

By Dr. David Schuringa, President

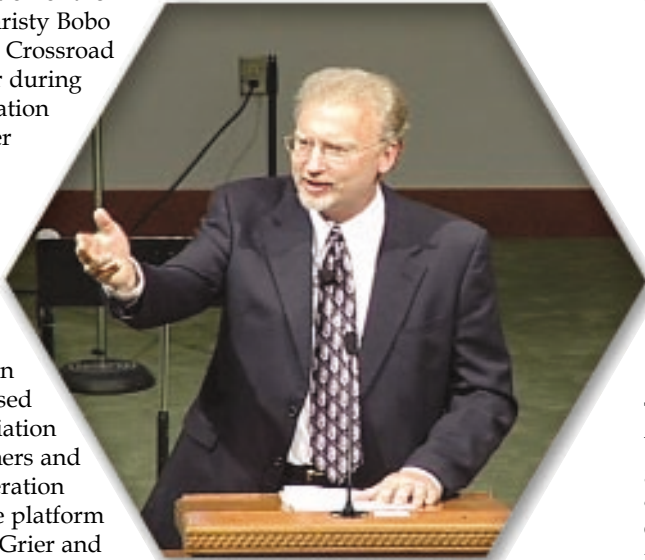


I want to thank those of you who made the journey to attend one of the Twentieth Anniversary events in either the Great Lakes or Great Plains regions. Both had guests from as far away as California. Whether at the First Christian Reformed Church in Byron Center, Michigan or the New Life Reformed Church in Sioux Center, Iowa, crowds gathered and were filled with anticipation for the evenings' festivities.

As promised, the two-hour program was a multi-media extravaganza with something for all ages. Hymns and praise songs, testimonies, proclamation, drama, sacred dance and live music videos were employed to celebrate God's goodness to the Institute for the last twenty years.

After welcomes by host pastors, Revs. Groelsema and Klompfen, in their respective locations, Dr. Greg Schuringa and the praise team started the evening off by leading the audience in a few songs. After introductions of the founders, staff, board members, office volunteers and Instructors, inspiring testimonies filled

the next portion of the evening. Christy Bobo shared what Crossroad meant to her during her incarceration and upon her release. On behalf of all Instructors, Delores Bazzett in Michigan and Marion Van Soelen in Iowa expressed their appreciation of the prisoners and for CBI. Operation Starting Line platform guests, Don Grier and Lesley Kent, shared their testimony in word and song of how Crossroad is powerfully impacting the prisons. This moving section of the program concluded with the audience singing, "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing."



Leading up to Rev. David Feddes' keynote address, "The Story of Rachel" was performed by the CBI Drama Team in Michigan and the Dordt College Drama Team in Iowa. The story focused on diametrically opposed views people have of the down-and-out. Many have a "hands-off" approach. Others, however, will take the risk to reach out and help. Following the drama, the praise team sang "Lord of the Poor" during a video which powerfully depicted

Celebration REPORT

the hopeless plight in which the world's suffering find themselves today. Following some friendly banter between Rev. Feddes and CBI's president, the radio minister of the Back to God Hour warmed our hearts by sharing why he loved CBI and how God works through it to reach so many of the least, the last and the lost.



The program drew to a close with more music and a grand finale of "Multiply Your Love" which included a video depicting the joy of the ministry, a sacred dance team from Hope College, and the praise team joined by Kent and Grier. Offerings were received in both locations, including a generous surprise check from the First Reformed Church of Sioux Center. The evening ended with everyone singing, "Step by Step," a song which attested to their commitment to continue following Jesus in reaching prisoners with God's truth and God's love.

The best part of the celebration was still to come as refreshments were served in the fellowship halls of each church. Instructors greeted each other and had the opportunity to meet with CBI staff and members of its Board of Directors. Guests raved about the celebration events and God was given all the glory for the great things He has done. The pictures in this special issue of *Crossroad News* tell more of the story. Be sure to order your copy of the video or DVD as a souvenir of this historic evening or to participate in the celebration if you were unable to attend.

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CELEBRATION PICTURES



Dr. Greg Schuringa and the praise team lead the singing



Rev. David Feddes delivers the keynote address



Rev. Feddes and Dr. Schuringa compare notes on the events



Audience members at the Great Plains Celebration



Kathryn Shane, Jill Beltman and Leah Van Schouwen perform "The Story of Rachel"



Operation Starting Line's Leslie Kent performs



Board member Doug Roossien catching a nap on the flight to Iowa



Instructor Marion Van Soelen being introduced



Operation Starting Line's Don Grier performs



Dr. Schuringa greets guests



CBI Graduate Christy Bobo shares her testimony



Crossroad staff members fly to the Great Plains Celebration



A multi-media extravaganza!



Instructor Elsie Arnoudse and Founder Judy de Vries are recognized



CBI board members arrive at the hotel

Ex-Offenders and the Right to Vote

More than five million Americans will be denied the right to vote for their president this month due to the fact that they have served time in prison. Only 12 states allow ex-offenders to vote while the rest disenfranchise former inmates during their probation or for several years after release. In fact, 14 states ban ex-offenders from voting for life.

These policies have grim consequences for African-Americans, a group which is disproportionately incarcerated in the United States. The fact is 1.4 million African-American men (13% of the entire adult African-American male population) are denied the right to vote due to having been behind bars. In five states, including Florida, one quarter of all adult African-American males are disenfranchised.

The impact of this situation extends far beyond the five million ex-offenders who are barred from the polls. Many will never vote, even when they are finally allowed to, due to confusion about the law. Children in these communities grow up apathetic to their civic responsibilities because the "role-models" in their lives are detached from the political process.

If an ex-offender has done his time and paid for his crime, it seems that few would defend the notion that he should be further punished by being denied the right to vote. Some legal schol-

ars surmise that the ban may to some extent be a lingering throw-back to a backlash in the South during Reconstruction after the Civil War. It is well documented that literacy tests, poll taxes, grandfather clauses and the committing of selected crimes were used to block former slaves from the ballot box. Still, wherever an ex-offender is allowed to vote today, each has the responsibility to take advantage of the opportunity.

“What better way to be a voice for the voiceless?”

Advocacy groups hold that it would be in the nation's best interest if even inmates were permitted to vote, preparing them to become productive and responsible citizens upon release. In countries like Germany, France, Australia and The Netherlands not only are ex-offenders allowed to vote, this keystone of democracy is also arranged for those who are still incarcerated. In some provinces of Canada inmates may vote. In the United States, however, only prisoners in Maine and Vermont may do so.



Even though America is treating its ex-offenders differently than other western democracies, it is unlikely that politicians, either Republicans or Democrats, would consider it advantageous to speak up for the rights of ex-offenders or prisoners. Church members, however, can make a difference by encouraging their political representatives to take a look at this issue. What better way to be a voice for the voiceless (Prov. 31:8) than to give the voiceless the vote?

CBI is pleased to announce the arrival of the new 20th Anniversary Celebration DVD/Video!

Crossroad Bible Institute
20th Anniversary Celebration

Yours free for a donation of any size!

Lift up your Spirits...



DVD or Video

Bonus music video included!

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



Because We're **Thankful!**



The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats in Matthew 25:31-46 draws a close correlation between our eternal destiny and what we're doing for the down-and-out. Those who care for poor people go to heaven and those who don't go to hell. Therefore, caring for those at risk is a matter of enormous, eternal consequence.

This is not a matter of earning our salvation, of course. The Scriptures and the historic Christian faith insist that salvation is by grace alone and not by works. Rather, here's the connection: We are not going to heaven because we care for prisoners; we care for prisoners because we are going to heaven.

So helping the poor is about being thankful – thankful for what God has done. He rescued us poor and needy sinners and now we have a solemn obligation to rescue others who are in need. Giving thanks, then, is not simply about verbally thanking God for how good we have it. Gratitude is best expressed by DOING something for those who don't have it so good. That's what we're privileged to do together through the ministry of Crossroad Bible Institute.

"We care for prisoners because we are going to heaven."

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!

2004 *Christmas* Send-A-Card


Send-A-Card


The season for CBI's Send-A-Card Program is here! This year you can help make Christmas a joyous season for many inmates.

For details go to the October *Crossroad News* or go to www.crossroadbibleinstitute.org

NO INMATE LEFT BEHIND!

Pray that we can keep this motto
Please remember CBI this Thanksgiving


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