"I sense the Lord saying that the time has come for His word of truth to be spoken in a way that exposes the confusion and falsehoods choking the life of God’s people so that they may turn profoundly to Him, to be strengthened, cleansed, and empowered for mission. I hear God asking me to take a part in that work."

Ralph’s letter to 51 potential supporters, June, 1980
The Call—Ralph Martin

It’s been an amazing 35 years! Things continue to unfold so fast that it’s hard to take time to reflect on what’s happened. Where will it all end? Well, we know the answer to that question! It will all end when our glorious Lord Jesus Christ will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead. Hopefully, we will all hear those blessed words, “Well done good and faithful servant!”

Renewal Ministries officially started in June, 1980. Anne and I and our four children (two were born later!) had just returned to Ann Arbor, Michigan after four years of life and service in Brussels, Belgium. We had moved there at the invitation of Cardinal Suenens, Archbishop of Malines-Brussels, who was one of the four moderators of Vatican II.

The seeds for the ministry were sown a few months earlier when I was in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area to deliver five talks on The Crisis of Truth. These talks resonated so deeply with the listeners (Among them was Peter Herbeck, then a seminarian. I’ll let Peter tell you about that first encounter.) that audio tapes were produced and widely distributed. The talks were then videotaped and used all over North America to conduct Crisis of Truth weekends.

Soon, I published a book entitled A Crisis of Truth: The Attack on Faith, Morality and Mission in the Catholic Church. It was widely distributed and made a significant impact. Still to this day, people tell me that reading that book saved their vocation, saved their souls, or kept them from the confusion in faith and morality that wrecked many people’s lives. Thanks be to God!

The inspiration for this message came while we lived in Belgium. There, I encountered many theological currents and was able to survey the views of Catholics in different parts of the world. I became increasingly concerned about the attack on faith, morality and mission in the Church.

When we returned to Michigan, I wrote a letter to a small group of friends asking if they would be interested in supporting a ministry dedicated to renewal in the Catholic Church. With their support, Renewal Ministries was born. My book, A Crisis of Truth, prompted an invitation from Mother Angelica to tape a series of interviews with her on this topic. This led to the development of The Choices We Face, a weekly television program that has run continuously for more than 30 years.

A Lifechanging Encounter

by Peter Herbeck

The first time I saw Ralph was at the National Catholic Charismatic Conference at the University of Notre Dame in August 1978. We didn’t meet there, but the message he proclaimed was like a laser that cut right to my heart. Following that weekend, I bought as many of Ralph’s books and tapes as I could find. A month after the conference, I entered St. John Vianney College Seminary at the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minnesota and took all that material with me. During the next couple of years, a few of my classmates and I devoured nearly everything Ralph was producing.

In 1981, to my great surprise, Ralph came to Minneapolis to launch the first of a long series of important conferences entitled, The Crisis of Truth. I recruited several other seminarians to join me for the conference. It was life changing for all of us. As Ralph unpacked the crisis of truth in the Church, he identified how that crisis was infecting seminaries around the world. We were amazed at how accurate the assessment was of our own experience. After one of the sessions, I decided to introduce myself to Ralph, to thank him and to let him know that his assessment was right on.

All of us came away from the conference inspired and invigorated. So much so that four of us decided to fast and pray every Wednesday for Ralph and his ministry. We didn’t tell him that, but we did it for the rest of that school year. Before breaking the fast we would meet and pray for 30 minutes or so for his work. I remember laying on our faces, crying out to God to help Ralph and to put within us the same fire, conviction and clarity. Who would have thought we would end up working together so closely all these years!
In 1983, we introduced FIRE rallies. Fr. Michael Scanlan, Fr. John Bertolucci, Sr. Ann Shields and I traveled all over the world preaching Faith, Intercession, Repentance and Evangelization. The rallies reached more than 430,000 people in 29 states, five Canadian provinces and 14 foreign countries. With the retirement of Fr. John and then Fr. Michael, the FIRE rallies ended in 2004. Our close collaborators in Africa and Eastern Europe still host rallies under the FIRE name.

In 1989, through a series of events, Sr. Ann Shields, Peter Herbeck and I began to pray together. New doors began to open. First, we were invited to Poland. Peter and I accompanied John Wimber, a pioneering evangelical leader who called all Christians to be open to the power of the Spirit, particularly in the area of healing. God acted powerfully. We have been back to Poland a number of times. My most recent visit was in November, 2014. I was invited to lead a retreat for more than 200 priests and gave a lecture at the Catholic University of Lublin, where Karol Wojtyla (Pope St. John Paul II) taught for many years. Quite a few people told me how their lives were changed during those first visits to Poland.

continued on pg 4
The Doors Continued to Open

Beginning with Lithuania, country after country asked us to support them in renewal. Today, we are working in nearly 30 countries to help strengthen the local Church, train lay people, encourage priests and nuns, equip catechists and stand with bishops.

In the early 1990s, my life took an unexpected turn that opened up additional doors for Renewal Ministries. We belonged to charismatic covenant communities that went through a difficult time of purification and pruning. I decided to take one course on ecclesiology at Sacred Heart Major Seminary in Detroit. Fr. Earl Boyea, the academic dean (now Bishop of Lansing, Michigan) encouraged me to pursue a master’s degree in theology.

After I completed the degree, Fr. Michael Scanlan asked me to start teaching in the graduate theology summer sessions at Franciscan University of Steubenville. I have done this for many years. Here, I began teaching about the Catholic mystics. This led to producing a series of CD albums on the various saints and then publishing the book entitled The Fulfillment of All Desire.

Next, Tom Monaghan, the founder of Domino’s Pizza, started a new Catholic college near Ann Arbor and asked me to teach there. The college was later relocated to Florida and is now known as Ave Maria University. In 2004, Sacred Heart Major Seminary asked me to serve as the Director of Graduate Theology Programs in the New Evangelization. They encouraged me to complete the Pontifical degrees needed to hold such a position. So, I moved to Washington, DC for a semester to take three courses on Thomas Aquinas, write my Licentiate thesis and defend the topic in a public lecture. In 2011, I went to Rome for the doctorate – this time Anne could come with me!

I agreed to pursue these additional degrees only if I could focus on the topic I believe is the most significant – namely, what we must do to be saved! Out of this work came the books, Will Many Be Saved? and The Urgency of the New Evangelization. Along with this came unexpected and amazing appointments by Pope Benedict XVI as a Consultor to the Pontifical Council for the New Evangelization in 2011 and as a delegate to the Synod of Bishops on the topic of New Evangelization held in 2012.

Happy Anniversary to Renewal Ministries!! It has been a blessing to watch what God has been doing through your fidelity to his call. Renewal ministries has answered the call of the Church to evangelize the sacramentalized, as well as the unevangelized through the power of the Holy Spirit. Lives have been touched, renewed and transformed by the spoken word, and the witness of love. May the Lord continue to bless all those who are part of Renewal Ministries, open more doors around the world for ministry, raise more dedicated servant-witnesses, and provide the financial support needed!

Bishop Sam Jacobs, Bishop Emeritus of Houma-Thibodaux
So many things to tell!

Another significant event occurred in 1995 when Sr. Ann felt led to begin the daily radio program, *Food for the Journey.* Today, it is one of the most-listened-to Catholic radio programs in North America. Many people are being fed by these programs. In 2005, Peter launched the radio program *Fire on the Earth.* He also became involved with the television program *Crossing the Goal* and the men’s movement.

All of these events are amazing. Even more amazing is the grace of God. He took the three of us and showed us His great holiness, power and love and asked us to make ourselves fully available to Him. God has truly used us – the weak things of the world – so that His power can shine forth more clearly. While we have very different personalities, we are one heart and mind in our love for the Lord and desire to make Him known and loved.

We have never had a five-year plan and do not have one now. We have sought to do only what He tells us, to listen to Him, to stay alert to any course corrections He may ask us to make and to proceed in complete dependence on Him in everything. I’m sure we don’t always get it right but He more than makes up for our mistakes and dullness of mind.

**Faithful Brothers and Sisters**

We could not have done it or continue to do it now without the help and support of many faithful brothers and sisters. Gary Seromik, our office manager, has been with us since he was a college school student. He moved to Belgium with us and continues to this day ensuring that the newsletters are distributed, the bills are paid and the computer programs are running. We have had and have now so many great staff members, so many great country coordinators, so many faithful supporters, who with their prayers and giving, make all this possible.

Some of you have been supporting to Renewal Ministries since 1980. Others have been with us for 30 years, 20 years, 10 years, or five years. Through your generosity and sacrifice, the Lord provides all we need. Whenever I sign thank you letters or review our yearly reports, I truly thank God for you and will continue to do so. I look forward to the heavenly reunion where we will have all the time in the world – the new world, the new heavens and the new earth – to marvel over His goodness and give thanks for each other before the throne.
Some charisms given by the Spirit burst in like an impetuous wind, which seizes people and carries them to new ways of missionary commitment to the radical service of the Gospel.

These words from Pope St. John Paul II vividly express my own thoughts as I reflect upon our experience together in Renewal Ministries and in particular the international dimension of our work these past 35 years.

Pope St. John Paul II’s words are helpful because they describe our exact experience together. From the beginning, we felt the Spirit burst into our lives in a new way. Without any planning, intention or initiative on our part, the Spirit began to gather Ralph, Sr. Ann and me together. He got our attention through a number of very clear, anointed and unsolicited prophetic words that came to us in a short period of time.

One of the first words that came to us went something like this: “Get ready. I am about to sow you into lands around the world. I will begin to open doors for you, and when I do, I want you to go through them and to give others what I have given to you.” In addition, the Lord said clearly that we should be ready to make a way for others who the Lord would send to us, brothers and sisters He would call and anoint to walk with us through the doors He was about to open.

To date, Renewal Ministries HAS PREACHED THE GOSPEL in 84 countries.

In the first place it should be known that if anyone is seeking God, the Beloved is seeking that person much more — St. John of the Cross

Transformation in Christ: The Wisdom of St. John of the Cross is released.

So let’s run on! …Let’s never avoid or run away from difficulty, but follow our leader, Christ Jesus — St. Catherine of Sienna

Growing in Love: The Stages of Spiritual Growth According to Catherine of Sienna, is released.

2001

Peter and Debbie Herbeck with their children and grandchildren in 2014.

70 attend the first School of Evangelization in Ann Arbor, MI.
An Impetuous Wind

After a season of discerning these and other words that came to us at that time, we were convinced it was the Lord. Shortly after we decided to throw our lot in together, the doors began to open. Looking back, I can say it felt as though an “impetuous wind” was breaking into our lives; the Spirit began to carry us to “new ways of missionary commitment to the radical service of the Gospel.”

During the years, we’ve told our story many times. Each time, I am amazed at how concrete, clear and specific the Lord’s word to us was, and how things have unfolded just as He said they would. The first door that opened was in Lithuania. That first year it was our only mission. Since then we have done literally hundreds of missions in 84 countries in Europe, Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East and the South Pacific. During the past 10 years, we’ve averaged 32 missions each year in an average of 25 countries. In 2015, we will conduct 45 separate international missions in nearly 30 countries.

We couldn’t do this work without our dedicated staff, the many volunteers who join us on the missions and the anointed leadership of our country coordinators. All of these brothers and sisters are the living fulfillment of the Lord’s word to us continued on pg 8
that He would unite men and women He had personally called and equipped to join us in this work.

Ralph, Sr. Ann and I have often marveled at the degree of gifting, sacrificial love and zeal our country coordinators have shown throughout these many years. To give you a sense of their work I asked Lloyd and Nancy Greenhaw how many distinct missions they have led in the past 10 years. They replied, “71 missions! God willing, that number will be 77 by the end of this year.”

The Next Generation

Four years ago, we felt led by the Spirit to expand the Renewal Ministries’ mission by creating a way to reach young adults. We invited a small group of men and women in their 20s and 30s on a three-day retreat. From that retreat emerged i.d.9:16, an outreach dedicated to forming young adults into intentional disciples of Jesus Christ.

It’s been a joy to watch the Spirit “seize” a new generation of leadership the way He seized us so many years ago. An important next step in the work of Renewal Ministries is the mentoring and guidance of this emerging generation of leaders who have been called by the Lord to play a role in reaching their generation with the Gospel.

1 Holy Father’s Speech for the World Congress of Ecclesial Movements and New Communities, May 27, 1998.

The Church which “goes forth” is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice. An evangelizing community knows that the Lord has taken the initiative, he has loved us first (cf. 1 Jn 4:19), and therefore we can move forward, boldly take the initiative, go out to others, seek those who have fallen away, stand at the crossroads and welcome the outcast.

— Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium, 24
When Ralph Martin began Renewal Ministries, he did so because he saw a crisis of truth in the Church. He did not set out to start a business but simply to preach clearly, and directly the truth of scripture; to warn people of the effects of continuing to walk in darkness. In obedience to God, he preached to those who would listen and found willing hearts who, with him, sought more earnestly the Truth that is Jesus Christ. Our lives changed — by God’s grace. The message and the mission work of Renewal Ministries continues to expand.

At the same time, our Enemy continues to sow seeds of lies and confusion among the faithful. In some ways he has “succeeded” by promoting social issues which militate against the Gospel, undermining our country’s Constitution and wreaking havoc in countries that are some of the oldest Christian nations.

So, even in 1998, it was not a total surprise when the Lord said this to me at a Renewal Ministries’ staff meeting:

Thus says the Lord God, “Behold I come. I come in Judgment; I come with justice in my hands. I come for those who have spurned my word and scorned my law; I come to speak to those who have rejected my own Beloved Son. The times will be difficult. The earth will be shaken. In that day, I want you to be ready to point the way to me. I

**i.d.9:16**

"i.d. 9:16 has inspired me to preach the Gospel...that's the heart of who I am.”

These are the words of a young adult who has benefited from i.d. 9:16, a ministry launched by Renewal Ministries in 2011. i.d. 9:16 exists to form young adults into intentional disciples of Jesus Christ.

Our initial focus was developing and fine-tuning the model which relies on two strategies: monthly Disciples’ Nights and men’s and women’s Discipleship Groups. We established the first chapter in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Now, more than 100 young adults attend the monthly Disciples’ Nights. In addition, approximately 20 men’s and women’s Discipleship Groups have formed in the Ann Arbor area.

**Spreading Our Wings**

Once we established the first chapter in Ann Arbor, we began exporting the concept to other parishes. There are now seven fledgling chapters in Michigan. We are providing these leaders with the tools and ongoing support they need to build their chapters.

Our goal is to help parishes raise up young adult communities of missionary disciples with a deep ache to spread the Good News.
do not want you to doubt my presence or my care. I act to cause many to return to me. Learn now to rely only on me. Depend not on the things of this world for much will be swept away in that time. Depend only on me. For I wish to use you to bring many back to me. Many will cry out for help, for answers in that time. Bring them to me. You must be firm and confident and sure in me, in my love, in my mercy. I will not fail you. But depend on nothing but me. The time is almost at hand. Be ready. Sink your roots deep in me that in the day of trial you will stand firm and give me glory for I WILL reveal Myself and every knee will bow."

I have kept this prophetic word close in my own thoughts the past 17 years. The time is now URGENT. Many of us have experienced the trials caused when lies collide with the Truth. And more is to come.

In 1998, we (I) did not yet understand the scope of the Enemy’s target — how deep and how wide he would spread his talons of corruption and destruction. No longer is God or even the values of the Christian life “present” (or if they are present, only in a token way) in our political, judicial, educational, economic, and medical systems, and in our social values.

The family has been particularly targeted and there is an ongoing effort to savagely shred the foundation and purpose God gave us for life together on this earth. The foundation of society has experienced an earthquake — and I am afraid a majority of those who attend Church are oblivious or choose to ignore the aftershocks that are soon to be readily apparent. Even an aftershock can kill!

Many years ago, after a rally in Slovenia, Sr. Ann accompanied several people to the town square to evangelize. It was the first time the name of Jesus had been heard publicly in Slovenia in more than 60 years!
God has given us many years of good, solid pastoral teaching, not only through Renewal Ministries, but through some outstanding faithful priests and religious, and through deeply committed and talented lay men and women with whom we have collaborated all over the world. Yet, much has seemingly fallen on deaf ears.

**We need to turn back to God!**

Many in our society do not even know how sin has deafened us to the loving voice of the Father. But, in God’s infinite mercy, He will always welcome us back to Himself if we humble ourselves, as did the Prodigal Son: “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am not worthy to be called your son” (Lk 15:21).

Thus, the need to speak the truth is even more needed now than when we began. First, to teach the truth of who God is and what He asks of us as His sons and daughters; to equip us to live and proclaim that truth to others by the way we live and the choices we make. Secondly, Renewal Ministries exists to proclaim that God is a God of love and mercy to all those who seek Him. Let all of us do all we can to show people that God waits with open arms for those who truly seek His mercy — His forgiveness.

We thank Him for 35 years of faithfulness to us through “thick and thin” and we thank Him for each of you who chose and still choose to “cast your lot” with us to bring the Truth — who is Jesus — to a world captured by darkness. “Shine in us, and be so in us, that all we come in contact with may know God’s presence in our souls. May they look up and see no longer us but only Jesus!” (Paraphrased from a prayer by Cardinal John Newman)

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*Catholic Library Association awarded Sr. Ann the Aggiornamento Award for her outstanding contribution to the renewal of parish and community life.*

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*I expect that you share with all in the Church the grace of Baptism in the Holy Spirit.*

—Pope Francis to the International Charismatic Convocation, 2014
I pray this ministry will continue its work of evangelization and will continue to spread the Word of God. May our Lord bless Renewal Ministries always.

Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto

Congratulations to Renewal Ministries for 35 years of faithful and fruitful ministry! In the past 12 years, I have been privileged to personally experience the profound effects of this ministry in 15 different countries around the world. I can only repeat Mary’s words that “the Lord has done great things!” That is just the tiniest slice of the immense work of renewal that has been accomplished in the past three and a half decades! Only before the Lord, I believe, will we truly understand how many lives have been transformed as a result. Thank you for your generous and self-sacrificial labors that have made all this possible. May the Lord only increase and magnify this critical ministry in the next 35 years!

Fr. Scott McCaig, CC, General Superior, Companions of the Cross

It’s been an amazing 35 years!

We have felt the Spirit leading us and guiding us. We have also experienced God’s great provision.

He has provided dedicated staff members, country coordinators, mission volunteers, board members and most importantly you. Through your prayers and financial support, you participate in this amazing ministry. On behalf of everyone at Renewal Ministries, THANK YOU!

RenewalMinistries.net