



billy graham center centerline

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

Investing Deeply in the “Band of Brethren”: A Glimpse into the STAR Mentoring Group

LAURIE FORTUNAK

Spend five minutes talking with Lon Allison, executive director of the Billy Graham Center, about his STAR Mentoring Group and you will see his eyes light up. Leaning back in his office chair, a contented, wistful gaze appears and he matter-of-factly states, “I really love this group.” Allison began the STAR Mentoring Group in 2002. He was turning fifty and knew God was calling him to invest in a group of quality evangelism leaders from around the world. “It’s not popular to be in evangelism,” he explains. “This group is a place where deep bonds and friendships are formed, global learning takes place, and personal character can grow.”

Nearly sixteen years ago Allison was praying God would provide someone to mentor him in evangelism leadership. Along came Leighton Ford (former evangelist for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and former chair of the Lausanne Committee for World Evangeliza-

tion), who taught him the importance of stepping aside from the pressures of daily life to go into deep communal mode with God and others of like-mindedness. “I was deeply grateful for that mentoring,” Allison says. “It advanced me in skills, networking, global issues, and intellectual development.”

The Beginnings of the Group

Allison, who is still mentored by Ford, knew when his time had come to start his own group and went about finding younger evangelism leaders who would be an excellent fit for what would become a group of nine. Two of these were Karsten and Rike Hüttmann, who met Allison at a younger leaders gathering in Germany. “On the last day of that gathering we had lunch with Lon,” recalls Rike, who is now heading the European Younger Leaders Network, part of the Lausanne Movement. “He later invited us to join STAR, which



The STAR Mentoring Group includes nine evangelism leaders from around the world.

really surprised us. It was such a huge offer and we were not sure if we would fit into such a group. We were just a young couple from a small German town trying to serve God and share his message of love, hope, and reconciliation. We felt like too little of ‘lights’ to join the group.” However, Karsten soon remembered his prayers over recent months. He had received many in-

Continued on page 4



The Life of Christ: The Drawings of Robert Doares

June 23, 2009 – February 16, 2010

One of the most requested art exhibits ever displayed in the Billy Graham Center Museum is back for a record sixth time. *The Life of Christ: The Drawings of Robert Doares* is a series of forty-nine drawings and five paintings created over a period of nearly thirty years. Doares began his work in the 1960s

as a group of paintings on the life of Christ. In 1978, at the age of 67, Doares decided to fully devote his artistic talent to the creation of the *Immanuel* series, setting a goal to complete fifty biblical scenes from the life of Christ. He reached that goal in 1991. He subsequently added four more pieces, bringing the total to the fifty-four scenes shown in the present exhibit. As Doares explained it, “My original plan was to paint all the scenes in color, but since time was running out I decided to keep them as pencil drawings—except for the five I had already painted.” He averaged nearly four hundred hours on each drawing. Doares’ intricate detail, depth of expression, panoramic vistas, and historical accuracy is unmatched.

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 or visit www.billygrahamcenter.org/museum



director's devotional

LON ALLISON

Creating in Community

A torrential downpour set the stage for the lecture. Far too many people,

shaking out their wet umbrellas, squeezed themselves into the lecture room. The topic was the "Inklings," that group of English humanists in the mid-twentieth century which included the likes of C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, and others. But it was less about their writing of *The Lord of the Rings*, *Narnia*, *Abolition of Man*, and such, than it was a lecture focusing on the creative community they formed. According to Dr. Diana Glycer, our speaker that night and the author of *The Company They Keep*, *The Secret of Creative Collaboration* (2009), the Inklings were an eclectic group of friends and colleagues who met every Thursday night for seventeen years. Glycer suggested that the Inklings interacted in four key ways: through encouragement, critique, advice, and pursuit of joint projects.

I couldn't help thinking about other notable groups of people who have made and are making significant contributions in their areas of interest. In the late 1990s I read a book in the leadership/management area titled *Organizing Genius* by professor Warren Bennis. Bennis studied the formation and impact of "great teams" that developed into corporations such as Boeing

Disney, and IBM. In a field then dominated by books defining "great leaders," Bennis argued that there are less great leaders than great teams who uniquely combine to produce stellar accomplishments.

One day in the elevator in the Billy Graham Center I had about three minutes alone with historian Dr. Mark Noll. I had just read an article about him and his creative companions (namely, George Marsden and Nate Hatch). My limited perusal of Christian historians led me to know that all three were important contributors to history, and especially Christian history. Again, the article focused on their friendships, their organized meetings, and the view from all three that each produced better history because of the influence of the others.

The Inklings, the industrialists, the historians, and finally, the story of Billy Graham and his great team. For more than fifty years, Mr. Graham surrounded himself with a small cadre of incredibly gifted leaders, theologians, and artists. There were the Wilson brothers—Grady and TW—both evangelists and missional leaders, who were originally high school friends of Billy. There was George Wilson, the highly accomplished leader and overall architect of Billy's organization. And there was George Beverly Shea, the "singer," and Cliff Barrows, song leader, organizer, and gifted communicator. That gang of six has been

mightily used by God to preach the gospel and extend the Kingdom of Christ throughout the world.

We in the West, who are so addicted to the notion of the individual leader, need to realize that no one impacts the world alone. I just returned from the San Francisco area, where my wife Marie and I grew up and led youth ministries and churches. In a more meager way than those mentioned above, we influenced the cause of the gospel during the Jesus Movement in that little corner of the world. One of our "old" teammates gave me rides to and from the airport. When Rog and I are together, we engage in the sin of nostalgia. We retell with great passion to anyone who will listen, even if just each other, the wondrous workings of God when Rog, Lon, John, Karen, Tom, Laura, Steve, Marie, and many others roamed the earth together. No one of us is who we are today, apart from the conscious and unconscious influence of the others.

I hope many writers and communicators will further study and tell us about creative community. Oh yes, I forgot about one other team. There was a man named Jesus, and after a long night of prayer he chose twelve to be with him, AND....

Gladly alongside many,

Lon Allison

School for Correctional Ministries Kicks Off Credential Program



Twelve students from eight states attended the residential course, *Introduction to Correctional Ministries*, June 8-12, 2009 at the BGC. The course kicked off the Correctional Ministry Credential program, which is part of the School for Correctional

Ministries (SCM), housed at the Institute for Prison Ministries (IPM) at the BGC. The course was the first of ten courses to be offered. For most of the students, it represented a return to education after many years in ministry; for others, it was the first college course they have taken. "We wanted to have this credentialed program to raise the level of professionalism and to better prepare people for

correctional ministry," said Karen Swanson, IPM director and course instructor. Students were struck by the vast needs and areas within correctional ministry. Upon leaving the class one student shared, "It was a great overview of corrections and a wonderful kickoff to the program!"

The second course, *Dynamics of Working with Offenders*, is an online course currently underway. Three additional online courses are planned for the fall semester. The program is a combination of intensive onsite courses and 8-week online courses, thus allowing students to remain in full-time chaplaincy or correctional ministry work. New students can sign up anytime. The SCM was developed in partnership with other national prison ministries and Wheaton College. For more information, visit www.bgcprisonministries.com.

Witnessing the POWER of God at a Festival



For the past three years dozens of Wheaton College students have been attending Franklin Graham Festivals each year in different regions of North America. Whether it's witnessing a 5-year-old girl patting her heart as she fervently exclaims, "Jesus is in here," a teenage girl questioning if her newfound faith really *can* change her life, or a back-slidden pastor repenting from a deep pit of pornography, the students are always greatly impacted by

their time at the festivals. "It is so powerful to stand on the field and see the Spirit at work!" shares Jacob Rodriguez. "A lot of times I have walked out of an evangelism situation having to trust God that his Spirit was at work because I couldn't see it with my own eyes. But to see the Spirit in action as souls are getting saved—this is quite refreshing!"

Although the BGC has always had a representative attend Billy Graham Crusades and Franklin Graham Festivals, three years ago a grant from the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association allowed students, staff, and faculty passionate about evangelism the opportunity to attend a mass crusade. Jean Bilang, office coordinator for the Institute of Strategic Evangelism at the BGC, has been accompanying students ever since.

"We take students who are already involved in evangelism or who are key student leaders on campus," she explains. "This allows them to share their faith in a new setting and see how large outreaches are organized." For Mike Wagner, witnessing the behind-the-scenes activity was helpful to developing a better understanding of unity in the Church: "Often, people simply think of the transformation which takes place in relation to the invitation given during the actual festival meetings," he says. "We often just think of the statistics. However, the transformation which takes place in the community surrounding the festival is much larger. Pastors and local Christians are encouraged, emboldened, and united around a movement much bigger than themselves."

3

Moving Our Churches toward Evangelizing Churches

As we stare down the cold, hard facts of evangelism in our churches, we are faced with a seemingly hopeless reality: well over ninety percent of churches in North America have not seen one single conversion in the last three years. "Seemingly hopeless" is the operative phrase. "But God..." as the oft-used phrase in the Bible begins, is still at work in the United States and is inspiring passion in the hearts of individuals and organizations to see lives changed for Christ. The Institute of Strategic Evangelism (ISE), led by Lon Allison, executive director, and Dallas Anderson, assistant director, at the Billy Graham Center is seeking to do just that through the Evangelizing Churches Project.

Several years ago Allison, Anderson, and a few others dreamed of a project that would undertake the great task of equipping local churches to become evangelizing churches. "There's a lot of talk about evangelism, but implementation to make that happen is the key thing," explains Anderson. "We thought, 'Wouldn't it be great if the BGC could be used to energize churches to be evangelizing churches?' Evangelizing is the time-sensitive and urgent issue that every church has to deal with. However, evangelism won't come naturally. It's counter-cultural. The world tells you that you have

no right to evangelize. There is no single thing more threatening to the evil one than the expansion of the kingdom."

The Evangelizing Churches Project (ECP) was launched in 2008 to find effective ways to move churches outside their present walls to become sustainable witnesses to their communities of pre-Christian people. In the ECP, churches commit to work with a BGC coach for two years with the goal of having the church become "evangelizing," meaning they are seeing more than ten percent of attendees coming from conversion growth, rather than a "re-shuffling of saints" from one church to the next. For example, an evangelizing church would see eighty people, in a church of eight hundred, making decisions for Christ yearly.

ECP is organized in two phases. Phase 1, a 2-month assessment phase, is a time when the church and the evangelism coach determine whether the church is stable enough to implement necessary changes and committed enough to provide resources (time, money, staff). Phase 2, a 22-month coaching phase, is when a BGC coach works with the church to become evangelizing. An evangelism point person from the church is chosen. The coach then works with that person (and as a result the entire church) to help him or her integrate evangelism

thinking and practice into everyday church life. The goal, according to Anderson, is threefold: (1) to have seventy-five percent of the congregation trained in viable forms of lifestyle evangelism, (2) to have multiple harvest opportunities (outreach events) throughout the year, and (3) to have multiple entry points for pre-Christian people to work their way into fellowship. "Most people enter the church not through a Sunday morning service, but through smaller ways—small groups, affinity groups, recovery groups," Anderson says.

ECP is in the pilot phase. Anderson is currently working with Cornerstone United Methodist Church, a church of nearly eight hundred people in Watertown, South Dakota. Although Cornerstone is seeing most of its growth through transfer, ninety-eight percent of the congregants polled feel God desires them to share their faith more than they are currently doing. If your church is interested in being a pilot church in the ECP, contact Dallas Anderson through ISE@wheaton.edu.

"I believe in the local church," Anderson shares. "It has often been overlooked; we have looked to just the individual to carry the gospel message. The local church needs to be the key part of our witness."

continued from page 1

vitations to preach at youth events, mainly evangelistic rallies, throughout Germany. He didn't feel able to cope with these challenges, so he and Rike asked God for help. "We knew this invitation was God's way of showing us his support and provision to become better leaders and be more able to share his love and truth in our context," explains Rike. Karsten is now directing the evangelistic program for Christian Endeavour Germany, a national para-church youth organization.

Henrik Thomsen has a similar story of how he got connected with STAR: "I first meet Lon at a Youth With a Mission (YWAM) seminar in Holland in 2002. He was a main speaker tasked to train evangelists and coordinators. I was training/mentoring a few young evangelists and setting up a new ministry in Denmark. I had been praying for a mentor, as I was pioneering the evangelistic work in YWAM Denmark, and Lon asked me to join STAR. It was an answer to prayer." The group is rounded out by Lorna Dueck, executive producer and host of Listen Up!, a weekly 30-minute news magazine in Canada that examines the spiritual side of news and current events; Adam Edgerly, founding pastor of New Song Community Church in Irvine, California; Terry Fisher, divisional director of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship; Doug Grimes, senior pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in Searcy, Arizona; Wesley Paul, an evangelist originally from India; and Angulus Wilson, who is on faculty and is chaplain at Fresno Pacific University in Fresno, California.

Deep Commitment, Strong Fellowship, Passionate Living

Each person has made a 10-year commitment to the group, promising to continue on in evangelism, attend an annual week-long retreat, and communicate with and pray for each other throughout the year. Allison explains, "The people in this group had to possess certain key characteristics: a deep passion and calling to evangelism and leadership, humility, teachability, and chemistry and connection with others in the group." Allison commits to discipling each, praying for each, helping to network each, and attending outreach/ministry op-

portunities for each once every three years. "My own mentoring experience was wonderfully life-enhancing," he continues. "It's like you are with your band of brethren."

For Dueck, her time with the group thus far has been marked with answers to prayer, growth in character, and deep fellowship: "It has helped me be deliberate and focused in both evangelism and my own spiritual disciplines. I've seen intimate spiritual ground among my STAR peers. We work together, pray together, and share deeply. It's helped me realize there are no superstars—only pilgrims, but deliberate and focused ones who do beautiful witness for Christ's kingdom."

Wilson adds how STAR has helped him grow in two other dimensions: the intellectual and the kingdom-building. "STAR has impacted me professionally, theologically, and personally. My desire to pursue higher education, to write, read, and develop areas of ministry that will change lives is revived every time we meet. Because of STAR, I was encouraged to pursue my doctoral studies, live passionately through church planting, develop mini-schools of evangelism, and start urban ministry development seminars for bi-vocational preachers and lay ministers. STAR has given me the courage to branch out and do what my heart burns to do: seek and save those who are lost. STAR has given me a personal board of peer-advisors who can speak into my life, equip, encourage, and inspire me to do what God has called me to do."

As Allison leans forward in his office chair, you can almost see the passion in his eyes as he says, "My dream for this great group of leaders is that they will have their own STAR groups and invest in others long term as well." Perhaps God has this dream also. Thousands of miles and an ocean away the Hüttmanns are already beginning to do this. "We are convinced that this kind of mentoring changes the lives of leaders, because that's what we have experienced," Rike shares. "So we invest in very similar ways by mentoring a group of younger people, as well as individual younger leaders around us."

Can your church become more effective in short-term missions?

Engaging the Church: Analyzing the Canvas of Short-term Missions

Edited by Laurie A. Fortunak and A. Scott Moreau

Are you, your church, or your mission agency involved in short-term missions? Do you wonder how you can leverage this tremendous mission-sending capacity for even greater good? Would you like to know how short-term missions got to be the way they are?

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