

Stonecroft Leadership Embraces Friend to Friend

We announced in February an unprecedented partnership between Faith Studies International and Stonecroft Ministries headquartered in Kansas City, MO. Three of seven regional training conferences have now taken place, and the excitement continues to build. To date over 850 staff and volunteers have received training from Hasnah Burdge, Faith Studies Vice President, in effective evangelism, and in understanding how the world perceives Christians today.

Hasnah was invited by Joyce Courtney, Stonecroft's CEO, to equip their national leadership, using our *Friend to Friend* materials. Stonecroft has a 63-year history of outreach through its 1,600 clubs in the U.S. and Canada. As they desired to renew their emphasis on evangelism throughout the organization, Hasnah's proposal to use *Friend to Friend* came at a good time.

"Our organization is all about evangelism," said Ms. Courtney, "And Hasnah's passion for evangelism comes through loud and clear. We felt that using *Friend to Friend* would be a good fit."

Hasnah has a long history with Stonecroft through their Christian Women's Clubs. She was involved in local leadership as far back as 1986, and has been a popular national speaker within the organization since 1990. Through her relationships and familiarity with the ministry's heart for evangelism, the continued relationship seems natural.

Hasnah traveled to Sacramento in March, to Calgary, Alberta in April, and to Denver in May. In each case, she presented an overview of the *Friend to Friend* training, and promoted the use of the *Friend to Friend* video tapes to extend the impact of the training to the local level.



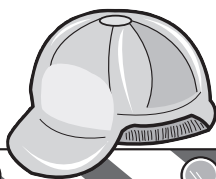
Hasnah addressed the Calgary Stonecroft audience

More than 250 people attended each conference, and interest and feedback has been very positive. One woman at the Denver conference said, "Hasnah presented exactly what I needed to hear. I want to serve Jesus. I want to evangelize. And she encouraged me to keep on keeping on and never ever give up."

A key component of *Friend to Friend* is the understanding that effective

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God at Work



April 2002

Here's a snapshot of some of what God has been doing in our ministry lately.

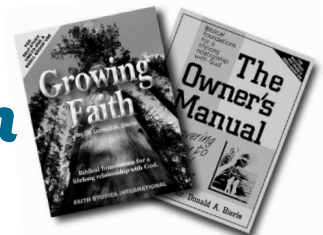
FaithSearch YTD

Events:	5	15
Attendance:	591	1,411
Response Forms:	297	707
Faith Commitments:	178	393

Supplementary Events:

Events	22	74
Attendance:	4,775	13,047
Response Forms:	512	2,437
Faith Commitments:	136	882

The Owner's Manual Becomes Growing Faith



Nearly six years after *The Owner's Manual* was first published, Faith Studies' successful discipleship tool has been updated. Republished as *Growing Faith*, the study boasts a new look, but still contains life-changing foundations for growing in your relationship with God.

"We needed the update to keep it in line with our other materials," said Rick Wattman, Director of Communications. "We've made it easier to read and to use, while keeping the study intact."

Known for faithfully introducing the tenets of the Christian faith, as well as offering insights into the personal nature of our relationship with God, this study has been used in churches and homes across the U.S. and around the globe.

"Faith Studies is committed to

the discipleship process taught in the Scriptures," said Dr. Don Bierle. "We encourage the use of *Growing Faith* to follow-up those making faith commitments at our events. It's a great way to help new believers get a solid biblical foundation as they begin a lifelong relationship with God."

Growing Faith contains eight easy-to-follow lessons that help you get firmly rooted in the truth. Each lesson covers selected readings and key Scripture passages that help you understand what God has done and will do in your life.

Growing Faith is available from Faith Studies International by calling (952) 401-4501.

FAITH STUDIES INTERNATIONAL

Faith Studies International is an inter-denominational, not-for-profit organization dedicated to presenting evidences for the Christian faith through the *FaithSearch* 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

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CLASSIFIEDS

Close-out on Owner's Manual

The *Owner's Manual* has been republished as *Growing Faith* (see article on page 1). The last remaining copies of The *Owner's Manual* are available for **50% off while supplies last**. That means until they're gone you can buy them only \$3.00 each. Call or stop by **today!**

2nd Annual Faith Studies
Best Ball Golf Tournament

Wednesday, July 24, 2002
Dahlgreen G.C.
12:30 PM Start

Burger Buffet follows

Call to reserve a tee time for your foursome: (952) 401-4501

\$50 covers greens fee, cart and buffet.

Fiscal Year to End June 30

It is hardly "big news" to announce a change in Faith Studies' fiscal year. Most of our friends and supporters will not even detect any differences. But our staff and the Board of Directors will.

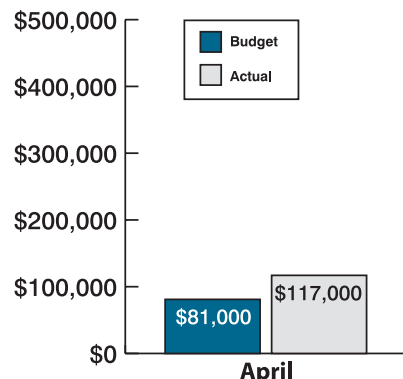
Faith Studies' fiscal year has historically coincided with the calendar year. Beginning this year it will run from July 1 through June 30, 2003. There were several reasons that the Board approved the change:

1. There is more time during the summer to do the work related to fiscal transition. Budget formation in May and June does not coincide and conflict with major holidays, as it does before the end of the calendar year. Also, end-of-year and annual meeting preparation will now occur in July, when evangelism schedules and office demands are lighter.
2. Our outside auditing firm is not as busy during the summer, and suggested it will cost us less money to prepare our return during the summer.
3. It provides for better timing of fund-raising events. Our financial appeals would be approximately six months apart—June and December.

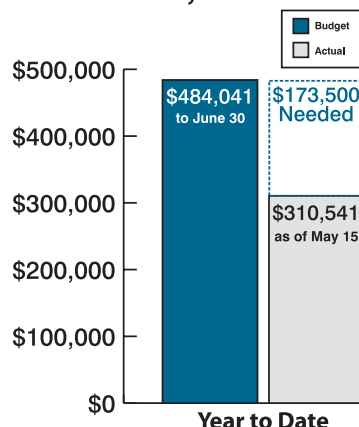
To facilitate this fiscal year change, Faith Studies has been operating under a 6-month transition budget from January 1 through June 30, 2002. "We are also asking our financial supporters to make an adjustment in their giving patterns," said President Don Bierle. "It would help us greatly if many would send a contribution in June so we can meet our interim budget."

Financial contributions in the first quarter of 2002 were low, but since the **Celebration Dinner in April**, we have seen the **beginning of an upswing**. "It has been an encouraging April and May, both in finances and ministry results," according to Don. "But as of **May 15** we still need about **\$173,500 by the end of June** in order to make our budget. We ask our friends to pray with us that God will continue to supply all our needs."

Budget -vs- Income April, 2002



Budget -vs- Income YTD, 2002



What People Are Saying

FAITHSEARCH

"I have been a Christian almost all my life and never had those questions answered. Thank you so much... Now it will be easier to answer friends' questions."
— JMP, Minnetonka, MN

"It's so exciting — phenomenally exciting — to learn this, to know there is more to the cause for Christ than blind, unquestioning faith."
— KE, White Bear, MN

ILLUSION & BEYOND

"You reached my son for Christ. I'm sure we'll never forget you! Thank you!"
— PL, Bloomingdale, IL

"We brought a friend and it was a very good way to hear a Gospel message in a non-traditional setting."
— RC, Shoreview, MN



Reports from the Field

Our evangelists share their impressions from recent events.

Don Bierle

This was a busy time for me — 24 events in six weeks with hundreds of faith commitments. Recent forays into the “lion’s den” were both exciting and rewarding.



At the Fish Head Coffeehouse on the campus of the University of Minnesota, and at Border’s Bookstore in Richfield, MN, I presented “A biologist asks: Where is the evidence for God?” It was encouraging to see **people crowding between the aisles of books to hear the challenge of faith.** And although I wasn’t able to make a formal invitation, I did present the trilema, that Jesus is either a liar or a lunatic, or He’s Lord. I told people the choice was up to them to accept or reject His claims. The interest was so intense that they gathered around in groups afterward to ask questions and discuss the topic until late in the night. What a blessing to see the Holy Spirit bring conviction about Jesus to their hearts!

that God lives in me now!!” There is no greater joy than to witness a life transformed before your eyes — especially at the end of a long and challenging travel schedule.

Toby Travis

We held a **STANDING ROOM ONLY** outreach event recently in Wayzata, MN. With an anticipated attendance of 800, the 1,100 that showed up made for a very dynamic evening. In Bloomingdale, IL, their outreach presentation of *Illusion and Beyond* sold out quickly. The church was willing to offer a second show, enabling some 900 people to attend and hear the Gospel. There were **182 recorded faith commitments** that night. And after a recent show in Downingtown, PA, a young lady approached and said, “You probably won’t remember me, but eight years ago you led me to Christ. Now I’m preparing for a missions trip to Russia.” WOW! What an encouragement and a blessing it is to see the multiplying ministry of God’s grace.



Hasnah Burdge

I had a whirlwind trip to Denver and Orlando for eight different speaking engagements in four days, including time for some 4,000 miles of air travel! I trained some 650 men and women leaders in effective evangelism, and shared the Gospel to about 2,000 people at various outreach events. About 50 people made first time faith commitments... WOO HOO! I cannot forget the image of a young Chinese gal I met the last night. She had heard about Jesus but always thought He was not for her. After I shared the Gospel, she came up and said, “I know the emptiness in my heart you talked about, but did not know how to fill it. Tonight I know that only Jesus can fill that void!” She gave her life to Christ that night, and in her broken English said, **“I am a Christian today. I can’t believe**



Adrian Van Vactor

My recent trip to East Asia was primarily to plant seeds for future work. We distributed materials, including the *Jesus* film. We did two programs in churches that will open the door for greater opportunity, having gained their trust. I did one college program for about 250 students. The response there was incredible. In the question and answer period afterwards, **I could see the hunger in their eyes.** One student was so attentive, that when her friend wanted to leave while I was sharing about Christ’s resurrection and why I believe in Him, she just pushed her friend away without even looking at her. Praise the Lord!



Stonecroft

(cont’d from page 1)



Joyce Courtney, Stonecroft Ministries CEO

evangelism involves a team effort. Those with relational gifts can feel free to focus on building friendships and inviting unchurched people to hear the message, while those with proclamational gifts use their abilities to communicate the message. A conferee at the Sacramento event confided, “I have felt that evangelism wouldn’t work for me, with my personality. But this is encouraging.”

“For some of us, her content was not new,” reflected Ms. Courtney. “Yet people appreciate the fresh approach to accomplishing our purpose of reaching non-Christians, [including] being reminded of the importance of building relational bridges specifically for the opportunity of sharing Christ.”

In a constantly changing culture, the challenge to stay relevant confronts most ministries. Yet Stonecroft has taken up the challenge. “They’ve been doing outreach for 63 years,” said Hasnah. “It’s energizing to see an organization willing to do what it takes to be more effective, including engaging training from another organization.”

As this Denver attendee commented, “It was helpful to see what people believe today, and to remember that I need to adjust my speaking relevance.”

The training will continue this fall at four additional conferences scheduled for Atlanta, New Orleans, Syracuse, NY, and Columbus, OH. Both organizations are looking forward to a productive, long-term partnership. Ms. Courtney said, “We certainly pray that Christians will move out of their comfort zones of complacency regarding the world around them, and be motivated to reach those within their sphere of influence with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.”

This heart for evangelism reinforces Hasnah’s enthusiasm for the partnership, too. “We will continue to serve them however we can, to help them be even more effective in their outreach.”

“Extending the Vision” —Fantasy or Confident Expectation?

In the last issue of this newsletter I shared my renewed conviction that *FaithSearch* should be our primary means to proclaim the Gospel of salvation to this 21st Century culture. I also pointed out that we now have wonderful resources—capable evangelists, effective publications and a professional support staff—to launch an extraordinarily effective proclamation of Jesus. We are calling that effort “Extending the Vision.”

This four-year initiative is our passion and resolve to fulfill God’s vision and calling for Faith Studies by renewing our zeal for reaching people in America, while extending His redemption to people in new geographic regions, languages and cultures.

In order to accomplish all that is entailed in “Extending the Vision,” we have initiated a campaign to raise 1.5 million dollars *above and beyond our normal operating budget*. In order to be intentional about responding to ministry opportunities around the world over the next four years, we need this in hand by the end of 2003. Is this a wishful fantasy or a confident expectation?

As the plans for “Extending the Vision” were being conceived in our minds by the Spirit of God last year, a wonderful and unprecedented affirmation came to assure us to move ahead boldly.

This confirmation by God came through the vision and conviction of a couple of businessmen. These men love God and are intentional about using some of the finances God has entrusted to them to help grow God’s Kingdom through Faith Studies International. This conviction resulted in their donating the largest single gift in the 20-year history of our ministry—\$500,000.

Because of this gift *we already have one third of our goal* for “Extending the Vision”! The optimism that we have to complete this goal is firmly based on two things: the biblical meaning of “hope” and our experience of Romans 1:16.

When the New Testament word for hope (*elpis*) is used in “...Christ in you, the *hope* of glory” (Col. 1:27)

and “...the *hope* of eternal life...” (Titus 1:2), it means nothing short of a “favorable and confident expectation.” Our hope is in our God who is the all-powerful Jehovah-jireh (“the Lord who provides”).

Why do we think He will provide the funds for “Extending the Vision”? Because our faith has been instructed and strengthened and prepared by God’s provision over the last five years. In 1995 we covenanted with God a vision called “Harvest 2000” to write the books, record the videos and establish God-gifted evangelists for a bountiful spiritual harvest by the year 2000. God so blessed that in the year 2000 both *attendance and commitments to Christ were greater than in the previous 20 years combined!*

The Bible says in Romans 1:16 that we are to have a faith that “leads to faith” (Jerusalem Bible). Other translations render it “from faith to faith” (NASB) and “through faith for faith” (RSV). Regardless of the translation, the meaning is clear: our experience of God’s faithfulness prompts us to trust Him more.

As a result of seeing God’s faithfulness in “Harvest 2000,” our faith leads to further faith. We have a confident expectation that God is *already at work* to open opportunities for evangelism ministry in cities around the U.S., and in India, Canada, Russia and elsewhere (as described in last month’s newsletter). And we believe He is *already at work* to provide abundantly for these opportunities through “Extending the Vision.”

And that’s faith, not fantasy!



Dr. Don Bierle
President




Praise

1. For success in outreach and training events last month.
2. For the completion of the *Growing Faith* discipleship manual revisions and publication.
3. For successful Pastor’s Luncheons, with follow-up meetings, events and church partnerships being scheduled and developed.



Prayer

1. Continue to pray for positive financial responses from our supporters, and for the \$173,500 need for the fiscal year end.
2. Pray about BLI funding to introduce *FaithSearch* to pastors in India. Pray for a reduction in airfare to India, and for people who could donate frequent flier miles.
4. Pray for more events to be scheduled and for contacts to develop partner churches.
5. Pray for the ongoing discipleship of new believers after our outreach events.
6. Pray for protection and health of staff and their families as they work and travel.
7. Pray for scheduled events: for the host church and the lost they are inviting, for coordinating teams, for the anointing of the Lord on presenters, for the conviction of the Holy Spirit, for the nurturing of new believers.