



billy graham center centerline

Fall 2004

News from the **Billy Graham Center** at Wheaton College, Wheaton, Ill.

Lausanne 2004

Rekindling the Passion for Evangelism in a Changing World

Dotsey Welliver

Increasing Third-World debt, AIDS, Postmodernism, sexual immorality, the growth of the Internet, increasing tribal conflict, displaced people and fractured families—all are growing global concerns which can lead the evangelist or missionary—indeed, the common man—to feeling overwhelmed and helpless.

Is the Gospel of Jesus Christ still relevant today? Can it provide answers to these growing concerns?

Some 1,500 world evangelism leaders from more than 115 countries recently decided to explore such questions and seek resolutions. The 2004 Lausanne Conference on World Evangelism (LCWE) convened in September in Pattaya, Thailand, to consider how to more effectively spread the gospel to the ends of the earth and how to apply its life-changing power.

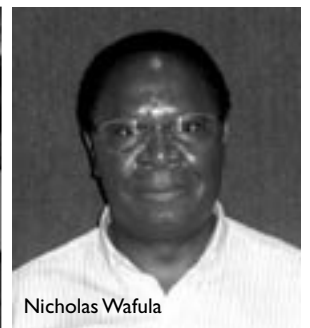
One of the leaders, Nicholas Wafula, director of Development Associates In-



Lisa Nagle



John Ng



Nicholas Wafula

ternational in Uganda and co-founder of the Deliverance Church in that nation, traveled thousands of miles to attend the conference.

Wafula's desire to see Christ-like leaders with a deep passion to evangelize their regions for the Lord led him to Thailand. While at Lausanne, Wafula exchanged ideas, gained insight and prayed with like-minded evangelists. The future leadership group he participated in was devoted to the process of developing Christ-like leaders.

Three overarching themes at the conference included the changing nature of world globalization, how to empower the body of Christ in witnessing and how to share Christ through every means avail-

able. Divided into thirty-one issue groups, these evangelism leaders passionately worked to provide an action plan for the various obstacles and concerns facing the church today. Topics included the uniqueness of Christ in the postmodern world, redeeming the arts, the persecuted church, holistic missions and the transformation of cities with the challenge of urban missions.

The world has changed dramatically since the initial Lausanne conference in Switzerland thirty years ago. However, the formal statement issued from the original conference has continued to influence evangelical thinking. The fifth session of the

Continued on page 4

at the museum...



That Old Time Religion

Before television and photography, there was the postcard

September 2004 - January 2005

In the early twentieth century, the postcard was a mainstay of popular American culture. A common find in many kitchen drawers and cupboards across the country, the subject matter of postcards was wide and varied. This American icon even left its mark on twentieth century religion. Over the last 25 years, the Billy Graham Center Museum has amassed one of the finest religious postcard collections found anywhere. This exhibit features a select sampling from that collection.

Museum Hours: Monday-Saturday, 9:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.
Sunday, 1:00-5:00 p.m.

For more information, call the Museum at 630.752.5909



director's devotional

Beauty and the Beast

I can't get the contrast out of my mind. It was like stepping from a well-lit room into abject darkness.

My new friends from Thailand, a group of five pastors and evangelists, wanted to show me Pattaya's famous beach area before dropping me at the conference center. As we turned onto the beachfront road in the early evening, I was struck by the beauty. Waving palms, blue, blue waters, well manicured grassy knolls, and a gentle breeze adorned the shoreline. I'd been in Santa Barbara, Calif., only a couple of days earlier. Pattaya was even more breathtaking. Lots of people, tourists and Thai nationals walked the boardwalk area. Beauty—pure beauty.

But that was only the "ocean" side of the street. Quickly we entered into the commercial areas adjacent to the beach. Music, bright lights, and shops came into view. Then as my eyes focused on specifics I began witnessing what I wished I'd not seen. Countless bars and clubs popped up. Glittering neon signs invited all to enter. And, since the warm weather allowed for open air establishments, everything was in plain view. It was no longer pretty. Beer and alcohol were served from square bars about thirty feet in diameter. Within each were young women, four to six of them per square. In some of them boys were "contained" as well. Around many of these square bars were men, middle aged white European and North American by

my estimates. They were buying the girls and boys for an hour, a night or even a week, I was told. This was unhidden, in-your-face prostitution. Sexual exploitation to a degree I'd never even imagined. Beastly—abject evil.

Beauty and Beast. Such is my memory of Thailand—lovely people in a lovely land. But sexual trafficking is a disease there, and the poverty is consuming. The prevalent Buddhist philosophy tells the oppressed that, "suffering is their lot, and that progress is not possible." It is devastating to view people made in the image of God, with longings for goodness and joy, caught in beastly behavior and systems of injustice—without hope in the world. I'm remembering Jesus going through the towns and villages seeing the people as "harassed and helpless" like sheep without a shepherd. No wonder he had compassion on them, the kind of compassion that moved

him to radical action (Matt. 9:35-38).

We weren't in Pattaya to engage its problem, though I am working on a plan to return. We were with 1500 evangelism and missions leaders from 127 countries to strategize on how to save the Pattayas of the world. However, I want every reader to know that the lost are not alone there. My pastor friends have a coffee shop on the strip. They minister to the victimized children and help many of them escape the evil. Another Christian organization started a hair salon. They "do the hair" of the prostitutes. But more, they love them, offering the hope of Jesus, coffee and a lot of love. They even help those willing to step out of the bondage by training them to be hair stylists and helping them start their own shops. The CHURCH is there. She is small, to date, but thriving. The gospel is moving. Jesus is regenerating souls and slowly infiltrating that society. Pray for the Church in Thailand. Pray they will be strong and persevere. And pray for the whole church, that we will take the whole gospel to the whole world, and that we do it with passion and urgency.

My Bible tells me that Jesus transforms "Beasts into Beauties" every day. Let it be. ■

The Billy Graham Center depends on faithful supporters like you to accomplish our mission. This fiscal year, July 1 through June 30, our funding need is an additional \$420,000, which is fifty percent above last year.

I'm praying for many to join our new "Life Circle." Life Circle members commit to giving \$1,000 or more to the Billy Graham Center per year. We chose the words carefully. "Life" refers to eternal life. Our work helps many cross from death to eternal life with Jesus Christ. "Circle" refers to the community of friends who join us in this good and vital venture. To join our Life Circle, indicate on the enclosed card.

Many of our *Centerline* readers are already regular supporters. Thank you very much. I hope you can continue at whatever level possible. Every dollar helps.

Thank you again, and please, remember us in your prayers.

Janie J. Allison



Torrey M. Johnson

Photo courtesy BGC Archives

Torrey M. Johnson Sr. Scholarship Award

Available for those interested in evangelism leadership

Individuals interested in evangelistic ministry now have the opportunity to apply for the Torrey M. Johnson Sr. Scholarship, an award designed to help Christians prepare for evangelism leadership through non-formal education sponsored or endorsed by the BGC. Johnson, a visionary pastor, evangelist, and leader in the mid-twentieth century, served as the Midwest representative for the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) and as the first president of Youth for Christ. After spending nearly twenty years as a pastor in the Chicago area, Johnson went into full-time evangelistic ministry, where he mentored many young leaders, including Billy Graham. Almost fifteen years later, Johnson returned to the pastorate.

Any individual hoping to pursue evangelistic ministry is eligible for a one-time \$500 or \$1000 scholarship. For more information or to apply for the award, please call 630-752-5918 or email: <bgcadm@wheaton.edu>.

on BGC Evangelism Partners

Doug Birdsall, former BGC advisory committee member, was recently elected executive chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangelism (LCWE). His position was confirmed at this year's conference in Thailand, where more than 1,500 world leaders from more than 115 different countries met to discuss strategies for spreading the gospel more effectively. Birdsall also serves as director of the J. Christy Wilson Jr. Center for World Missions at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Additionally, he is president of Asian Access/LIFE Ministries, an interdenominational mission agency committed to developing church leadership and growth in Asia. Birdsall shared his thoughts with editorial assistant Laurie Fortunak about Lausanne and other issues.



sources, and those should be shared with others. Financial resources should also be used to honor Christ.

Q: What contributions can the BGC make in expanding the efforts of global evangelism?

I believe the Billy Graham Center can play two very important roles. The first is to act as a communications vehicle for the Lausanne movement. I believe this movement is one of the great legacies of Billy Graham. There are specialists in missiology, journalism and the graphic arts who can help connect the Lausanne movement through both print and electronic newsletters. Second, the BGC can serve as something of a nerve center, to be a place where we can continue to keep historical documents, databases on movements and key individuals, and other important archival pieces.

Q: On a more personal note, how and when did you first become interested in missions and evangelism?

My father, grandfather, and great-grandfather were all pastors. Early on I learned to love God, love the church, and love the ministry. I left Wheaton College with every intention of being a pastor. In the fall of 1978, while I was attending Gordon-Conwell, Dr. Ralph Winter, the director of the U.S. Center for World Missions in Pasadena, visited. He painted a picture of the needs of the world in a way I had never seen before and spoke of the inequitable distribution of Christian workers around the world. My brother was also a missionary and encouraged me to visit him. God used a variety of things to make His leading clear. I wasn't eager to go, because I had never been out of the country, except for the Canadian side of the Niagara Falls. But as the writer of the proverb says, "In his heart a man makes his plans, but God determines his steps."

Q: Lastly, what would be your advice to Christian churches and lay leaders as far as motivating other Christians in the work of evangelism?

First, get Patrick Johnstone's *Operation World* to become educated about the world and learn how to pray for the world. Second, many churches have short-term mission trips. Go on one. Third, establish

Continued on page 4

Q: How did you first become involved with Lausanne?

I was introduced to the conference in 1974, during my senior year at Wheaton College. Don Hoke, director of the Lausanne conference at the time, came back to Wheaton to help Billy Graham establish the Billy Graham Center. [However], my direct involvement with Lausanne began in 1987. I had been [serving as a missionary] in Japan for seven years and was back in the states briefly. I met Don Hoke on a flight from Knoxville to Atlanta and he asked me if I had planned on going to Lausanne's Younger Leaders Conference. The conference was really a watershed experience for me. It expanded my horizons and called into question my many notions about missions, especially the role of the North American missionary and the mission enterprise of the church. I was definitely struck by the caliber of the leadership.

Q: As the newly-elect executive chair, what are your goals for the LCWE in the years to come?

I want Lausanne to be as fresh and vigorous and productive as it has been in the past in terms of thinking about the future. Not in terms of recreating or glorifying a previous time, but in understanding that the church in every generation and every culture has a responsibility to capture a sense of what God is doing and then to determine what their responsibility is. One of our top priorities is to see a leadership reflecting the demographic change that we've seen in the last fifty years. We've recently installed nine deputy directors from different parts of the world, and we've added a leader from India to our administrative committee, and are seeking

to add another from Africa and one from Latin America. Second, in a time when it's easy for the mission of the church to be misled by forces of money, marketing, and management, we need to make sure it's the gospel that forms what we do. Third, we want to continue finding out where the church is in the world, where it isn't, and what our role is in all areas of the world.

Q: After spending time at this year's forum, what do you feel are the greatest concerns or needs in global evangelism today?

Our greatest need and greatest danger, not only in the Western world, but in all areas, is the tendency towards fragmentation. The church is just being splintered and smashed to pieces by the rocks of individualism. We need to move towards unity. Second, there is a deficiency in theological reflection and solid theological underpinnings. The third issue is in the area of oral learners. What we do know about hidden people groups is that there are many people who can't read or don't want to read. We need to learn to use art, story, and music to successfully communicate the gospel.

Q: What role do you see the Western church playing in world missions today?

The Great Commission is for every church, in every time. Right now the Western church needs to figure out how to redeploy its resources. Rather than working off the old model that Hudson Taylor or William Carey used in spreading the gospel, we need to figure out how the needs have changed. When it comes to training, [the Western church] has a long history of re-

Continued from page 1

1974 Covenant declared, for example, that "evangelism and socio-political involvement are both part of our Christian duty."

Geoffrey Hahn, director of Serving in Missions (SIM) for the Pacific Andes area in Chile, Ecuador, and Peru spoke with Lon Allison, Billy Graham Center director, at Lausanne. Hahn addressed the issue of integrating evangelism with holistic mission and social involvement.

"Evangelism has worked extremely well for us when done in the context of building friendships," Hahn said. "The first person to accept Christ in a small farming community in Southern Ecuador did so after a missionary spent hours milking cows with the farmer each morning."

Mass evangelism still has its place, but other strategies often work more effectively in the modern world.

According to Lisa Nagle, who works with Pacific Link International Exchange Students serving teenagers in China, friendship ministry and addressing the spiritual needs of young evangelistic leaders can also be effective.

"Keep close to God," she said. "Intimacy with God is primary. Also, strengthen your family or else (you) lose (your) credibility in evangelism when marriage/family (breaks) down. Build international friendships. Friendships must be an end in (themselves). Conversion is the work of the Holy Spirit."

Nagle also mentions "surround" evangelism—surrounding a young person with Christian mentors, role models, teachers and host families where they can both experience and see the love of Christ.

Another strategy, according to Wafula, is "stratified" evangelism—dealing differently with various categories of individuals, such as top executives, doctors, lawyers, etc..., usually in a friendly meeting for lunch or dinner.

What is the value of a conference such as Lausanne? Although God alone knows the eternal benefits, nevertheless, participants spoke enthusiastically about the results.

John Ng, executive vice president of

Eagles Communications, a Christian organization based in Singapore, mentioned rekindling the passion of evangelism.

"Disciple-making and leadership development are critical," he said.

Hahn was reminded that there is more than one way to effectively evangelize.



Geoffrey Hahn

"Lausanne showed me how creative our God is," he stated. "I heard so many stories around the world of people doing evangelism in completely different manners and God transforming lives as a result."

Nagle was reminded of the importance of unity in effective evangelism.

"By listening to the stories, I have been encouraged to see the whole picture of evangelism more clearly," she said. "But all our efforts are futile unless we let God's Spirit direct our efforts. When all the heads and workers of the evangelistic mission organizations worshipped together, we were able to set our little ministry fiefdoms aside and glorify God with one voice."

Dr. Peter Brierley, 2004 Lausanne research chair, would likely agree.

"Why another Lausanne Forum?," Brierley wrote in a daily forum update on the Web. "Very simply, so that the Kingdom of God may grow throughout the earth... Jesus said, 'If I be lifted up, I will draw all to me'; the primary goal of this Forum is to do exactly that."

For more information on Lausanne, visit: <www.lausanne.org>. ■

Continued from page 3

friendships with the world that has come to our country. There are so many people of different backgrounds right here in our country. God doesn't call everyone to be a vocational missionary and move to a different country, but I do believe God calls every person to be responsive to the Great Commission. ■

The Billy Graham Center (BGC) strives to stimulate global evangelism through key partnerships. Forty leaders on the Center's advisory committee work alongside the BGC to develop strategies and skills for communicating the gospel.



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The Billy Graham Center stimulates global evangelism, partnering with Christian leaders to develop strategies and skills for communicating the gospel. The Center serves the church in evangelism and missions through leadership training, research, networking and strategic planning.

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