

# “Letter From M.O.M.”

The **Monthly** newsletter of **Moving On Ministry**

[WWW.MovingOnMinistry.COM](http://WWW.MovingOnMinistry.COM)

<http://PrisonMinistry.net/MovingOn>

**Volume 22** – March, 2007

## “I Can Only Imagine”

It is hard to imagine that this ministry has been developing for over four years. New facilities have opened up to us, as well as getting correspondence from many states and foreign countries.

Watch our websites

[www.MovingOnMinistry.com](http://www.MovingOnMinistry.com)

<http://PrisonMinistry.net/MovingOn>

## Addresses to contact our Ministry Volunteers

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**Chaplain Bob**  
**P.O. Box 6667**  
**Visalia, CA. 93290**

**Moving On Ministry**  
**Spanish Volunteer Linda**  
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## Addresses to contact other Ministry Volunteers

**WRT Prison Ministry**  
**4380 Concord Blvd.**  
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**Christian Pen Pals**  
**PO Box 2112**  
**Statesville, NC 28687**

**Church Behind The Wall**  
**3737 So Akers**  
**Visalia, CA. 93277**

**Inside the Wall Ministry**  
**PO BOX 1561**  
**Rancho Cordova, CA. 95741**

**Inmate Penpal Connection**  
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**Syracuse, NY 13206-**  
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**Prisoner Support Network**  
**Ministry**  
**P.O. Box 4**  
**Richmond, IL 60071**

**Jesus’ Prayer Ministry**  
**Sis Denise**  
**P.O. Box 7925**  
**Chula Vista, CA 91912**

## Intentions & Wishes

The intentions of this newsletter are to allow an understanding of jail & prison ministries. It is our intentions to get input from those incarcerated as well as those “free” to visit. Life experiences of the faith and fellowship from those locked up in the facilities are always desired to let others know of the value of “visitation”. I am certain that each of us have many stories of the miracles God has done in our lives.

Our wishes are that we would have a list of supportive churches that individuals might look forward to attending once released.

A list of services, such as housing, employment, and counseling services, as well as some individuals available for friendly fellowship are also much needed items.

God’s Word says if a man stumbles, how can he continue lest there be another to help him up. **Ecc. 4:10** “**For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him [that is] alone when he falleth; for [he hath] not another to help him up.**” **Proverbs 24:17** “**Rejoice not when thy enemy falleth, and let not thy heart be glad when he stumbleth.**” **John 11:10** “**But if a man walketh in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.**”

Please help us with input for this newsletter as we strive to serve God. We appreciate any articles or input.

## Fellowship

We would like to keep a listing of locations for fellowship that welcomes previous incarcerated individuals. We previously listed 51 churches that are supportive in Tulare and Kings Counties of California. We would like follow up on these churches to see if they are supportive, as well as letting us know of others available. **We also cherish letters from inmates or relatives to the churches to let us know how we are doing**

If you would like a church added, or have concern on one that is not supportive, please contact us.

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***Dreams are real, as long as you have faith in Jesus Christ.***

## ***The Mermaid***

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### **Bob’s Letter Writing**

**Bob has slowed down on responding, due to the volume of letters he’s written;**

<b>March 2006</b>	<b>84</b>
<b>April 2006</b>	<b>91</b>
<b>May 2006</b>	<b>128</b>
<b>June 2006</b>	<b>127</b>
<b>July 2006</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>August 2006</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>September 2006</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>October 2006</b>	<b>179</b>
<b>November 2006</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>December 2006</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>January 2007</b>	<b>136</b>

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## Letters that Express it All

**These are actual quotes from some of the different incarcerated individuals. The names have been removed. Our first newsletter went out October 2003. We receive many of these letters. If one of these letters is yours, let us know how you are doing now.**

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### Familiar Pattern

I'm 21. I turn 22 this Dec. 19. I was born in Hemet CA. and raised in the San Bernardino county. I lived in Apple Valley City. I started speed, weed, and cigarettes at the age of 7 with the 16 year olds in my block. I was 9 when I first got locked up. I was there for 95 days. Thought it was a long time of my life. It was also the first time I read the Bible. I really didn't think too much about it at the time, but nobody really does at that age. I was locked up 7 or more times as a kid. I dropped out of school in the 6<sup>th</sup> grade and all I did was skateboard, do dope, and rob people, even my family. I was really good at skating, and was sponsored twice by Pharmacy Board shop, and once by American Youth Clothing and Skate Park. I could have gone pro from what my sponsor told me, but all the dope I was doing, did not help. I know you're probably thinking, how much dope can a 14 year old be doing. Well, a lot when you run away from home and live with a kook at 14. I was slamming dope so it clouded my judgment and I quit skating to rob people, steal dirt bikes, cars, what ever I could make money off of. At 19 I was locked up for battery, released on O.R. , and never went to court. Then not too long after I was supposed to go to court,

I was arrested for a stolen truck. I spent 364 days in county jail. Got out and was doing good, was on probation, went to Bible college for 90 days, left 13 days early from there, found a job at a car wash and a part time one at an Auto Zone. One night I gave some chicks a ride home, dropped two off, and on the way to drop the third chick, I was pulled over and arrested again. This time with 4 years with ½ time. I parole in less than 90 days on February 14. Hopefully I get my parole transferred to Oklahoma. Well, that is about it for me. **TC**

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### The Reason

Dear Chaplain Bob;

First off, I would like to thank you for giving your time to come out here and teach the Word to us fellow inmates. I have been excited to take time and go to your classes, but not always will they let me out. I do get upset because I look forward to going to Bible study every week, even though I read my Bible every day. I know you are only supposed to read only a chapter a day (referring to Proverbs?), but I figured a little more wouldn't hurt. Well, your studies have been giving me a better understanding of the Word. I just like how you explain things and break them down. Well, this is my first time being locked down, ever (this would be the 19<sup>th</sup> person that was a 1<sup>st</sup> timer in Bob's almost 5 years in this ministry) and in the beginning I was scared. But then I realized only one thing to be scared of, and that's God. So I opened up the Bible and read. After reading, I wasn't scared anymore. So I

read everyday now. Not only do I read, but I also talk to God and thank Him for all His forgiveness and all His works. To tell you the truth, before I got locked up, I hadn't been to church in over a year. When I was small, I would go to church every Sunday with my grandparents, and I mean every Sunday, until one day my grandma got ill with lung cancer. She never smoked a day in her life and was never around it. God took her away from me and I took it deeply. She died October 14, 2005. I was never the same since. I stopped going to church because she was one of the reasons I went, because it made her happy. She was real religious. She even went to Jerusalem, Israel, and to lots of holy places. She loved to travel. Everyday, I would ask God why? I don't really know if I've gotten an answer. I realize now, I shouldn't have stopped. I believe God put me here to realize I was messing up, and I thank Him for putting me here to realize, not for what I lost, but of what I can gain from what I've lost. Your newsletters (Letter From M.O.M.) put a smile on my face and there's talent behind these walls and there are lots of more blessed men in here than I know out there. . . .I just wanted to thank you for your work and inspiration you give all us inmates and thank you for teaching me and my fellow inmates about lots of the understanding. So once again, thank you and God bless you sir. **MA**

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## **Touched with Giving**

Brother Bob and Sister Linda;

I read the last newsletter from you and was also touched by the brother's story who made cards and sent you the stamps he had received. I have spoken to the chaplain here on several occasions about bringing our tithes and offerings to the church to be distributed to those in need. It has fallen on deaf ears. I suspect the opposition comes from administration who prohibits us from bringing canteen to yard. What I have learned to do is look for those in need and each month start with believers by asking do they need something and giving it to them and saying "God bless you" or in "Jesus name."

I was blessed to help several people this year and really felt good being able to give to others knowing I am doing God's work. . . .

The other night an officer passing out mail asked did I know you? He had seen your address in the return portion of the letter. I replied, yes. He said that you helped his brother and that you were a good man. I was honored to hear that. It just shows that our light shines even when we don't know it does.

**RR**

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## NOTES and COMMENTS

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**When Satan reminds you of your past, remind him of his future.**

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**God accepts you where you are, but loves you too much to leave you there.**

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### **Need for Change**

. . . Keep doing what you have been doing, and you will keep getting what you have been getting.

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### **Conversion**

Conversion is the wiping of the slate clean so a new process can “start.”

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### **Replenishing**

God’s Word promises to restore the years of the locust, or more simply the years previously lost.

**Joel 2:25** And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you.

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### **Salvation**

It is a “point” followed by a “process.”

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Talk to God about the lost,  
Before talking to the lost about God

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### **Repentance**

Can be defined as; **Stop**, **Turn around**, and **follow**.

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God, be Lord of what is left of my life

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## Recommended Reading

For the new Christian, or the individual desiring to know God, we would like to recommend the following reading:

**The Gospel of John** – This is a great introduction of Christ’s walk on Earth.

**The Book of Romans** – This gives an introduction of many of the Bible stories shared and helps build familiarity of Christ’s plan for our lives.

**The Purpose Driven Life** by Rick Warren – 40 chapters will change your life in 40 days

**Book of Proverbs** – Read one chapter a day with the chapter read being the day of the month. This will allow the book to be read almost 12 times thru the year.

**Ephesians 4 – 6** – This gives the pattern for life that we should live. All 7 S’s are displayed in these 3 chapters. We are given the purpose of the gifts, changing our character, husband/wife/family relationships, and the type of life we are to live and display.

**Men’s Relational Toolbox** – Another fine work by Gary Smalley with both of his sons adding to this book. This book avoids “male bashing” but rather teaches men to use and modify the inner tools they have to improve their relationships.

**Prayer of Jabez** – A truly fine first book from Bruce Wilkerson. This short book will change your mind about being disobedient to God by not taking care of people in need

## Needs after Release

Individuals being released from incarceration have the same common needs of all individuals. There is a need of self-respect and self esteem. Many have a need of housing. Most are coming back looking for employment. Some are facing classes for AA, NA, or Domestic Violence. Some need to enroll in educational or vocational programs. Most would appreciate someone to just talk to or have a mentor. Fellowship with the right people is ALWAYS needed. For many these are totally new expectations and experiences.

One inmate expressed wonderfully the problem of being released. He stated that everything is slow to happen while incarcerated. It seems like an eternity as you wait for your next transfer or assignment. You feel like you are running at 5 miles per hour. Then, when released to the world, you are put into an environment that is running at 200 miles per hour. This drastic change of environments tends to overcome individuals and they have a hard time adapting. We hear of transitions from one area to another in each of our lives. Someone to just talk with about the feelings and changes the individuals are going thru is a great healer. The Bible says that each of us should be a "brother" to help the other one up when he falls. Other scripture talks about "sticking closer than a brother" we can often help with sharing life experiences or just listening to someone in need. We don't always have to solve the problems, but many times need to just "lend an ear" so that someone might share their needs or hurts with us. Many men have heard from their wives "I don't want you to fix it, just listen". We need to just listen.

## Sharing Your Testimony

There are 4 parts to an individual's testimony;

1. What my life was like before I met Jesus
2. How I realized I needed Jesus
3. How I committed my life to Jesus
4. The difference Jesus has made in my life.

But in reality, those who believe in Jesus have the testimony of God in them; Each of us needs to periodically share our testimony with others. The importance is not what you have done, but what God is doing.

1. Your testimony;
2. Your life lessons
3. Your godly passions
4. the Good News

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God will make all things new  
***What are some things I should finish once I start?***

**"For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ."  
Hebrews 3:14**

**New life in Christ. We must maintain the confident faith we had when we first believed.**

Scripture is from the New Living Translation (Tyndale House Publishers, 1996).

**Our testimony is to give hope to others; our fruit is to give proof to God.**

**Repentance means you change your mind so deeply that it changes you. It's not just that I changed how I thought—I am now changed.**

## Testimonies

### JD's Testimony

Greetings in the Name of Jesus I am an ex-convict I was released back in 1987 I will soon be celebrating 20 years free from prison. However I will be celebrating more than that I was saved years before I ever started down the road of lawlessness But while in Prison I truly came alive in Jesus Perhaps not the safest place to do so but I had a great ministry inside those slamming doors of steel. I was doing portraits in prison for other inmates making a few extra bales of tobacco when one day some one asked if I could do tattoos I never did one before so the fellow made me a gun and we made some ink it worked great and my story begins I was doing tattoos as with many clients they all want to know a bit about who is tattooing them perhaps to get their mind off the pain anyway every person asked the same question who are you At that time I was doing seven or eight courses from cons for Christ via correspondence computers or internet was not around yet so I started to share with them about Jesus and God and the Holy Spirit. Some asked for prayer as their parole date was approaching so we prayed after doing the salvation prayer And they found favor with the parole boards even those who were less than those who were less than good behaved inmates The word soon got around that if you wanted out of prison to come see me for prayer and they did by the droves one day the young lady who was a life skills coach came to me and asked me if I was a Christian I was blown away but said yes and asked who said I was she told me the other inmates did and she needed my help ok

again blown away I asked how can I help you she told me about a group of satanic worshipers putting curses on her and her life skills mission I don't really know why but I got upset with her and said you Christians really make me mad I used other words at the time but you get the idea do you not know the power you have been given through Jesus Christ Just bind them and cast them down as Jesus did so we prayed about it About a day later I fellow I knew came to me and asked me to fix a mirror for him that they had painted. I took a look at it was a pentagram very complete well I thought about it for about a nanosecond and said sure I would. I started on it right away erased it all and started fresh when I was done it looked the same but nice and fresh the only problem was I changed every word of it they never did find out but all of a sudden her ministry was flowing smoothly once again although I had been an ideal inmate my parole dates kept being denied I was to be fast tracked out when I first went in but now was being delayed. I can only assume it was to continue in His work inside the prison as we convicts do not trust anyone and even less some square john from outside I was eventually released and now 20 years later I am just setting out again to do his work I am now working as an evangelist and am going from town to town church to church and prison to prison if he wishes I pray for those of you whom I have loved ones inside those cold angry walls that God will bless and comfort you as you go through this I know I asked my parent not to come while I was there although I enjoyed seeing them as I knew it hurt them to see me like that and I caused

them so much pain as it was I pray for your loved ones that they find freedom thru Jesus can set them free even when inside those cages. I also pray that when they are released from their prison that the anger will not hinder them as they readjust to the outside but most of all for their children whom never even saw the Dads as it takes two to raise them right I come from a single mom too and she worked so hard it hurts me to think about the grief I have caused her. Jesus keep these children of yours in your loving arms meet their every need fiscally emotionally and spiritually Amen

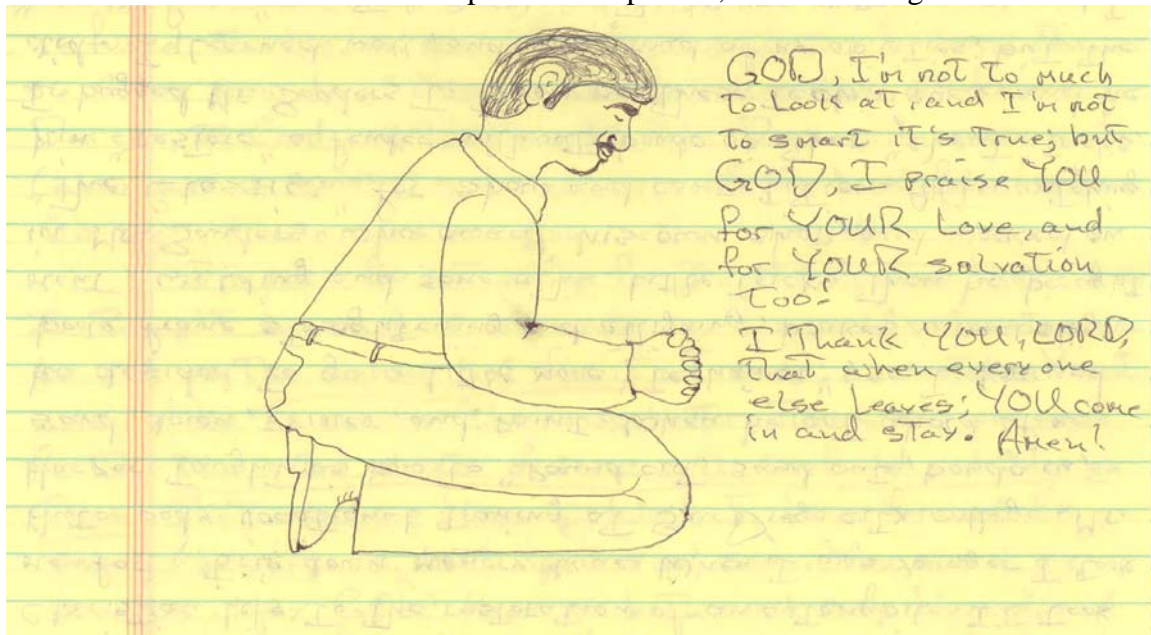
I swore years ago I would never enter thru those gates again now I can't wait to go and share my testimony with others and give them hope of a Better life In Jesus Christ

NOTE: Please share with this individual of how you feel this testimony helped you.

**Brother John-David**  
**Box 1681**  
**Princeton BC**  
**VOX 1W0**  
**Canada**

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We have been sharing inmate art and I think the following needs to be shared from an inmate. We need to realize that the picture is important, but the message is what lasts.





## Lighter But Serious Side

### Two Horses

Just up the road from my home is  
a field,  
with two horses in it.  
From a distance, each looks like  
every other horse.  
But if you stop your car, or are  
walking by,  
you will notice something quite  
amazing.  
Looking into the eyes of one horse  
will  
disclose that he is blind.  
His owner has chosen not to have  
him put down,  
but has made a good home for him.  
This alone is amazing.  
If nearby and listening,  
you will hear the sound of a bell.  
Looking around for the source of  
the sound,  
you will see that it comes from the  
smaller horse in the field.  
Attached to her halter is a small  
bell.  
It lets her blind friend know where  
she is,  
so he can follow her.  
As you stand and watch these two  
friends,  
you'll see how she is always  
checking on him,  
and that he will listen for her bell  
and then

slowly walk to where she is,  
trusting that she  
will not lead him astray. When she  
returns to the  
shelter of the barn each evening,  
she stops  
occasionally and looks back, making  
sure her  
friend isn't too far behind to hear  
the bell.

Like the owners of these two  
horses,  
God does not throw us away just  
because  
we are not perfect or because we  
have problems  
or challenges. He watches over us  
and even brings  
others into our lives to help us  
when we are in need.  
Sometimes we are the blind horse  
being guided by  
the little ringing bell of those who  
God places in our lives.  
Other times we are the guide  
horse, helping others see.  
Good friends are like this .....

You don't always see them,  
but you know they are always  
there.

Please listen for my bell and I'll  
listen for yours.

"Be kinder than necessary,  
for everyone you meet is  
fighting some kind of battle".

## When it Comes to Truth, Tolerance is a Travesty

by: Hank Hanegraaff

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**Q:** *Why are Christians so judgmental and unloving?*

**A:** Because we live in an age of tolerance where almost anything goes, openly questioning or criticizing other people's belief systems can quickly get you labeled as judgmental, narrow-minded, bigoted, hateful, and even ignorant. With regard to Christianity, Matthew 7:1 is often quoted (or should I say "misquoted") as discouraging Christians from putting other religious teachings and practices to the test: "Judge not, that ye be not judged."

This interpretation of Scripture, however, is simply mistaken. The Bible clearly speaks out not against passing judgment in general, but against rendering inaccurate and unfair judgments (John 7:24). In 1 Corinthians 2:15 Paul tells us that Christians are called to make "judgments about all things." Our judgment, though, should not be based on what God has not revealed; but rather, on what He has revealed (v. 13).

God's revealed Word, the Bible, tells us that Jesus Christ is the only way we can possibly reach God and that there's no alternate route (Acts 4:12). It stands to reason, therefore, that other beliefs offering alleged alternate pathways to God only lead

to dead-ends. And if we as Christians really want to follow our Lord's teaching to love our neighbors, we can't escape our responsibility to warn them about spiritually destructive roads paved by non-Christian belief systems (Prov. 14:12). True love and compassion should move believers to sound warning cries, even in the face of opposition, to avert countless lives from heading toward eternal separation from God.

Let's realize that when we call teachings into question, it's only because we're concerned about the eternal destinies of people. Let's also keep in mind that Scripture doesn't command us to simply rail against false teachings; rather, it encourages us to offer biblical reasons with gentleness and respect (1 Pet. 3:15). Always remember that when it comes to personal relationships, tolerance is a virtue; but when it comes to truth, tolerance is a travesty.

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### Five Moral Fences Protecting myself from myself for Christ and for others.

By Dr. James MacDonald

Fact: Some kids like to play "near the edge of the cliff," and some kids don't. I always did! I thrilled to stand near the point of no return and feel the rush of staring danger in the face but not backing down. Whether the "edge" was rock jumping into a cool mountain

lake or "bumper jumping," moving cars for a lazy slide down a slippery winter street, the potential of peril invigorated me.

That was then and this is now! "When I became a man I put away childish things." (I Cor. 13:11)

I was a pastor in seminary when the moral failures of the late '80's hit the news and they scared me. In addition to the newsworthy blowouts, I was hearing a shocking number of similar tragedies from my own circle of pastor/friends. I remember one Sunday night in 1987 when I cried all the way to church. I was terrified as I asked over and over, "How does this happen? Could this happen to me? How can I protect myself and my growing little family from the devastation a moral failure would cause? How can I be sure my actions will remain pure when men better and stronger than me were falling like flies?"

As I thought and prayed it through it occurred to me that ministers who fell morally must have disregarded the final warning signals. I knew they didn't go from spirit-filled to stepping off the cliff in one day. I knew they must have crashed some social barriers before their slippage became sexual. I remember wondering where the line was and how I could make sure I never crossed it. I knew I had to make my decisions early and my standards public so that others would know when I was "playing near the edge." I was determined that, by God's grace, I would not take the plunge. In fact, I wanted to stay as far away from the edge of the cliff as I could, so I decided to set up some boundaries of behavior.

I called them moral fences. The idea was to set up some standards of conduct that if never broken would make it impossible for me to fail morally. I

remembered back to my days as a bible college student and thinking how strange it was that our college president would not give my (young, beautiful) fiancée a ride to our church almost two hours away when he came to speak. With that in mind, I began to form my list of moral fences.

**1) I will not, under any circumstances, ride alone in a car with a female other than my wife or an immediate family member.**

No lifts home for a church secretary, no baby sitters driven home late at night, no teen girls in my student ministry, more recently no playmates of my daughters, no exceptions. One day I wasted two and a half hours in the American Tire store waiting for my car to be done while my secretary, only minutes away, could have picked me up so easily. Recently while speaking out of town, I had to explain to my pastor friend why it "would not work out for his wife to drive me and meet him over there." It has been awkward at times but the benefits are obvious. How many pastors commit adultery with someone they never ride alone in a car with? OK some, but read on.

**2) I do not counsel women in a closed room or more than once.**

Judging by the stories we all hear it seems like the majority of ministry infidelity begins through a counseling relationship. No matter what the issue, counseling is a very intimate activity. When the subject matter itself becomes intimate. counseling the opposite sex is like playing with fire. When our church was smaller keeping this standard meant that some women had to seek counsel

elsewhere and two or three left our church over my "fence." I was hurt at first but I think it blessed my wife. As pastors we are supposed to be training others to do ministry, not hoarding it for ourselves. (Eph. 4:11-13) I have always felt that my time was better spent training a team of men and women to do the lighter counseling and then referring those with more complex issues to biblical counseling centers outside our church. When I cannot avoid a second session with a woman in our church, I have my wife or another pastor sit in with me. Pretty hard to commit adultery with someone you never spend time alone with.

### **3) I do not stay alone in a hotel over night.**

I did my doctoral thesis on increasing the incidents of self-disclosure of sin among men. I have heard more confessions of addiction to various forms of sexual sin than any one pastor should ever have to hear, and it has changed me. It has left me deeply persuaded that, "there but for the grace of God, (and some moral fences) go I." I know myself too well. Lengthy, unaccountable hours with manifold temptations available and affordable is a recipe for failure. Romans 13:14 instructs us that we are to "make no provision for the flesh." You think I sound weak? I am! And when I forget that weakness I cease to know God's strength. (I Cor. 12:10) When I travel, I travel with someone. When that is impossible I stay with a friend. When that is impossible I do not go. Period! Early in my ministry that meant there were things I missed out on, more recently our Elders have agreed to help fund a travel partner for me. If an

outside ministry opportunity is deemed worthwhile, and the ministry cannot afford a second airfare, our church pays for me to take another pastor or elder, or best of all, my wife.

### **4) I speak often and publicly of my affection for my wife, when she is present and when she is not.**

No one likes to play the hypocrite any more than they have to. Marriages that are failing often become silent in public before they become loudly negative. Pastors who resist or refuse to publicly affirm and appreciate the significant role of a supportive spouse may be revealing a private deterioration of that relationship. I have close friends who consistently monitor the way I lead, to refer to, and interact with my wife in social and ministry contexts. It was Bill McCartney who taught that the countenance of a wife is the best indicator of marital strength. I know some men in our church feel the heat because I am so publicly wild about my wife of sixteen years, too bad!

### **5) Compliment the character or the conduct - not the coiffure or the clothing.**

I am still working on this one. As our church has grown, and I know a much smaller percentage of the people who attend here, I have seen the power of a compliment become a problem. As pastors we love people and want to be an encouragement. Formerly, if I noticed that Shelly had a new dress or Susan had changed her hair, I would compliment her on that. I felt it was harmless and if it seemed to meet a need and I meant it sincerely I thought, "no harm done."

More recently I have observed that this seemingly innocent gesture can have far more impact than I ever intended and potentially meet a legitimate need that I have no business meeting. Apart from family friendships, I have been trying to restrict my compliments to character and conduct. I get to use my gift of encouragement but I focus on the things God is doing in a person's life and not the externals that can be easily misunderstood.

### **Setting up the "fence" in public.**

The *fence is useless if I can take it down any time my sinful heart desires*. To make it work those around me must know what I have committed to myself to and be willing to confront me if they see a fence broken down. To inform the congregation I periodically weave the fence into a sermon every couple of years. My most recent example was a message entitled "Meeting God in Moral Failure." When the message came to the "how to prevent" part, I simply downloaded the five moral fences to everyone. At the staff level we require a more detailed list of moral fences. From pastors to ministry leaders, to custodians and bookstore staff, every paid staff member is regularly held accountable for this moral code. A former singles pastor found it very difficult not to have lunch alone with women in his ministry, and often "forgot." That is, until we told him we would "forget" to pay him if he "forgot" again. Remember, this is not legalism. Legalism is when we judge another's spirituality based on manmade rules. We are not judging anyone's heart for the Lord, we are simply reasoning together as to how we can be faithful to our commitment to Christ.

### **Above Reproach? Blameless?**

Both Timothy and Titus instruct us that those who serve us leaders in Christ's church must be above reproach or blameless. That is to say, our conduct must be such that it would be difficult, even for those who oppose our ministry, to bring an accusation against us. Many a pastor has had their ministry destroyed over spurious accusations, things that could not be proven false, though they were. I believe our congregation is comforted in knowing that our ministry team is seeking to protect themselves and the church from the pain of ministry moral failure. By examining the behaviors that sometimes lead to moral problems and avoiding them we are embracing the wisdom of Proverbs 4:26 which instructs us to "ponder the path of your feet and let all your ways be established." Of course we must not think that the standards in and of themselves are in any way righteous, they are not. They are only in place as a protection against potentially overwhelming temptation. As I write this article, personal immorality is the furthest thing from my mind.

Last summer, we drove through some very high, single-lane mountain passes on a family vacation. The road was narrow and the drop off was immense. I was very careful! I hugged the mountain and drove very slowly. I kept my eyes on the road and refused to look down, *but I am still glad the guard rail was there.*

## Poetry Section

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### Why Me?

If the past were just the past  
If nothing was meant to last  
Then why did Jesus die for me?

If life had no depth, no meaning or purpose  
If everything was what it appeared to be on the surface,  
Then why did Jesus set me free?

You see there is not one thing that I could ever do  
But your love within me proves true.  
You help me to see you in the Light of your presence and  
trust  
That You by your Holy Spirit will work for my Defense.

Hate and Regret no longer chart their course  
But Love, Peace and Longsuffering are now a welcome  
source  
From your agape love that's poured forth  
And I don't have to wonder Why Me?

It's not where I've been but where I am going  
That makes me want to love you.  
I know you did not die in vain  
I know that the cost of my freedom was not without your  
pain

I may still ask the question but now I don't have to wonder  
Why Me?  
But now my question is  
How about you?

**INM**

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### Live For Now

Live in the moment  
Live for right now  
But don't live to fast  
And don't be too proud  
When the thunder and  
clouds

Roll in it'll be loud  
So savor every moment  
And learn to slow down.  
Aim high to hit the mark,  
push onward to receive  
your crown

Don't stand in high water  
Because you might  
drown.

Open your heart and  
you'll

Feel His presence all  
around;

Put your hand to the plow  
And live for right now

**INM**

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**“Inmate Art”** Drawings on envelopes by Arturo Bastardo



Send us your drawings to be displayed to the world and to remind those on the “outside” the talent that lies “behind the walls.”



The following article is the sixth article of “**Message in a Bottle**” from **NW**. Those of you that have followed her articles on “**My Dream Seeker,**” (starting with **volume 17, July/Aug. 2006**) know of the love and expression displayed by the writer, and felt by the reader of the article. Now we present another article as written in a prison cell by **The Mermaid**.

### **To My Dream Seeker (Part 6)**

Here I sit in a very confused place in my life, knowing the right thing to do, but letting the enemy take over my life again. I sit and think and wonder why do you love me, or why you would want to wait for a woman that hurt you 16 years ago? Ever since you have become a part of my life, I have wanted to hold you, love you, and share my Jesus Christ with you. But the look out my window is so dark, that I am thinking you and I will never be able to fulfill these desires of passions.

Do you ever wonder, sitting on your bed, what she may be doing, or even thinking about? In hopes that the thoughts we have at the same time would be on each others mind. Our angel says that our letters meet through the sea of freedom every time there are bottles full of messages, those bottles land on the same lonely sandy beach shoreline of loneliness.

My thoughts have made me get up and say I love the Dreamer more now than ever before.

There are so many mountains to be climbed, walks along running river waters, slide down hills of snow, and most of all, run through the waves of salty freedom, with this Dreamer I once thought I would never have in my arms again.

Going back in time, I remember the night my Dreamer was taken away from two people that tried so hard to love for so many years. At that moment, after all the pain went away, my heart was broken. I wanted that hole filled, for so long he filled the loneliness and hurtful things that comes with a breakup.

There were nights I often wondered what he may be doing? But just like every love that gets lost at the sea, it doesn't mean that the wonderful mind doesn't wonder the famous, “What's, Where's, and why's.” Therefore in my life now, I can honestly say that the Dreamer I left behind, has found the “the dream of his lifetime.”

**Love, the Mermaid**