

PRISON-ASHRAM PROJECT
Rt. 1, Box 201-N
Durham, NC 27705

A little news, June 1986

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This is a brief update on the busiest and most diversified year the Prison-Ashram Project has ever had. Exactly one year ago, my book WE'RE ALL DOING TIME was published. Since that time, it seems we've taken on projects in virtually every major medium of communication: writing, audio, video, and live performances. I guess it's something in the stars. I'd like to give you a short description of each of those projects, and earnestly invite your ideas, suggestions, and your ever-important financial support so we can do the very best job we can in each field.

The Written Word

WE'RE ALL DOING TIME continues to be the main written resource we distribute from here. We've already sent out over 12,000 copies of our first printing of 18,000. Requests continue to pour in, often hundreds each week. Of the copies sent out, around 9,000 have been sent free to prisoners, and the rest sold to individuals, distributors, and bookstores.

We need to reprint the book as soon as possible, as it looks like we'll be out of stock by the end of this year. Heeding some compassionate professional advice, we've decided to create a new cover and typesetting for the whole book. This will cost an extra \$2500 or so, but it's been a very strong recommendation as far as making the book more appealing for commercial sales (income we desperately need). We hope the new edition will be ready in the fall.

Live Performances: Music

This past February we had the unprecedented privilege of conducting a rock & roll concert tour through ten of North Carolina's worst prisons. I put together a wild, top-notch band called the BO LOZOFF ALL-STAR ROCK & BLUES BAND AND TRAVELLING ROAD SHOW, complete with a juggler/magician/comedian. There's no way for me to describe how awe-inspiring and mad-cap that tour turned out to be. I've enclosed a clipping from the women's prison newspaper to convey a small sense of it, but it was far greater than that. The love flowed and flowed, with over 3,000 inmates listening, singing, clapping, and feeling loved. And since the tour, we've received hundreds of requests for WE'RE ALL DOING TIME from inmates in those audiences.

Our favorite part of each show, and one which we'll be highlighting



standing (from left): Sita Lozoff, Bo Lozoff, Joel Keel, Ed Butler, Alison Weiner, Scotty Young, Chris Turner & Zack Drill.
Kneeling: Victoria Joyce, Josh Lozoff, Zan McLeod.

even more in the future, was the jam session/talent show we hosted using inmate talent in each prison. We arrived early enough each day to get together with prisoner singers and musicians who then performed with us that night. We discovered some sensational talent in each place.

We see this NC tour as a pilot project. As we develop the very best methodology for this sort of thing, we can pass the ideas (and credibility) on to people in other states, regardless of how much or how little this one band may perform elsewhere. One great offshoot of this tour already: the NC Dept. of Corrections has invited us to make this an annual event.

Another offshoot of this first tour: The NC Women's Prison has invited us to help them coordinate an annual inmate talent show. We'll provide the musicians, sound system and outside support, and they'll provide rehearsal time throughout the summer, with the show planned for September. They're even considering letting the women wear their own street clothes instead of prison uniforms. There's a great deal of talent inside, and we feel honored to help get this ball rolling.

Live Performances: Theater

We presently have approval to do a theater tour of prisons in North Carolina (another pilot project) in February 1987. Joseph Bathanti, a prize-winning playwright, is currently working with some of the material from the "Dear Bo" section of WE'RE ALL DOING TIME, with the idea of converting some of those true accounts into a play. The play will include several roles for inmates in each of the prisons where we'd be performing. I've been studying improvisational theater for the past few months to be able to help coordinate this. We're very excited about the possibilities.

Audio Project

Inspired by the music tour and the touching response to some of my original songs, the Prison-Ashram Project is now developing an album called STUMBLING TOWARD THE LIGHT. Like my book, the album (and cassette) will be available free to prisoners and for sale to non-prisoners. We're already in production on some of the songs, which are all originals.

Our musical director and album co-producer for this project is Zan McLeod, a world-class guitarist who has played on dozens of albums spanning a wide range of musical genres. Many of the best and brightest rock, blues, folk/rock, pop and jazz performers in this area have also volunteered their services as studio musicians and back-up singers. As a lifelong singer/musician/songwriter, I'm thrilled and honored beyond belief to see this much talent coming together around my own compositions. We hope STUMBLING TOWARD THE LIGHT WILL be available by the Christmas season.

Video Projects

Because many prisons now have video equipment (and all inevitably will at some point), we have three video projects in the works:

1) A two-hour spiritual workshop filmed live in prison. This will be one of my standard prison workshops, with a talk, discussion, meditation instruction, and other practices.

2) A one-hour yoga/breathing/relaxation class, given by Liliias Folan, who had the long-running PBS show LILIAS, YOGA, & YOU (Liliias has donated her services for this video).

3) A one-hour documentary featuring inmate performers. This would intersperse footage of their performances with clips of interviews with these same prisoners, talking about their lives and understandings.

THE (groan!) FINANCIAL PICTURE

Like every other non-profit organization popping up in your mailbox every day, we always need a lot more money than we have. Right now we have about \$13,000 toward the reprinting of WE'RE ALL DOING TIME, which will cost close to \$20,000. We have no other funds whatsoever.

Even with musicians donating their time, STUMBLING TOWARD THE LIGHT will require at least \$5,000 to produce a professional-quality master tape, and then an additional few thousand dollars to mass-produce even a limited number of albums and cassettes. As with the book, this album will eventually provide one more source of income for the Prison-Ashram Project.

Our video projects will consume at least \$10,000 to produce the masters and a small number of copies. We're hopeful that the one documentary video will be of national interest outside of prisons, and may result in eventual awards and/or funding for future video work.

Finally, our live performances and inmate talent shows are sponsored in part by the NC Dept. of Corrections, but still consume a few thousand dollars from our budget as well (February's tour cost us \$2,000).

For over thirteen years, Sita and I have had a low-key, easygoing attitude about fundraising. However much money came in, that's how much work we could do. The Prison-Ashram Project pays no rent, because we built the office on our own land. And so long as we kept our salaries as low as we could (they're now at an all-time high of \$750/month take-home pay), we always received just enough donations to squeak by.

But with the overwhelming response to WE'RE ALL DOING TIME, things have quickly changed. Although we're in touch with tens of thousands of prisoners in over 25 countries, our non-prison mailing list of supporters such as yourself numbers only about 1,500 people. That's not a lot of donors for a worldwide project, but it would be more than sufficient if all of you sent us a small donation each month. Then we wouldn't have to spend

so much time hustling, trying to figure out whether we can afford to do all these things. The possibilities for powerful service are endless, and right now, for some strange reason, the usually locked steel doors of the prison establishment are wide open for us.

We don't intend to send you monthly letters asking for money (we couldn't afford to anyway), but when you do send a donation, we'll send you our thank-you note a few weeks later, along with a return envelope to make it convenient for you to contribute again. We also want you to know that as much as the funds are needed, your monthly support would also be deeply encouraging to us personally, as evidence of your approval and enthusiasm for the various ideas we're pursuing.

I hope you like what we're doing enough to send us an affordable monthly tithe so we can make the most of these new opportunities and this long-awaited credibility. If you're in a position to contribute a large endowment or to include us in your will, we'd be happy to correspond with you about those details. The bottom line is, it's time for the Prison-Ashram Project to grow up in the financial sense. We never dreamed we'd be around this long, and now it's obvious there's no end in sight! (all donations are tax-deductible as always).

With great love, affection, and humor,

Bo + Sita

Bo & Sita Lozoff

PS: SPECIAL NOTICE:

As part of a fundraising benefit for our prison concert tour, we made up these "Bo Lozoff All-Star Rock & Blues Band and Travelling Road Show" t-shirts for sale using Rick Morgan's brilliant artwork (photo at right). We still have some left in most sizes and colors (blue, pink, grey, tan, and violet), at \$8.00 each. They're 100% cotton, top-quality Hanes Beefy-T's.

