



billy graham center centerline

Spring 2005

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

Sharing Hope 2005

Hundreds Build "Bridges" to Those Outside the Church

Keeing close tabs on the impending ice storm heading towards Cary, North Carolina, Ed Beavers was uncertain whether the affinity groups for this year's Sharing Hope 2005 would still go on. Heavy rain and snow was rendering countless southern cities immobile and meteorologists predicted it was heading for Cary.

Laurie Fortunak

The storm never came, each of the twenty-five affinity groups scheduled went on without a hitch, church members saw their friends, family, and neighbors come to Christ, and Beavers witnessed both his long-time friend and his nineteen-year-old son accept the invitation of salvation. By the end of the weeklong event, 193 non-believers had either come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ or rededicated their lives to the Lord.

"This event has definitely reinforced just how powerful the Gospel is," said Jane Harrod, who, after praying for her boss for eight years, saw him come to Christ at the



Holly Ross

Kids wait expectantly for the baseball clinic, one of the twenty-five affinity groups in Cary, NC.

golf affinity group. "It was amazing to see how people's lives are illuminated by the Gospel. It's like watching a light go off in their heads. We [the church] need to get outside of our four walls and into the world to share the Gospel. We can't expect them to come to us."

Sharing Hope 2005 came into being last year when members of several church-

es in Cary asked staff at the Billy Graham Center (BGC) if they would help organize an affinity group event. The end result was a group of churches coming together to sponsor the event, in which church members could bring non-Christian friends and family to a specific activity or interest group. Several affinities included a

Continued on page 4

at the museum...



Ordained to Create: The Self-Taught Art of Southern Preachers, Prophets and Visionaries

March 1, 2005 - June 15, 2005

At the forefront of some of the most exciting self-taught art on the American scene are religious visionaries, preachers, and prophets. This traveling show of forty-three pieces from fifteen southern Christian artists is part of the Sage and Steven Pattie Collection of American Art. The collection, sponsored by Christians in the Visual Arts (CIVA), focuses on the passionate and creative journeys of the artists, many of whom began their works later in life. A special feature of the show includes a small environmental recreation showcasing the signs and crosses from the Reverend W.C. Rice's famous "Cross Garden."

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

Marvel in Marburg

The castle in Marburg, Germany loomed large above me on the cold January night.

As I recall, the moon cast some light. In that castle 575 years ago, luminaries like Luther, Zwingli and Melancthon, had met in the "preschool days" of the Protestant movement. The year was 1529, almost twelve years to the day after Luther nailed the ninety-five theses on the Wittenburg door, and only two years after the founding of the first "Protestant University" in Marburg. The reformers attempted the near impossible that October, that of forming an agreed upon set of doctrines for the Protestant churches. They crafted fifteen articles of faith. When the conference ended, they agreed on all but one. Luther and Zwingli disagreed on the exact nature of the Lord's Supper and no amount of discussion could reconcile them. Still, that early work was formative for the movement. The Augsburg Confession was finalized the following year, and Protestantism had its theological core.

Marburg must have been alive with Christ in those days. I imagine that students in the new university stood on tiptoes trying to see and hear the discussions of their theological heroes. I imagine that new life in Christ occurred regularly. The Reformation became a momentous spiritual awakening.

There I stood hundreds of years later. Actually, I stood outside of the great church just below the castle. Every stone spoke of tradition and history. They told me Luther preached in the ancient sanctuary. Of

course that gave me shivers, chills and a cold sweat, as I was about to do the same.

As I preached, I took up the same book Luther used—the Holy Scriptures. Ironically, that night I preached from James, a book that Luther actually questioned as canonical. No matter—he erred in many areas. So do I, far too often. But the tradition the Reformers began in the old church lived on that Thursday night.

American Christians are often told authentic Christianity is dead in Europe. Not so. That night the sanctuary was packed, the balcony as well. Nearly five hundred crammed the seats in the cold, damp building, probably more than in Luther's time. The Holy Spirit moved strong upon us. Songs, hymns, and spiritual songs were sung by men and women. Testimony was given. The Word was proclaimed. By the end of that weekend, I had preached to nearly one thousand souls, sponsored by what we in America would call an "emerging church." They don't call it that. In German they call it *Christus-treff*, the "Christ-meeting" church. People in their 20s, 30s,

and 40s filled the seats.

One thousand Germans worshipping Jesus as Lord is similar to a "giga-church" (10,000+) in America. Yes, it was quite phenomenal. But that is not the point. The point is, God will not be bound. The Word will not be stilled. The Spirit will not be quenched. Just when we're ready to turn off the lights on Europe and give up, fresh expressions of his power and presence appear. Marburg is aflame with God, not at the university that Philip built and where Bultmann taught, but in the state church on Thursday night when the building is otherwise bare. The same is true in England. Expressions like "Soul Survivor" and "Alpha" appear where least expected. Pockets of renewal are aflame in other European centers as well.

As that night ended, I knew Zwingli would have winced at the music. Melancthon would have been shocked at the clothing. Luther would have sent the preacher back to Homiletics 101. But, despite how I envisioned the old Doctors' scorn, God was as fresh and real in 2005 as He most likely was in 1529. It was a bit of a paradox really. The buildings displayed God's faithfulness through the ages. The worship expressed new winds of the Spirit. I was gladly wrapped in both, stronger and more convinced that God really is the way, the truth, and the life. Forever and ever, Amen.

Our mission at the Billy Graham Center is to reach people for Christ and we are dependent upon faithful supporters like you to help us accomplish that goal.

One way of doing this is by joining the "Life Circle." This term reflects our focus here at the Billy Graham Center. "Life" refers to eternal life. Our work helps many move from death to everlasting life in Jesus Christ. "Circle" refers to the community of people who join us in this goal. Members commit to giving \$1,000 or more to the Billy Graham Center per year. To join our Life Circle, please indicate on the enclosed card.

Thank you to our many Centerline readers who are already regular supporters. Please know that every dollar helps in doing God's work.

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

Louise J. Allison



Connecting Science and Faith: Dr. Hugh Ross Makes a Presentation at the BGC

Dr. Hugh Ross, founder and director of **Reasons to Believe**, recently presented "Using a Testable Creation Model to Reach an Unbelieving World" at the Billy Graham Center. Ross, an astronomer and Bible teacher, focused on the link between science and faith. As a world-renown astrophysicist, Ross came to faith in Christ while doing historical and scientific reality tests on the Bible. Concluding that the Word of God was true, Ross began his mission to help others understand that nature and God's revelation in Scripture do not contradict. Today he travels the world, challenging audiences in what they believe about Scripture and nature and why.

Reasons to Believe is an international, interdenominational ministry committed to communicating the factual basis for belief in the Bible as the one and only Word of God. Ross' visit was sponsored by The Institute of Strategic Evangelism.

on BGC Evangelism Partners

BGC advisory committee member Perry Bowers is founder and president of Focused Living Ministries, based in Columbia, South Carolina. Dedicated to helping men begin and mature in their relationship with Christ, the ministry, founded in 1993, provides dozens of forums and meetings annually. Bowers frequently speaks at seminars, workshops, and crusades internationally about the love and grace of God. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Maryland, a Masters from Western Conservative Baptist Seminary, and a Doctorate from Columbia International University. He is also an ordained pastor. Bowers recently spoke with editorial assistant, Laurie Fortuna, about his ministry for Christ.



unbeliever a year and helped disciple him in Christ, what kind of legacy would you leave?" Colossians 4:2-6 is important here. We treat discipleship as a process, not just a one-time project.

Q What motivated you to found Focused Living Ministries?

Two things. First, there were so many unbelieving men who needed Christ, and yet most would not come on their own to Christ or to church. Second, there was a large number of men who didn't have a clue how to reach their friends at the workplace. Some were playing Christian music or leaving Bibles in the waiting rooms, but many just didn't have a clue how to use effective ways to share their faith. They had a great desire—"I've just GOT to help my family and friends and co-workers"—but didn't know how to go about it. Some people talk of the 10/40 Window [in missions]. We are addressing the 9 to 5 Window at the workplace.

Q Why is this type of ministry—devoted specifically to men's roles in both the home and the workplace—important today?

Men need special attention. They are not asking for teaching alone, they are asking for someone to help them and to show them how to share their faith. They want someone to help them think through these issues. They need a safe place to ask questions, where there are no financial concerns. We are here to help them through the discipling process.

Q What principles should a godly man embrace?

There are thousands, but I like to think in terms of eight roles a man plays. If understood and applied, all the principles of godliness form around those roles. They need to get the roles squared away and the principles will follow. One, as a creation of God. That's surrender. Two, as a reflection of the image of God. Three, as husband. That's being a servant-leader. Four, as father. That's being a model. Five, as friend. That's being an encourager and

a sharpener. Six, as church member. That's being part of a body or a team. Seven, as an employer or employee. That's being an ambassador or a Kingdom-builder. Eight, as community leader. That's being a change-agent, salt and light.

God has given men these eight hats and roles to play. We help men to learn how to wear the hats. Our ministry is about what God wants for our lives. Colossians 1:28-29 is our theme verse.

Q: In what ways do you see these eight godly roles in conflict with how society tells a man he should live?

For the unbeliever, the person is 180 degrees off. In the case of husbands, it may be servant leaders versus husbands being served. Or in the workplace, man reflects the image of God versus man re-

God has given men eight hats and roles to play. We help men to learn how to wear the hats.

flects culture and society. For the believer, it may be the person is only one degree off. Satan knows he won't get believers totally opposite from what God says, so his plan is to get them just a little off. Men are not looking for programs to help them in this process, they are looking for shepherds to lead them along the path. That's what we are trying to do here.

Q Talk about the Each One Reach One evangelism training tool in your ministry.

With men coming to Christ, there needed to be more than just a one-time training class, so I developed this booklet. The concept is, "What if you took one

Q What advice would you give the Christian man who may not see his workplace as an opportunity for ministry?

First, I take him to Luke 5. First day of class. Jesus got into Peter's boat. In that time, the boat was Peter's life situation. You've got to let Jesus get into your boat, whether it's in your family life, your workplace, or any other area. Second, we pray that he will have a soft heart. Third, we tell them to purpose themselves as an ambassador of Christ.

Q What's the most important thing churches can do to help men live godly lives?

First, stick to the basics. We get way too fancy nowadays and need to stick to what's important. Second, encourage the men. Challenge them not with hype, but with hope. Not the "you can do it" speeches, but by putting courage and strength and character into their lives. It's so important to remember that it's not what you can do for God, but what God does through you. Third, keep the focus on people. Have older men mentor younger men.

Q How does the Billy Graham Center fit into your ministry?

I'm in the trenches with men and so [the BGC] helps give me the big picture. It's like a jigsaw puzzle, where the big picture is the most important thing. I've got these one thousand men and all these pieces of the puzzle. I see the smaller picture. [Director] Lon [Allison] and the Billy Graham Center provide a box top to the jigsaw puzzle. I am reminded of what God is doing in the world, in the larger picture. It's like saying, "Here's the Z, now let's work backwards." I may be at the C or D, but have the larger picture in mind. That's very helpful.

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.

Continued from page 1

father/son baseball clinic, gardening, golfing, Hispanic, home improvement, poker, scrap booking, seniors, software engineers, women's prison, and youth.

"There's a longing and a hunger in people's hearts to fill the loneliness and emptiness that only God can fill," said the Reverend Dallas Anderson, one of the evangelists presenting the Gospel at the end of each group. "These affinity groups are nothing more than taking the Gospel out to a location where people feel most comfortable. It's a way to link the believing church to the non-believing world. The church hasn't always been good at making that bridge. This gives the believer a natural

Holly Ross



The youth affinity group attracted more than four hundred children and adults.

and neutral place to share the Gospel."

The weeklong event began Sunday, January 30, with an opening prayer rally, where Christians prayed for their non-believing friends by name. That night, nearly four hundred teens and adults attended the youth affinity, where the Dove Award winning band, downhere, played. BGC director Lon Allison ended the night with the Gospel message. Allison and Anderson were joined by the Reverend Angulus Wilson, who serves as associate director of the Mission Evangelism Program at Samford University, and Pastor Alberto Guerra, pastor of Hispanic ministries at Wheaton Bible Church in Wheaton, Illinois. The four rotated in giving the Gospel message and invitation of salvation at the end of each affinity group.

"Sometimes we think we don't have a message the world wants to hear, but that's just not true," said Rev. Anderson. "We have a very positive message. What happened here in Cary was God's answer

to prayer. It was, by far, the highest percentage of people accepting Christ that we have seen. Our goal was to make a personal connection with every single person who attended. If they just took one step closer to Christ, that was success."

Ed Beavers experienced that success firsthand. For five years he had been praying for his friend, Bob, to accept Christ. Before Beavers was saved in 2000, the two had dabbled in Zen, Buddhism, and other forms of religion. The night Beavers said the sinner's prayer, he had a dream Bob also accepted Christ. Bob was not ready to make the commitment and the two friends' paths diverged. They did, however, stay in touch occasionally. When the golf affinity came up, Beavers invited his friend, and much to his joy and amazement, Bob accepted Christ.

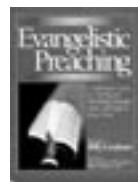
"A day before, someone had given him the same Gospel message—only in a different form," Beavers said. "He couldn't believe it was coincidence. God put Bob and I into each other's lives and I'll be here for him in whatever he needs."

Eight years ago, Jane Harrod also began sharing the Gospel with her boss. Although he never seemed interested, Harrod continued to pray for him. With her boss being an avid golfer, Harrod invited him to the affinity group. He made a commitment to Christ. "It was a very comfortable environment for him," Harrod said. "He was even a member at the golf club we were at. He's gone through a lot of rough things lately and something just hit a chord during the Gospel message. This whole thing has been bathed in prayer, so it was wonderful to see it happen. We should never write anyone off and say that they wouldn't be interested in the story of Jesus. God would never write anyone off."

Church members are now following up by sending cards, making phone calls, and inviting those who have made a commitment to Bible studies.

"God's been working on me the past five years, and through this I've learned more of what it means to be a church and to get out and share the Gospel," Beavers said. "There's a group here now that will forever be tied together because of what God did at this event. When we work together, God does something significant."

Special PRICE on self-study courses



Learn to construct evangelistic sermons. Hear and analyze sermons by: Leighton Ford, Billy Graham, D. James Kennedy, Luis Palau, Charles Swindoll and others. **Includes one manual and six cassette tapes. Complete course \$24.95.**

Learn how to equip new disciples. Be instructed and inspired by Bill Bright, Tony Evans, Howard Hendricks, and others. **Complete course \$24.95. Extra manuals \$4.95 each.**



Hear from well-known evangelical women including: Jill Briscoe, Elisabeth Elliot, Ann Graham Lotz. Includes one manual and six cassette tapes. **Complete course \$24.95. Extra manuals \$4.95 ea.**



22 titles available!

Pocket-sized evangelism and spiritual growth classics featuring the timeless teaching of "saints of old"—John Bunyan, Brother Lawrence, Phoebe Palmer, Charles Spurgeon, J. C. Ryle, D. L. Moody, George Müller, Catherine Booth and others.

SPECIAL PRICE \$2.50 ea.

(+10% shipping and handling)

Order online @

www.emisdirect.com



BILLY GRAHAM CENTER
WHEATON COLLEGE

LONNIE J. ALLISON ■ Director
KENNETH D. GILL ■ Associate Director
DOTSEY WELLIVER ■ Editor
Laurie Fortunak ■ Editorial Assistant
DONA DIEHL ■ Designer

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.

CenterLine is issued three times a year. Subscription is free. Send change of address to Billy Graham Center, Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL 60187-5593.

PHONE: (630) 752-5157
E-MAIL: BGCADM@wheaton.edu
WEB: www.billygrahamcenter.org


Wheaton College
For Christ and His Kingdom

Wheaton College complies with federal and state requirements for nondiscrimination on the basis of handicap, sex, race, color or ethnic origin in admission and access to its programs and activities.