

Crossroad

NETWORK NEWS

DECEMBER 2005

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DECEMBER 2005

The Mission of *Crossroad Network News* is to promote partnership in the ministry of CBI through communication



the Lord is near

|By Dr. David Schuringa, President

EXPERIENTIAL NEARNESS



The Greek word for “near” in Philippians 4:5b has a rich, multi-faceted meaning. First, it refers to a **judicial nearness** that speaks of our legal standing before God and therefore to Christ’s *first* coming, in Bethlehem, in order to die for sinners. Paul

speaks in these terms elsewhere in Ephesians 2:13: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”

Judicial nearness sees sin as a chasm between God and humanity. Only the cross can bridge the gap. At CBI we receive testimonies all the time from people in prison who were far away from God, in darkness. But then, sovereignly, they were brought near to God through the blood of Christ. Christmas is a comfort to all

believers, as Christ came to bring us near to Him by His atoning sacrifice.

The word also refers to a **temporal nearness**, indicating that Christ’s *second* coming is approaching. Paul writes about this dimension of God’s nearness in Romans 13:11: “Our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.” Or as in 1 Corinthians 7:29, “Brothers... the time is short.”

When a hurricane is approaching, residents on land are well advised to prepare for the arrival of the storm. You ignore an approaching storm at your own peril! When we see the Lord’s temporal nearness, it serves as a warning to prepare for Christ’s coming and the Judgment Day. And how much more is Christ’s nearness true for us, 2000 years after Paul’s writing! Soon and very soon, we are going to see the King—an appropriate alert for the Advent Season.

Finally, the word refers to a **experiential nearness** in the life of the believer. Scripture frequently speaks of this kind of nearness, as in Psalm 34:18: “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in Spirit.” In Romans 10:8, Paul quotes Deuteronomy 30 as he writes, “The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming.” It is one thing for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem, but he also must be born in your heart! Looking back to when I ate dinner as a little boy at Grandpa and Grandma Schuringa’s house, I remember my grandfather included in every prayer, “Be near and dear unto us, O Lord.”

The idea of the Lord’s nearness is so rich, and theologians refer to it as an eschatologically-charged and layered concept in the Pauline context that embraces the already and the not yet, the realized eschatological experience in the now as well as a believer’s apocalyptic eschatological hope for the future. The Kingdom has come, but is yet to come. At Calvary, Christ defeated the kingdom of darkness but is also coming to destroy His enemies and ours.

In fact, the first coming of Christ guarantees the second, and the power of the second coming impinges eschatologically into the present age and the present experience of the believer.

All three dimensions of the Lord’s nearness are integrally and intimately connected as we live in the reality of the nearness of God. It is this eschatological tension of the Lord’s nearness that empowers us by His Spirit to bring inmates near to God by His grace.



THE FATHERLESS ONES

| By Kathryn Shane

“A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing...”

Psalm 68:5-6

FATHERLESS



“I am one of the ‘fatherless ones’... I’ve spent most of my life alone. I had four stepfathers in my first eighteen years. All of them were abusive, both verbally and physically... I’ve been beaten so badly that blood filled my little cowboy boots until I lost consciousness. I’ve slept in doghouses, in my own feces and under my mom’s car for punishment for something that (my stepfather) thought I did, and my mom never said a word. She never came to my rescue.”

Thus begins the story of Clayton, a CBI student from Alabama.

“A lot of people have found different ‘things’ in God when they come to know Him. As for me, well, I found a Father at last. One that would not beat me, abuse me, tell me I’m never going to amount to anything like my other four stepfathers used to do.”

Most inmates grow up without a father figure, and those who do have a father in the home may have one like Clayton’s—abusive, denigrating, soul-killing. With fathers like his, it is no wonder he despised authority. When he found himself in a county jail and a man tried to tell him how God wants to be his Father, Clayton had a hard time stomaching the thought. He writes, “I thought that He too would eventually push me away. But He never did.”

Clayton is spending his life in prison, although he may possibly be paroled someday. His earliest chance to be released came and went in 2003, and he continues to serve the Lord behind bars. After doing an outstanding job in both Tier 1 and Tier 2, Clayton is now working on *Biblical Interpretation: How to Read and Study the Bible*, the first course in the curriculum of The Center for Advanced Studies at Crossroad Bible Institute.

Throughout his studies, Clayton has shown him-

self to be an exceptional and dedicated student of the Word. A true leader within the walls, he has been teaching a class in prison for the past ten years. Students like him who grew up in terribly broken homes and never had a chance at a “normal” life can now experience powerful relationships based on biblical guidance and discipleship through the Center.

As Clayton has grown in his relationship with the Lord, he has also discovered a hunger for his Father. CBI can help feed this hunger in Clayton’s soul by teaching him more and more about his Father’s will and Word. When asked why he wanted to pursue advanced studies with CBI, Clayton wrote that he wanted “a clearer grasp and understanding of God’s Word,” “a more ‘pure’ way of interpreting Scripture apart from denominational traditions” and a “level of knowledge and experience beyond a surface glance of God’s Word.” Together, we can help Clayton reach these goals. Join CBI this Christmas and reach out to inmates like him who need to know that they can find a true Father in God—a Father who, like Clayton says, will love them for the person that they are, “scars and all.”

Kathryn Shane serves as the Spanish and International Programs Coordinator at CBI.

I.R.S. GIVING CAP LIFTED



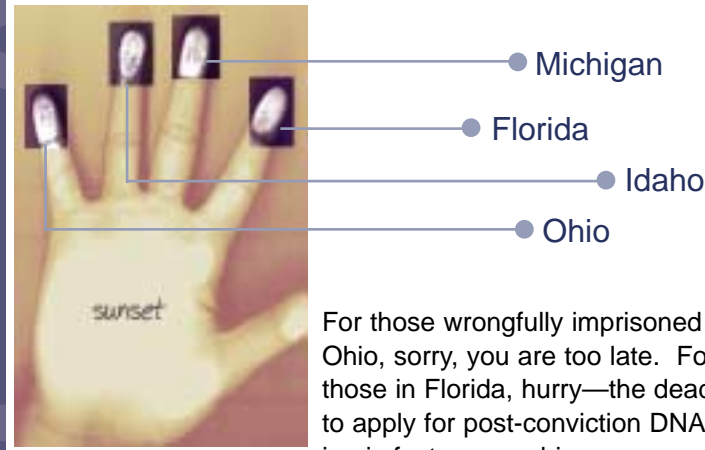
Congress has passed legislation for this year, ending December 31, that raises the giving-to-charity cap from 50% to 100% of your taxable income, with full deductibility.

See www.irs.gov/newsroom for details.



RACING THE SUN

By Aaron Van Oosterhout



For those wrongfully imprisoned in Ohio, sorry, you are too late. For those in Florida, hurry—the deadline to apply for post-conviction DNA testing is fast approaching.

Since the late 1980s, police have been using DNA (DeoxyriboNucleic Acid; each human being has an utterly unique sequence of these acids) “fingerprinting” to determine the guilt or innocence of criminal suspects. As this “fingerprint” can be lifted from years-old evidence that contains even the remotest trace of body tissue, many states then enacted laws that permitted previously jailed felons to apply for such tests in order to prove their innocence. However, the science was experimental and the tests expensive at the time, so the majority of these states included sunset provisions in their bills, or expiration dates, at which time they would decide whether to extend or discontinue the law.

Today, DNA testing has become increasingly effective (it can distinguish one suspect from billions of others) and the price has dropped. Despite these advances, however, only a few states have removed the sunsets from their laws.

In fact, Ohio’s law died on October 29 of this year, and Idaho’s expired over three years ago with no prospect of resuscitation. The Florida deadline will pass on July 1 of this coming year. Without this legislation, wrongfully convicted inmates can only petition their prosecutors to reopen their cases—a slim possibility.

Why not abolish the deadline?

Perhaps the answer can be found in Michigan. Legislators there recently extended their deadline to 2009, which coincides with another sunset—that of federal government funding.

In October 2004, President Bush signed into law the Innocence Protection Act (IPA). Contained in the IPA is a series of incentive grants given to states that conform to federal DNA testing procedures, such as preservation of evidence throughout an inmate’s incarceration and extension of the application deadline at least until 2009, when the grants will be eliminated.

If funding were the only obstacle between wrongfully convicted inmates and exoneration, however, more states would have enacted DNA testing laws with the 2009 deadline at the earliest. Instead, it appears as though many inmates must contend with apathy.

Only until recently did many Florida prosecutors protest extending their state’s sunset, and a Florida senator just introduced a sunset-less bill. The state of Washington recently overcame protests as well, and has since removed any sunset provision in their post-conviction DNA testing law.

What inspired the change?

A number of inmates in both states have recently been exonerated based on DNA evidence—two in Florida after spending twenty-two and twenty-six years in jail, respectively—and their cases were covered widely by the press. “There’s a human face to it this time around,” said Michelle Fontaine, assistant director of the Florida Innocence Initiative in Tallahassee, to the *St. Petersburg Times*. “I think the climate has changed.”

Indeed, when someone gives a voice to those who unjustly had none, legislators take notice and stop the sun from setting on the innocent.

K. Aaron Van Oosterhout serves as an Assistant Editor of The Center for Advanced Studies at Crossroad Bible Institute.

IN THE NEWS...

State-funded Abortion?

ST. LOUIS, MO—Per the Supreme Court's ruling, the Missouri Department of Corrections (DOC) recently paid the necessary expenses to transport an inmate to and from an abortion clinic to undergo the procedure. State officials said that the travel expenses violated the DOC's new policy, implemented this past July, that prohibited prisons from assisting an inmate's abortion in any way. The total cost included \$350 of taxpayer money for two prison guards to accompany the woman, in addition to fuel. The Supreme Court did not publish an opinion or dissent on the case—the first abortion-related legal action the court has taken under Chief Justice John Roberts—but the editorial board of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* wrote, "in effect, Missouri taxpayers will be paying much of the cost of a procedure many find gruesome and immoral."

Alternative Sentencing in Action

EAST LANSING, MI—23-year-old Denita Dorsey pleaded guilty to stealing approximately \$100,000 through identity theft. She was sentenced *not* to the maximum 20-year prison sentence for her crime, nor 10 years, nor even six months—the judge ruled that Dorsey would spend 60 days in jail, served over a period of 20 weekends. During the week, she will work outside the jail to pay restitution to her victims. "She probably deserves to be incarcerated," explained Judge James Giddings to the *State News*, "but that would interfere with her ability to pay restitution. I think if the victims receive total restitution, they'll be pretty pleased with the final analysis." Starting in November, Dorsey is scheduled to repay \$500 a month, and the amount will increase to \$1,000 this coming March. As the state has already recouped \$40,000 of the stolen money by selling Dorsey's brand new GMC Envoy, Giddings anticipates that Dorsey will have paid

back the victims in full by the end of her five-year probation. "The real punishment is paying the money back to the people you took it from," said prosecutor Michael Ferency to the *News*. "In order to pay it back, she has to make enough money to support herself and her obligations."

Trading Cigs for Health

SACRAMENTO, CA—Once a standard prison currency, cigarettes are now prohibited in California prisons. The ban took effect this past summer, in an effort to trim long-term health-care costs for inmates: \$280 million annually, to be exact. Many prisoners see this prohibition as yet another curtailment of their rights and a denial of one of the few remaining pleasures they have while incarcerated. Not all agree, however. "Lighting up is an illusionary respite from a craving that feeds its own dependency," wrote the editorial board of the *Christian Science Monitor*. "An end to smoking represents acceptance of personal responsibility to better oneself, the single most important value in preventing a return to crime upon release from prison." With this move, California becomes one of 18 states that have banned smoking entirely in prisons. All other states except for Missouri have partial bans.

Probationary Prying?

SACRAMENTO, CA—Among a spate of recent crime legislation signed into law by Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, county probation chiefs now have the authority to outfit probationers—even those convicted of lesser crimes—with GPS (Global Positioning System) anklets without court orders. The technology allows law-enforcement authorities to monitor probationers' movements across the globe, at all times. Supporters of the new law are pleased and hope for further implementation of the devices in the future. Governor Schwarzenegger, for instance, proposed that felony sex

offenders be required to wear the anklet for the rest of their lives and Jeff Fagot, parole administrator for the state DOC, wants every offender to be outfitted regardless of the crime committed. Some civil rights groups are concerned, however. "There are no checks or balances for this," said Ignacio Hernandez, legislative advocate of California Attorneys for Criminal Justice, to the *Los Angeles Times*. There is "no way to know what it is going to be used for." In another law, the state Department of Justice is now required to post sex offenders' name, age, race, photograph, list of crimes and, in some instances, address on a state website. Previously, the information was only found at certain police stations.

Rev. Feddes'

Installation Service



You are cordially invited to witness the installation of Rev. David Feddes as the Director of The Center for Advanced Studies at Crossroad Bible Institute.

The service will be held

January 8, 6:00 p.m.

at

**Family of Faith Church
6645 W. Steger Road
Monee, IL 60449**



IN REMEMBRANCE



In Memory of:

Joyce Bosman

John Bosman
Ben & Elizabeth Boxum
Martin & Galye De Witt
Don & Bernice Kooy
Nancy Nelson
Jacob & Donna Steiger
Bonnie Van Loo
Peggy Vellema
Robert & Bethany Williamson

Marvin Bosma

Dorothy Bosma & children

Janet Bouws

Jerome & Doris Bouws
Elmer & Kathy VanDerKolk
Graafschap CRC Ladies Aid

Jerry C. Bricker

Eleanor Dykema

Jessie Doore

Bernie & Pearl Bandstra

Susan Hielkema

Heiman & Marie Bosman

Ted Howerzyl

Eleanor Dykema

Abe Kalsbeek

Ken & Dorothy Vanden Brink

Harry B. Nickles

Charles & Bonnie Van Dyk
Hawthorne Gospel Church

John & Naomi Poelstra

Rod & Helen Green

Larry Thomas

Jean De Jong

Lambert Van Andel

Albert & Anne Woltersom

Elma Jane Vander Zwaag

Jacob & Margje Gras
Andrea Grasicwicz
Hermina Hop
Janet Katsma
Howard & Grace Lankheet
Larry & Arlene Nienhuis
Ken & Sheryl Piper
Karen & Gary Raak
Emie & Sally Rouwhorst
Ken & Frieda Rouwhorst
Mel & Rosalie Rouwhorst
Robert & Mary Rouwhorst
Mae Jean Slagh
Marvin & Faye Staal
Carla & Scott Terpstra
Pam & Jim Vander Zwaag
Howard & Noreen Weener
Jerry & Betty Westveld
Willard Wolters

Mabelle Van Arkel

Ivan & Ruth Mulder

Mae Vander Zwaag

Howard & Grace Lankheet

Norma Van Huis

Wayne & Karen VandenBrink
Tom & Frela Van Huis

Joe Van Wyk

Henry & Winifred Schuringa
Bill & Ann Slager

Walter Vis

Theodore & Julia Wevers

Betty Warner

Elsie Arnoudse
Lee & Maryann Yonkers

John & Gladys De Graff

50th Wedding Anniversary
Ben & Cathern Veenendaal

Chris & Nell Otten

70th Wedding Anniversary
Reuben & Deana Otten

Peter & Rosalee Drenth

Philip Drenth

Kathy Schreurs

Birthdays
Carol Van Den Bosch

Dr. David Schuringa

Birthdays
Greg & Sarah Schuringa & family
Joel & Lisa Bosma & family
Jeff & Rebecca Helmus & family
Tim & Elizabeth Schuringa

Bill & Ann Slager

50th Wedding Anniversary
Ray & Ida Boss

Marilyn Vander Weide

Birthdays
Henry & Ruth De Jong

In Honor of:

Geraldine Baumblatt

CBI Instructor
Sharon & Gar Alperovitz

Peter & Leona Noteboom

55th Wedding Anniversary
Mrs. Luetta Oolman
Tom & Elinor Noteboom
Vernon & Carol Noteboom
Arie & Mary Noteboom
Ronald & Joan Noteboom

CBI GRATEFULLY
ACKNOWLEDGES A GENEROUS
GIFT FROM THE ESTATE OF:
Kathryn Groenevelt

Your Car Is Worth More Than You Think!

Donate your running vehicle to CBI. Inmates will hear about Christ and you will receive a tax deduction. There are three levels of car gifts:

- Level 1: Those worth up to \$500: You determine the fair market value of your vehicle for a tax deduction of up to \$500.
- Level 2: Those worth over \$500: You may deduct the amount that CBI receives when it sells your vehicle. (Cheaper vehicles typically go to the auction, while the more expensive vehicles may be retained out.)
- Level 3: If CBI has a ministry use for your vehicle, you may determine and deduct the value of vehicles worth up to \$5,000. For those worth more than \$5,000 an external agent must make an appraisal (we'll help you find one) and you may deduct the entire amount.



HELPING THE CHURCH TO REMEMBER THOSE IN PRISON
Hebrews 13:3

- Providing prisoners with a faith-based reentry education
- Equipping the church to make disciples
- Guiding inmates into reentry agencies upon their release
- Educating the church on criminal and restorative justice issues

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