



SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY NEWSLETTER



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Quietly Changing Lives

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See Don and Yvonne

Catch up on back issues

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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.

MINISTRY IN PRISON vs. PRISON MINISTRY



We would like to clear up some confusion regarding the differences between these two ministries:

Ministry in Prison – A popular service where volunteers teach a Bible class, preach a sermon and possibly conduct a music program, specifically geared to draw members of the same faith. This may take place in a chapel, but most often in class rooms. (Catholic inmates have a different type of service.) Clearance is required for the volunteers, who must be escorted everywhere they go.

They are not allowed to visit one to one with inmates, and cannot contact families. With overcrowding in prisons, this is getting harder to do.

Prison Ministry – This is what we do, and it requires a different kind of clearance. We have been to the police academy three times in three different states. We are not escorted anywhere and have access to All Faiths. We attend prison staff meetings so we are aware of problems, mostly to do with gang activity. Often with my background I hold these meetings. Being able to mingle with gang members has brought many of them to Church. We have massive one to one time with inmates, which is much needed. The most important part of volunteering in prison is the one to one talks. (This can also be done by you through Paper Sunshine!) We are allowed to contact family members, and we also work with other prison ministries to get things accomplished. However, this type of service is being cut back due to lack of staff, and often times because prisons lack chaplains.

RELIGION IN PRISON

Sounds like a good thing, but it can be a nightmare. At one of the prisons that Yvonne worked at almost thirty years ago, we turned the Chapel into an All Faiths Chapel. This bunched the doctrines of some churches together. The Muslim religion takes a bad rap since often black gang members use it as a meeting place. We have a lot of inmate friends that are true Muslims who must deal with that problem.

I am reminded once of a challenge I received, which was to preach a sermon without using the name of Jesus. I could not do it, and when I failed the head Chaplain cautioned me; however, six members of the Muslim faith said, "Let the brother speak. We know who Jesus is." Amen.

UNITED WE STAND

We would like to work with other Prison Ministries. If your church does any type of ministry in any U.S. prison (not jail), please have them email us with their contact information, at sdapm@someonecares.org. By the way, visit our new web page www.someonecares.org and go to archived newsletters for a real trip through time.

At this time we wish to thank all those who for 87 cents and up have supported this non-profit organization for so long. We sure have needed your help in these tough times.

SPREAD THE NEWS ABOUT PAPER SUNSHINE

We are asking that everyone give a copy of this newsletter to their Pastor, asking them to read it to their congregations and tell them about this Ministry and Paper Sunshine. Our program has done a massive amount of good for those involved, even those who are free. Christians have been commissioned to do much by God's word, including feeding, clothing, and visiting those in prison. God blesses us for doing what He tells us to do and puts out a severe penalty for not. Many will go to Heaven because of this Ministry. If your Pastor will help organize a program in your church, God will grant the increase.

In working with Voice of Prophecy (VOP), Someone Cares Paper Sunshine has led one million inmates to complete Bible Studies. Amen! It has also prompted many groups to go into prisons to teach the Bible. Please remember VOP in your prayers.

Here is how the Pen Friend (aka Paper Sunshine) program works. When you contact us we match you with an inmate pen friend. You then receive an application and a letter from him or her. You respond to their letter and we pray that a blessing is received by all. You do not ever use your own address, but all mail is funneled through Someone Cares. As an added protection, we can assign you with a "pen name." When the inmate writes to you (at our address) we read their letter for your protection (but we never read the letters you write), then send it to you.

Since writing letters has become a lost art, we have started a new email program. You can type your letter to the inmate and email it to us, we will then "snail mail" your printed letter (with the top cut off so your email address does not show) to the inmate. When the inmate sends their reply, we scan it and email it to you.

JUST A BUNCH OF KIDS

We received this letter a couple of weeks ago: "My two boys know my husband and I write several inmates and send something every month to you, their Ministry. Without us knowing it they gathered up a lot of stuff and had a rummage sale. Here is \$97.17 from John and James."



DO THE CRIME, DO THE TIME

Prison today is almost in as bad of shape as the country. So many people wonder, why bother? Believe me, after years of experience there are problems everywhere. If you break the law you deserve to be punished, but just because a person has made a mistake doesn't mean we give up on them.

Here are some examples of people in prison:

- Mel was a bookkeeper who lost his job and could not get another. He cashed a couple of bad checks and went to prison. A forty-five year old man, thrown into the arm pit of society, he could not face the system and the fear and committed suicide.
- A pastor got caught with his hand in the collection jar and went to prison for five years, where he formed a choir and taught a Bible class.
- Rocky was a drug dealer sentenced to a long time. Being Mexican the gangs tried to recruit him. It wasn't easy, but he was able to stay clear of trouble and ended up one of Yvonne's guys.
- Bob was given a lot of years for a lot of crimes and was given more time in prison for additional crimes, sentenced to a total of fifty-five years. He turned his life over to Jesus and the Lord got him out in eleven years. Now he goes into prison as a volunteer.
- At San Quentin many hard core inmates got tired of the madness of prison, the cheating, stabbing and being stabbed. One man turned his life to Christ and started several self help groups. Upon release he got a job at a boot camp for gang kids. He made a difference.
- Betty was a lady of the night and a drug addict who had been locked up eleven times. Jesus found her through Someone Cares. At fifty-five she kicked all the old habits, got out of prison, got married, and now works with the Salvation Army.

Yvonne's Corner

There is something I would like to say, and that is that we should live our lives as being and acting like Christians, as opposed to preaching in our letters.

There are lots of ways you can let your light shine and there are plenty of things to talk about, such as summertime activities that you or your church are doing, trips you've taken, etc. Most inmates are lonely and come from broken homes, and many of them, both male and female, have been abused. We can assure you that most of them have no idea why you, a perfect stranger, are writing to them.

When we worked in prison I always let the inmates know that I was no better than them. We have all sinned and I told them I was one of them, a sinner. We should convey to everyone the happiness and joy of being a Christian, even if it's just a smile, telling others to have a nice day, or one of my favorites - have a blessed day!!!

Happiness is to know the Savior. Here is a challenge for all of you who write—before the end of the year try to find one other person to write to an inmate. Imagine if the new person would get someone else to write, it would be like a snowball effect! That would help with the two large piles of inmates waiting for someone.

By the way, "Jake's Spot" will be back soon. Currently he is busy getting school lined up for this year, and besides going to college he works two jobs. I wish I had some of his energy!



NEVER GIVE UP

Twenty-five percent of inmates who receive a Pen Friend never respond to the first letter, and seventy-five percent of the free folks get discouraged and quit. Mary wrote a total of thirty-one before ending up with the eight inmates she has written to for over five years.

Ricardo contacted over thirty groups, churches, and organizations before he got to us. He was a Christian to begin with and then became a better one. Since getting out he has started his own little ministry. Never give up, Jesus is coming!

Many of you know of my background, and I am still amazed that at the age of forty God could take a person with my past and put me together with an angel, Yvonne. For almost forty years we have loved each other and ran this Ministry together. So many of you have been along for the ride and many have gone to rest. When you get up after prayer are you looking for something to do for Jesus? Before you go to bed do you spend a little time in the Bible, Koran, or Torah or just on your knees?

Happiness is to know the Savior, living a life following the example of His behavior. "Happiness is the Lord, real joy have I..." (I hope you know the rest.) From the very first church I preached at to the 401st one, we have grown in the area of visiting prisons from California to Florida, which has been quite a learning experience. I learned to put a sermon together from José Rojas, Walter Pearson, Randy Roberts and Dwight Nelson. My father-in-law, Clyde Groomer, left me his sermon notes, and I pray he does not catch up with me in Heaven to tell me the changes I made he would not have done.

WHERE THE RUBBER HITS THE ROAD

We are more than humbled that God has blessed this Ministry and us. Before Jesus and Yvonne came along, my motto of "live fast, die young and have a good looking corpse" almost came true. On my next birthday I will be 80 and God willing I'll still be helping HIM help us (with a little golf, tennis, bowling, and swimming to keep me going).

We do not know what the future holds but we know well who holds the future. Taking the talent God has blessed us with, we will keep this Ministry growing. I am proud that many organizations recognize us as an authority on Prison Ministry. We have arranged to have ads placed in several publications to get folks to write through us. We will try to help others do what we do, since if something happens to us Jake has a big load to carry.

Men, women, boys and girls locked up are finding Jesus through Someone Cares. Over a million Bible studies have been completed by inmates and we hope to reach two million. It will take your prayers, your financial support, and your spreading the word to get folks to write inmates. It is not easy but it is a blessing when someone turns their life around because of God.

We are going back to the start when our appeal was for \$1.50 a month for five years. Postage is going up; the post office is going down. Even though it takes time we will enter the email world with Paper Sunshine. (If you don't have a computer, ask a friend if you can use theirs.) We will match you with as many inmates as you can handle.

ITEMS WE CAN USE

A used computer for Ronna so we all have computers; a used Viking sewing machine (Yvonne's eyes don't thread a needle as well as they used to); any loose stamps you have laying around; a quality used car; the names of anyone you know doing Prison Ministry. Mostly friends, we need your prayers.

This Ministry keeps growing as others close down. Jesus is coming as soon as we get the work done He has asked us to do. Our prayers reach out to you and yours.

God Bless!

Don, Yvonne, Jake and Ronna