

# Connections

LINKING RHEMA GRADUATES AROUND THE WORLD



## FOCUS YOUR LIGHT

HOW TO LIVE AND SHARE YOUR FAITH

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# The Bottom Line

## Sharing Our Faith in Our Everyday World

DOUG JONES | RMAI/RAA National Director



Throughout history, a variety of waves have passed through the Church. From man's viewpoint, such waves appear to be God doing a new thing. But from God's viewpoint, such waves might be man's recognition of imbalance and thus an attempt to replumb the Church's efforts so they align with God's overall plan.

As I consider these waves, it appears that each one came to strengthen a weakness within the Body of Christ. These weaknesses were caused by overemphasizing one principle of Christianity at the expense of other principles.

In our short time as laborers within Christianity, we have heard Brother Hagin's stories about the emphasis on healing during the '40s and '50s. Many of us witnessed the resurgence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit (with the evidence of speaking in tongues) that was fueled by the Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship. Then came the teaching emphasis, with its focus on positional truths such as righteousness, the authority of the believer, faith, prayer, and the Holy Spirit's ministry in and through believers.

When the healing wave came, much of the Church was emphasizing only a saving Lord and had drifted away from allowing Him to be a healing Lord. When the Holy Spirit emphasis came in the '60s and '70s, many in the Body of Christ had not been employing the full capabilities of "another Comforter" within their lives.

Then came the teaching wave of the '70s, '80s, and '90s to realign the Body of Christ with Who the Father is, who we are in relationship to Him, and so forth. These positional truths provided the wisdom and balance needed for us to fully thrive in a saved, healed, and Spirit-filled life.

### The issue is *balance*.

The Church out of balance is much like a tire out of balance. It just won't go as far as when it is in balance. Tires are balanced by adding small weights. In the same way, the balancing weight of healing was placed on the Church, then the balancing weight of the Spirit-filled life. But we didn't pry off the weight of healing just because the weight of the Spirit-filled life was added! Then the

balancing weight of positional truths was added. So the Church continued to progress, running just a little smoother and just a little faster . . . all because of *balance*.

Today, we are witnessing an emphasis on winning the lost. As with past waves, this wave comes because the Church is out of balance. Over the last number of years, the Body of Christ has been pursuing its privileges, rights, and blessings so much that it has lost sight of the words of Jesus: "If you follow Me, I will make you fishers of men."

As with balancing weights placed on a tire, we must not cast off other balancing weights just because we are adding a seek-and-save-the-lost weight.

Who better to win the lost than a believer who is saved, knows how to obtain healing, is filled with the Holy Ghost, and knows who he or she is in Christ? I like to refer to these as "empowered believers."

In all of this, we the Church must be careful not to pry off previous balancing weights to make room for new ones. We must harmonize them all in order to find the balance of Christianity for the sake of its influence—both in the world and among ourselves.

This edition of *Connections* is about believers living and sharing their faith in their Monday-through-Saturday world. If there ever was a time for this world to be influenced by saved, healed, Spirit-filled believers who know their position in Christ, it is now. . . .

A fellow laborer,

Douglas E. Jones  
RMAI/RAA National Director



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HOW TO  
LIVE YOUR FAITH

**Doug Jones ('75)** is the National Director of Rhema Ministerial Association International (RMAI) and Rhema Alumni Association (RAA). He has been an instructor at Rhema Bible Training College for 29 years.

## Representing Christ

In these last days, it is imperative that churches use every means possible to reach this world for Christ. Churches must be at their best. But those who sit in the pews must also be empowered to be godly influencers within their Monday-through-Saturday worlds.

To reach this goal of empowering the saints, churches must give as much creative effort to it as they do to developing a perfect Sunday morning experience.

To help the average believer become a successful influencer for Christ in everyday life, we must raise his or her awareness about something. **We must show believers that their conduct at home, at work, in the gym, and elsewhere within their community either increases or decreases their influence.**

Who we are—our character and integrity—will open doors for us to verbalize our faith quicker than anything else. The world has informed us that they are hesitant to listen to us because we are all “a bunch of hypocrites.” The thinking believer will realize that when the world calls us hypocrites, they are saying that they are watching us more than they are listening to us.

Well, if the world wants Christians to work next to them on the job like Christians, then it is time we give them what they want.

Paul addressed the issue of the importance of Christian conduct on the job, and its effect on unbelievers, in First Timothy 6:1: *“Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.”*

The word *blaspheme* means “to speak evil of,” “to address with irreverence.”

The world’s irreverence for God and His Word is partly due to unbelievers seeing believers fail to respect and honor their employers or department heads.

It is sad, but some unbelievers have actually turned away from desiring a relationship with God after seeing how a Christian interacts with a superior on the job.

Pushing unbelievers away from God and His Word has eternal consequences. May we never be guilty of it.

In Titus 2:9–10 Paul again gives instructions for employees: *“Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters . . . that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”*

### TITUS 2:1–12 / Guidelines for Living Your Faith

**1** But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine:

**2** That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience.

**3** The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things;

**4** That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

**5** To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

**6** Young men likewise exhort to be sober minded.

**7** In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity,

**8** Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.

**9** Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again;

**10** Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

**11** For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men,

**12** Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

Church programs and outreaches are good. But if we're not creating *Christians* who can live every day with godly character and who are constantly aware of Who they represent, then we're really fishing with only one pole. We're relying on the church to do all the fishing. We could be fishing with hundreds of poles! Each person is a pole. Have we fine-tuned each pole to catch fish?

Jesus said, "If you follow Me, I will make you fishers of men." If you stay in the school of Jesus long enough, you will become interested in the eternal well-being of others. Don't let carnality cause you to skip school.

The word *adorn* means "to decorate," "to add luster to." Paul said that when employees respect and obey their superiors, they decorate the Word of God. People are attracted to anything that is decorated, or that shines.

**What is interesting is this: The Word alone is not very attractive to the world. What is attractive to them is a life changed by the Word.**

According to Titus 2:9–10 and First Timothy 6:1, a believer's interaction with his or her superiors can do one of two things: it can either draw people toward a relationship with God and a respect for His Word, or it can push people away.

Here is my conclusion: If a believer is aware that his *nonverbal* behavior on the job has an effect, should he not be more sensitive to opportunities to share his faith verbally? I absolutely believe so.

Think about it: Working on the job and being governed by his flesh (or, in other words, being carnal), this person will surely miss opportunities to share his faith. Oh that we would never be guilty of such a thing.

"Whether we're aware of it or not, today our lives influence the lives of others. Never underestimate it."

—Author Unknown

## The Shirt

Doug shares this personal illustration:

"One day I was on my way to help my son, Steven, with his business at a home and garden show, and I stopped at a local convenience store. I was wearing a shirt that had Steven's business logo on it, and just before I went into the store I thought, 'Anything I do in here is going to reflect on Steven's business and could affect possible future jobs, or his reputation in the community.'

"So when I went in, I smiled real big, opened doors for people, and just went beyond the call of duty. After I got back in the car, I thought about how aware I'd been of representing my son—making sure I didn't do anything to misrepresent him or tarnish his reputation. And then it dawned on me . . . how sad that I was more concerned about misrepresenting *my son* than I was about misrepresenting *God's Son* . . ."

## Live Tuned-In

Are you walking around tuned in to your inward man every day? Doug encourages all Christians to become more aware of Who they represent and listen to that still small voice within, so that when opportunities present themselves, we're ready to share our faith.

"What if we lived with a consciousness that our conduct is going to influence people—even people we never meet or have a conversation with?" he asks. "If we go into our everyday world aware that our conduct is speaking for Christianity, knowing that 'my actions represent Christ,' we will be as tuned in as we can be to opportunities to share our faith verbally.

"But if we are living and working in a very carnal way," he continues, "having the attitudes, work habits, and work quality of the world, we probably won't recognize opportunities to share our faith verbally."

He cautions us to consider this: "**People around us will think either highly or disparagingly of Christianity because of how we live our everyday lives.** If we live totally unaware that our conduct has an impact, we'll miss opportunities to share our faith."

Go into your world as a missionary every day.

## HOW TO LIVE YOUR FAITH

CONTINUED

DOUG JONES

### What Is Character?

The word *character* dates back to the 14th century. One of its roots is in a Greek word which means “to scratch or engrave.” *Character* also means “a graphic placed on an object as an indication of ownership.”

These definitions suggest that character involves tendencies that are not original to the person. In other words, if you’re scratched, you got that scratch from someone else. This also suggests that we are not born with a character bent. We are in essence a clean slate that can be scratched by the world or by the Creator of this world. Whichever arena we feed on the most, we will find its scratch the deepest upon our life.

As Christians, we are to be scratched by God and His Word. This must supersede being scratched by this world and the god of this world. As we allow our lives to be scratched by God and His Word, our character begins to reflect God’s character. We are identified with Him, and His mark of ownership is upon us.

Second Corinthians 3:18 says, “*But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.*” This passage implies that the less we know about Him, the less we will reflect His character.



Second Corinthians 3:18 talks about believers being changed, or *transformed*, into God’s likeness. The Greek word translated “changed” in the *King James Version* is almost identical to our English word *metamorphosis*. It speaks of a change, or transformation, from the inside out. Character transformation begins in the soil of a teachable spirit that is allowed to be mentored by the Word.

Romans 12:2 says, “*And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*” The good news is that our character can change. We can be transformed. For example, being unreliable is not a character trait that we have to be chained to all of our days.

In his book *Louder Than Words* Andy Stanley said, “What is true of every living thing is true of your character. Your character is not stagnant, but is either developing or deteriorating.”

Of course, the direction our character heads in each day depends on how much we allow our Word-based beliefs to affect what we think, what we say, and how we act.

We must not take the stewardship of our character lightly. If we nurture our character properly, it will provide an exceptional platform from which we can gain the ears of those who need Jesus. **People listen to people of character.**

“Character . . . exemplifies human nature in its highest forms, for it exhibits man at his best.”

—Samuel Smiles

#### Your character is who you truly are. It will:

- ★ impact how much you accomplish in this life.
- ★ determine whether you are worth knowing.
- ★ make or break every one of your relationships.

Your character is instrumental in establishing how long you will be able to hold on to the fortune afforded you by hard work and good luck.

—Andy Stanley, *Louder Than Words*

## Hypocrisy and Its Effects

Apart from the lost never hearing the Gospel, hypocrisy has cost more unbelievers a relationship with our Savior than any other single thing.

And what's amazing is, the lost have for generations blatantly informed believers of hypocrisy's effects. They tell us, "The reason we do not listen to what you have to say is that Christians are nothing more than a bunch of hypocrites."

In essence what they are telling us is, they really do not care whether we have faith to move mountains. They are not amazed at the authority we possess as Spirit-filled believers. What they are looking for is a Christian who acts like a Christian in the home, on the job, and in our schools. Imagine that!

Simply put, a hypocrite is one who believes something and yet acts in ways that do not reflect that belief. Such people have the least impact upon those around them and short-circuit their ability to speak effectively into the lives of the lost. Who we are speaks louder than our words.

Mahatma Gandhi is believed to have said, "I like your Christ, but I do not like your Christians. They are so unlike Christ. If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today."

In Matthew 5:14–16 we are called the light of the world. Think about it: light is a silent quality, but light is meant to be seen. **Since we are Christians, our very lives should expose us as belonging to Christ, because our thoughts, words, and actions harmonize with Christ and His Word.**

All this talk about hypocrisy comes down to one thought: the lost are watching us more than they are listening to us.

If what the world wants is nonhypocritical Christians, then it will require some sermon series changes to include lifestyle Christianity. Let's give the world what they want: the Gospel from clean vessels.

### Your Kids Are Watching

Doug shares another personal illustration:

"When my son got a job in Colorado and moved away from home for the first time, he wrote me a letter a few months later. He thanked me for how I treated his mother and how I treated him and his sister, how I spoke well of my peers and my students, and so on. While reading, I thought, 'He didn't once refer to anything I *said to him*.' Then it dawned on me. *He was watching me more than he was listening to me.* Our kids are watching us more than they're listening to us. They will remember long after we're gone how we treated those closest to us. Let's go ahead and embrace the Word of God and allow our kids to remember some good things. Let's show them good things so that they can duplicate them in their own marriages and families and become powerful witnesses for Christ."



#### MATTHEW 5:13–16

**13** Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

**14** Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

**15** Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

**16** Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

HOW TO  
SHARE YOUR FAITH**You're Never Too Old****Lois Meyer ('77)**

*Lois Meyer is a former missionary who lives in Tulsa, Oklahoma.*

Lois Meyer has worked as a missionary in 19 countries, smuggled Bibles into China nine times, written a book, and preached Jesus to countless thousands all over the world. She didn't start until she was 57 years old, and she didn't stop taking missions trips until she was 90!



Today she lives at the University Village senior living center in Tulsa, and she just celebrated her 95th birthday. But as far as Lois is concerned, there's never a reason to stop sharing Jesus, no matter where you are. She knows she represents Him wherever she goes.

Lois has started several ministries at University Village, including prayer meeting, Bible reading, and an old-fashioned hymn sing. Everybody in the place knows her. On Thursdays, she goes up and down the hallways taking prayer requests from residents and employees alike. On Saturdays, obeying the Lord's instruction, she passes out hugs to patients in the health center dining room, telling them that God loves them.

When she goes into stores and the checkout clerk asks how she's doing today, she'll answer with a sweet smile, "I'm just wonderful, and do you know why? It's because of Jesus. Do you know Him?"

Lois says, "I'm nobody special. I'm just me, doing what the Lord gave me to do. I've promised to serve Jesus till the end. Why stop? It's fun!"

**Praying for Your Server**

**Tony Finley ('93, '94)**, *pastor of Faith Family Church in Omaha, Nebraska, has a unique way of reaching out to those who serve him in a restaurant.*



"After they bring my order," says Tony, "I'll say, 'I'm about to pray over my food here in a minute. Is there anything I can pray for you about?' They almost never say no, and sometimes it opens the door for me to minister to them or tell them about Jesus."

**Let the Spirit Lead****Pearl Stinnett Dalton ('85)**

*Pearl Stinnett Dalton lives and cares for members of her family in Wickliffe, Ohio.*



Pearl Stinnett Dalton, a former bartender, was working as a cab driver in 1978 when she was saved and filled with the Holy Spirit. The Lord delivered her from alcohol and nicotine almost at the same time.

She came to Rhema, and afterward she eventually went back to driving a cab in her old neighborhood. She also opened a ministry called The Potter's House.

"I reached more people in that taxi, and I just loved it," says Pearl. "When someone got into my cab, I would just begin to pray in the Spirit under my breath. And then when we got to the end of the ride, if the Holy Spirit had something for them, I would tell them."

Many of her customers were drug addicts, alcoholics, and street people. One time she picked up a young man who was obviously on drugs, and she knew he was a homosexual. "I just prayed in the Spirit," says Pearl, "and when we got to his destination, it just came up out of my spirit: 'The Lord told me to tell you to get your life in order.' And he began to weep."

Three weeks later she was gassing up her cab when a young man came out of the filling station all dressed up in a suit. When he saw her he began jumping up and down, and he said, "You don't remember me, but you told me that God said to get my life in order. I just want you to know that I am now going to church and I sing in the choir."

"I believe it was just praying in the Spirit," says Pearl. "One thing I learned at Rhema was to pray in the Spirit when you have an appointment or a meeting, and then when you get there you'll speak what God said. And so I always did that in my taxi—I let the Spirit lead me."

Although Pearl is retired now, she is still always looking for opportunities to share her faith everywhere she goes. She says, "Personal evangelism, to me, is as natural as breathing."

## Show the Love of Jesus

### Mary Kay Keeley ('92, '93) Caledonia, New York



*Mary Kay Keeley is a nursing supervisor at a hospital in upstate New York.*

Mary Kay Keeley says that inside a hospital, people don't care how much you know—they just want to know how much you care.

"My work requires that I be with people in some of life's most difficult times," she says. She's been there when a loved one's heart stops, or when someone has just heard they have stage four lung cancer, or when someone's been in a tragic accident. She's there for her patients, for their families, and for her fellow hospital employees.

Very often, when she doesn't know what to say, she just relies on demonstrating the love of Jesus.

She tells of one family's grief over a long-awaited baby who was stillborn. "The first call I got was from a delivery room nurse. The second call was from the grandmother, whom I knew. Both were crying, and I went to each, hugged them, and cried along with them."

Then Mary Kay and the grandmother went to see the baby. "In my heart I could hear the words of David when he heard about his child who had passed: *I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me*" (2 Sam. 12:23).

She and the grandmother anointed the baby and committed him to the Lord. "I thanked Jesus for the chance to usher this child into His Kingdom," she says, "waiting for the day when the family would be together. The grandmother kissed him and smiled when she said, 'Thank you, Lord. I look forward to that day too.'" Then they went to be with the mother.

Later the grandmother told Mary Kay, "I didn't know how I could face her, but I know where our baby is, and Jesus will help us now."

It isn't always easy, but Mary Kay finds that help is always there. "Jesus is the same yesterday, today, and forever," she says. "As long as I work in a hospital, I'm grateful that He comes with me."

## How to Reach Muslims



### Massoud Sadeghi ('05, '06)

*Massoud Sadeghi and his wife, Sarah ('05, '06), pastor Nejat Church in Seattle, Washington, and in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, where they are reaching local Muslims and broadcasting daily into Farsi-speaking countries via satellite.*

Some experts say that Islam is the fastest-growing religion in the world—and that it's even the fastest-growing religion in America. To Massoud Sadeghi, that means the fields are ripe and ready for harvest!

"We are often hearing frightening things about Muslim nations on the news," he says, "but the only thing that will help these volatile situations is reaching them for Christ. He died for them."

Massoud was born in Iran and raised Muslim until he received Jesus in 1995. He has seen many, many Muslims come to Christ, and he knows from experience that Muslim people are seeking the truth.

"They think they have the truth, but the truth is only with Jesus Christ," he says. "Jesus said when you find the truth, the truth will set you free. So we need to take this freedom to them."

So how can the average Christian reach out to Muslims in everyday life?

"You need to show them the love of Christ," says Massoud. "Tell them that Christ loves them. Build a relationship with them, so then you can speak into their lives and get past the barriers of what they believe." (See box.)

"The love of God is something very foreign to Muslims," says Massoud. "They need to come to the understanding that God is a loving God—He's not out to punish them. You and I can give them that message."

## What Muslims Believe

- ✓ "They believe that Jesus is a special prophet—that He was born of a woman, with no father. The Koran talks about Jesus, so we can build on that common ground and then explain Who Jesus really was."
- ✓ "They think of God as very holy and very far from being human, so they don't believe Jesus (a human) was the Son of God. They do believe, though, that God can do anything or be anything. So we tell them that God wanted to reach out to mankind, and the best way to do that was to become like us. And in order to pay the price for sin as our substitute, He had to become a man."
- ✓ "They believe that Jesus was not crucified. They think that because He was a prophet, God would not let Him suffer. But we explain that Jesus suffered for them—He took their punishment. A love that deep is incomprehensible to them."
- ✓ "They believe that they'll be judged by their deeds, and if their good deeds outweigh the bad, then they'll go to Heaven. Salvation is the highest thing on their mind, and they're always trying very hard to earn it. So we tell them that God did it for us—that's why He became a man who went to the cross in our place. We explain that salvation is only by faith in what Jesus did—through His death, burial, and resurrection—not by their good works."
- ✓ "The main thing to tell them is Who Jesus is, which makes a connection with their need—because they need salvation and they know it."



## Lifestyle Evangelism

### Vaughn & Jessilee Ford (both '13)

*Vaughn & Jessilee Ford have lived as missionaries in Russia, Brazil, England, Morocco,*

*Tunisia, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, where they have trained thousands of people to share their faith.*

Vaughn & Jessilee Ford could tell you hundreds of stories about sharing Jesus with people. One of those occurred when they were riding a subway in Russia, without an interpreter.

“We had some Russian tracts with us,” says Vaughn. “There we were, these American tourists, all joyful and bubbly, while all the other people in the car just sat there with solemn faces.”

“Since we couldn’t talk to them, we just started handing the tracts out to them,” says Jessilee. “We’d learned the words *free gift* in Russian, so we went up and down this subway car, smiling and saying, ‘Free gift! Free gift!’ as we handed them out. The people in the other cars wanted them too!”

“They would open the tract up and start reading,” says Vaughn, “and we’d just stand there and watch the Lord work.”

“Some people would miss their stop to keep reading it,” says Jessilee, “and others followed us off the train—they were so hungry to know this Jesus they were reading about and they wanted to pray. It was the most amazing thing.”

“We were just delivering the Bread,” Vaughn adds. “But we were smiling and giving them a gift—loving them, really—and the Holy Spirit ministered to them.”

According to the Fords, sharing your faith isn’t hard.

“The way I look at evangelism is this,” says Jessilee: “Everywhere I go, whether it’s the hair-dresser or the dry cleaner or the market, I’m going to be meeting people. I have to be thinking, ‘What kind of a light am I shining?’”



Vaughn says, “When I first started doing evangelism, I went into prisons, and I was so opposite from the kind of person I encountered there. I didn’t understand their upbringing or anything. But I just shared my testimony, and God moved.”

Vaughn and Jessilee say that they are two of the most ordinary people you’d ever meet, but they just expect the Holy Spirit to show up when they share. And they both agree on what the most important ingredient is for sharing your faith: “The biggest thing that all people need to hear is the love of God.”

## Suggestions for Sharing Your Faith

- 1) **Write your testimony.** Sit down and put it on paper—a little about who you were before Christ, and what has happened since Christ.
- 2) **Share it.** In a loving, group environment, get up and present what you’ve written so you can get feedback. Don’t be too heavy in talking about what happened before Christ—focus instead on the difference He’s made.
- 3) **Tweak it.** Can you do five- or 10-minute and half-hour versions? Tweak it into segments that can be used in different scenarios, no matter who you’re speaking to (i.e., in schools, to older or younger people, in the market, on the street, etc.).
- 4) **Use tracts.** Especially when you first start, tracts can help keep you on track as you’re sharing. Once you’ve given your testimony, take out the tract and say, “Can I go through this with you?” (It’s good if you’ve memorized it.) It’s also something you can leave with them to reread (especially if they didn’t want to pray right then), or even for them to pass around.
- 5) **Or use the Roman Road.** If you don’t like tracts, mark the “Roman Road” scriptures in your Bible (see box), and use them to explain salvation. In that case, it’s a good idea to take along little gift Bibles to leave with those you witness to, with the Roman Road highlighted for them.
- 6) **Ask them.** After you’ve lead someone through the prayer of salvation (see box), ask them what’s taken place, so they understand what they’ve just done. Make sure they know that they are now a new creature, that Jesus is in their heart, and that if they died tonight they would go to Heaven.
- 7) **Follow up.** Plan to disciple new believers or get them into church once they’re saved. Also, show them where to start reading in their Bible—for instance, the Book of John. Encourage them to talk with God themselves, asking Him for the Holy Spirit and illumination as they read. We can’t just have evangelism without discipleship.



## THE ROMAN ROAD TO SALVATION

- 1) **Romans 3:23**, “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” We have all sinned and done things that displease God. No one is innocent.
- 2) **Romans 6:23**, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.” The punishment that we have earned for our sins is death—not just physical death, but eternal death!
- 3) **Romans 5:8**, “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (NKJV). He died for you! Jesus’ death paid the price for our sins. His resurrection proves that God accepted Jesus’ death as payment for our sins.
- 4) **Romans 10:9**, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved” (NASB). Because Jesus died on our behalf, all we have to do is believe in Him, trusting that His death is the payment for our sins—and we will be saved!
- 5) **Romans 10:13** says it again: “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved” (NIV). Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins and rescue us from eternal death. Salvation, the forgiveness of sins, is available to anyone who will trust in Him as Lord and Savior.
- 6) **Romans 5:1; 8:1, 38–39**—Here are a few results of our trusting Jesus to save us.



## PRAYER OF SALVATION

*You can use this in leading someone to the Lord. Lead them in this prayer and have them pray it after you.*

Dear God,

I come to You in the Name of Jesus. I admit that I am not right with You, and I want to be right with You. I ask You to forgive me of all my sins. The Bible says that if I confess with my mouth “Jesus is Lord,” and I believe in my heart that You raised Him from the dead, I will be saved (Rom. 10:9). I believe in my heart that You raised Jesus from the dead, and I confess with my mouth that Jesus is the Lord and Savior of my life. Thank You for saving me!

In Jesus’ Name I pray, amen.



## Rhema Students Are Sharing Their Faith!

**“This generation of Rhema students isn’t waiting for revival—they are living it right now. Remember prophecies of old that have said in the last days all the revivals would come together? We’re seeing it.”**

—Tad Gregurich ('83, '84), Dean, Rhema USA



**Austin Bouchard**  
2nd year  
Manchester, NH

Austin Bouchard works at a car dealership in Tulsa, and one day he had to go a customer’s house to have some paperwork signed. “We bought his car back because he had terminal cancer and couldn’t drive anymore,” says Austin. “When I went to see him, I *wanted* to share the Gospel with him, but for some reason I didn’t. Then I was really angry with myself, because here’s a guy who’s terminally ill, and he could go to hell if someone doesn’t tell him about Jesus.”

Thankfully, Austin had to go back again the next day to deliver the check. “He was about to show me out, just like the day before, so I said, ‘Wait, I need to ask you a question. Do you know for sure that if you were to die right now, you’d go to Heaven?’

“He answered, ‘I’ve led a good life. I’m not perfect, but I think I’ll go to Heaven.’ So I shared Romans 10:9–10 with him and told him it’s by faith that we’re saved, not by works,” says Austin. “And when I asked him if he wanted to receive Jesus, he said yes right away, so we prayed the salvation prayer.”



It turned out the gentleman had no family, but after he prayed a joy came over his face. “He thanked me profusely and he was so happy,” says Austin. “I didn’t feel led to pray for his healing—I just knew this was what he needed. After all the people who had probably ministered to him over the years, I got to see the harvest. It was awesome!”



**Brad Spangler**  
2013 Graduate  
St. Louis, MO

At least once a week, Brad and some of his friends go downtown to share their faith with whoever they meet. They start by just introducing themselves.

“I say, ‘Hi! My name’s Brad. How’re you doing?’” he says. “I ask them questions, start a conversation, then say, ‘Hey, my friends and I go to Bible school not too far from here and we just like to share the love of God with people. Do you have any needs we can pray for? Any sickness or pain, any problem in your life?’ And we go from there.”

One night they were talking to some people at the bus station and a security guard asked them to leave.

As they were going out, Brad was drawn to one man who turned out to have bone spurs in his feet, causing him tremendous pain. Brad said to the man, “We have to leave, but if you’ll come outside with us, when you come back in, you won’t be in pain anymore. God’s going to heal you.”

So the man followed them outside, limping, and they prayed for his feet, commanding the bone spurs to leave in Jesus’ Name.

“He started jumping up and down and praising God, almost like dancing—he was totally healed,” Brad says. “It’s the Gospel coming to life.”

Brad and his friends have found that ministering healing to people very often opens the door to talking with them about Jesus.

“If you can find out their need and then pray for them, that’s connecting with them on an individual basis,” he says, “like becoming friends with them first. Then that just leads to being able to talk to them about salvation.”



**Whitney Finch**  
2013 Graduate  
Cordell, OK

In his job as a personal trainer, Whitney often works with clients who have injuries that prevent them from doing a full workout, so he puts the healing power of God to work.

“If they say something like, ‘my leg hurts—I can’t do that exercise,’ I’ll say, ‘Well, do you mind if I pray for you?’” Whitney says. “After I pray, the pain goes away and they can do their regular workouts!”

He says he has seen lots of legs grow out, and as many as four or five healings a day.

“There was one lady who hurt her shoulder really badly right in the middle of a workout,” he recalls. “She was a tough lady—she works in construction with guys all day—so she kept trying, but she couldn’t work through the pain.”



So Whitney asked if he could pray for her, and after he did, she continued with her workout.

“The whole time she had this astonished look on her face, and she kept saying, ‘It really doesn’t hurt anymore!’ Then the next day she came back and said, ‘I just want to tell you I woke up feeling so good this morning, and my shoulder doesn’t hurt at all!’”

Because Whitney sees most of his clients regularly, he gets to develop a relationship with them. That usually provides an opportunity to talk about salvation.

“When I pray for their healing, I don’t ask them if they believe,” he says. “I just ask them, ‘Can I pray for you?’ And then when I do, they get healed, and they want to know more.”



### Josh Egts

2013 Graduate—Tulsa, OK

The boldness for sharing his faith came to Josh when he learned one important truth.

“The Bible says that I’m dead and it’s Christ that lives in me,” he says. “That truth set me free from myself. I have a saying: ‘I’m so free from me that I’m free from you.’ In other words, I don’t wonder, ‘What are they going to think of me if I share Jesus?’ It frees me to turn off my head and just go.”

Josh says he doesn’t try to talk anyone into getting saved.

“I just show them love, so they’ll want what I have,” he says. “I start by having a conversation with them.” He did just that one night downtown when he was drawn to a young man and his friends who were drunk.

“I walked up and said, ‘Hey, what’re you guys doing tonight?’” he recounts. “The young guy told me he’d just been in a bartender contest but said, ‘I didn’t win—I’m a loser.’ I asked him if his wrists or back hurt after mixing all those drinks, and he said they did.”

Long story short, Josh told the young man repeatedly that he wasn’t a loser—that Jesus loved him and wanted to heal him. Josh had the young man sit down, and when he held the young man’s legs out, one was shorter than the other. When Josh said, “Jesus loves you,” the leg grew out right before their eyes.

“He was speechless!” says Josh. “Then one of the guys with him who had been real stand-offish started asking questions and got real interested.”

Not long after, the group of friends walked away. Josh doesn’t always pray the prayer of salvation with everyone; he depends on the Holy Spirit’s leading.

“Sometimes I’m the sower and the waterer,” he says. “I don’t force a harvest. I trust that if God sent me to talk with them tonight, He’ll send someone else to them tomorrow.”



### Mack Eardmann

2013 Graduate—Tuttle, OK

One Sunday while having a meal in a Tulsa restaurant, Mack and his friend went to the restroom. They were talking about a prayer meeting they had been to the previous Friday night where a lot of young people were filled with the Holy Spirit. And an older gentleman who also was in the restroom overheard them.

“He just started asking us questions about getting filled with the Spirit,” says Mack. “So we told him about Acts chapter 19 and explained it to him.”

It turns out the man was 80 years old and had been saved for years, but he’d been seeking the baptism in the Holy Spirit all that time.

“So I showed him in the Bible on my phone how Paul laid his hands on people and they spoke in tongues,” says Mack. “I told him we could lay hands on him and pray right now, and he’d get filled with the Holy Spirit.”

And that’s exactly what happened, right there in the restroom! Later the gentleman came by Mack’s table, introduced them to his wife, and paid for their lunch. He said he and his wife planned to come to visit Rhema and check things out.

“I saw them the next day at Prayer & Healing School,” says Mack. He went on to say that he prays with people to receive the baptism in the Spirit almost every day, whether it’s at his job, or at the gym, or wherever.

“It’s not hard to reach out to people in love,” says Mack. “I just start up a conversation with them, and the next thing you know, we’re talking about the Holy Spirit.”

## ‘Who Is a Missionary?’

“Every heart *with* Christ is a missionary, and every heart *without* Christ is a mission field. What does that make you? A missionary! So wherever you go—to your work or school, or to the grocery store—you have found your mission field. And you always have your antennae up, searching for those who don’t have Christ in their hearts, because that’s your mission field right there. It’s not somebody else’s job—it’s yours.”

—John Grunewald (’80), Director, Rhema Europe

## Did You Know?

You can access all previous issues of *Connections* magazine online at [goo.gl/EgIyl](http://goo.gl/EgIyl)

## THE CHURCH REACHING OUT

**ABOUT:** The Alpha course empowers church members to reach out. But it also is designed to give people outside the church an opportunity to learn about God in a relaxed atmosphere. The Alpha course was created over 30 years ago and is being used in over 65,000 churches and other locations around the world. It usually runs for 10 weeks. Topics include: Who is Jesus? How do I pray? How does God guide us? Does God heal today? and many more.

### For information about the Alpha course

- In the USA: [alphausa.org](http://alphausa.org)
- In Russia: [alphacourse.ru/](http://alphacourse.ru/)
- To attend an Alpha course anywhere in the world: [alpha.org/find](http://alpha.org/find)
- For Alpha course information in other countries: [alpha.org/find](http://alpha.org/find). Choose your country from the drop-down menu. Then check other links for information about how to train for and put on your own Alpha course. You'll also find a link leading to all the downloadable materials.

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### ✓ We talked to four Rhema churches that use the Alpha course:



**Sam Smucker ('77)** Senior Pastor, The Worship Center, Lancaster, PA (2800–3000 in attendance)



**Patrick Herzog ('87, '88)** Senior Pastor, Life Church, Fergus Falls, MN (500+ in attendance)



**Sean Hirschy ('93, '94)** Youth & Worship Pastor, Christliche Freikirche, Trostberg, Germany (110 in attendance)



**Dennis Pravorov ('96, '97)** Associate Pastor, Word of Faith Church, Minsk, Belarus (300 in attendance)

### Q&A: How do you empower your church members to invite people to Alpha?



**Sam**—We encourage them to go through the course themselves, then invite someone the next time (and even attend the course with them). We promote it in services with video or live testimonies. Also, during each Alpha course we encourage the attendees to invite someone next time.



**Patrick**—We show testimony videos, and initially we had leaders share their enthusiasm. We print invitation cards and put up signs around the community. I talk about the process for months prior, to get people thinking about how to invite someone. Now after six years of doing it, we don't allow any church members to come without bringing someone new.



**Sean**—Alpha offers predesigned promotional flyers and a video. We download them and then insert our info into them (dates, location, website, and so forth). We show the video on Sundays well ahead of the Alpha course and encourage our people to take flyers to use to invite their friends. We also feature the info prominently on our website, and we hang posters around town in stores and other spots.



**Dennis**—We talked about the Alpha course in our church for almost a year before we did it—emphasizing that our main calling as Christians is to preach the Gospel and get people saved. Eventually we got some people together and did a small, one-month version of the course. When they experienced for themselves what God will do in people's lives, they were eager to help and invite other people. Plus, during every prayer meeting in the church, we are praying for the Alpha course. Some of the Alpha teams do some informal activities with unbelievers before the start of a new course. They invite them for a picnic, or go to the lake, or bowling, or to some other activity, and tell them about the Alpha course. Before every course we have an Alpha conference for unbelievers. We do Alpha in several regions in our city, so people sign up for the one closest to them and then group leaders contact them.

### Q&A: How often do you do it?



**Sam**—We do the 10-week Alpha course three times a year: in September, January, and April.



**Patrick**—We do it twice a year.



**Sean**—We do it once a year, usually right after *Winter Bible Seminar*, so we're done by the time the weather starts getting nice.



**Dennis**—We do it twice a year: winter-spring and fall-winter. We use the summer to get connected with new people and invite them to the next Alpha.

## Q&A: Is the lesson taught with a DVD or by your people?

 **Sam**—The lesson is taught by our people, and we train them to teach the lessons.

 **Patrick**—We use the Alpha DVDs and have been very pleased with the results.

 **Sean**—The lessons are taught by our people. We have enough qualified teachers to have someone different teach every week.

 **Dennis**—Our people give the topics. It's much more effective than DVD. The discussion is very alive then.

## Q&A: Do you hand-select your facilitators? Is there training for them?

 **Sam**—The teachers are a mix of pastors on staff and trained volunteers.

 **Patrick**—Initially we hand-selected, but now we allow volunteers to be trained. We train fairly intensely and are clear about our goals and objectives going in. We do training each year.

 **Sean**—We hand-select small group leaders and they lead a team. They select teachers for the different lessons, plus teach a couple themselves. They choose volunteers to prep the meals and do other jobs. Every night has the same flow: a meal, a song or two, a lesson, a coffee break, and small group discussion.

 **Dennis**—We hand-pick each one. We do not ask them for a lifetime commitment—just 11 weeks. Everybody is a volunteer. People use their own money to cook the meal and go to Holy Ghost weekend. Before each Alpha we have Alpha training. Everybody needs to go through it, whether or not they are experienced.

## Q&A: How successful would you say it's been?

 **Sam**—It's helping change the culture of our church to be more evangelistic. We've seen lives change and more church members who were not involved volunteer to serve meals, pray, be table leaders, lead worship, and so forth. We've seen many attendees born again, rededicated, and filled with the Holy Spirit.

 **Patrick**—In our church, most of the people who have gotten saved or been filled with the Spirit in the past five years have come through our Alpha ministry. I would estimate about 150–200 people have been very impacted through Alpha and a number of our church ministry leaders came through the Alpha process.

 **Sean**—Each year we've had several people receive the Lord. And the course is long enough that they get a good start in the Word and build relationships with our people. Those who come to the Alpha course tend to stay connected and continue to come to the church.

 **Dennis**—Every time, 50 more people become believers. It's good for our country. We cannot do mass evangelizing campaigns or street witnessing—only personal evangelism and charity work. Alpha mobilizes the church. Anybody can be a part of Alpha. One can preach, others can cook,

some can listen, some can organize, and everybody can pray. In our church more than half the congregation is involved directly with Alpha, and others are praying. It has really united the church.

## Q&A: Have there been any challenges?

 **Sam**—Some attendees go through the course 2–4 times and it almost becomes like their church. We're exploring ways to get a higher percentage involved in the church body. Also, the lessons sometimes need to be tweaked a little to come in line with the teaching we present at our church.

 **Patrick**—We see some doctrinal differences about healing and the baptism in the Spirit, but not enough to get in the way of life change. One challenge is discussion in the small groups. We want leaders to let God work through the ministry process Alpha has established instead of trying to give answers to each person's questions.

 **Sean**—The biggest challenge was getting our people to invite the lost in the second year we did it. The first year there was more excitement. The lessons are really well-written for something that is taught in many denominations. It's basic but not watered-down. We haven't had a problem with it (but some may be filtered by our teachers.) There's even an Alpha Weekend you plan when you teach on the Holy Spirit and get people filled with the Holy Ghost!

 **Dennis**—At first the main challenge was to inspire people to do it. Now the challenge is that people are not as excited as they used to be to start it again. But when they see the results, they get inspired.

## Q&A: Anything else to add?

 **Sam**—We have anywhere from 180 to 300 people attend. This includes table leaders and other volunteers. Usually about 60 percent of the attendees are people who have never been saved, or they were saved but they need to rededicate their lives.

 **Patrick**—It's a great process for involving new believers in leadership. I love that it affords lay people an opportunity to pray for people to get healed or receive the baptism in the Spirit. All the setup and food is a lot of work, but it gets people involved who aren't participating in other ministries. If you do Alpha, the church leadership has to be totally behind it, or it will probably flop. It also needs someone who's up front every Sunday motivating the people and keeping it fresh.

 **Sean**—We've drawn about 40 people each time, and about 10 or 15 of those are new to the church. Pretty much every country has an Alpha website for that country and language. The Alpha course requires that you relax and take things slow. It's not a crusade with microwave evangelism; it's more of a crock-pot approach.

 **Dennis**—The material is so flexible. We use our own illustrations, but it's just Gospel, so simple and clear. It's all charismatic. They believe in all the gifts of the Spirit and other things we do. They believe in the infilling with the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues, healing, and the believer's authority.

# RBTC/RBC UPDATE

## Homecoming 2013

was held again this year with *Winter Bible Seminar*, February 17–22, on the Rhema campus in Broken Arrow. Graduates came from all over to celebrate these great alumni events with their Rhema family!

MONDAY • Alumni Fellowship



Grads gathered with new friends and old for food, fellowship, fun, and a giveaway drawing.

TUESDAY • Missions Luncheon



Rhema missionaries from around the world gathered for a time of fellowship.

WEDNESDAY • Reunion Luncheon



Grads from 1983, 1993, and 2003 celebrated their 30-, 20-, and 10-year reunions.

THURSDAY • RMAI Luncheon



Members of the Rhema Ministerial Association International were encouraged and refreshed at this year's luncheon.



## SAVE THE DATE

Rhema Worldwide Homecoming and Winter Bible Seminar 2014  
February 16–21



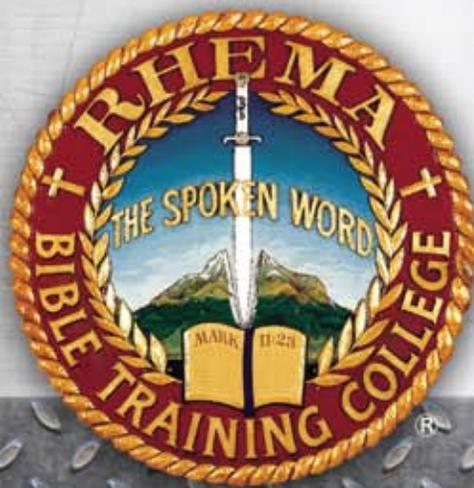
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# **RHEMA STRONG**

## A Pattern For Discipleship

*There is no “best model” for making disciples. But there are common principles set forth in the Word of God. When we follow Jesus’ model, we see that He didn’t do it the same way with everyone. We also see that it didn’t work perfectly, but it did work. Though they had a rough start, the first disciples changed the world. The same thing needs to happen today in our churches. Are we creating environments that can ultimately change people? Discipling believers requires that we address each of the following three vital areas.*

### 1) The Heart

It’s the condition of our heart that determines the condition of our life (Prov. 4:23; Jer. 29:13; Matt. 15:8, 19–20; Acts 13:22). In order to really



disciple people, churches must create an environment where God can capture and continually work on the hearts of believers.

### 2) The Head

The way we think determines how we see, what we want, and how we respond (Eph. 4:22–24). And of course, our way of thinking can change, and it *must*. Churches must influence the way people think by helping them renew their minds—by exposing them to God’s truth, people, and work (Rom. 10:17; Prov. 13:20; 1 Peter 2:12).



### 3) The Hands

What we do and don’t do significantly influences our spiritual journey (John 13:17).



Jesus invested in His disciples and then sent them out. The sending was a big part of how they learned. Sadly, in most churches today, people are being “sat” rather than “sent.”

## 7 Reasons We Aren’t Reaching the Lost

### 1. *Spiritual Lethargy*

Not obeying God. Many Christians are not growing spiritually, and lack of spiritual growth leads to a lack of desire to share Christ with others.

### 2. *Growing Inclusivism*

Some Christians are starting to believe that “good” followers will somehow make it to Heaven without a true Christian conversion. Our message will fall on deaf ears if this belief persists and grows.

### 3. *Busyness*

One of the enemy’s most effective strategies today is to get us so busy that we fail to make sharing our faith a priority. The unsaved are waiting for you to tell them about Jesus. They need to be on your to-do list. Are you giving priority to reaching them?

### 4. *Fear of Rejection*

Research shows that four out of 10 unsaved people will be receptive to our concern for their eternity. In other words, fear of rejection is unfounded. It is just an excuse for not sharing our faith.

### 5. *Losing the Habit of Witnessing*

Witnessing, like prayer and Bible study, is a discipline. It’s a habit to learn, retain, and if lost, regain.

### 6. *Lack of Accountability*

One good reason to have a “witnessing program” in church is the accountability inherent in the system. And that’s likely to inspire more witnessing attempts. Attempting more evangelistic encounters creates a habit of witnessing that then increases our zeal for evangelism.

### 7. *Failure to Invite*

When is the last time you invited an unsaved or unchurched person to church? It’s a simple gesture, yet so few Christians do it.

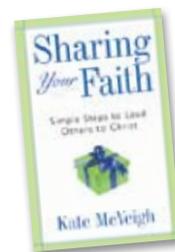
Is your church focusing on making disciples who “go ye” or on trying to entice sinners to “come ye”?

# Resources

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## Great Reads:

- \* ***Sharing Your Faith* by Kate McVeigh ('86, '87).** Simple steps to lead people to Christ
- \* ***Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* by Gregory Koukl.** A guide to a new method of sharing your faith with others
- \* ***Dare 2 Share: A Field Guide to Sharing Your Faith* by Greg Stier.** Provides an acrostic tool for sharing the Gospel message
- \* ***Transforming Discipleship* by Greg Ogden.** Looks at Jesus' method of discipling by investing in a few people at a time
- \* ***The Explicit Gospel* by Matt Chandler.** A call to true Christianity: knowing the Gospel explicitly to unite the church and reach the lost
- \* ***Sharing Your Faith Made Easy* by Mark Water.** Dozens of helpful witnessing tips and step-by-step guidance for communicating the Gospel
- \* ***Deep & Wide* by Andy Stanley.** Creating churches that unchurched people love to attend
- \* ***Making Church Relevant* by Dale Galloway.** The first step to winning unchurched people. Includes "every-member ministry" and thinking like a missionary in your community
- \* ***Comeback Churches* by Ed Stetzer.** A study of 300 churches from across 10 denominations that achieved healthy evangelistic growth after a season of decline
- \* ***Becoming a Contagious Christian* by Bill Hybels and Mark Mittelberg.** Simple instruction for effectively communicating your faith in Christ.



## Great Websites:

- OutreachMagazine.com** Reach your community; change the world.
- Dare2Share.org** Energizing a generation to evangelize their world
- SharingYourFaith.org** Teaching believers how to share their faith
- HowToShareYourFaith.com** Personal evangelism tools, training & ideas
- ShareJesusWithoutFear.com** An easy-to-use, relational approach to witnessing
- revival.com** Soul-winning tools
- CoreGroups.org/discipleshipcurriculum.html** Discipleship resources
- DiscipleMakingDisciples.com** Empowering believers to reproduce themselves
- MultiplyMovement.com** A simple resource to begin making disciples
- GospelCenteredDiscipleship.com** Resources to help make and multiply disciples
- Making-Disciples.net** Motivating mature Christians to reach the lost and disciple them
- BenSternke.com/making-disciples** A six-part blog series on making disciples
- WillowCreek.com** "Just Walk Across the Room" outreach and personal evangelism curriculum. (Type it in the Search box).



*There's an app for that . . .*

An app that makes it easy to share your faith with others. **ShareYourFaithApp.com**

# WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

## 1978

**Dennis and Vicki Avery (both '78)** pastor Victorious Life Church in Fosters, Alabama, and are the founders and directors of the Jean Browning Maternity Home. Jean Browning provides a safe, loving home to pregnant teenagers from ages 19 to 22. In October of 2012 they dedicated a brand-new building for the maternity home. New Beginnings Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, paid for the building, and Rhema churches throughout the region furnished it. [jbfh.net](http://jbfh.net) • [VictoriousLifeChurch.us](http://VictoriousLifeChurch.us)



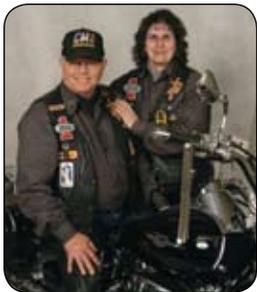
Rhema pastors at the dedication of the new Jean Brown Maternity Home building: John ('82, '83) & Sheila White; Dennis & Vicki Avery (both '78); Rob & Rose Wynne (both '90, '91); Stephanie Marks ('91). Not pictured: Bobby Marks ('90, '91).

## 1979

**Steve Shank ('79)** and his wife, Chanler, founded City on the Hill Ministries in 1979 in Boulder, Colorado. In 1987 they helped launch a Bible training center in Kingston, Jamaica, and in 2009 they founded Confirming the Word Bible College in Boulder. Steve has recently written a book, *Schizophrenic God?*. [CityOnTheHill.com](http://CityOnTheHill.com) • [SteveCShank.com](http://SteveCShank.com)



## 1980



**Richard Wagnon ('80)** and his wife, Darla, served as pastors of four churches in Oklahoma and Texas, beginning in 1980. Now that they're retired from pastoral ministry, they serve as area representatives for the Christian Motorcyclists Association (CMA). They help and encourage local chapters, and they also attend secular motorcycle rallies and hold Sunday morning services. [cmausa.org](http://cmausa.org)

## 1985

**Gloria Dean Duncans-Kidd ('84, '85)** actively ministers in a soup kitchen for the homeless in Detroit, Michigan. She also is an artist, sings in the choir, and travels occasionally. She graduated from Wayne State University in 2009 with a bachelor's degree.

## 1986

### Alumni Spotlight



#### Carlos Vargas ('85, '86)

Carlos Vargas and his wife, Diane, have pastored two churches (in Minnesota and in Michigan) and now have shifted their focus overseas.

Since 1988 they have traveled to the mission field over 60 times to Israel, Egypt, Hong Kong, China, India, and other places. They've also been to the Philippines over 40 times. "We've been to more islands than most Filipinos have," laughs Carlos.

Recently there was a huge earthquake in an area of the Philippines where the Vargases had many friends, and they swung into action to help. "The Lord put it on my heart to encourage the pastors," says Carlos. "Many of them lost churches, homes, and members, so I wanted to go and encourage them. We ministered for four days, and 137 pastors came. It was a huge blessing."

Not long after that trip, the RMAI Great Lakes Region, headed by regional director Jerry Weinzierl, gave Carlos one of two Outstanding Ministry Service awards at the 2012 Regional Retreat.

"We wanted to honor Carlos for his years of service and faithfulness to the call of God on his life," says Jerry.



## 1992

**Debbie (McIver '91, '92) Beck** worked for 10 years in ministry with evangelists in Tulsa and churches in Ohio and Pennsylvania. Then in 2002 she married Patrick Beck in Allentown, Pennsylvania. Today they serve on staff at Without Limits Christian Center in New Bern, North Carolina. They have five adopted daughters—three from Haiti and two from the U.S. Their daughters are Ethecie, Felicia, Esperancia, Esperanta, and Elizabeth. The Becks are actively involved in missions to Haiti, supporting one orphanage in Port-au-Prince and another in Leogane. [WLCCOnline.com](http://WLCCOnline.com)



**Nestor Soto ('91, '92)** received a Master of Arts degree in Biblical Literature/New Testament Greek from Alliance Theological Seminary in Nyack, New York, in 2011. Since then he's been serving as a graduate teaching assistant in New Testament Greek and mentor to Master of Divinity students in Spiritual

Formation classes at the seminary. In January of 2013 he was licensed with the Christian & Missionary Alliance and began serving as the transitional pastor of the C&MA church in Peckville, Pennsylvania. He also recently began training to be a coach to church planters in the C&MA Eastern Pennsylvania district.

## 1995

**Ari ('94, '95) and Pamela ('95, '96) Arroyo** have led Escuela de la Biblia (Spanish School of the Bible) at Rhema Bible Church Broken Arrow since 2006. They've published a game in English and Spanish that promotes interaction and Bible literacy in an entertaining format. The Arroyos live in Tulsa, where Ari is employed as a help desk analyst at ConnectShip. [quienlodijuego.com](http://quienlodijuego.com) • [WhoSaidItGame.com](http://WhoSaidItGame.com)



## 1998



**Paul Bowers ('97, '98)** and his wife, Alida, serve in Lima, Peru, with Hearts in Action International and Followers of Christ International. They are active in the local church hosting various missions groups, sponsoring medical/dental outreaches, and reaching the lost. They have two sons: Joshua and Noah. [LosBowers.wordpress.com](http://LosBowers.wordpress.com)

**David Watson ('97, '98)** was married June 23, 2012, to Isabel Watson, and the couple is expecting their first child (a girl) in July 2013. The Watsons live and work in Brownwood, Texas.

## 1999

**Lisa (Ames '98, '99) Moore** and her husband, J.T., moved back to Broken Arrow in August 2011. They both work for Kenneth Hagin Ministries—Lisa as a graphic designer and J.T. in lighting and RSI Audio. They have one daughter, MacKenzie, 8. The Moores have also launched Genesis Worship Technologies, a professional worship lighting business. [GWTLighting.com](http://GWTLighting.com)



**C.F. and Nicole Rainey (both '98, '99)** welcomed their third child, Olive Nicole, on March 8, 2013. She joins her brother Beau, 8, and her sister Lucy, 5. C.F. and Nicole pastor Lone Star Baptist Church near Bethany, Missouri, which is celebrating its 150th anniversary this summer.

## 2000



**Nate ('00) and Kristi (Dowdy '99, '00) Griswold** met at the NRC in 1999 and were married that November. Now 14 years later they have a daughter, Kennedy, who is 6, and are serving as youth leaders at Glory To Him Family Church in Ozark, Alabama. Nathan's parents are **Bill ('77, '99, '00) and Teresa ('77) Griswold**. They all hope

that Kennedy will carry on the family tradition of attending Rhema. [GloryToHim.org](http://GloryToHim.org)

## 2001

**Sharon Hopf ('98, '00, '01)** works in the ministry of helps at Living Stone Teaching Church in Coweta, Oklahoma, for **Carl and Teresa McKittrick (both '93, '94)**. She's teaching "His Glory Gang" discipleship class on Wednesday evenings and overseeing the Sunday morning prayer group. She also travels to the Jemez Pueblo area in New Mexico to minister to Native Americans. [HisGloryGang.com](http://HisGloryGang.com)



**Brian ('98, '01) and Cara (Coleman '98, '00) Salley** are relocating to Wolverhampton, United Kingdom, this year with their two sons: Darrin, 8, and Cody, 4. The Salleys lived in the U.K. for three months in 2012. They will work with Bible schools, help reach the lost, and minister to believers. [SalleyMinistries.org](http://SalleyMinistries.org)



**Travis ('00, '01) and Jackie (Serpas '96, '97) Strickland** have been in ministry for over 10 years, and in September 2012 they planted Forward Church in Foley, Alabama. They have two sons: Solomon, 6, and Lincoln, 3. [LiveForward.tv](http://LiveForward.tv)

## 2002

**Vidar ('96, '02) and Cathrine ('00, '01, '02) Ligard**

announce the birth of their daughter Sarah Louise, born on February 1, 2012. She joins her two sisters: Lisa, 7, and Hannah, 5. Vidar supervises the Kenneth Hagin Ministries IT Department and is director of Rhema Kenya, so the Ligards divide their time between the U.S. and Africa. [RhemaKenya.org](http://RhemaKenya.org) • [TheMissionaryWife.wordpress.com](http://TheMissionaryWife.wordpress.com)



**Vince Morales ('01, '02)** and his wife, Michelle, have served as associate pastors at Breakthrough Church in Tulsa and as founding pastors at Revival Life Northwest in Bellevue, Washington. They have recently launched Ruach

Awakening, an itinerant ministry, and continue to live in Bellevue. [RuachAwakening.org](http://RuachAwakening.org)

## 2003

**David ('01, '02, '03) and Pamela (Burkle '97, '98) Page** have pastored Open Door Christian Center in Bolckow, Missouri, since 2007. Previously, David served as an assistant pastor at A Glorious Church Fellowship in Collinsville, Oklahoma, and Pam worked for Mark Brazee Ministries in Tulsa. [OpenDoorChristianCenter.org](http://OpenDoorChristianCenter.org)



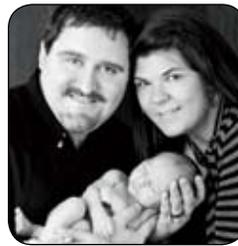
## 2004



**Jay Dodd ('03, '04)** resigned his position as assistant pastor at Cincinnati Word of Faith Church, Cincinnati, Ohio, in December 2012. He and his wife, Brenda, have moved back to Arkansas and are living in Springdale. They attend

Faith Builders Family Church in Rogers and enjoy being around their grandchildren.

**Anthony ('03, '04) and Sherri (Wafer '00, '01, '04) Gladney** serve on staff at Faith Christian Center Church in Orlando, Florida. Anthony is an assistant pastor and Sherri leads worship and directs the prayer ministry. She has released two worship CDs. They have three children: Mackenzie, 7, Mackiyah, 4, and Manuel, 2. [SherriGladney.com](http://SherriGladney.com)



**Devin Kroner ('03, '04)** and his wife, Elizabeth, announce the arrival of their son, Titus Shepherd, born November 17, 2012, weighing 7 pounds, 11 ounces. In January 2013 the Kroner family moved from Kansas to the Detroit area to join the staff of Life Christian Church. Devin will eventually become the senior pastor over the

campus in Baltimore, Michigan. [LifeChristian.com](http://LifeChristian.com)

**Daniel ('03, '04) and Ledia (Roberts '03, '04) Wiley** have accepted the children's pastor position at Spirit Life Church of God in Powder Springs, Georgia. [SpiritLifeChurch.org](http://SpiritLifeChurch.org)



## 2006

**Jim ('05, '06) and Mary (Hector '09, '10) Spencer**

were married on January 28, 2012, at the Rhema Bible Church chapel in Broken Arrow. **Jim Andrews ('79, '80)** of Lima, Peru, the bride's grandfather, performed the ceremony. Their first baby girl, Alice Lee, was born on December 12, 2012 (12-12-12!), weighing 7 pounds, 13 ounces. The Spencers live and work in Weatherford, Oklahoma, and are currently seeking the Lord as to their next step.



## 2007

**Aaron Griffith ('06, '07)** and his wife, Tiffany, became the pastors of Pawnee Christian Church, Pawnee, Illinois, in November 2011. They are also in the process of adopting a little girl from China.



**Phillip ('06, '07) and Kellie (Jones '04, '05) Hagedorn** announce the birth of their daughter, Hensley Anna Sue, born April 21, 2013, weighing 7 pounds, 14 ounces. She is their first child and the third grandchild of **Doug Jones ('75)** and his wife, Sherrel.

**Amber Hudson (Fricke '06, '07)** and her husband, Andy, are youth ministers at Triumphant Church in Independence, Iowa, for her parents, **Lance ('81, '82) and Janice ('81) Fricke**. Amber has designed Student Devos, a website and Facebook site for youth and youth leaders. [StudentDevos.com](http://StudentDevos.com)



**Brittany Spriggs (Greene '06, '07)** moved to Chicago in 2008 and married in May 2011 at her home church, Word of Faith International Christian Center in Detroit, Michigan, pastored by **André Butler ('95, '96)**. She and her husband, Gene, are expecting their first child (a boy) in September 2013. She works as a project manager for a Chicago accounting firm, and Gene works as a pipefitter. They currently attend Apostolic Faith Church.



## 2009

**Hector ('07, '08, '09) and Tina (Wenninger '08, '09) Casciano** announce the birth of their son, Orlando Cruz, born on July 2, 2012. He joins his sister, Ariel Joy, who was born on July 4, 2010. The Cascianos recently moved back to Tulsa, where Hector works at West Corporation and Tina works as a stay-at-home mom.



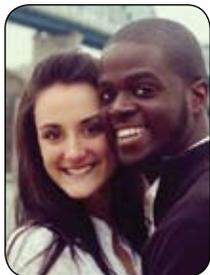
**Josh and JoAnn Garza (both '08, '09)** welcomed their new son, Gabriel, on February 28, 2013. He weighed 9 pounds, 7 ounces, and measured 19 3/4 inches long. He joins his brother Sam, 2. The Garzas live in Ingleside, Texas, where Josh currently works for OxyChem.



**Jonathon Wilson ('06, '09)** and his wife, Jaclyn, welcomed their daughter, Promise Victoria, on December 2, 2010, and their son, Jonathon Luke, on July 8, 2012. In June 2011 Jonathon joined the staff at St. Charles First Assembly of God in St. Peters, Missouri, as a youth intern. After serving in that role and as a part-time associate for a year and a half, he accepted a position as young adult pastor and multimedia director. [scfa.it](http://scfa.it)



## 2010



**Jai ('09, '10) and Angela (Odom '08, '09) Anderson** have recently moved from a two-year stint as youth pastors in Fort Smith, Arkansas, to become student pastors (grades 7–12) at Grandview Church in Quincy, Illinois. [GrandviewChurch.com](http://GrandviewChurch.com)

**Colby Cullum ('09, '10) and Abram Blobaum ('09, '10)** have been traveling and ministering as the founders of a purity ministry called (HEART)Virgin. They are based in Tulsa. [HeartVirgin.com](http://HeartVirgin.com)



**William Naramore ('09, '10)** and his wife, Pov, serve on the mission field in Cambodia. William is a school administrator and they also conduct a powerful youth ministry. [YouthImpactCambodia.com](http://YouthImpactCambodia.com)

## 2012

**Michael ('11, '12) and Katy (Westbrook '08, '09) Caple** were married on February 9, 2013, at the Rhema Bible Church chapel in Broken Arrow. **Tad Gregurich ('83, '84)** performed the ceremony. The Caples live in Broken Arrow. Katy works in the RBTC Admissions Office and Michael works for Penske Automotive. They both serve in RBC's JV Youth.



**Carl Joseph ('11, '12)** was married to Amy Nicole Warren on December 15, 2012, in Birmingham, Alabama. They recently moved to Highlands Ranch, Colorado, to start a church with the International Pentecostal Holiness Church. [RockyMountainPHCministries.org](http://RockyMountainPHCministries.org)

## HOMEGOINGS

'76.....	Wayne Teafatiller .....	July 9, 2012
'78.....	Donald Cave .....	2013
'78.....	Claude Lawson* .....	January 27, 2013
'78, '79.....	Thurman Taylor.....	December 19, 2012
'81.....	Anne Warren* .....	December 11, 2012
'82, '83.....	Gene Jolliff* .....	February 22, 2013
'86, '87.....	Pat Wicks.....	August 28, 2012
'88, '89.....	Earl Ericson .....	December 2, 2012
'90, '91.....	Efrem Sutton.....	December 26, 2013
'92.....	Guenther Richter*.....	April 11, 2013
'92, '93.....	Rosemary Miron** .....	July 2, 2011
'93, '94.....	Norine Zapata.....	January 18, 2013
'95, '96.....	Stephen Aaron.....	February 20, 2013
'96, '97.....	Elton Kelso .....	February 2, 2013
'97, '98.....	John Martin* .....	December 12, 2012
'98, '99.....	Dean Klepinger.....	January 1, 2012
'99, '00.....	William Ketchum .....	January 13, 2013
'01, '02, '03.....	Carney Johnson .....	February 27, 2013
'02, '03.....	Julia Benn-Reeves .....	October 22, 2012
'06, '07.....	Rob Goin .....	January 2013
'11, '12.....	Daytona Wilson.....	February 17, 2013

\*member or former member of Rhema Ministerial Association International (RMAI)

\*\*CORRECTION: In the Fall-Winter 2012 issue of *Connections*, we incorrectly reported that Eugene Miron had passed away. Eugene is alive. It was his wife, Rosemary, who passed on. We apologize for the error.

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