

## Historic Celebration Coming

As God continues to bless the ministry of Faith Studies International, we have planned an historic occasion to honor Him, and to anticipate the future He has for us. **The 2003 Celebration Dessert will take place on Friday, April 25, at Christ Presbyterian Church in Edina, MN.** The evening will begin with an artwork silent auction at 6:15 pm, followed by a dessert and program, beginning at 7:00 p.m. The evening will conclude at 8:30 p.m.

A special surprise that includes an historic announcement has been planned that you won't want to miss, so make your reservation today by calling our office at 952.401.4501. Seating is limited to 300, and reservations are taken on a first-come, first-served basis. This evening is a great opportunity to introduce the important ministry of Faith Studies to your Christian friends. We must get the life-changing and evidence-based *FaithSearch* message to as many as possible, so please prayerfully consider those



Kurt Linn of *River*, will be our musical guest for the Celebration Dessert.

you might challenge to join us in this cause. (Be sure to include them when you make your reservation.)

Dr. Bierle will share the growing impact and future vision of Faith Studies in his "Extending the Vision—2003" message. This is an exciting time for our ministry, and a critical time in the course of world events. We are continuing to step out in faith, to expand and accelerate the reach of our ministry around the world and into new areas within the U.S. Recently-appointed executive director Hasnah Burdge will also give a report on the activity of the ministry over the past year. And as a special treat, **Kurt Linn, from the nationally-recognized recording group *River*, will be our musical guest for the evening.**

An important part of the evening is explaining how you can participate in this unique ministry of calling people to new life in Christ. We encourage you to pray in preparation for this exciting evening so you will be sensitive to the leading of God's Spirit in regard to your participation in prayer, finances, volunteering, etc.

Several artists have donated their work for inclusion in the silent auction, for which we are very thankful. We encourage you to preview their artwork on our Web site ([www.faithstudies.org/celebration](http://www.faithstudies.org/celebration)). The work includes several prints from both **Robert Olson** and **Ken Zylla**, as well as an original canvas by **Randall Bennett**. In addition, **Jean Wood**, a watercolor artist and friend of the ministry, has offered to paint an original "portrait" of your home—if you are the auction winner. The works will be on display before the celebration, so come early to look around. Bids may be submitted until

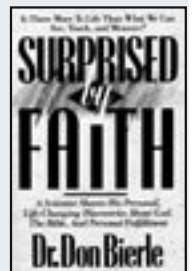
## No Surprise: Impact of Surprised By Faith Grows

Though it is nearly 10 years since its first publication, *Surprised By Faith* continues to have a increasing impact for the cause of Christ. With over a quarter million copies in print, this book is being used by God in exciting ways to encourage Christians and to bring others to faith in Christ for the first time. Current efforts are underway to have the book published in multiple languages for use around the world.

*Surprised By Faith* tells the compelling and personal story of Dr. Don Bierle's journey from skepticism to salvation. Along the way, it includes a detailed discussion of the historical, archaeological and logical evidence for faith, such as that which finally brought Dr. Bierle to his knees before Christ years ago. It also serves as the text for our flagship event, *FaithSearch*, and is used in churches around the country for sharing the Good News with friends and neighbors.

Wherever he goes, **Dr. Bierle continues to hear from people of all ages and walks of life who have been blessed and challenged by this text.** Recently, a gentleman approached him after a seminar in Hutchinson, MN. He shared a heart-rending story, yet one that ends in hope and encouragement.

A year-and-a-half ago, tragedy struck this man's family. His 10-year-old son was killed in a house fire while staying overnight with a friend. While



*Surprised By Faith* continues to be used of God, with nearly 300,000 copies in print

## God at Work

|               |           |
|---------------|-----------|
| <b>2003</b>   | <b>83</b> |
| 2002 (Actual) | 46        |

\* Scheduled or having occurred, as of 3/01/2003. Includes all events where *FaithSearch*, in whole or in part, is presented.

# 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.

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**Board Members**

Don Bierle, *President*

John Parenteau, *Board Chairman*

Lyle Drangstveit, *Board Secretary*

Larry Balmer Fred Bills

Eric Chico Gary Holland

David Lundstrom

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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). Call now for reservations—seating is limited: 952.401.4501

### 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

## Surprised By Faith (cont.)

visiting a counselor for help dealing with depression following his loss, the man was given a copy of the book *Surprised By Faith*. He shared with Dr. Bierle that reading the book was the primary factor that gave him strength to begin his recovery from depression. It gave him courage and confidence that he could rely on God for his future. When he heard that Dr. Bierle was going to be in town, he came to the event to personally thank Don for his book. How encouraging that the growth and healing were made possible by the faithful servant who passed along the book in the time of need.

This is only one of many tales of rejoicing. It seems not a month goes by that we don't hear from someone who has made a faith commitment to follow Jesus as Lord of their life after reading *Surprised by Faith*. Although we're confident that not everyone writes to inform us, in just the last few months we have heard from people in Florida, Georgia, Minnesota, Texas and Wyoming, who each made faith commitments for the first time in their lives.

The book, like the Gospel message itself, spans ages and cultures in its appeal. One enterprising young seventh grader, Elise, who is co-leading a student Bible study before school, demonstrates this. A friend who attends the study, who grew up without any church experience, asked for more information about Christianity. **Elise gave her friend a copy of *Surprised by Faith***, saying that it might answer some of her questions. The following week, her friend informed her that she was enjoying reading the book. By the next week, she positively ran up to her in the hall, and exclaimed, **"Guess what! I became a Christian."** She had finished reading the book, and came upon the suggested prayer in the back of the book. She wanted to begin the relationship with God which the book talks about. She said, "I prayed in my own words. I wrote my own prayer."

The international reach and impact of the book is growing, as well, especially as we continue to train pastors and lay people in the use of our materials in India. A pastor from Pudukottai in the very southeast of the country sent a letter to express his thanks and prayers for Faith Studies. "I read and touch [sic] our heart *Surprised By Faith*. It is very

helpful for our ministry work," he wrote. This growth will undoubtedly continue as the books are being translated and will soon be published in the Hindi and Tamil languages.

When the book was first published, evangelist **Dr. Billy Graham said, *Surprised By Faith* "will strengthen your own faith in God, in the reliability of the Bible, and in the truth of Jesus Christ."**

Over the years we have seen this born out time after time after time.

*Surprised By Faith* continues to help young people prepare to face the future, equipping them to resist the influences of society with the sure knowledge of the reliability and validity of Scripture. The book also

resonates with those who are tired in their faith, revitalizing their understanding of its relevance and importance, quickening them to new commitment and faithfulness. **It equips and encourages Christians to share their faith confidently with others.** And it meets real needs, answers the questions people are asking, about God and about life.

There is nothing more gratifying and humbling than to receive the thanks of one who has experienced the peace and forgiveness of God for the first time. And we in turn express our thanks to you for "participating in the Gospel" with us.



Pastors and lay leaders in India happily show off their copies of *Surprised By Faith*

## Celebration (cont.)

7:00 p.m. All proceeds will support the ministry of Faith Studies International. (Minimum bids for each work have been established.)

Call now to hold a table for you and your friends so you won't miss the celebration of the new things God is doing in and through Faith Studies—and to hear our surprise announcement firsthand. God has brought us all together for such a time as this to combine our prayers and finances so that we can accelerate the all-important task of "proclaiming the Gospel with evidence."



## What People Are Saying

### FAITHSEARCH

This was a great event to invite friends to. It's very encouraging that they enjoyed coming.  
—SF, Fond du Lac, WI

This was very helpful in that I was lacking on foundation. I now feel that I know why I believe instead of... just because. —SA, St Peter, MN

It not only answered many questions I had, but many I had not asked yet.—DB, Las Vegas, NV

This helped me to believe that God really does exist. —JY, Oshkosh, WI

This event gave me ways to help my daughters before the secular world grabs them.—GP, Brooklyn Park, MN

# FaithSearch Field Reports

Our evangelists share their impressions from recent events.

## Dr. Don Bierle

I am often asked if I don't tire of frequent presentations of the same material and my demanding schedule. I did 28 presentations in February, and 11 in the first 11 days of March. And that is in addition to a lot of writing, office meetings, travel, planning, fund raising, etc. My work days are often 12-15 hours.

Mind you, I'm not complaining (though Vernee sometimes does) or boasting. I love what God has called me to do, and to sustain a growing ministry like Faith Studies requires personal sacrifice. Tired of it? No. **Every time I stand up to speak I see new faces whose eternal destinies are at stake, and I am revived and motivated by God's Spirit.**

I also experience the satisfaction and fulfillment of seeing God change people's lives through the message. Many individuals come to my mind from Chicago, Hutchinson, Sioux Falls, Minneapolis, Bloomington, St. Peter, Desert Hot Springs (CA) and Sanibel Island (FL)—just in the past month. These individuals made faith commitments to Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord. Their expressions of gratitude, sometimes with tears of conviction and sometimes with bursts of joy, energize me. The apostle John must have felt this when he wrote: "What we have seen and heard we announce to you also, so that you will join with us in the fellowship that we have with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ. We write this in order that our joy may be complete" (1 John 1:3-4, GNB). **This is joy indeed!**

## Hasnah Burdge

David Brainerd, passionate about reaching the lost for Christ, penned these words, "I cared not where or how I lived, or what hardships I went through, so that I could gain souls to Christ. While I was asleep, I dreamed of these



*things; and when I waked, the first thing I thought of was this great work."*

Gaining souls to Christ moves me beyond the point of comfort. It occupies my time and often my thoughts, too. I am thankful for God's anointing on my life for such a purpose. Many times these last few months, I returned from events feeling overwhelmed by the responses from those who received the Gospel.

Recently at a *FaithSearch* event, I met a high school youth who commented, "**This presentation (FaithSearch) and the way it was presented just clicked completely and convinced me for the first time to accept Jesus with all my heart. I am very excited God led me to this event.**"

I spoke in February at a church in Wisconsin, and **18 people prayed for the first time to commit their lives to Jesus Christ** as their Lord and Savior. On that same Sunday morning, a gentleman from Iran walked up to me and asked many questions. He truly seemed to be seeking to understand this Jesus of history who claimed to be God. He left that day with a *Surprised by Faith* book and promised to read it.

So we will labor, as Jesus said, "As long as there is day we will continue to do the work of Him who sent Me" (John 9:4). Thank you so much for praying with us and for us as we continue to do the work God has given us.

## Toby Travis

I was encouraged after a *FaithSearch* for youth in Andover, MN, to see several kids respond with faith commitments. Several more also indicated a desire to join a Bible study.

One high school boy, who said he has not yet made a faith commitment but would like more information, encouraged me with his candor. He wrote, "**You've opened my eyes and answered many questions I've had. Thanks a lot!**"

My most recent *Illusion & Beyond* was one of those events where I wondered, "Lord, did you accomplish anything here tonight?" The evening was a mixture of too few people for the large



size of venue, and a subdued response to the performance and presentation. **But the written response by those in attendance was very encouraging**—and it was obvious that the evening touched the lives of many college students.

It seems that performances and seminars that "feel" ineffective are often the most spiritually fruitful. Perhaps that's just the Lord's way of reminding me that when it comes to matters of the heart, it is all about what He is doing in a person's life—not my clear or clever delivery.

Being back on a college campus got me "jazzed" in preparation for my next trip to India, where I typically find myself on dozens of campuses in the course of a couple of weeks. There is such challenge and opposition on the university level—and yet there is also the very evident power and presence of God stirring in the lives of young adults.

## Adrian Van Vactor

Our wedding plans are going great, so that's exciting. I have a number of international projects that we're planning, but it seems a lot of them are up in the air, so we're waiting on God. I would

appreciate your prayers for a possible tour through Brazil in April and May. There are concerns with financing by the Brazilian organizers, so please keep praying. I've never really been in this situation before, with such real uncertainty and so very little time to prepare. But I know that God will use this time to accomplish His work in us.

I'm also working on putting together several projects for the summer. This would involve going to Russia for a couple weeks, then on to London for another two weeks to perform for foreign visitors who are otherwise unreachable in their home countries. And of course, I'm planning to return to south Asia, performing the show with Toby's team. In addition, there is a possible opportunity to return to Germany in the fall. Sometimes it gets a little overwhelming, but I'm confident in God.



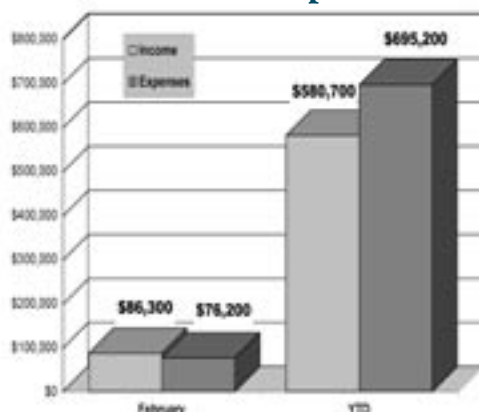


## A Just (Spiritual) War

With world conflict in the news so much, my mind keeps wandering to the biblical parallel of spiritual warfare. This is the one cause which we as Christians must undertake with every ounce of our being. The apostle Paul minced no words about it: **“For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms”** (Ephesians 6: 12). He admonished us to put on the full armor of God: Truth, righteousness, proclamation of the Good News, faith, salvation and the Word of God. These are our defensive and offensive weapons in this spiritual war!

In reviewing this, the Holy Spirit suddenly showed me that these were the very weapons He has given us at Faith Studies in order to wage spiritual warfare today! Since Satan is a liar (John 8:44) and uses deception to confuse and destroy people (2 Corinthians 11:3), we proclaim the *Good News* of God’s *Word as Truth*, calling people to *Faith* to receive *Salvation* and live *Righteous* lives in the power of His Spirit. Again, as Paul says, “The weapons we fight with... have divine power to demolish... arguments and every pretension that sets itself against the knowledge of God” (2 Corinthians 10:4-5).

## Fiscal 2003 Income-vs-Expenses



The apostles of Jesus established the standard of truth for presenting the Gospel of salvation to the unbelieving world, as recorded in the book of Acts. This pattern is referred to as the “*kerygma*,” after the Greek word used to identify it. It consists of three parts:

1. The historical evidence and facts concerning Jesus’ life, death and resurrection
2. The resulting consequence that Jesus is both Lord (God) and Christ (Messiah)
3. The call to respond: in repentance from sin, and in faith to follow Him

**Our flagship materials and event, FaithSearch, have been built and presented on this apostolic pattern for nearly 25 years.** In *FaithSearch* we present the historical and archaeological evidence that the New Testament Gospels are eyewitness accounts of Jesus—and are factually accurate. Using these records, we demonstrate from Jesus’ teaching and miracles that He was indeed God incarnate. Finally, we do as the apostles did—invite our listeners to a confession of repentance and faith to follow Jesus as Lord of their life. That’s the “*kerygma*”—the apostolic pattern of preaching salvation.

That’s why **the evangelists of Faith Studies focus on a FaithSearch passion**—that its message ideally meets the critical needs of our post-modern society, and that it is worth giving our ministry priority and lives to it. There are other ways to present the message of salvation, but God has uniquely called and equipped Faith Studies with *FaithSearch*. As soldiers of Christ, we use its spiritual weapons to carry out a just (spiritual) war for the souls of people.

And it is working! We have already had **over 12,000 people respond with a faith commitment to Jesus** in this fiscal year. PTL! **More than 130,000 have heard this message** in our events—not even counting the additional thousands

who read the same message through our publications. Thank you for helping us to proclaim *FaithSearch*—the apostolic message. Its cause is just, and its truth is changing the world, one person at a time—for eternity!



**Dr. Don Bierle**  
President

*Don*



## Praise

1. **4,268** have heard the Gospel at our events so far in 2003!
2. **419** recorded faith commitments at our events so far in 2003!
3. **83 FaithSearch** events scheduled through December 2003!
4. Praise that our *FaithSearch Pocket Guide “Looking for the Truth About Easter”* has been written and churches and individuals have begun to order it for use during the Lent and Easter season.
5. For **God’s faithfulness** in sustaining the ministry in these lean financial times!
6. For our wonderful and productive **office space**.



## Prayer

1. For wide distribution of the Easter *FaithSearch Pocket Guide* and a spiritual impact on those who receive it
2. For the encouragement and spiritual care of those who have **committed their life to Jesus Christ** at our recent events.
3. For an **increase in financial gifts** for operations and for “*Extending the Vision*” 2003-2006 campaign.
4. For **wisdom** for us and the Envoy Group (marketing agency) **as we plan** together for the future growth of Faith Studies.
5. For more **opportunities** in the evangelist’s schedules to proclaim the *FaithSearch* message that calls people to new life in Christ.
6. Pray for **our staff** to have peace and focus as many projects are handled at the same time.
7. Pray for **Toby** as he travels to India to **train pastors** April 14-23.
8. Pray for **scheduled events**. For the host church and the lost they are inviting, for coordinating teams, for the presence and conviction of the Holy Spirit, for the nurturing of new believers.