

# Changing lives...together

I'm trying to reconcile two conflicting messages I've heard recently. Maybe you can help me.

The first message came from a woman after one of my Faith Study seminars this fall. She said to me, "I've always had the questions, 'Why should I believe,' and 'Is the Bible true?' Now I understand—and I believe!" At the seminar's conclusion, she had indicated a first-time commitment of faith in Jesus Christ.

Whether they say it personally, or simply indicate on the evaluation form, this kind of response to our seminars has been gaining momentum. In 1994, 89 people noted such a commitment. Five years later, in 1999, almost 1,500 attendees indicated that they had made a faith commitment to Christ (and that number doesn't include thousands who responded to Toby Travis' presentations during his international outreaches). That's an increase greater than 1,600%! You, as a Faith Studies shareholder, can rejoice at your part in helping to make this happen.

The second message, however, creates the dissonance in my mind. Not long ago, one of our financial supporters—a shareholder—called to say, "I've noticed that Faith Studies is growing in its ministry every year...so I'm going to drop my support and give to a ministry that's struggling and really needs it."

For me, this is a conflicting message. After all, why would someone want to withdraw support from a work that God is blessing? And why would the growth of Faith Studies mean we no longer need people's support—whether it be prayer, financial gifts, or some other involvement? If you've been reading our newsletters, you realize that Faith Studies is not rolling along comfortably. Just a month ago, we were about \$250,000 short of the income required for the planned needs of 1999!

Yes, God provides, but he provides through the generous gifts of his people.

Last year we celebrated 20 years of growing outreach ministry. That was possible, first, because God has blessed our proclamation of the gospel—as thousands of people have experienced new life in Jesus Christ. Second, it was possible because so many people have joined Faith Studies as shareholders, through financial support, as well as through prayer, volunteering, and other involvement.

As this ministry expands (and the budget expands with it), it's easy to think that small gifts are insignificant, that they really don't matter. Not true! You'll notice, later in this *Shareholder Report*, a graph showing that friends of Faith Studies provide 74% of the income this ministry needs.

Every gift is important. Many people are amazed to learn that half of Faith Studies' supporters give less than \$100 per year. In fact, if every one of the 8,000 households on our mailing list had given only \$55 during 1999, we would have met all of our personnel expenses!

Soon we'll be celebrating 21 years of ministry growth. That growth has been a team effort. As a shareholder, you are on the team. With your commitment, with your support in prayer, participation, and financial giving, we will continue to expand this ministry of changing lives.

I urge you to take time to read the articles in this *Shareholder Report*. I believe you'll be encouraged by what God has done through your participation. Rejoice with us! I also believe you'll be challenged to "stay the course" by again committing yourself to be a vital part of the Faith Studies team of shareholders.

Together for the Kingdom

Dr. Don Bierle  
Executive Director

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***With your commitment,  
with your support in  
prayer, participation, and  
financial giving, we will  
continue to expand this  
business of changing lives.***

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January 2000

1999 Shareholder Report

# Friend to Friend video to be released in early 2000

In early 2000, Faith Studies will celebrate the long-anticipated release of our new small-group evangelism training video, *Friend to Friend*. After hours of tireless—not to mention patient—filming, editing, and general assistance, the video is in its final production stages.

We spent the summer months writing and revising the script in preparation for filming in the fall. After thoroughly examining the qualifications of local production companies, Faith Studies chose Mahoney Media to film and edit the eight-part video. Mahoney Media's experience and attention to detail were key factors in our selection. In addition to having worked on *The Faith Study* video in 1995, Mahoney Media has worked with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, PAX Network, and Focus on the Family.

Filming started in October. Many days, Mahoney Media had multiple crews working around the Twin Cities getting all of the footage for the two and a half hours of video. Film crews were dispatched to churches, homes, parks, offices—even the state capitol in St. Paul—to shoot everything that was needed. Over 80 volunteers took time off from work and busy schedules to appear in the film. Whether they presented their testimony or

merely appeared in the background, these volunteers contributed significantly to the final cut.

Although production is nearly finished, you still have the opportunity to contribute to the production costs of this important video series. Please indicate "Friend to Friend video" on the memo line of your check if you want your donation to help defray production costs. And please pray that God will prepare the way for the use of this video in churches across the country to involve more people in evangelism for his kingdom.



Faith Studies teachers and Mahoney Media work on a scene from the upcoming small-group evangelism training video, *Friend to Friend*

## Volunteers make the difference at Faith Studies

Each month, about 30 Faith Studies volunteers generously offer their time to help out with various ministry needs. In 1999, volunteers coordinated the monthly newsletter mailings, helped with data entry, and made our new office our new home by painting the walls and moving furniture. The Faith Studies mailing list grew dramatically in 1999. In December alone, volunteers spent almost 90 total hours preparing the Christmas letter for mailing to over 8,000 addresses.

With four documents in each envelope, our volunteers handled more than 32,000 pieces—plus the envelope! But the contribution of volunteers goes far beyond merely finishing a task. During 1999, our volunteers saved the ministry approximately \$10,000 in mail preparation, data entry, and other office costs.

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***"The Lord put a song in my life and I want to share it with others who want hope and a purpose for life."***

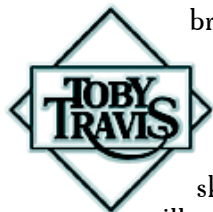
*—Glen Blanchard, regular Faith Studies volunteer*

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We're extremely grateful for the tireless efforts of our volunteers. Our gratitude, however, is not just because of the savings their work provides, for no value can be placed on the fellowship that you find when a group of people united in Christ come together to work for his kingdom!

If you live in the Twin Cities, won't you prayerfully consider spending some time with us in our offices to complete mailings and update our mailing list? Only a few hours of your time will have a dramatic impact on the operation of the Faith Studies ministry.

## Toby Travis Ministries merger brings a new perspective



The Toby Travis Ministries merger in July brought a new dimension to the Faith Studies program. Toby's unique presentation of the gospel message has reached tens of thousands of people throughout the world. We know there were those who raised skeptical eyebrows about the addition of an illusionist to the Faith Studies staff. But there's no illusion about the effect that Toby's gospel presentation has on his audiences.

One of the most successful events of the year was Toby's Halloween presentation of *Searching the Supernatural*. More than 500 people—many who were about to hear the gospel message for the first time—crowded into Eastern Hills Wesleyan

Church in Buffalo, NY. By the end of the evening, Toby's audience heard a critical examination of the paranormal claims encountered in the media and expounded by New Age adherents and followers of the occult. They also heard the gospel and received an invitation from Toby to dismiss myth and to accept Jesus Christ.

It's exciting when we receive response cards indicating that people have made a faith commitment at one of our presentations. By combining the excitement generated by a Toby Travis appearance with Faith Studies follow-up tools, we ensure that the message remains in front of the new believer or seeker instead of fading into memory. It also encourages joining with other believers, increasing the assimilation of new believers into mainstream involvement in their church.

# Shareholders still at the center of our ministry

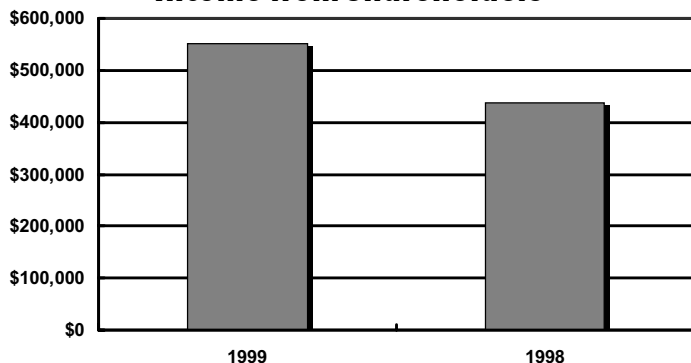
Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be. **Matthew 6:19-21**

Just a glance at the headlines in this report will tell you that Faith Studies experienced tremendous growth in 1999. A new office, a larger staff, a merger... God certainly deserves the glory for all he has done!

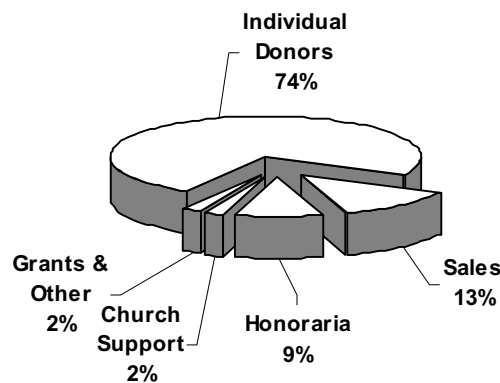
Growth, however, comes at a cost. We stretched the budget beyond its limit in 1999 to accommodate such expenses as office renovations and the costs of merging with Toby Travis Ministries. As our proclamation of the gospel increases, we depend more than ever on the generosity of our donors—our “shareholders” with us in this Kingdom work.

In 1999, contributions dropped to many nonprofit organizations because of Y2K concerns. Many generous people withheld their normal contributions, unsure about what the year 2000 might bring. But it is in God we trust, and we are confident

## Income from Shareholders



## Income Sources



that he will continue to provide for his work that we do at Faith Studies. Although donations have not quite kept pace with our growth, we rejoice in the 649 contributors in 1999 who gave a projected \$572,000. This is an increase of 102 shareholders and \$113,647 over 1998.

We could not have experienced this rapid growth without supporters who share our vision of helping people find new life through Jesus Christ. While 74% of our income is from individual donors, we continue to increase our income from other sources. Seminar honorariums are up 59% and ministry product sales are up 19% in 1999. However, it is our individual financial shareholders who remain the vital link in fulfilling our mission.

It is our prayer that the new year finds you well, with a heart full of joyous anticipation of Jesus' return. We ask, too, that you remember Faith Studies in your prayers and join with us as shareholders by contributing through regular prayer for the ministry, promoting the work of Faith Studies in your community, volunteering at our offices, and supporting the ministry financially.

# FaithSearch presents evidence for faith to youth

When we published *FaithSearch* in the spring of 1999, a whole new area of outreach opened up for Faith Studies. *FaithSearch* was the tool we needed to reach the youth in our churches and communities and to help them discover the same principles taught in *Surprised by Faith* and the Faith Study. The response to *FaithSearch* has been nothing short of phenomenal.

With minimal promotion, Faith Studies has sold nearly 3,000 copies of *FaithSearch*, and requests for the book show no signs of slowing down. Those sales don't include books sold in bookstores. Emerald Books, *FaithSearch*'s publisher, has commented that bookstores are enthusiastic about the book.

*FaithSearch* is being used in church youth groups, Christian school curricula, and even as a follow-up discipleship tool for the Twin Cities Power Team

outreach. Due to the generosity of Twin Cities attorney Brian Peterson, *FaithSearch* has even found its way onto the shelves of public school libraries in Minnesota. And a Faith Studies volunteer is working diligently with state correctional representatives to include *FaithSearch* as part of a plan to reach young people in Minnesota's juvenile correction system.

*FaithSearch* helps Christian youth discover for themselves what and why they believe about God, Jesus, the Bible, and their own existence. It equips students for defending and sharing their faith in high school. In college and on the workforce, many young people are bombarded with alternative view points that challenge their faith. *FaithSearch* helps solidify the foundation established by parents, pastors, and teachers. Regardless of your age, going beyond

what you know to understanding why you know is a powerful defense and witness.

Please pray with us that God will use *FaithSearch* as a tool to reach youth in confirmation classes, youth and family camps, and in Christian and home schools. Also pray that people will use *FaithSearch* to strengthen their faith and share it with others.



Youth leaders get their first look at *FaithSearch* at a brunch at Chrystal E.-Free in New Hope, Minn., in November

# Faith Studies brings skeptics to faith across the U.S.

At Faith Studies, we have a clear mission: assist people in discovering new life through faith in Jesus Christ. It is a mission that sets us on the purpose of fulfilling Jesus' Great Commission in Matthew 28:19-20. Everything we do at Faith Studies seeks to obey Jesus' command to make disciples—and to help others do the same.

We employ a variety of publications and seminars to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ:

- ▲ The Faith Study seminar and *Surprised by Faith* and *FaithSearch* books help adults and youth understand *why* they believe, and guides skeptics to the truth that the Bible is reliable and that Jesus is Lord and Savior
- ▲ The *Owner's Manual* discipleship guide helps people strengthen their relationship with God, regardless of where they are in their spiritual walk.
- ▲ The *Friend to Friend* seminar and video mobilizes entire congregations in evangelism by focusing attention on the gifts that each person has and can use to build relationships with the unchurched and uncommitted.

But all of these tools have something very important standing behind them: people dedicated to sharing the good news of Jesus Christ with as many as possible.

God has blessed this ministry and guided us through enormous growth over the past 12 months. The Faith Studies staff includes seven teacher-evangelists (five full-time and two associates) who present the ministry's outreach and training seminars across the country. In 1999, our teacher evangelists spent nearly 1,000 hours in front of 30,000\* people in the United States teaching, encouraging, and bringing 1,449\* skeptics to faith. Participating churches represented 26 denominations.



Faith Studies made presentations in 25 states in 1999 (shaded areas).

We are excited about what God has planned for us in 2000. With the staff and resources we have developed, we expect this to be the most fruitful year in Faith Studies' history. We pray that you will join us as a shareholder with your prayers, financial contributions, and by bringing someone you know to attend a Faith Studies seminar.

## Successful gospel outreach is no illusion

A pastor's wife approached me after a recent **Illusion & Beyond** for a confidential talk. We stepped aside and she shared that she had been very skeptical about the use of illusion as an evangelistic tool. The show had changed her mind. She said she believed it was the single most effective tool she had ever witnessed to communicate the gospel to the non-Christian in our culture.

We live in an entertainment culture where the average American watches 6-7 hours of TV *each day*. And, with 96% of Americans saying they believe

in God, our culture is also spiritually minded. An illusion show appeals to that entertainment thirst and then very naturally brings up the topic of the supernatural. For example, after I create the illusion of reading the thoughts of an individual (clearly making it known that it is merely a trick), the presentation easily segues to the question "Is there someone who actually knows our thoughts and is omniscient?"

In 1999 this unique vehicle for directing individuals to consider the reality of Jesus Christ included:

- Appearances in 3 foreign countries (India, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom).
- Extensive tours in the United States covering 15 states and dozens of cities.
- Presenting the gospel in person to nearly 24,000\* individuals, and tens of thousands more through television and radio appearances.

- Witnessing approximately 3,550\* indicate their desire to trust in Jesus Christ as a result of these presentations.

What's ahead for 2000? We are praying for a greater impact by adding The Faith Study, *FaithSearch*, and our follow-up study, the *Owner's Manual* to my repertoire of presentations.



Toby demonstrates one of his illusions as part of a powerful presentation of the gospel.

Faith Studies International is an inter-denominational, not-for-profit organization dedicated to presenting evidences for the Christian faith through the Faith Study seminar and its derivatives—including outreach and training seminars, media resources, and discipleship programs. Funded solely by individual gifts, Faith Studies International is not publicly or denominationally supported.

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(Watch for our Web site later this year.)



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\*Toby's presentation and commitment numbers are for all of 1999; Faith Studies' totals include Toby's presentations only after 7/1/99.