what would that wish be?”

Their answers astounded me. Five of them unanimously agreed that if they could wish for one thing it would be that their parents would be well and healthy until their return. Many of them said this with tearful eyes. It was heartwarming to see these young students so respectful and mindful of their parents who many said sacrificed much for them to have this study opportunity. The sixth and last student had a different reply but no less sobering ... she wanted to return to her country to help the poor and suffering ... especially the elderly who rarely get medical care because of the expense.

What a joy to share with these students whose hearts God is preparing to hear His Gospel!

## When was the first Christmas?

by Liz Beikmann, ISM Board Co-chairman & ISM Director  
Manhattan, KS

“When was the first Christmas?” is the question we were asked by an international student who was sharing Christmas with our family. It should not have been a surprise as the student had told us he was not religious, but the question did mean that he was thinking about it.

The student was not traveling with his fellow students between semesters, and his host family was out of town. He was going to be all alone on campus, so I invited him to join our family for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. I told him we would be going to church on Christmas Eve and gave him an idea of what we do to celebrate. He said he would come Christmas Eve, but not Christmas Day as in his country that was a time for families.

I told him we celebrated Christmas with family and friends, and we would be glad to have him join us. He accepted our invitation and together we shared customs of what our families did to celebrate Christmas, went to the Christmas Eve service, listened to Christmas carols and just shared time together that evening and the next day.

Finally on Christmas Day he asked, “Just when was the first Christmas?” This provided a great opportunity to share about Jesus’ birth, the Gospel and our faith. Several weeks later I got an email with a host of questions. He asked: “Why do Christians divide themselves into so many groups or churches? What about abortion? Will I go to hell because I do not believe in God? Are all of those people the world over who do not believe in God going to hell?”

Most of the international students we work with and share our lives with here at St. Luke’s Lutheran Church tell us they do not believe. One never knows when the opportunity like our Christmas experience will arise to share your faith. When it does we must be prepared to share and make sure the student is comfortable with asking more questions whenever they arise. What a wonderful opportunity God presented on Christmas Day and the following weeks.

## From Nina Haas, ISM Director Rolla, MO

Ten-year-old Alice, daughter of a visiting scholar from China, had her first experience on the pipe organ and played a beautiful melody for her audience. Alice also read the Christmas story in perfect English as part of our Christmas get-together! Alice is in the middle front.



## From Sharon Riordan, ISM Director St. Louis, MO



Under volunteer Tanya Peters, ISM St. Louis hosted a baby shower for one of the moms in the Mom/Baby Playtime. The “guest of honor” and the soon-to-be mom was so moved she shed tears as she thanked everyone. I thank Tonya for loving these moms so very much!

## Open hearts - Open homes

by Mark Meyer, ISM director, Lincoln, NE

My wife Leanna and I have been blessed to have 15 students from 7 countries live in our home at various times throughout the last 8 years. They have been like family to us as we have celebrated the first steps of our children, our birthdays, their birthdays, graduations, marriage, and even the birth of a first child. We have shared many meals and conversations. We have seen some of these students get baptized, some come to church for the first time and some read the Bible for the first time. From dirty dishes to noisy kids to impatient parents (mostly me), we are far from the perfect example, and yet what a blessing God has and will continue to use these “jars of clay” to be a light of the Gospel of Christ to these students.



Qinglei with our daughter Kara

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# Prayer Requests and Praises

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**March 1-7, 2015: ISM Austin, TX**

**Marcia Mittwede, director**

Thank the Lord for His good work in the lives of HT, LL, SD, BP, and H. Ask Him to continue to draw them to Himself as they study the Bible.

Ask the Lord to continue bringing students to study the Bible. Thank Him for Angela who was baptized in 2013 and is a good recruiter for our program!

Ask that the teachers would have insight into how to best help our students with English and adjustment to America.

Thank the Lord for the blessing it is to serve the international students and their family members. Many volunteers enjoy relationships that enrich their lives while helping students adjust and learn.

Ask the Lord for wisdom in who to invite to attend the In-Depth Bible Seminar.

**ISM Pittsburgh**

**Eric Andrae, campus pastor**

For Masyki, as she travels back from Japan to Pittsburgh following health issue to continue her studies.

**ISM LaCrosse, WI**

**John Jaeger, volunteer**

Thanks and praise for Faith Lutheran Church and Student Center in having the opportunity to host a "Soup Supper" for the new international students who have come to LaCrosse to start their studies this semester.

**March 8-14, 2015: ISM Cincinnati, OH**

**Jamie Noyd, director**

For a woman who is starting to attend our weekly English Conversations. Her husband is a Christian, but she is not. We are praying that the materials we use during this time including reading *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* will open her to learning more about Christianity and wanting to read the Bible.

Many of our international students and scholars have returned to China over the past months. Please pray that our current students would invite others to attend our conversation time as well as our weekly meal and Bible study.

**ISM College Station, TX**

**Adri Galvan and Hannah Galvan, co-directors**

We pray for our new students that we may welcome them and show them God's Word.

For our many international students who are pregnant.

For our students who are returning home and those who have already returned that they remember our message of the Gospel.

**ISM Detroit**

**Bob Dickhudt, director**

THANKFUL for the contacts which continue to come our way, "replacements" for those of our ISM family returning to China.

THANKFUL for NING's great end of the year mission trip to Mexico with some 500 young people ... a long ride, but possibly life-changing experiences; "I've never felt so happy as on this trip - helping others gave me so much joy. Yes, I think Jesus is working on my heart."

For our "returning scholars" ... the "seed" has been planted; Lord, please provide "watering" that it may grow and bear abundant fruit!

**March 15-21, 2015: ISM Conway, AR**

**Karl Lenser, director**

Thanks for the wonderful relational building "Conversation Club" evenings that are held every Tuesday. This event brings 80 to 100 international students for food, fellowship and friendship to our building. Thank you to all of the local congregations who provide food and conversation partners.

Thanksgiving for our "Ice Cream Social/Game Nights" hosted throughout the semester. May God continue to bless this ISM event as we build relationships and show the students God's love in all we say and do. We pray that the internationals can "tell we are Christians by our love for them."

For the LCMS to grow in support of ISM and understand how important this ministry is in spreading the Gospel to all of the nations in this world.

**ISM Chinese Ministry, St. Louis, MO**

**Becky Shaw, director**

Thanks that the Friday morning women's Bible study has resumed. Pray for the Holy Spirit's power in the lives of members.

Thanks for the expertise of a Send Me St. Louis staff person to help us envision what the ministry could potentially become.

For the Holy Spirit to compel first-time visitors to worship to come back so they can see and hear Jesus in the Word.

For the families of the seniors who come to the center that they would be curious enough to come.

That three young men, who are in the military, would grow in faith and see the mission field among their comrades.

**March 22-28, 2015: ISM Flint, MI**

**Kate Cole, director**

For two students who lost their off-campus housing in the dead of winter and are now living in Christian homes. Pray that they might come to know the ONE who provided our eternal home.

For 75 new Indian students just arrived—several are strong Christians.

For three new Christian internationals from the Ivory Coast, Taiwan and India who are witnessing to other internationals.

Praise for eight international students who attended POBLO's International Women's Tea.

**ISM Lombard, IL**

**Lynne Hoyer, volunteer**

For L who has been studying *Lutheranism 101*; she is very enthusiastic, understands and says she believes. Pray that she would attend worship regularly.

For the S family who are Muslims from Algeria and awaiting a green card.

For M, a new Christian, who is a Palestinian refugee, but born in Saudi. Pray for him to be given asylum here.

**ISM Rolla, MO**

**Nina Haas, director**

Thanks to God for sending Karan to our Friday activities. He is very open to hearing what the Bible has to say and asks very deep questions. Pray that the Lord continues Karan's visits with us and bless our sharing of His Word.

Pray that students seek to join our weekly activities and thankfulness for continued resources making it possible for us to reach out to them.

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# Prayer Requests and Praises

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**March 29 - April 4, 2015: ISM Ames, IA**  
**Hannah Moore, director**

For the many Chinese families involved in Bible study. That God would continue to work in their hearts and lives and bring them to faith.

Many thanks for all of the new students this semester! Pray we would be faithful in sharing the gospel through our relationships.

For the Easter message to be conveyed clearly as part of our annual Easter Egg Hunt Event.

For the many wonderful volunteer teachers, conversation partners, Bible study leaders and ISU students involved in our ministry. Praise and thanks for them.

For God to provide students who are eager and able to go to the In-Depth Bible Conference in May.

**ISM Madison, WI**  
**Judy Tang, director**

Several of our international students are having babies in the coming months and I would like prayers for safe deliveries and healthy babies!

Praise for a Taiwanese woman who had never read the Bible and was just filled with joy by what we've been studying in Bible study class! Pray that this seed will bloom into faith!

For our Easter event (dinner, movie, dessert, and discussion) so many will learn that Jesus is the Way the Truth and the Life!

**April 5-11, 2015: ISM East Lansing, MI**  
**Rich Bearup, director**

For Rev. Travis Downs who had neck surgery. Pray that he may be blessed with complete healing and a timely recovery.

For our long-time Board member and teacher Don Christenson, who slipped on the ice and broke a bone in his left hand.

For effective ongoing cancer treatments for Kay Kahl, Londa Meier, Rev. Carl Selle and Jan Poellet and also for ongoing health concerns for board member Karen Vaughan's father.

For an Iraqi couple at MSU whose families were killed by ISIS forces and who have asked for political asylum.

May God richly bless all the ISM's throughout the country for strength, perseverance, dedication and joyful service.

**ISM Lincoln, NE**  
**Mark Meyer, director**

That more American students would build friendships with international students.

For wisdom on how to disciple students in such a way that they also disciple others.

That good community would be built so that it feels like a wonderful family for the international students and the volunteers.

**ISM Stevens Point, WI**  
**Andy Weden, campus pastor**

Thanksgiving for "Bob" and "Chris" from China who continue to join us. We give thanks for "Bob's" Christian influence on "Chris" as he is not a Christian. Pray the Lord continues to work in His time before "Chris" leaves.

Pray for continued growth for American students to leave their comfort zones as they explore new cultures and friendships.



**April 12-18, 2015: ISM Milwaukee, WI**  
**Bessie Fick, director**

Praise for the new volunteers to assist in the children's program on Thursday evenings.

For God's people to continue to bring their gifts in support of the outreach to internationals and their families.

Thanks for the wonderful friends we have made this past year and that God would be with those returning home. We pray that they will find Christian contacts in their home countries who will help them to continue to grow in God's Word.

That God would bring others to English classes so we might have the privilege of inviting them to Bible study and Sunday school.

**ISM Manhattan, KS**  
**Liz Beikmann, director**

That God would give us guidance in answering a student's questions about Christianity.

Thanksgiving for new families who are helping with the ministry.

Thanksgiving for the cooperation from a European university that is willing to share information about incoming students. This will enable us to be of more help to them.

Thanksgiving for sending us a wonderful group of internationals for this semester.

**April 19-25, 2015: ISM St. Louis**  
**Sharon Riordan**

Praise the Lord for the baptisms in December 2014 of three Chinese. The baptisms took place in the prayer chapel of St. Mark Lutheran Church.

For a student who moved back to her home country and was only able to place her child in a Christian daycare. We're so excited that she continues to have contact with Christians. God definitely has a plan!

For "Y" whose grandfather is ill in China.

For "W" who revealed that his dad is a Christian back in China, but never "forced" Christianity on his children because then they could not be a member of the Communist Party. Please pray that he is open to hearing what his dad already knows about the Lord.

**ISM Tempe, AZ**  
**Jane Boyd, director**

For Jun Mi whose cancer has now spread to his lungs. He remains a cooperative patient at Mayo Clinic, but has still not embraced Christ as his Savior.

**April 26-30, 2015: ISM Hawaii**  
**Janelle Dryden, director**

That "O" and "I" would allow the Holy Spirit free reign in their schedules. That He would patiently and lovingly draw them into a closer relationship with God.

That the families I have met would allow God into their lives.

That God would calm me. A man I witnessed to for the last 6 months died. My last kindly spoken words to him were, "J, how are you doing with Jesus? His answer was a smart reply. Then I said, "Time is running short." His death has led to so many other witnessing opportunities. I must release this man to Jesus. I knew him for 20 years. I can only hope that Jesus got into his heart during the six day interim period from the choking to his last breath.

International Student Ministry, Inc.  
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### Inside this Issue:

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### Aaron's gifts are needed!

by Rev. Dr. Carl Selle, ISM Board member  
Rosholt, WI

God used Old Testament Aaron to assist Moses in leading the people of Israel at the time of the Exodus. When God asked Moses to lead, he felt inadequate as a speaker, not knowing what to say to his people and totally unskilled in leadership. But God solved all of Moses' issues by providing his brother Aaron to stand with him. Together, Moses and Aaron stood equipped as God's representatives and won each of the battles that Pharaoh had placed before them.

God places international students with their families before each of us. As the gifts of Aaron were needed, so are our voices needed to share the Good News within the international student community. Prayers are requested to be carried to God for response. Financial gifts are requested to provide funds for our needs.

Will you be an Aaron? The ISM, Inc. Board of Directors is a working board, but they need many to walk beside them. Encouragement, financial support, personal involvement in the ministry and one-on-one connection with internationals is needed. How will you be an Aaron?



### ISM women enjoy international tea

People of the Book Ministries (POBLO) hosted the 2015 Women's International Tea in January at Cross of Christ Lutheran Church in Bloomfield Hills, Mich. More than 25 countries were represented. The women had



a wonderful time sampling food and enjoying performances from all over the world!

In the photo are the women who attended from the ISM Flint ministry: From left, Latha, Sneha and Roopa from India; volunteers Diane Morris and Martha Helmreich; and Lu from China.

*The Doorstep* is the official publication of ISM, Inc., a Recognized Service Organization of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, dedicated to ministry among international students.

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