



SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY *Newsletter*



VOL. 2010 No. 3

QUIETLY CHANGING LIVES

MARCH, 2010

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**IT IS REALLY TRUE
GOD LOVES YOU.
BECAUSE OF YOU,
SOMEONE CARES.**

Published monthly by
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**DON & YVONNE MCCLURE
FOUNDERS**

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.

IN THE BEGINNING... DON SHARES ABOUT THE PAST

How We Met. It was a neat day in July 1967. I had just returned from Hawaii where I often went. Tanned and driving a new Lincoln, I decided to stop at my favorite "watering hole," The Golden Horn Bar and Restaurant. I sat at the bar, ordered my favorite drink and let my eyes adjust to the dark. My vision was already blurred from the drinks on the plane.

I looked around and saw several ladies and a little boy in a booth. Even though the booth was in the restaurant area and not in the bar, I said loudly, "No child belongs in a bar!" In a flash a very attractive lady approached me and said that *no one* belongs in a bar. "Why?" I asked. "Because Jesus would not be here," was her answer. *What?* "What are you doing here, then?" "I'm having brunch with my friends and one of their children," she replied. (Oops.)

I asked if we might have lunch or dinner sometime. To my surprise, she agreed to meet me for dinner but said she would drive her own car. That started

a long relationship. She had just gotten divorced and had three daughters. Her parents were Clyde and Vera Groomer, known by many of you as upstanding Christian leaders. I, on the other hand, was an ex-con, a member of organized crime, an alcoholic, and an atheist who had just walked into a different world.

Hitting Bottom. It would be nice to say that she took me into her life-style and I immediately turned my life around, but she joined me in the fast track of Satan instead. A who-who of her Church tried to break us up or lead me to Christ, but the world Satan runs was too glamorous and tempting, with all the right toys, the fast track of cars, planes, boats and money.

My drinking got worse and I started losing everything. Besides all of that, we are ashamed to say that we were living together. Our beautiful apartment turned into a shack, a real dump. To make matters worse, Yvonne's 13 year old daughter came to live with us. She slept on a box spring we had taken out of a dumpster, and we slept on the floor. Some

big spender hotshot I was! I remember running into a friend and asking for help. He said, “When you hit bottom, help will come.” How low was the bottom? Yvonne, knowing that a change was desperately needed, finally talked me into visiting Euell Atchey, a cousin of hers and a Pastor.

Peace at Last. We met in the Pastor’s study of the Mountain View Church. Euell could see that I was scared to death, even though normally I would fight anyone at any time. Every day I drank a quart of booze, smoked three packs of cigarettes and used all kinds of drugs, as long as they weren’t injected. Euell said, “Looks like you could use a smoke.” I said yes, but Yvonne said, “You can’t smoke in Church.” Euell told her to sit in a corner and shut up. (The only person on earth able to do that!)

Then he told me about Jesus and what HE would do for me. He said I didn’t have to give up, but that I needed to give *in*. Once before, in the juvenile system, a person had tried to tell me the same thing. I had listened, but he never

*“And the peace of God,
which surpasses all
understanding, will guard
your hearts and minds
through Christ Jesus.”
Philippians 4:7*

came back. Now, at age 40, I felt that Peace that passes all understanding.

Jesus Pulls Us Up From the Bottom. After two hours with Euell I went down on my knees and Jesus moved in, moving Satan out. I was set free. Almost at once I got a great advance, a job and a new apartment. Then I joined Daryl Retzer’s Church in Sunnyvale, California.

Since I had grown up outside of Church and had no knowledge of Christ it was hard trying to fit in; I did not. But the Lord is faithful, and He took my problem and used it for His Glory, leading me into Prison Ministry. Yvonne and I married and she managed an apartment complex. Satan struck her with a serious back problem on the job. But then she received a settlement, which helped us get our home in Aptos.

Things kept improving. I had a great paying job in Salinas and was teaching the Bible at Soledad Prison, studying all the time as I taught. With the help of Yvonne’s knowledge due to her up-bringing I learned fast.

God Had a Plan. Soon, the Chaplain at Soledad where I was teaching offered us full time unpaid jobs as volunteer chaplains. I accepted at once, but Yvonne said, who is going to pay the bills? I reminded her about the cattle on a thousand hills. We worked at Soledad for eleven years.

Progress and Blessings. We spent two years sharing with the prisoners at San Quentin, and “The God Squad” was born. Someone Cares became Incorporated. The Pen Friend Program was born, also known as “Paper Sunshine.” The Dress Out and Remedial Reading programs were in high gear. The mobile home where we were living was too small as we continued to grow. We bought a custom home in Paso Robles, while serving Soledad, opening Avenal Prison, working at Paso Robles Boys School and Atascadero Mental Hospital. Every spare moment we had we spoke at churches, all the while raising funds do to all this.

Time to Move. With California taxes continuing to rise, we decided to make a move. We sold our home, got in our motor-home, and headed to Kentucky (I had thrown a dart at a map and it landed in Hopkinsville, Kentucky), where we bought an old farm house.

Not long after the move, the wife of the couple we sold our Paso Robles home to died. We gave the family time to unwind, but in the meantime we were not able to move into the farm house, and instead spent the next six months living in the basement of an unfinished church.

And Move Again. Finally, the California home resold, and we then moved into our new house. A whole new prison

*For every beast of the
forest is Mine, And the cattle
on a thousand hills.
And the wild beasts of the
field are Mine.
Psalm 50:10-11*

field opened up and it was very exciting. Eddyville, the stone prison, became ours to run. We enjoyed two wonderful years there, which eventually ended due to some internal problems.

Seeking God's will, we felt a calling to go to Michigan. Now we were blessed with having a successful Ministry and being near all of Yvonne's family. We volunteered again as chaplains, which the Chaplains Union did not approve of, and so they fought against our positions in the prisons; we won the battle, but it caused us some problems. Also, as time went by, we discovered that much of what we had accomplished in California was falling apart. No one was following through with the programs we had worked so hard to establish.

And Again, And Again.

Back to California we went. We are very happy that so many of you followed us and continued with your support. We began working at the Delano Prison, then at Corcoran. But, mainly due to the economy, we felt directed to move back East again.

During all this time Someone Cares grew and expanded. In

Fort Wayne, Indiana it was clear that The Pen Friend Program, "Paper Sunshine," was the backbone of this Ministry.

One More Time. An automobile accident and terrible weather caused Yvonne serious health problems. The last straw was that her kidney shut down. We needed to move to a different climate, and so we packed it up again and moved to our current home in Payson, Arizona.

Size has always been an important issue, since we work out of our home. Sizing down to our current 14' x 60' mobile home has made things a little tough, but we love it here and we are truly blessed. We only recently received an offer on our home in Fort Wayne, and it has sold just a moment from foreclosure!

Settling Down, But Staying Busy. With all of your support, and our social security, we are still growing. I had hoped to give Yvonne a honeymoon we never had, or at least a vacation. (Her time in the hospitals does not count!)

Perhaps we can plan on slowing down if we meet our goal of opening Charter Groups of Someone Cares Prison Ministry in every state in the U.S. (See the February Newsletter.)

If a President can become President on small donations, then we can explode the "Paper Sunshine" ministry in the

same way. We now average 50 requests for applications daily. Internet exposure could help us grow, and I need to learn how to do that. We could also use grants, the "Widows Mite," and plain ol' good ideas to move us in the right direction.

We can promise you that the next few years will be exciting. Over one million inmates have completed Bible Studies. Over 100,000 inmates left prison with free parole clothes through the Dress Out Programs (which are no longer active, but which we hope to get going again).

YVONNE'S CORNER

I was recently talking to a neighbor who is interested in what we do. I made the remark that we would like to retire, and she laughed and said, "When you work for God you don't retire." By the time you read this I will be 70 and Don soon will be 77. I realized she was right, there is still much to be done, and we have faith as we take one day at a time that God will direct us in the way we shall go, to help expand this Ministry.

We prayed that our house would sell, and it did. Amen! We pray that the Charters in each state will open up and people will be willing to volunteer. Paper Sunshine will be the first objective, with other programs to follow as time goes by, taking one step at a time.

As a re-cap, we have been

through nine houses and over 400 churches, four of which Don was the Pastor of or helped with. Because of YOU, Someone Cares! We tried once to figure how many miles this has all added up to, but just could not. The amount of letters probably equals the number of the national debt—quite a bunch. God has been so good bringing each of you to us. Four times we had to fight States who wanted to stop Paper Sunshine.

**WILL YOU WRITE
AN INMATE?**

Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths. Proverbs 3:5-6

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THANK YOU, CHAPLAIN

Florida tried to stop the Pen Friend Program, but God sent a Chaplain to help us save it there. Below is a letter we sent him in an appeal for help, which he did. Drop him a note saying thanks.

*Chaplain Alex Taylor
Florida Department of Corrections
2601 Blair Star Rd. / Tallahassee,
Florida 32399*

*Dear Chaplain Taylor:
About 35 years ago my wife met an inmate in the hole of San Quentin. He informed her he had not received a letter for 17 years. This started a new phase of our Ministry called the Pen Friend Program. This is a risk free letter writing Ministry. It is risk free; as all the mail comes to us we read it and forward it from inmate to free person keeping their address confidential. The inmates are aware of this arrangement.*

We also field requests for internet spots and usually break matches or write inmates ourselves. This Ministry also over the years has had over a million inmates complete Bibles Studies free of charge. Our web page, www.someonecares.org, will show the effort we take to prevent any problems. We matched our first inmate in Florida about 20 years ago and the Pen Friend Program, "Paper Sunshine," goes into every prison in your state.

Needless to say we were shocked when an application to an inmate was rejected? I also was highly confused when I called and got transferred six times, all to folks who did not want to deal with the issue. We will be happy to have hundreds of very content Christians who have been a part of this Ministry for years contact the State of Florida Department of Corrections as to the success of their Ministry through us.

We are enclosing a copy of the form we send the inmate, and the paperwork we send the free person. Also Someone Cares does not receive or send monies to inmates.

My wife and I have been full time Chaplains as well as running this Ministry for a long time. We have helped form the rules of many prisons, and enforced same everywhere. With so little for inmates, and so many budget cut backs for Religious programs fighting this ruling is terrible. We thank you for your offer of assistance.

God's Blessings,

*Don B. McClure
Speaker/Director
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*God bless each of us as we do
HIS work.
Don & Yvonne*