



From

Brokenness

to

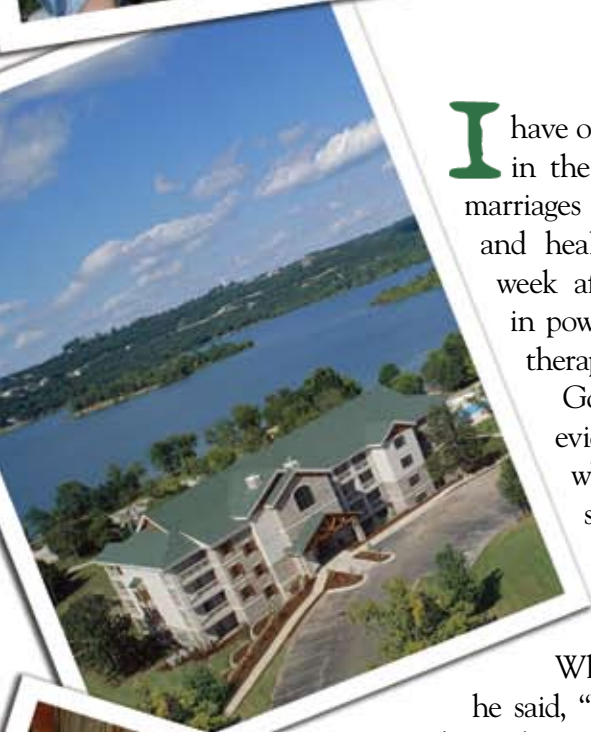
Healing

AGTS alumni bring
healing to broken lives



Healing Broken Marriages

Tricia Cunningham (M.A. 2001) is a lead intensive therapist and director of support resources at the National Institute of Marriage—a highly specialized, God-centered marriage program for couples in crisis. Couples come from around the country to a scenic location near Branson, Mo., for two to four days of intensive therapy.



I have one of the most rewarding jobs in the world. I get to help broken marriages come to a place of healing and health. I watch in amazement week after week as God shows up in powerful ways right there in the therapy room.

God's miraculous healing was evident in the life of a man who showed up one Monday, saying, "I can't stand my wife.

When she sits across from me at the dinner table and just breathes, it annoys me."

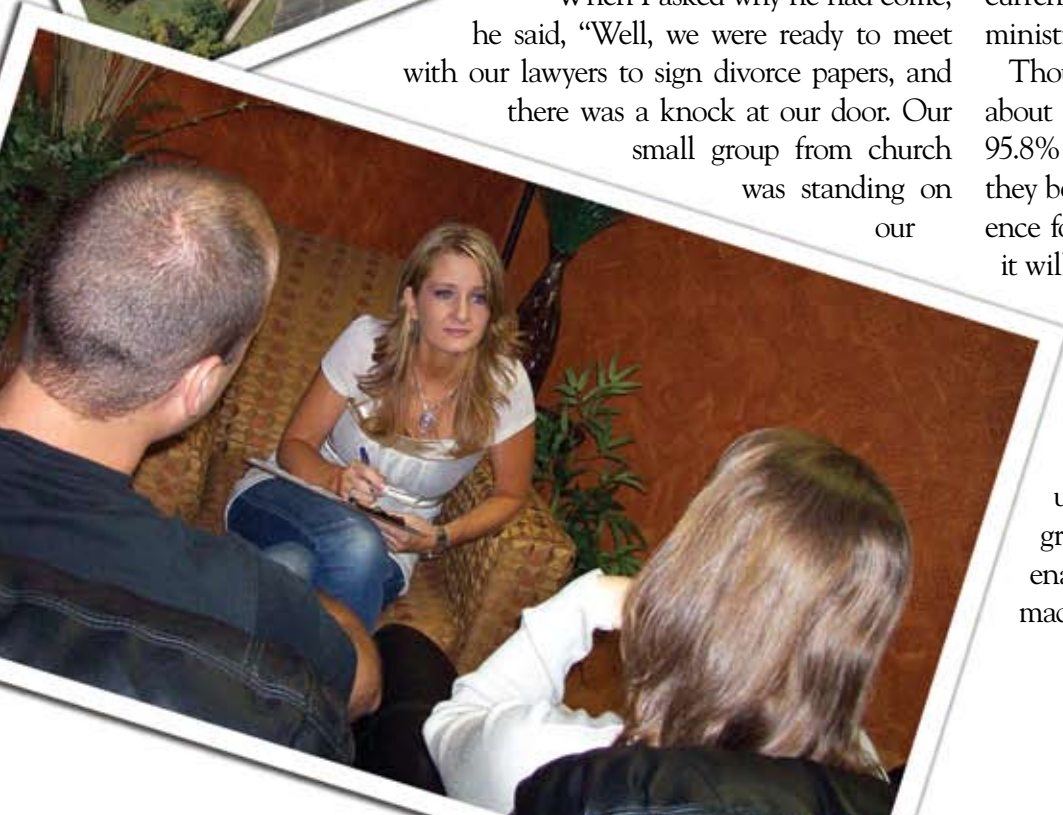
When I asked why he had come, he said, "Well, we were ready to meet with our lawyers to sign divorce papers, and there was a knock at our door. Our small group from church was standing on our

doorstep with an envelope. They had pooled their money to send us to the National Institute of Marriage if we'd be willing to go. How could we turn down a gesture like that?"

After a few days of counseling, their hearts began to soften, and by Thursday morning they looked like honeymooners. Upon leaving, he said, "No one will believe it when we get home... I didn't think it was possible to feel this way again." They renewed their vows a few weeks later and currently are involved in leading a marriage ministry in their local church.

Though couples often arrive feeling hopeless about ever achieving a satisfying marriage, 95.8% of the participants leave saying that they believe the experience will make a difference for their marriage, and 99% report that it will make a difference for them personally.

Although not every couple who enters the program finds success, the stories of restored hearts and homes are countless. Most of the time it feels like I get a front-row seat as God shows up and does his miraculous work. I am so grateful for my training at AGTS which enabled me to do one of the things I was made to do.



Walking Side Side by

Todd Monger (M.A. 2003) is a licensed professional counselor and the director of the Student Success Center at North Central University, Minneapolis.

I felt the call to full-time ministry when I was 16, in my hometown of Perth, Western Australia. I assumed my ministry would start right away, and it would involve a church, a pulpit and a congregation. Yet God's call and my assumptions were very different. In 2003, six months after graduating from AGTS with a master's degree in counseling, and two and a half years working at a psychiatric hospital, I became the first full-time counselor at North Central University (NCU).

I never imagined that my congregation would consist of students, my "sermons" would be in the form of counseling and my pulpit would be found in the shadows of life's circumstances. My education from AGTS opened a door into a ministry that I believe God specifically designed for me—I am a pastor, but not in the way I initially thought I would be.

Currently I serve as the director of the Student Success Center (SSC), a program built from

my heart in response to the needs of students at NCU. The SSC is a one-stop shop for students who need academic support, guidance in career and life calling, disability accommodations and mental health services. It is a place for the continuity of care and support of all students.

In the past five years, the counseling program has grown and expanded as the mental health need within all colleges has rapidly increased. Each year, we provide mental health services to more than 100 clients who are facing tough issues like depression, suicidal ideation, anxiety, eating disorders and self-mutilation and concerns about life calling and personal development. Many times students are just praying for someone to walk beside them through their loneliness, fear, hurt, pain and confusion.

As Pentecostal men and women are preparing to fulfill biblical models of leadership and ministry, this sometimes includes

the need to work through tough issues with someone who will avail themselves to be the answer to someone else's heartfelt prayer.



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Jesus with Skin on

Kelley Jones (M.A. 2006) is a licensed professional counselor and a registered play therapist in a non-profit, secular counseling agency serving victims of violent and/or sexual crimes.

The bad guys were winning. Danny* sat at the child-size table playing war with plastic soldiers in a small sandbox battlefield. The bad guys always won during our first play therapy sessions.

Danny had been sexually abused as a toddler. As a preschooler he witnessed domestic violence between his parents. Most recently he was sexually abused by a teenage boy who lived in the neighborhood and attended the same school and church. It's no wonder the bad guys were winning.

When Danny started experiencing panic attacks while away from his mother, she quit her job to be with him. Eventually Danny attempted suicide and was hospitalized and placed on antidepressant medication. The local church and school system were not equipped to deal with his significant emotional and behavioral issues.

Because I work for the state, I wasn't allowed to speak directly about Jesus in our therapy sessions.

Nevertheless, I watched God move in this boy's heart, mind and life through the therapeutic process of play.

I worked with the school and housing authorities to get him into a new school and housing complex and encouraged the family to find a new church, away from the boy who had abused Danny. After several weeks, his anxiety and depression had significantly improved. He is now keeping up with his peers academically and is involved in extracurricular activities. His mother was able to go back to work.

Over the course of therapy, the good guys eventually overcame the bad guys in Danny's sandbox war.

I've seen this happen for many other clients. It is a humbling experience to be God's vessel used in healing children.

AGTS Professor Melody Palm's anointed instruction is reflected in this prayer for my ministry: "Let me be Jesus with skin on." Counseling is a ministry of presence. It involves sitting with people in their pain and validating their human experience. I thank God for the training I received at AGTS, not only because it allowed me to meet state licensure requirements, but because I learned that God has equipped us with the counsel of the Holy Spirit to lead us as we guide the broken to healing.

