

# AMBASSADORS OF RECONCILIATION MINISTRIES



*Life is messy, but Jesus gives hope  
to all who need to be set free  
behind bars of steel  
and walls of bitterness.*

## May Newsletter 2013

### Next Jail Visitation Orientation Coming Up May 28<sup>th</sup>!



Every Thursday evening, a group of God's faithful show up at the Butte County Jail to carry the encouragement of the Word of God to inmates who want to hear what God has to say to them. Sometimes we have enough "ministers" to send one to each of the fifteen men's pods (cell blocks), but too often there aren't enough gospel visitors to go around. It breaks my heart to know that there are men who were counting on hearing from God through a jail ministry visitor, who will not see one this week. They are not told why; all they know is that nobody showed up for them this week.

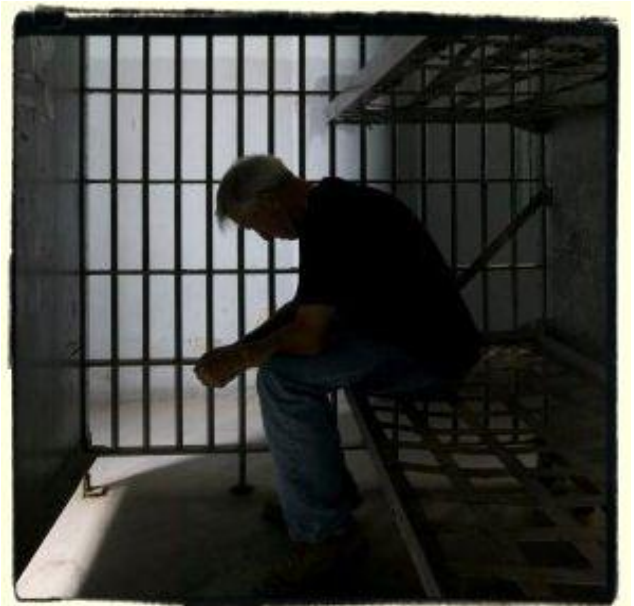
The women's cell blocks are set up differently, with fewer inmates in a group, but the groups are separated from each other, and from the women visitors, by bars. This makes it

harder to gather for a study together. It also means that the women who visit have to stand the whole two hours, while they talk and pray with inmates who come forward one or two at a time in their small cell blocks.

The bottom line is, we don't have enough visitors, men or women, to meet with everyone who wants to hear from God. If you have Thursday evening free, you could join us to bring the gospel to people who need to hear it. If you've read any of our newsletters, you know the kind of transformation that God brings into people's lives when someone cares enough to speak God's truth from their heart. If God is nudging your heart, please give me a call or an email. I would be glad to talk to you about what jail visiting is all about. I can get you an application, and the next orientation is the 28<sup>th</sup> of this month! No time to waste! The administrative Sergeant puts on the Jail Orientation, and it is mandatory before anyone can become a jail ministry visitor. They are only held two or three times a year, so if you're interested, don't miss it.

### Inmate Counseling

The Butte County Jail provides an environment where many men and women come to understand their need for God, and many of those make decisions to follow Jesus Christ, but the opportunity to grow and be disciplined by a more mature brother or sister is often scarce, especially for those in solitary confinement. Too often, such



Ministry to the Butte County Jail — inmates, families and staff

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new believers wither spiritually under the harsh conditions of jail life, or else find themselves discharged with inadequate preparation and community connection to continue their walk with Christ on the outside. Recidivism and fruitlessness are so common as to be proverbial, with many onlookers rejecting the validity of those conversions because the inmates relapse so often. But the problem is not the sincerity of their conversion, but the lack of follow-up in discipleship, helping them grow in their Christian walk.

The general public can only visit inmates in the glass visiting area on weekends, but licensed ministers and certified counselors are allowed to visit every day, until 9 pm. The jail is looking for any positive effect on an inmate's attitude, behavior, and chance for success on the outside. Now, you may not be a licensed minister, but ARM can train and certify you as a **Life-Skills Counselor**, to work with inmates one-on-one, studying through the Navigators' *Design for Discipleship* series with them. The series provides 42 weekly sessions, and the counselor and counselee may choose to spend more time on particular subjects, especially areas that directly impact the inmate's life and future – areas like anger, money, sexuality, work, honesty, authority, and family relationships. You would only need to commit to one hour per week with the inmate, and you would be securely behind the glass visiting window (no reason to be intimidated). Please pray about whether God would wish to use you in this way, or perhaps to provide materials for a counselor or an inmate. Materials for the whole 42-week course for one counselor and counselee costs \$115.59, or \$2.75 per week. The impact you would have on the inmate's life would be eternal!

## Happy Belated Birthday

I missed it last newsletter – ARM was incorporated just a year ago last month, on April 3, 2012. In the past year, inmates have been saved and discipled, seeds have been planted, and we have gotten to watch God at work in their lives and ours. What a privilege! We were granted our tax exempt status from the IRS in what I understand to be an unprecedentedly fast approval. Now, what great things is God planning among us this year?



## Prayer Requests:

- Pray for counselors and donors for curriculum to step forward to bring the inmate Life Skills Counseling program into action in people's lives soon.
- Pray for more visitors to come forward to minister to the inmates on Thursday evenings, and that they would submit their applications by May 21<sup>st</sup>, in time for the orientation May 28<sup>th</sup>. Pray that more of those already cleared would resume coming on Thursdays. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will raise up workers, teachers, mentors, pray-ers, helpers, and givers in this new year. Pray for churches and Christians in Butte County to hear of the need, and rise to the call of our Savior.
- Please pray that God would bring healing to Ian as he struggles with shingles. Pray that he would be able quickly to return to ministry in the jail and the community.

Thank you for your prayers, your help, and your encouragement. May the God of new life and new direction work among us together to bring new life to many inmates and families in Butte County! I'm excited, watching what God is doing, and anticipating what He is about to do!

Ian and Roxanne Carlisle

