

RURAL HOME MISSIONARY ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 300, Morton, Illinois 61550 ♦ 309-263-2350 ♦ FAX: 309-266-6014
info@rhma.org ♦ www.rhma.org



February 2022

Dear RHMA family and friends,

I am writing to share my excitement about the RHMA Board choosing Adam Kipp as my successor – the sixth Director in RHMA’s 80-year history!

My wife, Roxy, and I have known Adam and his wife, Cara, for 14 years. Our relationship began while I was serving as an advisor for the leaders of Grace Bible Church (GBC) when they were in-between pastors. GBC is a small-town church located seven miles down the road from RHMA’s headquarters building. As GBC’s leaders were zeroing in on the Kipps as their next pastoral couple, they knew I was planning to travel to Dallas and asked me to have supper with Adam and Cara while I was there. Adam was just finishing his ThM degree at Dallas Theological Seminary. This was the beginning of a relationship that continues to this day.

After the Kipps moved to Central Illinois, they and Klassens started socializing with each other. I’ve had lunch with Adam about every two weeks for 14 years. We’ve done much together as families. A number of years back, Adam joined a monthly lunch group I was a part of with two other local pastors who also serve as RHMA Board members. During all these lunches, we’ve processed a lot of life and ministry together.

Initially, I did lunch with Adam thinking I might help him get off to a good start in pastoral ministry. I quickly realized I was gaining as much from Adam as he was from me. I like how Adam thinks. Over 300-plus lunches together, we’ve spent much time processing not only things Adam was facing in his pastorate but all kinds of RHMA-related things.

I spoke at Adam’s installation service. I chaired his ordination committee and spoke at his ordination service. Adam’s ordination provided a special window into how Adam processes the Bible and theology.

Over the years, Adam and Cara have been widely involved with RHMA. They and their church have embarked on six “Extreme Makeover” trips to RHMA fields. Adam has organized and led all of these trips – crews of 20-30 from his church who literally transform RHMA church buildings in a week’s time. On these trips, Cara has served as the meals and kid-care organizer. Roxy and I have joined the GBCers on several of these trips and seen their impact first-hand. These makeovers have spawned relationships between the Kipps and RHMA missionaries in each of the fields where makeovers were done.

In 2015, Adam became an RHMA Board member. Through this, he gained much understanding about the inner-workings of RHMA. He and Cara got very involved with our annual conferences, particularly the days set aside for our RHMA missionary families – another way they’ve gotten to know many of our

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missionary family. Adam has led seminars at our conferences . . . and Cara has helped Roxy with various things such as hosting teas for the pastors' wives.

I walked with Adam through his Doctor of Ministry program – done at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, much of it tailored for rural ministry. During these years, Adam honed his thinking and skills. Afterwards, Adam became one of our TACT professors. And, Cara has assisted Roxy in hosting lunches in our home for female TACT students – many of them future small-town pastors' wives.

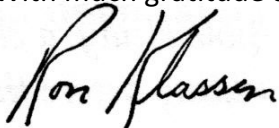
For several years, Cara has been a member of the “Flowers for the Pastor’s Wife” team – editing and writing blog posts for nearly 500 small-town pastors' wives all across the U.S. and Canada. This ministry is led by Denna Busenitz, a long-time RHMA missionary who, with her husband, Kurt, a couple of years ago became members of RHMA’s Leadership Team and this summer will be moving to Central Illinois and working at headquarters.

Add it all up and the Kipps and Klassens have been through all kinds of highs and lows of ministry together. Particularly important is that through all of this Adam and Cara have gotten to know RHMA quite well. They know well the mission of RHMA and are deeply committed to it. They know the RHMA culture, our people, and our ministries. What a huge plus! It gives them a head start.

Five or so years ago, Roxy and I began to think that perhaps God was preparing Adam and Cara to be our successors. We began committing this possibility to prayer. It turns out the Kipps too were starting to think about the same possibility, neither of us aware of what each other was thinking.

Can you see why I am so excited? I look forward to giving my full support to RHMA’s next Director and to seeing RHMA’s mission continue to unfold in new and ever-increasing ways. I believe the future is bright for RHMA!

With much gratitude and anticipation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ron Klassen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Ron, for Roxy too
Executive Director



Hello RHMA Staff and friends,

My family and I are so excited to become a part of the RHMA family in a new and exciting way. For those of you who don't know all of us just yet, and those that could use a reminder, I'm Adam Kipp, future Executive Director of RHMA. With me in the picture above is my amazing, supportive wife, and high school sweetheart, Cara, as well as our three kids Max (13), Penny (11), and Felix (5).

As Ron mentions in his letter, RHMA has been a part of my life even prior to my entry into full time ministry in 2008. Before we first met personally, I can still remember Ron coming to share about RHMA during my time as a student at Dallas Theological Seminary. Then I had no idea that God might call me to pastoral ministry in Central Illinois, let alone that He would call me to serve as Executive Director of RHMA. It just goes to show you the truth of Proverbs 16:9, "In his heart a man plans his course, but the LORD determines his steps."

Looking back, I can certainly see the way the Lord has guided my steps in preparing me to serve at RHMA. At the forefront of this is the mentorship of Ron in my life from the time I entered into pastoral ministry. But it's also been evident in service projects to RHMA churches, helping teach TACT classes, sitting on the RHMA Board of Directors, and opportunities to serve at conferences as both a speaker and in the dessert line. Also, I believe God has used my time as a small church pastor to form in me a deep heart for the small church, for pastors, and for the challenges faced by families who serve alongside them. The chance to help strengthen and equip small-town pastors and families to serve the Kingdom in their churches and go out and plant new ones is what excites me most about stepping in as Executive Director.

As for what steps the Lord might have in store for the future? Only He knows, but I'm looking forward to getting to know you and embark on that journey together.

With warm regards,
Adam, and the whole Kipp Crew
Executive Director Designate

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The prospect of finding a successor for the retiring Ron Klassen as the Executive Director of RHMA seemed like a daunting task to the RHMA Board and the appointed Search Team subcommittee. Where do you find someone who has a doctorate in rural ministry, a passion for rural ministry, rural ministry experience, and may actually know something about RHMA and its mission? This was a God-sized task, so the Board and Search Team began to pray. We needed God to show us who He had planned to fill this unique position.

As our planning meetings started, we discussed and reviewed RHMA's mission and purpose and asked ourselves if they were still relevant today. Not surprisingly, we agreed that indeed they are – planting and strengthening churches does not go out of style. We then discussed a strategy for going about our search. As in most searches, it seems best to look first at those closest to you and those who know about you. We also decided to invite Ron to our next meeting to see if he had suggestions of possible candidates that fit our search requirements.

Fortunately for us, at that next meeting Ron was able to give us a short list of names for us to possibly pursue. At a subsequent meeting we had a pre-interview with a potential candidate to discuss the position and his possible interest. That meeting went well, so we set up another meeting for an official interview with this individual. God continued to bring affirmation that our discussions should continue so our interview process moved to the full RHMA Board. We also asked for a reference list from the candidate so that we could speak to those who knew him best. We completed the calls and meetings with those on the reference list and it only confirmed what we were sensing from God about the abilities and gifts that this candidate possessed to succeed Ron in the position of Executive Director.

The Board had several good discussions about the candidate and it was decided to go into a time of specific prayer and reconvene in about ten days for a final meeting with the candidate. It was after this meeting that many affirming and positive comments were expressed and at the end of the discussion time a motion was made to offer the candidate the position of Executive Director Designate. A unanimous vote was made with thanksgiving to God for His clear direction.

It is with both joy and anticipation that the RHMA Board enthusiastically announces that the next Executive Director of RHMA will be Adam Kipp. Adam has been the pastor of Grace Bible Church in nearby Washington, Illinois, for the past 14 years and has been a member of the RHMA Board for the last seven of those years. Adam brings the experience, passion, and knowledge of RHMA that we had been praying for.

God has blessed us with a generous amount of time to transition from Ron's leadership to Adam's. We envision a time of overlap where Ron will be able to train Adam and expose him to the daily responsibilities of the Executive Director. We are also blessed that Ron and Adam have a long history of working together in both ministry and friendship. With Ron's retirement coming at the end of 2023 we see a handoff taking place sometime in 2023 where Adam will officially take over the executive director duties while Ron will still be available for help or consultation.

There is a strong sense of the Lord's guidance through these months of navigating the search process, and we look forward to what He has ahead for RHMA as we continue to look to Him for wisdom in our leadership roles.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Brad Hutchison'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brad Hutchison, RHMA Board Chairman

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