



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

March Newsletter 2015

Changed Lives, New Beginnings!

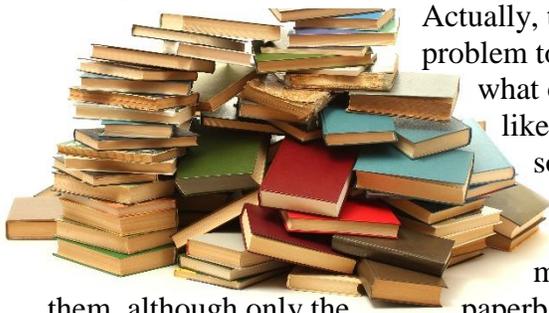
Have you seen new buds bursting out of what seemed like dead branches lately? Spring is a reminder that God is in the business of creating new life! And what is true in the green world of springtime, is also true in the spiritual world as well. New life springs up in the most unlikely places. Yet, life brings forth life. Flowers bloom where life lay dormant. Seeds sprout where they have dropped from living plants. Spiritual seeds sprout too, where imperfect people transformed by the living God drop the seeds of His Word. **Changed people change people.** Yet, it is not us, but the Spirit of God Who effects the change. We go where God has called us, we are faithful to listen and follow His lead, and then we watch as God transforms human hearts before our wondering eyes. We cannot convict a sinner of their failure before God, or their need for a Savior, but He can, and He does bring His salvation into souls through our proclamation of His powerful, living and active Word. He heals marriages, reconciles families, and plants His peace in newly reborn life. When we live faithfully, God uses our words and witness in ways we might never imagine.

As a matter of fact, His appointments are sometimes disguised as failure or inconvenience in our eyes. I visited the jail lobby after church one Sunday to meet an inmate's girlfriend. He had asked that I contact her and give her a Bible. She agreed, but never showed. Meanwhile, I had a serendipitous opportunity to speak with a first year college student who spent the night in jail for public intoxication. He was happy to be out, but God was working in his life. He had grown up in the church, and felt very embarrassed to have been arrested. He had never dreamed *he* would ever experience the inside of a jail. He had let the Christianity of his upbringing lapse, and, while we waited for his friends to come from Chico to pick him up, we had opportunity to talk. I asked about his situation, and he shared his circumstances. Then he asked what I was doing there, dressed for church and looking significantly out of place. I told him of my own testimony, and he identified with my spiritual journey. I spoke of this ministry and some of the stories of transformed lives I have seen, and he was struck with wonder at the power of God's work in people who had lost all hope in this life. He said his father had spoken of things like this, but he had never seen it or experienced it himself. But now, it was much closer to his circumstances, and God was opening his heart to the powerful reality of His presence and active work in people's lives. I offered him the Bible I had brought with me, and he promised to read it, for sure! When his friends arrived, he introduced me to them with enthusiasm, and I saw him leave a very different person than when I found him. Please pray for this student, and for those his newly refound faith will impact at his school. Praise God for His divine appointments!

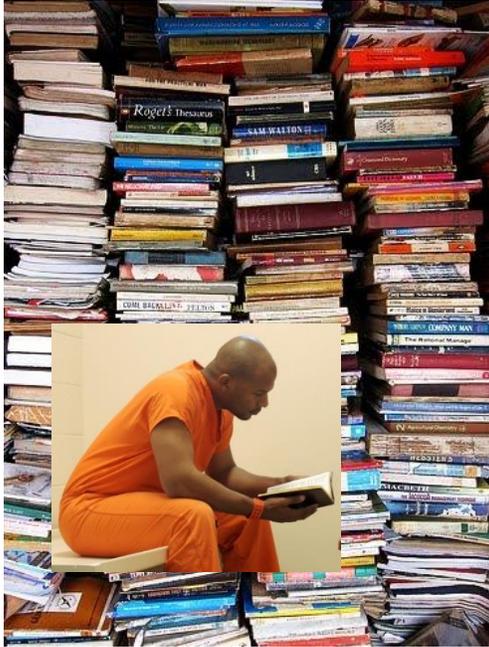


"God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose!"

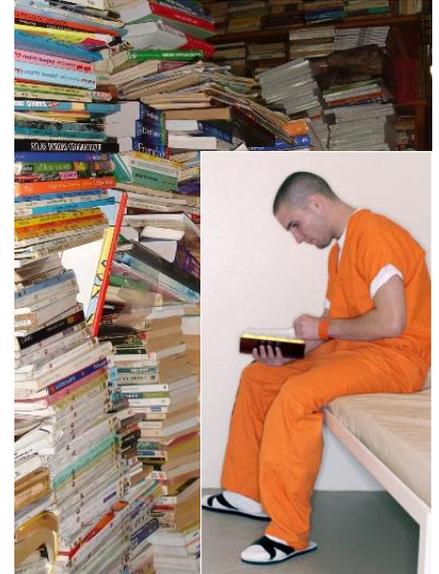
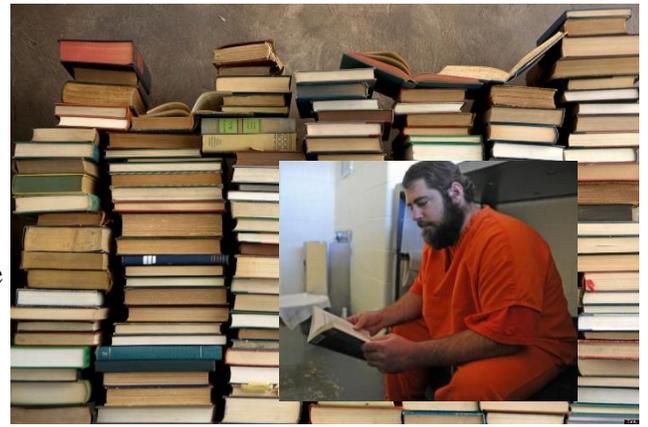
Help! We're drowning in books!



Actually, this is a wonderful problem to have! This really is what our living room looks like, as we continue sorting some 5,000 books we have had donated to ARM in the last few months. We make good use of all of them, although only the paperbacks are allowed into the jail. Hardbacks are being passed on to recovery houses and the Oroville Rescue Mission.



Advanced textbooks are given to a Bible college that is starting in a local church. Children's books are donated to a ministry that reaches out to kids in south Oroville neighborhoods. Books that are not Christian in nature are given to the Salvation Army, to be sold to fund their excellent relief and recovery ministries. Our goal, of course, is to foster insight into what the Bible teaches, and how it applies to our lives. We provide books to inmates, releasees, their families, and then to the whole body of Christ in Butte County. I have been delivering them to the cell pods each Thursday, and they scoop them up eagerly every visit. Many have come to faith in Jesus, and are eager for anything that will help them grow. For them, these books provide access to the wisdom of



experienced Christian teachers on topics they are wrestling with personally. Others are not committed spiritually, but they just want something to pass the time. If we can provide Christian books to plant the seed of faith in the back of their minds, then God will use that when the time is right! Once read by one inmate, they are passed around to others who want to read them, so they keep on giving! Thanks to all who made this possible!

Prayer Requests:

- Praise God for more Certified Jail Ministers stepping forward, discipling inmates once a week in the jail. Thank God for His transformation in their lives and in the inmates they serve, and pray that He would raise up many more to carry His Word into the lives of new believers. Perhaps God is speaking to your heart? Call me!
- Praise God for the opportunity to help a released inmate purchase a work wardrobe to help her get a sales job. Thank you for a compassionate donor with that goal in mind!
- Please pray for continued donations of Christian books, study Bibles, and concordances for inmates who lead in their pods. 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!

Tan and Roxanne Carlisle

