



SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY *Newsletter*



VOL. 2009 No. 6

QUIETLY CHANGING LIVES

JUNE, 2009

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

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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.

THE ROAD TRAVELLED

Hand by hand we stand. We wish we could name all of you whose hand I held after I became a Christian. Especially those that picked me up when I fell. I think often about why God chose me to start a Prison Ministry. I also think of well over 30 years, the massive amount of miles traveling to and from prisons and Churches.

The day I quit a great paying job and drove home to tell Yvonne we were going to work in Prison for the Lord. . . then her, "who is going to pay the bills?" (I am ashamed to say that the "we do not want those kind of people fit" me well.) God's Word told me HE wanted me. I kept my eyes on Jesus and listed to those God sent my way, mainly my help mate, Yvonne.

GETTING ORDAINED

Being an Atheist then at 40, becoming a Christian took a lot of Bible studies. I took every study course I could get my hands on. I studied and taught them at the same time. Then I preached them and taught them again. Not too bad for a kid who dropped out of school in the 6th grade.

Yvonne was such a great

help and helpmate. Chaplain Stan Read was a helper and a pusher. After 10 years, a Church Organization we worked with took our 10 years on-the-job training, the courses I took through Home Study, Andrews University, Liberty Bible, "AA", "E.A" and "N.A," and ordained both Yvonne and I. Several Courses in Pastoral Counseling were vital, and the knowledge gained was often used when working one to one with inmates.

ALL FAITHS CHAPEL

One big learning experience in prison is when you carry the title "Chaplain", you had better know you are the Chaplain of all Faiths.

In training volunteers we try to teach; Do not let your doctrine be a barrier, but rather a bridge to Jesus. Chaplain Read asked me to preach a whole service not once mentioning Jesus. The Chapel was jammed, I started preaching, and in a flash had Jesus up front. Chaplain Read stood. I started again and again, but Jesus kept popping out of my mouth. Read stood up as 5 Muslims came forward and told him – let him Preach we all have to account to one God. Amen.

Yvonne with her new title was given a section of the Prison as her own “800 men.” She chose a Muslim as her clerk. He attended all her services.

We were part of an effort that put the first ever Indian Sweat Lodge in a California Prison.

A CHRISTIAN IS AS A CHRISTIAN DOES

AKA talk the talk and walk the walk.

A young man who knew the Bible well started his own Bible group and was doing a good job. Then he was seen doing drugs and all his credibility was gone.

The Bible says through Jesus “follow me.”

I learned a long time ago that if you are asked a question and are not sure of the answer to say, “I’ll have to check it out and get back to you.” Too many volunteers answer without guidance. If you teach a class, make sure you stay in control and on the subject. Inmates often will try to make a fool of volunteers. They ask questions that are hard to answer, so just tell them you will get the answer, and make sure you do.

PAPER SUNSHINE

The Pen Friend Program was developed to provide a one to one approach to leading men and women to a better life. Pen Pal opened doors we wanted to stay away from. It has taken years to establish this program and it is not a dating service. Still they try.

When you will see you cannot gain control, take over and we will rematch you. Conditions in prison during the economic downturn of the nation are bad. I could do several newsletters on ways they try to get money or things. We don’t say do not give, but just a bit once in awhile. If you have trouble let us handle it. Many Ministries have tried doing what we do and failed. They quit and many of their problems are left for us, which increases our work load.

We have gotten behind but will catch up. Often we get so much mail we pass it on without reading it. A few bad things slipped by and we are sorry. There are probably going to be complaints as we are going to hold mail until we can read it. Our new Church has offered help. We matched some of you with inmates that offended you or you changed your mind and just did not contact us. Please, if you do not want to write, send all the information back. The postage increase has also effected us.

THE TOP OF THE PILE

We have 2 large piles of requests for Pen Friend applications. We would like to send the application to you to send to the inmate instead of us sending the application directly to the inmate. Let us know how you feel about this.

A lot of requests are from hard core prisoners and a real

challenge. Pastors, jump in. If not you, Who? If not now, when? If not here, where?

YVONNE’S CORNER

I want to explain how important it is for you to write or mail the information back to us. That part of communication is vital. We can’t have an inmate waiting for a letter and never receiving one. You have no idea what loneliness is really all about.

Picture being confined to a six by eight foot room where your bed, sink, toilet, and all your belongings are. You might have a small light bulb, and if you are lucky you might have a small mirror, like you would carry in your purse.

Let me tell you about an inmate in a federal prison who was confined to his cell twenty three hours a day. When guards came to the cell there were always two of them, so they had no reason to talk with this inmate. After he was there for fifty years, the Chaplain finally got permission to take this inmate out for a short time just so he might see the outside. As they were out he pointed up to the sky and asked the Chaplain, “What is that?” The Chaplain kindly responded that it is an airplane, the man just shook his head.

They returned to the prison and the inmate returned to his cell. That is what loneliness is – no newspapers, no mail nothing from the outside world.

Want to make a difference with Jesus watching?

As Don and I would go from cell to cell carrying large briefcases of literature to give to the inmates in the locked down units, we would find this loneliness cell after cell. Some of them would take anything I had just to have something to read, even a bookmark, so think what a letter does. It is truly Paper Sunshine.

At the end of the day our hearts would ache, but like I used to tell them, they didn't get there from singing in the church choir! We did have choirs in the chapels for the inmates and they would come to chapel, and I had the privilege of playing the piano and leading them. You should have heard them sing - it was beautiful.

BUT THEY ARE THERE FOR A CRIME

We at times sound like we are defending criminals. NO! Every knee will bow, every tongue confess, then we will be on to Glory. Most of these inmates will be released some day as they were - as they are - or as they can be, because of You.

A CONVICT SHARES HIS TRUE FEELINGS

The real prison is not the prison outsiders know, it is very different!

The real prison is loneliness that sinks its teeth into the souls of men and women and

emptiness that leaves a sick feeling inside. It is anxiety that pushes and swells, uncertainty that smothers and stifles. It is frustration, futility, despair, total indifference. This real prison suppresses, deadens and crushes. Its walls seem to close in on us. It makes life without meaning, without purpose. Inmates struggle fervently to find an answer for themselves. Sometimes the routine of merely living is a weary task. It is the place of vain hope, of hopelessness. This hell hole is the mute drama of inmates who have been paying debts for 5, 10, and 20 even 50 years, but who know the debt will never be paid in full.

Crowded into the slime of correctional institutions are inmates who have seen too many third rate motels in too many cities. Too many smoke filled gin mills on too many skid rows. Too many days without beauty. Too many nights without light.

To say it is formidable is an understatement. Stone walls, steel bars, razor wire, and gun towers almost shout contempt for our fumbling and groping humanity. It listens, unhearing, unheeding, to the cries of the damned.

NOW SOMEONE CARES!

I received the above years ago at San Quentin, with no signature but a drop of blood. It also talked of the promised visits and letters that never came. It made me think of all these

years Yvonne and I have spent traveling to and from prisons and back home. I thought of the hours spent listening to the hate vomited all over us and the anger we wisely held back. I reflected the route we have taken with so very many blessings, finding Yvonne and then Jesus. I thought of the unknown long road ahead and the hours I spent with wise men and women looking for the answers.

Darryl and Carol Ann who prayed for us to keep moving forward. Lee and Pat Grady who supplied food for the table and clothes for the Dress Out Program. Jim Finn who bound us to follow rules I knew not. Chaplain Stan Read and Harry Howard who opened doors and windows.

There are too many folks to name that helped this grammar school dropout get ordained. Chaplain Bill Moors who kept us in the Belly of the Beast.

Then those that supplied the clothes when "The Dress out Program" started".

Followed by the thousands that wrote inmates through Paper Sunshine The Pen Friend Program. Even though we worked full time we were paid by Faith Partners - a lot of you. All making THE GOD SQUAD what it is today.

Bible Schools headed by V.O.P. Amazing facts: Quiet Hour helped over a million inmates complete Bible Studies.

THIS IS OUR MINISTRY

All of you receiving this who have prayed, written inmates, gathered clothes, collected Bibles, and helped support Someone Cares become Members of the God Squad.

I WISH THAT THERE WAS TOTAL UNITY

Growing up when I did there were racial problems, serious in some areas not so bad in others. Prison is a problem of different levels. Gangs are most of the time totally racial. They are mostly North South areas. Religion is a sign of weakness or real strength. We never use to take race into the mix but now we do. A lot of folks got a little angry when we wrote years ago about the Black gangs like the Crips and Bloods. B.G.F made us honorary Blacks, because in prison we were color blind.

But the word was out - we showed no favorites.

I remember one tough black inmate that became a Muslim. Here was a gang member hiding under a religion to get things done. One of that group got into a bit of trouble. I was asked to visit him. He told me this was his new life and his chosen religion. I asked him if he minded if I called his mom and told her that. He almost turned white.

Now in prison there are many real Muslims who follow the rules of the Koran, and many Black inmates who follow the Bible, and many give up as it becomes too confusing. This brings us back to all faiths. In some of the Prisons we have worked in we had to approve the books sent in, and the \$5.00 ordination certificates. We got written up, but never once lost a case. God has got to be weeping looking at all the trouble being caused in HIS name. I hope HE is weary enough to come get us all. He must get by the hurdle - every knee will bow every tongue confess.

A few years ago in Kentucky the Muslims did not have a spiritual leader minister for their high services. They had to have a free person or staff supervisor. Yvonne and I took the Job. We are happy to say both Muslim and Christian Faiths got a blessing.

If you are matched with someone of a different religion, try to learn a bit of what they know and share - it really works.

Prison can be a learning spot and you may become a teacher. Do your best by learning a little about what they may think or what they believe. We will help if you get in a corner.

God Bless.

PRISON LIFE; HEED MY WORDS

*Prison Bunk, Prison Time,
Prison cell.*

*Heed my word's young man,
for what we say is true,
this prison life is hell.*

Its hard, cold and cruel.

It will break or ruin you.

Prison life due is not too cool.

*You get up at dawn, to
the ringing of bells,
off to breakfast you go.*

*Five minutes to eat,
back to your cell.*

*You now are stuck till
the dinner bell sounds.*

This prison life is harsh.

Nasty, bitter, and so profound.

*A racial fight breaks out,
you have nowhere to go.*

*Get down you are told,
Cop's guns then explode.*

Don't move until you are told.

*Heed our advise young man,
prison life isn't bold.*

Believe what I've said,

heed our advise, young man.

*Prison time, prison bunk,
Prison cell.*

*This prison life
will damn your soul.*

*Remember your family,
might they remember you.*