

THE CRY

for Service

Word
MADE
flesh



An Advocacy Journal
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We celebrate *Service*
as an expression of our fellowship.

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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.

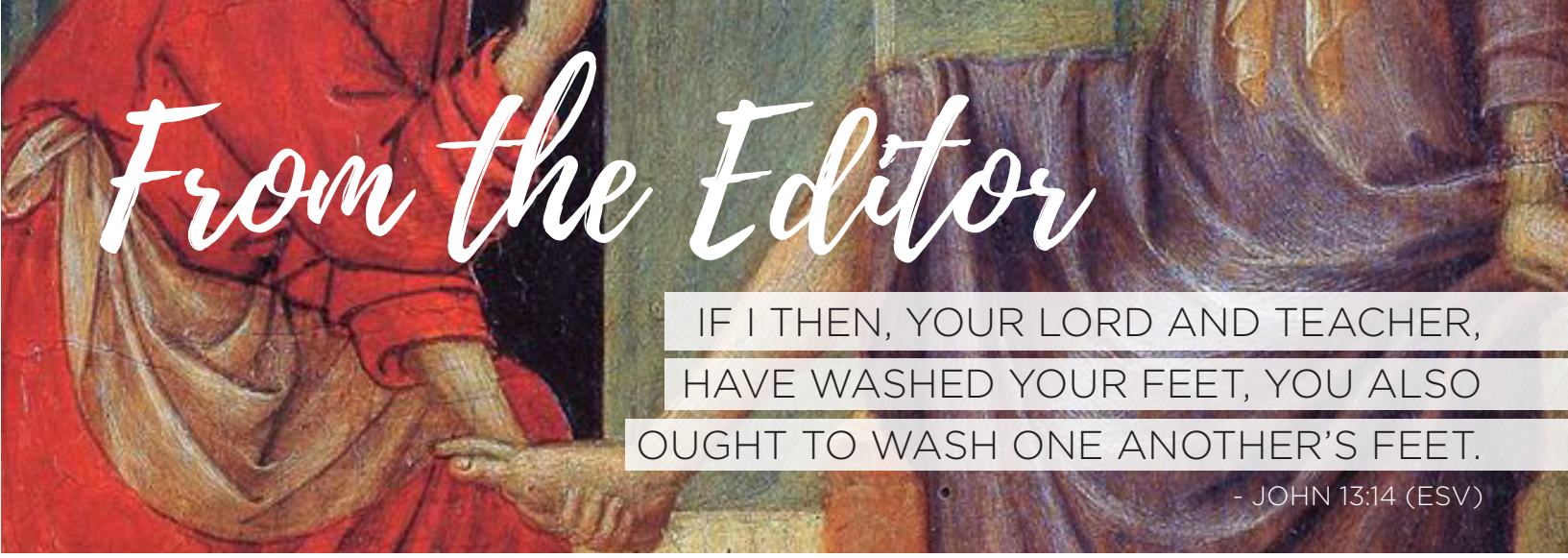
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It's often the case when you grow up in the church, especially at a mega-church like me, that the concept of serving can get skewed. Service becomes a thing of praise and recognition, even used in reference to just the person behind the pulpit or the one praying for the masses.

What about the ones in remote or vulnerable places of the world, reaching just a few and doing so far from any spotlight or public reward? And what of those who aren't called to "ministry" and are instead called to medical professions, or media, or teaching at public schools? Are *they* serving?

Beginning at a young age, I was told that I was destined to be used by God in great (and very public) ways, within the context of the Church. In and of themselves, such words of encouragement aren't necessarily wrong or harmful, but they have the potential of creating a separation between "those who are called to serve" and those who are not, and at best they create a false hierarchy of service (*my way of serving is better than yours*).

Christ flattens this hierarchy and shatters the system with a paradox: to climb up, that is, to get closer to Him and become more like Him, we must go low.

Though I'm only in my 20s, I can look back and see the ways in which I idolized serving, admittedly from a lack of humility (and I still could use much, much more of it). If you had told me that one day I would be working at Word Made Flesh, or (alongside my walk with WMF) helping run a community center for at-risk youth and children in Versailles, KY, I would've told you that I wasn't cut out for any of it. These things weren't my call. And indeed, they weren't, because service in my mind was not anchored in the Lord and Teacher who washes feet.

Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." (John 13:8)

The scandalous scene from John 13 should cause us to look inward and come to terms with Peter's offense: How could the Son of God get His hands so dirty and take such a lowly posture? This is blasphemy! *Surely, it is I who should wash your feet. You can never serve me. You're the Perfect One, I'm too unclean.*

Jesus' teaching here should humble us every day: Yeah, we're pretty unclean, but unless He loves and serves us in this way, we can't be with Him, and we certainly can't serve Him.

IF I THEN, YOUR LORD AND TEACHER,
HAVE WASHED YOUR FEET, YOU ALSO
OUGHT TO WASH ONE ANOTHER'S FEET.
- JOHN 13:14 (ESV)

The moment we start to believe that we don't need Christ's service to us is the moment we stop sharing the Grace and Love that enable us to serve at all.

When you let Him wash your feet, when we receive His ministry to us, we suddenly become aware of how many more feet He longs to wash through us. Thus, service becomes an expression of our fellowship with Him.

This is what our Word Made Flesh friends and family are doing all over the world — being Jesus' hands to wash the feet of those who have been forgotten. They're serving Jesus in His washing of hopelessness, injustice, and oppression off the feet of people suffering great vulnerability.

Washing feet and serving the community looks different from context to context. Whether they are offering play therapy to children in Moldova or working with women among the brothels of Bolivia, the folks in this issue of *The Cry* reflect on the things they've learned about service while on the field.

Kristin Bacher, who serves in WMF Sierra Leone, offers that sometimes serving can just look like listening to others, and Patrick Samuel who founded WMF Chennai tells us that sometimes the best way to serve someone is to love them just as they are.

My prayer is that this issue will both encourage you and inspire you to serve Jesus and wash feet in whatever context you might be in. Perhaps it is behind a pulpit, in a remote village somewhere, or as you work with a patient, customer, or student.

Our work is simply to remember Christ the Servant, and to do the things He did with great love.



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Editor, *The Cry*

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From the Executive Director

“The last temptation is the greatest treason: to do the right deed for the wrong reason.” - T. S. Eliot, *Murder in the Cathedral*

**“Service - We celebrate service as an expression of our fellowship.”
- Word Made Flesh Lifestyle Celebrations (<http://wordmadeflesh.org/about/>)**

“Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” - James 1:27, NRSV

To serve is essential, but service alone is not enough. *Why* one serves is vital to actions being acceptable or unacceptable. Authentically good service must arise from the heart and work its way outward. Ultimately, it is God’s understanding of the state of the heart which is the final measure of true and healthy service not the process or results of actions.

The classic story of Cain and Abel bringing the first recorded sacrificial offerings to God (Gen. 4) quickly portrays for us the principle that *internal motivation is primary and external method is secondary*. God accepts Abel’s offering and rejects his brother’s contribution because of the state of their hearts (Heb. 11:4). The principle of internal orientation again takes precedence when the prophet Samuel is looking to choose a king for Israel and finds David the shepherd to be physically subpar. God intervenes by reminding Samuel that humanity looks at outward appearance, but God views the heart (1 Sam. 16). Fast-forwarding in the biblical narrative we see Jesus showcasing this principle when scathingly naming an unhealthy incongruence between the outward appearance of the religious elite of his day and their inward heart-state. He called them “white-washed sepulchers” (Mat. 23). Their lives outwardly portrayed socially acceptable forms of religious piety, but inside their hearts were dead and decaying. Because of this they passed on death instead of life to others.

They had a form of godliness, but they eschewed its life transforming power (2 Tim. 3).

Unfortunately, being *pharisaical* has remained a continuing problem for many religious folks throughout history. T.S. Eliot’s phrase from *Murder in the Cathedral*, “The last temptation is the greatest treason: to do the right deed for the wrong reason,” is fully about seeking to make sure authenticity rather than hypocrisy defines one’s life. In Eliot’s play, 12th century Archbishop Thomas Becket struggles with feeling that he desires martyrdom out of selfish motivations. Again, we see that it is internal orientation/motivation that defines what is laudable external behavior.

“Love of God and love neighbor go together, but it is God that *transforms* our hearts in order that we may both best *love* God and neighbor.”

So, when WMF offers that service is “an expression of our fellowship,” it is accurate to think that we believe that healthy relationality with our neighbor (in the biblical understanding of neighbor) is a core component of service in order for it to be just. Yet, first and foremost, right fellowship with God is primary. Love of God and love of neighbor go together, but it is God that

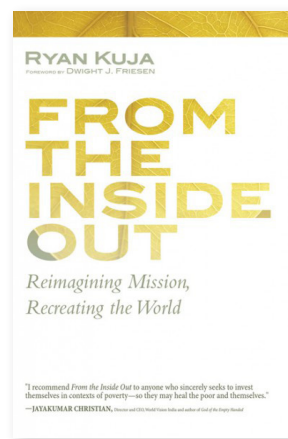
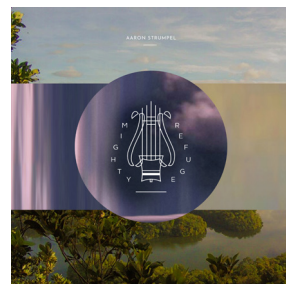
transforms our hearts in order that we may both best love God and neighbor.

All is accomplished by and through God’s grace. Unless the Lord builds the house, we build in vain (Eph. 2:8-10; Ps. 127:1; Jas 2; Luke 12:13-21).

In this issue of *The Cry*, reminding us that transformation of the heart precedes transformation of the world, you’ll encounter a piece about a new album of hymns from our WMF Artist Ambassador Aaron Strumpel. Aaron offers wonderful renditions of the hymnody of the Church - intermingling the timeless and the winsomely timely. Aaron’s singing reminds us that we are Jesus’ hands and feet in this world. We are God’s “ambassadors of reconciliation” (2 Cor. 5:11-21). As Aaron writes in the song *A Mighty Refuge / Guard My Heart*, “Guard my heart with your righteousness This faith will be my trusted shield Guard my mind with salvation Give me hands that can heal ... Fit my feet with your Gospel shoes Buckle my waist with your truth Make sharp the sword of your Spirit Give me songs full of you ... Let my mind be made new Let my heart be set on you Let my words flow from you God Let my life be found in you”

As we ground our lives in God, God graces us with opportunities to lead others to these streams of water too.

Also in this issue you’ll see a book published this month that is written by Ryan Kuja (WMF-Colombia Field Director). The book is titled *From the Inside Out: Reimagining Mission, Recreating the World*.



A teenager near WMF Peru playing the “charango,” a popular South American stringed instrument.

Though not stated directly as such, Ryan’s work certainly explores the how and why of service. Throughout his text Ryan asks hard questions and seeks authentic answers that offer healthy ways forward for living into mission. Kuja writes in his chapter titled *Wounded Healer*,

“...we are invited [by Christ] to move toward rather than away from the wounded places inside of ourselves and our stories. In turning toward the pain and plunging our finger into the wounds [like the disciple Thomas], allowing them to be transformed in Christ, we can go beyond ministry as a one-way street. We are no longer the whole helping the broken. Instead, there is mutuality. When wounds carried by relatively wealthy Westerners meet the wounds of the materially poor, something beautiful is birthed in the space between us. Exquisite mutuality arises. Wounds meeting wounds doesn’t have to equal more pain; it can be a catalyst for reciprocal healing.

Touching our wounds is the way, the only way, into the new. Going into the sites of the wound is to go beyond new iterations of the old patterns and be part of the rebirthing of mission from the inside-out.

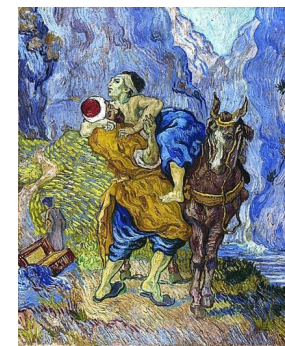
When tended, touched, and surfaced, the wound becomes a canal through which mission is rebirthed. When the wound is touched, the future of global mission is radically open.

The inner work of touching our wounds and the outer work of touching the wounds of the world are one work.” (p.176)

While navigating inner and outer woundedness is indeed one work, inner work takes precedence and undergirds outer work. Both processes are necessary

(Jas 2:14-26), but taking cues from the old aphorism, horses still belong in front of the cart. For WMF, healthy holistic process is often realized along the lines of Mother Teresa’s encouragement of seeking to do *small works* undergirded by *great love* from God.

Please consider purchasing a copy of Ryan’s text. It’s good stuff.



You’ll also see in this issue a painting by Van Gogh depicting a moment from the Good Samaritan story. The Good Samaritan is scripture gifting us a beautiful example of how God-breathed service is meant to manifest. This story directly turns

some traditional ideas of service on its head; it shifts power from the center to the margins. This story, if read well, helpfully encourages us to reconceptualize many of our understandings of service. For instance, in this story, we see that service is not about those with less power, social acceptance, and/or wealth serving those with more of such. This story also shows us that service is not about those with power, social acceptance, and/or wealth self-selecting to serve others out of volitional capacities arising from their privileged status. Rather than the above two scenarios, the parable of the Good Samaritan shows that God-honored service arises from anyone and anywhere (often from people and places we think least likely)

when the choice is made to care for a person in need (“enemies” fully included in this) despite all the choices that one could make otherwise *because our heart compels us forward in compassion*. This is service that God honors and loves!

Finally, throughout this issue you’ll encounter reflections from WMF staff and board members that journey us deeper into the heart of service that originates in and is sustained by God.

I pray that you are deeply encouraged and healthily challenged to love more deeply and broadly through engaging the content you find in this issue. Please let us know here at Word Made Flesh if there are ways that you would like to walk with us in our work. We’d love to welcome you along for the journey.

May the Suffering Servant who is also our Risen Messiah and Lord give us the grace to live as Paul exhorts us to do in Galatians chapter 5 (as expressed via *The Message*), “It is absolutely clear that God has called you to a free life. Just make sure that you don’t use this freedom as an excuse to do whatever you want to do and destroy your freedom. Rather, use your freedom to serve one another in love; that’s how freedom grows.”

Grace and Peace,

CLINT BALDWIN
Executive Director, Word Made Flesh



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The Economy of Service



"I HAVE FOUND THE TRUE PARADOX, THAT IF YOU LOVE UNTIL IT HURTS, THERE CAN BE NO MORE HURT, ONLY MORE LOVE." - MOTHER THERESA

By Rachel Dyachenko, *Field Director, WMF Moldova*

AS WE REFLECT ON AND CELEBRATE SERVICE—

I am challenged to consider what I have learned from my friends and neighbors as a North American living in Eastern Europe. Specifically, my thoughts turn to financial giving as a form of service. I continually ask myself the following three questions and I invite you to ask yourself as well.

Do I give only from the excess of my abundance or do I truly share my possessions in a way that indicates sacrifice?

I cannot count the number of times I have seen a child share his food or candy with another who has none. Nor can I count the number of times I have seen folks share money with a stranger who genuinely needs a few more lei to cover the bus fare home. I think of grandmas and grandpas who share their food with me, food that is literally the fruit of their hard labor in the garden and open fields.

There are so many people I have met who live month to month on a meager salary. In this context, borrowing from a neighbor is quite common. What I observe is that when someone has come up short the most likely person to share with them is not the rich neighbor, but rather someone just as poor who has experienced the very same situation of need. This kind of giving is sacrificial as it comes not from plenty or excess but out of true compassion for the one in need.

What is my response when I am asked to give? Do I simply give from the spare change in my pocket, or do I dig deeper and

offer more than is easy to give away? No matter the answer, I am compelled to open my hands and give.

"Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you." (Matt. 5:42)

Do I hold tightly to the piece of economic pie that I feel entitled to as one born in a culture of plenty? Or do I joyfully invite others to share in the access to wealth that I have been given through no merit of my own?

It seems unfair that a trifle to a person on one side of the world is like winning the weekend lottery to another. In Moldova, men and women work long hours with little time off and still have only just enough to get by, sometimes not even enough. I feel entitled to what I have because I work for it. In reality, however, my brothers and sisters here in Eastern Europe work just as hard (or harder) and yet are paid so much less for their labor due to economic factors out of their control.

I don't propose that it's a good idea to throw money at perceived problems hoping for a quick fix only, to set up systems of unhealthy dependency. However, I do believe that I am called to share what I have access to. No matter how you look at it, as a North American I belong to a country that has been given a huge piece of the global economic pie. It's my responsibility to share it and listen to and learn from friends who were born in places that simply don't have access to such abundant resources.

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." (Jim Elliot)

(Opposite) Two brothers at a playground. (Below) Beverages served for the community-wide Easter celebration earlier this year.

When I give, do I use my relationships and economic power to influence and manipulate how my gifts are used? Or do I choose to give freely with no strings attached, trusting that the brothers and sisters who receive these gifts are best suited to know how to use them wisely in their own context?

This relationship I have to wealth and the power to choose how it is used is the most difficult question for me. I desperately want to help, and somehow alleviate, what I perceive to be suffering. I am embarrassed to admit that I have often tried to give something that actually really isn't needed, like my recent attempt to get a wheelchair for an elderly woman who really didn't want one!

In my annual travels back to the U.S., I have watched things trend toward a cashless society. In many parts of Moldova it's still a cash-only society. Lots of folks don't even have a bank account. They keep their savings in a sock under their mattress. It's truly incredible that with access to on-line banking I can literally impact places all around the globe with my financial

resources. Incredible... and overwhelming. This is an opportunity unprecedented for any other prior generation, and yet because I am suspicious and controlling, I don't give as often as I could.

However, my heart is slowly softening as I realize that it truly is more blessed to give than to receive. And I am learning to take cues from my husband, born in Eastern Europe, who compassionately listens when approached by a stranger, and rarely hesitates to reach into his pocket when asked to give.

"Give generously to them, and do so without a grudging heart; then because of this the LORD your God will bless you in all your work and in everything you put your hand to." (Deut. 15:10)

Recommended Reading:

Western Christians in Global Missions, by Paul Borthwick

Missions and Money, Jonathan J. Bonk

Costly Mission, by Michael Duncan



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. After spending 8 years serving the community of Word Made Flesh Romania, Rachel joined a team committed to forming a new WMF community in the capital city of Moldova in 2010. Doors began to open in Moldova for the team to reach out to institutionalized children at one of the country's largest former orphanages. Rachel currently serves as Field Director and as arts and crafts teacher for La VIA's after-school kids program.



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Becoming Like Him

By Daniel Bernal, *WMF Bolivia Staff*

IT CAN BE EASY TO BELIEVE that going to church on Sundays or participating in another church activity is doing the will of the Lord, that this is enough to fulfill the responsibilities of every believer.

But when I understood that God calls us to go beyond attending church, my wife and I decided to dedicate our lives to the service of the Lord's work.

And so, every day serving in different ways (washing dishes, sweeping, ordering the deposit, leading cooking workshops or risk prevention counseling) in Word Made Flesh Bolivia, we hope to do and share the Gospel, strategically, with people who are affected by prostitution.

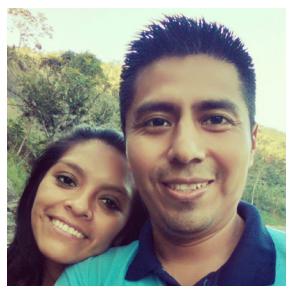
Each member of our community knows our mission well, because we do life together in the midst of very hard circumstances. In the face of darkness, we choose to serve those who suffer around us and shine light to these that have not yet been reached.

It is written in James 2:18, "faith without works is dead." Therefore, we are called to bear fruit, to serve and love as Christ loved us even when we were sinners. Our responsibility is to form relationships through love and community that open the doors for us to share the good news of Christ. Serving is seeing people through His eyes of love and acceptance, treating them with dignity and counting them as more significant than yourself.

Here in WMF Bolivia, I've learned that our mission field is the world. As John Wesley put it, "The world is my parish." The longing of my heart is that all people would be reached, and this will happen as believers commit to serve those who are suffering. Despite our sin and through our suffering, Jesus was humble and obedient to His Father and served us. By doing so, He redeemed us.

I've chosen, then, to serve the Father and my neighbors, believing that I can be part of His redemptive work and that I can be like Jesus. This is my desire. This work is available to all of us, wherever we are. This is His will, and by doing it, we'll become more and more like Him.

ABOUT DANIEL:



Daniel was born in the Caranavi Province of La Paz, Bolivia. He studied psychology and gastronomy after high school and went on to graduate from seminary with a degree in Theology and Missions. Since his life-changing encounter with Christ at age 8, Daniel was dedicated to the work of the Lord, serving through any opportunity he could find. This dedication to the church led him to eventually meet his wife, Nancy. They both continue to be very active in their local church as well as in Word Made Flesh Bolivia, where they work supporting the Children's Program and the Women's Program.

BOLIVIA



Landscape photo with a church near the WMF Bolivia community. Bolivia is one of the poorest nations in Latin America with an estimated 60% of the population struggling to meet their basic needs.

 @WordMadeFleshBolivia

Projeto Ester



PROJETO ESTER (The Esther Project) is a day center that exists to serve women on the streets of Rio. Our motto there is "Christ raising up women, women exalting Christ." Women come to the center to participate in Bible study, games, art, education and field trips. In addition, women can receive help with legal and documentation issues.

WMF Brazil would love to have more monthly partners supporting the ongoing work of the community. **Might God be laying this on your heart?** For more information or to donate, visit wordmadeflesh.org/brazil

BRAZIL



(Right) Field Director Edrienne Cohen with a child of a mother from the community. (Center) Two women who participate in The Esther Project. (Left) The community celebrating Mother's Day together.

LEARN MORE

Recommended Film

By Clint Baldwin,
Executive Director, WMF



FRED ROGERS of "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood" brilliantly exemplified the essence of service to others throughout his adult life.

Focusing especially on children, his guiding compass was love of God and love of neighbor. The other night, my wife and I found time for a mid-week evening date and viewed the Fred Rogers documentary "[Won't You Be My Neighbor?](#)" It was profoundly soul-moving. The film excellently showcases Rogers' determination, focus, whimsy, winsomeness, compassion, and deep empathy with both processes and people.

As an ordained minister, Rogers felt that media could be used for good. However, he often saw the opposite occurring. He felt God calling him to minister through television in order to offer an alternative to the negative messages.

Fred managed to be prophetic (in the tradition of biblical prophets decrying matters of injustice) while remaining pastoral. He never lost sight of the image of God in each of us and the inherent dignity that this bestows on everyone everywhere.

As Fred offers in the film and as we at Word Made Flesh also seek to offer, we are to be *tikkun olam* (תקון עולם), we are to be people who seek to be "repairers of creation."

"A dispute also arose among them as to which of them was considered the greatest. Jesus said to them, "...I am among you as one who serves" (Luke 22:24-27). Like Jesus and like Fred, as image bearers of God we seek to serve other image bearers of God.

I hope that we all might view our service as the ongoing query, "Won't you be my neighbor...?"

(Special thanks to [Jim Judkis](#) for permission to use his 1978 photo of Rogers at Pittsburgh's Memorial Home for Crippled Children)

“As an added bonus,
our faithfulness in
service makes us right
with God and with one another.”

Reflection by Aaron Strumpel, *singer/songwriter & WMF Artist Ambassador*

Belting out hymns every Sunday morning when I was young is something I'll treasure for the rest of my life. I've continued singing those old songs and on my latest record, I took one of my favorites, "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," and wrote something of my own, keeping some of Martin Luther's original lines and parts of the melody. I've shared this song,(now titled "A Mighty Refuge"), for this issue of *The Cry* because the third verse, to me, highlights Service. It's a set of lyrics we can sing about ourselves, to God, about how God has crafted us as the Bride of Christ. It reminds us of who we are, a people built to love deeply, to live sacrificially, to serve one another and God.

The reputation that we receive when we live like Christ is really incredible: we become known by living sacrificially, by serving our neighbors, by associating and calling into loving relationship the people at the margin, people who others may deem unlovable or untouchable. It's extraordinary what happens when we see our fellow human through the eyes of Jesus! This can lead our lives into places of immense beauty and treasure. As an added bonus, our faithfulness in service makes us right with God and with one another. It fulfills those beautiful words of Jesus in John 13, that the mark of being a follower of Jesus would be our love for one another.

A Mighty Refuge / Guard My Heart

by
**Aaron
Strumpel**

A mighty refuge is our God,
a shelter never failing;
Defender of the helpless ones,
a steadfast shield prevailing
But oh my God, this world,
great woe and strife unfurled
Has born the sins of flesh,
we'll not survive unless
We turn our hearts back to God

Would we in our own strength confide,
our striving would be losing;
The Man of Peace right by our side,
our greatest fears removing:
You ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He;
Lord Sabaoth, His Name,
from age to age the same,
In Him our weakness made strong

The Body Christ has made his Bride,
her beauty by him magnified
She'll be known by her love, her life,
she'll give her all, she'll sacrifice

For those who mourn in tears,
for those whose hearts are pure
For hungry and thirsty,
for those who seek his peace
His kingdom is forever.

-selah-

Guard my heart with your righteousness
This faith will be my trusted shield
Guard my mind with salvation
Give me hands that can heal

Fit my feet with your Gospel shoes
Buckle my waist with your truth
Make sharp the sword of your Spirit
Give me songs full of you

-selah-

Let my mind be made new
Let my heart be set on you
Let my words flow from you God
Let my life be found in you

(Click on the album to listen on iTunes)



AARONSTRUMPEL.COM

 @AaronStrumpelMusic

Check out Aaron's new album, *Mighty Fortress*, a collection of hymns and spiritual songs inspired by centuries of musical tradition and reimagined in contemplation.

Aaron has been a longtime friend of Word Made Flesh, having traveled on Discovery Teams during his time at George Fox University. He is now based out of Boulder, CO and collaborates with several worship and artist collectives. Aaron was WMF's first Artist Ambassador and has been featured in several national magazines, including *Relevant* and *Christianity Today*.

Discovering the Heart of Service

By Patrick Samuel, *Founder and Field Director Emeritus, WMF Chennai*

CHENNAI



@chennaiwordmadeflesh

THE YEAR WAS 1972, and I was waiting earnestly for the guidance of the Lord before committing to serve Him. I knew in the depths of my heart that I was to leave the job I was holding to transition to a place where the Lord wanted me, to fulfill his will through me for the least of these and the little ones. It was during that time of reflection that the question the Lord asked the dear apostle Peter took a new meaning in my life. A question asked thrice affirmed the Lord commissioning Peter for his ministry. “Do you love me more than these?” (John 21:15) Those words searched my heart and changed my course of life. They dissolved my complexes, excuses, and self-devaluation, and confirmed the call on my life to serve the little lambs in the society, the ones often neglected or not attended to.

I began the path which many others servants have traversed, a path of serving the Lord. It involved me conducting Bible classes, retreats, camps for kids and training programs for adults through Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEF), a wonderful organization which serves the Lord by reaching the children from various sectors of society. Those were periods of joy, astounding success, and deep contentment. But I was soon to discover the other side of the coin, the more shadowed path. There were times of discouragement and despair in spite of the outpouring of energy, time, and efforts. Especially when these efforts were for a selected child or teen, and rejected or not well-taken. These were times when my commitment to the Lord was challenged in a deeper and meaningful way. For more than two decades I traversed with fortitude the path cut out for me with Victoria, serving along side with me in CEF.

Then dawned 1994, and the Lord nudged myself and Victoria to move into an unexpected, yet more challenging field of service — beginning a children’s home and

being the first Residential Parents for disadvantaged and abandoned infants and children. We were deeply surprised to find the Lord leading us through ways of serving Him as His heart only can lead. We realized that when we were ready to answer him in affirmative — “Yes, Lord You know that we love You” as Peter did, new avenues were laid before us to take up new responsibilities. It was tough to leave that which we knew and were experienced in — doing evangelism work with

kids — to a deeper, and more invested, field of living with and caring for little ones. However, the love of the Lord did lead us in the right direction as per the verse in Zachariah 11:4 “Feed my flock marked for Slaughter.” Victoria and I were led in peace to confirm our commitment to serve the Lord among His little lambs, through Word Made Flesh Chennai. In all this, we were deeply aware that to confirm our path we had to lean back on the love of Christ, which compels and constrains us to move forward. Serving the Lord did

not mean taking care of the least and forgotten — it meant loving Christ in the least and forgotten. This was a deep lesson through which the Lord was teaching and training us before we stepped into serving Him among his lambs. There were many more such lessons to be learnt in the coming years which we never did foresee. Though painful, they were precious and beneficial.

As I write this, we are remembering one of our little girls, Surya Kala, and her birth anniversary, which recently went by (on 15th May 2018 — she would have been 22!). Painful lessons on letting go and in saying goodbye were part of the preparation

“The words of Christ propel us to move forward in renewed strength: ‘Do you love me more than these?’”

Patrick (2nd from left) during a day at the beach with some of the boys from the Youth Enrichment Program for teenage boys and young adults.



in deepening my commitment to serving Christ. There are nearly a dozen grave markers in the city cemetery which bear testimony to beautiful lives which started with a tiny flame and were snuffed out by HIV/AIDS before they could burn bright. To know that we were part of those brief but vibrant lives adds deeper meaning to serving Christ.

There were other lessons which helped us to deepen our roots in service. As children grew and we faced the challenges of teenage and young adulthood, we learned the meaning of tough love and letting go. Learning to love each one as they are and to let go when they turn back on the values and qualities that stand for the truth was deeply painful. Days and months of mourning the loss of a child who ran away, or made a decision to live a life of rebellion, deeply affected the innermost being of parenthood in both Victoria and I. However, the focus on seeing Christ in each child, and learning to love and to leave to them to the care of His grace, have been new lessons as the years turn the pages on its history.

Looking past the 24 years we have had with these many precious lives bring bittersweet memories of love, laughter, pain, heartache and tears. And that is what life is in essence. We were called to be part of these precious lives and to serve

each little one to the very best of our ability, which has been possible because of the love Christ, shed upon our hearts. Do we have beautiful happy ending stories to humble beginnings? Yes we do. Infants brought to us with HIV infection, after 18 months, have tested negative and are now living beautiful, healthy and purposeful lives in society. One such person will be soon completing his bachelor’s in theology. A family torn apart because of parents abandoning three beautiful children have found a deep sense of security through being part of the large family of WMF Chennai, and all three are making strides in higher education. Yes, there can be beauty for ashes, oil of joy for mourning and a garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, sometimes even this side of the heaven where we see for ourselves the fruits of the service rendered to Christ. I, however, believe it will be more so on the other side of heaven, where each motive, each movement of selfless service to Christ, will win the highest praise and the deepest reverence. In all these things, the words of Christ propel us to move forward in renewed strength: “Do you love me more than these?” These words help us to keep the heart of the matter, which is serving and loving Christ, at the center.



ABOUT PATRICK:

Patrick alongside his wife Victoria serve the children of south India who come from disadvantaged and broken families affected by HIV/AIDS. They were the first House Parents and Field Directors of Word Made Flesh Chennai, which began in 1994. They have since retired but both continue to serve the children, teens and young adults and hold an advisory role with the WMF Chennai staff. Their second daughter, Angelene, now serves as Field Director.



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Field Director
angelene.samuel@
wordmadeflesh.org

(Left) Field Director Angelene Samuel helping a girl with her hair at WMF Chennai.





The Celebration of Service

By: Steve Behnke, WMF Board Chair

Photo courtesy WMF Archives.

A woman does dishes on a rooftop at the Home for the Elderly in Nepal.

MARK 10:45

“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

MATTHEW 20:16

“So the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

Have you recently been well served? It could have been at a coffee shop, a restaurant, a gas station, or a grocery store. What were the characteristics of the service you received? Was it timely, friendly, or genuine? How did the server provide such exceptional service? Do you think it was easy for them? Were they just talented at service, perhaps? Have you ever experienced extremely substandard service? What might have caused the difference in service?

Over the past few months I have been reflecting on service as our calling in Christ Jesus, a paradox of the Kingdom. The very nature of servitude is that there is a subordination of the one serving to the one being served. We often think of this only in theological constructs. However, in every service-based industry found anywhere in the world, the necessity of this subordination exists. Such subordination is often accompanied by an inward struggle that those serving face against this repositioning within the social hierarchy. Time and again managers and leaders of organizations

work to remind their teams that this subordination is necessary, that the needs of their clients are paramount. An organization cannot be a success without sustaining this perspective.

Subordination of what, then, is required in service? Is it time, energy, resources? It seems to me that the answer to this is “D. All of the above.” Jesus spoke of this in Matthew 20:26-27, “Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—”(NIV). It’s actually a repositioning of the entire identity of self that is required, a reversal of wills; mine being exchanged for His.

In the hospital in which I work, we commonly refer to putting the patient “in the center” of our thoughts as we approach complex problems that face our health system. What does this positioning of the patient “in the center” mean? It means that their needs and perspectives must be preferentially considered over the needs of others in the organization. Ultimately, doing what is best for the patient, building the best processes for the patient, will be best for the hospital in the long run. Recently, I had a conversation with a younger physician in my hospital about the inconvenience of service. He, like so many others, desired that service be easier, perhaps on a more convenient schedule.

Yet, service refuses to be convenient. It refuses to be neat and orderly. Our desire for control, importance, and power each run counter to the necessary humility which underlies service. The hindrances of self must be set aside for service to blossom, and when they are, our service can be most fruitful. Genuine service, no matter how small or how

simple it may seem, is amazingly beautiful; a brief glimpse into the very nature of the Kingdom.

1 PETER 4:10

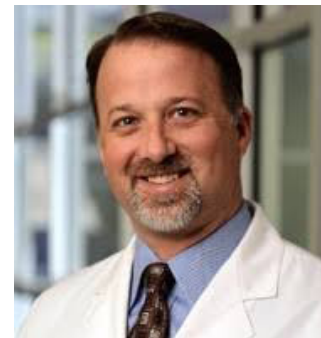
Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace, in various forms.



ABOUT STEVE:

Steve Behnke, MD, MBA, has been a long time supporter of Word Made Flesh, having first learned about the ministry fwhile attending Asbury University during its earliest years. He received his MD and MBA degrees at the University of Louisville and subsequently trained in Internal Medicine at Ohio State University. Presently, he leads MedOne Hospital Physicians in Columbus, Ohio and is the Chief of the Section of Internal Medicine at Riverside Methodist Hospital.

Steve lives in Columbus with his wife, Ashleigh, and their four boys.

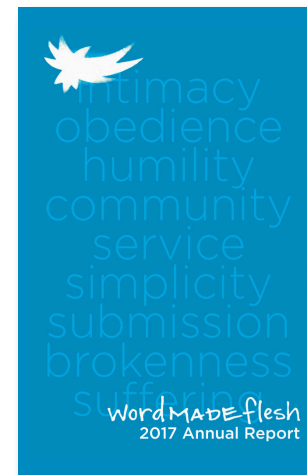


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Our 2017 Annual Report is available! Check out these highlights of our ongoing work with and among people suffering extreme vulnerabilities all over world. See how God moves through WMF across the world in each of our communities!

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Meet our Staff

WMF STAFF



Kristen Leichty
Director of Community Care
International Office, USA

Kristen will join Word Made Flesh as the Director of Community Care in August 2018. She desires to offer a space for reflection, rest and a listening ear to the WMF community as we live out our vocational callings around the world.

In 2017, Kristen graduated from Portland Seminary with an MA in Spiritual Formation and a certificate in Spiritual Direction. Before joining Word Made Flesh, she worked in experiential learning and study abroad programs for college students in both Lithuania and San Francisco. She loves exploring the sacred space where identity and spiritual formation as it collides with cross-cultural experiences.

Kristen currently lives in Oregon and can be found either hiking in the mountains or searching for the perfect lavender latte with friends.

CONNECT WITH KRISTEN:
info@wordmadeflesh.org



Gustavo Arraya
Marketing and
Communications Developer
WMF Bolivia

Gustavo was born in La Paz, Bolivia, to a Christian family but had a true encounter with God in 2009. He studied marketing in college and specialized in graphic design. One of the things he loves in life is music and serves with his church's worship team. He most enjoys playing drums and the guitar.

He has worked in many advertising agencies, but felt that something was missing and was looking for a job where he could be closer to God. After volunteering to lead worship for WMF events for several years, Gustavo joined the Word Made Flesh team full-time in 2017, and he says it has been a significant change in his life. He is currently the Marketing and Communications Developer.

CONNECT WITH GUSTAVO:
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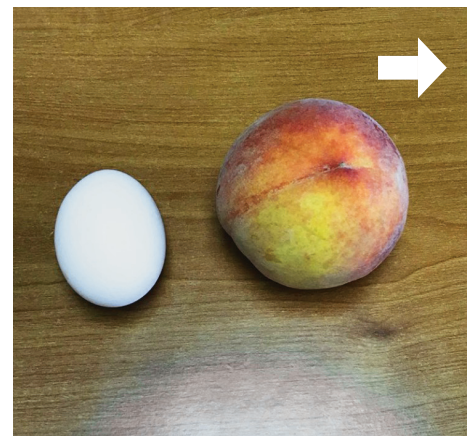
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ON SERVICE

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 service.

LEARN MORE

Read



RYAN KUJA serves as Field Director of WMF Colombia. We are so thankful to celebrate the publication of [this book](#) on healthy missional engagement! Kuja invites us to ask some challenging questions: Are we doing more damage than good? What does it look like to truly love and serve the marginalized in an authentic and effective way? Using storytelling and theological reflection birthed from his own painful and powerful experiences on and off the field, Kuja guides us into global mission's past and present and leads us to explore our motivations for missions. He provides light and hope as we look forward to healthier and more God-honoring service unto a hurting world.

Look



which is much darker. Instead, Van Gogh adds more light to the scene, likely placing himself as the man in need of help. The two figures to the left (the Priest and the Levite) are darker and fading, while the Good Samaritan is the most emphasized figure. Van Gogh communicates a message consistent with Jesus': it is good to show neighborly love and compassion by taking action to assist anyone who is in need.

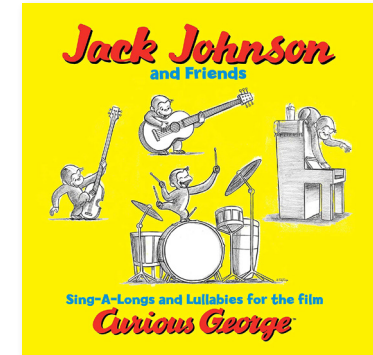
VAN GOGH painted the famous Biblical scene of "The Good Samaritan" (1889) shortly after having suffered a psychotic breakdown that led people to run him out of town. He was supposedly found on the side of the road and some people helped him get checked into a sanitarium. In this painting, he was copying Delacroix's depiction of the story,

Contemplate

Quote by Michelle Kratzer,
longtime friend of WMF

"I JUST ATE A HARD BOILED EGG...and a delicious Georgia peach...and a banana...all for breakfast. As I peeled my egg, I thought of a passage from a book that I read years ago where another person in another place in another time also peeled a hard boiled egg and ate it for breakfast. The difference is that the egg was it. There was no more. No lunch. No Georgia peach. No banana. I am prayerfully holding this truth alongside of the delicious taste of Georgia peach in my mouth. I am living with the discomfort and praying that the discomfort will change me...and through me (and a million others like me)...the world. Today, I will be compassionate. Today, I will be generous. Today, I will eat less meat. I will spend less and give more. Thank you to the many people who have showed me ways to lean into this uncomfortable, hard, compassionate, holy way of living. Thank you for the voices who remind me that compassion is an everyday, forever choice. There is no room for despair. There is Hope."

Listen



JACK JOHNSON AND BEN HARPER recorded a [beautiful performance](#) of Harper's "My Own Two Hands" in 2005 for the film *Curious George*. The combination of both the playful folk style recorded primarily for children and the song's simple declarations, reminds us to "become as little children" (Matt. 18:2) and believe this simple truth: indeed, we can change the world with our own two hands.

The lyrics below speak for themselves: the song feels light and hopeful and is a good reminder that serving sometimes is just putting our hands to work and, in our context, trusting that God will use them to create good and fruitful change.

*I can change the world, with my own two hands
Make a better place, with my own two hands
Make a kinder place, oh with my, oh with my own two hands
With my own, with my own two hands
With my own, with my own two hands*

*I can make peace on earth, with my own two hands
And I can clean up the earth, oh with my own two hands
And I can reach out to you, with my own two hands
With my own, with my own two hands
Oh, with my own, oh with my own two hands*

*I'm gonna make it a brighter place, (With my own)
I'm gonna make it a safer place, (With my own)
I'm gonna help the human race, (With my own)
(With my own two hands)*

Service As Soldiers Of Christ

By Patrick Freeman, *WMF Sierra Leone Staff*

I WAS TOLD A THRILLING STORY about a missionary couple who served sacrificially on the mission field. They happened to return home on the very day that a UN soldier was returning home from war. When they arrived at their country's airport they watched as he passed the joyful welcome and massive nationwide celebration of the soldier, while no one was there to cheer them on as they traveled to their final destination. But the country's president and dignitaries delightfully celebrated the soldier and he was dressed up with medals. Seeing that nobody was there for them, the missionary's wife asked her husband if they had perhaps wasted time serving God. The man told her that they hadn't yet arrived. He said when they arrived in heaven they would receive the best welcome, the best celebration and the best rewards.

We Christians are soldiers of Christ (2 Tim. 2:3, 4). We're called to fight battles, the battles of the good fight of faith. It's been said that no one goes to war at his or her own expense. Surprisingly, many of us have sacrificially served in the Lord's battlefield at our own expense. Some Christian soldiers have even lost their lives in active service. Many have been brutally killed because of their profound faith in Christ and diligent service, and seldom are they publicly acknowledged or honored. The world doesn't offer an attractive incentive, huge salary, life insurance, wreath or golden crown for fighting the Lord's battles, but we should be convinced and persuaded that we're champions of heavenly crowns.

Last year our gifted and diligent cook, Auntie P, sadly passed away. She was a hardworking woman. She always cooked right on time and her food was quite delicious. She was such a jovial person, and really fun to be around. Auntie P was a hero of the faith. She's not buried with crowns or medals, but her good service will never be forgotten. She will be rewarded by Christ our royal master.

Christ taught us how to serve in His Army by leaving an example. He humbly washed His disciples' feet (John. 13:5). He preached the Gospel to the poor, proclaimed release to the captives, recovered the sight to the blind, set at liberty the oppressed, and proclaimed the year of jubilation (Luke 4:18- 19). He served and gave His life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). He emptied Himself and took the form of a bondservant; He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Phil. 2:6- 11). His disciples served him faithfully and were killed for the sake of the Gospel.

This is what true religion is, and this is the kind of worshipful service that we render at our Word Made Flesh community. God's grace enables us to do all these things through Christ's love. We've been called to serve in the Lord's Army voluntarily. Although the praise and credit for our service should be given to Christ, our labor in the Lord is not in vain (1 Cor. 15:58). We will be rewarded for our faithful service on the day of the Lord.



ABOUT PATRICK:

Patrick volunteered with WMF Sierra Leone from 2015-2017. He became a Servant Team member from 2017- 2018 and a WMF staff member in March. He serves among children who are vulnerable in the Kroo Bay slum community. Currently, he is the tutoring and theatrical arts coordinator. He also assists with the Ale Ale Good News Club. He is a gifted musician and enjoys writing, singing, playing guitar and teaching children phonics with scriptural filled songs. He is studying theology at the Evangelical College of Theology in Freetown.

The Service of Listening

By Kristin Bacher,
Short Term Teams Coordinator/Nurse, WMF Sierra Leone

SIERRA LEONE

 @wmfsierraleone

“AUNTY KRISTIN, AUNTY KRISTIN! I have an assignment... I have a wound... I am not well... I want to talk to you a minute... someone came to see you... can you go visit this sick person... etc.” These interruptions seem to happen on a daily, and even hourly basis. People constantly interrupt the email I am writing, the spreadsheet I am putting together, or the planning period for a teaching session. I love the Word Made Flesh lifestyle celebration of service. More than anything, I want to “do” something for Jesus and “do” something to make the world a better place. I whole heartedly embrace the idea of service as activity, as task, as accomplishment. This constant flow of people and interruptions become so frustrating as I focus on the completion of my task. Yet, I wonder at times if I'm missing something.



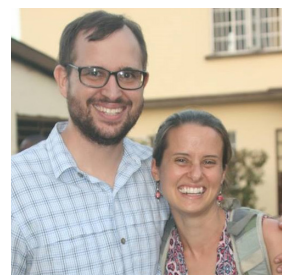
Living in Sierra Leone, I've been thrust into a culture that values relationships so much more than tasks and what I am doing. I am reminded of a quote attributed to Mayou Angelou “People may not remember exactly what you did, or what you said, but they will always remember how you made them feel.” And I have been thinking about how my zeal for service and accomplishment might make people feel. As I rush around accomplishing tasks and

people come to me, they begin to feel like a bother, like an interruption, and like they are not important enough for my time. I always sympathized with Martha as she complained to Jesus, “Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!” And Jesus

answers, “Martha, Martha, you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better and it will not be taken away from her.” How can sitting down to listen possibly be better than accomplishing tasks? Yet somehow, as I watch and live among the Sierra Leonian people, see the beauty and interdependence of their culture, and experience the sense of community, I begin to notice how often they stop for relationships. They stop on their way to a meeting; they leave a task unattended to listen to someone. Instead of starting a task, they sit

down because someone dropped by. What can look like inactivity, lack of motivation, or even a lack of punctuality to my western eyes, is the building and development of relationships that are at the heart of the Gospel. Can listening really be the better option? I realize this is also a very important aspect of service — the service of listening.

Photos courtesy WMF Sierra Leone



ABOUT KRISTIN:

Kristin Bacher grew up in South Alabama, but for the past four and a half years has lived and served among the Kroo Bay Community. She met her wonderful husband, Karlin, during her time in Sierra Leone. She enjoys music, using her nursing talents, being outdoors, and loves the beautiful beaches and people of Sierra Leone.

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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.

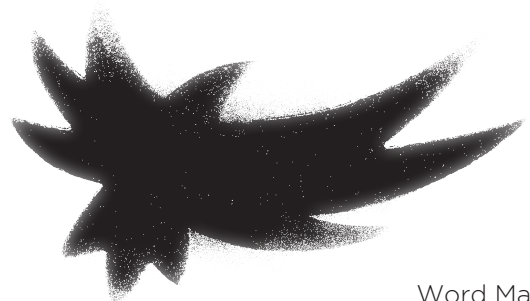
Submission We celebrate submission to Jesus, each other and the poor.

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

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

“Let us touch the dying, the poor, the lonely and the unwanted according to the graces we have received and let us not be ashamed or slow to do the humble work.”

—Mother Teresa



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