

06/02/09

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Greetings from your Stone Tablet and ROC family! I wanted to write a letter separate to you because we were trying to catch up on some of the articles that have been sent in and I had a little extra to catch you up on this month. As you all know, we have been working to help some Texas legislators address parole issues during this session of the legislature. Although it has been a little aggravating and frustrating, this has been a learning time for me. Unfortunately, as far as I can tell, this session will close without any marked change in the current parole situation. I believe that we should not despair but rather look upon it as a time to allow the legislators working diligently on parole reform to come up with a bill that has the best opportunity to pass and become law and will be worded in such a way that the Parole Board must follow specific guidelines not subject to interpretation or manipulation. At the same time we can grow in knowledge and meet other people who may be able to affect the parole system in the future. I definitely will continue the fight for parole reform as we begin to move toward the 2011 legislative session.

I believe that we should not let our efforts slow down one single bit. I want each of you to continue to keep me updated with your time sheets and to add others to our cause. Complacency is a killer to a good cause and if you guys give up it will die out and who knows when we will be able to get this stirred up again. I promise you that if we keep stirring up our friends and families to put pressure on the lawmakers, something will have to change. One of my friends that works in the House told me that they believe that the Parole Board will have to follow up on reform demands if we keep the pressure on. After saying all this I have to tell you that I have still not seen nearly enough letters and time sheets from you guys. I am interested in all time sheets from any one out there that wants to help. One comment I received was that their time sheet wasn't very good. So what!? I believe that it can always help the data base I am trying to build. Even if you have a bad sheet in the past, maybe the newer sheets will display some info that I can use for the good of everyone. This is not about one or two people--it is about all of you. Maybe your bad time sheet will help some one with a good sheet get a better chance. Please remember that Jesus would have us be a servant to others. He even said "***Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.***" *John 15:13*. This dying can mean to die to one's self as much as physically dying. Think of others more than yourself and see what happens. Let's work together as one to accomplish the greater good for all.

I shared on the radio and at Sunday service at The ROC that we are all one body and each of us (including you guys and gals out there) are a part of that body just as if you were sitting in service or listening in on the radio right then. The word says in *1 Corinthians 12: 26* "*If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.*" We must do everything we can to help each other through these times.

A side note to the ladies that receive the newsletter. We really do not have very many of you on our mailing list. What I ask of those of you who do receive the newsletter, is to please share a subscription form with a neighbor. Tell them what you know about us and have them send us their info. We are growing slowly but surely and I would really like to see this get huge way before the next session of the legislature. Although it is a little slow, I need you to keep encouraging you family members to keep up with the newsletter through our website at [www.refugeoutreachcenter.org](http://www.refugeoutreachcenter.org) and find the prison info and read it every month. As I get new info, I hope to be able to update more through our web pages for the free world folks and continue through the Stone Tablet letting ya'll know what is happening.

I just recently met and interviewed a fine man, Larry (Bro.Buck) Rodgers, who is very interested in trying to help those that are planning on paroling out in our area with a list of services and some contacts for those services. This is in its early stages right now although he has been doing some coordinating of this type the last few years through an event called the Excon-vention. The Excon-vention will be holding its third annual meeting some time this next November. It is a gathering of ministries and services that are trying to help men and women who have been released from prison or are preparing to be released from prison and have no resources to rely on. I believe that it is open to the public so that they may come and see what is offered and share with their loved ones that are incarcerated. Brother Buck was formerly incarcerated some years ago and understands the difficulties of trying to reintegrate into society. Unfortunately, most of you may have very little assistance when you come out and it will be very important that you know where you can go and who you can go to for assistance for anything from clothes to, housing, food, jobs, etc. Buck already knows a lot of these folks and is hoping to add to this wonderful network. He will be calling his part of this 'Free World Fellowship.' I plan on getting more info out about this in future issues of the Stone Tablet.

I wanted to take care of a few housekeeping issues before I close. Please remember that we are a small organization and cannot possibly answer all the letters that we receive. They are all read and kept for further reference. Your time sheets are not sent out or shared with anyone unless it is shared with the whole stack of time sheets. I did carry everyone's letters and time sheets when I went to Austin last month but they did not leave my hands. I would never do that unless I was sure that it would benefit whoever sent it to me. I also would never share any of this info if you specifically asked me not to. I cherish the info that you send me and I cherish your friendship too much to mess it up intentionally.

We want you to send all correspondence that you have for Jan to P.O. Box 65594 Lubbock, Texas 79423. I do receive those letters and keep up with them now. This will be the address we will continue to use for any correspondence other than the Stone Tablet. If you do send your time sheets to us here, we will take care of it for you. Lord willing and the creek don't rise, we may combine all of these to one address in the near future.

I have had a lot of trouble with losing some folks when they are moved, especially from county jails into TDCJ. Sometimes I can locate you and your new ID number but some times I don't. Trust me it is not from the lack of trying. I have spent numerous hours this month on about 15 address changes and I think I may have been lucky to find one quarter of those. So if you hear that someone quit getting their subscription, tell them to resubmit them and I will get them back on the list. Do not assume that your current facility will let me know you moved. Keep an extra subscription form in case of emergencies. Also continue to share the Stone Tablet and subscription forms with other inmates. Send them to other units if you know someone out there so we can continue to expand our circulation.

We have received several letters from folks thinking that we are trying to help them get parole on a one on one basis. That is not true and we have never said that we could do so. Our goal is to help everyone by changing the way the Parole Board handles their business (or your business as the case may be). We are tired of the treatment that you receive from the current parole system. It must be changed and we best can do that by helping everyone and not just one person. It would take a lot more time and resources than we have to assist just one person. I have been even asked to add us to someone's phone call list and we will not do that either as we could not possibly field all the calls that we would get. I do read the different ideas that are sent in and I keep them in mind and I promise you that we are all better off if it is written down rather than relying on me to remember what was said in a phone call! Just ask my wife.

I am hoping to send out more info in the near future regarding the way the parole board currently handles parole opportunities. I believe that it is important for you to really understand what happens when your parole packet is brought up before the parole board members that are looking at your case. This is something that will interest your family members and may be it will encourage them to step up and join us in the fight for a better system.

I gotta run now but I wanted to leave you with a scripture from one of my favorite authors:

*"We who are strong ought to bear with the failings of the weak and not to please ourselves. Each of us should please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For even Christ did not please himself but, as it is written: "The insults of those who insult you have fallen on me." For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."*  
*Romans 15:1-6*

I love ya'll and may God Bless each and every one of you!

Brother Don