

## “Letter From M.O.M.”

The Quarterly newsletter of **Moving On Ministry**

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

[www.PrisonMinistry.net/movingon](http://www.PrisonMinistry.net/movingon)

Volume 85 – July/Aug/Sept 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](http://www.MovingOnMinistry.com)

We are also affiliated with International Prison Fellowship

[www.PrisonMinistry.net/movingon](http://www.PrisonMinistry.net/movingon)

### Fellowship

Our mailing list has cleared over 800. 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 the

**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

**Otto & Jennie Ball**  
c/o Crossroads Ministry  
P.O. Box 363  
Hyde, PA 16843

**So Blessed Ministry**  
P.O. Box 275  
Lake Isabella, CA 93240

**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

## Ministry Volunteers

**Prison Pen Pal**  
P.O. Box 235  
East Berlin, PA 17316

**Little Lambs, Inc**  
John & Eileen Sala  
P.O. Box 32  
Sebring, FL 33871-0032

**Rose Marie Jones**  
54 Albion  
Jacksonville, IL 62650

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

**World Challenge**  
P.O. Box 260  
Lindale, TX 75771-0260

**Koinonia Homes of Hope**  
1300 S. Crowe St/  
Visalia, CA 93277

**Trinity Broadcasting**  
P.O. Box Z  
Santa Ana, CA 92711

**Matthew 15:36 Prison Ministry**  
Attn, Anton  
P.O. Box 1821  
Somerset, KY 42502

## 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 #.

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## 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."

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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**" (48 pages), the "**Pen Pal Friends**" (**discontinued**), ALL past newsletters ("**Letter From M.O.M.**"), inmate lookup links, and artwork are available to be viewed or downloaded.

[www.MovingOnMinistry.com](http://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 as funds available.**

**Pen Pals Discontinued**

\$.91 for Resources (6 X 9 envelope)

\$.49-\$1.32 for Newsletter postage

(Donations Welcome)

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## 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 Your life lessons
2. Your godly passions
3. The Good News

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## Readily Available Printouts

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.

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## Where God Guides, He Provides

What doors God opens, no man can shut, and what doors God shuts, no man can open. *Perhaps we are entering into a new season of life.*

M.O.M. recognizes our **fiduciary** responsibility with budget and spending. In over 12 years of ministry (started April 2002), not one nickel has been used as payroll for members and volunteers. We have had said to us "So. You do it for free?" And we reply "Actually we pay to do what we do."

After much prayer (especially by Linda), M.O.M. was started in April 2002 with Chaplain Bob doing visitation to **Bob Wiley Detention Facility** on each Monday. Soon Bob was visiting on Mondays and Thursdays, and even snuck in a few Wednesdays and 2 Sundays. Soon Bob and Linda joined the Bill Glass First Team as volunteers and were in more prisons of California (even Ottawa Co. Jail in Grand Rapids, MI.) Bob and Linda got clearance to be escorted by the chaplain and to do chapel services at Corcoran State prison about 2003. Eventually Brown cards were issued for Corcoran, Avenal and C.M.C. prisons in California and Bob and Linda scheduled regular services at the facilities. In October 2003 the newsletter "**Letter From M.O.M.**" was started with about 150 on the mailing list. There has been rapid growth on this mailing list with current active mailing list at just over 800.

After praying the prayer of Jabez, the territory covered grew and put more requirements on Bob & Linda. Annual training of 8 hours was required at each facility we ministered to and a new photo had to be scheduled annually at each facility. There was also the 6 services scheduled each month at Corcoran and Avenal, and the C.M.C. service scheduled quarterly. Reaching out to Federal Penitentiaries in Tucson, AZ and the Oregon women's prison at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility expanded our territory (much as the Prayer of Jabez). We made several requests to federal penitentiaries in California and a private prison in Pahrump, NV. We had many delays and losses of paperwork for clearance. Outreach, time off from work and travel expenses increased.

Publication costs continued to rise as our mailing list rose from 150 to over 800 for active mailing, and printing approximately 1100 newsletters to include handouts. Postage for 800 newsletters in May 2014 was \$392.00 (stamps only), plus cost of printing and envelopes. Cost of paper, toner, printers, envelopes, etc. increased. Transportation costs increased. We have cut back to printing ½ page size, went from color printing to black and white printing, bought printers through county surplus, and have run out of things to trim. Bob has been described as being so cost conscious that he can squeeze the buffalo off a nickel. Bob is planning to retire from his full-time county job in October and the income will not be there to cover the additional expenses. One of the financial

cuts is to cut the newsletter back again to quarterly. It is with sadness we make this decision, since we started with a quarterly publication, then went to bi-monthly and then monthly. As mailing list increased we found our publishing going from monthly, to bi-monthly, to quarterly.

It is unknown why, but churches are not supporting jail/prison ministries as missions or evangelism ministries. As mentioned in the previous newsletter, we wrote to 144 churches and not one reply back from any. If the churches (and even individuals) would come into the prisons one time and see the change in lives, they would have a new reality. We know that not all are reached in the prison chapel, but how many people do we have in the church congregations that are actually too satisfied because of not getting out of their comfort zones. As Eric stated during the Soledad Prison ministry trip, "Put them in something other than their prison uniforms, and you would think you were in a regular church service, except these ones are more dedicated." We have individuals in each prison that are fluent in Greek and Hebrew. Many of them do not have pay numbers (jobs) so they use the time to study the Bible and theology 6 hours a day.

Bob & Linda monthly donations to help cover additional expenses (excluding mileage travel expenses); Although the ministry was started in April 2002, the 501(c)(3) non-profit was not gained till Dec.19, 2011, with fiscal year running Jan. 1 to Dec. 31.

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Jan 2012 - - - - \$ 918.67	Jan 2013 - - - - \$ 199.44
Feb 2012 - - - - \$ 238.12	Feb 2013 - - - - \$ 584.12
Mar 2012 - - - - \$ 265.86	Mar 2013 - - - - \$ 657.54
Apr 2012- - - - - \$ 464.21	Apr 2013- - - - - \$ 343.08
May 2012 - - - - \$ 353.33	May 2013- - - - - \$ 732.49
Jun 2012 - - - - \$ 720.42	Jun 2013 - - - - \$ 93.52
Jul 2012- - - - - \$ 605.76	Jul 2013- - - - - \$ 31.32
Aug 2012 - - - - \$ 305.29	Aug 2013 - - - - \$ 534.20
Sep 2012- - - - \$ 276.42	Sep 2013- - - - \$ 533.24
Oct 2012- - - - \$1089.35	Oct 2013 - - - - \$ 892.15
Nov 2012 - - - - \$ 274.36	Nov 2013 - - - - \$ 74.97
Dec 2012 - - - - \$ 173.58	Dec 2013 - - - - \$ 505.04
<hr/>	<hr/>
2012 Total- - - - <b>\$5712.28</b>	2013 Total- - - - <b>\$5181.11</b>
Average - - - - - <b>\$ 476.02</b>	Average - - - - - <b>\$ 431.76</b>
Jan 2014 - - - - - \$ 415.05	Jun 2014 - - - - - \$
Feb 2014 - - - - - \$ 461.55	2014 Currant- - <b>\$3046.58</b>
Mar 2014 - - - - - \$ 778.54	Average - - - - - <b>\$ 609.32</b>
Apr 2014 - - - - - \$ 692.20	
May 2014- - - - - \$ 698.24	

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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.

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Good Morning Lord, I ask you into my life, to be my Savior and forgive me of my sins as I forgive others. To create in me a pure heart and mind and to remove all ungodly thoughts and behaviors from me. I fully surrender and submit my life and will to you and ask you to fill me with your Holy Spirit of truth, thru faith, so that all my thoughts, words and actions come from you today. I desire your will, kingdom and righteousness both now and forevermore and ask you to lead, guide and direct me in all I think, say and do with the strength to carry it out, so that I live, in full obedience to you and that all I say and do today glorifies you and your name, according to your will for me, for my good, by the power of the Holy Spirit for your glory, while hearing you and your word, through sowing all good fruit of the Spirit, in Jesus Christ I ask, thank, love and pray. Amen

**By Jason Kurtz**

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Just a quick note for you all: I had to share this photo of this sunflower plant and the watermelon garden. You get the seed, plant it, care for it, water it and watch it grow. The person who planted this from seeds took time to care for the garden. Just like God would want for us to take care of our heart and everything around us. We all have it in us to make the effort because God has given us that choice. What are you doing about it??? Think of how much more you could accomplish.



You are an adult. Now check out who planted this garden ☺ A two year old little girl: Sophia ☺ Okay, now it is your turn. Send us your story of what you have planted. Her mom is doing what the Lord has blessed her with Sunday school and working with children, artist, teacher, employed and I just love what the Lord is doing in their lives. Great job Vanna. God Bless you all.

In Christ Jesus, Linda

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## **Trusting God Instead of Using ‘Friends’**

Before I met Christ, I was on a mission to go in all directions, never settling down. I would do all sorts of stuff to get by in life. I never had a home to call my own. I would just stay at different places to rest my head. I had good friend whom I took advantage of just so I could get by for day. I wasn't bad in any other ways towards them, they trusted and loved me as a 'friend.' I was only their friend when I needed something . . . a place to sleep, food, etc. I was a big time drinker (beer, whiskey) and I did drugs, which caused me not to have a home to call my own.

I had this one good Christian friend, Beverly, who lived by herself, and had 4 little dogs. She would always invite me to stay at her place to watch movies and just be around and I took advantage of them. She enjoyed my company and I enjoyed her hospitality, all I could get. I knew her for 7 years before I got locked up. She is a few years younger than me, but heard she passed away a couple years ago, which I hope is not true.

Now after 12 long years of being locked away from society I have come to understand the love of Christ has given me during my life. He gave me the opportunity while I was out to better myself, but now I am here (in prison) and I understand God's will, that He never gives up, and from now on I will be a better person for Christ, do right by others, and for a better life of no greed, or using others just to benefit my needs and words.

Well I pray that when I am a free man, my life will be good and I will be able to help others in need. I will do my best to ask in prayer for God's guidance and direction, as I will be on my own once I get out. Pray that I do not start using others as I did before, but rather to be there as support is needed.

**Ernie Fountain**

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**1 cross + 3 nails = 4 given**

**Some people are kind, polite and sweet-spirited, until you try to sit in their pews.**

**Quit complaining about your church; if it was perfect, you couldn't belong**

**If a church wants a better pastor, it only needs to pray for the one it has.**

**Be ye 'fisher's of men' – you catch em and He'll clean them.**

**Forbidden fruits create many jams.**

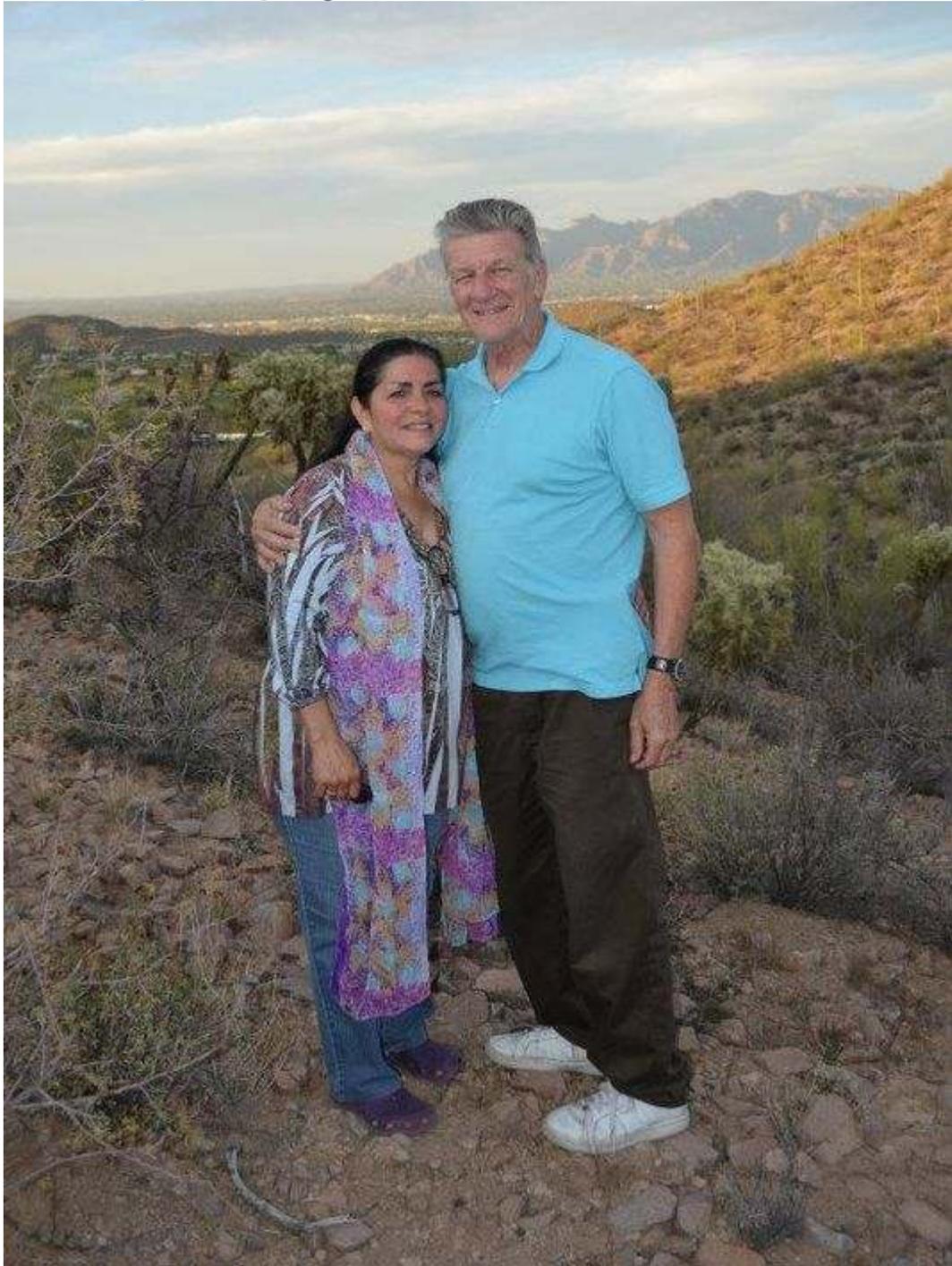
**Don't put a question mark where God puts a period.**

**God grades on the cross, not the curve.**

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## **Visalia couple help change prisoners’ hearts**

Teresa Douglass, [tdouglass@visaliatimesdelta.com](mailto:tdouglass@visaliatimesdelta.com) 10:27 a.m. PDT June 6, 2014



Linda and Bob Kaiser take a moment for a photograph on their way to the federal penitentiary in Tucson, Arizona. Through their nonprofit *Moving On Ministry*, they encourage inmates to change their lives. (Photo: Submitted Vanessa Birman)

For more than 30 years, Bob Kaiser had a hardened nature when it came to convicted criminals.

“My attitude was let’s lock them all up and throw away the key,” he said.

That was before he met his wife, Linda, who prayed about starting a jail ministry before he relented to the idea.

Once Kaiser visited some prisons, he said he realized some of the inmates were good people.

“I got sold out on it,” he said. “I love it because I see lives change.”

By day, he’s the data center administrator for the Tulare County government, but on weekends he and his wife travel to California prisons, offering hope to inmates with Moving On Ministry, the nonprofit he founded in 2002.

They are both volunteers and do not take a salary from the nonprofit. He said he’s an ordained chaplain but considers himself a volunteer.

“We’re a mission outreach,” he said.

For almost 13 years, they’ve visited half of the prisons in California including state prisons in Corcoran, Avenal and San Luis Obispo. Every two months, they mail more than 800 newsletters containing personal testimonials and reflections about God to inmates, other ministries, ex-inmates and their relatives.

He also writes a personal letter to 50-60 inmates a week, averaging about eight a day, he said.

Most of the time, the Kaisers pay the \$392 cost to print and mail the newsletter. But sometimes inmates and ex-inmates donate stamps and money to keep the newsletters coming.

Kaiser sent two M.O.M. newsletters to lifer Charles Manson at Corcoran State Prison but the convicted serial killer never replied.

This weekend, the Kaisers return to Corcoran for four chapel services including one for the hard core lifers without parole. This group has a positive attitude, Kaiser said.

“They know what their next home is,” he said.

Once, by request, he performed a foot washing ceremony and communion service for a serial killer.

At the prison, as few as 15 prisoners or as many as 300 prisoners attend their church service. First his wife gives a testimonial, they share Scripture and sometimes an inmate's story. Then Kaiser preaches.

"We make it like a smorgasbord or buffet," he said. "We let them know they are loved and their life can be changed."

He shoots for a 3 percent success rate. That's enough to keep him going back. He said he's encouraged when inmates stand in the rain or hot weather waiting to get into the chapel for a service provided by Moving On Ministry.

During one recent service at the California Men's Colony in San Luis Obispo, an inmate told Linda the service was not over yet. About 200 of them stood up and sang "Jesus, Lover of My Soul."

"She was in tears," her husband said.

### **How to help**

#### **What:**

Moving On Ministry, a 501c3 nonprofit

#### **Donations:**

Go online to [www.movingonministry.com](http://www.movingonministry.com) or mail a check to;  
P.O. Box 6667  
Visalia, CA. 93290.

#### **Info:**

If interested in becoming a volunteer, contact Chaplain Bob Kaiser at [Bob@MovingOnMinistry.com](mailto:Bob@MovingOnMinistry.com).

**Website:** [www.movingonministry.com](http://www.movingonministry.com).

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## Tennessee Will Offer Free College Tuition To High School Graduates



CREDIT: AP

In June, Tennessee lawmakers passed a bill that will make tuition free for all high school graduates who go to a two-year college. It now heads to Gov. Bill Haslam (R)'s desk, who has made it a signature part of his campaign to improve the state's graduation rates from 32 percent to 55 percent by 2025.

Beyond graduating from high school, students who participate in the Tennessee Promise program will have to maintain a 2.0 grade point average, attend mandatory meetings, work with a mentor, and do community service. After they graduate two-year colleges, they can enroll in a four-year school as juniors.

The program, which is expected to cost about \$34 million a year, will be paid for using \$300 million in excess lottery reserve funds and by creating a \$47 million endowment. The bill also lowers the state's current scholarship for four-year colleges, which is funded with lottery money, from \$4,000 to \$3,500 for freshmen and sophomores, although it will increase to \$4,500 for juniors and seniors.

Tennessee will be the first state to offer free college tuition, although Florida, Mississippi, and Oregon are considering similar plans. Others have looked at so-called "pay it forward" plans that allow students to attend community colleges or public universities at no cost but require them to pay a certain portion of their income after graduation — one model would have community college students pay 1.5 percent of their incomes for 20 years after graduation.

But the federal government could go even further than any of these states. For the amount that it already spends on subsidizing the cost of college through grants, tax breaks, and work-study funds — or about \$69 billion — it could instead make tuition at all public colleges free for about \$63 billion. (The government spends another \$107.4 billion on student loans, given it even more funds to use for this purpose.) While not everyone would attend a public university, it would incentivize private ones to lower costs in order to compete with the free option.

All of these plans come at a time when the cost of going to college has risen dramatically, shooting up 27 percent at a public four-year college and 13 percent at a private school. To help finance their educations, more and more students are taking on debt, but many of them end up in default.

**NOTE From Bob;** This should help deter crime as more individuals are trained for a professional career field.

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**UPDATE FROM MICHAEL HESS**

Dear Chaplain Bob & Linda

It was really super being able to talk to you'all this past weekend holiday. I really can't put into words you'all's influence on my thinking and such. I mentioned you'all in my interview to gain admittance where I am presently living. You'all came up in conversation with my parole officer. The social worker from the V.A. that drove me up here to Lake City urged me to never loose contact with you'all. I told him there was no worry of that.

But on another thought. This past weekend was Memorial Day week-end. We take time to honor our veterans. To people that did their patriotic duty. Not all of us vets did so well when we first got out of our branch of the service. I know I didn't, and I paid for it.

But I'm out of prison and this past Wednesday (May 21, 2014) was 1 year out. Doesn't sound like a lot, but to me it as a pretty big deal (most inmates are only out 2 to 8 months), and a step towards my re-integration into society.

While in prison I kind of kept to my own little area, and that worked for me. But in society, if you're a hermit like existence impedes your growth. Too many different things are happening for you to stick your head in a hole, hoping for the best.

If you want to achieve your maximum ability, you have to have your eyes, ears and heart wide open. If not, some really good opportunities well might pass you by. You have to be receptive to new ideas. Our old ones (mine anyways) didn't turn out so healthy for us. We need to change. We probably could use some help. Its out there. You just have to look for it when it is in your environment. Please don't stop looking. It ususally doesn't happen overnight, but you never know, it might be right around the corner.

Don't get held back by past mistakes. They happened, learn from them and let that make you stronger. Realize your full self-potential. Don't short change yourself. God bless you all.

Michael Hess (2268A-7)  
Robert H. Jenkin's Dom.  
751 SE Sycamore Terrace  
Lake City, FL 32025

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# Branscombe Richmond's Biography

Branscombe Richmond is a truly legendary Hollywood entertainer. He is best known for his portrayal of Bobby Six Killer in the recent hit television show *Renegade* with Lorenzo Lamas and Kathleen Kinmont. Portraying a Native American Indian bounty hunter, Richmond brought action, humor and style to the part. Six Killer's pastel blazers, Hummer and laughing outbursts quickly became mainstays of the long running series. Branscombe himself even directed several episodes of *Renegade*, one of the few non-network shows to exceed 100 episodes in syndication.



**Branscombe Richmond and Linda**

Bobby Six Killer led to widespread popularity for Branscombe. However, he had already been well established in television prior to his work with producer Steven J. Cannell on *Renegade*. Richmond has played regular characters on the network action dramas *Hawaiian Heat* and *Heart of the City*. In addition, he also made guest appearances in numerous hit shows including *Action Jackson*, *Baywatch*, *Magnum P.I.*, and *The Raven*.



A life in the movies came naturally to our star. His father, Leo Richmond, was a famous stuntman on many feature productions including *Mutiny on the Bounty* with Marlon Brando. Like father, like son, Branscombe has also worked in stunts. In several movies, he has even held the title of stunt coordinator! As a result, Richmond is often called upon for fight scenes in which he must go toe-to-toe with some of Hollywood's toughest talent. On the big screen he has battled such stars as Chuck Norris, Steven Seagal and Arnold Schwarzenegger. Unfortunately, in these clashes Branscombe is usually forced to take the fall and come out bruised, beaten or dead. However, before Richmond departs from a movie, the gentle giant always puts up a tough fight and brings enormous realism to his role.

Yet, Branscombe's finest contributions have come in the B-movie world. There he has landed such leading roles as Don Ho in the 1993 classic *Da Vinci's War*. Playing a homeless Vietnam Vet, Richmond was forced to lead his troops once again, this time against international spies and hit men. In what proved to be a career highlight, his portrayal of Tony in the 1994 action flick *Hard Vice* was acclaimed by action movie fans. Working with B-industry stalwarts Sam Jones and Shannon Tweed, Branscombe played a brutal mobster to perfection. This rise culminated with PM Entertainment's 1995 feature *To The Limit*. In this Anna Nicole Smith vehicle, Branscombe served as executive producer and second unit director, as well as reprising his character of Don Ho (aka Don Williams).

Branscombe has turned his attention towards conquest of the music world. Encouraged by longtime friend Wayne Newton, he has formed a country-rock band "*Branscombe Richmond and the Renegade Posse*". As lead singer, Richmond has brought his classic style and humor to the group and they played gigs in places as diverse as Las Vegas and Switzerland.

With the cancellation of *Renegade* a long and successful chapter of Branscombe's life has come to a close. In the show, he worked closely with his good friend Lorenzo Lamas. Richmond even served as best man in Lamas' 1996 wedding to Shauna Sand. TV fans everywhere are hoping that a new series will come along soon reuniting the legendary duo. Last known, the happy-go-lucky star and family man, Branscombe lives in Los Angeles with his wife Lei and four children.

# Linda's Testimony

## Linda's Life



What a great God we serve!!

When my husband asked me to share my testimony I had a picture of my mother and father and the small towns of Fowler and Selma California in my mind. We lived in a three room house with only a light bulb hanging from the middle of the ceiling. There was no plumbing, no bathroom but we did have a woodstove. The outhouse was a distance from the house. We drew water from a well until we graduated to a pump. Years later my "daddy" and "mama" added pipes for a sink and we thought we were rich. We grew all of our own vegetables, had to go out to the henhouse to collect the eggs daily and took care of the Coolidge Ranch consisting of irrigating, pruning, picking grapes, driving tractor etc.... It was the neatest experience. It was survival.

We did not get into town very often so when we did it was a treat. We would visit my dad's family in Tulare and my mom's in Visalia California. If we went to church it was for a wedding, funeral, Easter or Christmas that I could remember.

The earliest experience of any prayer that I could remember was an elderly lady by the name of Nellie Metzler and her husband Henry. When the Wizard of Oz would come out on TV every year they would pick up all of us kids and take us to their house. Nellie would pray for our delicious chocolate cake and glass of milk while we sat to watch the movie on this big blanket that was laid out for us in front of the "color" TV. Color TV! Wow! To see color for the first time and listen to Judy Garland sing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." There is just something about that song that stayed with me. I could picture myself singing, seeking for answers that would lead to a beautiful new world where there was no tears and everyone was filled with a joy and love for each other.

I did not realize that "Nellie" was put in my path to pray for me until 1992. Thank God that she was a prayer warrior. She was also the person that gave me this book called "All About Trees" and told me to read and I could travel all over the world anytime. Yes, I do love to read and write and encourage others to do so.

My father was a very hardworking man. He was also an alcoholic which led to the abuse of my beautiful mother. In my teens, during their divorce I started hanging around with people who were eight to ten years older than me. WRONG!!

Selma When I was 12 or 13 years old I was brutally and violently raped by a relative whom I trusted. Being dragged down a dirt field by the hair is like those cartoons

shown of cavemen dragging the female. With a can opener to my throat and after fighting for my life I finally stopped when I felt this calm over me as if I was not to move anymore. (I am still alive. Thank you Lord!)

My heart was shattered, my mind was confused and the silent rage filled my being. Every person was a target of my fury. The twig of anger turned into a bush of bitterness. Finding myself "alone" in all of this ugliness I chose to "survive". I vowed that on one was ever going to hurt me again. I delved in new age not knowing that it was leading to a nightmare of hell. I did not know any other way until the day I accepted Jesus Christ into my life in 1992. Praise the Lord!!

I did not care about anyone but myself. I wanted to belong somewhere so like a magnet all my friends were about in the same boat. I was living a wild and very dangerous and promiscuous lifestyle. Misery loves company. That is so sad that some people live life through a tunnel vision. They cannot see the whole picture.

I had my first child at 16, married at 18, had my second child, divorced by 22 and lived (not married) with my third child's father for another 7 years. During my first marriage I usually ended up by myself with my children. My husband at that time was a heroin addict of which I would go visit him in prisons all over dragging my children along with me.

I was at death's door at least 6 times either by being almost strangled, beatings, knifed, or shot, well, you name it. We lived in a little cabin in back of my in-laws. Actually it was my then husband's grandparents who raised him. Whenever Grandma would hear any screams he would try to cover my mouth so he did not have to confront any of them and yell back to her...."Nothing is going on. We are okay." [Liar, Liar pants on fire :>)]. I would get slapped across my face, onto the bed, his knees would be on my shoulders and I would get called every name in the book as he slapped me back and forth until I would get away which would land me next to the little frig, get slapped toward the stove then slapped to the floor. It was a never ending story. Usually happening on Friday or Saturday nights after he would come home and I would find matchbooks with from the Rainbow Ballroom or he would smell of perfume. It was always something. (That is if anyone remembers those "OLDIES DANCES".) There were always other women in his life. I was no naive in what was going on all around me. One day I had just about enough and in self defense I grabbed the scissors where I had them up to neck and until I heard "Grandma's" voice then I pulled back and I was safe.....for one day.

Being in and out of prison is no life for children and thinking there was no way out I felt lost and hopeless. I did not go to church besides visit and never got connected. I finally chose to get divorced leading to dead end relationships that were like a revolving door, over and over again.

The relationship I had for seven years was a roller coaster of emotions. I carried all the excess baggage with me everywhere. This relationship was full of arguments, no trust and insecurity. I had one child from that relationship. My son was loved by everyone and was tragically killed with his best friends in a fiery auto accident. He was a marine and home for several weeks when this happened. It involved alcohol. The enemy never sleeps.

Kings James 1 Peter 5:8,  
NIV version 1 Peter 5:8

If I had not known the Lord then, even the little that I knew at that time during my life, I shudder to think where I would have been now. I had two more children without their fathers in their lives.

During 1990 I moved to Visalia. The doors were opening in all areas of my life. I started working with the developmentally challenged, office, auto dismantlers and as a

merchandise working all over the valley. God sent several people in my path to encourage me. I was married in 1994, very involved in my church so when I was served with divorce papers it was as if I was going through the grieving stages of another death. I was devastated. In James 1:2-8 the scriptures speak of "when you face trials" not "if", for they will surely come. The only thing you have to rely on is to have faith and trust in God. Like Jeremiah 29:11 and also Colossians 4:17 where Paul writes; Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."

Well we have been given gifts, yes...You! You and I and we have to use them. It is like a nugget of gold. You use it to share the gospel and it increases in value everyday as you go out in obedience for His glory. It could be singing, using an instrument, reading to others, writing, sewing, painting, art, math, woodworking, ironwork, gardening...etc, etc, etc. Those skills are perfected and the giver of gifts will be well pleased..."he that is faithful in little will be faithful in much" What I am getting at is for you to look back at your childhood. What are your skills and gifts and how have you used them? What did you want to be when you grew up? Did you lose your dream? It has been said that the richest place in the world is the graveyard where people's hopes and dreams are buried along with them. The time is now! Do not wait a second longer. Pray for guidance in whatever you do. Maybe you will end up in Africa as my husband and I did. You do not know but I suggest you start getting prepared for this great adventure. If that train pulls up at your station I suggest you get on. Don't let that enemy put doubts in your head or allow him to set these words in your mind and heart like "I'll wait for the right time", "Maybe later", "I don't believe I am ready yet", or the classic:

"Look at you! Who is going to believe you, after what you have done!?" That dirty devil is the author of lies, deceit, confusion and the lord of the flies.

I am here today to write this because I know that we serve a great God and God loves me. As a young child I was robbed of my youth, joy and hope. When I realized that Jesus took it all for me I asked Him into my heart. He had to be the Lord of my life for the rest of my life. I asked for forgiveness and gave up trying to carry that heavy load of guilt, anger, sadness and the pity parties that I was the host of and was the guest of honor. Like I said misery loves company. If you want to be a winner you have to hang around with winners. Think back at your life and ask God to guide you from this day forward. Allow your life to be filled with a joy that is so overwhelming that you cannot contain it and share it with everyone. You can have it now. Just ask Jesus in complete submission. (search your heart)

Lord, I am here today because I am a sinner. I repent of my sins and ask for forgiveness of \_\_\_\_\_ (tell Him now) I accept Jesus Christ as my savior and into my heart. I trust in you from this moment on. Give me a hunger for your word. Guide me in the gifts that you have given me so I may serve and share of You daily and whatever I do and say will be glorifying to You. Less of me, and more of You. I am a new creature in God's kingdom. I am royalty and will act upon it accordingly. May the words of my mouth encourage others, give me the wisdom to turn away from wrong and the strength to run the race and follow you all the days of my life.

AMEN. (There, was that so hard?)

**December 15, 1992** Woodland Drive Baptist Church Office  
Pastor Ernie and Margie Martinez

When I accepted Jesus Christ in my heart was the day that I said, "Lord, please take away this ugliness in my heart. I want to have joy and peace in my heart. I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. Then all of a sudden I said; (I was truly tired and

desperate so I wanted to God to know that I meant business) “ Lord if I ever see the person who hurt me I will tell him I forgive him and tell him of Your love.” Then I said and if I ever see Nicky Cruz I will tell thank him for his book “Devil on the Run”. Margie gave that to me. The Bible is the living Word. It made this hard headed woman see the light. I got to see Nicky in Fresno and he prayed for me.

Years went by as I noticed so many changes in my life and saw how I viewed “things”. My pastor Isidro and Cleo Carrasco said to get rid of things in my house that were not godly and if in doubt get rid of it. I did as instructed. My eyes were open to all of the stuff that I was allowing into my children’s lives. I had to ask for forgiveness from my children. I then got rid of all kinds of items and broke them up ( gods, idols) thousands of dollars of books and tore them up so no one would pick them up. If we give them to others or set them where another would pick them up and use then or read them, it is opening up the window to the darkness for them and we will be accountable.

Well, one day it happened. I was singing at a funeral and low and behold there he was right across from me. There was the man that had shredded my life into pieces. The first thought that came to me was “Okay Linda, finish singing and get out of here.” I did get to see tears stream down his face under his sunglasses as I sang “Go Rest High Upon That Mountain” I started to leave when I heard a very clear voice tell me “What happened? I thought you were going to tell him about my love?”

???? Wow! I immediately asked for forgiveness and followed this person home and went up to him in front of all of his friends to ask him if I could speak to him

When he saw me it was as if he seen a giant with a facial expression that I will never forget. He walked around away from everyone and kept saying “please, don’t look at me. I’m not worth the ground you spit on.” I told him that I thought about many ways to get revenge but that on December 15, 1992 when I asked Jesus into my life there was a heart change. I told him that I was there to tell him that I forgave him and wanted to be sure that I did not go to my grave or he did not go to his grave before I told him that I had repented of all anger and bitterness against him and wanted to be sure he knew Jesus too. He cried and said please don’t tell me that. It burns like hot coals. He was like a crumpled, broken doll on his knees. I gently helped him up, hugged him and told him “I love you and now the ball is on your court. I serve an amazing God and I want you to know Him and let him be the Lord of your life too. Proverbs 25:22, Romans 12:20, NIV. Romans 12:9-21

Asking for forgiveness does wonders and heals our heart wounds. It had to be real. It was life changing and the newness and the joy I knew at that moment I could not even describe.

Psalm 18, Ephesians 6:10,  
1 Thessalonians 5:16-19

My present husband, Bob and I are growing closer.....The truth is ....At first it was a bit of a struggle for me. I would think “forget this” at times. When you are a Christian it doesn’t mean that everything is “live happily ever after”. It just means that we rely on God to guide us in our decisions especially when we “humans” get to a low point. When the storms come we are not alone, especially in blended families. There is so much more. I could go on and on about God’s miracles in my life and the lives of others that I would love to share. You may write me. God Bless you all.

God is good all the time....All the time God is good.  
In Christ Jesus, Linda.

**Inmate Art by Richard Sanchez**

