

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN THIS ISSUE

The fall is always a vital time for international student ministry as students from around the globe arrive on campuses across the U.S. to begin a new semester. This is a great time to consider how you might get involved in ministering among these students and thus be a part of fulfilling the Great Commission to make disciples in every nation.

And, as you will see from the stories in this issue of Doorstep, getting involved doesn't require advanced training or a specialized knowledge. It can be as simple as sitting down to enjoy a quick sandwich, which was all Susan Hartman was planning to do when she stopped by a picnic for international students. Read about the joy she has discovered in continuing to minister to these students in her story entitled "Oh, the Joy." Or read about how Ken Bickel's regular virtual chats and Bible study with a student in Taiwan began because he was willing to take a moment to just hang out at an ISM event.

A willing spirit and a heart of compassion are all that is needed for God to use you to share Christ's love to students from around the world. Please pray for the Holy Spirit to show you how you might get involved this semester! †

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INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS ENJOYING A POTLUCK AND ATTENDING WORSHIP

Pastor Eric R. Andrae

ISM Chaplain at Pitt, CMU, Chatham, et al, in Pittsburgh

Over 35 American and international students, friends, and families enjoyed a potluck together in Pittsburgh on June 18. Many of these students recently attended worship for the first time in their lives. "Joe" from East Asia seriously considers baptism and meets regularly with Pastor Andrae to

study the Catechism, especially the Ten Commandments, Creed, and Baptism.

Please pray for these students and also for our need for a new ESL volunteer instructor. Praise God with us for Eddie Godbold, Pitt grad student, who did a wonderful job teaching ESL last year. †



WHERE ARE ALL THE BEAMING FACES?

Technology changes with time. We love the smiling faces of international students and scholars just as much as you do. We would love to show them to you, but it is too dangerous. Students from some countries have been interrogated when they return to their home country. Others have received threats from their families or other relatives. We want to be as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves.



From now on, in all of our Doorstep News issues we will put a rectangle over the faces of all international students and scholars. Sometimes, for the sake of equality we will put them over the faces of the U.S. citizens as well. When you see those rectangles, please pray for the safety of each international who participates in Christian activities during their time in the U.S. †

WHO ARE YOU IN THE COURTROOM OF YOUR PEERS?

Rev. Bryan Wolfmueller described two courtroom scenes during his plenary at the recent Higher Things youth conference in San Antonio, Texas. In one, I walk in, my head bowed, my feet dragging. I know I am guilty.

(continued - See "Courtroom" p. 2)



RELATIONSHIPS, LISTENING, AND TRUST

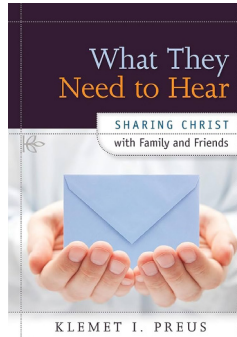
Augusta R. Mennell

Campus Ministry Director, All Saints Lutheran Church and Student Center

Fern Fitzpatrick would drive students from Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania, to Grove City for pizza at her expense. She loved to listen to her “kids” and to tell them about her sons, all of whom were pastors. She also listened with compassion to the struggles the students had with college life.

What Fern was doing may seem simple, but she was actually practicing some of the principles shared by Klemet I. Preus in his book *What They Need to Hear: Sharing Christ With Family and Friends* (CPH, 2013). The lessons Preus learned as he corresponded with his father-in-law who had lost his faith and was close to death are helpful for anyone sharing Christ with a friend. One principle is to focus on sharing repeatedly with one person. That is what Fern did by getting to know individual students well.

Rev. Preus also encourages us to



understand what is bothering our friend by listening well, then addressing their specific concerns. Different people struggle with different aspects of faith: miracles, baptism, or feeling that “God is not fair”. Addressing our friends’ concerns well helps them move ahead with God.

Building trust is also crucial in sharing the gospel. Through time spent together, trust will grow. That’s how it was for 80-year-old Andy and Lou Heasley, who invited students to their senior living apartment for their special homemade desserts. Even after Lou’s unexpected death, Andy included the students in his life, interacting easily with them. One student felt he had become a trusted father to her.

One-on-one relationships, listening well, and building trust lay a relational foundation through which God can and will work. †

MORE THAN ENGLISH

Marcia Mittweide

ISM Director, University of Texas/Austin

A few years ago one of our internationals coined a term that has stayed with me: She said our classes are “More than English.” This was a wonderful compliment because it demonstrated how she felt about her involvement in our international student ministry (ISM).

How is ISM more than English? Here are just a few ways:

- It offers the opportunity to make lasting friendships with people from other countries and cultures.
- Students are helped to adjust to life in America and to the particular city where they are living.
- They can learn about different holidays celebrated in other cultures, different foods, educational systems, and a plethora of other cultural differences that exist around the world.
- They can study the Bible freely and without fear - something that is not possible in some countries of the world where students are from.

(continued - See “More” p. 4)

(“Courtroom” continued from p. 1)

God in all his righteous glory is on the throne. Satan is accusing me. But the Holy Spirit and Jesus are my defense team. Jesus rushes in with the evidence of his blood, death and resurrection. I am declared righteous and set free. But there is another courtroom scene that we often participate in. I place myself on the throne. I judge others for not knowing the truth about God, or for the way they follow culture or peer pressure. I justify myself and accuse them.

As I heard him share, I thought of the youth at Higher Things who earlier in the conference had accepted my invitation as I role played as a “doctoral student from Afghanistan.” They sat down and joined me for some tea and snacks. A few forcefully told me, “We Christians do not make a show of praying. We pray privately.” Ouch! I winced at the

accusation that I was wrong. Some, while not accusing me, started to lecture me about what they knew about God. It still felt like law. Others humbly shared with me how difficult it is to understand

friends and neighbors influence us and our perceptions of right and wrong. However, “you are peers also!” he shared. We each influence others by what we say and do. Are we peers who share only law? Or do we share grace as well? That is, do we only point out wrong and urge for right? Or do we also admit when we have sinned, seeking forgiveness? Do we grant mercy and point toward God as the merciful one?

As friends of international students and scholars, where might we rejoice that Jesus has declared us righteous?

What “court of law” mannerisms in ourselves might we work to soften? And how might we allow the Holy Spirit to transform us into peers who share law and gospel with our international friends by word and deed? (To read more, see <https://wolffmueller.co/conscience/>) †



Sue Hasselbring asks Higher Things youth about their faith

some of the truths about God but that they trust him. I sensed then that they were welcoming me to join them, pointing me to the only “defense team” who could handle my case.

Rev. Wolffmueller shared further that peers have a profound influence on our conscience. That is, our family,

HANGING OUT WITH ED IN PERSON AND ONLINE

Ken Bickel

ISM Inc. Board Member, St. Louis

I met Ed, a graduate student from Asia, at an ISM-St. Louis Thanksgiving dinner in 2022. I'd been asked to serve as a driver, and then stayed to hang out at the dinner. I met Ed because I just happened to sit at his table (otherwise I might have met one of the other 60-70 students present!)

Shortly after our meeting, Ed learned that he needed to leave the university and go back home due to family members' health issues. He was sad to leave and was determined to return. I am confident he will return because he left three boxes of his belongings stored in my basement. But our connection continues as we talk by WhatsApp every other Tuesday. The main reason? He wants to stay fluent in his English. And I want to learn more about his world and his culture. I offered to be a regular conversation partner. We planned to talk for a half hour each time. It's usually closer to an hour.

After returning home, Ed remembered that one of the leaders of a Thursday night social gathering back at his St Louis campus had given him an English Bible. I was able to get the same translation and edition

from the person who gave him that Bible, so now we can use that Bible as part of our English sessions, and we can follow along page by page with our identical translations. I have the view that all international students owe it to themselves to get to know America's foremost religion, which is Christianity. Ed feels the same way. So we spend some time every WhatsApp session reading and discussing some of the core messages and stories, such as Psalm 23, the Parable of the Lost Sons, the Samaritan Woman at the Well, Romans 8. We've had good discussions comparing the concept of grace from a loving God with religious philosophies built on following the rules and being judged by Karma, or something similar. Tuesday's with Ed have been a real joy.

Reflecting on my friendship with Ed...

Friendships with students like Ed happen because the leaders of ISM sites work to organize special events that create opportunities for Americans to meet international students. These welcoming social events give students a chance to escape from daily pressures a

International Students, (generally speaking)...

- Want to improve their English pronunciation and vocabulary;
- Want to get together with other students regardless of the country from which they come;
- Want to learn about American customs and ways to have fun;
- Look for friendships with Americans; and
- Demonstrate unusual levels of respect for people (including Americans) who are their parents' age or older.

bit and interact with other students and local people. Forming these friendships also takes a willingness on the part of volunteers to take time to "hang out". Might you enjoy hanging out at an event and becoming friends with an international student or scholar? Contact an ISM site near you by searching at isminc.org/ministries. †

INTRODUCING NEW BOARD MEMBER: LYDIA SCHINNERER HARTWIG

Lydia Hartwig joined the ISM board in March 2023. She first felt called to serve international students in college, and she became the International Student Ministry co-director (later the director) at Texas A&M

University for four years. During this time, she served students from over 18 countries and laughed, cried, and learned from countless students, each loved by God and her.

Lydia has had a crazy few years. In 2022,

she moved from Texas to Ohio to be closer to her then-boyfriend Spencer Hartwig, who serves in the United States Air Force. Lydia graduated with her master's degree in nutrition in December of 2022, then in June of 2023 she and Spencer married and moved to Beale Air Force Base in California. All this moving to places without friends or family has given her a fuller appreciation of how international students feel when they move to an unfamiliar place.

Lydia is a Registered Dietitian by trade and is currently practicing at a long-term care facility in Yuba City, Cal. She lives with her husband on base and enjoys playing her violin, hiking, and being a mad scientist in the kitchen (and using her husband as a willing guinea pig for her new recipes). †



Lydia serves another delicious meal to international students



Lydia and Spencer on their honeymoon



Lydia the mad kitchen scientist.

OH, THE JOY!

Susan Hartman knows the joy of ministering among international students. She is also one busy woman: Grandmother of 16, working full time during the day and part time at the church, serving at the District level with LWML, teaching Sunday School, heading up youth ministry. She knew she did not have time to get involved with the ministry among international students at Trinity Lutheran Church in Norman, Oklahoma.

On three Sundays, Vickie Loemker, the Conversation Program director, brought colorful “volunteer” tickets to church so members could volunteer to “bring food”, “present a conversation topic”, “help with conversation groups”, etc. These volunteers were needed for an upcoming picnic

for international students. Susan saw the tickets, but she did not pick one up. However, on the day of the picnic, to show support for the program and her friend Vickie, she showed up with a big bowl of watermelon. She intended to drop it off and leave.

Vickie cheerfully greeted her, and Susan quickly said, “I do not know how, or feel equipped to help with the ESL program, but I wanted to help today by bringing some food.”

But at Vickie’s invitation, Susan

made a sandwich before she left. Then she sat down with some of the graduate students and started talking. And she stayed! Oh the joy she experienced.

She’s been volunteering ever since: driving students to events, presenting topics, inviting students to her home for a cookout.

And she encourages others to get involved, telling them, “These are the most polite, intelligent, friendly people I have met! You need to join us!” †



Susan Hartman presents about being a member of the Potawatomi tribe

(“More” continued from p. 2)

At the University of Texas/Austin, the students have had the opportunity to participate in various classes through the years - Bible, English Conversation, Idioms and Slang, Book Club, Mommy & Me, Watercolor Painting, Pronunciation - to name several. Since the pandemic, we’ve also expanded to offering many classes online. This has been especially important for those who have left Austin but desire to continue studying with people they already know.

The program also has been able to offer field trips to plays, orchards, area

scenic destinations, and a drive-through safari zoo.

Food has played an important role in the program as well. Through the generous grant we received from ISM, Inc., we were able to provide delicious beef brisket for a potluck party we held at the end of this semester.

Of course we are delighted when the internationals are interested in learning more about the Christian faith through studying the Bible. The ISM Inc. grant also helped us provide GOD’S WORD translation English Bibles to students so they could have their own Bible to use and mark up when they’re in class. We find that for those who are unfamiliar with the Bible, and are new to English as well, it really helps to use the same Bible for everyone. That way we can refer to a particular passage through the page number, rather than just the Bible reference (Mark 14:3, etc.). †

IN HONOR AND MEMORY OF

We praise God for each person you honor or remember as you give. From February 2023 through July 2023, gifts totalling the following amounts have been received.

In Memory of:

Bob Dickhudt	\$720
Silvester Golla	\$175
Larry Huedepohl	\$1000
Dale Loomans	\$100
Rev. Dr. Karl Lutze	\$210
Grace Pegorsch	\$10
Carl Selle	\$50

In Honor of:

Sue Hasselbring	\$1050
Pastor Freeman Li	\$60
Augusta Mennell	\$25

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Choice Dollars

Support ISM with your Thrivent Choice Dollars:

- Online at thriventchoice.org
- Call 800-847-4836 and when prompted, say “Thrivent Choice.”

For international students and scholars

- May God help all newly arrived international students and scholars to adjust well to life in the US.
- May each international student who is a Christian, quickly find a congregation in which they will be able to grow spiritually during their time in the US.
- May each international student develop strong friendships with a couple of Christians on or off of campus who will be the light and salt that Christ calls us to be.
- May international students who are not Christians have the opportunity to openly ask questions that they have about spiritual matters and receive gracious answers to their questions so that they might learn about Jesus, the Way, the Truth and the Life.
- May each international student have access to God's Word in English or their own language and receive guidance in studying it either one on one or in a group.

For increasing numbers of ISM volunteers

- May the Holy Spirit move LCMS members across the US to be willing to meet people of other cultures and share Christ's love with them.
- May God help each volunteer to listen well to the questions, fears, hopes and challenges that international students are facing.
- May God guide each volunteer in asking appropriate questions and sharing their own pain and joys with students so that deeper relationships develop.
- May God provide each ISM site with adequate numbers of volunteers at each event so that each international student feels welcomed and cared for.

For ISM events, sites and site leaders

- Praise God for the connections that have been made between ISM volunteers and international students during campus orientation events, open houses and welcome picnics.

- Pray for time, wisdom and grace in following up with international students and scholars via email, text, social media and personal phone calls.
- Pray for site leaders to pause and receive strength from God in Word and Sacrament during these busy first weeks of the fall semester.

Concordia University St. Paul MN Anna Gruen

Campus Ministry Associate

- Praise God that 400 new international students (most from India) have arrived this fall.
- Guide Anna and David as they recruit families in the St. Paul area to be Friendship Families to at least 50 of these new students.
- May God grant grace to these 50 families as they warmly welcome people of other cultures into their homes.
- May God give wisdom to Anna as she provides training and encouragement to the families over the coming months.

Other sites

- Praise God that Seminarian Justin Hilton has been assigned to serve his cross-cultural field experience with ISM St Louis. Pray that this will be the beginning of many seminarians receiving cross-cultural ministry experience as they serve with the two ISM sites in the St Louis area.
- For God to guide the teachers and students at Friendship House as classes start this fall.
- That a volunteer at Trinity in Norman, OK would be able to teach a basic ESL class at the same time as the English Conversation group meets so that participants with the lowest levels of English would get the assistance they need.
- Praise God that a student from Kettering University recently asked Martha, "When will you invite us

to your church again?" Pray for wisdom in knowing whether to start regular meetings at the church and for adequate volunteers to assist.

ISM Inc. Board and other matters

- Praise God for the committed volunteers and board members at the national level who give so much of their time.
- Praise God for the productive in-person meeting that the Board had in Champaign IL. Pray for timely followup to each matter needing attention.
- Pray for someone knowledgeable in Salesforce to be able to assist Sue Hasselbring in better establishing our database of sites, site leaders, donors, and Doorstep recipients.

Conferences and Grants

- May God grant wisdom to all who are applying for grants from LWML Districts. May the grants clearly express both the needs and the opportunities that God has placed before us.
- Praise God for the good interactions with high school and college students and their pastors at the two Higher Things conferences this summer. May those who were eager to become Friendship Families be able to connect with an international student this fall and warmly welcome them into their home.
- Praise God that three sites have expressed willingness to host the 2024 Equipping Conference. May the date and venue be set soon for this and the In-Depth Bible Seminar.
- Pray for Sue Hasselbring as she prepares to present at the Best Practices Heartland Conference Oct 11-13 in Carmel IN and exhibit at the Beautiful Feet Missions Conference Nov 9-11. May she also be able to schedule consulting visits with sites near these two events. †

SUBMIT YOUR ISM-RELATED PRAYERS

You are always welcome to submit prayers via email to: prayer@isminc.org. We encourage you to use the Prayer Request Form you can find at:

<https://tinyurl.com/ismincprayer>

Why not bookmark the form and send off a prayer request whenever the Spirit moves you?

DoorstepNews

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**OPEN NOW TO
READ ABOUT...**

*The joy of volunteering
The breadth of ISM
A fresh perspective on dialogue and
The value of hanging out.*

The ISM Inc. Board was hosted by Rev. Schuermann and the University Lutheran Chapel in Champaign for their face-to-face board meeting in July. †



*The board enjoyed a delicious
Sichuan (Chinese) meal together.*



*On University of Illinois quadrangle: Vice president Rev. Bill Jensen,
Sue Hasselbring, Treasurer Weina Qin, Angela Mueller, Secretary Vicki
Jameson, President JJ Voelker. Also attending the meetings remotely were
Ken Bickel and Lydia Hartwig.*



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