

# ARM Prison Outreach International

**"Ministers' Minute" Volume X Number 12**

**"COMMUNICATING OUR FAITH TO OUR WORLD"**

**#7: "We Must Communicate That Christianity Really Works"**

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Editor's Note: This "MM" is an email sermon, the 12th of 2011 --120th overall-- in a series we are sending as an encouragement to Christians around the world. This is the seventh message in our current series. It is my prayer that this message by my brother, Larry Farthing, will encourage you and honor God. Use it as a devotional, edit it, share it, use it or components of it! May God bless your labors!

-- Rod Farthing, Development Director

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## **ARM QUICK FACTS:**

American Bible Academy Update

**Sept-Oct 2011 Summary**

**1,741 courses were sent to NEW ENROLLEES!**

**2,462 courses were sent to UPPER CLASSMEN!**

**4,203 total courses were sent to prisoners!**

**COURSES MAILED JAN THRU OCT 2011: 22,200**

**An average of 74 courses sent DAILY! New enrollees: 30 per day!**

If you can donate toward this worthy cause, please send your gift of any size to:

ARM Bible Courses  
3127 Hwy K  
Salem, MO 65560

**Thanks! And may the Lord bless you for caring and sharing!**

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**"COMMUNICATING OUR FAITH TO OUR WORLD"**

**#7: "We Must Communicate That Christianity Really Works"**

SCRIPTURE READING:

Matthew 5:13a-16

*"You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives*

*light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven."*

Acts 2:42-47

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*

1 Peter 2:12

*Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God...*

INTRO:

The Christian life, as Jesus taught it, is a life of being salt and light in a rotting, dark world. The first century Christians in Jerusalem lived such exemplary lives that the rank and file of non-Christians of the city had very high regard for them. Peter assures us that if we will live truly Christ-centered lives, even our enemies and the enemies of Christ will take notice and glorify God!

The world that needs to know Christ has little toleration for two things: phoniness and anything that really doesn't work. We need to communicate to our world a *genuine Christian faith that people can see clearly working in our lives!*

By and large, "truth" is a secondary thing to the people of our world; primarily, they want genuineness, or sincerity, and something pragmatic. And most people can tell whether or not you're for real, and whether or not your Christianity really works. Far too many Christians live lives that belie the Christian message. Their walk does not match their talk.

Christian author Keith Miller puts it this way:

*It has never ceased to amaze me that we Christians have developed a kind of selective vision which allows us to be deeply and sincerely involved in worship and church activities and yet almost totally pagan in the day-in, day-out guts of our business lives and never realize it.*

*Maybe you've heard the old story about the two men who met on the street. One said to the other, "Have you heard about Harry? He embezzled half a million dollars from his company." The other man said, "That's terrible; I never did trust Harry." The first man said, "Not only that, he left town and he took Tom's wife with him." The other man said, "That's awful; Harry has always been a ne'er-do-well." The first man said, "Not only that, he stole a car to make his getaway." The other man said, "That's scandalous; I always did think Harry had a bad streak in him." The first man said, "Not only that, they think he was drunk when he pulled out of town." The other man said, "Harry's no good. But what really bothers me is who's going to teach his Sunday School class this week?"*

If we're going to communicate our faith to our world, we're going to have to communicate a Christianity that is real and that really works.

We must let them see that...

**CHRISTIANITY REALLY WORKS IN OUR PERSONAL LIVES.**

What about it? Can people see that Christianity works in your personal life? Are the effects of your devotion to Jesus as Lord and Savior plain? Do you win your battles with the desires of your flesh? Can you say to a seeker, "Follow me; I'll lead you to Christ"? Or to a new Christian, "Follow me; I'll lead you in the way of the Lord"?

We cannot successfully communicate a faith that is not real to us or that does not work in our personal lives.

Why would the world want a faith that can't hold up under stress?

Why would the world want to hear about a faith that can't handle loss or disappointment?

Why would the world want to hear about a faith that can't overcome fear and anxiety?

Why would the world want a faith that can't get us through the hard times?

You see, God wants you and me to be living proof that Christ is real and that Christianity really works!

Second, we must let them see that...

#### *CHRISTIANITY REALLY WORKS IN OUR MARRIAGES.*

Have we ever dropped the ball here, folks! The marriages of Christian people now fail and end up in divorce as much as those of non-Christians! This deals a serious blow to the validity of the Christian message.

The institution of marriage is really in trouble in our society, and our society knows it. They're looking for answers, but many people are skeptical that marriage can ever be what it was intended to be. The impression is that very few believe in marriage anymore. More people are divorcing. More couples than ever before are "shackin' up." However, I believe most people want to preserve the traditional husband-wife relationship. Most people value highly such a relationship; they just don't believe that it's possible for them in this day and age.

We can show them that it is! In Christ, a God-ordered, lifetime-fulfilling marriage is still viable, even in this new millennium; but when the marriages of people in the church are no better than those of people outside the church, the Christian way of life is a hard sell!

And those of you who have experienced the break-up of a marriage can be witnesses by showing the world that God can give you new life after the tragic death of a relationship.

Third, we must let them see that...

#### *CHRISTIANITY REALLY WORKS IN OUR FAMILIES.*

What a witness a functional, together family can be! One of the most successful religious groups around is the Latter Day Saints, or Mormons. Their success is due largely to people's admiration of the apparent quality of their families.

Our society actually values family above most other things, but a large segment of it has given up on ever having successful families; so they've experimented with various options, none of them godly ones. Christians can show the world that God-ordered, fulfilling, happy families are still possible.

Some Christians need to reorder their families according to the biblical plan:

- Husbands and fathers need to take their positions as family priests;
- Wives and mothers need to take their positions as helpmates and caregivers;
- Children need to honor their parents.

Those whose families are split, broken, and beyond repair need to show the world how their Christian faith enables them to make the best of bad situations and live lives that glorify God. Those whose homes are irreparably broken can be just as powerful a witness as those whose homes are not broken. In fact, more people of our society will identify with broken homes than with those

homes that are intact. Godliness and faithfulness in the face of severe adversity are powerful communicators of the Christian faith!

Finally, we must let them see that...

### *CHRISTIANITY REALLY WORKS IN OUR VOCATIONS.*

I went shopping for a used lawnmower once. After calling some repair shops, I decided to look at a mower at a particular shop. When I entered the customer area of the shop, I noticed some Bibles on the counter and a sign with a message something like, "This is a Christian business," or "Christ is the owner of this business."

As I was shown the used mower I expressed interest in, I asked the proprietor, "Are you a Christian?" He said, "Yes, sir, and I try to live a Christian life every day."

I thought, "All right!" Then I said, "I'll take the Snapper."

He said, "Are you going to pay cash?"

I said, "I'll write you a check."

He said, "Well, I'll have to add the sales tax to it, then."

In other words, "If you'll pay me in cash, I'll illegally pocket the money, and we two 'Christians' will cheat the state of Texas out of \$12.38 in sales tax."

I wrote him a check.

People, Christianity that doesn't apply to our vocational lives doesn't play well in our world. Our world tolerates it and has even come to expect it, but they don't want it for themselves.

You can't communicate your faith to your world if your practice of your faith is inconsistent. You're a phony, and the world doesn't like phonies.

Are you the Christian on the job -- or wherever -- on Monday that you professed to be on Sunday?

### CONCLUSION:

Why does the church exist? What reason does any church have for existing? Why did Jesus establish the church? To communicate, teach, contend for, preserve, and demonstrate Christianity to the world.

There are millions in this world who are not united with God through Christ. What's more, most of them aren't interested in being nor actively seeking to be united with Him. But they have problems in their lives, in their marriages, in their families, and in their vocations that they'd like to solve.

They don't much care about spiritual truth or church doctrine. But when Christians who seem to have it all together or who are surviving beautifully in spite of adverse circumstances speak, they tend to listen. They really want fulfilled lives. They really want good marriages. They really want strong, functional families. They really want "something better" for their kids. They really want fulfilling vocations. They want fulfilling lives. If we can communicate a way of life that really works, they'll listen.

So, what do you need to do to be able to communicate such a way of life?

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**"Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B**

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Check out our web sites: [www.arm.org](http://www.arm.org) [www.abarc.org](http://www.abarc.org)

**In 2010, 71 ABA Bible courses were mailed from ARM every day!**