



The Language of Love Finding a way to help Mauredson

by Frank Sambrick

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” **Romans 8:28**

The despair of prison life can break even the toughest of men. Those of us who serve with CLI should know. We have seen or heard it all. Or at least we thought we had. Then we met a man named Mauredson.

Mauredson sits in an American prison in Suffield, Connecticut, but he is not American. He speaks neither English nor Spanish, only Portuguese and because of his language barrier is even more isolated than most inmates. Yet, amazingly by God's grace he found his way to CLI. But as Mauredson's story unfolded before us we would discover that as far as CLI has come in its journey to reach the imprisoned for Christ, we still have so very far to go.

Mauredson struggled mightily to answer the questions on his weekly courses. A cellmate would attempt to translate the questions and help him with some answers, but he spoke Spanish, not Portuguese so the responses became an unintelligible mixture of both languages. The Bible Minister assigned to Mauredson did not speak Portuguese and thought she was reading some rare dialect of Spanish.

Unable to effectively communicate with one another, the relationship between the two quickly became strained until one day Mauredson sent a letter to CLI, with the help of his cellmate, which stated the following: “The Bible Minister

expressed frustration for not being able to comprehend my answers to the questionnaire. I felt bad and sadness come over me when I learned the person reviewing my Lesson became frustrated. I do not want anybody to feel bad because of this letter, but I feel the need to express myself because in the Bible it says that when a person feels afflicted, that person should let it be known. I will no longer be taking the courses anymore and all I ask is that you guys pray for me as I will be praying for all of you. Thank you so much and God bless you all. Sincerely, Mauredson.”

As Mauredson's letter was circulated to staff members at CLI headquarters, there was a consensus of deep disappointment that CLI had let down even one new convert to Christ. The team began to pray for the Lord to send a Portuguese-speaking Bible minister. A week passed by, and then two. And then one day, an elderly Christian couple stopped by to donate some books. One of the CLI staffers who had read Mauredson's letter happened to be there when they arrived and offered them a tour. Unbeknownst to that staffer, or anyone else at CLI, the Christian couple was Don and Bea Crane, a missionary team that had planted churches all across Portugal in the 1970s and had even founded a Bible institute there which is still in operation today. They both spoke fluent Portuguese. And, in accordance with God's perfect plan, they had been

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FOUNDER'S NOTE

Serving in God's Presence



Kathleen Skaar, Founder

Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

John 12:26

You may recall the song, "I Want To Be Where You Are" by Don Moen. The lyrics and melody stir our hearts toward God. Being near to God brings us comfort, joy, peace, strength, courage and much more. God's presence is a gift we should seek and treasure daily.

In Christ, we have the marvelous ability to draw near to God (Hebrews 10:19–27). Not only can we draw near, but we also have assurance and confidence in our relationship with God. The author of Hebrews then tells us to use this assurance, this faith, to spur each other on toward love and good deeds.

Jesus wants the best for us. Our best is to remain in His presence, God's presence. So as His hour had come and He was soon to be crucified, He gave us this command: *Whoever serves me must follow me* (John 12:26). It's a condition. If we see Jesus as our Savior and attempt to do things for Him, we must do it His way. We don't dream up activities or duties to perform for God. We get our directions and instructions from Jesus...continually.

When we follow Jesus, we will be in His presence. He tells us plainly in the same verse, *Where I am, my servant will be*. If we want to be in the presence of God, we need to make sure we are following Jesus and obeying His teaching. Sound simple enough? In a sense it is because Jesus will help and empower us through the Holy Spirit. At the same time, we have a part to play and it's not always easy.

You've heard the life through death principle: *Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds* (John 12:23–24). These are Jesus' words just prior to His command to follow Him in verse 26.

Are we willing to die in order to follow Christ? This is a serious question and one to prayerfully consider. Hopefully, our answer will be an enthusiastic and resounding, "Yes!"

Once we make this important decision, we need to ask Jesus, "What would You have me do this day?" or "How can I serve You?" Jesus is doing amazing ministry through His people and has an excellent plan to involve all of us. We are so thankful and praise God for each one of you joining us through CLI Prison Alliance!

When we are following Jesus and serving Him, we are worshipping the triune God. Jesus gave up His life so that we could once again serve our majestic and splendid God. Service in God's will is worship. No one else is more worthy of our time, effort and...life.

Incredibly, Jesus says, *My Father will honor the one who serves me*. The Holy One, worthy of all praise and worship, will honor those who serve His Son. What a promise!!

Let's pray: Glorious Father, thank You for sending Your Son, Jesus Christ, to die for us. We are eternally grateful and desire to serve and follow Him. We want to be Jesus' servants and be where He is. Holy Spirit, help us to follow in Jesus' steps and do the tasks that have been prepared in advance for us to do. We believe and trust Your promise that You, O Father, will honor us because we serve Jesus. Thank You. Amen. ■

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The Language of Love

praying for an opportunity to put their unique skills to work in the Raleigh area.

By the way, the reason Don and Bea showed up at CLI that day wasn't really because they had a few books to donate. It turns out Don's cousin, Phil Crane, a long-time CLI Bible minister, had been trying to convince them that their skills would fit perfectly into the CLI ministry. It's just one more example of God's mysterious powers at work in the lives of his servants.



Bea and Don Crane

Don and Bea are now officially CLI's first Portuguese-speaking Bible ministers. Their mission is to provide hope and comfort to inmates like Mauredson who are beginning their Christian walk in the most difficult of circumstances. And because of

Mauredson's letter, CLI will soon begin work on the translation of every CLI Bible correspondence course into the Portuguese language. It is, without a doubt, our new language of love. ■

The Blessings to a CLI Volunteer

By Bob Garner

I look forward to receiving my CLI lessons to review each week. Each lesson reveals God's hand on a life from a new Christian to one who's been on the sanctification path for awhile. Especially in the Disciple of Christ course, men reveal their needs and seek godly advice. Each lesson reviewed is a blessing as I try to respond to their spiritual needs with scriptural counsel. Many speak of prison as "the best thing to ever happen to me" because in prison they met Christ and trusted Him for salvation—often through CLI materials. Even after having reviewed about 1,200 lessons, each one provides me a fresh opportunity to speak to an inmate about how God can help him or her. Each is a person made in God's image who desires guidance in their walk



Bob Garner

with Christ. Also, reviewing lessons refreshes me with old and new insights from God's word. ■

INMATE LETTERS:

Poems from Prisons

Blessed Servants

by Tony, Inmate in Texas

To all CLI members,
Jesus came to serve,
And you reflect His heart of love
Through your service in this world.

Your service in ministry is of great value,
Not only to those whose lives you touch,
But unto the Lord, Himself.

I want each of you to know you are
much appreciated
For the ways you faithfully share
Not only His message but also His love

Changed

by Chicwanda, Inmate in Louisiana

As I walked the streets,
it was my body I was slanging.
All day, all night on the corners
I was hanging.
Looking for the demons
that would soon tear me down,
As I passed ordinary people,
I held my head to the ground.
Society was something
I could no longer face.
Not knowing to keep my head up,
I ended up in this place.
And to my God Jesus Christ,
it still wasn't a disgrace.
Look how He forgave me
of all my big mistakes.
And as I sit here
in my 8x10 cell space
I think about a lot of
things I have escaped.
In another world,
my soul is much stronger,
I think I'm ready, Lord,
so how much longer?
I know I can trust in You
to get the job done,
and my world goes
by the words that are
spoken by my tongue.
The Word of God
is what I now speak.
It will make me strong
whenever I am weak.

Volunteer Testimony

By Shari Kumler, CLI Bible Minister

I learned about CLI when Judy Hecht invited a gentleman to speak to our church about his life after prison. I don't remember his name, but his talk about how his life and his relationship with his wife had turned around, combined with what he was doing to help others, was so amazing.

I have been reviewing lessons for over a year now. I totally enjoy it and look forward to them arriving. I find the

inmates' lives to be so interesting as I read between the lines in their responses to personal questions.

As I go through the lessons, I've discovered that these lessons are perfect for me. It is actually time for me to be with the Lord as I evaluate the hearts and minds of those doing the studies, who struggle with their choices while incarcerated. It is easy for me to offer understanding and encouragement. ■



Shari Kumler



Tell Your Friends, We Need Christian Books

By Martha Weaver

In May of 2016, I was attending a Ladies Priority Luncheon at Bentwinds Country Club in Fuquay-Varina. The speaker that day was a representative from CLI. I had been a Christian for many years and heavily involved in missions and church activities. However, I, along with my table-mates, had never heard of CLI. I was very interested. The speaker gave everyone a glass ornamental light bulb with an inmate's first name and location written on a piece of paper inside. It was a reminder to pray for the inmate on that piece of paper. To this day, that light bulb still sits on my kitchen table as a reminder to daily pray for this man. One day I hope to meet him in Heaven.

In the parking lot after the luncheon, a friend and I were talking and the speaker came by. We stopped her and began asking more questions. I got her email address and, when I got home, immediately began emailing her more questions: "Do you want Christian fiction? Do the women in prisons like certain

types of books?" That June, I began telling the women of my church about the ministry and the need for Christian books. They, too, needed to clean out their bookshelves as badly as I did. By July, we had gathered several hundred books for our first donations and it hasn't stopped since.



Martha Weaver

Eventually it was decided that I was to propose a book drive to the church. I put an insert in our bulletin concerning CLI, and then I addressed the congregation. My first question was, "Do you all need to clean out your bookshelves?" There was a groan across the congregation, "Yes, yes!" They all did! So I told them, "CLI needs those dusty books that you no longer use so that others in prison can use them." We then put up a table in the fellowship hall of the church and just waited. Books began to pour in. By November, we had several thousand books to deliver. **Praise to the Lord!** With this momentum and excitement in the church, I then encouraged the congregation to tell their friends, family members, co-workers...tell everyone about this ministry! God had lit a fire within me to further His kingdom with something that I could do.

Sometimes I come home and there are boxes or bags of books in my carport from some generous person who has heard

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of the need for books. I am not alone in this effort—my husband Maurice has made many trips to Raleigh to deliver books. Several good friends have also helped count, carry and unload these books. Some are now CLI Ministers and help with the CLI Bible Study Lessons. We took our first carload of books to CLI in August of 2016. The count of books collected at present is 10,381, and I am confident there are more books to come. This has been a wonderful and blessed journey, and I am amazed that God used me to participate in His kingdom in this way. Remember, a dusty and dormant book on your shelf means hope in a prison library. ■

10,300+



MY HUSBAND AND I HAVE BEEN SO BLESSED TO HAVE COLLECTED AND DISTRIBUTED MORE THAN 10,000 CHRISTIAN BOOKS AND BIBLES FOR INMATES TO DATE.

BUT WE ALWAYS NEED MORE! PLEASE VISIT CLI.WORLD/DONATE-BOOKS TO LEARN MORE.

Bibles and Books Are Needed

By Chris Wilcox, Distribution and Resource Manager

The word of God is clear “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.” Matthew 7:7-8

God instructs us to make our needs known to Him. The methods and manner in which He answers those requests are a mystery. The needs we have in the Distribution and Resource Department are more Bibles and books. Since mid-June we have added more facilities weekly and are shipping out more boxes each week. Between the Raleigh and Georgia Hub we are shipping a little over 108 boxes a week on average. The inmates are reading more than ever and additional materials are needed to keep up with the requests.

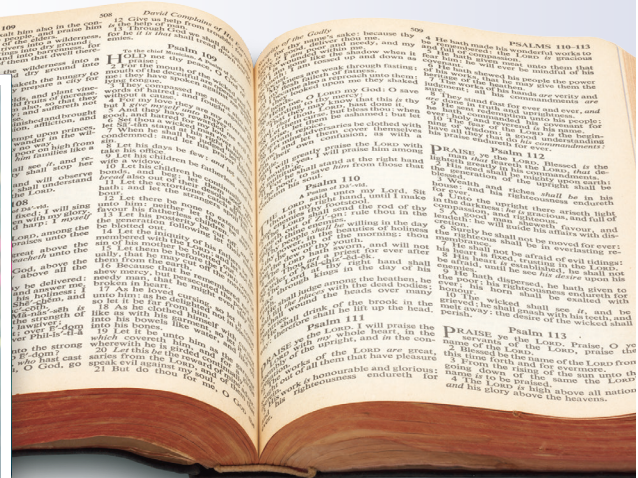
A recent letter from Chaplain Alfred Marcus in Ohio captures the need in a few words. “Thank you very much for your kind donation. As we all endure the effects of the Coronavirus, our institution has suspended a large portion of programs for our inmate population.



Chris Wilcox

Donations, such as yours, are even more impactful during these times as men are provided with opportunities to engage their minds and spirits through spiritual literature.”

Prayer: Lord we seek to walk out Your plans and purposes for this ministry. We may not understand the mystery in



which You work, but we have faith You are always at work. Needs for this ministry include an overflow of Bibles and books to further the mission. Lord, would You bring donors to the doorstep with boxes and pallets of books, whether through a church, an organization, a publisher or even an individual. We know You listen to Your children, Lord. Therefore we are asking, seeking, and knocking and will give You the glory no matter the door opened or closed. Amen ■

Blessed to be a Bible Minister

By Brenda Johnson

For three years I felt the Lord prompting me to serve Him through prison ministry. I told people about it, but procrastinated. A Bible study friend kept asking if I had started yet. "Ahhhh, no, not yet." And she kept asking. Then, a gentleman in my Sunday school class made an announcement that he was collecting books for CLI. There was a brief presentation about the ministry. As my heart beat a little harder, I knew the Holy Spirit was saying, "Hello, this is it!" I applied to become a Bible Minister. Three references were required, and they all responded within 24 hours. Thankfully, they were more responsive than I!

I've been a Bible Minister for a couple of years now, and it has been a joy. God is absolutely working in prisons. Of course, we all know that, but He is **really** working in prisons! He is saving, maturing, transforming, sanctifying, healing and comforting.

A week hardly goes by that I don't thank

an inmate for blessing me. What a blessing to read:

- the joy, hope and excitement of a new believer
- the passion of a long-time believer whose words prove the gospel never gets old
- a beautifully and passionately articulated response that stings the eyes with tears
- words of gratitude to God for His sovereignty in sending the learner to prison, thanking God because, through it, He saved them from death, both spiritually and physically
- honest, vulnerable responses of a repentant, broken heart

It truly is a joy to witness God's faithfulness to His promises of comfort, peace and joy in the midst of trials and suffering. I can learn a lot from the incarcerated! ■



Brenda Johnson

MEN, WE HAVE A TREMENDOUS NEED FOR MALE BIBLE MINISTERS WHO CAN DISCIPLE INMATES ONE-ON-ONE THROUGH OUR CORRESPONDENCE DISCIPLE OF CHRIST BIBLE STUDY. ENLIST TODAY AT [CLI.WORLD/BECOME-A-CLI-MINISTER](https://cli.world/become-a-cli-minister).

My Heart and Passion for Serving



By Leila Aboulhosn

It's no accident that I stumbled into CLI Prison Alliance as a volunteer about 10 years ago. I had asked God to show me what He would want me to do to give back to Him in serving my community.

Every year, my church hosts a day called Mission Day. I signed up to help and went with a group going to a ministry I had never heard of called CLI. We arrived at the office and did various tasks such as sorting, stamping, and packing books for shipment, opening letters, and sorting mail. This was the beginning of my heart and passion for serving the Lord through CLI.

Since that day I have been involved in

annual fundraisers, serving on planning committees, leading Christian book drives at church, and even the annual National Prayer at the Prison Gate event held every December. But, on a weekly basis it is my joy to serve as a CLI Bible Minister from my home.

Serving God through CLI Prison Alliance was an answer to my prayer. Every time I review a lesson, it allows me to be in God's word as well. It serves as a great reminder that I am broken too and still stumble at times. Many testimonies I have come across have been so heartwarming and life-changing for me, like Manuel

Grimaldi's in Herlong, California:

"Life before Christ was filled with suffering and worry about how I could please my flesh. I got nowhere with my sinful ways, just prison time. I am a Christian now, so I have God's armor to protect me while I am here. I'm preparing myself for the world and its challenges but now with God by my side."

Manuel and others who are behind bars have found their true freedom in Christ. They are learning to overcome the desires of the flesh by His Spirit. What an example to all of us! ■

God Has a Plan for Us

By Marce Weiss

I have learned that no matter how old we are or how physically disabled we might be, God still has a plan for our lives. He so desires to use us to serve others and give Him all glory, honor and praise.

About five years ago, I became quite physically disabled. I had been diagnosed with cancer and had ten spine surgeries. For decades I had done volunteer work with the homeless, delivered meals-on-wheels, cuddled babies in the hospital NICU, worked at the Monterey Food Bank, etc., but because it was hard to walk, bend over or lift heavy objects, I figured that I could no longer do any kind of volunteer work. I spent a lot of time talking with God and crying out to Him.

Quite out of the blue, Kathleen, CLI's founder, called me one day and asked me if I would consider being a Bible Minister to prison inmates. Wow! I didn't feel qualified for this position, and I had never worked with prison inmates before. I said I would pray about it and get back to her. I prayed and it was like the Holy Spirit was just waiting to hear from me! This was the path that God had already planned out for me to walk. I called Kathleen back and told her that I would be delighted to volunteer in this capacity. I was excited, scared, joyful and elated all at the same time!

It has been almost three years now that I have been involved with CLI's ministry,



Marce Weiss

and each day I am more excited and passionate about serving God than ever before. What a **blessing** it is to serve God and the men and women in prison! It is truly a **joy** to encourage these inmates in their personal walk of faith through their study of God's word! ■

GET INVOLVED WITH CLI

Bible Ministers



If you have a heart for ministering and the gift of encouragement, this may be just the spot for you.

CLI Bible Ministers review lessons from inmates from all around the country and encourage them as they study the Bible. Many of our Bible Ministers report that they get just as much out of the lessons as the inmates taking them.

You don't have to be a theologian to make an impact. We provide answer keys and other resources to you, so you can provide your time and encouragement to inmates. Volunteers review and reply to inmate lessons from the comfort of their homes. CLI mails the lessons to the volunteers for review and then the Bible Minister will mail back to the inmate in a pre-addressed CLI envelope.

Letter Ministers



Lots of inmates write us looking for Christian resources and encouragement. Through CLI Letter Ministers, we are able to respond to letters quickly and help inmates receive gospel tracts, Bible study applications, and most importantly, encouragement. We strive to answer every letter we receive and we want you to help. Our inmate correspondence volunteers let them know someone on the outside cares.



Volunteering with CLI: How To Get Started

To learn more about volunteer opportunities with CLI visit our website at www.cli.world and click on **GET INVOLVED**.

25th Anniversary *Heavenly Banquet*

By Kathleen Skaar, Executive Director

Mark your calendars: **Tuesday, September 29 at 6:30 PM** for our annual dinner extravaganza! This year you will be attending from your home. Our gala will be a hosted, interactive livestream experience! Yes, this is a first for us, so you won't want to miss it!

Our theme, *Heavenly Banquet*, is based on Revelation 19:7, the wedding feast of the Lamb. This is after end times when we'll be with Jesus and other believers! Plus, we'll meet former inmates that are there because of our holy prison alliance. Our *Heavenly Banquet* will be a foreshadowing of the real one.

Our emcee for the evening will be John Clark, morning news anchor with WTVD. We'll also have music, testimonies, an update from CLI Mexico and more. We have a hefty financial goal of \$250,000 this year. This will help us continue the impact we are having in making disciples in the prisons.

Please pray for our celebration to glorify God, raise or exceed our financial goal and be a huge blessing to everyone participating. The good news is that we know: "with God all things are possible."

(PS. We'll be sending out more information, but please contact me if you'd like to be a sponsor.) ■



(Formerly Christian Library International)

After 25 years, we have changed our name to CLI Prison Alliance. We believe "Prison" in our name clarifies our mission and ministry. We are keeping the "CLI" as part of our name so as not to lose the goodwill we have with student inmates or partners. This is true especially for inmate disciples already released from prison. Finally, we are in a war for souls. That is why we have allies to provide support and assistance. We come together in Christ to form an alliance under God to make disciples in prisons worldwide. Our alliance includes financial partners, volunteers, chaplains, publishers, book donors, etc. Our address and contact information remain the same. We are only changing our name. Thank you for being part of CLI Prison Alliance!

Together, in Christ, we are attacking and tearing down strongholds in prisons—all for the glory of God! ■



In recognition of our compliance with Standards of Responsible Stewardship, CLI has been accredited by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability.



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