



SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY NEWSLETTER



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Quietly Changing Lives

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IT IS REALLY TRUE
GOD LOVES YOU.

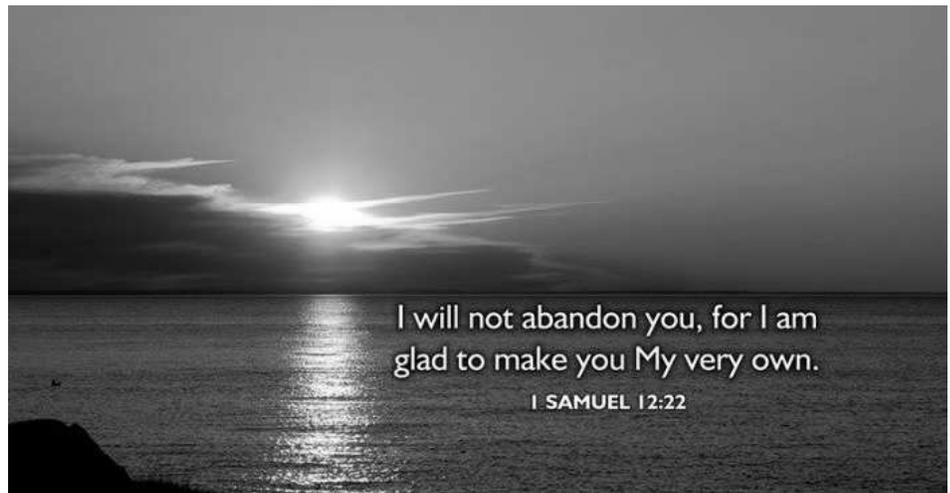
BECAUSE OF YOU,
SOMEONE CARES.

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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.

HE WAS THERE ALL THE TIME



I will not abandon you, for I am
glad to make you My very own.

I SAMUEL 12:22

God has blessed us so much, especially me. By the time you read this I will have turned 81 years young. I had a physical and my doctor is writing a journal on me. I have never had any childhood or adult sickness. I drank enough alcohol to turn my liver to pulp, but it is in great shape. As a result of heavy drinking and drugs I became a diabetic that has been cured, and I no longer have to take insulin. I play golf and read mail, I bowl and read mail, I play tennis and do mail, I swim and write sermons. I have mild scars from being stabbed and shot.

When Pastor Euell Ashley led me to Christ I came up off my knees and have never had withdrawals from any drugs or alcohol. Stan Read let me teach bible because of my prison background and I started teaching within three weeks after accepting Christ. Dick Cadavero, a Bible teacher at an Academy, became my friend and mentor. I had a rule when I taught that if I was not sure of an answer I would bring the answer the next week. Willard Register, another friend and mentor, also helped me There have been many others who pushed, pulled or shoved me forward. Six months after accepting Christ I became a full time unpaid Chaplain at Soledad, soon followed by Yvonne. I spent much time conversing with Jesus. Many in the church were not sure of our intentions. We just let go and let God. Our formal ordination came a year later.

A DEBT I OWED



After I became a Christian I had a problem. Who was I? I had given up all the things I used to do. No drugs, no drinking, married and happy. Yvonne and I chatted one night. She said, "Before you quit drinking you spent hours in bars. You knew everyone there. How many had you visited or had invited into your home? None?" I replied, "Let's go bar hopping and see them and try to show them the difference!"

We went to my favorite bar and walked in. When they saw me someone yelled, hey, there's Don! Let's buy him a drink! Sorry folks, I don't drink. What? They couldn't believe it, and they listened to my story. What was the result of the day? I got a call from our pastor asking me if I was drinking again! Seems one of the "saints" saw me and spread the word. It took quite a while before I was accepted. A few years later I tried to contact some of those old bar buddies, and all but one was dead.

ASK IN THE NAME OF JESUS

I stay amazed as we move through life as to how God's Word is used or misused. All the directions are there and too many of us worry about small things. I preach and teach, but I also listen. Hundreds of folks who have joined this Ministry have told us they are never asked to do anything by their pastors.

When I was at the church in Soquel I answered the phone. The man was drunk and had suicide in mind. Yvonne and I met him. We took him to church the next day, and most all eyes looked down at him. The youth took him to potluck, and the parents jumped all over us. He is sober today, married with a child, and attends a nice church. Sadly, it is not unusual for churches and pastors to want nothing to do with those who need help and the love of Jesus the most. We have gotten over a hundred folks writing inmates after their pastor advised them not to.

One day at San Quentin I met with a group of black inmates who were all associated with prison gangs. I was amazed at how well they knew the Bible. One said, "Hey Chaplain, when I was a kid we had all day church."



BEING GOOD STEWARDS

We are going to try again to get on Christian radio. If anyone has any ideas or contacts in this regards, please send them our way. We will continue our ad in the Recorder and are looking for another print media in order to help us get future Pen Friends. How about YOU?

A HONEYMOON AND A VACATION

As soon as Ronna can move around and Jake can make time we are finally planning on taking a vacation, probably to Canada, and then a honeymoon, which will probably be in California. To those of you who made this possible we prayerfully thank you.



Letters

Paper Sunshine

I was sitting in my cell thinking of what lay ahead. Thirty eight years of my life in here. If I can keep things straight I can work to a lower custody. I will be 68, what is the use. A voice came through the bars, "Put your past away and make the future positive." I went to my door and saw a very large black inmate. He said, "I know what you were thinking. Been there, done that. Fill this out and let whatever happens happen." It was an application for Paper Sunshine. A lot of stuff, but maybe...just maybe?

I filled it out and forgot about it. A couple of weeks later I got a letter from a 14 year old boy. He talked about baseball and making use of his time. There was a closing note from his dad. They made it clear they were Christians and would try to direct me that way. Baseball. I played in grammar school and my first year of high school. Then getting high took over. I had nothing else to do so I wrote the kid. The next letter he had a picture of him and his team, and a note from each of them. I also received a Bible and Bible study from Someone Cares? Why?! I wrote and Don wrote back, "Because He saved me and HE asked me to save you."

That was twelve years ago. I finished high school in here and got a job learning about cars. This morning I went to the parole board, my first trip. No one get out the first trip. I received a pardon and am going home in July. No, it was not easy nor is getting out and getting started going to be. But Jesus said, "Come to the water, stay by my side."

Your Brother in Christ,
John

She Proved Someone Cares

My name is Angelo. I grew up in the gang world of Los Angeles. I have seen my brother and cousin shot and killed in a drive-by shooting. Growing up I knew I would end up in Avenal Prison. I Did. I never thought I would end up in a prison with AIDS. I also did not think my life would end so soon. Lying in a bed, everyone scared to come near, I cried a lot. One day I hear a voice say, "My name is Yvonne. May I sit and chat?"

Wow. We talked a lot that day. She asked if we could have prayer. She reached out and held my hand as she prayed. Don came as the prayer ended. He sat at my bed we talked a bit more. He put his arm around me and we prayed again. These two were the only ones to touch me.

(Angelo sent us the above on pieces of paper. He died soon after that.)

BECOME A PART OF SOMEONE CARES

We do not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future. We get calls and referrals almost daily. Finally we are receiving some calls from pastors interested in getting church members involved with Prison Ministry. If you belong to a Christian men or women's group, our program is ideal for that. Ask your group if they would like to reach out and show that someone cares? You can write to one inmate as a group, but preferably each could request their own inmate (or inmates!). Sunday schools and Sabbath schools are really needed to participate. If each of you would ask your pastor to call us, we can explain all about our Ministry, ensure them of the safety of the program, and resolve any fears or reservations they may have. Thank you for your help!

SEND US YOUR STORIES

We would love to print some of your experiences you've had with your pen friend, either good or bad, so please write to us. Has your inmate friend written something interesting or touching? Perhaps a poem? Ask the inmate's permission first, then send us their stories or poems to have printed in our newsletter.

CONFESSION: GOOD FOR THE SOUL



My eyes are not as good as the rest of me. Often I rush and make mistakes, but I will improve on this. We have so many Pen names that are alike, and I've sent mail to some of the wrong people. I've been chewed out big time lately, but I ask for your patience and understanding, and especially your prayers that we get the extra help needed to work this Ministry. If you receive a letter that does not belong to you, give me a call and I'll give you the correct address (instead of sending it back with a tongue lashing), and then I'll send you the proper person. As we've mentioned, this Ministry is continuing to grow. If anyone has any ideas that would help us, please let us know!

SAVED FROM SIN, NOT IN SIN

When I first became a Christian the Bible told me many things I should do, or must do. Here is a poem I would like to share.

Living Sermons

by Florence Belle Anderson

There isn't a word that a preacher can say,
No matter how lovely or true,
Nor is there a prayer that his eager lips pray
That can preach such a sermon as you.

You vowed to serve Christ, and men know that you did.
They're watching the things that you do;
There isn't an action of yours that is hid,
Men are watching and studying you.

You say you're "no preacher"; yes, but you preach
A wonderful sermon each day;
The acts of your life are the things that you teach,
It isn't the things that you say.

Oh, Christians, remember, you bear His dear Name,
Your lives are for others to view,
You are living examples; men praise you or blame,
And measure all Christians by you.

WHAT PRISON IS LIKE FROM THE INSIDE

We have written before that inmates are sent to prison as punishment, not *for* punishment. Most inmates have little education, and many do not get any while in prison, but they should. As we are a "friendship" Ministry, try to help the inmate help themselves. Gangs are everywhere in prison and very dangerous. Most inmates join a gang for protection and pay for that somehow. With massive over crowding most are in their cells 23 hours a day. Drugs are everywhere. Young inmates are often sexually abused. I had a young inmate tell me he borrowed some money from an inmate that he could not pay back, which could be life threatening. I took him to staff, who said he

could be sent to another prison if he gave up the name of the inmate. This also could be life threatening. Over the years we have helped inmates get things they have badly needed, such as glasses, false teeth, and in one case an eye. Inmates ask for a lot. If you want to send them something, make sure the prison will accept it. Books must come from a book store. Do not send used books, stickers, or polaroid pictures, as these are ways to get drugs in and are not allowed. If you send money make sure it is just once in awhile. Don't forget to call or email us if you have any problems.