

# 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.*

## July 2015 Newsletter

### Pray for Leaders!

As I visit the cell pods in the Butte County Jail, I am always looking for individuals whom the Lord may be able to use in leadership in that pod. I encourage the guys who come together to **be the church** in their pod, to reflect Jesus' words, deeds and character to each other



and to the rest of the pod. Afterward, I often ask if they are meeting together during the week for Bible study & prayer. When they say "yes," I arrange to visit the leader to see if I can provide any help, a concordance or some Bible study guides, as well as books on issues they are struggling with. When they say "no," I usually look around the group and ask, "If someone were to lead a study here, who would it be?" Most often, they all turn and point to one guy with a surprised look on his face. The ability to lead, and sincerity of faith, are qualities we readily recognize in others, often even before they do themselves. I then explain that I'm not looking for an expert with all the answers, but just someone who is willing to go around and say, "Hey, come on, let's do this!" I promise to equip them with a study Bible and a concordance, and study guides on topics they want to explore, and to meet with them to talk about how it's going, and provide coaching where it's needed. When someone asks a question they don't know how to answer, they can check the helps in the study Bible, or look for the answer in the concordance, or request a visit from me.

Now, these are men and women who have struggles of their own, and are often new in the faith, or just recently returned to it. These shepherds need the prayers of many on the outside who care about the growth of the kingdom of God in the Butte County Jail. They are susceptible to the same weaknesses and temptations that got them in jail in the first place, and new ones raised by their visibility in leadership. While there are many things one could pray for, here are four straightforward Scriptural categories to guide your prayers for them, and for me, too:

### **1. Pray for spiritual and physical protection from the world, the flesh and the Devil.**

They face the reality of the weakness of the flesh, the assaults of the world and the rage of the devil. When leaders fall back into sinful practices, or fail to root them out when God brings them up, they bring disgrace to the name of Christ. We should pray for protection for (and reconciliation with) their families, so they can testify to God's power in their lives, and not fall prey to the world, the flesh or the Devil.

### **2. Pray for doors to be opened.**

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul asked the church to be praying "that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains" (Col. 4:3). The success of the spread of the gospel is dependent in part on the prayers of the people of God. In this way, the church shares in the gospel ministry with the

pod leader, every time they open the Word to a group of eager, or maybe just curious, inmates. They have stepped forward in obedience to God's unique calling to encourage and facilitate prayer, study, and compassionate service in a very hostile setting. As we pray, the Holy Spirit opens new hearts to hear His Word.

### 3. Pray for boldness and power to present the gospel.

We should pray, too, that these leaders would experience Spirit-inspired boldness. Paul asked the church in Ephesus to pray for him "that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel" (Eph. 6:19). Spurgeon often referred to the hundreds of people downstairs praying for God's blessings on the service and on Spurgeon's preaching, as the church's heater plant (boiler room). He considered the prayers of these saints to be the source of power in his preaching! You can be that source of power for these pod leaders!

**Pray for me, too! Ask God to give me the right words so I can boldly explain God's mysterious plan...I am in chains now, still preaching this message as God's ambassador. So, pray that I will keep on speaking boldly for him, as I should.** Eph. 6:19-20 (NLT)

### 4. Pray for a spirit of wisdom and understanding.

One of the most pressing needs for anyone who steps forward in ministry leadership is the wisdom to know when to confront, when to mediate, and to discern the particular needs of their people. Especially in the jail, the leader is daily faced with unique challenges for which they desperately need the wisdom of Christ. It is said of Jesus that "the Spirit of wisdom and knowledge, and of counsel and might" was upon Him (Is. 11:2). The servants of Christ need that same Spirit as they represent Him in word and action, living out an example of how Jesus can transform a life once lived for the flesh. We bless many in their pods as we call down wisdom from heaven upon them.

## Prayer Requests:

- Praise God for another Certified Jail Minister stepping forward, preparing to disciple an inmate once a week in the jail. Thank God for His transformation in the lives of these volunteers, and in the inmates they serve, and pray that He would raise up many more committed CJM's to carry His Word into the lives of new believers. Perhaps God is speaking to your heart, or to someone you know? Let your churches know! Call me!
- Praise God for a jail orientation date – Wednesday, August 19! This is the first one since February of 2014, and we don't know when the next one might be. If God is calling you to visit the jail with us on Thursday evenings, call me, email me, let me know! Pray for those who come, and whether you might be one of them!
- Praise God for the donation of 35 new *Life Application Study Bibles* for leaders in the pods! Please pray that God would raise up more inmate leaders, and provide materials to equip them. Pray for continued donations of Christian books, to help guide those who want to grow in Christ, or are just seeking. Pray for revival!
- Pray also for wisdom and workers to expand into the Juvenile Hall, and funds to make it all possible.

We pray that God would bless you all, and use you, too, for His glory!

*Jan and Roxanne  
Carlisle*

