



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

## November/December Newsletter 2013

### Merry Christmas from ARM, and God's blessing on your 2014!

I pray that this newsletter finds you well, and following hard after God's will for your life. After all, that's where the excitement is! This has been a busy and fruitful year for us at ARM. There have been two new ventures that have seen their debut in 2013. The first is the launching of our...

#### 1. Certified Jail Ministers

The county has no mentoring program for inmates, as they do for ankle bracelet releasees. In 2013, ARM began pairing inmates with **Certified Jail Ministers**, and I am excited to tell you that we have five pairs meeting already, and more going through the interview and training process! I look forward to many more of God's people stepping forward in 2014 to share Christ's riches with an inmate who is eager to grow in their faith! The second is...



#### 2. Compassion Ministry to Inmate Families



Although it has long been my dream to connect volunteers with needy inmate families, it wasn't until this September that we were able to see the first delivery of groceries arrive at a family's home. The smiles of gratitude were huge, as they helped unload the food. I look forward to seeing a network of churches and individuals who stand ready in 2014 to respond to needs of food, child care, home repair, transportation, or just the comfort and encouragement of a listening ear.



#### Community Impact Mentoring



December 3<sup>rd</sup> the Mentoring committee and the Butte County Sheriff's Office hosted a holiday celebration commemorating our second year of connecting community mentors with ankle bracelet releasees. It was a moving time, as we heard testimony after testimony about God's work in the hearts of mentors and mentees in 2013. One mother stood to say how grateful she was to have her two sons and her brother, all clean and sober, here with her that evening. A mentee recounted how he had lost his wife just days before last year's Thanksgiving celebration. In spite of her death and the pain in his life, he was now celebrating just over a year clean and sober! Only Jesus could accomplish these kinds of miracles in people's lives!

## Thursday Evening Jail Visitation – Join us!

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 and women 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. BUT, in just over a month, you will have an opportunity to change that. Wednesday, February 5, at 7 pm, Admin. Sgt. Brian Meyer will be offering the jail visitation orientation, which, along with a thorough background check, qualifies you to visit inmates in the jail with us. 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 you can clear your schedule on Thursday evening, you could join us to bring the gospel to people who need to hear it. 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 you can even visit once first to see what it's like! Please pray about whether God would wish to use you in this way. Don't miss it. The impact on the inmates' lives, and on yours, would be eternal!

## Angel Tree Deliveries to Inmates' Families

Angel Tree is a ministry of Prison Fellowship, through which they connect state and federal prison inmates with people in churches who provide Christmas presents for the inmates' children. Many would have no connection with their dad or mom at Christmas time, and maybe very little Christmas at all, if not for this wonderful ministry. As I delivered some of the presents I signed up for in my home church, I found that the inmate was one I had opportunity to get to know while he was here at the Butte County Jail. I was able to tell the family that I knew their father, and was glad I could deliver these gifts for him.



County jail used to keep inmates with less than a year sentence, but now in California, inmates can serve up to ten years in the county jail (or county prison, as it is now called). So, because Angel Tree does not work with county jails, I would like to see churches in Butte County step up to provide the same kind of service for inmates who are serving long sentences right here. Pray with me, as I seek God's will and talk to churches about this!

## Christmas Party in the Jail

We brought gifts of candy, Christmas cards, and a Christmas tract (including a "Get Out of Hell Free" card), all in paper bags decorated by students at a local Christian school. I remember one burly, tattooed inmate with tears running down his cheeks, gazing at the paper bag. He said, "If my daughter had drawn this for me, it would have looked a lot like this!" I appreciate the jail administrators allowing us to bring these otherwise forbidden treats once a year, for all the inmates. It is a small thing that touches the hearts of the inmates, and we pray that Jesus will use this gesture to draw some of them.



## Prayer Requests:

- Praise God for disciplers who have stepped forward to bring the Certified Jail Ministers program into action in 2013. Pray for inmates, and volunteers as they establish relationships with their inmate mentees, and pray that the Lord of the harvest will raise up workers, visitors, mentors, pray-ers, and givers to bring the gospel to prisoners. Pray for churches and Christians in Butte County to hear of the need, and rise to Jesus' call.
- Thanks so much for all of your prayers for my physical health in the last few months! Please don't stop praying – for health and for our finances, too.

May the God of new life and new direction work among us together to bring new life in this New Year to you, and to many inmates and their families in Butte County in 2014! We're excited to see what God is doing through us working together! We serve a great God - truly

**God-with-us!**

Ian and Roxanne Carlisle

