

Human Kindness Foundation

a little good news

Christmas 1995

THE GOOD GUYS ALREADY WON



Dear Family,
Sita and I send you all our love at this season of reflection, renewal and celebration. Do you wonder how I can say "celebration" when so many of you are reading this in lonely, frightening places, and when the daily news seems to bring little more than a steady drone of bleakness and despair?

Isn't that the eternal paradox of a word like "gospel," which literally means "good news?" The good news often comes to us when we are sick, lonely, frightened, weary, even when things seem hopeless. **And it rarely changes our physical circumstances.** We don't always get out of prison, recover from our illnesses, find our loved ones restored to life. Only in Hollywood. In real life, the prison bars are still hard, illnesses still a drag, the dead still dead. Yet there is cause for celebration. Why?

Because the greatest comfort, the best news of all, no matter how hard or frightening or utterly *exhausting* our journeys may be at times, is that the end of our struggle has already been decided. The forces of Good and Evil have already had their final battle, and we know how it turned out. The Good Guys won. The good in us won.

Jesus said on the cross, "It is accomplished." The Buddha sat down under the Bodhi tree and vowed never to move again until that same victory had been achieved. Mohammed sat year after year in his cave, Moses spent forty days and nights alone and hungry on Mount Sinai; countless men and women have presented themselves point-blank before the Great Truth and actually touched It. They went through the looking glass, came back out and told us, "It is accomplished." Not just for them, but for us as well.

The Holy Ones have all assured us that their victories apply to our lives as well. Light dispels darkness. Love conquers hatred. Good triumphs over evil. Forgiveness overcomes anger. There is only one set of rules, and they are absolute. We can count on them.

So our spiritual journey is like a war in reverse: The war has been won at the beginning, but to preserve the dignity of our free will, we each have to fight the same battles the holy ones fought, until we make the same choices they

made. It may be rough, but how discouraged can we get if we remember that the war has already been won? We just have to keep doing our part, aligning ourselves with the victorious forces — goodness, love, forgiveness, peace, long-suffering, humility, generosity, compassion. But we can already rejoice; the Great War has been won.

The only way we can even mistakenly *feel* like losers is to align ourselves with those principles which lost the war: selfishness, cruelty, anger, greed, delusion, hatred, fear. But so GREAT was the Final Victory, so TOTAL the Great Compassion, that no matter how long we act like losers, we'll eventually make the right choices and become winners. The most heinous killers will become the very embodiments of nonviolence. The biggest misers will give their wealth to the poor. The most meanspirited politicians will become sweet, fair, sensitive people.

It may take many lifetimes, but each one of us will eventually choose the Holy Path. The angels and masters and saints never give up on us no matter what we have done. The great Rabbi, the Baal Shem Tov, said to one of his disciples, "*The lowest of the low you can think of, is dearer to me than your only son is to you.*" Just imagine.

Jesus said, "I am with you till the end of the world." The Buddha and all the Bodhisattvas have vowed to keep taking birth until every last one of us is fully liberated. The Jewish Messiah will indeed come. The mercy and compassion of Allah is *infinite*; it can never be exhausted. Hanuman, the Hindu Holy Spirit, is immortal and unconquerable, available everywhere to those who sincerely cry for help. All the great paths promise the same thing: We will not be left twisting in the wind, alone and unloved.

Which means we human beings won't be able to uphold evil forever. The forces of good are eternal and the forces of evil are not. Life will wear us down until we just can't stand our selfishness anymore. We will tire of being against one another, and we will gradually choose to be kinder, humbler. And when we do, all those spectacular forces of goodness will be on hand to help and comfort us through the long struggle of undoing the many nets of karma we have imprisoned ourselves in. **We have no enemies other than ourselves, our own choices. But we have lots of friends in High Places.**

After all the words, all the books, all the thinking and discussion, life once again presents to us this single next moment: What will we do with it? How will we exercise our free will? Will our choices bind us further or begin to free us? As we bind or free ourselves, we bind or free the whole world a little bit more. If we have had enough of holocausts, "ethnic cleansings," homelessness, racial divisiveness, pollution and destruction of nature, fear of our neighbors, then we need to get cracking on our spiritual journeys. We are responsible and we are powerful, even in a prison cell or hospital bed.

The buck always stops in this very moment, right at our feet. Everything will definitely turn out all right in the end, but we can drag out the misery or speed up the mercy and healing. I choose to do what I can to speed it up, and I pray you do too, because we're all in this together. *I am with you until the end of the world.*

I hope you find some spiritual practices which suit your nature and do them faithfully. Spend a little time each day studying any source of classic wisdom. Take reasonable care of mind, body and spirit. Be kind to whomever life places in front of you at any moment. Don't do anything which you feel contributes to what's wrong in the world. Discover what your basic values are and abide by them, even when there is a price to pay for it. Keep your life simple, uncluttered and modest so you won't be an object of anyone's materialistic envy. Don't add any lies or hypocrisy to the world, as it can hardly bear any more.

The work has always been the same and always will be. Each and every one of us will make it to the Great Wonderfulness. Take comfort and help others to do the same. Remind them — through your thought, speech, and actions — that the good guys already won.

Happy Holy Days, Bo



CHRISTMAS AT THE MONASTERY

For Christmas, why don't you go to the Magic Monastery?

They have a brother there who was one of the shepherds who first greeted the Christ Child. Of course this brother is very old now, but when you hear him play his flute, you will become very young. (Be careful. You may do something silly.)

The three Wise Men are there also. Each Christmas one of them will give the sermon. Listen very carefully. You may have difficulty with his language, but that is because he is so wise and you are so foolish. I thought he was superficial, talking about incense on Christmas. It was only later that I realized he had been talking about the REAL incense, and now I can smell that wherever I go. Perhaps when you go there he will be speaking about the real gold, or the real myrrh.

And then there are the angels. You'll hear them singing. What shall I say? It's God's music. It gets into your bones. Nothing is the same afterwards.

But all this is nothing. What really matters is when the Word becomes flesh. Wait till you experience that.

-- "Tales of a Magic Monastery," by Theophane the Monk

PRACTICE: RADICAL GOODWILL (SEE A SAINT IN EVERY HEART)

When a pickpocket looks at a saint, all he can see are his pockets. — Neem Karoli Baba

When a saint looks at a pickpocket, all he can see is a saint. — Bo

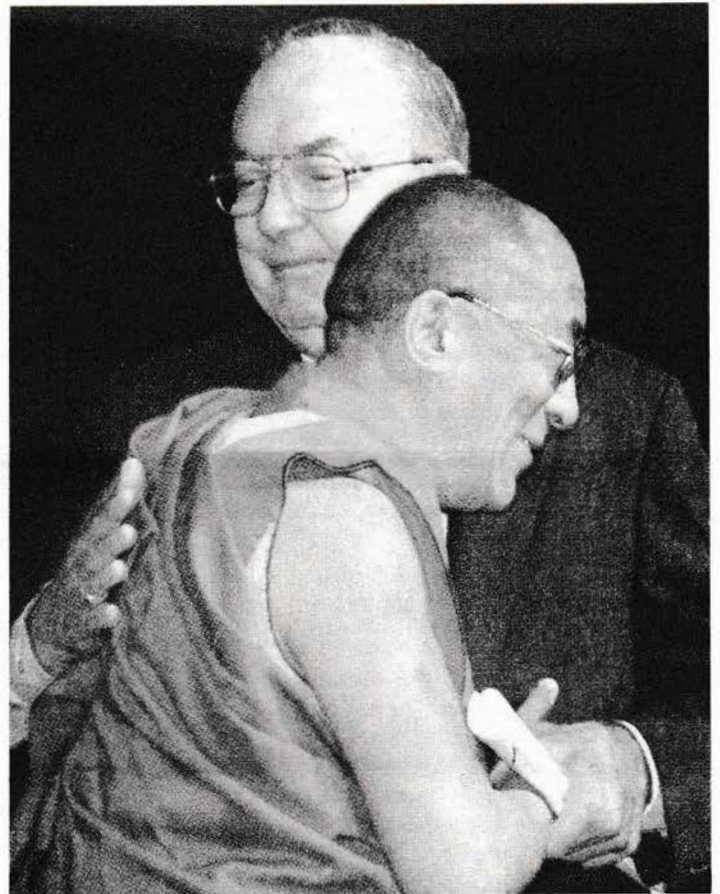
The photo on this page was taken at a recent event here in North Carolina. That's His Holiness the Dalai Lama on the left, who is known as one of the world's most saintly people, and that's Senator Jesse Helms on the right, who is known as one of the world's most stubborn and crafty arch-conservatives. Friends who

attended the event said they were deeply moved by Jesse's affectionate, respectful introduction of the Dalai Lama. They assured us the affection between them was sincere and mutual. Jesse called him "His Holiness," he kissed him, he bowed in humility. A cynic might say the only thing they like about each other is their mutual political opposition to China's aggression, but people who were there say otherwise.

Could it be that when most of us look at Jesse Helms we see the pickpocket, and when the Dalai Lama looks, he sees the saint that's lurking deep down inside? And could it be that Jesse can actually *feel* the Dalai Lama's respect and goodwill, and he then responds from the best part of himself?

Matthew, the heartless tax collector, went to Peter's home to mock Jesus. Jesus welcomed him, invited him to dinner. Peter was outraged at that, so Jesus told Matthew he would come to *his* home for dinner — totally unthinkable for a respectable person to do. Matthew soon became the good person — and eventually the saint — whom he truly was all along.

I have a practice of goodwill that started merely as a daily blessing to my son, Josh. At the end of my morning meditation practice, I used to bring him into my heart for a moment, feel all my fatherly affection, and offer him a blessing for the day. Soon I began to understand that the feeling I call "fatherly affection" is the same as the *radical* goodwill which the Dalai Lama feels for Jesse Helms or Jesus felt for Matthew: It's an absolute acceptance of his decency, his goodness. I **know** my son is a good person. No



matter what mistake he might make, I know his true nature is good. I probably know it better than he does — just like Jesus toward Matthew, or the Dalai Lama toward Jesse Helms. Regardless of sins, addictions, insanity, crimes, there would be no way to convince me my son is a bad person. "Radical Goodwill" is to know the same thing about everyone on Earth — not an easy task, but possible with practice.

So now my practice *begins* the way it used to, with a blessing to Josh, but then I bring to mind all the difficult, ornery, or lost people I can imagine (no problem finding enough of them!) and I strengthen my belief in their goodness, their decency, trying to **know** it as well as I know it about Josh. It's a practice which is changing my life. Jesus looked at cruel, despicable Matthew and saw a wayward angel. That's how we must learn to see Jesse, Newt and all the good old boys in Washington, or the angry prison guards who may make your life miserable, or the Mansons, McVeighs, Susan Smiths and all the other folks whom 'respectable' Americans love to hate. If we take the time to practice this every day even for a few seconds, we will gradually come to see that there is no one we don't know. It might even begin to sink in that we ourselves, down deep, are saints and angels as well. So we may as well start acting like it. ❀

LETTERS

Dear Sita & Bo,

Life continues to be one continuous burst of laughter. There really is humor in so much of what goes on here in prison. Every moment seems to give added insight into the people and situations around me.

Last night was a prime example. I was sitting on the last bench in a row of benches, talking to someone about living in the "now," and I had put my foot on the bench in front of me. Within a second there was a beam of light in my face from an officer, red-faced and screaming from behind the glass of the officer's station. I almost had to laugh seeing how distraught this man had become over my feet being set on a piece of wood.

He popped the door to the quad and violently motioned me to come over. I approached the little hole that officers talk to inmates through. He asked me why I had my feet on his bench and I said, "just habit," and I was sorry and it wouldn't happen again. To me, it was nothing to get hung about.

Well, instead of writing me up, he told me to remain on the bench when everyone else returned to their cells for count. I said "yes sir," and he asked whether I would ever put my feet on his bench again. I fought back a smile and said, "No sir!"

At count time the sergeant saw me sitting on the bench and called me over. Now this guy is usually ruthless, so I didn't know what to expect. The sergeant asked me what in the world I was doing sitting on a bench in the dayroom during master count. Trying to keep my sense of humor I said, "I knew you were going to ask me that." For the first time in my life I saw this guy smile and say, "I bet you did."

I explained the situation and he was actually kind. Right there is one lesson in keeping a sense of humor: It can rub off. The other officer came back in and handed me a rag, told me to wipe off every bench in the building, including the legs. At that time I thought about saying "Wax on, wax off," (Karate Kid), but instead I thanked him for his originality and told him that my punishment would build character.

He was angered at my lack of anger. It was amazing to see, though I see this

all the time. Still, by keeping my own inner peace, looking at the whole scheme of things compared to this now-hilarious situation, I saw how this man hated himself. I kept quiet and considered this for a while. Then I thought of the importance of "seeing Buddha in everyone," and I thought of how this man must be hurting.

There was a time when I would have hated him for being the oppressor, but through my own spiritual work I am at a point where I only wanted him to know that I had no hard feelings.

Remember: It is not that those who cultivate wholeness and virtue in themselves do not encounter difficulties in life.

It is that they understand that difficulties are the very road to immortality: By meeting them calmly and openly, however they unfold, and joyfully developing themselves in response to them, they become as natural, as complete, and as eternal as the Tao itself.

— Lao Tzu (transl. by Brian Walker)

I find there is so much to learn from every little experience, and walking in harmony with goodwill and a sense of humor makes it easier to see each lesson and see others as they truly are. I actually hurt for someone trying to cause me suffering. I've changed!

Much Love, M



Dear Bo,

Hi, what's up man? Not much here, just hanging on for this roller coaster ride. Man, this life thing is getting pretty fun! Now that I just sit back and watch all the clouds go by, it's really entertaining. I can see my moods swing up and down and I'm getting better at just watching instead of getting so attached to it all. My mind is... let's say extraordinary. Quite entertaining to say the least.

Man, I can't figure something out. I'm 21, sitting in prison with a life sentence and 25 years minimum mandatory to do. I'm in a drug program and starting to look within for the answers. Well, I'm not finding any answers but I'm happier than I've ever been. Actually,

I've pretty much stopped looking for answers and now I'm just enjoying my life. I can see the beauty of this world that I used to want to destroy.

The thing that's bugging me is that people in this program say I'm in denial about my time and my old lady. Man, if this is denial, then fuck reality! At least now I've stopped hurting myself and others. Do you think these people telling me this is a test to see if I'll get attached like I used to? I'll ponder that for a while but I'm not gonna stop enjoying myself for them.

Well, I'm off to see some more life. I love all of you doing the HKF....

Take care, D

Dear D,

Just a note to say thanks for the great letter. As for whether you're "in denial" or not, the good thing is, time will tell. That's all you need to say to the people in your program. Maybe you're partly happy from spiritual realization, and partly in denial; why argue? The truth will become clear as you continue to live your life in an open and honorable way.

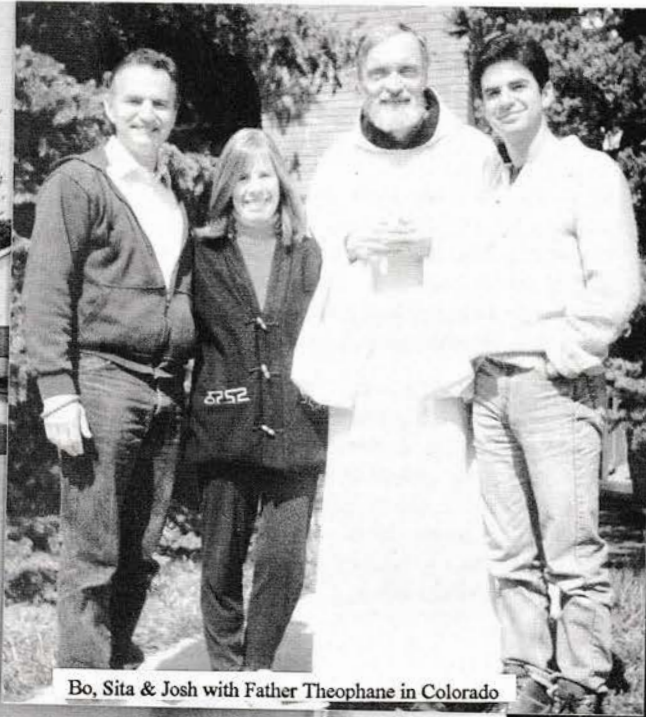
I would still encourage you to include some daily practices in your life — especially while you're feeling so good. If you take time now to pray, study, meditate, do good works, you'll be building your discipline and stability which will help carry you through the next round of hard times you may encounter. If your happiness is true, and not just denial, then it will lend itself to practice very well. What the Buddha called "right effort" is always an important part of the spiritual life.

Or as Lao Tzu put it 2500 years ago, **Don't think you can attain total awareness and whole enlightenment without proper discipline and practice. This is egomania. Appropriate rituals channel your emotions and life energy toward the Light. Without the discipline to practice them, you will tumble constantly backward into darkness.**

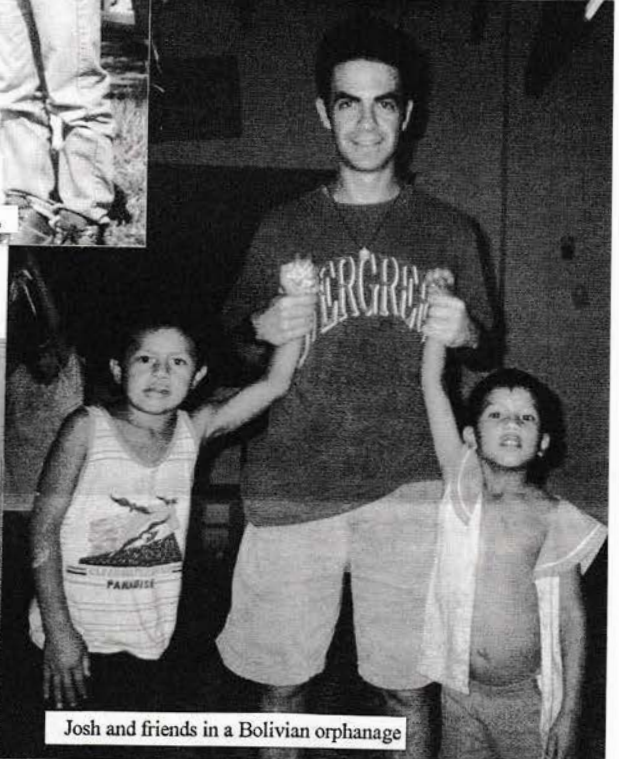
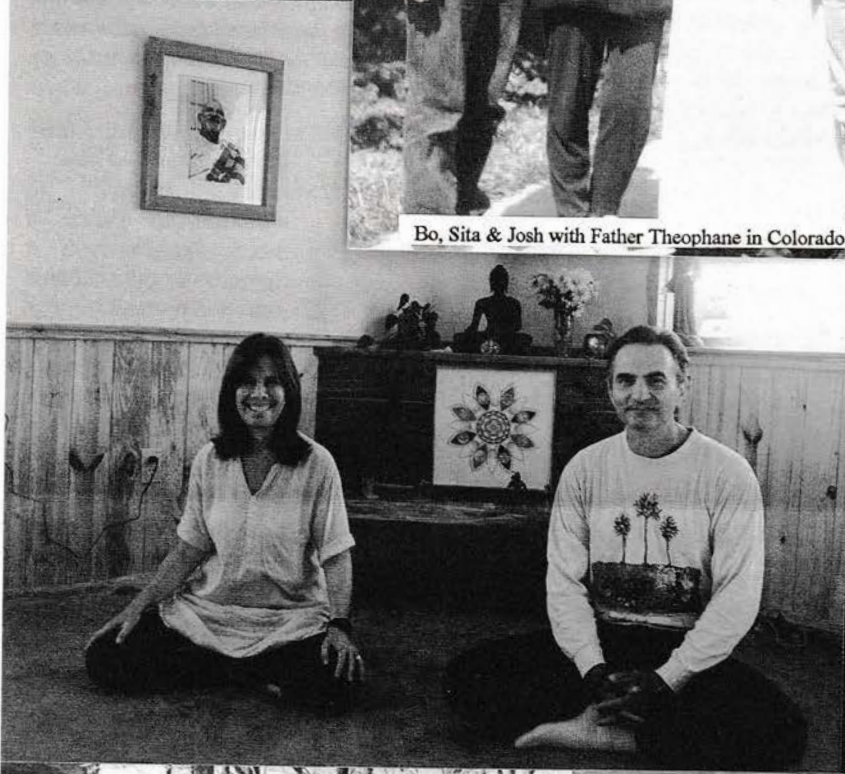
Anyway, we're very happy you're enjoying yourself and send you our very best wishes for this great new chapter of your life.

Love, Bo (& Sita)

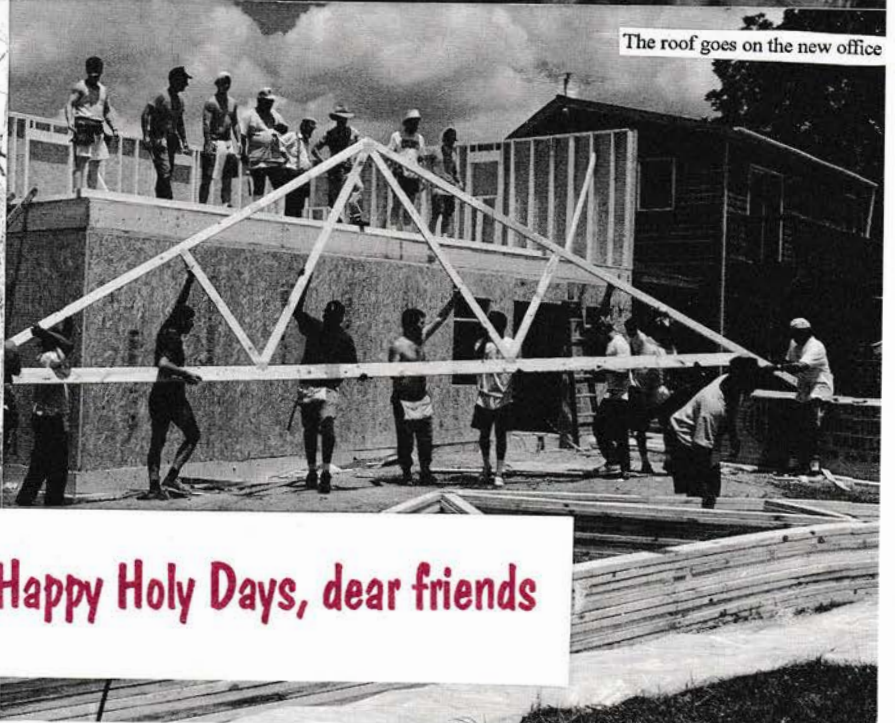
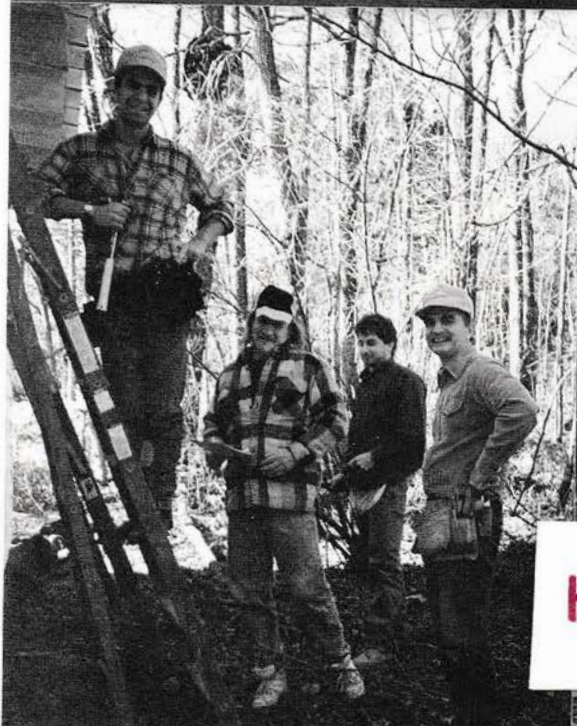




Bo, Sita & Josh with Father Theophane in Colorado



Josh and friends in a Bolivian orphanage



The roof goes on the new office

Happy Holy Days, dear friends

NEWS, NOTES, OFFERINGS & GOOD WORKS

WE'RE ALL DOING TIME IS NOW IN FRENCH...

Our longtime friend and supporter, Joan Bachmann, has now completed the translation of Bo's first book into French. We don't understand a word of the following announcement, but we're sure the people who need the new edition will! Many thanks to Joan for her dedication and effort.

Avec l'aide d'une équipe d'amis, Joan Bachmann, Canadienne habitant la Suisse, a traduit en français ce merveilleux guide que Bo nous a livré en anglais, il y a dix ans déjà.

Un exemplaire de *NOUS SOMMES TOUS DANS UNE PRISON* —
Un guide pour se libérer sera offert gratuitement à:

Association Lumière en Prison
case postale 505
CH — 1110 Morges (Switzerland)

ou au Québec à:

Savithri Shanker
case postale 84019
Otterburn Park Quebec, CANADA J3H 5V9

FREE ISLAMIC READING MATERIALS...

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MODEL IN-JAIL RECOVERY PROGRAM

70% of jail inmates are drug addicted. NCSL sponsors volunteers for in-jail education on drug addiction & recovery. The volunteers are highly successful in helping inmates decide and commit to recovery, and to enter a program upon release. A key to this cost-effective service is the volunteer's respectful attitude in listening to the inmate, helping him/her sort out alternatives and make meaningful choices.

For further information:

Northern California Service league
28 Boardman Place
San Francisco CA 94103
(415) 863-2323

Some New Tapes Available From Us

We are happy to announce several new audiotapes of Bo's talks in a variety of settings, and two videotapes as well. As always, the audiotapes are free to those who can't afford to pay, and \$8 for those who can. The videos are \$20 each. We can't afford to send videos free to individuals, but we'll be happy to supply a copy to groups or libraries. **Prisoners please note: these audiotapes are not clear tapes or shrink-wrapped, so your institution may not allow you to receive them. Be sure you have proper permission before requesting them. Otherwise, it costs us a lot of time and money.**

New Videotapes:

___ *But Enough About ME..* (75 min; 1995. Recorded at the annual conference of the Institute for Noetic Sciences. Bo gave the keynote speech, focusing on the current self-esteem craze and whether it really serves our deepest interests.)

___ *An Evening With Bo Lozoff* (75 min; 1990. Our formerly 2+-hour tape has now been re-edited. Recorded at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. Bo deals with general issues of spiritual life, and specific discussion of working with fear, anger and other strong feelings.)

Order form — cash or check enclosed

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New Audiotapes:

___ *But Enough About ME...* (same as the audiotape, 75 min)

___ *The Humility of Excellence* (60 min; 1995. Fresh, powerful sermon; includes two songs from church soloists)

___ *Sacred Living, Sacred Practice / Beside the Crucifix* (90 min; 1994. Two church sermons, one in a prison and the other in an affluent California church; a potent combination)

___ *New Dimensions Radio Interview* (60 min; Bo speaks to renowned interviewer Michael Toms about America's criminal justice crisis and its roots in our national values).

Order form — no funds enclosed

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Please send me the audios I've checked above.

___ I have approval for these tapes (enclose forms if necessary)

a little good news

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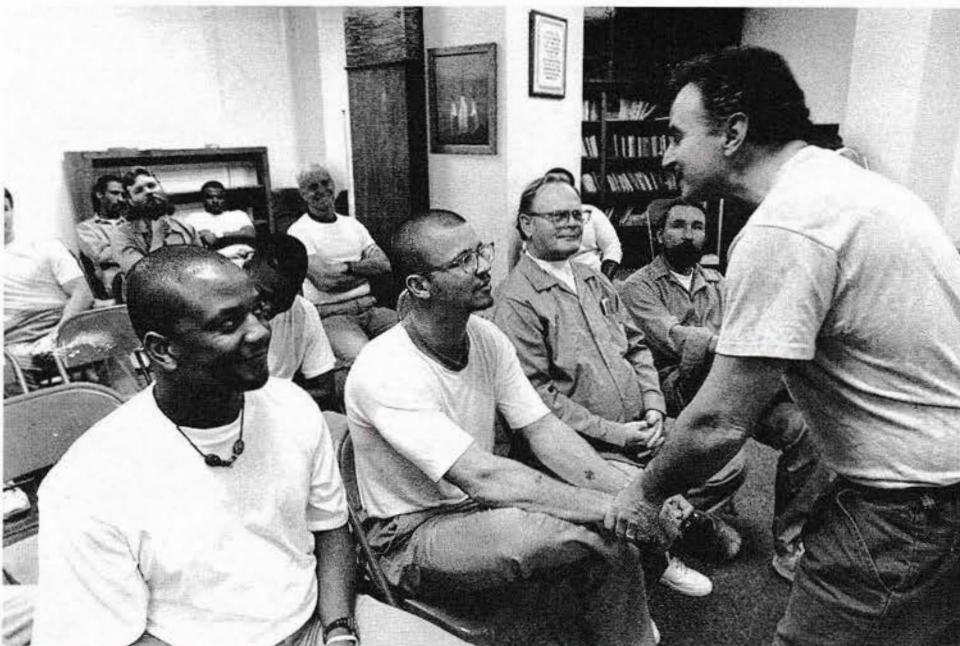
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Bo Lozoff and friends at Eastern Correctional Center, NC, 1995 photo: Chris Cozzone, *Prison Life* magazine

Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us.

We ask ourselves, "Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?" Actually, who are you not to be?

You are a child of God. Your playing small doesn't serve the world. There's nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.

We are born to make manifest the Glory of God that is within us. It's not

just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.

— Nelson Mandela, 1994 Inaugural Speech