

Pocket Guides: FaithSearch Goes Portable!

The newest resource from Faith Studies International is the pocket-sized brochure, "Unwrapping the Truth about Christmas." Originally conceived as a gift for newsletter readers, it quickly became a very popular tool for sharing the Gospel with evidence at Christmas.

A surprising blessing was the overwhelming response from our readers. We started receiving calls for additional quantities as soon as the newsletters were delivered. In fact, we **completely sold out in only three days**, and orders were *still* pouring in. The decision was made almost immediately to reprint, and we continued to process orders.

FaithSearch is the flagship event in the ministry of Faith Studies International, so it was natural to package the *FaithSearch* message in an easy-to-distribute form. It has been exciting to hear how creatively this little brochure was used by individuals and churches to extend the impact of *FaithSearch* around the country, and to share the "truth about Christmas."

Mission Park Baptist in Tucson, Arizona, used the booklet in a literature distribution to introduce their church in a new housing development. "This piece is very attractively done. It's definitely above par," said Pastor David Balsley.

"Everybody that has seen the booklet

is very impressed with how it looks and the message it shares," agreed Pastor Duane Fischer of Waite Park Wesleyan Church in St. Anthony, Minnesota. "We distributed about 1,200 booklets door-to-door in gift bags which also contained a Gospel of John, and an invitation to our Christmas Eve celebration." He reports that several people who received them have visited the church, including one young fellow on Christmas Eve day. "He came in to talk and ended up making a profession of faith," Pastor Fischer shared, "although he had not previously responded to our contacts with him."

Southwestern Christian High School in Chaska, Minnesota, purchased a booklet for each of its students, with the "homework assignment" of presenting them to family members. "The reality is that most kids are in contact with people who don't know the Lord," said John Newton, administrator for the school. "This brochure presented an opportunity to share the Gospel in a very interesting way."

Dean Stinchfield, a businessman in Shorewood, Minnesota, was "disappointed"

that his family had *already* sent out their Christmas cards before the Pocket Guide became available. He ordered 500 copies anyway, putting most of them away, ready to include them with next year's cards. "I gave a few out to family and friends, including one of my co-workers. He was so impressed that he asked for 100 to distribute himself," he said. "It really helps to meet nagging doubts head on, bridging your faith walk with your intellectual walk."

The reception of the first Pocket Guide confirms our intention to produce the second. Titled "Looking for the Truth about Easter," it should be available near the end of February.

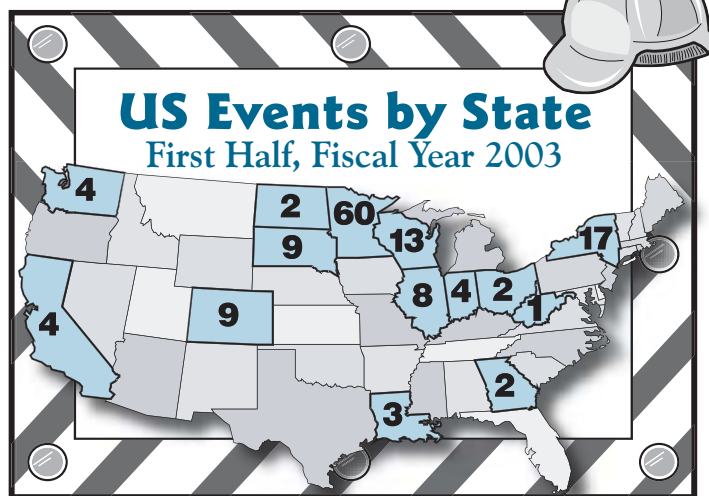
Daryl Richman, who has a discipleship ministry on college campuses in California, used the Christmas Pocket Guide for outreach. "It's an ideal way to reach non-Christians," he said. "I'll continue to use it, and hope to begin using the Easter one, too."

We are already cataloging advance requests for the Easter Pocket Guide. Typical of those anticipating its publication, Pastor Balsley said, "Our church can hardly wait to see the Easter version."

Call our office to place orders for the Easter FaithSearch Pocket Guide. (952) 401-4501 • 1-800-964-1447



God at Work



2003 Celebration Dessert
Friday, April 25, 6:15 pm
Christ Presbyterian Church, Edina, MN
Artwork silent auction, Dessert and Program
PLUS a Special Surprise!
Reservations Required:
Call 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

Address:

105 Peavey Rd., Suite 200
Chaska, MN 55318

Visit our Web site at www.faithstudies.org

Email: FSMN@FaithStudies.org

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Celebration Dessert Scheduled

Mark your calendars and plan to attend our annual ministry Celebration. The format this year is a light dessert (dinners are on alternating years). It's not too early to call for reservations—seating is limited: 952.401.4501

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ECFA Approval

Excerpt from a letter to Faith Studies from the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.

"Faith Studies International has faithfully demonstrated its continued compliance with the ECFA Standards of Responsible Stewardship. ECFA appreciates your ongoing participation with over 1,000 other evangelical organizations exhibiting excellence and accountability in ministry... We are proud to count Faith Studies International among those organizations that, through its membership, set the example of integrity within the nonprofit community."

New Address

Remember to use our new address when contacting us:

Faith Studies International
105 Peavey Road, Suite 200
Chaska, MN 55318

Faith Studies to Help Birth New Ministry

Faith Studies has always been enthused about partnering with the Holy Spirit to birth new spiritual life through the message of Jesus' death and resurrection. But partnering with God to birth a new ministry is unfamiliar ground for us. Nevertheless, we are excited to announce the birth of "Ministry Arts for Global Impact" (MAGI), headed by our own Toby Travis.

Last fall, the Board of Directors commissioned an independent marketing agency, The Envoy Group, to analyze Faith Studies International and make recommendations for the future growth of the ministry. One of the concerns they identified was "dissonance in our branding," i.e., our church partners and financial supporters are not always clear about who we are and what we do—what are our focus and passion. "*FaithSearch* (formerly The Faith Study) has been our flagship message and event since our beginning nearly 25 years ago," explained Dr. Don Bierle, president. "We are convicted that God wants us to stake our future on what He has blessed so wonderfully all these years. That would require focusing all our passion and resources on *FaithSearch*."

"I have been and shall continue to be a strong advocate of *FaithSearch*," said Toby Travis, "yet my focus and passion is identified in the following mission statement:"

"MAGI exists to facilitate responsible evangelism through the local church and to mobilize Christian performing artists in accomplishing that task worldwide."

Based upon that passion of Toby's, and Dr. Bierle's conviction to refocus *all* of Faith Studies resources on *FaithSearch*, the events which Toby developed during the years of ministry with Youth For Christ



Dr. Don Bierle and Toby Travis celebrate the launch of Ministry Arts for Global Impact (MAGI).

and TTM, Inc., before joining Faith Studies in 1999, will now be continued under the banner of MAGI – with Toby serving as the President and CEO of that new ministry.

Toby will continue on full-time staff and teach with Faith Studies through June of 2003, while he oversees the organization and development of the new ministry. Because we believe this is God's will, we are trusting that He will bless and prosper the approach of both ministries, so even **more people will be reached with the Gospel of Jesus Christ** than through our current organizational structure.

At present, MAGI will maintain offices in the same building as Faith Studies, and we will occasionally contract with Toby to do a Faith Studies event. "Toby is a friend and gifted ministry colleague," said Don. "We will miss him and his significant contribution to Faith Studies, but are pleased that we can continue to work together on God's larger team."



What People Are Saying

FaithSearch

I too have questioned if the Bible is true and have never been told about the evidence. It couldn't have been more helpful.

—E.L., Fond du Lac, WI

I had no previous connection between faith and science - Very interesting.

—T.N., Waconia, MN

I learned more in this seminar than in my whole church life so far. This seminar has touched me so much.

—T.T., Fond du Lac, WI

It helped me to be more confident in my faith and gave me the resources to answer the questions people ask me.

—M.E., Brooklyn Park, MN

Other

As a history teacher, evidence is important to me, so your evidence is comforting. I've been questioning my faith ever since my grandma died 8 years ago, and this has been an important step on my journey back. Thank you.

—Anon., Anoka, MN

FaithSearch Field Reports

Our evangelists share their impressions from recent events.

Dr. Don Bierle

"On the road again" could be my theme lately. Appleton, Las Vegas, Chicago, Tucson, Sioux Falls, Fond du Lac, and Prescott (AZ) are some of the places I've been privileged



to share the Gospel in the last couple of months. Of course, that doesn't include the many local ones.

Wherever I go, though, the response of people to the FaithSearch message is quite the same. One mother said that FaithSearch "helped her tell her son why the things in the Bible are true." Another shared that it had given her "confidence that Jesus really lived." A man said it made him "feel humbled and inspired." A senior couple bought a video because "this has made so much of a difference in renewing our faith in Christ."

I've also been spending a lot of time lately doing more writing—like the "Unwrapping the Truth about Christmas" pocket guide, and administrative planning and decision-making about the ministry's future. But **nothing invigorates me like standing in front of a group of people who are drinking in God's truth with enthusiasm, and responding with changed lives.** People keep asking me how I maintain my excitement about FaithSearch when I've done it hundreds of times. I'm not sure, but I think it must be of God. When the Spirit of God gave me the understanding and ability to develop FaithSearch, He also instilled a permanent desire and enthusiasm to share it. I pray it will be true as long as I have breath.

Hasnah Burdge

After a very busy fall schedule, traveling to 11 cities in 12 weekends, I'm enjoying a calmer January. However, the sense of urgency to proclaim the Gospel to a lost world still burns strong and hot in my heart! I recently took a trip to Toronto, Canada, to see a dear friend and to speak at a "Women in Leadership" event. They wanted to know **how to defend exclusive truth!** I am continually amazed at how relevant FaithSearch is to those who are seeking to know Christ. These women are influential Christian leaders in their communities and most of them have not heard this manner of sharing the truth of Christian faith before. Some of them said, "Canada needs FaithSearch!" I had another opportunity to share the Gospel two weeks ago, and helped bring **six people into the kingdom.** What an awesome God we serve.



On the flip side, being somewhat "grounded" from traveling has allowed me to focus on my responsibilities as Executive Direc-

tor. It continues to be a privilege for me to be called to serve at Faith Studies. Our phenomenal staff has blessed me tremendously! Thank you Todd, Rick, Laura, Kristi, Suzie, Sandi, Mary, Pat, Jan, Deb, Bonnie, Lowell, Vernee, Toby, Adrian and our newest addition Richard! You are serving God well!

Toby Travis

There's a lot of exhilarating change going on in my ministry right now as we launch MAGI (see page 2). It is exciting to see God opening doors right and left. The greatest challenge is going to be sorting out the many opportunities that are coming our way. Just like Faith Studies has done in focusing on FaithSearch, we have to keep our focus sharp in MAGI, too. But right now, it's mostly a question of "Where do we begin?" Naturally, some of what we'll be doing is expanding on the things we're already doing, such as Illusion & Beyond and the South Asia evangelistic tour.



Once again this spring, I will be representing Faith Studies in India, continuing the FaithSearch training for pastors. Some of the days will be spent training all the students in their Great Commission Training Center, as well. This means that all new Campus Crusade staff in India will be trained to use FaithSearch as they begin their ministries. Praise God!

Adrian Van Vactor

The focus of my life right now continues to be **studying and preparing to get married.**



The studying has been enjoyable and stimulating—it's all theology and apologetics. It is also extremely tedious and time consuming. But it's well worth it. When I began, I thought I didn't know anything, and I thought theology was completely unattainable. But I'm happy to say I'm "hanging in there with the big boys."

On top of that, planning a wedding is challenging. It's somewhat overwhelming, but I'm learning a lot, trying to see how I can come together with another person to live and to minister. I'm learning about responsibility, about being a spouse and a leader in a relationship and in ministry. I'm also learning more about being a steward of the time and resources God has given me.

Right now my event schedule is light, so it's my prayer to get done with school by June. We're also seeking God about our finances while I'm on half-salary with Faith Studies as a student. We're a little unsure about how we're going to pay for the rest of the wedding, too, so we would appreciate your prayers for us.

Ministry Highlights

Extending the Vision: Progress Report

Our ministry theme for the 2003 fiscal year, announced at the Celebration Banquet in April, was "Extending the Vision Through Faith." It has been quite a year of ministry so far, as we have stepped out in faith, watching God work in and through us.

Even as we seek to extend our impact for the Kingdom of God in these uncertain times, our confidence in Him is certain. We rejoice that He whom we serve is faithful. Here a snapshot of ministry highlights from the first half of this fiscal year, for which we invite you to rejoice with us.

- **218 outreach events** (79%), plus 37 training (13%) and 21 promotional (8%) events
- 129,152 people in attendance at all events
- **11,420 recorded faith commitments to Christ**
- Moved into new and expanded office facilities
- **International FaithSearch training in India:** 1,130 pastors and lay leaders in attendance learned how to use FaithSearch in their local ministries
- International distribution of *Surprised by Faith* and *The FaithSearch Guide* in India (1,750 copies of each book)
- International distribution of 1,250 two-volume set of *FaithSearch Videos* in India
- Continuation of the relationship with Stonecroft Ministries, including *Friend to Friend* training and testimonies with FaithSearch content, which were presented at regional seminars for their national leadership, with 1,686 in attendance at 11 events in 4 cities around the country
- Expansion of our international evangelistic efforts with tours to Thailand and South Africa, in cooperation with the Macedonia Project through Campus Crusade for Christ



Keeping the Furrow Straight

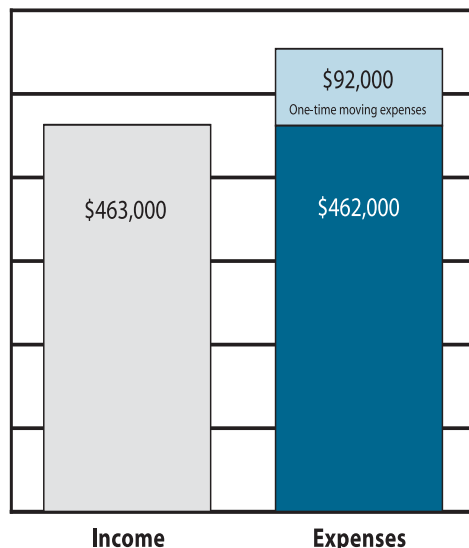
Last November, Vernee and I spent a long weekend at The Cove in Ashville, North Carolina. I was invited to the beautiful Billy Graham Training Center along with the executives of over 125 other Christian ministries, to sharpen our focus and strategy in these “troubled times.”

I came away from the conference with an unexpected insight. At first, it made me feel alone and defensive, but the Holy Spirit used it to bring to my heart a new conviction and resolve for the future. What was the insight? Faith Studies International is unusual, if not unique, in its evangelistic proclamation of *FaithSearch* with its powerful supporting evidence from history, science and testimony. **Not one other ministry was doing anything like we do.** I felt privileged and humbled that God has trusted us so much by commissioning us with a ministry to reach lost people in a very special way.

This insight has given me new motivation to put even more energy into our 5-year “Extending the Vision” plan. We will begin in February to explore ways to take the Gospel message using *FaithSearch* to new geographic regions of the country and the world, to new

Fiscal Year 2003

Year to Date Income-vs-Expenses



language groups, to the unchurched, to various age groups, etc. That’s why we’ve chosen a special verse for Extending the Vision—2003: “Go then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples...” (Mt. 28:19 GNV). And God continues to open the needed doors of opportunity as we prepare to take new steps of faith.

These are difficult financial times for ministries. While our contributions are down, by frugal budgeting and God’s ability to somehow multiply what we do have, we finished our **first six months of fiscal 2003 in good condition.** We had \$463,000 income but spent \$554,000—the difference being the \$92,000 we spent on relocation of our ministry headquarters. From this point on, though, the new location will **save us money every year and give us double the space.**

Look how **God has multiplied the spiritual fruit of Faith Studies** just in the first six months of fiscal 2003!

- Over **200 outreach events** were presented
- Over **129,000 people attended** our events nationally and internationally
- There were **11,420 recorded commitments to follow Christ**

The spiritual ignorance and deception of people today is epidemic in proportion—but we have a powerful biblical message to help them find the true and living God. Faith Studies needs the **prayers and sacrificial giving of every person** on our mailing list in order to get that message out.

Here’s one way you can help. Be sure to reserve **Friday evening, April 25, to attend Faith Studies’ “Celebration Dessert.”** Get an exciting, one-year update on the progress and future development of “Extending the Vision.” Bring some Christian friends to introduce them to Faith Studies. And be the first to receive a **SURPRISE** that will be part of our short evening together. Seating is limited — **call now for your reservations.**

As we consider the work ahead, I am reflecting on an agricultural illustration Jesus used to challenge those in His day who considered a compromising discipleship: “No one, after putting his hand to the plow and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God” (Luke 9:62). Those who have ever plowed a field will understand when I express the prayer of my heart: “Lord, help us at Faith Studies to keep our eyes on Jesus so our spiritual furrow will be straight!”



Dr. Don Bierle
President

Don



Praise Rejoice with us!

1. The “**Unwrapping the Truth About Christmas**” Pocket Guide was widely used across the nation in churches and with individuals this Christmas. Praise God!
2. Praise God for Don’s and Vernee’s safe and productive sabbatical in Arizona.
3. In 2002, nearly **130,000 people** heard the Gospel of Jesus Christ through Faith Studies teachers. Thank Him for His



Prayer Things to pray about:

1. Please pray for **positive financial responses** from our supporters. We are still running a monthly deficit against budget.
2. Pray for open doors so Faith Studies can have a presence at **church denomination conferences.**
3. Pray for Toby as he prepares to **train pastors** in India in April.
4. Pray for **scheduled events.** For the host church and the lost they are inviting, for coordinating teams, for the presence of God, for the conviction of the Holy Spirit, for the nurturing of new believers.
5. **Protection** of our staff and their families as they work and travel.