

By Dr. David Schuringa, President



Have you ever served a meal in a rescue mission? Have you ever provided transportation for someone living in a homeless shelter? Have you ever tutored an inner city child? When was the last time you volunteered at a pregnancy crisis center or visited a prisoner or corrected an inmate's Bible study lesson?

In this final installment, we will answer the question of who Jesus' brothers are from what I'm calling the Experiential Perspective. At first, this perspective may sound somewhat subjective or mystical, but read on and see what you think.

Last year, many CBI staff members, office volunteers, Instructors and board members volunteered at Operation Starting Line prison events, handing out CBI enrollment forms and meeting current CBI students. Several of our students introduced themselves to me at events I attended.

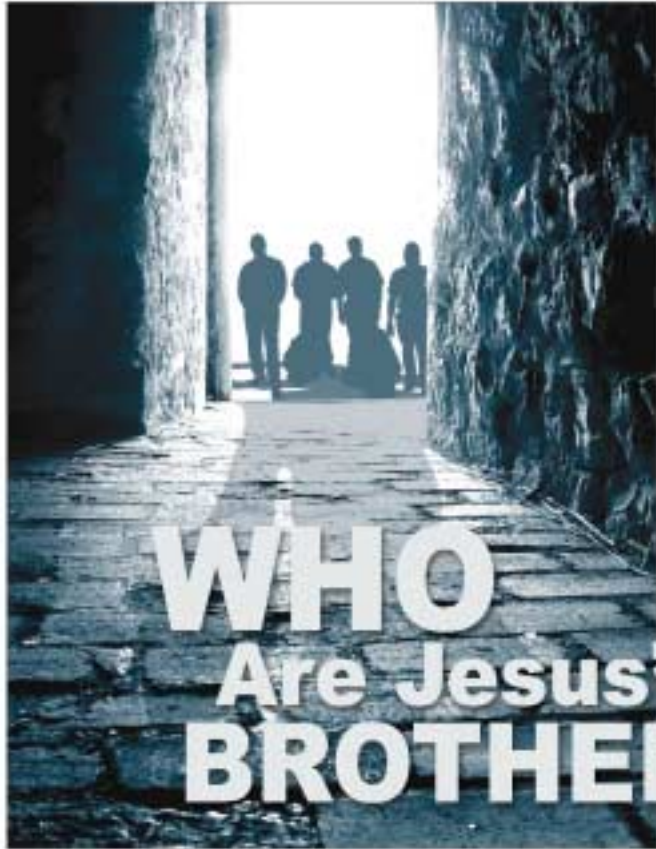
"Rudy," much taller than I, stuck out his hand to shake mine. He didn't let go for a while! He just looked straight into my eyes and said, "Man, you have no idea what those lessons and letters mean to us in here!" At that moment I knew I was standing on holy ground and that these men were the brothers of Jesus.

I sense that same thing every time I visit behind the walls, and as I read the steady stream of personal correspondence I receive from prisoners.

Recently, I was preaching at the Mid-Michigan Correctional Facility. Rachael VanderWerf and her husband, Mark, joined me that Sunday. Both are college graduates this spring and Rachael has been serving at CBI as an Intern this semester. Elsewhere in this issue of *Crossroad News*, Rachael shares her experience, but suffice it to say that she came to understand that in prison you find Jesus' brothers.

Who are Jesus' brothers? If you want to know, just get busy helping hurting people!

For those of you who find this perspective too subjective, perhaps I can best explain it as having some similarity with the doctrine of the inspiration and authority of Scripture. We believe in Scripture's infallibility because that's what the Bible teaches us about itself. And we refer to the "Testimony of the Holy Spirit" as that which convinces us in our hearts that what the Bible says about itself is true. So a believer knows, deep down, that the Bible is the very Word of God.



From both the social justice and missiological perspectives we learned from Scripture that all people in need are to be treated as Jesus' brothers. What I am suggesting from this experiential perspective is that when you actually reach out to the poor and needy, the testimony of the Spirit confirms in your heart that you are in the presence of the brothers of Jesus, and indeed, Jesus Himself (Matt. 25:40; Jer. 22:16). You just know.

Thank you for your partnership in reaching thousands of inmates—as many as we can—until the King of the church returns and says to those on His right, "Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world" (Matt. 25:34).

## INSIDE

Who are Jesus' Brothers? (Part IV) . . . . .	1
Hungry Souls . . . . .	2
2004 OSLEvents . . . . .	2
Portrait of a CBI Instructor . . . . .	3

# HUNGRY SOULS

By Rachael VanderWerf

The cold wind pierced our faces as we walked across the prison yard at the Mid-Michigan Correctional Facility in St. Louis, Michigan. On that chilly Sunday in March, Chaplain Bill Thompson was leading us—Dr. Schuringa, my husband Mark, and me—to the prison church. Only a few inmates were outside that brisk morning: some were on the phone, and others were playing ball or exercising. Their navy blue and florescent orange uniforms colored the dull grayness of the morning.

Ahead, I could see a gathering near the entrance to one of the buildings. “That’s where we’re heading,” Chaplain Thompson said, pointing to the entrance. My first time behind the walls, I didn’t know what to expect attending church in prison!

As we entered, music and singing filled our ears. Inmates went out of their way to shake our hands and welcome us. The worship had already begun, so we were led to our seats at the front.

**“THEIR  
DESIRE  
FOR GOD’S  
WORD  
AMAZED  
ME . . .”**

The service was planned and led by the inmates and many participated by reading Scripture, praying, sharing testimonies, and leading the singing. A CBI Tier 3 graduate spoke about his involvement with Crossroad. He shared that what he loved even more than the Bible study lessons was how each was personally corrected and included a hand-written letter of encouragement from CBI Instructors. He definitely had the inmates’ attention.

Before Dr. Schuringa’s message, Chaplain Thompson led the inmates in welcoming him. Repeating the chaplain’s words, they chanted in their loudest and deepest voice possible: “Good Morning, Dr. Schuringa! Feed our hungry souls!” Their desire for God’s Word amazed me as they received the President’s message with such enthusiasm.

At the end of the service, Chaplain Thompson invited those interested into a huddle for prayer—hands on each others’ shoulders. Being the only woman in a prison building surrounded by 50 or so inmates who had remained—all of whom were much taller and much stronger than me—made me a bit scared at first. But my fear soon settled. I looked up, glanced around and smiled. The chaplain was shouting out to God in prayer, and the inmates were shouting out in response, “Amen!” and, “Yes, Lord!”

I felt at peace as I looked around because I was in God’s house with Jesus’ brothers who cried out to God from the depths of their hearts. I prayed right along with them. What they prayed for was no different than what I prayed for; what they hungered for was no different than what I hungered for.

After the extended time of prayer many of the brothers were excited to meet us. Some were already CBI students. Others were eager to become involved. We handed out many enrollment forms—some have already been returned to the CBI offices. I can picture each of their joy-filled faces when I imagine them receiving those first lessons!



*Rachael VanderWerf serves at CBI as an Associate Curriculum Editor and Assistant to the President.*

## 2004 OSL EVENTS

Operation Starting Line events go into full gear again in 2004! OSL is a multi-ministry collaboration to bring the gospel to every prison in the United States by 2010, and to disciple to maturity all those who respond. Crossroad Bible Institute follows up on every responding inmate with an invitation to be discipled.

Many of the CBI constituency have already attended events throughout the country. You are invited to attend events this year as well. Go to [www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org](http://www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org) and click on Operation Starting Line on the Affiliates page for more information.

- April 13–23: Texas Campaign (Region I)
- April 15–25: Florida Campaign (Region IV)
- August 2–15: Florida Campaign (Region I)
- October 1–15: Texas Campaign (Region III)



# Portrait of a CBI INSTRUCTOR

CBI Instructors make up a remarkably diverse group of people: men and women; teenagers and saints in their nineties; a rainbow array of blacks, whites, Hispanics and Asians; those who have not finished high school and those who have earned doctorates; and just about every church denomination imaginable is represented.

However, notwithstanding this rich diversity, CBI Instructors have much in common. What is it about them who serve so effectively as Instructors and serve so faithfully for so many years? Recently President Schuringa sat down with Karen Loyd, CBI's Instructor Coordinator, and Kathryn Shane, CBI's Spanish and International Programs Coordinator, to share observations. While the three of them haven't met every Instructor, here's the picture that's evolving from their numerous contacts.



President Schuringa, along with Kathryn Shane (left) and Karen Loyd, discuss the characteristics of a CBI Instructor.

1. **CBI Instructors radiate a deep love for God and His Word.** They love to study the Bible and typically have much more knowledge of God's truth than they are even aware of. They have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and a desire to keep growing in their knowledge of Christ and His Word.

2. **CBI Instructors model gratitude.** Frequently on the application form they write the reason for becoming an Instructor is that they are so thankful for what God has done for them that they want to help others, to give something back. Since God has reached out to them in their sin and misery, they want to reach out to others caught in dire straits.

3. **A CBI Instructor's heart beats for hurting people.** CBI Instructors understand that the down-and-out are the objects of God's special attention (Ps. 146). They desire to do something for the brothers of Jesus who are at risk (Matt. 25:40). When it comes to prisoners, most in society wouldn't give them a second thought, but CBI Instructors give a significant amount of their time every week bringing hope to the hopeless.

4. **CBI Instructors manifest humility.** Instructors are never patronizing or act like they are doing the prisoners or the church or CBI a favor by correcting the lessons. In fact, the most repeated comments we hear from Instructors are, "I feel that I'm getting more out of this than my student!" and "Thanks for making it possible for me to share my faith in this way!" CBI Instructors are not

looking to be in the limelight; they minister behind-the-scenes, practicing sacrificial love, discipling prisoner after prisoner from God's Word.

5. **CBI Instructors practice dependability.** It obviously takes a measure of self-discipline to carve out one-and-a-half hours for each lesson every week. They have only four days in their busy schedules to correct a Tier 1 or Tier 2 lesson and to write the letter of encouragement. In addition, care needs to be exercised to follow numerous ministry and prison guidelines. But they take personal responsibility for their ministry and are committed to doing the job right.

6. **CBI Instructors exercise empathy.** Hebrews 13:3 says that as we remember prisoners, we are to do so as if we ourselves were incarcerated. To this end, CBI Instructors are non-judgmental, merciful and kind. It doesn't matter whether an incarcerated person is a former serial killer, rapist, drug addict or prostitute. Instructors never ask—they simply share the love of Jesus and something of themselves with all equally.

7. **CBI Instructors testify to changed lives.** It is not an exaggeration to say that Instructor after Instructor has shared that ministering to prisoners has changed *their* lives. Others offer that discipling inmates has significantly advanced their own spiritual growth and walk with God. If Matthew 25:40 is true—that what you have done for prisoners you have done for Christ—it shouldn't be a surprise that when you come into contact with Jesus, your life will be changed forever!

Well, these are seven characteristics of highly effective CBI Instructors. At least, that's what the growing, diverse army of Instructors looks like from the vantage point of CBI headquarters. Surely others in Christ's church exhibit such qualities in various avenues of ministry. Still, you'd be hard pressed to find such a portrait personified so consistently and among such a diverse group of people as the CBI Instructors.

Thank you, Instructors, for all you do, and especially for the spirit in which you do it! God is blessing thousands upon thousands every week through your ministry. As Dr. Schuringa frequently remarks, you are a picture of the church at its best, by God's grace!

**“A CBI  
INSTRUCTOR'S  
HEART  
BEATS FOR  
HURTING  
PEOPLE.”**

# CELEBRATE!

*CBI's 20th Anniversary Events!*



**Featuring: Host Pastors: Revs. Tom Groelsema & Carl Klompien,**  
**Worship Leader: Dr. Greg Schuringa,**  
**Operation Starting Line Platform**  
**Guests: Don Grier & Leslie Kent,**  
**Speakers: The Back to God Hour's**  
**Rev. David Feddes and CBI President,**  
**Dr. David Schuringa.**

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

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

*Mark your calendars now, and plan to attend—discount lodging available!*

Go to [www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org/celebration.htm](http://www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org/celebration.htm) for the most current Anniversary Celebration information.

## Give-A-Car Make A Difference

Touch the hearts of inmates across the nation by donating your **running vehicle** to CBI. You receive a large tax deduction! Simply deliver the vehicle to the CBI offices in Grandville, MI. Contact CBI today for more information.



## NOW AVAILABLE!

2004 "Know Me" PowerPoint Presentation CD

To order your **FREE** copy of the three minute "Know Me" PowerPoint CD, call the CBI offices or order online at:

[www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org/materialsrequest.htm](http://www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org/materialsrequest.htm)



## CORRECTIONS

In the April 2004 *In Remembrance* article, we mistakenly mentioned a gift in honor of Bert Joling's 87th Wedding Anniversary, the gift was actually in honor of Bert Joling's 87th Birthday. Also, in the April *Tribute to Office Volunteers* article, Pearl Vander Hart was mistakenly listed as volunteering for 3 years when she has actually been volunteering for 5 years!



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

ph: 616.530.1300  
fx: 616.530.1302  
[www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org](http://www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org)  
[mail@crossroadbible.org](mailto:mail@crossroadbible.org)

