

January 31, 2010

Dear Friends,

Haiti's disastrous earthquake dominated January's news. People and gear arrived there in droves, but a coordinated response delayed. Rescue personnel and supply seemed sufficient, but the delivery plan seemed hap-hazard. This happens in towns and cities here as well, teams fan out without much inter-communication. Sometimes the same area gets serviced twice before another area receives help once. Here in Redding, I know of one school that had five churches and agencies, working independently of one another, supplying them with backpacks while other schools nearby had no such support. I am increasingly interested in, and painfully aware of, the fact that the Church needs help to **work smarter instead of harder** at engaging society. Doors are wide open everywhere, especially as county and state funding dries up. All this calls for a fresh, comprehensive look and a *"togethering"* approach. A Kingdom paradigm and a coordinated effort infusing waves of love is needed in this hour.

SIGHTS and SOUNDS of JANUARY

"The kids love you guys!" stated the staffer at Juvenile Hall. Moments before, the supervisor had made it abundantly clear that *"You are making a difference. If anyone makes you feel like you don't belong here, come and talk to me! AND, if you ever feel like a conversation needs a safer spot, I see no reason why we couldn't set aside a room for you to be able to talk without the*



distractions." (Maybe he said this because he noticed that one of the boys had broken down in tears while discussing stuff with one of us at a table.) A female staffer chimed in, *"Yeah, I love to see you all sitting at the table engaging the kids in conversation. Personally, I'm glad when the rainy days keep us inside so you can have more one on one time. It's been awesome."* Our **Project 18 mentoring** is laying some serious groundwork for a smarter exit plan for the juvenile justice system. Getting to know these at-risk youths inside the hall creates a greater likelihood that they connect with us when they get out.

*"Jon, just had to tell you that the **Safe Transitions** lady we furnished a home for last fall came to church last week. She even came forward for prayer and ministry time,"* said the pastor. There is no pressure on those being mentored or sheltered through **SafetyNet's** pilot program with

Women's Refuge to attend church or receive Jesus. His grace simply seems too irresistible to them. Good news!!

We believe that more good news is on its way as **MyWatch** neighbors begin to nurture their thirsty neighborhoods and the Compass Cares senior arm of ministry gets rolling in 2010.

We are a leading edge in community transformation; engaging people, loving on them, valuing and uplifting them right where they're at. It takes all of us faithfully doing our part. Here is what some of our teammates are reporting from their vantage points.

From Deanna, South County Transformation:

After our recent planning meeting with ACCA leaders, liaisons from various churches are planning to offer life skills for the unemployed and underemployed. They will be using the Biblically-based Jobs For Life curriculum (www.jobsforlife.com). What a thrill to see this coming together! We also have a team in the planning stages of offering training and support to mentors - which will be needed for the Jobs For Life program. Youth pastors in the South County are now meeting monthly for breakfast. I love how God is moving in believers' hearts throughout the North State, giving them ideas for connecting, creating synergy, and accelerating the spreading of God's grace into our communities!

From Pam, Grace in Motion

The team was back in action the last Saturday of the month, and what a wonderful day it was. God blessed us by giving us a semi-dry day for hedge trimming and yard work. We were able to bless a single, disabled mother and her little daughter that needed God to show up in a tangible way - and we got to pray for healing for her neighbor!



From Joanne, Compass Cares

The "dust" has settled from our move into a house, now *transformed* into an office. Although we are all tempted to run ahead in starting new programs, I believe it's vital to remain in prayerful waiting as we build a strong foundation for growth and expansion. That's difficult because we're so excited about the vision to meet our community's unmet needs. As I find myself in meetings with public, social and mental health service providers, I can see the open doors to work alongside governmental programs and fill some serious gaps. Many agency representatives seem discouraged as they report current challenges. When I've shared our vision and mission to help mobilize the Church, I see hope re-enter the meeting rooms. How we proceed is critical, so we will keep on praying, seeking and asking God for favor and guidance, as we prepare our foundation and plan for 2010 and beyond.



From Karen, Redding Transformation/WeR1net Assistant

Joanne graciously offered part of the Compass garage to us as office space, and the transformation is almost complete (much quicker than transforming a city!). It has been quite a team effort, and is already facilitating team building. We look forward to having this new tool as we enter into this new decade. We could use a computer and a small copier if anyone has one to donate....

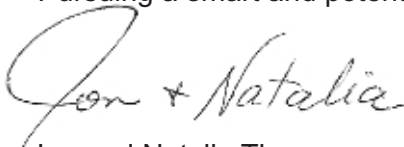
My other fun focus this month has been writing a grant proposal with my husband to survey organizations like ours across the country. In doing the preliminary research, we noticed some trends: the '90s had a "united prayer" focus, then, in the '00s,

individual churches began an increasing outward focus. Could it be that in the '10s we put these together, connecting and mobilizing?

TIME FOR ACTION

Balancing prayer and action is crucial. If Gideon had called a prayer meeting when God said, "Go destroy the altar of Baal," would he have been obeying? And how about the people of God in Exodus; "*As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the LORD... Then the LORD said to Moses, 'Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to move on. Raise your staff and stretch out your hand ...'*" I say it again, the doors are open, time to raise a staff, stretch out a hand and move on in!

Pursuing a smart and potent expansion,


Jon and Natalia Thompson

Let's connect to pray for our cities and region, to worship and be encouraged.

CONNECTING POINT NIGHT OF WORSHIP

Saturday, Feb. 6, 6:33 pm,

2206 Larkspur Lane (Hub City Bible) in Redding, FREE.

Bring some goodies to share for afterwards. Coffee and tea provided.