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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## **COLLABORATIVE INTERNET EVANGELISM PROJECTS UNVEILED BY INTERNET EVANGELISM COALITION**

### **Online Evangelism Training and Follow-up Emphasized**



9/23/02 - (Chicago, IL) "Internet ministry is not nearly as easy as we thought it would be seven years ago," according to Dr. Quentin Schultze, (Professor of Communication Arts and Sciences at Calvin College, Grand Rapids, MI), keynote speaker for The Internet Evangelism Coalition Annual Meeting last week in Chicago. The Internet

Evangelism Coalition is a strategic partnership of denominations and ministries that began in 1997 to "stimulate and accelerate web evangelism within the worldwide Body of Christ."

Dr. Schultze went on to say that while many denominations and Christian ministries are doing web evangelism, in many ways web evangelism has become "a deeply grassroots phenomenon" and that denominations and ministries must find a way to come alongside the grassroots by providing quality content and follow-up. Dr. Schultze emphasized that the nature of the Internet demands collaboration on such efforts, such as that represented by the IEC.

### **IEC PROJECTS**

At this year's Annual Meeting the Internet Evangelism Coalition unveiled several projects within the coalition that are designed to assist denominations and ministries as well as the grassroots, including:

- A new spiritual seeker site: [www.NowTryGod.com](http://www.NowTryGod.com) (Gospelcom.net, Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and NeedHim.org)
- The development of one-of-a-kind online curriculum to train Christians to share their faith online, available soon at [www.webevangelism.org](http://www.webevangelism.org) (North American Mission Board – Southern Baptist Convention, Crown Financial Ministries, Gospelcom.net)
- The Growing in Christ web site ([www.growinginchrist.com](http://www.growinginchrist.com)) offering resources for new or immature believers to grow in the Christian faith (Campus Crusade for Christ)
- An update on [www.evangelismtoolbox.com](http://www.evangelismtoolbox.com) which provides Evangelism resources in 180 languages (Campus Crusade for Christ)

Dr. Sterling Huston, chair of the IEC, commended the efforts of the ministries and organizations involved, each one representing a "Kingdom mindset by creating resources that can be used by the larger Body of Christ around the world."

### **MODELS OF INTERNET EVANGELISM**

Paul Fleming, e-Solutions Manager for the American Tract Society, says Internet evangelism "is not about the technology, it's about reaching people for Christ." In addition to the "paper tracts" that ATS has produced for over 170 years, ATS is involved in Internet evangelism through the development of "DigiTracts," evangelism resources for

hand-held computers (PDA's) and "E-Tracts" ([www.atstracts.org/internet\\_evan.html](http://www.atstracts.org/internet_evan.html)).

Evangelische Omroep (OE), based in The Netherlands, has developed a new online Pre-Alpha Course known as "Why Jesus?" Richard Post, Editor-in-chief, says "Why Jesus?" connects real life with virtual reality by offering the opportunity for anyone to explore the Christian faith during a non-threatening three-week series of studies and fellowship with a Christian E-Coach. At the end of the three weeks, participants are given the opportunity to make a decision for Christ, continue with another study or connect with a local Alpha group. (The Alpha Course is a fifteen-session program - begun in the UK - to provide a practical introduction to the Christian faith.)

## **2002 AND BEYOND**

Dr. Huston underscores that the IEC will continue its work to promote and empower the Church to be involved in Internet evangelism by inspiring strategic thinking and resource development and by facilitating the collaborative use of resources and personnel for evangelism on the Internet. In the next twelve months IEC Executive Committee members Rev. Robby Richardson (Gospelcom.net) and Dr. Keith Stonehocker (Christianity Today International) will hold strategic consultations on the connection between the local church and Internet evangelism and on global Internet evangelism. In addition, the IEC will produce a free e-newsletter on Internet evangelism to subscribers.

## **HISTORY OF IEC**

The Internet Evangelism Facilitation Committee was born out of a consultation sponsored by The Billy Graham Center in April of 1997. The consultation voted to establish a committee to facilitate short-term collaborative Internet initiatives—with the emphasis on evangelism.

Following a 1999 conference, that Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Sterling Huston, was charged with establishing a permanent organization for ongoing support of collaborative initiatives. This led to the development of The Internet Evangelism Coalition, which now includes leaders representing hundreds of denominations and ministries. At the same time, The Billy Graham Center agreed to set up an office to assist the IEC in becoming self-sustaining. A temporary "BGC Internet Evangelism Coalition Department" was established to serve the Coalition.

## **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

For more information about the Internet Evangelism Coalition, go to [www.webevangelism.org](http://www.webevangelism.org) or call 630.752.5156. To subscribe to the free IEC e-newsletter, send an email to [iec@wheaton.edu](mailto:iec@wheaton.edu).

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## **MEDIA NOTE**

***For assistance in scheduling an interview concerning the Internet Evangelism Coalition, please contact Naomi Frizzell at 904.262.5202 or by email at [iec@wheaton.edu](mailto:iec@wheaton.edu).***