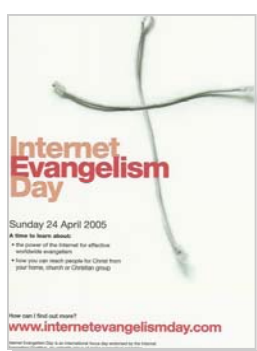


IN THIS EDITION

- **Internet Evangelism Day**
- **Decision Magazine On Internet Evangelism**
- **MinistryNet: Budapest 2005**
- **Internet and Culture News & Trends**



WIDE INTEREST IN INTERNET EVANGELISM DAY

By Tony Whitaker (editor – Web Evangelism Guide, www.web-evangelism.com)

The first worldwide *Internet Evangelism Day*, initiated by members of the Internet Evangelism Coalition, was observed on 24 April. Many churches and other groups around the world created a web evangelism awareness program within their services or other activities. Feedback from participants has been encouraging:

"I used the main presentation to talk about the Internet and some evangelism strategies, and asked people to come up with ideas for potential outreach sites on the Web. It was really encouraging to see quite a lot of inventive and creative ideas! We are working on re-developing our website at the moment, so hopefully will have a dual church/outreach focus to what we do." (church in Andover, UK) "It was a real eye opener for many. We used the drama skit One Billion Squares. While being somewhat humorous, it made a good point. During the fellowship time after the service, we had a computer set up showing various outreach websites. We also had a long list of websites in our bulletin." (church in Muncie, Indiana USA)

"People were challenged and inspired! We are going to review our church website, add evangelistic signature blocks to emails, and see how to use bulletin boards and chat rooms." (church in Dorking, UK) "We have been training a team of people as Internet evangelists over the last few months using the *Online Training for Online Evangelists* course develop by the *Internet Evangelism Coalition*. So, on the 24th, we took time in the service to graduate and commission our newly trained evangelists and speak about Internet evangelism." (church in Ottawa, Canada) A church in Saxonburg, Pennsylvania, USA used the children to present a demonstration of sharing God's love online. A handout for all the children was distributed, listing outreach sites for children that they could share with their friends.

Another *Internet Evangelism Day* is planned for next year. Meantime however, the website has been re-positioned, to encourage churches to create a web evangelism focus slot in their activities, at any time during the rest of this year. There is no need to wait till 2006! The site also has an ongoing web advocacy function, explaining ideas and strategies for online evangelism. A new page - 60 Tips for Effective Church Sites - is already helping churches understand how to create a website that can reach out into the community. <http://www.InternetEvangelismDay.com>

Editors note: Thanks to Tony Whitaker and his team for their excellent work on Internet Evangelism Day. We pray that many thousands of lives were changed for all eternity as they were ministered to online and through the outreach of churches, ministries and individuals. Let's pray, plan and work together toward IED 2006!

DECISION MAGAZINE ON INTERNET EVANGELISM
IEC Chair Sterling Huston wrote an article on Internet Evangelism for the April 2005 edition of Decision Magazine. You'll want to read the article for Internet statistics and for stories of people who have come to faith through online evangelism.
GO: http://www.billygraham.org/DMag_article.asp?ArticleID=551

MINISTRYNET: BUDAPEST 2005

by Gabe DeGuia



Sixty-seven people launched into a resounding applause as Austin finally entered the room. Like a desperate contestant on *Amazing Race*, Austin Okomowho was determined to make the trek from his West African home in Ghana to Hungary in Eastern Europe. Encountering visa trouble he went from Ghana to Lagos, Nigeria to Abuja, Nigeria back to Lagos, then to England, and finally two weeks later arrived in Budapest. All that time and effort to attend a 4-day conference which was half over by the time he arrived, seemed a little ridiculous. But when asked why he was so committed to being there he answered, "I have the distinct sense that God has something big in mind in regard to Internet ministry, but I have no idea what it is. This conference is the key. It is the beginning of something huge."

With Austin's arrival the official attendance of *MinistryNet: Budapest 2005* was 68, from 27 different countries and 5 continents. Helping Campus Crusade staff effectively launch and grow Internet ministries around the world has been a long time dream of Keith Seabourn, Chief Technology Officer for Campus Crusade for Christ, who started planning this event almost a year ago. The first gathering of its kind, *MinistryNet: Budapest 2005* sought to help a variety of people understand the use of the Internet in ministry. There were people who knew nothing about the Internet and those with several years of experience. According to Keith, the only requirement for those attending was to have a heart for ministry. "The key ingredients are ministry skills and a heart to see people's lives changed. When it comes to internet ministry most think they have to know a lot about technology, but that's not true. Today the technology is simple enough and Campus Crusade has provided a good, rich tool set that anyone can use. The cookies are on a very low shelf."

Sandu Onu from Moldova is taking advantage of that low shelf, gathering as many cookies as he can carry. "I joined staff in 1996," he said, "but I've never done anything with the Internet. I came here with a clean slate and now have a lot of ideas, direction and vision. I've learned that the tech part is easy and that the Internet can have a vital role in helping reach the 100,000 students on our campuses. If I didn't come here, we would not be able to launch this year."

Those with no experience like Sandu benefited from the collaborative sharing that took place from countries such as France, Spain, the United States and even the Middle East.

Eric Célérier was a pastor for twelve years without any knowledge of running an Internet ministry, but with a heart to reach French speakers with the love of Christ. He launched his evangelistic site, *topchretien.com* in 1999, and it has since become the number one Christian portal for French speaking sites. With a vast network of nearly 2,000 volunteers from 40 countries, Eric's web ministry sees an average of 15,000 people visit every day. Since March of 2002, over fifteen thousand have indicated a decision to receive Christ as their Savior.

WorldLinc, a ministry of Campus Crusade based in Orlando, Florida, introduced ARC (Assist Response Center) that helps follow up those who come to Christ over the Internet. Conferees were able to see how it works and adopt it into their own ministry. The sophisticated system forwards "decisions" to trained volunteers anywhere in the world to personally reply to new Christians, helping them grow in their relationship with God. The program makes it possible for German speakers to follow up German speakers, or athletes to respond to athletes, or any way a ministry chooses to set it up. If a volunteer can only handle one new person a week, then they only receive one email a week. It's an amazing tool being used to help minister to the thousands of people finding God via the Internet.

"Internet ministry is limitless!" became a repeated phrase as excitement about reaching the unreachable grew. News about a website for Arab students indicated that 298,100 had visited since November and 3,200 of them had become Christians.

Yván Pinto from Spain summarized an interesting pattern among young people, a trend that seems to be true across cultures. "We have a generation that thinks with their hearts and listens with their eyes." Several at the conference agreed with this, recognizing that teenagers in their respective countries are turning to the Internet as their primary source of truth. That makes Internet ministry necessary to effectively reach the young people of today.

At the beginning of the conference Keith Seabourn asked, "Are you just building a website or are you reaching the world?"

During these four days, coaching was provided in the areas of design, marketing, branding, and technology. At the end of the conference, Toni from Albania commented, "I didn't want to come here. I thought, 'Why do I have to be there? I know nothing about the Internet.' But now I know. It's not about high technology and great design. It's about our call to go and make disciples of all nations."

For a "Budapest Retrospect" from Rob Williams, please go to <http://orangejack.blogspot.com/2005/04/budapest-retrospective.html> or here <http://www.orangejack.com/ministry/ministrynet.htm>

INTERNET & CULTURE TRENDS, NEWS & LINKS

National Day of Prayer in the U.S.: May 5. GO <http://www.ndptf.org/>

Global Day of Prayer: May 15. This day will also be broadcast from "the rising to the setting of the sun." Starting on the Pacific Rim, a television, radio and Internet simulcast will cover events across each of the continents. GO <http://www.globaldayofprayer.com/>

Assist News: Pope and Email. Showing that Pope Benedict XVI intends to follow in the footsteps of John Paul II's multimedia ministry, the Vatican has modified its Web site so that users who click on an icon on the home page automatically activate an email composer with his address. GO <http://www.assistnews.net/Stories/s05040113.htm>

Baptist Press: Web Site Tools. Web sites become effective tools for reaching college-age students. GO <http://www.bpnews.net/bpnews.asp?ID=20595>

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Pew Internet & American Life: Online Filters. More than half of American families with teenagers use filters to limit access to potentially harmful online content – a 65% increase from 2000. But big majorities of both teens and parents believe that teens do things on the Internet that their parents would not approve of. GO http://www.pewinternet.org/PPF/r/152/report_display.asp

BBC: Project to Open the Internet to the blind.
GO http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/northern_ireland/4457793.stm

BBC: Blogging from East to West.
GO http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/click_online/4398243.stm

IEC ENewsletter Information

Questions and comments regarding the Internet Evangelism Coalition ENewsletter are welcome. Email iec@webevangelism.com. To submit content for possible inclusion in an upcoming IEC ENewsletter, please email Naomi Frizzell at naomi@webevangelism.com. The IEC reserves the right to refuse or edit any submitted content.
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Send this email: Know someone who is interested or involved in Internet Evangelism? Consider sending this email to them and encouraging them to subscribe.

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