



12 QUESTIONS FOR THE PRESIDENT

TO START OUT the New Year, the *Crossroad News* staff thought some questions for CBI President David Schuringa would be of interest to our readers.

CN: *How long have you been with CBI and how's it been going from your point of view?*

DS: It's my fifth year at Crossroad and I feel like I've just begun. While I thoroughly enjoyed the two churches I served, as well as many years as a professor in seminary, Crossroad feels like a very good fit.

CN: *How so?*

DS: Maybe it's just the-right-person-in-the-right-place-at-the-right-time kind of thing—all in God's providence, of course—but this position does seem to make use of my pastoral, academic and business experience.

CN: *How does a pastor and seminary professor get interested in prison ministry?*

DS: Many years ago, when I was teaching in Southern California, some of my students, especially Tim Spykstra, invited me to preach in prison. My schedule didn't allow me to go in as often as the students, but the times I did made an impact. I sensed that inmates were the kind of people Jesus would have gone to—the forgotten ones. Or maybe Johnny Cash's prison songs planted the seeds back when I was a teenager!

CN: *And you're reaching so many inmates, aren't you!*

DS: Christ's church is. I'm getting tired of the phrase, "It's a God thing," but it really is. The Holy Spirit has grown the ministry to over 25,000 students, with no end in sight. With prisons cutting back on educational and religious programming, due to state and federal budget cuts, our program is in more demand than ever.

“WE KNOW THE POWER OF GOD’S WORD . . .”

CN: *How do you know it's doing any good?*

DS: The results are actually quite measurable. Not only do we have the thousands upon thousands of completed and corrected Bible study lessons, we also have the *testimonies* of the inmates, the observations of 3,500 Instructors and the lives of ex-offenders who graduated from the program. We know the power of God's Word. And then there's lowered recidivism rates.

CN: *Has there been research on the effectiveness of Crossroad?*

DS: We haven't commissioned a comprehensive study on CBI's program per se due to the costs that would be involved. However, at least three major studies have already shown up to a 60 percent drop in recidivism rates among inmates involved in an in-depth discipleship program during incarceration. And no one does it better than Crossroad.

CN: *I suppose you frequently get asked about your relationship with Prison Fellowship and Chuck Colson.*

DS: (Laughs.) Yes, we do! Prison Fellowship refers thousands of inmates to us. It makes for a great partnership because there's no overlap. I've gotten to know and admire Chuck Colson as a premier leader of our times with a tremendous vision and kingdom world-view. We are grateful for every one of our ministry partners.

CN: *What are some overarching goals of CBI?*

DS: First, to recruit more students through ministry partnerships. Second, to improve and expand our current course offerings. Third,

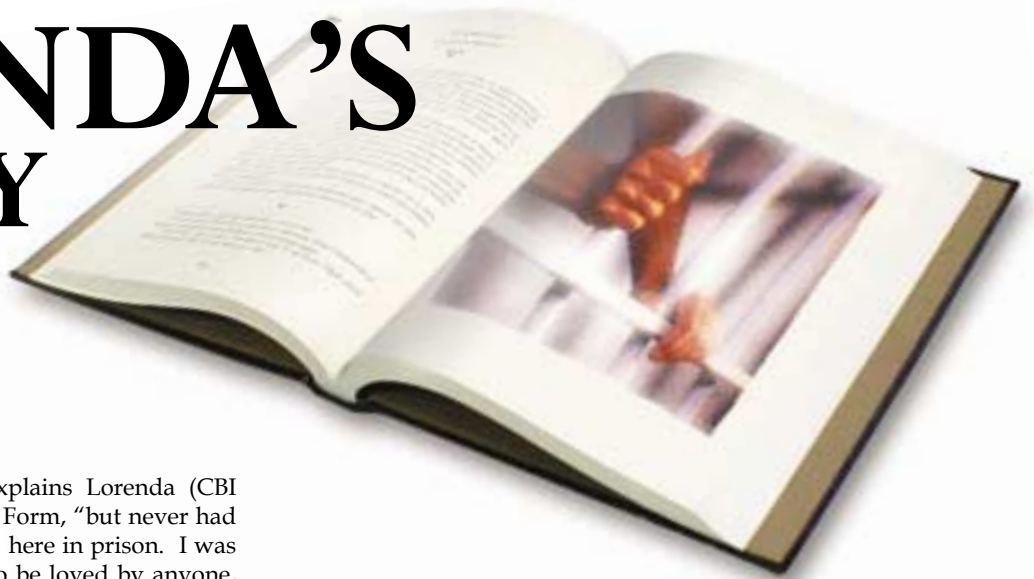
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LORENDAS STORY

By Rachael VanderWerf



"I was raised in a Christian church," explains Lorenda (CBI Student, MO) on her Tier Two Enrollment Form, "but never had a personal relationship with Jesus until . . . here in prison. I was very rebellious growing up . . . wanting to be loved by anyone, only to be rejected and criticized." Eventually, Lorenda's rebellious attitude and lifestyle landed her in prison.

As an inmate, Lorenda continued to struggle with feeling rejected and unloved. However, her cellmate, Marvina, walked around beaming with peace and joy. Lorenda was envious. "I wanted to have what she had," remarked Lorenda. The peace and joy Marvina expressed was from God and came from knowing Jesus. It was only a matter of time before Lorenda asked her cellmate to share with her how to receive Jesus as her Savior and Lord. Speaking about her prison sentence, Lorenda says, "It was a blessing, because if I hadn't come to prison, I would be dead. God saved me that day."

Just like for many Christians, however, Lorenda finds that being a Christian in a dark world is not easy. Her family members, including her mother, sisters and daughters, do not believe in Jesus and thoughts of persecution, religious conflict and family struggles anxiously invade her mind daily. And being separated from her family makes this even more distressing. She prays fervently every day for her lost family members with hope that one day they too will come to know Jesus.

Lorenda gets help for her Christian life from Crossroad Bible Institute. Her last Tier One Instructor commented that she did excellent work and "wants to live for Jesus!" Lorenda is currently working on lesson four of *Ten Men You Should Know*—CBI's first Tier Two course. Her Instructor has continually observed her strong faith in the Lord and her growth in understanding the

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Bible. Lorenda continues to inspire others as she shines with the joy that comes from knowing Jesus and shares with them His life-changing power.

Recently, Lorenda heard from her daughter, Holly, who finally wrote back after six years of writing her from prison. Holly had become a Christian! Imagine what joy and thanksgiving filled Lorenda's heart that day. Lorenda wrote to CBI after hearing that good news: "Her letter was filled with nothing but God; I was dancing, crying and singing praises!" Holly wrote to her mom:

. . . God has a plan for everyone. You are there for a reason . . . [It's] the only way Jesus could bring you closer to Him! There's a reason for everything! And when you get out, maybe your purpose is to send out the Good News to other people and tell them your testimony. I love you! See you soon!

This daughter, who was "totally opposite of godly living" had experienced the life-changing power of knowing Jesus Christ! Now Lorenda rejoices because God, in His time, answered the persistent prayers of a devoted mother!

Two weeks later came some *additional* good news. "I got a letter from my mom," writes Lorenda. "She told me she went to church for the first time and it was great. Praise God! I'm still praying for my two sisters and the rest of my family to be saved. If [God] can save Holly and me from our messes, He can save anyone!"



Rachael VanderWerf, a fourth year student at Reformed Bible College, Grand Rapids, Michigan, serves at CBI as an Associate Curriculum Editor and Assistant to the President.



ENDLESS REWARDS—MENTORING TIER 2 STUDENTS

By Karen Loyd

We have an urgent need for Tier 2 Instructors. What's it like to be a Tier 2 Instructor? While Tier 1 Instructors correct the lessons of different students each week, Tier 2 Instructors mentor the same student(s).

Tier 2 Instructors find that mentoring an inmate student is a rewarding experience, even to the point of bringing more depth and purpose to their lives. Just look at these powerful testimonies from Wilma, a Tier 2 Instructor, and her Tier 2 student graduate:

I received this letter from Wesley H. when he completed Tier 2. This letter made all the time I spent as an Instructor more than worthwhile. Perhaps you can use it to encourage someone else to become involved. If I, an Instructor nearly 80 years old, can be a blessing to a prisoner, they can too. Thanks for making my life so useful for the Lord.

Dear Wilma,

First of all I want to thank you for your many letters of encouragement and kindness. I also have found it to be a mix of joy and sadness to complete my studies. I have always looked forward to your letters and I have enjoyed them very much. I pray every day that the Lord will strengthen you and continue to allow you to be a blessing to all you come in contact with, as you have been to me. I also pray that I will get a chance to meet you at the Savior's feet. I know we will both be there, I just hope and pray we will

recognize each other. I cannot thank you enough for the thoughtfulness I saw in every letter you sent me. I thank God for the contact He allowed me to have with you. God bless you Wilma and take care.

*Your brother in Christ
Wesley H.*

P.S. You will continue to be in my prayers!

Would you like to share in the endless rewards with Tier 2 Instructors like Wilma? You are needed as hundreds of Tier 1 graduates are waiting in line for an Instructor. Please call the CBI office or contact us via our website to learn more about becoming a Tier 2 Instructor. Totally safe and secure, you will embark on what will be a most rewarding journey!



Karen Loyd serves as Instructor Coordinator at CBI

OFFICE ACTION

High school students help out during the busy holiday season.



to initiate partnerships with reentry ministries. Fourth, to raise the prayer and financial support to make it all possible.

CN: *How is CBI doing financially?*

DS: We had a scare back in September when a cash flow crisis sent us deep into our emergency reserves for the first time, but prayers for relief were answered. As this interview is taking place [early December], we are holding our breath, praying fervently for a huge year-end campaign so that we can be in a good financial position to reach inmates in 2004. We also are praying for increased monthly support all year long to sustain the ministry. Thank God for our faithful supporters!

CN: *What happens if adequate funding isn't there?*

DS: The answer is simple: Our staff and board would have to make some difficult decisions on where to cap the number of new students and Instructors until the support catches up. I don't believe in deficit spending. Our motto has been, "No Inmate Left Behind!" Pray that we can keep that motto.

CN: *This year, CBI celebrates 20 years of ministry to prisoners. What's been the key to Crossroad's success?*

DS: Prayer and God's working through the Instructors! The Instructors are the key in setting prisoners free. Week after week, they correct the lessons, they write the letters of discipleship, they pray for their students. I can't say enough about our Instructors.

CN: *If there is one thing that you could say to every CBI student, what would it be?*

DS: Thank you for giving us the privilege of serving you.



ROMANS 11

"I grew up Jewish, always being told Jesus was a prophet. I didn't know any different. I went to church in here a few times but was so distracted with the goings-on. I thought if Christians behaved like these folks I didn't want any part of it.



Karen, CBI Student, MD

I was reading my paper and applied for this Crossroad Bible study. It changed my life. I've learned who Jesus is, have learned to love Him, accept Him as my personal Savior and absolutely believe. Now I can minister to my Jewish friends and my dad. I now look forward to Jesus' Second Coming and know I'll be with Him!! Amen!"

TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

This year CBI celebrates its 20th Anniversary. Watch *Crossroad News* for announcements of special events!



CORRECTION

In the November 2003 Instructor Appreciation article, we inadvertently missed Dixie Bulson, Wayne Miedema and Betty Van Maanen, who have been serving the Lord as CBI Instructors for five years, as well as Delores DeKok and Hermina Nyhof who have been serving for 15 years!



NEXT MONTH:

CBI 2003 Stats. You'll be amazed at what God has done!



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