



SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY NEWSLETTER



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Quietly Changing Lives

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IT IS REALLY TRUE
GOD LOVES YOU.

BECAUSE OF YOU,
SOMEONE CARES.

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LIVE FAST, DIE YOUNG, AND HAVE A GOOD LOOKING CORPSE

This is the motto I adopted when I was only fifteen years old. I had quit school, left home and set out to explore Satan's world. In and out of trouble and in and out of jail was a learning experience. As many of you may already know, I had been an atheist and was placed in a boy's reform school, jail, and finally prison. A religious man came to talk to me and spent several hours telling me of a better life and a better place. The alarm sounded and he left saying he would be back. Would anything have changed if he had kept his promise?

Jesus made the same promise and He will return. God, who sees all, knows what the future holds, as He holds the future. My world of fast everything got me in trouble with the wrong people. I even went all the way to Tibet with a friend to hide out, which was a real learning experience.

Just weeks ago Elder D. Retzer called and asked permission to preach on the title of my previous motto, above. If you are ever asked to do something in the name of Jesus, say "I'll be happy to."



HEAVEN CAME DOWN AND GLORY FILLED MY SOUL

By accident I met Yvonne, a pastor's daughter just divorced from a bad marriage. She got in my fast car and we stayed in the fast lane of life for awhile. Yvonne's up bringing told her what we were doing was wrong and she started working on me to change.

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HEAVEN CAME DOWN

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One night in the pastor's study of a church in Mountain View, California she introduced me to her cousin Euell, an ex-cop and a pastor. In a two hour period he told me about Jesus. Not about what I had to give up, but how I had to give in. Feeling the need for a drink or something stronger, I felt a warmth come over me. Euell (now asleep in Jesus) knelt with me and we prayed. I felt the old me leaving and a warmth and feeling of love enter. I had accepted Jesus and a massive change was about to happen. Previously, I had drunk a fifth of booze daily for years, but now that desire was gone. I had smoked three packs of cigarettes a day; desire now gone. Uppers and downers, all gone. I drove to a river and threw away three guns. I had become a Child of the King.



OK, WHAT NOW?

Yvonne's parents, who were both heavily involved with Church, were not happy with Yvonne's choice. My old self and all my bad habits were well known. When we stepped into Church, all moved. It seemed like I spent forever studying the Bible. I volunteered for every job in the Church and failed at all. Well, maybe not all. Yvonne and I became leaders of a Vacation Bible School, and with the help of three of our friends we put together a five day program. The turnout was standing room only for five nights. I'll chat about this another time.

After that we moved to Soquel and took the job of youth leaders. We held a Friday night Vespers Service every week. One summer night we took the kids and their friends to a local beach. We had plenty of supervision, and unbeknownst to the kids there were even some local police dressed in beachwear. This beach was a hangout for the local druggies. We started singing songs around a large bonfire, and the druggies came. Some sat, some stood, and many knew the words of the songs and joined in the singing. We shared our potluck meal with many of them and invited them to church.

When we got home my phone started ringing with calls from outraged parents. How dare I take their child to such a place? I should be kicked out of Church! At Church the next day seven of the street kids had accepted our invitation to attend. The attitude that many had on that day, and sadly still have to this day, of "we don't want those kinds of people in our church" hurts. I was once one of those kids, but Jesus took hold of me, giving me a new direction in life. And now, after forty years, He's given me a fresh start. Amen.

FORTY YEARS WITH JESUS

I became an Ordained Elder in my church, took a massive amount of Bible studies, and taught others as I learned along the way. God called me to Prison Ministry and then Yvonne followed. We were honored to be made full time unpaid chaplains of Soledad Prison, training both inmates and volunteers. We started an All Faiths Chapel to provide an atmosphere where "don't let our doctrine be a barrier but a bridge to Jesus" was the motto. I have preached in over 300 churches and have given what seems like a zillion sermons in prison. We started a dress out program that gave free clothes to over 120,000 inmates upon release. Then a remedial reading program was started using the Bible. We were both ordained, and then the Pen Friend Program was started. Working with many organizations, over a million students have completed

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FORTY YEARS WITH JESUS

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Bible studies. Working with the General Conference of our church we helped start a Prison Ministry association to provide protection to funds donated.

That jammed forty years into just a few paragraphs. We need each one of you to carry on and keep open the doors Jesus helped us open throughout all those years.



OLDER THAN OUR TONGUES, A LITTLE OLDER THAN OUR TEETH

I will be 81 my next birthday. I enjoyed semi-retirement for only two weeks and am ready to go again. Thanks to several great donations from a bunch of folks we are going to continue and improve.

We continue to be good stewards of your donations, often using our Social Security instead of collecting a salary when funds are low.

FUTURE PLANS

The Pen Friend Program, aka "Paper Sunshine," developed some flaws along the way that we plan to fix. Folks listened to us preach or speak on the radio and attempted to get involved. But when they got the packet some of them got cold feet. We plan to develop a computer program listing the pen friend and their pen name, if they have one, along with the inmate's name and their full information. The program will track the dates of when you write and when the inmate writes. This way, if need be, we can check this information ourselves to make sure no one is falling between the cracks. Mail sometimes can be lost, misplaced or stolen. If it arrives here to us, we get it where it needs to go. However, mail sent from prison that never reaches us is out of our control.



Prayerfully, we will be on the Voice of Prophecy radio program again when they make their move. We plan to put an ad in Christianity Today magazine. With a smile on my face I will again be preaching on a regular basis. Is it too much to ask for a new home in warm weather to get us out of the cold and snow in the wintertime? Well, if Jesus sees the need, then God will grant it.

Helping Jake carry the baton will be our main job going forward. Helping him recruit those who are called will not be easy.

We are now for the first time ever in a position to really increase this Ministry. Yvonne will get a honeymoon and a vacation someday, I think perhaps in Glory.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We need folks to write inmates - lots of them!

- We are in dire need of letter writers, so please tell others about this Ministry.
- We need any and all old stamps you have.
- We have need of two quality laptop computers.
- Your faithful donations are still needed. Postage is going way up. If everyone reading this could commit to \$1.50 a month for five years, or \$180 a year, God will grant the increase. All donations are tax deductible.
- We can use two quality used cars or even a truck or van. I would like to say my age has not affected me, but my eyesight and hearing are not as good as they were. Thankfully we have Jake and Ronna to drive us in the winter months.

WE HAVE WORKED SO HARD

The conditions of churches are hurting. Giving to non-profit organizations is not a priority for many people. We thank the "widow's mite." Our goal is that through all our connections and friends we can touch the lives of another 500,000 inmates.

Please be a pen friend, and/or a faith partner, if you aren't already. If you just pray for this Ministry, that would be neat. If you need prayer, give us a call.

Thanks to those of you who have generously donated to this Ministry; your receipts have been sent with this newsletter.

Bless each one of you!

Don, Yvonne, Jake and Ronna



JAKE'S CORNER

Hey folks, it's been a few months since I've written in the newsletter due to school and trying to make a wider variety of skills for myself. I have thought about this Ministry every day while I wasn't involved in it, and I feel that was the Lord saying to go back. I have loved this Ministry for a long time because we have all seen what it can do for people inside and outside of prison.

My grandparents are getting older. Though my grandfather still thinks he's a spring chicken, he doesn't have the same physical ability to read and type as fast as he used to. I have committed myself to this Ministry for multiple reasons. Time and time again the Lord tells me to come to this Ministry, so that's where I'll be.

On another note, we have been getting complaints about mail. We are a big Ministry and there are a lot of people, inmates and pen friends, that we have to organize and keep track of. Also, mail that inmates send doesn't always get sent from the prison. Mail sometimes does get lost or stolen. Also, inmates often address their envelopes with an abbreviated name, such as "Barbara A." or "PJ." We have about twenty Barbaras and don't know who the letters belong to if they aren't addressed with complete names. We do have the names of inmates with their pen friends, but if it is a new inmate or pen friend we might not have had the chance to enter the names into the computer. We have started sending postcards to the inmates who abbreviate on the envelopes telling them not to for those reasons. It's fine to abbreviate in the letters, but just not on the outside of the envelope. Hopefully that will help a bit.

We want to try and get more and more people involved with this Ministry and get more in touch with you the people, not for us but for you and the inmates. We have tons of inmates who need someone to write to and we want to ask each of you that are reading this to please consider writing just one more inmate. It would do a lot more than you know. Thank you for everything you do.

God Bless,
Jake