



By Dr. David Schuringa, President

“WHATEVER YOU DO *unto the least of these brothers of mine, you do it unto me” (Matt. 25:40).*

In speaking of the end-times, Jesus tells the Parable of the Sheep and the Goats. With it, he asks us to care for His hungry, naked, sick and incarcerated brothers. In fact, in some way, where we spend eternity is related to our caring for His brothers. Identifying Jesus’ brothers is of paramount importance.

Some theologians hold that the scene depicted in the parable is not that of the Great White Throne Judgment. Rather, it is a judgment to take place just prior to Jesus’ millennial reign in Jerusalem. The nations are going to be judged with respect to how they treated Jesus’ brothers, *the Jewish people.*

It cannot be denied that the Jews are Jesus’ brothers for whom we must care since Jesus was born a Jew. In Romans 9-11, Paul also refers to them as his brothers. Though they are the natural branches that have been broken off in unbelief, he prays fervently for the return and conversion of his brothers. However, these are not the only brothers of Jesus.

Other theologians see the parable as (also) referring to the end-time judgment and understand it to teach that Jesus wants us to care for hungry, sick, naked and incarcerated *church members.* After all, they suggest, in Matthew 12:50 Jesus himself said,

“Whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother.” Hebrews 2:11 informs us: “both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers.”

Therefore, we must also care for these hurting brothers of Jesus. And there are many. Think of those in our own churches who need our help. Think of the tens of thousands of Christians all over the world under oppressive regimes who are being persecuted severely for their faith.

A couple years ago, I was mentioning “prison” texts like Matthew 25:40 and Hebrews 13:3 in a presentation about Crossroad, like I

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CHURCH *Ministry* GROWTH

NUMBER OF STUDENTS SOARS

CBI continued its breathtaking growth in 2003 with 27,788 students completing Bible study lessons. This was a 33% increase over the number of active students in 2002 and easily exceeded the 2003 goal of 25,000. This also helps in part to explain the significant financial pressures experienced last year.

These figures are so much more than numbers for an impressive chart. Picture for each an inmate sitting in his cell studying God's Word, carefully filling in the blanks and thoughtfully completing his essay questions. Picture also his trained Instructor prayerfully correcting each lesson and returning it to him with a full-page, personal letter. That's a lot of ministry going on by Christ's church! And this year promises still more.

A detailed account and explanation of the 2003 statistics will be available in the upcoming President's Report that you will soon receive.

Active Students



BOARD APPROVES BUDGET FOR 2004

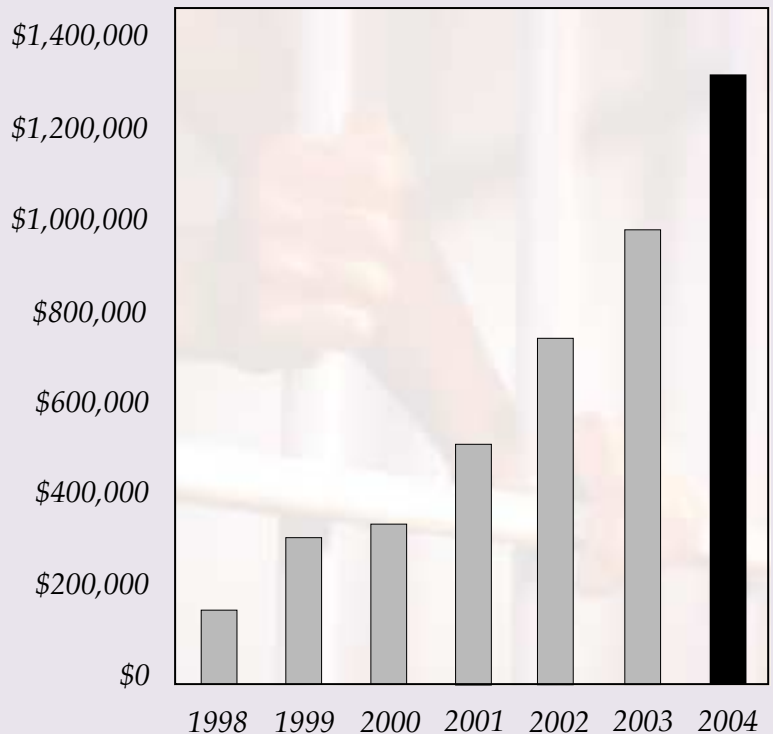
Expecting continued rapid growth, the CBI Board of Directors, at its meeting on December 12, approved a 2004 budget of just over \$1.3 million. This is a 30% increase over 2003. This size of increase has become typical in CBI's dramatic pattern of growth over the last five years. And each time it has been a huge step of faith.

“A HUGE STEP OF FAITH . . .”

Exciting as this is, however, it is anticipated that even this new budget will barely be able to keep up with the growing demand for CBI's program. One hundred percent of the budget needs to be raised from contributions since CBI charges no tuition or fees and receives no government funding or denominational quotas.

Please pray for CBI and introduce new people to the ministry to join in this important partnership for reaching prisoners everywhere with the truth of God's Word and the love of God's people.

Operating Budget



OFFICE EXPANSION—AGAIN

Every year that CBI grows, it needs more room. The corporate offices have been expanded significantly in recent weeks. Staff offices and office volunteer work stations have been added. The lunch room and the entire postage, printing and production operation have been moved into a new, larger location in the

office building. Finally, a conference room has been added for meetings of the board, committees, staff and Instructor training seminars. When you are in the Grand Rapids area, please stop in for a tour and see first-hand how the church's ministry to prisoners is facilitated.



*"Your work **TRULY** matters!*

It makes a big difference in so many lives—I know!

*The amount of **PERSONAL ATTENTION** you folks give your students is such a blessing . . .*

God be with you always!"

(Scott, CBI Student, GA)

CHRISTMAS CARDS BRIGHTEN CELLS



Last Fall CBI launched its national Send-A-Card Program for the second year in a row. In response, 10,744 cards were received and distributed to the prisoners, including for the first time 339 Spanish cards. Though there were not nearly enough for the entire student body, those who did receive one were deeply touched by the thoughtfulness and concern. Thank You to the many individuals, churches, school children and Bible study groups who participated in the program! Your efforts brought a message of hope for those in darkness.

"Thank you very much for the beautiful Christmas card and the letter. That really added to my happiness on this Christmas morning and I would like to say, Thank You!"

John L., CBI Student, PA

"My heart was overjoyed with your card. I would like to extend my thanks to you. May God the Father of our Savior bless and keep you from all evil and danger!"

Edward Y., CBI Student, MI

CBI BOARD HIGHLIGHTS

Met:	December 12, 2003
Devotions by:	Dr. Peter Zwier
Chaired by:	Henry Bouma, Jr.
Approved:	Minutes of the September 19 meeting
Received:	November and Year-To-Date Financial Statements
Approved:	\$1,308,500 budget for 2004
Approved:	Report of the Finance Committee
Approved:	President's Report
Reported:	Development of the South Pacific Distribution Center for inmates in Australia
Noted:	Facility Development: Plan to expand into more office space during the Christmas break to accommodate continuing growth
Noted:	Many staff members, in addition to the President, who are now speaking in churches and representing CBI at various events
Reported:	Affiliates Coordinator, Jan Vander Veen, on student recruitment efforts and several new referral affiliates

IN REMEMBRANCE

IN MEMORY OF

GIVEN BY

Herman Breuker Rev. Peter Vander Weide	Janet Bouws Thomas Johnson, Henrietta Visser, Jean Persenaire, Fanny Haagsma, Agnes Vander Molen, Bernard & Grace Vander Weide, First CRC (Oskaloosa), Harry & Elizabeth Boender, Maynard & Gertrude Hofman, Gerald & Clarissa Rozenboom, Claire Vander Weide, Ray & Marilyn Vander Weide, Byron & Debra Bruxvoort, Dorothy DeRonde, Harold Fynaardt, Lois Hoksbergen, Betty Ann Huyser, Arie & Carolyn Ringelestein, Jake & Judy Roberts, Marjorie Van Mersbergen, Tena Mae Van Engelenhoven, Leon & Sherry Veldhuizen, Richard & Bernice Veldhuizen, John & Claretta Lobbes, Bernard & Ila Kunnen, Sid & Peggy Vander Weide, Roger & Lois Oppenhuizen, Evelyn & Richard Nyenhuis, R.J. & Marian Poel
John Hillegonds Catherine & Gerrit Jager Harold De Vries Elmer Frikke Annabelle Ackerman Donald Reek	Elizabeth Hillegonds Elizabeth Hillegonds Elizabeth Hillegonds Martin & Lorrene Breems Bernard & Grace Vander Weide Rodger & Judith Dangremond, Anna Michen Elementary School (Fennville, MI), George Wedel, Dorothy Robinson, Anthony & Joyce Morgan, Patricia Garrity
MaryLois Mosterd	Peter & Lucille Noteboom, Joyce & Edward Star
Jennie A Tebben Esther Santjer Bernard Van Vuren	Gerrit & Ida Huisman Gerrit & Ida Huisman Joyce & Edward Star, Hugh & Janis Van Vuren
John Vander Ploeg Cornelia Van Dorp	Bart & Ellen De Jong Mina Balkema, Vernon & Lois Herder, Michael & Linda Alexander, Lois Hord, George & Carol Silva Family Trust, Daniel & Cornelia Vellenga

Theresa Mellema Richard DeJong Maynard Hekman Grace Huitsing Marinus Arnoudse Tillie Luitjens Helen Van Dyke	Paul & Gretchen Mellema Alice De Jong Paul & Martha Beebe Gerrit Huitsing Elsie Arnoudse Kenneth & Marlys Brouwer Jerry & Debra Van Dyke, Kenneth & Sandra Van Dyke George & Jean Pulscher
Cynthia Roskamp	

IN HONOR OF

GIVEN BY

Mayan Jane Salas <i>The birth of granddaughter</i>	Ron & Jane Reimersma
Byron Ling, Allen Ling, Jennifer Ling <i>Christmas</i>	Stephanie Ling
David & Sandra Ives <i>The marriage of</i>	Grace Streich
Lori Schoolland <i>CBI Instructor</i>	Kenneth & Eunice Vos
Henry Scholten <i>CBI Instructor</i>	Allen & Ardith Rubingh
Agnes Vander Molen <i>CBI Instructor</i>	James & Mary Vander Kam
Mr. & Mrs. Daniel Alons Sidney Post <i>80th Birthday</i>	Judith & Loren Van Duyn Jim & Gayle Post, David & Mary Schuringa, Gregg & Rena Baxter
Cliff & Lori Schoolland <i>Christmas</i>	Thelma Schoolland
Gilbert Van Dyke <i>CBI Instructor</i>	Jerry & Debra Van Dyke, Kenneth & Sandra Van Dyke
Pat Eikenhout Ted & Eleanore De Jong <i>50th Wedding Anniversary</i>	Close Air Support, Ltd Grace Huitsing
Sidney Bush <i>In lieu of gift exchange</i>	Kenneth Bush
Reuben & Deana Otten & their children <i>Christmas</i>	John Spykman
Lois Vanden Bos <i>Christmas</i>	Arlan & Corrine Vanden Bos
Ken Klaasen Grace & Dean Bos Lois Huizenga John & Margaret Meendering <i>60th Wedding Anniversary</i>	Katharyn Venhuizen Kim & Terri Weeks Michael & Rae Jean Reed Alice Parker

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often do. Afterward, a young man in the audience informed me that I had misused those texts, that they did not apply to the 2.3 million people incarcerated in the United States. Those verses, he insisted, only applied to church members.

If we could stop at the door of the church when identifying Jesus' brothers, it would lessen considerably the burden of relieving world suffering! When church members are hungry, we would feed them. When church members are thrown into prison for their faith, we would care for them. As for the rest of the countless mil-

lions suffering in the world—we wouldn't have to worry about feeding, clothing, or visiting those outside the church.

But do you think *Jesus* sees the prisoners and other suffering people that way? It's an important question because we don't want to ignore any of Jesus' brothers. We dare not leave any behind. We'll continue to study this next time.



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