



# He Fills the Life with Glory!

by Danielle deJonge

*Last month we quoted from a letter from a grandfather, Robert, incarcerated in Arkansas, who said the new children's course was an answer to his prayers for his grandchildren. We thought you might be interested in more of Robert's story.*

The springs of a cot squeak as a man sits straight up in the dead of night. He is a large man, and his low voice gives a few astonished laughs. Then the man's laugh crescendos so it bursts out of his six-by-ten-foot confinement cell.

Jesus is here.

Three years after Robert heard God's voice say that night, "Here I am," Robert writes his Instructor, "Christ has shown me that His most prized vessels are the ones with cracks in them. What I mean by this is that when He pours His Spirit into a vessel of His, He doesn't want it to stay there."

By the age of 20, Robert had become an intimidating drug addict, dealer and womanizer. He was never able to find anything to satisfy his compulsive desires or temper his extreme anger. "Charles Manson and the

Boston Strangler became people I wanted to imitate. I even made plans to start my own killing spree.” He was arrested for murder in the first degree. As his violent behavior was difficult to control, he was sent directly to solitary confinement.

Robert faced problems in his new space. At six-and-a-half-feet tall, he was near 300 pounds, and his tiny confinement space wasn’t very forgiving of this. Even worse, there was a man who everyone knew as “Brother Jim” who would visit the prison and would preach about Jesus. Robert synchronized his sleep schedule with Jim’s visits—he hated hearing Brother Jim’s voice.

Some days, however, he just couldn’t tune out Brother Jim. Eventually, Robert became somewhat interested in what the preacher had to say. “Jesus is alive today,”

giving me a better understanding of God’s Word.” His Instructor says *she* is learning so much from *Robert!*

And then came the children’s program and more answered prayer for Robert:

I want to thank you for sending me those forms for the youth Bible study through CBI. My granddaughters have really enjoyed their first lessons and are excited to continue. Believe it or not, before you sent them to me I had been asking God to give me a way to better introduce them to Him in a way they could enjoy and understand. My extended family at CBI has been and continues to be a vessel used by God to bless me and my family. I’m truly grateful for all that has transpired in my walk with Christ since my very first lesson.

“Charles Manson and the Boston Strangler became people I wanted to imitate.”

assured Jim, “and wants to come into your life and have a relationship with you. If you sincerely ask Him, He will reveal Himself to you.”

Robert did invite Jesus into his heart: “One night I was awakened out of my sleep and it felt like an enormous weight had been lifted. Joy filled my body and I just started to laugh.”

Soon he sought direction for his relationship with Christ and enrolled with Crossroad Bible Institute. He completed the lessons voraciously, finishing the first course in less than a year. Instructors noted his hunger: “very mature faith from his writings,” “showed great application of Scripture to his life” and “a blessing to correct this lesson.”

Upon applying for Tier 2, Robert wrote, “The studies in Tier 1 have greatly enhanced my spiritual growth by

His granddaughter asks in her latest *Manga Messiah* lesson to pray “for my Nanna Rose, because she is struggling with not having her husband [Robert].” Although Robert serves a life sentence, by God’s grace he will help his loved ones and others avoid the path he walked and to head in a new direction—just as he now has.

*When Jesus comes, the tempter’s power is broken;  
When Jesus comes, the sins are wiped away,  
He takes the gloom and fills the life with glory,  
For all is changed when Jesus comes to stay.*

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CBI STUDENT ART  
GALLERY  
Opening in September

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# CBI ECUADOR **Second DC Opens in South America**

by Cynthia Williams

This past summer, thirty-four new students in the prison facility of Penal Garcia Moreno in Quito, Ecuador, enrolled and began studying their first Crossroad Bible Institute lessons. CBI announces the opening of its second International Distribution Center in South America!

In Ecuador, as in most Latin American Systems, pretrial detention lasts for years. Bribes are used to secure a bed and food. Overcrowding and unhealthy living conditions are the norm, and children often live with their mothers in the same facility. Here, you are guilty until proven innocent.



Director Angel Aguirre with Ecuadorian prison church leaders and guards

DC Director Angel Aguirre Villamar is no stranger to this prison system. As a young man, after 17 years of drug and alcohol abuse, he was arrested and incarcerated for drug trafficking. He thought his life would end in prison, so he continued his harmful lifestyle until a fellow inmate gave him a Bible and shared with him God's love in Jesus.

Angel says that it was not long before God broke his heart, and he knelt in his cell to give his life to Christ. Little did he realize that God would use his time in jail to prepare him to one day minister, and even pastor a church, in the very same prison system where he did time.



Andean mountain roads

Since his release, with his unique perspective and understanding, Angel has worked for 20 years as a pastor and national missionary among the inmates of most of the prisons in Ecuador. He travels extensively over the high Andean mountain roads and through the hot, humid lowlands to

preach. He teaches and encourages those behind bars, baptizing new believers in whatever is available, including barrels of water.



Pastor Aguirre baptizing an inmate in a barrel

It is within the context of this extensive experience of reaching people in prison that Pastor Aguirre will implement the CBI program of Bible study and discipleship. He already has an eager and committed team of volunteers trained to correct the lessons and write letters of encouragement. CBI Ecuador joins in the growing worldwide partnership to reach those in prison with the truth of God's Word and the love of God's people.

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"Speaking out for those left unheard"

Cynthia Williams serves in the Spanish and International Programs at Crossroad Bible Institute





# Rainbows For A Fallen World

by H. David Schuringa

Don't get me wrong. I do not consider myself one who remotely resembles an expert in the aesthetic realm. In fact, I am so utterly fearful of my sinful nature's penchant for *kitsch* that I have learned to leave any and all aesthetic decisions at home to my dear wife who has *good* taste.

However, Dr. Calvin Seerveld's lectures back in college did teach me an importance of the Christian's aesthetic life that I have never shaken. Perhaps I have him to thank that since I started at Crossroad Bible Institute 10 years ago, I've been deeply touched by the voluminous unsolicited pieces of art that we receive from our students—so moved that we started a *Crossroad Journal of the Arts* and, this month, are opening an inmate art gallery in The Center for Advanced Studies at Crossroad Bible Institute.

According to Seerveld,

What sets off art from peeling potatoes and riding a bike or bare handicraft is not that it is "fine" art or that it is marked necessarily by "beauty." Peculiar to art is a parable character, a metaphoric intensity, and elusive play in its artifactual presentation of meanings apprehended. Art calls to our attention in capital, cursive letters, as it were, what usually flits by in reality as fine print. (*Rainbows for a Fallen World*, 27)

Though these art pieces would likely be classified more along the lines of Grandma Moses folk art than those of a Rembrandt or Van Gogh, in my estimation they fall within the pale of Seerveld's definition. In fact, when one considers the *context* of a prison cell where they were created, along with the utter scarcity of materials at the artists' disposal, the pieces immediately begin to tug at the heart of your aesthetic sensibilities.

Yes, as would be expected, some of the pieces are directly from the Bible and are obviously parabolic. But to what new meanings is the artist behind bars alluding who paints/draws a picture of Noah's ark, the cross, the armor of God, a weeping angel or a violent scene from the book of Revelation?

And the artists in prison know that "Christian" art extends far beyond explicit Bible texts and cascades into the grand cathedral of God's creation. Drink in the metaphorical intensity of a stone-hedged garden gate, a flowing river, a path winding through the woods, a tender flower, a regal eagle's head, or a panoramic view of a majestic mountain range—scenes the artist may never witness in the flesh.

And then there are the portraits of people—some serene, some sad, some beautiful, and a lone portrayal of yours truly that must represent an anticipated eschatological upgrade.

I won't say much more because I not only risk spoiling a visit to the gallery for you, you will also soon surmise how little I really know about art. I trust I will learn much more in the years to come as we develop this unique collection. And, thankfully, we have a learned curator in Kim Harris Vander Lende, who selects the pieces for the gallery.

May CBI's new inmate art gallery be an encouragement to the artists whose pieces are displayed. And may it make a meaning-FUL contribution to the aesthetic aspect of God's kingdom as it springs from perhaps a most unexpected source. These pieces truly are "rainbows for our fallen world." And rainbows overflow with promise.

*Dr. Schuringa serves as the President of Crossroad Bible Institute*

**Tune in to [cbi.fm](http://cbi.fm) beginning the weekend of September 13 for Dr. Schuringa's interview with Kim Harris Vander Lende on *Crossroad Connection!***



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