

CAMPUS MINISTRY TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS: OPPORTUNITIES AMID  
CHALLENGES

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## Abstract

The presence of international students on university campuses in the U.S. provides a unique opportunity to pastors and laypeople for on-going campus ministry to international students. Unique challenges that come with ministry to international students may cause some to assume they lack the expertise and experience needed to minister to international students in a campus setting. This paper will examine ways in which the challenges inherent in ministry to international college students are not only possible to overcome, but actually can serve as opportunities to support long-term ministry to international students. In exploring ministry to international students, my hope is that the reader finds joy that such an endeavor brings blessings from God for both the student and the minister involved.

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## Introduction

“Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:19,20).<sup>1</sup> Jesus spoke these words to a group of followers who were accustomed to expressing their faith within the realm of one geographical region and one Jewish culture. Little did they know the impact these words would have on the remainder of their lives. God’s message of completed forgiveness would travel from Jerusalem, to Judea and Samaria, to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8). The disciples would walk, ride, and sail to new places to share the name of Jesus with people they couldn’t have imagined being brought into God’s family of believers. Their historically Jewish faith would intersect with new cultures in exotic locations. They would often travel huge distances to make disciples.

The worldwide spread of the gospel has continued through the centuries to the present. The words and works of Jesus have spread in new ways with each advance in communication and technology. God continues to shape the course of human history for the sake of his church, to serve and benefit her as he sees fit. God’s shaping of human history has allowed the United States of America to become a world-renowned provider of higher education. People from all around the world are coming to American universities, and this movement of people for whom Jesus died provides an opportunity for us to make disciples. We may not have to travel the great distances that the early followers of Jesus did, but anyone who lives close to a college has the same opportunity that the early missionaries did to share the name of Jesus with people of various cultures.<sup>2</sup>

Many who live close to institutions of higher learning may not be completely aware of the type of opportunity for ministry to international students that exists. I will first briefly discuss the reality of the presence of international students in the U.S. as well as reasons why international students are coming to be educated in such large numbers. Knowing about the opportunity to connect with international students is the beginning of the endeavor. Universities

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture quotations in this thesis are taken from The Holy Bible: New International Version, Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1984.

<sup>2</sup> While foreign mission work involves a different set of challenges and opportunities, aspects of its rewarding work are accessible without leaving home. Cari Larson, international student outreach coordinator of Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, comments, “I’ve found that working with international campus ministry is God’s answer to my childhood prayer that I wanted to be a missionary.” – Cari Larson. Phone call, October 9, 2013.

have already poured resources into considering how best to work with international students, and I will present ways we can learn from their philosophy of welcoming international students. Yet despite the opportunity, there are also a number of reasons someone might feel ill-equipped to reach out to international students both on an individual and a programmatic level.

The main body of this paper will explore some of the challenges that exist in establishing relationships with international students. I will then identify how these challenges may serve as opportunities to serve the international student community. Finally, recognizing that finding ways to connect with international students for a one-time event is far easier yet often less impactful than engaging in long-term relationships, I will look for ways to form long-term relationships in which gospel encouragement can take place. This paper intends to defend the thesis that the challenges inherent in ministry to international college students are not only possible to overcome, but can actually serve as opportunities to support long-term ministry to international students.

### **1. International Students Coming to the U.S. Provide Opportunity for Evangelism**

When it comes to the reality of international students coming to the U.S. for higher education, the statistics speak for themselves. According to a recent survey 819,644 international students were enrolled in U.S. universities in the fall of 2013.<sup>3</sup> By comparison in the 2003-2004 school year there were 572,509 international students enrolled.<sup>4</sup> That's a 43.2% increase in the number of international students in the last ten years. The 2013 international students composed 3.9% of all American university students.<sup>5</sup> Many international students come with their families. An estimated 59,736 spouses of international students lived in the U.S. during the 2012-2013 school year, along with 35,717 children of international students.<sup>6</sup> These students generally

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<sup>3</sup> *Fast Facts 2013, International Students in the U.S.* (Institute of International Education), <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data>. The *Open Doors Report on International Educational Exchange* is published by the Institute of International Education, the leading not-for-profit educational and cultural exchange organization in the United States. The census data is based on a survey of approximately 3,000 accredited U.S. institutions. See Appendix A for the full report.

<sup>4</sup> *Fast Facts 2003* (Institute of International Education), <http://www.iie.org/Research-and-Publications/Open-Doors/Data>.

<sup>5</sup> *Fast Facts 2013, International Students in the U.S.*

<sup>6</sup> *The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy* (NAFSA: Association of International Educators), [https://istart.iu.edu/nafsa/files/docs/Methodology\\_Economic\\_Impact\\_Final\\_Nov2013.pdf](https://istart.iu.edu/nafsa/files/docs/Methodology_Economic_Impact_Final_Nov2013.pdf). Total economic benefit and accompanying jobs analysis is derived using formulas developed for NAFSA: Association

represent the brightest and the best of the countries from which they come. They will go on to shape the future course of the public policies and private viewpoints of the countries to which they often return. Those who stay in America will also play a major role in shaping the future of our country.

It is difficult to pinpoint just one reason for the stream of international students into America. Yet it is clear that a major factor is the increasing globalization of the world's economies.

“New technologies and new political orders have initiated a process of ‘global change’ whereby national and social borders have undergone reassessment. There is a new global competitiveness and a struggle for global economic power between giant trading blocks such as North America, Europe, and South East Asia. It is mainly between these wealthy trading blocks that travel for Higher Education has become possible and more commonplace.”<sup>7</sup>

This economic drive for education in the U.S. will also shape the goals of the students who come, a point which I will discuss further in this paper.

Whatever the motivation for international students to come, our motivation to introduce them to Jesus stands on the basis of his Word. We live as citizens of two kingdoms, the kingdom of heaven and the kingdom of the world.<sup>8</sup> Central to understanding our response to international students living in a culture far different than their own is the understanding that we as Christians live as strangers and foreigners in this world. The concept of the Christian as a stranger is found throughout Scripture.<sup>9</sup> Peter addresses his first letter “to God’s elect, strangers in the world” (1 Peter 1:1). He encourages his hearers to abstain from sinful desires on the basis that they are “aliens and strangers in the world” (1 Peter 2:11). The writer to the Hebrews encourages a life of faith by presenting examples of heroes of the Old Testament who lived by faith. He says that

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of International Educators by Jason Baumgartner, Director of Information Resources, Office of International Services, Indiana University - Bloomington. See Appendix B for the full report, which also includes information regarding the financial impact that the presence of international students and their families have on the U.S. economy. According to their estimates international students and their dependents contributed \$24 billion to the U.S. economy during the 2012-2013 academic year.

<sup>7</sup> J Belcher, “Thinking Globally, Acting Locally: Strategies for Universities.,” *Journal of International Education* 7 (1995): 5–13.

<sup>8</sup>A Christian’s citizenship both in the world and in God’s kingdom is found in Matthew 6:32-33 and in Ephesians 2:19-22.

<sup>9</sup> For additional examples in Scripture see Ge 23:3, 47:4, Lev 19:34, 25:23, 1Chr 29:15, Ps 39:12, Eph 2:29, Heb 13:1

these believers “admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth” (Hebrews 11:13) and encourages the same attitude in believers today.

This concept of a Christian identity of foreignness comes directly from God’s Word and also was present in the writings of Christians of the early church. St. Augustine removes any doubt about his concept of Christians as strangers, “For everyone here below, even in his own house, is a stranger. If he is not a stranger, let him not pass on from here. If pass on he must, he is a stranger. Let him not deceive himself, he is indeed a stranger.”<sup>10</sup> In commenting on other church fathers’ references to Christians as strangers and foreigners<sup>11</sup>, Amy Oden comes to the conclusion, “These early Christian voices reflect the profound conviction that Christian identity is rooted in otherness. Before Christians can truly offer hospitality, they must understand their marginal position.”<sup>12</sup>

In order to be prepared to show care and concern for the international students living in our communities, we must first understand the care and concern God showed for us in bringing us into his community of saints when we were foreigners to his kingdom.<sup>13</sup> As strangers in the world, we share a common foreignness with every other person we encounter. We are all foreigners in this world. We desire that all be made citizens of heaven. The problem of sin and the need for God’s grace exist equally in all people, and that similarity provides the basis for any relationship with international students in which spiritual encouragement can take place. “Foreigners, just like us, have been created in the image of God and therefore have great dignity. They are worthy of respect. Love your neighbor as yourself; love the alien as yourself. From

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<sup>10</sup> Augustine, “Sermon 61,” in *Homilies on the Gospels*, vol. 6, Post Nicean Fathers.

<sup>11</sup> One such church father is John Chrysostom. He draws application for his hearers from observing the faith of Abraham who traveled far from home at God’s command. “On this account we have provoked God to wrath, because when the blessings of heaven have been set before us, we are not willing to be separated from things on earth. Instead we act like worms, we turn about from the earth to the earth, and again from this to that. In short, we are not willing to look up even for a little while, nor to withdraw ourselves from human affairs.” Chrysostom “Homily 24 on Hebrews,” in *Homilies on John and Hebrews*, trnas. G.T. Stupart. NPNF 1.14 p.473-74.

<sup>12</sup> Amy Oden, “God’s Household of Grace,” in *Ancient & Postmodern Christianity: Paleo-Orthodoxy in the 21st Century: Essays in Honor of Thomas C. Oden*, ed. Kenneth Tanner and Christopher A. Hall (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002).

<sup>13</sup> Paul expresses this concept in Ephesians 2:12-13, “Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”

these two commandments we can draw the conclusion: the alien is also a neighbor, even though he may not share our background, culture and religion.”<sup>14</sup>

We also share in the common desire to be brought to our true home of life with God. God has indeed placed eternity in the hearts of all people (Ecclesiastes 3:9) so that they might know that there is something beyond this life. God has determined the exact times and places where people should live in order that they would seek him and find him (Acts 17:26,27). No international student comes to a university or rubs shoulders with the Christians imbedded in their new communities by accident.

These fundamental truths not only need to be applied to the beginning of a research paper about ministry to international students, it also needs to be continually held before the eyes of anyone who works with internationals. Such workers ought not be surprised if others react less than favorably at their desire to help people from other cultures. One campus minister explains, “I still remember somebody coming to me when they realized I was doing campus ministry work with internationals and they said, ‘Do you really like working with *them*?’ I didn’t like the way he put it. But that’s just a preconceived notion of the internationals being different and not being able to relate to you.”<sup>15</sup>

In addition to the skeptical voices that come from without, there is a constant need to reconnect to the Word of God so that our natural distrust of anything different doesn’t interfere with our desire to communicate with people from different cultures. “When our relationship with God is not healthy, our relationship with foreigners usually suffers too. Foreigners are no longer people to be discovered, but a threat to protect ourselves from. Their strangeness is no longer one of the facets of God’s rich and diverse creation; it becomes a reflection of our own difficulty in being at peace with ourselves and at peace with our Creator.”<sup>16</sup> In order for anyone to begin encouraging others spiritually, they must first recognize God’s administration of his grace to them.

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<sup>14</sup> Chawkat Georges Moucarry, “Aliens, Strangers, and the Gospel,” *IFES Review* (November 1993).

<sup>15</sup> Mark Eckert, Phone call, October 2013. Mark Eckert is the campus ministry pastor of “Lutheran Collegians MTU,” a campus ministry at Michigan Tech University. In this paper I will quote interviews that I conducted with international students and with people who have worked with international students. For a more detailed description of the interviews and the interviewees, see Appendix C.

<sup>16</sup> Moucarry, “Aliens, Strangers, and the Gospel.”



We rejoice that peace with our Creator has been given to all in the same way. “There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:22,23). This commonality before God applies not only to all people in general, but also to all who are brought into God’s family. We share a common heritage with all who are connected to Jesus through faith. “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:26-29). While a new believer from a different culture may not have the maturity of knowledge of a long-time believer, their status before God as a fully forgiven saint is on an equal plane. While the two may have vastly different physical ancestries, they have the exact same spiritual heritage. Both are descendants of Abraham by faith and heirs of God’s promise of a Savior that has been fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus.

## **2. Learning from University Internationalization**

Armed with an understanding of our common status before God, there is much we can learn from the university organizations that have sought to attract and maximize the presence of international students on their campuses. I will address the challenges that international students face in attending universities and ways that universities have attempted to address those challenges later in the paper. However, before I explore those findings, I will first discuss the philosophical principles that provide the basis for the decisions that universities are making in order to provide assistance to international students.

Universities recognize the value of having international students attending their institutions. The primary value is in broadening the experience of anyone who would attend their university. “Internationalization at home is about promoting an international experience for all students and staff, but particularly for those who have not travelled beyond their own universities into new contexts.”<sup>17</sup> If a university attracts international students, they provide another incentive for domestic students to attend their university. When people interact with other cultures, it

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<sup>17</sup> Paul Crowther et al., “Internationalisation at Home: A Position Paper” (European Association for International Education, 2000).

exposes them to new ways of looking at their world. While some view travel expenses and logistic difficulties as deterrents from ever experiencing this kind of cross-cultural exposure abroad, studying at a university with a large international student base provides some of the same benefits without all the same difficulties. Inevitably the domestic student's university experience will be richer from encountering such exposure to people from other cultures.

Anyone who has had the chance to do mission work in a foreign culture can attest to the fact that they returned home having gained invaluable insight they wouldn't have otherwise had.<sup>18</sup> Communicating the truths of the gospel message with people of other cultures often involves simplifying and summarizing statements of truth. This experience forces the communicator to rethink those truths in detail for themselves and often leads to new insights unseen before. While the value many times also comes with expensive travel arrangements and impractical time commitments, sharing the gospel with international students brings much of the same rich spiritual experience without all of the same travel hurdles.

In order to craft an environment that attracts international students, universities are counseled to follow the approach, "Instead of asking what internationalization means, universities should be asking 'why internationalize' and 'what should internationalization mean?'"<sup>19</sup> This proactive rather than reactive approach to interacting with international students will lead universities and international ministries alike to consider the challenges that international students face in moving to a new culture in order that they may then craft ways to address those challenges.

### **3. Challenges of Ministering to International Students**

Any ministry relationship is a two way street, and the challenges of ministering to international students can be viewed from two perspectives, the perspective of the international student or the perspective of the person ministering to them. This section will focus on the challenges that international students face and how this affects a Christian's approach in

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<sup>18</sup> Campus minister Mark Eckert talks about the value of a trip to South Korea, "That was interesting and probably important for us to see because it gets you to understand more about their culture. Going over there has changed my perspective. They told me what Korea was like but now I understand a whole lot better how things work over there." – Eckert, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Nick Stone, "Conceptualising Intercultural Effectiveness for University Teaching.," *Journal of Studies in International Education* 10 (2006): 334–356. p.334

ministering to them. The primary perspective will be that of the international student with occasional reference to the domestic perspective.

### ***3.1 Difference in Culture***

Any discussion of the challenges of moving to a new culture must first address the issue of the term ‘culture’ itself. There are inherent weaknesses in using the term ‘culture’ to try to express the differences that exist between people of vastly different backgrounds. The term can be used to dismiss diversity among distinct communities within a certain geographic boundary.<sup>20</sup> It can imply superiority and inferiority between groups of people and explain away actions as symptoms of culture rather than inquiring or considering the deeper reasons for why an individual would act the way they act.<sup>21</sup> It’s easy to hoard information that confirms a perception of culture and ignore information that discredits it.<sup>22</sup>

While recognizing these weaknesses, the term ‘culture’ is useful because of its ability to summarize the diversity among people of different backgrounds in one simple word. People from different cultures have different ways of looking at the world. When international students are removed from their culture of origin, there will be moments when their view of the world is challenged. Anthropologist Paul Hiebert makes the following point concerning worldview which also applies to culture, “Worldviews provide psychological reassurance that the world is truly as we see it and a sense of peace and of being at home in the world in which we live. People experience a worldview crisis when there is a gap between their worldview and their experience of reality.”<sup>23</sup> International students will inevitably experience this “worldview crisis” while living in a new culture and will need to reassess and reform their worldview on the fly.

The difference in cultures inevitably affects how members of different cultures view one another. “In constructing a biblical worldview, or a road map of how to communicate Scripture to a person of a different culture, it’s important to remember that our worldview has been shaped by our culture, as theirs has theirs. Worldviews are encoded in the language and culture of an

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<sup>20</sup> Catherine Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience: Universities into the 21st Century* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010). p.9.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. p.11.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. p.15.

<sup>23</sup> Paul Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008). p.30.

individual.”<sup>24</sup> The implication for the one ministering to international students is summarized, “In addition to exegeses of Scripture, we also need to engage in exegeses of humans, both the worldview context of the human I’m communicating to and how that shapes their reception of my message, and the worldview context of the human who’s sending the message and how that shapes the way in which I send the message.”<sup>25</sup> Seeking to understand how the gospel message is colored by the perceptions of the message sender and the message receiver do not make the task easier, but can help remove unnecessary boundaries from the communication of the message.

Engaging in exegesis of humans never looks the same twice. No two cultures are alike and the aspects of a particular culture that any one member of that culture accentuates will vary on an individual basis. What’s true of one individual from a certain culture is not guaranteed to be true of another individual from that same culture. As a result certain generalities about different cultures can be helpful but ought not be applied indiscriminately. The sentiment expressed in this journal article may apply to some but certainly not all members of Asian and Western cultures (which are huge culture sub-groups in themselves): “Doing something ‘because I should’ or ‘because it is expected’ signals maturity in Asian cultures, while doing something ‘because it feels right or honest to me’ suggests maturity in modern Western cultures.”<sup>26</sup>

The usefulness of such generalities is that it can help a domestic citizen understand behavior patterns of international students on a grand scale. The danger is that one would pre-judge an international student’s motives and passions rather than looking for opportunities to find out what makes a person tick on an individual level.<sup>27</sup> Such thinking gives even a Christian a distorted view of who they’re talking to and seriously hinders their ability to conceptualize how they might apply the message of salvation to them.

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<sup>24</sup> Ibid. p.274.

<sup>25</sup> Paul Hiebert, *The Gospel in Human Contexts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009). p.12.

<sup>26</sup> Tim Stafford, “The Tiger in the Academy: Asian Americans Populate America’s Elite Colleges More Than Ever--and Campus Ministries Even More Than That,” *Christianity Today* 50, no. 4 (April 1, 2006): 70–73. p.3.

<sup>27</sup> An example of prejudice applied on a generalized level and the affect it had on the international students is recounted by an international student from Texas A&M University, “I was in a class about international development, the professor was talking about jobs in the U.S. and one of the American students said that international people came here and took away jobs, took away scholarships that should be deserved by American students, and took away the higher positions that should be theirs. There is less opportunity for American people to graduate school because of international students. I remember that most of the international students felt very hurt by this conversation. To some extent I feel that this is a typical American feeling about international students.” – To Tam Phuong, Phone call, October 2013.

With sufficient caution against stereotyping international students, some of the generalized differences in culture between international students and Americans can be helpful in understanding the challenges international students are facing. Understanding their challenges from their cultural perspective is a key step in the human exegesis of international students.

### ***3.2 Difference in Expectations of the University Experience***

The first difference I will examine is the perceived goal of attending a university. An International Student Admissions Counselor makes the following observation:

“International students are much more academically focused than their American counterparts. They sometimes aren’t as interested in the extra activities. We as Americans see extra activities as part of a well-rounded college experience but many international students don’t see the merit in it and say, ‘I’m here to study and not to do the extra activities.’ Many of them grow up so pushed in their academics that it’s ingrained in them. That’s a cultural thing that we’re not going to fight, but we do encourage them to do a couple of extra things to get a full American experience. Their main goal is success. Their main goal is their future.”<sup>28</sup>

While there are some American students who would subscribe to a similarly defined goal of their university years, in general the American approach to the college years is a bit more relaxed and centered on social endeavors. The different type of goal international students set in attending a university will shape how and why they interact not only with their American classmates, but also with the Christians imbedded in their community. This can lead to barriers to friendship formation among members of different cultures. A 2007 research study carried out by Harrison and Peacock shows some of the reasons for barriers to friendship formulation among international and national students. Their findings also have implications for those who minister to international students.

“Many national students have limited participation with international students and tend to associate similarity with friendship and to assume that difference was a barrier to the development of relationships. Discourse about international students was very general and specific interests, names, and countries of origin were often not known. International students were perceived to be ‘shy’, ‘introverted’, or ‘difficult to know’. The most significant barrier to interaction reported in the study was language skill and use. Many national students were unwilling to work harder in conversation to just ‘relax and have a laugh’ when they could get that easier from others.”<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Cynthia Fitzsimmons, Wisconsin Lutheran College Admissions Counselor, Phone call, October 2013.

<sup>29</sup> Neil Harrison and Nicola Peacock, “Understanding the UK Student Response to Internationalisation,” *UKCOSA Wordviews* Summer (2007).

The desire to get a laugh without having to work harder than necessary causes many domestic students to tend toward friendships with people who are like them. Conversely, international students will tend toward friendships with other international students who share their goals. The same type of barrier may also exist in the one seeking to minister to international students. They will find that communicating God's soul-shaping Word to members of their own culture is easier than working hard to understand a new culture in order to communicate to it.

Encountering a different set of expectations for the college experience may seem like a detriment to forming friendships with those whose expectations differ from your own. If one student wants to spend Friday night studying and another wants to spend it with friends, the two may not naturally form a strong friendship. Yet that doesn't mean that one or the other has the right or wrong set of expectations. It simply means their expectations and priorities are different and if friendship formation is to happen it must acknowledge and overcome those differences.

### ***3.3 Difference in Language***

The cultural barriers I've discussed have much to do with differences in language. A language barrier exists between speakers of two languages not only in their ability to communicate verbal concepts, but also in their ability to understand each other's meaning once the concepts are communicated. "Different languages do more than just communicate the same thoughts in different words, they are intrinsically different ways of looking at the world."<sup>30</sup> Language plays a key role in developing identity. "Language is the 'social scaffolding' for the development of the mind in interaction with others. This puts language and interaction at the center of the development of our sense of self and our perception of others. There is a crucial link between language and cultural identity."<sup>31</sup>

Learning portions of an international student's language can help in bridging the gap of cultural difference, but even more important than learning someone's language is a willingness to get to know the culture that shapes and is shaped by their language. This cultural understanding requires long-term commitment to the international community and to individual

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<sup>30</sup> Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*. p.18.

<sup>31</sup> Claire Kramsch, "The Multilingual Subject," *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 16, no. 1 (2006): 97-110. p.98-99.

international students. Ways to facilitate long-term influence will be discussed in more depth later in this paper.

The tie between language and culture acquisition also makes the transition to a new culture particularly difficult for international students, especially in the first few weeks of the transition. New international students will be exposed to different idioms and slang and a new speed of speech that their English language training could not possibly have prepared them for. Classroom language is not the same as the English they've learned and there was no way of knowing that ahead of time. Assignments that take American students 20 minutes may take international students who are still making this language adjustment 3 hours.<sup>32</sup>

English speaking ability not only lays stress on academic performance<sup>33</sup>, it also interferes with needed friendship formation.

“If your English is good enough, it is great to spend time with American students. If your English is not good enough to communicate with them, spending time with them is a waste of time and makes yourself uncomfortable. If you cannot understand what the other people are talking about, or if you cannot express clearly what you are thinking about, I think it is a nightmare to stay with American people, especially a group of American people.”<sup>34</sup>

Friendships with international students need to be formed with patient assessment and understanding of where their language skills lie and the emotional effect that miscommunication has on them. If the costs of communication outweigh the rewards of the friendship, a relationship is unlikely to last long.

### ***3.4 Difference in Academic Expectations***

In addition to the language barrier, understanding new cultural and academic expectations is a challenge for international students. A student recalls her first class periods in her new

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<sup>32</sup> Carol Koelpin, former international student Admissions Counselor, Phone call, October 2013.

<sup>33</sup> This academic challenge applies not only to oral, but also written English. “Normally I don’t have much difficulty with oral communication but with written communication it is a problem. So I have to spend so much time understanding the written material for my classes. I spent a lot of time trying to improve my writing skills. My university had a supporting service to help the students in their writing. The writing center has professors and graduate students who are willing to volunteer to help the international students and read the articles and to help them with their writing skills. They gave me so many useful tips for my writing. With every paper I submit to the professor, they help me to edit it.” – Phuong, interview.

<sup>34</sup> Jun Feng, Texas A&M student, Email, October 2013.

culture, “It was not always easy for me to understand the expectations of the professor. At first they gave us a long and detailed syllabus and I didn’t understand what the professor expected of us.”<sup>35</sup> Much of the confusion over teacher expectations is caused by how the educational philosophies that many international students are accustomed to differ from the philosophies of the universities they are attending. “In my country it is a teacher centered approach to education but here it is a student centered approach. I didn’t do a lot of research for my master’s degree, but here it is quite different. The students have to do a lot. The instructor teaches the student how to research themselves. Here the students have to self study a lot and there is not much lecture.”<sup>36</sup>

International students are forced to adapt their ingrained methods of learning and interacting to fit the new context of the American university. The need for adaptation also applies to international students learning the truths of God’s Word. Communicators of God’s Word may unwittingly use teaching methods that are foreign to an international student. The minister needs to keep in mind that the international student is in the midst of learning style adaptation. They can then seek to ease the burden when able. Such adaptation happens best within the framework of a strong support system. That brings up what I consider the primary obstacle international students face, the loss of their traditional support system.

### ***3.5 Loss of Social Capital***

Catherine Montgomery uses the term ‘social capital’ to sum up the sense of meaning and purpose that a support system provides, as well as the ability to make use of and influence others. “Possession of social capital is a means of acquiring advantage both socially and educationally. When groups of individuals share the same values, ideas, and strength of cooperation they can access advantages provided by their network as part of their social capital.”<sup>37</sup> She then explains the effect of putting geographic distance between the international student and their social capital.

“When a person moves to a new social context that is geographically or socially distant from their own, there is a sense in which they are separated from access to their own resources of social capital. They can no longer draw from their friends, acquaintances, and family, their social network, to access support or advantage in the

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<sup>35</sup> Phuong, interview.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience*. p.69.



same way as before. Even if they are from an advantaged or elite background in their home country, once they arrive in their new social context international students lose their social advantage.”<sup>38</sup>

This loss of social capital and the need to find new networks of support make all of the previously mentioned challenges that international students face that much more difficult. Learning a new culture and language, navigating a new learning system, and interacting with people with foreign goals are tasks best done with a strong support group in place, and this is precisely what many international students are lacking when they first arrive. In the interviews I conducted with international students, the loss of social capital as an additional stressor came up in everything from dating problems<sup>39</sup> to a general sense of importance in the world.<sup>40</sup> Many students talked to their parents every day in order to preserve some of the valued human resources they left behind in leaving their country.<sup>41</sup> This points to the initial weeks of an international student’s stay as an especially vulnerable time. As they begin to build a new support network, new social capital is gained to replace what was lost.

“The students arrived in a new environment where they were initially alone. They appeared to spend a difficult first stage feeling lonely and lost, but by the time they had reached their second or third year at university they had emerged from this difficult phase. They had made the effort to build a social group that replaced the one in their home environment, yet close links with the network base back home were retained and even became heightened in their significance.”<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid. p.70.

<sup>39</sup> “Sometimes I am depressed because of my girlfriend. When that happens I need to talk to my friends and they give me some advice.” – Mu Xi Yan, interview.

<sup>40</sup> “In India when I would leave my house I didn’t think there was any boy who wouldn’t stare at me. I think girls enjoy that attention. I used to think I’m beautiful and modern. And you come here and no one looks at you. That’s good and it’s bad because that’s the way it should be, no one should stare at you. But it was different all of the sudden. There was no attention. I did have a deprivation that no one was paying attention to me.” – Sakshi Gupta, interview.

<sup>41</sup> “I talk to my parents every single day. Not just because I’m homesick but it gives me a lot more positive energy. Talking to my parents helps me feel more relaxed. I feel like I have a lot of work and I’m not doing it all and I easily feel overwhelmed. If I talk to my parents it really makes me happy and they give me wonderful advice.” – Gupta, interview.

“I talk to my parents on the phone every day, I visit back home twice a year. This is very important. They encourage me when I am frustrated and give me the courage to face difficulty.” – Feng, interview.

<sup>42</sup> Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience*. p.111.

The majority of international students are at the age when beliefs and habits undergo a series of challenge and reformulation. Added to this setting are the dynamics involved with having to rebuild the mechanisms that enable a person to cope with the fears and the failures, to enjoy the victories and advancements of life. What an opportune time to introduce Jesus to them. Recognizing the great need for support provides ample reason to search beyond these perceived boundaries to international student ministry and find in them opportunities for ministry.

### ***3.6 Providing for a Family***

Another consideration unique to a subset of international students is the presence of an international student's family. According to a recent survey 7.3% of international students in the U.S. are married.<sup>43</sup> There are roughly 6 children for every 10 married students.<sup>44</sup> Others may have parents or relatives living with them. In addition to the challenges stated above, these students face the challenge of providing for their family. This pertains not only to economic support, but emotional support as well. Many of these international student spouses and family members have even more severe language limitations, visa restrictions, and less opportunity to build a social network than their spouses. Children must adjust to their new settings without the same level of maturity their parents possess. All this must be done without the traditional support system of extended family. "They're here alone; they don't have their family and friends around them, so we have to be their family and friends whenever we can."<sup>45</sup> Serving the international community involves finding ways to address the needs of their family members.

### ***3.7 The Challenge of Evangelism***

A treatment of the challenges to communicating the gospel to international students wouldn't be complete without remembering the natural aversion to the gospel message that comes from sinful hearts. The message of Jesus as a person's Savior from sin is foolishness to those who are perishing (1 Corinthians 1:18). The person controlled by the sinful nature neither accepts the message of Jesus nor are they able to do so by their own power (1 Corinthians 2:14). In addition to the natural rejection of the gospel message, many international students are hearing

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<sup>43</sup> *The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy.*

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Larson, interview.

it for the first time. They may react negatively not only because of the inability of a sinful mind to accept these ideas, but also because of their cultural perceptions about the Christian religion.<sup>46</sup>

In my interviews with international students I asked them how they reacted to others telling them the teachings of the Bible. One Indian student responded, “Many of my friends really don’t like that because they feel that someone else is imposing a different religion on them and we love our religion. We just say we believe our God and we are not saying that you don’t believe yours, but you don’t say that my God is nothing. I’ve been raised saying that my God is real and my God is everything to me.”<sup>47</sup> A Chinese student said, “Some students feel offended if you tell them about religion. They don’t feel a need for religion and some believe that a religion is wrong. So I don’t make a judgment on people. I just let them have their beliefs and I learn what I can. But not all people agree with Christianity and so people should not say that is the only right religion.”<sup>48</sup>

The reaction of rejection will be impossible to avoid, but understanding where international students are coming from in the topic of religion provides a framework for a balanced approach to evangelism.<sup>49</sup> “There’s a fine line between shoving it down their throats and being a loving Christian environment that shares God’s love with them. And that’s really up to interpretation of the individual and how they take it.”<sup>50</sup>

#### **4. Opportunities amid Challenges**

The challenges inherent in ministry to international students may cause one to shy away from engaging in such ministry. Yet while it is important to count the costs before you build,

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<sup>46</sup> This initial rejection should not immediately be viewed as a closed door. “We must remember too that people who initially reject a new way often reevaluate their decision and may be open to conversion. Their ‘no’ may not be a final ‘no’ but a ‘not yet.’” Michael Goheen, *A Light to the Nations* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011).

<sup>47</sup> Gupta, interview.

<sup>48</sup> Yan, interview.

<sup>49</sup> Resources that explain the religious perspectives of certain groups can be useful. The following helps explain a cultural outlook: “Hindus may and often do find Jesus personally appealing. But becoming a follower of Christ is quite difficult because it implies a rejection of one’s own dharma (duty) and the acceptance of the “Christian” dharma. The stakes are increasingly higher for those of higher castes, because they have more to lose both spiritually and in social standing. Hinduism prescribes that only after the householder stage is complete is a person required, according to dharma, to be actively involved in religious studies. Thus students may be curious about religion but they are also justified in postponing serious religious inquiry.” - “Indian Christian Fellowship - A City On a Hill,” *Intervarsity.org/*, n.d., <http://cms.intervarsity.org/ism/article/690>.

<sup>50</sup> Fitzsimmons, interview.

such challenges ought not be a deterrent from ministry to international students. The challenges that international students face, and even the challenges of effectively communicating to international students actually provide a host of opportunities for gospel ministry. In presenting such opportunities, my hope is to provide both motivation and practical application for international student ministry.

#### ***4.1 Similarity-Based Relationships***

One might be intimidated by the differences in culture that I've explored and feel ill-equipped to communicate to members of other cultures. Mark Eckert talks about running into this perspective and the approach he took. "Some people seem to think, 'I'm dealing with internationals so I have to be different.' To be honest with you I've just been myself. I haven't tried to be different. I haven't tried to do anything different. I just looked at internationals and said, 'These are people who have souls just like I do and they're sinners just like I am and they need to hear about their Savior.'"<sup>51</sup>

Despite obvious differences in culture, it is important to remember that the similarities between two people will always outweigh the differences. We will always share a common humanity with the international students we meet. We will always share the need for a Savior and the promise that our Savior has come.

Not only are the spiritual vulnerabilities and needs we all face before God the same, but the challenges of adjusting to college life may also be more similar than many realize. "Many of the issues facing the international student group are those that face all students, and indeed all of us as people. We all miss family and friends when we are away from them... There are many elements of international communities that underlie how similar we are to each other, rather than how different."<sup>52</sup> International students are struggling with the same issues that many domestic students face. This similarity in humanity provides a starting point in forming relationships with international students that can lead to gospel ministry.

Forming friendship based on similarities rather than focusing on differences provides an opportunity for those differences in culture to be expressed and exchanged within a safe and helpful environment. Even seemingly neutral points of conversation can reinforce a difference-

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<sup>51</sup> Eckert, interview.

<sup>52</sup> Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience*. p.125.

centered approach to a relationship unless one proactively makes it a priority to focus on similarities.<sup>53</sup> Being aware of the possibility of driving wedges between oneself and international students isn't a fool proof way of avoiding misunderstandings, but such awareness does curb those differences from becoming relational obstacles.

Similarity-based relationships find an opportunity for friendship formation amid the challenge of cultural differences. One way this finds expression is in the perceived stereotypes of members of either culture that are proven by time and experience to be untrue. This often happens for both the members of the foreign culture and the members of the domestic culture.

“The notion in my country is that we always feel that Americans are rude and do not value relationships and are spoiled, but since I came here, I don't see that. Americans are good at time and caring about relationships. In India we are not very good at being on time. I never realized this before. Before I always thought that we were the ones who do hard work, but that is not the case. Everyone here works hard because they like their subject. In my country you go to new levels only to get new jobs, not because you enjoy what you are doing. I got into this program not because I was interested but only to get my masters. People here don't do that here generally. They find things they enjoy and they study it.”<sup>54</sup>

Such discoveries prove that a person's impression of a member of another culture is never static. New discoveries are made with each interaction. Someone ministering to international students may approach them with interest, expecting to come away with a better understanding of the individual and their culture. They should also realize that they are providing information that will allow the international student to reassess their understanding of American culture, whether for good or bad. If someone is intimidated by the differences of another culture, they should realize that the intimidation is being felt on the side of the international student as well. They can look for ways to alleviate an international student's worries and re-inform their impression of American culture. Such an approach will provide a framework in which the

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<sup>53</sup> An example of a seemingly neutral question having this effect, “The question, ‘Where are you from?’ is probably the one that international students are asked most frequently, and this requires them to reassociate themselves with their national origin. In one sense this reaffirms the link between their nationality and their identity in a force that emphasizes national stereotypes both in the eyes of the person asking the question and, perhaps reluctantly, in the eyes of the international student. Thus it may be that when the actual boundaries of culture are more strongly emphasized it may be more difficult for these to be crossed.” - Stephen Bochner, B.M. McLeod, and A Lin, “Friendship Patterns of Overseas Students: A Functional Model.,” *International Journal of Psychology* 12, no. 4 (1977): 277–294.

<sup>54</sup> Gupta, interview.

American can develop a more informed impression of the other culture, making it easier to approach them in the future.

#### ***4.2 English Language Opportunities***

The reality of a language barrier and the difficulty that it presents in communicating to international students should be balanced by the fact that language skills can and do change with time and experience. Language improvement often happens faster than expected. An international student relates her experience, “If you think the language is a challenge it will be a challenge and you’ll be shy in front of people. When I came here the language was a challenge. I did not used to express myself to others but over time it has become a lot less difficult. Initially I did not understand what people were saying but now I can understand 90% of what they say after a year.”<sup>55</sup>

What is needed to provide the advancement in language skills that international students are looking for is simple experience in conversation. This is a hot commodity for international students. English is viewed as an international language that will allow students to gain entry into a more global arena.<sup>56</sup> The incentive to improve their English skills relates to many facets of the goals international students have set for their futures. It will improve their prospect of finding a job. It will help them socially to feel more like an insider.<sup>57</sup> Improving their English will make their experience in the U.S. more enjoyable. All this points to improvement of English skill as a need which international students recognize and will respond to when the opportunity to improve presents itself.

The desire to improve English language skills is a gold mine of opportunity to provide help for a definite need that international students have. “The issue of language and identity is seminal to students’ view of themselves as being ‘international’. In particular, language development and competence is seen as a factor that enables the development of an international or global perspective.”<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience*. p.101.

<sup>57</sup> “Sometimes people look at us like we’re from the outside. We don’t speak the way that you speak and so we’re looked at as inferior and I totally hate that.”- Gupta, interview.

<sup>58</sup> Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience*. p.98.

Acquiring language skills happens best in natural settings where back and forth conversation and clarification can take place. There is no one better suited to assist in language acquisition than a native English speaker. By virtue of your years of speaking English, you are a conversational English expert who has a lot to offer any international student. International students realize this and often seek out opportunities to converse with Americans who they feel they can trust. International students will seek out campus ministries that are able to build up a reputation of quality English as a Second Language programs. Cari Larson explains the value provided to international students with ESL classes. “They couldn’t understand their professor until they came to this class. Once they listened to me they can understand slang and enunciation better. Also they’re updating their vocabulary. It helps them to know what’s interesting; it helps them with their kids, their families. It’s really a support system to help them achieve their goal which is to take back skills to their university.”<sup>59</sup>

Even apart from creating a program of structured ESL classes designed for multiple students at once, the simple opportunity to have one on one conversations is an invaluable resource in building relationships with international students. This is true whether a conversation happens in a casual or a structured environment. This opportunity to serve a need extends beyond the international students to their families as well. “One time I saw some leaflets about a church providing ESL service and although I don’t need it I gave it to my husband to improve his English. Now he is confident in communication with American people. A pastor came to our house to talk with him and we appreciated it a lot.”<sup>60</sup>

Even more important than coming up with a programmatic strategy for providing ESL services to international students<sup>61</sup> is understanding the motivation behind it. ESL sees a need that one’s neighbor has and seeks to address that need. The goal is to look for a way to share Jesus’ love with international students, yet whether ESL leads to an opportunity to present the gospel message or not, a Christian can be confident that he is helping his neighbor in need in a way that brings glory to God.

### ***4.3 American Culture Opportunities***

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<sup>59</sup> Larson, interview.

<sup>60</sup> Phuong, interview.

<sup>61</sup> For examples of ways to run an ESL program, see Appendix D.

In the same way that you are a conversational English expert by virtue of your experience in the language, you are an American cultural expert by virtue of your years spent absorbing and being shaped by American culture. As international students struggle to understand the new campus and state laws, as they are blindsided by weather they've never experienced before, as they adjust to navigating a new banking system and grocery store, you have an opportunity to provide guidance. Even something as basic as American standard of cleanliness and hygiene are not automatically noted by international students.<sup>62</sup> The incentive for them to find an American they can trust and interact with in order to learn American culture is connected to their ability to survive and their desire to thrive in their new culture. Such cultural lessons are typically learned within the context of a community support system. International students need to rebuild this support system and the Christian living in their community has an opportunity to be a part of their new support system.

#### ***4.4 A Family Community of Faith***

International students will rebuild the social capital they lost when they moved away from their native environment in much the same way they built up social capital at home. Practicality is the biggest factor in determining the types of relationships and friendships international students seek out. Many international students choose friends based on how they perceive the potential friend's ability to help them achieve their goals of academic success.<sup>63</sup> This practical view of friendship is a major reason why many international students form most of their friendships with other international students. "International students to a certain extent share the same goals as students from other international countries, sharing interests and having much in common. Because of this they are able to offer each other social capital and access to support and social and educational resources."<sup>64</sup>

If academic success is high on their list of priorities, they will choose friends who will help them academically. As I've already discussed, one way for Americans to fit into that category is to offer ESL classes or other language improvement opportunities. But offering academic support applies to more than just language skills. Taking an active interest in the ups

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<sup>62</sup> Fitzsimmons, interview.

<sup>63</sup> Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience*. p.72.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. p.70.



and downs of their studies will go a long way in showing that you care about the person. If what is important to them is important to you, it shows in the time and attentiveness you're willing to give them when they talk about their academic life.

Many of the basic needs of college students that are often provided by friends and family will need to be provided from elsewhere for international students who have left their friends and families behind. This is a chance for Americans to fill the gap. One of the most basic of all needs for any college student is food. International students must adapt to a cuisine often strange and new. Table manners are different. Not only do they relish the opportunity to indulge in their native flavors, they also enjoy being able to adapt to new food styles and eating customs with someone they've grown to trust.

“We don't really need the food (offered at a church) but that is a very good opportunity for my family to know about the culture. My family can learn how Americans eat and what Americans eat and the meaning of special occasions. Another thing is that I really want to know the table manners to help me understand how to adopt the manners in different situations when I am in contact with people. It is not easy for foreigners to be invited by American people to dinner because we do not always know the table manners of people.”<sup>65</sup>

Many international students never get invited into an American's home, and the simple hospitable act of opening up your home to them will stick out as being different from the majority of the American culture they've experienced. Campus ministry pastor Tom Trapp shares his experience, “If you invite them to your home for a meal they'll come. They don't get invited often and it's a big deal for them. Many of the international students are very busy, but food is a common denominator, that's a drawing point. They all have to eat. If you have an opportunity to show kindness, that may open them up to get to know your God.”<sup>66</sup>

In the interviews I conducted with international students, I asked how their friendships with Americans were formed. A pattern quickly emerged of forming friendships through church-related services and acts of kindness from Christians. International students consistently noted the difference between the Christians they met and the other Americans they were familiar with. Catherine Montgomery also notes in her research, “The friendliness and support of these church-

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<sup>65</sup> Phuong, interview.

<sup>66</sup> Tom Trapp, campus ministry pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel, Phone call, October 2013.

based relationships appear in contrast to the more distant relationships the international student group has experienced with the younger home students at the university.”<sup>67</sup>

One area of need that local churches provided for the students I interviewed was the need for furniture. “I met my American friends because of a church. I went to a church because I needed furniture. Someone came and dropped it off at my house and she called me and we started hanging out. There are so many people who I exchange my number with them and they never call, but she called me. There are not many who know what’s going on in my life, but she knows that.”<sup>68</sup> In this case a church provided a service that met a known need in the international community. The international student noted the difference between the Christian who came and the other Americans she had encountered. This Christian showed interest in her life, and a friendship resulted.

The willingness to provide free services is a first impression that stands not only in contrast to the other aspects of American culture that internationals become familiar with, but in a lot of cases it runs counter to the culture an international student comes from.

“When I first came to my apartment my friend had all the furniture, and my friend said she got it all from the church. That was my first impression of Christians. Although I had no experience with the church, I got a benefit from it. We don’t have such a service in my country. When I came here I was surprised that there are so many churches here and that they help in so many ways. My impression is that the church plays an important part in the life of people here in this community. When I realized the importance of church and church services I want to go there and understand what is happening in church.”<sup>69</sup>

Another example of Christians sticking out as distinct from the culture around them deals with an international student who didn’t know her way around her new and unfamiliar surroundings. “I met my best friend the second day after I arrived here. She took me home because I lost myself on road. Since then, we have become very good friends. She is an American lady and she helped me a lot to get through the hard transition time.”<sup>70</sup> This highlights the opportunity to help international students during the first critical weeks as they are making all kinds of cultural and logistic adjustments. It also shows that a connection doesn’t need to be

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<sup>67</sup> Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience*. p.115. This comment is especially striking considering Montgomery’s research comes from a strictly secular viewpoint with a strictly secular purpose.

<sup>68</sup> Gupta, interview.

<sup>69</sup> Phuong, interview.

<sup>70</sup> Feng, interview.

officially organized under a church heading, but can simply be an expression of Christian love responding to an observation of a person in need.

International students also recognize the need for spiritual encouragement in dealing with stress. “In dealing with stress I know that God is with me. He wants to give me new things so that I learn more. That belief is very important to me. Believing that God helps me and takes care of me makes me feel like whatever is happening is planned and I can handle it.”<sup>71</sup> At such a time of adjustment and academic pressure, a minister may find the international student more open than they anticipated to hearing about the relief from stress and pressure that the gospel offers.

Becoming a part of an international student’s rebuilt social capital very simply means caring about their needs in much the same way their family and friends back home would.<sup>72</sup> Opportunities to express such care are not limited to organized programs in connection with a church, but such functions may provide opportunities to express care and concern. This doesn’t require a minister who is highly trained in cultural sensitivities and communication methods as much as it requires a person’s heart to be moved to compassion and a willingness to help as they observe needs among international students. Cari Larson sums up her role in helping international students, “I’m just God’s person to them, I’m not anyone special, but I am to them.”<sup>73</sup>

Putting oneself in a position to offer care and guidance for new international students provides an opportunity to establish long-term relationships with international individuals and with the international community at large. Word of mouth spreads quickly among a particular international community at a university once they begin to see the benefits that the local campus ministry or individual Christians are making in their lives. “They feel very indebted to us for just being their friends, for getting them out of their apartments, and helping them know English better.”<sup>74</sup>

## **5. Challenges and Opportunities in Maintaining Long-Term Relationships**

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<sup>71</sup> Gupta, interview.

<sup>72</sup> Cari Larson gave some examples of being family to international families: visiting women in the hospital when they give birth, giving food gifts, and sharing information about coupons and deals around town.

<sup>73</sup> Larson, interview.

<sup>74</sup> Trapp, interview.

Word of mouth among international students provides a framework to maintain an on-going relationship with the international community in a given area. This challenge of maintaining long-term relationships deserves extra attention. While there are many ways to attract international students to a one-time church event, I'll now focus on challenges and opportunities of encouraging on-going interaction and spiritual encouragement.

### ***5.1 Challenge of Students' Short Stay***

The first barrier to long-term relationships is the transient nature of college students. Traditionally four years of studying produces a degree and it's time to move on. While there are some international students who extend their university stay longer than four years, there are also plenty who spend less than four years at a given university due to scholarship limitations, visa restrictions, funding obligations, or other factors. The likelihood of international students staying in the same area in which they studied is also significantly less than domestic students. Many international students intend to or must move back home after their studies are completed.

This means there is limited time which a campus minister has to work with the international students they come into contact with. Time and energy spent programmatically must be carefully planned so that time isn't lost trying to figure out how to gain initial contact with international students. As I've demonstrated, the initial three to four weeks of an international student's stay are crucial times when the needs and vulnerabilities of international students are often most glaring. These needs are also often ones that are met rather simply, so long as planning has gone into how these needs will be met.

An intentionalized effort to follow up any initial contact is a key in forming long-lasting relationships. You may not have another chance to follow up with international student contacts before they move on to the next stage in their lives. Follow up should happen in a matter of days, not weeks, following any international event designed to draw visitors and create contacts.<sup>75</sup>

The ability to share the opportunity to reach out to international students and include others in this ministry will also determine the overall impact a given international ministry is able to make. A pool of volunteers are not always available to every college ministry setting, but there may be more willingness to help within local congregations than is often realized. Volunteer recruitment may take the form of bulletin flyers advertising the opportunity in local

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<sup>75</sup> For an example of a plan of follow up after events, see Appendix E.

congregations or may take place in personal phone calls and conversations with individuals that are known to have skill in teaching or serving.<sup>76</sup>

### ***5.2 Reverse Culture Shock***

A unique opportunity to serve a need of international students beyond their stay in America presents itself with reverse culture shock. Reverse culture shock is experienced when people who live in a foreign culture go back to their native culture and find that their perspective on their own culture's usefulness and practicality has changed. Reverse culture shock is an opportunity to provide support for international students both before and during its occurrence. One of the best ways to prepare is to anticipate it and talk to students about it before they move back home. Encourage students to maintain regular contact with their home culture. Structuring regular schedules while in the new culture also helps to establish regularity.<sup>77</sup>

In addition to the normal culture shock experienced by people spending time in a foreign culture, there may be a religious culture shock for someone who converts to Christianity during their time away from home.<sup>78</sup> Returning home with their newfound Christian perspective will cause them to look at their culture in a new light. They will need Christian support in a time when their family and friends may be unenthusiastic or even offended over their newfound beliefs.<sup>79</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Tom Trapp shares his experience, "Most of the volunteers are from local churches. We sent out bulletin flyers for ESL teachers and people liked doing it. For VBS I would call people who I knew were good teachers and they loved teaching children from all around the world."

<sup>77</sup> Tom Phillips, Bob Norsworthy, and W Terry Whalin, *The World at Your Door: Reaching International Students in Your Home, Church, and School* (Bloomington, Minn: Bethany House Pub, 1997). p.177.

<sup>78</sup> Such religious culture shock may apply apart from conversion to simply observing Christianity and finding it different than expected. "I've noticed differences between Christianity and the religion of my home country. In my country the average age of people who believe in Buddhism is 40 or 50 and here there are so many young people who believe in Christianity and who go to church every week, even small kids. Also the people who serve in the church are very young people, but in my country it is only old people. The people here who serve in the church have a lot of education and training for it but in my country they do not have much training. Here when you decided to commit to a Christian it is a kind of a job and you don't need to give up your normal life but in my country when they decided to serve the Buddhist temple they have to give up everything in their life. They give up their family and they live at the temple. They have very strict regulations." – Phuong, interview.

<sup>79</sup> When ministers travel abroad themselves, it provides experiential knowledge of culture shock which may serve to motivate one to look for ways to help others dealing with culture shock. "Traveling abroad I had the sensation of really being isolated in a place where you didn't know a thing. The foods were so different. I remember how totally foreign I felt and it's easy to feel lost and alone. So now I guess it's a little easier to relate in reverse and to know that someone needs to smile at them and see what we can talk about. It's just overwhelming to your senses how different things are." – Koelpin, interview.

### ***5.3 Learning a Biblical Worldview***

Apart from reverse culture shock, becoming a Christian in itself implies a type of culture shock. Becoming a Christian challenges one to look at the world differently. As a Christian you are now a stranger and foreigner in this world. Your greatest goal in life shifts from career and financial achievements to life with God now and in heaven. Your self-worth and morals now have a different source than your own feelings and logic alone. Yet it would be naïve to think that there is a moment in time when all of these changes click at once. While conversion does happen at a moment in time, a host of worldview changes that come with being a Christian take time to develop. While a person's status before God and their connection to the benefits of Jesus' life may be sure and certain the moment they believe, their ability to see the world as God would have them see it is a process and will remain so for all believers until they reach heaven. This conversion of worldview happens with all new converts, but it may be even more difficult to offer encouragement and advice when dealing with a member of a different culture.

Anthropologist Paul Hiebert explains the tension between conversion and worldview transformation.

“Can someone become a Christian after hearing the gospel only once? Our answer can only be yes. If a person must be educated, have an extensive knowledge of the Bible, or live a good life, the good news is only for a few. But what essential change takes place when someone responds to the gospel message with simple faith? Certainly they have acquired some new information. Moreover, what they know is shaped by their cultural beliefs. If we accept them as a believer are we opening the door for ‘cheap grace,’ syncretism, and a nominal church? If we tell him to wait and learn more, we drive him away. What must take place for a conversion to be genuine?”<sup>80</sup>

Hiebert brings up some practical points to ponder for anyone ministering to international students. Genuine conversion is always the work of the Holy Spirit through the means of grace. Yet conversion may not always be easy to spot in international students whose expressions of faith may look different than an American is used to. A new international convert's expression of faith will be colored by their cultural background. Introducing someone to certain aspects of a biblical worldview may violate their worldview in ways that you couldn't have anticipated. Hiebert gives an example, “Seeing the world as an interaction between the creator and the

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<sup>80</sup> Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*. p.10.

created radically shifts the way you view the material of this world. If God made everything, then everything is marvelous and has a purpose. If he created everything, then everything depends on him for its continued providence.”<sup>81</sup> This may mark a significant shift from a worldview that saw the material of this world in an evolutionary framework. It may take a while for all the implications to be worked out in a new convert’s mind and heart.

The challenging shift in worldview that an international student’s newfound faith causes may pertain to something as foundational as conversion itself. “The challenge with some international students is getting them to understand that baptism is a means of grace and not a graduation ceremony. You can talk to some of them and ask them if they are a Christian and they say, ‘No, I don’t think I’ve gotten to that point yet.’ I’ve talked to some people and I’ve said, ‘You know you say you’re not a Christian yet, but you are.’”<sup>82</sup> A Christian worldview may also challenge their conception of what landed them in America. “They know they’re lucky to be here and they know that’s a blessing, and I tell them that God arranged that. They start to understand that it’s not their good luck, it’s not their fortune, it’s not their brains; it’s God giving things to them. That’s an important transition to make, and if you can’t make that one then it’s pretty hard to be a Christian.”<sup>83</sup>

Providing on-going support touches a need for all new converts. The prince of this world will not stand by idly as the seed of God’s Word is sown in someone’s heart. He will work hard to pluck and to choke out that seed before it grows. The motivation to find ways to establish long-term relationships recognizes that conversion is generally followed by a period of evaluation, whether conscious or unconscious, during which the new way of life is critically examined and parts of it are adapted or abandoned.<sup>84</sup> Our goal in these relationships is not to make people walk and talk like we do, but to provide support for the spiritual battle that will ensue.

This spiritual battle will not neatly compartmentalize itself into a self-contained portion of any Christian’s life, nor will the powerful effects of the gospel. “The truth of the gospel is vitally related to all spheres and problems of life, the most common and trivial as well as the

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<sup>81</sup> Ibid. p.269.

<sup>82</sup> Eckert, interview.

<sup>83</sup> Larson, interview.

<sup>84</sup> Hiebert, *Transforming Worldviews*. p.313.

most elevated.”<sup>85</sup> Helping international students work through everyday theological issues is not just a chance to show unconditional love and kindness, but to show them the all-encompassing effect that Christ's love has on their life.

On an individual basis, this means finding ways to interact with international students repeatedly. Letting them know that you're spiritually concerned for them opens the door for them to communicate spiritual needs. Praying for them and letting them know about these prayers is a powerful way to communicate your care.<sup>86</sup> Encouraging godparent relationships is a practical way to provide spiritual support for the newly baptized.<sup>87</sup> Social media and email are easy yet often neglected ways of staying in touch once new converts move on. Finally the goal must be finding as many ways as possible to connect international students to God's Word which will grow and protect their faith, whether it be in a formal or informal setting, in person or through electronic communication.<sup>88</sup>

One way to foster long-term relationships in a programmatic way is to integrate the international student community into the decision making and purpose setting process of the international campus ministry. “In order to acquire knowledge and skills, learners must move from legitimate peripheral participation towards full participation in the social and cultural practices in a community.”<sup>89</sup> Participation helps the international students to make the ministry

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<sup>85</sup> Goheen, *A Light to the Nations*. p.216.

<sup>86</sup> “Can you imagine no one ever praying for you for your entire life and now there's someone praying for you often? Their hearts are softened by that.” Larson, interview.

<sup>87</sup> “If they are new Christians you need to let them know that even though they aren't children they should have godparents. I advise them on how to do that.” Koelpin, interview.

<sup>88</sup> Paul and Charis Salem, international student outreach coordinators, provide a few examples of strategies that may be useful for providing individual care. “In our situation (where almost everyone was still a seeker), the first method, which involved a Bible study with only one or, at most, two Americans guiding it, created a situation more conducive to genuine seeking. Students could freely ask questions without feeling like they were somehow “behind” the rest of the group. They could be skeptical without feeling the pressure to assent to things they had not heard of until recently. With this first method, how the group interacts and relates to one other will hopefully shape itself around the culture of those students. The second way to help guide a group is what has been called *shadow pastoring*. This removes the American completely from the group, thus allowing some of the cultural elements to form in a way that is most natural. The role of the American is to invest in a few of the students outside the group gathering. Those students can then lead the group through what they are learning and practicing with the American.” - Paul Salem and Charis Salem, “Welcoming International Students Strategically,” *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* 45, no. 2 (April 1, 2009): 206–211.

<sup>89</sup> Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger, *Situated Learning: Legitimate Peripheral Participation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). p.29.



their own.<sup>90</sup> Appropriate ways to integrate international students will vary from place to place, but allowing them a seat at the table will let them know that their opinions and ideas matter to the campus ministry program.

Whether an international campus ministry reaches one lost soul or a hundred, the angels of God rejoice in heaven. Yet campus ministries which have found significant long-term success have found word of mouth among international students to be the most significant factor of their success. Maintaining a positive long-term relationship with the international student community at large will not always produce numerical results, but will show a dedication to the international students. Providing quality services that reach known needs of the international student community allows the students to see your concern. Word of mouth is the fruit of years of careful labor, and often leads to international students inviting others. “Americans can invite internationals all they want, and they’ll get some. But if you find someone who’s an international student inviting others you’ll get a whole lot more. It’s not the pastor and the evangelism committee, it’s the friendship of internationals to internationals that really works.”<sup>91</sup>

## **6. Walking in Step with International Brothers and Sisters in Christ: A Rewarding Endeavor**

In this paper, I have sought to face with honesty some of the challenges an American faces in reaching out to international college students. Yet in doing so I have discovered opportunities among the challenges. Such opportunities rarely present themselves without some confusion and difficulty remaining. But it is within the interaction among culturally diverse people, which at times can be a struggle, that gospel witness is still able to take place and to flourish. “Understanding what the international experience is like should not be looked at as a polarization of international and home or of self versus other, but instead as a complex set of struggle, tension, and conflict. Yet this ‘troublesome space’ in which intercultural interaction takes place should not be seen as problematic but as useful and transformative.”<sup>92</sup> God does not change human hearts from unbelief to trust in him in a vacuum. He uses the means he has

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<sup>90</sup> Jane-Frances Lobnibe, “International Students and the Politics of Difference in US Higher Education,” *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies (JCEPS)* 7, no. 2 (November 2009): 346–368. p.20.

<sup>91</sup> Eckert, interview.

<sup>92</sup> Alice Pierce, “What Does It Mean to Live In-between?” (presented at the 4th Annual IALIC Conference, Lancaster University, 2003).

determined, his Word, within the framework of a person's life circumstances. God uses the 'troublesome space' of this world to transform all who have become and who remain Christians. The international student is no exception to God's usual way of interacting with people.

We are not to ignore the things that make us different from others, but celebrate that in Christ such differences find unity. Paul once wrote to a group of Christians in Ephesus who were dealing with the difficult question of how to navigate through a cultural divergence among multiple cultural groups who were new Christians. He builds his urge to unity on the premise that apart from the grace of Christ we all would be excluded from the body of believers.

"Remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility" (Ephesians 2:12-16).

As Christian individuals and campus ministries endeavor to minister to international students, they will face challenges, but will also discover that they will be encouraged and gain insights they couldn't have anticipated. It may be easy for the American minister to think of all that they have to offer the international student, but as they endeavor to connect themselves and their Savior to international students, they will undoubtedly find that they are receiving far more than they are giving. "It's not always the case that the international students have much to gain from the home students, they can do just fine without them in some cases. Rather often the home students have much to gain by getting to know the international students."<sup>93</sup>

We all have benefited from the Christian witnesses God has placed into our lives to teach us and show us the love of Christ for us. Ministry to international students is our chance to do the same for others. "Their needs are just to have someone that cares. The campus ministry is a place for them to go where they know the people care. A relationship with them that is based on our common faith will provide opportunities for a long-lasting relationship. Once they're gone, I miss them dearly. All I can really do then is pray for them."<sup>94</sup> May God give us hearts that see

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<sup>93</sup> Montgomery, *Understanding the International Student Experience*. p.113.

<sup>94</sup> Koelpin, interview.

our common need and our common Savior so that we might share his love with international students finding opportunities amid all challenges that come our way.

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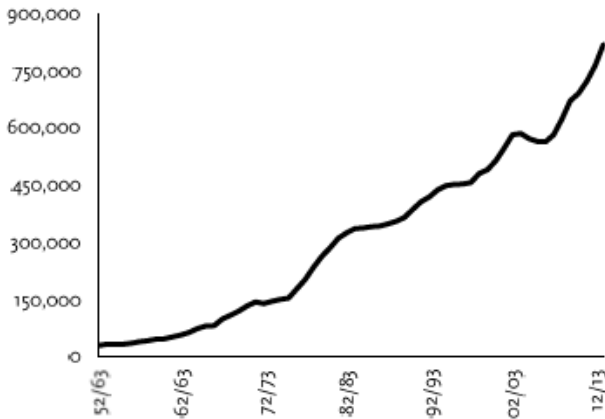
## Appendix A: Open Doors 2013 Fast Facts Report

### A. NEW INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ENROLLMENT

New international student enrollment – students enrolling for the first time at a U.S. institution in fall 2012 – increased 9.8% over the previous year.	Year	Total	% Change
	2007/08	173,121	10.1
	2008/09	200,460	15.8
	2009/10	202,970	1.3
	2010/11	214,490	5.7
	2011/12	228,467	6.5
	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>250,920</b>	<b>9.8</b>

### B. INTERNATIONAL STUDENT TRENDS

In 2012/13, the number of international students in the U.S. increased 7.2% to a record high of 819,644 students.



Year	Total Int'l	% Change	U.S. Higher Ed Total*	% Int'l
2001/02	582,996	6.4	15,928,000	3.7
2002/03	586,323	0.6	16,612,000	3.5
2003/04	572,509	-2.4	16,911,000	3.4
2004/05	565,039	-1.3	17,272,000	3.3
2005/06	564,766	-0.05	17,487,000	3.2
2006/07	582,984	3.2	17,672,000	3.3
2007/08	623,805	7.0	17,958,000	3.5
2008/09	671,616	7.7	18,264,000	3.7
2009/10	690,923	2.9	20,428,000	3.4
2010/11	723,277	4.7	20,550,000	3.5
2011/12	764,495	5.7	20,625,000	3.7
<b>2012/13</b>	<b>819,644</b>	<b>7.2</b>	<b>21,253,000</b>	<b>3.9</b>

\* Data from the National Center for Education Statistics

### C. TOP PLACES OF ORIGIN of International Students

Rank	Place of Origin	2011/12	2012/13	% of Total	% Change
	<b>WORLD TOTAL</b>	<b>764,495</b>	<b>819,644</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>7.2</b>
1	China	194,029	235,597	28.7	21.4
2	India	100,270	96,754	11.8	-3.5
3	South Korea	72,295	70,627	8.6	-2.3
4	Saudi Arabia	34,139	44,566	5.4	30.5
5	Canada	26,821	27,357	3.3	2.0
6	Taiwan	23,250	21,867	2.7	-5.9
7	Japan	19,966	19,568	2.4	-2.0
8	Vietnam	15,572	16,098	2.0	3.4
9	Mexico	13,893	14,199	1.7	2.2
10	Turkey	11,973	11,278	1.4	-5.8
11	Brazil	9,029	10,868	1.3	20.4
12	Germany	9,347	9,819	1.2	5.0
13	United Kingdom	9,186	9,467	1.2	3.1
14	Nepal	9,621	8,920	1.1	-7.3
15	Iran	6,982	8,744	1.1	25.2
16	France	8,232	8,297	1.0	0.8
17	Hong Kong	8,032	8,026	1.0	-0.1
18	Indonesia	7,131	7,670	0.9	7.6
19	Nigeria	7,028	7,316	0.9	4.1
20	Thailand	7,626	7,314	0.9	-4.1
21	Malaysia	6,743	6,791	0.8	0.7
22	Colombia	6,295	6,543	0.8	3.9
23	Venezuela	6,281	6,158	0.8	-2.0
24	Kuwait	3,722	5,115	0.6	37.4
25	Spain	4,924	5,033	0.6	2.2

### D. ACADEMIC LEVEL TRENDS of International Students

Year	Undergrad	% Change	Graduate	% Change	Non-degree	% Change
2001/02	261,079	2.6	264,749	11.0	34,423	1.6
2002/03	260,103	-0.4	267,876	1.2	30,551	-11.2
2003/04	248,200	-4.6	274,310	2.4	20,659	-32.4
2004/05	239,212	-3.6	264,410	-3.6	28,418	37.6
2005/06	236,342	-1.2	259,717	-1.8	30,611	7.7
2006/07	238,050	0.7	264,288	1.8	38,986	27.4
2007/08	243,360	2.2	276,842	4.8	46,837	20.1
2008/09	269,874	10.9	283,329	2.3	51,812	10.6
2009/10	274,431	1.7	293,885	3.7	54,803	5.8
2010/11	291,439	6.2	296,574	0.9	59,233	8.1
2011/12	309,342	6.1	300,430	1.3	69,566	17.4
<b>2012/13</b>	<b>339,993</b>	<b>9.9</b>	<b>311,204</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>73,528</b>	<b>5.7</b>

**E. TOP U.S. INSTITUTIONS** Hosting International Students, 2012/13

Rank	Institution	City	State	Total Int'l Students
1	University of Southern California	Los Angeles	CA	9,840
2	University of Illinois - Urbana-Champaign	Champaign	IL	9,804
3	Purdue University - Main Campus	West Lafayette	IN	9,509
4	New York University	New York	NY	9,362
5	Columbia University	New York	NY	8,797
6	University of California - Los Angeles	Los Angeles	CA	8,424
7	Northeastern University	Boston	MA	7,705
8	University of Michigan - Ann Arbor	Ann Arbor	MI	6,827
9	Michigan State University	East Lansing	MI	6,759
10	Penn State University - University Park	University Park	PA	6,693
11	Arizona State University	Tempe	AZ	6,645
12	Boston University	Boston	MA	6,615
13	Indiana University - Bloomington	Bloomington	IN	6,547
14	University of Washington	Seattle	WA	6,491
15	Ohio State University - Main Campus	Columbus	OH	6,478
16	University of Minnesota - Twin Cities	Minneapolis	MN	6,178
17	University of Florida	Gainesville	FL	5,961
18	SUNY University at Buffalo	Buffalo	NY	5,804
19	University of Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	PA	5,751
20	University of California - Berkeley	Berkeley	CA	5,632

**F. TOP U.S. STATES** Hosting International Students

Rank	State	2011/12	2012/13	% Change
1	California	102,789	111,379	8.4
2	New York	82,436	88,250	7.1
3	Texas	61,511	62,923	2.3
4	Massachusetts	41,258	46,486	12.7
5	Illinois	35,920	39,132	8.9
6	Pennsylvania	33,398	37,280	11.6
7	Florida	32,567	32,746	0.5
8	Ohio	26,427	28,401	7.5
9	Michigan	25,551	26,930	5.4
10	Indiana	22,194	24,408	10.0

The Institute of International Education (IIE) has conducted an annual census of international students in the U.S. since its founding in 1919. Known as the *Open Doors Report* since 1954, and supported by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs of the U.S. Department of State since 1972, the report provides detailed data on student flows into and out of the U.S. Visit us online at: <http://www.iie.org/opendoors>.

## Appendix B

### **The Economic Benefits of International Students to the U.S. Economy Contributed \$24 billion in 2012-2013; Supports 313,000 jobs**

International students contribute academic value to U.S. colleges and universities as well as cultural value to local communities. International students also make a significant contribution to the U.S. economy. During the 2012-2013 academic year, NAFSA: Association of International Educators estimates that international students and their dependents contributed \$24 billion to the U.S. economy. NAFSA's economic analysis also shows that nearly 313,000 jobs are supported or generated as a result of international student spending on tuition and living expenses while in the United States. This means that for every 7 international students enrolled, 3 U.S. jobs are created or supported by spending occurring in the following sectors: higher education, accommodation, dining, retail, transportation, telecommunications, and health insurance.

Overall analysis of the economic contributions is conducted for NAFSA by Jason Baumgartner, director for information services at Indiana University – Bloomington's Office of International Services. The dollar amounts are calculated using:

- International student enrollment figures from the Institute of International Education *Open Doors 2013* report, produced in partnership with the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs;
- College and university tuition data from the U.S. Department of Education's National Center of Educational Statistics Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, plus living expenses derived from these figures.

The number of jobs created/supported is calculated using the above data combined with data and research findings from:

- The U.S. Department of Commerce's International Trade Administration and Bureau of Economic Analysis, and
- Dr. Enrico Moretti, a professor of economics at the University of California, Berkeley, who discusses an extended multiplier effect in innovation sectors in his book, *The New Geography of Jobs* (2012).

Access <http://www.nafsa.org/economicvalue> for a more in-depth discussion of the research methodology, and to use NAFSA's new interactive "International Student Economic Value Tool", which highlights ten-year trends and data broken down by region, state, and congressional district. By any measure, international education makes a significant contribution.



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## United States of America

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<b><i>Total Number of Foreign Students:</i></b>	<b><i>819,644</i></b>
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### Part 1: Net Contribution to U.S. Economy by Foreign Students (2012-13)

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Contribution from Tuition and Fees to U.S. Economy:	\$17,685,000,000
Contribution from Living Expenses:	\$14,687,000,000
Total Contribution by Foreign Students:	\$32,372,000,000
Less U.S. Support of 27.2%	- \$8,811,000,000
Plus Dependents' Living Expenses:	+ \$393,000,000

<b><i>Net Contribution to U.S. Economy by Foreign Students and their Families:</i></b>	<b><i>\$23,954,000,000</i></b>
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### Part 2: Contribution to U.S. Economy by Foreign Students' Dependents (2012-13)

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<i>Spouses' Contribution</i>		<i>Children's Contribution</i>	
Percent of Married Students:	7.3%	Number of Couples in the U.S.:	59,736
Percent of Spouses in the U.S.:	85.0%	Number of Children per Couple:	0.6
Number of Spouses in the U.S.:	59,736	Number of Children in the U.S.:	35,717
Additional Expenses for a Spouse: (% of student living expenses)	25.0%	Additional Expenses for a Child: (% of student living expenses)	20.0%
Spouses' Contribution:	\$266,000,000	Children's Contribution:	\$127,000,000

<b><i>Net Contribution to U.S. Economy by Foreign Students' Dependents:</i></b>	<b><i>\$393,000,000</i></b>
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### Part 3: Net Jobs Created/Supported by Foreign Students and their Families (2012-13)

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Jobs Directly Created/Supported:	114,614
Jobs Indirectly Created/Supported:	198,361

<b><i>Net Jobs Created/Supported in the State Economy by Foreign Students and their Families:</i></b>	<b><i>312,975</i></b>
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## Part 4: Financial Contribution and Jobs Created/Supported by State (2012-13)

State	# of Foreign Students	Tuition and Fees (millions)	Living Expenses and Dependents (millions)	Less U.S. Support (millions)	Total Contribution (millions)	# of Jobs Created/Supported
Alabama	7,108	\$125.3	\$101.0	\$62.1	\$164.1	1,931
Alaska	648	\$11.3	\$10.4	\$4.8	\$16.8	147
Arizona	13,307	\$282.6	\$224.8	\$139.5	\$367.9	5,459
Arkansas	5,030	\$73.8	\$82.4	\$28.9	\$127.2	1,195
California	111,250	\$2,242.2	\$2,397.2	\$1,044.2	\$3,595.2	43,020
Colorado	8,975	\$210.7	\$176.7	\$106.4	\$281.0	4,210
Connecticut	9,955	\$257.5	\$204.9	\$124.4	\$338.0	3,861
Delaware	4,343	\$96.7	\$70.3	\$45.5	\$121.5	1,766
District of Columbia	9,237	\$274.6	\$229.3	\$165.4	\$338.4	4,042
Florida	32,817	\$686.1	\$603.2	\$344.2	\$945.0	12,867
Georgia	16,661	\$399.6	\$291.6	\$190.2	\$501.0	7,239
Hawaii	4,413	\$62.8	\$77.3	\$31.5	\$108.6	1,027
Idaho	3,261	\$45.6	\$44.6	\$18.2	\$72.0	711
Illinois	39,047	\$917.6	\$705.2	\$524.1	\$1,098.7	17,231
Indiana	24,389	\$628.2	\$419.1	\$272.1	\$775.2	11,122
Iowa	11,563	\$240.6	\$178.4	\$93.8	\$325.2	3,421
Kansas	9,597	\$141.0	\$133.2	\$63.6	\$210.6	2,351
Kentucky	6,378	\$113.8	\$91.8	\$47.0	\$158.6	1,508
Louisiana	7,717	\$137.6	\$110.3	\$71.9	\$175.9	2,338
Maine	1,405	\$35.2	\$24.4	\$13.2	\$46.4	458
Maryland	15,525	\$348.2	\$323.4	\$208.6	\$462.9	6,123
Massachusetts	46,478	\$1,426.9	\$1,024.6	\$736.4	\$1,715.1	24,288
Michigan	26,926	\$704.3	\$448.2	\$329.6	\$822.9	11,612
Minnesota	13,254	\$238.1	\$203.0	\$108.8	\$332.2	3,633
Mississippi	2,705	\$34.5	\$36.9	\$20.8	\$50.6	577
Missouri	17,279	\$332.1	\$279.5	\$159.4	\$452.1	5,732
Montana	1,611	\$27.7	\$23.9	\$9.5	\$42.1	497
Nebraska	5,143	\$74.9	\$70.9	\$34.9	\$110.8	1,234
Nevada	2,362	\$35.9	\$41.7	\$16.6	\$61.0	773
New Hampshire	3,101	\$84.8	\$57.5	\$38.6	\$103.8	1,423
New Jersey	15,634	\$352.2	\$319.4	\$209.9	\$461.7	6,091
New Mexico	3,555	\$53.5	\$55.0	\$27.1	\$81.4	909
New York	88,219	\$2,106.6	\$1,878.9	\$1,164.0	\$2,821.5	35,211
North Carolina	15,015	\$325.6	\$246.7	\$187.0	\$385.3	5,561
North Dakota	3,093	\$42.2	\$41.0	\$21.1	\$62.0	642
Ohio	28,373	\$586.8	\$478.8	\$293.1	\$772.5	10,908
Oklahoma	9,059	\$143.2	\$139.8	\$67.1	\$215.9	2,440
Oregon	11,682	\$241.7	\$218.9	\$85.6	\$375.0	4,577
Pennsylvania	37,245	\$1,014.1	\$710.0	\$510.4	\$1,213.7	18,963
Puerto Rico	943	\$6.0	\$12.6	\$4.6	\$14.0	0
Rhode Island	5,272	\$150.7	\$101.2	\$55.0	\$196.9	2,232
South Carolina	5,083	\$102.6	\$80.4	\$58.0	\$125.1	1,473

South Dakota	1,504	\$19.5	\$16.9	\$9.8	\$26.6	214
Tennessee	7,323	\$170.5	\$122.1	\$71.6	\$220.9	3,028
Texas	62,901	\$911.1	\$993.1	\$523.7	\$1,380.4	18,305
Utah	8,311	\$117.7	\$116.6	\$50.3	\$183.9	2,478
Vermont	1,214	\$38.6	\$20.8	\$13.2	\$46.2	451
Virgin Islands	101	\$1.3	\$1.9	\$0.7	\$2.5	0
Virginia	16,507	\$351.5	\$252.6	\$147.7	\$456.4	6,357
Washington	22,896	\$384.2	\$385.0	\$126.2	\$643.0	6,736
West Virginia	2,685	\$42.5	\$39.4	\$22.3	\$59.6	639
Wisconsin	10,437	\$221.1	\$147.3	\$100.2	\$268.2	3,761
Wyoming	1,107	\$11.6	\$16.6	\$7.9	\$20.3	203

## **Appendix C: Explanation of Interviews and Interviewees**

In my research I sought to maintain balance between the perspectives of the international student and the person ministering to them. In order to get first hand perspectives of the opportunities amid challenges I conducted interviews both over the phone and via email. The phone interviews generally lasted 30-45 minutes. The email interview consisted of a two page questionnaire. I interviewed five international students, two undergraduate and three graduate students. Two of these students were married with children and three were single. The students are from the countries of China, India, and Vietnam. I also interviewed four campus ministry staff members. Of these staff members two worked full-time in campus ministry and two were parish pastors who also worked part-time in campus ministry. I also interviewed two university staff members who worked directly with international students, of whom one was retired and the other was currently working in this capacity. The universities primarily represented by the people I interviewed are Michigan Technological University, Texas A&M University, University of Minnesota: Twin Cities, University of Wisconsin-Madison, and Wisconsin Lutheran College.

All interviewees who are quoted in my paper gave their consent to their names being included. My sincere thanks to all who provided valuable insights for my project.

## Appendix D: Example of ESL Program

The following is an example of the variety of ESL services provided by Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel. Information provided by Cari Larson.

**True Beginners** - (maximum of 12 students) Reading some English but not speaking any English; meets twice a week. Must purchase book.

**Advanced Beginners** - (maximum of 15 students) Reading and speaking some English; meets twice a week. Must purchase book.

**Intermediate** - (Maximum of 20 students) Reading English and focusing on conversation practice; meets three times a week. Must purchase book.

**Advanced** – (Maximum of 22 students) Students are comfortable with English and interested in learning more about America, Wisconsin culture, Madison and the University of Wisconsin. Newspapers are the textbook. Meets twice a week. Newspaper fee may be charged.

**American Music** - Meets once a week. Must purchase book.

**Thursday Evening Discussion Session** - No class size limits or book fees.

**Saturday for Kids Program** – Once a month. All children who attend our program receive a “Read to Me Children’s Bible” for free.

The two primary sources for ESL books we use are *ALTA Book Publishers* and *New Readers’ Press*; both have catalogues of workbooks and are also available online. They have a variety of topics and varying levels of teaching; we do have our students pay for their books. Sometimes they complain that a book is \$15 and I say how much was your plane ticket here? How many free Chinese classes are available to me in China? None. Paying a little for a book results in better attendance as well which can be a problem with a “free” class.

We give away free bi-lingual Bibles which can be very pricey so we limit those to students who attend our Bible studies.

We also pass out copies of different Multi-Language Publications Bible Study Series and “The Bible Story in Pictures.”

## **Appendix E: Example of Post Event Follow Up**

This example of an approach to follow up special event is provided by Tom Trapp, campus ministry pastor at Wisconsin Lutheran Chapel.

1. We send post cards thanking them and telling them about the next upcoming event
2. We place phone calls to specific people who indicated spiritual interest.
3. We enter all names and addresses into our database in order to invite them to future events (e.g. International Vacation Bible School, Saturday for Kids...they include adults as well as children's Bible studies).