

Changed Lives and Financial Giving— A Marriage Made in Heaven

The motivational formula for financial giving at Faith Studies International could be summarized as follows:

People with spiritually-changed lives give to partner with us in changing the lives of others.

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 also.

Matthew 6:19-21 NIV

Actually, that's the way God intended it to be. Jesus made it clear that our investment of His resources is to have a priority and focus on the spiritual (Matthew 6:19-21). He said, "seek first His Kingdom", i.e.,

use your possessions to build spiritual treasure in heaven. Invest in people's eternal destiny—that is how you lay up treasure in heaven.

Many people support Faith Studies International because of what it has meant in their own spiritual walk.

Others are financial donors because they see the life-changing impact it's had on others. For most, it's a combination of these two things. Below are some examples from the nearly 700 who gave in 2000.

From skepticism to enthusiastic support

Three years ago, Widdy Shreves Bird was invited by a friend to attend



Widdy Shreves Bird gave testimony at the Share the Joy Celebration about how Faith Studies eternally impacted her life.

the *Faith Study*. As Dr. Don Bierle talked about his journey through agnosticism, he had her full attention.

At one time, Widdy thought she knew all she cared to know about Jesus and Christianity. She had gone to church while growing up, but, like Bierle, she thought the church was hard on people who asked questions because it didn't have reasonable answers.

"Don, formerly a skeptic like myself, laid out all his research," she remembers. "I listened to his whole story, and at the end, my head was convinced...." But she knew she was in the same place that

"I hadn't done a great job with my life, trying to do it on my own."

Bierle had found himself years earlier. Pride was in the way.

(cont'd on page 3)

Financial Donors are Key to the Ministry

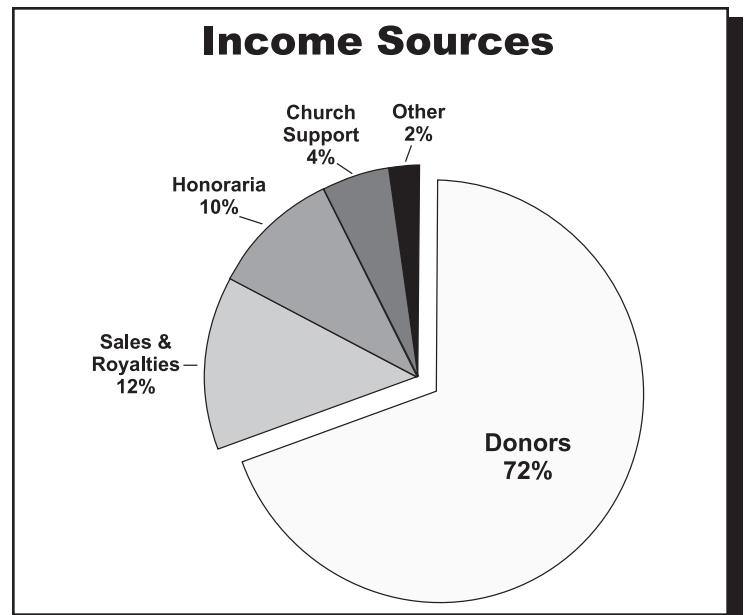
God continues to expand Faith Studies through wonderful opportunities to share the gospel message. The ministry has grown from one evangelist in 1997 to four full-time evangelists on staff today. As a result, approximately 1,130 people responded with a faith commitment in the first quarter of 2001—a 119% increase over last year. Yet this "success" is possible only because of God's abundant provision through the generosity of our donors.

"I rejoice over the spiritual fruit of our efforts," says President, Don Bierle. "But I'm concerned about a current trend: financial support from our donors is leveling off."

"Just let us know when you have a need" is something long-time financial friends of the ministry have often said to Don. "We have a need now" says Don. He's confident that's all the friends of this ministry need to know!

"...I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."

Philippians 1:4-6



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.

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Giving to your heart's desire

Do you like to give with your heart? Maybe one of these special projects is just what your heart has been looking for, and you can know that your gift helped make it happen.

New Faith Study Video

There are numerous costs for duplication, art design, packaging, advertising, etc. in order to distribute this dynamic gospel presentation to change many lives. **Needed: \$10,000.**

Technology for a Changing World

As our evangelists continue to proclaim the gospel, they are needing to use computers (laptops) and projectors to communicate the gospel in creative ways to large audiences. These tools greatly enhance the evangelist's ability to deliver the message of the gospel in a compelling way. **Needed: \$20,000.**

Adopt an Evangelist

Don, Hasnah, Toby, or Adrian may have made a difference in your life at a Faith Studies event. Now you can make a difference for them. Adopt one of them by making a regular contribution as a member of their support team. They'll keep you informed of the fruit of God's blessing. **Needed: Regular gifts of any size.**

Thank you for your generous heart!

There are many ways to make a contribution to Faith Studies International

Monthly Cash Contributions

For tax, record-keeping, and security purposes, cash contributions should be made by check.

Automatic Bank Withdrawal

This is a convenient and recommended way for donors to contribute to Faith Studies International.

Stock Gift

You avoid paying capital gains tax on the appreciation, and you can deduct the full fair market value of the security at the time of gift.

Donor-Restricted Giving

You can designate gifts to support special projects of your heart's desire.

Matching Gifts

Many businesses have matching gift programs set up to encourage their employees to donate money to charities. The company matches the amount you give.

Bequests

Include Faith Studies in your will.

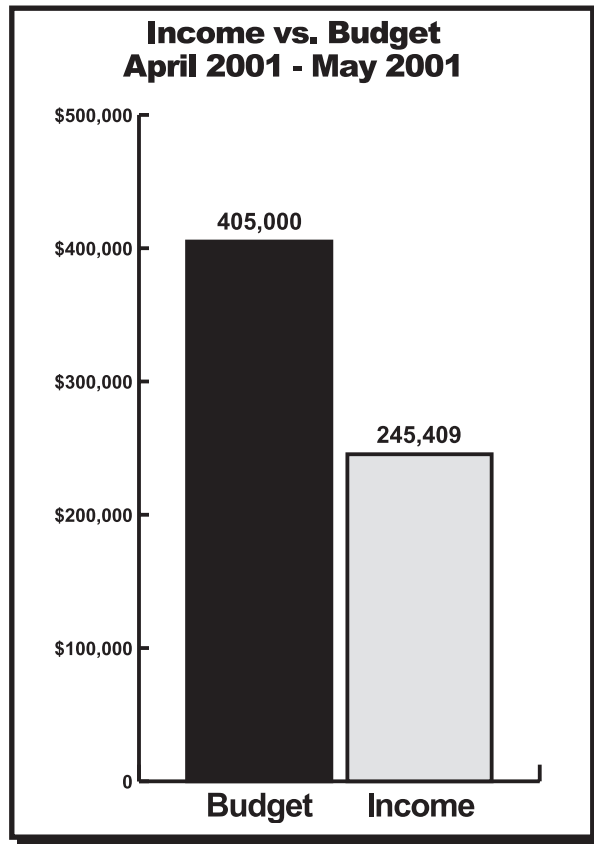
Gifts-in-kind

Receive a tax-deductible credit for the value of material gifts given to Faith Studies, such as furniture, art and computers.

Gift Charged to Visa or MasterCard

This is a convenient way to give a cash gift to Faith Studies.

Call Hasnah Burdge at 952-401-4501 (800-964-1447 outside the Twin Cities) for more information about these and other ways of supporting Faith Studies International.



Faith Studies Gets Around!

JAN-MAY MINISTRY RESULTS

Number of Events:	132
Attendance at Events:	19,196
Commitments to Christ:	1,652

"You've given me hope for my son's salvation."
—Sandra G., Bloomington, IL

"Evangelism isn't impossible! I can do it!"
—Arthur N. Tuscon, AZ

"I am changed because of this seminar!"
—Victoria A., Sanibel, FL

Changed Lives and Financial Giving (cont'd from page 1)

But even as she resisted the call of God, she recognized “I hadn’t done a great job with my life, trying to do it on my own.” Turning away from her pride and fear, she acknowledged God as Creator, Savior, and Master. The next three years were filled with intensive Bible

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study, beginning with the *Owner’s Manual* produced by Faith Studies. “It’s a phenomenal study,” she says. “It leads you through the Bible in an incredible way, and answers the questions just as you’re getting ready to ask them.”

She passed her enthusiasm on to her husband, Jeff, a businessman who became a believer two years before she did. Both Widdy and her husband now lead *Owner’s Manual* studies for others.

Because of its significance in their own lives and its impact on others, the Birds are regular financial supporters of Faith Studies International. “Jeff and I probably support a dozen ministries that we think reach people effectively, and we think Faith Studies does that.”

From fear to investment in outreach

JoAnn Oberg would agree. A registered nurse at the Veteran’s Administration hospital in Minneapolis, she had also been acquainted with Christianity in childhood, but as an adult she considered it irrelevant, at best.

She attended a *Faith Study* seminar in the early ‘80s. Afterward, the friend who had invited her said, “Well,

are you going to make a commitment to follow Jesus now?”

JoAnn was unmoved. “It’s a nice story,” she said, “but I’m not doing it.”

Five years later, at another presentation of the *Faith Study*, she was crying. “They talk about the reliability of the Bible manuscripts....” she says. “I remember sitting in the back, saying to myself, ‘You pride yourself on being an intelligent person. If you are, you have to affirm the truthfulness of the Christian faith. .’ And I didn’t want to.”

Like Widdy Shreves Bird, JoAnn struggled with the fear of becoming a Christian. “Don’t turn me into a goon,” she remembers saying to God. “Let me keep my mind.”

“But a short time later I opened up the Bible and started to read. Though I considered myself an intelligent person, to my surprise, I couldn’t understand it.” I shut that book with great sadness. I’ll never forget that sadness. I really wanted to read the Bible, but I just couldn’t.”

That discovery helped JoAnn to realize her need for new life through faith in Jesus Christ—and to accept the claims of the Bible. That commitment led her to experience a truth that others, including C.S. Lewis, have observed. That step of faith (a reasonable step, not a blind one) opened the door to greater understanding. Since then she has been a regular supporter of Faith Studies, knowing that others will find what she found there.

Following God’s leading

Frank Vennes was working as a janitor when he first heard of Faith Studies International. He went to a Faith Studies annual celebration event at the Decathlon Club as the guest of a friend.

He already had a close personal walk with God, strengthened during

three years of solitude and study. In prison, a man has a lot of time for contemplation.

Vennes remembers a volunteer at one of the prisons where he was housed. “What are you in for?” the man had asked. “You seem different.”

“It was a good chance,” said Vennes, “to explain how I’d been victimized.”

But, says Vennes, the volunteer listened to his story and then asked a strange question. “Are you thankful for it?”

“I was silent for a few moments,” he recalls. “What kind of a question was that?” The volunteer explained that from his prison cell, Paul had written that he had learned to give thanks in all circumstances. Later on, in his own cell, Vennes began to list things for which he

“It’s an extremely effective ministry, with verifiable results.”

could be thankful. The exercise started slowly, but picked up speed, and “went on and on and on,” says Vennes. “It changed the way I think.”

That was more than a dozen years ago, and now Vennes’ story resembles that of Joseph, who was brought out of prison and placed in a position of influence. He now manages his own multi-million dollar company, financing accounts receivable.

As the business prospered, he and his wife sought direction from God on where they should place the money He had entrusted to them. Faith Studies International was one of the answers. “I could put it in human terms,” says Vennes. “It’s an extremely effective ministry, with verifiable results. They use the money wisely and efficiently. But what it really comes down to is following God’s leading—and He pointed us to Faith Studies.”

Ministry by Proxy

Throughout my 28 years of full-time Christian ministry, I have frequently had someone say that they wish they could do what I do. With a twinkle in my eye I tell them that they can—and tell them two stories.

Several years ago a friend of Faith Studies wanted to be “in ministry”—i.e., hands on. So she gave valuable assistance, primarily organizing to make a more efficient office. Some months later she shared with me an insight. “Here’s how I now see it, she said, “I have a new job offer to make very good money. If I take that job, I can give a significant amount of the money to Faith Studies. In that way God can use me to help Faith Studies more than staying here hands on.”

Over the years since then, she and her husband have indeed given large amounts of money to Faith Studies and contributed in numerous other ways. She is in Christian ministry—for Jesus said, “Anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophets’ reward, and anyone who receives a righteous man because he

is a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward” (Matthew 10:41).

By her intentional act of giving, in the eyes of the Lord, she has affirmed our mission and become united in ministry with Faith Studies—and will share in the same rewards!

About three years ago I received a handwritten letter from a nine year old boy with a \$1 bill enclosed. He said he wanted to send some of his allowance money to help us tell others about Jesus. I was convicted by his simple motivation.

But this, too, was an act of ministry. Jesus said, “he who receives you receives Me...” (Matthew 10:40). His gift to Faith Studies was in actuality an act done unto the Lord. To be in God’s work requires that the Christian give of their time, talent, and money—and when you give of these as to the Lord you are in Christian ministry.

Jesus said, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21). I think Jesus means that your priorities actually capture your heart. So, it’s not about obligation, but about discovering joy and fulfillment in the ministry of helping to touch others for eternity.

And that’s why I can boldly send to you an issue of our newsletter on financial giving. With all sincerity, it is my invitation to you to participate in the ministry. Not everyone is called of God to do what I do, but every Christian is called to participate in the ministry. Your financial contribution enriches other lives for eternity by enabling us—by proxy—to proclaim the life-changing message of Jesus. It’s one way you “share the joy”.

Your partner
in ministry,




Dr. Don Bierle
President

Faith Studies—Effective and Efficient

There are two important measurements of the evangelism ministry of Faith Studies International, i.e., how effective and how efficient are we in fulfilling our mission. One indicator of effectiveness is the number of recorded commitments to Christ. These result from outreach events—both domestic and international. Also, increasingly we receive cards and letters from people around the world indicating salvation and spiritual renewal as a result of using our resources.

The results from all known recorded sources in 2000 fill us both with joy and humility. A total of 7,761 people made commitments in 2000 compared to 2,105 the year before. Obviously, Faith Studies is increasingly effective, but is it efficient?

One indicator of evangelism efficiency, i.e., what it costs us to get one recorded commitment, has steadily dropped from about \$1,400 in 1995 to the unusually low cost of \$119 this past year—the best in our ministry’s history. President Don Bierle says that “This indicator, together with recorded commitments, should give our

financial donors confidence that their contributions are being invested wisely—effectively and efficiently.”

Another basis for confidence is that Faith Studies is a member with good standing of the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA). As a member we demonstrate our responsibility as we abide by standards of Biblical doctrine, audited financial statements, financial disclosure, fund-raising and use of resources. **We want our integrity to be evident even as the apostle Paul expressed: “Now it is a matter of pride to us—endorsed by our conscience—that our activities in this world, particularly our dealings with you, have been absolutely above-board and sincere before God...” (2 Cor. 1:12, Phillips Modern English).**

We are accountable to God and to you for how we use the resources that you have committed to us. To see the ECFA standards, call for a brochure entitled, “Our Financial Commitment To You”. To see ministry results, ask for a copy of the 2000 annual report.

