

# THE CRY

*for Humility*

Word  
MADE  
flesh

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We celebrate *humility* before God and humanity.

## 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 CELEBREATIONS

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

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

**Humility** We celebrate humility before God and humanity.

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

**Service** We celebrate service as an expression of our fellowship.

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

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

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

**Suffering** We celebrate suffering as a willing sacrifice in serving Jesus.

# From the Editor

*“Nothing is more deceitful,” said Darcy, “than the appearance of humility. It is often only carelessness of opinion, and sometimes an indirect boast.”*

— Jane Austen, *“Pride and Prejudice”*

I often struggled to “keep myself humble,” which really was nothing more than an attempt at its appearance. After all, humility is one of those virtues we hold with such high esteem within our Christian circles, especially in a pride-driven world.

Trying to be humble is not humility at all. I’ve become convinced that humility ought not be a goal, lest we boast in such an achievement.

So what is the goal?

To “put on the Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 13:14), a King born in a stable amidst farm animals and hay, laid on a lowly manger; a man who embodied a love so extravagant that no greater love could exist — a love exhibited by Jesus in the deliberate laying down of His life for His friends (John 15:13).

The humility of our Savior is overwhelming when He washed the disciples’ feet or insisted that it would be John the Baptist who would baptize Him, and not the other way around. Or when “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross...” (Philippians 2:8).

As often is the case, when we look at the person of Jesus and then examine ourselves, we fall infinitely short. This should bring comfort to us! We could never do it alone. We must face this and let no shame overtake the admission, as shame would only drive us to cover our nakedness with deceit and put on the appearance of humility and love.

Instead, we must embrace that without Him we could never become like Him. To put on “humble” versions of ourselves (or whatever notions we have about humility) is to leave the Lord Jesus Christ off. It is He who has the ability to shine through us and only He who can create in us pure, humble, and loving hearts.

The call to Christians in walking humbly with our God (Micah 6:8) is simply to put on Christ, to wear Him like a garment that covers us. It is to follow Him and to do what He did. Over time, as the Holy Spirit sanctifies, we become more like Him and our nature begins to look a lot like His.

I have been so humbled by how much our folks around the world and the people they are reaching look like Him. I have been challenged to die to myself every day and strive to become like Christ. Over the course of the last year — my first — as Editor, I have encountered people and stories of people who without any desire to achieve humility have put on Christ and taught me more about humility than I ever could have imagined.

The following pages contain the stories and faces of some of these people. You’ll read stories of people who have chosen paths that lead them to emptying themselves daily for the sake of the Gospel. They lay down their lives for their friends.

Some of the articles and pictures you’ll read and see come from people who were born into very difficult contexts and have now chosen to dedicate their lives to pouring love right back into communities experiencing oppressions and vulnerabilities.

I pray that as you read this issue and as we are heading into Advent, that you are moved by the words of humility and wisdom found in its pages. I hope you are profoundly touched by the word “humility” becoming flesh, as it were, first in Christ and secondly in the people whose stories make up this issue. No appearances here. Just the real thing.

**Jorge Castorena**  
Editor, *The Cry*

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*“Humility ought not be a goal, lest we boast in such an achievement.”*

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**Cover/Back Photos by** Word Made Flesh Archives; Back art by Angelene Samuel of WMF Chennai

**Inside** Word Made Flesh Archives: A boy sitting on his mother’s lap near the WMF Chennai community.

**The Cry is an advocacy publication of Word Made Flesh** that invites readers to learn and share in the stories of our friends who suffer under poverty and injustice.

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# From the Executive Director

"I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it" (Mk. 10:15)

"Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." (Mat. 18:2-4)

To lack humility is to be missing a vital component of being like children and not being like children is concerning enough to God that He lets us know: it is a deal breaker related to living eternally in the Light of God. On the other hand, exhibiting humility as a component of childlikeness is in fact so vital that God lets us know that it moves us into a category of exemplifying the very best characteristic of bearing the image of God. Ironically, when we exhibit humility we become the greatest; that is, at the point of caring the least about being the greatest, we become the greatest.

Humility noted as placing a person in a position of "greatest" categorically puts it alongside another biblical characteristic of "greatest" — Love.

What does biblical Love/Humility look like?

"God's love was revealed among us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. Beloved, since God loved us so much, we also ought to love one another." (1 John 4:9-11)

Do children always seem to epitomize socially acceptable "perfect behavior"? If you have been around children for any length of time it is unlikely that

you will answer in the affirmative to this. So, if children do not primarily manifest this, and yet, God wants us to be like children, it must not be socially acceptable perfect behavior that God desires from us. What is it then that God seeks from us?

As those verses from 1 John showcase, God desires from us Love/Humility that cares enough about and compassionately empathizes with the infinite worth of another at one's own expense. As was showcased at the time of Jesus and also before and after

*Humility noted as placing a person in a position of "greatest" categorically puts it alongside another biblical characteristic of "greatest" — Love.*

this time, such Humble Love can often be considered antithetical to socially acceptable behavior.

"This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master

is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father." (John 15:12-15)

God loves us so much that God humbly raises us from an unjust relational categorical status to the status of friends of God. God does not just desire that we are saved from some situation of torment and once done will allow us to meander safely, but disconnectedly about the grounds of Life. Rather, we are Known by God. We are part of the family of God; God says of us as He said of Jesus, "this is my beloved child, in whom I am well pleased." Out of the recognition of being unconditionally loved we can find the strength to humbly give ourselves away on behalf of others.

As friends of God and part of the family of God, there is the recognition that we will begin to be associated with the rhythms of God. Iron sharpens iron. Salt diffuses to surrounding contexts. As part of the vine, we bear fruit. Thus, this means that if we are to Humbly Love after the manner of God then all people are to be considered our friends just as all are to be considered our neighbors as all people are created in and bear the image of God. Love of God and, consequently, love of neighbor remain our core responsibilities. It is vital not to forget how our love is able to manifest as related in 1 John 4 lest we begin to think too much of ourselves and our abilities. Love is a gift. It is a gift to us and by God's grace we are able to share such a gift with others too.



(Right) Time with Rev. Dr. Samuel Kamaleson, retired Vice Pres-at-Large World Vision Intl, on Nov. 20 at Asbury Univ. Chapel. Dr. Kamaleson's influence continues to impact WMF as it did in its early days almost 30 years ago.



A group of young girls outside their home near our community in Romania.

If you have been around children during their earliest years, you will have seen that they are curious, they ask questions – often quite a lot of questions; they seek to learn. You will have seen that children are quick to forgive a harm done and that given a moment's space for reflection they will often choose to share what they have with others if they see another person lacking. You will have seen that unless tragically hindered, children love with expansive breadth – all are welcomed. This is the kind of Humility and Love that God seeks from us.

Throughout this issue of The Cry that is focused on our Lifestyle Celebration of Humility you will encounter material from our communities, from friends of Word Made Flesh, and from resources that we have found that encourage our hearts and souls toward compassionate Humble Love. We hope that these stories move you to seek to be more like Jesus in your own daily rhythms of life. Please pray for us and for the ongoing work of Word Made Flesh among those around the world today in harmful and oppressive situations that are like those people

that – in the midst of loving all people – Jesus particularly saw and loved in His days here on earth.

As you enter into reading the following pieces in The Cry, let me leave you with some words of Mother Teresa who was – and remains – a formative figure for WMF as our folks walked and worked alongside her and the Missionaries of Charity in Kolkata, India during the early years of Word Made Flesh.

*"To become holy we need humility and prayer. Jesus taught us how to pray, and He also told us to learn from Him to be meek and humble of heart. Neither of these can we do unless we know what silence is. Both humility and prayer grow from an ear, mind, and tongue that have lived in silence with God, for in the silence of the heart God speaks.*

*Let us really take the trouble to learn the lesson of holiness from Jesus, whose heart was meek and humble. The first lesson from this heart is an examination of our conscience, and the rest — love and service — follow at once.*

*Examination is not our work alone, but a partnership between us and Jesus. We should not waste our time in useless looks at our own miseries, but should lift our hearts to God and let His light enlighten us.*

*If you are humble, nothing will touch you, neither praise nor disgrace, because you know what you are. If you are blamed, you won't be discouraged; if anyone calls you a saint, you won't put yourself on a pedestal. If you are a saint, thank God; if you are a sinner don't remain one. Christ tells us to aim very high, not to be like Abraham or David or any of the saints, but to be like our heavenly Father."*

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<sup>1</sup> *Mother Teresa: No Greater Love.* (1997) Ed. Becky Benenate & Joseph Durepos. New York: MJF Books. pp. 54-55.



# The Gift of Slippers

(Below) Children of WMF Chennai putting on a nativity scene for the community.

By Angelene Samuel, *Field Director, WMF Chennai*

Oh how she loved it! It was just an ordinary pair of slippers. The kind with a flat base and Y-shaped plastic molded straps and a printed cartoon on the sole. She held it close to her and kept saying how lovely it looked. The sparkle in her eyes and the smile dancing on her face where big enough to melt any heart. The letters L and R were marked on the soles with markers to help her fit her feet in the right ones. She tried them on and took them off for safe keeping. This could have been just any child's reaction, except for the fact that Sasi (Name changed), was being given her very first pair of slippers!

Sasi was three years old and she came along with her younger infant sister Sumi of 15 months. They had lost their mother very early, and the father, who had a daily wages job, was not sure of keeping both the little ones safe. They joined our family of other elder sisters (accas) and elder brothers (annans). Each minute with these sweet children seem to unravel deep dark secrets that you would not like to know. Neglect, abandonment and probable physical abuse flashed before as I tried to assess a bruise there and a cut here and that dark stripe there. I could piece together the untold story of these infant girls, which is common in most of rural India. Since the rural hometown from

where these two little ones came from, generally looks at girls as huge burdens, Sasi (the elder one) in particular must have bore the brunt of family's displeasure over her gender and was met with unexpected responsibility of having to take care of her sister after her mother's passing. Sasi and Sumi's existence would have been considered a nuisance and they would have been mostly left to fend for themselves. They likely ate whatever is leftover and starved whenever the men of the family ate most of the food.

Their father sat stone faced, signing some papers as the two infants giggled, unaware that soon they would be admitted into a big family and would be living in a new environment. There was a quick good bye, with not so much fuss, which indicated they were used to being left in the care of strangers while their father went to work. Their belongings were few. A couple of crumpled dresses and underwear, a water bottle and a baby bottle for milk, with not so much as a drop of milk to suggest that the infant was recently fed. Just gathering them into my arms was so therapeutic. I knew that they would have never been held with love and that they would soon get used to our open arms. It crushed pieces of my heart to think that no one would have

held them so, bathed them, kissed them or dressed them with gentleness and love. Knowing that such precious little ones were not provided with the very basics of love and life was too much to comprehend.

I had my work cut out. Warm baths for both. Clean clothes to wear. Soft towels and bed linen to pamper them and toys to snuggle with. There was one thing which disturbed me lot. It was the fact that Sasi was barefooted. She had walked over rugged paths from her home town, travelled in the city bus and walked on the tar roads of the city all barefooted to reach our home. One of the very first purchases I did for Sasi was a tiny pair of slippers. She had been talking about having a pair of her own, when she saw all the other children in the home wearing theirs. When I handed over her pair of slippers, she jumped up and down with pure delight of having received something very new for the very first time. Her reaction would have been just normal, had it not been for the fact that she had never been bought a pair of slippers. It disturbed me deeply to realize that infants could not have enjoyed these simple pleasure of basic needs like footwear, food and clothes.

We continued to ooh and ahh over her beautiful slippers while I said to her that I like her slippers very much and that I was sure they would look lovely when she walked with them. She just looked deep into my eyes and smiled the most brilliant smile. I asked her if she liked them and she responded, "I love them." It's difficult to describe what happened next. She took her brand new slippers, box and all, and gently placed them on my hands and said, "You should have these because you love them so!" I was astonished. I was expecting a little child deprived of basic needs to grab the gift, mumble a quick thank you and make a dash with her precious gift. But here was I encountering something sacred, beautiful and deep. She simply looked at me and said, "Take it, it's all yours!" It was like a dam breaking loose within me. It is not every day I encounter something so sacred as this giving. It felt as though something warm and squishy was being poured without measure, deep into my soul. I did not find words to reply and just took her and held her close. I told her she was the best gift I could ever have and I wanted her very much to have the slippers. She nodded as though she understood and left with a smile. The richness that poured into my soul because of her gift was profound and shook me intensely.

She gave her everything when she had nothing. It humbled me to know that I did have many resources from which I was giving, and sometimes not so very cheerfully. She personified the beautiful woman whom the Lord commended for giving, not from her abundance but from her poverty. The gift was so powerful, that it twisted its gentle power deep into my heart and sent vibrations all over my being, leading me closer the greatest giver of all — Christ. I saw Christ in this child. I saw the suffering Christ and Christ the life giver all entwined into one. I saw his footprints clearly before me, to humble myself as a child to receive what he was willing to pour in. Care giving can be so work related that it can snap the very essence of serving with humility the Christ we worship. Yet, Christ often comes in guise to keep us humble and filled, sometimes in the child we encounter, or in the very depths of

our soul, where a child waits to be acknowledged in humility to receive the fullness of Christ. This was the gift of the highest order which only the greatest in the kingdom can give. The truly humble child in whose soul Christ abides.

I knew that they would have never been *held with love* and that they would soon get used to our *open arms*.

## ABOUT ANGELENE

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. She did her undergraduate studies in Psychology and post-graduate studies in Clinical Psychology. Meanwhile, her parents Patrick and Victoria, transitioned into work with WMF Chennai.

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. As Angelene began working alongside her parents 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.

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# From Oxford Don to Field Preacher

By David R. Swartz

The gospel narrative depicts God becoming flesh. Living a fully human life, Jesus of Nazareth was born to a laboring mother in the throes of birthing pains. He experienced the fears of childhood, the angst of late childhood and the temptations of mature adulthood — all (and this is where the similarities finally end) without succumbing to sin (Heb. 4:15). Jesus was Emmanuel, God with us (John 1:14; Phil. 2:6-7), and God's identification with humanity changed everything. At the “heart of the gospel of salvation is God's incarnation,” says Methodist theologian William Willimon. The ineffable Yahweh was embodied in Jesus, a lowly carpenter in ancient Nazareth.

John Wesley offers another model of incarnational humility. For Wesley, identification with the poor was not intentional, at least not at first. Much to his consternation, he was forced out of his native Anglican cathedrals by fellow clergy and bishops who were infuriated by the young preacher's social improprieties. So the “dapper little don,” as Skevington Wood described him, who “was so very particular that he could not bear the slightest speck of dirt on his clerical attire,” began preaching on the filthy coal-blackened streets of an industrializing England.

Over time Wesley reincarnated from Oxford don to field preacher. Covering over quarter a million miles on horseback and preaching forty thousand sermons, he went to the people. He generally preached in the open air: in the fields, in the middle of streets, the main city square, the meat market, and on a flight of steps outside a malt house. He also went inside prisons, asylums, private homes, and hostels. According to theologian Albert Outler, the evangelist encountered what became his “chosen constituency: ‘Christ's poor.’” Wesley embraced the heckles and odors of the “uncouth mob.”

His ministry took particular shape: not just to, but among the poor. He did not simply collect money for the poor, as most aid societies of the time did. In the context of a deeply stratified society that often blamed the victim, Wesley and his Methodist colleagues ate with, confessed with, and prayed with the poor. Class meetings were intimate, consisting of each member “relating his own experience during the previous week, his joys, and his sorrows; his hopes and his fears; his conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil.” The rich and poor alike sought to relate “the state of his or her soul.” Like Christ who “emptied

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*(Opposite) A depiction of John Wesley preaching in the street. Photo courtesy of Wiki Commons.*

himself, taking the form of a slave” (Phil. 2:6-7), Christians should adopt a “gospel poverty,” said Wesley's brother Charles, who believed that Christ and the first apostles “were themselves deliberately poor” because the poor “uniquely bear the image of Christ.”

Living with the poor—even becoming poor themselves—generated within the early Methodists a feel for the warp and woof of poverty. After extensive travel and research on the problems of hunger and unemployment, Wesley blamed government policy, economic management, and societal choices more than indigent drunkenness and idleness. He wrote, “One great reason why the rich in general have so little sympathy for the poor is because they so seldom visit them. ... Many of them do not know, because they do not care to know: they keep out of the way of knowing it—and then plead their voluntary ignorance as an excuse for their hardness of heart.” By contrast, Wesley told his congregations, “in the place of every poor [person] and deal with him as you would [think?] God should deal with you.”

This emphasis on incarnation had profound consequences. Identification with “the other” provoked “a holy dissatisfaction,” according to theologian Theodore Runyon, that “goes beyond any status quo.” It provoked Wesley to object to industrial capitalism, the slave trade, patriarchy, and a religious establishment that valued intellectual assent and doctrinal conformity above all. Runyon suggests that the poor of England, as Wesley attended to them with humility, “found their voice.” When Wesley declared that “the world is my parish” at Fetter Lane Chapel in London, it was not an imperial order from the upper classes to conform. “We require no unity in opinions, or in modes of worship,” declared Wesley, “but barely that they ‘fear God and work righteousness.’” An incarnational humility characterized his mission.

What we believe is important. But Wesley's example — and the approaching Christmas season — remind us that how we believe is just as important.



## ABOUT DAVID:

David R. Swartz began teaching history at Asbury University after earning his Ph.D. from the University of Notre Dame. Areas of teaching and research interest include American religious history, Anabaptism, global religion, and issues of war and peace. He is the founder and faculty sponsor of Plowshares, a Central Kentucky group that promotes peace and reconciliation. David published his first book in 2012 with the University of Pennsylvania Press, garnering positive reviews from *The New York Times*, *Journal of American History*, *Christian Century*, *Huffington Post*, and *Books & Culture*. His second project is forthcoming with Oxford University Press and deals with global evangelicalism. David also regularly writes at the Anxious Bench blog at Patheos.

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# Humility vs. Humiliation

By Doris Monasterios, *Executive Director of WMF Bolivia*

Where I live, humility is often measured by the size of one's paycheck. In this context, the word humble is not reserved for the meek and holy – rather it is used to describe people of poor and lowly stature. In my culture, wealthy people are esteemed while “humble” people with less money are seen as less and less significant. While, yes, it often tends to be easier for a person of humble means to better practice spiritual humility than someone of great wealth, it is also easier for their humility to be turned into humiliation as their rights are stripped from them along with their dignity.

My home city of El Alto is one of the largest cities in Bolivia. It is known for being the highest city in the world – the city that sits at the highest altitude of any city in the world. Even though this city reaches such great heights, you might also say it is a humble place. Seventy-three percent of its inhabitants live in poverty, 12% of whom are considered to be living in extreme poverty.

Almost 30 years ago, my family of eight (two parents four sisters, a brother and myself), moved to El Alto from the mining centers of Coro Coro, Bolivia. Growing up in our family, money was always a struggle. So, people grouped us with the humble and poor people of El Alto. Being a Christian family, we didn't mind being labeled as such. We knew that humility could take on a different, spiritual meaning. We actually liked the phrase. However, we quickly learned the difference between being humble and being humiliated – the difference between merely living in poverty and being made vulnerable by having our rights taken away due to our humble position.

My family had been living in El Alto for 10 years when my only brother got seriously ill. He started bleeding from the nose and then suddenly lost his ability to move at all. Doctors couldn't tell us what was going on. They ran several tests and then biopsied my brother's skull, eventually detecting a tumor that turned out to be tuberculoma.

The doctors operated on my brother and, in the process, they mistakenly left a piece of cotton in the right side of my brother's skull. This formed a cyst, causing need for the doctors to operate once again. Because of this

injury and the subsequent faulty surgeries, my brother ended up living with a life-long motor skill disability.

I could hear the doctors saying to one another that our family would not say a word about all of this trouble because we were a “humble” family. We wouldn't be able to do anything to right their mistake. Despite this hardship, I thank God my brother was able to accomplish many of his goals, like finishing school and making a career in music. As my brother worked to achieve these goals, he did so with much humility, recognizing his limitations even as he walked toward his dreams.

In 2002, my father passed away. Unfortunately, his death was due to medical negligence once again. After entering the hospital with severe appendicitis, he died of peritonitis. When he first arrived at the hospital,

he needed immediate emergency surgery. However, surgery was delayed. When he did eventually come out of surgery, his poor condition merited the need for him to be in intensive therapy. The hospital didn't offer this service and was going to need to transfer him to a different hospital. However, we owed money on medical bills and hospital fees there. We didn't have the money to pay for these things. We were working as hard as possible to get the money, but were having very little luck. During this time, my mother said to the hospital staff that my father was dying. She asked, “Why didn't you do anything sooner?”

When the doctors saw my mother, they told her that, being such a humble woman, she didn't have the right or ability to claim anything or prove anything. They unkindly reminded her she didn't even have money to pay for her medical bills, much less for the court costs and legal fees that would be necessary to right this medical injustice. In the midst of all of this, my father died.

In the wake of my father's death, I resented my family's humbleness. I prayed and wished it away – wished we could simply have money. If being humble meant being destitute, fatherless, and causing my brother pain, I wanted nothing to do with this so-called humility. When Scripture called me to be humble, I felt confused and afraid.

In the years since these events, the Lord has restored my heart. He has written His truths in my heart and showed me the true meaning of humility—that being humble doesn't mean not having money; being humble is having a willing heart to listen to the Lord's call despite adversities. He taught me how to recognize His will in humility. It is with that newfound and redeemed sense of humility that I can now say that God has had mercy on my life—even in the hard moments. He has forgiven my pride, and blessed my humble family beyond measure.

## ABOUT DORIS

Doris Monasterios is a powerful example of perseverance, strength hard work and an unending faith in God. She has lived in El Alto, Bolivia for most of her life. Growing up, she experienced the cycle of violence that affects so many firsthand in this chilly, sprawling city.

In 2003, her family began hosting WMF Servant Team members in their home and a friendship grew with the WMF Bolivia community. In 2009, Doris joined the WMF Bolivia administrative team. Her dedication and passion led her to transition to the role of Executive Director in 2015. “The past is still there, but God healed everything,” she says. “This community has been my biggest support.”

Doris is also wife to Daniel and mother to Adria.



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A woman carrying her child on her back.  
Photo taken at our community in WMF Bolivia.



# The Least of These

By Papanie Turay, *WMF Sierra Leone Staff*

I grew up with my aunty, my father's sister. My parents gave me to my aunt to raise me with my older sister because I was my mother's first surviving male child. To protect my life, my parents decided it was best to give me to my aunt, who did not have a child. This is a common thing to do when one's sibling is childless.

I was sent to my aunt when I was when one month old. My experience with my aunt was terrible. At a very tender age I was introduced to street life at Victoria Park, a popular market in Freetown, where my aunty was petty-trading cooked food (Cookery). I mostly spent my time in the street, and my friends were the street children in Victoria Park.

Victoria Park was a dangerous place where drug abuse, prostitution, fighting and gambling were the order of the day. It was not a place for a kid who had dreams and aspirations to succeed in life. There were bad influences everywhere. Because of the crime rate and all the bad activities that go on in Victoria Park, the Sierra Leone police raided that area at least twice a week. I experienced an excess of child labour while growing up. Neglect, loneliness, rejection and other abuses were a major part of my pain. Through all these pain, struggles, and difficulties in my life I chose to be humble and save my aunty.

When Jesus was grown, He was known to have spent time with "the least of these" in society. He walked in the company of prostitutes, of hated money launderers, thieves, beggars, the sick, oppressed widows and little children. This was what is was like to grow up in my community. I neither celebrated holidays nor played as a child. All I knew was working.

As I was growing up, I saw an excess of teenage pregnancies, which were a result of poverty and street living. Girls and boys in the streets had no sexual education, and there were those who would also take advantage of them because of their vulnerable situation. This resulted in the bearing of more street children, and it led to the onward destruction of young people's futures. Prostitution was common for girls and stealing was common for boys. Tragically, most of my friends ended up in prison because of the lives they were living on the street.

Growing up without loving parents and living in such a dangerous community was a hard thing for me. I was thankful to have my big sister with me. She was the one who helped me not do bad things. She was there to protect me, but I was



*Children eat an after-school snack together at WMF Sierra Leone.*

looking for love in a different place. I was looking for a big brother and a father. I was not happy with my family's and community's situation. I wanted to see a change in my life and in the lives of the other young people. However, I was incapacitated to enact that change. I wanted to chase my dreams and finish my education like anyone else.

Before my father died, my aunty said he sent for her. My father was living in a village and he told my aunty to "Make sure Papanie went to school." She told me that was my father's last word. But still, she was having a difficult time paying for my school.

*(Below) Papanie tutoring young students of the Lighthouse Ministry.*



In 2003, I encountered Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone, which helped me to get out of the streets and go to school again. When I joined the Lighthouse program, everything in my life changed and I started to see a new world. Through their Lighthouse program, I have moved from despair to hopefulness, and have learned to share God's love to others. I have developed a passion to do things which give hope to my family and to my community. When I saw WMF's humility and how they loved us, I wanted to do the same thing for others by helping children and youth that were going through difficult times. I started with my small income I get from the Lighthouse program. They pay me to clean houses and do laundry for my leaders. I use

some of the money given to me for my work to help with lunch and to buy sweets for the Victoria Park children.

Jesus' humility demands our own. If you walk with a prideful heart, with your head so high you cannot even see the ground, humble yourself and recognize the one, true King. Know the truth of this Christ King. He is at home among the lowly, the foolish and the cross. He is not ashamed of us in our weak love. But one day, He will come as a conquering king and our pride will not stand against Him.

## ABOUT PAPANIE

Papanie first arrived at Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone in 2003 and was one of the initial members of the Lighthouse Program, in which vulnerable youths are intentionally disciplined and mentored through various activities. It was then that Papanie began his Christian walk and later went on to serve with Mercy Ships for three years, travelling the world to preach the gospel. He is now back in Sierra Leone working as an intern with the WMF community and serves primarily with the children and youth.



SIERRA LEONE

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# The Mind of Humility

By Khristi Adams, *WMF Board Member*

At the beginning of this year, I prayed that God would teach me about faith, hope and love. I was so excited to embark on a journey to discover more about these three important virtues of our faith. Last week, however, someone asked me “What is the greatest lesson you have learned this year?” I took some time to think about it and my response was, “Humility.” I thought that by the end of the year, I would have some profound definitions of faith, hope and love that I could sermonize or turn into an in-depth study, but that is not the case. God did answer my prayer, just not in the way I’d assumed. What I have is example after example of how God used my circumstances and the circumstances of people around me to teach me humility. God used the common thread that weaves faith, hope and love together.

As we approach this Christmas season, I reflect on the many lessons that Jesus taught and demonstrated throughout his life and ministry. When I think of what binds those together, it is that same common thread of humility that Christ exemplified from beginning to end. In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul writes to the Philippian church about the humbled, yet exalted Christ. He writes about Jesus who, through God, became a man and “made himself of no reputation.” He continues by stating that Jesus’ humility didn’t stop there. Jesus continued even until the end of his life in that

same humility and “humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death.” Jesus de-elevated himself and lived on the margins with humanity. There was no single instance or lesson in humility for Jesus. It was who he was, it was his character and it was his lifestyle. It has made me think that maybe I should stop thinking of humility as one instance or one lesson and instead, as Paul instructed, take on the same mind of humility that was also in Christ Jesus.

To be a minister  
of the gospel, one  
must be open to the  
same mind of Christ  
who made himself  
of no reputation.

It is a pleasure to serve on the board of Word Made Flesh, because I have had the opportunity to meet Word Made Flesh staff and partners who are on their own journeys. Though their paths and prayers may differ, I see that same common thread of humility demonstrated within each person. To be a minister of the gospel one must be open to that same mind of Christ who made himself of no reputation. The work that many of our staff

and partners do is not fame seeking or glamorous. In most cases it is not work that will make anyone rich or reputable. However, that is the work where Christ is present because it exemplifies the same mind and spirit of humility required to minister an authentic gospel. It is not one prayer or one lesson, but a lifestyle. My prayer is that as Christ continues to be the glue that binds Word Made Flesh as a family, may humility continue to do the good work of perfecting our souls as well.

## ABOUT KHRISTI:

Khristi Adams is an ordained minister and currently an Associate Pastor at First Baptist Church of Lincoln Gardens. She is also the Program Administrator for the Center for Black Church Studies at Princeton Theological Seminary. She is the author of the book “The Misinterpreted Gospel of Singleness: a cultural critique of myths surrounding singleness in the Christian community.” Khristi is the Founder & Director of “Becoming,” an annual conference designed to empower, educate & inspire girls between the ages of 12-16. A graduate of Temple University and Princeton Theological Seminary, Khristi is currently working on her Ph.D. at Eastern University. She serves on the Board of Directors for Word Made Flesh.

## CONNECT WITH KHRISTI:

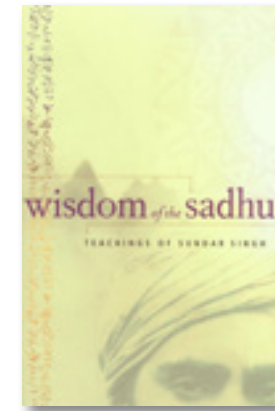
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# ON HUMILITY

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 humility.

## Read



**SADHU SUNDAR SINGH** said, “I am not worthy of following in the steps of my Lord, but, like Him, I want no home, no possessions. Like Him I will belong to the road, sharing the suffering of my people, eating with those who will give me shelter, and telling all [people] of the love of God.” A modern Saint Francis, Sundar Singh left the wealth of his home at 16 to live as a sadhu, or wandering holy man traveling throughout the Indian subcontinent. His beggar-like existence, his intense devotion, and his simple yet profound parables became the stuff of legends. No one who met him – including the thousands who flocked to hear him during his visits to Europe, the Far East, and the United States – remained unaffected.

**DOROTHY DAY** was a highly revered 20<sup>th</sup> century figure. When she died in 1980 among the underserved of New York City, archbishops compared her to Gandhi and Martin Luther King, the *New York Times* spoke of the “end of an era,” and homeless men wept. In her early years, Day had strong ambitions of becoming a famous writer. Soon after her conversion, she dropped everything and devoted her life to help people in poverty, spreading a powerful message about Christian devotion. She fought for social justice, nonviolence, and passionately cared for the marginalized. In this book, you will find a refreshing humor and honesty as she addresses her hopes and fears and her sources of inspiration that daily led her to abandon everything just to love God and people.



## Contemplate

— **WENDELL BERRY, THE ART OF THE COMMONPLACE: THE AGRARIAN ESSAYS**

We have lived by the assumption that what was good for us would be good for the world. And this has been based on the even flimsier assumption that we could know with any certainty what was good even for us. We have fulfilled the danger of this by making our personal pride and greed the standard of our behavior toward the world - to the incalculable disadvantage of the world and every living thing in it. And now, perhaps very close to too late, our great error has become clear. It is not only our own creativity - our own capacity for life - that is stifled by our arrogant assumption; the creation itself is stifled.

We have been wrong. We must change our lives, so that it will be possible to live by the contrary assumption that what is good for the world will be good for us. And that requires that we make the effort to know the world and to learn what is good for it. We must learn to cooperate in its processes, and to yield to its limits. But even more important, we must learn to acknowledge that the creation is full of mystery; we will never entirely understand it. We must abandon arrogance and stand in awe. We must recover the sense of the majesty of creation, and the ability to be worshipful in its presence. For I do not doubt that it is only on the condition of humility and reverence before the world that our species will be able to remain in it.

LEARN MORE

## Listen



**YO-YO MA** and Allison Krauss recorded a wonderful rendition of “Simple Gifts,” a Shaker Thanksgiving hymn about humbly accepting the simple gift of God’s grace. The Shakers are most commonly known for their communal lifestyles and simple living. Established in 1770, the Shakers

emphasized total devotion to God and believed that a life of simplicity and communal labor was the model leading them toward redemption. But simple living was not without rich culture. The Shakers loved art, dancing, and music.

Additionally, reflect on the lyrics of “Bow Down Low,” another Shaker hymn capturing meekness in serving Christ.

*Bow down low  
and bend your head  
Bow down low  
and bend your head  
For I've come  
to sweep this house  
For to sweep  
the Lord's house clean*

*For low I've come again  
And I've not come in vain*

*Sweep high  
Sweep low  
Sweep clean  
As you go*

*Yes I've come,  
I've come to wash and clean  
From this floor  
the stains of sin*

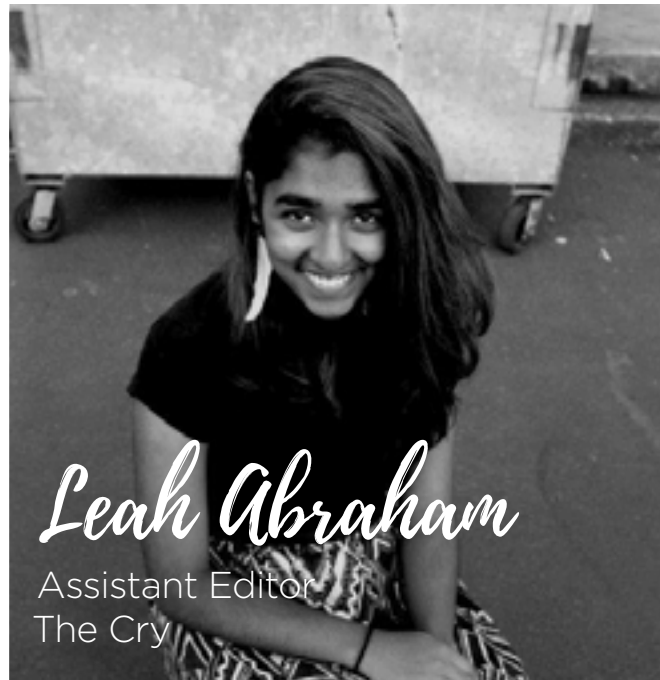
*Bow down low  
and bend your head  
For to sweep  
the Lord's house clean*





# Meet our Staff

## WMF STAFF



Hi, there! I'm Leah. Loved ones call me Athu. I'm a storyteller + writer + journalist + creative + empathizing romantic + pessimistic realist + ISFP + Enneagram type 2 + much more. I live in the Seattle area where I work as a community newspaper reporter.

Having spent half my life in India, I consider myself an immigrant/citizen hybrid. This is perhaps why I have a heart for the underdog and the "least among us."

What brings me joy? Korean food, Mary Oliver poetry and my dorky, immigrant family. What makes me feel alive? Coffee dates, dance parties, asking BIG questions and being a midwife of stories.

That's exactly why I'm grateful to be a part of the WMF family. I get to be a part of bringing the important stories to life.

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Anca was born in 1975 in Pechea, a county of Galati, Romania to an Orthodox family. She has 3 brothers and 2 sisters. In her last year of high school, she started to understand how there were many kids, youth and families affected by poverty, diseases and other difficulties around the community she was in.

When she finished high school, she already knew that she wanted to help the vulnerable, especially children. She didn't know how exactly, but she had this in mind when she began deciding where she wanted to work. From 1999 to 2011, Anca worked through a few NGO's with abandoned children affected by HIV/AIDS and other effects of poverty and marginalization. She has studied social work, sociology and psychology.

In 2011 Anca became a part of Word Made Flesh, first as a volunteer and then came on staff in 2012. She oversees communication and fundraising in the community.

Anca believes in the power of personal example to change things that are not how they are supposed to be. She also believes that whatever one decides to do must be done with gladness and love. "Whatever you do, do it with all your might."

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Thank you so much for your ❤️ of Word Made Flesh. Your support sustains our work. Please help us end the year well and begin the next year strong. Visit **wordmadeflesh.org/donate** with your end of year gift. Thank you.



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(Above) Graffiti in Lima, Peru for “Woman’s Day 2008” - the murals read: “Woman, remember your battle” and “Woman, you deserve respect.”

# "Tú También Tienes a Una Madre"

By Brian Langley, Board Member, WMF Peru

*“Recuerda que tú también tienes a una madre-“ (Remember that you also have a mother),* the man said, just loud enough to be heard but soft enough to not further aggravate. On that dimly lit street, and for reasons that I don’t fully understand, this phrase defused the rage in the other man, who slumped his shoulders, and shuffled down the street. Moments before, I had tackled the enraged man and forcefully confiscated his kitchen knife. Although still very risky, this seemed the better option rather than let him attack his former partner and mother of their child, who had run up to me in hysterics hiding herself behind my back.

Our team had been trying to de-escalate the growing tension between this couple the whole afternoon. To add more fuel to the fire, he had been drinking – able to have a conversation but with much less of a filter. Nothing was working, and as evening became night, the tension between them was growing and finally exploded into his knife attack. Even after his knife was confiscate, he promptly found a glass bottle, broke off the end, and began threatening his partner once more. If anything, he appeared more angry than before.

Until, that is, he was gently reminded to whom he owes his life, and from where, and whom, he came. I was surprised and amazed that this actually worked, more so because it didn’t seem to be the result of any plan or strategy – it just came out, from the heart, right when it was needed most. One more glance over at this soft-spoken man revealed numerous scars and tattoos up and down his arms and neck. Seemingly, he was also familiar with the street – the fear, the

cravings, the loneliness, the pain. So often those who find themselves on the street try really hard, daily, sometimes moment by moment, to forget where they are from because there is so much pain there.

And yet, to remember that we come from somewhere, that our lives are more than just random tragedy, that there might be, hopefully, someone who still cares about us, is power. A good power, the kind that helps us get up in the morning, to hold our heads up high in the face of struggle and suffering, also the kind that reminds us it’s time to calm down, to stop hurting each other and remember that we are connected.

Peruvians, I think, uniquely understand the importance of “place.” Every child growing up in Peru hears their family members, preschool teachers, newscasters, and professional athletes talk about the “Orgullo de ser Peruano.” (The Pride of being Peruvian). I, of course, didn’t “get it” for many years, even after learning Spanish and living and working and raising our children alongside Peruvians for almost two decades. Peruvian pride didn’t quite square with my American cultural values of military victory, political power, and economic wealth as deep sources of national pride. In Peru, one of the most cherished and repeated military stories is of when the horse-mounted general Ugarte rides off a cliff into the sea, flag in hand, rather than be captured by the Chileans during the Battle of Arica. During this battle, Peru permanently lost territory to Chile. The struggle to forge identity is much bigger than winning fights – those who have lost their share of fights are keenly aware of this fact. As long as Peru has been a nation, her people have never



(Top) A boy holds up a sign during check in at the launch of WMF Peru’s newest ministry, “Zero Violence,” a safe space for protection and conversation advocating against violence. (Below) A girl crafting during Zero Violence.



been the strongest, wealthiest, or most powerful. But the amazing and diverse lands in which they live and create their communities are composed of coasts, mountains, and jungles – a unique topography found few places in the world. And every region has her own language, customs and flora and fauna, as well as dances, costumes, songs and food. All Peruvian children grow up hearing about this, learning the songs and the dances from their town and region, as well as going to events where they see, consume, feel and practice the songs, dances and food from other regions.

Our three children have spent their whole lives steeped in these wonderful and powerful Peruvian traditions. They deeply feel the pride of being Peruvian. Truth is like a fish who is now out of water, and I am slowly realizing how deeply I also feel this pride now that we have moved to the

United States. Part nostalgia to be sure, but also the fruit of thousands of shared meals, of smelling the cool crisp mountain air blowing against your cheeks while sipping coca tea among friends and of watching our children stiffly dressed in brightly colored costumes perform their dances before their parents’ and teachers’ rapt attention. It is also the countless times when, feeling very much like a foreigner, Peruvian friends and co-workers softly said to me, “You are one of us now, and we’re so glad you are here.”

To remember that we also have a mother is a powerful reminder that our lives are connected to others and to shared experiences. For most Peruvians, this is a path that reminds them of the difficult circumstances of their childhoods – households often lacking, rarely winning against opponents of all kinds, and being taken advantage of by those more powerful. A path of shared humility for sure. And yet, it is these very circumstances that, surprisingly, become fertile ground for a robust sense of identity and belonging.


The Advent season involves movement on this same path – remembering that we all “come from somewhere”, that no matter how humble, painful, sinful or tragic our beginnings, God was always there. The places from which we come become the fertile ground of our new identity for those who receive what God is doing through the salvation story. It is the pride of realizing that God not only joins us in our story but has done everything needed to include and embrace us into the great divine story of abundant and eternal life.

## ABOUT BRIAN & RACHEL LANGLEY

Brian and Rachel Langley, moved to Peru in October, 2000 to work with the Word Made Flesh community serving among young people who were living on the street. They served 17 years based out of Lima. In June 2017, their family moved to Columbus, Ohio. Both Brian and Rachel continue to serve on the board of WMF Peru.



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**Humility** We celebrate humility before God and humanity.



(Left) A doodle of **Philippians 2:7** (quoted in English and Tamil) by Angelene Samuel, Field Director of WMF Chennai. **"It depicts the feet of Christ, incarnated,"** she said. "These feet lead us in paths of humility and peace. Feet being the lowest part of the body are the least revered. They are symbolically the measure of the depth of Christ's humility in reaching out to us."

## 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.



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