



# The Challenge of Trust

## The Wagners Dialogue about 2009



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STEPHEN WAGNER'S MONTHLY UPDATE

CHRISTMAS 2009

**Note:** *It's been over two months since you've heard from us. Here's the reason for the silence: Rebeccah's preparing to give birth to our second child (sometime before January 15?), and I've been very busy helping shape the direction of JFA for the coming year. I'm confident that JFA's recent vision-setting meetings will help us train thousands more pro-life advocates through our [Abortion: From Debate to Dialogue program](#) (seminar + campus outreach + next step activity) in the next five years than we have in the past five years. As I planned this letter, I asked Rebeccah to write some of her reflections on the year. As I read her thoughts, I felt they were a good summary of where we've been this year, and where we're at as individuals, as workers, and as a family. Since our work at JFA is all about dialogue, however, I can't resist adding a few comments here and there (red). Since it's "in her genes," neither can Elsie (green). Our second child may need to weigh in at some point, too (grey). So, without further comment, I present the Wagners, at Christmas, in a rag-tag, happenstance dialogue. – Steve Wagner*



DEAR PARTNERS AND FRIENDS,

It has been a hard year... a good year. Lots of stress: travel, uncertain and crazy housing, a baby who doesn't like sleeping, a new baby and all of the difficulties of pregnancy. Lots of joys: being together as a family experiencing Steve's work, watching our sweet baby turn into an engaging, beautiful little girl, saving enough money to buy our first home after living almost all of our first two years of marriage with roommates, the joy of having a new baby in the family (or at least dreaming about it, since baby will probably NOT have arrived by the printing of this letter!).

Our new house has a big yard for me to play in and lots of space indoors for me to run and play on cold days like today.



You can say that again! Our whole family accompanied the JFA team for many of its 34 days on 14 campuses, 33 day-long seminars, and about 30 other presentations.



I don't believe in due dates, but I can tell you that I'm getting a bit cramped in here. All of the blood is rushing to my head! Aren't all of us learning, though, that God loves to use all of the most important events of life, like conceptions, births, and marriage, to teach us to trust Him? I guess I will come when I come ☺



This has been a real growing year for me. Personally it's been full of struggles and triumphs, and I'm finally beginning to feel as though I'm not just floundering in a sea of uncertainty and newness, as I've felt for most of our marriage. Adjusting to wifehood and mommyhood has not all come naturally and easily! ☺ Throughout this year I've come to know myself better than I have probably in the past 25 years combined.

I'll refrain from psychoanalyzing my wife here. (I wasn't born yesterday.) I thank God for giving me a perfect helper and best friend who is wise, frugal, industrious, and fun.



It's okay, Mama. To add to the travel stress, you have someone living inside of you (me), so hormones change as frequently as the scenery. You are doing the most important job in the world: modeling the pro-life message by mothering your two kids with strength and grace!



I've been blessed this year as I watch Steve in his work at JFA. Blessed to have some experience in the same work environment, so I can understand more clearly what's happening. I'm blessed to travel with him and keep our family together (even when it was really hard and I regularly felt overwhelmed ☺). I'm blessed to have raised support prior

to our marriage, so I can empathize with him when things take time and feel stressful. Blessed to watch him really grow and learn in a position with challenges of administration and content. He has done a great job, and I'm so proud of him. Stephen's joining the JFA team has brought great things to an office that just four years ago, when I joined the staff, had only five people in it. Now, with a staff of thirteen, the office is busting at its seams and growing pains are naturally very present. Stephen's skills for organization and clarity are helping to bring lots of stability to an organization full of very passionate people. ☺ I am excited to see what this next year will bring.



There's my dad in the black shirt in the middle of Smith Plaza at the University of New Mexico having conversations with people on the open mic in front of a crowd of people. I don't understand much of what they're talking about (but I understand more than you think!). Mama explains that Daddy's working. We pray that God will help him.

By far, the most exciting thing about my work is our growing staff (at least 4 new staff members are joining the JFA staff in 2010). Almost every staff member is working towards certification in our trainer-training program. My investment in each of them has a direct impact on the quality of the training experience for our volunteers. I have the enviable job of facilitating the training during our seminars and outreaches and watching God work through the different personalities and strengths of our staff members to mentor each volunteer (one to one) so they can grow as ambassadors for Christ.



This year has been possible in large part because of YOU. We are so thankful for you. We know we're far away from (almost) all of you, but we love you and pray for you. We've rejoiced as some of you have welcomed children, cried as some of you have lost children, dreamed as some of you have shared exciting plans for outreach and service, and had our worlds enlarged greatly by your experiences, your love, and your friendship. Thank you for being part of our lives in such an intimate way. We may not have opportunity to connect in person with you regularly, but know that each of you is very special to our family.

The challenge for all of us is to trust God more habitually in the midst of whatever He sends our way. 1 Thess. 5: 16-18 gives us a practical way forward: *pray and give thanks.*



? That's me!

MERRY CHRISTMAS,

*Rebecca*

(for all the Wagners, including *Stephen*, *Elvie*, and the "Baby in the Belly")

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