

# 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.

## Where Is Our hope?

April 2017 Newsletter

Spring is sprung. The sun is shining (off & on). The days are warming. God is working His beautiful transformation, bringing life again from the death of winter. He has answered our prayers for rain, and He has answered our prayers for protection from too much rain! He has seen our fallenness, our need, our death, and His answer was Easter, God with us, God suffering with us and for us, God dying and rising again for us, carrying us along with Him from death to resurrection! Jesus comes to us in the midst of our suffering and despair, and opens the door to our transformation!

We have seen that death, suffering, and fear over these last few months, on many fronts. As we wrapped up a contentious election year, one survey found that a significant block of respondents preferred that our planet be struck by a killer asteroid, than that either of the two presidential choices step into office! More recently, we have seen the Oroville Dam spillway, and the whole hillside around it, broken up and washed downstream, by an overflow that threatened massive destruction and loss of life downstream. Some 188,000 people (including me and my family!) evacuated the lower levels of Oroville, Gridley, and Marysville. North Korea threatens nuclear war, and ISIS continues to strike around the world. Closer to home, I know two men who are again stuck in addiction, two more who are back in jail after a fall, and many more who wonder if they will ever be really free from that battle. Families suffer, and the struggle continues.

Yet, we have the promise of God that **“in all these things we are more than conquerors.”** Rom 8:37

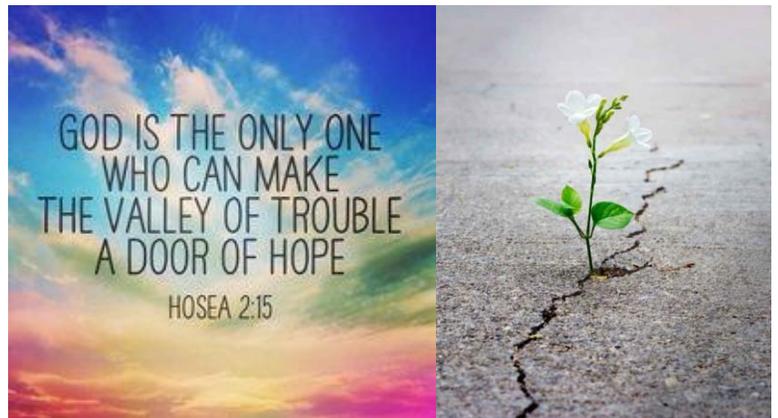
I think of an inmate who was on the run, but called me for support, to accompany him as he turned himself in. Jesus gave him the strength to face the only path to legal stability for himself and his family. He is out now, and working with a local church to develop a *Celebrate Recovery* program, to help others who are struggling with addiction as he has.

Another inmate, who grew up in the foster care system without ever knowing a stable family, listened from a distance for over a year as the Thursday ministers came into his pod. Finally, he decided to take God at His Word, leave his pride and violence behind, and give his heart and life to Jesus. He was baptized in the jail. Today he is being mentored weekly by one of ARM's Certified Jail Ministers; he is leading others in his pod to study, pray, and grow in faith; and he is looking forward to a positive life on the outside that helps those around him and brings glory to the God he now serves. He told me the deciding factor for him was having someone “through whom I can see Jesus.” Today, he wants to be that kind of person to others!

One young man is leading ten inmates in his pod in a daily study and prayer time, and training another to take his place when he leaves for prison soon. They are praying they both end up at the same prison, so they can lead a large group together there, with study Bibles and tools that you have provided them through your donations to ARM!

Several former inmates at a local Christian transition ministry were able to testify to the hope that Jesus fulfills in the lives of those who commit their way to Him, as I took them to the United Evangelistic Fellowship Jail Ministry conference in Sacramento. The room was full of shouts and applause as Jesus got the glory for delivering lives which once knew no hope.

**Thank You, Jesus, for doing what only you can do, for giving hope to the hopeless, setting captives free!**



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**Dear friends, do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you. <sup>13</sup> But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed... So then, those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good.** **1 Peter 4:12-19**

## So what can I do?

**First**, I would ask, are you living that life of hope and dependence on God that Jesus calls us to in His Word? This is the foundation for a life of victory and obedience.

**Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you... Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.** **James 4:7-10**

**Second**, only God can give hope of deliverance and transformation, but He often chooses to use one of *us* who have given ourselves to His service, someone *“through whom I can see Jesus.”* Our hands can deliver the words of God that create hope, and nurture the new life that only Christ can plant! You can volunteer to mentor an inmate, visit a pod, help a family, write an inmate in prison, donate needed funds to provide study Bibles and discipleship materials, and support us as home missionaries, as we visit inmates and challenge God's people across Butte County to rise up and fulfill Jesus' Great Commission in our Butte County Jail!

## Prayer Requests:

- Praise God for His work in the hearts of inmates! Only He can transform sinners like us into His children!
- Praise God for those who have expressed interest in joining our Certified Jail Ministers, as they disciple inmates on the glass weekly, and to show them that someone cares about them. Please pray that God would confirm His call in their hearts, and raise up more of them.
- Pray for inmates struggling stay clean from the drugs that Satan uses to destroy their lives, their families, and their spiritual victory. It's a war! Pray for strength, courage, faith, and perseverance!
- Pray for God to raise up board members who will work to help ARM, guide it, and listen to His voice.
- Pray for God to bring Butte County churches alongside us to reach out to “the least of these, my brothers.”
- Pray for continued donations of Christian books, to help guide those who are spiritual seekers, and those who want to grow in Christ. Pray for continued spiritual revival in the jail!
- Praise God for our donors, who make this faith venture possible. “We thank God on every remembrance of you.” And pray that God would raise up more of them, so that His work can continue.

Bless you all as you serve Him and walk according to His ways!

*Jan and Roxanne Carlisle*

