

MARCH 2011



The Sword
of the Spirit



NORTH AMERICAN REGION NEWS

In January, about 400 college students from Ohio, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Vancouver, Quebec, Minnesota, Ontario, Maryland, and Florida, traveled to the annual Kairos Winter Conference in Columbus, Ohio. The theme this year was *For the Praise of His Glory*. It was a weekend of worship, teaching, fellowship, encouragement, and fun.



Kairos Winter Conference

“One of the main highlights for me,” shared Alex, who leads a UCO household at MSU, “was the prayer ministry during the men’s session. I was able to pull together the guys from our house so we could pray as a group. The Lord did something during that time of prayer. There had been a temptation to start coasting in our household life because things were going well, but the Lord gave all of us a renewed zeal for the mission of our household.”



Magz talked about how the Winter Conference was an important final step in her return to God from anger and unbelief. “The Kairos Winter Conference was brilliant—I got to worship the Lord; it was so freeing. I love that I can love the Lord with my whole heart. He has set me free!”



“A highlight for me,” Nicole says, “was Saturday night when Mike Shaughnessy (the NAR Kairos director) told about all the different college outreaches. He showed us a video of the new University Christian Outreach chapter in Aleppo, Syria. Victor, from Lebanon, who served in Detroit last year, was in the video. It was great to see.”

“I went to the winter conference with a feeling that I needed a large change in my spiritual life,” Rob shared. “Over the past semester, I had started to use UCO more as a social club than a Christian community. I still attended the parties, but I was going less and less to the regular meetings. I told people I had too much school work. While this was not completely untrue, I could have found time for a daily prayer time and for UCO prayer meetings.



“The conference made me realize that with God’s help I could make a change and maintain it. My ‘funk’ lifted, and I made a schedule to help me be faithful in my spiritual life. I also decided that I needed to be more charismatic in my worship, something I had never really done and had often made excuses for. I now have hope that I can continue making progress in my life with the Lord.”



Audrey, hiding, with Boundary Waters Adventure participants.

Junior High Girls Boundary Waters Adventure

After carrying 70 lb canoes up steep and rocky portages, canoeing against high winds, hurriedly setting up tents before the attack of buzzing assailants, losing canoes, and being thoroughly coated in dirt, one might not expect a girl in seventh or eighth grade to willingly volunteer to come back for another Boundary Waters adventure. This summer I had the pleasure of serving as a staff member for my third trip. I don't go back because I am crazy or because I have a misplaced love of mosquitoes, but because I was once a seventh grade girl who went through the challenge. I have experienced the richness of sisterhood as I faced seemingly insurmountable challenges and overcame them. I experienced feelings of helplessness, which changed my focus from relying on myself to relying on the Lord for strength. Now I am blessed as I watch my younger sisters grow as I once did and foster life-long sisterly relationships with the shared challenges and joys. The Lord has richly blessed so many women with this opportunity and I hope other young women will take the plunge! (By Audrey LaPorte, Work of Christ, Lansing, MI)

UCO, Pittsburgh, PA

In November, the annual People of God UCO (University Christian Outreach) and youth retreat ascended the mountain at Jumonville retreat center and had a great encounter with the Holy Spirit! 59 people came from Pittsburgh, Michigan, and Maryland to become better equipped to "illuminate the Darkness." The retreat included teachings, spiritual warfare, lots of worship, and plenty of fun.

Both the UCO and youth ministries have been marked by growth in numbers and in our relationship with the Lord. UCO has had 35 guests attend a meal, prayer meeting, or other chapter event during the year. We also had 19 people come to the Winter Conference—fantastic considering our first prayer meeting had fewer than ten.



Nohelia, in white, with women from City on the Hill.

Living Singleheartedly for the Lord

"I promise not to marry but to live single for the Lord Himself, and to live for His glory and praise..." On January 15, Nohelia Lopez spoke these words during an inspiring ceremony held at St. Paul's Church in Los Angeles, bringing several years of discernment and preparation to a joyful climax. Following the ceremony, the City on the Hill community enthusiastically celebrated Nohelia's lifelong commitment to live single for the Lord. They held a festive reception that included honoring Nohelia and serenading her with songs, the performance of folkdances, and a video about Nohelia's

life. Originally a member of Ciudad de Dios, the Sword of the Spirit community in Managua, Nicaragua, Nohelia joined the City on the Hill in 2005, when she moved to Los Angeles. Nohelia is a member of Bethany Association, an ecumenical, international group of women living single for the Lord in the Sword of the Spirit. Nohelia says, "I am not alone. Other sisters are walking with me in this way of life." Bethany Association members Jeanne Kun (Word of Life community in Ann Arbor, Michigan) and Brenda Castillo and Samy Samaniego (both from Jesed community in Monterrey, Mexico) supported Nohelia by participating in her commitment ceremony and celebration.

Nohelia is a dental assistant in a medical/dental clinic for Latinos in Los Angeles and she serves in Lumen Christi, her community's monthly outreach/prayer group for Latina women.



The 2010 Campus Outreach Academy (COA) was a brilliant time of learning, discipleship, and lots of laughs. Over ninety students and staff gathered at Miracle Camp in Lawton, Michigan, for ten days of prayer, teaching, training, and fellowship. There were contingents from Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Hillsdale, Lansing, Pittsburgh, and Vancouver, along with a couple international guests from the Philippines and Germany. The Vancouverites get special mention, as they did a bunch of special fundraising to allow an awesome group of twelve to make the flight and attend the COA.



Students were in different tracks, focusing on discipleship or outreach training, with a third track for staff training. Everyone received a series of teachings from Drs. Tom Bergler and Dan Keating on Ecumenism. One of the highlights of the week was the Lord sharing his heart for unity and drawing many into a deeper and stronger commitment to seeing that accomplished in the body of Christ.





SUMMER MISSIONS



Imagine being a church deacon and not having anywhere to train new members in the faith. This was the situation our teams encountered this past summer in the Dominican Republic. With the help of 36 Sword of the Spirit youth and staff, our two Kairos-NA mission teams completed a home enabling this deacon and his wife to host eager, young Christians into their home.

Our teams, representing 9 Sword of the Spirit communities, focused many of our efforts in doubling the existing size of a home that now features more public space for ongoing training and formation. Through this training, more and more Dominicans are better able to meet the ongoing needs of their neighbors long after our teams have returned to the States. Our project started with the digging of footings and ended up with the placement of a shiny new roof, freshly stuccoed walls, new vented windows and secure entry doors. You should have seen the faces of these family members when their new addition was complete.

Our girls team also had the privilege of serving with many high school-aged youth from the Santo Domingo-based Sword of the Spirit community called Cuerpo de Cristo (The Body of Christ). The girls served in a rural, neighborhood school which was base for a two-day Vacation Bible School type day camp, where they led enjoyable and ice-breaking activities (just imagine that) for numerous children of Haitian refugees. Those could very well prove to be two of the happiest July days of those children's lives.

All in all, our youth showed once again that no challenge is too big. Their faith, their love, and their determination to serve those in need, proved once again that we can all make a difference in someone else's world.

Report by Mike Kramer, Director of Kairos Summer Missions



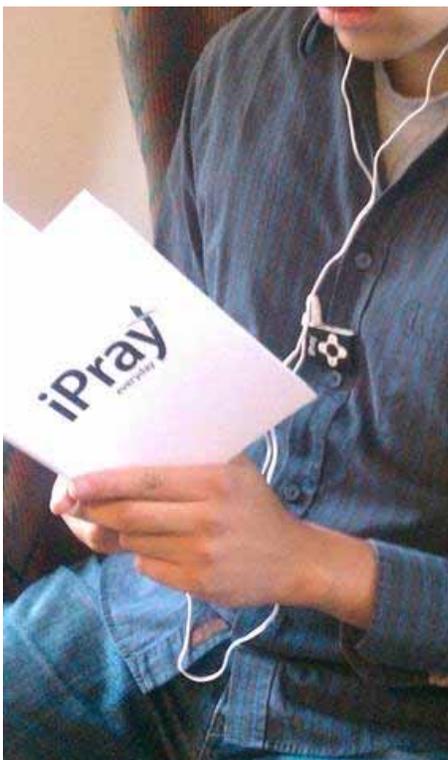
Family of Faith, New Jersey

In October the Family Of Faith Community hosted the second Filipino Diaspora Conference. It is an event started two years ago by Vic Gutierrez (former Senior Coordinator of Ang Ligaya Ng Panginoon community in Manila). The conference gathers Filipino migrants to the US who had been involved in a community or outreach back in the Philippines. The conference was attended by 64 Filipino brothers and sisters from all over the US and Canada. They were served by 60 members of Family of Faith who also attended. The conference coincided with the community's 17th Anniversary celebration, which was graced by the presence of several brothers and sisters from affiliate communities in the US and Canada. Highlights of the celebration were the public commitment of twelve brothers and sisters and the installation of Nilo Natural as Coordinator. He joins Cecil Penson (Senior Coordinator) as coordinators of Family of Faith. Also in October, the North American Regional Council approved the Family of Faith as an Underway-A community of the Sword of the Spirit.

Photo above: participants of the Filipino Diaspora conference. Visit the community's web site: www.fofnj.org.

iPray...do you pray?

iPray, the 15 min personal prayer tool, has been affecting the prayer lives of Sword of the Spirit members around the world for the past 5 months. **iPray** was developed and



is being marketed by Kairos-NA, the youth outreach of the Sword of the Spirit in North America. Over 1,000 units have been sold and Kairos is making plans to serve a broader audience in the months ahead. The blend of authentic praise and worship, traditional chanting of the psalms, and inviting times of intercession and thanksgiving have been helping the prayer lives of

many brothers and sisters. **iPray** has become an evangelistic tool for Sword of the Spirit members to give to family and friends to help them grow in daily prayer.

iPray provides 31 days of guided, ecumenical prayer. It comes preloaded on a Digital MP3 player or can be downloaded onto your existing iPod or MP3 player. To learn more about **iPray**, go to www.kairos-na.org/iPray



Families for Christ, Vancouver, B.C

Steve Clark visited Families for Christ Community in Vancouver, British Columbia in October of 2010. It was a much-awaited visit for the whole community. Many of the members have heard about Steve and read his books but have never met the man.

It was a hectic five-day visit for Steve. He met with the pastoral leaders of the community and gave three talks all in one day for them. He attended a Lord's Day celebration with the council of coordinators and their families. Steve also came to the general assembly where he was able to meet the members of community. He spoke at the meeting and answered many questions. On the last day of his visit, he was able to squeeze in some sightseeing. He went around Vancouver and also visited the University of British Columbia campus where many of the University Christian Outreach members attend classes.



Jacksonville (FL) Prayer Meeting

In October 2010, the Jacksonville Prayer Meeting celebrated five years together. Brother Rahl Bunsu from the Brotherhood of Hope came to speak at the celebration. The group meets almost every week for prayer, so five years represents 250 ecumenical prayer meetings: over 500 hours of praise to God. Fifty people have now made a covenant commitment to the community. Joe Difato, the group's leader, says that more and more people in their 20s are stepping into leadership in Jacksonville—and many young children are being immersed in the life of the community. "We are being transformed," Joe shares. "we are thinking and acting less like the old self and more like Jesus every day."



Triumph of the Cross, Middletown, MD

In early January, Brendan and Sophia Murray moved to Middletown, Maryland, to serve the Triumph of the Cross Community. Brendan is originally from the People of Hope Community in New Jersey, and Sophie is from the Work of Christ Community in Michigan. They were married last May.

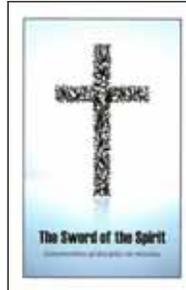
This move is significant as the Murrays relocated in order to take over leadership of the community's high school youth group and to help

establish a new University Christian Outreach chapter in greater D.C. area. Brendan and Sophia will be working with students on campus at the University of Maryland to start an evangelistic Bible study with the hope of building a campus presence for UCO.

The Murrays are part of an encouraging regional trend of young married couples who are serving in our Kairos outreaches. Even more encouraging is this couple's willingness to leave home, friends, and family for the sake of our mission. The UCO and youth group are both off to a very good start, but transportation in the sprawling D.C. area present a significant challenge to building a vibrant youth and university outreach. Do keep the Murrays, and all our Kairos work, in your prayers!

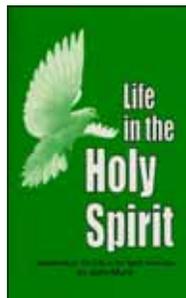
New Tabor House Books

Tabor House, the book publisher and store for the North American Region, has recently published three new books. These books, and many others, can be purchased on-line by visiting www.TaborPub.com.



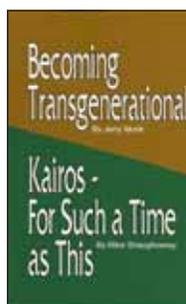
The Sword of the Spirit: Communities of Disciples on Mission provides a brief introduction to the Sword of the Spirit. The book is written in a question and answer format and is a valuable resource for guests who want to learn more about our way of life. 26 pages; \$2.50 each. (Bulk quantities available for community handout tables.)

The Life in the Spirit Seminars has been a power tool to help people come into a more tangible and personal experience of the Holy Spirit. ***Life in the Holy Spirit*** is based on the seminars, but is geared for one or two people working closely with a mentor in the context of a community of Spirit-filled Christians. 78 pages; \$5.50 each.



Two works come together in one book: ***Becoming Transgenerational & Kairos—For Such a Time as This***. In the first section, Jerry Munk discusses how families in the Sword of the Spirit

can work to bring their children into the life and mission of the Sword of the Spirit. In the second section, Mike Shaughnessy, the North American Region Kairos director, outlines the history, goals, vision, and programs of Kairos, the Sword of the Spirit's outreach to youth and young adults. This is a valuable resource for community parents and community leaders. 52 pages; \$5.50 each.



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Noelle Gornik, Uganda, Africa

After living and serving with the Sword of the Spirit throughout the world for 5 formative years, I felt the Lord call me to take a leap of faith. This meant leaving the comforts of western community life and following Jesus to the developing world, specifically to Eastern Africa, to learn about serving the poor and building the Kingdom of God.

This past summer, I spent 3 ½ months traveling, serving, praying, and discerning in S. Sudan, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. It was a wonderful time of seeing the realities on the ground in Africa, and getting involved in the building of God's kingdom. Then I decided to stay in Africa.



For the last 4 months I have been a full-time staff member of a discipleship training school at Yesu Ahuriire Community in Mbarara, Uganda. The discipleship school has been running for 4 months and is very good! We had 29 students from all over eastern Africa. I enjoyed teaching and mentoring the students on their journey to a deeper and stronger relationship with Christ. I am now moving into a new phase of work, helping the community in their efforts to become self sustainable. This is real development work for a group of people who are daily building the Kingdom of God.

Noelle Gornik has lived and served all over the Sword of the Spirit. For full details and stories of her work in Africa, visit noelleinafrica.blogspot.com. Email noelle.gornik@gmail.com if you would like to receive her newsletter!



Ecumenical Conference Work of Christ Lansing, Michigan

In September, The Work of Christ Community held a conference on Ecumenism in the Sword of the Spirit. Talks included a frank discussion of where we stand (by Dave Hughes), our ecumenical approach (by Bruce Yocum), and our reason for hope (by Bruce Yocum and Paul Dinolfo). Presentations were also made about Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox approaches to ecumenism (by Dan Keating, Dave Hughes, and Jerry Munk respectively). This conference was videotaped and will be distributed throughout the Sword of the Spirit for use in local communities.

Kairos Fellowship

Kairos Fellowship is the Sword of the Spirit's outreach to young teenage boys in North America. The program offers wilderness adventure trips and preparing for adolescence weekends. Joe Giles (Word of Life) and Joe Quense (People of Hope) are having a great time as Kairos Fellowship Interns, and helping to develop the ministry. Recently we ran a winter survival trip in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. It was an awesome time. We are in the process of planning our summer trips for boys who have completed grades 7 through 9, and will include some older boys as junior staff. If you are interested in getting boys connected with this important ministry, please contact Stan Mathay. His e-mail address is StanMathay@gmail.com.



Word of Life, Ann Arbor



The 40th Anniversary of covenant community is the perfect excuse to plan two fun-filled weekends of fellowship. This is just what the Word of Life Community did, and the festivities were met with enthusiasm and enjoyment.

In order to celebrate this momentous occasion properly, four events were held over two weekends late in October: an adult reception, a children's carnival, a Lord's Day celebration and finally an anniversary prayer meeting. *Photo: an early Ann Arbor prayer meeting.*



Sarah Nilles, Detroit Summer Outreach

Last January, a friend asked me if I had considered serving with Detroit Summer Outreach (DSO). She was shocked that no one had ever talked to me about doing it since the Lord was doing a lot in my heart in the areas of serving, poverty, inner-city work, ecumenism, and community: the very things that were happening in DSO. I applied and was accepted into the summer program. I never would have imagined that saying "yes" to one invitation by the Lord would open the door to a life-changing invitation that I received through an e-mail a week after being accepted into DSO. Josh Rock asked me to prayerfully consider doing a Standing in the Gap year in Detroit that following year. I e-mailed Josh back saying that it was crazy to think about leaving school when I had one year left, leaving Saint Paul's Outreach, fundraising for a year of service when I had school loans, moving to a city that I knew nothing about, and approaching my parents back in Iowa about doing a program that I barely knew anything about. I said, "Doing a Gap year is crazy, but at the same time it makes a lot of sense to me because my heart desires most of the things that you are doing in Detroit." After prayer and many long conversations, I said "yes" to the invitation to come and see the Lord's work in Detroit.

Everything in Detroit is raw and real. Detroit is bruised, broken, oppressed, and impoverished—yet it is so close to God's heart. I came into my year of service with a whole bunch of ideas about working with the poor. The Lord quickly taught me that this is His work and all outside ideas, game plans, and prides need to be left at the door. I lead the high school girls' youth group, which has tripled in size this year from one girl to three. I tried to do the "normal" youth group thing by leading worship, having Bible studies, giving talks, and doing girly things, but it didn't work. Finally, I surrendered and allowed the Lord to lead. It was messy, unconventional, and it didn't look like we were doing much, but last week, two of the younger girls gave their lives to Jesus Christ. I can't wait to see what God is going to do next week!

Being the only woman Gapper in Detroit has its challenges, but I have never felt so blessed in my entire life as I have here in Detroit. God's presence here is consuming. You can see Christ's love for His people. I can't explain it, but I experience it. I experience it at the Capuchin soup kitchen when I give Andre, a former gang leader, drug addict, and ex-con, a hug every Friday morning. I experience it while holding Esther's hands, looking her in the eyes, and telling her of God's love—even though she believes that her heart is too cold to be loved. I experience it as a child from Bezalel Project, our after-school program, runs towards me for a hug. I experience it while driving through the projects picking up or dropping off kids. I experience it through our tight-knit community here in Detroit that functions like a family. The Lord invited me into the midst of His work, and I am truly privileged to be here.

Community Campout, CADA, Southwest MI

Christ's Ardent Disciples in Action (CADA) families and singles and friends packed up their camping gear and pitched their tents at the Holly State Recreation Park for the first community camping weekend held last August. From the perfectly situated individual sites that allowed us to enjoy meals, have night and morning prayers, and a Lord's Day celebration together, to the threatening storm that passed us by, it was another event that was blessed by the Lord.



The Sword of the Spirit is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ and strengthening Christian people (Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox) through active evangelization and by forming Christian communities.

In our youth outreach and community building work, we encourage men and women to give their lives fully to Jesus Christ, practice daily Christian discipleship, and to zealously proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ to others.

The Sword of the Spirit is supported by charitable contributions. Your support is welcome! Contributions to The Sword of the Spirit are tax deductible in the United States.

Jerry Munk, Newsletter Editor

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