



## Academy's Mentor Training Program Launches Fall 2011



"My best memory of David Larson is his humility, not only during the course but ever since I met him," wrote **Joseph Ashong**, a PhD student from Ghana at Cornell University, about his mentor

**David Larson** (affiliated with Intl. Students, Inc.) with whom he field-tested the Academy's first course.

Humble and wise mentors significantly impact their mentees. So it's no surprise that mentoring students is a major focus of the Academy, which will launch its "Mentoring for Change" training program on September 24 and October 15 in the Twin Cities.

"Our capacity to effectively mentor students---Americans and internationals---will at least triple or quadruple because of the training," commented the Academy's executive director, **Dr. Robert Osburn**.

The Academy's mentoring program aims to instill the character, skills, and processes that enable mentees and mentors to, like Jesus with His 12 disciples, creatively and courageously apply a biblical worldview in their societies and workplaces.

The Saturday, September 24 workshop introduces basic mentoring concepts and practices, including biblical examples, while the October 15 workshop focuses on cross-cultural mentoring. **Dr. Linda Leonard**, the Academy's educational consultant, emphasizes group work and exercises that help trainees internalize mentoring values and practices. Wilberforce Academy mentor training distinctively focuses on culturally-aware, professionally-oriented, and spiritually and

theologically-competent mentoring. Participants will learn how to utilize the three courses that have been developed by the Academy.

When asked about matching mentors and mentees, Osburn indicated that there would be opportunities for participants to attend as mentor-mentee pairs or for discovering how to be matched with a mentor/mentee. Sponsors may send potential student mentees, including those who are not yet followers of Christ.



*Dr. Linda Leonard with an international friend and her daughter*

The training lasts from 9 am to 5:30 pm (on-site lunch and refreshments included) at Ebenezer Lutheran Brethren Church, on the corner of 41<sup>st</sup> St and Cedar Av S. (Hwy 77) in south Minneapolis (18 blocks south of Hwy 55 and east of I-35W). (See enclosed information card for both mentors and mentees who want to register.)

"Students today are eager to have a mentor. Christian students desperately need guidance on how to apply their Christian faith in the workplace and in the broader flow of society," said Osburn. Wise, humble mentors like David Larson can make a lifelong difference in students who may well be future leaders for Christ in society and on the job.

## Kairos Timing

“It’s hard not to see that God has developed Wilberforce Academy ‘for such a time as this,’” said Robert Osburn, the Academy’s executive director recently. He was reflecting on a recent conference of campus ministers where many showed interest in the courses being developed by the Academy. He was also conscious of the classic distinction in Greek between two kinds of time: *chronos*, referring to sequential time, and *kairos*, referring to special times when major changes occur. Osburn was saying, “We’re in *kairos* time.”

What are some of the evidences that God has raised up the Academy to serve His purposes at this time in history?



- Evangelical college students are much more interested in applying their faith to real needs in society (see “I’ve Been Thinking” sidebar).
- At a time of globalization, the overall resurgence of religion across the globe means that students today must be skilled in negotiating their faith in public life and in the workplace. The days of privatized faith are long gone!
- As more international students begin to return home in greater numbers, international student re-entry is being prioritized far more than ever before.
- College students, whether international or American, are much more interested in being mentored. They are looking for reliable models of how to successfully apply a Christian perspective in family life, public life, and the workplace.

How can the Academy respond to this *kairos* moment in world history?

- Help build the all-important connection between ideas and action, between a worldview and its consequences in real history. We emphasize this theme in all our courses.
- Help students to wrestle with the implications of their faith in societies that do not possess a Christian cultural heritage. We want mentors to help students wrestle with how their faith works back home.
- Insist on the biblical goal of personal and social transformation, not the mere accumulation of good information. Our educational program is built around this vision which fits with biblical teaching (Romans 12:1-2).
- Develop culturally-relevant tools that provide guidance on how to foster redemptive change in societies where these practices (and a host of others) predominate. In January 2012, the Academy will host an international student retreat on how “Christ Conquers the Culture of Corruption.”

### I’ve Been Thinking...

The energy poured into positive evangelical social initiatives is wonderful news (see “Can Cause of Social Justice Tame Culture Wars?” in June 27 *USA Today*). I have two concerns, however. First, social action will never replace conversion. There is a **very powerful** theological argument that social action absolutely requires a concomitant commitment to evangelism. My second concern is that many wrongly want to put evangelical social action **against** evangelical political action. A biblical worldview, however, will not allow us to separate them. According to John 1:17, Jesus simultaneously embodied grace and truth. So should we. The same couple hosting international students works to pass laws sanctioning one man-one woman marriage. Those who battle for justice in City Hall open their homes to those living on the street. Some of our Academy mentees work for biblical justice in their nations while also feeding the poor. I grow weary of those who unnaturally pit acts of compassion against promoting a biblical vision for society. Actually, I want to do both simultaneously, because truth and grace are as inseparable as is Jesus’ preaching and His compassion.



-- Bob Osburn