



Missionary Evangelism to Corrections

Sharing the gospel & Christ's love

Year End Review and Praises

- 80-84 Church Services, Bible Studies, Individual Spiritual Counseling or Topical Outreach classes ministering to
- Approximately 7-800 attending these-counts include individuals who came to more than one meeting)
- 40 Reentry meetings
- 86 letter to inmates
- 27 new volunteers began with MEC
- 1 new mentor
- 36 prayer letters averaging 7-8 pages or 120 requests each
- Cross roads Library 870 books are being kept at a volunteers home or in the office until they can be distributed.
- 500 Daily Breads during the year, plus 200-300 Christmas and Easter Daily Breads distributed
- 400 Bibles given out this year

Your Prayers Can Impact Your Community

- * Increased security and training for all volunteers increases the load on administration
- * Continued communication with jail staff and administration to keep the relationships current. As staff in the jails change, as it does continually, the impact on volunteers can be drastic in decreasing volunteer time or in encouraging them.

December 31, 2016 Newsletter

MEC Spotlight

Christmas Angels at the Sherburne County Jail.

I was in jail for the first (and hopefully only) time in my life. I had wanted to die, but instead I was alive and in jail. I was severely depressed and spent a lot of my time crying. I was surrounded by other women – all of them in there for some crime they had committed. I was too depressed to be scared. I was surprised by the warmth exhibited by some of the ladies. They welcomed and nurtured me – this was not how I pictured Jail.

I committed my crime in December and had the holidays to look forward to in jail. One of the things I found surprising is that you need money in jail. They have a canteen system where inmates can buy “luxury” items if they have money on their books.” I had no money on mine and no likelihood of getting any. I resigned myself to life without coffee.



Most of the women in the jail had

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Problem Thinking and the Lord's Healing

What Are We Open To?

One of the most frustrating aspects of working with people is when you can see all of the blessings that are there

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December Highlights

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Pray from pg. 1

Please Pray

- * Contributions and distribution of Bibles and Christian literature
- * Inmates being released to your community
- * Prayers for inmates families
- * Thank You's for volunteers and intercessors – prayers
- * For inmates to be able to get into treatment and with that to desire, pursue and maintain real growth, sobriety, health and recovery.
- * Police officers, Corrections officers, Program Directors, Chaplains, Captains and Undersheriffs
- * The opiate and heroin epidemics in many cities and counties across America
- * Staff who work in the chemical dependency field, their understanding addiction and of God's intervention in people's lives – to have good beliefs about abstinence versus being medicated with addictive substances.

Let us know if you would like a cd of the fall event.

Ministry Friends Shout Out

We know we are not alone in Ministry and each month we acknowledge another ministry that we network with. This months shout out goes to

CRU

<http://uppermidwest.org/>

This international inter-denominational organization says -We want every student and faculty across the Upper Midwest Region to know someone who loves Jesus and lives like it. We do this by sharing about Jesus ... discipling believers to grow in their faith, and preparing students to share the gospel on campus, with their families, and for a lifetime wherever God brings them . They do homeless care kits . I chose them this month because two of their staff volunteer for MEC

Spotlight from pg. 1 True Christmas Story

money on their books from family or friends. As Christmas approached a group of women decided to have a gift exchange. This was nothing I could participate in since I had nothing to give.

The night this group assembled in a circle to exchange their gifts I was surprised to be approached by a woman with a large bag. These women had decided to bless two of us who had no funds with some "luxury" items. I was given a large bag with coffee, hot cocoa mix, candy bars, Ramen noodles, shampoo, baby powder, hair conditioner, and other items. I was overwhelmed. I had so many candy bars that I was able to share with others who did not get gifts.

There in jail, with such a bleak outlook, I was blessed by criminals. It felt like they were angels there in the jail. Angels who looked after me when I was so depressed. They encouraged me and brought me to Bible studies, where I heard the song "*Mary Did You Know?*" for the first time. One of the women from Pilot Outreach played her guitar as she and another volunteer sang this song, written by Mark Lowry, with music composed by Buddy Greene. The gifts they gave me touched my heart deeply and I still remember that Christmas, with joy, something I had thought was gone from my life for good.

This happened nine years ago. In those nine years God has worked powerfully in my life healing my depression, giving me an opportunity to work at MEC and providing for me. While in jail, I started listening to KTIS almost nonstop because it kept me sane and helped me to get to know Him better. When I was released from the jail and living in a homeless shelter, I took my earbuds out for a moment. God spoke to my Spirit that He would provide. After six years of small apartment living, growth through therapy, church fellowship, and work, He has provided a condominium.

That Christmas in jail was an epiphany of God's love, care and joy which still continues.

Sandy Hanson

for them if they would choose a certain path but they are not aware of them. They may view your sharing them as trying to manipulate them in a way they do not want to go. Having heard the challenging or negative aspects of a situation has set their mind against it. Inmates may have heard from others who left some of the best programs and are not open to the good that could come to them. Often when they first come in and are very discouraged they are open to certain help and as they are there a few weeks, sober and more stable, they decide they do not need the help.

The topic we discuss today is suggestibility. Why are we sometimes open to what is not good for us and not open to what is best for us? We are all open to some influence and we select which influences we allow to affect us the most. More than one speaker and author has noted that those who have attitudes that differ from what is good for them will find each other in a group. Criminal thinking and addictive thinking is that it is prudent to hide certain information but that they are smart or wise enough not to be fooled by another.

Your feedback can help inmates! This is a series we are hoping to print to give to inmates to help with growth & transformation God provides.

What influences us most is what we think will improve our importance. Sometimes the idea of helping another person will cause us to take poor risks. What we pay attention to will influence us. For criminals listening to and thinking about crimes and what they could have done to make one that failed for another person successful is a problem. It is important for addicts to find meetings where people do not stress their use of substances, but that focus on the activities of recovery.

It is what we focus on and what we learn to trust that we are going to participate in. Checking facts and details of situations gives us more time to think about the whole picture. Realizing we have trusted the wrong values, making choices and doing the work to learn new ones and looking deeper into our motivation can help us avoid pursuing outward possession and display. "The key is the activation of what is already riding within the man." (Youchelson and Samenow, pg. 324)

Ruth Chodniewicz wrote an article in Prison Fellowships Frontline 1-21-11 which outlines for volunteers the importance of true transformation versus Jailhouse religion. She quotes Sam Dye who was the national director of Inner Change Freedom Initiative He "warns that if faith-based volunteers are not careful, they can unknowingly create "spiritual criminals... who wears religious values like an external coat...[that they can] put on and take off at will, ...This...can actually do more harm than good, because it gives the volunteer false joy, and it denies the inmate the chance for a real, life-altering transformation."

If we really seek and cry out for it for "wisdom [it] will enter our heart, and moral knowledge will be attractive to us. Discretion will protect us, understanding will guard us, to deliver us from the way of the wicked, from those speaking perversity, who leave the upright paths." (Prov. 2: 10-13a NET - author put us in there where it said you.) Praying that the Lord Create in us a Clean Heart (Ps 51) can be a good place to start. Jesus talked about praying and doing good deeds in secret and that our Father God will reward us openly (Matt. 5) and He was upset with the Pharisees who "cleaned the outside but not the inside" (Matt. 23 & Luke 11). When we do let God clean the inside of our cups and hearts we can then drink the pure and clean living water (John 4, & 7, Rev. 7) that brings abundance to our lives. Don't let the thief kill, steal and destroy your faith and joy. Ask and follow Jesus who came that we might have abundance of His love in our lives. (John 10) *K. Selby*

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