GOV'NOR GEORGE BUSH SPEAKS OUT:

Thank you for your letter about Faye Tucker. When I was sworn in as the Governor of Texas, I took an oath to uphold the laws of our state, including the death penalty. My responsibility is to make sure our laws are enforced fairly and evenly, without preference or special treatment. According to the Texas Constitution, the Governor may only commute a sentence if the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles recommends it. This they denied. Many people contacted my office about this execution. I respect the strong convictions that prompted some to call for mercy and others to emphasize accountability and consequences. Like many touched by this case, I sought guidance through prayer. I concluded that judgements about the heart and soul of an individual on death row are best left to a higher authority. Karla Faye Tucker acknowledged she was guilty of a horrible crime. She was convicted and sentenced by a jury of her peers. The role of the state is to enforce our laws and make sure all individuals are treated fairly under those laws. My prayers are with Karla Faye Tucker, her victims and their families.

YOUTH PASTOR SPEAKS OUT:

Remove my name from your mailing list. I want nothing to do with Someone Cares Prison Ministry, including continuing to write my Pen Friend.

Why? Because I voiced an opinion on the death penalty in our March Newsletter. I fully understand that the Bible favors the death penalty. I understand Karla Tucker committed those crimes. I also know she was born again, and as such, became a new creation. Our God does not know a sin He does not hate, or a sinner He does not love. This leader of our Youth took a position and that is good. But why stop ministering to his Pen Friend? The death penalty is not a deterrent to crime. In a future newsletter I will deal with the cost of executions instead of life in prison.

DO NOT WRITE ANYMORE?

Would you please do me a favor. When I first got here I received A Pen Friend from Someone Cares. Now I am told the rules have changed and I can no longer have a Pen Friend. I told them the Chaplain gave me the form, they said he did not have the right. So please tell the young people (A Youth Class) not to write anymore, I do not need any more problems. [I will keep you all informed as I do not think any prison has this right.] The Pen Friend Program is a positive program proving good results. The Prison: Leavenworth, Kansas.

SUMMER SLUMP:

Each year during the summer, any self-supporting ministry gets a little worried. We have not had a problem in 7 years and would like to prevent one. For all of you who are new, either through V.O.P or The Web, we are a ministry run by free will offerings of those of you who get this newsletter. Your donations of money, cars and equipment are all tax deductible. Our Tax ID number is 61190123. We have been going since Moby Dick was a guppy through small gifts, with a few larger donors. God will bless whatever help you can furnish. He will bless you abundantly for your generosity!

I'M HAPPY TODAY:

I am overjoyed at the results your Ministry has done for my son. Jerry started getting into trouble as a very young boy and we did nothing to help. The more he got into trouble the more we turned our backs on him. In 1985 he robbed a store and killed the owner. I think went he was sentenced to life we were glad we no longer had the problem. We kept in simple contact with him for awhile but that stopped also.

As we try to put the pieces together, your wife came by his cell at Soledad and gave him several books and offered him a Bible study. He took the books, not the study. One of the books, Steps To Christ, he sent us in 1990 with this note:

"Mom and Dad I can never make up for all the hurt I have done in my life, to you, to others to, myself. But a kind lady gave me this book and inside of it I found a new me. She and her husband started coming by my cell and they introduced me to Jesus. Yvonne told me that no matter what I had done, Jesus would forgive me if I asked. I did not for a long time. One night I was almost killed, and nearly had to kill someone else in here. After lights out I got down on my knees and told Jesus I had no idea of what to do but I did need his help. When I got up such a warm feeling came over me. Now that Jesus has forgiven me, I ask you for the same forgiveness. Please read this book and maybe you can change your mind about how you feel toward me.

I read that book and started thinking how much fun it was as a child going to church." My husband and I are regular Church members now, we have visited our son and we now love him so.
So again I say "I'M happy Today because Jesus took my sins away. Betty

BORN TO LOSE:

Quiet desperation forges full-grown panic as the echo of the steel door seals the fate of a young man in his 20s. "Stay cool, Don't let them see the fear," he tells himself. The antiseptic smell of the prison corridor gives way to the stench of body odors as he treads the gauntlet of his 8x10 cell. "Don't get sick, or you're a dead man," he thinks as the pit of his stomach rumbles. An eternity passes before it's lights out. He rolls in his bunk to face the wall as a silent tear streaks down his cheek. Born to lose-born to lose—even when he shuts his eyes he still sees the burning impression of his cell mate's tattoo "Born To Lose."

BORN AGAIN:

Coiled razor wire may line the walls. Electronic surveillance scans the cell block, but the desperation of prison life remains as vile and hopeless as it was years ago. Two thieves, guilty and sinful, hang on either side of Jesus. One curses the day he was born and blames everyone, the other accepts responsibility, and with the simple words "Forgive Me," receives eternal life. Today we ask each of you in whatever way you can to send this hope to men and women in prisons across the nation and around the world. You just cannot be Born to lose if you are Born Again.

I SENTENCE YOU TO LIFE!

I sat in shocked silence as the Judge handed down the sentence. No, this cannot be! What he is giving me? How could it happen? Let me tell you. I was raised in a small farm town and grew up a happy girl. I was a good student and my folks were God-fearing people. When I graduated from High School I had a choice to make; my parents helped. I wanted to go to college and they made arrangements for me to move to an Aunt's home near the school I would attend. Things at my Aunt's were not the same as home but it was O.K. My grades were good and I met a young man. My Aunt did not go to church and neither did the young man I was dating, and so I did not, either.

I was scared of several of my boyfriend's friends. One night, Jerry, one of those friends, asked me to drive him to the store to pick up some stuff for a party. I DID NOT WANT TO BUT DID. I stayed in the car for what seemed like forever and was shaken by the sound of gunfire. I opened the car door as Jerry came running out of the store. "Drive," he yelled as he pushed me into the car. I drove in fear and did not see the young boy crossing the street until I hit him. I was quickly arrested and charged with accessory to murder of the store owner, and murder for killing the boy while fleeing the scene of a crime. The rest was a blur for a long time until one day a man standing in front of my cell said, "Jesus loves you."

Did He still?? Yes! I again found peace in Jesus. Jerry had told the court that I knew what he was doing and cut a deal to get a light sentence. Our God works wonders, as Jerry also accepted Christ and after five years told the truth. Today I am free after seven wasted years, and two lives that cannot be bought back. I am writing this to you because I do not know the person who came to my cell and I just wanted to thank anyone who takes the time to care.

VOICE OF PROPHECY:

We were on the air for 5 days in May and the Holy Spirit blessed. We got call after call and almost wore out call waiting.

The Email came in bunches from France, Germany, Canada, Japan, Hong Kong. God's people were crying out to serve Him. I wish all the Pastors could be here to see, hear and read the comments from all of you. Churches across the country, around the world, are looking to serve Jesus and don't seem to be getting the direction. We, with God's blessings thank each of you who takes a part in this ministry.

One area we need to build up a reserve is for postage. We need to try to get stamps to inmates, since you cannot get them sent in.

Writes Terry: "Don, I got 13 letters from the person you assigned me. Thank God she kept writing, until I got out of the Hole and sold my dinner for a stamp to write her. [This is common]

YVONNE'S CORNER:

Folks, before I share what is on my mind, let me try to surprise my husband, Don. On the eighth of June he will be sixty-five. No, not thinking of retirement but just getting into second gear. It would be nice if you and your inmates, could send cards, E Mails what ever, he works so hard.

We met with a wonderful group of ladies to chat about prison Ministry. It was as always a learning experience on how little the public knows about the high cost of prisons. Also how little they know about the problems our kids go through: The peer pressure of gangs; abuse (not at home but just making it through a day). Kids in the 'Hood and slum areas of the world would like to have an eighteenth birthday, much less a sixty-fifth. But they know they will not. Our dear friends, please talk to time to communicate with your kids, or grand kids, before someone else does. We have all seen on TV the destruction done by kids with guns. Here in Michigan a twelve-year-old boy is being tried for murder. He looks like a baby, but killed like a man with no remorse.

It really is time the Church got off the seat of its pants and got involved. Are you Standing on the Promises or just sitting on the premises? Politicians worry about jobs instead of what is destroying our homes and our kids. We know what the Bible says about Church and State, but brothers and sisters, someone [neat name] has to do something, sometime!
THINK!

Is anybody happier because you passed this way?
Does anyone remember that you spoke to them today?
The day is almost over, and its toiling time is through!
Is there anyone to utter a kindly word to you?
Did you waste the day or use it?
Was it sorely spent?
Did you leave a trail of kindness, or a scar of discontent?
As you close your eyes in slumber, do you think that God will say,
You have earned one more tomorrow for what you did today?

Art Collins

THE JOY OF MY PEN FRIEND:

Just a little story here I think you might enjoy. I always pass your newsletters on to my friend Carlos. Some other inmates commented to him how he received letters and always wrote back and they had no one to write to them. Carlos told them how we "met" through your ministry and he gave them some of your newsletters. What a beautiful witness for Christ this young man is, and I'm claiming these other two men's souls for Christ even now. I know you are smiling now and rejoicing with me. [YES!] God bless you both, and I pray my small monthly offering can help toward the high costs.

Pat F.

GONE. WHO KNOWS WHERE?

I am a 38-year-old with no kids, and my wife gone, who knows where! I get one free letter a week here, but I have no one to write to! I'm only asking, if you have anyone who would write to help me, for every time the mail comes I get so depressed I sometimes cry "yes I cry" I come up for parole but with no place to go. I can't get released until I serve my full sentence. Having someone to write will help. The Chaplain here gave me your address and said, "these people will help you."

Rick

WHERE DO THEY COME FROM?

We have been watching really close how our Ministry has grown. Let me give one example of a prison here is Michigan. One inmate wrote for a Free Bible Study, which he received along with an application for a Pen Friend. He got a Pen Friend. A friend of his got a Pen Friend, and then a friend of the friend's. Now 33 men have Pen Friends and all are doing Bible Studies.

WHO WENT WRONG? I'M SITTING IN JAIL.

They wonder where my mother went wrong, so I'm writing this poem.

My mother planted Church in my heart,
The devil tore it all apart.
My mom sang "Amazing Grace,"
I hated the whole human race.
My mother picked up a Bible,
I picked up a gun.
My mother walked to church,
From the law I did run.
When I killed a man, I killed my Mother's soul,
Now they're takin' me to the execution hole.
So when they lay me to rest,
Please put on my tombstone
"I'm the only Hell my mother ever raised,
That's why I died alone.

Debbie S

HOW HIGH IS THE NUMBER?
A person commits a crime, let's say murder.

First is the dead person, his family and friends. Using a man I know as an example who did kill someone, he went to prison for life. His wife and three kids went to a different prison, only God knows for how long. His wife's parents suffer the embarrassment as well as his parents.

Everyone is sentenced to some kind of prison. In this case the wife and kids went on welfare, as did the wife and kids of the person he killed. This is costly. Now, other than welfare costs there is the cost of keeping this man locked up. He is in a state where it only costs $28,000.00 a year. He is 33. Let's say he lives to seventy-three: 40*$28,000=$1,120,000 which is enough, but the older he gets the higher the cost. A prison system of 128,000 inmates paid a medical contact fee for managed care of $238 million dollars in 1997. Two medical facilities realized a $25 million dollar profit. Does this not indicate that the contract was a bit generous with taxpayer money? With all this corruption, where is the money for rehabilitation? Oh, a final touch: this same state's leading newspaper published an article showing that eight doctors, who had their medical licenses placed on probation, were working in prisons!

IF YOU DO THE CRIME, DO THE TIME:

Some folks think we are a little easy on inmates. We are not. I believe in punishment for crimes, just like God's word says. But we send men and women to prisons AS punishment, not FOR punishment.

Live fast, die young, and have a good-looking corpse is the motto of today's gang member. Prison does not change that thinking but adds to it. The theory of "The Rich get Richer, the Poor get Prison," is so true. Yet many in prison with three hots and a cot would rather be there than getting killed in drive-bys. God wants us to help these folks.