

THE CRY FOR COMMUNITY

THE CRY: AN ADVOCACY JOURNAL OF WORD MADE FLESH SUMMER 2007 – VOL. 13, NO. 2



SERVING JESUS
AMONG THE POOREST OF THE POOR



WMF LIFESTYLE CELEBRATIONS

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

OBEDIENCE
We celebrate total obedience, which intimacy demands. Our obedience is our response and responsibility to the grace of Jesus.

HUMILITY
We celebrate humility before God and humanity.

COMMUNITY
We celebrate community with each other because in community, we find the greatest potential for discipleship, service and growth.

SERVICE
We celebrate service, which fulfills our fellowship.

SIMPLICITY
We celebrate simplicity as our privilege in identification with Jesus and the poor.

SUBMISSION
We celebrate submission to Christ Jesus and each other as a visible sign of our humility.

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

SUFFERING
We celebrate suffering as part of a willing sacrifice in serving Jesus among the poor.

The theme of each issue of "The Cry" is based on one of nine WMF Lifestyle Celebrations. In this issue, we focus on the topic of COMMUNITY.

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR: daphne eck

Light A Prayer

This July, the North American WMF staff and board members, along with their families, will gather at the Lied Lodge in Nebraska City, NE, for a 10-day retreat. This time of workshops, worship, teaching, prayer, fellowship and celebration takes place every three years; it is the fourth gathering of its kind. Thankfully, our partners in ministry – Argentinians, Bolivians, Brazilians, Indians, Nepalese, Peruvians, Romanians, Sierra Leoneans – will carry on the service of WMF international while the North Americans meet.

In the meeting space where we gather for worship (thanks to our music leader, Aaron Strumpel) and teaching (thanks to WMF staff and board), there will be an altar. The altar will be covered with many small candles. Every day, each person in attendance is welcome to light one candle – or many candles – in prayer for our friends who will not be present with us.

It is our intention to welcome the poor into these special times, rather than to leave them behind as we enter into a “fun time” of being pampered and trying to “recover” from the stresses of overseas service. We desire to bring to our fellowship the hungry child on the streets of Brazil. We long to worship with songs that the girl who is putting kohl on her eyes before a night on the line in a red-light district of Kolkata could also sing. We pray that our sessions would be a prayer for the elderly Nepali widow who is lonely and abandoned. In that place of celebration and friendship, we remember the former child soldier in Sierra Leone who is dreading the nightmares he will have tonight about his kidnapped, drugged, gun-wielding days.

Our candles will be lit in prayer for these precious, most vulnerable friends. A candle will also be lit in prayer for our international ministry partners who will serve in our absence. And on



USA staff and board present at the spring 2007 board meeting in Omaha, NE (see USA update on page 10 for more information). The group pictured above is less than half the size of the group that will gather for the all-staff retreat in July.

that same altar, a candle will be lit in prayer for you. It is only fitting that you would join us – you who pray for us, who hold us up, who enable WMF to be there to wipe their tears, give a word of Hope, to share the food they have.

I believe that something unique and special happens when a serving community comes together in worship and prayer. And this dynamic doesn't only occur in the “spiritual” gatherings – but also when we laugh together, share a meal and a drink, tell stories, go for a swim or talk “business” on topics like organizational structure, advocacy, community care, administration, STDs and attachment disorders.

Please pray for us as we gather in the name of Jesus this summer. You will be with us in many ways. Light a prayer for us in your own church or home. I will light one for you. ■



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www.wordmadeflesh.com

COVER PHOTO

Photo by Joel Klepac, Romania staff.

WMF Romania kids and staff in a dog pile – or “pig pile” if you speak Romanian – at summer camp.

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The Cry is an advocacy publication of Word Made Flesh. In addition to serving Jesus among the poor through ministries of compassion and proclamation of the Good News, Word Made Flesh is committed to serving the church as a prophetic voice for the poor. We strive for *The Cry* to be a voice to the church, articulating the cry of the poor for God and the cry of God for the poor.

To request a free quarterly subscription contact us at 1.800.279.4543 or info@wordmadeflesh.com. Though the subscription is free, we suggest a tax-deductible donation of \$10 per year to help cover our costs (\$30 donations for addresses outside the U.S.).

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All Scripture is quoted from Today's New International Version Bible, unless otherwise stated.

Staff Profiles

JOSE GARCIA



Jose, Monica and David Garcia

Jose Garcia was born in Mexico City in 1973, and born again 12 years later. When he was 19 years old, he moved to El Carmen, Mexico, a little town located in the Nuevo Leon state. There he started his pastoral studies at El Calvario Ministerial Institute. After graduating, he was sent to the city of Aguascalientes to be a youth pastor, and he happily worked with this ministry for three years. However, he felt the need to further his education. At the Universidad del Norte in Monterrey, Mexico, he received his financial administration degree and worked two years as the city treasurer of Monterrey.

In 2004, God called Jose to go to Omaha and work again in ministry, as an assistant pastor and worship leader. There, he met the woman who would become his wife, Monica, and a year and eight months later, they were married. God has blessed them with a son, David Jose. In 2005, God brought them to WMF, where they have been able to fulfill their desire to put into God's hands their talents and strengths for helping people. Jose and Monica believe WMF is a good place for them to learn more about the gospel in real life. Also, they are grateful to God because He has allowed them to share the warmth of the WMF family. Jose is the accounting assistant in the Omaha office, and also uses his pastoral gifts to encourage and exhort the community. ■

DAVID AND LENUTA CHRONIC

David was born in Denver, CO, and moved to Omaha, NE, with his family when he was 11. Following the move to Nebraska, he struggled through conflicts with his family. God had His hand on David's life, though. David accepted Jesus in early 1992 because of a friend who reached out to him. At the time of



David and Lenuta Chronic

David's salvation, God also placed a call on him to be involved in missions. As he would read the Scriptures and pray, God would break his heart with visions and dreams of a dying world. Part of that calling was fulfilled in missions trips to India, Mexico, Romania and Moldova. As a student, David studied in Romania, where he began to spend time with street children. In 1996, he received an international business degree from the University of Nebraska. In 1998, David returned to Romania with WMF, where he started a WMF site in Galati, serving among street children, children with HIV, and the Roma (gypsy) community.

Lenuta (pronounced "Lenut-sa") was born in the small town of Cudalbi, in Galati County, Romania, the eldest of three children in a family that kept the Romanian orthodox traditions but didn't know God. In her school years, she adhered to communist doctrine because she wanted to dedicate her life to an ideal. She was taught that those who spoke of faith in God had attitudes from the Middle Ages and were obstacles to society's progress. At 18, she became a teacher at a grade school in Galati. The same year, her parents decided to follow Christ. She saw great changes in their lives, but her mind was already very grounded in communist ideology. After eight years of questions and interior struggle, she surrendered to the love of Christ. She began to go to the Pentecostal church her parents attended.

In 1998, she met David. She saw how he related to the children of the streets, whom she had ignored until then. She prayed for God's direction in her life, and soon the leaders of a local children's home asked her if she wanted to work with them in their home, with children who had lived on the streets. She worked there for a year and then returned to teaching public school. In 2000, two children with whom WMF worked were in her class, and she became more involved with the Valley House (WMF community

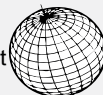
center), accepting the position as the first chairperson of the WMF Romania board of directors.

In December 2002, Lenuta and David were married, and in 2005, Lenuta came on staff at the Valley House as an educator for the schoolchildren's program. David is the Europe/Africa Regional Coordinator. He is studying theology in a distance study program through the London School of Theology. ■

**wmf servant teams ask *
where are you landing next?**

el alto*bolivia
rio de janeiro*brazil
kolkata*india
lima*peru
galati*romania

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teams



it's beyond a
four-month experience.
it's just the
beginning of a
changed life.

dates
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june 2008
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august-15
december 2008

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serving Jesus among the poorest of the poor

ON COMMUNITY: That's How We Are

by heather goertzen

I graduated from Taylor University in a subculture that loved the buzzwords “intentional community.” Small groups of students were everywhere talking about those they were going to live with after graduation, and where they were moving. The commune idea was being resurrected, and Seattle seemed to be the most popular destination city. I remember being inarticulately bothered by the cliché of it. My friends and I, instead, planned to separate tearfully, dramatically, decidedly; head toward seminary, med school, law school, Tibet and Africa; spend astronomical amounts on phone bills and post; and step into the real world.

I was disturbed when my plans for Africa began to fall apart and I found myself back at the “wide gate,” my seemingly best and only option being to move to Seattle (where else?) for graduate school. I moved into a community house with four other students (despicably cliché) and began a four-year feast on community (buzz). The five of us eventually turned into seven (sometimes eight to 10, depending on who was crashing on our couches at the time), and our house became an open-door hangout for whomever wanted to stop by. We shared milk, bathrooms, car pools, phone bills and dirty dishes. We took road trips to the coast to camp away holiday weekends and properly celebrated every birthday, promotion and semester’s end.

I left that community (again, tearfully, dramatically and decidedly) in the fall of 2003 to spend my first four months among the poor in El Alto, Bolivia. There, I got my first taste of what it might mean to build community in the midst of people who didn’t share my language, culture, education or love for good coffee and great books. I got a sense of what it would cost to live among those who were most desperate



Workers and women gather in the kitchen at WMF Bolivia’s community center for women, La Casa de Esperanza. Heather Goertzen pictured back, center.

for a Kingdom community. From there, I wrote a letter home:

“I woke up this morning missing, really missing, home: missing Sunday morning breakfasts at the house, missing 10 p.m. runs to Barnes & Noble for frappuccinos and copies of Divine Secrets, missing salmon cook-outs that start at 5 and end long after the sun has set over the Olympics and Rainier has faded into darkness, and missing the beds that were always available for invasion if your own was too cold or too lonely or the need for pillow talk was too great.

For a second I had to stop and wonder again why I was here and what was driving those ever-more-frequent thoughts of staying. It didn’t take me long to remember meeting Emily last night on the street. It was only her third night working ... still so new to the darkness. I thought of her and how open her bed is to

invasion, not by laughing, dramatic, sentimental girls needing to process a recent date or lack thereof, but by any stranger willing to fork over the 15 Bolivianos (\$2) that her 15 minutes of violation is worth. I thought of all the women I’ve met for whom a trip to Barnes & Noble would mean so very little since they can’t read, and 30 Bolivianos for a cup of coffee would mean hungry kids for a week.

So when I think of why I’m here in El Alto, I remember all of you whom I miss the most are

(continued on page 19)



Heather Goertzen is a counselor at La Casa de Esperanza community center in El Alto, Bolivia. She and her husband, Wes, were married in August 2006. They live with a woman who has escaped prostitution; together the three of them desire to build a home that is a safe place for women to experience healing and wholeness.

ON COMMUNITY:

With Open Arms

by jara sturdivant

Between the lonely phone calls to family, friends and loved ones, I have found myself wrestling with the concept of community. I've asked myself why I feel alone when I am living in an intentional community. Then I hear these words echoing in my head: *People are surprised when they are lonely in the middle of community.*

When I moved to Omaha two years ago, I thought I had a clear understanding and expectation of community. I experienced great community in college and graduate school, and thought I had it down. I never associated community with loneliness. Little did I know that two years later I would still be struggling with what community means and why loneliness is such a big part of it.

After I tell people that I live in Omaha and work with Word Made Flesh, they immediately ask questions about living in community: Do we live in the same house? Do we attend the same church? I am not sure what surprises them more, that we don't live in the same house or that there are about 12 different churches represented within the office.

In a culture that frequently tosses around the word "community" in conversations, it is hard to pin down a true definition or picture of community. Although communities have different looks, beliefs, lifestyles, I see several common characteristics. Community is a group of people who share life together. But that basic and simple definition doesn't really explain community in depth. Jean Vanier expands what community is in his book *Community and Growth*. Community is "groupings of people who have left their own milieu to live with others under the same roof, and work from a new vision of human beings and their relations with each other and with God."¹ Although we don't live in the same building (well, some of

us do), we do spend a lot of time together. If we are not working together in the office, many of us are sharing meals together, working out together, running errands together.

There's not a set formula or equation for entering and developing community, but it's done through grace. Some people integrate well into community, but there are others who stumble into it.

When I entered into the community here in Omaha, I had some misconceptions and leftover Christian-college baggage that I carried with me. With my arms wide open, I expected to fit in immediately and to feel the warmth and closeness of community. While a college student, I had the privilege of having an immediate community: my classmates and hallmates. With an emphasis on community, my college experience was full of social activities, long, late-night conversations and not much time alone. This I associated with "community." So as I settled into life here in Omaha, all of my "community" baggage came out, and I began to stumble.

No longer were my arms open; my arms were crossed. I thought to myself, they must have this community thing all wrong. I didn't have that familiar feeling that I had when my community in college surrounded me. I had a very new feeling, loneliness or solitude.

It's only now that I'm able to see the benefit of the solitude I experienced. In *Clowning in Rome*, Henri Nouwen writes, "Without solitude we begin to cling to each other; we begin to worry about what we think and feel about each other; we quickly become suspicious of each other or irritated with each other; and we begin, often in unconscious ways, to scrutinize each other with a tiring hypersensitivity. Without solitude, shallow conflicts easily grow deep and

cause painful wounds ... daily life becomes so self-conscious that long-term living together is painful and almost impossible."²

In the midst of my solitude, I didn't hear my cell phone ringing or friends asking me to hang out; I heard nothing. It was in that space that I needed to learn to trust God and His sustenance. Nouwen continues to describe this empty space for God by saying that "with solitude, however, we learn to depend on God, who calls us together in love, in whom we can rest, and through whom we can enjoy and trust each other even when our ability to express ourselves to each other is limited."³

If I don't allow this solitude to be a part of community, I fear that I can become too dependent on filling my emptiness with false comfort. Entering into solitude goes against what I've been conditioned to believe is right, not just for me, but for our community. It really doesn't make sense that solitude builds community. I've always thought that I had to be *with* people to build relationships and community. But it's also when we're alone that we build relationships. "Whenever we pray alone, study, read, write, or simply spend quiet time away from the places where we interact with each other directly, we are potentially opened for deeper intimacy with each other. It is a fallacy to think that we grow closer to each other only when we talk, play, or work together."⁴

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Photo: Jara Sturdivant

Jara Sturdivant has served in the role of Short Term Programs Coordinator and Design Assistant for two years. This June, she will move into a new position, that of U.S. Advocacy Coordinator.

ON COMMUNITY:

Building Community Through Forgiveness

by silas west

Several years ago, a co-worker gave me a copy of an article by the late Henri Nouwen called “Moving from Solitude to Community to Ministry.”¹ Anyone who has read Nouwen’s books would recognize his familiar three-part philosophy of ministry: first, grounding yourself in **solitude** with God; second, gathering a **community** around yourself with whom you want to proclaim the truth that we are the beloved sons and daughters of God; and, third, going out *together* to a **ministry** of healing and proclaiming the Good News.

I appreciate his definition of solitude as a discipline of listening. In solitude we focus our attention on the voice of God calling us His beloved sons and daughters. “When you are not walking in that voice,” he writes, “you cannot walk freely in this world.”²

For the past nine years, much of my attention has been focused on the idea of listening to the voice of God calling us His beloved. As I battled with deep insecurity and fear of what others thought and said about me, I found great solace in the reality that God had established my identity long before I was born. This identity has nothing to do with what I tell myself or what anyone else says about me. But I have also discovered that there is a vast difference between believing that this voice of love exists and actually experiencing the freedom that comes from believing that voice.

The time I spent trying to listen to God – so that my identity could be grounded in the reality of His love for me – was actually spent trying to quiet my fear and insecurity. The more I gave in to my fear and insecurity, the greater the negative impact they had on my family, community and ministry. I had little confidence in who I was, or that I could possibly be called to ministry among the poor. I had serious doubts

about being a loving husband and good father. In vain I struggled to silence those other voices – those lies crafted by the enemy of my soul to turn me away from the reality of my identity.

Although I knew who I was, the insecurities and fear I lived under were holding me back from walking in that reality and from fully engaging in the community that was forming and growing around us in Nepal. In community, whenever members are not grounded in the experiential knowledge of God’s love for them, their lives are tainted by a constant need to prove themselves. They become driven by an unseen motivation to have their value affirmed. They expect things from others that only God can give, and become demanding, manipulative and ultimately resentful when they don’t get it. Even successes are marred because they are motivated by the need to pay some inner debt of worthlessness or need for affirmation. This was me in a nutshell.

It all climaxed for me when I went on sabbatical a few years ago, a time that I call “The Year of Forgiveness.” Everything and everyone God brought into our lives during that time pointed me toward the concept of forgiveness. That year, I learned to give and receive forgiveness and, in doing so, silenced the lies and turmoil within.

Before “The Year of Forgiveness,” I had known the importance of forgiveness, but I never understood *how* to forgive. Even after going through the motions of forgiving, I soon discovered that nothing had changed – the resentment still lingered.

I discovered that I had been saying the words “I forgive” but never actually canceled the debt owed me. Matthew 18:23-35 is a parable about a servant who owed his master a debt of 10,000 talents, an impossible sum of roughly \$6.6 billion today. We find the servant begging his

master to “be patient” and he would “pay back everything” (18:26). The servant was looking for a forgiveness that meant asking the master for more time, not an utter release of the debt. The debt would still be owed, but it would not be recalled until the next time it came up. When we forgive people without canceling the debt, we only put off the payment until it comes up again.

God brought a dear friend into our lives who helped me understand the process involved in true forgiveness. This friend helped me understand that first we must look deeply within ourselves at the debt that is owed us. What do we really want? An apology? Justice? To get back what was lost to us? Debts take many shapes, but they are essentially the same – “Pay back what you owe me.” When we can clearly see what is owed us, then we can begin to identify the effects that debt has had on our lives. Many of the false beliefs we have about ourselves were established when we were wronged or wounded, or when we faced significant loss in our lives. We hold onto resentment, and it buries itself deep within us. Resentment binds us to the need to settle our accounts and receive payment for the debt that is owed us.

After identifying the effects of the debt, we lay it all out before God. We tell God about it – all the wrongs done to us, all the ways it affected us, all that we desired but were not able to see come to fruition, and what we still desire to see

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Silas West serves in Kathmandu, Nepal, with his wife, Kimberly. He is the Field Director and Regional Coordinator for South Asia but his favorite role is being daddy to his four children, Jedidiah, Adia, Elijah, and Priya. Silas is in his tenth year of ministry with WMF in Nepal.

Photo: Kimberly West

ON COMMUNITY:

Building Caring Communities

by jyoti bhattarai

Though “community” is not a new word for me, its great strength and depth makes my experiences seem continually new. My first community – my family – did not grant me an accurate picture of what community should be. Since the very beginning of my life, I was deprived of love, care and concern from the familial community into which I was born. Living in a traditional, predominantly Hindu Nepali culture, my mother had two strikes against her: she was a leprosy patient, and she believed in Jesus. When she was less than a month into her pregnancy with me, she was forced to leave my father’s household because of her faith in Jesus.

She went to live with her own parents. My grandfather, in accordance with Nepali culture, bought a male goat to celebrate my birth. But my mother gave birth to a daughter instead of a son, and my grandfather, in his disappointment, did not kill the goat; he sold it. In this way, I was cast out by both my maternal and paternal families. Such gender partiality and discrimination are common in Nepal, but they are not the actions of a caring community.

Though I had no knowledge of a father’s love and my maternal grandfather shunned me, I was with my mother, and her faith in Jesus brought me into the Christian community where I felt some security, care and concern. Through fellowship, prayer and community life with a handful of Christians, I was greatly influenced in my thought and understanding. We were weak in a sense, because we were very poor. But despite our poverty, we had a desire to extend care, help, concern and love to others. We gave of ourselves to whatever degree we were able.

In learning to serve through the example of my mother and Christian brothers and sisters, I began praying fervently about my future. Even though I excelled in my studies, I found myself desiring to give my life to serve and to build

caring communities.

That is exactly what I am now doing. Before I started this ministry, I had a good job from which I resigned so that I could serve among elderly and abandoned women. Many visitors who come to our home often say, “After spending many years in university studies, why are you doing this? You have wasted your life!” But I humbly tell them this is what God wants me to do. I have committed my life to care for suffering, sorrowful, abandoned, poor elderly women in the name of Jesus.

Caring for people in need is a challenge. Because of the Maoist insurgency in the last 12 years, many people in Nepal have become widowed, orphaned, poor, homeless, starving and hopeless. My effort may be very small – it may even seem like a waste of life to some – but I have great satisfaction doing this work. A friend once told me, “Jyoti, what you are doing is very inspiring to me. You have done great work.” I do not boast in these words – I only hope they are an echo of what I may one day hear from the Father: “Well done, my good and faithful servant.”

It is our duty and responsibility to build caring communities, but we cannot do it overnight. However, our little effort can pave the way for



This is one of the “ammās” (Nepali word of respect, meaning “mother”) who is a member of the family at Prem Ghar, the WMF home for elderly widows in Kathmandu, Nepal.

Photo: Kimberly West

generations to come. Let us take this challenge very seriously and contribute toward building caring communities. ■



Photo: Chris Heuertz

Jyoti Bhattarai serves as the director of Prem Ghar (Home of Love), WMF Nepal’s home for destitute and abandoned widows. She is the mother of three daughters. Jyoti has a master’s degree in botany and loves to spend time in her garden, which provides many of the vegetables served at Prem Ghar.

ON COMMUNITY:

Open Celebration

by rebecca nichols

In Rio de Janeiro, the celebrations are many. Between the 2 million people who pack the beach in Copacabana for New Year's Eve and people coming from far and wide for Carnaval, it's the parties that put us on the map of hot tourist spots. Just a half-hour's bus ride through the city is our *favela* community of about 50,000 residents who help to give Rio its well-deserved reputation for appreciating a good celebration.

After all of the shops have closed on Sunday afternoons, you might find our neighbors sitting out on the stoops of their apartments in our row of homes, gathering trash cans, pots, wooden spoons and available hands to form an impromptu rhythm circle. Or if it's a game day, who can resist taking a few minutes to sit and watch the soccer match? Almost every shop and home will be rooting for their team. The shouts and popping firecrackers easily give away the score even for those who aren't watching. Or on a cruel, steamy-hot day you might find our 2-year-old neighbor calling for us to join her reveling in the coolness of the water in her inflatable pool. "AahhhhNINHAaaaa! Come swimming with me!" she summons. Every day is a chance to enjoy the small pleasures of life.

And special days are a chance to enjoy extraordinary pleasures of life. On New Year's Eve, a neighboring family opens up their vegetable shop to make space for a special dinner. They meticulously carve melons and papayas into little baskets holding plums, grapes, strawberries and other sundry fruits. The table is a rainbow of sweet delights. Other families on the street bring pots of rice, farofa, potatoes, skewers of meats, roasted chickens. No one even thinks about starting the party until the fireworks signal that the new year has begun. But the celebrations, the food, the beer, the conversation, the laughter all last through the day until night falls again on our little street.



This boy is a friend of the WMF community in Brazil.

Photo: Jenna Pashby

A microphone and speaker mounted on a car parked almost directly below our window announce our neighbor's birthday; an actual red carpet has been rolled out over our street pocked with potholes, and family members and friends take turns at the mic telling us all what a wonderful woman we are celebrating this day. Encircling the woman of honor in ring-around-the-rosie style, her daughters and friends jump and dance as we sing "Happy Birthday" and firecrackers bounce in between the buildings of our narrow street. A few minutes later, cake and soda are served to everyone who has joined the party.

You don't need an invitation to join those celebrations in our community, except maybe a "Hey! Come on in!" or "Here, have some cake. Don't you want some soda, too?" These aren't private, exclusive parties reserved only for those

with invitations. No, everyone from neighbors to passers-by is invited to stop and celebrate life for a few moments today. No special dress is necessary. You don't have to know anyone powerful or important. In fact, around here, it's probably best if you don't! You don't guess that someone is having a party because there is an abundance of cars parked in the driveway – you are invited into the celebration as you walk by. Feel free to dance or sing, to make music, to laugh or to cheer. No one here minds a little noise.

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Photo: Rich Nichols

Rebecca Nichols lives and serves in Rio de Janeiro with her husband, Rich, and daughter, Anna. Last year, a jukebox was installed right below her bedroom window. Her favorite song to sing along with is "We Are the World."

OPEN CELEBRATION
(continued from previous page)

Yes, life blooms here in this community. We celebrate life in spite of, or perhaps because of, oppression in the *favela*. In general, our neighbors are well-off, according to slum standards. Though many live from small paycheck to paycheck, most of our neighbors do better than eek out provision for their families. But the heaviness is real and is felt. In this neighborhood, no one knows who to trust. The *bandidos* (“criminals”) often seem more like the “good guys” on this stage than those who have been commissioned to serve and protect the people. The police are known for taking advantage of the common working man and for demanding bribes, while the *traficantes* (“those involved in the drug trade”) protect the community from thieves and robbers, and sometimes the police. “Right” and “just” are confusing concepts here. It’s hard to know who or what would actually qualify.

Jesus was no stranger to this type of oppression or to fully celebrating life. The Roman hand was heavy upon the Jewish community of Jesus’ day, but this is to be expected of an occupying enemy. The leaders of His own community, those who should have recognized Him, were the very ones who contrived and carried out the plot to crucify Him. His people were dominated by a foreign government, and His life was ended through abuses of the penal system. Yes, Jesus knew oppression. Still, our Lord loved to celebrate, and He celebrated often. From rejoicing at weddings to dining and feasting at the homes of others to commemorating the feasts of the Jewish calendar, Jesus openly took pleasure in the joys of life. And He opened His celebrations up to all who would come in, whether a reviled tax collector, a leper, a prostitute or a sinful woman who would anoint His feet with her tears.

Christ invites us all in: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10). He not only allows us but encourages us to drink in the fullness and abundance of good things in our lives and declare that there is something worth celebrating no matter the circumstances. All are welcome: the *favela* resident, the young mother on the streets, the rich, the poor, even the *bandidos* and *traficantes*. Knowing that we would suffer, Christ came to bring us fullness of life, life worth celebrating.

For the time being, we celebrate in spite of our circumstances. At the end of time, we will join the ultimate celebration of our Lord’s return and the establishment of His Kingdom on earth at the wedding supper of the Lamb. There will be singing and shouting, worshipping and feasting as we celebrate our long-awaited union with Christ. But this new celebration of life will not be under the harsh hand of oppression or her sister sorrow, for as the New Jerusalem descends “prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband,” the Lord will “wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away” (Revelation 21:2-3). We will truly be able to live and celebrate with our brothers and sisters free from sorrows, worries and grief. We will beckon and be beckoned: come and sing a joyful song; come and feast; come and play; come and worship. Come! Come rejoice! ■

A WITNESS OF LOVE

by jenna pashley



Photo: Estefanie Cohen

The WMF community in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, is in relationship with many mothers who are raising their children on the streets. Jenna is pictured here, holding one such child.

Our witness is tied up in our community. Together we learn about God’s grace and then are given ample space and opportunities to practice that grace on ourselves and our fellow brothers and sisters. Together we read about God’s love and are then offered the option to love each other with that wild, free abandon. We love extravagantly. We love absurdly. We love frailly. But we love because we’ve received love, and we can’t hold back from sharing. It’s impossible to keep in!

While preaching the gospel is important, few people pay attention to the street preachers with their loudspeakers in Rio de Janeiro. They seem to be in every major city square, but their voices blend with traffic sounds and samba tunes, and they’re shrugged off as yet another minor annoyance. Our witness should be not in how loudly we preach, but how loudly our unity speaks for us.

My Word Made Flesh community is made up of four very obviously white North Americans. No one can miss the fact that we don’t “belong” on the street. So during our regular Monday-night dinner with the families and adolescents on the street, which happens around rush hour, hundreds of people pay attention. They stop on their commute to stare, with quizzical looks stamped on their faces. They pass to the other side of the street, looking over their shoulders four or five times. They press their faces to the bus windows and puzzle through this sight. And once in a while, a pedestrian will stop, bend down and ask a question or two. They want to know if we’re OK, if we know where we are and who we’re spending time with. If we’re afraid. And if they get this far in the conversation, they usually want to know if we’re Christians. They know that only love would drive someone to spend time in the places we go. Only love or desperation would draw us to live in the places we live. And the only love that makes sense is the love that comes from God, because it’s the only love that does crazy things such as

living in *favelas* and spending time with known criminals, leaving friends and family to serve the unknown and forgotten. We don’t have to preach that love from the middle of a crowded square with microphone or loudspeaker. We just live it. ■



Photo: Ben Miller

Jenna Pashley is field staff in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, where she serves among families and youth living on the streets and at a home for at-risk children. Jenna enjoys naps, old books, storytelling, thunderstorms and singing opera in the streets.

Country Updates

OMAHA, NE U.S.A.

FEBRUARY

- Corey Widmer of Third Presbyterian in Richmond, VA, speaks at Beggars Society.
- Chris Heuertz's article for the Christian Vision Project, "A Community of the Broken," is published in the February issue of Christianity Today (christianvisionproject.com/2007/02/a_community_of_the_broken.html).

MARCH

- Aaron Strumpel of Enter the Worship Circle sings and speaks at Beggars Society.
- David Zimmerman, associate editor at InterVarsity Press, visits Omaha to work with Chris on his book. The working title for Chris' book is "Simple Spirituality."
- Chris speaks at Yale Divinity School in New Haven, CT.
- Sarah Kim speaks at Immanuel Baptist Church in Chicago, IL.
- Several Omaha Fleshies attend a conference by Old Testament scholar and writer, Walter Brueggemann (pictured right).



Walter Brueggemann (front center) with WMF staff

APRIL

- April 19-21, the board of directors convenes for the spring board meeting. Jeremiah and Jennifer Dean (Argentina), Jesse Heirendt (Nepal), Liz Ivkovich (Nepal), Stephanie McGuire (Sierra Leone) and Calvin Smothers (Nepal) are approved for overseas staff positions. Amanda Timm (USA staff) and Stephanie McGuire (Sierra Leone staff) and Lisa Kelly (USA board) are commissioned for service. See photo on page 2.

RIO DE JANEIRO, BRAZIL

FEBRUARY

- Rebecca Nichols organizes a study group for missionary women that begins meeting in late February. Five women are participating in the book study and fellowship time.

MARCH

- Jenna Pashley is a missionary speaker at a local church. The next day, the WMF volunteer program hits a new milestone: The Brazilian volunteers outnumber the Americans! Four teenagers from the church continue to take part in the street visits.
- Ben and Rich make weekly hospital visits to be with five-year-old Bruce, a friend from the streets, who is suffering from an antibiotic-resistant infection in his leg. Pray for Bruce as he has already been in the hospital for three months and has to spend lots of time there alone.

APRIL

- WMF staff and volunteers throw a birthday party for the children at *Projeto Vidinha* whose birthdays fall between December and June.
- Brazil staff meet with volunteers and prospective board members in a informational meeting to explain who we are, discuss our goals and brainstorm about how to improve our programs on the streets.

LIMA, PERU

FEBRUARY

- The Forcatto family (South America Regional Coordinators) travels to Lima for a field visit with the WMF community.
- WMF Peru board meets for staff interviews and the yearly business meeting.
- Samuel and Esther Cabrera (WMF Peru staff), after four years of faithful service with the community, end their employment and move to Israel.
- The ProVision Foundation completes what was lacking in the community's fundraising efforts to purchase a ministry center. Praise God with us for this timely and perfect blessing.

MARCH

- The school year starts. WMF Peru is helping 26 children and young people (all former youth from the street or their children) attend school.
- All full-time Peruvian workers are given the option to personally raise funds by forming support teams. Please pray for us as we seek to support each other in even greater ways as a community in mission among the poor.
- The girls' Bible study, for young women and mothers formerly from street contexts, begins to meet regularly.

APRIL

- The community evaluates market conditions and available properties for the purchase of the ministry center.
- Linsey Higgins and Monica Ghali travel to Arica, Chile; Linsey re-enters Peru on her new resident visa. Praise God!
- Natalia Langley receives her U.S. immigrant visa from the embassy.
- The Bolivia Servant Team visits the community in Lima.

EL ALTO, BOLIVIA

FEBRUARY

- Andy Baker and Walter Forcatto visit El Alto to assist in leadership transition during the Bakers' medical leave.
- The spring Servant Team arrives.
- Humberto Sirpa comes on staff as Inter-Institutional Coordinator.
- *La Casa de Esperanza* celebrates with a costume party during Carnaval festivities.

MARCH

- *La Palabra Hecha Vida* (WMF Bolivia) introduces itself as a legal Bolivian foundation to churches, governmental and non-governmental organizations and ministry partners.
- *La Casa de Esperanza* celebrates Children's Day with a reduced-price clothing sale.
- WMF Bolivia participates in a local radio program against the prostitution of minors.
- WMF Bolivia collaborates with *Organización de Trabajadores Nocturnas* (syndicate of women who prostitute) and El Alto's Health Center in a meeting of nearly 200 women.

APRIL

- Heather and Wes Goertzen move into a home with Eliana, with hopes to offer rehabilitation and community to vulnerable women and their families.
- *La Casa de Esperanza* hosts a free medical campaign for the children of women who prostitute.
- Vicky, the cook at *La Casa de Esperanza*, falls and breaks her leg in three places. Please pray for healing!

GALATI, ROMANIA

FEBRUARY

- Feb. 15, Josh and Robin Fowler arrive in Galati, beginning their staff term.
- Lau and Vali Archip make a three-year covenant with WMF Romania community.
- *Cuvantul Intrupat* (WMF Romania) begins the process of buying land for a job-creation project. Please pray for the development of this new project.

MARCH

- The children present a program for their parents, a celebration of springtime through songs and poems.
- The mothers of the schoolchildren are honored on Women's Day with a mini spa, complete with manicure, massage, facials, haircuts and styling.
- Frank Summers, Neil Summers and Daniel Heather work on the electrical system in the renovated attic space and chapel.

APRIL

- He is risen! Easter at *Casa La Vale* includes worship, stories, skits and a big, traditional Romanian Easter meal.
- Brook Birch, Kara DeBruyn, and Kimberly and Priya West (Nepal staff) visit Romania.
- The WMF Romania staff have a retreat in the mountains with the theme "Daily Spirituality: Practicing the Presence of God."
- Ron Wright, professor at Mount Vernon Nazarene College, shares with the community about counseling, theology and community care.

FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE

FEBRUARY

- David Chronic (Europe/Africa Regional Coordinator) visits Freetown from Romania. Later in February, he, Noah Tullay (Field Advisor) and David Bayne (USA board member) travel to South Africa to explore the possibility of establishing a WMF community in Cape Town. From there, David Chronic continues on to Zambia, to meet with potential partners in ministry.
- The first Servant Team comprised of all Sierra Leonean team members begins.
- The Lighthouse youth and Kroo Bay children enjoy an outing at Kent Beach.

MARCH

- Several Lighthouse youth begin attending baptism classes at a local church.
- Joe and Mindy Eichorn (former WMF staff), along with baby Natalie, return to Freetown for a time of closure. Keith Padgett (former WMF staff) also visits Freetown.

APRIL

- Lighthouse celebrates Easter by hosting a special "Jesus party" for kids in the Kroo Bay slum.
- The Lighthouse tailoring youth begin to learn a specialized form of embroidery.
- Sheku (Lighthouse youth featured in the spring issue of *The Cry*) buys a generator for his tailoring shop with money he saved from sewing for his peers.

BUENOS AIRES, ARGENTINA

FEBRUARY

- Two youth attend a weekend spiritual retreat for young adults led by friends from the church the Forcattos attend. Young adults from other cities in Argentina and Chile attend this retreat.

MARCH

- Youth participate in an afternoon of games, movies and fellowship with the Forcattos and one of the volunteers at church.

APRIL

- Some of the youth of the streets participate in Holy Week activities with the Forcattos.

KATHMANDU, NEPAL

FEBRUARY

- Two young men, Kamal and Sunil, enter drug rehabilitation at *Kripaa Sadhan*.
- Feb. 19, Nepali staff member Top Magar and his wife Sukantala celebrate the birth of their first child, a daughter named Glory.

MARCH

- Gautam Rai travels to Bangalore, India, to reunite a young man who is a friend of WMF Nepal with his mother after many years apart. The entire family comes to know Christ!
- The Kolkata Servant Team comes to Nepal for a visit.

APRIL

- April 1, Sanu Baba, friend and former resident of *Kripaa Sadhan*, passes away due to complications from AIDS and Tuberculosis.

CHENNAI & KOLKATA, INDIA

FEBRUARY

- Sari Bari begins another training session, this time with nine women.
- Beth Waterman receives her first Servant Team.
- Sari Bari celebrates its one-year anniversary with a huge party, lots of food, and very thankful hearts. WMF takes special time to celebrate the lives of the three women who started at Sari Bari one year ago, and in doing so, were able to leave the sex trade.
- Sari Bari has its first annual picnic, taking the three full-time employees and their kids to the beach for an overnight trip to Bakkali.
- Rekha, with the assistance of WMF and the support of her husband, leaves prostitution and starts making jute bags at a local company.

MARCH

- After the dedication of the new home for WMF Chennai's Home of Happiness, the huge task of moving from the old home to the new building begins. The home successfully makes the change by March; the children are greatly enjoying the new facilities and their new home!
- The new trainees at Sari Bari receive their first paycheck – a big moment of pride and celebration for the women. One woman said, "By my own hard work, I earned this money."
- Silas West (South Asia Regional Coordinator) makes a visit from Nepal to Kolkata to encourage and support the team.

APRIL

- Sarah Lance and Beth Waterman visit Pattaya, Thailand, to participate in the Servants to Asia's Urban Poor Celebration Conference.
- Brent and Melinda Snader (Sari Bari Distributor), along with their two daughters, visit Kolkata from Memphis, TN.
- The children at the Home of Happiness take their final term exams in the months of April and May. Solai, Sumitha and Yashodha will be writing their final public exams, which will determine their future studies.
- George Babu, of the Home of Happiness, recently began attending a vocational school, and is doing well. We are proud that he placed first in a carpentry competition conducted in the center!

ON COMMUNITY:

Artisans of Peace

by lau archip

A few years ago, I started to send two friends from church a letter each week, trying to encourage them, with the hope that I would receive a letter back from them. As I look back at my attempts at closer relationships, I realize that I was looking for mutual trust, devotion and consistency. In the years to come, I received answers to that search. I realized that what I was looking for was called “community.”

When I explored models in history, I realized that community is not about a place. Yes, many healthy communities have a place, a physical space, an address, but the core of their being is not found in buildings, gardens or neighborhoods.

Living in a community is not about a set of rules, principles or laws. Most communities do have certain principles or rules, but those are not what define them as community. They are guiding lines, like stones that make up a bridge, like signposts.

Nor is community about what we have. History gives us examples of wealthy communities as well as poor communities. The word by itself is used to refer to both high-tech groups and slums.

Community is about people. Jesus provides the ultimate example. He wasn't concerned about a place. He traveled outside Judea, into Samaria. Also, Jesus didn't worry about rules, not when a person was on the other side. That is why He invited sinners to meals and why He became friends with unclean persons. When He was honoring them by having fellowship around the table with them, His message was clear: People are more important than rules and traditions.



The WMF Romania community center kids and staff have played soccer and many other games in this field during their yearly summer camp program. This beautiful field was washed away in the severe floods that hit Romania in 2005; now, only a rocky riverbed remains. Thankfully, they have found other places to play!

Photo: Joel Klepac

The pressures of modern society make it difficult to live the values of the Kingdom of God. A short definition for the Kingdom of God is *the reign of God in the lives of believers*. This implies a new vision about oneself, about people, about work; a new openness to yield to the ways of God; a new set of values. The Kingdom becomes visible as people live out those values, as people submit to God's dynamic rule.

One of the most powerful non-values of the Kingdom – though a highly destructive value that rules human society – is materialism. To resist the pressures of material concerns, we have to encourage an alternative community. A community has a dynamic that generates resources, first of all at the level of the mind. When people know that they belong and are significant and when they feel secure, they feel

encouraged to let the heart rule the material aspect of life. Too often, as Christians, we are trying to succeed both by secular standards and by Kingdom values. Too often people just start using a different vocabulary and hope that doing so will be enough to change lives. Jesus pointed out His vision for today when He said that those who truly save their lives according to the values of God's Kingdom may indeed lose them in the kingdoms of this world.

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Photo: Joel Klepac

Lau Archip serves as Executive Director of WMF Romania and is also a third-year university student, studying English and Romanian. In 2005, he married Vali Stefan, program director for WMF Romania. When you can't find Lau, look for him in the woodshop where he is probably creating something with his hands.

ON COMMUNITY:

We Belong To One Another

by kristin keen

Community is God's tool to make us more like Him. I believe that living in community allows us to become and love the person who God has made us to be. It's a powerful vehicle that God uses to captivate His people and make them new. However, after living in a small WMF community for the past three years, I understand why people would choose to run from community. It's scary, dynamic, raw, exposing and real. At the same time, it has been the most powerful refining tool in my life.

I am a person who tends to go and go, always running. It is the way that I deal with my problems – just keep moving and don't let anyone too close, and then you won't have to feel. But for the past three years, God has used community to hold me. I was given an image of a dad wrapping his arms around his daughter who is kicking and screaming and scared. He just holds her until she is so exhausted from fighting that she collapses into her dad's arms and is able to receive his love. God has used the community here in Kolkata to be His arms and their love to be His heart. Slowly, with grace and gentleness, God has exposed the hidden layers of my heart and has begun to make me new.

I am unable to hide in community. The pain and anger that I tried to stuff so deep kept being exposed. No matter how hard I tried to cover it up, it just kept sneaking out.

God has brought those hidden parts to the surface and showed me my deep desire for independence – an independence that comes from my insecurity, my distrust, my desire to have my self-worth in other people's approval and my fear of getting hurt. This independence drives others away. I had the attitude that if you aren't going my way, I am going to run you over, drag you with me or leave you behind. The deeper I found myself immersed in community,



The Sari Bari women and WMF staff take an overnight trip to the beach to celebrate Sari Bari's one-year anniversary, and more importantly, to celebrate a year of freedom from prostitution and new life for the women.

Photo: Beth Weisman

in intimacy with people, the deeper I saw that I was scared to need people, that I *am* scared to trust people.

My anger and judgmental heart came out as well. When I first started going to the red-light districts, my reaction was anger, anger toward the church, God, India, men, myself. And then God began to show me deeper roots of anger in my heart as well – anger that came from past hurts and experiences. I began to understand how anger keeps my heart cold and hard so I don't have to feel. It keeps people at a distance and in some ways allows me to justify my behavior.

The most amazing thing about community is how, after these dark places in my heart were exposed, I have experienced grace. Being so exposed is like being naked. I've wanted to shrink back, hide in shame and try to cover up. But instead of people pointing and laughing

at me, I have been received with love and forgiveness. My vulnerability has allowed me to experience love, intimacy and newness. I spent many years putting so much energy into hiding and proving my worth that I couldn't receive love.

Community has also refined the gifts that God has created in me. I am a passionate, people-oriented, strong, visionary woman. This is who I need to be. This is who God called me to be. My community has helped me to be confident in this. They don't expect me to try to be anyone

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Photo: Sarah Lance

Kristin Keen leads WMF's brothel ministry in Kolkata, India. Kristin could swim before she could walk; her love for the ocean (and snorkeling!) is nurtured during retreats the staff take away from the intensity of Kolkata and their work among women who prostitute there.

What Do We Mean by ‘Prophetic’?

POSITION PAPERS: “Position Papers” do not necessarily represent the opinions of the entire WMF community, but seek to articulate alternative positions on issues of mission and spirituality. These positions find their basis in the WMF identity statements (preamble, philosophy of ministry, lifestyle celebrations and vision statement) as well as in the commitment to living out these statements in practical application.

by chris heuertz and sarah kim

In Part One of this paper, we named several contemporary deformations concerning the “prophetic.”¹ Naming the deformations of modern-day perceptions of the prophetic allows us to move forward in constructing a prophetic paradigm that is biblically grounded.

Modern examples such as Oscar Romero boldly embody the form and function of what the biblical texts offer in terms of introducing the irreducible characteristics of the prophetic. In an attempt to understand the prophets’ divinely appointed purpose as revealed in the Scriptures, we have named five distinctions. These are mere signposts to help guide this study of the prophets’ multifaceted attributes and responsibilities. Consequently, we are presenting this second part of the paper according to the clearest defining features of the prophetic: the office, the function, the nature, the role and the message of the prophets.

The Office

The prophetic office was the prophets’ position of authority, which was appointed specially by God. Historically, the Scriptures directly correlate the phrase the “Word of God” with the calling of prophets.² This direct encounter with the Word of God initiates prophets with instructions for a prophetic task. The authenticity of the prophets’ appointments comes only through the prophets’ experiences with the Word of God. The prophets use the Lord’s Word to identify the message as God’s words rather than their own. Simply using the prophetic phrase “Word of God” does not validate the prophets’ position – the prophecy actually coming to pass confirms it.

The office of the prophet can be seen in many scriptural examples. Moses, the archetype of biblical prophets, conveyed God’s words stating how He appoints a prophet: “I will put my words in his mouth, and he will tell them everything I command him” (Deuteronomy 18:17-18). For Jeremiah, the Lord reached out and touched his mouth and said, “Now, I have put my words in your mouth,” to appoint him as prophet (Jeremiah 1:9). Again and again, it is when the Word of the Lord comes to the prophets that they are designated to their offices, and from this established position the prophets are able to speak with authority.³

In the days of Samuel’s youth when he served under Eli in Shiloh, the Word of God was rare because of a vacancy in the prophetic office (1 Samuel 3:1). Later, Israel recognized Samuel as a prophet of the Lord because God let “none of his words fall to the ground” (v. 19). The Lord revealed Himself to Samuel through His word and was with him (v. 21). Similarly, the prophet Deborah acted as the mouthpiece of God and communicated God’s command to lead a revolt against Sisera based on His promise that He would put the enemy into the hands of the Israelites (Judges 4). This prophecy came to pass, and Deborah led the rebellion.

There was a point in biblical history when the concept of the “Word of God” underwent a significant shift. Originally, this phrase signified the divinely commissioned speech of prophets; but this notion changed with the temple priests and scribes in the Persian period. With this change, the “Word of God” is used for citing the Mosaic Law.⁴ Thus, a radical modification

occurs as the “Word of God,” which was once a technical term for prophetic revelation, becomes a description of the Law of Moses, establishing the Mosaic Law as a new authoritative source. The books of Chronicles affirm the writings of the prophets as new authoritative religious texts. In the process, the concept of the “Word of God” transformed into a means of referencing sacred, authoritative Scripture more generally.⁵

In the New Testament, John the Baptist lived and spoke from his appointed office as a prophet as he quoted the words of Isaiah when preaching to the Jews.⁶ The Gospel of Luke explicitly states that the Word of God came to John, who then began speaking prophetically with the words of Isaiah. Similarly, Jesus Christ spoke as a prophet to the Jews when He pointed at Himself as the fulfillment of the prophet Isaiah’s words (Luke 4:17-19).

T. Austin Sparks states, “Prophetic ministry is not something that you can take up. It is something that you are.”⁷ Hence, the office of the prophet is appointed by God for a prophetic purpose, and finds its fulfillment when receiving and living out the Words of God through word and deed to His people.

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Chris Heuertz is the Executive Director of WMF. He and his wife, Phileena, have been married eleven years and both been a part of WMF since before they were married.

Sarah Kim is the International Partnership Coordinator and Assistant to the Director. A recent graduate of Taylor University, Sarah’s brings many cross-cultural experiences with her, as well as a passion for theology.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'PROPHETIC'?

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The Function

The prophets functioned according to the message they were sent by God to deliver. Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (referred to in the West as Maimonides) writes, "Their function was that of preachers who called upon the people to obey the Law of Moses, threatened those who rejected it, and held out promises to those who were firm in observing it."⁸ These words usually carried the weight of life or death, hope or despair, restoration or destruction, mercy or judgment. Once Israel strayed from centering God in life and society, the prophet was sent forth to urge the people to obey their one true God.

Walter Brueggemann summarizes the various functions of the prophet in two foundational categories: energizing and criticizing. Brueggemann points to the grieving of the prophet Jeremiah as prophetic criticizing – lamenting the wrong in society. He holds Jeremiah's lament in tension with the prophet Isaiah's hopeful prophetic energizing for things to come. The present in its brokenness and the future with its promises create the simultaneous prophetic functions of energizing and criticizing. The prophet cannot merely criticize the present reality without pointing to the potential for God to restore and redeem it. However, simply hoping for better things and claiming the promises of God without critiquing systems, structures and people who prevent the in-breaking of the Kingdom also lacks prophetic integrity. Functionally, prophetic criticizing is a radical form of truth-telling, while prophetic hopefulness includes a proclamatory naming of things gone wrong. This has been widely deformed because "prophetic hope easily lends itself to distortion. It can be made so grandiose that it does not touch reality."⁹ Prophetic criticizing and energizing must hold one another accountable, for "Hope expressed without knowledge of and participation in grief is likely to be false hope that does not reach despair."¹⁰

The functioning duties of the prophet have been compared to being a watchman, a servant, a messenger of God, an assayer and tester of the people's ways, and as one who hears the words from God's mouth and gives warning.¹¹ Prophets appeared at some of the most crucial

moments of Israel's history to anoint kings, to act as military advisors and to dethrone some of Israel's rulers.¹² They could be seen as the most adversarial forces against God's own people.¹³ They were commonly seen as charismatic miracle workers, leaders and teachers of a band of prophets, and noticeably as those caught up in God's Spirit of ecstasy.¹⁴

One underlying function is consistent in all of the prophets' duties: They declared the judgments of God and denounced the sins of His people. For instance, Nathan confronted King David about his affair with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:7). In their respective biblical books, Amos attacked the social abuses in the north, and Hosea condemned syncretism and apostasy. In the south, Isaiah criticized the religious appearances and injustices (Isaiah 1:11-15). Jeremiah rebuked unfaithfulness and idolatry (Jeremiah 1:15-16). Similarly, Micah berated false religion and inequity (Micah 3:5-12).¹⁵

These accusations spoken through the prophets all have a common theme: The people were guilty of forsaking their God, and as a result injustice and unrighteousness became rampant. The cause was the corrupt and unrighteous way in which the leaders and people conducted their lives. The ones who suffered most from the injustice caused by the unrighteous were the most vulnerable in the land – the poor. The oppression of the poor infuriated God, because it is a direct assault against Him: "Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God" (Proverbs 14:31). As biblical scholar and prominent rabbi Abraham J. Heschel notes, "To the prophets even a minor injustice assumes cosmic proportions."¹⁶

Still, the sins of the people were highlighted against the background of God's gracious and merciful acts of the past. The mercy of God was an alternative to confronting the wrath of God if only they repented. The prophets' lives were often personifications of the analogous relationship between God and Israel. We find the husband-wife relationship as portrayed by Hosea; father-son and owner-vineyard relations in Isaiah; shepherd-flock in Ezekiel; potter-clay in Jeremiah.¹⁷ The prophets illustrated the desire of God to lovingly embrace His people

with mercy and grace, and lead them back to the path of justice and righteousness. Yet, the people usually responded by silencing the true prophets and listening to the false ones.¹⁸ Heschel makes it clear why they would be silenced: "The prophets remind us of the moral state of a people: Few are guilty, but all are responsible. If we admit that the individual is in some measure conditioned or affected by the spirit of society, an individual's crime discloses society's corruption."¹⁹

The Nature

The nature of the prophet refers to how the prophets lived out and became the message they were given to deliver. Once a prophet was called by God and appointed for a task, the prophets not only proclaimed the Word of God but embodied it. They intimately experienced and incarnated the Word of God, rather than merely being hearers and deliverers of the Word. As Heschel puts it,

"It would be wrong to maintain that the prophet is a person who plays the role of 'the third party,' offering his good offices to bring about reconciliation. His view is oblique. God is the focal point of his thought, and the world is seen as reflected in God. Indeed, the main task of prophetic thinking is to bring the world into divine focus."²⁰

We do not need to look far to see how the prophets actualized the Word of God in their own lives in order to communicate God's message. The prophet Hosea is well-known for his prophetic calling to marry an adulterous wife to illustrate the love of God for his unfaithful people (Hosea 1:2). Hosea himself experienced God's unchanging devotion to Israel, since he was called to retrieve his wife after she prostituted herself (3:2-3). The prophet Isaiah was called by God to go naked and barefoot for three years to prophetically portray what would happen to the Egyptian and Cushite exiles, whom Israel sinfully relied upon (Isaiah 20:2-3). As for Ezekiel, he received a prophetic calling to lie on his left side for 390 days, bearing the 390 years of sin for the house of Israel (Ezekiel 4:4-5). Jesus Christ, operating out of his prophetic nature, is the Word who became flesh – the One who came as the incarnation of God Himself to manifest Immanuel, or God with us (John 1:14).

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'PROPHETIC'?

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As the prophet embodied the Word of God in his or her life, the prophet usually became a target of scorn among his or her people. "To be a prophet is both a distinction and an affliction. The mission he performs is distasteful to him and repugnant to others; no reward is promised him and no reward could temper its bitterness. The prophet bears scorn and reproach (Jeremiah 15:15). He is stigmatized as a madman by his contemporaries, and, by some modern scholars, as abnormal."²¹

The prophets shared an intense understanding with the heart and Word of God, and it consumed their entire beings. The prophet Jeremiah was mocked and ridiculed for his words of violence and destruction, yet he felt the burning Word of God in his heart when he attempted to withhold it from Israel (Jeremiah 20:8-9). Isaiah expressed his intimate sympathy for the anguished heart of God over his people Israel in his song about the vineyard of Israel (Isaiah 5:1-7). Jesus typified His oneness in heart with the Father as He embraced the fulfillment of God's Word by willingly dying for the sin of all humanity.²²

The Role

The role points to how the prophets postured themselves to accomplish their prophetic duties. In the words of Heschel, "The main vocation of a prophet is 'to declare to Jacob his transgression and to Israel his sin' (Micah 3:8), to let the people know 'that it is evil and bitter ... to forsake ... God' (Jeremiah 2:19), and to call upon them to return."²³

As portrayed in Jeremiah 2, the prophet describes how the Israelites had forsaken the Lord by: chasing after worthless idols (v. 11); committing the two sins of forsaking the spring of living water and digging their own cisterns, which points to the illusion of creating a means of self-sufficiency or dependability (v. 13); and continuing to live in apparent corruption – although they "washed themselves with soap," the stain of guilt was before the Lord (v. 21-22).

Most importantly, the lifeblood of the innocent poor was on their hands, even when the Israelites thought they were blameless and God was not angry with them (v. 34). The people assumed they were innocent of guilt and sin. Even so, God promised that He would

pass judgment on His people despite their ignorance (v. 35). It is in this similar scenario that the prophet speaks out to God's people. "The prophet disdains those for whom God's presence is comfort and security; to him it is a challenge, an incessant demand. God is compassion, not compromise; justice, though not inclemency."²⁴

The human capacity to deceive itself and ignore reality is astonishing. The prophets led the people to face what it truly means to know the Lord as He defines it. God declares, "He defended the cause of the poor and needy, and so all went well. Is that not what it means to know me?" (Jeremiah 22:16). Likewise, Heschel notes that the prophet Samuel stressed obedience over sacrifice. Amos and the prophets who followed him not only emphasized the primacy of morality over sacrifice, but even proclaimed that the worth of worship is contingent upon moral living, and that immorality that prevails in the midst of worship is detestable. The prophets challenged the people's worship through offerings and songs by showing that the primary way of serving God is through love, justice and righteousness.²⁵ Again in the words of Heschel, "Instead of dealing with the timeless issues of being and becoming, of matter and form, of definitions and demonstrations, he is thrown into orations about widows and orphans, about the corruption of judges and affairs of the market place. Instead of showing us a way through the elegant mansions of the mind, the prophets take us to the slums. The world is a proud place, full of beauty, but the prophets are scandalized, and rave as if the whole world were a slum."²⁶

The Message

The prophets held a radical view of the message entrusted to them by God – not only did they live out and relay the message, but they also demanded a response from the people of God. The prophets amplified what was of utmost concern to the living God: "He has showed you, O people, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). In the process, they expressed the worthlessness of religious practice in the midst of injustice. The practice of sacrifice in itself was not condemned, but the deeds of injustice overshadowed both sacrifice and prayer.

Heschel affirms, "Men may not drown the cries of the oppressed with the noise of hymns, nor buy off the Lord with increased offerings. The prophets disparaged the cult when it became a substitute for righteousness."²⁷

The message of justice and righteousness is inherent to the character of God, and equally central to the message of the prophets. Injustice is not an outside moral virtue, or a problem of evil that exists unnoticed by God. The attributes of justice and righteousness are at the core of God's essence. They are who He is. He embodies these in His own person and they are identified in all of His ways. The Scriptures declare, "He is the Rock, His works are perfect, and all His ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is He" (Deuteronomy 32:4). The prophets reminded the people of this fundamental truth. Hence, the prophets urged the people to renounce their opposition to God in their unrighteous and unjust ways of living, which oppressed the poor. "Prophecy is the voice that God has lent to the silent agony, a voice to the plundered poor, to the profaned riches of the world. It is a form of living, a crossing point of God and man. God is raging in the prophet's words."²⁸ The prophets pointed out that the stench of injustice that exists in the world is a direct affront to God, or in other words, "the oppression of man is a humiliation of God."²⁹

Even more important, the prophet's message was spoken to direct the people toward the goal of God's redeeming activity.³⁰ God was ultimately preparing His people to actualize the heavenly vision of God's Kingdom. This includes complete salvation for His people through the Messiah and the ability to live out God's righteousness. Jeremiah speaks of everyone from the least to the greatest as knowing the Lord (Jeremiah 31:31-34). Hosea depicts God's people as being betrothed to the Lord in righteousness, justice, love, compassion and faithfulness (Hosea 2:19). Ezekiel describes this preparatory process as a resurrection of dry bones and the giving of a new heart (Ezekiel 37:4-10; 36:26).³¹

The prophets made known the coming day when God will establish His absolute sovereignty and will be King over all the earth. The Lord

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WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'PROPHETIC'?
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alone will be exalted, and will personally reign on earth (Isaiah 2:11; 11:9). God Himself promises to wipe every tear from His people's eyes, and death, mourning, crying and pain will be abolished (Revelation 21:4). Simply stated, the apostle Peter calls it the home of righteousness (2 Peter 3:13).

With this vision in mind, the prophets could do no less than call out the people's unrighteous state of affairs. In *Lament For a Son*, Nicholas Wolterstorff speaks of mourners as "aching visionaries."³² He writes, "The mourners are those who have caught a glimpse of God's new day, who ache with all their being for that day's coming, and who break out into tears when confronted with its absence."³³ The prophets, too, ached and mourned for the day of the Lord as they lived in the reality of its overwhelming absence amidst injustice and corruption.

The central message is the same today as it was when Jesus first proclaimed the Good News: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18-19). The demonstration of this truth, love and mercy secured in justice and righteousness is the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, for God is behind this very task of reversing the order of this world into the standards of His Kingdom.

WITH OPEN ARMS
(continued from page 5)

It is a battle to enter into solitude. Solitude isn't natural; it's quite scary. In solitude, we see ourselves for who we truly are – vulnerable and naked. Even beyond that, we see our selfishness, neediness, sin, jealousy, anger and rage. In solitude, it would be easy to be paralyzed by discouragement. One of the misconceptions of solitude is that it means that we are lonely and without our friends. Actually, according to Nouwen, "In true solitude there is unlimited space for others because we are empty."⁵

When we are in solitude, we are able to grow closer to each other. It's in solitude that I unpack my "community" baggage. I lay out my selfishness next to my neediness. Then I lay out my

This is a message of conversion. As Oscar Romero taught, "we need someone to be a prophet ... and call us to conversion and not let us set up religion as something untouchable. Religion needs prophets, and thank God we have them, because it would be a sad church that felt itself owner of the truth and rejected everything else. A church that only condemns, a church that sees sin only in others and does not look at the beam in its own eye, is not the authentic church of Christ."³⁴

Conclusion

So what do we actually mean by "prophetic"? We can conclude that the prophetic is not caricatured by contemporary deformations that overly define it with predictive proclamations, generalized liberal concerns with society and politics, or hyper-conservative exaggerations of personal mystical experiences with the Divine. The prophetic as portrayed in Scripture is one among a number of ministry giftings that must remain submitted in Christian community. The prophetic as defined through the lives of the biblical prophets was simultaneously an office appointed by God, a function of radical grief and hope, a nature of humility and understanding embodied in truth-telling, a role of necessity taken on for the spiritual vitality of a specific community, and an integrated message of interiorized righteousness with an expressed call to justice – all pointing back to the character of God. ■

judgmental attitude. I lay out my assumptions and expectations. It's a painful process, but it's only when I begin to deal with my baggage that my hands are actually free to embrace my community. Then, together, we are able to embrace love, selflessness, sacrifice, grace and mercy, but we are also able, most importantly, to embrace communion with God. ■

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Jean Vanier, *Community and Growth* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1979) 10.
- ² Henri Nouwen, *Clowning in Rome* (New York: Doubleday, 1978) 15.
- ³ Nouwen 15.
- ⁴ Nouwen 13.
- ⁵ Nouwen 30.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'PROPHETIC'?

ENDNOTES

- ¹ Part 1 focused on the deconstruction of contemporary deformations of the prophetic, namely: the tendency to caricature the prophetic as either social justice or future-telling, a lack of submission to other ministry gifts, isolation from a worshipping community and making assumptions about predictive elements of the prophetic. For the complete article, see "What Do We Mean by 'Prophetic'?" (Part 1) in *The Cry: An Advocacy Journal of Word Made Flesh*, 13.1 (Spring 2007): 16-17, 19 (available at: www.wordmadeflesh.com).
- ² B.T. Arnold, and P. Cook, "Word of God," *Dictionary of the Old Testament Historical Books* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005) 1000.
- ³ See 2 Samuel 7:4; 1 Kings 17:2, 8; Isaiah 1:2; Jeremiah 1:2, 4, 11; 2:1; Ezekiel 2:1, 2-3; 3:16; 6:1; 7:1; 12:1; 13:1; 14:12; 15:1; 16:1; Hosea 1:1; Joel 1:1; Amos 1:3; Jonah 1:1; Micah 1:1; Zechariah 1:1; Malachi 1:1.
- ⁴ See 1 Chronicles 15:15; 2 Chronicles 35:6.
- ⁵ Arnold and Cook 1002.
- ⁶ See Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:1-3; Luke 3:1-6.
- ⁷ T. Austin Sparks in *Prophetic Ministry: A Classic Study on the Nature of a Prophet* (Shippensburg, PA: Destiny Image, 2000) 15.
- ⁸ Isadore Twersky, ed., *A Maimonides Reader* (Springfield, NJ: Behrman House Inc. Publishers, 1972) 293.
- ⁹ Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2001) 68.
- ¹⁰ Brueggemann 69.
- ¹¹ See 2 Kings 17:13; Hosea 9:8; Amos 3:7; Jeremiah 25:4; 26:5; Haggai 1:13; Jeremiah 6:27; Ezekiel 3:17.
- ¹² See 1 Samuel 16:13; 1 Kings 19:15; 1 Kings 22; 2 Kings 3; 1 Samuel 15:28; 1 Kings 14:7-18; 21:19.
- ¹³ K. Moller, "Prophets and Prophecy," *The Dictionary of the Old Testament*, (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2005) 825-829.
- ¹⁴ See 2 Kings 20:7; 10-11; 1 Samuel 10:5; 19:20; Isaiah 8:16; 38:7-8, 21.
- ¹⁵ William Dyrness, *Themes in Old Testament Theology* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1971) 219. See Micah 3:5-12.
- ¹⁶ Abraham J. Heschel, *The Prophets* (New York: HarperCollins, 2001) 4.
- ¹⁷ Heschel 221.
- ¹⁸ See 1 Kings 22:5-28; 2 Chronicles 18:4-27; Amos 2:9-12.
- ¹⁹ Heschel 29.
- ²⁰ Heschel 29.
- ²¹ Heschel 18.
- ²² See Matthew 26:36-27; Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:40-46.
- ²³ Heschel 22.
- ²⁴ Heschel 16.
- ²⁵ Heschel 250.
- ²⁶ Heschel 3.
- ²⁷ Heschel 250.
- ²⁸ Heschel 5.
- ²⁹ Heschel 251.
- ³⁰ See "What Do We Mean By 'The Kingdom of God'?" by David Chronic, *The Cry: The Advocacy Journal of WMF* 11.2 (Summer 2005) 12-16.
- ³¹ Dyrness 234.
- ³² Nicholas Wolterstorff, *Lament For A Son* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987) 86.
- ³³ Wolterstorff 85.
- ³⁴ Oscar Romero, *The Violence of Love* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988) 143.

BUILDING COMMUNITY

(continued from page 6)

take place. Pouring out our hearts enables us to choose gratitude – gratitude that within even the deepest pain there is a God who cares deeply and desires to restore us; gratitude that His desire for us has always been what was best for us, regardless of what happened; gratitude that if we willingly let go of the debt, no matter how terrible the circumstance was, He will use it for our good. But He cannot do that if we are holding onto the debt. When we cling to our collected debts and our resentment, there is no room for healing or the transformational power of the Holy Spirit. There is no room for freedom. There is no room to listen to the voice calling us His beloved sons and daughters, because the voices of resentment and uncanceled debts are crying out to be heard.

Therefore, we must allow Him to move us toward gratitude. That is why the next step is so important. We must cancel the debt. Matthew 18:27 says, “The servant’s master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.”

That is not an easy thing to do. When someone owes me money and I cancel the debt, I have no hope of ever getting that money back. It is a loss that I must absorb. When I look at the consequences of not canceling the debt, however, I realize just how important it is to forgive. In Matthew 18:28, the same servant went to a co-worker and demanded he repay a debt of 100 denarii, about \$200 today. When his co-worker was unable to pay, the servant abused him and had him thrown into prison. When the master heard about it, he was outraged and sent for the servant, who was then turned over to the jailors to be tortured until he could repay his original debt – remember, it was an impossible sum to repay. The story ends with a chilling warning: “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive a brother or a sister from your heart” (Matthew 18:35).

Nouwen writes, “Within the discipline of community [is] the discipline of forgiveness. Forgiveness and celebration are what make community ...”³ Community without forgiveness allows what others say about us, how they treat us and what we say to ourselves to have a shaping effect on our lives. Without forgiveness, we not only play God, we allow others to play

God in our lives. Resentment builds, and God’s voice identifying us as His beloved is silenced. Community without forgiveness leads to insecurity and fear. “What will they think of me?” “What will they say if I ...?” “I can’t believe she said that ...” These were the voices that I could not silence. They were shaped by Satan into lies I believed about myself. When we live like this, we allow people (and ourselves), not our Creator, to define us.

Community with forgiveness, however, looks very different. First, it means we have settled the debts we’ve held onto from our pasts so that we can freely enter into the present with those to whom God has called us. No longer bound by the lies that held us in fear and insecurity, we can enter fully into life with people who will probably disappoint us without resenting them for it. If we can live in forgiveness – true forgiveness – then we can live with one another in a way that is not seeking to get from them

what only God can give. Rather than having our focus on ourselves and how what others said or did caused us pain, we are free to see them for who they are. Sometimes we see their own wounds and discover why they spoke or acted as they did. We are also free to see their gifts and talents, and celebrate their unique place within community. We are free to receive the love they also have to offer without needing it to be perfect.

In this place, we are free – free to be who we were created to be: God’s beloved sons and daughters, free to go out together to a hurting world and help others let go of their resentment and celebrate God’s goodness with gratitude. ■

ENDNOTES

¹ Henri Nouwen, “Moving from Solitude to Community to Ministry: Jesus established the true order for spiritual work,” *Leadership*, spring 1995, 81-87.

² Nouwen 82.

³ Nouwen 84.

NEW BOOKS by OLD FRIENDS

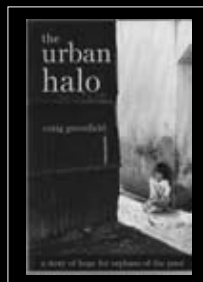
books written by some of our friends who serve among the urban poor



sub-merge

*Living Deep in a Shallow World:
Service, Justice and Contemplation
Among the World's Poor*

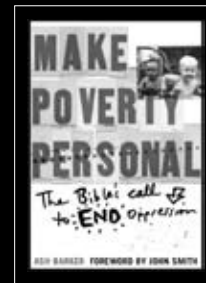
John B. Hayes
Regal Publishing



the urban halo

A Story of Hope for Orphans of the Poor

Craig Greenfield
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WE BELONG TO ONE ANOTHER

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else. Likewise, I am learning to let other people be who God created *them* to be. I need to let the foot be the foot so the hand can be the hand. I am learning how much humility this takes. It means stepping down and allowing other people to shine in who they are and just being confident enough in who I am to let that happen. I have also learned more and more about the beauty and power of being in Christ's body – "Each member belongs to all the others" (Romans 12:5). Isn't that beautiful? We belong to one another. Isn't that the deepest desire of our hearts – to belong? This is our calling as Christians: to let ourselves belong to each other.

From this sense of belonging, I have a newfound ability to call others in. Now when I sit with the women in the red-light districts and play with their kids, or sit with the women of Sari Bari, I know to what I am calling them. I am calling them to belong to the body of Christ. I am calling them into community. God is calling them. He can use community to wrap His arms around them and their pain, until they stop and melt into His arms so they can receive love. Jesus is calling them to a place where they can rage against His chest with anger at the people who hurt and exploited them, until they are reduced to a place of forgiveness. He is calling them to a place where they can discover they have gifts that have nothing to do with their sexuality – where they can realize their God-given gifts such as kindness, leadership, mercy and encouragement. He is calling them to a place where "if one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it" (1 Corinthians 12:26). He is calling them to a place where the things that keep them from receiving love can be driven out by love. He is calling them to a place where it is safe for them to let down their guard and be seen, known and accepted. He is calling them to a place like the one I have been given through Christ's body.

Community is not perfect, but I have a deep belief that God uses community to change the world. Yes, community is a risk. However, it's a risk we are asked to take so that God can love us and others. It will expose us, strip us down, drive out our fears, change us, mold us. But, in the end, we are called to community so we know we are loved – so we know that we belong. ■

THAT'S HOW WE ARE

(continued from page 4)

the ones who at different time laid hands on me and sent me here. When I think of staying, I know that it is your love – and God's – that keeps me here, that I desire for these girls to have safe beds to crash in and good books to read. And I desire for their kids to be raised in communities that love them as much as you have loved me. The very things that tempt me back are in the end what empower me to stay here and love these people."

In the months that followed, I returned to Seattle. I sat around a table with my closest friends in a scene that in my mind compares to that of the Upper Room of Christ and His disciples. Bread was broken. Glasses were raised. Communion was received. I was named by those who had come to know me; I was prayed for and again sent out.

And so our communities must be: intimate, bounded and still penetrable. They must include sacraments of sending. And there must be room for the entry of those who are most likely to compromise the stability that we so long for in our innermost spaces, those who most need to know the kind of love that we, in our most graced moments, have come to know.

"It is grace, nothing but grace, that we are allowed to live in community with Christian brethren," Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote.¹ It is grace for us when our friends and communities become for us the tear-bearing shoulders of Christ. And, it is grace for the un-graced, for the broken, the discarded, the dispossessed and the un-held, when we become for them the same. When we allow them into our Upper Rooms, our innermost spaces, and allow those spaces to be profaned by their distrust, desperation and fear.

ARTISANS OF PEACE

(continued from page 12)

Historically, we see that many communities have been started by opening a hospital or a school. This is because we are called to keep our eyes open, to see the direction our society is going and to reach into those areas that are sensitive for our neighbors. If our neighbors need hospitals, we need to make them; if they need schools, we need to start them. When individualism is the norm, when sharing the same building means nothing for relationships, when urbanism keeps moving people around, Christian communities are called to recognize the loneliness that engulfs so many people, and to respond. Christian communities are to make the first steps and get off the road to success, personal development or fulfillment and, instead, to find joy in helping others.

Loving God seems normal for most Christians. According to the gospel, there is one way to show this love: loving people. That is why the poor are central for the WMF community. Our desire is to have God's heart for the poor. Jesus came not for the "healthy" ones who don't need a physician, but He came to save the sick. Those who knew they were "sick" and acknowledged their need were invited to gather around the table.

In hard times, in crises, we are to remember the price Christ paid to save humanity. We want to let our hearts cry for the spiritual and physical needs of the poor, for spiritual and material bread. We pray to receive the strength to move among the poor, so that we can be closer to God's beloved ones. Despite our human thirst for power, we wish to empower the poor. We pray, also, that our evangelism will not stop after speaking the first words, but will grow into discipleship. In this broken world, we want to become artisans of peace. I hope that in a few more years when I look back on our life together, I will be able to see God's reign and our loyalty. ■

I am undone by my friend Elizabeth's words to another girl, words intended to give courage to a friend on the margins from one who now knows life both on the outside and the inside.

Yo estaba allí, también. No tenía a nadie – ni familia, ni hermanos que me entendieron. Pero ellos, ellos no te van a dejar. Somos una familia. Somos una comunidad ... así somos.

"I was there, as well. I didn't have anyone – not family, not brothers or sisters who understood. But they, they won't leave you. We are family. We are community ... that's how we are." ■

ENDNOTES:

¹ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (San Francisco: Harper, 1978) 20.



BOLIVIA BUILDING CAMPAIGN

*"We're doing what is possible for the girls.
But God will do the impossible." -Eliana*

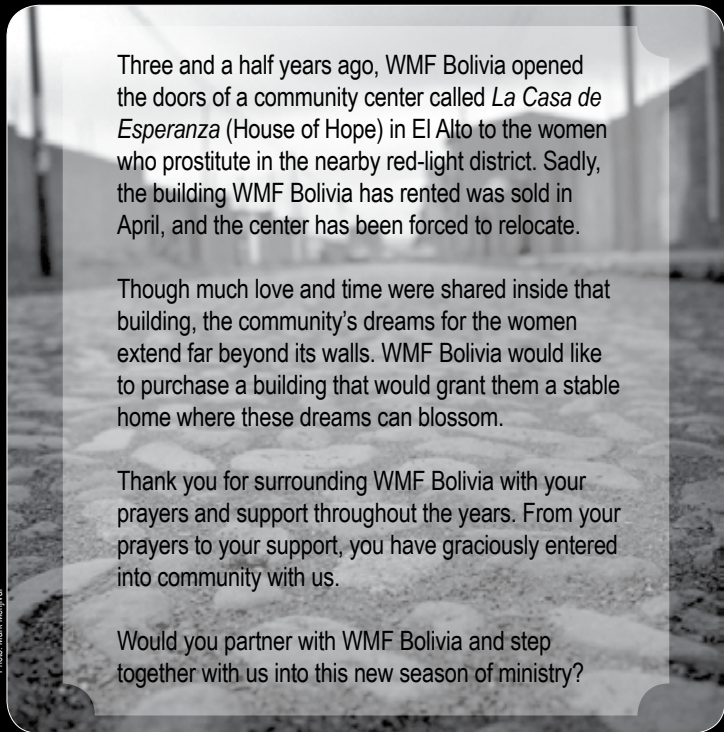


Photo: Mark Wagner

Three and a half years ago, WMF Bolivia opened the doors of a community center called *La Casa de Esperanza* (House of Hope) in El Alto to the women who prostitute in the nearby red-light district. Sadly, the building WMF Bolivia has rented was sold in April, and the center has been forced to relocate.

Though much love and time were shared inside that building, the community's dreams for the women extend far beyond its walls. WMF Bolivia would like to purchase a building that would grant them a stable home where these dreams can blossom.

Thank you for surrounding WMF Bolivia with your prayers and support throughout the years. From your prayers to your support, you have graciously entered into community with us.

Would you partner with WMF Bolivia and step together with us into this new season of ministry?

It will take an estimated \$160,000 to purchase a building for the center.

Please respond now; we hope to have the funds to purchase a permanent home by January 2008.

You may designate donations to: Bolivia Building Fund and send them to Word Made Flesh, P.O. Box 70, Omaha, NE, 68101.

If you would like to inquire further, please e-mail Wes Goertzen at wes.goertzen@wordmadeflesh.com.

history of WMF Bolivia

2001

Andy and Andrea Baker moved to Bolivia and founded WMF's presence in El Alto.



2003

In October, WMF rented a building near the red-light district and *La Casa de Esperanza* officially opened its doors to women who prostitute.



2004

Heather (Coaster) Goertzen, a trained counselor, arrived in El Alto. *La Casa de Esperanza* expanded its program to include counseling. The staff team grew by five people in that year.

2005

Eliana made the decision to leave prostitution and begin a new life in Christ. Her newfound freedom filled her with a desire to serve those trapped in sexual slavery. She was among the first Bolivians to join the staff team, as the housekeeper at *La Casa de Esperanza*.

2006

September 6, WMF Bolivia (*La Palabra Hecha Vida*) was registered as a Bolivian foundation in El Alto.



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