

“Letter From M.O.M.”

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

WWW.MovingOnMinistry.com

www.PrisonMinistry.net/movingon

Volume 83 – Mar./Apr 2014 (Published since Oct. 2003)

“I Can Only Imagine”

As you receive this volume of **Letter From M.O.M.**, we are continuing with more of the testimonies of “How God Changes Lives” as well as some more of our own written articles. We can truly say that the “high” that many of our inmates have been trying to get through the wrong methods, is being surpassed by those putting God in control of their lives.

Watch our website
www.MovingOnMinistry.com

We are also affiliated with International Prison Fellowship
www.PrisonMinistry.net/movingon

Fellowship

Our mailing list has cleared over 750. The time required for designing the newsletters, printing, folding and stuffing the newsletters, applying postage and printing the envelopes has become great. We get behind on letter replies, and may occasionally miss one. Please write back if we do not answer, and write clearly so we can get the information correct. **We would like to know of the impact we are having and also cherish letters from inmates or relatives to the churches to let us know how we are doing.**

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 (Resource List).

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.

Addresses to contact our Ministry Volunteers

**Moving On Ministry
Chaplain Bob & Linda
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia, CA. 93290**

**Moving On Ministry
Spanish Ministry
P.O. Box 6667
Visalia, CA. 93290**

**Stephen "Fuzzy" Brown
So Blessed Ministry
P O Box 275
Lake Isabella, CA 93240**

**Iglesia Puerta de Salvacion
202 Lafayette Ave.
Lindsay, CA 93247**

**Set Free Prison Ministries
Bible Correspondence Course
P.O. Box 5540
Riverside, CA. 92517-9986**

**Discover Bible School
Attn, Paul
229 Stormy St. NE
Albany, OR 97322**

**Crossroad Bible Institute
P.O. Box 900
Grand Rapids, MI 49509-0900**

**International Prison Ministry
Bible, Dictionary, Concordance
P.O. Box 2868
Costa Mesa, CA 92628-2868**

Missing M.O.M. ?

We must constantly remind individuals that we need to be notified of changes of address or facilities. If we get returned mail (about 20 each month), we remove that individual from the files. If you have, or you are going to be moved, please drop us a note to keep your file active. We get mail returned for bad ID #'s, no cell #, and no bed #.

Letters that Express it All

We like to post real life situations, because God works in real lives and He is the one that gives "Eternal Life."

Readily Available Printouts

For those of you that communicate with individuals that have computer access, we have added quite a bit to our web site. The "**Resource List**" (40 pages), the "**Pen Pal Friends**" (12 pages), ALL past newsletters ("**Letter From M.O.M.**"), inmate lookup links, and artwork are available to be viewed or downloaded.

www.MovingOnMinistry.com

Ask for a copy of our **48 page**
"Resource List"

SASE with Postage is needed but verified indigent envelopes will be mailed.

\$.49 for Pen pals

\$.91 for Resources

\$.49-\$1.32 for Newsletter

(Donations Welcome)

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.

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

I would like to add that we have shared many wonderful testimonies. Many individuals are afraid to share their testimony because they are not sure what to write or feel inadequate in their writing ability. God's Word says in **Jeremiah 17:9** that "**the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?**" When the heart is changed by Christ it becomes the center of where God works from in our life.

Why would we do it? Closer than a Brother

In previous newsletters we talked about the things we as volunteers may sometimes do. The advice of a "friend" is always better accepted than the advice of a "stranger." When we go into the prisons, we are not just trying to get a count of conversions, but are trying to get across the message of TRUE conversion. Salvation is "Once saved, always saved, **IF** really saved." If we know the value of salvation, there is nothing we would trade it for. Salvation is "A point in life, followed by a process." If we can't recall that point, or there is no evidence of the process happening, we need to examine our salvation and covenant relationship.

The main emphasis of M.O.M. is bringing individuals to a saving knowledge of Christ. But the covenant relationship does not stop there, we must "move on." That is why M.O.M. promotes mentoring and discipleship training.

If you know of a church, ministry or individual(s) interested in supporting jail/prison ministry. Please refer them to **Moving On Ministry**. M.O.M. is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation.

Jan. 18, 2014

M.O.M. Ministry

Dear Bob, Linda and other supporting members

Thank you for the resources that you currently sent me. I hope I will be able to use them in assisting me on finding believers to stay in contact with until my release. I got the newsletter and really got the vibe that your ministry cares deeply. You travel the hedges and highways, the broken roads, the caves, and the bars. It's amazing how soon we forget that Yeshua's ministry was on foot. Churches weren't established till long after his ascension. Yet most Christians today wait in the pews for people to come in, but who's looking for the lost sheep? For if they are lost, how could one expect them to find their way to salvation unless someone goes out after them to bring them into the fold?

This is true faith, a true example Yeshus left us, and I just wanted to write to you and give praise for your ministry, and encourage you to keep on keeping on. I know at times it can be difficult when the results of your fruit cannot be seen from where you are, but I can assure you that your ministry is changing lives. In my experience, I wrote many other Christian based ministries (churches included), and they never wrote back. I guess they saw the prison stamp on the envelope and came to the conclusion that it wasn't worth the time to write back.

Your ministry wrote back with God-speed, and supplied me with information I plan to use to help spread the love.

I just recently saw a little bit of your online profile. Great web page. . . .

God bless, **Ronnie Doak**

Dear Moving On Ministry,

Good day, my name is John Richardson. I just would like to thank you guys so much for helping me with all the resources. Also, thank you for getting back to me so quickly. I know God is behind your work. I will be praying for your ministry. May God open doors for all the staff and all the people responsible for helping out. God bless you!

Thankfully yours,
John E. Richardson

Dear Chaplain Bob & Linda;

I am writing to share some good news; the lifer case (*CA Appellate Court First District Division Two – Case No. A127273 and A139411 – In Re Roy Butler*) was settled, and 35,000 lifers will soon no longer be lifers. I want to write to credit God, and all the prayers. I’ve asked you guys for all the righteous men who prayed and participated in this, the Weekend of Champions Warriors who showed up here with Tino Wallenda, Dennis Rice, Tully Blanchard, who all laid their hands on the court docket and prayed over it, here at Chowchilla, CA. the same way the Spanish Christian brothers in front of Lassen Hall at Soledad North laid their hands on my 30 pound bad of papers at the very start of this case with me and Aubrey Grant. We knew that without God, this case could not win despite its strong merit. Now it has and let it be a testimony to all the men and women in and outside of prison that unless you reach out to God with that mustard seed of faith in Him, forget the mountain, you will turn blue in the face trying to move the lint out of the corner of your cell and fail.

I wanted to exhort all the men and women to continue their quest to better themselves through Christ and self-help; now that my name and Aubrey’s name are attached to this Butler term-fixing policy, it terrifies me to think lifers will become complacent and get out, only to commit another crime. Let’s not give the State any reason whatsoever to say “see, we told you so.” Let’s give them confidence in this new policy to sentence lifers justly and release them into society, with our less-than one percent recidivism rate (total inmate recidivism rate in CA is 88%). Rah rah lifers! Atta-boy, fellas! You’ve made us proud, and surely will continue to do so.

I want to exhort and encourage the girls at those prisons (CCWF & CIW), whom I have rallied for before the courts in this case, even mentioning their sterilization abuse by CDCR, where the state “appears” to have been practicing eugenic on the most obvious candidates’. Yes, its true. They used to, up till the 1950’s, and they apologized publically for the latest boo-boo. At CIW, sister Rhonda Leland pushed to have Santa Monica College come in to do a self- help seminar here. She’s quite impressive and deserves some recognition. I hope you guys mention that I’m the one here asking for you guys to recognize her. I want to motivate the girls to follow her example, I think the women’s prisons are much more bleak and dire, stressful,. And difficult than ours. Their lifers, (like Rhonda) are much less likely to parole than men in the same predicament. That may just be my personal perception, but Bob, please ask Linda to put you in her position, as to what it would feel like to be a woman lifer, perhaps already with children.

Empathy is key. I hope M.O.M. can give a small space to this testimony, the attaboys and the exhortations I’m presenting. This is a one-time thing, since this is HUGEMONGOUS news. It is a good opportunity to witness of God’s great goodness to so many still in doubt, through the M.O.M. newsletter. **Rudy Gonzalez**

Los Angeles Times

Parole board to set minimums for life-term prisoners Corrections officials agree to the change in a settlement in the case of a convicted killer who said he was unjustifiably denied parole. Up to 35,000 inmates could be affected.

December 16, 2013, 10:01 p.m.

SACRAMENTO — State corrections officials agreed Monday to a major change in California's parole system that could lead to earlier releases for convicted killers and other inmates sentenced to a maximum of life in prison but who are still eligible for parole.

The settlement stems from a legal action filed by an inmate at the prison in Soledad, who was sentenced to 15 years to life for a 1987 murder and claimed that his application for parole was routinely and unjustifiably denied for 10 years.

"For decades, the Board of Parole Hearings has left these guys completely in the dark as to when they might ever have a chance of getting out," said Jon Streeter, the court-appointed attorney for the prisoner whose case prompted the unexpected settlement. Under the settlement, approved Monday by state Court of Appeal Justice J. Anthony Kline in San Francisco, the state Board of Parole Hearings is required to establish the minimum time that should be served before an inmate is released.

Those sentences are to be based on the circumstances of the crime, so that killers convicted of torture, for instance, would draw the longest terms.

For inmates to be held beyond that minimum sentence, a parole board would have to demonstrate why they are a danger to the public.

Until now, parole commissioners waited until after prisoners were found suitable for release before calculating a minimum sentence. By then, many inmates had overstayed the minimum sentence for the circumstances of their crime.

The policy change could affect the time served of nearly 35,000 inmates — one out of four of those in California's crowded prisons — who received maximum life sentences with the possibility of parole. Those included killers, kidnappers and 8,800 third-strike felons.

"It is a remarkable settlement," said Stanford law professor Robert Weisberg, whose own research documented remarkably low crime rates by those life-sentence inmates who have been released.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation did not immediately comment on the settlement. It is signed by parole board Executive Officer Jennifer Shaffer.

Advocates for crime victims and their families were unsure Monday how the policy change might play out. They already are concerned that Gov. Jerry Brown and his appointed parole commissioners allow far more prisoners facing sentences up to life to be

paroled than did previous governors. Since January, Brown has allowed 454 convicted killers to be paroled.

"Our biggest concern is that those people coming back into our communities are safe to do so," said Christine Ward, executive director for the Sacramento-based Crime Victims Action Alliance. "We want to make sure in every decision the parole board makes and every decision the governor allows to go forward, that these individuals are safe and they will not create another victim."

The state appellate judge who signed Monday's settlement had questioned the constitutionality of California's long prison stays in a separate case last year and, in that ruling, provided the legal road map for the case that led to the settlement.

Kline was the governor's legal advisor in 1977, when Brown signed the determinate sentencing law, which sets fixed-length sentences for most crimes but left so-called term-to-life penalties in place for murder.

The settlement requires the state to begin crafting new policies "as soon as is practicable," but does not take full effect until Kline decides the appeal of the man who filed the case, a 46-year-old prisoner who has been refused parole five times.

Roy Butler was convicted in the 1987 stabbing death of a man who regularly and severely beat a friend, court records show. Butler at first arranged an attack on the man to stop the abuse of the woman.

While the man sought treatment for those injuries, Butler and a friend decided the abuser should die. His accomplice stabbed the man as he walked into his apartment, while Butler, who panicked, hid in the bathroom with a knife.

He was sentenced to 15 years to life in prison and had his first parole hearing in 1998. Although Butler had no history of violence or drug use, parole boards repeatedly refused to release him. In 2012, commissioners dwelt on unsatisfactory post-release plans, and whether he showed enough insight into his crime.

"I'm sure you recognize it, but I would have liked not only for you to recognize it ... but to articulate it," one commissioner said, according to the parole hearing transcript.

Butler's lawyers calculate that he should have been given a minimum term of 16 to 18 years, but that minimum term was never set by the parole board.

A 2011 Stanford study found that killers who are eligible for parole at 16 years because of credits for good behavior served an average of 27 years behind bars.

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Allowing Troubles to Grow Us Up

James 1: 2-4

Dear brothers and sisters, whenever trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything.

This morning I was writing in my diary and I wrote this: “10 freakin years of my life.....it took me 10 years of my life to understand how to say simply that I will not compromise anymore.” I started to cry as I was writing this as I really was struck by the part about “10 years.” It suddenly felt like such a long time. Here I am, 57 years old and it was not until I was 46 years old did I start my own recovery and then 10 years down the road after I started, I finally had reached a place where I was able to put boundaries in my life where I started to love and respect myself and say no to compromising my life.

What really started all of this internal processing the last few days is someone asking me to do something that I would have done 10 years ago and did do 10 years ago. During my writing and thinking I realized my answer is simply “no”.....that I won’t compromise myself anymore. I kept writing about it and suddenly this morning I found myself grateful for the question, grateful for the trial, grateful for me being able to see that although it took 10 years, ultimately it’s really alright with me. I was writing about this and I was very aware that as a child, I’d been taught to compromise my body. I was literally trained by those who had abused me to a pattern of allowing others to use me. I felt a variety of emotions as I was feeling these words. I was mad inside as I wrote this. I should be angry inside as it was not alright that I had been literally taught by the hand of others to compromise my body and disregard myself. But after I felt what I felt and cried a little, I really felt true gratitude for this person to ask me this question now. I felt thankful for the test. If this person had not asked me to do something that challenged me, how would I ever have really had to process this, that now the answer is “no.” What a blessing really is how I feel.

I started to feel what a blessing the trials and temptations really can be. I could see how God has used all these years to grow me up. Yes, at times it feels like it does take too long. I know at times I’ve felt like I’d fail, fail and fail, but I’d hang in there, keep trying and never let the Father go. God let me be me is what He did. He doesn’t want to take over and have us live like robots. He wants our growth to be real, sincere and genuine in our hearts. I know He never left me alone. His promise of being with me, holding me, lifting me up was His place in my life. I was and am secure in Him. Keeping it real, I did have the human being side of me that cried and I got angry about 10 years of my life to learn to love myself. I was overwhelmed for a minute with that amount of time. But now I do love myself, respect myself enough to not compromise anymore. That’s real those feelings and I won’t deny that as a human, that seems a long time. But in my heart and in the spirit within me, I feel such joy and peace that I have grown with God to this place in my life.

When I found myself being grateful for the trial, grateful for the challenge, I thought about these verses in James and just how true they are. Without the trials and

temptations how could we see all that the Father is doing in our lives? We can be genuine with others and God about our emotions and our feelings. We can work out our faith with truth and in the light. God can work with hearts that stay open to His love. If we live in the light as He is in the light, I believe God can and does do amazing things in our lives. When reality hits us, then we face it knowing we are not alone. I can see now God is never late as He is at work in our lives. He desires we understand that He can heal us in all ways, in all areas and it's real. There is no half way with God. There is no partial healing in His will for our lives. He desires we give our all; we surrender completely to His ways, His love and His grace. His love is real and His mercy is everlasting. Each of us is such a rare treasure in the eyes of our Father.

By **Carol Ann**

Word from Bob: M.O.M. is so blessed to have God lead Carol in the way she serves this ministry. Carol has been secretary of M.O.M. since we did the 501(c)3 non-profit corporation in January 2012

HERE I AM

Submitted by
Brother Gene

There is a term for the gap that exists between our moral beliefs and our daily behavior. The term is called, the state of confusion. If our actions are in tune with our values, we'll feel good about ourselves and life will work as smoothly as it can. If we act contrary to what we believe in, we will gradually dislike ourselves and life will be a constant struggle. The latter is how my life was prior to incarceration.

Coming to prison has forced me to look deeper within myself and find a meaning to my life. In order to find meaning to my life, I needed to find meaning to my suffering. A portion of the suffering comes from the influence of a piece of society which no longer recognizes individuals in prison, as human beings with minds and with families. There is a forced primitiveness in prison life, but in spite of this setting, I have been able to deepen my spiritual life. I have been able to come to terms with life's suffering. I've been able to retreat from my surroundings to a life of inner riches and spiritual freedom.

I am a person with inner freedom and personal value. I possess two values that no prison can strip me of: my ability to decide how I choose to react to any situation and of course my spiritual freedom. It is in this spiritual freedom that life becomes meaningful and purposeful. The way, in which I accept my fate and all it entails, the way in which I take up my cross gives me ample opportunity, even under these circumstances, to add deeper meaning to my life. When I realized my destiny was to suffer in prison, suffering became my task, my unique task. No one could suffer in my place; it was my actions which brought me here. My unique opportunity lies in how I bear my burdens.

God has created all possibilities, including the choice for me to see a miserable world or a wonderful world. We have free will to use these elements in a way which will bring more peace or more suffering. I choose to focus on Faith, Hope and Love. Faith is

profound acceptance of life's ultimate goodness no matter what happens. It's a willingness on our part to accept any immediate situation, as part of God's power and Grace and His love for us. My true faith is when I feel bruised, defeated and exhausted, but then I remember maybe this is what it feels like to be beaten and beaten until I feel the purification through my trials into a more refined state of being. I rely on my ability through God to love, not a demand to receive it.

Very often our immediate environment or circumstance is not under our control...but our choice of Faith and Love is in our control. I've discovered much of our suffering comes from a selfish mindset and much happiness comes from cherishing others. But true happiness does involve a basic love and care of self. I have learned that prior to being able to cherish others with the attitude of love and respect that is needed; we often need to give attention to our own inner healing with God. Happiness then can be our own natural state when we live a spirit centered, service centered lifestyle. This is how I choose to carry my cross.

It is true that acts of kindness may not solve the problems of hunger, poverty, racism, oil prices or prison life, but my goal is not a problem free world. My goals are attainable right here, right now! A state of love, goodwill and helpfulness between me and at least some of the people around me is my goal, instead of the state of fear, distrust and selfishness. We as human beings exist in relation to one another. Real freedom cannot be separated from our responsibility to others. To be free means to be able to respond to the needs of others, whatever the situation or circumstances. I have chosen to live this way and it wasn't easy. The way I transformed myself was to unlearn everything I had learned and allow the richness of God's love to transform me. When this took place, faith returned to me, my personal power increased and I was able to invest my faith in new beliefs. As a man of character, I have found a special attractiveness in difficulty; since only by coming to grips with difficulty can I realize its full potential. Even our worse failures can turn out to be the very building blocks of our truest selves, which as children of the Lord we become filled with the fullness of His love, compassion and humility. Romans 5:3-5

Dear Moving On Ministry,

Thanking God for your recent newsletter I received a few days ago (Volume 82). I thank God that your ministry has touched and changed many hearts. But I know that you plant the seed, someone else waters it, but God does the rest.

I was at "old Corcoran" for 6 years and enjoyed when your ministry came to visit us, but here at CSATF we don't get many ministries from the outside. I pray to God that He will make a way for you to come here. I know that nothing is impossible with God.

Thank you once again for all the newsletters I have received thru out the years.

Your Brother in Christ
Francisco Garcia

Living Bible

His name is Bill. He has wild hair, wears a T-shirt with holes in it, jeans, and no shoes. This was literally his wardrobe for his entire four years of college.

He is brilliant. Kind of profound and very, very bright. He became a Christian while attending college.

Across the street from the campus is a well-dressed, very conservative church. They want to develop a ministry to the students but are not sure how to go about it.

One day Bill decides to go there. He walks in with no shoes, jeans, his T-shirt, and wild hair.. The service has already started and so Bill starts down the aisle looking for a seat.

The church is completely packed and he can't find a seat. By now, people are really looking a bit uncomfortable, but no one says anything.

Bill gets closer and closer and closer to the pulpit, and when he realizes there are no seats, he just squats down right on the carpet.

By now the people are really uptight, and the tension in the air is thick. About this time, the minister realizes that from way at the back of the church, a deacon is slowly making his way toward Bill.

Now the deacon is in his eighties, has silver-gray hair, and a three-piece suit. A godly man, very elegant, very dignified, very courtly. He walks with a cane and, as he starts walking toward this boy, everyone is saying to themselves that you can't blame him for what he's going to do.

How can you expect a man of his age and of his background to understand some college kid on the floor? It takes a long time for the man to reach the boy.

The church is utterly silent except for the clicking of the man's cane. All eyes are focused on him.. You can't even hear anyone breathing. The minister can't even preach the sermon until the deacon does what he has to do.

And now they see this elderly man drop his cane on the floor. With great difficulty, he lowers himself and sits down next to Bill and worships with him so he won't be alone.

Everyone chokes up with emotion. When the minister gains control, he says, **'What I'm about to preach, you will never remember. What you have just seen, you will never forget.'**

'Be careful how you live. You may be the only Bible some people will ever read!'

Next time you visit a church, look to see how the released inmate or homeless person is treated. Does the church simply allow them a place to sit (where they can find it) or does the church actually provide programs or something different for this "different" person? Do the members of the church show themselves friendly to the individual or do they try to avoid him/her?

MOVING ON MINISTRY CHAPLAIN BOB & LINDA

Update From Leenda

02-14-2014

JUST A NOTE FOR YA'LL.

1. I read the letters that come in and have to say: **PEOPLE!!! PLEASE WRITE LEGIBLY. "PRETTY PLEASE OR HANDSOME PLEASE"** ☺ ☺ I want to be sure that we respond as soon as possible but sometimes I am unable to read the letters or numbers resulting in mail being returned. So if you have written and not received an answer write again and please double check the writing. Some letters don't even have a name only last name or name of facility. For sure those did not get a response ☹☹

2. Moving On Ministry is not a pen pal program. Please understand that this is a ministry for encouragement and understanding God's Plan for you in your spiritual walk.

God is preparing our hearts for whatever is in this life's path with guidance to share His love to understand the little things that teach us compassion, patience, faith and hope. We might not understand His ways at times yet He has the perfect timing for everyone and everything. The Lord sometimes keeps us surrounded by the things that we fear or are unwilling to sacrifice until we realize that we must give in and let Him live in us. Then and only then can we understand ways of a new spiritual awakening to become more like Him. Say this:

THANK YOU LORD FOR SENDING ME INTO THE UNKNOWN FOR I KNOW YOU GO BEFORE ME TO GUIDE ME. AMEN.

IN CHRIST JESUS, Leenda / www.movingonministry.com

I Love Ruthie

By Phil A. Smouse

It can't be true! I can't go on!
Oh, everything we had is gone!
Naomi wept. Poor Ruthie cried.
Naomi's precious sons had died!

And oh, one precious, priceless son,
Naomi's son, that very one,
Was Ruthie's *husband!* Lord above!
Her one-and-only one true love!

Now, sometimes when it rains it pours,
And this time it would pour for sure!

For evil people ruled the land
As evil people sometimes can
And sometimes will and sometimes do,
When you and I allow them to!

From here to there, from there to here,
The food began to disappear!
It filled the people full of fear –
Yes, full of fear from ear to ear!

“Orpah! Ruth!” Naomi cried.
“The time has come. We must decide.
We have to leave. We cannot stay.
We cannot stay, not now no way!

From north to south, from west to east,
The men are gone. Extinct, Deceased!
Without a man,” Naomi said,
**“WE'RE ALL ABOUT AS GOOD AS
DEAD!”**

Now be cool,
some things were different then,
so don't get too upset,
amen?

“Just look at me! I'm old and wrinkled,
Sagged and bagged and crook'd and
crinkled,
Crumpled, puckered, nooked and
crannied,
Rip-Van-Winkled, gray and grannied!

Oh, there's just no hope in sight
To find another Mister Right,
Or even just a Daffy Duck,
An Elmer Fudd, or Mister Yuck!

The time has come! The time is now.
The time has come right now and how!
You must return, you *must*, I say,
Return back home, right now, today!”

Naomi prayed that they would bite
And Orpah knew that she was right.
She packed her bags without a fight
And left for home that very night.

But oh, not Ruth.
Not her. No way!
She had a thing
Or two to say . . .

“I can't return. I want to stay.
I will NOT go 'right now, today!”

“For where you are is where I'll be.
And when you stay, you'll stay with me.
And when you die, I'll die with you.
And THAT is what I'm going to do!

Your God will by MY God and He
Will surely care for you and me!”
Oh, what a thing for Ruth to say.
That kind of thing can make your day,
And make you shout “hip-hip hooray!”

They hugged and kissed, then packed up
tight
And left for Bethlehem that night.

“Naomi! Is it true?
What happened, girl? Just look at you!

Your hair! Your clothes! Your shoes!
Your toes!
Your eyes, your ears, your mouth, your
nose!
You’re looking pale. You’re looking
thin.
In fact, if we may say akin
to something that the cat dragged in!”

(Well, things looked bad, the way things
can,
But listen now, God had a plan . . .)

“Oh Naomi, please don’t cry.
Oh please don’t cry. I’ll tell you why!

I’ll find a farm. I’ll be real nice.
I’ll ask them once or maybe twice
To take our jugs and jars and snacks
And fill them of treats and snacks.

Yes, crumbs and morsels, flakes and
flecks,
Leftover kernels, crumbs and specks.
A black banana! Bagels! Lox!
Some cheese stuck to a pizza box!

I’ll beg and plead. I’ll sob and bleat!
I’ll ask them for a tasty treat –
An itty-bitsy, teeny-weeny
Tiny scrap for us to eat!”

So off she went. She did her thing.
She did it never noticing
That someone had been fastening
His bulging eyes on everything!

“Who IS that girl out in my field
And what’s she doing?” Boaz squealed.
Look AT that hair. Look AT those eyes!
Excuse me just one minute, guys,
I’ve got to go and socialize!

(No, Boaz wasn’t one to miss
an opportunity like this!)

He shaved his toes. He licked his lips.
He checked his teeth for cracks and
chips.
He combed the bugs out of his hair,
Yes, Don Juan double-debonair
With savoir-faire extraordinaire!

(Now, don’t be quick to judge, amen?
Well, don’t think what you’re thinking
then!
For Boaz was a gentleman.)

Please stay with us. Take what you
need.
Take what you need and more, indeed!”

He loaded up all Ruthie’s sacks
And jugs and jars with treats and snacks.
Yes, it WAS true love at first sight –
A double thumping-heart delight!

She headed home. Oh, what she’d
found!
Her world was turning upside-down.
She ran the whole way back to town
And ten feet above the ground.

“I’m telling you, tonight’s the night,”
Naomi grinned, “and if I’m right,
There’s only one thing left to do
To get that man to say I DO!

(So do they did. Oh, DID they do . . .)
They fluffed and puffed. They crimped
and curled.
They powdered, sweet-perfumed, and
pearled!
They thanked the Lord. They sang His
praise!
They marveled at His wondrous ways!

And off she went into the night
To have and hold her Mister Right –
Her Mister Shining-Armored Knight –
Her straight from heaven-sent delight!

Now, as I'm sure that you supposed
Boaz said "YES!" when Ruth proposed!
Yes, *RUTH* proposed. That's what I
said.
Just look it up, go right ahead.

They tied the knot and lived to be
Quite happy ever-after-ly.
And soon God blessed them with a son,
a precious, little baby one!

But wait! This story's far from done.
Because their son, he was the one
who had a son, who had a kid
known as King David. Yes, he did!

And David was the Great, Great, Great,
Great, Great (times three, times one plus
eight)
Great Grand-dad of a man whose wife
You've probably heard of all your life.

A man whose son, to be precise,
Was Jesus. No?! YES! *Jesus Christ!*

Just take a second, think it through
Oh, what God will go and do!
The kindest that you'll ever find,
The kindest that you'll ever see,
That's something else, don't you agree!?

The God of the Mountain

By Donald Domelle

When the heartaches and sorrows of life have taken hold of you
And the pain you bear you don't know what to do
The God of the mountain will come and see you through
For he is the God of the valley too.

Jesus is ever present to lift you up
And take away that bitter cup
For He will give you inner peace
And give your heart sweet release

For the God of the mountain which you view
Is the God of the valley too.
So take your heartaches and burdens that you bear
And He will put into you His loving cure.

Jonah

By David Marsh

God spoke to Jonah on his knees
Hear these words, dear Jonah, please
I need your help, my prophet, true
I need some help, some help from you

A journey, far, for me you'll go
To tell some folks what they should
know
Tell them soon, they must repent
And heed these words, that I have sent

Where is this Lord, you'd have me go
To tell these folks what they should
know
I'll tell them soon, they must repent
And from the Lord, I have been sent.

You'll take my words to Nineveh
The capital of Assyria
And straight from me, you have been
sent
Remind them of our covenant

Now, Jonah thought, why must this be
They don't deserve, divine mercy
They are pagan thugs, both tried and true
They don't deserve, a chance from You

So Jonah left, off on his trip
To thwart his God, he took a ship
To Tarshish, soon the ship would sail
God's plan for him, he meant to fail.

The ship took to sail the sea
While Jonah slept defiantly
It tossed and pitched while Jonah slept
With mighty waves the decks were
swept

They cast their lots to find the curse
And while they did the storm got worse
They tossed their load into the sea
And prayed their gods would let them be

And Jonah said it just might be
My God is mad, He's mad at me
To save your lives, to set you free
Then cast me out into the sea

They listened close to Jonah's voice
And knew quite well they had no choice
They tossed him quickly out on the seas
It calmed the waves, and stopped the
breeze

Now God's great plan for Jonah meant
He still must go where he'd been sent
And Nineveh must yet be saved
God raised his hands, His hands he
waived

Then from the deep, there rose a fish
A giant fish, as God had wished
He found the man, an ate him whole
He swallowed him, flesh, clothes and
soul

Now Jonah prayed while in the fish
Lord set me free, this is my wish
Three days and nights, he stayed inside
God prepared his soul, and cured his
pride

The fish obeyed the Lord's demand
And coughed him up, upon dry land
To Nineveh, then Jonah went
And told them there, why he'd been sent

In 40 days, your end is due
For God is mad, so mad at you
And without change, he'll take the life
Of boys and girls, each man and wife.

“To be continued . . . “
