

Friend to Friend adds new dimension to discipleship at Arkansas church

On any given Sunday at Family Church in Bryant, Ark., 10 or more people are likely to make a faith commitment to Jesus Christ. But Family Church wants to do more than make a gospel presentation that results in a commitment. They want to make disciples.

Associate pastor of Christian education Dick Frederick and the rest of the pastoral staff noticed a need to focus on discipleship to ensure that those who make faith commitments on Sunday keep coming back to grow in Christ. "We have a large number of commitments," says Dick, "but many slip out the back door."

Remembering a *Friend to Friend* presentation, Dick recommended using the video at Family Church. *Friend to Friend* would help Family Church build on its strengths, incorporating a plan to more intentionally reach unbelievers, while assimilating new believers into the congregation through small-group nurturing.

"Our congregation is in the mode of inviting people they know well to church," says Dick, citing a key element of the *Friend to Friend* strategy. "But they aren't as strong in stretching their comfort zones to intentionally develop relationships that will create opportunities to invite others."

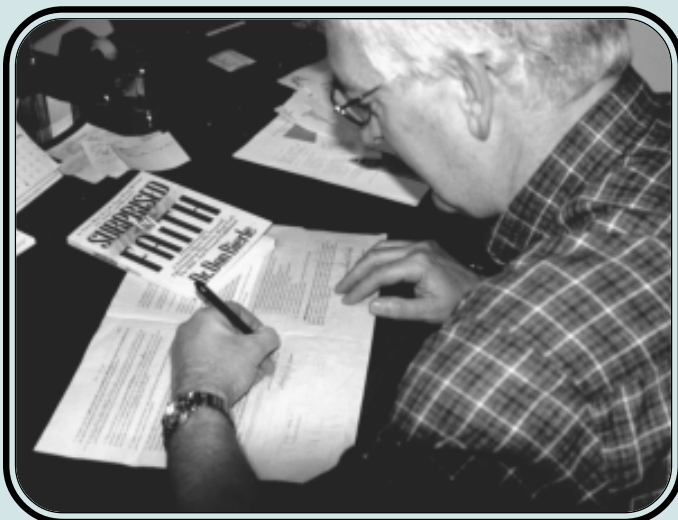


Dick Frederick of Family Church in Bryant, Ark., is using the *Friend to Friend* video series as part of their disciple-making strategy.

Family Church already employs many *Friend to Friend* elements. In addition to a vibrant congregation that invites people in, the church uses various means to reach out to the unchurched. Saturday night concerts and a skateboard and free-style bike park bring in youth from throughout the commu-

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Surprised by Faith translation contract signed



In August, Don signed a contract with China Sunday School Association of Taiwan for the translation of *Surprised by Faith* into Mandarin. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2002.

South Asia 2000 tour reaches thousands in India

After a bumpy ride around an Indian Ocean hurricane, the South Asia team landed in Bangalore, India, just 30 minutes behind schedule. In spite of minor injuries to several passengers on the plane from a sudden change in altitude, the nine-member team made it safely to the starting point of their 13-day tour.

The team's first performance was held shortly after arrival. An invitation-only crowd of 1,100 business, religious, and government leaders had gathered to see the only performance by the entire team. After resting for the night, the team members went in seven directions to all corners of India to spread the gospel message through illusion. The tour was hosted by South Asia Campus Crusade for Christ.

During the next 12 days the five individuals and two couples gave more than 150 presentations to almost 95,000 people. The rains, so prevalent throughout India in the weeks prior to the trip, subsided, allowing most performances to go on as scheduled and team members to travel unimpeded. A typical day for each illusionist included two to four shows during the day and evening, followed by car or train travel at night. The exhausting, but rewarding, schedule resulted in dozens of new campus ministries and church plants in the wake of the tour.

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FAITH STUDIES INTERNATIONAL

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. Faith Studies International is not publicly or denominationally supported.

For information call:
(952) 401-4501/toll-free 1-800-964-1447

Mailing address:
P.O. Box 786 (7801 Park Dr. Suite F)
Chanhassen, MN 55317

Visit our Web site at www.faithstudies.org
Email: FSMN@FaithStudies.org

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South Asia Tour (cont'd from page 1)

Throughout the trip, the team was supported by a solid prayer-covering from home. In spite of performing in what can sometimes be hostile areas, only minor skirmishes were reported, and one performance was canceled due to unrest.

The team returned to the United States after an extra day in Bombay following a missed connection. The time turned out to be a blessing for the team, giving them the opportunity to debrief and spend some time as tourists. Allan Rasco of Arizona remained in India for two additional weeks for a more extensive working-tour of the country.

For Faith Studies' Toby Travis, a special blessing was being able to train a young illusionist from Chennai to present the gospel through illusion. Toby first met Justin Raj on a 1997 tour, and Justin has been training himself in the art of illusion ever since. "Justin was such a blessing to me as my assistant this year. It was exciting to train such a fast learner in sharing the gospel through illusion." Toby was able to leave nearly all the equipment Justin will need to continue to make gospel presentations.

The team is thrilled with the work God has done on this fourth South Asia tour. God is growing his church at a phenomenal rate in India and the South Asia team is already looking forward to being able to minister in India next summer.

Life is difficult for Christians in India. Please pray for God's church in India, and for the growth and safety of new Christians there. Pray, too, that God will provide for the follow-up of new believers from the South Asia Tour, and guide and protect Justin Raj as he continues to share the gospel through illusion.



Brad Brown, Colleen Stewart, Greg Stewart, Dave Wigen, Toby Travis, Mark Perkins, Allan Rasco, Adrian Van Vactor and Jennifer Wigen.

A "whale" of an opportunity

In the Old Testament, Jonah's disobedience landed him in the belly of a great fish. But, after three days, God returned him to dry land ready to obey. Visitors entering the three-story glass "whale" Pavilion of Hope (POH) at the World's Fair in Hanover, Germany, may not catch the symbolism. But POH organizers hope many of them will return to land armed with a new hope in Jesus Christ, empowered to do God's will.

More than 240,000 visitors attend the fair each day, which runs from June 1 through October 31. Many of them will pass through the POH. There they will view a 3-D computer-animation film that tells the biblical story of the prodigal son, experience an adventure expedition, and hear a gospel message. Each segment of the exhibition is designed

to help visitors answer the question, "What is your hope in life?" And from October 1-21, visitors will get to see Faith Studies' Adrian Van Vactor share the hope of the gospel through his illusion presentation.

Adrian's unique presentation is especially compelling to youth, the major focus of the POH. A major benefit of using illusion for a gospel presentation is the interest it generates. Equally important in

this post-Christian age, however, is the emphasis illusion places on how easily we can be deceived. Adrian's audience will be challenged to examine the evidence for the truth of the gospel so that they can make an informed personal commitment to it.

"I hope people get a better understanding of who Jesus Christ is," says Adrian. "Through my presentation, I try to show that faith in Jesus isn't anti-intellectual or blind. It's about solid reasons to follow him based on the evidence of history, design, and the eyewitness gospels."

World's Fair organizers granted special permission for Adrian to set up a table offering copies of Don Bierle's *Surprised by Faith*. Adrian expects to give away more than 600 books to POH visitors.

"I'm excited about this opportunity to perform in front of another international audience," says Adrian, who recently returned from the South Asia 2000 tour. "I hope that my program provides an additional interest to the pavilion, which is already so strong in its ability to share the gospel with visitors."

Please pray for Adrian's trip to the World's Fair. He will travel from September 29 through October 22. Faith Studies is still seeking underwriters for Adrian's personal support (\$2,400), travel (\$2,000), and free distribution of Surprised by Faith (\$2,500). If you would like to make a special contribution to this exciting evangelistic opportunity, please write "Pavilion of Hope" on the memo line of your check.



Adrian Van Vactor



THE FAITH STUDY

This is the best, easiest to understand apologetic presentation I have seen. I am giving the book [*Surprised by Faith*] to friends who are seeking. —Jean, St. Paul, MN

The Faith Study really helped support my faith in God. It also gave me tools to defend my faith, and reasons for me to believe. —Alyssa, Minneapolis, MN

FAITHSEARCH

[FaithSearch] really gave me more confidence to know how to stand up for what I believe. Hearing God's words in this seminar was different from others, and it was wonderfully filling to the spirit. —Youth, Minneapolis, MN

This gave me my answers to what I've been questioning... and helped build my faith and confidence. —Youth, Hanford, CA

FaithSearch helped me understand more about Jesus and to finally see in my heart that Jesus is real. —Youth, Detroit, MI

Staff Profile: JJ Vreeland

In college, JJ Vreeland studied under John Dominic Crossan—a key figure of the Jesus Seminar. Now she helps to communicate the Faith Studies message, directly counter to that of the Jesus Seminar.

A graduate of DePaul University in Chicago, JJ has worked for an air filtration company specializing in nuclear and toxic applications; a cable television provider; and two universities. Her experience in marketing communications prepared her well for a role as co-leader of the Faith Studies marketing team. Her duties include planning mass mailings to churches, writing this newsletter, and developing new promotional pieces.

JJ spent her early teen years in Austria, where her father worked for the International Atomic Energy Agency. Her experiences there gave her a passion for international travel, and she has had the opportunity to visit four continents.

An active member of Wooddale Church, JJ recently completed a two-week mission trip to Indonesia, where she stayed with Muslim families. Their goal was to break down her hosts' stereotypes of Christians. Many believe that the Hollywood lifestyle represented in the media is Christianity. "The type of work we did was very much in line with Faith Studies' strategy of Friend to Friend outreach," she says. Hoping to go again, she quips, "How does next week look?"

Has a Faith Studies event impacted you or someone you know? Mail or email JJ (jjvreeland@faithstudies.org), and your story may be included in a future issue of Reasons.



JJ, Faith Studies' marketing and communications specialist since October 1999, just returned from a mission trip to Indonesia.

Arkansas (cont'd from page 1)

nity. On Wednesday nights, many come to the park and stay for the evening's youth service.

The *Friend to Friend* video series has helped church members see how they can get involved in the vision that Family Church already has. Dick has heard comments like, "Now I know what to do," and, "I can do that!" from the 70 *Friend to Friend* video series participants. They were encouraged to discover specific action steps they could take to bring people in their circles of influence into a relationship with Jesus. "*Friend to Friend* gives them something they can do in an orderly process," says Dick. And giving people something to do has made all the difference.

Family Church is committed to moving new believers into discipleship. Within a week, each new believer is invited to an *Owner's Manual* class to start building the foundation for his or her Christian walk. Systematic discipleship

ensures that the person is supported to become an active member of the church community. The *Friend to Friend* video series is a vital link in that discipleship process, showing believers how they can take part in the Great Commission to make disciples.

"We've had an enthusiastic response," says Dick, who is thrilled with the results. "We're not interested in getting notches on our gun," he says of Family Church's ability to bring people in from the community. "We're interested in getting brothers and sisters who know they are loved by their church family and by God."

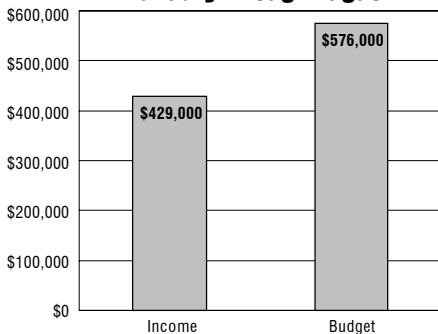
The *Friend to Friend video* is now used in nearly 70 churches. Please pray that God will continue to use the video series in these churches to increase his kingdom. If your church isn't using *Friend to Friend* yet, your pastor can order the video series for a free 30-day trial. Call Faith Studies at 800-964-1447 for more information.



PLEASE PRAY FOR FINANCES

We need about \$20,000 more per month to meet operational needs.

**Income vs. Budget
January through August**



How Faith Studies is turning fish into sheep

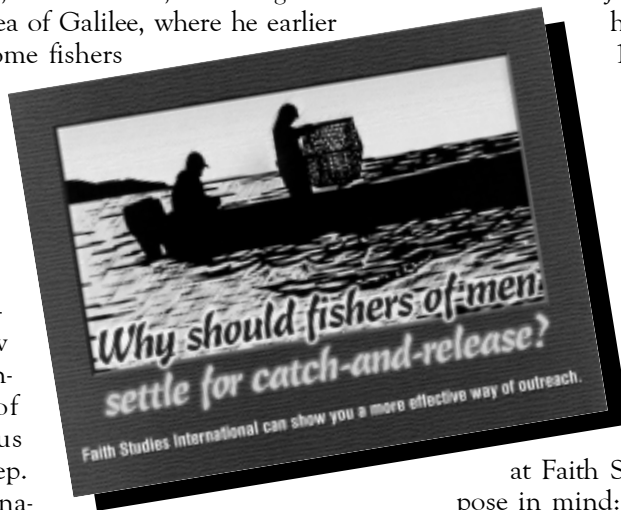
We've been trying to hook thousands of pastors around the country with this line: "Why should fishers of men settle for catch-and-release?" Our play on words strikes at the heart of a pastor's greatest frustration: helping new believers become effective disciples.

The fishing metaphor, of course, isn't new to us. Jesus' teachings and parables are replete with fishing imagery. Jesus also used images of sheep. And, at least once, he brought the two concepts together. At the Sea of Galilee, where he earlier had called disciples to become fishers of men, Jesus emphasized the need to feed his lambs and sheep (Matthew 4:19; John 21:15-17).

Was that merely coincidence? Or was Jesus showing that seekers, drawn in as fish, are to become disciples who follow as sheep? I think he fully understood the mixture of metaphors. I believe Jesus wants to turn fish into sheep.

At Faith Studies International, we're serious about connecting Jesus' emphasis on *fishing* (calling people to commitment) with his command to *shepherd* (nurturing new believers). He doesn't want new believers to jump the net. Catch-and-release may be fine for today's sport fishermen—but it was never intended for fishers of men.

That's why I wrote the *Owner's Manual*. And that's why we insist that the local church use it to provide immediate, short-term spiritual care. One new Christian expressed her gratitude this way:



"The follow-up to the Faith Study was the Owner's Manual. It was perfect! Having taken this significant first step, like a baby, I wobbled. But through the Owner's Manual God guided me and supported me through those "toddling" steps. Because of it my whole perspective and outlook has changed. My hunger to know God and the Bible is ever growing."

Jesus said about his sheep, "I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" (John 10:10). An *Owner's Manual* leader has seen that truth reflected in the faces of women in her small group:

"I've just begun leading my fifth group of women through the Owner's Manual. Each time...I wish you could see what I see...Their countenances change...their eyes widen, their bodies relax, and they beam with the hope of knowing about their newness....By the end of our short time together, these are truly changed women. Women who feel loved and equipped, with a deeper hunger for God's Word and the fellowship of other believers."

The products and seminars we develop at Faith Studies International are designed with one purpose in mind: to make disciples for Jesus Christ. We do this by inviting people into relationship with him and providing for early nurturing.

Anything less fails Jesus' commission given us in Matthew 28:19. Anything less is just catch-and-release. Anything less won't turn fish into sheep.

Yours for better fishing and shepherding,

Don
Dr. Don Bierle



Dr. Don Bierle
Executive Director



For Praise

South Asia 2000 team. Hosted by South Asia Campus Crusade for Christ (SACCC), a group of nine—going in seven different directions—put on 154 illusion performances in 13 days for nearly 95,000 people. Leaders of SACCC were extremely encouraged by the doors for evangelism that were opened through this creative outreach. Despite pockets of religious opposition and even a turbulent flight, team members returned safe, healthy, and encouraged.

Indonesia outreach. JJ Vreeland, our marketing and communications specialist, completed a two-week project in Indonesia with a group of single adults from the Twin Cities. Coordinated by an American Christian running a business in the island nation, group members stayed in the homes of Muslim families. There they sought to build bridges with their hosts, trying to counteract common negative stereotypes of Christianity.

Faithful Volunteers. Friends of the ministry donate hundreds of hours each month, by assisting with mailings, data entry, and other office tasks. Their help is invaluable!



For Prayer

Evangelists. With a busy—and growing—fall schedule, Don, Toby, Hasnah, and Adrian desire that God would bless their efforts. Pray for the Holy Spirit's empowerment, so their presentations might be effective and fruitful.

Faith Studies staff. Staff members support the evangelists' efforts through event coordination, financial management, data processing, marketing and communications, order processing, and other duties. Pray for their spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being; for good family relationships; and for wisdom in daily tasks.

Finances. In order to meet this year's operational budget, we need an additional \$20,000 per month. Pray that God would move friends to begin or to increase their giving to Faith Studies International.

Germany outreach. In October, Adrian Van Vactor will present the gospel through illusion at the World's Fair in Hanover, Germany. Pray for God's blessing and protection. Pray also that Adrian will be able to book many outreach events for his winter tour in the Southwestern states.