

WHO Are Jesus' BROTHERS? PART III

By Dr. David Schuringa, President



We've been studying together the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25. We've seen that it is important to identify who Jesus' hurting brothers are because He expects us to take care of them. From a biblical, social justice perspective, we learned that we must come to the aid of hurting "strangers," as well as hurting church members. A second way to look at this parable is the "Missiological Perspective."

Matthew's gospel concludes with what is known as the "Great Commission" (Matt. 28:16-20). The church must go into all the world to make disciples, "teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you." Just as the Jewish Christian readers would have understood the parable on the backdrop of OT social justice legislation, they would also have heard it in terms of the grand sweep of the History of Redemption.

Within the context of Creation, Fall and Redemption, God promised that through Abraham and his descendants ALL nations would be blessed (Gen. 18:18). Sadly, Israel did not live as God's special people through whom the world would be blessed. They

disobeyed God's covenant, failing miserably to come to the aid of the poor and needy both within and outside Israel. Finally, after repeated warnings by God's covenant messengers, the prophets, His people were sent into captivity.

The faithful, covenant God, however, did not forget His promises. He preserved a remnant and eventually returned them to the Promised Land. In the fullness of time, One emerged from that remnant who truly cared for the hungry, the naked, the sick and prisoners. He not only obeyed on behalf of His people, with His passion and death on the cross, He also paid the price for His people's failure to care for the down-trodden.

Jesus did not remain in the grave, but rose gloriously from the dead. Having ascended into heaven, He continues His saving work through His people, the church. He poured out His Spirit to empower them for blessing the nations with Good News. In fact,

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THE URGENCY OF OUR MISSION

By Dr. David Schuringa

In February, when I was on an extended preaching/teaching tour in Florida, the news carried a heart-wrenching story of Carlie Brucia, an 11-year-old from Sarasota. As she



Carlie Brucia

crossed through the driveway of a car wash, on the way home from a sleepover, a surveillance camera captured the images of her abduction by a man who would eventually be identified as Joseph Smith. An *Amber Alert* was issued, but before the girl could be rescued, her dead body was discovered in some bushes next to a church parking lot. Joseph Smith was arrested and charged with the murder. It turns out that Smith had been arrested some 13 times previously, spent a good part of 2001 and 2002 in a Florida penitentiary, and was in violation of his parole. Gov. Jeb Bush admitted that Smith was supposed to have been in prison at the time of the murder and that he would look into what had gone wrong.

As horrible as this incident was, it is tragically more typical than you might think. First, research shows that upon release most ex-offenders, 75 percent, will commit another crime. Gov. Bush noted that Smith should have been in prison. Perhaps so, but more time in prison would have only postponed the almost inevitable return to a life of crime.

A second matter is that not only does incarceration fail to rehabilitate prisoners in the majority of cases, it also appears that inmates are leaving prison worse than when they were incarcerated. Smith had previous brushes with the law regarding improper conduct with females and he was incarcerated for drug possession. Now he has graduated to murder.

Let's imagine another scenario. One wonders if things could have turned out differently had the church begun to disciple Joseph Smith the first time he was in prison. Statistically, there would have been a better chance that little Carlie would still be alive, since the recidivism rate drops to 15% for prisoners who were disciplined during incarceration. While most prisoners will return to a life of crime upon release, most *disciplined* inmates will never commit another crime . . . ever.

The brutal murder of Carlie Brucia underscores the urgency of our mission, as 750,000 inmates are being released every year for the foreseeable future. Most are woefully unprepared for re-entry. That's why CBI cannot grow too large or too fast. The church needs to reach ever more prisoners not only to save lives for eternity, but also so that lives like Carlie's can be saved today. To that end, the church is answering the call as record numbers of CBI Instructors are spreading throughout the Sunshine State!



TOP QUALITY DISCIPLESHIP!

Recently, a packet of information was sent to all CBI Instructors that included a notification regarding the "Zero-Tolerance Policy" with respect to the Instructor Guidelines. Many have already responded positively, but some have requested further explanation.

The guidelines are not new – they are explained at the time of each Instructor's training. These important ministry procedures have been formulated and refined on the basis of twenty years of prison ministry experience with tens of thousands of inmates. CBI needs to take extra measures at this time to review the guidelines and to ensure that all Instructors are familiar with them.

Crossroad's program enjoys a sterling reputation in the prisons and jails. Prison chaplains refer to

CBI as "The Industry Standard" for inmate Bible study programs. Our referral affiliates also count on the fact that the inmates they entrust to us are experiencing the highest quality response with every contact. Most importantly, the students depend on CBI to deliver what it promises. If even one Instructor fails to follow the guidelines, the ministry of every Instructor is compromised and even placed in jeopardy.

This year we will likely exceed 4,000 Instructors. CBI Instructors do such a great job. Thank you! We want every one of you to understand how much you are appreciated and how important your ministry is for the church in reaching more and more prisoners with God's truth and God's love.



TRIBUTE TO OFFICE VOLUNTEERS By Jill Beltman

With heartfelt thanks, Crossroad Bible Institute honors this month the multitude of people who volunteer at the CBI offices. In 2003, 246 men and women of all ages assisted the ministry at CBI this way. How we appreciate the office volunteers!



Office volunteers equip the church for its ministry to prisoners in various ways. New lessons are sent to the students in personalized, hand-addressed envelopes. Volunteers take phone calls from Instructors who need to report their students' scores. Some volunteers help enroll new students. Others update student records in the database. Some CBI volunteers operate print and copy machines, and then assemble the materials. This *Crossroad Newsletter* you are reading was part of a mailing assembled by an office volunteer.

There are two kinds of office volunteers, those who come on a weekly basis and those who are on call for large projects. While we are most grateful for all CBI volunteers, no matter how long they have served, again this year we want specifically to honor those who have been volunteers for three, five, and seven years. Each will also receive a special Certificate of Appreciation.

Thank you, CBI office volunteers, for the faithful gift of your time and talents! You enable the church to touch the lives of so many prisoners with God's love and truth.

*Jill Beltman is CBI's
Office Volunteer Coordinator*



7 YEARS

Ethel Brunger
Dave Evertsberg
Verna Evertsberg
Dan Gronsmann
Glenn Hartger
Gert Rotman
Kay Schneider
Lee Schneider

5 YEARS

Al Dekker
Al Dykhuizen
Elsie Schafer

3 YEARS

Marjorie Alberda
Gert Boven†
Carolyn Brandsen
Roger Brandsen
Jay Breuker†
Pearl Breuker†
Jeanette Brink
Harv Brouwer
Marion Brouwer
Gerald Bronsink*†
Kathryn Bronsink†
Jane Buiten
Anita Collins
Ida DeJong†
Marge DeYoung
Bertha Driesenga†

Gert Dykema
Anne Faber
Barb Francoys
Dot Hager
Milly Harkema†
Betty Hoolsema
Eunice Jonkman
Jake Jonkman
Alaine Knoll
Jane Knoll†
Ken Knoll†
Dan Koetsier
Doris Koetsier
Elinor Koetsier†
Al Koning
Sally Koning
Dorothy Koop

Dennis Lankheet†
Grace Lankheet
Howard Lankheet
Millie Lankheet
Winifred Miersma
Arlene Nienhuis†
Muriel Norden†
Kathleen Pasma†
Ruth Post†
Bob Prince†
Louise Randall†
Henrietta Rooy
Mary Schultze
Jenette Sikkema†
Marilyn Smits
Gert Sytsma†
Marilyn Talsma

Alida Terpstra†
Jay Timmer†
Maxine Timmer†
Ethel Vanden Hoek
Les Vanden Hoek
Pearl Vander Hart
Elma Jane VanderZwaag
Josephine VanderZwaag
Marge Vis
Merle Vis
Alice Visser
Neil Vogel
Howard Weener
Noreen Weener
Chris Wielenga
Hazel Windemuller†
Stan Windemuller†

* Recently deceased

† On-Call Volunteer

20TH ANNIVERSARY 1984-2004
Extravaganza!

**Mark Your Calendars Now,
& Plan to Attend!**

Great Lakes Celebration
September 10, 2004 at 7:00 pm
First Christian Reformed Church,
Byron Center, MI

Great Plains Celebration
September 17, 2004 at 7:00 pm
New Life Reformed Church,
Sioux Center, IA

**Crossroad
BIBLE INSTITUTE**

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:

REV. PETER VANDER WEIDE
Ray & Marilyn Vander Weide
Howard & Alvina Krikke

ANN RIBBENS

Joseph & Thersa Van Wyke
Henry & Winifred Schuringa
Bernard & Pearl Bandstra

GERALD SCHIPPERS

Kenneth & Agnes Beelen
Clarence & Ann Boerema
Rod & Kerri Brandsen
Randy & Laurel Dokter
David & Taren Durham
Kathryn Jipping
Arthur & Dorothy Groenhof
Jerry & Delia Jonker
Jay & Cheryl Keuning
Susan Klein
Vi Klingenberg
Jack & Joyce Koeman
Leon & Louise Koops
Harold & Gerene Langejans
Lawrence & Anne Lee
Maranatha CRC – Household #4
Phil & Donna Michmerhuizen
Russ & Wanda Michmerhuizen
Dale & Joyce Mooi
Dave & Judi Nykamp
Ronald & Elaine Nykamp
Fred & Ruth Otten
Reuben & Deana Otten
Richard & Eunice Schippers
David & Mary Schuringa
James & Dolly Strikwerda
Florence Van Campen
Kathleen Van Noord

Ruth Vanderheide
Mark & Rachael VanderWerf
Earl & Mary Vander Meulen
Harderwyk Ministries

HELEN ELGERSMA
Fanny Haagsma

ARLENE DEKKERS
Ivan & Ruth Mulder
Dick & Cora Prins

JOHANNA SKOGLUND
Ray & Marilyn Vander Weide

JOYCE DERING
Gordon & Connie Zonnefeld

GLADYS ELGERSMA
Matilda & Daniel Alons
J. Earl

DON VAN WYNGARDEN
Don & Leona Abbas
Ada Assink
Merlyn & Barb Assink
James & Tena Bandstra
Wilma Blanke
Margaret Brass
Cornelia Buitenwerf
Ralph & LuAnn De Haan
Tom & Vi De Vries
Lois Hoksbergen
Betty Huyser
Raymond & Angelyn Klyn
John & Lois Lanser
Norman & Audrey Mehl
Vernon & Margaret Menninga

Martin & Leona Nunnikhoven
Bob & Jan Pothoven
Gerald & Ann Radig
Dorothy Rus
Henry C & Wilma Schimmel
William & Marjorie Schimmel
Clarence & Gen Seebeck
Harold & Martha Slings
Lavonne Smidt
Carrie Steenhoek
Raymond Terlouw
Jim & Bev Tierney
John & Ann Vande Kieft
Case & Rachel Vander Hart
Marion & Marilyn Vander Linden
Arvin & Carolyn Vander Wilt
Cornelia Van Wyhe
Henry & Minnie Van Wyngarden
Larry & Barb Van Wyngarden
Clarence & Trudy Van Zee
Walter & Harriet Van Zomeren
Wes & Arlys Veenstra
Jay & Audrey Veldhouse
Ruth Veldhouse
Frances Ver Heul
Betty A. Ver Meer
Richard & Wilma Vos
Abe & Phyllis Willems

MILDRED MAAS
Eltha Wolbrink
John & Lavonne Maas
Dean & Marilyn Lefers
Roger & Donna Lefers

JOHN FABER
Frances Faber

IN HONOR OF:

JOYCE DE VRIES
Birthday
Don & Alice Verduin

ABE & PHYLLIS WILLEMS
50th Wedding Anniversary
Betty H. Huyser

AL & JACKIE DYKHUIZEN
Wedding Anniversary
John & Ellen Wierenga
Amy Wierenga
Tyler & Anita Buitenwerf

ANN SIMS
Birthday
Sherry & Kenneth Hendricks

REV. WILLIAM & KARLA ZEILSTRA
25th Wedding Anniversary
Betty Huyser

BERT JOLING
87th Wedding Anniversary
David & Karen Van Vuren

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reaching out to those who need Jesus is so much a part of their new nature that they will be surprised on Judgment Day when the King draws it to their attention (Matt. 25:37-39)!

Do you see it? Picture the vast multitude of hungry, naked, sick and incarcerated persons who don't yet know Christ as a vast mission field. Chuck Colson says that the prisons and jails constitute the largest mission field in North America. This field ripe unto harvest exists in our own back yards no matter where we live. We need to reach the inmates, disciple them, bless them in Jesus' name.

We do this by feeding them the bread of life, clothing them with the righteousness of Christ, healing them from the misery that sin brings, and setting them free from their guilt and shame. In fact, isn't it pre-

cisely God's love through us that can bring our prodigal brothers and sisters back home under Father's roof?

Who are Jesus' brothers? From a missiological point of view you can see that we need to reach *all* hurting people with God's truth and God's love. We'll finish our study next time, D.V.



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