



SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY NEWSLETTER



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Quietly Changing Lives

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(Register on line!)

See Don and Yvonne

Catch up on back issues

Send us Email (see below)

IT IS REALLY TRUE,
GOD LOVES YOU,

BECAUSE OF YOU,
SOMEONE CARES

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Someone Cares is a faith
ministry, supported by God's love
and your gifts. It is a non-profit
corporation; all donations are tax-
deductible.

WHEN WE ALL GET TOGETHER

We have spent the last month "shopping" on our computer database, looking for those we can ask for help. We have so many names on our mailing list, and we discovered that we had a lot of folks getting up in age. Asking these folks who have already done their work to do more is a bit much. It was nice to re-kindle the flame that they provided.

Then we found a whole lot of folks who had written an inmate, received an answer, but then quit? If this is you, we would sure like to know what happened. There are others who were sent an inmate's name and introduction letter, but it appears they never wrote? Following through is so important. If something happens that you cannot continue to write, please be considerate and let us know so we can update our records.

We also found out many who listened to us on V.O.P. radio contacted us to find out more information, and we presumptuously sent a name they did not request! (Our apologies.)

We spoke with one pen friend named Pete, who told us he was with us at 91 and will be until he goes to rest. What a caring, sharing God we serve! Mary has been with us for 35 years, and has sent us \$1.00 per month for the last ten years. AMEN.

We are praying the leaders of this country will find the answers, or tell the truth. But this massive unemployment has sent many desperate men to prison. Men who have no idea what is going to happen. Someone Cares needs to be there to help them and their families somehow.

WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

Being a Faith Ministry means we depend on donations from our supporters. When we first started we asked for 1,000 folks to commit to giving \$1.50 a month for seven years. This economy, and series of world events, has finally affected us, and our donations are down 25%. Along with this, we are faced with increased expenses, postage being the biggest increase.

A new updated goal would be to receive \$ 2.50

a month for seven years from each of you. Also, if you have any stamps lying around unused, please send them to us as we will put them to good use! We have recently sent postage to 60 pen friends so they can keep writing. Many an inmate has traded a meal for a stamp. Since a large amount of our pen friends are older, many have poor eye sight and a very limited budget, which caused them to quit. Some of them found someone else to write to their inmate, but many could not.

Judy wrote, "My medication is so expensive I have to cut my pills in half." If you are affected in a similar and find it too costly to continue writing, please let us know as we will be happy to send stamps, paper and envelopes--we desperately need you!

Bob wrote, "We support you and others, but have to cut back. We will send to you when we can."

Judy (another one) wrote, "Friends, I have been writing 20 inmates for a long time. This mess the world is in made me pray for a way to keep on. I asked a person of means if they would help me with postage and she said yes!" Amen!

Now with the world getting deeper in debt, prisons and inmates are also affected. If stamps are tough for us, 44 cents in prison is something men would kill for. Some chaplains accept stamps from us and give them when needed

to inmates in the Pen Friend Program.

WHAT DO WE DO WITH THE SUPPORT YOU PROVIDE?

Over 1 million inmates finish Bible studies provided by Someone Cares! Several million inmates have been part of the active Pen Friend Program, or have received clothes from the hopefully-active-again-soon Free Dress Out Program. With our tie in to other ministries, children have been able to receive Christmas presents from their inmate parents.

Some other blessings brought about through your help are: thousands of free new Bibles, one Glass eye, hundreds of pairs of glasses and two sets of false teeth! Seven chapels received pianos and several hundred TV's and VHS equipment have been distributed.

A very high number of inmates got visits from free folks through this Ministry, as well as did their families. Only God knows the amount of prayers sent upward. Yvonne and I, as well as many volunteers, have walked thousands of miles of prison yards. We have gone into Death Row, opened AA, NA and EA groups in 11 prisons. (We wish to do that and more again, or make arrangements for someone else to carry on this work.) We have worked with Billy Graham, Jim Dobson, Chuck Colson and all of you.

WOULD YOU THINK ABOUT...

Being a "Faith Partner" (financial supporter) or naming Someone Cares in your will? Donating a car, truck, CDs, videos, stamps, musical instruments, computer equipment or jewelry?

Our new bookkeeper owns a used book store. He works for us for very little, and he is always in need of used books (we would like to help him out as he is helping us).

Can you get your Church interested in this Ministry? Read Matthew 25 and see what the Lord directs you to do. Think about starting a leg of Someone Cares in your area. Think about providing support or stamps for someone willing to do the work of writing.

Any and all contributions, no matter the size, are appreciated more than we can express.

"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' "The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'
Matthew 25:37-40

YVONNE'S CORNER

We founded this Ministry many years ago, 35 to be exact, and we started small—with family, friends, and their friends. In fact, most of the folks that helped us start were people who previously had not even wanted me to date Don. His background was well known and no one believed a person with that kind of life could change.

But God did change Don and put him where his terrible background could be used for good rather than harm. This has been a valuable lesson that he works so hard to tell others. My folks were sure the church would shake if Don walked through the doors. He may have been shaking, but God knew then and now what would happen—HE cared.

Over the years this Ministry has been like a snowball—it's grown and grown, and just keeps on growing. Now we find we need help from the next generations. We need some younger folks to step up to the plate and make a commitment to take over where someone else has left off.

Each day I read many letters from inmates wanting a pen friend, and so many take the time to thank us for making this program possible before ever asking for a pen friend. Having a pen friend would be a great family project, especially if you are home schooling. Paper Sunshine is a wonderful way to witness. We have many pen friends who write and tell

us what a blessing it is for them.

God has seen fit for us to grow very large, and now we have faith that He will supply the workers and the finances. Seven days a week and very long hours has aged both of us, but the blessings keep us growing.

PAPER SUNSHINE, 'AKA' PEN FRIEND PROGRAM

How It Works:

We receive a letter from an inmate requesting someone to write. We send an application explaining this is a Christian Ministry with the mail going through us. We also explain the does and don'ts. They fill out an application and return it with an introduction letter. This we place in a pile or piles.

When we receive an offer to write to an inmate pen friend we match them with whoever is on top of the pile. It's simple, but it does work. In fact our problem is that it works too well, as every time an inmate gets a letter they share it with others, who then request pen friends, and the snow ball rolls.

We have been able to do all this on less than \$80,000 a year in donations. Often we have had to reach into our own pockets. When we started there were about 50,000 inmates in prison, but now there are well over 2 million. Over 50% of the prison ministries have shut down. Churches of all dominations are doing away with their budgets for prisons, community service and temperance.

How You Can Help:

We get several calls a week asking if we can get a pastor to visit an inmate. This request is almost impossible to fill. What we need to know from you is if you know of any folks from your churches who go into prisons and what prisons they go into? (Prisons only—not jails.) If you know of anyone, please pass their names and contact information along to us, with their permission of course. We believe that every pastor should be willing to have a Pen Friend Program in their church.

We also need to hear from you with any bad experiences you may have had. These do happen, and by sharing we can inform others of what happens if you are careless.

I know that this Ministry has made its share of mistakes, and when we do I know you will tell us about it, and we will share it with all.

At age 77, I do not read or move as quickly as I once did, but we are continuing to grow in the work we are doing.

LETTERS FROM FRIENDS *The Year Was 1971*

You and your wife put on a Program at our church and I was amazed. Growing up in the church in a sheltered life I had read about people with Don's background, but was amazed God had picked him. I also was reminded about the disciples. I knew Yvonne's parents were sad when she was dating Don. We started getting the newslet-

ter long ago—they were terrible, but fact filled. Was glad to see Jim Finn take Don under his wing. We have written 11 inmates over these many years, have gotten family members to write also. We lost track of 8 but are still in contact with 3 who are all leading productive lives. We also collected clothes for Someone Cares when they had their Dress Out Program. Was glad the Grady's helped them. We did through Don & Yvonne what God asked us to do. We recommend supporting this Ministry. George & Betty

Soquel Camp Meeting

I went there every year with my parents and grew up knowing Yvonne. Lost track of her and was surprised that she and her husband were speaking with Jim Finn. Yvonne, being a preacher's daughter, I thought she might marry a minister, not help God create one.

They from the platform drew my attention to the back corner of the auditorium where they had a prison cell set up. Twice a day they held meetings there. My husband and I became a part of this Ministry and still are. To see and hear Don then and now has been a true blessing. Always well dressed he now is as well polished. For a grammar school drop out into a gang's jail and prison, the Lord really reached in and picked a plum.

My Name is Bill Webb

Yvonne's parents were friends of my wife and me. I was saddened when she got divorced as were her parents. But her reasons were valid. When I was told she was dating a man with somewhat of an unworthy background I chatted with her. Don drank a lot, he smoked and was involved I think with some unworthy things. I knew he did not believe in God or religion. My amazement grew when I learned he had accepted Christ, quit his old ways and he and Yvonne were married.

Growing up as he did Don did not know prejudice. We had a lot of talks about white and black issues. An event in my life I will never forget—they invited me to Soledad Prison to preach. I was impressed with the All Faiths Chapel and a bit surprised at the turnout, as the Chapel was full. Yvonne the Chaplain played the piano and an older black man, an ex-preacher, led the song service. I preached to one of the best groups ever.

I finished and sat down, no one moved. What had I done? Don whispered in my ear, "Too short a sermon." They wanted more! I spent much time watching this couple grow and was inspired that a man self taught in the word had a great street knowledge of application.

PREJUDICE IN PRISON

Running away at 13 and living in New York, I learned about racial difference. In prison it is more forced and a real problem. Gangs everywhere. We found, while going through our database, that this is a continuing problem. Someone told us, "When I requested a pen friend you matched me with a black person. I did not write."

Jesus teaches us to be color blind. We now try as hard as we can to match by race, and it has taken care of some problems. We are going to spend the next few newsletters inside prison. We are going to take you out on the yard, into the cell blocks and try to explain inmate mentality.

MAY GOD BLESS YOU

We pray each step gets you closer to writing or supporting this Ministry, to start if you aren't already doing so, or do more if you are able.

Jesus saves! I am a perfect example of that. God Bless.

And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." Luke 23:43

NOTE TO PEN FRIENDS:

We have a pile of mail addressed to us (Someone Cares) without a name or pen name. There are too many to list. If you are not receiving letters from your inmate pen friend, call or email us.