

# YARD OUT

**Vol. 18 No. 2**

**A PFC Publication**



*Inside...*

*Gangstas Need  
God Too*

*Rebel Without  
A Clue*

*Lost, Lonely  
and Scared*

*and more*



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Publisher: Greg Von Tobel  
Editor: Peyton Burkhardt

**YARD OUT**  
c/o Prisoners for Christ  
PO BOX 1530  
Woodinville, WA 98072

Website: [www.pfcom.org](http://www.pfcom.org)

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# YARD OUT

**Vol. 18 No. 2**

## Start a new life... GET CONNECTED TO GOD

If you feel there is more to life than what you see pass before your cell bars everyday, then YARD OUT has good news for you. You can know that God loves you. You can meet the real Jesus, the only begotten Son of God, sent to earth by God His Father to die for our sins. Jesus showed the love of God by His mission and proved His divinity by His physical resurrection three days after He died by crucifixion. These guidelines from the Bible tell how to receive Christ.

Trust God to create an internal change in you. A power bigger than yourself is available if you ask. “But to all who did accept Him, He gave power to become children of God.” John 1:12

Understand your need for change and see that God is giving you a chance to start a new life. “Truly... I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God,” John 3:3

Admit your basic selfishness. Be honest about the hidden motives of your heart. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Romans 3:23

Realize that salvation is God’s free gift. Nothing you do can earn it. “Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God...” Ephesians 2:8-10

Express your faith. Believe God will do what He promised. “If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” 1 John 1:9

Show your desire to receive Jesus by prayer. “For whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 10:13

Talk to God one-on-one. In your own words, tell Him how you felt after reading these Bible verses. Or simply repeat the sample prayer given here with an open and sincere heart.

“God, thank you for loving me. Thank you for sending Jesus to die for me. Please forgive my sins. I’m sorry for all I have done wrong and for all the pain I have caused others. You promise to forgive all who ask, and I ask now that you forgive me. I commit myself to you. Come into my life, Jesus, and be my Lord and Savior. Fill me with the Holy Spirit, and help me trust you for the rest of my life. Amen.”

Take a few seconds to be quiet and think. Did you sense God’s reality? Or know the presence of His love? Regardless of any feelings, your forgiveness is based on His promise and not your emotions. By talking to Him daily and reading the Bible, you will strengthen your faith and grow to know God better. If you have questions about your new life in Jesus or what it means to be a Christian, please send for our free literature. Write to:

Prisoners for Christ, P.O. Box 1530, Woodinville, WA 98072

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# Lost, Lonely and Scared

by Howard E. Norton

**My heart raced and my head pounded as I plotted another robbery to satisfy a black hole in my life. Hopelessness was my master. Guilt and shame called me to feed my addiction to crack cocaine. My addiction to this drug cost me everything I cherished—the loss of a beautiful woman and my son, whom I love more than anything. I was pushed over the edge and down a path most men die from. My drug addiction created a monster within me that destroyed everything in my life, even the lives of two men.**

I was a rotten son, brother, mate and father. Violence became my character. Things I thought I could never do, became a reality in my life—kidnapping, car jacking, and aggravated battery with a fire arm. A serial robber was what I became.

I was a stone cold criminal who faced death every day to get the next hit of cocaine. I destroyed everything in my path over the years, and was completely alone in this world.

I had just robbed a bank and a drug store the week before, and all the police agencies were on the hunt to get me off the streets.

A huge threat to myself, my family and the community, I was running scared and wanting to end my miserable life. Then a small voice spoke to me to turn myself in.

For a six time prison re-offender with two new violent robberies, a life sentence was in order. I thought my life was now destroyed and over with. There would be no more breaks or chances to be part of society. I was offered 120 years at my first pre-trial hearing.

When the world and everyone I knew had given up on me, out of sheer desperation and hopelessness, I cried out to God for whatever hope He could provide a piece of trash such as me.

My drug addiction had created an animal with a war going on in my mind. Lonely and scared,

there was no one to care about my lost soul. Even my family hated me. My life had no value to want to even see another day. But God has other plans.

The Lord heard my sincere cry of desperation and brokenness. He knew I was finally broken and ready for what only He could do with a horrible sinner such as me.

***I had just robbed  
a bank and a drug  
store and... was running  
scared and wanting  
to end my miserable  
life, when a small  
voice spoke to me to  
turn myself in.***

Jesus came to turn dead people into alive people. He took this hopeless and broken man, one who had been shot, stabbed, hit by cars, and dragged by vehicles, and provided me a whole new life and a great future with Him.

I am no longer a slave to the chain gang behavior—the sin, prison violence, smoking, gambling, and every other negative behavior that played a role in why I couldn't remain positive or be productive in society.

Now there is no room for any part of these traits in my life or character. Yes, I am in prison, but I am free on the inside.

Every day is a new day and an opportunity to show my fellow brothers that Jesus Christ is the solution to any problem.

The Lord can change anyone's heart and life for the better, if only they will seek Him out.

My eyes and heart are on Jesus Christ and what He did for me. He opened a door in my life and heart that gave me a purpose and a bright future. My life is not destroyed or over with, as I had thought.

Because I acted out of obedience to my Lord and Savior, He did for me what no one else in the world could—[allowing] me to be sentenced to ten years mandatory in prison. Why did the Lord yield to my cry for help of all people? I have no clue.

All I know is the Lord can change any man or situation for the better. For all my past crimes, failure and hurts, the Lord showed me undeserving love and grace.

One act of obedience toward what the Lord asked me to do when I was running scared, made the difference between life and death.

No problem you may face is hopeless to the Lord. When I thought my life was finally over (for just reasons) the Lord had other plans for this lost soul.

There is a solution for any problem, especially for a man such as me. It's now about serving the Lord and always doing what is right.

If [any inmate reader] can relate to my state of hopelessness and past lifestyle of self destruction, please call on the Lord to save and change your life. Romans 10:13 says, *"For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*

I promise you will not regret it. May God bless you on your new journey through life. One that only He can provide.

*Howard E. Norton, Quincy, Florida*

## God Became My Rock

by Gabriel Cordova

**My life has been one giant roller coaster ride. Since I was about fifteen years old, I started using drugs. It went from pot to cocaine, and by the time I was 18, I was smoking and selling crack. As the years went on, I had jobs that lasted a couple of weeks just to get a check to go buy drugs.**

Eventually I became a full time heroin addict, rebelling against the world. I chose drugs over everything, and really hurt my kids and family by doing it.

In 2005, before I picked up my charges, I was involved in a shooting with an old acquaintance. Afterwards, my mom told me she was scared I was going to die and that she hoped God would protect me. About a month later I was in jail for armed robbery, facing 96 years in prison.

Believe me, I was 25 years old and scared out of my mind. But being the addict I was, I looked to drugs in jail to hide my problems. Pending my sentencing, after I signed a plea agreement, I was given 24 years in prison. At this time my family was devastated.

When I got back to my housing unit, I got on my knees and asked God to please help me. From that day on, I thought because I repented I would be saved and healed. I went to my sentencing and God did bless me. The judge gave me four of the 20 years. I was ecstatic.

I did my stretch, got out and by that time my ex-girlfriend was back in my life, along with the drugs and gangs. Soon I was back to armed robberies and selling drugs again.

It took a while, but the law and my probation caught up to me and I was arrested for trafficking and several other charges; plus my probation got revoked.

After my sentencing, I ended up with fourteen more years with twelve suspended. I honestly couldn't believe it. Back in prison, I went right to drugs and [ended up] in segregation lock-down 23 hours a day.

But recently I've found God again and He's been working in me to help other inmates in seg to always do their Bible studies. I love reading about God and His good word. He promises to love us forever.

I even got certified in advanced computer technologies and computer repairs, plus I am working on getting a certification from a discipleship institution. To be honest, if it wasn't for Christ, I probably wouldn't be getting out [so soon].

I've been clean and sober, and my family is all healthy. So honestly, me being in segregation was a blessing because I was rescued. This testimony is my message to all inmates. No matter what, always keep God and Jesus Christ close.

Thanks to *Yard Out* because you and all the inmates who write in it, inspire us to keep trying. I gave my life to God and He became my rock and salvation. Now I have started a new [chapter] in my life. The old me is gone and I'm born again.

*Gabriel Cordova, Santa Rosa, New Mexico*



City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

# Through a Looking Glass

by Peyton Burkhart

**Not** many prisoners would bust out of lock-up in order to break into the hole. But that's exactly what happened recently in Nebraska. Except that the segregated unit the guy broke into was not exactly solitary confinement. No, it was a cage full of wild animals, and the escape artist had one thing in mind. He wanted to play.

News reports published about the incident state that a three year boy named Kael unlocked the front door of his parent's home one night after everyone had gone to bed. He walked alone on a busy street to a nearby bowling alley.

He crawled up the drop chute of a toy arcade machine in the lobby to play with the stuffed animals displayed behind the glass. With help from the night manager, police rescued the wayward toddler and secured him in his bed before he could lead the animals on a jail break of their own.

These toy games have become very popular in recent years. Grocery stores, movie theaters and malls are common locations for such machines. Anywhere parents are trying to control their kids, they are also willing to pay to keep them quiet. Maybe Kael's parents denied his previous requests (screams?) for a stuffed tiger. Maybe dear ol' Dad tried and failed to snag a dragon with the hard-to-control claw device.

Little Kael wasn't charged with a crime, but hopefully he learned not to take things that belong to others. That is a lesson difficult for many people—be they child or be they adult—to learn too.

According to Bureau of Justice statistics, robbery and theft account for 38.7 billion dollars worth of crime annually. The latest stats show identity thief out paced property crimes by ten billion dollars. It seems more criminals are willing to rip people off using their computers than to confront them face-to-face.

"Thou shall not steal," God says in Exodus. For those weak in the face of such temptation, Jesus is willing to help out. Re-focus the need for greed and see that sin is really the core of the issue. Confess and be forgiven 1 John 1:8 tells us. The thief who hung on a cross next to Jesus walked with the Savior in paradise because he finally surrendered to God.

Jesus knows all the details of every crime and every sin that goes down anyway. It's no big secret to God. It's kind of like a guy trying to pull off a hit in a glass cage, right? Where's he going to hide? Behind a pile of stuffed rabbits, turtles and bears?

*Peyton Burkhart has been editor of Yard Out for nineteen years.*



**"Light in the Darkness" won Honorable Mention in Yard Out's 2014 Art Contest. Artist Mitch Gleed is from Boise, Idaho.**



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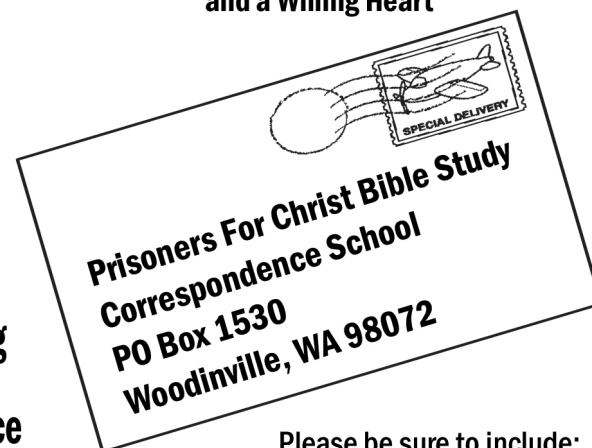
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Inmates write

Pen Letters

Dear Yard Out;

**Your newspaper is a God send.** It is the most positive thing I see in the prison system. The best part is it is for prisoners. It gives prisoners an outlet for their talents that otherwise would not be there. It also give them a place to express themselves spiritually. Your paper is sending a powerful message throughout this country. The message is God still forgives. Keep up the good work.  
P. A. Deck, Sr., Moundville, WV

**I was walking past a trash can** and noticed a newspaper called *Yard Out*. After reading it I said, “Lord, wow, this is it!” It made my day and changed me, like no other feeling before. I just knew for a fact, I needed this *Yard Out*. I’m working my way to God, and me and my Bible are best friends. I talk to God every minute of the day. I’m in lock up but I get an hour out, and boy, do I have a lot to tell God. He put me here because I was on the wrong path. So before I hurt myself or someone, He stopped me in my tracks so I could see, think straight, and open up to God, and I did. Thank God for that. Amen. I would love to receive *Yard Out*, for myself, and I can pass it around to other inmates when I can. Just trust in the Lord, and “Pray,” [because] it works.  
Joe E. Sanchez, Cotulla, Texas

**Thank you *Yard Out* for** reaching out to us [prisoners] and helping us stay on the right path. Thanks to my family and friends for their support and love. Some days are hard but when I stay focused on Him, I can make it through. I should be bitter, sad, even angry, but God has been good to me so that I wake each day with a smile and praise. The outcome could have been different; [it could have been a] life sentence, death sentence or

maybe even suicide by now. But I am still here to give God glory, honor and praise that He kept me when the times got tough, the road got rough, and there was no light at the end of the tunnel. The letters are encouraging and the articles are inspirational. By reading and sharing each others experiences, *Yard Out* challenges us to be a better person.  
Keriann Thompson, Ocala, Florida

**I found your newspaper** on the top sink counter. Since it was lock-down, people seem to get rid of all the extra stuff. So I took it through lock-down and finally got a chance to read it. It blew my mind. I really enjoyed the testimonies. I fit in pretty much all of them. I’m doing time and my life has been going up and down. But I keep moving toward the goal. I was raised in a Christian home but moved away from the creator’s ways. The Father’s got my full attention now. It took this sentence for me to change. If I was on the outside I might be dead. Anyway, it’s not about me anymore. It’s all about God’s redeeming love.  
Martin Valdez, Lovelady, Texas

**Thank the Lord for leading** me to *Yard Out*. It really blessed me. I turned my life over to God after reading the testimonies. I used to be a drug addict and I’m serving 73 years for my crimes. The court showed me no mercy, but with God I hold my head high. I love Jesus now, live according to the Bible, and try to show the life of Christ in me.  
Terrance Hutchison, Carlisle, IN

**I enjoy tremendously** your publication. It is inspiring and motivational. A lot of guys here at my unit read it and enjoy it as well. God is good, isn’t He? He slows us down, to see clearly, and to open our hearts to the things we neglect and hold true. Please continue to share with us your awesome publication *Yard Out*.  
Anthony Johnson, Pine Bluff, AR

**I just want to thank you** for all of your support and for connecting me further to the Lord. All the beautiful work, the poems, drawings and testimonials from all these different people are so

heart felt, that as I read them I am taken to where they are. *Yard Out* has shown me how much God loves people in the pen and how He has forgiven all my sins. God is here to help, take His hand and He will lead the way. God bless.  
Alyssa Mayer, Denver, Colorado

**In the chapel attending** a meeting for the faith and character program, I came across *Yard Out*. I realized God is real and how He works. In that issue was a drawing called “The Temptation of Eve.” The person who drew that is a friend of mine who I lost touch with due to me being in prison in Florida and him in Michigan. The crazy thing is I was thinking about my friends two days before I found the drawing. I know God is real and this is just another sign that He is all powerful. I am glad to see that my friend has found God. He has power to bring people together no matter how far apart they are. Thank you for an amazing newspaper. It is a great joy to read.  
Bradley Williams, Malone, Florida

**Thank you *Yard Out*. Your** newspaper is widely read here and we look forward to every issue. There are approximately 1,200 women in this yard, with offenses ranging from murder to petty larceny. I have known women from every walk of life and every criminal background come to know the power of God’s saving grace, and be transformed into women of God. I just want anyone reading *Yard Out* to know that there is no offense God will not pardon. God’s saving grace will be your’s too if you only ask.  
Diann Killian, Mcloud, Oklahoma

**Letters sent to *Yard Out* must be accompanied by the release form found next to the “Headed Your way, Yard Out” cartoon on the last page. Signature is required for use of the inmate’s name. Contents may be edited. Send material to:**  
**Letters to the Editor**  
**c/o Yard Out**  
**P.O. Box 1530**  
**Woodinville, WA 98072**

When Mom found me...  
“I Was Almost Dead”  
by Joel R. Soloman

**I just happened to find half of your great newspaper on a heater vent in the hall. I was hoping it was *Yard Out* since the other publications can’t hold a candle to it. Every time I have gotten one, I’ve read it from front of back. And never once have I not been completely, 100% satisfied.**

It puts Jesus first and foremost (what many of us have failed to do). And Jesus put us in places like this to totally realize and ultimately bring us closer to Him. I have just been locked up for my third time down since 2003. Last time down was for a stolen car and a huge cocaine addiction I couldn’t seem to get rid of.  
I just wanted to die and end the pain I was causing myself and my family. I had almost died seven months prior from a cocktail of drugs. God saved me by having my mom, who I refer to as a female version of John the Baptist, come over to my house.  
Jesus had spoken to her and told her to wake me up. She tried but I was almost dead. She and my dad rushed me to the hospital. Doctors said if

they would have found me one hour later it would have been curtains for me. When I got out I made the biggest mistake anybody can make, and sadly most do.  
**No**, I didn’t go back to drugs or crime. I just didn’t put my Lord and Savior first in anything and everything I did. Being diagnosed with bipolar disorder, I started taking up to 12 meds everyday.  
My mom and I had been praying for years for me to be able to stop all the meds and for Jesus to totally heal me and restore me to sanity.  
I was on four different psych medications when I came back to prison. Within the second day I had to see a doctor, who [took] three of my four medications since they didn’t prescribe them in prison.  
**Always** in the past when I came down off my meds, I detoxified worse than I had seen full blown heroin addicts withdraw. I prayed my heart out to Jesus to help me come off the meds with as little side effects as possible. He delivered me from all perfectly with zero side effects.  
Then after being back for around 45 days, Jesus told me to up and quit my last medication cold turkey. I am off all meds now and feel the best I ever have. Hallelujah. Praise be to God, I have been totally healed.  
What a great start to a whole new year. Even though I am locked up in a level four prison and locked down 22 hours a day, I am definitely still free on the inside.  
Joel R. Soloman, Manistee, Michigan

# Prison Poetry

## The Almighty Fate

by Joshua Coleman

Surrounded by four walls, so cold,  
within their clutches, me they hold.  
No one outside can hear me shout,  
“Please, oh please, come let me out.”  
I don’t belong within this hell,  
yet only I can seem to tell.  
Who would care? Would anyone?  
To know the truth of what was done?  
Maybe some, but I figure not.  
[They think] he deserved just what he got.  
However, a justice higher than man,  
one day will judge me as no other can.  
Upon His judgement, I shall await,  
for God Almighty holds my fate.  
*Joshua Coleman, Caldwell, Ohio*

## Phone Call To God

by Joseph Bonito

Hello, God. I called tonight to talk a little while.  
I need a friend to listen to my anxiety and trial.  
You see, I can’t quite make it through a day just on my own.  
I need your love to guide me so I’ll never feel alone.  
I want to ask you please, to keep my family safe and sound.  
Fill their lives with confidence to whatever fate they are bound.  
Give me faith, dear God, to face each hour through out the day,  
and not to worry over things I can’t change anyway.  
I thank you, God, for being home and listening to my call,  
for giving me such good advice when I stumble and fall.  
Your number is the only one that answers every time.  
I never get a busy signal nor have to pay a dime.  
So thank you for listening to my trouble and my sorrow.  
Good night, dear God I’ll [take the time to] call again tomorrow.  
*Joseph Bonito, Panama City, Florida*

## Fire and Rain

by Christina Franco

Dear Lord, it’s me, I came to say,  
save me now, to you I pray.  
I have grown weary, I don’t understand,  
this life for me that you have planned.  
The road is narrow, and you’re all I’ve got,  
succumb to weakness, I shall not.  
I rely on you for all my needs,  
for only you can plant the seed.  
Seasons change, people come and go,  
still my purpose, I do not know.  
I walk through the fire, I walk through the rain,  
this life on earth is full of pain.  
It’s hard to see what’s real and what’s fake,  
the glory I have, they shall not take.  
The wind and the rain, the moon and the sun,  
Did they feel God’s power when the world begun?  
You said, “Don’t fear. I’m high on a rock.”  
But I hear time ticking, tick-tock, tick-tock.  
I will be strong, till you call me home.  
My body’s in prison, but my spirit shall roam.  
I’ll stare out this window, I’ll look through this pane.  
I’ll fall to my knees and get up again.  
I’ll shine in the darkness--my soul I won’t sell.  
My mind is in heaven, while my body’s in hell.  
Although I sit, my heart on a chain,  
I’ll walk through the fire, I’ll sail through the rain.  
*Christina Franco, Cleveland, Ohio*

## Maturity

by Douglas Hendrix

Like a baby so tiny, is the way we begin,  
when redeemed by Christ from the darkness of sin.  
At first we crawl, then we learn to walk;  
and bowing in prayer, to the Savior we talk.  
God’s Word, so precious, we desire to know,  
and by its milk we begin to grow.  
Then, no longer a little one, on milk so weak;  
for we grow to maturity, when it’s strong meat we seek.  
Now as I look back over many long years,  
growth came through my faith, obedience and tears.  
There is one thing I know for sure;  
it is a wonderful feeling to be Godly mature.  
*Douglas Hendrix, Abbeville, Georgia*

## Three ~ Two ~ One

by Evan Street

If gifted me, were wishes three,  
my first wish I would wish to be,  
to turn from evil, filled with glee  
and have God’s light shine bright from me,  
so that His love the world could see.  
If gifted me were wishes three.  
My gifted wishes now are two,  
and with this wish I wish you knew  
the love that my God has for you,  
to prove to all that through and through  
His love for all is strong and true.  
Would be my wish with wishes two.  
Of my three wishes, number one  
would be to meet Jesus, God’s Son,  
or see the devil turn and run.  
Oh, man, wouldn’t that be so much fun?  
Sadly, I have no wishes... no [not one].  
But if God wills, let this be done.  
*Evan Street, Hardwick, Georgia*

## Blessing in Disguise

by Larry J. Hodges

Sometimes we learn that hardships are blessings in disguise,  
that earnest work and faith in God are proven to be wise.  
God’s word is like refreshing rain that waters crops and seed.  
It brings new life to open hearts and meets us in our need.  
Jesus, you stood for truth, and in the end you stood alone.  
Thank you, I can rest in the work of the cross that you have done.  
The power of God can turn a heart from evil and the power of sin.  
The love of God can change a life and make it new and clean within.  
Lord, thank you that you are a God who is listening.  
Your ways are right and good, all who walk in them walk in blessing.  
Lord, when it is difficult, help me walk in your ways.  
Fill me with your light and love as I share your good news today.  
*Larry Hodges, Vacaville, California*

## God’s Promises

by Tammy L. Childs

Good works and faith go hand in hand,  
Only Jesus is the Son of Man.  
Directions for holy living are in the book,  
So get your Bible; let’s take a look.  
Promises of God’s holy grace,  
Radiant glow from His precious face.  
Omnipresence is His where abouts.  
Many praising Him with a loud shout.  
Infidelity and breaking the law,  
Seeing Him on the cross to save us all.  
Eternal living is our final end,  
Satan has lost the war again.  
*Tammy L. Childs, Ocala, Florida*



# *A Still, Small Voice*

*by Steven Tetro*

*I tried so hard to understand,  
how to obey God's Word—His every command.*

*I knew there had to be a better way  
to live for God each and every day.*

*Then one night while trying to sleep  
came a still, small voice these words to keep:*

*"My dear child, please hear the words I say.*

*Utmost attention to them you must pay.*

*My love for you exceeds your deepest thought,  
for with divine blood your soul was bought.*

*So why don't you take a worthwhile dare  
by giving to me your every care?*

*Time spent with Me will not be lost.*

*What's gained through surrender is worth the cost.*

*Just let go and you will see  
that giving your heart is pleasing to Me."*

*Steven Tetro, Raiford, Florida*

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