



## Making amends – Sycamore Tree

**Rosie Wood, Regional Coordinator for the North East, shares the amazing outcome when a victim of crime for the Sycamore Tree course at HMP Wolds had to be found at the last minute:**

Needing to find a victim of crime quickly I thought I would ask the Chaplain for help. He said that one lady came to mind, but this woman happened to be a friend of mine and I believed him to be wrong, surely I would know this about her? Oh ye of little faith, sure enough she had been a victim of an attempted attack some 30 years previously.

Claire said that she would think over the possibility of coming in and sharing her story. As she prayed about it



Drawn as an Act of Restitution by a prisoner on a Sycamore Tree course

she began to get an excitement in doing so. When Claire shared her story she recollected what had happened quite simply and without full knowledge of what it may raise in the men who were listening. They were also recollecting how they had affected their own victims - I think this is something you can never completely prepare for.

Then the questions began and Claire started to see that these men really

felt guilt and shame for what they had done. She saw the desperation in their eyes and that they wanted to change, but there was another realisation that was beginning to dawn - Claire began to see that she had unresolved issues concerning forgiveness. She realised that had she been faced with the opportunity to meet with her perpetrators, she would have been resistant. It dawned on her that forgiveness and reconciliation was essential to receive closure on the past and to move forward into a new beginning.

Between Week Three and Week Six of the course, the Lord was working in Claire's heart to prepare her for the final session where the men would make a Symbolic Act of Restitution. Was she ready to forgive and let go?

When the time came it was an overwhelming time of real confession and sincere apologies. The men rushed to the front in unison. This was the first time this had happened and, much to Claire's surprise and delight, one man knelt down in front of her and wept as he shared how he had hurt people and needed forgiveness. This response melted Claire's heart and she was easily able to offer her forgiveness to those who asked for it.

*Rosie Wood*



Learners during a final session of a Sycamore Tree course

**We would like to say thank you to all who have responded to our Transforming Lives appeal. This much needed money will help us to continue to embrace the vision of Prison Fellowship to engage in 'seeing lives transformed,' and we are excited about how God is going to use us all to strengthen and grow our ministry.**

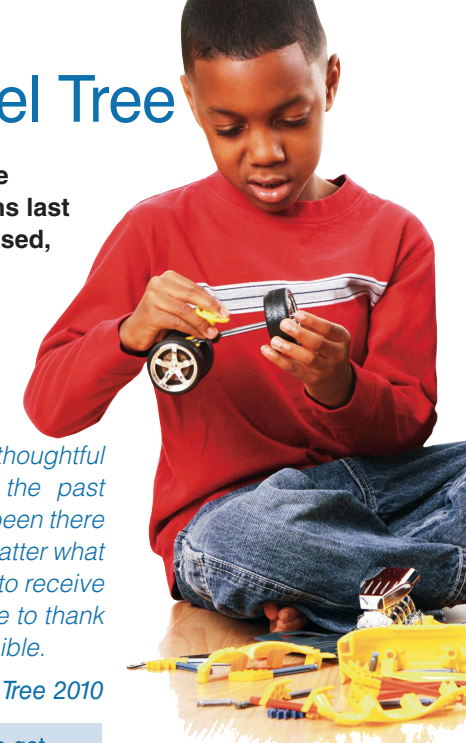
## Letter of thanks - Angel Tree

**Angel Tree has finished for another year, this time operating in 79 prisons – that's up from 65 prisons last year! Media interest in Angel Tree has also increased, with Angel Tree featuring on BBC Radio Kent on Boxing day! Through God's provision, Angel Tree continues to bless families with His love and below is a response that shows why this programme is so worthwhile:**

*I am writing to you today to thank you for the kind and thoughtful service you have been providing me with over the past 10½ years of being in prison. Angel Tree has always been there year after year and has always delivered on time no matter what the weather, and I know it means a lot to my children to receive a present from me each year. Once again I would like to thank you and all the volunteers that make Angel Tree possible.*

*Prisoner, Angel Tree 2010*

To find out more about Angel Tree, or if you would like to get involved, please contact the office on **01621 843232**



## Showing God's love – Letter Writing

I'd been involved in a Prison Fellowship prayer group where most of the group were involved in actually going into the prison to serve, either through prison visiting or the Sycamore Tree course. Working full time,



I was unable to commit to prison visiting or assisting with Sycamore Tree but I still wanted to do more than pray

(although this is essential). As a result I was told about Letter Writing. I completed the Prison Fellowship course and then I was given a prisoner to write to. I feel so

privileged to be able to assist in this small way. I say small, but the point of us being here is to show God's love and I've been told that receiving a letter is very precious to those inside. It shows that they are not forgotten. Sometimes the prisoners I write to share lots about themselves whilst at other times they are quite private, but the important thing is to not push it. I'm just so glad to be a non-judgmental 'safe' person for them to speak/vent to.

*Jo Orr*

**If you would like to make a difference by writing to a prisoner, please contact the office on 01621 843232**

