

Fall 2018

# Pacific Youth

## Correctional Ministries

Chaplain Rick Johnson

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### A New Goal

My mom is one of the most loving people alive but my dad was only in my life for about a year. He left us because he felt unworthy and didn't want to mess up our lives. A year or so after he left, my mom remarried the man I now consider my dad.

I did well in school, got my license to drive at age 17, and was working three jobs during my high school years. All this changed the day the police came to my house and arrested me. Juvenile Hall made me feel like I was thrown into a cage. I was in shock and shut down emotionally for three months. One day a Christian staff approached me and began instilling faith in me. At that time I wasn't sure of what I believed. I grew up Catholic but was not practicing my faith. Over the span of a couple weeks we spoke often and I opened up about my life.

I stopped attending Catholic services around a year into my stay at Juvenile Hall. Another staff member started sharing her faith with me and inspired me to go to the Protestant services. Last May I walked into the church service expecting God to speak to me. Chaplain Rick came over to shake my hand and welcome me. I heard the gospel that morning and prayed the salvation prayer. As I was going back to my unit I felt a joy that I had never experienced before.

The next day I hugged the staff that encouraged me to attend. That night I picked up the Bible for the first time and read Matthew and Mark. I remember feeling nervous to tell my mom what happened. Over the phone I told her that I finally know what's going to happen when I die and she was pleased. Every time we speak she asked what I am learning and we talk about some of the questions she is having about the Bible.

I began meeting with Chaplain Rick weekly and completed the discipleship curriculum. Each week I looked forward to these times because I was learning more about what it means to know the Lord. It was also an opportunity to ask the multitude of questions running through my mind. These sessions gave me the strength I needed to take on the rest of the week.

God has used me to encourage several youth in my unit to attend church and bible study. My mom recently sent me a Life

Application Study Bible and I carry it with me most of the day. God has given me a life with meaning and whatever happens regarding my court case will be what he has for me. My long term goal is to one day become a minister.

Josh - Juvenile Hall

Pray that Josh will be tried as a juvenile since his crime occurred over six years ago.

### Task Force Time Line

Northeast of the Well (NEW) is a ministry in Orange County that discipless men and women in recovery. Most of those they work with come from country programs and sober living homes. NEW was awarded a grant last year to start a social enterprise so women in discipleship could be hired. Here is what happened next.

10/24

The NEW Board had asked the executive director (Laura Suk) to gather a task force to help develop a social enterprise and tonight eight of us met for the first time in the Costa Mesa Ayers Inn conference room. My task was to explore the training available through other agencies. Sandra Ayers was the chair person leading the meetings.

11/14

The task force met at the Ayres Inn to report on our assignments and come up with ideas on what social enterprise (business) would be feasible.

1/9

Task force members shared about the visits and tours they had of other organizations. Several ideas and suggestions were put on the table and discussed.

2/6

We were struggling with what type of business to start and I likened what we were doing to the Children of Israel circling Jericho and nothing happening.

3/13

I was told to look into purchasing Bella's Café across from the OC Superior Court in Santa Ana. A co-owner had died and the other owner wanted to sell it but the property was in probate court.

4/3

I was able to meet with the co-owner of Bella's Café and shared the information he gave me about the business. It was more of a lunch counter that would only hire three people but the price was right.

5/29

The owner of Hidden House Coffee in Santa Ana was interested in helping us out and we discussed how we might partner with him.

6/21

I attended a meeting at Mariners Church with those interested in hiring our ladies in their resource center (Thrift Store). The resource center manager was very supportive and an agreement was reached to interview two ladies in the next few days!

9/14

Kelly Hartman was introduced to us as the part-time new hire to oversee the social enterprise. She is a perfect candidate that Laura was referred to after a speaking engagement. We found out that the two ladies were hired at the resource center and were doing very well. One of them was able to detect some dishonesty going on in the store on her first day.

9/31

I had dinner with Laura Suk and her husband and was told the plan is to purchase a large building for the ministry offices and a location for their weekly gatherings. Eventually, some type of business will be created there.

I plan to stay connected to NEW and help out in any way possible.

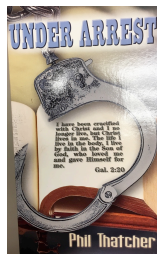
## Getting Off Probation

My name is Frank and I was recently released from the Youth Guidance Center after completing a seven month sentence. My time at YGC allowed me to grow closer to the Lord and changed the way I live. When I got out of YGC, I remembered to call Chaplain Rick to tell him how I was doing. A few days later he invited me to go with him and another friend to the Harvest Crusade. I was unable to get permission from my Probation Officer but Chaplain Rick connected with her a couple hours before he was going to pick me up.

It was a life-changing experience to see so many believers worshipping the Lord in one place. It brought tears to my eyes when hundreds of people responded to the gospel at the end. On our way home, I found out that Chaplain Rick's friend grew up in the same area as I did and shared with me how he eventually had to cut off certain friendships. His story made me realize that no matter how far you fall, you can still get back up.

My grandmother in Texas had taken me to the Harvest Crusade when I was seven and I couldn't wait to get back home to call her. She was excited to hear the news and told me to never stop following the Lord. I went to court two weeks later and the judge took me off probation!

Frank - Buena Park



## Finding a Book

My first couple days of incarceration were strange and stressful. I was angry with myself but wasn't making any plans to change. Thoughts of getting out and justifying my negative behavior took up most of my time.

One day I asked the staff to get a couple books off the shelf. I grabbed a Bible to remind me of my family with no intention of reading it. The book Under Arrest caught my attention and once I opened it I became fascinated with the life story of Phil Thatcher.

Never before had I ever thought about changing my life but when I finished the book, I felt the need to give it a try. I began by reading the Bible and soon after I surrendered myself to the Lord. A month later my mind, attitude, and overall self has changed and I feel like a new person. As long as I have faith in the Lord and put him first, I do not need to worry about my future. He will lead me down the right path.

Kevin - Youth Leadership Academy

Kevin was also recently assigned a mentor with our ministry.



This newsletter contains three testimonies submitted by the youth we serve (with some editing). Thank you for reading it and for your part in keeping me on the mission field full time.

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