



The Servants of the Word

EASTER 2003




From the editor ●●●●●

It is with joy we extend Easter and Pentecost greetings to you, our relatives and close friends. We look forward to one year from now when we as Catholics, Orthodox and Protestant Christians around the world will celebrate Easter and Pascha on the same day as we look for roads to greater unity as Christians in a world that is often hostile to genuine, ecumenical, Christian movements.

As we pass through the spring season, we see rejuvenated life budding forth and we eagerly anticipate the activities of the upcoming summer. You'll see several previews from some of our different regions listing the range of mission opportunities to which the Lord has called us, as well as personal snapshots into the lives of some of our brothers working in secular settings. You will see the role our brothers are playing in bringing the light of Christ to those in need.

As a brotherhood, we salute the exceptional and inspirational leadership of our brother Bruce Yocum in the role he has played as our Presiding Elder for the past 13 years. With the passing of one season and the burgeoning of another, we welcome and wholeheartedly receive the leadership and direction of our new Presiding Elder, John Keating. We look forward to the blessing John's capable leadership will bring to our life together for the next number of years. We pray that our support and affection are worthy of the task he is undertaking.

You'll also note that many personnel changes are taking place during the summer and fall seasons. With all of these changes, we trust that you will see the hand of the Lord on our lives and once again commit to upholding us in your daily prayers as we seek opportunities to strengthen the Kingdom of God. 

— Mike Kramer

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Volodimir Bezulowsky, Brother and Doctor ●●●●●

I first met Volodimir Bezulowsky in 1988. We were both in Germany attending a conference involving young Christian leaders from ten or more different countries and almost as many

denominations. He spent a day with us before travelling on for a climbing vacation in the Alps. His physique - 6'2" and with the sort of triangular upper body build that is normally reserved for "Sports Illustrated" front covers - suggested the ideal man to be attempting the Eiger, or for clambering up the Matterhorn but not someone you would instantly look at and say "A celibate brother - of course!" Volodimir's story with The Servants of the Word began back in 1983 in Belgium where Vo (his nickname) met Ed Conlin, an American brother on mission in Europe. Vo explains that it was seeing Ed living the life of The Servants of Word in such a matter of fact and personable way that first attracted him to consider The Servants of Word way of life for himself. Nine years later, in 1992, Vo himself made a lifelong commitment to The Servants of the Word, and has since then been living it out in the London household with nine other brothers.

Our brothers have worked at various jobs, most involving direct mission or mission administration work within The Sword of the Spirit. Vo is one of the brothers who works in the secular world, as a psychiatrist. The work not only contributes financially to our life and work, but gives him many opportunities to witness of the Lord to his colleagues and staff, and occasionally to the patients he works with. For the last five years he has worked at Huntercombe Maidenhead Hospital in West London, a specialist adolescent psychiatric hospital to the west of London. In his role he works as part of a multidisciplinary team caring for teenagers suffering from a wide range of emotional and psychiatric problems including severe mental illness, complex emotional disturbances and eating disorders. Recently, he treated a girl of around 18 years, who entered the hospital suffering from severe anorexia nervosa; on entry to the hospital she weighed only 70lb (32kg). The hope is that she will be able to return home and to a normal life after a couple more

●●●●● Presiding Elder's Corner ●●●●●

The last time I wrote, it was from Mexico. This time it is from Oxford, England. But there will not be a next time... The past few months have been full of "lasts" for me, and I complete my final term as Presiding Elder, and do this or that for the "last" time. This is my last little note to you in our newsletter.

Life moves on. We will have three brothers making lifelong commitments in August, for which we thank God. In the next few months we will move a few brothers around - Don Schwager from Detroit to London, Mike Shaughnessy from Belfast to Lansing, Dave Quintana from Lansing to Belfast, Jake Yap and myself from Oxford to Belfast, and last but not least, John Keating from Manila to Ann Arbor to take up the reins of government.

This is also my last opportunity to thank all of you who have supported and encouraged us over the years. May God bless each of you with peace, joy and abundant life!

— Bruce Yocum

months in hospital. Other current cases include young people of 15 or 16 years, suffering from the first stages of schizophrenia, or from severe emotional and social disturbance possibly brought about by abusive upbringings. Dealing with self-harm is part and parcel of the job, and on occasions this includes working with seriously suicidal young people.

It is an understatement to say that Huntercombe Maidenhead Hospital is a challenging place to work. To what extent does Vo's faith make a difference? Vo's response is emphatic: his presence there as a Christian man brings hope and love. As a professional psychiatrist, opportunities to speak directly about the explicit 'Christian Hope' to his patients are limited, but in all cases he explains that beyond professional treatment it is possible to offer encouragement and concern that may bring his patients one step closer to the source of all hope, our Lord Jesus. It is clear in talking with him, that in the day-to-day job, Vo works to the highest ethical and professional standards, acting reliably, with integrity and respect not only towards his patients, but to his staff and colleagues. In this work and in his life and service in The Servants of the Word, Vo is one of our many exemplary brothers in being a consistent witness of the Lord. 🏹

— Andy Pettman

The Servants of the Word in action in the Philippines ●●●●●

After having returned from two years in the United States last October, I have witnessed how abundantly the Lord has been blessing our youth work in the Philippines. The brothers here are serving different youth outreaches and last year we started looking at it as unified service in which all the brothers are integrated.

Christ's Youth in Action

Some of the brothers are serving our University outreach which is Christ's Youth In Action (CYA), our outreach to the young professionals (Lingkod Ng Panginoon), to the youth of our community (Ang Ligaya Ng Panginoon) both high school and university age and our outreach to the youth of the poor areas in Metro Manila (Tahanan Ng Panginoon). CYA as a national movement continues to affect the lives of many young people of our country through its evangelistic efforts. Last November in Manila, we had an evangelistic retreat and we were expecting to have 80 to 120 participants but 180 attended instead! It was a real blessing to see a lot young people's lives transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

CYA Basketball League

One venue that the brothers are using to evangelize more men is CYA's basketball league. Eleven universities compete in Metro Manila alone. It's the second year that we are doing this and so far it's a good way to get to know men and invite them to our evangelistic events.

Service to Churches

Because of the services that CYA can offer, we are constantly tapped by the churches to serve their youth programs. This May, CYA members from all over the country will meet together in Visayas for a week of prayers, training and fellowship. Lingkod, which is also a national movement, continues to bring the presence of the Lord in the workplace. There were a lot of Life in the Spirit Seminars and retreats just this past month. I arrived from the US just in time for their National Leaders Training conference. It's a gathering of around 350 Lingkod leaders from all over the country. It was a great time praying and studying the scriptures together, enhancing the leaders' skills to serve the brothers and sisters even better.

CrossTraining

The Young Adults Program (high school ministry of the community) this year launched its program called CrossTraining. It's a program geared towards preparing 3rd and 4th year high schoolers for the university Christian life, appreciation of community life and a life of service to

others. I find it a real blessing to serve the high school program. It's great to see our young men and women in the community start to love and serve the Lord at their early age. We just finished the last stage of the CrossTraining which includes household life, giving retreats, works of mercy and community service.

Outreach to the Poor

The same wave of blessing is also happening in Tahanan Ng Panginoon It's also inspiring to see our brothers and sisters there experiencing hope in Christ amidst their poverty. All of these things that are happening in our region are a confirmation of His call to us to bring more young people to Him and to be His light here in Asia. We are humbled by the fact the Lord is indeed using us as His instruments and blessing us with fruitfulness in our labor. 🙌

— Marlo Valencia

Brothers in the news: ●●●●●

- Raoul Roncal elected President of Loyola School Of Theology Alumni Association.
- Ken Noecker defends his Master's thesis.
- Jake Yap to finish his Doctorate in Theology at Oxford one year early.
- Martin Steinbereithner makes our first Sword of the Spirit visit to East Africa in recent years.
- David Mijares completes the Paris marathon in good speed.
- Dan Rinke to co-lead Ranch Challenge team to Wyoming with Mike Kramer.
- Stuart Ferguson, Steward of the Brotherhood Center, begins a development plan for the Center with future growth in mind.
- Mark Whitters publishes his Doctoral thesis.
- Dan Keating will be a respondent at a theological symposium in Washington, D.C.

Lord, send more laborers into your fields!

At the dawn of the year 2000, when we were planning our conference for the closing and beginning of the millennium, we saw with great hope the time that was before us in our region, especially for those of the coming generations in the communities that we serve. God was inviting us as young leaders to rally His army, to prepare it for an even more intense time of battle and victory for His Kingdom.

During the conference that December, we saw a dream of ours become reality. Some 350 youth from our communities and evangelistic outreaches gathered in Acapulco to welcome the third millennium with hope, faith, and especially a great desire to renew our commitment to the spread of the Gospel among the youth of our region.

The question we now ask ourselves is, what has happened? What is God doing to fulfill His promises? How have the youth of our region responded to the call from the Lord to build and labor for Him?

God has been generous to our region. In these three years of laboring, the amount of men and women serving our youth has tripled. God has charged us with raising up new leaders, and filled those of an older generation with a youthful spirit. God knows that the fields are large, the need is great, and he has listened to the same prayer of Jesus, "Pray that the Father may send more laborers into the fields." He is doing this and we have had the opportunity to offer various formation seminars on working with youth in our region in Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, Ecuador, and Colombia.

As a member of The Servants of the Word who has served with the youth of our region for over 17 years, I

am amazed to see how God has acted. He has proven true the phrase in the Bible, "If the Lord does not build the house, those who labor do so in vain."

In these last few years we have witnessed our youth having something that our adults are less apt to display—an astonishing strength and creativity. We have seen them awaken, carrying the Word of God to their peers, desiring for their friends and family to know Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

I know with confidence that the future holds many great things. In July of this year we will have a Regional Youth Encounter in Nicaragua, the theme being "Saints of the Third Millennium." This is what I believe we will see in the future— a new generation of men and women desiring to respond to God's call to be the Light and Salt of the Earth. Let us pray that God fulfill that which has not come to pass in our generation, but shall come to pass in of the future. 🌱

— Luis Manuel Bravo

New Commitments

This coming August 28, Jim Orbe from Manila, Philippines, Nico Angleys from London, England and Fernando Ayala from Monterrey, Mexico will make their lifelong commitments to The Servants of the Word. This is an important moment in our life, for they, and for us. It is clear for us to see God's call on these men's lives. These will be the first lifelong commitments since Mon Samson in 1999, and the first commitments of multiple brothers since 1994. We anticipate these will be the first of many more brothers to follow. We look forward to receiving these men into our life. 🌱

— Mike Kramer

WE APPRECIATE YOUR HELP.

The Servants of the Word receives its support through donations and the financial earnings of the brothers. Many of our brothers work for sacrificial wages or for no pay at all. Please consider if you can become a financial sponsor of The Servants of the Word. Your prayers and support are appreciated in our work with young people and our community development work.

THE SERVANTS OF THE WORD
P.O. Box 7087, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48107
U.S.A.

Tel: (734) 475-3550
www.servantsoftheword.org

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