



# billy graham center centerline

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

## Broken, Loved, and Sent Out: Holistic Evangelism at Wheaton College

LAURIE FORTUNAK

“Once students get to a place where they are aware of their brokenness and of their security in the love of Christ, the gospel message becomes dearer to them,” explains Dr. Jerry Root, associate professor of evangelism at Wheaton College and assistant director of the Institute for Strategic Evangelism at the Billy Graham Center. “And once they get to that place, it’s hard to keep them quiet when it comes to sharing the gospel. And once they’ve led someone to Christ, it’s even harder to keep them quiet!”

Root’s last evangelism class, which had fifty students, resulted in not only the students understanding the relational aspect of the gospel more fully, but also in forty people being led to Christ through the students’ outreach efforts. For Root, evangelism is about both those we are seeking to minister to and our own walk with Christ. He begins his class by sharing the illustration of a bullet. By describing the

bullet, the students are mimicking what is done with biblical exegesis—giving a description of the relationship between the words. “However,” Root continues. “If that’s all you do—share how the Bible is a great grammar book—you won’t reach people where they’re at. You need the target (the relational piece; the ‘Word Made

Flesh’) and the gun (the thing that fires the bullet—namely, you).” Herein comes the need to cultivate self-awareness before engaging in evangelism. “When students understand themselves better and their own brokenness, they can minister better and be able to unpack human brokenness,” he says.

Wheaton College freshman Joey McLellan also believes in the importance of preparing oneself before going out to evangelize. Realizing the need for apologetics (being able to defend the Christian faith) and the lack of apologetics or evangelism training in many churches, McLellan organized F.Q.I. (Latin: Fides Quaerens Intellectum; English: Faith Seeking Understanding), a club where students discuss an issue in apologetics (e.g., problem of evil, hell, evolution, pluralism, etc.). Ten to fifteen students meet every other week for an hour. “We want the students to think through the issues so they can more effectively



Beginning the first week of class, evangelism students have to share the gospel or have a faith conversation at least once a week.

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## The Artwork of He Qi

The Billy Graham Center Museum will display an exhibit of the artwork of He Qi beginning March 12. He Qi is a premier Chinese Christian artist and theologian who stands at the forefront of modern Chinese Christian art. He Qi translates biblical scenes into the artistic language of China using a Chinese technique of color-on-paper painting. The exhibit will feature approximately forty artist proof giclees (making fine art prints from a digital source using ink-jet printing). He Qi is a featured speaker at Wheaton College’s Theology Conference this April. There will be a special reception for the artist, sponsored by the Bible & Theology Graduate Department at the college, in the BGC Museum on April 16. The exhibit runs March 12 through June 9, 2009.

**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](http://www.billygrahamcenter.org/museum)

at the museum...



Through June 9, 2009



# director's devotional

LON ALLISON

## The Few for the Many

Jesus reached the few, who reached the many. This morning, as I prepared to write this

article, I sat down once again with the classic book *Master Plan of Evangelism* by Robert Coleman. Because much of his thought, combined with Leighton Ford's *Transforming Leadership*, provides the backbone of our vision for the Billy Graham Center, I need to turn to this book often. God has convinced us that we are here to "move God's people and ministries toward their witness destinies."

Our means of achieving that is to spend a lot of time with a few evangelism leaders every day and every year. Through formal education (undergrad and masters level) and through mentoring relationships, the gift of time, time, and more time (mixed with a bit of experience and wisdom) is freely given.

There are ministries called to reach the many. I pray for them and thank God for them. Jesus also spent time with large groups teaching and preaching. We do some of that at the Graham Center. Just this month, one of our leaders preached Christ and taught evangelism to thousands of people. By God's grace, many made confessions of faith and thousands were

encouraged and trained to share their faith. We rejoice. Support dollars and prayer flow toward "big numbers" reports. I know that.

But our primary place, our "sweet zone," seems to be in the longer and deeply fulfilling task of reaching and growing the few, who reach the many. The Graham Center "stimulates global evangelism" in a multitude of ways throughout the world. A very meaningful part of that is to do it right here at Wheaton College. Dr. Jerry

*"A few people so dedicated, in time, will shake the world for God."*

— Robert Coleman

Root teaches fifty or so undergrads every semester in hands-on evangelism. He also trains and inspires faculty, staff, and other students to do the same. We are witnessing amazing stories as a result. In the graduate school, Dr. Rick Richardson guides a team of faculty and staff who teach more than forty students working on a Masters in Evangelism and Leadership. This degree program has grown from one student to forty students in just a few years. Our passion in the program is to help train "thinking practitioners" who think well and practice their evangelism tirelessly. It's a great program and one of the only ones like it in any Christian liberal arts college/university in America.

Yesterday I sat in a strategy meeting of about fifteen people where both Jerry and Rick were present. We spent an hour telling stories of "the few who are reaching the many." It was exciting. I sat back and thought, "I can go to heaven now." It was the realization that people like Jerry, Rick, and many of our staff are pouring themselves out for the few, who will reach the many. I promise to highlight more of them in upcoming issues.

As for me, I found an inscription I had made in September 2002 on page 39 of Dr. Coleman's *Master Plan for Evangelism*. It is a prayer actually: "Lord, I choose to reproduce my life (Yours in me), for a few chosen people, who will rise above me for the next generations." God has answered and is answering this prayer today. Our staff are doing amazing things. Hallelujah. And here's my prayer for you: "Lord, may every reader of this newsletter be drawn more fully to reach and grow the few, who will reach the many. In Jesus name. Amen."

Alongside,

Lon Allison  
Executive Director

## Dr. Joel Carpenter Presents at the First Annual BGC Archives Lecture



Approximately forty people attended the first annual Billy Graham Center Archives lecture this past December, given by Dr. Joel Carpenter, founder and director of the Nagel Institute for the Study of World Christianity at Calvin College. Carpenter, a well-

known historian of both the American evangelical tradition and modern world Christianity, spoke on "Wheaton, Moody and the China Connection: Finding Our Ancestors in the Archives." He

explained how his experience of using oral history interviews shaped his research and thinking for the 1990 book, *Earthen Vessels: American Evangelicals and Foreign Missions, 1880-1980*, which he co-edited. A Q&A time followed the lecture. There was also an exhibit of mission history scrapbooks, photos, home movies, and other documents from the BGC Archives illustrating the themes of the lecture.

The annual BGC Archives lecture will feature key historians, missiologists, academicians, and researchers discussing what it is like to do archival research and how to use scrapbooks, newspaper clippings, oral history interviews, and other historical raw materials to write history.

# Impacting the World (and the Workplace) for Jesus Christ: The MA in Evangelism and Leadership Program

**W**hen Valerie Kent quit her job in Maryland to move to Wheaton last fall, she had only the glimpse of an idea of how God would continue to validate her gift of evangelist and deepen her understanding of how to be an evangelist-leader. A school psychologist in New York only five years ago, in a call of obedience, God called her to quit her job, sell her home, leave the relationship she was in, and preach the gospel. She did all four, moving to Maryland, taking



The MA in Evangelism and Leadership program has more than forty students.

part-time jobs, and beginning work as an associate minister. At her church, she led evangelism, short-term missions, and training classes. She soon became interested in Billy Graham and by May 2007 was attending the Billy Graham School of Evangelism in North Carolina. "It was like God was recreating me and my view of salvation," Kent recalls. "As much as I thought I knew who God was, I realized that you can't when you stay where you are at. A shift happened where I began not just thinking about salvation for the individual, but for the nations. God has called me to preach and teach to the nations—I needed to know what that meant and how to do it."

In God's sovereign plan, Lon Allison, executive director of the Billy Graham Center, was teaching at the school. Kent took copious notes when he mentioned the MA in Evangelism and Leadership program at Wheaton College. Countless emails and phone calls later, Kent was on her way to Wheaton.

## Equipping Catalytic Change Agents

Only four years ago the MA program went through a complete overall under the guidance of Dr. Rick Richardson. Previously, the program was more historical in nature—focusing on the history of evangelism. A year later, the 40-credit hour program, now under the umbrella of the Wheaton College Graduate School Intercultural Studies Department, emerged with a more contemporary feel. "I felt like God was wanting us to pay attention to where he is at now—where he is reaching people," explains Richardson. "And even in the American culture, it is a global context. Our focus had to be multicultural in nature. This program is for leaders who are catalytic change agents—people who have a passion for both evangelism and for leadership."

As a way to draw in passionate and gifted leaders, Richardson has established partnerships between Wheaton College and several cutting-edge ministries, including InterVarsity Christian Fellowship; Arrow Leadership; and the national New Thing Church Planting Network, connected to Community Christian Church in Naperville, Illinois.

From having only one student three years ago, the program has grown to include more than forty students from all over the world. It is, according to Richardson, one of the only MAs in Evangelism and Leadership at a liberal arts college in this nation. Less than half of the students live in the Wheaton area. The program is set up in a modular fashion, so students can keep their full-time jobs but attend one-week intensive classes several times a year. The program takes 1 ½ to three years, depending on if the student is part time or full time.

For Kent, her 1 ½-year commitment to Wheaton came straight from scripture. Wrestling with God on leaving her home, she prayed that God would confirm if she was to move. She opened to Acts 18 and read about Aquila and Pricilla, who took Paul in. (A couple in Wheaton offered a

room to Kent shortly before she read this passage.) Only a few verses later she read that Paul "stayed for a year and a half" in that city. Kent was convinced that Wheaton was the place God was calling her. "Moving here was the hardest thing I've ever done," she says. "From a worldly perspective, this is 'lost time.' However, my time here so far has been amazing. It's helped broaden my view of the gift I've been given and helped me to understand what an evangelist-leader does. I can see that I am connected to a bigger picture."

Students come from both secular (e.g., architecture firms, research labs) and Christian (e.g., churches, parachurches) workplaces and range in age from twenty-two to sixty-five. "Most of the students here have tremendous passion and energy," Richardson says. "They are 'thought-leaders'—they like to think critically about issues of the gospel and culture. We are here to equip them to be effective, active leaders wherever God has placed them in order to make a difference for him."

Kent has taken this challenge to heart: "For generations, God has been pouring out the gift of evangelist on people. I am here to play my role and to take the baton and run for as long as God wants to use me."

For more information on the MA in Evangelism and Leadership program, visit [www.wheaton.edu/evangelism](http://www.wheaton.edu/evangelism), email [evan@wheaton.edu](mailto:evan@wheaton.edu), or call 630.752.5948.



Less than half of the students live in the Wheaton area.

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evangelize," he says. "I used to fear evangelism because I was so afraid that I didn't know enough. This club is to help us confidently evangelize because we know more, have thought through the complex issues, and have struggled to answer the tough questions."

McLellan and other students are preparing themselves to become more effective in evangelizing. However,

according to Root, at some point "you may just need to throw them in the pool and rescue them." Beginning the first week of class, the evangelism students have to share the gospel or have a faith conversation at least once a week. And just as their giftings are diverse, so too are their methods of evangelism. Some students take part in structured outreaches: local college visits, homeless shelter ministry, youth hostel ministry, Franklin Graham festivals evangelism, high school activities, or Spring Breakaway trips (to minister either locally or overseas). Other students visit laundromats, talk to gas station attendants, or engage in conversations with individuals at local coffee shops. "There isn't just one style of evangelism," Root says. "Being aware of the gun (oneself), students can begin to see that God wired them uniquely and that they have a unique means of delivery."



Just as the students' giftings are diverse, so too are their methods of evangelism.

Freshman Devlin McGuire and about twenty other students are part of Chicago's Beloved Homeless, an outreach to homeless individuals in Chicago. Every Saturday,

the students pack around eighty peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and donated clothing and split into groups of five to talk and pray with homeless people on the streets of Chicago. The students' goal

is to build relationships, meet immediate needs, help find housing and jobs, and lead people to a saving faith in Jesus. By partaking in evangelism

outreach, McGuire says he has learned to be more comfortable outside his comfort zone, bolder in sharing the gospel, and more sensitive to the heartbreaking situations of the poor. "Christ commands us to make disciples, so to follow Christ we must also share Christ," he says. "We want to show people the love of Christ and lead them to a saving and life-changing knowledge of him."

### Evangelism and Connecting Points

One of the key things Root reminds students of is that they are not bringing Jesus to anyone. He is already there. Their role, as followers, is to dialogue with people so as to find where they feel broken and use that as a connection point. "Whether it's the woman at the well, Nicodemus, or the man at the pool of Bethesda, Jesus begins with what's there," Root explains. "Our role is to listen in order to understand that everyone has a story that's beautiful. We need to listen to what a person says and ask questions so that he or she will build on that story. If there is estrangement, maybe we can talk about reconciliation. If there is guilt, perhaps justification. If they are broken, there may be restoration."

Students in Root's classes—and indeed students all over campus—are taking evangelism to heart. "If faith becomes all about taking in so that God can somehow improve our lives, then we will become spiritually obese, taking in and in, but never giving out," McGuire says.

"My goal is to develop my generation into Christians who passionately pursue the intellect and can communicate the gospel in a loving way," McLellan adds.

*"If faith becomes all about taking in so that God can somehow improve our lives, then we will become spiritually obese, taking in and in, but never giving out."*

— Devlin McGuire

## Newly Released Short-term Mission Book!

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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, and strategic planning.

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