SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY
Quietly Changing Lives
News Letter

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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.

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Directors

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www.someonecares.org

JESUS ON THE MAIN LINE:
Around the world men and women, boys and girls are serving time for crimes committed, and many for nothing. Most deserve to be where they are, but as Christians we must realize they are sent to these main lines as punishment, not for punishment. Prison Ministry was started by Jesus on the cross. Was He looking at you to do the job? If not you, who? Is it for everybody? A letter from inmate Mike Cummings might help.

"This has not been a good morning," writes Mike. "Last night a little Cuban guy I knew from the Chapel, where he worked, was stabbed and killed during the night. A senseless loss of life; he was really trying to turn his life around. Just Sunday he sang in the church about giving his life to God."

Yvonne and I know God heard his plea. Mike talks about messing his life up so much to end up where he is. He wrote

FINAL FALL
I pray this morning Lord,
For the soul who lost the fight.
His life was taken from us
In the middle of the night.
A very senseless killing,
But aren't they all?
I'm sorry it was here,
That he took his final fall.
I'm asking you this morning
For mercy on his soul.
I knew him from the chapel, Lord,
You were his only goal.
Sunday in the chapel
He stood and sang a song.
He offered his life to you, Lord;
This morning he is gone.
I pray his prayers were answered,
And that he crossed the line,
To roam within the realm
He searched so hard to find.
Help them through the heartache, Lord,
Which now may have come their way.
I wish, like You, we knew his thoughts Lord,
As he took his final breath.
Maybe that would stop
Another senseless death - 1/5/98

PRAISE GOD FROM WHOM ALL BLESSINGS FLOW:
So very many years ago when God started this ministry through us, we had no idea the direction it would take. My wife thought I was nuts, quitting a great job to go into a self-supporting ministry, but she came along. Each step of the way we have received many blessings, and have met so many neat friends, in and out of prisons.

I still have the binders we started with, to record what God was doing through us. I will never forget our first donation of $10.00 and a new set of binders to keep track of the funds. Most of them came then from our savings. Week by week and month by month we grew first in
knowledge, then in experience. Then the first computer, which I knew nothing about, was donated. We still used the binders as we learned.

My first speaking appointment in a church was frightening, but God was there. Now almost 450 churches later it all seems so easy. Our first love offering in a church brought in $98.00, our largest $1,143.97. The most important was from a little old lady in Santa Maria, California. She gave us 87 cents and asked us to use it to lead those in Prison to Christ, the true Widow’s Mite. Twenty-some-odd years later, I am keying this on a new computer, and when edited, it will appear on THE WEB!! God's blessings are many. Our new e-mail address at the web is: sdapm@someonecares.org

AN INVITATION TO A MOUNTAIN TOP EXPERIENCE:
Today when people think about prison ministry, they usually don't think very long. God's word tells us to take the gospel everywhere. He tells us "I WAS IN PRISON AND YOU VISITED ME NOT."

From Genesis to Revelation He tells us only one thing: "GO DO:" Both words require action. Would we pay to sit in the grandstand and watch the football teams just huddle? Of course not! We want to see the game. So, think of church as a huddle. The rest of the week, Jesus wants to see some action.

Where? The gospel must be preached to every nation, kindred, tongue and people before He can come back to claim victory. We have goals to reach and souls to win.

PEN FRIEND PROGRAM:
This is a RISK FREE letter writing ministry. It is risk free, because all mail goes through our PO Box and is forwarded to the inmates. They write back then their letters are read by us, and forwarded to YOU! The program is so safe we have children writing child molesters and leading them to Christ!

From Willie: I write this from San Quentin Death Row which is a terrible place. When I arrived here in February of 1982, I suspected life here was going to be one (hell of a test). Was that an understatement! I have seen more crime in San Quentin perpetrated by inmates and staff than I ever saw on the outside. There are things here that would make Hell look like a playground.

I met Don & Yvonne in 1984 and knew they were special people who spoke of God's word like it was an excellent dinner needing to be eaten. We had a few visits here on the row before they got me into their Pen Friend Program, a program they established for guys (and women) they did not even know. Being a convict, I first thought, what were they getting out of it? I found out right quick they wanted to help guys like me that want to get their lives in order. The nice thing about a letter is, it can be read over and over, and the people that write are Christians. My friends [we spoiled him] got me into the word of God. I am so grateful for their encouragement in my effort to grow spiritually and to have sincere friends for life through their ministry. I was rebellious only to find that made them more aggressive in trying to save me from what had misled me all my life myself! Through their efforts to lead me to Christ, I have been able to do the same for others here. May God bless you and keep you until we meet again. The guys here sure miss you both, your love and smiling faces.

TWO CARE:
Those of you who have been with us, those of you new to this ministry, and especially to those of you reading this on THE WEB, we invite you to be a special part. We have hundreds of inmates across the country who have completed one of our Bible Study Courses. These inmates have shown an interest in baptism. We need to know whether it's into our church, your church, or just into the Body of Christ. The Two Care Program is a program of one-to-one or couple visitation man to man, woman to woman, or couples to either. We do not match men to women or women to men. We ask those interested to visit a person in a prison near you once a month for friendship and fellowship, and fact finding. These visits are done in visiting rooms, or through a glass by phone. Prisons do not rehabilitate, so we need to help Jesus regenerate.

SHARE AND CARE:
Betty is a woman in her fifties, in and out of prison all her life. She decided to change and started looking around to find out how. She found most Christians in prison did not practice what they preached, so she studied alone. Through a Chaplain she was sent our way. We arranged for a Pen Friend for her. God matched her with a young couple who wrote often. The change in her bought us seventeen other women who wanted what Betty had. Bob and Joan arranged, through a friend of theirs, to have a local Pastor visit this woman. This started an interest in some of his church members, and they started a Bible study there in prison. The neat part of this story is, Bob and Joan are not members of our church, the friend they contacted was not a member of their church, and the Pastor was a member of still another church. Four separate churches involved with a common cause, leading men and women to Christ.

YVONNE' CORNER:
Ever since I joined Don in this ministry, I have kept a Journal. Every now and then I take different years out to reflect on what God has done through us. Please join me on Wednesday, May 22, 1985. Just another day in most people's lives but not in mine...

Every morning between 9:00 and 9:30 I go to Soledad prison to hold a morning devotional plus other duties. I shall never forget this day. We held the devotional in an All Faiths Chapel at 10 am. In the back of the chapel was the Muslim clerk and two friends.

The clerk said, "Mrs. McClure, may we join you?"
I smiled and said "Yes, all are welcome."

Our chairs were in a circle as usual, and we had prayer before starting. Before prayer the Muslim asked if he could say a few words; I again smiled and said yes, not knowing what he was about to say. First he introduced his friends.

"I want you guys to meet Sister McClure, I consider her and her husband, who is a Chaplain here, to be more than friends to me. I have grown to love them, as God would want me to." He nodded at me and smiled. I was, needless to say, quite surprised and overjoyed. However, wanting to keep the devotional reverent, I thanked the man and his two friends and we bowed our heads for prayer. What followed words cannot really write. We started reading the first and second chapter of Ecclesiastes; everyone took their turns reading around the circle of twenty-two men including our three Muslims. I asked for questions and comments and we had a wonderful time. I closed the devotional reading with Galatians 3:26-29 as we had discussed racial tension in prison. One of the Muslims said he would be back again and I know they will!

The rest of the story goes like this: In that Bible study where 15 regulars, two Muslims joined making seventeen. Out of the seventeen we lost track of five. Of the twelve, all have been out of prison for over five years. Two, including one of the Muslims, went to Bible College. Eight are married, three are engaged. All attend church. One is heading back to prison. This all is because of Jesus. Our Pre-Release and Reentry Program helped a lot. Hebrews 13:3 + Mark 8:34,35 = Mathew 25:41-46.

DRESS OUTS:
We get calls from all over asking us for different ways of getting into Prison Ministry. One of the programs we started years ago in California is the Dress Out Program. This program provides free clothes to men and women being released from prison. This is also an excellent way for the church to open the door of a prison. Men and women in prison have little chance to make or save money while locked up. When released they have usually lost most contacts including family. As an example: in California an inmate is released with $100.00 "gate money." If they do not have clothes, the prison then sells them the clothes they had been wearing out of the gate money. They get a second $100.00 when they arrive at their Parole Office, if they do. Great Ministry! Did not Jesus say "I was naked and you clothed me not"?

One reason we need to get involved with prison ministry is common sense. We put a person in prison for, let's say 10 years. It costs the taxpayer about $35,000 a year to keep that person locked up. Little is done to change, educate, or rehabilitate this person. Then we give them little to make it on. The revolving door of prison has eight out of ten returning to prison because they have no way to make it.

REMEDIAL READING:
This is another ministry to benefit inmates. The illiteracy rate in prison is massive. School classes in prison are being cut, as are most positive programs. Where does all the money go? If you have a talent to teach and a little time to volunteer call your local prison, or us. With both Dress Outs and Remedial Reading, you can get into prison. Seems strange, trying to get in, doesn't it? Once inside, you can branch out and maybe start a Bible class.

HE WEPT:
We would like to share with you a real injustice. Volunteers in prison have been vital to chaplains ever since there have been prisons. God has commissioned us to GO and few do. A friend of ours, a Chaplain, told us he had to cut his volunteer staff in half, which is cutting his religious programs in half. Chaplains become administrators and Satan runs rampant. When we were at San Quentin working under Chaplain Harry Howard, he had a massive number of Volunteers, including many ex-cons who went back to pay a debt. These days, this dedication is being done away with by political ignorance. Ninety percent of those locked up will one day be released. Few make it without Jesus.

The last act Jesus performed as one of us, was to save a convict on the cross, The last Parable in Mathew 25 is the last act of the church prior to His return prison ministry.

FAITH PARTNERS:
We will both admit we never thought we would ever get as big as we have. In fact, we never even thought this would be a full time ministry. But God did. Every day we get calls from other ministries who need help. Every day we get letters from inmates wanting a chance.

If ever asked to do anything in the name of Jesus say "I'll be happy to," and we are. It takes a lot to keep on keeping on.

When God planted the idea of getting 1,000 Christians to give $18.00 a year for eight years that seemed like a lot of money to us. The eight years is up. So we again are going to ask for 1,000 Christians to make a pledge, this time of $5.00 a month for three years. Or a dollar whenever. This way, we can continue to plan God's work and work God's plan. All donations are tax deductible. You do not have to support this ministry to be a part of it. God assures us we will stay in the black and we have for years. Larger one-time donations will help a mite.

PASS IT ON:
We invite you to visit our web site, give us your feedback, and ask your pastor or news editor to put our address in the church bulletin. Show him this newsletter to give him ideas. We're excited about this new opportunity God has provided.
Please remember, "The Christians who move the world are those who do not let the world move them."

Agape,
Don & Yvonne McClure