

<u>Doorstep</u>

SERVING INTERNATIONALS ON CAMPUS

ISM Fever

by Karl Lenser, ISM director and ISM board member

International Student Ministry, a Recognized Service Organization within the Missouri Synod, has been a tremendous blessing to me and to Peace Lutheran Church, Conway, Ark. I have been involved in international student ministry for the last six years. Initially, my family became friends with several Japanese students who attended a worship service and luncheon.



This initial meeting sparked an interest in me to help and love these students

who were so far from home and did not know about Jesus. What started out as a simple luncheon conversation eventually led to hiking excursions, tennis, swimming, house parties, driving lessons, resume assistance, grocery shopping and more. During the past six years, we have had a total of 40 Japanese students and parents in our home. Thank you, Holy Spirit, for igniting the ISM spark within me and my family!

What has been wonderful is that several others in our congregation have caught the ISM fever and have been similarly blessed by working with international students. Our little 125+ member church has impacted the lives of students from Japan, China, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Mexico, Tanzania, India, Finland, Vietnam, etc.

But how and when did ISM become part of my life and ministry? I will confess that I never knew about ISM until Mark Tooley, our Director of Family Life Ministry and vicar, suggested that I attend the 2012 Equipping Conference that was held in Kansas City. This meeting was a HUGE blessing to me and our ministry at Peace!

I met so many wonderful and knowledgeable people who have the same passion for this ministry as I do. I was like a sponge during the conference and absorbed as much information as possible. I was "ablaze" with all of the information and networking that I accrued.

I discovered how awesome the ISM website is and the amount of resources available. The information I have garnered from the site alone has helped me with our ministry in Conway. Please use the website to grow your ministry! A few minutes of your time and a few mouse clicks can make a huge difference in your efforts to draw internationals to the cross of Jesus.

Please click on www isminc.org RIGHT NOW and bookmark it! A great tool is only great if you use it!

May God bless your international student ministry!

My Path to Christianity

by Changbo Hu

To begin with, I never thought I would one day be baptized as a Christian.

It was in 2002, when I was at the University of California in Santa Barbara. My roommate, Charlie, was working towards a master's degree in the Mechanics Department. His professor, Steve, organized a Bible study group. I attended almost every time to read the book of Luke. I do not remember getting any real understanding of the Bible, but it served only as English language learning. Basically, I repeated the readings to get the correct pronunciation and tenses. I don't even know in which church we were meeting. I rode in Steve's huge van every time to get there and back. Steve always said: "We never knew why we bought such a big van. Now we know!" Yes, now I know, too.

My office mate, Rogerio, was a Catholic. I often joked with him with questions like, "Can God create a stone which He cannot lift up?" Rogerio seriously answered, "Yes, He can if He wants." Then, I laughed and said, "Then He cannot lift it up!" Normally, Rogerio and I worked together happily. One day I had an argument with him and I won the argument. But I felt terribly bitter and wanted to repent of my actions. This incident struck me because it caused me to see how great a Christian loves others with patience. Rogerio has always been one of the best friends. But he never knew why he won me over. It was not his strong skill of teaching and smartness, but his humbleness, love and patience.

Over the next several years, I experienced happiness and sadness. There were many Christians along the way. My family and I attended a Chinese church's Bible meetings regularly and learned a lot. People are full of love and grace. Two families helped us very much. We always believed they are the role models for all families: wealthy, healthy and happy. My wife even expressed our admiration during one gathering, but it turned out to be a big surprise. One friend told us, "We live a broken life. The role model is only Jesus, not us." Everyone lives a broken life no matter how perfect others may think. Jesus is the only Way, the Truth and the Life.

After my family moved to Austin, I was introduced to King of Kings Lutheran Church, Round Rock, and attended Bible class and worship. If circumstances that caused me deep sorrow had not occurred, I would never have gotten so close to Pastor Richard, Elmer, Marcia, Judy and Trilby. Although the Bible is learned in the class, it would never become the principle of my life. But God had His plan for this sinner.

I came to know Jesus and I seriously carried this belief

(Continued on Page 2.)

My Path to Christianity (continued)

in my life. I feel blessed with my lovely wife and two sons. Although there is always something not good happening, my feeling and dealings are different now. During my job search and interview, I was extremely confident and positive. It was not because of how smart I believed I was. It was only because I know God is leading my family to where He plans.



ISM Director Marcia Mittwede joins Changbo and his son, Anthony, and wife, Jadie.

May God's will be done, not my will be done. So then I knew it was time to be baptized and confess my faith, repent of my sins and be born into a new life in Jesus. So, on December 22, 2013, I was baptized by Pastor Richard Mittwede into the family of God at King of Kings Lutheran Church.

From Ames, IA Hannah Moore, ISM director

English class makes a difference

by Haruko Nakagawa

I was looking for the opportunity to learn English. Although I had lived in Ames, for 28 years, my conversation in English was still choppy and not sophisticated. I usually spoke Japanese, especially after my sons left home.

"Where do you teach English?" I asked Jean (an ISM volunteer at Memorial Lutheran Church and Student Center) while we were both volunteering at the Reiman Gardens. I had known her for more than nine months, and she seemed very kind and intelligent. A couple days later, I was in an English class at Memorial. The instructors were very friendly and patient so that international students like me were able to make questions and speak up without fear about their own opinions. I have not only learned English, but also made friends with other international students in the classes.

Then, I found out there was Bible study class and a class about Christianity. I thought I would like to attend. The way of teaching the Bible and Christianity here is not authoritarian, but friendly. The students can use the Bible written in their language if the English one is difficult. The text used in the Bible study is easily written and each story has an illustration. Any questions, even if it sounds childish, are answered. Pastor Mark Heilman is very knowledgeable about Japanese history, particularly the Christian one. Therefore, I feel very comfortable and thankful to learn about being merciful, faith, and repentance with the instructors, Hannah Moore, ISM director, Pastor Mark and my international friends.

From Lincoln, NE Mark Meyer, ISM director

Each year we prepare a family-style Thanksgiving meal. Last fall, we had over 100 people at our Thanksgiving meal and about 45 of them were international students. It was a great opportunity for many people to make a new friend. Lives have been changed by this yearly meal. Three years ago at this meal, Roger and Jerry



Meyer met a Chinese couple. They continued to build a friendship with this couple over the last three years, and in October, this Chinese couple, their two children and the grandmother were all baptized at Messiah Lutheran Church in Lincoln.

Recently, I was helping a student from Iran move furniture and in the course of the conversation I asked this student if he had ever read part of the Bible. The student said, "No, to be honest with you, I had never even seen a Bible until I was in your church the other day." We had recently received 20 Farsi Bibles*, so I asked him if he would be interested in one. He answered, "Yes, I would really appreciate that." A few days later, I was able to stop by his apartment and deliver the Bible to him. Since then we have had several conversations about God and Jesus. The Lord is good!

(*Editor's note: We are thankful for the Northern Illinois District LWML grant that provided Bibles for ISM sites.)

From Columbia, MO Rev. Art Simmons, ISM director

International students and visiting scholars are inundated with Christmas music, the Christmas shopping frenzy, and the endless "holiday-themed" TV shows. But missing from this onslaught is virtually any mention of that earthshaking birth that changed all of history and brought God's love and salvation to all.

The international ministry group at Campus Lutheran Church in Columbia, set out to fill that gap with its Christmas Open House, designed to introduce visitors to the background and meaning of all the symbols associated with the celebration of Jesus' birth. Volunteers made sure the event had all the necessary elements: Christmas cookies, songbooks of carols, information sheets with explanation of all the symbols of the Christian celebration, and the DVD "Red Boots for Christmas" from Lutheran Hour Ministries played in Mandarin Chinese with English subtitles.

What a delightful afternoon! Twenty-seven internationals graced the church with their presence, with their curiosity about Christmas, and with their rapt attention to all the sharing that was done.

They left knowing more about Christmas than all the TV specials, all the frantic shopping, and all the "holiday" fuss could ever teach them.



For ISM WORKERS and VOLUNTEERS

A conference to equip and encourage God's people for ministry among international students, scholars and their families

MAY 22 — 24, 2014

The National Shrine of Our Lady of the Snows 442 South De Mazenod Dr., Belleville, IL 62223

KEYNOTE PRESENTER: Ken Chitwood



Ken Chitwood is a ministry leader, freelance writer and religion commentator. He lives with his wife, Elizabeth, and two dogs in Houston, Tex., where he serves two congregations as Mission Overseer and Leadership Development Coordinator and preaching/teaching vicar. He is a published author and sought after speaker whose work has appeared in the *Washington Post*, the *Christian Century, Sojourners*, the *Houston Chronicle*, *Publisher's Weekly, Religion & Politics* and the University of Chicago's *Sightings* in addition to published book work with the BARNA Group, Zondervan, Wipf & Stock and Tri-Pillar. He spoke at the 2013 National Youth Gathering and teaches on multi-ethnic ministry, cross-cultural mission, world religions and transnational religious phenomena in Texas.

Ken has served on five continents and in eleven countries, spent significant time in New Zealand, South Africa, and serving international students at Arizona State University and the University of Houston.

Bible Study Leader: Rev. Kris Whitby



The Rev. Kris Whitby serves our Lord as senior pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church and School in Mt. Prospect, Ill. He has served for the past ten years in both associate and senior pastoral roles. Recently Whitby completed a four-year term as national pastoral counselor for the national Lutheran Women Missionary League (LWML). He is a published author of the Bible study, "At Table with Jesus." While serving in Jacksonville, Fla., he also hosted the weekly radio talk program, "Faith Talks," that explored current issues of the church from a Lutheran perspective.

Rev. Whitby has a passion to teach the Word of God with an engaging, Christ-centered focus. He also has a heart to bring the good news of Christ and the touch of His compassion to people around the world and has had the honor of leading short-term mission trips. He is blessed to be married to Marguerita and be the father Bradley and Kathryn.

Registration Information

The registration fee of \$150 per person covers programming, lodging and meals from Thursday evening through Saturday afternoon. For those not needing housing, a fee of \$75 will cover programming and meals. *The deadline to register is April 15, 2014.*A late registration fee of \$50 will be added after April 15.

Equipping Conference registration and information are available from ISM Directors; www.isminc.org; isminc@isminc.org; or 715-677-4877.

The 2014 Equipping Conference, offered every two years, involves relevant speakers and workshops, worship and Bible study and plenty of interaction time with others to share and learn about international student ministry.

Prayer Requests and Praises

March 1, 2014: ISM Board of Directors

Praise and thanks for the faithful supporters of ISM, Inc. who serve through prayer and financial gifts.

March 2-8, 2014: ISM Detroit Bob Dickhudt, director

Thanks for the Chinese students who continue to bring friends along to "experience ISM."

Praise that we have a good group of students who are interested in getting into the Word. Pray His Holy Spirit to touch their hearts with a "heavenly change."

HALLELUJAH for "Leah," who after only just 3 days in Detroit came to our Christmas party. A "friend in China told me to be sure to find 'Bob and the ISM'." She did! She's unable to come to our Thursday gatherings (classes at the same time), but wants to attend off-campus activities with us and is ".....going to the Chinese church on Friday evenings and Sunday mornings."

March 9-15, 2014: ISM Chinese Ministry, St. Louis, MO Becky Shaw, director

Praise for some new faces at our Tuesday women's English Bible study. Pray for good weather on Tuesdays.

Pray that the visiting scholars who have visited Light of Christ would listen to the Holy Spirit.

Praise for the great fund-raising event in late January.

For the leadership training for the co-worker group members.

ISM Conway, AR Karl Lenser, director

Heaven is celebrating as God has added two more to His family. Two Chinese ladies that came to Conway in July of 2013 have now become Christian. Both of these young women became friends with several families at Peace Lutheran throughout the summer and fall. They are so excited, happy and relieved that the burden of the law is not hanging over them anymore.

For our ISM at Peace Lutheran as we continue to grow this ministry. We ask that the Holy Spirit provide our church with more members to serve in this exciting and rewarding ministry. Bless us with more spiritual farmers that can help plant seeds in the hearts of the students that do not know Jesus.

For guidance, knowledge, and help in working with the dozens of Saudi Arabian students. Help us use this opportunity to show them that Jesus is more than a Prophet, but also our Priest and King.

March 16-22, 2014: ISM Milwaukee, WI Bessie Fick, director

For the privilege of sharing God's Word with the internationals. Thank you for the wonderful help of P who is inviting many friends to the classes.

For the work of our ISM assistant Erica Wieting and the planning she is doing with the children's program. We give thanks for her new baby daughter.

For more volunteers for the English conversation groups as one of our long time volunteers, Irma Weber, had to step down because of health issues.

That God would guide the internationals returning to their home countries to other Christians so that they can continue to hear God's Word of grace and forgiveness.

(Continued) March 16-22, 2014: ISM Iowa City, IA Megan Starrett, director

Praise for the many students that the Lord is bringing us.

For A and B from an Islamic country who received the gift of Holy Baptism.

For C from China to continue to study and learn and prepare for baptism this spring.

That the Holy Spirit will work in the hearts of those who hear the Word through ISM ministries.

March 23-29, 2014: ISM Ames, IA Hannah Moore, ISM coordinator

For South Sudan in the midst of turmoil again. For God to restore peace and bring unity to not only the country but its people all over the world. Praise for His work in difficult situations amongst families here in Ames.

For a new Chinese mother who had her baby three months prematurely. It absolutely crushed her perfect world with all the unknowns, but she is now eager to find hope, faith and peace in God. Praise Him for His handprints all over the situation.

For friends from China, Japan, Korea, South Sudan and Columbia who faithfully attend Bible studies.

For Stephen who is serving as an ISM peer assistant this semester and for God to provide two students for this summer.

For Kear and Ayon to finish 8th grade confirmation classes strong and complete them in May. They are the oldest of four and six children respectively and are leaders for their younger siblings.

For all of the new and returning students at English classes, Bible studies, FISH dinners and activities.

March 30 - April 5, 2014: ISM St. Louis Vicki Jameson, director

As ISM-St. Louis volunteers walk through Lent and look forward to Easter, may the Lord help us share that Jesus died on the cross and rose again to save all people. May the Holy Spirit help international students trust in Jesus as their personal Savior.

Pray for the Washington University Tuesday Lunch for International Students. As the venue changes this semester, may the Lord lead students to participate at the new location. May volunteers have many opportunities to share God's love each Tuesday.

Pray for "E" who continues to wonder about Christianity. May the Holy Spirit work in her heart and help her believe that Jesus is her God and Savior.

Give thanks to God for "S" who is asking questions about the Trinity. Pray that the Lord will continue to give her a thirst for His Word and will guide her to believe in Jesus her Savior.

Pray for God's wisdom and guidance as we reach out to share God's love with international wives and families living in a Clayton neighborhood.

ISM Lincoln, NE Mark Meyer, director

For our new friendships with many Iranian students. Pray that more of them would be open to coming to our Bible discussions.

That God would open the hearts of the students weekly hearing the Gospel. Pray that they would trust in Jesus and be baptized.

That God would raise up more conversation partners. Pray that we would be faithful in asking for conversation partners.

Prayer Requests and Praises

April 6-12, 2014: ISM Lansing Area, MI Rich Bearup, director

For the successfully recovery of teachers Tom and Ken following surgeries, as well as for board member Kaye who continues her chemo treatments and volunteer Wes who is receiving treatment for a brain tumor, heart problem and vision difficulties.

For three of our teachers and their unborn children.

For God's blessings on the more than 60 volunteers who are teaching classes this semester and for the many volunteers now serving as conversation partners.

For God's grace, mercy and blessings upon our fellow servants in the International Student Ministry field across the U.S.

For the more than 500 international students who have come to Friendship House MSU this semester. Especially praise Him for the recent baptisms of four of our students.

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

For our students of different faiths, especially our Muslim students that we may be able to share our Christian faith with them in a respectful and moving way.

For Dlzar and his wife, as they are expecting their first child.

April 13-19, 2014: ISM Honolulu, HI Janelle Dryden, director

Praise and thanks for O and I seeing Jesus answer their college career prayers.

Thanks for R and R getting on their knees before God and allowing Him into their lives at last!

That A would see the lie in Yoga and in the eastern religion that she feels "is just wonderful." She still rejects Jesus.

For students to avoid harmful sites on the Internet.

Thanks for the funding that has come in for LCM. Need more! God is so good!

For the outreach to Jewish people here in Hawaii.

ISM Manhattan, KS Liz Beikmann, coordinator

Thanksgiving for new families being willing to host Ecuadorian teachers.

For the successful orientation dinner for new international students for the spring semester.

For God's guidance in working with students who have never been to a church service before and who have many questions.

ISM Tempe, AZ Jane Boye, director

Praise that MJ will not need to have his leg amputated. The chemo is working. However, he has many more rounds ahead of him, so continued prayers are needed.

Thank You from the ISM, Inc. Board of Directors and the many international students who have participated in the In-Depth Bible Seminars. Your support is so vital and greatly appreciated!

April 20-26, 2014: ISM Big Rapids, MI Bethel Larsen, volunteer

That the Holy Spirit will continue to pursue students who have moved on or returned home.

That three prospective In-Depth Bible Seminar students will be able to attend.

That Jinyi will continue to grow in the Lord.

That we can form a connection with a retired pastor who wants to serve among Grand Valley State University students.

For good health and guidance for new and expectant moms, and that they and their families will know Jesus.

That Xiaohua's wedding and study plans will be guided by the Lord and that her marriage will be blessed.

ISM Cincinnati, OH Jamie Noyd, director

Praise God that a Chinese student is serving as an intern this semester to facilitate our English conversation classes and to help a local LCMS church with their refugee program. Pray this would help us to reach more international students and that it would provide connections for this student in her future career.

That God would continue to open the hearts of the international students who regularly attend our weekly Bible discussions and evening prayer. That they would draw closer to Christ and that some would be led to be baptized.

April 27-30, 2014: ISM Austin, TX Marcia Mittwede, director

Thanks to God for bringing people to salvation. Please ask Him to lead these to other believers for continued growth in faith: Changbo and family, Ginger and Sean, Sophia and Jin.

For Angela to have opportunities to share Jesus with her family. Pray the Holy Spirit would open the eyes of students who are now in Bible class, so they know Jesus.

For those who will attend the In-Depth Bible Seminar to have prepared hearts for learning leadership skills and wisdom.

Thank the Lord for the faithful volunteers who selflessly give of their time each week to share their lives with students.

ISM West Lafayette, IN Jim Barton, retired pastor

Praise for the adult confirmations of a students from South Korea and Greece.

Praise for the adult baptism of a Chinese undergraduate student.

For 125 students who came to a dinner for new internationals at Purdue for the spring semester.

For lots of volunteers and a good start on a transition after Pastor Jim Barton's retirement at the end of 2013.

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:

- Equipping Conference planned for May
- Lives are touched through ISM
- Gifts for the In-Depth Bible Seminar
- Prayer Requests and Praises

Non-profit Org. U.S. Postage PAID Wisconsin Rapids, WI Permit No. 31

From ISM Milwaukee, WI Bessie Fick, ISM Director

Thank You to the People of the Light!

Fuqi, a visiting scholar at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, his wife, Xianglin, and daughter Jenny have been blessed with the kindness and care they have received from many people. Here he extends his thanks for the wonderful care and love shown his family:

"In our most gloomy time, the Lutheran Memorial Chapel (LMC) was our sunshine. When we arrived in Milwaukee on a winter night one year ago with curiosity, hope and ambition, we did not anticipate what would follow. For many days we kept asking ourselves, "Is this the life we want in America, being isolated from the outer world, having no opportunity to know local people, even to speak English, or even worse, needing to see the doctor often?" It was only our daughter, Jenny, who loved everything!

"In the midst of the blue days, information came into our life by chance and we could get to know American people in a local church.

"As a result, our life gradually lit up. As a non-Christian, I may be allowed to cite a Bible verse to stress what I want to ascribe to the people of LMC: "For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light" (*Psalm* 36:9). As a philosophy professor, I got such a unique chance to penetrate into the correlation between philosophy and theology, which has been an important part of my academic interest for a long time.

"Thank you all for helping us, thank you all for giving us the "good message" through your nice words and deeds. If God is the light of the world, we have seen this light through you. Experiencing hard times, we know this light matters.

"In about a month we will head back to China. We are considering very often what gifts we can bring to our friends and relatives. Beside choco-



Fuqi with his wife, XiangLin, and Jenny

lates, lovely clothes, etc., we will bring them a free "gift": the "good message" about you, even more about the light."

A Tremendous Opportunity in 2014



THE OPPORTUNITY:

ISM, Inc. is hosting its annual **In-Depth Bible Seminar** for International Students from May 14 to 21 in the St. Louis area. The seminar consists of an eight-day training for Christian and "serious seekers" with a Bible overview, Catechism lessons, preparing and sharing a personal testimony, and facilitating a small group ministry. The cost per participant is approximately \$800 of which each participant pays a \$150 registration fee. Our hope is to offer training to 20 students.

The total cost of the In-Depth Bible Seminar is approximately \$16,000. In the past, we have sent out a appeal mailing for this seminar, but we believe that including this announcement in this newsletter will be a better use of our ISM funds.



WHAT CAN YOU DO?

With this opportunity, your gift will enable ISM, Inc. to host the seminar and train our international friends to share the Gospel around the world!

Be part of this tremendous opportunity and send your gift in the enclosed envelope or give online at www.isminc.org.



OUR HISTORY OF 18 YEARS IS BLESSED:

On behalf of the ministry of the some 200 international students who have participated in the In-Depth Bible Seminar (aka In-Depth Leadership Training) over the past 18 years, we say "thank you" for your prayers and your generous gifts.



THE IMPACT OF THE IN-DEPTH BIBLE SEMINAR:

ISM, Inc. has found that the impact of this seminar has made an eternal difference in the lives of those who attend. "Graduates" of In-Depth serve around the world: Miriam continues to lead a weekly Bible study under a banyon tree in rural Nigeria; Lars is integral in the Lutheran church in Latvia; Hongling guides as an elder in a family church in Beijing; Goi served as director of a Concordia Center in Bangkok, Thailand; and Kabede serves as an agricultural missionary in Ethiopia.

Turn this page over to read a few stories of the impact of the In-Depth Bible Seminar.





In-Depth Bible Seminar News

Planting a Church



Asfaw Gudina
(Ethiopia) attended the last
two In-Depth Bible
Seminars. Currently, he is
finishing up his master's
degree at Kent State
University in Kent, Ohio. At
the same time, he is assisting
his brother in Ethiopia with

the planting of a church in a very rural and unreached part of Ethiopia.

His part in the project is providing support, developing the model for outreach, and seeking funding for the beginning of this new congregation. While many in Ethiopia are already believers, many are yet to be reached. Asfaw has a heart burdened for those unreached people.

Using God's Gifts

While in Stevens
Point, Wis., **SunJoo Oh**was a faithful participant
at Peace Lutheran
Campus Center, served as
a peer minister for
international student
ministry and attended the
In-Depth Bible Seminar
in 2004. She was
instrumental in bringing
many international



students to worship and activities.

Today, she lives with her husband and family in Milwaukee and continues to use her gifts in helping others, especially serving as a translator for the Korean community.

Continuing to Serve

Goi attended the In-Depth Bible Seminar in 2005. She first came to know Jesus through the LCMS ministry at Concordia Gospel Ministry in Bangkok, Thailand.

Following the In-Depth Seminar, she



returned to her homeland and served at the Concordia Childcare Ministry Center in Bangkok. Today, she is married to Seth Fischer and is a fulltime mother to their daughter and helping in her Christian and non-Christian community.

Reflections from Participants

- ◆ Thanks for giving me this opportunity to know more about God's Word. (Japan)
- ♦ We came here because of God; and we are leaving here for our future journey to honor Him with better knowledge of His words and better understanding of His blessings which we gained through this week. (Germany)
- ◆ I found answers to many questions and know that I will benefit from these few days all my life. God will always bless us! (Nigeria)
- ◆ I appreciate that the church gave me a chance to learn more about the Bible. It drew me closer to God and to becoming baptized. (Hong Kong)

