

Thursday – 12/16/10

Dear Calvin and all who will read this—Christmas Greetings Indeed!

What a pleasure to have received my first piece of mail in the dungeons of Atlanta USP from you, right there in the same city. It's the best welcome I could have hoped for — a blessed ending to my second full day here, having arrived and gotten fully checked in to the famed Big House right around this time (8:00 PM) on Tuesday night.

Thank you for your prayers, all your support and willingness to make the trek all the way down to Ocilla. Thank you for the beautiful card — Nelia's handiwork is unmistakable (the second I have received from you) the comforting Bible references and most especially thank you for attending the prayer service at Ft. Benning with your talent and camera at hand. The images you sent along are simply stunning — so great for Louis and I to have shared and reminisced with each other and fellow inmates at Ocilla, a wonderful tool for storytelling and discussion. Alas, I no longer have them with me — the whole ride up here I was kicking myself for not sliding that sheet of images into my one "legal" envelope. But to have in hand your words of welcome and encouragement, written so recently, knowing you all are close both physically and in spirit — to have resumed fellowship after the shock of a sudden move under unusual circumstances — is such a lift to my spirit. I am learning to be grateful every step of the way, come what may.

As I write, the night cold is slowly creeping into my concrete cell embedded somewhere in the outer walls of USP's formidable structure. Luckily, I have a pair of thermals from Ocilla, some tube socks and a white t-shirt to go with my orange jump suit. I'm sitting at my little steel desk and swivel chair next to the toilet bowl above which my white t-shirt (hand washed) is hanging to dry — hence I'm wrapped in a blanket for extra warmth — and tucked between my socks and blue Jackie Chan slippers (standard issue) are a pair of foot warmers I fashioned from the extra leg-length in my extra-large jumpsuit. Dreadlocks insulate the head quite well, but I'm helped right now by a makeshift head wrap made from the extra-length in the bottom of my thermal top. Temperature wise I am comfortable — nonetheless the cold affects me still I think — my back is tight, and getting tighter. Pain is rising and exhaustion setting in so I will need to pause soon and take this up again in the morning.

As of this afternoon I have been alone in my cell — which has been quite a blessing, despite the warm welcome and excellent introduction to USP afforded me by my previous cellmate "Bull," who now resides with his buddy next door. I'm in the bottom bunk of cell no. 121 — incidentally, my home address in Nairobi is 121 Lamulta Rd. Bed time (9:05 PM). Someone has lettered 121 Deadman Ln. above the door (inside). I'm going to change it to 121 Deadman Living.

Well, I had intended to lay down and get some rest, but in order to do that I had to first thoroughly clean out some empty food trays (I use the empty food trays under my mat to raise it up for my head, and absolutely don't want to attract roaches. Certainly not there.) and prepare my sheets and blanket in the warmest manner, use the commode, etc. etc. All this movement, and a little peanut butter thanks to my former celly has me awake again, so here we are. I'm going to take this opportunity to write a longish letter to you Calvin, trusting that this is the best way to communicate both some miniature (?) and important details to the folks over in LA. Not only is it quite appropriate that you should receive the only letter I'll be able to stamp before Tuesday, if you are able/willing to photocopy/scan/type & email this out to them, it makes for faster correspondence given the convenience of being so close.

I want to assure everybody that I am doing well — quite well despite some extremes in the situation here. Yes, I am in transit in a hold-over facility at Atlanta USP under Federal Custody — a situation quite comparable to being in "the hole" or PC/punishment anywhere else, so I have had some good preparation for what I am now experiencing. In fact, the solitude and alone time I'm anticipating to be quite rejuvenating, especially as it is very likely to last over Christmas and New Years and who can say how long into the next month — no one knows but God, in whom I have complete trust. I know that I am in the right place and am open to the lessons and experiences I am about to have, open to being used in big and small ways, open to being stripped of self in order that God's infinite abundance might come in. Already the ways I have seen this happen are too numerous to mention here: from this dorm to that, one cell to the next, one personal encounter to another, guided all the while not by my own understanding no matter how I may try to manipulate the outcome. It seems there is always something in store, something expected yet unexpected; a new insight, an opportunity to plant a seed, a placement by God in a situation for whatever reason. I trust and hopefully will always obey.

I am thankful everyday for all of you who are praying for me, and am humbled to tears—especially when I think of my inadequacy in responding to the outpouring of love and support. And though they are no longer with me, the stacks of letters and postcards, thanks, warm wishes and love continue to bear me up on eagle's wings. I am very much looking forward to resuming that correspondence from my quiet little cell and desk here (which I had only really just begun in earnest thanks to Louis) should it be our heavenly mother's will. Now I am truly exhausted. Must sleep. Mas manana.

12/17/10

Good morning all. The guard just came by to open the door slots which means breakfast will be coming down the line shortly. I awoke this morning before the light in the main hall came on but wasn't/am not tired. I'm feeling very alive — glad to be here. I was not cold last night — in fact I have found it to be pleasantly warm in my cell as I've been walking around singing, praying and contemplating. The guard came by and saw me and my little "light On Please" sign in the window and switched my light on so I could start writing again.

Breakfast just came by. It was a decidedly slim breakfast compared to what I've experienced here over the last few days. A small serving of grits, an apple, and a little piece of cake — but then I've been eating rather gluttonously since getting here and have put on some weight just in the last couple of days; the meal situation is always an interesting adjustment — in general I find prison food to be not bad at all, in fact quite good sometimes, especially here at USP. I am however trying to be in solidarity with the world's poor — those in Latin America who suffer the Imperialist policies of their northern oppressors, those in Africa who face climate change imposed droughts, war-imposed famine and imperially imposed economic shortages, many of whom I worked with as refugees — or grew up on the other side of the wall from. Wherever they may be I find that, like Gandhi, being conscious of meal times and pairing down your own to closer match what one in these circumstances might be forced to survive on is an excellent way to bring those injustices to focus and remain in a prayerful, appreciative frame of mind. And even here in prison, or I guess especially here in prison, I am conscious of our excess, imbalance and wastefulness as a society. It's so hard to see so much food going to waste off other's trays and unyielding to have such abundance here where life is supposed to be severely restricted. But I/we return thanks nonetheless and pray for those less fortunate — and perhaps by our own insignificant actions we can enact some small measure of justice.

So having delved into over-consumption this past week I am now being careful to return to my discipline and diet. The grits are an adequate breakfast serving and quite tasty when hot with some breadcrumbs, salt and pepper and/or a bit of jelly (if available) worked in. Delicious when steaming hot, eaten slowly — but alas, no microwave in here. Sometimes you can get the orderlies to run things back and forth to the microwave if/when it's out, maybe, but that requires knowing people, a little give and take etc. etc. ah the intricacies of prison relationships (quite a thrill learning to navigate these dynamics) — what is most feasible however as far as out-of-cell movement of food is to get them to pass food in a tray to another cell. I've been sending a lot of food over to 124 — it's occupied by two inmates who were transferred up here with me from Ocilla. One Eric McLendon, a sickly, elderly gentleman who just needs all the help he can get and the other, Carl Mac Jones — the very same Mac Jones who came down with us to Ocilla from Muscogee, who voraciously devoured all of Fr. Louis' extra food, when I penned the letter for that fateful Saturday afternoon, who did and said nothing as his friend "T" and I were attacked, whom I hadn't seen again until the ride up here. God works in mysterious ways.

This morning after seeing what pathetic little breakfast we were served I sent them up my serving of cake, and a little bit of peanut butter and the last few slices of wheat bread gifted me by my former roommate. It is he who will stamp this letter — I intend to pay him back for that, as well as the peanut butter and bag of ginger snaps he gave me (which I voraciously devoured). So hopefully there will be some money on my books before Sunday's commissary call. I think it will be at least another week, maybe two before my outstanding balance at Ocilla clears for my use here. I am also unsure of when my mail will be transferred here from there, but they did assure me it would be forwarded to my next location back when we were first classified. Since coming here, I have learned that my mail will eventually be sent on to my final point of designation at whatever Federal Camp I am to finish up my sentence. However, it should come here for now (as confirmed to me by the reception of Calvin's letter) until I receive my final designation, from which point it will be forwarded on and held for at least 30 days or so — not sure of all the details, but that does introduce the next subject; my sudden transfer here.

Most inmates arrive at USP already designated by the Feds simply awaiting transfer — it is not typical to have undesignated/unassigned inmates residing here except in special circumstances (e.g. some kind of disciplinary

process, or a security concern — who knows). Unassigned inmates tend to have a slightly longer stay here as they are not usually called from whatever holding facility/county jail they were previously until designated. I suspect in my situation that ICDC had increasing motivation to get rid of me once the information about what happened there began to spread further, on the net/media, etc. Monday's mail call had me on the alert for some kind of repercussion as for the first time I began to read messages from people who had heard the story of what took place from some third party media source. This, along with some other indications and changing dynamics in my dorm situation at Ocilla had me at the ready. I would return quite frequently to Matthew 24:34-46, which was one of the readings for the first liturgy Fr. Louis and I had with Tabouri and Valentino in Alpha dorm of Ocilla. For we know not the hour, nor the day, but we must remain faithful; watch and pray.

That night I was blessed to receive a new cellmate through divine ordination. Donovan, a young man of about thirty or so, Black Italian/Sicilian and white from close by there in Georgia; getting "careered out" on drug charges, facing serious time and separation from seven amazingly beautiful children. An artist in written word and on the pad who had briefly shared a cell with Fr. Louis last year in Cordele, remembered him upon sight and most importantly became a follower of Jesus about 10 months ago and is steadily growing in faith. One of his daughters, Olivia, is blind — gorgeous. His brother committed suicide on June/July 17th earlier this year (I forget exactly which). Please pray for him that he might remain strong in his faith and that something would give in his situation that he might be re-united with his children sooner rather than later. Please pray the same prayers for Tabouri Wilburn (whom I would be glad for any assistance in locating presently — I mistakenly left his contacts in the writing pad I gave Donovan).

Right now DII is out on rec so they're filling the hall outside — the noise level, TV, and activity is rising. We're DI and will most likely get out after lunch — it's better that we get out later rather than sooner for the time difference in calling California. This is shower day though, and my only chance to get some extra supplies (towel, socks, hygiene items, maybe another blanket/sheets, etc.) before the long weekend through which we don't have any rec. Also have to put The Open Door on my contact list in order to send this letter, which means getting on the computer, and I need to get in a phone call at least to Bob Phares to discuss ICDC and transfer stuff/update him, and hopefully get a call in to CA as well. It's also my best opportunity to get the stamp from my former roommate and some extra coffee from 124 — Mac doesn't drink what they give us in the morning so he saves me his little one cup instant coffee cup — his small way — really his only way to thank me for all the food. That may seem trivial to you all on the outside, but on the inside, it's so much about give and take — such a lesson and interesting challenge in a lot of ways — an important recurring theme I'll be writing more about in the future. Needless to say, I'll be quite busy on rec — probably will forego the shower and take advantage of my privacy to clean up right here in the cell. Such a blessing — how long this solitude lasts, I cannot now, but am so thankful for it right now. I was wrong about DII — it was just an assemblage of amped up orderlies—hopefully still time i.e. after lunch before they let us out as I'm not quite ready yet. I paused from the Donovan portion of the story to give this little update and also say I'm getting colder and starting to feel the pain in my back which has been mostly absent since I awoke. I saved a banana from yesterday and put my little milk pack from breakfast in the window slit to stay cold and fresh through the day. A little milk, banana, some peanut butter — a luxurious second breakfast to precede my three times daily with food ibuprofen pills I held off on at breakfast. A little bit of warm coffee (it comes pretty hot out of the sink) in a homemade hot cup I worked on all day Wednesday — empty Peanut Butter Jar wrapped in various forms of insulation. Breakfast of champions, while reading out of Ecclesiastes. I am truly blessed.

It's now sometime in the mid-afternoon, not exactly sure when but no matter God's timing is perfect. Lunch and Rec happened much sooner than I expected earlier today; almost as soon as I was through with my scrumptious banana smoothie snack, the trays were coming down for lunch. So I set up my little station by the door to receive the food, get what I would be eating and send down to 124 as efficiently as possible, then enjoy my meal slowly and peacefully. A little bit of fish patty with a couple spoonfuls of mac and cheese mashed into iceberg lettuce for a delicious little salad. Sitting on an upturned trash bucket, the floor serves as a table and through the open tray slot in the cast iron door I can talk to the orderlies and see just enough of the angled TV screen right outside my room to actually derive some entertainment from it. It's really quite homey. Shortly thereafter the doors opened for rec and I dashed out as fast as possible to the nearest available computer, beat the line and got on with my business. And I made out like a bandit in the end — a pair of socks, another towel and a fresh jumpsuit to keep me extra warm during fasts — then on to the phone lines, connecting with Eric and Mac en route, and after a brief wait, several failed attempts to get into the system and a couple unanswered calls, I finally was on the phone with Rebecca. What joyous relief. After my call to LA, I retrieved a stamp and was barely able to get my first email out. As I sent it off,

the guard yelled “Lockdown!” Rebecca — do not be anxious/feel guilty — I asked you to send out that story. I was meant to be here. “COUNT TIME. ON YOUR FEET!!” Echoing through the halls. Then dinner, it was sooner than I expected. Another decidedly slim meal — I consumed the entire tray (a paltry rice & beans with a bean burrito) in anticipation of my weekend fast.

On Monday night in Ocilla, when Donovan came in, I had papers/documents spread throughout my half of the room in my new cell above Louis'. It was a spacious, quiet getaway — a much needed interlude as it turned out. Louis and I were consolidating lists and writing joint responses — Donovan could see I had a lot to do, and I said as much, but still we spent most of the night deep in conversation — studying the Bible and sharing poetry. He kept saying, “you should be working,” to which I would counter, “everything happens for a reason.” By the time breakfast came I was exhausted. I had made it through a few more responses, and my thoughts were racing somewhat as I expressed to Louis the new concerns I had from last night's mail. And sure enough, as I re-entered my room post-breakfast a guard came in the door to announce my impending departure (in twenty minutes) to Atlanta USP.

Momentary panic then eventual calm reminding myself I had been expecting it, and God is in control. Books and stacks of mail to Louis to send back to LA, most of my personal items to Donovan, as much warm clothing on my body as possible, one envelope with important contacts, all legal documentation, some stamps, and extra paper, a delicious plate of pancakes with extra syrup and jelly, then on my way. Personal effects returned to me for the duration of the journey — a true blessing considering it was one of the coldest days on record — my scarf and knit cap were simply indispensable, and quite conspicuous amongst the masses of federal prisoners and the airport in ATL (where we waited for hours), then on the bus and into USP in the late evening. We were given nothing to eat while in transfer so I was extremely grateful for the morning pancakes and pleasantly surprised when Bull, my new celly from South Carolina had some extra fruit he had been saving — he said he was expecting company that day.

At the moment I am feeling quite tired. It's extra codd in here it seems and I'm having some trouble with focus (sorry for the sloppy writing). I am anxious to complete this letter, but just checked with the guard and learned that the earliest they can pick it up now is Sunday. I should have thought that through a little better — the closeness of the Open Door had me hopeful for a quick communication, but I should have known to have something in the mail by day's end today. My apologies to everyone who is anxious to hear from me. I guess I have some extra time to write now. I'm quite saddened, but reminding myself of my own words — “God's timing is perfect.” I'm thinking of and missing my family very deeply right now. Oh for some pictures.

I just received a blessing. Hot water from the microwave. Hot liquid has become so very precious to me while locked up, and that is probably the hardest thing about being in USP for me now — that I don't have any dependable access to hot water at all. A friendly orderly, Johnson, slid it under the door in a zip-lock tang bag — the only way to get it in as the tray slots are now shut. It was just enough to fill my hot cup for the most precious mug of instant coffee I have ever had — and Johnson, in spite of my offer, is not expecting anything back for it. A good soul.

Coffee is now gone and I feel I must address my family whom I have been unable to reach directly and will not likely do so before Christmas — unless a miracle happens on the phones sometime soon. I pray for that connection, but for now...

Daniel, Happy Birthday Star! Yes, you are. You know it, I know it, everyone around you does too — just don't let it get to your head! Ok! I can't wait to hear about your visit, your big plans and the land situation. You are making us all very proud and I can't wait to see you again. Oh, and Merry Christmas too — since you probably won't see this before your b-day. “Honor your father and mother.” Be good to Mommy and Daddy! “So that you may live long in the land the Lord your God has given to you.” So you'll be ballin' big time with all your business and development plans.

Debbi! I miss you so, so, so much. You are growing into the most beautiful woman I know. You have quiet wisdom your older brothers never did at your age, myself included and your talent is undeniable. Keep working hard, running hard — please run for me since I can't right now, and take good care of your mother for these last months that you have together. Remember, you don't need to be in a hurry to get through school — this is a big, big world with lots of problems and the beauty you possess, inside and out can and will be a shining light. No matter what. Merry Christmas, Debbi “Debby.” I love you.

Pause. New celly just moved in. He's loud — seems like fun. Adrian's his name. The freedom was fun while it lasted — I got the most out of it. Here's a new experience. I'm smiling inside, but am feeling very self-conscious about the fact that I didn't shower today and haven't had my time with the sink yet. He's already commented on “the smell” in here — a project for tomorrow I guess. “AD” is from Ohio, locked up going on 14 years — moving from a medium to a camp, already designated, unlike me, so he'll likely be out of here before me. He already looks to be a pro at this.

Samuel, you know I think of you as being closer than a brother. You're my soul brother. Yes, it hurt that you didn't come, and that you couldn't give your support, but I understand your concern for our parents and siblings. I don't know what your Christmas plans are, but if you're anywhere close by, think of me. Would hate to ask you to go too far out of your way, but family visits are the only kind I'm allowed while here ... it would be a real joy to see your face. I can't ever thank you enough for everything you have done over the years, and you are so killing it in that program. Number one stunner. Love Always Brother. I miss you. Merry Christmas! Get a working phone already, dammit!

AD just asked what time the light goes out. It's kinda late and he's in his bed on the top bunk, think he wants to sleep, so I'll accommodate that and take this up again tomorrow. I'm writing on the only lined paper I have, hence the lines & scribbles.

Saturday 12/18/10 6:40am -ish.

I've been up a couple times through the night — breakfast is on the way now. // Post-breakfast: Johnson really hooked me up this morning – three 8oz. Styrofoam cups of hot water. What a joy — it really livened up the cold breakfast of yellow cake, milk and barely a serving of bran flakes — but more than enough for me and a good start to my fast. (I eat Saturday breakfast and then nothing else until Monday breakfast.) The hot water is so wonderful to have, can't say that enough. Yellow cake crumbled into crushed bran flakes with a little bit of milk to make a paste washed down with sips of hot coffee — another breakfast of champions.

I've been walking around the cell mostly contemplating — some prayer and bible reading before taking this up again — now sitting on my bed wrapped in a sheet (pink) for extra warmth as my back is against the outer wall, and it's probably best to keep the desk clear while AD is in his top bunk so he doesn't have to ask every time he needs up or down. Though it's cold, I am comfortable, cross-legged wrapped in a sheet — “OFF YOUR BEDS! STAND UP COUNT!” Here we go. AD's up and about now. I think our cell is colder than the ones across the main hall — those aren't on an outside wall. Yesterday I noticed an empty one on the top range over there — should've asked about moving, but we filled up completely with last night's arrivals — oh well, maybe next week. That would be closer to the counselor's office too which would drastically increase my chances of being seen by him in person. Almost lunch now, I'm going to set up by the door so I can give AD anything he wants off of my tray and send the rest down to 124 — in a minute. As it is, the counselor sees people according to a list you sign on to at rec, but he starts by his office and goes along the top range to the cells closes to him (around 4:00/5:00pm) and stops when he gets tired. If you're further away, like I am, you often don't get seen — despite two requests so far, and being at the top of the sign list the first time. Please pray for this in particular — I think such a move would be quite beneficial to my well-being. AD has discovered why I like to be by the door. For me it's more about efficiency than the TV, but he's more interested in sports scores. He says we'll have to take shifts. I think he's already claimed the lunch shift. Ah, economies of tight space. After lunch I'm going to have to figure out how to get clean and wash some clothes without bothering him. I think a sheet hung curtain style wall-to-wall in front of the sink should do the trick, especially if he goes back to sleep again, or is content to stay away from the door for a while. We'll see. Trays are here.

After lunch. AD is stretching — says it's important in transit, especially when it's cold like this, cause you get real stiff and your lower back tightens up. Good advice for me. Lunch was very hard to resist, but I managed — a big slice of turkey (AD got mine), with mashed potatoes, carrots & peas, two slices of wheat bread and salad. I saved the salad off mine & AD's tray, and 124 sent me up theirs as well — it'll easily keep in this cold for some extra substance in my food on Monday. 124 should be rejoicing right now — they got both mine and AD's bread and dessert pastries, all my taters and carrots and some of AD's too. And I know I don't have to worry about waste with them — they're generally hard up and Mac especially eats voraciously. AD's sitting at the steel desk playing

cards — as cold as it is, this is probably the warmest it's going to get in here today, so I better get up and get washed right now if I'm going to. We got to talking some and AD excused me from giving myself the sink treatment — that I shouldn't have to do that to myself in this cold weather and he hasn't noticed any funk coming up off me anyway — sigh of relief. We spent much of the afternoon chatting and then both fell asleep, so it should be close to dinner time by now. He's from Youngstown, OH, has completed most of his term, June '12 is his official release but hopes to be out by December '11 — crack cocaine and gun charges — strong critique of drug laws and Obama's compromises therein. Seems very receptive to my story, although we have a lot still to discuss — he says I can have up to 7 sheets on one stamp — I had been told 6 by Fr. Louis so I'm going to try and go with that, besides, I already have two large ones!

Father and Mother Dear: what possibly to say to the best parents a boy like me could ever have hoped for. You have been patient, gentle and loving, yet firm and committed. It is the purity of intent and dedication you possess that have always been my guiding light, and even when we may not and often do not see eye to eye, your truthfulness, humility, and dedication to service, still exemplifying the highest ideals of servant leadership and personhood. Thank you for loving me and supporting me even when I appeared to be rejecting you. Thank you for making me memorize scripture as a child. Thank you for spanking me. I know you know that I have always had a belief in God — it's just the nature of God that has will continue to baffle me. I will always struggle with the term “Christian” — to me God is purest Love in All Her/His/Its manifestations, and yes that “heaven when you die, pie in the sky” bullsxxx just rubs me the wrong way. Though it may be true, it's much more important to me that God's Kin-dom is here and now, present though not fully realized, radical and subversive, giving comfort to the poor, the oppressed, and afflicted. Micah 6:6-8 sums it up quite well. And through that lens, both your lives must be regarded with highest esteem. I love you both more than written or spoken word can communicate. Three Christmases apart is too many. I long for your joyful and loving presence. Know that I am thinking of and praying for you this Christmas. We are together in Spirit, and may we be reunited again soon. Mungu akubariki. Bwana Asifiwe. I Love You. Merry Christmas!

Dorie, Gary, Ruby, Max and Cousin Mike: I love and miss you all! Thank you for all your generous hospitality over the years, which I can never repay, and especially to Rebecca and me leading up to my arrest. You guys are truly a God-send and I always feel guilty for not keeping in better communication. I hope you are together this Christmas/New Years, with Alicia and little Michaela also! What joyous times — yet whatever your plans, you will be in my thoughts and prayers as I am filled with appreciation for All of you and proud to call you my family. God Bless You. All. Write me/send me pictures! Pretty please? Merry Christmas!

Grandpa Diener: You know Grandpa, you're the only Diener I've heard from while locked up and that includes my mother! I have to admit to having misunderstood you somewhat throughout the years, but my respect for you has grown a lot in the last couple years. You are a remarkable man, committed and resilient. Your words of support and encouragement were quite a delight to read, and I'm glad to hear that you're doing alright in Florida. I will pray for your health, for the strength to keep walking and exercising — and I look forward to seeing you again. Again, your understanding and support are so much appreciated. I love you and Merry Christmas.

I also have to include in this letter very important shout-outs to **Ross, Sam, and Allison.** Ross and Sam — my brothers from another mother. I cannot appreciate you enough for sharing this journey with me — all the way from carrying Alba Ramos puppet together last year. Sammy and Ross, words fail when I think of all the time and energy you sacrificed hosting and traveling with us. Hearing from you guys, seeing your pictures, etc. has been a joy. Even though I hadn't done it yet, I was touched you sent a Sudoku puzzle Sammy — always right on the money And Ross, I just cannot even begin to thank you. Allison you are a very lucky woman. Thank you for taking care of my Sammy. And thank you also for sharing a part of this journey with me. I hope all three of you have a blessed Christmas there in central Illinois — not too cold, if that's where you are (I don't remember all your plans). In any case, I'm thinking of y'all – Merry Christmas!

Adrian and I have had a pleasant evening chatting and playing checkers after dinner, both of us noting the extreme cold in here — he calls it the “pneumonia cell,” says it's the coldest cell he's ever been in apart from one in which the heater broke and they were given extra blankets! He's been locked up from when he was my age, 24, and is a wealth of information on the federal prison system. Conversing with him has further confirmed to me that I'm

in here, moved so suddenly and unassigned because I was causing trouble, essentially: receiving lots of mail, writing a lot, requesting those written statements so frequently (which despite promises had not yet been given to me when I left), and the involvement of Bob Phares in my affairs. I hope it had nothing to do with Louis' move, but I suspect otherwise, yet I'm glad to know he's in Oklahoma, which is a much more comfortable transit facility than this. Adrian says it's gotten worse here too, meal-wise and out-of-cell movement wise. He also has told me not to get my hopes up about my mail from Ocilla coming here, that they will most likely just send it back (in spite of their saying otherwise to me, and I don't doubt him). So it seems Babylon's eye is indeed steadily trained upon me, and that I am quite literally being frozen out. Nonetheless, I trust in God's authority and believe there is Divine intent in my current location. AD has put the idea in my head to try and be an orderly — ask Johnson to put my name on the list. Pray that this works out and that my requests to see the counselor, get in touch with Bob and get some further clarity on the situation and my options all go through. Pray for warmth. We're talking about possibly plugging up the window with paper and plastic tomorrow. Time for warm drink, Bible reading, prayer, stretching and sleep.

Good morning! Sunday 10:30am -ish 12/19/10:

A good, warm night of sleep — enough clothing and extra sheet, and I covered up my (lower) half of the window slit with cardboard, paper, and plastic last night, and I believe it helped. Good Breakfast, bran flakes and chocolate cream pastry to 124, and Johnson brought me two extra milk cartons when I mentioned I'm fasting. Yet I am in prison, cold and taking pain pills for my back — so I don't want to be too much like “the fool who foldeth his hands and eateth his own flesh” (Eccl 4:5), so I kept a tiny morsel of flakes and pastry mixed with milk, Isaiah 58 ringing in my head. Then contemplation, prayer — I slipped Johnson a note as he watched TV outside my room, conveying thanks and asking him to put my name on the potential orderly list. Through TD Jakes, God sent me Phil. 2 — been Bible reading, Ecclesiastes, 1 Cor. 13 (interesting, my version uses “charity” instead of “love — perhaps apropos for prison) and Philippians 2:1-18. Even with the light off and the window covered there is still enough light to read and write. Will be keeping my mind busy today with fashioning extra hot cups, and bandana/warm clothing out of extra sheet material, as well as planning commissary once the list arrives. Must get this letter in the mail tonight.

A special thank you to you, Calvin, for receiving this, my USP thesis as it has turned out to be. I recognize I have now imposed upon you (“BOTTOM RANGE, STAND UP FOR COUNT!!”) or someone at the Open Door the task of reading and getting this out to LA. However it happens please know that I am deeply appreciative — perhaps a Kenyan meal for you and your guests will be sufficient repayment next time I am blessed to stay with you all. Much love, thoughts and prayers to ALL of you. // AD just handed me his coffee and sweetner packets and choco pastry from breakfast. Blessed.//

To Everyone at Home (LACW) – I am thinking of you guys and praying for you almost all the time, especially you Rebecca. Thank you for sharing this work and journey so closely with me. God works in mysterious ways. You folks will be hearing more from me once my stamps come in on Tuesday. PEACE, LOVE, BLESSINGS, AND THANKS TO ALL. Tell Fr. Louis I'm with him in Spirit. And now, MAY THE GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, THE LOVE OF GOD AND THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE HOLY SPIRIT BE WITH US NOW AND FOREVER. IN THE NAME OF THE MOTHER AND FATHER CREATOR, THE REDEEMER, AND THE HOLY SPIRIT. AMEN.

One Love,
Michael David