



SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY NEWSLETTER



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Quietly Changing Lives

Visit our web site:

www.someonecares.org

Become a Pen Friend
(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.

Published monthly by
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Don & Yvonne McClure
Co-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.

PLEASE SIT AND CHAT WITH US

Due to the growth of this Ministry, we need all the help we can get in telling people about Someone Cares and compelling as many as possible to become Pen Friends. By word of mouth inmates have spread what we do all over the place. Keeping up with the growing demand from inmates requesting pen friends requires your input and assistance.

If every one of you got your church to put something in their weekly bulletin to promote this Ministry, that would help a great deal. Another idea we have is to see how many of you can get your local newspaper to place an ad for us. Most newspapers will run it for free. Please see the end of this newsletter for the ad copy.



THE PEN FRIEND PROGRAM

This was started many years ago at San Quentin. Working in one of the most dangerous cell blocks in the nation, Yvonne met an old man. They chatted awhile and she found out he had not had a visit or a letter in almost twenty years. Yvonne was so moved she said she would get someone to write to him. We never break a promise, and that was how the Pen Friend Program was born. It has continued to grow daily ever since.

The Program works this way:

- An inmate contacts us, requesting a pen friend.
- We send the inmate an application to fill out, and ask him/her to write an introduction letter.
- When they return their application and introduction letter, we put their envelope at the bottom of a pile (the Inmate Pile).
- In the meantime, when we speak in churches and on the radio or TV, we make appeals for folks to become Pen Friends.
- When someone writes to us stating they would like to become a Pen friend, their information is put at the bottom of a second pile (The Pen Friend pile).

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PRISON IS ...

...a place here that is going to be like hell for those who don't make Heaven.



When I first went to prison I was prepared. The first thing I got was a shank (prison knife), and then I hooked up with a prison gang. That price was a bit too high to pay so I made it on my own; I was tough enough.

I think back when I first took Yvonne to prison to minister. She really wanted nothing to do with it. But when she saw that in prison there were men who had made a mistake but could be reached, she changed her mind; that was thirty years ago. During her training she was told the first thing she had to do was search the Chapel for shanks or any material that could be used for a weapon. She found out very quickly that 99% of the inmates were there to protect her, since they realized that she was there for them. She changed the Chapel to "All Faiths." Even I was amazed to see inmates with all kinds of church backgrounds praying together, studying together and growing together. Yvonne and I had access to all the prison areas without escort, which was very unusual. Although not paid by Church or State we were treated as Staff. Some day I'll tell you about going through the police academy.

THE PEN FRIEND PROGRAM - *continued*

- We take the top envelopes from each pile and match them together. (The inmate pile is very high and the free person/pen friend pile is usually empty!)
- We send the inmate's application and introduction letter to the Pen Friend, and pray that the match will be a good one and that the Pen Friend will honor their commitment and write to the inmate on a regular basis.
- If there is any problem with the match, with the inmate's letters, or the Pen Friend cannot continue to write to the inmate for any reason, we ask that they return the original inmate information (application and introduction letter) and contact us to let us know why, so we can try and re-match the inmate.
- When the Pen Friend writes to the inmate, their envelope should be addressed with the inmate's name and number, and the prison address. The return address section of the envelope should have the Pen Friend's FULL first and last name or "Pen Name" (but only if that name has been previously provided to us and is on file with the real name). Our name "Someone Cares" should NOT be in the return address, but it should have OUR address of P.O. Box 11245, Fort Wayne, IN 46856. That letter should be sealed and stamped and placed into another envelope addressed to us at Someone Cares, with the Pen Friend's full real name and address in the return section.
- The only address the inmate has is ours, and the program is risk-free if all the rules are followed.
- When the inmate writes their Pen Friend through our address, we try to read all of their letters to prevent any problems.
- We are always available to receive calls or emails if anyone needs help or has questions.
- This is a non-profit Ministry that has been operating on a "widow's mite" for decades.

Inmates also request Bible information from us, and over one million have completed Bible Studies through this program. Remember that Jesus, after being beaten, stuck with thorns and nailed to the cross, performed His final act...to lead a convict to Him, promising him glory. We are called to be Christ-like. Please re-read Jesus' very convicting words to us in Matthew 25, verses 31 through 46, regarding what He expects of us, including visiting those in prison.



HARD TIME

When the Lord, via a Warden friend, called us to San Quentin it was a real challenge. Yvonne was raised in the Church with Christian parents...was she ready for this? We met with the warden who introduced us to the Chaplain, Harry Howard (now deceased).

Harry knew of our work and training, and assigned us to "C" Section - a terrible place reserved for very hard-core inmates. It was five tiers high with fifty men

to a tier, single celled. The guard opened the door leading to this hell on earth, and when we entered we could feel and smell the tension.

The very first cell housed a man like no other. His hair was to the floor, his beard the same. He heard us at his cell and charged the door. We tried talking with him, but he was having none of that. Once a week for over a year we visited C Section, passing his cell. One day after we had passed him by, the guard came to tell us the bearded man wanted to talk with us. We went back, and I had Yvonne stand behind me. The man said, "I have money and want to buy what you are selling. I've seen many men change and even leave here."

All this went over my head, but Yvonne stepped in front of me and said, "What we have is not for sale - it has been paid for by Jesus." Then, like a mother to a child, Yvonne told him about Jesus. I noticed the gun rail guards had moved behind us. For about sixty minutes Yvonne talked about Jesus. Then a tear came down the man's face into his beard. "Will Jesus take someone like me?" he asked. "Sure," she replied. "Let's pray about it." I moved next to Yvonne and we both took his hands, while behind us we could hear the guns being clipped and aimed. Yvonne prayed, and then in gutter-language that I have heard no other person pray in, he asked Jesus to forgive him. I closed with prayer. One guard told me later, two seconds more and he would have shot someone.

One month later we moved to Paso Robles, but kept in touch with the bearded man, matching him with a Pen Friend and enrolling him in a study. He was moved. Later we were asked to do a Christmas program at San Quentin, where the man had been moved to a new cell block. When we found his cell it was clean and well-ordered, as was the man, who had shaved his beard and cut his hair short. He reached out a hand and we prayed again. We moved to Kentucky, but kept in touch. After thirty-three years he was released to be free in Jesus.

No, we don't like crime or criminals, neither does Jesus. But on the Cross he invited two to go home with Him - one accepted the other did not.



Jake's Spot

I have many concerns about churches now days. I see all the judgment that comes out of a church, all the gossip and unholy actions. Why? Isn't it supposed to be a place of worship? For anyone who wants to learn and see what the Lord does!? People have stopped going to church because of this, and have lost interest in even trying, because what is the use of going somewhere to be judged on how you live or shunned because of how you dress. That is just another reason I want to continue doing what we do. We need to show people that Jesus wants us just as bad as we need Him. He chose to save two prisoners that were put to crucifixion with him. One chose to accept Jesus the other did not. What does this show?

Jesus does not care what type of person you are, He doesn't care what you wear or how you live, He simply wants you to believe in Him. He will save you from all that can possibly harm you. And the one thing that I want to say is, HE IS REAL. HE CAN, and HE WILL. Just believe, pray, spread the word of God. He changed my life. He can change yours, too.

I GOT A LETTER!

I wrote to at least 35 ministries and churches and got no answer. When I got Someone Cares address I threw it away. Thank God I went and found it. Through them I got a great couple, and got enrolled in a Bible study. Someone Cares!



THE DOG DID IT!

If you sent letters to your inmates that might have arrived here sometime around the week of April 1st (and seriously, folks, this is no joke!), we are sorry to say that our doggies found the pile of letters irresistible and they were soaked, rendering most of them unreadable! If you think your letter may have been here during that time period, please re-write your inmate. Thanks for understanding.



HELP US BY PLACING A LOCAL AD!

See if your local paper has a Christian section and will place an ad for this non-profit organization free of charge. The main thing we are promoting is the Pen Friend Program and Paper Sunshine. Below is the ad, which you can copy and give to the paper, or re-type it and send via email. Thank you in advance for giving it a try! (If many of you are able to get this accomplished, the harvest of new and greatly needed Pen Friends could be great!)

SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY

We invite you to join us in spreading "Paper Sunshine" to those imprisoned, through this risk-free Prison Ministry program!

Don and Yvonne started this Ministry over thirty years ago as a non-profit organization. In 1973, God took hold of Don, who was on a direct path to hell, and led him to Yvonne, who then led him to Christ. Don was an ex-atheist, ex-drug addict and ex-convict whose motto had been "live fast, die young, and have a good looking corpse." As a new Christian, Don felt "lost" in church, and then God called him back to prison, to minister to those in need. He began teaching the Bible, even as he was learning it himself along the way, with Yvonne's help. They both became full time volunteer Prison Chaplains, unpaid by Church or State.

During one prison visit early on, Don and Yvonne came across an inmate who had not received a personal letter in twenty years, and the Pen Fried Program (aka "Paper Sunshine") was formed. Besides visiting with and teaching inmates, they formed a "Dress-out Program" that provided at least 150,000 inmates with free clothes upon their release. Also, over one million inmates have completed Bible Studies that the Ministry provides free of charge.

Since all mail, to and from the inmate, goes through the Ministry's address as a "clearing house," it is a risk-free program and is very easy to do. In Matthew 25 Jesus makes it clear His wishes about "visiting" those in prison (which you can do from the comfort of your own home through Paper Sunshine!). Jesus further set the example for us on the cross, when He invited the criminals next to Him to join Him in Paradise.

For more information, or to request an inmate Pen Friend, contact us at Someone Cares Prison Ministry, P.O. Box 11245, Fort Wayne IN, 46856, or via email at sdapm@someonecares.org, or call (260) 387-7423. Check out our website at www.someonecares.org. God Bless.