



Letter From a Crime Boss

by Frank Sambrick

My job at CLI is to tell stories that shed light on the amazing works that God is doing through this humble ministry. Most of these stories come from letters we receive from inmates around the country who want to thank us and encourage us for the work that we do. Below is one such letter, written so eloquently that there was nothing more we could do than to print it. The letter is from Sylvia Price, A/K/A "Deez Nuts," who was sentenced to 75 months in prison as the ringleader of a multi-million dollar crime ring that included theft of cars, phones, computers and other big-ticket items in the Washington, D.C. area. What makes her story of redemption so compelling is that it is in her own words. So, read on and see what God can do in the lives of those who were once lost, but now found in Christ.

Dear CLI,

I feel very blessed having so much love and care extended to me. It feels good having people like you helping people like me to get through the devastation of being in prison. I encourage you to continue with this wonderful thing that you do. If you ever wondered before if your effort is even worth it, take it from me, IT IS!! I wait eagerly for mail from CLI Prison Alliance. The comments make me feel so good about what I've done. The joy I feel when I share the lessons with some of my roommates or with the women in my prayer group is amazing. I feel like I'm finally a part of something good, something godly, something real. God's work is being done. His will is being revealed and His love shows in all that you do. So please, each time you receive mail from this facility, know how much we appreciate this ministry and how important your purpose is for lives that are lost.

I'm eight days from returning to the community and family I left behind 5 years ago. My life prior to July 2015 was one of

The BayNet.com 12/21/2016
"Deez Nuts" sentenced to six years
for racketeering conspiracy

WUSA9 10/6/2020
14 indicted for \$5 million 'Simple City' theft ring

THE DAILY CALLER 10/6/2020
Female Gang Boss 'Deez Nuts'
Guilty Of Running DC Crime Ring



Sylvia Price with her family.

turmoil, unrest, distrust and unhappiness. Just thinking about it gives me goosebumps! I never would have imagined that anyone, let alone a loving God, would be capable of saving a wreck like me. I was so caught up with the world as I knew it and its perverse morals and values, I succumbed to a life that enveloped me in complete darkness. But God knew me, all about me, including my heart. He created me, so of course He knew what He was going to do with me. Psalm 145:14 reminds me that *"The Lord helps the fallen and lifts those bent beneath their loads."* Although God hates sin and all evil actions, He did not react with anger. Instead He showed me His great power and how much He had love and compassion for a wreck like me. And my changed life is proof of all that He has done.

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God promised in Jeremiah 29:13-14, *"If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me. I will be found by you,"* says the Lord. *"I will end your captivity and restore your fortunes. I will gather you out of the nations where I sent you and will bring you home again to your own land."* The whole heart must be yielded to God or the change can never happen. We are powerless to stand against our tendency toward sin and failure, but God reaches out to those who are weak and entrapped by sin to forgive us and strengthen us by His glorious power to rebuild our lives. Through Jesus, God already conquered the power of sin. All we need to do is admit that we do need His help and ask Him for it. He will empower us to overcome our weaknesses.

Today I breathe new life, beat a new heart, walk in a new way, with new hope inspired by a new faith in the same God!! My life as I knew it, although in the past, was necessary all the same so that I can be the living testimony of God's amazing grace and mercy. My experience is "His story" (History) and I'm blessed to be a part of it. And I'm so grateful that He uses you also, the volunteers at CLI Prison Alliance, to encourage me with prayers and motivating words of wisdom. Thank you for all the time and love you put into your God-given calling. Although this experience saved my life, I still am happy that I am going home. I'm praying everyday that God continues to enlighten me with understanding His precious word and to mature in my Christian walk. I still have a lot of work to do on myself, a lot of growing up to do, and I thank God for where I am so far.

I pray that this is the "beginning" of a forever relationship with all of you, my new family in Christ. I do have family in Durham, NC, as well as in Wilson, NC, so I can only hope that one day the Lord will use me in an awesome way and allow me to give back what you all gave me, **hope and love!**

May God bless all of you and CLI Prison Alliance and *please* continue to send me the material to help me as I pursue getting to know all about His word and His will for my life.

Thank you and God bless,
Sylvia Price ■

FOUNDER'S NOTE

Heaven's Praise



Kathleen Skaar, Founder

The heavens praise your wonders, LORD, your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.

Psalm 89:5

Praise God for enabling us to serve through the Covid-19 pandemic! God wants *all people to be saved and come to knowledge of the truth* (1 Timothy 2:4). Therefore, He worked through our board, staff, prayer warriors, volunteers and financial partners to make sure the imprisoned learned of Jesus Christ and were encouraged to follow Him.

God's plan did not go unnoticed: *"During this stressful time when no volunteer church meetings can be allowed the literature ministry looms larger and more important than ever before. You are meeting a need no one else can meet."*
Chaplain Paul Freeman, Channing CA

I would like to personally thank our staff who worked extra hours from home and at the office to ensure the gospel was not hindered. They were zealously committed to our mission of making disciples worldwide. I am proud of each one of them!

Our gratitude goes to our board of directors, who were ready and willing to help in any way needed. Their dedication to our mission and to us is treasured. We value their shared wisdom and faithfulness to our Lord.

We also want to thank each of our volunteers who served as they were able. Close to 200 Bible and Letter Ministers continued reviewing CLI Bible studies and answering inmate letters at home. Others picked up books and Bibles outside our offices, stamped them and dropped them back off at CLI Prison Alliance.

Nearly 300 CLI prayer warriors, both inside and outside prison, lifted up praises and requests in the name of Jesus. We and all of our allies know that without Christ and God's favor, we can do nothing. We all must seek the Lord continually and follow the Holy Spirit's leading and counsel.

Last, but certainly not least, our financial partners continued to give as they were able. Some are doing well and shared even more of their resources. Some have suffered setbacks and we pray for their recovery. God provided through these generous allies so we can operate effectively. It takes funds to mail, ship and minister to inmates and chaplains in 1,345 prisons across the US and Mexico.

As of September 9, 2,180 prisoners have trusted Jesus as their Savior, a 54% increase over the same time period last year. Inmates have completed 13,500 Bible study lessons, a 25% increase over last year and we provided 106,000 books and Bibles, a 1% increase over last year.

This Christmas we can all rejoice and praise God for His wonders and faithfulness. Not only have we placed our faith in Christ, but we have been part of God's plan to share the good news of Christ's birth, death and resurrection. Merry Christmas! ■

I Remember Praying to God One Day to Just Make it All End

By Hope, an inmate in Pinellas Park, FL

Hope was a drug addict of extreme proportion. Through this lifestyle, she contracted Hepatitis B and was in and out of the hospital due to the severe damage it had done to her liver. At one point, her brother even called their family members informing them they needed to come say their final goodbyes. Hope seemed hopeless. Miserable with the way she was living and seeing no way out, Hope had reached her breaking point. "I remember praying to God one day to just make it all end. That was probably the first conversation I had with God in years."

Not long after that prayer, Hope was arrested, tried and sentenced to 7-15 years in prison. Sitting in her cell over the last 14 months, sober, she has had time to reflect on her life. Hope was raised in church by loving parents. She remembered the story of the prodigal son – how the father in that story never asked his son about all the wrong things he had done while living a sinful life. The father only offered forgiveness. That's what Hope wanted too, and she knew just where to find it. It was in that moment that Hope rekindled a relationship with her Heavenly Father and came back "home" to Him!

My Prayers Were Answered

By Josh, an inmate in Cullman, AL

My name is Josh. You don't know me, but we have a relationship. Let me tell you how.

In order to obtain books to read, they must be mailed in. That's where our relationship started—yours and mine. There has always been plenty of "garbage" to read: Stephen King, Richard Damon, and stuff like that. None of that interests me.

I began to pray that God would send us Christian books to read. Then I received your book request form in the mail, and my prayers were answered. It was amazing! We began receiving Christian books and

She started going to the prison church on Sundays and began reading the Bible. Then, she found out about the CLI Bible studies and enrolled right away. "The CLI Bible studies are such a help to me in my independent spiritual growth right now. Due to COVID-19 none of the church ministries can come to see us, but I am able to continue growing in my faith thanks to the CLI Bibles studies."

Hope has now read her Bible through three times. She said in a recent letter to CLI, "The most important thing that I have received has been God's love, but with that came forgiveness, redemption, salvation, and peace." Hope now has hope!

It will be a minimum of seven years until Hope gets to hug her family again. She has a clear understanding of why she is incarcerated, but she prays that through the lessons she has completed she will become a testimony for God in prison. Now, Hope is a disciple of Christ helping to reach others just like her inside the prison walls.

"Without CLI I would be starving for the Word of God right now when we need it the most." ■

Bibles, not "garbage," to read. I shared the books with other inmates. We went through that first box quickly. Then the second box came. It had some books everyone is still asking for—Karen Kingsberry's Amish novels and many others.

I'd like to express how thankful I am for your faithfulness and your willingness to serve someone like me. CLI has provided me with what has become my favorite Bible studies. It's an absolute blessing to have men and women of God, like you, so eager to serve people in prison like me. ■

INMATE LETTERS:

Poems from Prisons

Hope Again

By Willie, an inmate in Columbia, SC

There were some days I felt alone
Didn't seem that I could carry on
Feeling my hope leaving me real fast
Chasing my dreams from a broken past
I thought if I could just stand up
Maybe no one would know I was giving up
Couldn't let them see the real me inside
Tried to hide the tears and hurt in my eyes

Worrying about my face, trying to
stand like a man
Felt like my choices were matching
God's plans
Got tired of people telling me to put it
in His hand
Walking in the way that seems right to
a man

God said to me, "Son, forgive and see
Let go of the past cause you are free
No greater love than the life of a friend
Look to the cross and hope again!"

Now I am free to walk like the child of
a king
I'm free to talk like the child of a king
I'm free to act like the child of a king
I'm free to love like the child of a king

I'm free to ask God for anything
I'm free to show my love to the king
I'm free to worship and bow down
before the king

So, when you see a child of
God this way
Remember how you felt
this day
Tell what God's word
says

Jesus prayed that your
faith fails not this day
You can hope again ■



THE Heavenly BANQUET

CLI Prison Alliance's Virtual Gala Was A Huge Success!

By Heath Placek

We are so grateful to all our guests and donors for making our first-ever 25th anniversary virtual gala a great success! The live one-hour event was aired nationally on Tuesday, September 29th and we believe there were more than 300 people watching. The event was hosted by ABC11 WTVD news anchor John Clark and featured testimonials from best-selling authors Gary Chapman and Carol Kent. The highlight of the night was hearing the powerful stories of inmate lives being transformed by the gospel of Jesus Christ!

We entered the evening with a goal of \$350,000, including a matching gift of \$60,000. As of this writing, we only need \$20,000 to reach our goal! We are so close! Will you consider donating to the gala? Every gift given through October 31st will be DOUBLED because of the generosity of our matching donor.

If you would like to make a gift, you may go to: cli.world/heavenlybanquet

If you missed the event, you may watch it from now through October 31st. Go to: cli-heavenlybanquet.com

God is continuing to push this ministry forward to reach more inmates for Christ both in the US and around the world. We are rejoicing that He has provided in such a mighty way through the virtual gala and look forward to all God will do in the future. ■

INMATE LETTERS:

Jordan in Petersburg, FL

My addiction landed me in prison. I am 31 years old and have been here for over 25 months. I grew up in a loving home but never knew the Lord as my personal Savior. In July of 2018, while in the county jail, I met Jesus Christ and made Him my Lord and Savior. My cellmate, Matthew, told me about CLI's Bible studies, so I wrote to enroll in their program. The lessons have been such a blessing to me. I tell other inmates about Jesus and encourage them to take the Bible study courses too. The one thing that has meant the most to me has been the caring feedback I receive from the Bible Ministers who review my lessons. I am a completely different person today than I was when I came here, and I am so thankful for the wonderful Bible studies that CLI Prison Alliance provides to incarcerated individuals.

Rogelio in Pampa, TX

I want to thank CLI Prison Alliance for their beautiful and well-thought out Bible studies. They are truly food for the soul. I hope you will keep making disciples worldwide. Thank you for all you do for prisoners. ■



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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CLI Prison Alliance

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