

CROSSROAD **EXTRA**

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BROKEN

BY STEVEN M.

*All the parts scattered around,
 Torn and shredded, trampled to the ground.
 Unrecognizable to those who knew
 This puzzle of pieces that once was you.
 Beaten and bruised, your aching heart,
 Hoping for love, perhaps a fresh start.
 A mind that held thoughts so dear
 Now longing to think again as clear.
 Your healthy body so ravaged by time,
 Done to another would be considered a crime.
 This condition of yours, not meant to be;
 I swear by heaven this once was me.
 With just one word that God has spoken,
 Suddenly now whole, that which was broken!*

Suddenly Whole

by Stacy Ladenburger

Born into a situation marked with pain and brokenness, Steven never experienced childhood innocence or normalcy. His natural father raped his mother, a crime that led to his birth. His stepfather was abusive, and Steven recalls escaping from their Oregon home with his mother and siblings when he was six: "My stepdad stood on the porch, pointing and then shooting a pistol as we pulled out of the drive." Steven vowed that he would never let anyone hurt them again.

A few years later, Steven's mother sent him to the home of his aunt and uncle, and he lived with them first in Washington state and then in Puerto Rico. When he was thirteen, Steven moved back in with his mother, siblings and new stepfather, at whose hands violence had resumed. Determined to act on his childhood vow, Steven fought often with his stepfather, knocking him unconscious in a particularly heated brawl. Steven was shocked to hear his mother's rebuke. "I honestly believed that I had taken the only course available," he says.

THE LETTER

BY STEVEN M.

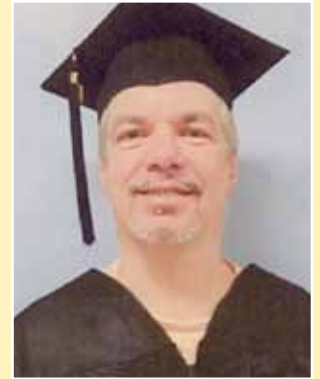
*As you walk about day to day,
Do you ever wonder what it is your life will say?
It's not just words that you speak
That lend a hand to help the weak.
Also action, empowered by grace,
Will bring a smile to a saddened face.
Sometimes things spoken will do the trick;
Other times a faith-filled prayer will heal the sick.
If you want to be more like your King,
Deny the flesh and the pain it brings.
Deliver yourself like a letter to men
Written by the Lord, not with a pen.
Neither ink nor paper needs to be used
To let people know with Christ you are fused.
So when the world reads you like they always do,
Let them see the Son of God written in you!*

REVERSED AND REMANDED

BY STEVEN M.

*Reversed and remanded, the decision was made,
Little did they know how the foundation was laid.
Not with writs and motions of learned men,
Not with fancy words twisted with pen.
Appeals to the courts were of little effect,
Void were the questions of great intellect.
Men tried and tried to convince the judge—
The results were nil; he wouldn't budge.
Yet something happened to change his mind,
Something unforeseen, his justice was kind.
Someone stepped in to argue the case,
A living sacrifice to take your place.
Now his honor had little choice:
Release the prisoner, said the voice.
He has been given a lifelong reprieve,
Granted to all who choose to believe.
The verdict rendered, justice is done;
In a heavenly court, your battles are won!*

Steven was placed back into the care of his aunt and uncle and alternated between the two households throughout his teenage years. By the age of seventeen, he used drugs and alcohol consistently, he had joined the army and his girlfriend was pregnant. The two were married, but the relationship between these “very mixed-up kids” didn't last.



At age twenty, participation in a burglary landed Steven in the county jail, where he heard the Gospel for the first time. Though compelled, he continued in his old ways. He encountered Christianity again during his first prison sentence, but after his release, a hurtful experience with a professing Christian shattered his view of the church, and he walked away.

Steven married again and started a family, but he never gave up his addictions. The last threads of his life unraveled when he surrendered fully to alcohol. He separated from his wife, quit his job and tried to drink himself to death.

When his wife returned for some of her belongings on a spring day in 2003, a domestic dispute erupted into violence. By the time the police arrived, Steven, in an alcoholic stupor, had barricaded himself in his house. He received a prison sentence of 172 months.

“I was suicidal and extremely morose, without hope,” Steven remembers.

His transformation began when a visitor to his prison's chapel presented a simple question. “She asked if I was willing, for one second, to allow God into my heart and fix whatever was wrong with me. I said yes, and He did. I have not been the same person since.”

Steven began studying with Crossroad Bible Institute, enthusiastically underlining every Bible verse he encountered in the lessons. “My Bible is marked up, in every book. Crossroad has not only provided me a free study of Scripture but also a comprehensive study of the whole Bible.” Of his Instructor in The Center for Advanced Studies, he says, “Frederika has shown me by her faithfulness and steadfastness that no matter my situation, I can be a blessing to another.”

And indeed, he is a blessing. Steven writes poems proclaiming his faith and witnesses to fellow inmates—including his cellmate, who responded by accepting Christ.

Once broken, beaten and bruised, Steven knows that, by the power of God, he is now whole. “I can't believe the transforming work that has happened in my life,” he marvels. “Today, I embrace the gift of life that God has granted me and continues to grant me each day.”



Stacy serves as an Associate Editor in The Center for Advanced Studies at CBI

CBI Instructor Pastors Prison Church

by Stacy Ladenburger

Ten years ago, Rick Admiraal, then a member of Third CRC in Zeeland, Michigan, became a CBI Instructor. Inspired and energized by his experience, he wanted to do even more. He saw Prison Fellowship's Operation Starting Line advertised in a CBI newsletter and promptly got involved. Soon after that, he and his wife were leading services at a facility in Muskegon.

In 2006, Rick investigated a career change. "The Spirit was calling me to move into something new," he explains. He began pursuing a Master of Divinity at Calvin Theological Seminary, and before long, he was confident that God was calling him to plant a new prison church.

Early this year, Rick was ordained as a Minister of the Word in the Christian Reformed Church, and New Life Prison Church was planted in Iowa's Newton Correctional Facility. Rick, supported by volunteers and churches, pastors the growing prison congregation. "The work is beginning to bear fruit," he reports. "Guys are growing closer to one another and to Christ. True Christian community is taking root behind bars."

In the prison congregation model, inmates are members and leaders in the church, with a called pastor and volunteers from the outside supporting them. New Life Prison Church is in the early phases of the ministry model, in which relationships are built through weekly prayer groups and Bible studies. The first worship service



was held on Maundy Thursday, and the inmate participants responded with gratitude as they received Communion. A second worship service was held this summer.

Rick, who continues serving as a CBI Instructor, demonstrates an unmistakable passion for reaching those in prison with God's truth and love as he joyfully leads New Life Prison Church. He comments, "Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the support of the local church, we hope to eliminate the depressing cycle of incarceration and its ill effects on families and society as a whole."

New Life Prison Church is one of more than fifteen prison congregations planted through Prison Congregations of America (PCA), a nonprofit ministry that establishes denominationally recognized congregations in prisons nationwide.

To learn more about PCA, listen to the archived *Crossroad Connection* radio interview with Director Mary Mortenson, purchase a recording of her March Continuing Education Seminar or visit www.prisoncongregations.org. Keep up with New Life Prison Church at www.newlifepriisonchurch.blogspot.com.

The Center for Advanced Studies

Continuing Education Seminars

SEPTEMBER

Speaking Up for the Voiceless: Defending Indigent Criminal Defendants

Professor Tracey Brame, Thomas M. Cooley Law School
Crossroad Bible Institute, Grandville, MI

Date: Tuesday, September 13, 2011

12:00 pm – 1:30 pm (Lunch provided)

Registration Deadline: September 6, 2011

OCTOBER

CBI, Reaching God's Children in Prison

Mr. Phil Briggs, Mr. Terry West and Mr. Ben Nicholson
Macleean Presbyterian Church, Macleean, NSW, Australia

Date: Saturday, October 22, 2011

12:30 pm – 5:00 pm

All seminars are **free** of charge, but advanced registration is requested.
Please register by calling CBI at **800-668-2450** or going online to www.cbi.fm.

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Never Tire of Doing What is Good



by H. David Schuringa

The words of Paul in 2 Thessalonians 3:13 that I chose as the title of this article are also echoed in Galatians 6:9: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

It's September, time for church and school activities to kick in for another season. Perhaps it is tempting to greet the turning of this calendar page with a sigh. *Here we go again, one more time*, we often think. We can become weary in doing good.

Paul's cure for the doldrums is to keep the coming harvest in view. The promised harvest keeps us energized in the here and now.

I've been ordained for twenty-nine years and have served as the President of Crossroad for the last twelve of these. I just never tire of stories like Steven's. In fact, as I read it, I got goose bumps all over. Here was a life that began with no chance for success, and might have ended in utter disaster if not for the grace of God. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the Holy Spirit is using CBI's discipleship program to make a new man out Steven. What a thrill!

And then the story of Rick, a church member who began as a CBI Instructor and then participated as an Operation Starting Line volunteer. But God wasn't through with him yet! Rick went on to seminary and now is pastoring a prison church.

Stories like these keep us from ever getting weary over here at Crossroad! And the excitement for this ministry has never been greater. We are experiencing a huge increase in enrollments, for both English- and Spanish-speaking students. So we need more Instructors, and we need more support. Our job in fulfilling this niche in the Great Commission has just begun!

And so, as another church season begins, I hope you are as fired up as I am for this great cause of Christ's church. Please, never tire of doing what is right! Never give up! A plentiful harvest awaits, glimpses of which we see every day.

Dr. Schuringa serves as the President of Crossroad Bible Institute



RESTORATIVE JUSTICE WEEK
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HEB. 13:3



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