

Connections

LINKING RHEMA GRADUATES AROUND THE WORLD



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Wisdom for Life and Ministry
Gleaning from what others have learned

fall/winter 2008

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The Bottom Line

Wisdom for Tomorrow . . .

DOUG JONES | RMAI/RAA National Director

Recently I took some time to reflect on the road that I have traveled over the last 33 years of ministry. I must admit that it is not quite the road I would have chosen on my own, but then again, when you're *laboring with another* you're usually sent places and asked to do things that would not have been your personal choice.

During this time of reflection, questions began to surface. I find it interesting how different the questions are at this stage of my life, compared with the questions I asked as a young person just entering into ministry. Now I understand some of Dad Hagin's responses to my questions. Oh how I wish I could talk to him today! My questions would be so different! It is amazing how traveling a few miles down the road has changed my perspective of things.

Gleaning from those who have traveled the road ahead of us is becoming a lost art. We have become a generation that spends more time blogging, texting, MySpacing, and e-mailing than listening. We are so busy *giving out* that we often fail to *take in*. In the meantime, those who possess the very life-navigating wisdom that we so desperately need remain silent until we slow down long enough to listen to what they have to say.

Obtaining wisdom from those who have traveled the road before us adds several helpful ingredients to our lives. First, it encourages us above all else to maintain a heart desire to please God. Jesus said, "*I always do those things that please Him*" (John 8:29 NKJV). What would happen if we first measured our every thought, word, and action against the question, "Does this please God?" Pornography, adultery, and the general mistreatment of people would be things of the past.

Second, wisdom encourages us that it is important to develop and maintain healthy marriages and family relationships. Finishing our course without strong marriages and healthy families will not bring much joy in the end.

Third, wisdom reminds us that we must continually increase in knowledge. When we stop asking questions, we stop growing. To believe that what you know today will be enough for tomorrow is folly. Maintain a teachable spirit and you will increase in effectiveness.

Fourth, if those who have traveled the road ahead of us were allowed to speak into our lives, they would tell us that cooperating with other churches and ministries ensures that we will not become shipwrecked along the way. When will jealousy of recognition give way to a spirit of unity in the Body of Christ? The united action of the Body will benefit mankind the most in these last days.

Finally, wisdom cautions us to guard our hearts when it comes to people. Watch how people treat and talk about others, and realize that they will treat you and talk about you in like manner sooner or later. Never be taken by surprise when you experience such things. Just be certain not to imitate them yourself.

With all of these issues in mind, I encourage you to glean from the pages ahead. And when you have the opportunity to speak into the life of a new Christian worker, be sure to pass these time-proven ingredients on to them.

A fellow laborer,

Douglas E. Jones
RMAI/RAA National Director

"That men do not learn very much from the lessons of history is the most important of all the lessons of history."
—unknown

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WISDOM *for Life and Ministry*

Gleaning from what others have learned



Whether you're just *starting out, pressing through the middle, or headed for the finish line, keep these five keys in mind to finish strong.*



Key #1—Place God Above All / / Alumni Staff



Alumni Staff

We must keep God first place in our hearts and minds or we will be tempted to please people, become self-involved, or live life in our own strength. All of these paths lead to failure. Here are some insights.

What is our main motivation for ministry? Is it the desire to impress others, to be liked for what we say, or to attract a crowd? Is it to be popular, influential, or powerful? Is it to be an eminent preacher or grow a large church?

The Apostle Paul gives us insight. *“Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? . . . If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ”* (Gal. 1:10 NIV).

We want to keep our focus on pleasing God above all things. A living, daily fellowship with your Creator is the only way to run a race that stays strong and finishes strong.

In his article in the book *Deepening Your Ministry Through Prayer and Personal Growth*, Maxie Dunnam says, “Few things are as hollow as a relationship intended for passion that instead is marked by mere duty.”

A love relationship with God is necessary for a vital ministry. *At the heart of ministry is a heart close to God.*

If we lose our heart for God, we may still be able to perform our duties well, do everything required with skill, and succeed at keeping the ministry going. But there's no excitement. There's no sitting on the edge of our seat to share something great God has done recently. Furthermore, there's no heart for doing the hard things, and no burning concern for missions or outreach.

Ministry is more than just building churches, running programs, winning souls, or preaching sermons. **True success in ministry is knowing God and being the person He wants us to be.**

Jesus didn't say the first and greatest commandment was, “Love your neighbor as yourself.” He said *first*, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” Out of *that* flows ministry. •

“MOST PEOPLE THINK IN TERMS OF SUCCESS, BUT AS LABORERS WE MUST THINK IN TERMS OF OBEDIENCE.”

—DR. BRAD WAGGONER

🔑 TIPS FOR MAINTAINING RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

- 1) **Attend to the emotional.** Ministers can be hindered spiritually by emotional and personality hang-ups. Being honest about our emotions and dealing with them really helps us spiritually. Spend time in God's Word and meditate on His acceptance, His giftings in you, and who you are in Christ.
- 2) **Fine-tune spiritual disciplines.** Develop habits of study time, prayer time, and reflection time.
- 3) **Retreat.** Schedule “regular maintenance” time for your soul—maybe once or twice a year. It's not selfish or extravagant to take time to get away, gain perspective, and rest. It's vital to your well-being and longevity in ministry. You might even want to try short, one-day retreats more often if that works for you.

◇ Jerry Piker ('83, '84)



Investing in your family is forming a firm foundation for your life. Rev. Jerry Piker has some insights on keeping your family life strong. He and his wife, Shirlene, have been married 38 years. They pioneered Opened Door Christian Fellowship in Laurie, Missouri, in 1976, and now both of their daughters and sons-in-law work with them in the church. Jerry also serves as RMAI Regional Director for Region Nine.

Jerry Piker says he has encountered many triumphs and tragedies in the area of family relationships. “The triumphs have been many,” he says, “while most of the tragedies have come from seeing people who lost their families ‘for the sake of the ministry’ or something else they gave their attention to.”

According to Jerry, **it’s never too late to nurture your relationships with your spouse and children—and it’s an ongoing thing.** “When you spend more time on your family relationships, you will see your life and ministry change for the better,” he says. “It’s something you have to do all the time, but then you’ll see your children begin to love God (and ministry) in a greater depth.”

He encourages people to use the same Bible principles of faith for their marriage and family as they do for anything else.

“When I first started out,” he says, “I didn’t know how to be a good husband and father. I had to learn. As the Scriptures say in Second Timothy 2:15, “*Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed. . . .*” Like anything else, you have to find out what God says about it and then become a doer of the Word.” •

◇ **PRACTICAL TIPS FOR NURTURING YOUR FAMILY**

- 1) **Love your spouse.** “The Bible tells us to have our house in order *before* we become a minister of the Gospel, not after (First Timothy chapter 3). That means that my priorities must be God first and my family second, before ministry. If a man is to love his wife as Christ loved the Church (Eph. 5:25), then he needs to study how Christ loved the Church and pattern his life after Jesus. We need to give our lives to our husbands or wives. Many say, ‘When my *spouse* does such and such, I will act better.’ That’s not God. *To save your family, you must save your marriage relationship first.*”
- 2) **Let your kids know they’re your priority.** “We’ve always been active in our kids’ lives. When they were in sports or the band, we were at every event, even if we had to miss church. If something was important to them, it was important to us. Be sure to go away as a family for vacation, just to be with them. When our kids were little, we’d even go to a hotel and spend the night to swim in the pool. They loved it.”
- 3) **Don’t talk bad in front of your children.** “We never wanted our children to make decisions about people or the ministry by what was taking place in our lives. In fact, until they began working with us, our daughters never knew there were people in church who didn’t love us! Children can get the wrong impression if they only hear the negative about situations. We shared only the good things about people and ministry, because there are so many great, rewarding things to look at.”

Connections says:

- ◆ When your family sees and hears *you* treating spiritual things with respect (such as the Word, the ministers, and other people in church) they are much more likely to love God and church. If they see negative things and ask you about them, don’t just whitewash over them—acknowledge your family’s concerns, talk about them openly, and lead your family to the Word.

“If I had it to do over again . . .”

“I would spend more time with my daughters and reevaluate the high expectations I placed upon them, especially my oldest. Today they are all involved in local church ministry, but I blinked and they were in elementary school (while we were at RHEMA), blinked again and they were graduating from high school, blinked once more and they were in college, married, and living on the other side of the world. I wish someone had told me that ‘that moment’ when I was carrying my little girl in my arms at the mall would be my last time.” •

Marcus and Natalie Avalos (both '91, '92) pastor Crossroads Church in Seguin, Texas.
www.crossroadsc.com

Jim Herring ('92, '93)



Sometimes we think our way of doing things is the best way or the only way, but if we stop learning and changing, we stop growing. **Rev. Jim Herring** who along with his wife, Samantha, pastors Abundant Life Family Church in Fort Worth, Texas, talks about the dangers of stagnation and a “know-it-already” mentality.

“Anyone who stops learning is old whether this happens at 20 or 80. Anyone who keeps on learning not only remains young but becomes constantly more valuable, regardless of physical capacity.”

—Henry Ford

“Regardless of how old I get, I want to stay young!” says Jim Herring. “I also want to become ‘constantly more valuable.’ According to Henry Ford, the way to do that is to continue learning and growing.”

Jim believes a personal growth plan is vital. “It’s so important to set aside time to read, listen to others, attend seminars, or pursue formal education,” he says. “The truth is, God works through knowledge. We limit our effectiveness in the Kingdom of God when we choose to remain the same and stop acquiring knowledge.”

“If we stay the same, we become stagnant,” he explains. “For example, I don’t want to be the same man, husband, dad, or pastor I was last year. I want to be

better, sharper, more knowledgeable, and more productive.”

It’s also possible to pass a love for learning and growing on to others. “We can help the people in the pew develop a love for growth,” he says, “by taking the Apostle Paul’s advice as a personal mandate: ‘... be an **EXAMPLE** to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, **GIVE ATTENTION** to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine’ (1 Tim. 4:12–13 NKJV).”

“Several years ago I spent some time with a seasoned minister,” Jim recalls, “and I asked him, ‘What advice would you give a young minister?’ His quick and potent response has stayed with me through the years. He

“IT’S SAID THAT ‘YOU CAN’T TEACH AN OLD DOG NEW TRICKS,’ BUT YOU’RE NOT AN OLD DOG—YOU’RE A NEW CREATURE! YOU CAN LEARN NEW THINGS.”

—KEITH MOORE

said, ‘Never stop learning!’ Those words became a part of my spiritual DNA and have guided me in a quest to continually grow and develop.” •

TIPS FOR BEING A CONTINUAL LEARNER

1. Have a personal development plan.

What type of system do you have in place for your personal and ministerial development? Map it out with a list and a calendar. Dedicate time to reading and praying *every day*, instead of ‘working it in when you can,’ then *commit* to that time. You will never reap a harvest of knowledge on the seeds of learning you failed to sow.

2. Keep it fresh.

No matter how long you’ve been involved in ministry, you haven’t ‘heard it all’ yet. It’s important to attend seminars and read what others have written to keep things fresh. Go in search of what others are saying and doing. It will help you personally, and it will help your ministry.

3. Fellowship with others who love to grow and change.

Pick a book to read or a seminar to attend together with your spouse or a friend. This gives you a measure of accountability, and it helps you process the things you learn as you share them with each other. Being around others who are excited will help keep you excited.

Connections says:

- ♦ Broaden your horizons, embrace some new ideas, stir yourself up. Take a free computer class at your local library, mentor a young person (www.MentorYouth.com), go on a short-term missions trip (www.InMotionMinistries.org), become a volunteer (www.VolunteerMatch.org), get a degree or finish one you’ve started, stir up your passion for souls, learn more about nutrition and exercise, (download some e-books at www.NoPaperPress.com), start a new hobby (www.FindMeAHobby.com), log on to the home page of IWorshipHere.com.

✦ Rob Wynne ('90, '91)



When we're going forward with a vision God's given us, sometimes we can get an "isolationist" mentality. But it's important to keep a spirit of cooperation, involvement, and servanthood—with other ministries, with the community, and even with friends and mentors. Revs. Rob and Rose Wynne pastor Cornerstone Church in Linden, Alabama, and have discovered the benefits of looking outward.

Pastor Rob Wynne believes in getting involved in his community. "One main reason," he says, "is because Jesus said if you want to be first in His Kingdom, you have to be servant of all." He serves in a number of volunteer capacities in his town.

According to Rob, there are other benefits as well. "When churches take part in their community, it dispels false rumors," he says. "Whatever people perceive about you is reality, whether it's true or false. When we came here, people had a lot of false ideas of

what our church was like, so we knew we needed to get involved with them and show them who we were."

When you're willing to serve, it helps build credibility. "I'm able to speak into the lives of people that I'd never otherwise have access to, like judges," says Rob. "Slowly but surely we've established a rapport with people in our whole county. They know we're normal people who want to serve Jesus and help others. **If we're going to invade people's worlds, we're going to have to get outside our four walls.**"



Rob also belongs to the Linden ministerial association, which is composed of Baptists, one Methodist, and himself.

"Early on, we determined that we would hook up with others who lift up Jesus," he says. "If we refuse to meet and worship with other believers just because they don't believe the way we do, then we're not obeying the Scriptures. I don't want to stand before Jesus and have Him say, 'I thought I told you to love everybody. . . Fellowship with these people!'" •

✦ TIPS

- **Be willing to be a follower.** "When we get involved with all these different things, most of the time we're followers, not leaders. We don't do it to get credit, or even to get members, but rather to be a help."
- **Sow and reap.** "Getting involved sets an example for church members. When we volunteer somewhere, it encourages them to volunteer in the church. It's hard to ask people to cooperate if you don't cooperate yourself."
- **Get along.** "Sometimes it's difficult to cooperate with other denominations and groups. But it's necessary to have others around you, even when they don't agree with your doctrine. They have ministerial wisdom to offer, good things to say. Be open to hear a good idea, or suggestions."
- **Have close friends.** "It's tremendously important to have friends who speak into your life. When we shut ourselves off from other people, we open ourselves up to depression, or to the enemy saying that no one really cares about us—just all kind of bad things that are unnecessary."



Key #5—Overcome Discouragement, Disappointment, and Hurt //

Many of your problems and disappointments in life and ministry will stem from working, living, and interacting with people. Here is some wisdom from your fellow grads about not getting bitter or letting hurts keep you from fulfilling your destiny.

Richard Pilger ('86, '87)

Associate Pastor, Valley Family Church,
Kalamazoo, Michigan
www.kvfc.org



Betrayal and untruths hurt, but especially when they're experienced at the hand of an individual whom you have mentored, trusted, or invested your life in. For me, I had to get a fresh revelation of two things.

"First, the Lord is my defender and He will take care of me. Second, I had to recognize that there is always a spiritual battle taking place in the unseen realm (Ephesians 6:12), and the enemy will use people, the words they speak, and their actions, to try to derail me and keep me from running my race.

"I had to realize that if the enemy can discourage me, he will jump on that opportunity—and if he can use people to do that, he will. But I had to recognize the origin and then not 'sign for the package.' I had to walk in love and keep on walking! Easy to do? No, it was probably the hardest thing I've ever experienced in ministry. But God is always faithful!

"Another key to overcoming discouragement is to never forget your first love. In ministry, it is very easy to get so busy doing things *for* God, you fail to spend time *with* God. Keep your own spiritual tanks full! Ministry is an overflow of the reservoir on the inside of you, and you can't give what you don't have.

"Spend personal time in the Word—the time you spend in message preparation doesn't count. Cultivate a healthy prayer life. You are never too busy to pray—in fact, you can't afford *not* to pray. Devote time to worship. Load your iPod or put on your favorite CD and just spend time in His presence. You'll emerge refreshed and renewed."



Beth Webb ('78)

Pastor's wife, Foothill Family Church,
Lake Forest, California
www.foothillfamily.com



People will disappoint you; don't be surprised by it. I once heard a seasoned minister say that he always told his children when people did hurtful things, 'They are just being people.'

"My husband often says to me, 'This just proves that we need to be here—they need to grow up!' If people were spiritual, then they wouldn't need us.

"There's a temptation to think, *What's wrong with me? How come other people are succeeding and it seems like I'm not?* Those are thoughts the devil hounded me with for the purpose of distracting me! I found out that the people I thought had it all together had the exact same thoughts!

"So now, for me, it's just about pleasing Jesus. If I obey Him every day, even in the small things, then at the end of my journey He'll say, 'Well done.' It's about obedience to Him, not about building a ministry."

Will Duke ('00, '01)

Pastor, Washington Faith Family Church,
Washington Court House, Ohio
www.washingtonfaith.com



One thing that surprised me was how many people have had some really horrible experiences in their lives, either in childhood or in adult relationships.

"Knowing this brings a lot of clarity sometimes as to why people act and behave like they do! My wife and I both feel as if we basically grew up on *The Waltons*, because we never experienced any of the things that people have shared with us during counseling or just general conversation.

"It makes you realize that there are a lot of hurting people out there with a multitude of problems and emotions, and we have the opportunity—or better yet, the responsibility—to share the love of Christ with them and bring healing and, hopefully, complete restoration."

Whether it's people you work with or people you work for . . . people you minister to or people who minister to you . . . people in your own family or complete strangers . . .

Don't Let PEOPLE Catch You by Surprise



Whether you're just starting out or you've been around awhile, you have to know that *people* are going to be one of the biggest challenges you face in life and ministry.

Even if you're an outstanding leader or helper, there's no guarantee that others are going to hold up their end of the bargain. Even in Jesus' ministry, the multitude left Him, the 12 ran away, the three went to sleep, the one denied Him, and the one betrayed Him. He wasn't at fault, but it still happened.

So be ready. While you're doing your best, there will be humans who let you down. That's part of life. If you're aware of that going in, you will survive how others treat you, disappoint you, or surprise you, and it won't derail you from keeping your joy and fulfilling your call.

Those You Work With



It is said that people often leave a job not because of the work, the pay, or the conditions, but because of coworkers.

Rev. Joe Duinick, head of the RHEMA School of World Missions at RBTC, says that one

of the main reasons missionaries leave the field is because of trouble with people.

"We don't expect to have a problem with our fellow ministers, so it catches us off guard," says Joe. "We think, *I graduated with this person. They're a friend. They're a RHEMA graduate. Let's work together.* We don't expect it to be frustrating—just as people don't go into marriage planning for it to be something they have to work hard at. But often they do."

According to Joe, *awareness* is a huge part of the answer. "Just know to expect challenges," he says. "I think that studying different personality types can be a helpful tool in learning how to get along—to understand that there are differences in the way we all perceive things."

For example, Joe says, "Most often it would be beneficial for missionaries to study what another culture is like before

they go live there. But if they don't think they'll have trouble with the culture, they don't study it. In the same way, if you don't think you'll have trouble with people you work closely with, then you don't plan for it. Anything you don't plan for can catch you off guard. Be forewarned that even in the best situations, you'll have challenges with people."

Learning to deal with people is vitally important. "If we're going to make disciples and evangelize the world," says Joe, "our strongest testimony is love within the Body. Unless we're better than Jesus, there are going to be people who hurt us, intentionally or unintentionally. So we need to use wisdom and grow up. It's hard and challenging, but we don't have a license to get bitter."

"BE FOREWARNED THAT EVEN IN THE BEST SITUATIONS, YOU'LL HAVE CHALLENGES WITH PEOPLE."
—REV. JOE DUINICK

Those You Minister To

Humans can be fickle. Often it seems as if those you help most, or the ones you're closest to, are the ones who turn on you. So when (not if!) that happens, what can you do? Here are some tips:

- 1 Lean on God. He is always faithful, always trustworthy. He never leaves you, never forsakes you, and always upholds you. Your strength lies in Him (Isaiah 41:10).
- 2 Pray for those who hurt, disappoint, or harm you (Matthew 5:44; 1 Peter 3:9). God's Word says that rather than ignore, retaliate, gossip, or suffer in silence, we must *take action* when people treat us badly. We must love, bless, do good, and pray. These are not passive things.
- 3 Forgive and forget. Don't let someone else's actions have power over the rest of your life. Forgiveness is freedom (Mark 11:25–26).
- 4 Remember that no one can steal your joy unless you allow it. Determine that no person, no matter what that person does, can steal your joy (Nehemiah 8:10).
- 5 Stay open, don't get hard, and keep loving people. If Jesus did it, you can too (Hebrews 12:4).



Secrets of Staying Power

LIFE IS A MARATHON, not a dash. And races aren't always won by the first runner out of the blocks. Winners are determined at the finish line.

Ministry is also judged not on short bursts but on total impact. So what are some secrets of staying strong all the way to the end of your race? Here are some contributing factors:

- Realize that everything isn't going to get done today. Sometimes there are more needs at the end of the day than there were at the beginning. Don't put unrealistic demands on yourself, and daily cast your cares on God.
- Make a big deal about the victories. Celebrate the milestones. Keep a file of appreciative notes. Mark down the triumphs, and use them to encourage yourself in the hard times.
- Be emotionally stable. It's not your responsibility to make people happy. Encourage them and remind them of God's promises, then trust Him to be God to them. Don't let your emotions be determined by what others are going through.
- Go with your strengths and find people to fill in for your weaknesses. Know and accept yourself.
- Enjoy the journey. Don't "wait" to be happy—be sure to do at least one thing you love every day.
- Recognize what the Gospel is and avoid the wrong crusades. Distractions are a detriment to longevity. Social issues and even doctrinal issues—majoring on the minors—can sap your strength. They point the finger away from our need for Jesus and point it toward something else.
- Pace yourself. Do your best to take care of the temple God has placed you in. It has to take you a long way, and ill health will drain your staying power.
- Be humble. God gives grace to the humble and resists the proud. Without Him, you are nothing.
- Appreciate people and things. Have a grateful heart. Say "thank you" and "I appreciate you" often.

"90 percent of those who fail are not actually defeated. They just quit."

—Paul J. Meyer,
founder, Success Motivation Institute

Keep It Honest

To keep yourself spiritually healthy for the long haul, ask yourself these questions:

1. *If the ministry was taken away from me, would I still have a personal, growing relationship with Jesus?*

No matter how big or successful your ministry gets, never lose the hunger to know God in a more intimate way.

2. *Am I performing, or am I following God's call on my life?*

What we do as leaders must be the fruit of a heart that's right with Him.

3. *Am I pursuing integrity? Are there any areas of ongoing secrecy that I'm trying to hide from those closest to me?*

None of us has the right to dabble in things we wouldn't allow others to do. We're not above the standard.

Land Mines to Expect . . . and Overcome

If you expect life and ministry to be easy and smooth, you're going to be surprised—or become angry, hurt, bewildered, or fearful. John Maxwell, in his book *The Difference Maker*, says: "Successful people expect to face hurdles. They know that overcoming obstacles is a normal part of life, and they plan accordingly. They face their challenges instead of fearing them."

Here are four challenges you can expect to run across—and how to overcome them.

1) Discouragement

Everyone gets discouraged at some point. The question is, will you *give up* or *get up*? Here are some tips:

- ❖ See discouragement as temporary. This too shall pass. You can bounce back.
- ❖ Be willing to move on. Let negative things go. Once you've asked, "Why?" then move beyond it. Change your focus from the problem to the solution.
- ❖ Study success. The most successful people have usually overcome the greatest obstacles through persistence. Why not be one of them?
- ❖ Talk yourself up. There's no faster way to discouragement than negative self-talk. Start calling things that be not as though they were (Romans 4:17).

2) Problems

Perfect conditions are rare. Problems are everywhere, and everyone has them. That means we'll usually be living and working for the Kingdom of God in the midst of some kind of storm. Recognize problems for what they are—temporary tests of your resolve and ability. Here are some keys for solving problems:

- ❖ Ask—is it a problem? A problem is solvable; a predicament is something that must be endured. Know the difference, and don't waste energy on trying to solve a predicament.
- ❖ Be ready. Don't treat problems as special—treat them as normal. Expect them and plan accordingly.
- ❖ Face it. The first step to solving a problem is to begin.
- ❖ Take stock. Thoroughly evaluate the problem. It may not be solved instantly. Keep patiently implementing the solution.
- ❖ See the opportunity. Very often, adversity paves the way for success. Problems can be a wake-up call for creativity.
- ❖ Make a list. Write down all the potential ways to solve a problem. There's a solution out there.

3) Fear

Even the most successful people experience fear. It's part of human nature. It's what you do when you're afraid that matters. Steps for overcoming fear:

- ❖ Admit it. Acknowledge that fear exists. Don't hide from it or deny it.
- ❖ Look beyond. The feelings are real, but what is the real reason for your fear? James Thurber said, "All men should strive to learn before they die, what they are running from, and to, and why."
- ❖ Focus. Stop worrying about things you can't control and focus on things you can. Start with attitude.
- ❖ Feed your faith and starve your doubt. What are you thinking about? If you focus on your fears, they will dominate you. If you focus on God's power and love, guess what?

"If you have a job
without
aggravation,
you don't have a job."

—Malcolm Forbes

4) Failure

None of us can avoid failure. But failure doesn't mean you won't succeed—it just means success might take longer. Make failure work for you. Here are some tips:

- ❖ Be persistent. The best way to overcome failure is to develop an attitude of tenacity. Refuse to quit. What matters is not how many times you fall down but how many times you get back up (Micah 7:8).
- ❖ Aim high. Don't sell yourself short! Every person who's ever achieved anything had to overcome the odds.
- ❖ Keep laughing. Taking your mistakes too seriously makes life hard. Learn to laugh at failures.
- ❖ Learn. When people say they got their education at "the school of hard knocks," they mean they failed and learned from it. There's great value in learning from your mistakes.

"Sometimes you win,
and sometimes you learn."

Robert Kiyosaki, author of *Rich Dad, Poor Dad*

RHEMA BIBLE TRAINING CENTER UPDATE

NRC GETS A FACELIFT

Over the summer, an amazing renovation took place at Ninowski Recreation Center. RHEMA Alumni Association members get free access to the NRC. When you're in town, stop by and see the new look!



"Before"



"After"

NEW INSTRUCTORS

Several Kenneth Hagin Ministries employees will add "RBTC instructor" to their job descriptions this year.



Olivia DiCamilli



David Wildman



Patrick Vandiver

- ◇ **Olivia DiCamilli**, head women's basketball coach, is teaching "People Skills" and "Pastors Lab" and for the third-year RHEMA School of Pastoral Ministry program is assisting with "Message Development & Delivery."
- ◇ **David Wildman**, Marketing and Special Projects Director, is teaching "Marketing & the Mobile Church" for the RHEMA School of Pastoral Ministry.
- ◇ **Patrick Vandiver** of the RHEMA Bible Church music department is teaching music classes for the third-year RHEMA School of Worship program.

YOU'RE INVITED . . .
February 15–20



Winter Bible Seminar 2009 includes the first-ever
RHEMA Worldwide Homecoming!

Join us for this special gathering.

- All alumni and students from RHEMA Bible Training Centers *around the world* are invited.
- A reunion luncheon will be held for the classes of 1979, 1989, and 1999.
- Come home to a glorious celebration for the entire RHEMA family!

Register today! We'll see you there!

www.rhema.org/homecoming

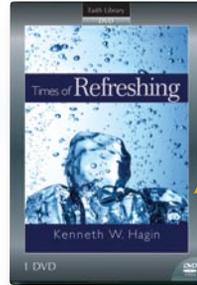
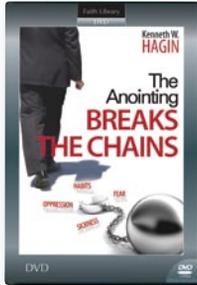


NEW!
Special 30% Discount for Alumni on these items!
Special prices expire June 1, 2009.

DVD TEACHINGS

The Anointing Breaks the Chains—Kenneth W. Hagin
\$14.95 reg./ **\$11.95 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11J

Times of Refreshing—Kenneth W. Hagin
\$14.95 reg./ **\$11.95 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11K



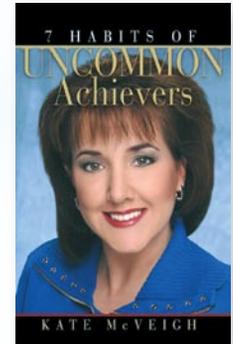
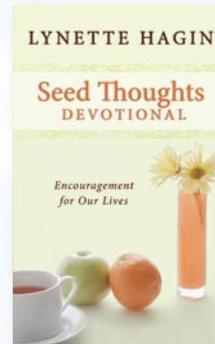
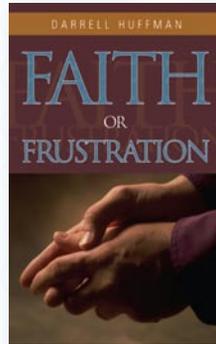
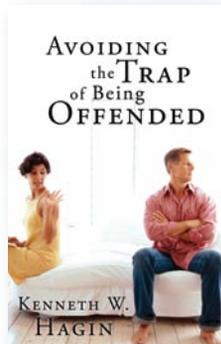
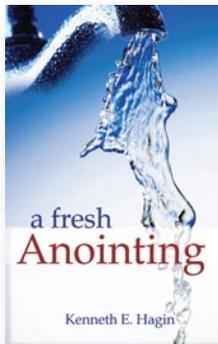
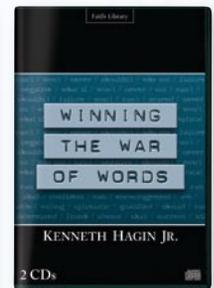
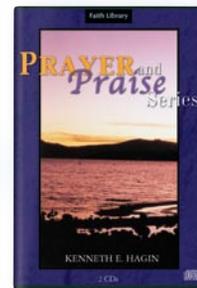
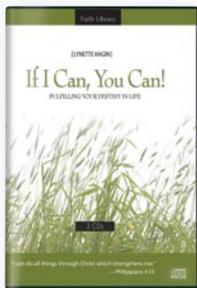
CD TEACHINGS

If I Can, You Can—Lynette Hagin
(3 CDs) \$21.00 reg./ **\$16.80 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11F

The Prayer and Praise Series—Kenneth E. Hagin
(2 CDs) \$14.00 reg./ **\$11.20 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11G

Stand Fast! in the Storms of Life—Kenneth W. Hagin
(3 CDs) \$21.00 reg./ **\$16.80 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11H

Winning the War of Words—Kenneth W. Hagin
(2 CDs) \$14.00 reg./ **\$11.20 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11I



BOOKS

A Fresh Anointing—Kenneth E. Hagin
(paperback) \$9.95 reg./ **\$7.95 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11C

Avoiding the Trap of Being Offended—Kenneth W. Hagin
(paperback) \$13.95 reg./ **\$11.15 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11A

Faith or Frustration—Darrell Huffman
(paperback) \$9.95 reg./ **\$7.95 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11E

Seed Thoughts Devotional—Lynette Hagin
(hardback) \$16.95 reg./ **\$13.55 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11B

7 Habits of Uncommon Achievers—Kate McVeigh
(paperback) \$9.95 reg./ **\$7.95 discount***
Offer# KIT08CN11D

***Special prices expire June 1, 2009.**

To order, visit www.rhema.org/bookstore, call **1-888-28-FAITH** (1-888-283-2484), or mail the enclosed envelope.

Note: These prices are not available at the RHEMA Bible Church Bookstore. Listed prices do not include shipping and handling.

We asked the questions.
Your fellow grads shared their answers.

Q. *If you could do it all over again, what would you do differently?*

A. "I wouldn't put people in leadership so fast. I'd let them do the work without the title first, and only put them in charge of a ministry as the Holy Spirit leads."
—Tony Finley

"I would have taken more time to be healthy. At first I allowed the passion of the call to push me beyond the limits of wisdom. We believe in divine healing, but maintaining divine health should be a high priority."
—Ken Taylor

"I would ask the advice of more seasoned ministers—and I'd listen to them! I also wouldn't worry. God was always faithful. Worrying was a big waste of time, and it robbed me of living in days of peace and joy."
—Beth Webb

"I would trust people more and make ministry more about the people and less about me. I would not have tried to handle so much of the burden of ministry alone."
—Stan Saunders

Q. *Throughout your ministry experience, what has caught you by surprise?*

A. "That most of my problems were natural and not spiritual. Growing a church has more to do with 'natural' decisions and strategic planning than with a tangible move of God in the services."
—John Nuzzo

"It surprised me that those you do the most for are often the ones who turn against you first. I knew troubles happen in every church. The surprise was who they came from."
—Reggie Knowles

"The amount of time it takes to truly effect change, create momentum, and sustain it in the hearts of people."
—Tommy Figart

"How fragile a church seems to be. Loyalty to a congregation does not seem to be very deep in some people. Their attitude seems to be 'what is in it for me?' rather than 'how can I serve this congregation?'"
—Sam Smucker

"The amount of spiritual and emotional drain ministry has on the body. I knew nothing of 'pacing' myself and I thought it would be like jobs I had in the secular world. Although I enjoy every moment, ministry is W.O.R.K!"
—Marcus Avalos

Q. *What has been your most troublesome thing and how did you overcome?*

A. "Persevering when people disappoint you or turn against you. I have learned to overcome these trials by (1) asking myself, 'What is my motive for serving people?'; (2) remembering that it's not always my fault. God is the perfect Father, yet Adam and Eve rebelled. Jesus was the perfect leader, yet He had frustration with His disciples and even was betrayed; and (3) walking by faith, not by sight!"
—Timothy Jerry

"Removing people from leadership positions. It puts them in position to get offended. I cast the care on the Lord and trust Him to work it out. I overcame in this area by loving the people unconditionally and by consistently teaching and pastoring according to what God wants, not what people want—ministering out of the overflow of my personal walk with Him."
—Tony Finley

"My own limited thinking and humanity. To overcome I aim to remain teachable; to realize everyone is not like me and appreciate the differences; to continually develop a Spirit-dominated life; and to keep a good sense of humor and not take myself too seriously!"
—Kevin Cooley

"When people leave the church and you can't tell your side of the story. Then people question your leadership. How to overcome? Pray! And let your congregation know you will be faithful to them for years to come."
—Joe Hernandez

"Working under someone in ministry and seeing things you do not agree with. I tried to overcome by keeping a servant's heart and remaining submissive in my role, being a blessing to people and honoring the Lord."
—S.T.

"My lack of personal ability to do what God has called me to do. By nature I am a self-reliant and driven person, but natural ability alone will always end or spiral into a works-based mentality. I'm overcoming it by learning to rely on God where my understanding and ability fall short. Without Him, I can do nothing."
—Tommy Figart

Jesus will not say, "Well done thou good and successful servant" . . . it is "well done thou good and faithful servant." Be faithful in what God has called you to do.
—Reggie Knowles

Q. *If a young person asked you, what is the most valuable lesson or principle you've learned in your years of ministry, what would you tell them?*

A. "Two things: (1) stay prayed up all the time; and (2) there's a difference between leaders and managers. Managers maintain the churches they have, while leaders grow and keep things moving forward."
—Tony Ramirez

"Learn the value of serving another ministry. I recommend working with children and youth, because it's behind the scenes and you'll get more ministry opportunity than you can handle. God will promote you if you're faithful."

—Jody Hagerty

"Love God; love people. It has to be in your DNA."
—Jerry Stone

"You can't allow your self-worth to be based upon your function or performance in the ministry. Who you are in Christ is so much more important than what you do in the Body of Christ!"
—Ken Taylor

"(1) People are not the enemy; (2) the hardest places were the best places—every trial brought the greatest opportunity for personal spiritual growth; and (3) continue putting one foot in front of the other, never taking your eyes off Him, no matter what people think about you or say about you, your motives, or your ministry."
—Charlotte Rahrig

"Success is based on whether you are doing what God called you to do, not how you compare to others."
—Chad Gonzales

"(1) Don't try to 'do ministry' in your own ability. Tap into God's supernatural ability. If He has called you He will equip and resource you. (2) Don't put things off until tomorrow. It will never be convenient and you'll never have the "extra" money, so step out in faith. (3) Find a confidant outside of the church you serve—someone in ministry with whom you can share your thoughts, feelings, triumphs, and challenges. Ministry can be lonely, and you'll need this person in your life."
—Richard Pilger

"(1) Value the Word over a word, and (2) you *can* afford to walk in love."
—Kevin Cooley

Different is not wrong; it is merely different. Be open to different ideas. Remember, you can always learn something. Don't act like you know it all. Give people the right to correct you, share ideas, and show you new things and methods. Then treat them with respect and thank them. Pray over the idea and do what God says to do.
—George and Karen Bean

Christianity is not a democracy where we get to vote on obeying His will. We are a part of a kingdom . . . we have a king . . . He gives us missions, and we obey. . .
—Marcus Avalos

Q. *What principles or habits have worked well for you over the years?*

A. "Learning to become numb to both criticism and praise. Ultimately the only thing that matters is that I keep my heart pure (before God)."
—Ken Taylor

"Being punctual in everything. When people saw that we kept our word, they became people of their word."
—Larry Willige

"Enjoying quality relationships with people who are filled with the Word—people I can call, pray with, ask advice of, and so forth. I can't stress enough how vital it is to keep a balanced perspective."
—Lynda Bussing-Puff

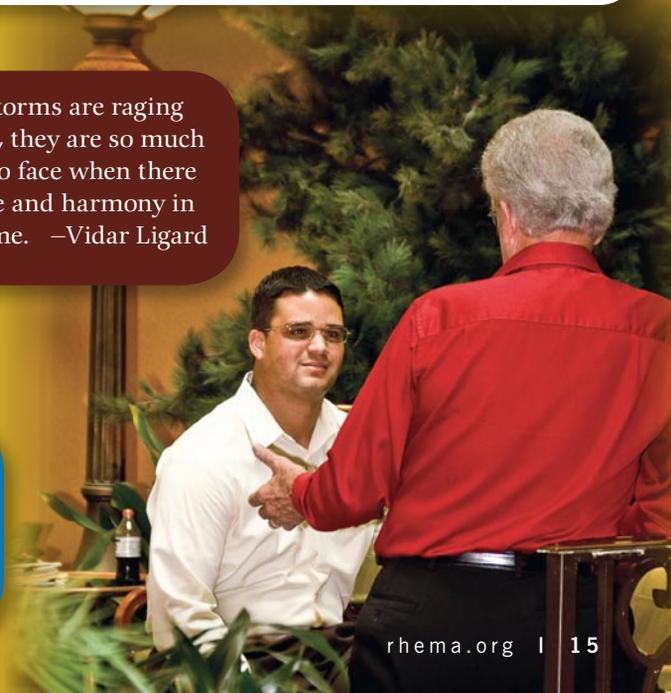
"Always staying positive . . . we must be what we want to see. Also, ministering to the people who are there, not the ones who don't come that day."
—Dan Leiker

"Controlling my schedule so I can stay full in my personal relationship with God."
—Tony Finley

"Reading books on leadership. Hanging out with people who challenge the way I think. Getting into the Word daily."
—Steven Jones

"My wife knows where I am 24/7. A financial accountability system in place at church that reduces the possibility of the misuse of money. I study the Word almost every day to keep the reservoir full. I read a variety of other books to glean the wisdom of others. I don't try to copy other ministries. I force myself to think younger, so we can always reach the emerging generation. I ask many questions (of staff, advisers in the congregation, other preachers, professionals, and so forth) and listen to their answers (Proverbs 11:14; 15:22)."
—Stan Saunders

If the storms are raging outside, they are so much easier to face when there is peace and harmony in the home. —Vidar Ligard





blog (bläg/):
a journal written by one or more contributors, often about a particular topic with the latest news and ideas.

“The barriers
you break
are not just
for you—
they’re
for the
generations
after you.”

—Mark Hankins

▶ Alumni, Let’s Exchange Ideas!

The Alumni Blog . . . RHEMA Alumni sharing what works, reaching the world with the message of faith! Send us your great ideas (along with your name, phone number, and photos) to rmai@rhema.org.

log ideas and outreaches

▶ Jerry and Melanie Stone ('87, '88) say ...



Reach out to families. Two or three times a year we'll target an area of our city and have a family movie night. We find a public place—maybe a grassy knoll in a business park, or we'll rent a community building or apartment clubhouse. We canvas the area with flyers two weeks in advance, mainly targeting the kids, inviting people to a free family night with a movie, games, and free food, sponsored by our church. That night we'll have outside games for the kids and serve free hot dogs, burgers, and soda pop, and then start the movie when it gets dark. We give away free minibooks and have our church banners and literature set up for people who are interested. Then we'll go back to that area a couple of months later and do something else to bless them.



About ... Jerry and Melanie Stone pastor Life Church Charlotte in Charlotte, North Carolina. www.LifeChurchCharlotte.org

▶ Paul ('85, '86) and Samantha ('81, '82) Roach say ...



Bless people at Christmas. We run a program called “The Blessing Basket.” The first year we gave 100 baskets with a full Christmas meal to those in need. Now 12 years later this outreach has expanded to several other towns in our county—giving food, gifts, blankets, toiletries, and more. The whole town gets involved in donating, including the schools, fire and police departments, and other churches. The program has expanded to include shut-ins and the elderly, and last year more than 1,000 families were blessed.

About ... Paul and Samantha Roach pastor Faith Family Church in El Reno, Oklahoma, and also serve as RMAI District Directors. www.FaithFamilyChurchInc.com

▶ Dwight Collins ('95, '96) says ...

Get help with evangelism. We had the RHEMA Bible Church Street Evangelism Team from Broken Arrow come to our church. They conducted four evangelism training classes and then led church groups into the community to practice and apply what they learned. In the 11 years since we've founded this church, there has never been such excitement about winning souls for Jesus! I'm very excited about the results and would strongly recommend this team from RHEMA to any church interested in improving their ability to evangelize and increase the Kingdom of Jesus Christ! (Contact RHEMA Bible Church Evangelism Team at RBCoffice@RHEMA.org.)



About ... Dwight and Jean Collins pastor Risen Christ Family Church in Duncanville, Texas. www.RisenChristFamily.org

▶ Mont Herdman ('86) says ...

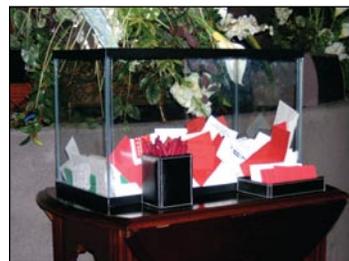
Make a difference in your community. We have an inner city church in a low income area that used to have gangs and drive-by shootings regularly. We wanted to get kids off the street and get them into church, so we went to schools to ask how we could help. We started by getting involved with the school programs. Now we run Shining Light Day Care which ministers to about 300 to 350 preschoolers per day, plus we have an after-school program, and are working with high school students, getting them into college, etc. When a dog track opened nearby, we offered a discount to their employees for day care. We don't have drive-by shootings anymore—people know we're trying to help kids. The lives of the kids are changing, and their families are coming to church. People used to tell us we needed to move out of this area, but this is where our church is called to be a help.

About ... Mont and Stephanie Herdman pastor Shining Light Celebration Church in Charleston, West Virginia.



▶ Mike and Jaida Campbell ('90, '91) say ...

Believe together for salvations. Early in 2008 we purchased a \$10 fish tank at Wal-Mart and put it on the platform along with pens and strips of white paper and red paper. Congregation members believe God for someone to get saved, write that person's name on a strip of white paper, and put it into the fish tank. Occasionally during services we'll pray as a congregation for the names in the tank. When a person gets saved, the



congregation member writes that name on a *red* strip of paper and puts it in the tank. As more and more people get saved, everyone can see it. This keeps soul winning before the whole congregation and helps them keep believing together.

About ... Mike and Jaida Campbell pastor Trinity Assembly of God in Cookeville, Tennessee. www.TrinityAlgood.com

▶ Cal Langford ('77) says ...

Help the needy. Our church has a program called "Shield of David." When a person calls us with a need for food, utility payments, and so forth, we ask if we can send someone to their house to talk with them. While we're there we can assess their need. Then in addition to meeting that need (we don't give them money, but we go shopping with them or send them to our food pantry), we look for other needs around their home—maybe leaky pipes or a broken air conditioner. If we find those, we send a team to fix the problems and we pay for all the repairs. We have a Shield of David fund financed by offerings from the church and donations from other people in the community.



About ... Cal and Nita Langford pastor Foundation Life Fellowship in New Bern, North Carolina.

▶ Randy and Vickie ('03, '04) Lynn say ...

Raise up your own musicians. When we grew frustrated over the lack of musicians in the church, the Lord directed us to do something about it. For one hour on Sunday afternoons, our band members and others give lessons for anyone interested in playing for praise and worship. In different rooms we have lessons for bass guitar, drums, piano, organ, and guitar. We teach current songs as well as hymns. Classes are open to all ages, but we have a lot of kids who come. The lessons have really spurred growth in our praise and worship at the church.



About ... Randy and Vickie Lynn pastor Praise Center Ministries in Sapulpa, Oklahoma. www.PraiseCenterMinistries.org

▶ Rick Sharkey ('79) says ...



Get everyone to church. We have designated the first Sunday in October as "100 percent Sunday." Well in advance we announce to everyone that this is the Sunday when everyone makes it to church (as at Easter or Christmas). We advertise it and made it a special occasion for everyone attending (much like having a guest speaker or a barbecue) and the results have been incredible.

About ... Rick and Linda Sharkey pastor Spokane Christian Center in Spokane, Washington, and also serve as RMAI District Directors. www.SpokaneChristianCenter.org

▶ Gary Hayhurst ('76) says ...

Help your members stay informed. We send church announcements out every week or so to everyone in the church who has e-mail and wants to receive them. This also enables us to remind people about special events right before they happen. First, it's just another way of announcing things (since not everyone pays attention during church announcements!), and second, it's another way to touch people's lives when they're not in church and remind them that we're here for them. It's been an effective way of staying in touch and keeping people informed.

About ... Gary and Debbie Hayhurst pastor Faith Christian Family Church in Eureka Springs, Arkansas. www.FaithChristianFamilyChurch.com

▶ Jane McDonnough ('79, '80) says ...

Keep your helps ministers fired up. Forty minutes before Sunday morning service we have what we call "Huddle Up" in the main sanctuary. All the workers from every department come—greeters, children's workers, ushers, and so forth. If these ministries met by themselves they would be small groups, but together we make a crowd and it generates excitement. We start by "sounding off," with everyone giving their name and place of service for that morning. Then I give a quick word of encouragement, we pray together, and we end by stating the church's mission for the year and cheering. It has pumped everyone up, and they are on time to serve. Many come early! It's been a very positive and unifying thing.

About ... Jane McDonnough is pastor of Faith Life Church in Tampa Bay, Florida. www.FLCTampa.org

What's working
in your church
or ministry?
Tell us about it!

Send your name, phone number,
details, and photos to
rmai@rhema.org.

Great Web Sites:

Children's Ministry

Charge up your kids camp. Countless ideas for activities, games, skits, songs, team-building, and stories, plus resources, vendors, and more. Check out www.UltimateCampResource.com.

Recruit volunteers. Check out this DVD from Group Publishing that you can use for church announcements. "We Want You"—Easy Recruiting Commercials for Children's Ministry."
www.GroupPublishing.com



Youth Ministry

All about youth ministry. This Web site has resources, blogs, videos, ideas, job listings, curriculum, podcasts, and more. For nearly 40 years Youth Specialties has worked alongside Christian youth workers from just about every denomination and youth-serving organization all around the world. www.YouthSpecialties.com

Fresh ideas. Books of interactive material on everything from illustrations, stories, and Bible study topics to skits, service projects, retreats, and special holiday events.
<http://www.parable.com/HomeWord/group.Fresh-Ideas.780.htm>

Churches

Church buildings. Simple, affordable, innovative answers to church buildings and expansion programs, especially for smaller churches who want to own their own building instead of rent. Designed to seat 150 to 250 people. This company is run by RHEMA graduate Bill Barbee ('86, '87). www.ChurchBuildingSolutions.com

Outreach tools. Here's a leading provider of church communication and outreach tools to help you establish your members and reach more people for Christ. Everything from media and books to study guides, enrichment programs, and training tools.
www.outreach.com

Free give-away Gospels. The Pocket Testament League has been motivating and equipping Christians to read, carry, and share the Word of God for more than 114 years. Check out their Web site to obtain free copies of their pocket testaments to give away, and equip your church members to get serious about sharing their faith.
www.PocketPower.org

Handling conflict. A comprehensive approach to building a culture of peace in your church. Equipping and assisting Christians and their churches to respond to conflict biblically. www.peacemaker.net

Ministers

Give your messages some motion. Almost 10,000 video sermon illustrations on countless topics. Countdowns, advertisements, and more. Also in Spanish.
www.SermonSpice.com

Resources for ministers. Everything from evangelism, training leaders, and managing finances to family matters, theology, current events, and more on this ministry Web site—Christianity Today Library. www.CTLibrary.com Cost is \$9.95 per month and well worth it. It draws from several cutting-edge publications and also includes related sites for Bible, reference, and sermon illustrations. A gold mine of information for those in ministry. Check it out for free.



Great Reads:

Secrets of Staying Power

by Kevin A. Miller

This book shares keys to endurance in ministry—including occupational hazards, using your gifts, receiving affirmation, rest, and what to do in down times.

Making the Most of Mistakes

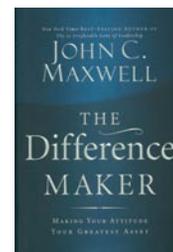
by James D. Berkley

Includes chapters on facing failures, damage control, counsel for recovery, how to restore ministry, and winning victory out of defeat.

The Difference Maker: Making Your Attitude Your Greatest Asset

by John Maxwell

Find out what a good attitude can do for you, and take a look at five big attitude obstacles.



Ordering Your Private World

by Gordon MacDonald

"Driven people are usually too busy for the pursuit of ordinary relationships in marriage, family, or friendship . . . not to speak of one with God." This book looks at how to live life from the inside out, cultivating the inner victory necessary for public effectiveness.

Ministry Momentum

by Wayne Schmidt

As a spiritual leader you cannot create a movement of God's Spirit . . . nor can you control it. But you can build an atmosphere conducive to spiritual momentum. Spiritual leaders have the responsibility to sense where God is leading and mobilize His people to follow.

ALUMNI BLOG

Where Are They Now?

1980

Harold Rosensteel ('80) and his wife, Barbara, have pastored several churches since they graduated—most recently, Word of Life Family Church in Greentop, Missouri. They are currently retired and living in Three Springs, Pennsylvania, where Harold fills in for pastors as his health allows.



Norman and Peggy Nale (both '80) began ministry in 1981 by holding church services in nursing homes. Over the years they have trained literally hundreds of people for ministry

and seen thousands of people saved. Norman has served as an associate pastor and has also written a book, *The Interesting Life of Norman Nale: When He Was 10, He Saved His Dad's Life*. The Nales live in Yorktown, Indiana.

1983

Bruce Conover ('82, '83) and his wife, Marianne, celebrated the grand opening of their new multipurpose



church building September 7–10, 2008. This is the first building on their newly developed 18-acre church lot outside Berthoud, Colorado. They are the founding pastors of Berthoud Family Church, which started in 1984.

www.BerthoudFamilyChurch.org

1984



Tony and Debi Palmisano (both '84) are celebrating their 17th year of pastoring in the Fort Lauderdale, Florida, area. They pastor Living Word Community Church. www.mylwcc.com

1987



Kevin ('86, '87) and Areni ('97, '98) Castro announce the birth of their second son, Josiah Michael, on April 5, 2008, in Nagpur, India. He weighed 8 pounds and measured 20 inches long. He joins big brother Jay who was born March 15, 2007. The Castros are full-time missionaries in Nagpur, where—in addition to other ministry—they publish and distribute Bible-based literature throughout the Indian subcontinent. They have four offices in India. www.LivingWordIntl.org

1988

Andrew and Cathy Rutherford (both '87, '88) pioneered Family Life Church in Port St. Joe, Florida, in 1999, and 2009 will mark their 10th anniversary there as pastors. They have two children, James and Bethany.



1992

Stephanie Jordan ('91, '92) is a board-certified Chaplain with the Association of Professional Chaplains and has worked as a hospital chaplain for eight years at St. Anthony Memorial Health Center, Michigan City, Indiana. She also serves as associate pastor for Roderick Hoffman at River of Life Church in Michigan City. She earned a Doctorate of Ministry Degree from United Theological Seminary in Trotwood, Ohio.



1994

Neal Donop ('93, '94) is an RMAI member who has been living and working in Beijing, China, since 1995. He taught English in a university for four years and is now involved in a company that manufactures arts and crafts products. Neal also is involved in community outreach, including educational, elderly, and orphan programs. Neal helped start the New Day Learning Center, a full-time English-language program that enables him to reach college-age students. Anyone interested in teaching or working in China is welcome to contact Neal about opportunities through educational, business, and charitable activities. NealDonop@gmail.com





Trista Penhey ('93, '94) was born in Australia and returned there after 15 years in the U.S. She now works as personal assistant for **Tony ('82, '83) and Patsy ('77) Cameneti**, RHEMA Directors for Southeast Asia and the South Pacific. Trista's

job includes numerous and various ministry activities, and she loves being back in Australia near family and friends.

1995

Josef Sjoberg ('93, '95) and his wife, Maria, announce the birth of their fourth



son, Daniel. He joins big brothers Emmanuel, Nathanael, and Samuel. The Sjobergs live in Mullhyttan, Sweden, where they are involved in a local church and they both work with Gospel Media, a Christian publishing house. The Sjobergs also take regular mission trips to Pakistan, Indonesia, and other countries.

1997



Matthew ('96, '97) and Olga ('97, '98) Cent have pioneered churches in Siberia and Germany. Every summer they take their ship, "Siberian Fisherman," by

river to Omsk to bring the Good News of Jesus to the people of Siberia. They have three sons and serve as pastors of World Outreach Church in Wiesbaden, Germany. www.hwoc.de

1998

Leonard Durrett ('97, '98) is celebrating 10 years in the ministry. He is the founder of Tsunami Ministries and has been traveling to Central America, South America, and Cuba teaching, preaching, and laying hands on the sick.

www.TsunamiMinistries.org

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

Ellie Davidian ('97, '98)

Ellie Davidian was born and raised a devout Shiite Muslim in Iran. She experienced the revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini and has personally seen friends and loved ones tortured and murdered by the Iranian regime.



Ellie came to the U.S. in the early '90s and in 1994 was born again. In 1997 she married Pastor **Sourik Davidian ('83)**, who wasn't raised in Islam but also has a heart to reach Muslims with the Gospel.

Presently the Davidians conduct "Unveiling Islam" seminars to help the Body of Christ understand the spirit of Islam and learn how to minister effectively to Muslims. They recently started Living Hope Church in Mission Viejo, California.



Ellie takes part in television programs that broadcast the Gospel in Farsi by satellite to Iran, the rest of the Middle East, Europe, and around the world. The Davidians have seen many signs and wonders, and many Muslims have come to know Jesus through their ministry.

www.HeSetsFree.org

1999

Karie (Petersen '98, '99) Franks was recently crowned the winner in the first "Fit for a Cause" training and education fitness contest. She lost over 47 pounds and won \$1,500 for her cause, Experience Church Missions Group. Karie and her husband, **Brian ('99, '00)**, are the Missions and Life Group pastors at Experience Church in Puyallup, Washington. They have three children.

www.KarieFranks.WordPress.com



John Withington ('98, '99) has been living in India as a full-time missionary since 2000, traveling and preaching all over the country. In December 2007 he married Naomi, who is from Manipur, India. They are starting an orphanage—Home of Hope—in northeast India and are continuing their ministry of preaching God's Word, helping the needy, and supporting others. john.withington@yahoo.com

2000

Theresa Heard ('99, '00) has worked for Kenneth Hagin Ministries for nine years, and is currently Production Manager of the Broadcast Media Department. She has just authored her first book.



Rob and Linda Horne (both '99, '00) pioneered Living Word Family Church in Cody, Wyoming, in November. [Cody is located east of Yellowstone National Park.] The church meets at the Holiday Inn on Sunday mornings and is introducing tourists and residents to the *true* "Old Faithful."

www.lwfccody.org

2001



Owen ('00, '01) and Mary (Pries '05) Adams are missionaries in India. They have completed courses in Hindi and travel out of Delhi, going from city to city holding Bible training sessions and ministering all over the country in home Bible studies and churches.
OwenAndMaryAdams@yahoo.com

Adam ('00, '01) and Julie ('01, '02) Culp travel worldwide evangelizing young people, helping with projects to care for their needs, and teaching others how best to serve them. Their goal is to evangelize the nations through children and youth. Adam recently returned home from a trip to Myanmar (Burma). The Culpes have four children. www.forHISglorytothenations.com

John Thomas Boykin III ('00, '01) completed his Bachelor of Science degree in Leadership and Ministry Preparation in May of 2004. He is currently working on his Master's degree in New Testament and eventually plans to obtain a doctorate in Christian Counseling.



2004



Yolanda Vargas Huerta ('03, '04) has been doing missionary work in South Korea, sharing the Gospel by teaching English cooking classes to children. She is also involved in street evangelism and has seen many people come to the Lord.

Stephanie (DuBois '01, '04) Wilson and her husband, Jeff, announce the birth of their daughter, Abigail Nora, on November 8, 2007. She weighed 7 pounds, 7 ounces and was 20 and one-quarter inches long. The Wilsons live in Tulsa, Oklahoma. **Kirk DuBois ('90, '91)** and his wife, Pat, are the proud grandparents. Kirk is an instructor at RBTC.



2006

Steve ('02, '06) and Teri (Renko, '02) Zuppo were married on October 27, 2007, at their home church, Believers Christian Fellowship in Warren, Ohio, by **Pastor Joe Cameneti ('82, '83)**. They currently live in Girard, Ohio, and they are leaders of the young adult ministry at the church.



Matthew and Donna Farmer (both '05, '06) are pleased to announce the birth of their first child, Eric David, on March 10, 2008. The Farmers now live in Cleveland, Tennessee, and serve as assistant pastors at Cleveland Christian Fellowship for **Pastor Mark Strickland ('79)**. www.ClevelandChristianFellowship.com

2007

Andrew and Melissa (Fulson) Judd (both '06, '07) were married in Canada on October 13, 2007. They are currently living and working in New Zealand.



Phillip ('06, '07) and Kellie (Jones '04, '05) Hagedorn were married on May 10, 2008 at a historical church in Tulsa, Oklahoma. **Rev. Jerry Piker ('83, '84)** performed the ceremony and Kellie's father, **Rev. Doug Jones ('75)** had a dance-off with Phillip at the reception (to see it, type in www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ye409-ft8k0 or go to www.youtube.com and type in *father/son dance off*—it's on top).



2008

Nicholas and Emily (Van Sickler)

Maxson (both '07, '08) were married on January 27, 2008, in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma.

Emily is the daughter of **Mark and Lynn Van Sickler (both '98, '99)** and Nicholas is the son of **James and Lorie Maxson (both '02, '03)**. The families have known each other for years.



Jason Poncia ('07, '08) is currently serving on the mission field in Peru. He has been traveling to different cities and villages preaching, building, doing street ministry, laying hands on the sick, leading short-term missions groups, and ministering in prisons. <http://jasonponcia.com>

IN MEMORY OF:



Phil Davis 1937–2008

Phil Davis was born October 30, 1937, in Columbus, Ohio. He studied at Ohio State University and was a U.S. Navy veteran. In 1980 he and his wife, Angie, moved to Tulsa to become the first Directors of RHEMA Student Housing, and

in 1983 they became part-time RBTC instructors, teaching Home Missions. They led many student missions trips to Indian reservations over the years, and they were living and working on the Duck Valley Reservation in Owyhee, Nevada, when Phil passed away. He is survived by Angie; four children: Clinton, Laura, Ethan, and Daniel; and four grandchildren. Memorial contributions may be made to Phillip Davis Ministries, P.O. Box 325, Owyhee, NV 89832.

HOMEGOINGS

- '80..... Madge Lee BarrettJuly 7, 2008
- '81..... Dr. Bertram Gaines*October 2007
- '81, '82..... Paul Milbee*May 27, 2008
- '82, '83..... Charles Koch*August 11, 2008
- '84, '85..... Willie Peterson.....April 5, 2008
- '84, '85..... Gloria MellottJune 14, 2008
- '85, '86..... Glenn Reese.....August 17, 2008
- '89, '90..... Phil Davis.....September 13, 2008
- '92, '93..... Melba Rentschler.....August 2008
- '98..... Ann Heemsbergen.....August 2008
- '98, '99..... Yvette VanNameeApril 14, 2008
- '06, '07..... Stephanie Joy TurnerFebruary 19, 2008

*RMAI members

We Want to Hear From You!

If you've had a wedding, a new baby, something exciting happen in life or ministry, or just want to update fellow alumni about your life, write rmai@rhema.org and let us know!

PLEASE help us make the most of your updates and photos by following these tips.

Tips for writing to us:

- Look at past issues and see what others have sent us.
- Tell us where you live, what you're doing in life or ministry, and how long you've been doing it.
- Remember to include your spouse's and children's names.

Tips for sending photos:

- Send close-up shots with faces close together, as in this example. →



- For baby pictures, please include Mom and Dad too. (Your fellow alumni want to see you as well as your baby!) →



- *Digital Photos:* Send only sharp, good quality photos with high resolution—300 pixels/inch on your computer or digital camera. (If you are unsure of what pixels/inch your camera gives you, set your picture size to its highest resolution and largest file size; then we can adjust accordingly.) **Low-resolution photos used for Internet sites and e-mail do not work well for print magazines like Connections.** ↓



Low resolution photo



High resolution photo

Send your updates and photos to us at
rmai@rhema.org

January 4–7, 2009

Shining Light Bible Church

8500 Fruitville Rd, Sarasota, FL 34240
(941) 366-9903

www.shininglight.org

Pastors Stephen and Jennifer Schlabach

Service Times: Sunday 7:00 p.m.

Monday–Wednesday 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

March 22–25, 2009

Destiny World Outreach Center

101 N. W.S. Young Dr., Killeen, TX 76543
(254) 690-0856

www.destinywoc.com

Pastors Chad and Marla Rowe

Service Times: Sunday 7:00 p.m.

Monday–Wednesday 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

May 17–20, 2009

Word of Life Christian Center

3520 N. Buffalo Drive, Las Vegas, NV 89129
(702) 645-1990

www.wordoflifelasvegas.com

Pastors David and Vicki Shearin

Service Times: Sunday 6:30 p.m.

Monday–Wednesday 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS on the RHEMA campus
in Broken Arrow, Oklahoma

For more information or to register for any of these events, visit
www.rhema.org/events or call 1-888-28-FAITH (1-888-283-2484).



• **Winter Bible Seminar & Worldwide Homecoming**
February 15–20, 2009



• **RHEMA College Weekend**
April 17–19, 2009



• **Ministers, Leadership, and Helps Conference**
June 8–11, 2009



• **Campmeeting**
July 19–25, 2009

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