

To everyone at home,

This is my second letter from prison. I am so out of practice as a letter writer, and find it difficult to know how to write to you while in a situation that seems to require much more immediate communication methods; but as this incredible journey unfolds I find myself grateful for the opportunity to still myself and my mind and share with you who have shared with and given so much to me, physically, emotionally, and spiritually, both in the last two weeks and in the last one and a half years of my blessed journey as an LACW community member.

I remember coming in, not being certain about my faith, yet knowing that I had some and now being unable to continue writing without first saying that God is powerful and present immeasurably beyond what we can ever imagine. Of this I am certain- the only challenge, and the biggest is only for us to surrender ourselves completely to God's radically transforming love that is in all, with all and through all, now and forever. All glory, honor, and power be to the Lord.

It is approaching 12:30 pm now on my 16th day of incarceration, having crossed over that fence at 12:15pm 16 days ago, and the rush of exhilaration I felt as I fell to the ground on the other side of that fence has remained with me in the form of a blessed assurance that I am exactly where I am meant to be, and all that is required of me is faith, hope, and love. As I write, the noise that typifies this section of "the hole" is slowly rising. All sound here seems to have a mysteriously spiritual quality, sometimes eerie and haunting, yet so peaceful and calm at others-ever changing.

I am in a six-person cell (three bunks) with two companions. One, Jamal something or other, young black man from Tennessee facing nine months on a robbery charge--been in for a couple (I think). It is his second time in the hole having completed a 10 day stint just recently for sleeping on morning inspection and its easy to see why--he sleeps almost all day and night only getting up to eat and do some light reading ('Blow')—mild mannered and quiet, easy to talk to—a very peaceful presence. He is in again for the same thing, and then cussing at the awaking officer—haha! But is awaiting transfer for sentencing back up to Tennessee hopefully before the holiday season is in full swing.

The other, Antonio Wilson, aka "Brown"—a truly beautiful man, generous giver of the pen in my permanent possession that now inks these words. A simple but life-giving gift. He is in here (the hole) on some bullshit tobacco charge, but he's the kind of person who is truly able to make the best of any situation and maintain a positive, joyful attitude—a gift of the Holy Spirit and solid example for me. Not surprising considering he spends most of his time reading his Bible (or some other book), which he now shares with me, and is always open and eager to converse with me on just about anything, especially Biblical matters and our work

at the LACW. He is also a wealth of information on the ins and outs of this prison having had a kitchen detail for about six months. This hole time just got extended for a couple days but he's almost out anyway and it doesn't bother him anyway—a real blessing. The running shoes (too big) Fr. Louie got me on commissary now belong to him and the other Bible he had in his possession left our cell with Tabour W around 3:00am this morning.

If you remember, “T” is the other close friend I have made thus far and you will eventually all meet him (maybe his wife and kids too) of this I haven't a shadow of a doubt so no need to say much about him—a pure soul, thankfully now back in Protective Custody after a rough stint last night listening to long, rapped threats from the shower below which was occupied by my former bunkmate, Rico Lewis aka “Coon”—our (slightly deranged) aggressor from S. Carolina facing a long time in prison for gang-banging and now possibly more with an added charge of aggravated battery on “T”. Please pray for him and his peace of mind. I do love him like a brother.

As I said, “T” moved out last night and it was a move that gave me immense peace knowing he can ride out his time in safety and relative comfort, with his new-found commitment to reading the Word, until he is re-united with his family, which is really all he ever was able to think about anyway. He will be out in nine months or so, and we have already discussed our coming communication. A success.

So after a rough night, this has been a blessed day. Breakfast happens between 4:30 and 5:30 here, about 5:30 today, so I got some rest before and after breakfast, went out to feel the 24 degree night chill slowly fade away between 9:00 and 10:00 as the sun crept up. Had the morning pill call immediately after- I get painkiller for my back, not enough though, twice a day. This morning's nurse, Ms. Coffee, is an elderly, usually grumpy Black woman, the nicer ones do not hesitate to give extra Tylenol/Motrin, but not her ☺ Oh well.

1:38 pm called to hearing with Lt. George.

I just got back to writing this letter after my hearing, but will have to stop again and pick it up later. This is a beautiful and blessed day. At the moment I have to use the bathroom and get ready, gather my stuff and chat some with Brown as I have been officially dismissed from “the hole” and this will take some explaining later. I may try and get on the phone and will y'all as well and let you know what's up. God is great.

Ok. It's 2:20 am, but I don't care. I have to finish this letter, despite not having gotten any sleep yet. I feel strong and am well fed, the most I have eaten since being incarcerated having been at last night's meal, dinner happens generally

between 4:30 and 5:30 pm. Tonight my dinner consisted of a full tray of very tasty, even healthy rice and sausage with beans and cornbread. Quite delicious. I saved some for later in a plastic cup and am now sitting on a top bunk in my new accommodations in F-dorm while two of my three new roommates are carrying on a chess marathon and the third is sleeping oh so soundly and peacefully in his bed on the bottom bunk on the other side of my top.

Incidentally, my new room in Foxtrot-10 is set up exactly the same as my old room in Echo-10 where the assault took place on Saturday night. In fact, the dorms are identical and my room and bunk are the same one's they would have been in E-10, but my new bunkmate is the exact opposite of the one who assaulted us. Almost 40, very welcoming and accommodating, he gave me his fat-free milk from dinner without my asking, a commodity that has become of great value to me while on the inside as I love to heat up milk to go with some hot water, to supplement my greatly paired down diet. I love being able to give away most of my food at meals, and have been in environments over the last 17 days where every extra scrap has been almost vultured away. The lunch meal in "the hole" today was the epitome of that experience—my last meal in that place was actually quite an exhilarating and enjoyable experience. "T" was gone, it was Brown, Jamal, and myself and I woke up from my post-breakfast nap just as the orderlies were sliding our baloney sandwich and pasta trays through the slot in the iron mesh cage door. It was quite a rush to awake to the hooping and hollering back and forth in the cells and have Brown negotiating for more sandwiches from "Croc", my favorite orderly—an elderly white man with a gentle and generous spirit. At one point the really loud guy in the cell next door to us was offering up his juice for some more pasta, which Jamal was quite eager for and in the process of taking up—I gave mine up instead, so that he could have at least some of his own if he wanted and handed Croc my now all but pasta salad free tray to slide over there as he quickly slid in another juice to me for Jamal, who also got my a.m. juice as I generally stay away from the concentrated sugar-water solutions. Brown and Jamal had already cleared of my extra baloney sandwiches as I kept one piece of bread and baloney for myself to make a small salad with a little bit of Jamal's extra pasta. Afterward the officer briefly (atypically) let me out of the cell to hurriedly clear up some dropped trays and food on the top range of cells as I had offered to save the orderlies some work once they came back from their own meals, and as I did so was quickly sliding extra little mayonnaise packs under another inmates cell door as per his request. It was quite beautiful.

I am sure my mood in that moment had been brightened by the fact that Lt. George had already come by in the morning after outside rec and informed me that she would get to the bottom of my situation by the end of the day. It was she who had transferred Brown, T, and myself over to the hole to join Jamal in 6205 the

previous morning before lunch and was now aware that we had moved “T” out and had finally received all the ____ that morning, so I would be out by the end of the day—came her assurance.

And indeed she made good on her word. My evening meal occurred in a decidedly different, even somber environment as I sat at a new table by myself in F-10. My case was dismissed and it wasn't long before I had packed up my stuff, called Rebecca (at the LACW), moved to a new dorm pretty much directly across the double ____ from my old one and was sitting with some elderly inmates in F-10, most of whom have some kind of medical issue. I sat in astonishment at the peace of this new place and was not solicited for any extra food, nor taken up on any offers to give some up. And as I slowly mixed up my second little serving of rice, beans, sausage and cornbread and made the decision to appreciate and celebrate this opportunity to “feast”, I cried.

It is almost 4:00am now. I am off the bunk and sitting at the little two-person table over in the corner as my roommates have just completed their chess stint. The warm-hot coffee I have been sipping, thanks to my new bunkmate, has now gone cold. The other guy in a top bunk is an old acquaintance from Alpha dorm, a mild-mannered gentleman who was a good friend of a good friend I made there—he tends to pontificate sometimes and is doing so right now—it's cute. The guy beneath him is sleeping soundly still, slightly upright against the wall with his arms folded on his chest under his blanket slightly snoring. That is whose coffee mug I am sipping out of and I am facing him directly from my new position at the table. It is Father Louie Vitale. It's warm in here.

Peace and love,

Michael David Omondi

P.S. 4:20 am the doors just opened for breakfast. Time to get real hot milk in the microwave thanks to bunkmate roomie who is just talking to me about Mennonites, good food, slavery and all the connections and Louie just woke up to piss in the toilet next to me. Time to mail it I think.

THANKS BE TO GOD. AMEN!