

Online Evangelism Initiative Offers E-Counselors, Discipleship Coaches

Billy Graham may not be preaching in stadiums anymore, but the work he started lives on through a new Internet evangelism initiative to reach people online with the gospel.

The Billy Graham Evangelistic Association launched the program in beta form in late April, and thousands have already viewed an online gospel presentation and indicated making a commitment to Jesus Christ.

“Every day, people are searching online for answers,” says Preston Parrish, executive vice president of ministry for the BGEA. “In their time of need, we are presenting the only hope we have in this world—the hope found through a relationship with Jesus Christ.”

Here’s how it works: When individuals enter phrases like “What happens when I die?” or “Why am I here?” in popular search engines, BGEA’s Internet evangelism project will direct the searcher to relevant web pages that address the questions the inquirer is asking and offer the hope of the gospel as the ultimate and true solution to the need. The searcher can make a commitment to Jesus Christ, or will be able to chat with an “e-counselor” to learn more. For more information on the Internet evangelism project, visit www.bgea.org. On the site, visitors will see how the program works, as well as real-time commitments being made around the world.

In the coming months, trained volunteer “e-counselors” will be available to chat online with spiritual seekers in an effort to lead even more people into a relationship with Christ. What’s more, “discipleship coaches” will offer follow-up training to those who have made a commitment and encourage

them in finding a church in their area.

The program is an extension of BGEA's commitment to proclaim the gospel by every effective means available and equip others to do the same. Billy Graham pioneered the use of radio, television and motion pictures to spread the Gospel around the world. Today, BGEA continues in the spirit of innovation through the use of the Internet and social media.

"Today's generation lives on the Internet," says Parrish. "Much like our historic strategy of going where the people are—into stadiums, civic arenas and public gathering areas—we are doing the same as we reach into cyberspace with the Good News of God's love, and His offer of forgiveness and eternal life through faith in Christ."