

# **This 1 Outreach Saw 5 Million Decisions for Christ**

It's still dark outside when Janet Wright takes a seat at her large, wooden desk.

She begins typing on the laptop in front of her as a cat curls up in a black cushioned office chair nearby. Wright is in her office at home in Texas, chatting online with a woman halfway across the world—and leading her to a relationship with Christ.

Wright is one of more than 330 trained volunteers with BGEA's (Billy Graham's Evangelistic Association) Internet evangelism ministry, Search for Jesus. And one of many who are part of a new ministry milestone: 5 million decisions for Christ. That's like filling New York's Yankee Stadium 100 times with people who have said yes to Christ.

"Five million is exciting," Internet Evangelism Director John Cass said as the ministry approached this milestone. "But a second later, a minute later, somebody else is going to make a decision, and that's just as exciting."

The ministry hit the milestone Monday morning.

BGEA launched Search for Jesus (SFJ) in April 2011, building upon decades of Billy Graham's multimedia ministry by using the Internet to share the love of Christ across the United States and around the world.

Through SFJ's evangelistic website, *p*, people of all ages are seeing and hearing a clear gospel message through videos and Scripture. The website allows them to commit their lives to Christ or ask a question.

More than 25 million people have been exposed to the gospel

since the ministry began, with many receiving one-on-one discipleship and free follow-up materials.

The individual interaction comes through SFJ's trained volunteers across the country. They serve as e-counselors, chatting live with people on ; as discipleship coaches, guiding people through a free, online discipleship course called *k*; or as email responders, answering spiritual questions and pointing people to Christ.

Wright, a retired paralegal, volunteers as an e-counselor.

"Today is a divine appointment," she prays before sitting down at her computer to chat online. "Whoever you bring to me, Lord, let me be your instrument."

Wright's Bible lays open on her desk. And there's a stack of index cards with different verses written on them. She uses those as prayers for people who want to chat online.

"I'm always amazed that the very Scripture passages I've been studying are the ones appropriate for *that* visitor God brings *that* day," she said.

She recently chatted online with a woman across the globe who said she couldn't connect with God and didn't know why. The woman said she was "born Christian," but as Wright chatted with her, the woman realized she had a decision to make. She made that decision as Wright explained how to ask Christ into her life.

Internet evangelism is just one way BGEA carries on Billy Graham's ministry of spreading the gospel worldwide.

"The Internet commands the largest and fastest-growing audience segment on the face of the earth," BGEA Vice President Duane Gaylord said. Gaylord oversees the Internet evangelism ministry and said while radio, TV and other modes of communication are still relevant today—as they were when

Billy Graham first started out—"we at the BGEA realize that to share the gospel, you have to find ears to listen and eyes to watch, so you have to go to where the audience is gathering."

That audience includes dozens of countries around the globe.

"We can do Internet evangelism in countries we can't get into," Cass said. "We can't put Billy Graham or Franklin Graham or Will Graham in some of these countries. ... [Yet] Jesus' words to us were, 'Go into all nations.' This technology has given us the option to go to all nations."

Some of those nations have taken SFJ by surprise.

While the ministry has mostly targeted English speakers, the past few months have seen an increase in people reached in Middle Eastern countries—places like Iraq and Pakistan.

Anyone can see where decisions for Christ are being made through a SFJ website that uses Google Earth to pinpoint these decisions in real time. And recently, it's pinpointed lots of places in the Mideast.

Cass said, "We had people coming from all parts of the world, but when things heated up there this past spring, it also started spinning our globe there more frequently."

For Cass, that's a sign of God's hand in the ministry; even if SFJ isn't actively targeting these countries, God can open doors for them to be reached.

**Read more about recent decisions for Christ in the Middle East.**

Wherever the globe lands, BGEA's Internet evangelism team gets excited. That means someone has indicated a decision for Christ through . The ministry is also working with partner sites in Mexico, Canada, the U.K., Portugal and the Philippines, as well as with, which reaches U.S. Spanish speakers.

But Internet evangelism extends beyond BGEA's Internet Evangelism department. SFJ volunteers have also responded to people who watch BGEA Festivals streaming online and want to make a decision for Christ or submit a question. And the ministry has supported BGEA efforts like the My Hope outreach by providing one-on-one follow-up for new believers.

The ministry isn't just online, either. SFJ is working to connect people online to local churches that will help them grow in their faith.

While 5 million decisions for Christ is something to celebrate, SFJ know the ministry is about each person, not a number.

Joan Garvey volunteers as an e-counselor.

"It is only through the Holy Spirit that I am able to respond so personally to the people I chat with," Garvey said. "On my own, I would respond with impatience, perhaps judgment, quick answers, rote prayers and little compassion. With the Holy Spirit with me, I am so often overwhelmed by the thought of how much God loves this person."