CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME

GOD has once more called for Someone Cares, Yvonne and I, to go where He wants us to go. When we left California we never thought we would be moving back. We did not leave "Our Hearts in San Francisco," yet more and more things kept happening to us showing that we were needed there. We prayerfully asked God that if He wanted us in California again, to show us the way. He parted the water and sent us a pair of saints who have provided us with a home and a way to afford it all. Say a big Amen to Nancy and Steve! We will be based in Visalia, within easy reach of seven prisons and all the wonderful church friends we left seven years ago. To think of serving God, and being back home, brings joy to our hearts. We were recently sent a box of avocados from a friend there. Yvonne took a seed, put out the fleece as Gideon did, and said, "If this grows we will plant it in California, as God will find a way"

The tree has flourished abundantly and is now six inches high. We will be planting that tree, and God's word, in California and all points East. Please ask your pastors to book us as we want to be busy everywhere right away.

MOVING

Friends, let me tell you it is really expensive and will tap our reserve a bit. If you are not a Faith Partner but want to be a part of the excitement ahead, please send what you can. We are taking every short cut we can to be good stewards of the Lord's funds. God will bless every extra dime you send and we will use it to His Glory. Isn't it neat that when we move to Heaven there will be no packing, no decision on what to take or leave, no negotiating for the moving van, no boxes. That trip is prepaid and we have a reservation!

DRESS OUT PROGRAM

The first thing we will get started is one of the very first programs we had, providing free clothes for inmates who have no money when they are released. We still hope this program will inspire other ministries to join with us in making it a nationwide program.

ORGANIZATIONAL PEN FRIEND GROUPS

We need to really expand the Pen Friend Program by starting Care Groups in all major areas this ministry reaches, which seems like everywhere. Mary writes: I wanted to write and say hello. I can't share enough how you two are a blessing to so many. When I needed a friend, I was sent an application with a Bible course I signed up for. I did not even ask, but God knew. I now have a Christian Pen Friend because someone really cared. Getting mail is like getting a visit as you can read the letters over and over.

TWO CARE PROGRAM

With so many joining us, we will start a one-to-one visitation program in every California prison with men and women inmates already involved with our Pen Friend or Bible study programs.

THE CONVICT THAT WAS

I once knew a convict so depraved
His morals were foolish, his life unsaved.
He said in his heart that God did not care.
There was no hope, life was unfair.
He made stupid choices that he thought were cool,
Found out later he was but a fool.
He had lot of buddies, most just like him,
Filled with confusion, and burdened with sin.
In and out of prisons he burned out the game,
And came very close to going insane.
But one day someone brought God's word to his heart,
Promising freedom and a new heart.
Down on his knees in that dungeon so dark,
He cried "Dear Jesus please set me free,
I thank God HE DID-"
That convict was me!

Domenic

FAMILY OF GOD

We want you to know we have adopted our Pen Friend as a spiritual brother, not through legal paper work, but through Holy Spirit intervention cemented in our hearts. I knew Amos was a gift from God, as did my husband. Although I was a Christian longer than Amos, he began teaching me spiritual things right away that I that was unaware of. God's word does say "God blesses those who bless others." Being involved with your ministry really shows what it is to be a Christian.

I'M FREE:

My prison home is cold and grey and made of rock and steel.
It's filled with tears both night and day with little love to feel.
The sick and sad and broken men, who suffer here with me,
Cannot recall the moment when they last were gay and free.
Yet I am happy and free though tombed within this hell,
For mighty acts of God I see,
Sparrows fly outside my cell, and go from fence to tree,
I know He grieves their every fall And He grieves here with me.

DEAR ANN LANDERS

Although I read your column regularly, I have never been motivated to write until now. The letter from the Crestview inmate did it. I am incarcerated in Michigan a long time-long enough know that the Pen Pal scam your inmate claims is common is not common at all. I believe the vast number of inmates who correspond with people they've never met do not try to manipulate them for money, stamps, cigarettes and so forth. I write to several folks and enjoy their friendship and would not risk losing it. I also don't want to be put in the same category as that clown.

Another writes: I have been an inmate and know more about prison life and inmates than the generally misinformed public. One of the first things I learned about inmates, being one, is that they are fathers, brothers, sons, cousins, a true cross section of the American public. For him to say all inmates are con artists is as ludicrous as saying all postal workers are gun-toting homicidal maniacs.

SOMEONE CARES OPINION

We handle more inmate mail than all the other ministries put together. We are so familiar with our Pen Friends that we just need to spot check 10% of the mail now. Sure, men and women in prison ask for money and stamps. In twenty years I have reported 11 inmates for sexual letters. I have advised, then rematched, inmates who asked for money too often. With the safety valves we put in place, problems are rare.

I wish we could match every hard core inmate; we would guarantee a change in them. These tough, shank (knife)-packing guys cry just like you and me. Thousands of inmates have been and are writing through us, and a whole bunch are writing their friends direct, as they have built up trusting friendships. There are sick people in prison, and often mental cases. We weed these out as gently as we can.

I will print any negative letter or bad experience any of you have had. Printing the good stuff would take months. We do not allow problems from the get-go. When an inmate writes asking for a woman 20 to 30 we send a stern note to the hustler. The application the inmate must fill out details the rules. There have been few problems because of this, and we promptly handle any that do arise.

HOW DOES IT FEEL?

How does it feel as I sit and reminisce?
How does it feel when I think about the one I really miss?
How does it feel knowing my life hasn't ended, just on pause?
How does it feel knowing all the pain I've caused?
How does it feel now that I treasure my precious life?
How does it feel getting another chance, by the power of God's might?
How does it feel having the knowledge of reality I now possess,
Only God's future knows, but He holds me in HIS hands.

Tony

YES YOU MAY:

We are often asked if you can still write your Pen Friends through us when they are released. Yes. My dear friends, if your friend does not write right back, think of this: They may not have a, pen, pencil, paper, envelope, and most important, a stamp. Please write once a month until they answer.

Because of massive gang activity, inmates are being moved all over the U.S. If you lose yours in the shuffle, write the Chaplain or the Department Of Corrections in their State. We cannot take the time to do this for you. Work out a middle person if you must. Please.

HARD TO BELIEVE

During our last broadcast I got a call from a church in Columbus, Ohio wanting to get involved with writing. We will take 100 names, they said; I sent 50 that day. We also matched hundreds of others. Now, once this Church got the names, they had to have a meeting on how to do what-ever. Then they thought it would be wise to have us come down and explain. The inmates waited. Finally I had them send the names back. Brothers and sisters, we need not have committee meetings to get God's work done! We matched over 1,000 inmates that week-all but the fifty. Now, some of you have received a name and have not written. Please do so TODAY.

CALL A CHAPLAIN:

Prison Chaplains are often the loneliest people in the world. The prison system wants them to be cops, and the Lord wants them to be preachers. If there is a prison near you, or the one your Pen Friend is in, call and wish them well or send a thank you note from you and us.

YVONNE'S CORNER:

A question that often comes to my mind is: Are we living the life that would reflect Christ to those we come in contact with on a daily basis?

If Jesus came to your house to spend a day or two
If He came unexpectedly, I wonder what we'd do.
Oh, I know you'd give your nicest room to such an honored Guest,
And all the food you'd serve to Him would be the very best,
And you would keep assuring Him you're glad to have Him there serving Him in your own home is joy beyond compare.
But when you saw Him coming, would you meet Him at the door with arms outstretched in welcome to your Heavenly Visitor?
Or would you have to change your clothes before you let Him in, or hide some magazines and put the Bible where they'd been?
Would you turn off the radio and hope He hadn't heard and wish you hadn't uttered that last loud, hasty word?
Would you hide your worldly music and put some hymn books out?
Could you let Jesus walk right in, or would you rush about?
And I wonder if the Savior spent a day or two with you, would you go right on doing the things you always do?
Would you keep right on saying the things you always say?
Would life for you continue as it does from day to day?
Would your family conversation keep up its usual pace,
And would you find it hard each
meal to say a table grace?
Would you sing the songs you
always sing and read the books you read
And let Him know the things on
which your mind and spirit feed?
Would you take Jesus with you
everywhere you'd planned to go,
Or would you maybe change
your plans for just a day or so?
Would you be glad to have Him
meet your very closest friends,
Or would you hope they'd stay
away until His visit ends?
Would you be glad to have Him
stay forever on and on,
Or would you sigh with great
relief when He at last was gone?
It might be interesting to know
the things that we would do,
If Jesus Christ in person came
to spend some time with you.

We pray as God goes with us on our move to California you will all remember this Ministry in your prayers.

Via Email
Subject: INNOCENT
Hi Don and Yvonne,

I am now getting a dose of the sorrow and frustration that you people must experience all the time. Allow me to tell you about my prison friend Max. (Max was married the second time). I am telling this story in almost exactly the way he wrote it in a letter to me. I have corrected the multitude of spelling mistakes, but this is Max's story:

"We were married for ten years and I was the happiest guy in this world. We had two beautiful daughters. We were the closest family you could ever meet...

"My wife's Mother took sick and passed away and that's when my life became a living hell. My ex-wife went nuts and told me to leave and never come back. At the time I had nowhere to go and no friends to turn to so I loaded up my truck and drove for two hours when I came to a town called Fort Pierce, Florida, and there I went to work and turned to the bottle and my drinking got out of hand.

"Here I lost my son for no reason at all (from his first marriage) and then my two daughters that I had grown so close to. I just couldn't understand it. Where had I gone wrong? One night while I was at my parents drinking, we got a phone call from a friend of mine... He was kind of watching out for my kids and letting me know from time to time on what's going on with them... He said my ex-wife was leaving the kids here and there, going out partying a lot and he told me if I could come home and see if I could do anything with her (for her). Well, when I got home, she wasn't there and no one knew where she was at, so I started driving around looking for her. About an hour later, I found her and the kids in a park. She was so out on drugs that she didn't know if she was coming or going. So I took her to my friend's house and then told him I was taking the children to my parents house in Fort Pierce. I told him to tell her that when she got herself straight, we could talk about what we were going to do with our kids.

"Two weeks later, the police came and arrested me for kidnapping my own kids. I tried to explain but no one would listen to me, so off I went to jail. That's when I found out Linda is the one that had me arrested.

"Well, my court date came, but I couldn't get anyone to tell the courts what happened. I knew I was in trouble. I called Dad and told him things were looking bad for me and looks like I will be going away for awhile. Six months later I was sentenced to life in prison and that was in July 7, 1980. I have been locked up ever since."

My question now is ... HOW CAN I HELP HIM??? I am willing to do whatever I can. I would like to get a lawyer for him. He says he is working on an appeal right now but I don't want him to do it alone. He is a simple man (NOT meant as an insult). He needs caring, concerned legal help! I desperately want to help him. He became a Christian in prison. Praise the Lord and we are praying that God will make a way!

Thank you to both of you. Thank you Thank you.

BRIGHTEN THE CORNER WHERE YOU ARE

God has blessed us in so many ways here in Michigan. We have learned more and will take that learning experience with us wherever we are. We are told to Brighten the Corner where we are, well we do this through where you all are. We pray all of you stay with us as we go forward. Two people who have made a massive difference in this ministry are Jean Winter, who takes what I send her and makes it all come out so neat each month. We are blessed she will continue doing our newsletter. Darrell Ferree has been a right arm to us as a Board member. Now he will be a long arm reaching back to Michigan where we will still be somewhat entrenched. When you receive this news-letter, it will be an instant change of address for all of you writing inmates. So
write your pen friend now using the California address:

Your Name
PO Box B
Ivanhoe CA 93235

Don't forget to remind your Pen Friend about the new address as well.

Agape,
Don & Yvonne McClure

JEAN'S JOTTINGS

Don's praise is very flattering and the ministry's showers of love are appreciated. The gift of writing, editing, or whatever is needed come from God, and His intervention in keeping the devil out of the computer this year have been awesome to experience. This machine is due at the "hospital" as soon as this issue is off to the printer, for major memory upgrades as well as any other corrections in software installations. Once more we should have the graphics that make the news-letter fun.

There's an empty spot in my heart already for the McClures; they've been physically present in Michigan and that presence will be 'way out in California now. The technology that can produce so many web sites with evil content also carries sites where we can study the Bible on line, retrieve our weekly lessons with explanatory material, comfort and encourage our friends and look after them via Email, the possibilities are endless. Maybe one day Don and I will compile a list of extra-good sites to visit for you.