



The Doorstep

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SERVING INTERNATIONALS ON CAMPUS

STUDENTS GET FIRST TASTE OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY AND LIVES ARE CHANGED

by Sarah VandaVeer, 2017 In-Depth Bible Seminar staff member

Twelve international students and four Americans at the In-Depth Bible Seminar sit around a crackling campfire on an unseasonably chilly night in May. As the sunlight fades, the thick Missouri woods seem to wrap this small group in a comforting quiet.

Chen*, a beautiful Chinese woman who typically has an infectious smile and cheery spirit, speaks through her tears. "This week, I found home." Chen's words bring tears to several in the group, as they recognize the complete truth in her words. It was in this week, in the sanctuary of the Missouri countryside, that many found home.

Chen's vulnerable words were spoken after a week of trust was built at the In-Depth Bible Seminar. Raised as a Buddhist in China, Chen recently became a Christian. She desired to learn more about the Bible, and so she attended In-Depth.



At the seminar, 12 students complete a week's worth of training on God's salvation plan, Christian teaching from *Luther's Small Catechism*, and how to conduct small groups. They share testimony of God's work in their life, and they even teach a small portion of class! There is a trip to the St. Louis Arch, Concordia Seminary, board games, and many shared meals. Through all of this, within seven days, a small family is formed. For many of the students, this is their first taste of a Christian community; and by the end of the week they don't want to leave.

On the last night, the staff gives each student a blessing. As the fire softly glows, each student is prayed for and given a blessing. After this is done, the students are dismissed to return to the retreat center.

This year, the students couldn't be moved. They weren't ready for the night to be over. They lingered around the fire for hours sharing the story of what God had done that week, thanking the staff for the time, and eating roasted marshmallows. The night was a perfect ending to a week saturated with God's grace and goodness.

Your gifts make this week--a life-changing experience for these students--possible, and we give you our deepest thanks on behalf of the staff and students of this year's In-Depth Bible Seminar.

Lives were changed, and we are hoping and praying for baptisms of the students who were seriously seeking.

*Name was changed for the student's privacy.



A HEART IS CHANGED

By Bob Dickhudt, ISM Detroit

Daniel, a special scholar active in our ministry returned to China after almost one year at Wayne State University. His “parting comments” were worth remembering and sharing!

The final Bible study we had worked up was titled, “Ten (10) Things from the Bible to Take Along Home with You.” The very first one, Genesis 1, elicited from him a passionate response none of us will ever forget. It went something like this:

“I came to America in 2016 a very proud man. I had not only gone to college and got a degree; I had earned a PhD and was teaching in the university. I was not only proud of my achievements; I was also very angry and unkind even to my wife and teenage daughter. I thought I was so important and wonderful. I had been chosen to go to America for one special year for research!

“We read in Genesis how all was DARKNESS, and then Creator God said, “Let there be LIGHT.” And there WAS LIGHT! It was that way for me when I came to Detroit. I WAS IN DARKNESS! And it is as if God said to me, “LET THERE BE LIGHT!”

“I learned about Jesus and His love. I learned about His forgiveness for me. I no longer am proud; I have been made humble. I am no longer angry and abusive to my wife and daughter. I want to show my love to them!

“Since my baptism in August, I am a new man. I go back home a very different man! Thank you all for helping me.”

His parting hugs for each of us, with tears in his eyes, made all of us feel blessed to be part of a weekly outreach to whomever the Lord sends up to our 7th floor room in the Student Center. We never know who will come, and why, but we are thankful for the fun we have, the good food we enjoy together, and the opportunity to study the Bible, and sharing truths we often take for granted!



Daniel (holding the cake) is surrounded by his ISM family.

FRIENDS FROM AROUND THE WORLD

By Liz Beikmann, Manhattan, KS

The ISM ministry at St. Luke’s (Kansas State University) works in partnership with Helping International Students (HIS) which is a Christian non-profit organization here in Manhattan founded in 1979. HIS now has over 30 partnering churches and Christian campus organizations.

International students at K-State number nearly 2,000. Americans involved as HIS friends number over 150. These students are from 36 different countries with the largest number coming from China.

HIS events in which St. Luke’s participates include a fall welcome dinner during orientation with 600 in attendance, a spring semester welcome dinner with 120 guests, and a spring friendship banquet with 320 in attendance. St. Luke’s provides workers and helps with the food donations for each of the dinners. Other events include a fall furniture giveaway and a seminar on transiting to home.

Partner churches and groups sponsor English classes, Bible studies and miscellaneous services like transportation for shopping and bike repairs. HIS also

NOW HE IS CONNECTED TO JESUS!

provide Bibles in numerous languages and various other religious resources.

Students are grateful for the help that internationals are provided through HIS, the friendships that are formed and the opportunity to learn about Christ.

Supporting ISM, Inc.

When making Thriver 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.

CONNECTIONS MATTER

by Becky Shaw, Light of Christ Chinese Ministry
St. Louis

Wenyu Ding (known as Dingding) was baptized at Light of Christ in the summer of 2015. His parents are Christians and had wanted him to be baptized. He came to St. Louis to attend a summer camp at Washington University and stayed with the our family. During the summer with us, he studied *Luther's Small Catechism* and was then baptized just before he returned to China for his last year of high school.

The following summer, Dingding came to St. Louis for a visit before going to New York where he would begin studying at Cornell University. He visited the Washington University library where he saw his classmate Bonn Cao from China. (A surprise connection from home!) Bonn and his parents had come to the United States a few days early to sightsee before Bonn needed to report to the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. Dingding and Bonn were happy to see each other; and Dingding invited Bonn and his family to Light of Christ for the Friday evening weekly fellowship.

The family accepted the invitation. During casual introductions, Bonn shared his plans to attend the University of Minnesota, so I gave Bonn the phone number for her daughter Anna who lives in Minneapolis. (It was another important connection!) After a few weeks, Bonn connected with Anna and they invited him to their house as well as to their church. (This hoped-for connection had been made.)

Bonn was interested in Christianity and began attending a weekly Bible study for international undergraduate students as well as an LCMS church plant called The WHEREhouse where Anna and her husband attend. Bonn was reading his Bible, was learning about Jesus during this past year and was meeting Christians who encouraged him in his faith.



The baptism of Bonn!

He recently met with the pastor of The WHEREhouse and, during the conversation, Bonn confirmed his faith in Jesus and wanted to be baptized, but he wanted to wait until his parents could attend.

Bonn was baptized on May 21, 2017, at The WHEREhouse.

CHANGING TIMES

by Kate Cole, ISM Flint Coordinator



Flint International Friends volunteers welcomed international students from Mott Community College.

Flint International Friends began teaching conversational English at UM-Flint in 2014. We've enjoyed bountiful blessings with international students from China, India, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and West Africa. Recently, the number of international students has dropped from nearly 1,000 to less than half that number.

In a report by Voice of America in March of this year, "U.S. college applications from foreign students for the next school year have slowed, with 39 percent of responding universities reporting declines in the number of undergraduate applications from countries in the Middle East, according to a new report."

God has opened new doors for our ministry with the start-up of The International Center of Greater Flint—a new non-profit aimed at providing services to the international population. This organization welcomes religious groups to participate by providing a way for our group to reach out to a broader international community.

Please pray for us as we continue to serve international students in our community and as we seek new leadership and volunteers.

MAPLE SYRUP IN MADISON



Prayer Requests and Praises

July 1, 2017: ISM Board

Praise and thanksgiving for a meaningful and successful In-Depth Bible Seminar and for the sites who sent participants and for the dedicated staff of Rev. Lee Meyer, Rev. Paul Hoemann, Sarah VandaVeer, and Sharon Riordan.

July 2-8, 2017: ISM Flint, MI Kate Cole, director

For our leadership positions to be filled and for God's direction in a changing environment.

Praise for another semester completed with great friendships established and for faithful volunteers who served.

ISM Big Rapids, MI Bethel Larsen, volunteer

Thanks for the joy of interacting with international students over another academic year.

Thanks for the booklet I gave John (China) raising his interest in learning about Jesus.

Pray for returning students and their families to know Jesus, especially M and his family and B and hers.

That I will be led to any students I should meet or reach out to over the summer.

For wisdom and grace in reaching out to new students arriving in August. May God prepare their hearts and minds for fruitful relationships!

July 9-15, 2017: ISM Rolla, MO Ken and Nina Haas, volunteers

That God's Word remains in the hearts of our hearers: Dexter, Qi, Tina, Steve, Ming, and Hugh and Elaine who are expecting their first child.

Pray for safe delivery for mom and child.

That we will all be able to meet again in the fall.

For our helpers, Terry, Todd and Christy, that God would give them patience and perseverance in works of love that God has laid out for them.

ISM Detroit, MI Bob Dickhudt, director

For "Daniel" going back home to China, a new man, a brother in Christ, after one short year with us. Strengthen him to share his new-found faith with patience and love. (His 17-year-old daughter has already told him, "There is no god!").

For us that we may find good ways to invite new students to join us. So many have returned home in the past three months and so many are here as visiting scholars for one year or less.

For "Jean," coming so close to Jesus, but experiencing serious marital problems. May Christian friends be a special blessing to her and her husband somehow.

July 16-22, 2017: ISM Austin, TX Marcia Mittweide, director

For God's wisdom in reaching out to more new internationals who are coming to campus to begin classes.

In thanks to God for our new University Lutheran Church building. That the Lord Jesus would be honored in all that is done there.

That the Lord would guide students to us in whose lives He is already at work to bring them to faith in Jesus.

Thanks to God for the wonderful volunteers who help make this ministry possible.

For several new mommies and babies who will be attending our Mommy & Me classes. That they would come to know Jesus.

ISM Madison, WI Judy Tang, director

Praise God that N asked me about wanting to become a Christian! Pray for her new faith and that she would grow in her relationship with Jesus!

For continued healing for a family of one of the staff.



Friends at the International Friendship Center, Madison.

July 23-29, 2017: ISM Kent, OH JJ Voelker, pastor

For guidance from the Lord to reach out to new students who are open to hearing the Good News over the summer and into the school year.

For R to grow in his faith and believe that our Savior is real.

For S to find a job and be able to take care of his family.

For R to do well in her studies and find true peace in Christ.

ISM Shorewood, WI Bessie Fick, director

Thank you for the baptism of L and A. Pray they will find a faithful group of Christians with whom they will continue to grow in faith upon their return home.

For guidance for the Luther Memorial congregation as they call a new pastor and as they seek to find a new ISM Coordinator as my husband, Jeff, has accepted a call to the Southern Illinois District. May the members continue in their faithful sharing of God's Word with the members of the community, the campus and among internationals.

Pray that God's people will continue to bring their gifts for the work among the internationals here at Luther Memorial Chapel and also throughout the many other campuses in the country. May He continue to keep this window of opportunity open so that many more may come to know Jesus as their Savior.



Prayer Requests and Praises

July 30- Aug. 5, 2017: ISM College Station, TX

Lydia Schinner and Andrew Cloeter, co-directors

Pray for our summer class offerings that began in early June and will run through the first week of August. Ask God to bless the friendships that are being formed as we have fun with English and study the Word together.

For Hans, Olivia, Xianmei, Dizar, and all other international students who come to us this summer who do not yet know the Lord as their Savior. Pray that the Spirit of God will move powerfully in their hearts.

For our co-directors, Lydia and Andrew, as they enjoy their summer vacation away from the Texas A&M campus. Ask the Lord to bless Pastor Paul Hoemann and volunteer Mary Beth Vanderpoorten, who are leading our summer offerings.

For Weidong, who was baptized a year ago at University Lutheran Chapel and then returned to China. Ask that God will provide him with good Christian fellowship, biblical teaching and encouragement, so that he can grow in his faith and be a dynamic witness to his family and friends.

Ask that God will continue to richly provide our Lutheran campus ministry with the funding and the volunteers we need to be a blessing to people of all nations.

Aug. 6-12, 2017: ISM Manhattan, KS

Liz Beikmann, director

Thanksgiving for a wonderful year with the Czech students from KSU.

Thanksgiving for so many students asking for host families in August.

For more families to step up to help with the ministry as host families.

ISM Chinese Ministry, St. Louis, MO

Becky Shaw, director

Praise for the participants, leaders and volunteer teachers who attended the summer retreat.

Praise for new friends coming to church and/or Bible study each week.

Praise and prayer for the new Friday evening youth Bible study teacher.

For sufficient funds to continue to carry out the mission of Light of Christ.

For good participation at the Sunday school teacher training.



Aug. 13-19, 2017: ISM Lincoln, NE

Mark Meyer, director

That God would raise up English Conversation Class leaders.

That our new connection meals would go well, and many more new students would be connected to ongoing groups.

That God would grow faith in the hearts of those students who are regularly hearing the Gospel.

ISM Pittsburgh, PA

Eric Andrae, campus pastor

For Allison (Korea), Dandan (China), and Kaoru (Japan), along with their new conversation partners Doris, Ali, and Krista.

For Anthony (China), who was baptized at Easter.

ISM Champaign, IL

Rick Milas, campus pastor

For a student from Taiwan who was recently confirmed at University Lutheran Church.

Aug. 20-26, 2017: ISM Hawaii

Janelle Dryden, director

A huge “mahalo” to God for enabling O who, after three tries, passed the bar exam. Now the prayers shift to God’s help in the future – direction, provision in every way, and wisdom!

For employment for J, a single mother, with an 11-year-old daughter to support.

For my new friend, S, who doesn’t believe or understand what Jesus did for him even though he takes his daughter to a Christian preschool.

For ML who is suffering from many physical aches and pains that could, eventually, interfere with her very busy ministry.

That God would remove what keeps believers from reaching out when opportunities are right in front of them!

Aug. 27 -31, 2017

For the work of the ISM Board of Directors as it leads the organization. May all it does be God-pleasing.

For each of the ISM sites as they create places of friendship, hospitality and the Gospel message.

For the internationals who participate in the programs offered through ISM ministries.

For congregations and individuals see the great value of international student ministry and offer support.

Praise for the many volunteers who give of their time and talents to enrich the lives of these guests in our country.

Thanks for those who serve in leadership roles at local sites.

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.

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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I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR ISM

Submitted by Bessie Fick, ISM Director
Memorial Lutheran Chapel, Shorewood, WI

Here Thu Phang, an immigrant from Vietnam, extends her thanks for the kindness and support given her in the ESL and Bible reading classes.

“Last Christmas, when our family moved from Texas to Wisconsin for job opportunities, I was in the process of preparing for my naturalization.

“First of all, arriving in the winter season was quite shocking because of the white snow covering Whitefish Bay. Though it was difficult to go outside, I had to seek ESL and civic classes to prepare for the citizenship test. A kind lady at Cumberland Elementary School told me of Ms. Bessie at Luther Memorial Chapel (LMC).

“When I tried the first time calling Ms. Bessie, I was really impressed by her clear and warm voice. She invited me and my family to join a dinner before the class started on that day.

“Then, on a day that the snow temporarily stopped falling, I decided to go to the classes at LMC. When Ms. Bessie heard about my wish to study English and civics for naturalization, she assigned Ms. Julie to help me. For a period of nearly four months, Ms. Julie and sometimes Ms. Debbie helped me to go through the 100 questions that related to the United States.

Besides this, I also attended the Bible Reading classes, led by Pastor Wieting, attracted me into the life of a Christian under God.

“Finally, the day arrived. Being well-prepared and equipped with the prayers of

my beloved instructors, I passed the citizenship test in spite of the interview being rather tough. Needless to say, everybody in LMC was very happy because they had greatly contributed to my success.

“Deep in my heart, I am very grateful for the special concern of all the volunteer instructors at LMC. They were very attentive, enthusiastic and wholeheartedly supported me. Please accept herewith my sincere thankfulness for helping me in the pursuit of my American dream, which came true on April 20, 2017.”



Julie Wohlrabe and Deb Madigan
celebrate with Thu Phang.