



Missionary Evangelism To Corrections

Sharing the gospel & Christ's love with those in corrections since 1982



January 31 Newsletter

"I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'"

Jeremiah 29:11

My parents separated when I was 6, and my father was mostly absent due to drug addiction. When I was 7, my mother's new boyfriend, who was verbally & physically abusive, came to live with us. One of my earliest memories is of him punching her in the face through a glass screen door.

After my mother got out of this relationship, we started attending church. When I was 9, I was molested 3 times by different boys, one being the youth pastor's son. Being under the impression that "these things just happen", I never thought twice about it. This led me to begin acting out with boys. I lost my virginity when I was 12, and when I was 14, I became pregnant and lost the baby.

My mother married my stepfather who had been in and out of the prison system since he was 18. My stepfather had knowledge about the Bible, and Jesus that he had learned while incarcerated. People came to teach him the gospel, which got passed down to my mother and me.

In 10th grade I met the man who would eventually become my husband. He was 21 and I, 15. We married 3 yrs. later. We both used pornography frequently. After a long struggle of infertility, we had a baby. A year later, we took in my husbands' nephew and when my stepmother passed away, my 13 yr. old half-sister. With two full-time jobs and the level of stress at home, my husband's angry outbursts began to include physical abuse. We decided to have an open marriage. We were out of control in feeding our sexual appetites, all in the name of making our marriage better. My husband becomes angrier, blowing up at the kids and throwing things around our house. 2007 brought a separation. Life began spiraling out of control. I was drinking heavily, started seeing a guy that was no good for me, had a friend who stole from me, my house went into foreclosure, and I became depressed.

My children's daycare lady told me I needed Christ and took me to church where I finally let God into my heart again. A few days later the Lord told me to go back to my husband. Reluctantly I did, and the Lord was faithful, in 7 days, my husband and I were back together, we got our house back and then my husband gave his life to Christ.

I prayed that the Lord would bring new friends into my life that where Christians, and he blessed me with 5 beautiful women who love Jesus and walk together with Him I attended Celebrate Recovery, and eventually began leading a group for women who struggle with sexual integrity and addiction. We have found a church and today, my husband and I are celebrating 12 yrs. of marriage.



Please see *page 2* for **MEC 2013 Goals & Angela's Appeal** If you are on facebook see note on pg 3



1. Prayer Initiative for 15 days of prayer
2. Maintain and increase communication with existing
 - a) prayer supporters
 - b) jail volunteers
 - c) re-entry & mentoring volunteers
 - d) bored members
 - e) supporters
3. Strengthen Re-entry program
4. Recruit, train, place and support volunteers for openings
5. Recruit, train, place and support leader volunteers for re-entry/mentoring program
6. Consider raising support for staff person for re-entry/mentoring

Angela's Appeal

I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to intern with MEC. My Master's Degree is in HR Development, so I have been schooled to design training programs for organizations. When the Lord spoke to my heart about working with those in prison, I dismissed it as not having the time. When I found out I could intern one day a week in the MEC's office, I knew the Lord had orchestrated this.

MEC is doing between 80-90 services a week. The relationships that have been created through this ministry have brought the opportunity for 30 more service openings..... But, what happens after the inmate is released? Many of these inmates have no home to go back to, no employment, no community other than the one that they left. What is to stop them from entering back into the lifestyle that brought them to jail in the first place? Only partway through 2012, MEC has responded to over 70 inmate requests for resources. The need for inmates to connect with Christian resources has fueled the initiative to provide re-entry and mentoring services to inmates prior to their release and upon entering the community.

An initiative like this takes someone to design the training, find the volunteers, train the volunteers, and then monitor the program. In a three-person office, this isn't an easy task. Yet, it was something MEC was passionate about. Providing mentoring and re-entry services makes a difference in both an inmate's life and our world. Statistics show they can reduce recidivism by 70 to 80% -a statistic that's difficult to ignore. Reducing recidivism prevents further incarceration and helps inmates become productive citizens. It means a safer world and a reduction in tax dollars for us who pay them.

MEC has gathered the resources. We have seen many come into existence and grow. **How can inmates become aware of these resources that will meet these real needs, if no one tells them?** This is where a re-entry volunteer comes in. They meet with soon-to-be released inmates to determine their needs, then, the volunteer does the footwork of researching resources and compiling them and then meeting again with the inmate to discuss resources and re-entry goals. Mentors meet weekly for a year. Individuals can train for either one or both roles.

Cheryl Turrito, has begun working in the front lines with MEC to bring re-entry services to Chisago County and the Roseville VOA. Cheryl has helped over 50 inmates re-enter the community. (Oct 2012) Some have found secure jobs in a difficult market. She has taught them how to negotiate for housing, despite holding a criminal history. Many have found church homes and educational programs. These inmates are being given the opportunity to start over again. Brad Engelbrekt and Jim Contois

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have provided some help. (see Dec 2012 newsletter) **MEC January 31 Newsletter Pg 3**
Some inmates are blown away by someone taking the time to care about them. It is clear that inmates are looking to people to connect with, and it can take time to build the relationship with the inmate. This relationship brings credibility and trust, and opens the door for the gospel of Jesus Christ to be shared. This takes time, commitment, and patience to help someone start their life over again. It's about teaching that ex-inmate practical life skills . It's about being a friend - a healthy friend - and really listening to them to build a foundation of trust. Most importantly, it's about communicating Christ's love to people who may never have seen the love of God before.

I learned about a man who was addicted to methamphetamines. He became sober in jail and then heard the gospel for the very first time. He did not know where he was going to live, but when he received re-entry services, he was able to find housing after he was released and got connected to a church family. Now, is living a sober life and he leads Bible study . Another story is of a large black man who hated white people. After talking with her about re-entry needs, he now greets her with appreciation.

Could you be a re-entry resource person to motivate inmates, connect them with resources and help them during their transition or a mentor to come alongside recently released inmates for a year or longer. Sometimes, that individual can take on both roles with the same person. Would you like to pray for those who will?

Are you fired up about seeing former and current inmates passionate about the gospel? Do you want to make a long-term difference in someone's life? This volunteer opportunity may be for you.

Facebook Updated

When we created the facebook account, back in January 2012, for MEC we didn't know how to set up the ministry page correctly. If we are facebook friends already, the friend request you responded to in the past is now Karen's personal page. *Please determine* and friend the ministry ([MEC](#)) page and/or personal ([Karen Selby](#)) page that you wish to keep up with. You may need to un-friend the page that you do not want to follow.

Now that everything is straightened out *Friend us* or *like us* on our [Missionary Evangelism to Corrections facebook](#) page to see our [albums](#), read some [testimonies](#) & keep updated on [MEC events](#). We are excited about this new way of connecting with you.!



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