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Requests for our materials in Spanish continue to come! Repeatedly, people have inquired as to the availability of a Spanish *Surprised by Faith* and *FaithSearch* Guide. And it's no wonder. Spanish is reported to be the third most-widely used language on the planet. It is natural, then, that the Hispanic world and the Spanish language have long been targets for our ministry. But God's timing is always perfect and His leading is clear as He has opened a door of opportunity to us.

Many of you have earnestly prayed for this day to come and God's hand has been moved on our behalf as a result. It is impossible for a project like this to begin without such Kingdom-building prayer on the part of God's people. Witness three significant events which have transpired as our Hispanic ministry begins to unfold.

First, critical to launching our Hispanic ministries was the provision of a qualified evangelist and coordinator

for the Spanish-speaking world. God has answered our prayers. **We are so thankful to the Lord to introduce to you Mr. Carlos Fernandez.**



Carlos Fernandez

Carlos comes from Lima, Peru, and is currently a student at Dallas Theological Seminary, in the second year of a three-year program to earn a Master of Sacred Theology (STM) degree. He is a gifted student, has a broad background in both business and ministry, and has a passion for reaching the Hispanic world for Jesus Christ. Carlos has joined us as an intern during his last two years of seminary, and will join our fulltime staff as Spanish Coordinator and Evangelist in the summer

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God at Work



Highlights of Fiscal 2003

- The second edition of *Surprised by Faith* was released in 2003. This book has been the most widely recognized and distributed of all our publications, with 300,000 in print.
- Our evangelists proclaimed the Gospel to **144,393 people** on five continents, in seven countries, and twenty-three U.S. states. A total of **403 presentation events** were conducted, with a record **12,454 people indicating a commitment to the Lord.**
- A major event this year was the **move of our ministry offices** from Chanhassen to Chaska, prompted by a friend who wanted to help the ministry by gifting some space.
- A new line of **outreach booklets** were released in fiscal 2003—"Unwrapping the Truth About Christmas" and "Looking for the Truth About Easter."
- Fiscal 2003 was the first year of our new four-year strategy, "**Extending the Vision.**" It is defined as "our passion and resolve to fulfill God's vision and call for *FaithSearch* by renewing our zeal for reaching all the diversity of people in America, while extending His redemption to people in new geographic regions, languages and cultures."
- The difficult economic times resulted in a 40% reduction in personal financial donations. Income in fiscal 2003 was significantly below budget for the first time in the history of Faith Studies International. We continue to pray for God's faithfulness in providing finances sufficient to fulfill His call upon us to meet a growing need for *FaithSearch* in the world.

Hold That Verdict On The James Bone Box!

In our last newsletter we reported on the archaeological discovery of the first century ossuary bearing the inscription, "James, son of Joseph, brother of Jesus." **If authentic, it provides the earliest archaeological evidence of the person of Jesus and his family ever found to date (A.D. 62).** It also provides external confirmation of the historicity of the New Testament which identifies James as the brother of Jesus and as one of the three pillars of the Jerusalem church (Mt. 13:55; Acts 15:13; 21:18; Gal. 1:19; 2:9; 1 Cor. 15:7).

But on June 18, 2003, the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) announced that a scientific study they had commissioned found the inscription to be a fake—a modern forgery. This set off what *Biblical Archaeology Review* referred to as "The Storm Over

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FaithSearch is published by Faith Studies International, an interdenominational, not-for-profit organization dedicated to presenting evidences for the Christian faith through *FaithSearch* 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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Hedgehogs, Foxes, and Other Busy Creatures

Author Jim Collins, teacher to leaders throughout the corporate and social sector, asked a puzzling question in his book *Good to Great*. “Are you a Hedgehog or a Fox?” According to an ancient Greek parable, he wrote, “A fox knows many things, but the hedgehog knows one big thing.”

Our Mission: Faith Studies International exists to call people to new life through faith in Jesus Christ by proclaiming the Christian Gospel with supporting evidence through FaithSearch.

Now you may ask, what does this have to do with ministry and sharing the Gospel? It's about stewardship. It's about focusing on what we do best, concentrating our resources, time and energy on it. **What we do best at Faith Studies International is presenting the Gospel through FaithSearch!** That is why, if you have called the office in the last several weeks, you would have heard, “Good morning, *FaithSearch*...How may I help

you?” Identifying ourselves as *FaithSearch* is a part of our new focus on clarifying our distinct calling and vision.

In March of this year, as a result of study and extensive prayer, we partnered with The Envoy Group (www.theenvoygroup.com) to help us in this new and God-ordained effort to articulate our unique calling and vision.

The Envoy Group is a team of communications professionals dedicated to the furthering of the Kingdom of Christ. They do this simply by “Delivering Your Vision.” Karl Schaller, senior vice-president and partner, said, “Our ‘Why didn't I think of that!’ marketing and fundraising strategies begin, and end, with an intense focus on understanding our client's vision. Our focus is squarely on results,” he continued, “which has led to a track record of successfully delivering the vision of dozens of national and international clients.... The pursuit for an organization is to work in excellence as

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CLASSIFIEDS

LEADERSHIP ADJUSTMENT

Hasnah Burdge has served well as the Executive Director of Faith Studies for the past year. She also serves as an evangelist, and as the coordinator of our relationship with The Envoy Group. Since these several responsibilities were expanding, and also because Hasnah needed to spend more time with her family, it was decided that her primary focus should be on *FaithSearch* evangelism and Envoy coordination. She will no longer carry the responsibility of Executive Director. Effective July 1, President Don Bierle has assumed executive leadership responsibility.

FOLDING MACHINE NEEDED

Wanted: Folding machine for *FaithSearch* office use. If you have one to donate or would like to donate towards this need, please call the office: (952) 401-4501.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY

**Part-time or fulltime PAID Position:
Office Assistant**

Be a valued part of a team that will reach over 100,000 people for Christ this year!

Our ideal candidate would possess the following types of skills:

Excellent communication skills, multi-tasking ability, enjoy working with computers, skilled in Windows operating system and MS Office; organized and good with details.

Must love the Lord and desire to help introduce more people to Him!

Call for more information! (952) 401-4501.

WANTED: CLASSROOM TABLES

We are seeking the donation of several matching classroom tables to be used for training seminars. These are narrower than regular folding tables; 2' x 6' would be ideal. Call (952) 401-4501.

Bone Box (Cont. from page 1)

The Bone Box” (BAR Sept/Oct 2003). Since June there have been many “revelations” about the box and about the people who are studying it. These are implicated in the following headline from an article on Beliefnet.com: “The ‘James Bond,’ squabbling geologists, a possible vendetta, and uncertainties of biblical archaeology.”

The first item in the headline refers to the allegation that a modern forger tried to make the recent inscription look old by covering it with an applied mixture of water and ground chalk (the ‘James Bond’). The second item refers to the fact that some of the world's greatest paleographers and scientists have looked at the evidence and arrived at opposite conclusions. Clearly, less impassioned study is needed on the matter, especially in view of the third item (“a possible vendetta”). A rift has occurred between the director of the IAA and Hershel Shanks, editor of *Biblical Archaeology Review* magazine. Shanks believes that “archaeological politics” may have played a role in the IAA's investigation of the James bone box. (See BAR July/Aug 2003, p. 24 and box inset on p. 32 of BAR Sept/Oct 2003.) Finally, the fourth item about the “uncertainties of biblical archaeology” is summed up by BAR: “It is never possible to establish 100 percent authenticity. No matter how many tests you apply, there may be another test that would reveal that an object is a forgery. This is true even of objects found in professional excavations.”

At present it seems that paleography—the study of the form and slant of the letters of an ancient inscription—has not been the basis for declaring the box a forgery. As Frank Cross, Harvard dean of Semitic paleographers, has expressed, “If this is a forgery, the forger is a genius.” Rather, the basis for fraud has been the interpretation of the results of a technical chemical analysis of the box and inscription. Differing interpretations of these results have been offered by other scientists.

Until these issues are resolved and scholars arrive at a consensus, we must suspend judgment about whether the James bone box is authentic. As Shanks, says, “I think this is the beginning of the debate, and not the end.”



The disputed ossuary: Real or fake? We must wait and see.

Hispanic Work (Cont. from page 1)

of 2005. Over his two-year internship, Carlos will be able to spend time training with us as he completes his studies and prepares for his *FaithSearch* ministry.

Second, the Spanish translation of *Surprised by Faith* has begun. God again has answered the prayers of His people for this long-awaited translation project. As part of his responsibilities, Carlos will translate and field test the Spanish version of *Surprised by Faith*, to be followed by the *FaithSearch* Guide and the Growing Faith discipleship manual. Carlos has excellent linguistic skills and is ideally equipped to see these publications through to completion. The environment at and around Dallas Seminary also provides a perfect testing ground as these translations move from first draft to publication quality.

Third, an emerging worldwide strategy to reach the Spanish-speaking world is already in preparation. Key parts of this strategy include both North and South America, Mexico, Spain and the Portuguese-speaking nations of Brazil and Portugal. Again, we will be working with Carlos over these next two years to clarify this strategy for reaching Hispanics for Christ all over the world.

Please continue to pray for the Spanish world and our efforts to reach these dear people for Jesus Christ. **We have only just begun and your prayers are as urgently needed as ever before.** Pray for Carlos as he translates materials and trains for *FaithSearch* ministry. Pray for funding for our International Ministries so this project will become a reality. And pray for abundant spiritual fruit of salvation as we continue “Extending the Vision” to all peoples everywhere.

International Update: India Translations Arrive

When Dr. Bierle and Denny McKeever returned from India, they brought with them copies of the recently translated books, *Surprised by Faith*, and the *FaithSearch* Guide, in both Tamil and Hindi. Tamil is the language of the southeastern state of Tamilnadu (population over 62.1 million), and Hindi is one of two official national languages of India (English is the other). The books were published in India last year in English.

Plans have been formalized recently to translate the works into three additional Indian languages: Malayalam (the language of the southwestern state of Kerala, population 33 million); Kannada (the language of the western state of Karnataka, 51.7 million); and Telugu (for the eastern state of Andhra Pradesh, 75.7 million).



Tamil *FaithSearch* Guide, Tamil *Surprised by Faith*, Hindi *FaithSearch* Guide, Hindi *Surprised by Faith*.

Hedgehogs and Foxes (Cont. from page 2)

unto the Lord.” They have now begun this process with us.

With this laser-sharp focus on *FaithSearch*, we have been quite busy repackaging our resources to reflect the *FaithSearch* identity, beginning with our Web site (check us out at www.faithsearch.org), and continuing through to the look of our publications, our new presidential letterhead and even this newsletter. Other initiatives include a capital fundraising campaign, new database technologies and strategies, and creative communication methods designed

to get the word out to those who aren’t familiar with *FaithSearch*.

In a recent marketing mailing introducing *FaithSearch* to some 30,000 churches nationally, nearly 1,000 responded to request more information. (The 3% response rate to a mailing of this type is phenomenal.) This is evidence of a tremendous felt need for—and response to—the eye-opening and convincingly logical case for trusting the Bible and believing in the historical person of Jesus Christ, which *FaithSearch* delivers. *FaithSearch* events in new regions have already been scheduled as a result of this mailing, and follow-up calls to each respondent are underway.

“God has given us a profound message and doors of opportunity for sharing it,” said Dr. Bierle. “We can’t keep this only for ourselves—good stewardship and compassion for the lost dictates that we become more effective in taking *FaithSearch* to all peoples everywhere.” Join us in praying for God’s continued guidance and blessing as we seek to serve Him effectively and with excellence.



The new *FaithSearch* curriculum: *FaithSearch* Guide, *Surprised by Faith*, Friend to Friend, Making Sense of Creation and Evolution, Making Sense of Life After Death (formerly the Hope Study), Growing Faith, and Growing Faith Leader’s Guide.



What People Are Saying

FaithSearch

[You] provided so many pieces of evidence and facts that I’ve never heard. Very enlightening!
—SI, Eden Prairie, MN

I was beginning to question. This makes me remember that God is God and I need to have Him first in my life. I thought it was very helpful. I learned so much! Thanks! —JE, Little Canada, MN

This event answered the silent questions in my heart, I now know for a matter of fact that Jesus is Lord! —SL, Shakopee, MN

This event would have been more helpful to me if it had been presented to me 35 years earlier. So much wasted time, so much futile effort. —DN

Surprised by Faith

You gave me a copy of *Surprised by Faith* at the reunion. I just wanted to let you know that I came to accept Christ as Savior after reading it.
—KJ, Sioux Falls, SD

I had some lingering doubts about my faith, but they were all removed when I read *Surprised by Faith*. —AMS, India

FaithSearch Field Reports

Dr. Don Bierle

It has been quite a summer. There have been the regular *FaithSearch* outreach events—Rochester, Fridley, Chaska and Brooklyn Park (MN); Beloit and Fond du Lac (WI). What a joy to see people discover new life in Christ! There have also been some irregular activities. In fact, if I didn't like change, I probably wouldn't like working at Faith Studies.



For example, we have given our *FaithSearch* presentation quite a "face lift," creating ten "Ah-ha!" discoveries for attendees to experience. I used these in my training of India pastors recently—and they really "got into it." Charlie Abro, Director of Media for India Campus Crusade, jokingly said that people in these pastors' churches will be saying "Ah-ha!" for weeks to come as the pastors preach and teach what they have learned.

Second, the staff and I have created coordinated covers for all our publications to reflect our new *FaithSearch* brand and logo (see page 2). Third, we have added a Peruvian intern to our evangelist team who has already begun translating my book *Surprised by Faith* into Spanish.

But most exciting is our expanded strategy for training and outreach in India. We have been asked to have *Surprised by Faith* translated into three more Indian languages and to begin training an infrastructure of Campus Crusade personnel who will take *FaithSearch* to the billion people of India. **This, together with our domestic expansion, gives me great motivation and enthusiasm about our future ministry.** We are praising God for the many open doors he provides for the Gospel, and for trusting us to go through them with the message of *FaithSearch*.

Hasnah Burdge

I am writing this report from a log cabin overlooking the snow-capped mountains of Montana. It is a time of retreat for me with my Star Fellowship (a gathering of seven leaders from three nations for a time of prayer, encouragement and accountability). Ministry work is an all-consuming task—I so easily allow it expend me. **This time of intentional, personal reflection and retreat back to the heart of God will prepare me for the days ahead.**



As I was recounting with God His goodness and mercy this morning, I was reminded how His hands have moved mightily as I

continued to preach Jesus Christ and Him crucified. **I wish I could fully express the changes I see in people who receive the Good News of Jesus Christ through *FaithSearch*.** The transformed look in their eyes continues to humble me, and their deep gratitude ever strengthens my resolve to preach in and out of season, in good times and in bad, and never to be silent!

I presented a modified version of *FaithSearch* at an adult education class in a local church last week. I was amazed at the response. There was a loud, audible gasp as I presented the incredible evidence and support for the integrity of the New Testament. **About six people prayed with me to make a faith commitment to Christ for the first time that day!** God is truly awesome!

I look forward to returning from my time here in Montana and continuing to preach the powerful message of the cross. Please pray with me and for me as I submit to God's leading in my life. I appreciate you all!

Denny McKeever

From August 26-September 4, Don Bierle and I returned to India to train pastors and church leaders in the use of *FaithSearch*. It was an incredible time as **over 600 pastors met in three conferences** in the cities of Pondicherry, Cudallore and Mysore.



Actually getting there was an adventure in itself. The 195 mile journey from Bangalore to Pondicherry on the eastern coast took over eight hours, rather than three as we would expect here. And the entire time we stopped and started, lurching violently as we wove our way between and around bicycles, motorcycles, ox carts, on-coming vehicles and potholes on the narrow roads. So much for sleeping in the car!

Over and over again, though, we were blessed by those in attendance. **They testified to the importance this incredible tool, and of their intention to lead their churches in the use of *FaithSearch*.**

Returning to this spiritually hungry land makes me think of the movie *Back to the Future*. Going back to India is indeed in our future, and our partnership in India recognizes the future for *FaithSearch* there. Discussions were held with the leadership of Campus Crusade regarding their **desire to take *FaithSearch* to all twenty-eight states in India.** Praise God!

And thank you all for your continued prayers. **More than at any other time in my ministry, I was actively aware — I could actually feel it — that we were being daily upheld before the Lord.**



Praise

Rejoice with us!

1. Over 20,000 people have heard the Gospel at over 150 events so far in calendar 2003!
2. 1,140 recorded commitments at our events so far in calendar 2003!
3. Amazing responses to our "*FaithSearch* Discovery Kit" marketing campaign introducing us to more churches!
4. Exciting new possibilities for further ministry in India with Campus Crusade for Christ!
5. God's faithfulness to Don and Denny as they ministered to pastors in India.



Prayer

Things to pray about:

1. For the encouragement and spiritual care of those who have committed their life to Jesus Christ at our recent events.
2. For an increase in financial gifts for operations and for "Extending the Vision" 2003-2006 campaign.
3. For wisdom for us and The Envoy Group (marketing agency) as we plan together for the future growth of Faith Studies.
4. For the churches who've requested our "Discovery Kit." Pray that they would be prompted by the Holy Spirit to act on it and that more Gospel-proclaiming events might be scheduled.
5. Pray for scheduled events (see calendar). 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.
6. For excellent candidates for our office position that needs to be filled.