



"...All day long I have stretched out My hands..."

-Romans 10:21 (God's Word)

As I think back upon the year 2013, one word comes to mind: "opportunity". Some missed, some failed, some taken, some gained, some squandered and some refused but nonetheless opportunity has come knocking. I am in constant awe of the way our Lord weaves His bigger picture into our lives. The above Scripture, when taken in context, speaks of God's heart for disobedient Israel. It speaks of the opportunities He gives Israel time and time again to receive the gift of His Son. It speaks to us of God's character, His patience and His undying love. Listen to this same passage in the Message Bible:

"But haven't there been plenty of opportunities for Israel to listen and understand what's going on? Plenty, I'd say."

Isn't that true of all of mankind? Can we look back at our own lives and remember the divine appointments, the encouragements that came during seasons of adversity, the provisions that arrived at just the right time? We all have these memories; they are fuel for our faith. The past year of 2013 was an amazing year of opportunity for all. We would like to share the good news of those who have chosen to accept God's hand of grace as it stretches out to reach into places that we cannot always access.



JOINING WITH OTHERS:

Two are better than one, because they have a good [more satisfying] reward for their labor; -Ecclesiastes 4:9 (AMP)

We have always referred to this passage for married couples to encourage them to see the advantage of working together. It holds true for the body of Christ when we choose, as ministries, to walk alongside one another. Partnering with others brings a greater advantage to the people of God as we are able to receive the manifold giftings of the many membered body of Christ.

Helping couples walk in covenant love..

We firmly believe in their covenant message. The workshops and seminars they offer have given more opportunity to those we have counseled and supported. They have a unique style and presentation that gets right down to where you are living. The Biblical Truths they present in their workshops are practical, spiritual and life changing when applied faithfully in our daily lives. The resources that they have compiled have been invaluable to others and have greatly assisted us in finding a support base for those who are desperate to see covenant love glue their marriage together permanently. The following are comments from those who have participated in the resources made available through Chris and Carmen:



"... it was one of the stepping stones that helped bring my husband to Jesus. It has shown us that the strength of our marriage with Jesus as the foundation is an important part of raising children who will love Jesus."

"...The Fortified Marriage's Coffee Chat is an environment that creates unique conversation among couples of all different ages and lengths of marriage; my husband and I find this useful to gain wisdom from others. The meeting give us tools to use throughout the month..."

"Fortified Marriage has really helped us make time for each other as a couple again. The studies are helping us get to know and understand each other in ways we haven't before, and most importantly with Jesus at the center."

Helping others find freedom...

Early in the year 2013 we held our grief conference, Beauty for Ashes at Bethel Church in Chandler, Arizona. Right on the heels of that seminar came an opportunity for some of the families we are working with to attend a Victory Weekend conference also held at Bethel Church. The impact of those events was life changing!

- A family we were working with cleared up issues of infidelity from their past and began the year with repentance and a new beginning for their failing marriage.
- The wife of an addict found freedom and healing in bringing the issue to capable individuals who could walk her through the grief, pain, and sorrow of many years of abuse.
- A young single mom who had suffered abandonment issues accepted Christ and began a journey of healing and hope with the Lord.
- Ron, our secretary's son, had his eyes opened and his heart healed at the first event, and accepted Christ at the second event following it with baptism. Most of his children have followed suit and are now walking with the Lord.

It was a blessing to join with Bethel for these events and see fruit that remains for the glory of His kingdom. Thank you to Nicole and Pastors Mike and Julie for providing this opportunity for Jesus Cares.



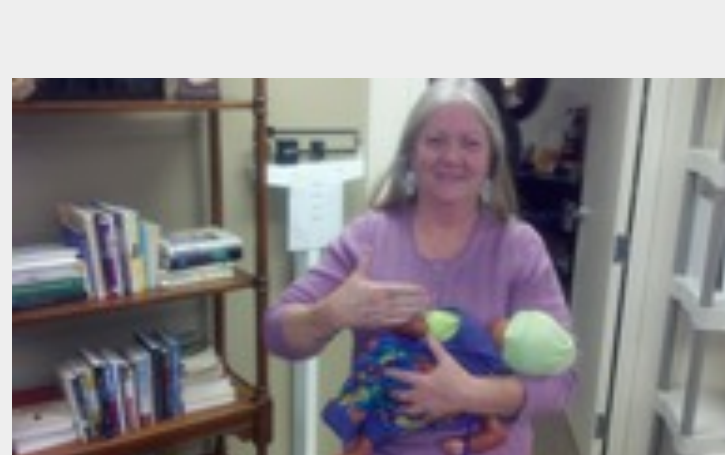
Helping the widow and orphan...

We were so excited to join with John and Kay West in July of 2013 to reach the widows and orphans of Swaziland, Africa. Through God's miraculous provision we were given the opportunity to live, breathe and experience the sights, smells and sounds of this poverty stricken, oppressed nation. From village to village we journeyed to bring the saving message of God's grace. The prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread.." takes on new meaning when shared with those living in a third world country. Thank you to the many hearts that sent us across the miles with their prayers, encouragement and financial assistance.

Grounding others in Truth..

Freedom's Journey, Crossing the Jordan, Lee Strobel's Case for Christ, and Randy Alcorn's Theology of Money are just some of the classes made available in 2013. Teaching the participants of the ministry to read, study and follow God's Word affords them the opportunity to be established in Christ. The greatest counselor is the Holy Spirit. As we teach them to be diligent students of the Word they are able to develop an abiding relationship with Christ and learn to make Jesus their first stop when encountering life's trials.

Thank you to Tim Kufrin for being such an excellent facilitator and teacher in several of these workshops.



Kelley and Linda did a wonderful job teaching childbirth and breastfeeding classes at Chandler Pregnancy Crisis Center in 2013. Their nurturing hearts and knowledgeable minds are a great combination for teaching some practical tips for these moms facing unplanned pregnancies. We are blessed to have these mentors/teachers serve with us as we reach out to the community.



Strengthening the family...

Whether helping a single mom find the confidence to parent her teenage daughter, walking a family through the crisis of an addicted son or daughter, or providing housing for those facing homelessness, we were privileged to walk alongside of those needing crisis intervention this past year of 2013.

God's opportunities come knocking but failure loves to find a place in the hearts of the weary as well. One parent that we assisted speaks of those lurking opportunities:

"There have been multiple opportunities for "problems" but we've actually worked through them -yay! Thank you so much for your help!! I feel a bit ridiculous not knowing how to parent... Your prayers and counsel are invaluable. The Lord is teaching me and breaking me over and over."

An individual housed in the F.I.T. Program shares:

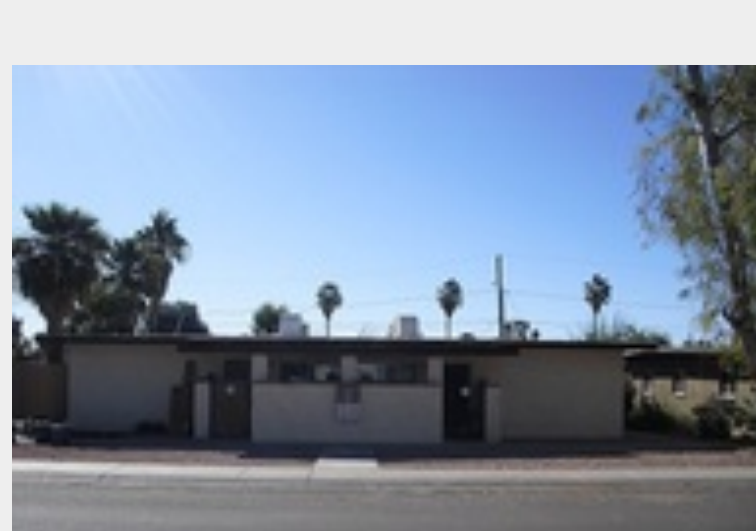
It is a world of new opportunities. Jesus Cares Ministries has opened not just a door for us, but a world that we never thought possible. A place we never thought we would be. Though I thought it was all about doing this or that right, it was never about a list of accomplishments we needed to get done in a certain amount of time, but a guide to finding out who we really are in Christ Jesus."

This message came after I already decided that "opportunity" would be the theme of this newsletter recapping the year 2013! We have seen many tragic circumstances and failures for those who rejected the Lord's outstretched hand, but the victories give us the encouragement to press in. We are continually grateful for the opportunity that our supporters give us to be able to offer studies, counsel, housing, and fellowship to participants of Aftercare, Community Outreach and the F.I.T. Program. It is because of your support that we have the opportunity to be His hands extended.

FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES...

Respite for the weary...

In June of 2013 we had an opportunity to meet with a woman who serves as a counselor for the Women of Character program at America's Keswick in Whiting, New Jersey. This is the oldest rehab in the country having almost a century of experience working with addicts and their families. You can imagine my delight in being able to speak to others with more expertise, skill, and experience than we have. Collaborating with her and others in the local community has led to the possibility of opening a respite for spouses of addicts. It is on the horizon and we would appreciate your prayers as this vision unfolds. Times are perilous and lives are being devalued by the increase in sexual and chemical addiction among individuals in and out of the church. After almost 35 years of seeing the effect of addictions on families we are passionate about seeing how we can help others find beauty from ashes.



F.I.T. Housing opportunity...

We have a two bedroom unit open for a small family at the affordable housing program in Tempe, Arizona. We are accepting applications. Please see our website:

www.jesuscaresministries.org.

Click on "affordable housing" and you will see an application at the bottom of the page. Contact Tom or Doreen if you have any further questions. 480-831-1737.

JESUS CARES

Tom and Doreen