



The Doorstep

SERVING INTERNATIONALS ON CAMPUS

An In-Depth Bible Seminar ‘two-timer’

Over the years, the In-Depth Bible Seminar has proven to be a marvelous blessing to the attendees. Now and again, an individual determines it best to participate in the seminar a second time. One such “two-timer” is **Asfaw Gudina** from Ethiopia. Baptized as an infant, Asfaw desired to deepen his understanding of the Christian faith. In 2012, his participation in the In-Depth Bible Seminar proved to be a special blessing to him.

But in his reflection during the next year, he felt as if he “still had not had enough.” He applied and was accepted for the 2013 seminar.

And as he later recalls, ***“I caught the fire! I wanted to share Jesus with all the people in Ethiopia who still do not know Jesus.”*** He later wrote, ***“God has given responsibility to His second born children to share His Word with all nations. I believe that I have been called to share God’s Word to the nations, especially to those people who are not yet in Christ. In particular, after I had participated in the In-Depth Bible Seminar offered by International Student Ministry, Inc. in 2012 and 2013, my heart was ignited. The most important fact I learned during the seminar, and want to share with others, is God’s unfathomable mercy to His people throughout the history of salvation. My prayer is to ask God for His guidance in opening doors.”***

The result of that fire was the writing of a “Proposal for a Missionary Church Plant in Sariti Wayo Peasant Association, Rural Area in Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia.” His brother, Bidika, had recently participated in a church plant in a nearby city, but the concern was that the rural people could not walk the great distance to that new church.

He completed the proposal, but then wondered how a five-year plan to support that mission start would happen. He called Carl Selle, one of his mentors from the seminar, and shared the vision with him. Would there be some group who might help with support for this new church plant? The cost would be fairly minimal. A \$20,000 grant spread over five years would give the mission start a tent, benches, Bibles, and a full-time evangelist.

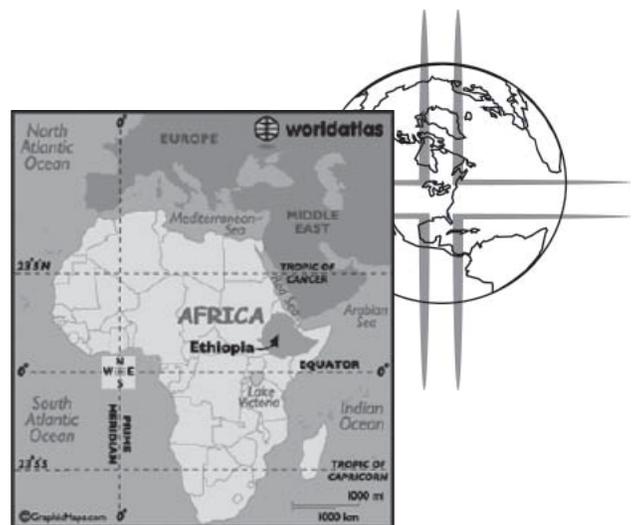


Asfaw, second from left, listens intently to a presentation at the In-Depth Bible Seminar.

Selle and Gudina prayed about the possibility and the Lord opened the door with an answer. Spirit of Life Lutheran Church, Mosinee, Wis., was organized in 2008; and as a part of their original vision, they intended to plant a church after five years. It was that time.

The members of Spirit of Life considered this possibility; and the Lord led them to say “Yes!” to the opportunity. They oversubscribed their pledge and have now begun the investment in this new mission plant in Ethiopia.

Asfaw continues to pursue his doctorate in Public Health at Kent State University, Kent, Ohio. He marvels at the wonderful way that God works miracles.



'I am a Buddhist'

by Augusta Mennell, ISM director
Slippery Rock, Penn.

"I am a Buddhist," she said. She explained that her parents, who are from Germany and the United States, had decided not to influence her religious choices and allowed her to make her own decisions. She stated, matter of factly, that she had never been inside a Christian church for worship.

I met this student during orientation at Slippery Rock University. She appeared confident, excited and interested in seeing who was there to welcome students. She wasn't looking for a church to attend, but she stopped in front of our campus ministry table in response to my greeting, "Glad you are here. Would you like to enjoy a free meal for college students this fall?" She replied, "It would not be fair to come to the meals because I am a Buddhist."

In response to her statement, we immediately let her know that we welcome all students to the meals. We want students to come to experience friendship and to realize that the student center is for everyone no matter what their faith may be. She listened to the invitation, told us her name was Sophie and took our business card.

Before Sophie left she added that Buddhism is not really a religion, but a code of behavioral ethics.

You may think that you couldn't share your faith with a Buddhist student because the issue is too complicated. I have often wondered if it takes a degree in religious studies to talk with a Buddhist. The truth is that it is not complicated. There really are only two religions in the world: Christianity which tells us to trust Jesus for our salvation, and the other is all the religions which teach you to trust in yourself and to work your way to heaven.

Students are glad to hear what we think of Jesus and what a difference He makes in our lives. It is quite exciting to think about students who will come to you and me. God can work faith and we truly welcome students who don't know Him yet.

From ISM Rolla, MO Nina Haas, director



Nina wrote, "The Northern Illinois District LWML grant was an amazing gift! I was able to give members of this class their personal copy of *Luther's Small Catechism* in Chinese and English. Thank you!"

Staying Connected

by Trish Kelm, ISM board member and volunteer

What happens when they go back?

Amy was not your typical international student, but she was the mother of an international master's degree student from Taiwan. She came on a six month visa to visit and help with daily chores of her single son who was struggling academically and emotionally.



Not wanting to waste an opportunity to improve her English, Amy attended all the English classes and Bible studies offered through All Nations Christian Center at University Lutheran Chapel in College Station, Texas. It was a joy to have her as part of each class as she always brought her quiet nature and smile.

As our friendship grew, she became comfortable enough to ask me to pray for her and her son as their struggles seemed to also have some legal ramifications. She had so much to deal with in a foreign system that she didn't understand. In spite of the circumstances, Amy's faith in our Lord grew.

Amy returned to Taiwan, but we have stayed connected throughout the last eight years. I am so thankful to be able to stay connected with many of my former students through e-mail and Facebook. I am especially thankful that Amy is one of them!

Today, she gives credit to the time spent with our English classes and Bible studies for her calling to be a trained counselor with a Christian holistic counseling center. She is thriving in a country where less than two percent of the population is Christian. God has her right where He wants her so His light in her shines brightly! Amy embraces the motto, "I do all this for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings" (I Cor. 9:23).

From ISM Detroit Bob Dickhudt, director

"I think this may be God's will for me ... to go back to China."

How amazed and thankful we were to hear "Johnson" share with our assembled ISM group how he now felt after the "roller-coaster 2-3 weeks" he'd been through! The joy of graduation with a post-graduate engineering degree ... the possibility of a job with one of the Big Three automakers ... and then the letter from our government telling him his visa would not be renewed!

Our Bible studies about God's love for all the people of the world and His wish to have us all experience the joy of trusting the Lord and His promises, and saying "Thy will be done" with our prayers ... all this and more is truly being blessed by the Holy Spirit! Thank You, Lord.

'Thank You!' from St. Louis



International students from St. Louis took this photo to thank the volunteers who serve among them. The "Thank You" is also for you, our faithful prayer and financial supporters.

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.

Sharing English - my joy!

by Ann Nehring, ISM committee member
Luther Memorial Chapel, Shorewood, Wis.

It started out very simply. Bessie Fick, ISM Coordinator at Luther Memorial Chapel, had been encouraging anyone who had an interest in leading an English conversation class to try it out. I thought about it and figured I could speak English well enough. I thought I could try out leading a class during my lunch break once a week on the UWM campus where I work.

Bessie let me know last September that someone was interested in an English conversation class during the time I had available. That first week I had one student. The next week that student brought a friend, so I had two students. The group grew during the course of the fall semester. I had so much fun simply speaking English with those who wanted to learn. We continued through the fall semester, the spring semester, into summer and now into fall.

We have a lot of fun, laughing at the idiosyncrasies of the English language. We use a book as the basis for our discussions. Sometimes a word that is introduced in the book reminds me of a Bible story. This provides a great opportunity to share God's message of love and salvation by telling Bible stories in my own words.

I have thoroughly enjoyed facilitating English Conversation classes and highly recommend it to anyone who has about an hour a week to meet others who want to learn our language and our culture. This can also lead to opportunities for tangible ways of sharing one's faith in Jesus as Savior.



Couple sows 'seeds'

by Nancy Kopp, volunteer
St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Manhattan, Kan.

One hot August evening, my husband, Ken, and I picked up Jiri, a Czech exchange student, at the Kansas City Airport and headed home. Passing a church, I asked if he attended church services. I've never forgotten his reply.

In a firm voice, the answer came quickly, "No. I don't believe in God." Then silence, broken less than a minute later by a second response. "I do believe in God but I don't believe in church."

As a host family, we witness to these young men and women through our actions and our Christian way of life. We are hoping to plant "seeds" over a few short months with these exchange students who come to Kansas State University. Most students from the Czech Republic have little or no religious belief. We trust that these "seeds" will bear fruit with time.

Jiri lived off campus, but often came to our home for dinner and conversation. His parting words to us were, "*When I am finished with my education, I want to do for others what you and Ken have done for me this year.*" He is married now and father of two boys. I don't know if he has grown in his religious beliefs or not, but I hope that the small "seeds" we sowed created a beginning for him.

Recently, I e-mailed several students who have kept in touch with us to let them know we will be in Prague in a few weeks. We set a time and place for anyone who wanted to visit with us. We were overwhelmed and gratified with the response. I'm excited about this reunion and also looking forward to doing a homestay for two more Czech students this year.

In most cases, we will never know if the "seeds" we sow come to fruition. We are only a very small part in the life journey these young people travel, but perhaps we can make a difference in some small way.



Ken and Nancy Kopp with Czech students.

Save the Date!

**2016 ISM Equipping
Conference
for Workers and Volunteers**
May 26-28, 2016
Our Lady of the Snows
Belleville, IL

Prayer Requests and Praises

Sept. 1-6, 2014: ISM Slippery Rock, PA
Augusta Mennell, director

Pray that the Buddhist student will come to study the Bible with us.

That students will want to attend our student meals, especially for the large group of Chinese students who will study here for a short time.

That God would protect students from having their faith destroyed while attending college.

ISM College Station, TX
Ashley McKenna and Hannah Galvan, co-directors

Pray for the incoming students on our campus in College Station, as well as all other campuses.

May our program not only teach students English, but also the Word of God.

Thanksgiving for the students we have gained this summer.

For Johnny, an international student, who is having sciatic nerve pain.

Sept. 7-13, 2014: ISM St. Louis
Susan Spitz, interim director

Please pray for ISM-St Louis in a time of staff transition. Director Vicki Jameson and her family have moved to Indiana where her husband accepted a new pastoral position. In the interim, Board Member Susan Spitz will serve in the director capacity.

Pray that the Lord brings the right person to lead the ministry, and that the transition goes smoothly as we encounter the critical and busy fall semester. This is our greatest opportunity to connect with incoming students with the aim to tell them about Jesus love for them.

ISM Manhattan, KS
Liz Beikmann, coordinator

For families volunteering to do homestays and be friendship families for this coming school year.

For former students who are passing the word about how wonderful it is to have a friendship family.

For safe travel for newly arriving internationals at KSU.

For the orientation dinner sponsored by Helping International Students (HIS) to be well attended.

Sept. 14-20, 2014: ISM Austin, TX
Marcia Mittwede, director

Thank the Lord for the good summer session. Ask Him to lead us to the students He wants in our program for this semester.

Ask the Lord to guide us as we begin a new Sunday morning English-as-a-Second Language Bible class. May He bring students who are eager to learn of God and His plan of salvation.

Thank the Lord for excellent volunteers. Ask Him to help us find more Americans willing to be involved for Jesus' sake.

Thank the Lord for leading my husband, Rev. Richard Mittwede, to accept the Call to be the new campus pastor for University Lutheran Church. Ask for wisdom, favor and guidance as we reach out together to proclaim Christ.

As many students are hearing the Gospel for the first time, ask the Lord to break down the barriers that would keep them from understanding who Jesus is and what He has done for them.

Sept. 21-27, 2014: ISM Flint, MI
Kate Cole, coordinator

A newly returned Chinese student sent the following e-mail that warmed our hearts:

Dear Friends:

*Thank you for helping us with English communication and the touring of the water plant. **Actually everything you have done makes me and my friends feel a great love.** We are grateful.*

I got home last evening safely. It's a hard, tired but happy trip.

Thank you for helping me so much and treat me as a friend. I would keep in touch with you and miss you.

Thanks and best regards.

John

For John, who was baptized here, as he shares his new faith in his homeland. We rely on God's promises for continued growth.

Praises and thanks to God for two students (Chinese and Indian) participating in one-on-one Bible study.

For our "laundry basket" giveaway to new students. Each basket is filled with laundry and personal products along with a schedule of our classes.

For the evangelistic workshop being hosted with POBLO - People of the Book Lutheran Outreach.

ISM Lincoln, NE
Mark Meyer, director

Pray that we would take good care of the new international students who arrived this fall.

For the three Muslim students from North India we recently met, that we may develop friendships with them and have many opportunities to share the Gospel.

That God would continue to grow the love of the volunteers for the students they are investing in.

That God would grow the depth of our community and we would invite more international students into this community.

Sept. 28 - Oct. 4, 2014: ISM Big Rapids, MI
Bethel Larsen, volunteer

For guidance and new opportunities for Yiwei (China) who was employed in the international office at Ferris until his job was cut. He has returned to China.

For Vivian, that Jesus will draw her to Himself during these final two semesters of her master's program and guide her future work in special education.

For Xiaohua as she prepares for her marriage in December.

For Tom, that his faith questions and doubts may be answered.

For the many Saudi students and their family members who have returned for the fall semester. May the Holy Spirit open their eyes and hearts to Jesus!

For Jinyi as she continues her master's program at Grand Valley State, that she will continue strong in her faith as she maintains a very busy schedule of study and work.

For good adjustment, needed support, and especially opportunities to meet Jesus for all new international students.

Thanksgiving for the continuing joy of interacting with international students and their families! May God enlarge our territory and provide harvest workers in this academic year!

Prayer Requests and Praises

Oct. 5-11, 2014: ISM East Lansing, MI

Rich Bearup, director

For Board Member Kaye who continues chemotherapy.
For Jie and her unborn child due this month
For conversation partner Grandma Jean – 94 years young – who is convalescing after hospitalization.

Praise for the healthy birth of a daughter for House Managers Kelly and Nate.

For Janine's healthy baby boy.

We also praise Him for Pastor Carl Selle's improved health and returned vitality after his bout with meningitis.

For the marvelous landscaping project at Friendship House MSU, undertaken by three internationals from Belgium, Brazil and Japan, all of whom are landscape architects.

For the \$23,980 grant awarded to Friendship House MSU by the Lutheran Women's Missionary League – Michigan District for improvements to our Christian and ESL educational programs.

For each of our fellow ISM ministries. God's blessings to all!

ISM LaCrosse, WI

John Jaeger, volunteer

Pray for the safe travel of all the international students and their respective schools of higher education.

Pray for a good response to our weekly student Bible study.

ISM Champaign, IL

Rick Milas, pastor

For Ann, who is serving an internship here and will soon return to India.

Oct. 12-18, 2014: ISM Milwaukee, WI

Bessie Fick, director

Praise for the summer volunteers. Pray that God would provide others to lead English conversation groups and provide a morning children's program volunteer.

That God would guide us to opportunities to invite other internationals to activities that we might share the love of Christ.

For opportunities to tell how God is working in the lives of those who come to us from other countries. That God's people would continue to fund outreach ministries on campuses throughout our nation and here in the Milwaukee area.

ISM Pittsburgh

Eric Andrae, pastor

For Mikaka (China) and Yumja (Japan), who have returned to their native lands. They both studied the catechism; and, at least in the case of Mikaka, is seriously considering Christianity.

ISM Tempe, AZ

Jane Boye, director

Thank God for hearing our requests on behalf of Jun Mi who is no longer taking chemotherapy. He is now taking radiation and returned to class this fall. We continue to pray for healing.

For Shuwei and Riyo as they return to Japan. We pray for safe travel and a new job for Shuwei.

For God's guidance during the new school year at ASU. We pray that our witness may be strong and that all our decisions on behalf of our ministry be God pleasing.

Oct. 19-25, 2014: ISM Madison, WI

Judy Tang, director

Praise God for the opportunity to help and work with the University of Wisconsin-Madison program of Chinese families coming to the U.S.

For L as she is really seeking to know more about Christianity, attending Bible study, and meeting one-on-one with an International Friendship Center (IFC) volunteer to learn more about what it means to have a relationship with Jesus.

That God would bring more volunteers to lead English classes.

Many new internationals came over the summer. Continue to pray with me for all the new students coming this fall and that the IFC will be a light and a witness for Jesus on campus!

ISM Rolla, MO

Nina Haas, director

For new and returning international students, scholars and their families, their adjustment to new communities and American culture, for those seeking friendship and hope for this life and the next – that the Lord would point them to our ministries.

For more open hearts, minds and hands in the churches so that internationals will feel welcome and see Jesus in us.

Thankfulness for volunteers Ken Haas, Sue Burgdorf and Emory Cook for their sacrifices on behalf of those whom God has placed before us and for supporters who faithfully give of their talents and treasures – the Lord bless them and keep them!

Oct. 26-31, 2014: ISM Chinese Ministry, St. Louis, MO

Becky Shaw, director

For all the guests at worship. Pray that the Spirit would bring them back.

That the Holy Spirit would work faith in the hearts of ESL Bible study members who are not yet Christians.

For all who attend Chinese Bible study on Friday evening, including a separate small group of teenagers.

That Christians everywhere would realize the urgency and importance of sharing Christ with their neighbor no matter what race or color.

ISM Detroit

Bob Dickhudt, director

Thank the Lord for our friend, Carol, who is in her 80s and has found it necessary to "step back" from weekly service with ISM. Bless her "new life" as she witnesses in other ways!

May the Holy Spirit continue to work on the hearts of Tom, Chen, Arthur, and Man Man who were so blessed by the 2014 In-Depth Bible Seminar.

For "Johnson" as his family goes back to China, obviously touched by the Spirit and wanting to recognize God's will.

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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Inside this Issue:

- **An In-Depth Bible Seminar ‘Two-timer’**
- **God’s ISM stories**
- **Join ISM on Facebook**
- **Prayer Requests and Praises**



God, witness and strawberry picking

by Judy Tang, ISM director and board member
Madison, Wis.



What can we learn about Jesus from a trip to the strawberry farm?

Once the invitation e-mail is sent to the international students, the anticipation begins. I wonder who is going to sign up and join me as we pick strawberries at the farm. I wonder what questions they will ask me about Wisconsin, strawberries, Christianity, life, travel, etc. I wonder if I will have the answers to their questions.

On a beautiful June afternoon, 25 of us traveled 50 minutes in vans and cars to Hazeltine Strawberry Farms in Janesville. For most of the students, this was the first time they have ever been strawberry picking. What fun to introduce them to a new experience!

During the drive to the farm, we passed barns, farmland, rolling hills, very small towns, cows, and horses. Internationals did ask me about Wisconsin, American culture, farms, and traveling. But the most exciting conversations were the ones

about Christianity. I was able to share about the Trinity and how Jesus was present in creation, and God’s creativity and care in designing our world and producing strawberries!

Students asked why there are bugs, floods and bad things that happen in our world. I was able to share with them that sin has affected all of us but that Jesus has freely redeemed us through His amazing love, life, death, and resurrection. Many students were interested in knowing more about Jesus and God’s Word, so I invited them to attend any of the Bible studies at the International Friendship Center!

I am thankful and blessed to be a part of this ministry where God can and does use English classes, activities, and Bible studies to connect internationals to life in the U.S. and life in Jesus Christ!

PLEASE NOTE: Thrivent donation site

When making Thrivent Choice decisions, you must search for INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY, INC. - STEVENS POINT, WI. This will provide choice dollars for ISM, Inc. It is hard to find, but if you put in the above words, it should take you to the correct place.