

# WHO KNOWS?

Faithfulness  
In Uncertainty

# WHY FAITH & WORK

100,000

Hours is the average time people will spend working over a lifetime

69%

Of workers are disengaged (Gallup 2025)

72%

Of Christians struggle to connect their work with their faith (Barna 2018)

Our vision is that every person's work brings hope and life to their city.

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**WHO KNOWS?  
HE MAY TURN  
AND RELENT AND  
LEAVE A BLESSING  
BEHIND HIM...”**

JOEL 2:14

# Letter From The CEO



“Who knows?  
He may turn and relent  
and leave a blessing  
behind him...”

JOEL 2:14

We are living in a moment where it is **increasingly difficult to know what to expect**, even though our technological “progress” has enabled us to access, process, and produce more knowledge than ever. In fact, whatever sense of security we had in our way of life, whether in our jobs, national political stability, shared convictions and viewpoints in our local congregation, or our investing strategy has been unmasked as profoundly insecure.

The future feels less predictable, less sure, and less hopeful. It was into that kind of moment that a simple phrase from Scripture took on new meaning for the Denver Institute team this year.

In March of last year, during our staff’s weekly rhythm of engaging Scripture together through lectio divina, prayer, and discussion, we encountered Joel 2:14. The prophet calls God’s people to return, repent, and reorient their lives toward God. Or, as the New Testament would later describe it, to undergo **metanoia**—a renewed mind set on things above (Rom. 12:1-2; Col. 3:1). Then comes the catchy, profound line: “Who knows? Perhaps he will be compassionate. Perhaps he will relent. Perhaps he will leave a blessing in his wake.”

## Metanoia

μετάνοια

A change of mind: as it appears in one who repents  
A change in direction of one’s heart and life

## “WHO KNOWS?”

“Who knows?” became a light-hearted mantra for our team and our work, but it also became something deeper. It reminded us that our role is not about outcomes and impact but about faithfulness. We are to be faithful in aligning our work with God’s character, his will, and his work in us and through us, while at the same time expecting, hoping—but not demanding—that God would bring surprising fruitfulness to our daily labor.

Faithfulness does not come with guarantees. It lives not in clarity, but in uncertainty; not when outcomes are secured, but when they are still hidden. It is the steady turning of our attention, our work, and our hope toward the one Person we can trust: Jesus.

This year, that posture grew deeper in our team.

We made decisions that, on paper, did not make complete sense. We stepped into opportunities that carried real risk and faced questions we could not answer at the time. We chose to lean into what might take shape, even when we could not see where it would lead.

Should we place the 5280 Fellowship on sabbatical? Will it come back? Will we have enough interest to continue our flagship program? **WHO KNOWS?**

Should we divert hundreds of staff hours from our operational plan to pursue an intensive grant process with a major funder who has never given us the green light? **WHO KNOWS?**

Should we keep imagining the next iteration of Business for the Common Good even though we’ve seen a downward trend in attendance over the last 3 years? **WHO KNOWS?**

How much and in what ways should we invest resources and staff time into managing and enabling the growth of the Women, Work, & Calling ecosystem nationally and internationally? Will it result in greater engagement and will more women integrate their faith with their public life? **WHO KNOWS?**

We did not know. What will the 5280 Fellowship look like after a year off? Will we receive any funds for our big storytelling plans? What kind of fruit will our national Women, Work, & Calling initiative yield? Would God leave a blessing in his wake? We hoped, expected, but didn't demand it. A prayer I began praying in those moments was, **"Father, give us only what we can faithfully steward."**

The Lilly Endowment grant came through, launching the CityGate Storytelling Initiative and opening doors for national impact we could not have orchestrated ourselves.

Our two largest events ever—Business for the Common Good and Women, Work, & Calling—gathered more people than at any point in our history. Even in the pause of the 5280 Fellowship, we found space for renewal and reimagination that will shape its future; then, we had more applicants than the previous three years.

**None of this was inevitable. It was received.**

Joel's words echo forward into Acts 2, when Peter preaches on Pentecost and declares, **"This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16)**. What was once a hopeful question—"Who knows?"—becomes, in time, a surprising declaration: God's Spirit was poured out on those who did **metanoia**, who put their trust in Jesus.

## What began in uncertainty became unmistakable in hindsight.

All of us find ourselves in a moment that requires that same kind of trust.

We are living in a time of accelerated change and deep instability. Wars and geopolitical tensions continue to reshape the world. Our political life is increasingly defined not by persuasion but by outrage and power. Even within the Church, we see fractures that mirror the world more than the unity of Christ, specifically division along ideological lines, suspicion replacing charity, and a growing temptation to seek influence more than faithfulness. At the same time, artificial intelligence is rapidly redefining the nature of work itself.

These are not small shifts; they are tectonic. Beneath them is a deeper question: in a world being reshaped this quickly, what—or who—will anchor us?

**The call of the Christian is not to certainty, but to trust.**

Yet, trust is not passive. As Dallas Willard reminds us, **"grace is opposed to earning, not to effort."**<sup>1</sup>

**FAITHFULNESS IS NOT INACTIVITY; IT IS ACTIVE ALIGNMENT WITH GOD'S PURPOSES WITHOUT THE ILLUSION THAT WE CAN CONTROL OUTCOMES.**

Or, as Eugene Peterson wrote, the life of discipleship is "a long obedience in the same direction."<sup>2</sup> In contrast to a culture addicted to immediacy and visibility, the way of Jesus is slow and hidden. It is precisely there that God empowers and equips the kind of people through whom he is willing to work.

● **FAITHFULNESS PRECEDES CLARITY.**

● **OBEDIENCE PRECEDES OUTPOURING.**

● **TRUST PRECEDES TRANSFORMATION.**

This is the pattern we see in Scripture, and the one we are invited to live.

At Denver Institute, we believe this "who knows" kind of trust is worked out in the concrete places of our lives, namely in the work of meetings and emails, decisions and deadlines, products built, services rendered, people led, and budgets met. Faithful work in uncertain times is about offering our work to God with integrity, courage, and hope, trusting that he is at work in and through it.

We rarely recognize God's work fully in the moment. Yet, sometimes, we are given glimpses of lives changed, leaders formed, workplaces renewed, and cities changed through and a growing hunger for a vision of work that is not merely productive but redemptive.

The "Who knows?" of Joel is not doubt; it is expectancy. It frees us from the illusion that everything depends on us, while calling us into the real responsibility of faithfulness. The early church lived in that same tension. Waiting. Without clarity. Until suddenly. The Spirit moved.

**What began in uncertainty became unmistakable in time.**

Church, this is our moment—not because we have clarity about what comes next, but because we know the One who does.

So we turn toward him again, and again, in our work, in our leadership, and in our cities, and move forward with quiet confidence, trusting that the God who meets us in our faithfulness is able to do far more than we can ask or imagine.

Who knows?



**ROSS CHAPMAN**  
CEO, Denver Institute for Faith & Work

<sup>1</sup>Willard, D. (2006). *The great omission: Reclaiming Jesus's essential teachings on discipleship*. HarperSanFrancisco.

<sup>2</sup>Peterson, E. H. (2000). *A long obedience in the same direction: Discipleship in an instant society* (Rev. ed.). InterVarsity Press.

# THEOLOGICAL GROUNDING & PERSONAL REFLECTION

## It's Good Not to Know

JEFF HOFFMEYER

In common usage, the phrase “Who knows?” carries little to no connotation of hope. Accompanied by a subtle shake of the head or shrug of a shoulder, the expression connotes exasperation, uncertainty, and resignation. When will it stop being so windy? Who knows. When will my supervisor finally see the problem clearly? Who knows. When will the Rockies be relevant again? Who knows!

Not surprisingly, being the iconoclasts that they were, the Old Testament prophets used the phrase in a much different manner. “Who knows whether God will turn and relent, and leave a blessing behind him?” (Joel 2:14). “Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish” (Jonah 3:9).

The hope that is latent in this prophetic turn of phrase is built on trust. Part of this trust is the unstated answer to the rhetorical question. Who knows? No one. That’s how we use the phrase. Not so the prophets. Who knows?

**No human knows, but God does.**

In the case of Joel and Jonah, the prophets are trusting that God knows whether or not the impending disaster and judgment will occur. At the heart of this trust is the core knowledge that God is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness” (Exodus 34:6). This is crucial.

If God was capricious or indifferent, his omniscience (knowing all things) would not inspire the trust that leads to hope. But if God’s character is marked by **hesed**, the Hebrew word that expresses God’s abundantly loving covenant faithfulness, then we can trust and hope amidst uncertainty, calamity, and despair. **Who knows? The God who loves us faithfully knows.**

Hesed

חסד

- God’s abundantly loving covenant faithfulness
- steadfast love
- loving kindness

What this means is that we can trust the Author of the story. This trust in the Author is at the core of biblical prophecy, including Joel and Jonah. The prophets were attuned to the eternal story of who God is, which we as Christians affirm as the love between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That story has been written onto the pages of the world through Jesus Christ. The Author continues to write the story, faithfully bringing it to its conclusion when all things will be made new. Somehow, our stories, including our work, can be a part of that ongoing work of new creation. How does this happen? Who knows. What we can do is trust the Author, in prayer, and in how we treat our coworkers and clients and customers, and

**in working not so as to find our identity but so as to express our identity in Christ, the One who knows us and loves us.**

To the Author of your story, and mine, be the glory, now and forever. Amen.

Jeff Hoffmeyer is Denver Institute’s VP for Advancement and Theologian-in-Residence.



**Want to hear more on this topic?** Listen to the latest episode of Teach us to Pray, in which Jeff explores how to trust the Author of the story through prayer.



## REFLECTION PROMPTS

- Where are you most tempted to demand clarity or control at work?
  - What might it look like to entrust that area to God instead?
- What could it look like to make **faithfulness** your primary goal, **rather than outcomes or performance indicators**, in your daily responsibilities and decisions?
- Read 1 Corinthians 3:5–9.
  - In what ways are you planting, watering, and tending in your daily work?
  - Where might you be trying to control growth that only God can bring?
- Read Hebrews 11:8–10.
  - Where might God be inviting you to step forward in obedience without full clarity?
  - What would it look like to move in trust, even when you do not know where it will lead?



Women,  
Work &  
Calling®

# YEARS OF WOMEN, WORK, & CALLING

As we celebrated the tenth anniversary of Women, Work, & Calling's (WWC)® annual event in 2025, we reflected on the catalytic role this gathering has played in the movement WWC has become. As we continue pursuing the FOR Campaign, WWC is expanding opportunities for women to experience vocational discipleship opportunities, relational connection, and catalytic resources to see their public lives as redemptive opportunities.

**Who knew that the women who poured through the doors at our inaugural event in 2015 would be the first of thousands served through our programming?** At WWC25, we leaned into the tensions that characterize working women's lives through the theme "Embracing the AND." Sessions explored leadership that is both surrendered AND empowered in Christ, the dynamic interplay between purpose AND desire, the nagging worry professional women feel that they are too much AND not enough, and the wisdom needed to lead in a world that has been redeemed through Christ AND is not yet fully redeemed.

For the 1,350 guests gathered at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts and at 20 livestream host sites around the country, the theme resonated deeply with their lived experience: "WWC25 reinforced the reality that tensions can co-exist and it is not something inherently wrong," one guest commented. Others reflected on the critical role the annual event plays in their growth:

**"[Women, Work, & Calling] is an important catalyst and combinator for women. It brings together ambitious leaders asking the same questions—despite differences in age, stage, or career—and provides real community, support, and resources."**

**But what if one day each year isn't enough to fill this gap in women's discipleship?**

Three years ago, we envisioned a "Who knows?" plan to address this need at its source—through an ecosystem of vocational discipleship rooted in the institutions that shape working women's lives. We wondered whether churches, nonprofits, universities, and other organizations would share our passion for vocational discipleship. Could we develop models that are teachable, scalable, and adaptable?






# IN 2025, WE HOSTED THE SECOND CLASS OF WWC'S MINISTRY LEADERS' INTENSIVE,

A five-month virtual cohort that has now trained 42 organizational leaders in foundational principles for vocational discipleship. A pastor at a large Virginia church shared how the experience reshaped her approach:

"I'm beginning to see the women in my care through a new lens—vocational discipleship, not just general discipleship. The needs of working women are nuanced, and many don't even realize how much they long to connect their faith with their work. With intentionality, the Church has a powerful opportunity to meet that need."

The Intensive was joined by Community of Practice calls supporting emerging "women and work" groups, along with digital resources such as the "Getting Clear about Calling" and "Good Work, Deep Rest" discussion guides.

Soon, messages began arriving from around the country and the world: a physician launching a "women and work" initiative in London seeking guidance; a church leader in Nebraska requesting new resources after her group exhausted our existing materials; invitations to share what God is doing at Biola University, Hope College, Samford University, and Northwestern College.



## WHO KNOWS HOW GOD WILL DEVELOP THIS ECOSYSTEM?

*"It's like tapping into a water source that is already flowing with force and beauty," a local leader shared. "I'm confident that WWC is a growing movement that will equip many women for whole-life stewardship to Christ."*



# 5280 FELLOWSHIP REDESIGN

In 2016, Denver Institute started with a clear vision that birthed the 5280 Fellowship: early career professionals working with God, for the world, through their careers. For the next eight years, the Fellowship equipped 150 leaders to embody God’s vision for work and the love of Christ within Front Range workplaces through a 9-month peer learning experience in theology for work, professional development, and spiritual formation. During those eight years, we saw broad social changes through a pandemic, a polarizing political climate, decline in young adult church participation, rampant spiritual “deconstruction” among Christians, and significant changes in how committed people were to their public lives. So after those eight years, we took a planned year off from the Fellowship to reconsider it and redesign it. Organizationally, this felt like a public risk...like a programmatic **“Who knows?”**

The redesign felt obedient but uncharted. A group of nine 5280 alumni gathered for a weekend retreat of design thinking to hone the program. We hosted focus groups with other alumni to listen to their ongoing professional development needs. We restructured the Fellowship learning goals and learning activities. The communications staff developed a refreshed brand and colors to create a new, clearer, and more descriptive website. In the spring of 2025, after a year of discernment and listening, we laid out a plan to share these changes publicly and begin recruiting the next cohort of fellows.

**We didn’t know** if the year off would hurt our momentum.

**We didn’t know** for sure that what we rebuilt was better.

**We didn’t know** if post-pandemic Christians would be too busy to engage in a deep and regular formation experience.

We experienced silent tension in the waiting between redesign and relaunch. We’d been faithful in the process, but we had to wait in the not knowing, trusting God with any fruitfulness that might come of it.



The response to the relaunch has been a gift, confirming God’s continued work through the Fellowship. The current class of 22 fellows that joined us at the end of 2025 come from 15 different churches and represent a broad range of industries. Their top three reported reasons for applying to the Fellowship were the primary values we had redesigned around: desiring a theological framework to view their daily labor as Kingdom participation, looking for “like-minded” peers to combat isolation and process professional challenges spiritually, and learning concrete personal and leadership practices to integrate their work and faith.

Our long-term hope for the 5280 Fellowship is the same as when we first designed it. We hope to develop thoughtful and committed Christians who see their career as a place to think theologically, embrace relationships, seek deep spiritual health, and serve others sacrificially all while creating good work in the public square. Why? Because these remain the foundational principles driving both the Fellowship and the broader mission of Denver Institute in **WHY** we do **WHAT** we do.

## DENVER INSTITUTE’S 5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES:

Think theologically

Embrace relationships

Create good work

Seek deep spiritual health

Serve others sacrificially

Think about any early- to mid-career professionals in your network or company who might be well-served by this formative community. And would you join us in praying for the current class of the 5280 fellows? We continue to entrust this group and the future of the Fellowship into the knowing and gracious hands of the Father.



IF YOU'D LIKE TO SEE THE REFRESHED VISION IN ACTION, EXPLORE OUR NEW WEBSITE HERE.





Business  
for the  
Common  
Good

# As we looked ahead to Business for the Common Good in 2025, we found ourselves asking a simple question with potentially profound ramifications: should we do it again?

Started in 2017, the event was one of the longest running and most visible aspects of Denver Institute's work. Internally, we had labeled it as one of our "anchor events"—a gathering that shaped our work as an organization, oriented the community to our mission, and required large amounts of time, energy, and money.

Over time, however, this anchor began to feel more like something holding us back instead of something holding us steady. We continued to invest significant resources for a one-day gathering that had seen a 22% decrease in in-person attendance from 2022 to 2024. **Was the time and money worth it? Does the Front Range really need an event like this? Are we the organization that should do it?**

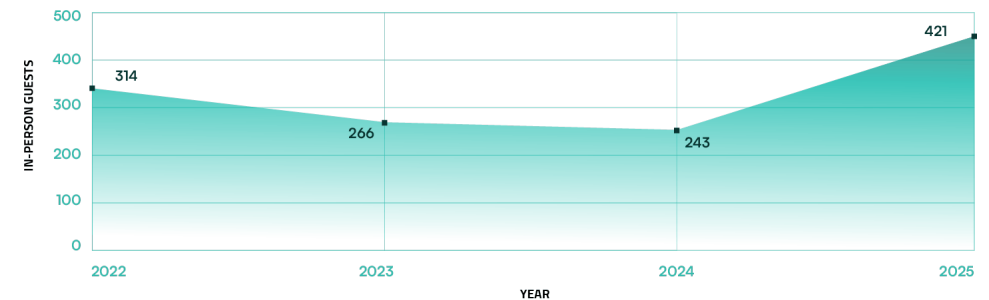
But as we discerned the year ahead, we kept returning to a different question. Not "Will this succeed?" but "What would it look like to be faithful?"

**We moved forward.** We identified a theme, secured a venue, selected speakers, invited guests, and executed all of the details as well as we could. That theme was wisdom because while the intelligence and knowledge revolution accelerated past the point of comprehension, what business needed wasn't greater efficiency and greater output. Business needed, and still needs, to add good and right actions to that knowledge. And doing so requires a moral courage Christians must exemplify.

For us, wisdom in our own work meant holding plans for the future of Business for the Common Good more loosely. And perhaps most of all, it meant loosening our grip on metrics. Attendance numbers mattered. Budget numbers mattered. Staff investment and capacity mattered. But many of these metrics, at some important point, are beyond our control. Stewardship of donated funds required being open to the possibility of not continuing Business for the Common Good.

What followed surprised us. Attendance at Business for the Common Good 2025 grew by 73% compared to 2024, becoming the largest in its history. What once felt like fading momentum became fresh movement. Looking back, it would be easy to call it success. But at the time, it felt like and was an effort in faithful risk. It felt like choosing to act without knowing the ending.

IN-PERSON GUESTS AT BUSINESS FOR THE COMMON GOOD



And maybe that's what wisdom looks like: not certainty, but trust. Not control, but faithfulness.

Faithfulness precedes clarity.

Obedience precedes outpouring.

Trust precedes transformation.

In 2025, we didn't know what to do with Business for the Common Good. But God was already at work using the event to remind us of our dependence on him.



# FOR CAMPAIGN UPDATE & PROGRAM DATA

Launched in 2024, the FOR Campaign is Denver Institute's five-year vision campaign for the future of work & workers, church, and cities.

From the start, the FOR Campaign has existed in the liminal space between clarity and uncertainty. The five problems to address became clear through listening and discernment and the corresponding goals created faithfulness metrics with the hope of real fruit. But the **how**—the strategies, tactics, and initiatives we would choose to pursue those problems and reach those goals has a bit of a “Who knows?” reality. Over the last two years, we've grown initiatives, let some rest for a time, dreamt up new ones, invested more deeply in others, modified a few more, and put others on cruise control. Each decision had a calculus to it, and each decision was pointed toward a problem and a goal.

**In the midst of those choices, the “wait and see” anticipation that comes from trusting the loving God turns to “taste and see that the Lord is good.”**

The FOR Campaign continues through 2028, and we are fully committed to it. The zigs and zags, ups and downs, and the moments of clarity and confusion are wrapped up in all faithful work.

The biggest, most obvious “Who knows?” moment of the FOR Campaign has been our goal to “platform practitioners” to address what we call the imagination gap between seeing and knowing God's big vision for work and what it practically means and implies in our particular industry, profession, and workplace. The best way to close that gap is to give away our platform to those faithful workers—practitioners—who cultivate that imagination. We just didn't really know what that would look like.

It seemed like a new strategy was needed but what became clear was naming this as a past, present, and future core value in all of our programming. Over the last two years, we hope you have noticed an increase in the percentage of practitioners invited to share from our stage, podcasts, and in our resources.

About 9 months into the campaign, our team decided to stop strategizing and praying about the “how” and to simply start paying attention to “who.” Shortly after that, the Lilly Endowment released a request for proposals for storytelling projects that would show the hope and vibrancy of the Christian life. Could this be a way to platform practitioners—those faithful workers whose stories others need to hear? Could their stories expand the Church's imagination for work and reveal the hope and vibrancy of following Jesus?

We can't recognize God's work fully in the moment. But we can miss it altogether if we don't pause, look backwards, and trace the glimpses of fruitfulness he brings to life. The data on these pages give us a glimpse into the places and people where faithful work meets God's fruitfulness. They are, in some meaningful ways, echoes of answers to that perpetual question, “Who knows?”

**LEARN MORE  
ABOUT WHAT  
HAPPENED  
WITH THIS  
OPPORTUNITY  
ON PAGE 16**

**THE PROBLEM**

Rare Collaboration: Leaders rarely solve city needs together

**HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM**

Convening leaders from all sectors

**DATA POINT #1**

**1453**

Guests at 21 co-hosted events since the start of the FOR Campaign

**THE PROBLEM**

Theology & Practice Gap for Individuals: Theological thinking about work is divided from its faithful practice

**HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM**

Sharing examples of faithful work by platforming practitioners

**DATA POINT #1**

**57%**

Percentage of 2024-2025 podcast guests who are practitioners—workers across industries and workplaces

Read about the **CityGate Storytelling Initiative** on page 16 to learn more about how we hope to address this problem.

**THE PROBLEM**

Theology & Practice Gap for Organizations: Organizations need help integrating a theology of work into their strategies

**HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM**

Helping organizations make practical changes in the way they operate to better reflect God's view of work

**DATA POINT #1**

**40**

40 leaders have completed the Women, Work, & Calling Ministry Leaders' Intensive since 2024—gaining vocational discipleship tools they need to develop the women they lead.

**DATA POINT #2**



Collaborated with Barna Group to produce the Work as Formation Report—the latest research on how leaders can shape workplace culture

**DATA POINT #3**

**12,000**

Encouraged over 12,000 people in their daily work through strategic speaking engagements at 150+ organizations

**THE PROBLEM**

Anemic Vision of Work: Work is often seen as an idol, a necessary evil, or something on the margins of God's work in the world

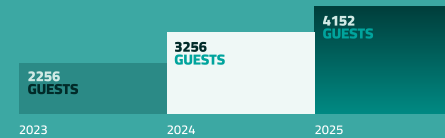
**HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM**

Cultivating vocational discipleship opportunities

**DATA POINT #1**

**84%**

Increase in attendance at Denver Institute from events since the start of the FOR Campaign



**DATA POINT #2**

**04**

New downloadable resources were published in 2025

- Good work, deep rest
- Getting clear about calling
- God Loves Work 2
- A Collection of Prayers for our daily work

SCAN THE QR CODE TO DOWNLOAD



**DATA POINT #3**

**103%**

Increase in average monthly downloads for Teach Us To Pray since the start of the FOR Campaign

**DATA POINT #4**

**37%**

Increase in social media audience since the start of the FOR Campaign, inviting more people into our mission

**THE PROBLEM**

Isolation & Loneliness in the Workplace

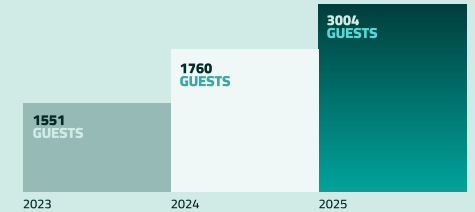
**HOW WE'RE ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM**

Convening & connecting Christians for relationship

**DATA POINT #1**

**70%**

We saw a 70% increase in in-person guests at our events in 2025—people are hungry to connect with each other



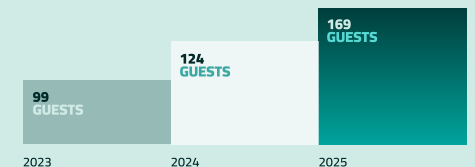
**DATA POINT #2**

**283**

Guests at industry-based networking events since the start of the FOR Campaign

**DATA POINT #3**

Professional Women's Network quarterly gatherings continued to grow in 2025, with women seeking community with each other



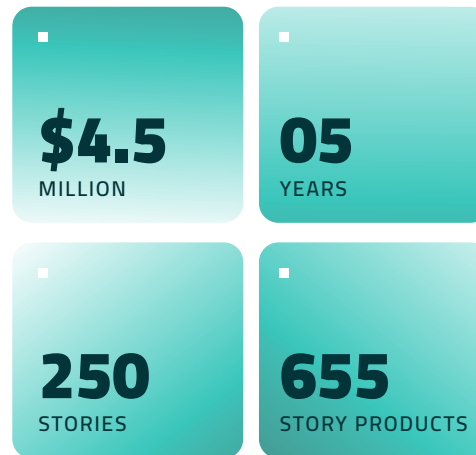


# THE CITYGATE STORYTELLING INITIATIVE

Like living organisms, organizations are never static. They expand, contract, change, and adapt over time, shaped by forces both within them and beyond them. In 2025, Denver Institute found itself in one of those moments of inflection.

At the start of 2025, we had a growing internal conviction that stories matter—that Jesus was a storyteller and that the modern workplace is filled with a vast array of stories waiting to be told. Although there was a sense that something was taking shape, the path toward actually telling these stories remained unclear.

Around the same time, we were introduced to the National Storytelling Initiative on Christian Faith and Life, a grantmaking initiative of Lilly Endowment Inc. seeking to tell compelling stories that portray the vibrancy and hope of the Christian life.



## THE MERTON PRAYER

BY THOMAS MERTON

My Lord God,  
 I have no idea where I am going.  
 I do not see the road ahead of me.  
 I cannot know for certain where it will end.  
 Nor do I really know myself,  
 and the fact that I think I am following your  
 will does not mean that I am  
 actually doing so.  
 But I believe that the desire to please you  
 does in fact please you.  
 And I hope that I have that desire in all  
 that I am doing.  
 I hope that I will never do anything apart  
 from that desire.  
 And I know that if I do this you will lead me  
 by the right road,  
 though I may know nothing about it.  
 Therefore will I trust you always though  
 I may seem to be lost and in the shadow  
 of death.  
 I will not fear, for you are ever with me,  
 and you will never leave me to face my  
 perils alone.

Merton, T. (n.d.). *The Merton prayer*.  
Yale Divinity School.

Alongside CityGate leaders, we began exploring what it might look like to tell stories that reveal how God is at work in and through workers and workplaces. The vision was compelling, but the process was uncertain. It required significant time and energy, without any guarantee that it would lead anywhere.

**We moved forward.** Not because we had clarity, but because we sensed it was the next faithful step. Like the prayer of Thomas Merton reminds us, we often did not know where we were going. We did not see the end of the road, or even the next turn. But we trusted that the desire to move in a faithful direction is itself pleasing to God.

What emerged over time was the **CityGate Storytelling Initiative: Parables for Transformation through Work**, a proposal to capture and share stories through film, podcasts, written profiles, and live experiences across a growing national network. It was slow work, shaped through conversation, collaboration, and a willingness to keep going without full visibility. There were moments of clarity, but just as many moments of ambiguity as we faced questions about scope, capacity, and whether we were the right people to carry something like this forward.

When we hit "Submit" on August 14, 2026, there was a sense of relief, the sense that we had done all that we could do, followed closely by uncertainty. **Who knows if it will be worth all the effort?**

In November 2025, Denver Institute was awarded a **\$4.5 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc.**, launching the CityGate Storytelling Initiative and opening doors for local and national impact.

**This incredible gift has entered us into a new season of not knowing:**

- Who are the right people to lead the initiative?
- Who knows what stories will be told through this initiative?
- Who knows all the work we can't imagine that will be required to tell those stories faithfully?
- Who knows how they will shape individuals, workplaces, and cities?

**The CityGate Storytelling Initiative reflects the posture that has defined this year:** moving forward without certainty, guided not by outcomes but by faithfulness. Trusting that even when we cannot see the way ahead, the One who does is already at work.



**CityGate** is a national network of leaders and organizations working at the intersection of faith, work, and cities. The heart of CityGate is relational trust and friendship that can lead to collaborative risk-taking between organizations pursuing similar work. Denver Institute provides administrative support and funding for the network, while the vision, priorities, and collaborative work of the network are guided by the leaders and organizations within it.



# FINANCES & TRANSPARENCY

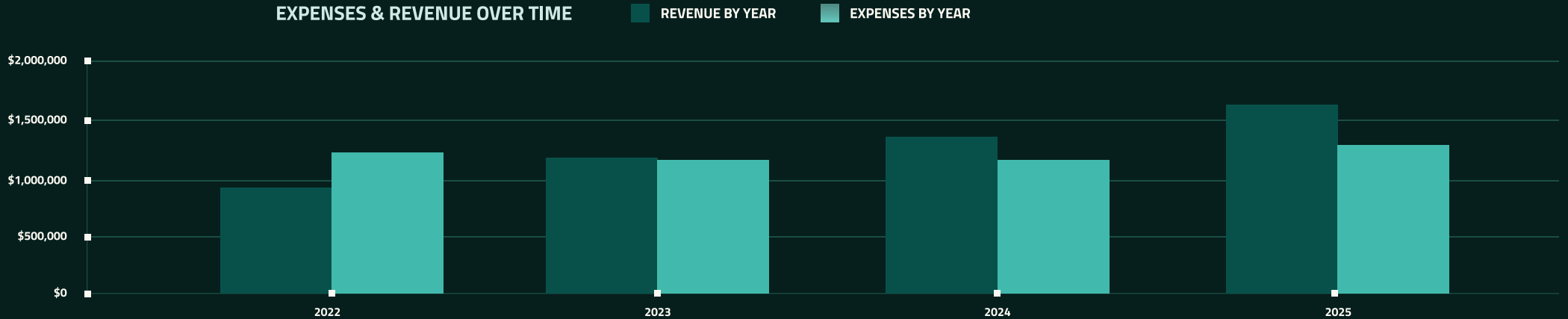
The financial summaries below reflect Denver Institute’s 2025 operational budget—the revenue and expenses that sustain our core programs and team.

In 2025, we also received a \$4.5 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. for the CityGate Storytelling Initiative. As a restricted, multi-year investment for a specific initiative,

it is not included in the figures presented here.

We’ve separated these funds to provide a clear picture of our ongoing operations, while acknowledging this significant provision for future work.

EXPENSES & REVENUE OVER TIME

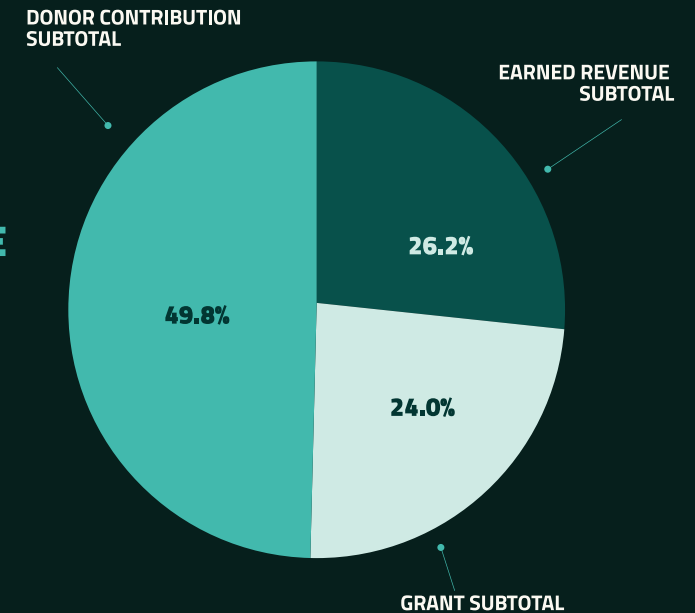


REVENUE				
	2025	2024	2023	2022
<b>EARNED REVENUE</b>				
Event Income	\$138,962	\$98,540	\$89,227	\$49,525
Sponsorship	\$77,034	\$93,000	\$94,680	\$70,064
Additional Program Revenue	\$44,990	\$31,181	\$52,633	\$44,169
Misc Income/Loss	\$162,911	\$8,018	\$6,514	-\$7,319
Media Income	\$9,868	\$10,092	\$9,351	\$10,778
<b>EARNED REVENUE SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$433,765</b>	<b>\$240,831</b>	<b>\$252,406</b>	<b>\$167,217</b>
<b>GRANTS SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$398,039</b>	<b>\$340,000</b>	<b>\$325,000</b>	<b>\$2,000</b>
<b>DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$824,117</b>	<b>\$793,204</b>	<b>\$602,869</b>	<b>\$709,638</b>
<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$1,655,920</b>	<b>\$1,374,036</b>	<b>\$1,180,275</b>	<b>\$878,855</b>

\*Additional Program Revenue primarily consists of tuition for the 5280 Fellowship and Ministry Leaders’ Intensive and any money earned by CityGate.

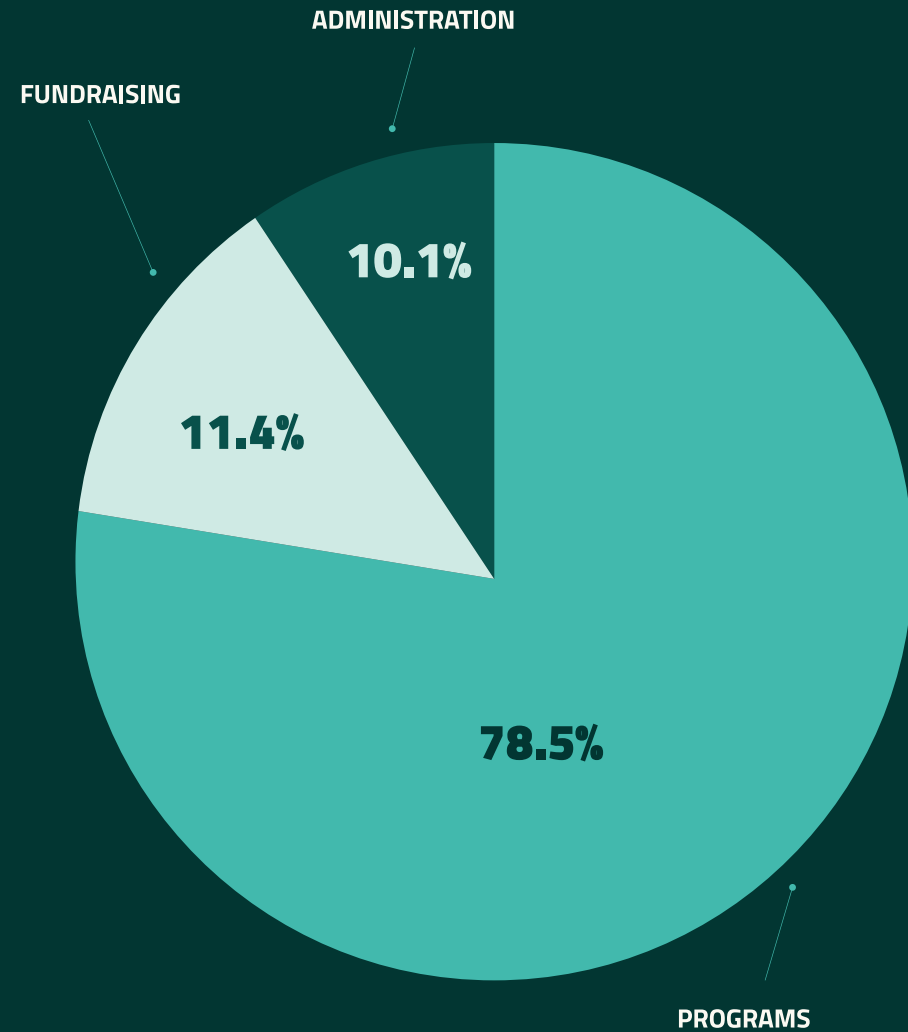
\*\*Misc Income/Loss for 2025 includes \$137,121 of Employee Retention Credit (ERC) funds.

2025 REVENUE BY CATEGORY



EXPENSES				
	2025	2024	2023	2022
<b>PROGRAMS</b>				
Public Events	\$404,308	\$286,816	\$303,917	\$300,196.06
Vocational Formation	\$346,093	\$388,537	\$211,165	\$225,992.89
CityGate	\$66,547	\$58,074	\$103,771	\$107,876.20
Additional Programming & Communications	\$218,898	\$175,648	\$162,944	\$145,967.44
<b>PROGRAMS SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,035,845</b>	<b>\$909,076</b>	<b>\$781,798</b>	<b>\$780,033</b>
<b>FUNDRAISING SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$150,091</b>	<b>\$153,399.16</b>	<b>\$214,753.74</b>	<b>\$239,562.78</b>
<b>ADMINISTRATION SUBTOTAL</b>	<b>\$133,292</b>	<b>\$130,146.37</b>	<b>\$181,302.46</b>	<b>\$209,075.46</b>
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$1,319,228</b>	<b>\$1,192,621</b>	<b>\$1,177,854</b>	<b>\$1,228,671</b>

## 2025 EXPENSE BY CATEGORY



Denver Institute for Faith & Work is a nonprofit incorporated in the State of Colorado and is tax-exempt under Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. Denver Institute is also accredited by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

# STAFF & BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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CityGate Cultivator

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Founder of Performance  
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# WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

If people believe their work is central to God's work in the world, they will find hope for and in their work and become agents of life in their workplaces, professions, industries, and cities.

If you are interested in more opportunities to join the work of Denver Institute, we encourage you to **INVEST, PARTNER, and CONNECT.**



## INVEST

Invest in a future where every person's work brings hope and life to their city. There are opportunities to invest through your business resources, your personal resources, and your time.



## PARTNER

Are you interested in cohosting an event with Denver Institute? Would you like a Denver Institute staff member to speak at your church or organization? Do you see another way we could work together toward a common goal or mission? Let us know! Email us at [hello@denverinstitute.org](mailto:hello@denverinstitute.org).

If none of these apply, consider sharing about us with your customers, clients, or congregation.






## CONNECT

Attend an upcoming event to meet other community members, learn together, and take redemptive action in your workplace and city.



**d** denver  
institute  
for faith & work

 8100 E Arapahoe Road, Suite 303  
Centennial, CO 80112

 720.227.3947  
 [hello@denverinstitute.org](mailto:hello@denverinstitute.org)

@denverinstitute  
    