



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

August Newsletter 2013

Certified Jail Ministers



**“I used to be a
hopeless dope fiend.
Now I am a
dopeless **hope** fiend!”**

- A BCJ inmate whose life
has been changed by the
hope of Jesus!

ARM is ready to begin pairing inmates with **CJM's** (Certified Jail Ministers), and I can hardly wait! We have the hope that can only come from the God of hope, through Jesus Christ, and He wants us to share it with others.

Psalm 25:3–5 (NIV84) — No one whose **hope** is in you will ever be put to shame... Show me your ways, O LORD, teach me your paths; guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my **hope** is in you all day long.

Romans 5:2–5 (NIV84) — We rejoice in the **hope** of the glory of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, **hope**. And **hope** does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

ARM can train and equip you as a **CJM**, and provide the Jail with the certification they require for you to work with inmates one-on-one, studying through the Navigators' *Design for Discipleship* series with them. The series provides 42 weekly sessions, although 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). You can schedule your visits any time that fits into your week, 8 am – 9 pm. Please pray about whether God would wish to use you in this way, or perhaps to provide materials for a counselor or an inmate. NavPress graciously provides any materials we intend to give away at 58% off retail, which brings the cost of curriculum for 10 inmate/mentor pairs down to \$631.10. That is \$33.72 to set up each Jail Minister (80¢ / week including a leader guide), plus \$29.39 (70¢ / week) for each inmate who finishes the series. The impact on the inmate's life would be eternal!

New Jail Visitation Volunteers

On May 28th, a new crop of about fourteen Thursday evening jail visitation volunteers graduated, a welcome help for those of us going in to share Jesus' good news of hope among inmates eager for an encouraging word and a caring touch. We still haven't seen any of the new faces who needed security clearances. Please pray for quick processing, so they can begin joining us this summer. 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.

A Transformed Life

I spoke recently to an inmate who experienced this grace in a deep and dramatic way. He had grown up in church, and had never expected to find himself behind bars. But as he wandered off into parties and alcohol, before he knew it, the fun had worn off and his addiction was in control. I remember the first time I visited him, at his mother's tearful request. He was a miserable, scared kid. He hadn't slept in days, afraid that if he shut his eyes at night, his life would be ended by an angry inmate with a makeshift "shiv."

I reminded him about Jesus' promise of peace and protection for all who seek and serve Him, and prayed with him. At first he couldn't believe those promises could apply in his circumstances. His hopes and plans for life had been destroyed by this ugly new reality. But slowly, he began to acknowledge that he needed God's help, began turning to the Bible and prayer, and found that his Heavenly Father was there, ready to talk to him, ready to receive him through Jesus, just as the Word says. He began growing and encouraging other inmates, praying and studying with them, and becoming a spiritual leader in his cell block.

And last week, months after our first visit, he told me that, whatever happens, his life belongs to Jesus, and he knows that God has a bright and productive future for him in service to the kingdom of God. His mother and father both expressed their gratitude to God, and to those who have visited their son in His name. He is one of many who have found real freedom and eternal purpose in our Butte County Jail. Jesus is still changing lives in Butte County and across the world! Amen!

Prayer Requests:

- Pray for counselors and donors to step forward to bring the inmate Certified Jail Ministers program into action in people's lives this month.
- Pray that the new jail visitor applicants would be quickly screened and cleared to begin coming into the jail with us.
- Pray that the Lord of the harvest will raise up workers, teachers, mentors, pray-ers, helpers, and givers. Pray for life transformation in inmates, volunteers, Butte County churches, and our neighborhoods, as the hope of Jesus does its work wherever it is heard and experienced.

Thank you for your prayers, your help, and your encouragement.

Ian and Roxanne Carlisle

