

Behind the Walls

BOOK PROPOSAL

Behind the Walls: A Practical Guide to Christian Prison Ministry from the Inside Out (Italian: *Dietro le Mura—Una Guida Pratica al Ministero Carcerario Cristiano dall’Interno verso l’Esterno*) A Practical Handbook for Pastors, Volunteers, Inmates, and Their Families—Written from Inside by Dr. John M. Cobin Christian Living / Practical Theology / Prison Ministry Approximately 154,852 words | 38 chapters across 9 parts Complete manuscript available in English, Spanish, and Italian Companion to *Suffering Unjustly* (theological framework) and *Bearing the Cross* (memoir, five books) Contact Information John M. Cobin, Ph.D. Viña del Mar, Chile Website: policyofliberty.com Italian rights direct from author (dual Italian citizenship through maternal grandfather)

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1. ONE-SENTENCE SUMMARY

Hook. *Behind the Walls* is the first comprehensive Christian prison-ministry manual written not by a visiting chaplain but by the prisoner himself—a Reformed Baptist pastor who spent five years and five months inside three Chilean prisons, preached or lectured 865 times to fellow inmates, and emerged with a field manual that translates theology into the smell of smoke, the sound of steel doors, and the daily decisions that determine whether a ministry behind bars survives the first month.

One-Paragraph Summary. *Behind the Walls* is a 154,852-word practical handbook for everyone whose life intersects with the world of incarceration: pastors and lay volunteers running prison ministries, chaplains and seminary students preparing for prison work, Christians who unexpectedly find themselves in a cell, and the families left behind when a believer is imprisoned. Anchored in Hebrews 13:3 (“Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them”) and 1 Peter 2:19-20, the book moves systematically from the shock of the first 72 hours of incarceration, through the rhythms of daily prison life, into the disciplines of evangelism and discipleship behind bars, the counseling of suicidal and addicted inmates, the navigation of institutional corruption, the destruction of marriages and finances on the outside, and a forty-page comparative survey of prison ministry across Latin America, Europe, Oceania, and North America. Two final sections address frontiers most Christian publishers will not touch—a biblical case for civil disobedience regarding cell-phone bans in prison, and a careful, theologically guard-railed proposal for using artificial intelligence in inmate Bible-study

preparation. The final chapters are prison chronicles drawn directly from the author's eleven-volume memoir, set on the *patio*, in the dining hall, and on the night the Valparaíso penitentiary's cell block 118A caught fire. The book is ecumenical in its usefulness without being doctrinally soft: it can be handed to a Catholic chaplain in Trieste, a Waldensian deacon in Torre Pellice, a UCEBI pastor in Rome, or a Pentecostal volunteer in Naples, and each will find practical guidance he cannot get from a book written by an outsider.

2. BOOK DESCRIPTION

The Problem Christian prison ministry is one of the most consistently mandated and most consistently neglected obligations in Scripture. Christ Himself made it a criterion of final judgment in Matthew 25:36. Hebrews 13:3 commands believers to remember prisoners “as bound with them.” Yet the existing literature on prison ministry is dominated by two limited genres. The first is the academic-pastoral handbook written by chaplains or seminary professors who have studied incarceration from the visitor's side of the glass. The second is the persecution memoir—*Tortured for Christ, The Hiding Place, God's Smuggler*—which inspires but does not instruct. Neither addresses the daily mechanics of how to actually run a Bible study in a cellblock where there is no quiet room, no printed materials, no functioning lock on the door, and seventy professing evangelicals on the next floor who are running an extortion ring. Neither tells a wife how to survive when her husband is on the inside and her finances are gone. Neither warns a new volunteer about the *conducta*-score economy or the prison-Pentecostalism that masks predatory behavior with charismatic worship. Italian Christians face this gap acutely. Italy holds roughly 62,000 prisoners across 189 institutions, with chronic overcrowding (about 118 percent of capacity in 2025), a high rate of foreign-born detainees, and a chaplaincy structure that—though formally Catholic—increasingly relies on lay volunteers from Catholic, Waldensian, UCEBI Baptist, Pentecostal, and ecumenical networks. There is at present no single Italian-language handbook that crosses these traditions and speaks practically to the volunteer rather than the institution. The Solution *Behind the Walls* fills that gap. The author wrote it after spending five years and five months in three Chilean prisons—Valparaíso, Rancagua, and Casablanca—convicted of a self-defense shooting during the violent 2019 “Social Upheaval.” He went inside as a Reformed Baptist pastor with a Ph.D. and emerged as a field-tested prison minister with verifiable numbers: 865 sermons or lectures, ten to fifteen credible conversions, a daily feeding program for three to ten inmates funded by outside supporters, oversight of the repair of three prison bathrooms financed by Baptist churches, Bible studies coordinated across cell blocks and on smuggled cell phones, and a co-pastor partnership with fellow Baptist minister Valentín Navarrete Urbina that produced an online Sunday-school series taught from inside. The book is structured as nine sequential parts: Part I—Understanding Prison. The shock of incarceration, the daily routines, the cast of characters (guards, inmates, lawyers, chaplains), and the theology of unjust suffering. Part II—Ministry Behind Bars. How a man becomes a pastor in prison without permission or infrastructure; evangelism in concrete and steel; worship and prayer when privacy is impossible; counseling the suicidal, the addicted, and the violent; navigating institutional corruption without participating in it; and what the outside church actually does that helps versus what it does that wastes everyone's time. Part III—The Collateral Damage. What incarceration does to marriages, children, finances, and the

long shadow of the ex-convict stigma. Part IV—For the Ministry Worker. A practical handbook for pastors and volunteers: preparation, logistics of running a Bible study inside, correspondence ministry, and reentry support during the critical first 90 days after release. Part V—The Bigger Picture. Church-state relations, criminal justice from a biblical perspective, and the Christian’s obligation to seek justice. Part VI—Theology Revisited. Distilled foundations from the author’s companion volume *Suffering Unjustly*: the dual mandate of prison ministry (remember the brethren / evangelize the lost), doing good behind bars, the four mortal enemies of the Christian, and the judicial power as friend or foe. Part VII—Academic and Global Perspectives. A 100-page comparative literature review covering the empirical research on faith-based recidivism reduction (including the Angola Seminary model and the InnerChange Freedom Initiative) and surveys of prison ministry across Latin America (Brazil’s APAC, Argentina’s evangelical pavilions, Chile), Oceania and the Philippines, Europe (UK, Germany, Scandinavia, the Netherlands, Eastern Europe), and North America. Part VIII—New Frontiers. A biblical case for Christian civil disobedience regarding prohibited cell phones in prison, and a careful methodology for AI-assisted Bible-study preparation with explicit theological guardrails. Part IX—Prison Chronicles. Seven narrative chapters drawn from the author’s eleven-volume memoir *Bearing the Cross*, dramatizing daily endurance, visitation day, the day the prison burned, and what courage looks like when the steel door locks behind you. Each chapter closes with concrete “Action Steps” and discussion questions designed for small-group or volunteer-training use, so that a prison chaplain can hand Chapter 7 to a new inmate or a pastor can give Chapter 15 to a volunteer team without requiring them to read the whole book.

3. TARGET AUDIENCE

Primary Audience Pastors, ministry leaders, and lay volunteers in prison ministry. This is the working core of the readership—men and women who walk into prisons weekly and are repeatedly frustrated by handbooks written from the outside. The book gives them a vocabulary for what they have already seen and a strategy for what they have not yet figured out.

Catholic prison chaplains and lay collaborators (in Italy, the cappellani and the lay volunteer pools coordinated through dioceses and through Caritas) Waldensian and Methodist ministers in the Federazione delle Chiese Evangeliche in Italia (FCEI) prison-ministry programs UCEBI Baptist pastors and lay leaders working with the Servizio Cristiano and ecumenical chaplaincy networks Pentecostal and evangelici liberi pastors operating in detention centers In the English market: Prison Fellowship volunteers, Good News Jail & Prison Ministry coordinators, Catholic Charities chaplaincy programs, and Reformed-Baptist church teams Secondary Audience Christians who are currently incarcerated, or who anticipate they may be. Part II and Part IX speak directly to this reader. The manuscript has already been used in draft form by inmates at the Casablanca prison in Chile. Family members of incarcerated Christians. Part III is written specifically for spouses, parents, and adult children—the “forgotten casualties” of the criminal justice system, often abandoned by their congregations and overwhelmed by financial collapse, legal procedure, and social stigma. Tertiary Audience Seminary students, biblical-counseling programs, and lay-leadership training tracks. The book is suitable as a textbook or supplemental reading for pastoral theology, biblical counseling, or missions courses dealing

with marginal populations. The Part VII literature review makes it credible as a scholarly reference, not merely a devotional. Religious-liberty and criminal-justice reform readers. Parts V and VIII engage seriously with the church-state question, the failure of institutional incarceration, and a libertarian-influenced biblical case for reform—material that intersects with the growing Catholic and Reformed conversation about restorative justice. Market Size (Italian and Anglophone) Italy: approximately 62,000 prisoners; chronic overcrowding (118% capacity); estimated 1,500 active prison-ministry lay volunteers across Catholic, Waldensian, UCEBI, and Pentecostal networks; growing Caritas detention programs United States: 1.9 million incarcerated; Prison Fellowship serves 400,000+ inmates annually Spanish-speaking Latin America: 1.5 million incarcerated; APAC (Brazil) and equivalent evangelical-pavilion ministries reach hundreds of thousands Worldwide: ~11 million incarcerated; the global prison-ministry sector is large, fragmented, and under-resourced with practical literature

4. COMPARABLE TITLES

Behind the Walls sits in a niche occupied by very few books, and none of them have been written from inside the cell.

Born Again by Charles Colson (1976). The founder of Prison Fellowship wrote a memoir of his own brief incarceration that gave rise to a global ministry. Colson's account is foundational. *Behind the Walls* differs in two ways: Colson was inside for seven months at a U.S. federal minimum-security facility, while Cobin was inside for sixty-five months in Chilean prisons including a maximum-security penitentiary; and Colson's book is a memoir from which a ministry was later built, while *Behind the Walls* is the practical manual that ministry like Colson's still lacks. *The Heavenly Man* by Brother Yun (2002). Yun's account of imprisonment in China sold over a million copies and established the contemporary persecuted-believer genre. *Behind the Walls* shares its credibility-from-inside but adds systematic structure, action steps, and a discipline that is closer to a field manual than a testimony. *Sentenced to Life* by Burl Cain & friends, on Angola Prison Seminary. Several books document the Angola seminary model and inmate-led ministry. These are case studies of one extraordinary American institution. *Behind the Walls* generalizes the inmate-as-minister principle across institutional contexts and across the Catholic / Reformed / Pentecostal / ecumenical spectrum. *Lettere dal carcere* by Antonio Gramsci (1947). For the Italian market this is the canonical "writing from prison"—though, of course, secular and political. *Behind the Walls* offers what the Italian Christian reader has not had: a contemporary, theologically serious, practically detailed counterpart written from the inside in a Catholic-majority Romance-language society with a chaotic justice system. *Saggi sulla pena* and the Caritas Italiana / Centro Studi sulla Pena literature. The Italian Catholic and ecumenical conversation about incarceration produces white papers, conference proceedings, and pastoral letters, but does not produce a single-volume practical handbook for the volunteer. The proposed Italian edition (*Dietro le Mura*) fills exactly that gap. *A Place of Healing* by Joni Eareckson Tada (2010); *Suffering* by Paul David Tripp (2018). These are theologies of suffering written from outside the experience of penal incarceration. *Behind the Walls* shares their pastoral seriousness but addresses the specific, granular reality of prison rather than suffering in general. Market Differentiation *Behind the Walls* combines five things that no existing title combines: 1. First-person inmate authorship by a credentialed theologian and ordained pastor.

2. Practical action steps at the end of every chapter—usable, not aspirational. 3. Ecumenical reach without doctrinal compromise—the book is confessionally Reformed Baptist (1689 LBCF) but is written so that a Catholic, Waldensian, UCEBI, or Pentecostal worker can apply it without translation. 4. A serious academic literature review (Part VII) that gives the volume textbook standing. 5. Treatment of the new frontiers (civil disobedience regarding cell phones; AI-assisted ministry) that no other current book in the genre engages.

5. UNIQUE SELLING PROPOSITION

Written from inside. Not by a visitor. Not by a former inmate writing years later in a comfortable office. The bulk of *Behind the Walls* was drafted on pen and paper inside cell blocks 118, 109, 84, and 45 and in collective dormitories 2, 3, 4, 5, and 7, with the author working on a smuggled cell phone for typing. The author's own opening line: "I did not write this book from a seminary library or a church office. I wrote it from the inside of a Chilean prison cell." Volume of in-prison ministry. 865 sermons or lectures. Daily Bible studies sustained across five years. Ten to fifteen credible conversions documented and weighed honestly against the failed ones. A feeding program of three to ten men daily. Repair of three prison bathrooms funded externally. These are not estimates. They are recorded counts. Ecumenical practical applicability. The Italian market is not a single audience but a layered one—Catholic chaplaincy, Waldensian and Methodist pastoral care, UCEBI Baptist outreach, Pentecostal volunteer surges, and Caritas social work overlap inside the same prison. *Behind the Walls* is unusually portable across these traditions because its action steps are practical rather than confessional, even while its theological foundation is explicitly Reformed Baptist. A Catholic chaplain in Padua can use Chapter 7 on prayer and worship without sharing the author's ecclesiology. Trilingual readiness. Complete manuscripts already exist in English, Spanish, and Italian. The Italian translation was prepared by the author himself, who taught himself Italian to B1-B2 level during his imprisonment and holds Italian citizenship through his maternal grandfather from Oliveto Citra (province of Salerno). Companion architecture. The book is the practical apex of a three-volume project: *Suffering Unjustly* (theology), *Bearing the Cross* (memoir, five books / 1.17 million words), and *Behind the Walls* (practical manual). Each can stand alone. Together they form one of the more substantial contemporary corpora on Christian incarceration. Frontiers no one else is writing about. A biblical case for Christian civil disobedience on cell-phone access (Chapter 30) and a methodology for AI-assisted Bible-study preparation with explicit theological guardrails (Chapter 31). Both topics will be unavoidable in the next decade of prison ministry, and *Behind the Walls* engages them now.

6. AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Dr. John M. Cobin has been a committed Christian for over 47 years. He holds a Ph.D. in Public Policy from George Mason University, M.A.s in Economics and Business Economics, a B.A. from California State University Long Beach, and an undergraduate degree in Religious Studies from Reformed Bible College, with six graduate-level correspondence courses in Bible, church history, and ethics from Regent College. He has authored multiple books on public policy and biblical theology, including *Bible and Government: Public Policy from a Christian Perspective*

and Christian Theology of Public Policy: Highlighting the American Experience. Dr. Cobin served as pastor of a fledgling Reformed Baptist church in Reñaca, Chile for three years and currently serves as co-pastor of *Bautistas Históricos*, an online Reformed Baptist ministry reaching Spanish-speaking believers throughout Latin America (bautistashistoricos.com). He taught at Chilean universities between 1996 and 2014, principally Universidad Finis Terrae, Universidad Austral, and Universidad Andrés Bello. He also taught at American universities and community colleges between 1986–1995 and again from 2001–2007. On November 10, 2019, during Chile’s violent “Social Upheaval” (*estallido social*) that had begun on October 18, Dr. Cobin defended himself against a mob of rioters who attacked his vehicle while shouting “Kill him!”—court testimony confirmed that the lead assailant, Sebastián Valdés Muñoz, opened the driver’s-side door to lynch him. Though acting in self-defense with a legally registered firearm, Dr. Cobin was prosecuted by hard-leftist prosecutor Paola Rojas Caro alongside Communist Party lawyers and was initially sentenced to over eleven years in prison. The Chilean Supreme Court later reduced the charges, acknowledging the lack of murderous intent. He still served 5.42 years across the Valparaíso Penitentiary, Rancagua prison, and the Casablanca jailhouse. During his imprisonment, Dr. Cobin: Preached or lectured 865 times to fellow inmates Led Bible studies that resulted in 10–15 credible conversions Read through Scripture nearly twice and 204 additional books Wrote *Suffering Unjustly* and the five-book, 1.17-million-word memoir series *Bearing the Cross* Drafted the bulk of *Behind the Walls* itself Fed three to ten fellow inmates breakfast and lunch most days, funded by 149 outside supporters Oversaw repair of three prison bathrooms funded by Baptist churches Taught himself Italian to B1–B2 level (and Spanish to C2 by international standards) Played 3,761 games of chess, winning 91.4 percent and drawing 1.9 percent Dr. Cobin was released on parole in January 2025 and continues his ministry, writing, and consulting from Viña del Mar, Chile, where he has also become an active AI consultant and developer through his firm Alertness AI Consulting. He is married to Pamela and has seven children and seven grandchildren (seventh grandchild due May 2026). He holds Chilean and Italian citizenship (the latter through his maternal grandfather, born in Oliveto Citra, province of Salerno).

7. AUTHOR PLATFORM

Online Presence. PolicyOfLiberty.com (English, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese, German, French—author bio, complete catalog, criminal case documentation, literary-agent dossier); BautistasHistoricos.com (Spanish-language Reformed Baptist ministry, 151,000+ contact database, weekly sermons and devotionals). Ministry Network. Co-pastor of the Historic Baptists online ministry (Reñaca / Casablanca). Network of 149 unique financial supporters built during imprisonment. Active correspondence with Reformed Baptist churches across Latin America. Personal contacts inside Chilean prison chaplaincy networks. Italian-family network through his maternal Taglieri-Lullo branch in Oliveto Citra and in the United States. Publishing History. Multiple books and academic articles on economics, public policy, and biblical theology under the Alertness Books imprint; *Bearing the Cross* (five books, 1.17 million words) and *Suffering Unjustly* both currently seeking traditional publication. Media. Major Spanish-language YouTube interview with Nicole Rodríguez (October 2025) drew 13,500+ views, 1,700+ likes, 414 written comments (overwhelmingly positive), with a follow-up scheduled for March

2026. Strong narrative for both religious-liberty and prison-ministry media: an American-born pastor imprisoned in Chile for self-defense during a Communist-led riot, who sustained a working ministry inside for five years and five months. Italian-Market Specific. Author speaks and writes Italian (B1–B2 active, higher passive). Italian citizenship facilitates author travel for promotion. Family roots in Oliveto Citra (Campania) provide regional connection; *Bearing the Cross* contains substantial Italian material because of the author's self-instruction during imprisonment.

8. MARKETING PLAN

English-Language Channels Prison ministry organizations. Prison Fellowship (founded by Charles Colson; serves 400,000+ inmates annually), Good News Jail & Prison Ministry, Kairos Prison Ministry International, Catholic Charities chaplaincy programs. Endorsement, conference speaking, bulk purchasing for volunteer training. Reformed and Calvinist networks. Ligonier Ministries, Banner of Truth, Reformation Heritage Books, Reformed seminary bookstores; the 1689-aligned associations (ARBCA, IRBS). Religious-liberty organizations. Alliance Defending Freedom, First Liberty Institute, Becket Fund—natural fit given the author's case. Conservative Christian and libertarian media. Strong narrative for podcast interviews. Author is fluent in English and Spanish and conversational in Italian.

Italian-Language Channels (*Dietro le Mura*) Catholic publishers and distribution. Edizioni San Paolo, Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna (EDB), Queriniana, Cittadella, Effatà—for the broad Catholic chaplaincy and lay-volunteer market. The book's ecumenical practicality and explicit Hebrews 13:3 grounding give it an accessible entry point. Protestant / ecumenical publishers. Claudiana (Waldensian-Methodist) for the FCEI network; GBU and ADV for the evangelical / Pentecostal market; Edizioni GBU for the academic Reformed reader. UCEBI distribution through Casa della Bibbia. Caritas Italiana Settore Carcere. Direct outreach for volunteer training material; potential bulk purchase or co-branded edition for cappellani and lay collaborators. Conferenza Episcopale Italiana (CEI) Ufficio Nazionale per la Pastorale Carceraria. Endorsement and recommendation list. Italian regional press. The author's roots in Oliveto Citra (Salerno) provide a regional press angle in Campania; bilingual interviews available for *Avvenire*, *Riforma* (Waldensian weekly), and Vatican Radio Italian-language programming. Italian universities and theological faculties. Facoltà Valdese di Teologia (Rome), Istituto di Studi Ecumenici San Bernardino (Venice), Pontifical Universities for criminology and pastoral theology programs.

Spanish-Language Channels Hispanic evangelical denominations across Latin America (CIE, AEBC, FFBPL, etc.) and Spanish-language Christian radio (extensive presence in every Latin American country) Latin American prison-ministry networks: APAC (Brazil), evangelical-pavilion coalitions (Argentina), Chilean Catholic and evangelical chaplaincies known personally to the author

Author Participation The author commits to active marketing participation, including podcast and radio interviews (fluent English and Spanish, working Italian), church and seminary speaking engagements in Chile, the U.S., and Italy, online content through existing websites and ministry channels, prison-ministry conference appearances, and ongoing free-tier distribution to incarcerated readers through correspondence programs.

9. SAMPLE TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION—Why this book exists / Who this book is for / How to Use this book / About the Source Works PART I—UNDERSTANDING PRISON 1. The Shock of Incarceration—What the First 72 Hours Are Really Like 2. The Daily Reality—Routines, Rules, and the Rhythm of Confinement 3. The Cast of Characters—Guards, Inmates, Lawyers, and Chaplains 4. The Theology of Unjust Suffering—Why God Allows His People Behind Bars PART II—MINISTRY BEHIND BARS 5. Becoming a Pastor in Prison—When God Calls You to Shepherd Fellow Inmates 6. Evangelism in Concrete and Steel—How to Share the Gospel in Prison 7. Worship, Prayer, and Spiritual Disciplines When Everything Is Stripped Away 8. Counseling the Desperate—Suicide, Despair, Addiction, and Violence 9. Navigating Prison Politics and Corruption Without Compromising Your Faith 10. The Outside Church’s Role—How Visitors, Letters, and Support Actually Help PART III—THE COLLATERAL DAMAGE 11. When Your Family Is Destroyed—Marriage, Children, and Estrangement 12. The Legal Nightmare—Wrongful Conviction, Appeals, and Injustice 13. Financial Ruin—Property, Assets, and Starting Over with Nothing 14. The Stigma—Living as an Ex-Convict Christian PART IV—FOR THE MINISTRY WORKER 15. Before You Start—Preparing for Prison Ministry 16. Inside the Walls—Conducting Services, Studies, and One-on-One Ministry 17. Correspondence Ministry—Letters, Books, and Remote Discipleship 18. After Release—Reentry Support and Continued Discipleship PART V—THE BIGGER PICTURE 19. The State, the Church, and Criminal Justice—A Biblical Perspective 20. A Theology of Hope—Suffering, Glory, and the Eternal Perspective PART VI—THEOLOGY AND PRACTICE REVISITED 21. “Remember My Chains”—The Dual Mandate of Prison Ministry 22. “Doing Good” Behind Bars—Whole-Person Ministry 23. Four Mortal Enemies of the Christian 24. Is the State’s Judicial Power a Christian’s Friend or Ally? PART VII—ACADEMIC AND GLOBAL PERSPECTIVES 25. What the Research Shows—A Literature Review of Christian Prison Ministry 26. Prison Ministry in Latin America—Challenges and Opportunities 27. Prison Ministry in Oceania and the Philippines 28. Prison Ministry in Europe—Secularization, Multi-Faith, and Opportunity 29. Prison Ministry in North America—The American Experiment PART VIII—NEW FRONTIERS IN PRISON MINISTRY 30. Christian Civil Disobedience—The Case for Cell Phones in Prison 31. Artificial Intelligence in Prison Ministry—A New Tool for an Ancient Task PART IX—PRISON CHRONICLES 32. “If You Take It Patiently”—Daily Endurance Behind Bars 33. “Glorify God in the Day of Visitation”—When Saturday Finally Comes 34. “The Bread of Adversity”—Suffering Among Sufferers 35. “Cast Your Bread upon the Waters”—Unexpected Fruit and Redeeming the Time 36. “Not Given Us a Spirit of Fear”—Courage in Confinement 37. “One Is Hungry, and Another Is Drunk”—Drugs, Reading, and Resistance 38. “Pulling Them Out of the Fire”—When the Prison Burns A Letter to the Church

10. RECOMMENDED SAMPLE PASSAGES

For the acquiring editor’s first reading, three passages best demonstrate the book’s voice, range, and credibility: Chapter 5—“Becoming a Pastor in Prison” (Part II opener). This is the most direct expression of the book’s central premise: ministry stripped of every institutional support. It explains how the Bible studies started with nothing, how Reformed theology resonated in a

population of “biblically illiterate” inmates because “it takes sin and sovereignty seriously and does not pretend that human beings are better than they are,” and it includes the author’s honest accounting of his most painful pastoral failure (Leonardo, the Marxist ex-professor) alongside his most affecting success (Marcelo Bonilla, the dying son-in-law of an Assemblies of God pastor). It establishes that the author is neither triumphalist nor sentimental. Chapter 8—“Counseling the Desperate.” The most pastorally distinctive chapter, and the strongest evidence that the author writes from inside rather than about. It opens: “There is a sound that haunts a man long after he leaves prison. It is not the clang of the steel door or the bark of the guard. It is the weeping of a man who has lost everything...” The chapter handles suicide, addiction, violence, and self-harm with biblical sobriety and without the platitudes that disqualify most Christian counseling literature for prison use. The author admits his own seasons of despair without compromising his theology—a tone the publisher can verify is consistent throughout the manuscript. Chapter 38—“Pulling Them Out of the Fire.” The book’s strongest narrative set-piece, drawn from the night of February 4, 2021, when cell block 118A of the Valparaíso Penitentiary caught fire. Reformed Providence doctrine and the practical reality of incarceration converge in a single forty-minute incident: an unlocked door against regulations, a former flight engineer named Miami crawling on his hands and knees through smoke to drag an unconscious inmate to safety, the *gendarmes* arriving late and counting heads while the building still smoldered, and the author preaching live commentary into his church’s Zoom meeting from his bunk. The chapter then turns Jude 1:23—“pulling them out of the fire”—from metaphor into manual. Any editor who reads this chapter will know what the book is. The complete manuscript is available in English, Spanish, and Italian on request.

11. ABOUT THE MANUSCRIPT

Status. Complete. English: 154,852 words across 38 chapters and 9 parts plus introduction and a closing “Letter to the Church.” Spanish and Italian translations complete. Ready for editorial review. Source Works. *Behind the Walls* synthesizes material from two prior unpublished volumes by the same author: *Suffering Unjustly: Imprisonment, Wrecked Families, and Property or Wealth Destruction Affecting Christians in Modern Democratic Societies* (theological framework; ~55,000 words; English and Spanish complete) and *Bearing the Cross: A Gringo Political Prisoner Exposes the Injustices, Indignities, and Vexations of the Chilean Criminal Justice and Prison System* (five books, eleven volumes, 1.17 million words; memoir and journal). *Behind the Walls* draws the theological scaffolding from the first and the lived material from the second, then adds the practical action-step apparatus that makes it usable for ministry training. Rights. All rights available worldwide, in all languages, including audio, electronic, and translation. The author holds dual Chilean-Italian citizenship and can sign contracts and receive payments in either jurisdiction. Theological Position. The author writes from a Reformed and Historic Baptist perspective, confessionally aligned with the 1689 London Baptist Confession of Faith. He is a cessationist and a six-day literal creationist. The book quotes Scripture primarily from the King James Version in English and the Reina-Valera 1960 in Spanish; the Italian edition uses Riveduta-Luzzi for direct quotations with selective use of the CEI translation where ecumenical clarity is helpful. The author explicitly notes in the introduction that he will “not dilute my convictions to achieve broader appeal,” and the

manuscript's practical orientation makes that conviction compatible with broad cross-tradition use. Health, threats, and abandonment The author's credibility as a prison-ministry writer rests in part on what he survived inside. For more than five years, behind the bars of three Chilean prisons, John Cobin contracted a series of grave illnesses that the Italian State (his second state of citizenship) knew about—and chose not to remedy. Every episode was communicated, in writing and in person, to the Italian Consulate in Santiago—first to the very young Consul Nicole Spada, then to her successor Francesca Siega—to the Vice Consul in Valparaíso Franco Dezerega, and to the Director General Stefano Opilio of the Italian Ministry of Justice in Rome, at Via Arenula 70. The responses were evasive, formulaic, or simply absent. While the Strasbourg-Convention transfer file slept on a ministerial desk, the illnesses advanced. This was the ministry context behind *Behind the Walls*: a pastor preaching, counselling, and writing while his own body and his own diplomatic protection were failing in real time. The documented pathologies

Severe COVID-19 (June 2020, Valparaíso, *módulo* 109). Three nights—in his own words—in which “death was knocking at the door”, the brain unable to drive oxygen to the lungs. Loss of 10–15 kg in three weeks. Pneumonia no. 1 (June–July 2020, simultaneous with COVID-19). Thirteen days of heavy antibiotics following Dr. Venegas's diagnosis. Pneumonia no. 2 (August 2022, Rancagua *módulo* 45). Dr. Consuegra ordered an X-ray: “half of the left lung in a fog, no oxygen exchange” (*Bearing the Cross*, P03964–P03966). The request for transfer to the Clínica Santa María in Santiago was refused. At least seven documented respiratory/flu episodes (2020–March 2025), plus a tuberculosis exposure (24 October 2024, inmate Brian 2 in the adjacent *colectivo*). Stage-2 renal carcinoma. Blood appeared in the urine on 17 June 2023; MRI confirmed the tumor on 23 January 2025; surgery—performed by Dr. Iván Pinto, robot-assisted, at the Clínica Santa María in Santiago—postponed until 23 June 2025, two months after parole. The tumor had grown for more than eighteen months while the transfer file lay in Rome. Progressive macular degeneration, uncontrolled hypertension, hypothyroidism, diverticulitis, severe vertigo with vomiting (25 February 2023). Torn shoulder connective tissue, contracted in prison and never properly diagnosed at the time. Almost crippling to this day: more than twenty post-release physiotherapy sessions have failed to restore full mobility. Torn hip connective tissue, a parallel injury equally refractory to physiotherapy. Continuous pain and persistent gait limitation. Left knee—marked stiffness, contracted in prison and never treated. To this day, after walking any distance, Cobin visibly limps.

Endemic bedbugs. April 2021 episode: “seven baby bedbugs and five or six full-grown ones” in Cobin's clothing (BTC P01423). Weeks without soap in the communal showers (May–August 2023, dozens of manuscript citations); daily water cuts of 19–22 hours; broken plumbing throughout. Torture, with names attached Valparaíso—*gendarme* Rigoberto Castro. During the austral winter, Castro forced Cobin to sit for hours in the rain inside a cage exposed to the elements, without adequate clothing. This is torture as defined by Article 1 of the UN Convention Against Torture: severe pain, intentionally inflicted by a public official, for a discriminatory purpose. Rancagua—concrete quarantine cell. Cobin was held for 321 consecutive hours (\approx 13.4 days) in a cell with broken windows, sub-zero winter air filtering in continuously, water gushing from broken fixtures that mixed the damp cold with airborne mold spores. Direct consequence: one of the two bouts of pneumonia. The pneumonias were caused,

not merely left untreated. On both occasions Cobin was running a fever of 39.8 °C / 103.6 °F and was refused permission to return to his bed to sleep: he had to pull on his hooded jacket and lie down on the concrete floor of the yard or guard booth, with morning temperatures of -4 °C / 25 °F, while the cough would not stop. Pamela Cobin, heroine of the medical saga *Without Pamela Cobin*—the prisoner’s wife, and with her the household helper Jana (Nadia)—the author would never have reached any of the consultations at private clinics outside the prison. Cobin carried private health insurance (*Isapre*) that covered every cost in full: the financial barrier did not exist. And yet the *gendarmes* refused care systematically until Pamela and John’s lawyers (chief among them Héctor) pushed individually for each authorization, sometimes resorting to court orders. “If the *gendarmes* had taken John for the MRI Dr. Pinto ordered in 2023,” Cobin wrote in June 2025 after the surgery, “the tumor would have been caught early, rather than taking everyone by surprise in 2025.” For the prison-ministry reader, this is the operational reality the book treats throughout Parts II–IV: the family on the outside is not a comfort, it is the lifeline. Death threats arising from naming names in the book In Volume 1 of *Bearing the Cross*, Cobin named—by full name or by transparent pseudonym—a number of fellow inmates: child molesters, drug dealers, violent political militants. Once they learned that their names appeared in the manuscript, retaliation began: Warden Lt. Parra physically confiscated four pages of the manuscript on 18 January 2023; the inmate Garra (a drug runner) spat in Cobin’s face on 23 February 2023; the inmate Omar 1—a Communist—issued a death threat on 26 July 2023: “any time, any place [...] if you narked, I will call on my communist pals to stab you.” Cobin himself recorded: “Should the writing of *Bearing the Cross* suddenly come to a stop, the reader would know that the communists succeeded in killing John.” The threats were transmitted to the Italian Consulate through Pamela, inside a continuous correspondence between February 2023 and December 2024 that explicitly invoked “the human rights violations he was experiencing as a reason for urgency” (BTC P04350). No protection of any kind was offered by the Italian State. Pamela herself came to fear, in January 2025, that she might be kidnapped for ransom by the “*patio scumbags*” who—having learned of the book—would assume John had money (BTC P06107). Three verbatim passages from the manuscript

“Three nights during the end of June (between doctor visits), John thought he was close to death. He could not breathe well and sometimes not at all, waking him up as his brain struggled to get oxygen to his lungs. It was horrifying lying all alone in the cold, dark cell with death knocking at the door.”—*Bearing the Cross*, June 2020, *módulo* 109 (BTC P00976). “Prison conditions in Chile are intolerable and dangerous, especially for a foreigner born in the First World who considers himself to be a political prisoner. The courts and prison authorities seem to rather enjoy the spectacle of my presence, but it is nothing but a terrestrial hell for me.”—Letter to Dr. Stefano Opilio, Director General, Italian Ministry of Justice, Rome, 4 March 2024 (BTC P05187). “And whatever happened to Italy, and its official spokespeople, Francesca and Franco 2, who let him rot in jail for years, while bureaucrats sat on his transfer request? The animals in prison were to blame for small evils, but there were many other greater evils imposed by truly evil judges, police experts, police officers, *gendarmes*, and bureaucrats.”—*Bearing the Cross*, 30 March 2025, ten days before parole (BTC P06195). What ordinary people did, and what the State did not There is a counterpoint to all of this that the documentary record makes inescapable. The Italian State of which Cobin is also a citizen contributed nothing—no transfer

to an Italian penitentiary, no dollar of consular assistance, no institutional response of any meaningful kind. Across the five years and four months of his confinement, 149 individuals did. His son David carried the heaviest share of that burden; his cousin Dan added a quieter, steady help; and more than 147 friends, acquaintances, and brothers in the faith contributed because they recognised, without needing to be told and without diplomatic instruction, that a raw injustice had been done. Together they donated USD 197,500 for the family's support. What the institutions refused to do, ordinary people did—out of their own pockets, on their own initiative, with no register to sign and no diplomatic note to file. The contrast is, in itself, the moral verdict on the case. Why this matters for *Behind the Walls* A practical manual for Christian prison ministry written by someone who endured none of this would be a different book. *Behind the Walls* gives chapter-and-verse for counselling the suicidal, evangelising in concrete and steel, surviving institutional corruption, and rebuilding a family from a cell—because the author did each of those things while sick, threatened, and abandoned. The documentary record is unambiguous: a sovereign state with formal notice, repeated written warnings, four in-person consular visits, and twenty-two documented contacts with the prisoner's wife elected silence while its citizen was tortured and threatened with death. The ministry that produced this book was conducted inside that silence. 2026 Update—The active Chilean criminal investigation of the prosecution and the perjurers As this proposal goes to editors, a criminal investigation is under way in Chile—opened by court order, not at police discretion—into the conduct of the very prosecutor who tried John Cobin in 2020, Substitute Prosecutor Paola Rojas Caro, along with several of the forensic-police experts (peritos) who testified against him at the original trial. The lead investigator is Detective Cristian Severino of Chile's *Policía de Investigaciones* (PDI). The charges so far are obstruction of justice (obstrucción a la justicia) and further offences. Severino's most recent personal update to Cobin is dated 30 April 2026: having concluded several pending matters, the investigator indicated that the witness-interview phase would begin in the first weeks of May 2026—the phase now under way. In parallel, five trial witnesses who gave false testimony in the original proceeding are also under formal investigation. Their depositions, when checked against the ballistic forensics, the video evidence, and the cross-witness record now in the appellate file, are reportedly irreconcilable with the documented physical sequence of events of 10 November 2019 in Reñaca. This matters for an Anglophone reader and for an Anglophone publisher. It means that the case is no longer a private claim of innocence by a wrongly-convicted citizen: it is an active investigation by Chilean state institutions into the conduct of their own prosecution and their own forensic experts. Chile is putting its own actors on trial for the way they convicted Cobin. The manuscript thus becomes the contemporaneous record of a criminal-justice failure that the implicated jurisdiction itself has now begun to acknowledge. Few wrongful-conviction memoirs reach the editor's desk while the state in question is still opening files; this one does. *Behind the Walls* records what happened to one prisoner over five years and five months of confinement that Chile is now, in 2026, beginning to recognise as the product of a compromised prosecution. The book's prison-ministry observations now stand in light of the very institutions that produced those years now investigating themselves. Updated 17 May 2026.

CONCLUSION

Behind the Walls fills a real and persistent gap. Christian prison ministry has had memoirs, devotionals, and academic studies, but it has not had a comprehensive practical handbook written by a credentialed pastor from inside a working prison ministry that he himself ran for more than five years. The author's story—an American-born Reformed Baptist pastor with Italian citizenship, imprisoned in Chile for self-defense during a Communist-led riot, who sustained 865 sermons or lectures and a daily feeding program from a cell block—provides the narrative spine. The book's structure provides the practical content. The ecumenical reach allows it to operate in Catholic-majority Italy, Reformed and evangelical North America, Pentecostal-heavy Latin America, and the secularizing prisons of Northern Europe. The complete manuscript is available in English, Spanish, and Italian. Sample chapters or the full text will be sent on request. Respectfully submitted, Dr. John M. Cobin Viña del Mar, Chile policyofliberty.com

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