

# THE CRY

*for Community*

Word  
MADE  
flesh

*An Advocacy Journal*  
SPRING 2018 | VOL. 23 NO. 1





We celebrate *Community*  
as a means for discipleship & service.

From the Editor.....2	The Process of Community..... 9	Meet our Staff: Ansumana Bangura..... 15
A Letter from the Executive Director.....3	God’s Table..... 11	Meet Our Staff: Anna Monteviller..... 15
Community: What Comes Our Way .....5	Reclaim. Redeem. Repurpose.....13	Learn More: On Community .....16
Practicing Growth in Faith.....7	Support WMF .....14	Rooted in Christ..... 17



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**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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Recently, I encountered a devotional prompt that invites readers to ask God to show them their journey thus far, a contemplative exercise in understanding how God intimately influences our lives and keeps careful record of our stories.

I knelt down in the spot where the Father and I usually meet, and I asked Him to tell me my story. As soon as I did, it was as though a movie made of memories began to play in my mind. I was remembering my life. Year by year, I revisited many moments, small blips in the timeline of my life that somehow, altogether, tell the story of me. I saw birthdays and chickenpox, our house in Mexico, the plane we flew in when we moved to the US, playing outside with friends, graduations and my ordination. I saw my church and my family and I relived my wedding. I saw accomplishments and failures, laughter and tears, joy and suffering.

How long this went on I’m not exactly sure, but the realization the Lord was bringing me to struck me and nearly took my breath away. It wasn’t the events and memories that had marked me. It was the people.

I saw this decades-long thread of people, one after the other, loving me and pouring into me, shaping me and marking me forever. I saw how much love I had experienced and been given through so many people. How empowered I was by teachers and pastors. How much I had learned from my parents and I saw the impact of the affections of friends.

As I revisited in my mind the communities of people I was immersed in, it became clear that for the most part, the shaping and formation that took place was not always intentional, in fact it often took place in the most ordinary of interactions, and that is a beautiful thing. People didn’t even have to try, yet God provided for me so much through them. He shined His light over and over again in my life. Out of His grace and kindness, He was taking care of me all along through those He brought across my path. In an instant, they became miracles to me.

So I wondered if there were any people in the world whose mental movie reel would perhaps include me, unintentionally being used by God to love, rescue, empower, or help shape them.

And that begged a convicting question: what would happen if we actually tried?

I believe you will find the answer to that question in the pages of this issue of *The Cry*. Intentional community lies at the heart of Word Made Flesh; people who carry the revelation that community changes everything and who live out the mission to establish places of intentional love and togetherness in His name; people whose lives have been transformed by God through others who just wanted to serve and share every bit of the Gospel with those experiencing great need.

In the process, our folks have themselves found community and have been touched and changed by those they went to serve.

Having established communities around the world, WMF folks are doing life together with people who find themselves in extraordinarily vulnerable situations. They’re doing it on purpose because this was the model given to us by Christ. He came to us and dwelt among us, not by accident but by divine purpose, because He loved us.

And He came, communing with us and inviting us into a deep fellowship with Him, the Father, the Spirit, and with others, altering humanity’s story forever.

“But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.” 1 John 1:7

What joy fills my heart at the thought of widows and orphans, families and entire communities getting to one day play the movie reel of their lives, their journeys thus far, and remember how Jesus found and loved them through intentional people who moved into the neighborhood and simply brought light where there was none before — this is *true* community.



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# From the Executive Director

Friends, throughout this issue of *The Cry* on **Community** you will read about how the people of Word Made Flesh are daily, faithfully seeking to build and sustain communities patterned after examples that God gives us throughout the Scriptures of – in the phraseology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer – **doing life together**.

Considering the idea of *community*, we are the Body of Christ *together*. We all need each other; we each play a role. One of our responsibilities as members of the Body is to be mutually encouraging. We hope that you are encouraged in learning about WMF folks daily, faithfully saying “yes” to Jesus’ call to them.

Our prayer is that upon reading this issue you will be inspired in your own life to take further steps to seek to be just and compassionate in all your interactions. Our hope also is that you will pray for Word Made Flesh and that being encouraged in learning about our work around the world that you would become a financial supporter of WMF and tell others about our faithful efforts too. Our people seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus in deeply under-resourced areas; partnership in enacting the work of the Good News of the Gospel is vital to sustained engagement.

As we are people who seek to follow after Jesus Christ, it is right and good that Word Made Flesh has *Community* as a Lifestyle Celebration (that is, as a spiritual discipline).<sup>1</sup> I am thankful that we can focus on the topic of *Community* in this issue of *The Cry*.

**The idea of community is central to living life as a Christian.**

While theological discussions about the way in which the Trinity ought to be understood at times seem interminable, it is agreed upon by essentially everyone that God is deeply relational in nature. God the Son grew-up deeply embedded in and often struggling with community. God the Father is seen as Creator – the Establisher of the possibility of community in the first place. God the Holy Spirit is

understood as Connector *par excellence*. Overall, not only with God, but whole the Biblical narrative is replete with examples showcasing possibilities of communal existence. Even recognizing that there are potential pitfalls to community, from the beginning we are shown that isolation is not a healthy option. “Then the Lord God said, “It is not good that the human being (Heb. “*ha-adam*”) should be alone...” (Gen. 2:18) For better and for worse, we navigate our existence through interrelationality.

Again, community is core to Christian life.

## The idea of *Community* is central to living life as a *Christian*.

Community as God-breathed can be very beautiful; yet, community – always composed of finite, fallible, human beings – can also be a very dangerous thing.

Dangerously, community focused on a particular people-group can become insular and antagonistic toward others who differ from primary social group norms. However, community patterned after a relationally compassionate God desiring the good of all people tends to better find creative ways to include new ideas and people into its matrices. God-breathed community while always seeking to care for all people particularly focuses on caring for those “outside the camp,” those who have experienced various harms of injustice, marginalization, impoverishment, exclusion, anomie, alienation, and the like.

Throughout Scripture we see many examples of biblically faithful community that seeks to compassionately welcome and make room for others. Ultimately, no group is left out of God’s care. As God-followers, we too are

called to emulate this focus in our own communities.

In his classic *Life Together* Dietrich Bonhoeffer has written, “[The person] who loves [their] dream of a community more than the Christian community itself becomes a destroyer of the latter...”<sup>2</sup>

What might Bonhoeffer mean? Have you ever noticed that things rarely (if ever) turn out exactly as planned? It is perhaps helpful to consider that if frustrations about what didn’t occur prohibit celebrating the people with whom you journey then you may well love your dream of Christian community more than the thing itself.

Bonhoeffer offers a difficult concept. How is one supposed to construct organizational systems/structures/processes/methods in hopes of sustaining good work and perpetuating fellowship without falling into the dilemma of loving a dream of community more than the actuality that will always be experienced? How might there be room for healthy critique if persons do not faithfully respect agreed to forms of covenant without being charged, per se, with loving a form of community but denying the reality thereof?

Bonhoeffer shares some thoughts:

The serious Christian, set down for the first time in a Christian community, is likely to bring...a very definite idea of what Christian life together should be and to try to realize it....The person who fashions a visionary ideal of community demands that it be realized by God, by others, and by himself. Such a person enters the community of Christians with their demands, sets up their own law, and judges the brethren and God Himself accordingly. This person stands adamant, a living reproach to all others in the circle of brethren. This person acts as if they are the creator of the Christian community, as if their dream binds people together. When things do not go their way, they call the effort a failure. When their ideal picture is destroyed, they see the community going to smash. So such a person becomes, first an accuser of their brethren, then an accuser of



The staff of WMF-Bolivia on a recent community retreat

God, and finally the despairing accuser of their own self...But God’s grace speedily shatters such dreams. Just as surely as God desires to lead us to a knowledge of genuine Christian fellowship, so surely must we be overwhelmed by a great disillusionment with others, with Christians in general, and, if we are fortunate, with ourselves...*Only that fellowship which faces such disillusionment, with all its unhappy and ugly aspects, begins to be what it should be in God’s sight, begins to grasp in faith the promise that is given to it.* [language updated for gender inclusiveness; added emphases mine]<sup>3</sup>

**Christian community must move beyond the sense that it can ultimately manufacture itself.** So, what is the promise given to Christian community referred to by Bonhoeffer above?

Because God has already laid the only foundation of our fellowship, because God has bound us together in one body with other Christians in Jesus Christ, long before we entered into common life with them, we enter into that common life not as demanders but as thankful recipients. We thank God for what He has done for us. We thank God for giving us brethren who live by His call, by His forgiveness, and His promise. We do not complain of what

God does not give us; we rather thank God for what He does give us daily. And is not what has been given us enough: brothers and sisters, who will go on living with us through sin and need under the blessing of His grace? Is the divine gift of Christian fellowship anything less than this, any day, even the most difficult and distressing day? *Even when sin and misunderstanding burden the communal life, is not the sinning brother or sister still a brother or sister, with whom I, too, stand under the Word of Christ? Will not their sin be a constant occasion for me to give thanks that both of us may live in the forgiving love of God in Jesus Christ? Thus the very hour of disillusionment with my sibling becomes incomparably salutary, because it so thoroughly teaches me that neither of us can ever live by our own words and deeds, but only by that one Word and Deed which really binds us together the forgiveness of sins in Jesus Christ. When the morning mists of dreams vanish, then dawns the bright day of Christian fellowship.* [language updated for gender inclusiveness; added emphases mine]<sup>4</sup>

All kinds of questions of “how-to” practical implementation for community will always remain. As Christians what we must come back to again and again is that all “how-to” plans and procedures should

constantly be laid at the feet of Jesus and made subordinate to the Love of God, the kind of Love that would leave the flock in order to seek the one lost sheep. (Mat. 18:12-14; Luke 15:3-7) In some fashion, community that is Christian in nature will always focus on including as full members those who would often be left-out, disenfranchised, discarded, abused, and the like.

May God give us strength and creative ingenuity to love one another well as He has first loved us. May we not love our dreams of community, but instead love God’s idea of Beloved Community.

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.” (Eph. 3:20-21)

**CLINT BALDWIN**

Executive Director, Word Made Flesh

<sup>1</sup> <http://wordmadeflesh.org/about/>

<sup>2</sup> Bonhoeffer, Dietrich. 1954. *Life Together*. (1954) Dietrich Bonhoeffer. New York: Harper One. p. 27.

<sup>3</sup> Bonhoeffer, pp. 26-28.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 28-29.

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# What Comes Our Way

By Shelby Renfro, Field Director, WMF Rwanda

**WHEN I MOVED TO RWANDA**—once I decided to join Word Made Flesh—I had an idea of the kind of community that I wanted to be in. Word Made Flesh (WMF) excited me because of the way it celebrates community as part of a life of service among the poor. This was beautiful to me. I spent three months living with the WMF community in Romania and loved being part of a community that was established and with people who worked well together. I came to Rwanda excited about the possibility of getting to build the community from scratch. However, this came with its own dangers, as I could not keep myself from dreaming of the community that I wanted to create.

In *Life Together*, Bonhoeffer says that the person who loves the idea of community more than the community itself will destroy it. That person's vision for what the community should be can cause them to enter into it as one who is demanding God to meet their vision, rather than a thankful recipient of fellowship and communion. "If we do not give thanks daily for the Christian fellowship in which we have been placed, even where there is no great experience, no discoverable riches, but much weakness, small faith, and difficulty; if on the contrary, we only keep complaining to God that everything is so paltry and petty, so far from what we expected, then we hinder God from letting our fellowship grow according to the measure and riches which are there for us all in Jesus Christ." (Bonhoeffer, 29).

Many of you have been following the story of our dear friend and WMF community member, Immaculee, who has had

complications and health issues surrounding pregnancy over the last year. Much of the season of Immaculee's pregnancy felt like a dry season for our small community. Immaculee was bedridden for the final four months or so, and Annie and I were still struggling to learn Kinyarwanda and could not lead our programs without her. Many of my dreams for the year fell through the cracks in those months as we cared for Immaculee. Every two weeks I borrowed a car from a friend and spent hours driving Immaculee to and from various doctor's appointments all across the city. Those days spent in waiting rooms rather than participating in ministry among the most vulnerable in our city felt like days without discoverable riches.

At last, after a year of struggle and loss, baby Hope was born. As we left the hospital the next day, Immaculee said to Annie and I, "Now that she is here, I don't even remember yesterday." All of the days she spent bedridden in pain over the last several months, the fear she felt as we rushed to the hospital the day before, the pain of labor—all forgotten in the full joy of carrying her baby out of the hospital. I felt the same. In the wonder of this new life, I forgot my frustration with the weakness and difficulty experienced in our community over the last year. When we arrived at Immaculee's home, all 15 women we have been working with over the last year were there waiting for us, and together we celebrated new life in our community. We don't get to choose our community. Moreover, we don't get to choose whether that community experiences joy or lament. We have to carry both and celebrate what comes to us.



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## ABOUT SHELBYE:

Shelbye is proud to be an Oregonian. She and her younger sister were raised in the suburbs of Portland by two incredible, encouraging parents. She grew up surrounded by a loving church community who challenged her to seek Jesus with her whole heart from a young age.

Shelbye had the opportunity to travel several times to both Kazakhstan and Mexico as a teenager where she was deeply moved by the injustice and poverty that she witnessed. During her senior year at George Fox University she spent a semester in Kigali, Rwanda where her worldview was forever changed. She graduated from George Fox with a B.A. in International Studies and a passion for seeking peace and justice in her daily life.

Shelbye has been working with Word Made Flesh since May of 2014 as an intern in the US office, and later on a servant team with WMF Romania before returning to Rwanda to start a WMF community. She will be beginning graduate studies in Global Development and Justice through an online program with Multnomah University early next year. Shelbye has been living, working, and eating goat brochette in Rwanda since November 2015.

(Opposite) Some of the women in our WMF Rwanda economic empowerment group singing together.

RWANDA



Shelbye and her friend Epiphany, who is one of the members of the economic empowerment group.

**“THE PERSON WHO LOVES THEIR DREAM OF  
COMMUNITY WILL DESTROY COMMUNITY, BUT  
THE PERSON WHO LOVES THOSE AROUND THEM  
WILL CREATE COMMUNITY.”**

**- DIETRICH BONHOEFFER**

LIFE TOGETHER: THE CLASSIC EXPLORATION OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY



# Community: Practicing Growth in Faith

By Stuart Erny, Life Coach at the Excel Center; WMF Advisory Council Member

**AS 2017 CAME TO A CLOSE** I, along with my family and a few close friends, rang in the New Year in our usual way: each person came with a rock in their pocket. As we sat in a circle, we took turns naming the ways that God had been faithful to us in the past year and placing our rock on a candle-lit table in the center of the room. Following the example of the ancient Israelites, we created an Ebenezer or “stone of help” to serve as a marker for the present and a reminder for the future of God’s faithfulness (1 Sam. 7:12; see also Gen. 35:14; Josh. 4:9, 24:26; 1 Sam. 14:35). Later, we will gather the rocks, cement them into a garden stone and give it to one of the families/individuals.

From the very beginning, community has been a core value of Word Made Flesh (WMF). At the center of WMF was the conviction that the self-giving, ever-flowing community of the Father, Son and Spirit is that which provides the

blueprint for a life of love, the pattern for our communities, and indeed the basis for all reality. The early years of WMF also coincided with a renewed focus, within the wider church, on community, that took shape in such forms as “intentional communities”, “missional communities”, “new monasticism” and its international counterpart, “new friars”—all inspired by the early church’s countercultural community of radical hospitality and sharing. Consider this list of things shared amongst the members of the early church community: property, possessions, money, meals, worship and fellowship (with a focus on the Eucharist and the apostles’ teaching), and prayer (Acts 2:42-47).

My wife, Christine, and I resonate deeply with the vision of Word Made Flesh, and while we, especially during our years in Nepal, adopted many of its facets, we never fully joined an intentional community. I admit that I felt a degree of guilt over

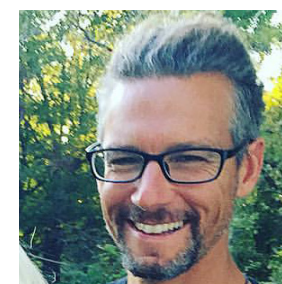
this and for a time continued to look for the opportunity to join or create such a community—as evidence that I was taking the call to community seriously. Christine and I, in time, had three children of our own and eventually it dawned on me that the five of us made up an intentional community of radical hospitality and sharing.

Our band of five, which eventually grew to include members of our extended family and a few close friends, became our nexus of transformation, our “school of love” and the primary place in our lives where the idea of community was fleshed out. We worship, fellowship and serve together. We share possessions and resources. We enact regular rituals (like the Ebenezer mentioned above) to mark the passage of time to remember the goodness of God; to celebrate the good gifts of life and to lament its sorrows. We create, borrow and tweak rites of passage to mark significant points along the journey such as when our children reach the age of young adults or when the adults hit mile-markers. These rites of passage involve wilderness experiences, traveling to and serving in other countries, words of blessing/affirmation, stories from the elders and even physical markings like ear/nose piercings and tattoos. Within our family of five, we share the rhythms of daily life that involve household duties, shared times of prayer and sacred reading, art creations, backyard soccer, hiking/camping, poetry readings, trips to the library, maintaining a compost pile and garden, shared meals and hospitality towards others.

We view our life together as not only loving each other well, but also providing the nurture and sustenance for sending each of us out into our unique spheres of living, be it school, work, friend groups and so forth as carriers of love. Seeing our family as an intentional community has helped Christine and I bring a more profound degree of intentionality and creativity to our family’s life. It has allowed us to see that the community of our family, although commonplace and often mundane, is sacred, vital and even radical. Please don’t, however, be fooled by the idyllic picture I have so far painted! We certainly have our share of dysfunctions, mistakes and regrets. Our attempts at life together are more than not, messy, hit-or-miss and more haphazard than we would like.



I share this part of my journey in an attempt to offer encouragement—encouragement to be free and open-minded with your place in a community. Each path is unique. Each form of community, although following age-old patterns, is singular and there are many variations that community can take. Whether you are single, married, married with children, widowed, “empty-nester” or whatever, there is no formula or prescription for your community. So many other factors also come in to play—such as temperament, financial situation, gifts and talents and physical proximity to one another. By all means, seek the counsel of others, read the books, be interested in communal forms both ancient and new, but don’t let any of them be prescriptive, or worse, make you feel guilty for not following their example. The invitation is to be open to the movement and leading of the Spirit—to be intentional and vulnerable and even playful as you live into your way of community—the nexus of our ongoing transformation and conversion into deeper and deeper love of God, self and others.



## ABOUT STUART:

Stu, along with his wife Christine (and sons Wesley and Luke), spent 1999-2001 with WMF in Kathmandu, Nepal. While there, they helped to create a home for elderly destitute women. Since that time, Stu has served alongside and mentored young adults in both the college and adult high school settings. He currently serves as Life Coach at The Excel Center, an adult charter high school in Anderson Indiana. Stu also serves on the WMF Advisory Council.

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*Overlooking rooftops in an impoverished area of Kathmandu, Nepal. (Opposite) Children in the street selling onions and potatoes.*



# The Process of Community

By Andy Baker, *Regional Coordinator, WMF South America*



**ON A COLD RAINY DAY IN EL ALTO** I walked into the SutiSana workshop. The space is filled with ladies hovered over sewing machines. To make your way to the offices, you first have to walk through the middle of the production process. As I try to unassumingly sneak past, one artisan lifts her head and says, “Hola Jefe, el viento debe estar soplando,” which means “Hey boss, the wind must be strong to have blown you in!”

I don’t go to the office everyday anymore. Since moving into my new role as Regional Coordinator (I was Co-Director for Bolivia for several years), I now find myself working in quieter spaces from home and a little further from the daily decision making. At the same time, I recognize my need for community. I need to rub shoulders and be in communion with those that I have come to realize God has placed in my life for a reason. In many ways these ladies have become my family.

You see, I typically wouldn’t find myself hanging out with women making hand bags, from a different culture and with a questionable past. I tend to pursue relationships with like-minded people and bond through shared activity. If you ride a bike or climb mountains we can almost instantly be friends. But somehow in the Kingdom of God, these ladies have become my teachers. Their outspoken and brazen way of speaking into my life calls me back in line and reminds me that they need me, and I need them. Without a doubt God has placed us together for this season.

Community is like a close relationship with a person or group of people. Not the easy kind, but the kind that requires effort and intentionality. It is the mirror that is kindly — or sometimes not so kindly — lifted to help reveal our true self. Similar to how the apostle Paul said that in this life we see through a mirror dimly, but in the next life we will see clearly (1 Cor. 13:12), I’ve often felt like community helps clear the view in this life giving us hope and anticipation for the next. Several eyes or perspectives help shed light on any given situation and often help give insight into my own life. Scripture reminds us that there is “deliverance is in a multitude of counsellors (Proverbs. 11:14).

Opening ourselves up to the refining process of living and working in community necessitates a willingness to grow and move past our current state. In a world driven by self

expression and individualism, there is a hidden treasure found when we willingly engage and even submit to those around us. Henry Nouwen describes it this way. “I am learning that the best cure for hypocrisy is community. Hypocrisy is not so much the result of not living what I preach but much more of not confessing my inability to fully live up to my own words.”

Over the years I’ve learned that hiding or sneaking past people who are my community only leaves me isolated. The same is true with our heavenly Father. We are made to be in communion with Him and with those around us. The greatest commandment reminds us of this truth. So, slowly over time and whenever appropriate I have made it habit to greet with a kiss and embrace those who our loving Father has placed in my life. I rest in the fact that He is our good Father and gives us exactly what we need.



## ABOUT ANDY

Andy loves family and a good adventure. He’s also passionate about his contribution to world. He believes that an honest faith journey will lead us to look beyond ourselves and consider the needs of others. In 2001, Andy and his wife Andrea moved to Bolivia to serve vulnerable populations in the sprawling city of El Alto. Together they founded Word Made Flesh Bolivia, a ministry presence in the red-light district of El Alto and SutiSana, a social enterprise that offers alternative employment to survivors of prostitution and human-trafficking. Currently Andy serves as Regional Coordinator for South America, offering oversight and support to WMF fields and staff in the region. He is father to 4 active boys and husband to one amazing wife.



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(Opposite) A woman sewing at the SutiSana workshop in Bolivia.  
(Above) A family living near WMF Bolivia shares a meal together.



# God's Table

By Lau Archip, Executive Director, WMF Romania

**WHEN WE SPEAK OF COMMUNITY**, many different aspects come to our attention that capture our efforts. We have to accept that the idea of community changes over the years. For me, first, there was the youth summer camp community. Seeing and interacting with young Christians for a whole week, changed my life. I still remember, halfway through the week, saying, “Whatever they have, whatever they are, that is how I want my life to be, too.” Thus, I began to know God, to be known by God, to grow in this intimacy and in obedience to discover my calling in Him.

Next came the years when, as young adults, we wanted to change the world. Our notion of community and service included passion, energy and sacrifices. Later, we learned that planting seeds was our call. This calling produces humility, for what we wanted, in truth, was to make things grow fast, to harvest. We addressed each other, we challenged each other and we encouraged and supported each other; we accepted that what God does is for the long term and that we are just a

small part of what He is doing. Finally, of course, starting our own families changed our understanding again; commitment and an active role became the embodiment of community life.

These changes—like any change—brought pain, suffering and brokenness. I had to reconsider “my” idea of community and “my” vision. A breakthrough occurred when I accepted what Peter Scazzero, in *Emotionally Healthy Spirituality* calls “our need to be ‘alone together.’” It would take pages to write about learning to be responsible, the discovery and use my gifts and to submit and accept help from others. When we speak about changes, Jean Vanier, in *Community and Growth*, presents us with one of the greatest challenges any Christian community faces in the world of today,

“In the past, Christians who wanted to follow Jesus opened hospitals and schools. Now that there are so many of these, Christians must commit themselves to the new communities of welcome, to live with people who have no other family, and

to show them that they are loved and can grow to greater freedom and that they, in turn, can love and give life to others.” The idea of community can take many shapes, but one of the temptations and one of the greatest dangers is when we, as part of a community, begin to “play god”, that is, when we convince ourselves that “we alone know what is best for the community, or for some members” (Scazzero).

In our modern world, with so many distractions, we can take this step by embracing simplicity, by focusing on what really

matters. We can do this by actively remembering Jesus (see Allen Verhey, *Remembering Jesus*, 2005) and by rediscovering together our identity and our lives’ calling. “...However, such hospitality is more complex than welcoming ‘those people into our church’ or ‘making room at ‘our’ table. In the church, especially, it is not our table to which we welcome people; it is God’s table to which we come as equal.” (Christine D. Pohl, *Making Room*).



## ABOUT LAU:

Lau has been involved with WMF Romania for over 16 years now. Lau’s position mainly focuses on teaching the children, helping in the community care department and fixing WMF buildings whenever something breaks down. Lau’s hobbies include playing chess and reading.

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Some of the children from our community center in WMF Romania (for at-risk children) gather fruits and vegetables to donate them to others who are less fortunate.



# Reclaim. Redeem. Repurpose.

By: Nathan Brown, WMF Board Member

**I HAVE THE PRIVILEGE AND CHALLENGE** of being an entrepreneur and a small business owner. One of my companies, Old World Timber, in Lexington, KY, manufactures products from reclaimed wood from around the world. Our motto is “Reclaim. Redeem. Repurpose.”

The wood we use as our raw material has been utilized for some other purpose decades or sometimes even centuries ago. It is typically discarded because its original purpose is no longer viable or useful. This wood has endured much longer than many of our lifetimes. Over many many years, these pieces develop fascinating bits of character that only time and the struggle of passing through storms, heat, cold and wear can create. We process these remarkable pieces of wood into many different products such as flooring, wall paneling, and architectural accents. The driving force behind our customers’ desire for these products, and the reason they place such a high value on them, is due to their one-of-a-kind story, history, and spectacular character.

The community that I am blessed to work with is a very special one. Many of my employees come from challenging backgrounds, in which they made poor choices with consequences of addiction and incarceration. Some of these men have served more than 30 years of jail time, and when they are released, they decide to come work for my company. These men understand, in a way most of us cannot, the meaning of second

chances. It is beyond inspiring to see these individuals start to blossom as they become part of a community that loves, embraces and challenges them after life has left them feeling discarded and forgotten.

The act of repurposing wood, which in its raw form the world sees as worthless, into something new has deep meaning for these men coming out of brokenness. Taking these pieces of wood full of nail holes, cracks, splits and weathering, and with their own hands creating something of exquisite beauty for our customers brings them a wonderful sense of satisfaction. Each and every day I am personally inspired and challenged by this tangible picture of grace and redemption.

Old World Timber is blessed to be able to offer employment opportunity to these individuals who find it almost impossible to find a place that will hire them after they have served their time. Our team is even more blessed to work in a place where we are reminded that this exact same process is one that God desires to do each and every day in our own lives if we allow Him.

As a community of faith, we so often forget that trials, struggles, heartbreak and the brokenness we experience in this life are not accidents. Our loving Father desires only good things for his children. However, He does allow us to make our own choices which often end up bringing painful consequences and suffering for ourselves and others. Thankfully, His never-ending love for us means He will never leave us especially in these difficult times of suffering, pain



Nathan (right) with his staff outside of Old World Timber in Lexington, Ky.

and despair. In fact, in our very darkest moments He is with us. Our Father redeems each and every self-inflicted scar, crack and split, to produce unique and beautiful character in us for His honor and glory.

It is truly amazing to create something beautiful out of old discarded pieces of wood. What is even more amazing, however, is experiencing God’s grace in our own lives as He fulfills his divine work to Reclaim, Redeem and Repurpose.



**ABOUT NATHAN:**

Nathan Brown was born in Arizona and grew up as a missionary kid with Native Americans and then in Barcelona, Spain where his parents served with World Gospel Mission. Nathan’s family moved back to the US where Nathan finished high school and went to college at Asbury University and graduate school at the Patterson School for Diplomacy and International Commerce at the University of Kentucky.

Nathan has been an entrepreneur for the last 17 years founding and operating several businesses. Nathan’s passions include missions, sports, outdoor activities, travel, and spending time with friends and family. He lives in Lexington Kentucky with his wife Katy and his two children Oliver and Stella.

**CONNECT WITH NATHAN:**

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# Meet our Staff

## WMF STAFF



**Ansumana Bangura**  
Acting Field Director  
WMF Sierra Leone

Ansumana was born in Kamakwie Bombali District Northern Province, Sierra Leone and grew up in a Muslim home. When he became a Christian in the late 90s, he was isolated by His muslim community. He became a Christian because he had witnessed Christians forgiving, whilst Muslims found it difficult to forgive.

In 2002, Ansu settled in Freetown with his uncle to attend Albert Academy. He joined Scripture Union and started preaching the Word of God during devotions.

In 2006/2007, when Ansumana began studying at Fourah Bay University, he soberly realized he needed to serve God. He joined Bible Study Union (BSU) SLEFES FBC and began going to conferences and mission trips to the remote parts of the country.

Ansumana began to volunteer as a tutor with WMFSL in September 2010. Since then, God has used him to help shape the lives of many of the Lighthouse youth. Now, Ansu is a staff member serving as Administrator and as Acting Field Director while Cami Goble, WMFSL Field Director, is on sabbatical. He was married to Betty in November, 2016 and they have a daughter named Josephine Makallay.

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**Anna Monteviller**  
National Director  
WMF Peru

Anna Myriam Monteviller Pino was born in Lima, Peru. She grew up in Christian home and continues to live with her mother and younger brother. She is licensed in tourism having studied Marketing and Publicity.

She loves wood carving, camping, hiking, going to movies, and highly values her friends.

In 1998 she met and became friends with the Directors of WMF Peru who encouraged her to serve among the most vulnerable and at risk members of society. In 1999 she traveled to Romania for a field visit to learn more about a different reality of work among the poor. She believes that God gave her a prophetic and evangelistic call to the church and to God's people to denounce and exhort them towards following Jesus' love and care for the poor. She has participated in and worked with the Word Made Flesh Peru community for over 9 years, first as the Vice President of the board of "La Palabra Hecha Hombre" and director of the Job House. She went on to serve as Programs Director and most recently as the National Director.

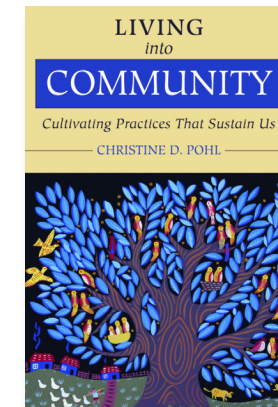
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# ON COMMUNITY

## LEARN MORE

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 community. Click on the images to find out more or, where applicable, purchase a book.

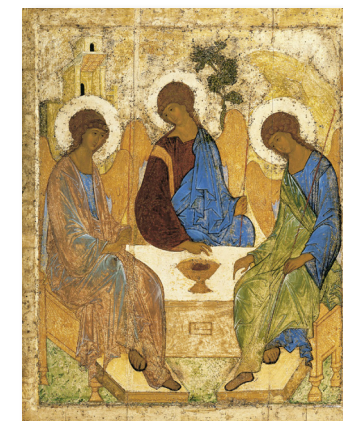
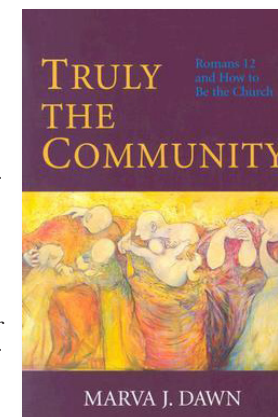
## Read



**CHRISTINE D. POHL** explores four specific Christian practices — gratitude, promise-keeping, truth-telling, and hospitality — that can counteract the destructive forces that tend to pull people and churches apart. In *Living into Community*, Pohl aims to help churches and individuals build and sustain vibrant communities. Drawing on a wealth of experience and interacting with the biblical, historical, and moral traditions, Pohl thoughtfully discusses each practice, including its possible complications and deformations, and points to how these essential practices can be better cultivated within communities and families. Christine Pohl co-authored a book with one of our former Executive Directors and has been a friend of WMF for long time

## Read (some more)

**MARVA J. DAWN** is a theologian, musician, author and educator, teaching at seminaries and conferences all over the world. In *Truly the Community*, Dawn accomplishes what many writers, who have decried the lack of intimacy and community in our culture, could not do: she provide a fully biblical description of community and gives specific methods for its recovery. Through an intensive study of Romans 12, Dawn offers precisely this kind of practical guidance for building vital Christian community life. Originally published as *The Hilarity of Community*, this volume continues to be one of the best sources for understanding what it means to live together as the church of Christ.



## Look

**ANDREI RUBLEV'S** *The Trinity*, also known as *The Hospitality of Abraham*, is a Russian icon from the 15th century. It is Rublev's most famous work and is regarded as one of the highest achievements of Russian art.

*The Trinity* depicts the three angels who visited Abraham at the Oak of Mamre (Genesis 18:1–8), but the painting is full of symbolism and is interpreted as an icon of the Holy Trinity. The painting illustrates the image of *perichoresis*, or “rotation,” a term which describes the co-indwelling and mutually-intersecting nature of the Triune God. Rublev's icon expresses this intimacy and reciprocity, the perfect oneness yet distinct differentiation, among the Persons of the Godhead, which model for us perfect fellowship and community.

## Listen

(Click the image to watch the video)



**AGES AND AGES** is an American rock band from Portland, Oregon. In 2014, they recorded *Divisionary (Do the Right Thing)* live in a living room surrounded by family and friends, other local artists, activists, a children's choir, and a choir of adults with disabilities.

The tear-inducing video was shot in a single live take and captures the creation of music and art in the context of community. “In a lot of ways, I feel like this is the way our music is intended to be: inclusive, communal, and all together,” Ages And Ages front man Tim Perry said in an interview with NPR.

It's a beautiful performance with a beautiful message:

*Do the right thing, do the right thing  
Do it all the time, do it all the time  
Make yourself right, never mind them  
Don't you know you're not the only one suffering*







*"Rooted in Christ"...and Growing Together!*

Painting by Ana Rase, Former *WMF Romania* staff  
Reflection by Rachel Dyachenko, *WMF Moldova*

Upon my 10-year anniversary of service with Word Made Flesh I was blessed by a time of celebration and many gifts, including the unique painting pictured here. The leaves of the tree are thumbprints of children and adults from WMF Romania. They represent the uniqueness of each individual in community and how beautiful we are together. They are reminders of how important people are in our journey. These leaves together help feed the tree (leaves carry out the process of photosynthesis), and they provide shade for those who are weary and need rest.

Following is an excerpt from the text that accompanied this piece of art, a gift I will treasure as a lasting reminder of the formative years I spent in community with WMF Romania.

*"You have passed through all the seasons and they will continue to wash over you again and again. Some of them brought sun and warmth. Others stripped your branches and crushed what was once alive in you.*

*But this constant flow of seasons will only strengthen your frame. You need not be afraid! From birth to rebirth, you will always pass through sleep and death, but your sacrifice and fragility will not be in vain. You have passed through innumerable spring times. Seasons of rebirth, moments of buds and flowers. Seasons of hope. The summertime saw your branches green and prepared you for fruit. These were times of trust. Every summer was followed by autumn, the rust-colored queen who knocked you over with her winds and whipped you with rain. Your leaves began to thin and covered the earth with their setting warmth. This was a season of sacrifice...*

*Your identity is what remains after the passing of every season. Pleasant days, bitter days, those with light and hope, freezing days and times full of fruit will unceasingly pass over your life. But just like the tree does not cease to be a tree, so you too will never cease to be you. And your identity will be fixed in your rootedness in Christ."*



#### ABOUT RACHEL

Rachel was born in Newburyport, MA, and raised in a loving, Christian home. Her heart was first stirred towards missions by her grandparents and other relatives who have spent their lives in East Asia in cross-cultural ministry. While a student at Gordon College the doors were opened to join a Servant Team in Romania with Word Made Flesh. This time of intense exposure and discipleship in community among the poor opened her eyes to see God's heart for widows and the fatherless. In 2002 Rachel moved to Galati, Romania, where she served as Servant Team Coordinator, led worship for the community, and mentored youth at the Community Center and on the streets. In 2010, Rachel joined a team committed to forming a new Word Made Flesh community in the capital city of Moldova. As this team of five began their life together, doors opened for them to reach out to institutionalized children at one of the country's largest former orphanages. Rachel currently serves as Community Care Facilitator and as arts and crafts teacher for La VIA's after-school kids program.



#### CONNECT WITH RACHEL:

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## Lifestyle Celebrations

**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.

“However, community is first of all a quality of the heart. It grows from the spiritual knowledge that we are alive not for ourselves but for one another.

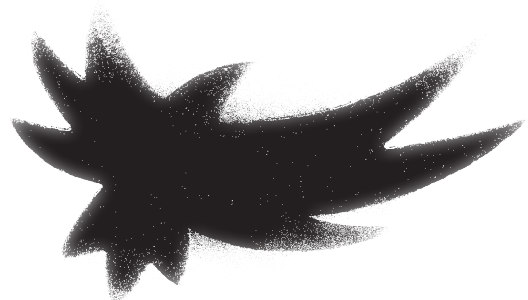
Community is the fruit of our capacity to make the interests of others more important than our own.

The question, therefore, is not ‘How can we make community?’ but, ‘How can we develop and nurture giving hearts?’”

— **Henri Nouwen**

*Bread for the Journey:*

*A Daybook of Wisdom and Faith*



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