



billy graham center centerline

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Internet Evangelism: The Mission Field on Your Desktop

Laurie Fortunak

As Christian leaders met for the 2005 Internet Evangelism Coalition (IEC) to discuss how to reach the nearly one billion Internet users worldwide, countless individuals were surfing the Web, unaware of the global movement to share Jesus Christ electronically. Indeed, the mission field is on your desktop.

"The World Wide Web is where people deal secretly with intimate matters," said John Edmiston, chairman and CEO of the Asian Internet Bible Institute and Cybermissions.org. With two-thirds of those online having investigated faith-related matters at some point, the potential to reach millions with the gospel is staggering.

"God is so creative that he can take the science of technology to share the gospel," said Karen Schenk, managing director of TruthMedia Internet Group, the Internet ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ (CCC) of Canada. "We want to give ev-

eryone on the Internet the chance to hear about Jesus."

In 1997 the Billy Graham Center hosted an Internet Evangelism (IE) consultation which later led to the creation of the IEC. During this year's IEC conference, more than forty IE leaders discussed cross-cultural ministry on the Internet; IE legal issues and trends; online training for online evangelists; networking among IE organizations and more. Participants held the foundational belief that IE works through Christian organizations and



Webevangeliism.com offers resources for those looking to share the gospel online.



Members of IEC discuss strategies for Internet Evangelism at the 2005 conference.

through one-on-one interaction. Individuals can take part in IE just as effectively as churches and Christian organizations that present the gospel message online.

"Everyone can get involved in IE," said Rusty Wright, speaker and writer for Probe Ministries. "There is a great wealth of resources that can be tapped into growing the kingdom. Everyone has unique talents and we have to remember that there is not one way of doing IE."

Schenk agrees. "If we have just one method, we will not reach all the people or be effective. We need to use many methods."

Both churches and individuals can become involved in IE. According to Wright, the reasons the church may not use the Internet to its fullest extent to draw unbelievers to Christ are many: an inner focus on

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A Brush with the Eternal: Selected Paintings of Ron DiCianni

Through March 31, 2006

One of America's best known and well-loved Christian artists, Ron DiCianni, has returned to the Billy Graham Center Museum with a new collection of thirty-three original pieces. Five years after his initial exhibit, *Beyond Words*, at the Museum, DiCianni has once again placed biblical events in contemporary settings in a way which makes Scripture come alive. On a self-stated mission to reclaim the arts for Christ, DiCianni has created dozens of biblically-centered paintings since his first piece, "Spiritual Warfare," in 1992. With a background in illustration, he considers himself "a Christian cleverly disguised as an artist." As both an artist and an author, DiCianni has reached not only Christian audiences, but is making an impact in the secular market as well.

Since the exhibit opened at the Museum on July 1, more than 12,000 people have visited and 106 have made either first-time commitments to Christ or have rededicated their lives to the Lord.

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

www.billygrahamcenter.org/museum





director's devotional

Lon Allison

The Moments

Paul McCartney is on the road again. The original Beatle, now a billionaire and knighted by the queen as Sir Paul McCartney, wants to do more live concerts. Why? After all, he is 63-years-old. He doesn't need the money and he doesn't need the fame. Why subject his mind and body to the frenzied pace and exhaustion of touring? In an interview with CBS News, McCartney answered similar questions by stating that he tours because of "the moments." These moments bridge his life with those who cherish his music. McCartney's desire to be with people in important life moments mirrors the heart of a pastor. His words, linked to melody, are his means of walking in moments with people.

A pastor at my home church recently preached on John 1:14: "The word became flesh and made his dwelling with us." In *The Message* paraphrase, Eugene Peterson similarly remarks, "The word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood." While my pastor spoke, I tried to concentrate on what he was saying. However, I found myself linking McCartney's moments with the incarnation of Christ. There are very deep "whys" behind the incarnation of Christ. One of the most significant being the knowledge that God decided to walk in our moments. Similar to McCartney, he desired to speak "live" into life events. However, Christ did this to an eternal degree. He was present in both the joys of weddings and parties and the sorrows of loss and death. He entered the tedious moments of commuting and preparing food.

I am glad that God moved out of heaven and its bliss to enter fully into human moments. I find this personal-ness of God very appealing. Because we want to be with people we like, it tells me that God re-

ally must have liked the people of Palestine in the first century. Our oldest daughter, Tara, is away at college. Because I like being with her, I love it when she comes home. Since her school is only forty miles from home, Tara decided to come home recently because she was sick. Although I was sorry she was sick, I was glad to be with her. Similarly, Jesus wished to be with people.

The God who is Jesus, must be very personal. After all, there were other ways to get his songs and canon to the masses. Coming himself was very costly. It is impossible to imagine how costly both the incarnation and the crucifixion were to the Father. I prefer to think that Christ came not only because he needed to, but also because he wanted to. He really liked those people. He really likes us.

Because he resurrected and promised to be with us always, we gladly tell the world he is still with us. I believe he is as much in our moments as he was with Mary in Cana and Martha in Bethany. In my evangelistic preaching, I often emphasize this truth.

A Partner with the BGC

I watched the Billy Graham Center being built as an undergraduate without much understanding of its purpose. Now, as a pastor, I value its ongoing contribution to evangelism, cross-cultural mission and discipleship. I thank God for Lon Allison and his colleagues at the Graham Center and their important contribution to the work of the kingdom and the fulfillment of the Great Commission through the witness of evangelist, agency and church. **It's a privilege to be a partner in this enterprise.**



Craig A. Swanson

—Craig A. Swanson, Senior Pastor,
First Evangelical Covenant Church,
Grand Rapids, Michigan

The God who is a part of our moments is different than other gods. Buddhists have Buddha's words, but not his presence. Muslims have Mohammed's, words but not his presence. The presence of Jesus is so real that he speaks to us from within. He comforts, he convicts, he convinces and he calls. He is a very present help in times of trouble (Ps. 46:1).

This is the God we need. He is our comfort when facing family crisis and he is our hope in the midst of natural disaster. They were not alone in first century Palestine and we are not alone today. Our moments are God's moments.

Louis J. Allison

Chicagoland Narnia Sneak Peek Event Draws Hundreds of Christian Leaders



Over 800 Christian leaders gathered for the Chicagoland Narnia Sneak Peek event, held October 11 at Wheaton Bible Church in Wheaton, Illinois. For years C.S. Lewis' beloved series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, has impacted readers across the world. To date the series has been translated into forty-one languages. The first book in the series, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, is coming to theaters nationwide December 9 and the Sneak Peek event provided pastors, teachers and those in the faith community with resources and tools which will help in using the film as an outreach opportunity. Hundreds of Sneak Peek events, sponsored by Mission America, are being held nationwide prior to the release of the film. The Billy Graham Center partnered with Wheaton Bible Church and the Wade Center at Wheaton College to host the Chicagoland event. Special appearances were made by Doug Gresham, co-producer of the film and stepson of C.S. Lewis, and Christian artist Steven Curtis Chapman, who helped create the soundtrack for the film.

Internal BGC @ Work

From the printed word into the wireless world, the Billy Graham Center has gone online with a unique venture—EMQonline.

When *Evangelical Missions Quarterly (EMQ)* began in 1964, the world knew nothing of the massive worldwide network of online, invisible communications which would change the generations following in a radical way. More than six billion people can now be accessed in ways never dreamed imaginable. A lone Christian worker in Africa can hear of the Lord's workings half a world away simply by the push of a few buttons. Today, both the word of the Lord and the work of his people travel magically and gracefully through the invisible connections of the Internet.

Forty years after *EMQ* began, it has become one of the premier evangelical missions journals in the world—and the news is not traveling simply by printed word anymore. On July 1, 2005, *EMQ* went online, providing missions articles that aid workers seeking to reach peoples of all cultures.

The BGC is committed to encouraging those who spend their lives serving Christ and to providing resources and insight which make the work easier and more effective. EMQonline is one way we do this. To learn more about this practical and valuable resource, visit us at www.emqonline.com.



• **"Grounded for Good? Is the Era of Missionary Aviation Coming to an End?"** by Jon Lewis, a missions pilot with Missionary Aviation Fellowship from 1977 to 2003. Lewis details the historical use of aircraft in missions and discusses why using aviation is invaluable to global missions today.

• **"Missionary Medicine in a Changing World"** by Min Chul Kim, an Internist serving at a large missions hospital in Korea. Kim discusses how medical care can act as a bridge to those in need of Christ. He also details the history of medical missions and touches upon real issues on the field today.

• **"A Muslim Theology of Jesus' Virgin Birth and His Death"** by Jason Borges, a church planter among Muslims in Central Asia. Borges reminds readers that a new, contextualized interpretation of the events in Jesus' life is needed. He discusses the virgin birth and the death of Christ from a Muslim point-of-view, while offering readers hope that a bridge can be built to share the gospel.

The Internal BGC @ Work allows readers to "step inside the Center" and read about the exciting things God is doing. Each issue will focus on one of our eleven departments.

When the Evangelism and Missions Information Service (EMIS) joined the BGC in 1998, it became the publishing arm of the Center. One important resource has been *EMQ*, a quarterly professional missions journal. Articles are written by veteran missionaries and experts in fields pertinent to missions reflecting aspects of missionary life, thought and practice. Each issue contains articles, book reviews, editorials, international news reports and

letters. EMQonline contains all this, plus access to more than forty years of archived *EMQ* articles and current missions information not found on other sites.

For more than forty years, *EMQ* has covered subjects such as trends in world evangelization; church planting and discipleship; health and medicine; education and training; relief and development; and missionary family life. The current issue of *EMQ* and EMQonline contains articles such as:

Billy Graham Center

Life

Circle

The Billy Graham Center Life Circle is a committed group of individuals and churches who promise to give at least \$1,000 a year to support and strengthen the ministries of the Billy Graham Center.

Life Circle members are vital to the ongoing work of the Center in advancing the kingdom of God around the world.

Each Life Circle member receives:

- an invitation to a BGC event
- a complimentary subscription to EMQonline, the premier missions journal published by EMIS, the publishing division of the BGC
- a quarterly letter from Lon Allison, director of the BGC
- our prayers for your life and needs
- a CD or DVD featuring one of our evangelistic speakers

Will you prayerfully consider becoming a Life Circle member?
Please fill out the enclosed card and return it today.

TRULY, the harvest is great...

Continued from page 1

spiritual growth rather than an outreach focus; an emphasis on results; and a desire for quick results instead of fostering the lengthy relationship-building phase which may be needed when communicating online.

One suggestion Wright has for churches is to provide a link on the church website to a site with the gospel presentation. These may include www.NowTryGod.com or www.WhoIsJesus-Really.com. "More and more, people are going online to find churches and it's important to provide some type of gospel presentation for those visiting," he said.

For individuals looking for ways to share the gospel online, opportunities are seemingly endless: visiting chat rooms, writing daily or weekly blogs, emailing and attaching links to Christian sites to one's signature in an email.

Volunteering with Respected Christian Websites

The Internet can be intimidating with the abundance of information available at the touch of the fingertips. One simple and effective way to get involved in IE is to become a home-based volunteer for a respected Christian organization. Two websites, www.TruthMedia.com and www.WorldLinc.org, both divisions of CCC, use hundreds of volunteers who work from home to disciple and minister to Christians and non-Christians. Opportunities include sending prayer emails, responding to emails, hosting or organizing chat room ministries, following up on phone calls, writing, editing, developing content and mentoring.

"From a human perspective, sometimes it just takes trial and error to figure out what you are good at, but from God's point-of-view, he has a plan to open doors and opportunities for IE," Wright said. "You never know what God will do. I certainly never pictured myself as an internet evangelist, but as I tiptoed into it and saw that God could use me, I got excited about it. People who are shy or reticent can share the gospel in a non-intimidating way."

Accessing Resources to Prepare for Internet Evangelism

To equip and encourage Christians, the IEC has a multitude of resources which can

be accessed at www.webevangelism.com. One way churches, schools, mission agencies and other Christian groups can do this is by hosting an Internet Evangelism Day. This event provides those in the church an opportunity to see what God is doing on the Web, learn outreach strategies and gain insight into how to reach out to the neighboring community.

Another resource is the Evangelism Toolbox, an online database that offers multi-lingual, multi-formatted evangelism resources provided by top evangelical organizations. The toolbox includes tracts and videos, apologetic-type material for defending the Christian faith, witnessing material, Bible studies and children's devotionals, maps, books, articles and more. Resources can be found by language, topic, country, city or audience.

www.GrowinginChrist.com offers new believers answers to hard questions and encourages them as they explore the faith, fellowship with believers, grow in their relationship with the Lord and learn how to share their new faith.

For those seeking a specific training program which will equip them for IE, Online Training for Online Evangelists provides a self-taught course which can be completed at an individual's pace. The online course offers preparation for IE, options for presenting the gospel online and effective follow-up for new online converts.

All of the above resources can be found at the IEC website.

Stepping Out in Faith

The mission field is indeed at your fingertips. IE must be done through churches and Christian organizations and through one-on-one interaction. Thousands of individuals are reading about issues related to faith right now. All need Jesus. And all can hear if Christians are intentional about sharing the love of Christ through the Internet.

People are indeed dealing "secretly with intimate matters." The gospel is the answer and Christians are the means God uses to get the answer into a darkened world.

"There are so many people in need," said Schenk. "They are only one click away from the gospel."

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Sale ends December 31, 2005



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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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