

Small Things with Great Love

On a cool and rainy day in Belfast I boarded a plane to arrive 20 hours later in the sweltering heat and sun of Mumbai at the beginning of two weeks that would challenge, enrich, and change me forever. At the same time two other Servants of the Word and two women from the Sword of the Spirit had boarded four planes around the world, and soon Tadhg Lynch, Dave Quintana, Sarah Quinn, Claire Robinson, and I found each other and six missionary friends among the billion people in India.



From left: Sarah, Brian, Dave, Claire and Tadhg teach a song at the camp in Khandala

Sword of the Spirit communities in Pune, Mumbai, Vasai, and Bangalore; and to visit and serve with a Christian orphanage and slum-church in Pune.

We soon met the organizers of the youth camp and, learning that we were to give 14 sessions in the next four days to a group of youth aged 11 to 27, we quickly set to planning our part in it! More than 100 young people from Pune, Mumbai, Vasai, and Bangalore came together (via a 24-hour train ride!) in Khandala for the first-ever Sword of the Spirit India Youth Camp. The topics *Choosing for God*, *Discipleship*, and *Being on Mission* were the focus of the talks, and the experience of the team. Throughout the four days in the mountains there was little time for relaxing but, buoyed up by the help of the enthusiastic Indian leaders and the endless excitement of the youth, we soared through the week and were saying sad goodbyes before we knew it. The days in Khandala were such a full time and yet “the camp in Khandala was truly a time of grace for all those involved,” reflects Nicholas D’Cruz from Pune, one of the main organizers of the camp. “This was the first time all of the communities in India came together and, through all the differences, it was heartening to see the bonding and building of relationships between the youth.”

Our hopes for the trip were three-fold: to serve together with Youth with a Mission (YWAM) – one of the largest mission organizations in the world with 18,000 full-time staff and over 200,000 active missionaries; to help establish a sub-regional youth program in India by running a youth camp for the four



Youth and leaders from Vasai outside the meeting hall in Khandala



Beloved family and friends of The Servants of the Word,

The very active months of the summer are now behind us, and we in the brotherhood send you our Fall greetings. All the summer households, the mission trips, the camps and backpacking adventures, the conferences and seminars, and the many other activities which characterize our work with young people every summer have come to their happy and fruitful conclusion, and across the world we have embarked with faith and hope upon a new season of outreach work among young people on university campuses and in high schools.

We are also very pleased this Fall to be opening households of our brotherhood in Beirut, Lebanon, and in Grand Rapids, Michigan. Over the years, we've had several young Lebanese affiliates living together in a household in Beirut, and for this year one of our elders, Eroni Sotutu, will be living with them and leading that household. Joining Eroni and our affiliates in Beirut will be Toufic El-Ramy, who has recently completed his two years in the formation household in Ann Arbor and, in August, made his first Full (one-year) commitment to The Servants of the Word. Toufic is the first of our young Lebanese brothers to make this commitment, and we are hopeful that many others will

follow him in the future.

We have great expectations for this Beirut household, and also for our new household in Grand Rapids, where Stan Mathay and Brian Laba are living, together with three of our affiliates. In recent years, our university outreach in the Grand Rapids area has been growing in strength and in numbers, and we are delighted to have a small outreach household of The Servants of the Word this year in the western part of Michigan.

In these and in countless other ways, we in The Servants of the Word are experiencing the goodness, the fidelity, and the mercy of God. We live in deep gratitude to him for his grace and blessing in our lives. We count you among those blessings, and we are truly grateful for all the love and support that we receive from you. May our gracious God bless you, who are such a blessing to us! 🏔️

In Christ,

John Keating

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Kairos Fellowship Launched: Fostering Christian Growth in the Great Outdoors

Two years ago I was asked to begin developing programs for junior high-age boys of families in the Sword of the Spirit. Since there was already in place an informal program of summer adventure trips, it was natural to start my work there. We initiated the program in the summer of '08 with a backpacking trip in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Western Virginia, and a canoe trip to scout out Algonquin Park in Ontario, Canada. This past summer we improved and enhanced these trips, and prepared for a third trip to Wyoming starting next year, which will serve as the culminating experience for what has become a three-year program called the Kairos Fellowship, part of our broader youth work also called Kairos.

Each Kairos Fellowship trip focuses on the three key fellowship values of **discipleship, servanthood, and brotherhood**. Much of the success of the trips results from simply sharing with the boys, on a level they can understand, the great goodness and wisdom the Lord has given us in our life in The Servants of the Word. Besides helping the boys experience and grow in the key values, we teach them outdoor skills and foster good character traits so they will develop into strong men who can serve and lead in their future lives.

Serving with Kairos Fellowship is also a great blessing to me personally. It's exhilarating and inspiring to work with the boys and the young men who serve as my staff, and of course, the time in the outdoors is something special for me. In addition, the program has plenty of room for future development, which provides a great outlet for my creative side. As with so much of what we do in our brotherhood, it's obvious that serving in this way is only possible with the freedom as well as the support that our life provides – and that's yet another reason for me to bless the Lord for his goodness to me as a Servant of the Word. 🏔️

–Stan Mathay

May God's Glory Fill This House!



Over the last few years, we Servants of the Word in Asia had occasionally talked about establishing another household in the southern Philippines. We have had short term households there in the past, but nothing seemed to be falling into place for a sustainable set up.

In the meantime, the changing life circumstances of our brothers made it necessary to modify our current housing in Manila. In response to this situation, we made a few practical adjustments in how we were living. First we set up a second household in the same compound with eight or nine brothers in each household. This helped meet some of our needs, but was not enough.

Then we tried rent-

ing a separate house, but the prohibitive cost of accessible housing in crowded-Manila only allowed us to rent too small a house for six. Soon we began talking of buying a more suitable house.

When we got a favorable response from the Servants of the Word elders in December 2008, we started looking for a house that would be spacious (with a guest room and a prayer room), in quiet neighborhood, accessible to public transportation—and within our budget. Not a list of criteria to be easily met!

In January 2009, Stu Ferguson, in his capacity as International Treasurer, came to Manila for his annual visit. Wanting to be educated about the housing situation in Manila, Stu accompanied us to look at two houses that were up for sale. “He came, he saw, and he liked the second one.”

After consulting with expert civil contractors from the community, we decided in February to buy this house. By the beginning of May, renovations had begun. And in the first week of August, some of the older (they prefer to call themselves seasoned) brothers –Jake Yap, Francis Iturralde, Mon Samson, Raoul Roncal, Jojo Baquiano, and Abyong Calo – moved in!

God led us to this house and provided us the resources, space, and environment we need. In gratitude to the Lord, we dedicate this house to him and to his work. May God's glory fill this house!

Just a side note: Our new house is located on a street named “Ipil.” And so the brothers jokingly call it “The Ipil (Eiffel) Towers.” Those who know our brothers Jake and Francis know it's named most appropriately! 🏠

–Joseph Piquero





Community youth playing under a waterfall at the end of a long trek

and dances, sharing food and stories, and praying with them; but these girls with their open hearts taught us much more than Indian dances and hand motions to songs – they showed us a living image of the Gospel that they were receiving in the orphanage.

All I knew about slums before was what I had seen from the movies, but as we drove the next morning into one of the city’s biggest slums where over 10,000 people live in less than one square kilometer, the reality assailed all my senses at once. We met a pastor of a small church who took us on a walk around the slum stopping in to visit each of the 15 families that attend his church, sharing and praying with each as we went. At the end of the day, dusty and tired we returned to find the window of our car broken with a brick, but our host only smiled and said it is a small price to pay for the hope of reaching these poor and broken people. Oh, that we might have that perspective!

As I sit at my desk reflecting on these things we did, I can’t help but laugh at how small they were when compared with the magnitude of the need; and yet I also smile with faith because our Lord is one who takes the small offering and feeds 5,000. “Do small things with great love” was what Mother Teresa said about her work in Calcutta. We are blessed to be able to do some small things with great love; may we live with our hearts open to the world and live generously as Dave Quintana says, keeping “less for self, more for others, enough for all.” 🏹

–Brian Shell

With the camp finished we boarded a train back to Pune and took some much needed rest, tried to fight off the mosquitoes, and catch a bit of sleep. Then began the second phase of the trip: working with YWAM Mercy Ministries and Vanitashray Orphanage in Pune. When we entered the orphanage the next morning, any tiredness that we might have had was swept away by the smiles and welcoming hands of 20 girls aged 3 to 14 with contagious energy and joy. Their joy took on a new depth once we learned of many of their histories that made your heart cry: Rescued from rubbish bins, back alleys, and child prostitution, these girls had found welcome and a home with Anu and her husband, John, who run Vanitashray. We spent two days playing with the girls, teaching and learning songs



Team with SOS Youth Camp organizers

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