

BIBLICAL REASONS TO REACH INTERNATIONALS

Even though international students are not mentioned specifically in the Bible, there are at least four Biblical reasons to reach out to them with the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ.

God's heart is to bring the knowledge of Himself to all people. This is a theme throughout the Bible.

- The Old Testament. It was never God's intention that Israel would keep hidden the blessing of knowing the one true God. "Blessed to be a blessing" (Genesis 12:1-3), God told Abram that "all peoples will be blessed through you."
- The New Testament. Jesus commanded us to make disciples of all nations. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8) The plan is the same today – God desires to bless all the nations of the world by bringing the gospel message to all 'the peoples' of the world.
- Throughout the whole of Scripture we see God's desire for all the peoples of the world to know Him and serve Him: Genesis 18:18; 22:17,18; 2 Chronicles 6:32,33; Psalm 67, 96; Isaiah 49:6; Acts 1:8; Romans 15:8-24; Ephesians 3:1-6; Revelation 5:9; 7:9.

One example of this are international students. On any given campus international students represent many different nations. If international students can be effectively trained and disciplined, they have the potential to take the gospel back to their own countries where they can make disciples among their own people. Knowing the language and culture of their home nations can make international students especially effective in ministry.

We are commanded to love our neighbor. Anyone in need, regardless of his or her ethnic, cultural, or religious differences, is your neighbor.

- When asked, "Who is my neighbor?" Jesus told the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37).
- By giving tangible help to internationals– help with housing, furniture, language, transportation, overall friendship, etc.– we are showing Christ's love in a way that pleases our Lord and validates our faith.

We are told to welcome the "stranger" and the "alien" in our land.

- “The alien living with you must be treated as one of your native born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:33,34 (also see Deuteronomy 10:17-19; 16:10,11, 14; 31:12)
- “Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.” Hebrews 13:2
- Today, international students are “the aliens” and “strangers” on the college campus.

There is only one Savior for all mankind.

- “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” Acts 4:12
- If an international student gains a degree from an American university, and even lands a terrific job, he or she has attained a lot from the world’s perspective, but without Christ, the person is still lost for eternity.
- By taking the time to share the good news of the gospel with our international friends we are giving them the opportunity to know the God we love and serve.

Internationals are not tourists or privileged visitors. They are men and women who have often come from a distant land with few resources, no friends, and a fair amount of anxiety about what the future will hold for them. They are often lonely, vulnerable, and very much in need of friends. By showing loving concern for international students, we are expressing in a tangible way the heart of God to them.