



The Doorstep

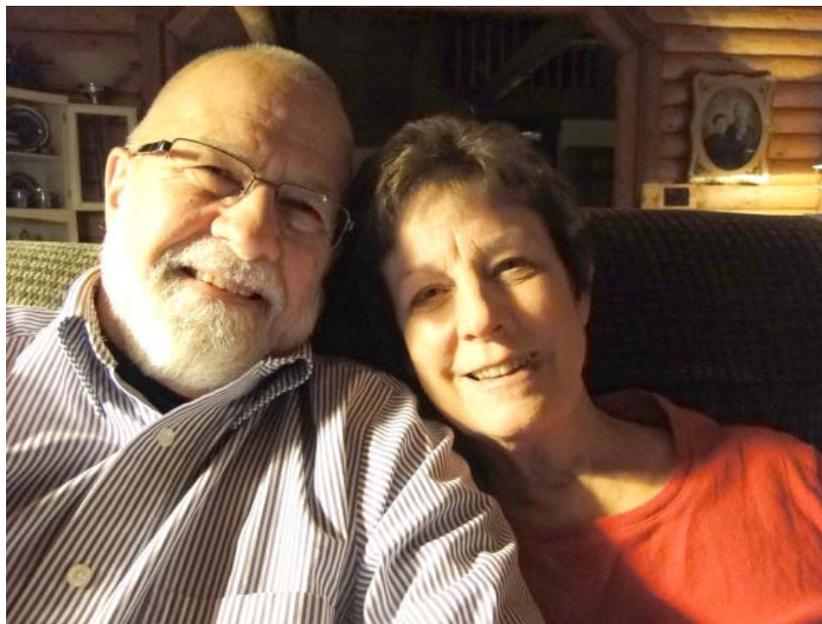
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SERVING INTERNATIONALS ON CAMPUS

MY LIFE HAS CHANGED FOREVER

Karol Selle
ISM, Inc. Public Relations Director-Retired

Being married to Carl Selle brought an entire new dimension into my life. He brought with him his love and passion for ministry among international students and their families. It was in 1996 that International Student Ministry, Inc. (ISM, Inc.) was created to offer assistance to those involved in this ministry and to equip others to become involved with the international communities on college and university campuses.



Carl and Karol Selle

In September 1992, my husband accepted the Call from the Missouri Synod to become the first missionary in North America to international students. He was to begin ISM on the six major campuses in lower Michigan. Carl and I both knew that we would move, but I kept hoping there would be way for us to stay in Stevens Point, Wis. You have to know that I thought we would retire in Stevens Point. I loved the community, the friends I had, my job, our family was happy, the school system was excellent; and not least of all, my 100-year-old Victorian home.

The decision was made and our family began the preparation for moving to East Lansing, Mich., where this new ministry would be born. One of our last days in Stevens Point, I had what I call my “dining room experience.” I was packing in the dining room one afternoon. The sun was shining through the leaded glass windows. So I was standing there, feeling distraught and sorry for myself. When it was as if the Lord spoke to me. You need to know that Carl would probably go

anywhere in the world for ministry. I really didn't want to do that at this time in my life. As I was standing there, tears streaming down my face, the Lord said, “Now Karol, I'm not asking you to move to Africa, Asia, South America, I'm only asking you to move to Michigan.” It was at that moment that I knew it was okay to go. A peace settled in my heart. Oh yes, it was difficult - but as a friend said, “It isn't the going that's difficult; it's the leaving that so hard.”

So we moved to a larger community, an unknown job for Carl, no job for me; moved two children to college, transplanted two children in Michigan; sold the house, bought a smaller home for more money; and, planted ourselves in a foreign land called Michigan.

I certainly wasn't sure how I fit into this plan. I knew that the Lord was with me, but I struggled. It was Carl's job to work as a missionary for Synod.

In less than a month, the Lord was going to begin to develop my new vision for ministry.

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Our then, 16-year-old son, Matthew, had been paired with a Japanese boy in tennis and because they were both newcomers became friends. We proceeded to invite his family for a meal. It was at that first dinner in my new dining room without the leaded glass, that his mother asked me what I did. I replied that I was an unemployed teacher. She immediately asked me if I would help her with English. I consented, not out of passion for this ministry, but because I wanted something to do. That English conversation with Hatsuko soon became a group of international men and women meeting regularly for English. From this beginning the Lord was fashioning a vision where I could use my gifts and teaching experience to meet a need of international spouses; and especially, the beautiful children.



of seeing internationals come to know the Lord before my very eyes and becoming His children through baptism.

Today, the Lord continues to bring the “Cream of the Crop” here to our doorsteps and we have an opportunity to touch the lives of the leaders of countries with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In every community there is a way to be involved with international students. You don’t really need any special gifts, just a heart!

Indeed, my life was changed forever. Isn’t God wonderful! I challenge you to find the place where He wants you to “touch a life.” Just might be an international student, spouse or child!

I have truly loved and been richly blessed through my more than 21 years as the PR person for ISM, Inc., but it is time to move on, and enjoy my retirement!

Whatever that may mean...

I have moments that I have memorized ... like Tassuku saying he would see me in heaven... like Jiehwa who wanted a Jesus hug... like Tsai-ping who is today a leader in her Chinese church... moments of joy at the birth of babies, moments of shared sorrow when parents have died in a country far away... and moments

RODEOS MAKE FRIENDS

Sharon Riordan, Director
ISM St. Louis
St. Louis Universities

ISM St. Louis received this note from a student who responded to an invitation to attend an American Rodeo with us, but his note said so much more. For privacy, “Ming” is not the student’s real name:

This is Ming. I’m glad to hear from you. Sign me in for the American Rodeo. Recently I just felt kind of lonely, haven’t made any friends even though I am willing to. Maybe because my English is not good, but I am eager to try to improve. So, I’m just wondering is there any more meeting on campus to make friends? -Ming

The next day Ming went to one of our English Conversation Groups and also joined us at the rodeo three days later. We not only hope to help Ming’s loneliness, but we look forward to sharing Christ with Ming as the Holy Spirit provides the opportunity. Please keep him in your prayers.





TIMES CHANGE

Augusta. R Mennell, Campus Ministry Director
All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center
Slippery Rock University

Twenty-Five years ago most international students had very little spending money. As a result they needed our help. Whatever we did was a help. We helped them buy warm winter coats, and we provided snacks like packages of Ramen noodles, which we always kept visible in the church kitchen for students to take when they were hungry. They also needed the photographs we gave them to send to their families, because few had cameras then. As we helped in these ways the students became our friends. They accepted Bibles and our invitations to worship because they trusted campus ministry.

But times change. Campus ministry has to find new ways to connect with students. All students own cameras now and some own cars. Trying to adjust to the new circumstances, it occurred to us that we could offer help to those who need to learn to drive. We also realized that we could really help students by telling them where they can take their cars for repairs and car inspections. We have known Tim Stauffer for years. He is a Christian mechanic who does excellent car repair work. He is totally honest and really enjoys meeting and helping the students repair their cars. This has turned out to be a good outreach; as we drive the students to Grove City where Tim has his shop, we get to talk about real things and we get to invite them to come into All Saints any time to talk, have lunch, take a drive to the grocery store, as well as to come for Bible study and worship.

Although times are changing, the need for friendship families has not changed. Slippery Rock University provides student mentors for new international students, and this is good, but a number of students still ask for friendship families. During the holidays some college students stay on campus instead of traveling. It is lonely so the students welcome friendly families like Jill and Ed Geidner, who gladly invite them home for Thanksgiving or Christmas dinner; and they are always willing to help students get to the Pittsburgh bus station.

Even though times are changing there are no limits to ways to establish connections with students. Our LCMS pastors are very willing to arrange help. For example, a Pakistani Muslim student who attends SRU has a friend who attends at Kansas State University in Manhattan Kansas. This international student has not adjusted well to being so far from home in Pakistan. She is miserable. She's tempted to go back home right now. She calls her SRU friend frequently asking for encouragement. When All Saints' pastor, Rev. Larry K. Loree, Jr. became aware of this he contacted Rev. King Crawford in Manhattan Kansas, asking if he would find a friend for the student. In a short time Rev. Crawford called with the name and email addresses of two young women who would love to help. Lutheran pastors are great at connecting students with loving Christians who can't wait to help.

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At one time All Saints used to serve pizza and show a movie at an event we called Movie Night. This has changed dramatically. The students much prefer time to visit with each other in preference to watching a movie. They cannot wait to eat the real Korean dishes (not pizza) and frequently take leftovers back to their dorms. Instead of watching movies they like to ask questions. An American student wanted to know why infant baptism is so important. An international student from Sri Lanka wanted to know why a “pregnant lady” was sitting next to Jesus in Leonardo da Vinci’s painting “The Last Supper”. What an opportunity to tell the real story.

Since times are changing, All Saints’ undercroft will be getting a makeover. It will be made more appealing for students to use as a place to relax, study, and drink their favorite coffees, as well as having the opportunity

to share ideas with Rev. Larry K. Loree. Students are freely offering their ideas on what furniture, coffees, and games should be available at the coffeehouse. We are looking for a name for the coffeehouse. One student from Iran said she’d like the undercroft coffeehouse to feel “cozy”. Campus ministry is doing everything possible to change this area so that it will say “welcome” to all the students. Any ideas for a name? Send your suggestions to Augusta Mennell or Pastor Loree.

Change does not need to mean the end of everything good. Change means cars that can drive themselves; Skype means being able to talk to, and see, family thousands of miles away; and change means adjusting our techniques to share the Gospel. God never changes, but we can change and improve the opportunities to take John 3:16 to the students.



DUMPLING LESSON

Bob Dickhudt, ISM Director
Wayne State University - Detroit, MI

What fun it is for us, as Americans, to learn how to make dumplings! We’ve always enjoyed EATING them, but never realized how making them is both “tricky” and “simple”! Our Chinese scholars said they first learned how to make dumplings when they were 8-10 years old. Theirs looked so much more perfect than ours did, but all of them tasted wonderfully delicious, thanks to the great pork mixture ShiBo made! I encourage YOU, wherever you are, with whatever culture you encounter, to show your interest in them and their heritage by trying their foods... and maybe even try MAKING it yourself. You and they will be blessed!



STEP INTO THE RIVER

Bethel Larsen

Ferris State University in Big Rapids, Michigan

It is always exciting to read the stories in *The Doorstep* submitted by students or other workers—journeys of faith, baptisms, and the impact of the In-Depth Bible Seminar. My submissions, on the other hand, are infrequent. My ministry is so small-scale that I seldom have much to report. I have no home base on “Christian turf”, the nearest Lutheran church being at the other end of town and my home congregation even farther. So, then, how does a day in the life of this ISM volunteer look?

It actually begins the day before my Thursday visits to the international lounge (a repurposed classroom) on the Ferris State University campus. Wednesdays usually find me in the kitchen baking muffins or cookies to share with students the next day. Food is a time-honored icebreaker, with staff as well as students! On Thursday mornings, after prayer, I drive twenty miles to campus, tote my plastic container and a bag with booklets and Scripture portions in various languages, maps, and other useful literature into the lounge, and sit. I offer goodies to students who circulate in and out and start conversations with anyone who looks up from a phone. After a break for lunch, I sometimes visit one or two of the Middle Eastern women in their apartments, where they can attend to small children and converse without veils or cumbersome abayas. I will jump at the chance to lead a Bible study with one or two students, but such chances do not always come. I pray for insight to ask good questions. I often go home at the end of the day wondering whether I have even scratched the soil where the Good Seed is planted.

Yet, after a summer hiatus, I was preparing to begin my visits again at the same time I was reading through the Old Testament. When the Israelites were about to cross into the Promised Land near Jericho, the priests were instructed to carry the Ark of the Covenant into the surging Jordan River and stand there. As at the crossing of the Red Sea, the waters backed up and a path of dry land opened before the Israelites. As a bearer of the Word, I, too, seemed to receive instruction to “step into the river.” My first visit, during new student orientation, a Vietnamese student worker in the international office was paving the way for me with some good P.R. I met a number of new students on campus and later in a local supermarket, where I offered some shopping assistance. My steps of faith were rewarded. The next weeks, however, fewer students visited the lounge, and a Saudi woman postponed a planned visit. Lord, did I accomplish anything?

“Step into the river.”



More barren Thursdays followed. Then two of the Chinese women I had met earlier came into the lounge when their class was cancelled. When it seemed appropriate, I asked them if they had Bibles. One did; the other eagerly accepted a copy of God’s Word. I told her that, if she liked, I would be happy to spend some time exploring it with her. At the end of the day, I went on my way rejoicing.

Next Thursday, again I will “step into the river.” Perhaps God will show me fruit of my efforts; perhaps not. The work is His, after all; He does not ask me to be successful, but faithful. The outcome is in His hands; I simply have to plant my feet where He directs me.

“Step into the river.”