

By Dr. David Schuringa, President



One of my favorite events last summer was when I took my four-year-old granddaughter fishing. I feel guilty that I never took my kids fishing when they were young, so I'm determined to make up for it with my grandchildren.

I had been especially eager for this day ever since we purchased a cute little orange "Tigger" fishing pole for Olivia a couple years ago. The two of us walked out to the end of the dock with my tackle box and gear. She reminded me of Opie on the Andy Griffith Show going fishing with his dad.

Olivia watched with interest—though a tad grossed out as I fished a wiggly worm from the bait can and wrapped her hook with it. Casting the line out a ways, I showed her how to hold the pole and how to keep her eye on the bobber.

The evening sun was warm, the water calm. I was hoping the kid would at least get a couple nibbles, or even a bite. Neither of us were quite ready for what happened next.

Not a minute had passed before her bobber dove down, hard. "This might be something," I remember thinking. I showed her how to start reeling the fish in, and she did. As my oldest grandchild slowly brought it closer and closer to the dock, we could look down and see just under the water what she had on the line: BIG fish!

"You take it, grandpa!" as she quickly handed her pole to me to reel the prize in the rest of the way. I pulled it out of the water and removed the hook: A 12 inch largemouth bass! A beauty! I couldn't believe it, her first fish! Olivia was a bit apprehensive about it all, though. After all, it was a big fish for a little girl.

We hurried on shore to show off our trophy to the rest of the family. After her dad took pictures, we gently released our catch back into the lake. At that point she said, "I'm going to go by grandma now, okay grandpa?"



Olivia was a bit apprehensive about her first fish!

## Fishing Can Be Frightening... At First

In a couple of minutes, however, I heard the pitter-patter of little feet behind me running up the dock. She was back for more. "Let's get another one, grandpa!"

We baited her hook again and tossed the line out. In a minute or so, down went the bobber and she brought in a bluegill. Angling for more, she caught another bass. We weren't out there for long, but we couldn't have asked for more her first time out.

I make no claims to being much of a fisherman. A long time ago, Christ called me to follow Him and become a fisher of men (Matt. 4:19; Mark 1:17). I remember the first couple times I shared the gospel with people—I admit that I was nervous at first. But after the Holy Spirit helps you reel in a few, it's quite a thrill.

At first, people sometimes hesitate to become CBI Instructors because the idea of discipling prisoners is frightening, especially going one-on-one in Tier 2. However, it's usually not long until fear is replaced with the exhilaration of being a fisher of men. We expect a couple nibbles, or even a bite. And God surprises us by filling the net (John 21:6)! Thanks for joining me on this great fishing expedition—reaching so many thousands with God's truth and God's love.

### INSIDE

Fishing Can Be Frightening At First	1
CBI To Help Inmates In Reentry	2
New Tier 2 Course Launched	2
Pay to Stay Plans	3
2004 Christmas Send-A-Card Program	3
In Remembrance	4

# CBI To Help Inmates In Reentry

A question we've received over the years is, "What do you do for the students when they get out?" CBI's response has been that Crossroad is a ministry to prisoners, preparing them for reentry, and that they may continue their studies upon release. From time to time, inmates have asked for help in finding a church or reentry ministry, and staff members have done the best they could, realizing that CBI's focus is on providing Christian education during incarceration.



"We're looking forward to guiding as many inmates as possible to effective reentry structures that will reinforce the discipleship efforts of our Instructors," says Ms. Grasiewicz. Andrea is excited about seeing how well CBI graduates do on the outside.

Post-prison ministries assist ex-offenders as they search for a church, apply for a job, look for housing, deal with lingering substance abuse issues—everything involved with getting their lives back on track outside the walls.

Crossroad Bible Institute is pleased to announce a new position focused entirely on helping our students in reentry. The Reentry Programs Coordinator's primary job is to connect CBI graduates with reentry agencies and churches for when they leave prison. Instructors will be key in encouraging their students to seek out reentry assistance and letting CBI know when and where they will be released. The RP coordinator will also provide parole board recommendations for eligible students.

Andrea Grasiewicz has been appointed to the new position. She is uniquely qualified for the post since for the last couple years she has headed Crossroad's Tier 2 Graduate Studies Program which is geared specifically to issues prisoners will face on the outside. According to President David Schuringa, "It's been a dream of mine to have a reentry ministry at Crossroad that can strengthen our in-prison educational focus. This new position and program fit the bill."

As to the appointment, Schuringa notes that "Andrea brings the energy, people skills and administrative talents needed to launch this important new area of Crossroad's ministry." Requests for reentry help are especially pouring into the CBI headquarters since the program was mentioned in CBI's student newsletter, *Crossroad Connection*.

In the same way that CBI networks with evangelistic ministries, broadcast agencies and publishers who refer their inmate respondents to CBI for discipleship, CBI will now in turn refer its students to reentry ministries. This will also benefit the post-prison ministries as CBI can provide them with promising candidates for reentry



**Andrea Grasiewicz is the new Reentry Programs Coordinator**

## Inmates Asking for Help

*Dr. David Schuringa said that I could ask for a letter of recommendation for the parole board. So, seeing this was for me a huge blessing. In September 2004 I will see the Pennsylvania Board of Parole...also I would welcome any reentry ministry information that you might have. I will not know the board's decision until after October, so I will again write to let you know what happens.*

Mark K., Cresson, PA

*I long for a place to go once I'm released, so please inform me of any post-prison programs that you may offer.*

Brennan T., Hutchinson, KS

*Can you send me the name/address of any church in Kalamazoo or Portage, MI area?*

Danel G., Tutwiler, MS

*I need help finding a church, please!*

Deborah L., Las Vegas, NV

*Thank you for giving me a chance to have a closer relationship with God through your Bible study courses. Fortunately I will be released back into the community, what a wonderful feeling that will be! I read your article in the President's Corner about helping find a church and reentry ministry. I will be moving back to Taylorville, IL and would like help!*

Ryan B., Vandalia, IL

## New Tier 2 Course Launched

In an effort to continue to improve the curriculum, a long awaited course has been launched, *Ten Women You Should Know*. For years, CBI has had a course entitled, *Ten Men You Should Know*, that has been taken by both men and women. In recent years, however, female Instructors have encouraged Crossroad to produce a course more specifically for female inmates.

Women have certainly benefited from the *Ten Men* course. Still, these new character studies are also geared to reentry but are more specifically written for women and will provide a more effective component in CBI's discipleship offerings for them.

The course includes studies of Eve, Sarah, Leah, Tamar, Bathsheba, Mary (the mother of Jesus), the adulterous woman, the bleeding woman, the woman who anointed Jesus' feet and Mary Magdalene. Each contains issues to which female prisoners can relate as they study the unfolding plan of God in the history of redemption. They will learn how to apply each story to their own lives as they prepare for a successful reentry.



## ■ Pay to Stay Plans

Some applaud and others are raising questions about the pay to stay plans instituted by county jails and prisons in at least 40 states. Growing in popularity since it began 15 years ago in Alabama, charges have been increasingly levied against inmates, even some who have not been convicted.

Charges vary widely. Inmates may have to pay for things like meals, medical attention, haircuts or become liable for booking and administrative fees. Increasingly, charges for room and board are assessed at anywhere from \$10 to \$60 a day. The rent is an attempt to recoup some of the \$25,000 a year it costs on average to incarcerate a person in a time of prison overcrowding and budget deficits. In prison, jobs for inmates on average pay 10 cents per hour.

Some institutions try to collect while inmates are incarcerated, most are pursued after release. In fact, inmates have been re-incarcerated for not paying the bill of the previous incarceration.

Pay to stay plans resonate powerfully with voters attracted to politicians who claim to be tough on crime. Why should the responsible citizens be taxed the entire \$40 billion a year for the punishment of over two million people in the United States who have chosen to commit crimes? These folks feel that the tougher prisoners have it, the better. We should at least charge those who can afford it. Still, some conservatives are beginning to question the practice.



Some questions come from a social justice perspective. Few inmates are drug kingpins with considerable assets. Most are the poorest of the poor who have scarcely any resources to mention. To be forced to cough up the costs of their stay, in addition to completing their sentences and paying their fines, may constitute cruel and unusual punishment. So even with a sliding scale, the justice question looms large. It can also reduce the chances of a successful reentry, which is already at considerable risk and so, is self-defeating. According to the U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan, Martha Stewart will not be billed for her incarceration.

Others question pay to stay plans in terms of their practicality. Ultimately, it may be more costly than it's worth to spend time and money attempting to locate and collect from an ex-offender who is starting from scratch. Olmstead County, Minnesota, for example, reportedly spent \$13,000 over four months to collect just over \$7,000.

So are pay to stay plans right for our prisons and jails? As Bill O'Reilly says, "We'll let the viewers decide for themselves."

*I need money and I need it bad;  
You've got to pay to stay  
And this world's so sad.  
Well, I'm not worried about being thrown out;  
It's just one more thing I can do without.*

"Pay to Stay" by country music singer, Jimmy Ryan

## ■ 2004 Christmas Send-A-Card Program

This year marks the third year of the international Christmas Send-A-Card program. Individuals, families, Bible study groups, Sunday school classes and schools are getting into the action. In 2002, 11,801 cards were sent in for the prisoners. Last year, 10,744 cards came in, including 339 Spanish cards. Despite the overwhelming response, thousands of CBI students received no card, so let's make this year the best one yet! Here's how you can participate in this great program:

1. Select a Christmas card (English or Spanish)
2. Leave the name blank at the top (CBI will fill that in)
3. Add a special greeting or encouragement
4. Sign only your first name (or a brother/sister in Christ)
5. Do not include cards with foil or pop-up parts, stickers, glitter, glue or removable objects (most prisons will not accept them)
6. Card must fit into a 6x9 envelope
7. Place the card in its envelope, but DO NOT SEAL IT
8. Do not put postage stamps on envelopes
9. Send the card and blank envelope to CBI between now and December 1. We will include it with an inmate's lesson during the upcoming Christmas season
10. Send as many as you wish

For additional information, go to  
[www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org](http://www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org)

*Thank you so much for your kindness and the Christmas card. When I opened it I cried. I haven't received a Christmas card in over six years. It meant so much to me.*

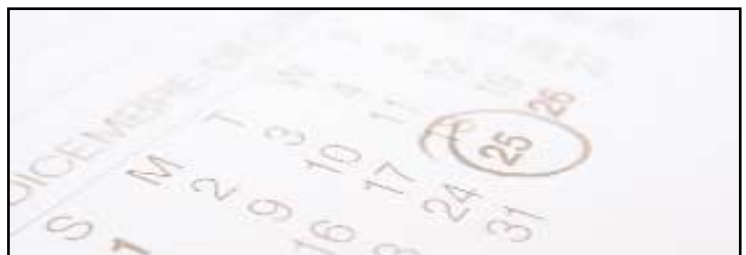
James W., Scottsville, KY

*The reason I'm writing this letter is to thank you for the beautiful Christmas card, it meant a lot to me. It was the only card that I received and it made me so happy. Thank you very much.*

Julia R., Pittsburg, PA

*Brothers, I want to thank you for the Christmas card you sent me. I received it with great happiness and joy. It's the greatest gift I've gotten, and I mean it. The only thing I ask is that you do the same thing for others that you've done for me, because I know that in their hearts, they will have joy simply upon seeing the words you write.*

Carlos R., Miami, FL



# IN REMEMBRANCE

Gifts "In Memory Of" and "In Honor Of" are appropriate and meaningful ways to remember a special person in your life and to support the ministry of Crossroad Bible Institute.

## IN MEMORY OF:

### **Merlin Mellink**

Ivamarie & Ronald Kelly  
Delmar & Elizabeth Markus  
Dennis & Doris Markus  
James & Cecelia Oakland

### **Cesar Henderson**

Judy De Vries  
Edith Meppelink  
Gretta Veenstra

### **John VanDeWeert**

Peter & Margaret Koster  
David & Joyce Van Hoff  
Evelyn Van Manen  
Brent & Donna Visser  
Janet Boss  
Garry & Nancy Reenders  
Anne Van Hoff  
Ann Hofstee  
Gordon & Shirley Kuipers  
Minnie Pruiksma  
Richard & Ruth Van Hoff

### **Jo Last**

Christine Wielenga

### **Joanne Overdyk**

Ray & Marilyn Vander Weide

### **Jeanette Sikkema**

Mildred Bouman

### **Gladys Elgersma**

J. Earl Elgersma

### **Lula Roels**

Glen & Esther De Vries

### **Gordon Lewis**

Ronald & Ivamarie Kelley

### **Lorrene Breems**

John & Claretta Lobbes  
John & Betty Bolkema  
William & Veda Bousema  
Dick & Cora Prins  
Dorothy Breems  
Sam & Ruth Hofman

### **Wilbur Roose**

Gladys & Harris Nieuwsma

### **Frances Hilts**

Lainee Hilts

### **Lloyd Potter**

Arnie & Irene Potter

## IN HONOR OF:

### **Women of Faith Bible Study**

### **Faith CRC, Sioux Center, IA**

Dorenda Van Gaalen

### **Warren Van Tongeren**

Thomas & Sheri Groelsema

### **Dave Vander Ploeg**

St. Joseph CRC

### **Mrs. Ben (Maggie) Alons**

100th Birthday

Loren & Judi Van Duyn

### **Stewart & Carolyn Vander Woude**

55th Wedding Anniversary

Charles & Cheryl Marcus

### **Matthew Anderson Carlisle**

Birth of Grandson

Roger & Janet Klok

### **Rev. Pete & Carrol De Jong**

Services rendered at Merlin Mellink's funeral

Marjorie Schryvers

## You Can Help!

Financial support is vital for the church's ministry to prisoners. In addition to your personal gifts, you can help support CBI by asking your church to take offerings or even to add CBI as a line-item in the budget under Missions, Evangelism or Benevolence. Increasing numbers of churches include Crossroad in their Faith Promise campaigns. Also, remember to encourage your church to remember the prisoners during the Thanksgiving Season. Thank You!



P.O. Box 900  
Grand Rapids, MI  
49509-0900  
U.S.A.

ph: 616.530.1300  
fx: 616.530.1302  
www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org  
mail@crossroadbible.org

