

# ***WELCOMER***

## **Reaching the World On American Colleges and Universities**

Never in the history of the Church has a generation of Christians had a greater opportunity to reach the world than we have in America today!

America hosts the largest number of internationals of any country. Over 550,000 international students and scholars are studying here from 188 countries of the world.

International students must speak English before they begin their studies. They represent the brightest and most affluent people from their countries. Over 60% of these internationals are from the least evangelized countries of the world. Most of them desire to make American friends while they are still here and to understand U.S. culture. Most international students will return home when they graduate and excel in business, military, science and education. They will not need to learn the language or culture. They will not need a passport. As Christians, they can be missionaries in their own home lands.

## ***Tips on Building International Friendships***

### **Where to find International Students:**

- Attend international student groups. Usually there is one main group and often there are particular groups such as the India Club.
- At the first of the year, you can meet new international students as they arrive by bus, train, or plane. Offer your assistance to programs already going on campus which help international students get oriented.
- Show them around campus
- Help them find a residence and map out courses for registration. Explain some of the peculiar customs and traditions of your school and of American culture in general.

### **Initiating Friendships**

- Learn their full names correctly. It may be hard to say, and they may laugh while you struggle to say their name, but they will appreciate your effort.
- Do some research on your own about their country, religion, and customs. Then ask them to share their views on these subjects. Let them talk about their country.
- Don't be interested in them just to preach to them. If you do not intend to care about them as a total person, it might be best not to initiate the friendship.
- Since friendship expectations by most internationals are high, and you have only so much time to give, a few close personal relationships with internationals will accomplish more in the long run.

### **Building the Relationship**

- Study together. They may welcome help with English, with understanding various technical terms, or just making sense of their notes and assignments.
- Take your international friend home over the holidays or vacations.

- Bring them to retreats.

### **Sharing the Gospel**

- Share the gospel while growing into friendship. The best way to communicate religious truth to international students is by letting it be a natural part of a personal relationship over a period of time.
- Internationals often want to see the practical application of Christianity to daily life.
- Often they lack knowledge about the scriptures and biblical terms. You'll need to take time to clarify what the gospel really means.

### **Group Involvement**

- Sponsor parties aimed at meeting internationals. Use these as opportunities to begin friendships
- Dinners are a great time to begin and build friendships
- A progressive dinner could be held in the homes of various Christians from local churches who are interested in befriending students.
- You might also sponsor a dinner in which your fellowship buys the food and some internationals from one or two countries work together with your members to teach them how to prepare a meal from their country.

## ***CONCLUSION***

Here you have the four roles of a World Christian: goer, sender, welcomer, and mobilizer. But which one is **your** role? Let us help you gain a proper perspective on where you fit in.

A common misconception is that God's predestined plan for you is to serve in one of these positions for the rest of your life. *It's not.* You will notice (if you haven't already) that there will be particular seasons in your life when you serve in different areas. Take your college years as an example. There are many Christians on your campus that are unaware of God's heart for the world. What a great opportunity for you to reach out and mobilize them to become World Christians. Also on most campuses there is a healthy number of internationals. Be a welcomer to them. You may have the option someday of spending your summer serving overseas. Take that time and be a goer! And why not mobilize your friends to come along. Perhaps you will see a time of increased income. It would seem natural for you to assume the sender role at that time. Do you see how the question of the roles is not an "either...or," but "what am I capable of doing now?" The point is that throughout the many phases and changes you will experience in your college career and future life you will most likely cover all four areas.

One area that should remain consistent, however, is mobilization. Mobilization is something you can always do. Isn't it possible to share your overseas experience with your friends? Or to help someone grow in their ability to send? Can't you always take a friend with you to meet internationals? Even when you are a missionary you are responsible for mobilizing the new converts to "Go ye."

Mobilization is the underlying responsibility of each role. Always giving God's trumpet call for His heart for the world.