

HUMAN KINDNESS FOUNDATION

A Little News Magazine

FALL 1990

THE PATH OF NO RESISTANCE

The Way is perfect like vast space, where nothing is lacking and nothing is in excess. Indeed, it is due to our choosing to accept or reject that we do not see the true nature of things.... To set up what you like against what you dislike is the disease of the mind.

from Hsin Hsin Ming (Verses on the Faith Mind), by Sengstan

Sita and I have just come back from driving across the country again -- meeting with a lot of you in prisons, churches, spiritual communities, social action groups, spending a couple of days with our son. It's been a great, deeply inspiring summer. And as different as things may seem between a stifling, hot prison in the bayou of Louisiana, and a beautiful retreat center 9,000 feet up in the mountains of New Mexico, I look in people's eyes and see the same exact thing: My own will to survive, my own yearning to be free, my own effort to make sense of life. Prisoners, guards, activists, psychologists, monks, nuns, young people, old people, wandering seekers -- everyone's eyes reflect the same basic human search for meaning.

Everybody has problems, everybody goes through periods of struggle, everybody must endure some measure of suffering in life. In fact, it's important; it's a required course. But what life brings us -- what you might call *natural* suffering -- is maybe 10% of what we go through. What we bring into our lives -- *self-created* suffering -- accounts for the other 90%. A major task of the spiritual journey is to recognize the difference between the two and to stop causing ourselves so much unnecessary pain and hassle.

The key is to stop *resisting* our own lives -- the basic facts of who we are, where we are, what is happening, and what we feel in any given moment.

The kind of non-resistance I'm talking about is **not** passivity or weakness or wishy-washiness or anything like that. It's not the opposite of *action*; it's the opposite of *self-delusion*.

Whatever happens **is**. Bad or good, fair or unfair, from the moment it happens, it already **is** whatever it **is**. Most of our suffering comes from denying, ignoring, regretting, pretending, contorting, or worrying. We do have the option of not wasting that time and energy. It just takes practice.

Resistance to reality always makes things worse. If a car is careening toward me and I waste a few

seconds screaming "**Oh NO!!**" instead of instantly accepting the truth and diving out of the way, those few moments of resistance may kill me. Again, non-resistance *doesn't* mean to stand there and let the car run me down, it's simply having no resistance to seeing it, accepting it exactly as it is, and reacting to it. (Diving out of the way isn't resistance, it's intelligence.)

Many people try to turn everything around to see something positive in everything, but that's still a subtle form of resistance. "Well, there's a car careening toward me, but I'm sure it's for a good reason..." One sweet, optimistic person squished all over the road.

Reacting to reality is essential. But copping an attitude -- positive or negative -- is just a mental habit; just our busy minds constantly labeling and evaluating, distracting us from directly experiencing our lives.

Like any other spiritual practice, non-resistance will gradually change our whole state of consciousness. As we sharpen our skill of seeing things just as they are, with no pushing, pulling, or distorting, we become "**a part**" instead of "**apart**" in the flow of our lives. We find ourselves living in a natural, effortless **faith** which no longer needs to approve or disapprove of reality; the kind of faith which the above passage from *Hsin Hsin Ming* is about.

Things happen, and we react. Things happen, and we react. That's it. Life moves, and we move with it, not constantly stuck in fears, desires, evaluations, preferences, dreads. Like the words of Nisargadatta Maharaj on the back of this newsletter, our lives become **so** different, so much more intense and interesting, it's hard to imagine it took us so long to get hip to it.

This isn't some wimpy way to live and be everybody's doormat; quite the contrary. This is a way to tap into the magic of spiritual life and to feel the power of being a person who works *with* reality instead of struggling against it.

As we become better and better at the skill of

non-resistance, we see that resistance and non-resistance are a major issue in *every* area of our lives, from our physical health, to our emotional well-being, to our very enlightenment. We discover that there is indeed an awareness in us which always knows what's really happening, and we've been resisting that awareness most of our lives.

Brushing your teeth, there's the little voice saying "Brush a little better in the back there," as you see yourself ignoring it and putting your toothbrush down. A year later, you're at the dentist in pain. Getting married, finding a job, having kids, going to

school, planning a crime, shooting smack -- you always have a quiet awareness that knows whether you're making a good decision or a bad decision. It may be hard to find underneath all the fears, desires, and habits, but we just have to make our best guesses until it becomes clearer and clearer. That's why we practice meditation, etc.

Imagine the relief of a life lived in harmony with that still, small voice; a life lived with no resistance to whatever is right and true. That's power!

It's simple to try this practice of non-resistance: Just look at what's happening and admit the truth to yourself with no avoidance or modifications. Try a threefold approach of **acceptance**, **respect**, and **action**. Say you get turned down by the parole board -- **accept** the reality that you were turned down; **respect** this bad news that has come into your life; and then **act** however you feel moved -- whether that means appealing the decision, or using your extra time as best you can. All through the day, anytime you feel "off-center," try the same thing. Gradually you'll notice you're becoming a simpler and more powerful human being with a lot of energy available which you used to waste through bitching, moaning, or avoidance.

RESOURCES

Prison writers, poets artists, and even you readers: Here's a new magazine "by prisoners, for prisoners and their people." Send in your work, or get subscription information by writing to:

CONVICTIONS
BOX 1749
CORVALLIS, OR 97339

Prisoners who are parents: We'd like your views and sharings about the ups and downs of parenting. Even if you don't wish to write anything, you're welcome to a free copy of our manual, "Parenting From The Inside Out."

GLORIA NOURI, DIRECTOR
BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION/ STRESS
MANAGEMENT PROGRAMS
NJ DEPT OF CORRECTIONS, CN 863
TRENTON, NJ 08625

The ReVerse Project is seeking original poetry from offenders and victims of crime for possible publication. If your work is selected, you'll receive more information. If interested, send your material to:

ReVERSE
BOX 5376
HARRISBURG, PA 17110

OTHER NEWS

• Lineage now on tape

Like *We're All Doing Time*, *Lineage and Other Stories* is now available in an audiotape set as well as in book form. Recorded in Bo's voice, it's a set of two ninety-minute tapes, and is available for \$15 from our office.

Prisoners can request free copies, but please be sure you have all the proper permissions to receive cassette tapes. Unfortunately these are not clear tapes, no screws, or

shrinkwrapped, because they're in an "album" which looks just like the book. If you can't receive them personally, maybe you can get the librarian or psychologist or chaplain to request a set that can be shared.

• Bo's and Sita's Travels Again...

Having just returned from a Southwestern tour, Bo & Sita will be off again in October/November for prison workshops and public talks on the East Coast. The schedule isn't final yet, but will include a weekend workshop at Southern Dharma Foundation (Hot Springs, NC) on October 12th-14th, and a reading from *Lineage and Other Stories* at the New York Open Center on Saturday, November 3rd. Prison workshops will probably reach as far north as Kingston, Ontario.

If you're interested in arranging or attending anything on this tour, please contact us immediately and we'll let you know what's happening.



LETTERS

Dear Bo,

I've been receiving your newsletters for some time now, but this last one, Spring 1990 with "Even 'The One' is One Too Many", has finally prompted me to write.

I am not a prisoner, never have been. I'm single. I'm gay. I'm a university graduate (BA, MA English). I have seen most of the world and explored many of its cultures. And I'm very familiar with the basic tenets of the world's major religions, including Buddhism and Hinduism. I admire both, but cannot bring myself to believe in any sort of deity or cognizant afterlife. And it is the last that is giving me trouble.

Last year, I turned 50 and a few months before that, my best friend died. My parents are getting old. So, I have suddenly become painfully aware of my own mortality. I find myself triggered to think of my death by all sorts of things, from beautiful music to reading about someone who's been dead for centuries. I then get what must be an anxiety attack -- almost, a panicky feeling of desperation. And the only way I can escape those depressing feelings is to divert my thoughts to something else.

I believe my attitude is not one of fear of my own death, but rather terror at not existing any longer after my death. I think it is more a feeling of impending loss than anything else, since it causes me to have to literally, physically alter my mental state to "get away from it".

I would like to believe in something beyond death, but simply can't. I am a materialist, a realist in just about everything.

I might add that until now, I have never been depressed for any period of time. I've always had a happy attitude about life and, indeed, have enjoyed life until now. Maybe that is the problem? Maybe I've enjoyed life too much?

I know your philosophy is one of inner direction and that it's based on Buddhist thought. I would very much appreciate any advice you

might be able to give me.

Sincerely, D

Dear D,

Congratulations. Isn't it wonderful that your own life and mind won't allow you to ignore the basic questions of your existence any longer? It's not required that you believe in anything or think in any particular way. Truth is truth. The issue is, can we see the way things truly are? Can we see who it is who panics when you think about death, and who it is who needs to define himself so rigidly ("I am a materialist, a realist..." etc.)?

By the way, you're not a "realist" until you can see what is real and what is not.

The only true realists are people who are totally enlightened. The rest of us live by our imaginations.

You imagine life to be a certain way -- materialistic, without God, without afterlife, and so forth -- and now you are experiencing pain and fear. So you write to me hoping I can amend your imagination just enough to leave most of it intact but remove the pain and fear.

But your imagination itself is the problem. Stop imagining, and look at your life with a sincere desire to see the truth. That's the only way I can point out. The truth is, what dies is a tiny part of who we are.

You're frightened by death and non-existence; your fears are no more real than a child's fears of a monster underneath his bed.

The monster doesn't exist, D. I'm among the many people who grew up and looked underneath the bed for himself. Now I sleep well and have no fears of the monsters which you still dread.

I don't ask you to believe me; see for yourself. Look under your bed. The way you do that is to quiet your restless, anxious mind. And even if you can't entirely quiet it, you can at least step back from it just enough to know you are much

more than the body and mind you have always taken yourself to be. This takes work, but what doesn't?

If that's important to you, make room for daily meditation practice so you can see more clearly. The meditation section in *We're All Doing Time* is simple and a good start. If you like group support, take a course somewhere to get you off on the right foot. But you won't be able to solve your problem with thoughts and philosophies.

Your imagination of a materialistic universe has prevented you from experiencing untold beauty, power, magic, and mystery for fifty years now. Thank your pain and fear for forcing you to finally take steps toward being a true realist. If you think you have "enjoyed life too much," you have some really terrific surprises in store! I deeply hope you take the effort.

Love, Bo

Dear Friends,
I've been wondering why the Texas Department of Corrections is so adamantly opposed to Linage and Other Stories. Well, I have read in Playboy that TDC spokeshumans openly boast that Texas has the toughest, hardest-core cons in the USA -- possibly even in the world. Perhaps your book undermines this image by suggesting that even the hardest con may be only human. A book such as yours might make softies out of them!

Well, it was a thought.

Love, R

Dear Bo and Sita,

Hello, my name is T and I am one of many who ended up in the

system. I have been one of the lucky ones to have read your book, *We're All Doing Time*, and it has touched me in so many ways. I am a convicted prostitute and drug user. Doing time has not been easy for me and I'm sure it never will be.

I have gotten into the drug program here and it has helped bunches. I have made many changes but still have a good ways to go.

I am working my twelve steps and I am kinda stuck on my third step, the willingness to turn my life over to my higher power. I have found God and am willing to turn my life over to Him.

What bothers me is, when you're locked up you tend to believe in change and becoming different and you work on it. But when you actually walk out the door it's another story and the change you fought so hard for in here goes to hell.

I am scared of leaving cause I'm afraid of doing this and I don't want it to happen and I know it can, cause I've put it in my mind before that I'm gonna change and do right, but as soon as I was free I did just the opposite.

Well, coming to prison is really different with a 4-1/2 year sentence hanging over my head. I was due to go home August but now, the system has brought out this new law and it involves any and all sex-related offenses, including prostitution. Well, what credit I've received to put me home in August will be taken and I will no longer receive it, only getting the 20 days a month gain time so now I'm looking to do about 11 more months on top of the 8 months I've already done and man, is the living hell, for I was looking so forward to going home to my 2-year-old son who I don't even know and having a chance to be his mommy again before he could know anything.

Now I won't get to do this until he's 3 or 4 and I'm hurting. But for the grace of God I am accepting it and looking at it as if there is a reason and the only reason I can come to terms with is it's God's way

of letting me know I'm just not ready to go. And with that attitude I'm able to deal with these angered feelings I have and just let go and let God.

Well, Bo and Sita, I want to thank you for allowing me time to get things off my chest and I truly hope in any small way you can give to me an encouraging word or two to keep me headed in the direction I'm going.

T

Dear T,

It sounds like you know pretty well what you need to do and how you need to look at it. Maybe the best help I can give you is to point out one part of the problem which you may not see too clearly: Fear.

Fear is a problem in and of itself. It's very destructive. You're afraid that when you get out you won't be able to stay straight. You're afraid that while you stay in these extra months, you'll be missing precious experiences out on the street with your family. You're afraid your son may not relate to you in the way you would have hoped. You're afraid your new attitude might regain some old bitterness. You're afraid that before you know it, you'll be right back in the joint looking back on one more crushing disappointment of your hopes for a better life.

But FEAR is the problem, not any of the things it pretends to be about.

Don't let fear or any of its lieutenants -- worry, anxiety, panic, denial -- fool you into giving up the changes you've worked so hard to achieve. You're a much different person now than when you were busted.

You have much more awareness of the effects of drugs and prostitution on your life. You have more awareness of the kind of life you really want. Don't let fear twist your mind into thinking you haven't changed, that you're just playing a game, that you'll be back into all your old shit as soon as you hit some hard times. That's just fear talking, and it's a lie.

Fear has no power in itself; that's why it tries to make us panic so that we make its predictions come true.

If you find yourself in a bar, and you've sworn you wouldn't drink, and you start feeling FEAR that you're going to drink, what often happens is that the fear becomes so intense, you find yourself reaching for the bottle just to get it over with already.

But fear didn't make you drink; it SCARED you into making yourself drink. You didn't have to buy into it like that. You could've just recognized it for the powerless scary demon it is, and let it rant and rave and threaten all it wanted to. But it can't make you do anything. It can't make you turn a trick; it can't make you shoot up. It can't make you cop a bitter attitude.

In the beginning of your letter you said you were afraid to get out yet, and then you mentioned the new law and how upset you were that you can't get out yet. Well, I think you're right to try to see the new law as being a gift of a little more time to pull your life together. You felt you needed it anyway.

Being a GREAT mother to a three-year-old is better than being a scared, inconsistent mother to a two-year-old. Use your time to keep gaining strength and faith, and to keep quieting your mind through meditation so that you stand up to fear and refuse to be its victim anymore.

When you get out, your life is going to be whatever you're willing to make it. Don't let fear make you think you won't "be able" to do what you want to do. Start refusing that kind of crap right now.

Your Loving brother, Bo

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Dear Bo & Sita,

Greetings. I am writing to you in search of some help and advice from you. You seem to give an answer and it fits and helps out lots. In your newsletter, you give answers from the heart and speak truthfully, pulling no punches.

I have a very severe problem. As you might know or have heard, there was a riot here at (name withheld). It was the worst riot in state history. Over half the prison was ruined, 15 or 20 million in damages, 145 injuries, no deaths though.

You see, I came back to prison for a parole violation and was given 18 months back time to do. When the riots happened, I was waiting for my parole plan to come back. I had a so-called bro here who I thought was a pretty decent dude. He hooked me up with his sister, she wrote me, visited me and even got some pussy on the visit from her and head and hand jobs.

But you see, I turned my life over to Christ and that ended the smut on visits. We remained friends and she still came to visit me. I thought me and her brother were real tight.

Well when the riot kicked, I met up with her brother and we hung together during the riot. We didn't do anything but watch our backs in case of trouble. Things were set on fire, inmates were stabbed and beaten along with guards, living quarters were set on fire, the whole works. Well due to the unavailability of space, I was transferred to a new jail. I was brought back to this riot-torn prison in January because someone was saying I did something.

Well, after 57 days in lockup, I was arrested and arraigned on four new criminal charges: Arson Endangering Property, Arson Endangering Persons, Riot and Criminal Conspiracy to Commit Arson. I am accused of setting or telling two black inmates to set one of the Modular Housing Units on fire that burned up, two of them and a small mobile trailer. Total loss estimate \$472,000.

I now stand to face if convicted, 23-1/2 to 47 years more in prison, a \$40,000 fine and total restitution for the trailers. Not only that, the county this jail is in and my home county told me one more felony conviction, I'll be hit with the career criminal act that gets ya anywhere up to life in prison. I now face all this because the guy I spoke of in my letter earlier, made the statement against me. I am really pissed and hurt. I have a daughter who just turned 2 years old on March 25 who, if by some miracle I get convicted, I may never get to see grow up.

I am filled with so much anger and hostility that I'm losing my mind. I'm INNOCENT. I did nothing Bo and Sita. I became a Christian in 1988 and have lived a life of a Christian since then. This

guy knows that and knows I wouldn't bring harm to anyone. But I am slipping. I have started letting anger control me deeply and in my heart.

I've already started plotting revenge. I want to kill this guy, his family, everything associated with him.

I done sent him a letter through the prison grapevine, in someone else's handwriting, letting him know if I get convicted, I will either escape and make it out and kill him, all his sisters, mom, dad, cat, dog, anyone including his daughter and wife. If I don't make it out I will die trying.

I know it's wrong to think and talk like this but I can't help it. I don't know what to do. I just want to kill him and all his family instead of forgive him and pray for the best.

Bo and Sita, I just got my ex-old lady to give me another chance because she thought or thinks I changed and I did, but now this is giving her different thoughts. I love my ol' lady and kids, I have 2 daughters to her, one's 2 and the other is 11. I can't stand to lose her because some dude I thought was cool with me is trying to hang me. Do you have any advice?

Love, your brother, R

Dear R,

I'm really sorry to hear how hard things are for you right now and all the shit that's coming your way. I hope you're hanging on, even if only by a thread. If you allow yourself to go over the edge, then you lose no matter how it turns out -- whether you're in prison or on the streets, you're back at square one, being an angry, bitter guy with a very clouded mind.

Obviously I can't say much about why your friend has fingered you or whether the charges are going to stick or not. So the best way I can help is to focus on your state of mind no matter which way things go. For example, are you better able to combat these charges with a calm, clear mind, or an angry, confused mind? You'd better decide what your highest priority is: Is it clearing yourself of the charges, or is it vengeance on your old friend?

If it's clearing yourself, then you'd better get your mind back on track so you can prepare your defense without being a raving lunatic. If your higher priority is to be a righteous vengeful convict, then go ahead and wallow in all those feelings, but you may as well stop bitching about doing more time, because you're going to do more time.

So which is a more important picture in your mind -- your wife and children's sweet faces around the dinner table, or your ex-friend's dead face at your feet?

Those convict games will be going on forever, they never stop. Somebody's always fucking up somebody else. You just have to decide when you're going to grow up and step out of the game.

There's such a bigger world than that! That scene only seems big and important while you're in it. Once you step out, you'll look back and think, "My God, how was I so stupid for so long?"

And for you, there's even a bigger issue to consider. You say you turned your life over to Christ. Well, do you think He forgot about you? Did He just blow it this time? Is your ex-friend more powerful than Christ? It's very easy to go to a revival and say "I turn my life over to Christ," but then when He sends you something heavy to deal with, you freak out and say, "No, no, I didn't mean this!"

How do you think Christ helps you become stronger -- by making things easy? It's easy to say "I want to give up anger and hatred" while you feel cool, but you can't really give it up until you're feeling it. Christ is still right here, ready to take it from you, but you're saying "I have a right to be angry! I have a right to hate that dude!"

But the spiritual journey isn't about rights; it's about ripping off all the layers of hatred, fear, and fury that keep us from our God-nature. Was Christ guilty of the crimes which got Him crucified? Was that fair and just and right?

Turning your life over to Christ means accepting the struggles and

trials He sends your way, R. In fact, as bad as your situation is, 90% of your pain is from your resistance to reality. So have you turned your life over to Christ or not?

If you stop resisting what's happened, then what you're left with is simply to prepare as vigorous a defense as you can to prove your innocence (remember the Bible line, *God helps those who help themselves!*).

But that's not the pain and suffering you wrote about in your letter, was it? Your letter was about resistance, bitterness, hatred, anger, violence, self-pity. Your letter was "THIS SHOULDN'T BE HAPPENING TO ME!!!!!!!" So have you turned your life over to Christ or not?

Is life supposed to be easy or smooth, always fair and just? Have you turned your life over to Christ or not?

That's the question which holds the key to your mental state right now. I'll be pulling for you, my friend.

In His Name, Bo

Dear Bo and Sita,

Greetings, friends. I come to you in peace, love and guidance in my life again through God.

I did receive your letter and it kicked me where I needed it. I must say, it was a very impressing letter with some showing of care and helped me get my act back together.

I am no longer holding on by a thread, I've gotten the whole spool back. I'm beyond square one. I may still be in prison awaiting trial for my new charges, but I'm doing what I need to do to be a better man.

For the last 2 months since your letter, I've done my soul searching, asking God for forgiveness and getting the hatred and anger out of me towards the non-believer who still has me here. As Christ says, "When you are weak, I am most strong." I believe it.

Your letter is so strong and full of truth. I really dig it. I have it framed in cardboard and hanging on my wall as a reminder. My lady

and kids are more important to me than some ass who is trying to save his own a. At least I still have my lady and kids, what does he have, about 9 convicts wanting his neck in a wringer. This guy has told on at least 11 people so far.

So, I can turn back to Christ, give him my anger and prayer for his will and guidance and that the truth shine through at trial. There are enough cons who want him and I don't need to waste my time. My hands are washed of him. I pray for his (snitch) deliverance and that he comes clean in life, but I don't foresee it. Someday, he'll answer for his mistakes and misdeeds.

I have a defense of about 8 convicts for trial. Being this took place in prison, I can only use cons, but it's whether the jury will believe me and 8 other cons or 1 guy. I'm not gonna worry. I leave it in God's hands. I believe I'll win. I have a very strong case and defense.

I wish I had the statement that the inmate made against me. You'd laugh. At the beginning of his statement, he says me and these 2 guys came through Modular Unit 5 into Mod 6, then in another paragraph, he said he met me outside of Mod 6. This is where me, a white guy, was supposed to tell 2 black guys I don't even know, to set a fire. What a joke.

This guy is telling on so many people it's pitiful. I pray justice prevails and I win as I am wrongly accused. I haven't gotten a trial or pre-trial date yet. I'm supposed to get it on June 6, 1990.

This does hurt inside because I'm missing my summer with the lady and kids and by rights, I should be out there. But now I will probably miss the summer and Christmas. Since I came back to this destroyed jail, I have received 4 misconducts for snapping verbally on the guards. They taunt ya till you snap, then write ya up. A person sitting locked in a cell can only put up with so much before he lets loose.

How is Sita and the family doing? Anything more to read yet? Take Care, keep in touch and brother, your letters are strong and helpful, keep it up.

Take care and stay in touch.

Love, R

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Dear Bo,

Because I love you and the spirit of God has moved me I can not remain silent. I will first say I am a Christian and most assuredly am biased by my spiritual belief. You mentioned in your book Lineage of a pastor on fire with Christ. Then Christ appeared to him while he was in a state of confusion and revealed to this Christian preacher truths, that God is with everyone, for everyone, and comes to everyone through any religion.

I am sorry but I cannot accept this. There is only one reason anyone would not want to have Christ thus God in their life -- "Satan". From my point of view the devil or one of God's ex-angels a demon was sent to this man to confound, confuse and muddle his faith.

Christ will never leave him but by his choice he may disgrace or discredit his Lord and Savior.

I love you and praise God for your book but am also concerned for your spirit. You being a highly spiritual person must see there is no good reason not to ask Christ into your life.

Why limit yourself to not having the power of the Holy Spirit? There is so much to be gained, and nothing to be lost except maybe the desire to sin against God.

I hope and pray you are already a Christian, if not think clearly about asking Christ and the Holy Spirit into your life. Remember Satan will do all he can to stop this wonderful thing. That's his job. "Seek" and you shall find. You must "seek". The peace and grace of God be with you always. I love you.

Your brother, J

Dear J,

I'm glad you love me enough to be honest about your feelings. But it's you who doesn't quite understand the good news.

To answer your question, yes I have certainly asked Christ to come into my life and I have indeed been born again. Christ is always with me and it is with His authority I write what I write and say what I say. Christ has no problem with it, and I have no problem with it, so I guess

you're the only one who has a problem with it.

And since I'm the guy who wrote the story ("A Matter of Choice") I can say that it was definitely not a devil or demon who appeared to the minister. It was Christ. The experience he had was genuine. If you can't see it, you're just going to have to turn inward in prayer and ask the Master to clear your vision.

You express a kind of Christianity which is filled with fear and judgement almost to the point of hysteria. That sort of thing hasn't changed since His day.

Fundamentalists who condemn me for writing the Truth are the same ones who condemned Jesus for being the Truth.

Narrow-minded people refuse to **FEEL** whether the Holy Spirit is present, they merely want to cling to written words and unchanging beliefs to keep the Living God at a safe distance. Don't fall for that.

If you read my story with an open heart, you'll feel the Holy Spirit, because I didn't write it alone. Don't forget that Christ was a rebel and an outcast in His day, with a lot of people trying to "save" Him from his "blasphemies". Times haven't really changed very much.

You're a good guy. Open your eyes and see beyond the frightened mind's limited view of God. He is here, right now, just like He promised. I appreciate your concern for me, but I assure you, it's actually His Spirit that you're disagreeing with in my writings. You'll have to take it up with Him.

In His Love, Bo

Dear Bo,

Ya know, I've been reading your material for quite a while now, and I must say I'm impressed. You've been a great inspiration to me and my friends.

Anyway, let's get down to the real issue here. All my life I've tried to be a kind and caring person. Many times I've stuck my neck out on a limb for someone else, and most likely I'll be doing that until the day I die. Well, I think we can all agree that the "System", as we know it to be, is pretty screwed up, and there is a definite need for some positive changes.

For the last 7+ years I've done time at GBCI in Wisconsin. This is a "kiddy farm" compared to most joints. There's never been much unity among the inmates until recently. And the nice thing about it is the inmates are beginning to stand up and be counted as human beings. They are tired of being stepped on by those in high places.

Anyway, GBCI has been in the "Dark Ages" about rehabilitation for a good many years now, and the inmates are starting to realize this. But when someone gets enough balls to do something constructive, the Administration is right there to put a damper on the situation. The cons are ready for change, but the Administration don't want to see it happen.

The point here being, I picked up my balls and gave it my best shot to break the communication barrier. I stuck my neck out to be able to work together with the Administration in hopes to make the world a better place to live in. But ya know what happened? I got my ass transferred real quick!

I've done all my time with a clean record, and now my file states that I'm a severe threat to the security of GBCI, and that I have a great influence over the general population. I guess they don't like people rocking the boat in a positive way.

I've got a couple life sentences with a little extra change to boot, and I sorta wonder if this isn't gonna create a roadblock for me when I see the parole board in four years. But oh well -- I firmly believe in creating a "Kinder--Gentler" society. And when I believe in something, I'll pull out all of the stops and "keep on, keepin on".

I have absolutely no intentions of allowing this minor setback to break my spirit. And I would urge all my brothers back at the Bay to keep pushin' forward for what they believe in. I want all of them to know that even though I'm not there in body -- I'll always be with them in spirit. And that goes for all my Bros in the joint, and the "forever friends" I made in the Green Bay community. I love every one of them with all my heart.

Love ya-- Mark "Eagle" James

Bo, I don't know if this is too long for you to print or not, but I would sure appreciate it if you'd give it a try. I was the Editor of the prison rag there for several years, and this might be my last chance to let the Bros read my work! At least for a while anyway.

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*At every moment whatever comes to you unasked, comes from God
and will surely help you if you make the fullest use of it.*

*It is only what you strive for out of your own imagination and desire
that gives you trouble.*

*Do not be afraid of freedom from desire and fear. It enables you to live
a life so different from all you know, so much more intense and
interesting, that truly, by losing all you gain all.*

-- Sri Nisargadatta Maharaj