

THE Shepherd

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost. Luke 19:10

Love Ripples

By Christine Skaar Hand

Patrick Brassell is a former inmate who was greatly impacted by CLI's ministry of making disciples in prisons. Since his release, he has been doing all he can to live out a Christ-like testimony before his family and friends. CLI invited him to speak at the 2019 "Love Lifted Me" Dinner in Raleigh, and there he shared his story.

It had been a long journey, starting at age 14, when Patrick was first introduced to drugs. From then on, drugs became a way of life—landing him in prison for nine years. He had disappointed his family and himself. Then, in 2002, he found himself crying out to God on the bathroom floor in prison. This prayer would become the starting point of a changed life. Just as a stone thrown in a lake creates a ripple that touches every bank, so those around Patrick felt the effects of his changed life as well.

In 2010 Patrick was introduced to Christian Library International. A Bible was made available to him along with Christian books and the consistent encouragement of CLI letter ministers. The ripple of a changed life now grew to a wave. It wasn't long before others were caught in this 'wave of love.' Perhaps what is most surprising is that not only were other prisoners affected and changed by Patrick's testimony, but his family was as well. The great equalizer of humanity, the cross of Christ, made a lasting impact on him, for it is there that we all stand both guilty and redeemed; none of us more or less than the next. This was Patrick's new reality, and those around him could see it too.



Patrick Brassell with his wife Brandi, grandson Jeremiah, and mom Shirley; and as a young man

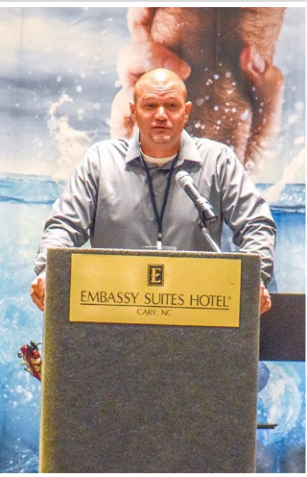
Patrick choked up when he left the stage at the "Love Lifted Me" Dinner, and his wife tenderly embraced him. She is proud of his testimony and the godly man he has become. They both desire that whole communities be impacted by his testimony and the transformation God made in his life.

However, the ripples of love do not stop with those of us who attended the CLI Dinner. The powerful impact of the gospel of Jesus Christ extends to anyone who calls on Christ as Savior. Many donors and volunteers sat in the audience that night and heard Patrick say "You don't know what an

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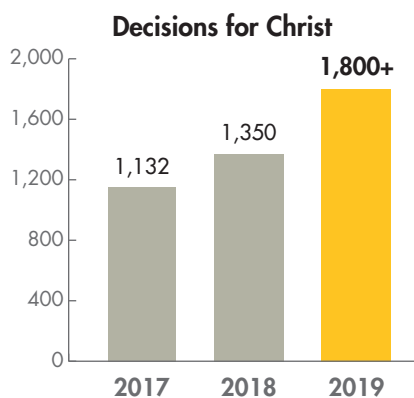
Love Ripples



Patrick Brassell spoke at this year's CLI dinner

encouragement you are." That same sentence could be said of you, the reader. You are a part of the ripple that CLI has started by sharing Bibles, Christian books, and discipleship studies in prisons all over America. We could all echo Patrick's story, knowing that our own journey of knowing God also began with just a ripple... a love ripple.

Use your End of Year Gift to Make an Impact



God has been abundantly blessing CLI! More than 1,800 inmates have written to tell us that they have dedicated their lives to Christ this year. Through our work of sending Bibles, Christian books, gospel tracts, and Bible study lessons, we have seen the Holy Spirit using us to make disciples in prison.

We know these blessings wouldn't be possible without the partnership of donors and volunteers like you who have given cheerfully to the mission of spreading the gospel inside prison walls. Through your generous gifts God has multiplied our efforts. Last year we reviewed 12,161 Bible Study lessons. This year so far

Words of Light

Through Him you believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and glorified Him, and so your faith and hope are in God. 1 Peter 1:21

Hope in the Bible means we trust God to fulfill His promises and to intervene in our lives for His glory and for our good. The word "hope" in the Bible and the world's use of it is somewhat different. It's not just wishing or desiring for certain things to happen, it's expecting and having confidence in God to make things come about.

Before I trusted Jesus as my Lord and Savior, I was without true hope. I didn't know God and only had a wish for good things to happen in my life. Sadly, the good things in my mind were all about wealth and the self-indulgent things money could buy. I didn't know God and the real meaning of life. I lacked peace, love, and joy.

Working with the imprisoned brings the concept of hope clearly into focus. Many of them are without any kind of hope, secular or biblical. For example, Brian, an inmate in Indiana writes:

"I fell into hard and dark times, I figured that there was no hope for me, I lost most of, my family and all of my friends in the last 2 years, and in prison, almost everyone is negative so I almost lost all hope."

As you know, Jesus is the light that shines in the darkness. He came to conquer Satan and make us children of God. This is the hope, this is the confidence that every man, woman, and child must receive. This is the reason CLI exists. We want every inmate we serve to have a personal and loving relationship with God and in turn, take this truth to others.

Brian was blessed to hear and believe the message of Christ crucified! He continues in his letter: *I prayed to have God soften my heart and I prayed for forgiveness. I am a new Christian and new at this, but I want to learn more."*

Brian now has true hope. He knows his sins are forgiven, and he belongs to God. As he reads his Bible he will learn that God has a good plan for him, a plan to give him hope and a future. He will learn that no matter how many promises God has made, they are all "Yes" in Christ (2 Corinthians 1:20).

Even if Brian or we slip up, or fail God, all is not lost. We still have hope because God is faithful. He will show us mercy and help us to return to His loving arms. These are the same loving arms that are waiting for us in heaven. As Christ's disciples, we have the future hope of seeing God face to face and experiencing His incomparable light and glory. Now, *May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 15:13).*

A good way to strengthen our biblical hope is to review all the things God has done for us, both personally and through His word. This builds up our confidence that we know and trust He will always be there for us.



Kathleen Skaar, Founder

we've reviewed more than 14,000. This is the multiplication method of discipleship and we praise Jesus.

We believe it is God's desire to make even more disciples in prison, and your faithful prayers and financial support are helping to make that possible.

Dire Need for Paperback Books

As you know we rely on your Christian book and Bible donations to reach the 2.2 million men and women incarcerated across the U.S. God uses your books and Bibles to save, mature, encourage and minister to men and women in prison. One book may be read by hundreds of inmates so that it literally falls apart. Please check your

shelves and tell your friends of our need both at our headquarters and for our Georgia Hub. Consider asking your church or a friend's church to do a book drive. Thank you for partnering with us for this tremendous need and exciting opportunity. **For more information check out our website:** cli.world/donate-books

I Was Offered a Cup of Coffee, and God's Word

By Lawrence Sanchez

I first came to accept the Lord as my Savior in 2005. I was in Jefferson County Jail in Colorado looking down the barrel of a 48-year sentence. It was my first time looking at prison, and it was a nightmare to me. I remember saying to myself, what did I get myself into? What did I do to deserve such punishment? How was I going to tell my mother that she was going to lose her son to concrete walls and bars?

So, I sat in my 10' by 6' cell holding my head in my hands. I had given up. After all, what could I do? As tears started to roll down my face, my cellmate offered me a cup of coffee.

I accepted that cup, and while I was drinking it, he told me about Jesus and the Bible. To be honest, I really didn't want to hear about that. I only wanted to hear about how I could get out of jail. Every day for a week he made me a cup of coffee and told me about Jesus and the Bible. For what it was worth, it seemed to help me take my mind off of being in jail.

The day came when he was taken from that Colorado jail to begin serving his time in prison. I remember he left at 4am

in a sleepy state. I shook his hand and wished him luck on his way. When I woke up, I was alone again in that cold cell. However, I noticed a Bible and a cup of coffee sitting on the desk. I thought to myself, was I dreaming? Didn't he leave earlier this morning? Or, would he be back to talk to me more about Jesus and the Bible? As I sat there looking at that Bible, I noticed it had a bookmark sticking out. I flipped it open and began to read the marked passages: John 3:16-18 and 2 Cor. 5:17.

It was there and then that I told myself I wanted this love, this freedom. So, I fell to my knees and started to ask God for His forgiveness. Tears filled my eyes as I felt a warm presence around me. Since then my life has changed. I see all the blessings the Lord has given me, and now He is using me to talk to others about Him.

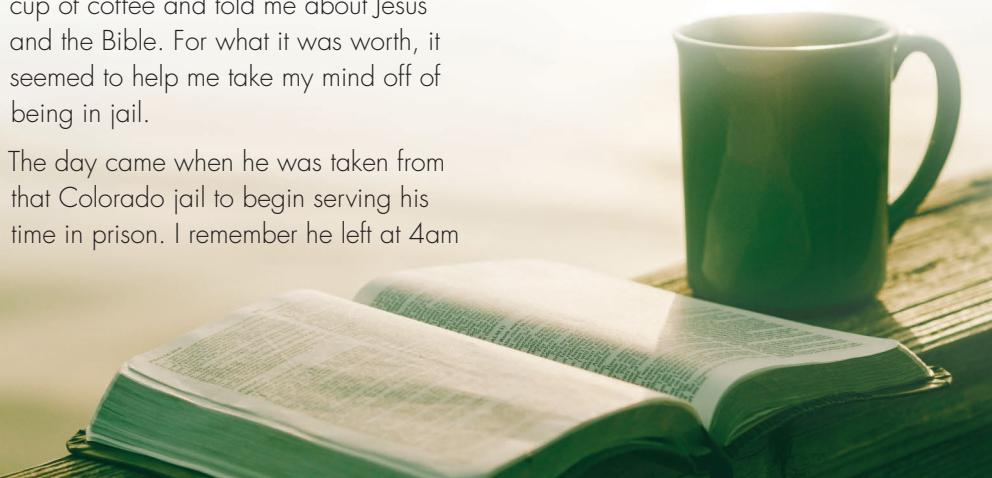
Inmate Letters: Praises from Prisons

Thank you for being a means for God to bless those who are locked away! I can't speak for the others, but I love each of you at CLI! You all are amazing and are in my prayers daily! **Arthur, Eastville, VA**

I really appreciate your people looking over my answers. They really pay attention to what is written on those pages and truly seem to take their job seriously. I have been brought to tears several times just from a few kind words of understanding. It's nice to see that a stranger can really care that much. **Brice, Henderson, TX**

When I was in jail, I decided I would put as much time and effort into reading the Bible and finding God as I did looking for and doing drugs. It's been 3 1/2 years and I feel more at peace with myself and other people! **Kevin, Carlisle, IN**

I just wanted to send a short letter saying thank you for this opportunity to grow in Christ. I really enjoyed the first lesson and I'm really looking forward to the next one. Thanks again for taking the time to help me and others grow in Christ. **Melissa, Omaha, NE**





2019 Bible Match Met

The greatest request we receive from prisoners is for large print Bibles. In the spring of this year an anonymous donor pledged \$30,000 to be used for the purchase and shipping of large print Bibles in order to meet this need. Incredible, right? But then we had the awesome task of raising \$30,000 to match that gift. While it seemed daunting, God once again met this great need. We are so pleased to share with you that, because of the generosity of partners just like you, together we met that match. Now, there are nearly 9,000 English and Spanish Bibles being shipped to inmates all over the US. To God be the glory!



CLI's Eighth Annual Prayer at the Prison Gate

Saturday, December 7, 10 a.m.

It's time for our annual Prayer at the Prison Gate! Each December we gather together to pray for inmates, victims, prison personnel and families that have been affected by incarceration. It's our Christmas present to Jesus.

Would your church consider sponsoring a prison or jail in your area? Church members would gather outside the assigned prison and pray from a suggested prayer list or however the Holy Spirit leads. We'd love to have teams praying in all 50 states. Will you join us?

Email info@cli.world to sign up or for more information. We look forward to hearing from you!

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



KATHLEEN SKAAR, FOUNDER | 4724 HARGROVE ROAD, SUITE 100 | RALEIGH, NC 27616 | 919 790-6987 | MINISTERS@CLI.WORLD
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