

THE CRY

for Brokenness

Word
MADE
flesh



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

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

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From the Editor

Brokenness is an inescapable part of the human experience. worthy of celebration — they present opportunities for us to see Him gloriously at work, and for us to labor with Him.

It is often easier to ignore it, the brokenness that exists out in the world and that which exists within. This sense of being hurt, bruised, torn beyond repair is powerful enough to take us into despair, as the apostle wrote, “For we were so utterly burdened beyond our strength that we despaired of life itself.” (2 Corinthians 1:8)

So, God brought to us the promise of wholeness and redemption. We understand that through Christ, this work was already finished, and yet, we do not see it fully. This truth of redemption doesn’t always feel, well, true. In this tension, the temptation is to run past brokenness — sometimes to just not deal with it at all — because of the hope that we have, and the promise of new life.

Though this running is well-intended, we must remember that God embraced the things and people that seemed too broken. He did not ignore them. It wasn’t too much for Him; He heard their cry.

Christ, taking on human form and submitting himself to the human experience, lived out with us the brokenness of our world and of our sin. Yet, He did not shy away nor recoil. He embraced us — like the father who was waiting for the son of prodigal living — before we could tell Him about how broken we were. He stopped us in our tracks whispering, “Don’t worry. I love you in your brokenness,” and offered us healing.

This is the hope of the Gospel! Jesus embraced us in our brokenness, experienced it with us for our sake, and endured the breaking of His body to show us that we could never be too broken for Him. The resurrection promises that He makes things new and whole again, no matter how broken or hopeless they might seem.

As He lovingly wills to restore, broken things then have become

Word Made Flesh has responded to these opportunities around the world seeking to be like Jesus in His loving embrace of brokenness. You’ll find in the following pages that in the process of embracing the brokenness of others and of the world, we tend to encounter our own.

Our folks wrestle alongside people who have experienced severe brokenness and together find ways to mourn and to hope.

“Jesus wept” with his friends before He caused Lazarus to come out of his grave. Thus, we do not celebrate brokenness in a manner of complacency or hopelessness, but as a prophetic act displaying what it looks like to mourn as Jesus did, with hope of resurrection and the restoration of all things.

Our hope is that these stories would inspire you to celebrate this lifestyle with us. May you see God’s loving hand at work in and through the brokenness in your midst.

It is because of brokenness that we cry out. We cry for wholeness. We cry for justice. We cry — and God promises to answer.

JORGE CASTORENA
Editor, *The Cry*



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From the Executive Director

As this issue of *The Cry* focusing on our Lifestyle Celebration of **brokenness** publishes, the season of Lent (March 6- April 18) is upon us.

Lent is a time within the Church year that we recognize that the journey of faith entails navigating our own brokenness and the brokenness of our surrounding world. Lent lasts for 40 days to correspond with the time of temptation and seasoning that Jesus experienced in the desert wilderness before His entry into public ministry (Lk. 4:1-13; Mt. 4:1-11).

I appreciate that much of the Church does not officially count Sundays as part of the Lenten timeline. This means that Lent always runs a bit longer than 40 days on the regular calendar. The Church has chosen to not count Sundays as a sign that we experience multiple, ongoing Easters/Resurrections/Redemptions/Transformations in the midst of traversing brokenness. Hardship and Hope hold hands.

When one experiences a life of significant privilege it can be daunting to hear that brokenness accompanies hope. When one's life is fraught with brokenness, hearing that you are not abandoned by hope is celebratory indeed. No matter from whence one hails, both brokenness and hope are with us all.

Intriguingly, God – the Creator and Sustainer of the universe – chose to experience vulnerability and harm for our sakes as part of the process of best coming to Know and Love us. God didn't just magically wave away the brokenness of the world. Rather, God dove into the brokenness with us. God made sure that Hope was present in the midst of hardship.

Throughout the Gospels, we are exhorted to seek to live like Jesus lived. We are told that if we are doing this reasonably well, then we should not expect outcomes that significantly vary from those that the Lord experienced (Mt. 10:24-25; Lk. 6:40; Jn. 13:16; Jn. 15:20). We should expect to experience both brokenness and hope – crucifixions and resurrections.

How might leaning into the approachability of God via the intimate, vulnerable presence of Jesus affect our theological

understandings and methodological practices? What might we learn from more fully accepting brokenness as a vital, necessary component for seeking to understand and to share the Love of God? How do we go about seeking to live like Jesus, experiencing both brokenness and hope?

Some thoughts:

1. As we have seen above, at significant expense, Jesus came to live with and among. “God so loved that He gave...” (Jn. 3:16) Jesus came; God stays with us (Mt. 28:20, Jn. 14:16; Jn. 16:7). The all-powerful God did not immediately seek to fix everything, but we see that Jesus always Loves well. We too can each do this in our own way. Certainly, all around the world Word Made Flesh staff share their time, talents, and resources through living with and among people. As much as they are able, seeking to follow in the footsteps of the Lord, WMF staff also arrive and stay. WMF folks accompany others; they walk together in community. They experience camaraderie of joy and solidarity of brokenness. This is not to suggest that joys or brokenness are ever exactly similar for anyone, but authenticity of lived experience arises through lived fellowship.

2. Like God, we can seek to not look at outward appearances, but rather seek to look at the heart (1 Sa. 16:7).

A person can look fabulous on the outside and be deeply broken within. A person can look fabulous on the outside and hold deep wells of goodness within. A person can look broken on the outside and be deeply broken within. A person can look broken on the outside and hold deep wells of goodness within.

We can ask the Lord that we would be able to see with the eyes of our heart (Ep. 1:18-19) and not just with the eyes in our head. We can ask, beyond externalities, for wisdom and discernment to see the Goodness of God in every person (Ge. 1:26-28; Ge. 9:5-6; Ja. 3:9).

3. We can ask the Lord to help us recognize that not only people experience brokenness, but systems experience brokenness. Systems are made up of people experiencing varying levels of brokenness. It quickly makes sense that systems might well exhibit and perpetuate their own characteristics of brokenness.

Personal and social brokenness mutually reinforcing each other can become an extraordinarily vicious cycle.

Around the world, Word Made Flesh communities exist right in the midst of such brokenness that manifests as both systemic/social and personal marginalizations and oppressions. WMF communities seek to interrupt cycles of harm and initiate and grow cycles of goodness. Our communities seek to be places of peace, hope, love,

welcome, joy, comfort, and stability functioning in antithesis to surrounding injustices and chaos.

4. Finally, we can recognize that while we all experience brokenness differently, we all experience brokenness. Brokenness is not foreign to any of us. If the Lord gives us the strength to be vulnerable in the ways that He showed us are possible through His life, then we can all meet each other in our places of limitation and lack. In Christ, we can meet each other in our brokenness and begin to find the nascent first fruits of new life in such meeting. However, some of us may be more aware of our brokenness than others. Developing awareness becomes an important component of leaning forward into God's Love for ourselves and others.

Mother Teresa writes about how recognizing our own brokenness can be key to allowing God to use us to aid in the healing of the brokenness of others,

...The knowledge of our sin helps us to rise....Knowledge of self is very necessary for confession. That is why the saints could say they were wicked criminals. They saw God and then saw themselves, and they saw the difference. We become hurt because we do not know ourselves, and our eyes are not fixed on God alone; so we do not have real knowledge of God. When the saints looked upon themselves with such horror, they really meant it. They were not pretending.

Knowledge of ourselves will help us to rise up, whereas sin and weakness will lead to despondency. Deep confidence and trust will come through knowledge. Then you will turn to Jesus to support you in your weakness, whereas if you think you are strong, you will [think you do] not need our Lord....Reconciliation begins with ourselves. It begins with a pure heart, a heart that is able to see God in others.¹

Recognizing that we all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Ro. 3:23), that we all have brokenness as part of our Being, that we are mutual pilgrims longing for redemption and reconciliation in this world, allows for a recognition of kinship that bridges differentiating divides. Where at first we might not have seen connection because of difference, we now begin to see not only connection, but kinship.

We begin to see the Goodness of God in others through and beyond the mutuality of our brokenness.

When we approach one another in honest, humble recognition of mutual lack, it leaves the Lord great space to enact mutual redemption and healing. This becomes a foundation for a strong, healthy, vibrant community.

In our weakness God is made strong (2 Co. 12:9-11). We recognize that though God allows us to participate in the process of help and healing, ultimately it is the Lord that does this. We are simply conduits facilitating power. We are the branches...God is the vine (Jn. 15:5).

It is through the lens of brokenness that God offers us Grace to see into the wholistic Hope of God.

God teaches us that resurrection becomes possible via crucifixion.

I love the bittersweet story of the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). It's tragic that the disciples were unable to recognize Jesus

¹ Benenate, B., & Durepos, J. (1997). *Mother Teresa: No Greater Love*. New York: MJF Books. pp. 113-114.



WMF Peru staff take supplies to a marginalized neighborhood outside of Lima.

after a whole day of walking together. That is, they were unable to recognize Him until they invited Him in, He broke the bread, and gave it to them. **In the brokenness (and the giving) they saw Him!**

In this issue of *The Cry* you'll read all kinds of important reflections on brokenness. I hope that like the disciples on the Emmaus road, in retrospect you'll more fully realize God's presence has been with you all along, “were not our hearts burning within us while he talked...?”

“Inasmuch as you have done it unto the least of these my brethren you have done it unto Me” (Mt. 25:40). Who have you been talking with on the road? How has Jesus been with you in the midst of your own and others' brokenness?

Friends, we are called to be like our Lord. May you be broken and give yourselves for the sake of others. Being broken is hard. It is excruciating. Yet, it is in breaking that we ironically find the power and the joy of the Gospel. “...unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit” (Jn. 12:24).

Look beyond the surface... Look deeper than the difference... Can you feel your hearts burn? Can you see Him? Everywhere you go, with every person you're with, He's available and waiting the whole time. Start saying Yes to Him today in your every encounter, in your ongoing brokenness. Surely, “He who began a good work in you, will be faithful to complete it” (Ph. 1:6).

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Jumping rope during playtime (WMF Romania).

"Break My Heart for What Breaks Yours"

By Annie Jones, *Short-Term Programs Coordinator, WMF Rwanda*

I remember singing along at a Hillsong United concert and praying that prayer as a young follower of Christ. Not long after praying that prayer I joined Word Made Flesh in Kolkata, India. Back then, as a girl fresh out of university, I was eager to see people the way God sees them. I wanted my eyes to be open to this broken world and not only focused on the bubble I had lived in.

But why do we celebrate brokenness? We celebrate brokenness as our responsibility to the poor. God's heart was *broken* when Jesus died. Jesus' body was *broken* when he died. Yet in their *brokenness* we are made whole. That sounds like a reason to celebrate to me. We are called to live as Jesus lived, if He was broken we too will be broken. How do we break our hearts for what breaks His?

Let's first ask—**what breaks God's heart?**

Sin; and sin needs to break our hearts as well. We can't sit back in this broken world and not let our spirits be broken and crushed over sin.

Sometimes we are the ones who have sinned, and when that's the case, we must let it lead us to a spiritual brokenness, which then leads us to repentance. When we take communion we break bread to remember Jesus' broken body, the broken body that brought us salvation though we were still sinners.

Sometimes it's the sin of the world that breaks our hearts. When we repent of our own personal sins, God uses us in ways we could have never dreamed or imagined. He leads us to places and people that are broken so that we can share the good news of salvation for the broken.



A woman who owns a small produce market during a visit from WMF Rwanda staff.

Secondly —,
What does brokenness look like in your community?

I currently serve with WMF in Rwanda. We serve in Kangondo, a community that has a reputation for being called the "toilet" of Kigali city. It is surrounded by expensive neighborhoods, and the government plans to tear down Kangondo in the next year or two for its city development plans. In addition to this coming displacement, we see brokenness in education, finances, malnutrition, and lack of health insurance to treat minor illnesses which then turn into serious diseases. Not having money also causes husbands to go look for money elsewhere, usually resulting in finding another wife. Sometimes this sort of brokenness can be hard for an outsider to relate to, and it's hard to know how to help. We do our best to educate, reminding the women here of their value and worth, and show them the resources God has given them, that He hasn't forgotten them.

But another common area of brokenness among the women with whom we work is loneliness, or lack of community. Loneliness is something most of us can relate to. Many of the women's testimonies include feeling lonely before joining our community in Kangondo and how being in community changed them and gave them hope again.

Lastly we ask,
How do we help and serve in a broken community?

RWANDA

I personally get caught up in how am I helping this broken world? What can I do to take my friends' brokenness away? But that's not my job. I can't do that. I can however let God break my heart and give me empathy towards my friends. I can love them and be in community with them. I can remind them that they are not alone.

In *From Brokenness to Community*, Jean Vanier says,

"To be in communion with someone also means to walk with them. Those of you who have had the privilege of accompanying people in distress and inner pain know that it is not easy to walk with them, without having any answers to their problems or solutions for their pain. For many people in pain there is no solution; for a mother who has just lost her child or for a woman who has just been abandoned by her husband, there is no answer, there is just the pain. What they need is a friend willing to walk with them in all that pain."

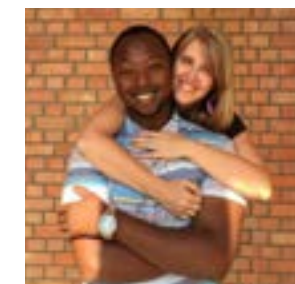
That's how we celebrate brokenness, by choosing to be in community with other broken people. We walk with them, we laugh with them, we cry with them, we remind them they are not alone, and we too are reminded that we are not alone.

Break my heart for what breaks yours, God; when our eyes are open and our hearts are broken, there is no turning back. We each become activists, advocates, and friends to the outcast. Then we no longer see our friends as broken and rejected outcasts like the world see them. We see them as our beloved community.



ABOUT ANNIE

Annie Jones is the Short Term Programs Coordinator for Word Made Flesh Rwanda. She is married to Claudien Niyigena and they are expecting their first child, Chloe, this May.



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Two women who participate in our Economic Empowerment program at WMF Rwanda.

Learning Through Transformed Brokenness

By Grace Dean, WMF Volunteer



Photo courtesy Grace Dean

The Juniper bush grows in the harshest of conditions. Its kind can be found in diverse regions ranging from sea level to 10,000 feet in elevation, but the plant (also called a cedar) is commonly found in the vast copper terrain of the American southwest. Through the unforgiving trials of the desert, the Juniper's survival seems like a miracle. Untamed wind cannot tear down its malleable branches, just as prolonged droughts cannot take its life. The Juniper's unassuming strength not only helps in its own survival, but also plays an integral role in the ecosystem. Small creatures find shade under cedar branches, nutrients in its berries, and the lifecycle then continues.

Only our Creator can design a system so perfect that the Juniper can find the means to thrive in scalding desert conditions. Just as our God can make a seemingly bleak and helpless terrain into a vibrant landscape, He can transform the universal effects of a broken world into prosperity. Every person is affected, but individuals, cultures, and countries experience brokenness in different magnitudes. Over countless years, the Navajo people have withstood broken systems enacted by broken people. They have seen enough hardships that would overwhelm the many gaps in American history books. However, in this pain only the love of Jesus can transform the acts of suffering into a life of patience and generosity, traits that my Navajo family encompass completely.

And as the Juniper's grand design sustains life in the desert, through the power of our Father, my brothers and sisters in Cedar Ridge provide hope and healing in their communities haunted by brokenness.

In the years 1944 to 1986, private companies and the federal government leased Navajo land to extract uranium. Many Navajo families found work in these mines, unaware of the effects caused by uranium exposure. To this day, water, soil, and air in the area remains contaminated by the 500 abandoned mines on the reservation. Results of uranium exposure include lung and bone cancers as well as kidney failure. Little action has been taken to resolve the issues. Like the mines, stories of injustice run rampant on Navajo land.

This systematic oppression is difficult to comprehend, but its effects are easy to identify. Drug use, violence, disappearances and poverty are remnants of brokenness that seep through the reservation. Even in recent years, people have died due to the cold and starvation. These issues seem overwhelming, especially since they are so overlooked. However, our Navajo brothers and sisters in Christ remember and learn from the past, but rely on the Lord for the future. Their faith is a constant reminder of the greatness of our God. They do not limit His goodness to time or expectation, but rather, they find strength in transformed brokenness to empower their people.

We can find unity in brokenness. Human nature fell from God's grand design, but just as we have all fallen short, we all are created in His image. I have never met a person or culture that can really encompass the full image of our God, but it is in our different strengths that we can understand His nature more and more. Our perception of the goodness of God can be limited to our own experiences, but if we recognize the beauty in diverse backgrounds and transformed brokenness, our understanding of God reaches greater heights.

The Navajo have taught me many aspects of the image of God that I had not experienced elsewhere. Their wisdom comes through listening and their value for all life reflects a natural stewardship. They live simply, but give in excess and they stand strong in the face of any adversity. The Navajo are an integral part of the Body of Christ just as the Juniper brings an important role in natural life of the desert. We need Christ's love to alleviate brokenness and we need each other to walk and grow closer to our God. Thus, we come alongside the Navajo and find hope and redemption in Christ together. How wonderful it is that we can advocate for change for a broken world through the love of our Father and the strength of our brothers and sisters!



ABOUT GRACE

After growing up in Northern California, Grace's family moved to Wilmore, Kentucky where she attends Asbury University and is completing her degree in Social Work. Her family has been a longtime friend of WMF and works alongside a Navajo church in Arizona. They travel with Word Made Flesh every year to spend time there. Grace will graduate in May 2019 and will then transition to full-time work with the Navajo Nation.

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A young girl leading the way through the Navajo Reservation in Arizona.

Breaking Down Walls

By Christine Sine, *WMF Advisory Council Member*

My Lenten theme this year is *Breaking Down Walls*. I was not just thinking of the controversy about the wall on the U.S./ Mexican border when I chose this topic. All of us have walls in our lives, products of our own brokenness and often too, of our responses to the brokenness of others. These walls separate us from the one true God, from each other and from God's creation.

Jesus is the one who is able to break down the walls and open the barriers that keep us closed off, but we often don't know how to access His healing power to make the walls crumble. Lent is a great season for working on our walls yet some of the tools we need are not always what first come to mind. To join God's creative work of restoration, we don't need more disciplines or more denial, we need more time for fun and creativity.

Nothing lights up the brain like play, according to psychiatrist Stuart Brown, founder of the National Institute for Play. He believes play is as important as oxygen for our wellbeing.¹ Adult play buffers us against the burn out of the hustle and bustle of busyness.² And from my perspective anything that lights up the brain to that extent must be important to God.

Play may be God's greatest gift to humanity. It's how we form friendships, learn skills, and master difficult things that help us survive. It is a release valve for stress, and an outlet for creativity. It helps us heal and opens us to wonder and awe. It brings us music, comedy, dance, and everything we value. Above all, play is how we form bond with each other in non threatening barrier breaking ways. It's how we communicate "*I am safe to be around, I am not a threat.*"³ When we play well together we replace negative beliefs and behaviors with positive thoughts and actions and heal emotional wounds. It is, I suspect, meant to be an important part of our spiritual practices too.

Embracing playfulness in our spiritual practices unveils glimpses into the heart of our fun-loving, playful God and into the joy-filled personalities God wants us to grow into. Play bonds us to God, and each other. It buffers us from the spiritual burnout so rampant in our faith communities. It liberates us to be ourselves and invites us to relax, take notice and be unafraid to be vulnerable. I am convinced it is an essential but neglected element for the survival of a healthy relationship to God and to each other.

“Play
may be God’s
Greatest
Gift
to humanity.”

Here are some suggestions that can help unleash your inner child.

Go on a play date each week. Have some fun. Visit your favorite museum or art gallery, get on a ferry, play with kids. Give up self denial for Lent.

Create a doodle each week. This may not sound very spiritual but can become a powerful spiritual discipline. I think God loves to doodle. I only need to look down from a plane at the meandering pattern of a river to see that.

Before you doodle ask yourself a question like “how could God use me as an instrument of reconciliation during Lent?” Prayerfully close your eyes. Doodle with your non dominant hand for about 30 seconds, open your eyes and reflect on the image. Repeat your question. Ask God to speak to you. Color your image with pencils or crayons. Invite God to shape it into something meaningful. Pause after a minute of coloring and repeat your question. Write down what you sense God is saying. Keep the image on your desk or journal and continue to add to it over the week.

Practice Lectio Divina. This is a particularly fertile practice to stir imagination and creativity, especially when combined with creative acts like drawing, writing or singing. Prayerfully recite a scripture verse several times until a word resonates in your soul. Meditate on the word and allow God to take you deeper into its meaning. I like to paint my words on rocks then decorate them and place them in small contemplative gardens for further revelation. It is great fun and incredibly inspirational. You may like to write your word in a journal or craft it into a poem or song. Even a dance may stir within you. Feel free to express your word however God prompts.

Practice Visio Divina. This art of divine seeing is like Lectio Divina with images. You can apply paintings or photos but most fun and inspirational for this season is to use it as you walk. Pretend you see everything for the first time. Be alert to the newness that Christ brings to each mundane object, moment or encounter. Notice the graffiti on the walls, streets signs, advertisements, fallen leaves or sunshine through trees. Take a photo of what catches your attention. Perhaps it makes you laugh or brings you to tears. Take your photo home and reflect on it. What is God saying to you about your neighborhood? Is there a new way God wants you to respond?

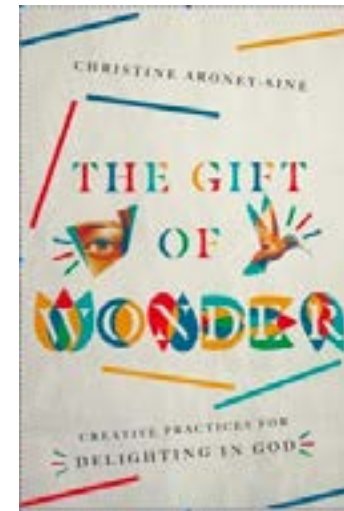
Find happiness in the small things. So often we get caught up in unrealistic expectations. By focusing on our own ideas of



A moment of joy (WMF Rwanda).

what should happen we often put the Holy Spirit in a box that restricts what God is able to do. Our senses that make us aware of the fragrance of a rose and the sound or a children laughing seem small and insignificant but it is often through these that we are made aware of the intimate presence of God. Our senses make it possible for us to move beyond our disappointments and the sadness and pain of life.

I hope that you will allow God to liberate your creativity during Lent this year and find the freedom of fresh expressions of faith and new depths of spirituality.



THE GIFT OF WONDER

Look for Christine's new book from Intervarsity Press this Spring! (March 2019)

Click on the book to view it on Amazon.

¹ TED Talks. (May 2008). Play is more than just fun. [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/stuart_brown_says_play_is_more_than_fun_it_s_vital

² Scientific American Mind. (Spring 2017) The Mad Science of Creativity, 83

³ beyourself, Medium. (Oct 3, 2017) Mass Shootings in America, and Why Men (and Boys) Keep Doing This. Retrieved from <https://byrslf.co/thoughts-on-the-vegas-shooting-14af397cee2c>



ABOUT CHRISTINE

Christine Aroney-Sine facilitates the popular contemplative blog Godspace. In her new book *The Gift of Wonder* (IVP March 2019) she explores characteristics like play, curiosity and imagination that shape us into the people God intends us to be.

Together with her husband, Tom, she is also co-Founder of Mustard Seed Associates but recently retired to make time available for writing and speaking. In a former life, Christine trained as a physician in Australia practiced in New Zealand and developed and directed the healthcare ministry for Mercy Ships.

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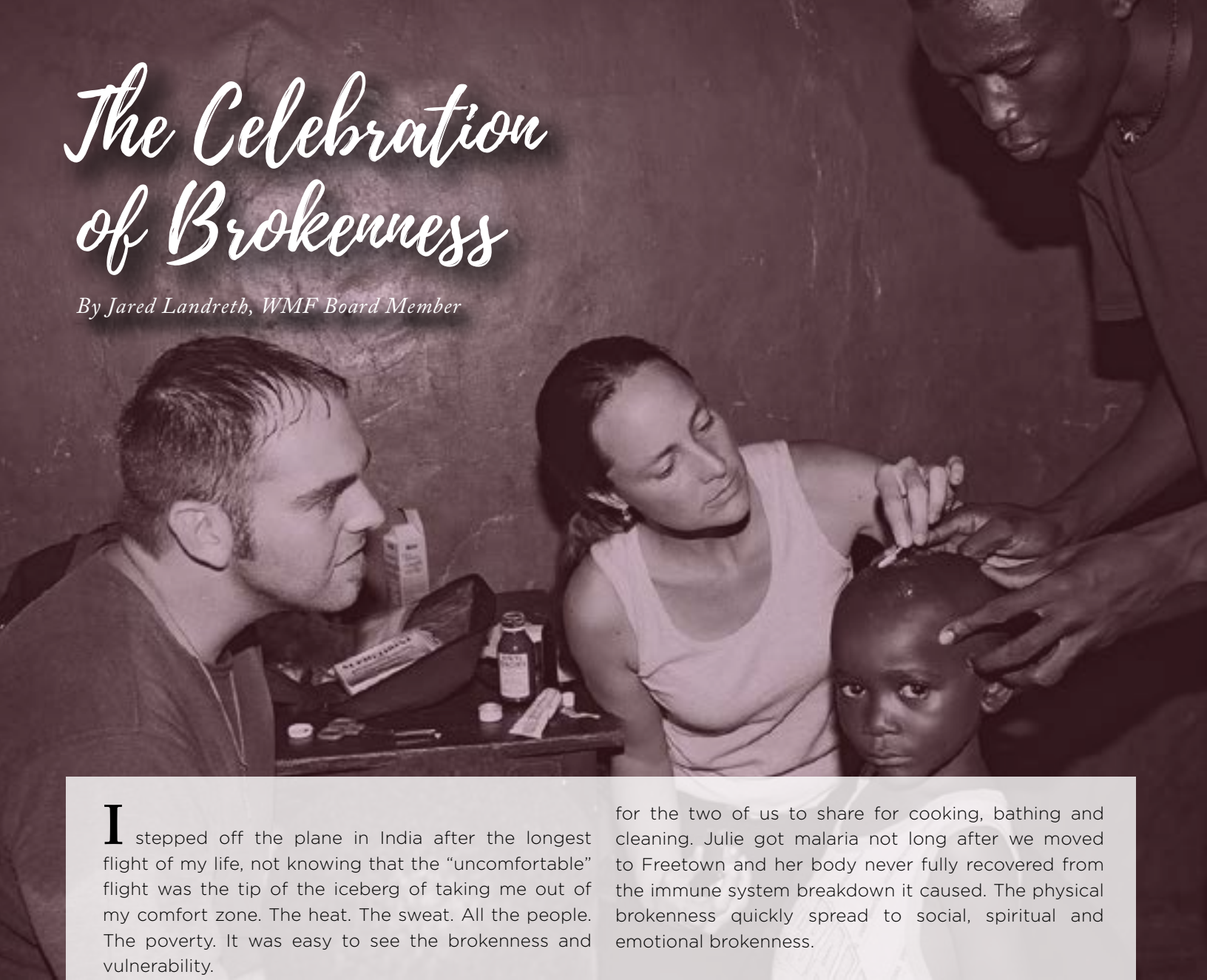
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The Celebration of Brokenness

By Jared Landreth, WMF Board Member



I stepped off the plane in India after the longest flight of my life, not knowing that the “uncomfortable” flight was the tip of the iceberg of taking me out of my comfort zone. The heat. The sweat. All the people. The poverty. It was easy to see the brokenness and vulnerability.

for the two of us to share for cooking, bathing and cleaning. Julie got malaria not long after we moved to Freetown and her body never fully recovered from the immune system breakdown it caused. The physical brokenness quickly spread to social, spiritual and emotional brokenness.

What caught me off guard was how this revealed my brokenness.

At the time, my perception of being broken had only a negative connotation. Being broken meant being damaged, weak, separate and less than. When trust is broken it is never the same again. When relationships are broken they won't be as good as they were. Broken dishes, toys, furniture, homes and people are all less desirable. This is the brokenness of the world.

What caught me off guard was how this revealed my brokenness.

My wife Julie and I moved to the poorest country in the world in 2002 to pioneer the first Word Made Flesh field in Africa. Because of the damaged infrastructure from the war, we averaged about ten hours of electricity each week. We had only five gallons of water each day

What caught me off guard was how this revealed my brokenness.

In John 12:24, Jesus compares his life and ministry to that of a grain being broken by saying, “Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” Jesus was broken and used his brokenness to heal, redeem and define brokenness within God's Kingdom. When we love like Jesus we are compelled to use our brokenness to be vulnerable and to comfort others. Jesus may even use our brokenness to offer healing to others. I have experienced healing through the brokenness and vulnerability of others. In my attempt to give, I received far more.

I recently learned that if there is a break in metal and the base metal is welded properly with filler metal, the weld becomes stronger than the parent metal. Unlike broken dishes, toys, furniture and homes, welding – when done



Jared holds a baby at WMF Chennai.
(Facing) Jared looks on as WMF SL staff offer medical attention to a child.

What caught me
off guard was
how this revealed my
brokenness.

correctly – is the strongest part of the metal. What if in our brokenness Jesus sends the Holy Spirit to fill us to make us stronger? Could loss birth love? Could brokenness be redeemed and offer healing even deeper than the initial wound? When we claim our belovedness from God and are willing to be vulnerable, we unlock Kingdom brokenness. Kingdom brokenness does not glorify the hurt; it transforms it. Kingdom brokenness not only can restore trust, it can create the possibility for broken relationships to be even stronger than they were initially.



ABOUT JARED

Jared Landreth and his wife Julie live in Bonney Lake, WA with their 3 amazing kids Sarah, Micah and Adora. Jared is an Old School Fleshie and was a member of the first Discovery Team and Servant Team. Jared spent 3 years in India and Nepal and 2 years in Sierra Leone where he and Julie pioneered that field. Jared has served as the Treasurer of the Board for the past 5 years.

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When Brokenness is a Way of Life

By Angelene Samuel, *Field Director, WMF Chennai*



The man’s emaciated form was what caught my attention: his skin pulled tightly over and the shape of his skull was so evident, with hollow cheeks and a frame which was held by the loose skin holding the bones together. His inability to sit on the chair for more than a couple of minutes indicated that he was deeply ailing from a serious illness. His spouse sat beside him, holding his hands just so he wouldn’t lose his gait. Often he had to be escorted out, maybe for a drink of water, and then he was brought back to his seat.

It was a prayer gathering at the end of the month. I chose to attend not because I was keen on refreshing my prayer life, but because I knew I had to get away from the mundane routine of caregiving. Because of the veneration it has in mission culture, it sometimes takes a toll on life itself, shadowing the vision of the mission, leaving all efforts in mission void of life. It had been a month or so since I stepped away for some hours to do something other than ministry-related work, with weeks of organizing Christmas programs, caroling, shopping for kids and decorating all three floors of our facility, followed by a New Year Renewal Bible camp that required much organization to get the kids

It was beautiful
to be broken
and to feel
vulnerable
again.

ready and to drop them off at the facility. It was a web of knots, each one overlapping the other with no possible way of undoing it.

I was glad for the gentle breeze which kind of refreshed me from my stuffy gray broodings of a teenager who chose to quit the two job positions and lived now like a rebel, and of a 5 year-old repeatedly down with respiratory tract infection which required round the clock monitoring, and my own viral bronchitis which stubbornly refused to loosen its grips from my system. I looked around to see people in our community, young, old, couples and singles gathered there to spend some time praying and contemplating to prepare in prayer for the new month we were about to step in.

Because of my weakened physical condition and my chaotic emotional state, none of the meditations and calls for worship made a dent in my consciousness to give me a breakthrough. I shifted my attention to those close by where I noticed this couple that had probably spent a day’s pay to make it to the prayer meeting that was located on the outskirts of Chennai. The physical condition of the husband was weak and he requiring immediate medical care. He definitely was not able to work, and his face was blank. His wife was cherishing each and every word during prayer and was encouraging him to attend to the proceedings to his very best.

Halfway through the prayer, the offering bag was passed, and those willing were dropping coins and rupees. I was waiting for the bag to be passed over to the row where I was seated, which took a while. I looked around and saw the couple waiting to place something in the offering bag. I was touched that they were ready to offer to the Lord, in spite of their seeming poverty and sickness. I continued to watch discreetly, and then saw something which just reached out into my very being. The man was even unable to lift his hand to drop the offering of a few coins into the bag. His wife gently



clasped his wrist, moved it towards the bag and asked him to drop the offering. The image of a very skinny wrist being led by a loving hand to place an offering brought tears to my eyes. It just broke my heart to see the couple so willingly give their best in spite of their desperate need and his deteriorating condition.

I forgot about myself and my seemingly gloomy state of affairs and started interceding for this precious couple and their deliverance. I did not want to let them off my field of vision until the end of the prayer. I laced my now lively prayer with

ABOUT ANGELENE

Angelene was born and raised in the southern most state of India, Tamil Nadu. She was influenced by the work and dedication of her parents who were full time workers in Child Evangelism Fellowship for more than 15 years. She did her undergraduate studies in Psychology and post-graduate studies in Clinical Psychology as her parents, Patrick and Victoria, transitioned into work with WMF Chennai. During her studies and her job as a lecturer in Psychology, she was constantly aware of the nudge that God had plans for more. As Angelene began working alongside her parents with Word Made Flesh, she also worked as a counselor in the Phase I HIV vaccine trial — a project of the New York-headquartered International AIDS Vaccine Initiative — which was the first of its kind in India.



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(Facing) Angelene surrounded by children outside our center at WMF Chennai. (Left) Prayer before studytime at our children’s home.

fervent supplication for his recovery, job, needs, and so on. Feeling so broken at the sight of such humble yet sincere giving helped straighten my perspective on life and mission. I had good health, transportation, a job and a family to back me up in all the ups and downs of ministry. I could offer a decent sum as an offering without feeling the pinch on my purse. Yet, somehow I felt all that I was doing and giving was from a plane of ease, layered with self pity rather than giving from my need. I had been looking at the wrong side of life, while life itself was making itself plain clear in each of the seemingly insurmountable problems I encountered.

I had so much to give and guide in each situation which was parading itself before me in the guise of a problematic teen, a sick toddler, and a whole lot of logistical work for each event of the facility. Yet I had let the situations take precedence over the grace of giving care. It was beautiful to be broken and to feel vulnerable again, after a cold month of being over-layered with such difficult emotions. I let myself be peeled of self pity, anxiety and control. I liked the person I saw within myself budding to life after being broken. It had been very difficult for me to let myself be broken because of the façade of mission work I was wearing all along. I believe Heaven would have erupted with deafening applause when those few coins were dropped into the offering bag that day.

Meet our Staff



Rachel Dyachenko
Field Director, WMF Moldova

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, she saw an open door 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 now serves as the Field Director and Advocacy Coordinator for WMF Moldova.

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WMF STAFF



Abraham Salinas Maldonado
Sutisana Production Coordinator,
WMF Bolivia

Abraham was born in La Paz, Bolivia to an impoverished family. His father left when he was young, leaving his mother and sister to provide for him and his siblings. His mother faithfully attended church and Abraham and his siblings grew up knowing God and trusting in Him. When Abraham graduated from high school, he immediately went to work. He travelled to Brazil to work for a few years and learned to be self-sufficient. When he returned to Bolivia, he began working in a textile factory that was later nationalized by the Bolivian government. After 15 years with the company, he resigned due to administrative complications.

By the God's grace, Abraham has been married to Lupe for many years and they have two children, Jhoselin and David. Abraham takes great joy in his children and says they motivate him to do his best. In 2015, Abraham met the WMF community as he taught a sewing class for the women in SutiSana, WMF Bolivia's social enterprise. Shortly thereafter, he joined the team as the workshop manager, where he continues to serve.

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ON BROKENNESS

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 the topic of brokenness. **Click on the images to learn more.**



Read

CHRISTINE SINE'S newest work invites us to pay attention to childlike characteristics that have the power to reshape us. Each chapter of *The Gift of Wonder* addresses a childlike characteristic to embrace, including delight, playfulness, imagination, awe and wonder, love of nature, and much more. As we contemplate on the brokenness found in the world, and even within ourselves, and experience burn out or hopelessness, Christine Sine reminds us to embrace the wonder and joy that God intends for us. She gives us a guide to spiritual practices that engage all of our senses and break down our walls, helping us to be come like little children once again. *Catch a glimpse of this work and read a reflection by Christine on page 9.*



Listen

Reflection by Clint Baldwin

On January 2, I listened again to a song from a long appreciated singer. After some of the chaos of 2018, I thought to myself, "this is a needed reminder." Both musically and for justice, Nina Simone (1933-2003 [born Eunice Kathleen Waymon]) offered an original, strong voice throughout her career. Simone's life exemplifies how the evils of surrounding socio-political contexts can propel us to be one of the best versions of ourselves. **In this issue of *The Cry* focusing on WMF's Lifestyle Celebration of Brokenness, Simone extends hope through singing a moving rendition of "He's Got the Whole World in His Hands"** [from the album, "Nina Simone and Her Friends" (1959)]. In her distinctive style, Simone shares the song's hopefulness without allowing it to become trite. Amidst troubles and turmoil, it is poignant and vital to remember that the Lord does indeed have the whole world -- not just parts that are nice and people who are pleasant -- in His hands. None are left outside the Love of God. Overall and finally, God redeems. Harmful brokenness that causes humiliation is a twisted version of helpful brokenness that produces God-breathed humility; God-blessed brokenness leads away from isolation and debilitating shame to connective community participation.

Take a few minutes and listen to Nina Simone sing this encouragement over you:

*"He's got the gamblin' man in His hands
He's got the sinner man in His hands
He's got the gamblin' man in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands*

*He's got everybody here in His hands
He's got you and me, brother, in His hands
He's got everybody here in His hands
He's got the whole world in His hands"*

Contemplate

Quotes by Rumi, (1207-1273)

"**THE WOUND** is the place where the light enters you."

"**DANCE** when you're broken open. Dance, if you've torn the bandage off. Dance in the middle of the fighting. Dance in your blood. Dance when you're perfectly free."

Photo courtesy WMF Archives (WMF Romania).

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Embracing Our Brokenness

By Jennifer Seo, *Child Sponsorship Coordinator, WMF Sierra Leone*

In his book, *From Brokenness to Community*, Jean Vanier shares about his experience of being in community with disabled adults and describes his community L'Arche as a place of healing and transformation. Being in community with those who are broken, according to Vanier, reveals to us our own brokenness, yet brings us hope because in community we can be accepted for who we are despite our brokenness. Vanier writes, "I do not have to pretend that I am better than others and that I have to win in all the competitions...I am allowed to be myself, with all my psychological and physical wounds, with all my limitations but with all my gifts too."

I have been part of Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone (WMF SL) since 2012. We celebrate being in community with those who are broken, especially those who are struggling with poverty in the Kroo Bay slum area of Freetown. As part of staff training at WMF SL, we read Vanier's book together. His book helped shape our understanding of the place of brokenness in our Christian journey, particularly in the context of our WMF SL community.

Due to my health challenges, my husband and I had to leave Sierra Leone a couple of years ago, and we have been in Canada since then. While I worked in Freetown, one of my roles included working with girls who have been sexually abused. A majority of the girls in Kroo Bay experience sexual abuse from a young age, and WMF SL provides support for these girls and families through counseling, medical care and legal assistance.

I have a special friend named "Esther" whose family I stayed with for over a year when I lived in Kroo Bay. There was a rich sense of community in my small Kroo Bay home. The door of our home was always open, and neighbors constantly dropped by. Though the Sierra Leonean family I lived with didn't have much materially, they always shared their food with their visitors. Esther loved playing with the neighbor children. I had the privilege of helping her with her homework, and attending church with her despite her initial hesitation due to her Muslim background. Esther, who is 16 years old now, has gone through a lot of hardships in her life. She stays with her uncle's family, since her parents cannot afford to send her to school. Shortly before I left Freetown, I was informed that she had been sexually abused. It was heart-rending to hear the news.



Photo courtesy WMF Archives (WMF Sierra Leone).

"Our brokenness is not something to be ashamed of..."

Six years ago, Esther had courageously accepted Christ and was baptized. I still remember the joy I felt at her baptism. Partly due to her family's Muslim background, she didn't receive much support to continue with her new Christian faith, and she discontinued going to church a few years ago. In my absence, my WMF SL colleagues have continued to care for Esther in the midst of challenges she has gone through.

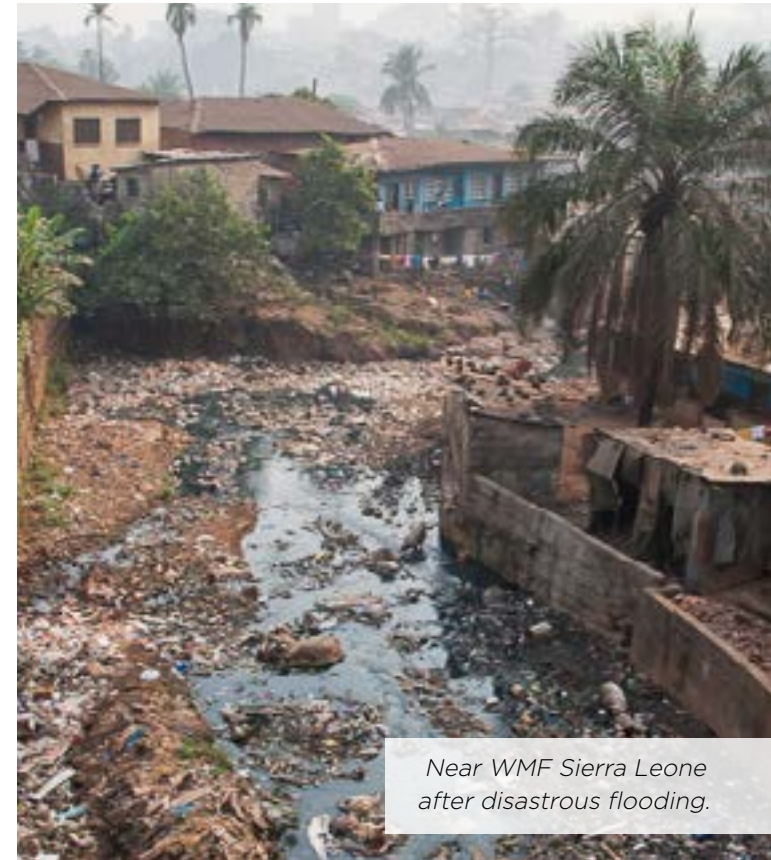
Last week I came across a card Esther wrote me before I left Sierra Leone. She told me to make sure I took care of my health and got better so that I could return to Sierra Leone soon. I get teary when I think of her and I really miss her. As I reflect back at the time when I worked in Sierra Leone, I remember being energized and strengthened by friends like Esther, especially when I was sick. When I had to spend many hours in bed, I often felt discouraged. However, being able to mentor people like Esther when I was physically capable was life-giving for me. When I felt like I didn't have much to contribute to the community due to my illness, Esther's friendship allowed me to share with her my ability to give life to others.

I agree with Jean Vanier. Being in community with people like Esther reveals to us our own brokenness but gives us hope because we are accepted despite our brokenness. If the WMF SL community can love Esther with all her brokenness – and furthermore – if Esther can give me a gift of live-giving friendship with all her brokenness, then I can accept my own brokenness. When I think of Esther's brokenness, I am reminded how I too am broken – relationally, sexually, and in so many other ways. But the difference between me and Esther is that I am so much better at hiding my brokenness. It certainly terrifies me to show others how messed up I am. Being in community with people like Esther gives me the courage to embrace my own brokenness. Our brokenness is not something we need to be ashamed of, but something that binds us together in community as imperfect yet beautiful children of God, who longs to heal and transform us.

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SIERRA LEONE



Near WMF Sierra Leone after disastrous flooding.



ABOUT JENNIFER

Jennifer Seo was born in Seoul, South Korea. She was raised in a Catholic family and had a personal encounter with Christ when she was 17 years old. She went to the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Canada. In 2001, she moved to Vancouver and worked as a dental hygienist until she felt called into full-time missions in 2010. From 2012 to 2017, Jennifer served in the Kroo Bay area of Sierra Leone's capital city of Freetown with Word Made Flesh Sierra Leone. During that time, she focused on ministry with vulnerable women and children. Currently she lives in Vancouver with her husband, Stephen Ney, and enjoys running and reading. In September 2019, Jennifer will transition back to WMF Sierra Leone to step into the role of Field Director there.

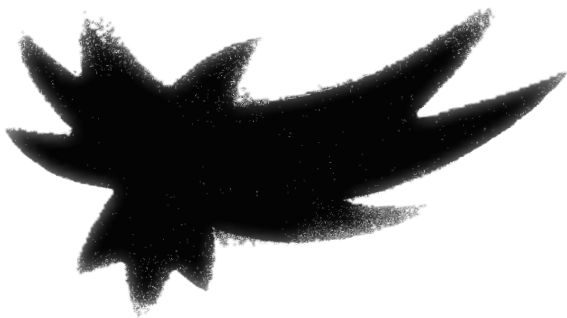


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“Our brokenness has no other beauty but the beauty that comes from the compassion that surrounds it.”

—Henri J. M. Nouwen



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Lifestyle Celebrations

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

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

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

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

Humility We celebrate humility before God and humanity.

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

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

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

Service We celebrate service as an expression of our fellowship.

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