A BRIEF HISTORY OF STUDENTS IN MISSION

1517 – Martin Luther
Europe - Reformation
1517 – is converted by the “gospel of grace” and preaches the teaching of justification by faith to his students at Wittenberg university, Germany. The gospel of Jesus begins to spread throughout universities in Europe.

1520s – Thomas Ridley secretly gathers students from Cambridge University at the White Horse Inn to read the New Testament and Luther’s writings.
1520-30s – John Calvin is converted at Orleans university, France. He writes his hugely influential “Institutes”, and sets up the Geneva Academy, training and sending out missionary pastors into Europe (including John Knox to Scotland).

1520-30s – Three German law students sail for Africa with the gospel, including Peter Heiling who spends 20 years in Abyssinia translating the Bible before being martyred.

1576 – Melas Ludwig Von Zinzendorf establishes regular prayer meetings for overseas mission at Wittenberg in Germany and Utrecht university in Holland.
1732 – Zinzendorf commences the Moravian missionary movement by sending two missionaries to the West Indies.

1806 – Samuel Mills and four other students at Williams College commit their lives to foreign missionary service at the Haystack prayer meeting. This moment is often considered the birth of the American foreign missionary movement.
1808 – The Society of the Brethren is founded at Williams College with the aim of taking the gospel through the world.
1810 – The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Mission is founded at the instigation of Mills (along with other students).
1811 – The first American foreign missionaries (including Adoniram Judson) are sent to join William Carey in India.

1811 – Charles Simeon establishes the British and Foreign Bible Society at Cambridge.

1885 – The seven sail for China, followed by many other students who caught their vision for global mission.

1910 – SVF becomes the Inter-Varsity Foreign Missions Fellowship (SVM)

1928 – The Student Volunteer Movement was formed.

1947 – The International Fellowship of Evangelical Students (IFES) was formed with 9 national movements as its founding members: Australia, Canada, China, France, Great Britain, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland & the USA.

1948–2007 – Indigenous IFES student movements are founded in almost 160 countries throughout the world: Africa, the Middle East, the South Pacific, Asia, Eurasia, Europe, North and South America. However, to date, 17 countries still do not have an IFES presence.

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IFES movements in Taiwan, Korea, Brazil, Mexico, Nigeria, Kenya and India hold regular mission conventions.