



# The Doorstep

SERVING INTERNATIONALS ON CAMPUS

## AN ISM, INC. TRUE STORY

by Rich Bearup, ISM director  
East Lansing, MI

Friendship House MSU predominantly serves international visiting scholars, graduate students, PhD students, post-doctoral students, and their family members. "Hannah," who arrived from China about a year ago, was a scholar with an intense curiosity about Christianity. She attended all of our Bible studies, as well as many of our ESL classes, and held deep discussions with several of our teachers about the who, what, where, when and why of their Christian faith. She began attending what is called the "Chinese Church" that serves Chinese internationals on campus. She also visited the worship services of many of our Lutheran congregational partners.

She excitedly came into my office one day and announced with an emphatic, revelatory tone, "I am Christian!" As she poured out her zeal and joy, I was nearly overcome myself, a witness to her amazing declaration and transformation. She was later baptized and clearly thirsting for more and more about scripture, faith and her personal evangelical responsibility. I asked her to attend ISM, Inc.'s In-Depth Bible Seminar and she readily agreed.

Right after she returned from what she felt was a mountaintop experience at In-Depth, she learned that her husband's oldest brother had passed away. As the family Skyped in the days following his death, our student shared the Good News, urging them to consider Jesus as the best and only source of comfort to them. Initially, the new eldest brother rejected her entreaties, calling such talk dangerous and subversive. Still, as the family gathered at weekly internet chats seeking some form of mutual solace, our student would continue to urge their attention on Jesus. The eldest brother continued to reject her suggestions. Then, a few weeks later, the eldest brother called our student. He said, "What do I need to do to know more about Jesus?"

Our student felt called by God to return to her country for the rest of the summer in order to witness among her extended family and share God's peace and joy to all who would listen. She spent many hours with the eldest brother.

"Hannah" returned to MSU and the Friendship House for the fall semester. When she called on me in my office, her smile was as broad as a summer's day. "My brother-in-law is starting to believe," she said. "This is important because the family follows his lead."

Along with her courses and research at MSU, our student returned to our Bible classes. Late in the semester, she and I met to talk about her continued desire to be a witness for Jesus. What came out of our talks was a new class that started this semester at one of our partner churches. The pastor agreed to lead with our student as his assistant.

Incredibly, our student personally recruited 29 other Chinese internationals from MSU to attend this class. She arranged for transportation so they could safely arrive and return home afterwards.

**They all came.**

**They all stayed.**

**They all are coming back!**



## MEALS WITH A MEANING

by Augusta Mennell, ISM Slippy Rock, PA

All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center serves homemade meals to Slippy Rock University students once a month. As successful as these monthly meals I have had to consider the question, "Are the meals worthwhile?" I can confidently say that yes, they do. Christmas Day proved it!



Most college students get to go home for the six-week Christmas break. A few internationals don't get to go home. That's how it came about that we were able to invite students

from Nepal, the British Virgin Islands, and Sri Lanka to have Christmas Day dinner at our house. At first the conversation was all about our favorite foods, how they celebrated holidays at home, and the weather.

And then Anuj brought up the topic of religion. He believed that all ways leads to heaven as long as the person is good or tries to be. After Anuj expressed his belief it was perfectly reasonable for me as a Christian to respond even though he was a guest in our home. I responded by saying that Christians believe that we can never be good enough to earn a place in Heaven, and that Jesus is the only One who is good enough because he led a sinless life because he is God's Son.

How did Anuj respond to that? With mounting excitement we realized that Anuj was not closing his mind to what we were saying. He heard it! And his willingness to hear what we said about Christianity came about as a result of the student meal. The meal amounted to an open door to the Gospel.

### Supporting ISM, Inc.

When making Thrivent Choice decisions, you must search for INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY, INC. - STEVENS POINT, WI. This will provide choice dollars for ISM, Inc. Our work is the only national Lutheran ministry encouraging outreach among international students.

Your generous gifts fund the publication of *The Doorstep* and our regular conferences. Thank you for your prayerful consideration.

## Reflecting on 20 ISM years

by Liz Beikmann, ISM volunteer  
St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Manhattan, KS

Reflecting on the recent holiday, I found it amazing that we received more than 40 emails from former Kansas State University (KSU) exchange students. They updated us on their current lives and asked how everything was with us. Most importantly, they were remembering their time with the families that participate in St. Luke's ministry among internationals.

It was 20 years ago that a friend asked me to get involved with Helping International Students (HIS), a local Christian organization founded to help internationals at KSU. Although I did not know any of the details, I said yes; and that began my 20 year journey with HIS and International Student Ministry (ISM).

During those first few years we were assigned a student through HIS. As several of our families were assigned students from the Czech Republic, the students began passing the word to the next group coming telling them of our ministry. Eventually a number of families wanted Czech students and through connections with students and one of the universities in Prague, St. Luke's families are hosts to all of the students from the Czech Republic.

Since we are in communication with the students before they arrive, we meet them at the airport and put them up in our homes for the first few days



which allows the student and family to bond. The students live on campus and maintain contact with their local family/American friend. The entire group gathers for church picnics, pancake feeds, Christmas dinners, and other events.

Families are amazed at the constant contact and lasting friendships that are made. Students come back to visit, invitations are sent for weddings, announcements of births and more recently parents are emailing that younger siblings are now intending on coming to KSU and want to be part of the host family ministry.

One never knows what kind of impact you might make on someone or how a ministry will affect a person. I think that the continual contact over a 20 year period tells you that the impact has been amazing.

We thank God for this opportunity through ISM.

# Prayer Paves the Way

by Kate Cole – Flint International Friends Coordinator

“L,” a student from India, attended our ISM meetings and my church for several months. She learned about Jesus and confessed she believed he was a god, similar to her millions of other Hindu gods. When she left the Flint area for a job, we connected her with another Christian family—who embraced her with Jesus’ love.

Later I received a request from the her sister, C, who had earlier attended UM-Flint—prior to our ministry start-up. She asked me if I could send her a Bible because a co-worker at the auto-manufacturing plant where she worked shared Jesus with her at lunch-time.

Weeks later, both L and C confessed Jesus as their only living God! What joy and celebration we shared. Later, C, emailed to say she was leaving for India to witness to her family. She requested prayer—and our people prayed.

A month later, when she returned to the area, another email. “I am back from India, and yes, there was conflict but I stayed strong and Lord Jesus helped me every way. I was about to fall down in my faith...meaning bow down for idol worship, but I DID NOT do it. Praise the Lord, He saved me. I did not go to any temple. I did not do any idol worship. I prayed and taught my family how to pray ... it will take time for them to understand His love, but my Lord is faithful with me. He will give them direction....In the name of Jesus Amen!”

We also praise God that C is able to attend a Bible Study during her lunch-time at the manufacturing plant and pray for both women to be baptized soon.

## No Christmas Party?

by Sarah VandaVeer, St. Louis ISM Communications Volunteer



St. Louis ISM director, Sharon Riordan and her husband, Steve, had a great time showing students how to decorate their first Christmas tree! “We also had a wonderful opportunity to share the Christmas story in a natural setting. We absolutely love these students.”

You might think that December would be the perfect time for

International Student Ministry to throw a Christmas party. We have a big event for harvest time, Thanksgiving, and Easter, so why not Christmas? We don’t have a celebration in December, because we hope that this will be a time where ISM volunteers can invite students into their homes and churches to share Christmas. We love—that all across the St. Louis area this past December—international students were joining families around the Christmas tree.

For one of our volunteers, this was their first time celebrating Christmas with international students. They were excited to welcome both Mohammed, a Muslim-Iranian from Washington University, and Chetan, a Hindu-Indian student from the University of Missouri St. Louis, but they still were a bit nervous.

“Would the students like the food? Would they be uncomfortable with a celebration for Jesus Christ? Would the family enjoy them? Would they enjoy a

big, boisterous family?”

Turns out, that inviting the students made Christmas even more joyous than usual.

“The students asked me about our Christmas traditions, and to be able to tell them about the reason we celebrate Christmas—and to explain the Gospel in that setting—was unbelievable!” **-Maureen Bertarelli, ISM Volunteer**

Each student was given a gift and expressed their immense gratitude for being included in the celebration. The family said that it was as if the students had always been there as a part of the group. They ate together, they laughed together, and as the family sat down to read Luke 2, the international students listened right along with the rest of them.

The students not only heard the reason for Christmas that, “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord,” but they also witnessed the love and joy of Christ’s birth by celebrating with a Christian family.

As the Bertarelli’s found out, sharing with international students can be simpler than we think. By following the example of our Savior, bringing real Peace—the peace that was made between man and God—to the nations can start simply, by inviting others to our table to share a meal.



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# Prayer Requests and Praises

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**March 1-4, 2017: ISM State West Lafayette, IN**  
**Justin Herman, pastor**

Praise God that 107 international students were able to visit University Lutheran for our January welcome Dinner! Nearly 20 of those students talked with me about Christianity as it compares to other religions in the world. A number of those students said that they were interested in learning more. Pray that through those contacts God would call children to the waters of Holy Baptism.

That God would bless our new endeavors and we ask that He will continue to use us to strengthen the faithful and call the lost to Him.

**ISM Rolla, MO**  
**Nina Haas, volunteer**

For the Spirit to open minds and hearts of our students.

For Terry, one of our helpers who has returned to South America to meet with her translation team and visit villages. Pray especially for her safety.

**March 5-11, 2017: ISM Austin, TX**  
**Marcia Mittweide, director**

Thanksgiving for a good beginning to the second semester classes.

For A, C, R, T, Z, S, S, & J who have been in Bible class for several months. That the Holy Spirit would work faith in their lives and bring them to desire baptism.

For the Easter Triumph pageant to be well-attended by international students and be used by the Lord to open their hearts to Jesus.

For the Lord's guidance in who to ask to attend the In-Depth Bible Seminar, and that they would be willing and able to go.

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

Thanksgiving for all the wonderful Christmas messages from former exchange students.

Thanksgiving for safe arrival of the new exchange students and for safe travel during holidays.

For strength and courage as the families work with the students during the spring semester.

**March 12-18, 2017: ISM Big Rapids, MI**  
**Bethel Larsen, volunteer**

Thanks for meeting new students Abdul (S.A.), Kelsey (China), Shinhee (South Korea), Sarah (France), and Danielle, Suzanne, and David (Netherlands). Pray for the Holy Spirit to touch their lives.

Thanks for the delightful time with Yadan and her parents who were visiting from China. Please pray for continued guidance as she begins her OPT experience.

For fruitful relationships to develop with Areej and Rawan.

For Epiphany in the lives of Mohammed, Batool, and Sara and their respective families.

Pray for healing for Mohammed and that Jesus will be revealed to him and his family.

For further conversations with John (China), Simon (S. Korea), Dona (Cameroon), Ji (S. Korea), Nelly (China), Purvan (India).

**March 19-25, 2017: ISM Honolulu, HI**  
**Janelle Dryden, director**

That J and E would grow deeper in their faith.

That E would not be abused and grow up with great wisdom about God's protection and love.

That JH would share her new faith to all of her friends in China and around the world.

That M would find a suitable location for her ministry.

That God would protect A and her beautiful family against all evil as the children grow to be teenagers.

**March 26 - April 1, 2017: ISM Shorewood, WI**  
**Bessie Fick, director**

Thank the Lord that the Holy Spirit brought to the waters of baptism 9 individuals last year.

For God's guidance and direction as we serve those He is sending from other lands.

That God's people are prepared to serve and that we lovingly invite our new friends to hear His Word of salvation in Jesus Christ our Lord.

Praise for the two new English conversation leaders.

That God's people would continue to bring their gifts for the work among the internationals here at UWM and also throughout our Synod.

**April 2-8, 2017: ISM Detroit, MI**  
**Bob Dickhudt, director**

Pray for several students who recently returned to China in time to celebrate Spring Festival ("Chinese New Year") with their families. Pray that they'll share something about Jesus and His love for all the people of the world.

Thank the Lord with us for the great group who came the Thursday of Chinese New Year to not only make and eat dumplings, etc., but who brought friends who heard about the God of the Bible who loves us and wants to be part of our celebrations of "whatever" including the new year of the Rooster!

Pray that we will continue to have "friends bringing new friends" and that we can truly be like "a home for them"... though far from home, feeling "at home" in our ISM family.

**ISM Flint, MI**  
**Kate Cole, director**

For the baptisms of C and L former students from India and their family.

For two Muslim young men who needed snow boots that were provided by volunteers. They attended the Jesus Film showing and a Bible Study. Pray that they will come to know Jesus!

For B to continue his study of God's Word as he has transferred to UM-Dearborn in order to begin a master's program.

That Z would continue in another 5-week Bible study, A New Beginning. And that his friend would join him.

**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.

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# Prayer Requests and Praises

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**April 9-15, 2017: Madison, WI**  
**Judy Tang, director**

Praise God for bringing lots of new internationals to the International Friendship Center (IFC)! Over the last couple of weeks, 15 new people from Argentina, Egypt, China, and Colombia have joined the English classes and activities.

Please continue to pray for Y, W, S, and W who are meeting one-on-one to learn more about Christianity and desperately want to put their faith in Jesus! They are concerned about how their relationship with Jesus will affect their jobs and family relationships.

For two more volunteers that have joined IFC.

That God would bring a few more volunteers and that the IFC would continue to be a warm and welcoming place to learn English and learn about Jesus!

**ISM College Station, TX**  
**Lydia Schinner and Andrew Cloeter, co-directors**

For the healing for Jim's wrist.

For health and a good relationship for Galina's parents.

For Andrew's uncle's health as he was just diagnosed with blood cancer.

For Rebekah's job situation.

**April 16-22, 2017: ISM Chinese Ministry, St. Louis, MO**  
**Becky Shaw, director**

Thanks for volunteers and learning that took place at the retreat at the end of December.

Thanks for the Gospel message being sown at the dumpling-making party on December 31.

For understanding and stronger faith for those attending the catechism class.

For the youth and the seminary student who is teaching their Bible study on Friday evening.

That God's Word would cross language barriers during the English Bible study on Friday morning.

For families to make wise decisions as they set priorities and teach values to their children.

**April 23-29, 2017: ISM Slippery Rock, PA**  
**Augusta Mennell, Campus Ministry Director**

Thank you, Lord, for the wonderful article on campus ministry in the winter issue of *Lutherans Engage*. The article features Rev. Eric Andrae, who says about campus ministry, "It is our most important domestic mission."

That the Kenzaburo's family gained great comfort through attending worship at All Saints and by attending the powerful memorial service at First Trinity. Rev. Andrae gave words of comfort. Faith is closer still for Ken's mother because of the services.

Pray that All Saints will be able to enlarge its building to attract students. Many come to the meals, and we pray that we can expand the outreach by having more space.

That two students from Nepal would come to learn of Jesus love for them.

**ISM Board of Directors**

Pray for those students and staff who will be attending the In-Depth Bible Seminar this year.

Continue to hold your Board up to the Lord for wisdom as it makes important decisions for ISM.

**April 30, 2017**

Pray for a specific ISM site today!

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## Rolla Bible Study is Alive!



Nina Haas writes, "Pictured are graduate students from the civil engineering and chemistry departments at Missouri S&T in Rolla including helpers. Our group has been meeting for a year in our home for dinner and Bible study on Friday evenings."

"Foreigners living among  
you will be like your own  
people. Love them as you  
love yourself."

Leviticus 19:34



*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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## The Chinese Apple Lesson

by Bob Dickhudt, ISM Detroit

My wife and I served in our Hong Kong Chinese schools from 1964-72 and learned many things through our students and teachers, both faith wise and culture wise. Things like NEVER give a WHITE (“sympathy”) gift envelope at a joyous occasion, like a wedding. RED is the color of joy! Always show respect in giving or receiving gifts by using BOTH hands.

Christmas in America, 2016, we learned something from our ISM friends, Bin and Ning, who we had never known before, relating to the APPLE and the PEACE that our Lord Jesus offers in John 14: 27. Bin and Ning, and son, Jerry, came to our home on Christmas Eve before going to the Candlelight Service. Bin gave me a box of big red Fuji APPLES! A most unusual gift!

He explained why the apples on Christmas Eve; in the Chinese language apple is; PINGgwa. The word for peace is; PINGAn. The word for Christmas Eve is “PINGAnYe”, or “Peaceful Evening.”

Many people in China practice this special “custom, but many have never heard of it. Included in the “tradition” is the fact that the apples are HUGE; too big for one person to eat alone - they are MEANT FOR SHARING! What added meaning!

The PINGAn that Jesus gives is MEANT FOR SHARING on Christmas Eve, and anytime, anywhere! You may wish to take the lesson that Bin and Ning taught US at Christmas and share it ANYTIME, ANYWHERE ... PINGAn/PEACE, in Jesus. SHARING AN APPLE just might open up some interesting conversations about our Jesus, who freely offers Peace, PINGAn, through His life, death, resurrection and promises to be with us always.

P.S. I had the opportunity to share with several Muslim neighbors who stopped over during the holidays ... not a lengthy sermon, but an APPLE, and the story of PEACE as told me by my Chinese friends and how SHARING PEACE is so important in our world today.



The Dickhudts with Bin and Ning.