

THE CRY

for Intimacy

word
MADE
flesh

An Advocacy Journal
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We celebrate *intimacy*
with Jesus to be our
highest calling and our
created purpose.



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From the Editor

Few things hurt more than isolation. I’ve become convinced that in the Kingdom of God, the lifeline that keeps us going is true community — and for that, we need intimacy.

The Bible tells us that “in the beginning was the Word.” Long before being made flesh, the Trinity existed eternally in community, dwelling as three separate beings yet perfectly and intimately as One.

Considering the eternal intimacy of the Trinity, it is no surprise that the Son cries out on the cross, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” During Jesus’ most excruciating moment when the sense of isolation is at its pinnacle, when Jesus seems to be forsaken, and death seems to have triumphed, God cries out to God who He has been in constant fellowship with for all eternity. Jesus’ anguish ends with the reaffirmation of the eternal Trinitarian fellowship; Jesus cries out again, “Father into your hands I commit my spirit.” God’s intimate Love overcomes the spirit of death that humanity has perpetuated upon itself since the Garden of Eden.

Jesus endured isolation, pain, and death to remind us that a Garden with a Loving Father awaits. Jesus’ endured the cross perpetuated upon Him by all that is wrong with humanity showed just how far Love was willing to go to claim its own over-against the forces of death.

This season, I found myself in a place of isolation; purpose and identity were flung into chaos. For much of my life, I remained internally a loner; as a defense mechanism, I closed myself off. In the struggles of this season, rejecting intimacy, I increasingly drew inward until I imploded. Suddenly my deep lack of and desperate need for intimacy were exposed.

I cried out for the courage to say yes to the Loving intimacy of God that I knew I needed. Thankfully, a hard, but beautiful process of healing began. I was met with amazing Grace, Love, and Light. The darkness of isolation and excommunication lifted. I felt seen, known, and loved just for being me; I felt

Loved for who I was beyond the particularities of any actions. Intimacy brought me to an open space devoid of walls. I was brought to a place of more freedom than I had as of yet ever experienced or even thought existed. I felt at a deeper level than I previously had just why the intimate Love of God is the strongest power in the universe, I felt why it is Love that conquers death.

I believe so much in the work of WMF. All over the world, WMF is reaching out to those who have experienced isolation and excommunication. People are being met with and invited into intimacy and fellowship. Community, redemption, freedom, and joy are being restored to those who have been forsaken and forgotten.

In this issue of The Cry, you will read stories about some of these works of hope and goodness.

I deeply enjoy the process of creating a publication because it requires intimate collaboration and teamwork. Getting to connect with contributors worldwide and reading and laying out the meaningful content they share is truly a gift.

However, this edition of The Cry is particularly special to me, because of the personal awakening that I’ve experienced in getting this issue together. Its theme is now a deeper reality in my heart: I celebrate intimacy with Jesus my highest calling and my created purpose. I pray this issue of The Cry leads you too into a deeper recognition of the intimate Love that God has for you.

Peace and grace be with you,

JORGE CASTORENA
Editor of The Cry

CONNECT WITH JORGE:
jorge.castorena
@wordmadeflesh.org



Editor Jorge Castorena

Assistant Editors Leah Abraham,
Sarah Choate

Editorial Committee Leah Abraham,
Clint Baldwin, Jorge Castorena,
Ashley Castorena, Corrie Catlett
Merricks, Laura Zahniser Pierson

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jorge.castorena@wordmadeflesh.org



From the Executive Director

In a beautifully intimate passage of scripture we read, “As a mother comforts her child, so will I [God] comfort you...” (Isa. 66:13)

What could be more intimate than God identifying the Love of God as being like that of a mother who comforts her child?

This issue of The Cry focuses on our Word Made Flesh Lifestyle Celebration of Intimacy. Throughout this issue, you'll read stories of intimacy experienced and explored by Word Made Flesh folks from all around the world.

“How meaningful it is to have someone know you intimately enough to know how to be healthily present with you, but to still allow you space to be your own person.”

Here in this piece, I want to reflect somewhat broadly about the idea of intimacy. What is it for us? How does it shape us?

For some, intimacy evokes feelings, memories, and ideas of comfort, compassion, kindness, and love. For others, because of harmful choices of people in our world, intimacy evokes feelings, memories, and ideas of discomfort, uncertainty, abuse, and betrayal.

Much of the difficulty with the idea of intimacy lies in the fact that it naturally

comes coupled with vulnerability. We are readily aware that human society has not always been gracious to those who exhibit vulnerability.

Too often, persons offering the intimacy of thoughtful and healthy compassion, empathy, and overall relational connection find themselves exploited and abused.

Of course, vulnerable intimacy tragically abused has been illustrated in dark and iconic fashion for us in the crucifixion of the Word Made Flesh – of Jesus Christ crucified.

It is from this low-point in the history of our world that we can see with deep clarity the need for and the importance of intimacy. Without healthy intimacy humanity has capacity to perpetuate all kinds of violence upon one another.

Yet, even in the midst of difficulties encountered, Love continues onward living into the mission that is its very DNA – care for all that is around it.

Even the very darkest of moments cannot and do not extinguish the deeply intimate greatness of Love. With immense Love, God the Son intimately cries out to God the Father on the cross, “Father forgive them, they know not what they do.”

It is from this lowest point that intimacy begins its ultimate rise showcasing that in the end it will finally be exclusion that is excluded and Love will triumph.

The Love of God is intimacy showcased par excellence. At whatever level or in whatever manner experienced, relational connection is core to intimacy.

Ultimately, one does not become most intimate with an organization, with an idea, or with a set of rules; rather, one becomes intimate with persons.

Personhood is primary. Contexts arise because of personhood.

This is why it is so very vital that the core of our faith is not about a principle, but rather it is about a Person. It is about

the Person of Jesus the Christ.

The world renowned 20th century missionary E. Stanley Jones in his book, *The Word Became Flesh*, notes that he considers “and the Word became Flesh” (from John 1:14) as the most important verse in the Bible. He writes that in all of his interreligious conversations and comparative studies of other religions, in the end, the major difference came down to being that all of the other belief systems at their core were about principles, myths, legends, and grand ideas while Christianity at its core is about a real Person and that Person’s relationship with us and our relationship with that Person.¹

This personhood of Christ is what is often referred to as the scandal of the incarnation. God came near. The Word became Flesh. The All-Powerful also became all human. The intimacy created by God’s proximity and particularity became a conceptual stumbling block for many even as it offered the pathway of freedom for all.

Because of Jesus’ presence we know that the “you shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free,” (John 8:32) statement is not primarily referencing an idea. Instead, such a pronouncement ushers us into relationship with the One who calls Himself Truth itself. Jesus declares, “I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life...” (John 14:6) It is primarily to a Person that we are called and secondarily to the principles which arise out of being in relationship with this Person.

In the most meaningful of intimate ways, God does not extinguish or suppress our personhood, our volition, our ability to choose in the relationship, but rather God chooses egalitarian parity with us and intimately calls us “friends.” (John 15:15-17) We can understand that the best example of a friend who sticks closer than a sibling (Pr. 18:24) is actually God. In the parlance of our times, in the above senses of close and faithful companionship, we do indeed have a “personal relationship with Jesus.”

As an example of “personal relationship with Jesus,” of “a friend who sticks closer than a sibling,” in the deepest

of communions (communion being a practice of intimacy), God says, “Inasmuch as you have done it to the least of these my brethren you have done it unto me.” (Mat. 25:31-46) God articulates the deepest intimate, identification with those in the deepest of need. God says, “they are me.” God says, “I am them.” God cares that much.

In the midst of the seekings and searchings of our finite attempts at Love we can take heart in knowing that as with Truth, Love is not primarily a principle, but it too is primarily a Person. God is Love (1 John 4:8). Such God-Love casts out fear (1 John 4:18) and will not fail (1 Cor. 13:8).

To have such intimacy producing love that is like unto the Love that God offers means to be present and yet not to be stifling, but rather to make space in the midst of being present. How meaningful it is to have someone know you intimately enough to know how to be healthily present with you, but to still allow you space to be your own person. Healthy intimacy requires both this presence and space. Frederick William Faber alludes to such breadth coupled with proximity in his 1862 hymn, *There’s A Wideness In God’s Mercy*, “There’s a wideness in God’s mercy, like the wideness of the sea...” Here Faber offers that the God who made and sustains us, who sees us and is moved to mercy on our behalf, allows space for us to live and learn. Khalil Gibran also deals with the subject of presence and space in writing about the intimacy of marriage,

*You were born together, and together you shall be forever more.
You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.
Ay, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.
But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you.
Fill each other’s cup, but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread, but eat not from the same loaf.
Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music.
Give your hearts, but not into each other’s keeping.*

For only the hand of Life can contain your hearts.



*And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other’s shadow.²*

Henri Nouwen, a professor and minister who wrote much about intimacy and love describes how his friend and mentor, Jean Vanier – the founder of L’Arche International, sometimes shared about relational intimacy.

When Jean Vanier speaks about that intimate place, he often stretches out his arm and cups his hand as if it holds a small, wounded bird. He asks, ‘What will happen if I open my hand fully? We answer, ‘The bird will try to flutter its wings, and it will fall and die.’ Then he asks again, ‘What will happen if I close my hand?’ We say, ‘The bird will be crushed and die.’ Then he smiles and says, ‘An intimate place is like my cupped hand, neither totally open nor totally closed. It is the space where growth can take place.’³

Considering the God-breathed aspects of intimacy related in all of the above, such intimacy is the kind of life, work, and community that Word Made flesh seeks to embody and to share around the world. Word Made Flesh seeks to establish and sustain long-term stable communities of loving presence among and alongside people experiencing intense hardship.

Out of empathetic solidarity, these community efforts look to foster authentic relationships of friendship that encourage people toward growth while always seeking to meet them and walk with them in the midst of whatever difficulties and/or joys they find themselves in at any given moment.

I pray that the stories, reflections, and overall content of this issue of The Cry offers renewed and greater awareness to you of the great love that God has for you and the great love that God has for everyone.

The God of the universe sees you and loves you. God knows your name (Isaiah 49:15-16), knows the number of every hair on your head (Luke 12:7), holds every tear that you cry (Ps. 56:8), and knew you before you were being knit together in your mother’s womb (Jer. 1:5).

May we all experience the intimate comfort of God and by Gods’ grace and mercy may we all on behalf of God each in our own way seek to offer such intimate comfort to others.

CLINT BALDWIN
Executive Director, Word Made Flesh



² Gibran, Kahlil. (1973) *The Prophet*. New York, NY: Alfred A Knopf, Inc. (A Borzoi Book). p. 15.

³ Nouwen, Henri. (1986). *Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity, and Ecstasy* in Christian Perspective. New York, NY: Doubleday (An Image Book). p. 22.

CONNECT WITH CLINT:
clint.baldwin@wordmadeflesh.org



¹ Jones, E. S. (1963) *The Word Became Flesh*. Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press

(Opposite) Clint posing with members of the Rwanda community during a trip earlier this Summer.



The Last-Minute Bomb

By Maren Telsey, *Director of Community Care*

“The last-minute bomb” is a term affectionately used by therapists. It refers to a common phenomenon in which clients divulge a full-session-worthy topic in the last 30 seconds of a session.

In my context as Director of Community Care for Word Made Flesh, I often experience the most honest, intimate conversations when I am doing exit interviews. In these conversations, staff members bear their disappointments, proud accomplishments, relational challenges and the particularities of their vocational calling. At the end of these calls, I hang up the phone with a deep sense of gratitude for their honesty. However, I also feel sad because this vulnerable conversation happens just as they

are ending their time with Word Made Flesh – the last-minute bomb. I often wonder how we can encourage this kind of meaningful connection throughout one’s time in our community, rather than saving it for the end.

Henri Nouwen, in his book “Lifesigns: Intimacy, Fecundity, and Ecstasy in Christian Perspective,” offers the imagery of intimacy being one’s home— a place where one can be his or her truest self. When we respond to Jesus’ invitation that says, “Make your home in me as I make mine in you,” we are able to strip away the very human tendency to hide from others due to fear.

(Above) Prayer after water baptisms led by our community in Bolivia.

If fear is intimacy’s greatest opponent, love is it’s truest friend. Perfect love is the love that God has given each of us even before others could love us or we could love others. It is a participatory love that says you are safe to dwell here—you are home here.

Intimacy is a discipline that requires us to choose to say “yes” to love and “no” to fear. It is fostered through a deep prayer life where home can be found within our hearts. We can come to the assurance that “all shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of things shall be well,” (Thanks, Julian of Norwich). Intimacy is also realized when we embrace our shared sense of being beloved. When our perception changes and we see ourselves as being united with others—the fragmentation caused by fear dissipates. Prayer and solidarity move us from fear into greater love, and therefore greater intimacy.

I’ve been in the role of Director of Community Care for close to seven months, and I’ve never met another Word Made Flesh staff member in person. According to Google maps, the closest community is 2,311 miles away in Bangkok. At times this can feel quite isolating and far from intimate. I am challenged to draw near to others, on the other side of the world, through risky (Skype) conversations marked by love and not fear, and praying for one another—asking God to bond our hearts and work together so that we may find our way home.

ABOUT MAREN

Maren Telsey is the Director of Community Care. She lives in Seoul, South Korea with her husband Benjamin. Maren is a Licensed Mental Health Counselor Associate, and finds great joy hiking in the mountains, cooking for friends, people watching on the subway, and the smell of the ocean.



CONNECT WITH MAREN:
maren.telsey@wordmadeflesh.org



@wordmadeflesh



Intimacy

**They say the eye
is the window to the soul...**

“Freckles and Eye Study” is a series of works contributed to this issue of *The Cry* by our Artist Ambassador, Karisa Keasey. See more of her work on the following page.



UNTITLED

"Your eyes

saw my unformed substance;

in your book were written, every one of them,

the days that were formed for me

when as yet there was none of them."



"None the Wiser"



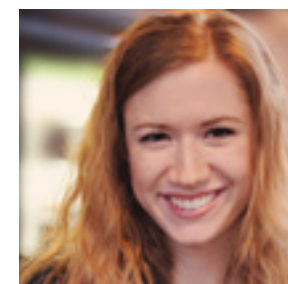
(Above) "Still" | (Opposite) "Monochromatic Eye Study"

KARISA KEASEY WMF ARTIST AMBASSADOR

My goal as an artist is to help my audience give their undivided attention to their neighbor long enough to inspire intimacy and a desire to walk with them in their journey — just as Christ walks with us. Intimacy is an odd thing - it is something we both yearn for and are terrified of. We feel uncomfortably vulnerable when others know too much about us and we feel offensively intrusive to others when we know too much about them. Yet to truly experience intimacy, we have to move beyond our inhibitions. "It's impossible to really understand somebody, what they want, what they believe, and not love them the way they love themselves." (Ender's Game) When I create, I devote undivided attention to each face I paint knowing every crevice, eyelash, and shadow of the person I am painting. I become invested in their story, and stir an empathy for the cries and dreams that person holds. When I share my art, I invite others to enter into this private moment with me and fight for that person's dignity and aspirations as if they were our own.

Prints and originals available
for sale at karisakeasey.com

SEE MORE OF
KARISA'S WORK:



The Intimate Creator

By Hannah Kunde, *Community Director, Oregon*

While walking on the beach last weekend, the chaos of the surroundings caught my attention. The lines in the sand made shapes of all angles. The boulders looked jagged and precariously steep. The wind blew and waves crashed; calm one moment, harsh the next. Despite the unpredictability of the Coast, I felt at home. I felt deeply comforted in the midst of this breath-taking, beautiful chaos.

The reason I felt so at peace, despite these chaotic observations, is because I also know there is an overarching and grounding order. Not only at the Coast, but in all of Creation. Connected to the phases of the moon, the tide rhythmically

comes in and out. Running alongside the ocean, the beach is a delicate yet resilient ecosystem-home to crabs, clams, grasses and tiny invertebrates. The birds above fly in a “V” formation. It is stunning. Beyond comprehension.

The God that created these wonders and rhythms also created me. This sense of intimate connectivity surfaces within me most frequently when I am in awe of Creation. Perhaps I was resonating so deeply with these paradoxically chaotic, and ordered observations on this walk because I feel like my life right now is a manifestation of this same paradox.

Over a year ago, I embarked on a journey with Word Made Flesh with the intention of starting a community in Oregon.

(Opposite bottom) Hannah posing with one of the elderly members of the L’Arche community as they picked fresh raspberries.

This sense
of intimate *connectivity*
surfaces within me
most *frequently*
when I am in awe of *Creation*.

It has been a year full of hope, deep questioning, challenge, laughter and some tears. After much soul-searching, I recently came to the conclusion that I am not going to pursue Word Made Flesh Oregon as my next step. This decision feels raw and shameful at times. It also feels freeing and sincere. Some days it feels pretty chaotic. The fact that I am not following through with something I said I would has felt burdensome. I fear it is a reflection of my integrity — or lack thereof. The list goes on.

Yet, my family and friends have shown me what feels like an extension of God’s grace when I have otherwise been unable to sense it myself. They have spoken words of truth and offered reassurance. I have come to accept the reality that things change and that is ok. God is in the midst. God is still moving and breathing. God’s Love is big enough to hold what feels like my broken offerings. God is weaving even this into a tapestry that is much bigger and more beautiful than anything I can imagine.

As part of my journey with WMF, I have been living and working at a L’Arche home in Portland. It is an enormous gift. While manifesting in different ways, the missions at the core of L’Arche and WMF are the same: walking alongside people who are marginalized, relationships of mutuality, and exploring community in the name of Christ. The rhythms of daily life at L’Arche are intimate indeed. This kind of shared living involves starting the day alongside another, sharing meals, prayer, music, celebrating birthdays and anniversaries, and mourning pain and loss. One of the greatest gifts and greatest challenges of life at L’Arche is how blurred the lines are between personal time, space and rest, and community time, space and work.

This level of intimacy has challenged my desire to do incarnational ministry (when it comes down to it, it is really hard!), but has also deepened my belief in the world’s need for it.

In the midst of my discernment earlier this year around WMF Oregon, I was asked to go on a trip to Bolivia as an interpreter

OREGON

for a medical team, which I happily agreed to. On this trip, I visited the WMF-Bolivia community in El Alto. Through this experience and prayer, I have since decided to go back to Bolivia, after my commitment with L’Arche ends, to do a short-term internship with WMF-Bolivia. This is hugely exciting to me and was an opportunity that completely took me by surprise. As much as I would like to say that discerning God’s will is easy, the more I grow, the more I realize how far from the truth that is. God’s will is oftentimes messy and unpredictable; I started out with WMF thinking of starting a new field in Oregon, after following a very zigzagging path, I have come to a place where my next step is going to Bolivia as an intern.

God created the sand, rocks and ocean just as much as God created the force of the tide and the phases of the moon. God created my journey with WMF just as much as God is continually creating me more into the person God intends for me to be. As the poet, Rilke, puts it,

*“God speaks to each of us as God makes us.
Then walks with us silently out of the night...
Flare up like flame
And make shadows I can move in.
Let everything happen to you:
Beauty and terror
Just keep going. No feeling
Is final.
Don’t let yourself lose me.
Nearby is the country they call life.
You will know it by its seriousness.
Give me your hand.”*

God created me. God is continually creating me. In the midst of the pain during this journey with WMF, I also find much beauty and depth in it. I have interacted with God, with others, and with myself intimately in ways that are new and stretching. Perhaps such intimate interaction is more the point that God seeks from us and hopes for us than what the world deems a “successful” journey.

CONNECT WITH
HANNAH:

[hannah.kunde@
wordmade flesh.org](mailto:hannah.kunde@wordmade flesh.org)



@wordmade flesh



Intimacy and Lament

By Mikayla Greenwell, *Short-term Teams Coordinator and Social Worker, WMF Romania*

PSALM 22:1-2

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?
Why are you so far from saving me,
so far from my cries of anguish?
My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,
by night, but I find no rest.

PSALM 22:23-24

You who fear the Lord, praise him!
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
For he has not despised or scorned
the suffering of the afflicted one;
he has not hidden his face from him
but has listened to his cry for help.

As I walk down the road in the valley of the city in which I live, I see luxury cars parked outside a gated house, usually meaning there is prostitution or trafficking occurring. As I walk through the neighborhood that we work in, I hear someone speak the reality that while not every woman and girl is involved in prostitution, every single one will consider it as an option for themselves because of the poverty they experience and the lack of options many of them navigate.

We hear the children speak of experiences of homelessness, violence in their homes, addiction, death, sickness and racism

against them because they are Roma. When we speak of intimacy, in relation to these realities, we respond based upon how we think of God’s involvement in these realities.

We lament.

I take my cue from Psalm 22 -- the Psalm that was on the lips of Jesus as he suffered on the cross. In fact, “No other Psalm goes so deep in the depths of despair and also to the heights of praise, (Brown, 2010).”

Jesus “takes up the righteous cry of the sufferer, that he laments in every way as we do. He enters into the Pit, he suffers the same persecution from enemies, the same physical distress, the same apparent silence and absence of God that afflicts the psalmist in Psalm 22, (Shipps, 2011).”

Famously, Jesus quoted the first line of Psalm 22 knowing that the Jewish audience surrounding him would immediately know the context and following words of that passage. This Psalm is a lament of an individual, and it begins with a call to a God who seems to be silent in the face of suffering. The speaker then shifts his focus from being abandoned to remembering God’s past faithfulness. He proclaims that God is the God of Israel who has come through for his people and delivered them.

This Psalm makes it clear that we serve a God who understands suffering and is in the midst of suffering. However, it also gives us a model of mature faith in the midst of suffering. The speaker does not keep his lament to himself, nor does he simply default to believing that he needs more faith.

Instead, he stands his ground and asks God why he is absent. This is the power of lament; it requires trust in God and knowledge of his character. In the midst of this suffering, we see that the speaker reminds us of God’s actions in the past. We look toward the past in our collective community and in our collective memory to understand who God is in the present situation, especially when it seems to be empty His presence.

In the midst of lament, we do not despair. We remember the character of the God we serve. This Psalm reminds us that we serve a God who

brought His people out of Egypt. He provides food for those that don't have it, and he is present in suffering. The principle of lament calls us to be active in the midst of suffering.

We are called as the people of God to act by entering into this suffering. We are called to stand for justice and to stand on the side of those who are marginalized and attacked.

If we believe that God has been faithfully present in the past, we can lament the present when it seems that He is absent. We can stand our ground and ask that He intervene, because He has proven Himself to be a God who intervenes.

We have the freedom to ask these things of God. When this practice of lament can happen freely, so can hope for the future. In this practice, we can play a role in revealing the kingdom of God that is coming and that is here now.

On the cross, Jesus spoke these poetic, Psalmic lines of deep lament and anguish, but in doing so, also reminded his hearers that God the Father is present in suffering and in lament. In these cries, Jesus demonstrated that he intimately understands suffering. Like Jesus, we too can intimately call out in brokenness because we are free to cry out to the God who intervenes on behalf of the forgotten.



(Above) Children playing soccer at the WMF Romania Community. WMF Romania’s main outreach is to children in poverty. (Opposite) Children drawing during an artistic development activity.



ABOUT MIKAYLA

Mikayla Greenwell is the short-term teams coordinator for Word Made Flesh Romania. She first encountered Word Made Flesh while attending George Fox University through participating in 3-week discovery teams, studying abroad with WMF-Romania for a semester, and returning to lead 3-week discovery teams. After graduating from George Fox University, Mikayla moved to Romania as WMF staff in November 2016. Alongside her WMF work, Mikayla attends Fuller Theological Seminary studying in the Masters of Divinity program. She enjoys a good cup of coffee, being with people, and watching Jimmy Fallon.



CONNECT WITH MIKAYLA:

mikayla.greenwell@wordmadeflesh.org

 @cuvantul.intrapat (WMF Romania)

Together

BOLIVIA

By Andrea Baker, *Field Director, WMF Bolivia*

The International Christian Alliance on Prostitution (ICAP) unites, equips and empowers practitioners and advocates who compassionately challenge injustice and offer freedom to people exploited by prostitution, including sex trafficking. In Bolivia, our field works to provide abundant life to those affected by prostitution. Andrea Baker, WMF Bolivia Field Director, attended the 2017 ICAP Conference in May. The following is her reflection on her experience.

As soon as I arrived, I became an emotional wreck for days, feeling the tears well up inside me at any given moment and for no explainable reason. After a sob therapy session, I took some time in the prayer room to quietly reflect – tried to breathe deeply, to quiet my body and mind that had been racing in preparation for this trip.

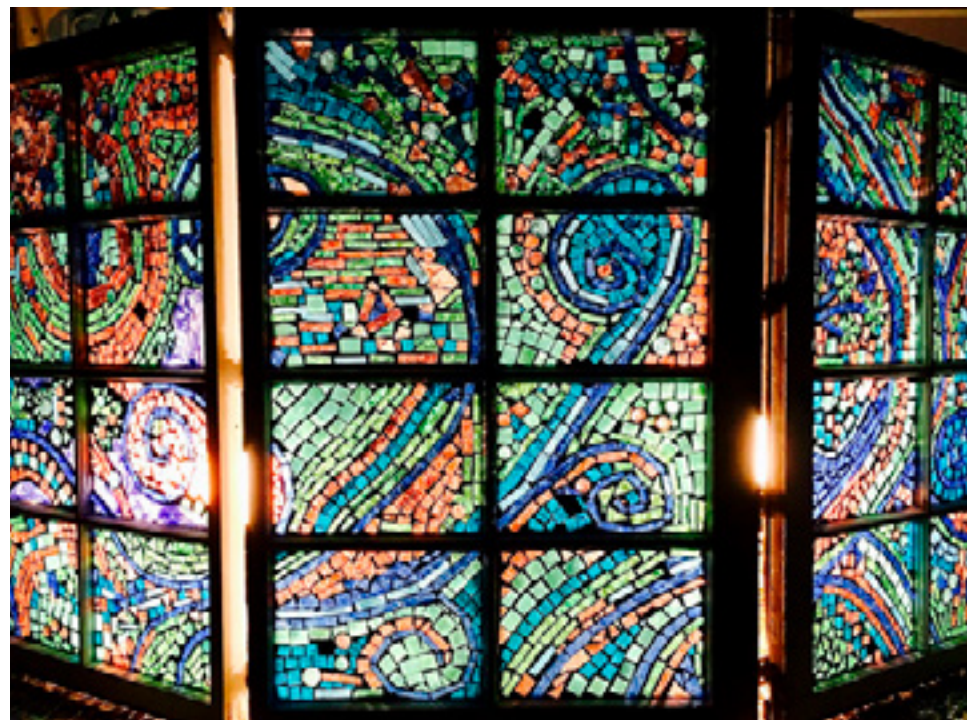
I began to walk the labyrinth in the center of the room, slowly following the lines set before me.

And as I walked....I realized how very alone I feel.

Although we have friends and family, cheerleaders, all around the world, as well as a beautiful community immediately around us, this life is one where few can fully relate. As a Christian, a missionary, a leader, a woman, a mother... I don't completely or neatly fit into any of those groups, and that realization is disheartening sometimes.

So I walked "my line" carefully placing one foot slowly in front of the other. In my peripheral vision, parallel lines came into view on either side of me. And it occurred to me, "I'm really not the only one here. There are others walking a similar path and we're in this together!"

Throughout the week, we were invited to collaborate in a piece of art. Broken pieces of colored glass, individually placed but then united to form a beautiful reflection of this community. The mosaic we created balances the brokenness and beauty that we collectively hold, shows the undercurrents of the movement of the Spirit in the midst of the darkness we see, and manifests the glorious beauty that transpires when we allow Light to shine through us, together.



CONNECT WITH
ANDREA:

andrea.baker@wordmadeflesh.org



@wordmadefleshbolivia



ABOUT ANDREA

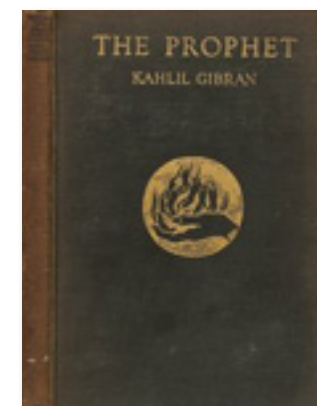
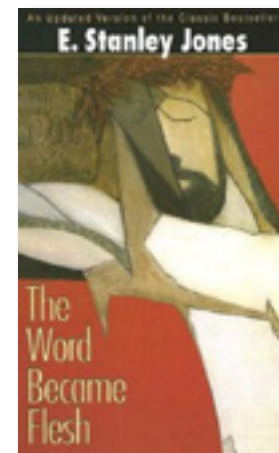
In 1994, Andrea traveled to Bolivia on her first overseas mission trip. There she discovered a passion for missions and a heart for the poor. Following this, she and her husband, Andy, traveled on various short-term trips to China and throughout Latin America. In 2001, they moved to El Alto, Bolivia with Word Made Flesh to begin their service among the poor, focusing on women in prostitution. Andrea is the Field Director of WMF-Bolivia where she lives with her husband and four sons.

ON INTIMACY

As we reflect on this lifestyle celebration, we invite you to explore some of our staff top picks from media and resources that deal with intimacy.

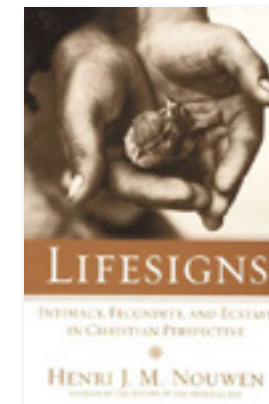
Read

E. STANLEY JONES is one of the most influential missionaries/theologians of the twentieth century. His book *The Word Became Flesh* includes 364 daily devotionals revolving around John 1:14 and its meaning for a transformed life. From his wide experience with world religions and contact with believers across the globe, E. Stanley Jones explains the difference between Christianity (in which God reaches toward humanity through Jesus Christ) and other faiths (in which humanity reaches toward God in various ways).



KAHLIL GIBRAN was a Lebanese-American artist, philosopher and writer most known for his work, "The Prophet", a book of 26 prose poetry fables. The prophet, Almustafa, has lived in the foreign city of Orphalese for 12 years and is about to board a ship which will carry him home. He is stopped by a group of people, with whom he discusses topics concerning life and the human condition. Topics include: love, marriage, children, freedom, reason and passion, pain and self-knowledge, among others.

HENRI NOUWEN, in his now classic work "Lifesigns," explores what he saw as three of the most vital aspects of his ministry. The first of these is the Gospel invitation to intimacy, which Nouwen describes as communion with God and relationship with others. The second is the call to fecundity, exhorting us to be open to a fruitful life of change and growth. And the third, the experience of ecstasy, extends the Gospel promise "that your joy may be full."



Watch



THE POWER OF FORGIVENESS To forgive someone can be simple. But this simple act can have powerful consequences – and may lead to personal and spiritual transformation.

Recently, the study of forgiveness has come into its own. Researchers are examining the psychological and physical effects of forgiveness under an

amazingly wide variety of conditions, ranging from petty insults to sexual assault to 9/11. Clinicians now help guide people to forgive transgressions and get on with their lives.

From Ground Zero to Northern Ireland to the Amish countryside, The Power of Forgiveness explores this important concept, and reveals how forgiveness can transform your life. Rent it [here](#).

Listen



OVER THE RHINE is an Ohio-based folk music band, the core of which is the husband-and-wife team of pianist/guitarist/bassist Linford Detweiler and vocalist/guitarist Karin Bergquist. They have been around since 1991 and are still making music today. There is an intimate quality to their music, coupled with deeply meaningful lyrics — a combination that gives us a unique listening experience. Check out their album, "[The Long Surrender](#)," considered by many critics to be one of their top offerings.

Follow Word Made Flesh



Holy Wounds

By Ashley Brown, WMF Board Member

Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, “We have seen the Lord!”But he said to them, “Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe.” A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”Then he said to Thomas, “Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.” Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

The first time I went to Rwanda, I met a man in a medical ward who had a tunneling wound that went from his outer thigh all the way to his femur. The nurses and I spent at least an hour a day pulling out gauze from the site and repacking it with a clean dressing. While the process was painful and often met with a scowl from our patient, all parties endured the daily procedure with hope that with the careful care of the wound, one day it would be nothing but an intense scar.

Ever since this experience I have found wounds to be particularly fascinating. Maybe that is a morbid thing for a person to admit, but maybe that’s also why I love being a nurse. To me there is nothing more sacred then being a part of the slow restorative process of which the body is capable. God did indeed create something beautiful and good when he designed our human bodies. Our bodies are sturdy, and fragile, complex, and incredibly simple all in the same breath; they are capable of so much restoration. This being said, sometimes it is nearly impossible to heal without allowing others into the painful spaces of our wounds; physical, spiritual, emotional, and mental.

Visiting WMF-Rwanda this past May with the WMF Discovery Team, this truth was made even more apparent to me while listening to the stories of two Rwandans. Sitting around a large wooden table, sharing a pot of African tea, our team listened as Alice and Emmanuel told of how their lives became intertwined during the Rwandan Genocide. Alice, who bears multiple scars from her experience, hid in the swamp during the genocide. It was there that Emmanuel and several others cut off her hand, took a machete to her head and left her for dead. Miraculously Alice survived.

Much later, Emmanuel, who had admitted to his part as a perpetrator, had begun to help build houses for those who had been devastated by the genocide. One day Alice decided to join the group in order to assist in the process of restoration.

(Center) Ashley tends to a man with a large, tunneling wound during her time in Rwanda.

Emmanuel immediately recognized her, and approaching her one day, confessed what he had done and asked Alice’s forgiveness. Alice, through a deep understanding of God’s grace, love, and mercy, forgave Emmanuel and they began the painstaking process of healing together. Today, they continue to tell their story to encourage others that forgiveness is possible. They share that even though the process of healing is hard it is worth it in order to live into the kingdom to which Christ has called us.

“...sometimes it is nearly impossible to heal without allowing others into the painful spaces of our wounds...”

Listening to Alice and Emmanuel, I was struck by how profoundly painful, beautiful, and intimate their story was. While many people in our current society would have chosen to never speak to one another again, Emmanuel and Alice continue to daily choose to love and forgive. They have also

chosen to continue telling their story for the last 23 years. This has not been a journey for the fainthearted. It has meant continuing to recognize the ways they have wounded and been wounded. It has meant continuing to recognize their hurts. It has meant continuing to invite people in to their deepest anguish, and triumph. It has meant continuing to ask Christ to be with them, and in them, as they heal.

Wounds are by nature some of the most intimate parts of someone’s heart and life. They are areas that no one has to let anyone else into, and yet this is what Alice and Emmanuel have chosen to do. They continue to say yes to the intimate process of Christ’s healing and have recognized also the importance of letting others into this process as well.

As a follower of Christ, Alice and Emmanuel’s story reminds me that part of our calling is indeed one of deep intimacy with Christ and one another. In one of my favorite sections of scripture Jesus invites Thomas to touch and feel Christ’s hands and side. He in many ways asks Thomas to tangibly enter into the physical wounds that represented Christ’s greatest fear, his greatest pain, his greatest love, and greatest triumph. These wounds were the evidence of God’s great love and redeeming work in the world.

In all of this, I see that the redeemed Body has holy wounds. And in the midst of already being made perfect, Christ asks us to join Him in this intimate place of continued healing. This is a tension that I still have yet to fully understand or be able to explain, but it is one that I believe is present and important. How do we remain open and pliable; humble and honest in the face of deep hurt and tragedy? How do we recognize the pain, without letting it become all that we are? How do we invite others into our personal wounds and in doing so enter into the redeemed and resurrected life with one another? How do we recognize that despite the ways that we feel broken, we are in fact whole?

Christ invites us to enter His wounds. In this, we share in Christ’s resurrection, infinite love, deep pain, and insurmountable joy. We then are able to share our deep hurt and delight with The Spirit as well and enter into the process of being whole. Like the man I met in the medical ward who day after day looked pain in the face in the hopes of healing, Christ asks that we recognize the fear that makes us uncertain of entering into our own wounds, the wounds of others, and the wounds that resulted from Christ being led to the Cross, and continue forward in faith. God asks that we lean in to these areas of our lives knowing that He is able to shine His love not just into our life, but also into the lives of others in a continual process of intimacy, healing, and transformation.

ABOUT ASHLEY

Ashley is a cardiac nurse in Boise, Idaho. Outside of work, she enjoys dancing, reading, listening to records, pottery and drinking coffee. Ashley is more than excited to be part of the passionate team at Word Made Flesh as a board member. More than anything she desires to journey alongside people of all nations and walks of life, and in doing so learn to live out the love, justice and mercy of Christ.



CONNECT WITH
ASHLEY:
ashleydbrown07@gmail.com



Photo by Wesley Dean, Go ED

Meet our Staff

WMF STAFF



Angelene was born and raised in the southern most state of India, Tamil Nadu. She was influenced by the work and dedication of her parents who were full time workers in Child Evangelism Fellowship for more than 15 years. The missionary stories she heard from her parents and at the children's camps always made her want to commit to serving the Lord.

She did her undergraduate studies in Psychology and post graduate studies in Clinical Psychology. She went on to do her Masters in Philosophy with the special subject as Clinical Psychology and worked as a lecturer in a city college. During her studies and her job as a lecturer in Psychology, she was constantly aware of the nudge that she had much more to do in life than teaching psychology. Her parents, Patrick and Victoria Samuel, are her living examples of serving the Lord. The patience, love and care that they have given to many homeless children challenged her to commit to the cause of the needy.

As Angelene began working with Word Made Flesh, she also worked as a counselor in the Phase I HIV vaccine trial — a project of the New York-headquartered International AIDS Vaccine Initiative — which was the first of its kind in India. Angelene considers both her earlierIAVI work and her current WMF work a privilege since the scenario of HIV/AIDS in India is bleak. Now, nearing a decade as full time staff with WMF, Angelene looks forward to seeing God's continued Presence in WMF Chennai.

CONNECT WITH ANGELENE:
angelene.samuel@wordmadeflesh.org

A colleague at work asked me the other day if I get tired of being "the guy from Canada" and I told him I don't. I guess "where you are from" is always a foundational part of the rest of "where you go." I grew up in Canada but with family roots in the United States. I grew up as a pastor's kid and life was very much about people, ministry and church. Whether it was the Sunday night missionary slides, the youth retreats or the Still Small Voice, I've always had a part of me that resonated with helping people in the name of Jesus in word and action.

I have worked formally in churches as a pastor, helped with house church plants and worked at a Christian boarding school. I've also had a professional recording studio, taught at an arts College and worked computer tech support. I think the best place to be is where God leads you and right now I'm living in Wilmore, KY with my wife, Melissa, of 19 years and our 9 year old twins Jana and Luke. I'm a full time instructional designer at University of Kentucky in the College of Social Work and just starting a PhD program in Education. I'm thankful to have tracked with Word Made Flesh since the early days and more recently started helping with web development.

God is in every part of this work as He is in each one of us. It's so great to be a member of the grand and wild community of Jesus.

CONNECT WITH JASON:
jason.johnston@wordmadeflesh.org

[WORDMADEFLESH.ORG](http://wordmadeflesh.org)

Lifestyle Celebrations

WORD MADE FLESH IS UNITED IN AN INTENTIONAL SPIRITUALITY THAT IS EXPRESSED THROUGH NINE CORE VALUES. EACH ISSUE OF THE CRY FOCUSES ON ONE OF THE CELEBRATIONS

Intimacy We celebrate intimacy with Jesus to be our highest calling and our created purpose.

Community We celebrate community as a means for discipleship and service.

Submission We celebrate submission to Jesus, each other and the poor.

Obedience We celebrate obedience as our loving response to the grace of Jesus.

Service We celebrate service as an expression of our fellowship.

Brokenness We celebrate brokenness as our responsibility in ministry among the broken.

Humility We celebrate humility before God and humanity.

Simplicity We celebrate simplicity as a privilege in identification with Jesus and the poor.

Suffering We celebrate suffering as a willing sacrifice in serving Jesus

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our vision

Word Made Flesh is called and committed to serve Jesus among the most vulnerable of the world's poor. This calling is realized as a prophetic ministry for, and an incarnational, holistic mission among the poor. We focus our energy to make Jesus known among the poor while reconciling the church with the poor.

THE **CRY**

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Word Made Flesh
PO Box 70
Wilmore, KY, USA 40390
1.800.279.4543
info@wordmadeflesh.org