

IN-DEPTH

REV. PAUL HOEMANN / ISM DIRECTOR
UNIVERSITY LUTHERAN CHAPEL / COLLEGE STATION, TX

Twelve international students from China, Bangladesh, South Korea, Indonesia, Benin and Nigeria gathered in the St. Louis area May 16-23 for ISM Inc.'s annual In-Depth Bible Seminar. This special group of students was sent by our LCMS campus ministries at Texas A&M University, Kent State University, Michigan State University, University of Texas-Austin, University of Texas-San Antonio and Arizona State University.

After spending the first morning at the LCMS International Center in Kirkwood, the group moved out to Sojourn Retreat Center in Dittmer, Mo. There, for the next six days, they engaged in some intense study of God's Word. Pastor Lee Meyer presented to them God's story, salvation history, as it is revealed in the Scriptures. Pastor Paul Hoemann took them through the basic teachings of the Christian faith, including the 10 Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, Baptism, the Lord's Supper, the Church, and prayer. And Pastor John Voelker led the students in small-group ministry activities each evening.

One of the highlights of each In-Depth comes on Monday night when the students have a chance to tell their story to the rest of the group. What follows is the testimony of Glory Dimbga, a translation major at Kent State University. She is from Nigeria. Glory was baptized into the Christian faith in 2008.

"God has been awesome to me in so many ways. Even when I feel I do not deserve His mercy, He still showers it upon me. I want to share how Jesus delivered me from being hot tempered. I used to have what could be considered



PASTOR LEE MEYER ENJOYING A MOMENT OF RELAXATION AND LAUGHTER AT THE 2018 IN-DEPTH CONFERENCE WITH GLORY DIMBGA, FROM NIGERIA, ON THE LEFT, AND BIBIANE OGUÉ FROM THE WEST AFRICA COUNTRY OF BENIN, ON THE RIGHT.



impulsive anger. I am almost never seen angry; yet I burn within me. Because of this, I hardly react to situations, but when I do, my reactions tend to be really bad.

"I was born and raised in a Christian home. I was taught the tenets of Jesus. Yet, within me, I knew I needed to love more, to do away with unforgiveness. At some point, I accepted it as who I am and as part of my life and thought it was okay. This continued until it became visible to my family members, who immediately started correcting it. My mother would always call me aside to pray for me.

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However, since I spent most of my time alone, (just like introverts) there was little they could do about; especially because I would not listen and always defended myself in arrogance.

“Later on, in my teenage years, I met with a pastor and told him that I needed prayers. We discussed at length, and I arrogantly refused all the advice he was giving me while trying to prove to him, the Scriptures notwithstanding, how the situation was not that terrible. He prayed for me, and he dropped a Bible reference that has remained with me: ‘Do not be quickly provoked in your spirit, for anger resides in the lap of fools.’ (Ecclesiastes 7:9)

“On my way home that day, the Holy Spirit began to expound the words clearer to me, and soon I saw myself for who I really was. God began His marvelous work in my life and gradually dealt with my anger. So, when I feel hurt and try to hold on to the grudge, I remember through the help of the Holy Spirit that someone died for me. Jesus Christ does not hold grudges against me, so then I can take grace from Him and forgive others. That’s my testimony!”

It was a great pleasure for Pastor Meyer, Pastor Voelker and me to serve this year’s group of students. Each year at In-Depth, we are continually awed by the students that God brings us from the international student ministries in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Some of the students are already believers in Jesus. Some are not. Wherever they are at, spiritually, we know that God has them there for a reason. And it is our joy to serve them; share with them; learn from them; and in some cases, equip them for ministry as they return to their campus or homeland. To God alone be the glory!



SEND OFF WITH BLESSINGS

LIZ BECKMANN / ISM DIRECTOR

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN / KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY / MANHATTAN, KS

The international student ministry at St. Luke's Lutheran in Manhattan was blessed to have 15 host families and 26 exchange students to Kansas State University from the Czech Republic this past school year. Some students were here for the year and some for only the fall or spring semester. Each student was met at the airport by their host family and stayed with the family for the first few days. They were helped to check-in at the international student center KSU, given a tour of campus and helped check into campus housing prior to the start of orientation. The students attended church with their host family their first Sunday in Manhattan.

St. Luke's ISM partners with HIS (Helping International Students) a local organization. HIS hosts a welcome dinner for the newly arriving internationals during orientation, has a furniture give away and a spring banquet. Our host families help with these events.

The host families and students attended St. Luke's fall festival and enjoyed a hayrack ride and fishing as well as great food. A Christmas dinner was held at St. Luke's for the students and host families. Many of the students attended the church's ice skating



KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY CZECH EXCHANGE STUDENTS AT THE END OF THE YEAR SEND OFF PICNIC HOSTED BY ST. LUKE'S DIRECTOR OF ISM, LIZ BECKMANN AND HER HUSBAND.

party and the LLL pancake supper. The KSU rodeo was a first for them. All host families and students attended the fall and spring picnics hosted by the Beikmanns. And students spend time with their family for various family events, meals, etc.

As these students are from a former Communist country they are for the most part atheists. So attending church for them is a new experience. Showing these students a Christian way of life and leading by example plants the seeds and makes a difference in the long run. We thank all of our host families for their dedication to this ministry as it makes an amazing difference.

VOLUNTEERS - THE KEY TO EFFECTIVE MINISTRY

KATE COLE, ISM DIRECTOR

FLINT INTERNATIONAL FRIENDS // FLINT, MI

God blessed Flint International Friends with a number of faithful volunteers who serve Him through our organization. International students need conversation partners for our English classes—and thankfully God provides them. It's during this precious time together that students get to know and better understand American culture, while volunteers feel free to share their faith. Deep friendships often occur providing more opportunities to share the Gospel.

One of our graduate students needed off-campus housing—a volunteer couple answered the call by opening-up their home.

A former student had medical issues and the American way of dealing with medical procedures was much different from what the student was accustomed to in China. Thankfully a nurse volunteer stepped up and explained the anticipated hospital procedure to the student—even joining her for the doctor's visit and relieving her of many worries.



ALL-AMERICAN BACKYARD COOKOUT HOSTED BY ISM VOLUNTEERS

To mark the end of the school year volunteers hosted a back-yard American Cook-Out featuring a wide variety of hot dogs and burgers. Vegetarian options were also available. Students from Africa, Nepal, China, and India all relished the international flavors and diversity.