

## IN HIS STEPS FOUNDATION – What is it?

After the 1994 Cleveland Billy Graham Crusade, a few families that had been instrumental in supporting this Christian event began to pray together about establishing a public Christian foundation for God's work, initially in the Cleveland area. Gordon Heffern met Leo Koury, a recent convert to Christianity, and they both birthed the idea and were quickly joined by John Jazwa and Dwight Short. Throughout 1995 and 1996 this initial group regularly prayed together and sought God regarding whether He would have them start a public Christian community foundation. By 1997 the initial core group also included Art Holmes. Charitable status was applied for and awarded by the Internal Revenue Service and In His Steps Foundation was created as a 501(c)(3) public foundation in 1998, as Tom Yancy joined the initial group. Later, Anthony Ciepiel, Alice Hitchcock, Peter Conway, Steve Terrell, and John DuRoss also joined the Board, after Gordon and Art passed away. In retrospect, three separate but related circumstances gave rise to the birth of the Foundation.

- The accumulation of wealth by many American families throughout the very prosperous decade of the 1990's;
- The ceiling on the Federal Estate Tax of \$600,000 per American throughout the Clinton administration, resulting in a larger than intended percentage of Americans recognizing that they were going to pay Estate Taxes. Through the 1990's and into the first decade of this century, a number of new private family foundations resulted;
- The recognition that a Donor Advised Fund with a public foundation provides better benefits for the donors who utilize them, when compared to a private family foundation or other alternatives.

Gordon, having had a long and distinguished career in banking, also had a depth of experience with at least two public foundations and one private foundation. IHS Foundation's founding trustees also embraced the idea of Christian unity, working together in a community toward the common goals and welfare of the community in Christ's name. By late 1998, IHS was funded, established an office, and hired an Executive Director to conduct daily business activities. Within the first few years the Foundation's skeletal shape emerged consisting of:

- A General Fund for the Foundation's giving to Northeast Ohio area evangelistic Christian ministries through a Grant application process;
- Family giving funds, called Donor Advised Funds, which families could use as a replacement for a Private Family Foundation within the legal structure of IHS;
- Endowment Funds for Christian ministries to build future resources and help promote the ideas of planned and deferred giving and Christian stewardship.

## IN HIS STEPS FOUNDATION – What is it?

Throughout its first 19 years, IHS has developed each of these areas under a common umbrella of Christian stewardship and Biblically Responsible prudent investment management.

As 2017 begins, In His Steps Foundation consists of 115 families that have established family giving funds , 45 ministries that have established Endowment Funds and 29 people who have created a planned giving arrangement, all administered through the office and under the oversight of the Board of Trustees of the Foundation. IHS has given away over \$46.8 million to domestic and international charities; including \$3.8 million in General Fund Grants to NE Ohio ministries to date, and has assets of just under \$28 million.