



# The Sillysheep Pen

## Finding the lost, Binding the brokenhearted

## NEW EXPERIENCES

June 2010

So, what three words would you use to describe your life right now?", Joe Ferrito started.

The sun was bright and the gentle breeze was blowing in from the ocean. It was the perfect beach day. And that's where Joe Ferrito, one of the students in my action group, and I were. We were meeting up for some one-on-one discipleship time and taking a walk on the beach.

As part of that time, we were trying to get into spiritual conversations with people using the Quest 1.0 questionnaire.

"Meaningless, purposeless, and lonely", replied Os. He was one of the 3 young men we were talking with. His two friends chimed in with their own answers and we talked for nearly 2 hours. Os had spent his childhood in Bosnia during the war. His close brushes with death, both in war-torn Bosnia and the drug culture of America have led him to conclude that there must be no God, and if God did exist, He certainly didn't care. Though our conversation with Os was finally cut short, we pray that God would continue to send others who would share His love with Os and his friends.

Day after day, we encounter people on the boardwalks and beaches. Many are open to spiritual conversation as they look out at the ocean and enjoy God's creation.

But, our opportunities for the gospel are not limited to "initiative" evangelism. Each year thousands of international students come to Wildwood to work for the summer. As part of their American experience, many hope to improve their English, make new friends and discover America. Everywhere we go, we see groups of international students. It is an incredible opportunity to reach the world right here on the Jersey shore.

Each summer over 200,000 vacationers come to the island of Wildwood, NJ and the tourism industry draws over 1,000 students from around the world here to work and practice English. These students represent a wide array of countries, many of which are from some of the areas in the world that are least reached with the gospel. Since 1974, a group of college students from around the country have come to Wildwood to reach out to the people here and grow in their relationships with God.

### Nations we have connected with this summer:

Azerbaijan	Ghana	Kyrgyzstan	Serbia
Belarus	Greece	Macedonia	Spain
Bulgaria	Honduras	Malaysia	Taiwan
China	Israel	Moldova	Thailand
Columbia	Jamaica	Paraguay	Turkey
Egypt	Jordan	Russia	Ukraine
Ecuador	Kazakhstan	Saudi Arabia	

Opportunities for the gospel also arise as project students work alongside internationals at their jobs. One of the resources we are using to help students intentionally develop relationships at work with the purpose of sharing the gospel is "Godspace", a great book by Doug Pollock.

Wildwood Summer Project is a great opportunity for Christian students to not only grow in sharing their faith, but also to treasure Christ in their own lives and walk in the freedom of God's grace. This summer, the book of Galatians provided a great foundation for understanding the grace of the Gospel and the need to break free from performance and legalism. As students embrace this freedom, they are able to share it with those around them here as well as back on campus in the fall.



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## God at Work (literally)

Dan and Richard's story began in the McDonald's kitchen. Dan, a summer project student met Richard, a student from China, while they were both working at McDonalds for the summer. In addition to more traditional initiative evangelism, summer project has a special focus to evangelism in natural settings, most notably the students' summer jobs. We train students to reach out to their coworkers by asking good questions and listening well—two of the best tools for building a relationship and sharing God's love and truth. As Dan got to know Richard, he repeatedly invited him to the project's "International Café," a weekly event when the project offers free internet access, grocery store rides, and English conversation tables to serve the international students in the area. Eventually, Richard came and Dan was able to walk with him through "Solarium," an evangelistic tool in which people choose photos to communicate their thoughts on life and God. When asked what God is like, Richard chose a picture of a dark bridge with a light in the distance. Richard described it as representing hope, but he was not sure where this hope could come from. Dan shared the Gospel message and how we can have hope through Jesus. Richard was intrigued and receptive. Two days later he met up with Dan again to "accept the gift." Dan explained the Gospel again, this time with a bi-lingual gospel presentation and Richard prayed a prayer of repentance and faith in Chinese. Even more encouraging is the fact that Richard is already taking steps to learn more about God and grow in the Gospel!

## Grace in Action

We say that we believe we don't have to do anything to receive salvation, just accept God's gracious gift, but how often do we live that out? Keren is a witty, personable freshman at Harvard who seeks the truth and is not afraid to ask hard questions. In conversations this summer with her staff Action Group leader, she explored these questions and eventually concluded that she was living under a performance mindset because she had been taught her whole life both directly and indirectly that you have to work to please God and if you are not living a good enough life then you are not going to heaven. As they explored this further, she began to understand grace more and how performance is not consistent with the gospel. She asked God to help her understand and accept grace. By the next week, she was excited to share how God had really been making grace clear to her and showing her how much He loves her no matter what she does. She shared that God showed her how much she has been able to forgive family members for some very hard things in her past because she loves them so much, and how much more He does that for her. That same week she got to experience grace when she apologized to a friend and not only was forgiven but was also encouraged. She was so excited and is continuing to grow in the understanding that God desires her to live in freedom. When Keren returns to Harvard in the fall, she will be a powerful counter cultural force in the performance driven campus world.



## Prayer Corner

- Pray for a smooth transition as staff leave and students take leadership of the project.
- Pray for the growth of those in Wildwood who have professed faith in Jesus.
- Please pray that the Lord will lead us to new ministry partners who will partner with us to reach lost students here at UMass, Smith College and beyond.
- Please pray that Joe and Jen will maintain a vital relationship with Jesus.

Thank you for your faithful prayers & support!

Your help makes summer project possible where we played a significant role in bringing to fruition the vision of treasuring Christ and making Him known. Joe led small groups with 3 men & met weekly with each for discipleship appointments to nurture and challenge each student in their areas of need and strength. Students were equipped with ministry and leadership skills in the light of eternal perspective and God's heart for the world. As the staff transitioned out, we have trained the student leaders and encouraged each student in their roles for the rest of project and ministry in the fall.