SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY
Quietly Changing Lives
News Letter

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Don & Yvonne McClure
Directors

YVONNE'S CORNER:

As we enter the month of November it seems so timely to reflect on all we have to be thankful for. God is so good. My parents, Elder Clyde & Vera Groomer, just celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on October 2. That is a great blessing!

We are not only blessed by our families, but by all of you who participate and donate to this ministry. I sincerely believe that everything we say and do matters. It may not seem important to us, but it is to God. Nothing we give is too small for God to use. I think back to one of my favorite Bible stories – of course you know it – John 6:9. Yes, the boy's lunch of loaves and fishes, a thoughtful word, a tiny act of kindness. The next time you are tempted to think that your small deed is of little consequence, remember that in God's hands it is like the proverbial pebble tossed into the pond. Its ripples may travel much farther than you might ever expect. Our God is still capable of performing much more than we can even imagine, and most of us have good imaginations. How much do we take for granted?

Don and I have learned to give God all the glory and praise. God is in the driver's seat of this ministry and we just pray for strength to keep on keeping on. That takes all of us working together toward serving our Loving Master and sharing Him with all those we come in contact. We pray that each of you will count your many blessings this month as Thanksgiving rolls around. Very seldom do we get a chance to thank all of you. Each one of you counts and makes a great difference. We want to thank Jean Winter, who is the faithful chief editor of our newsletter every month; our Board, which keeps every-thing in Christian order; and we also want to thank Cecil of JC Printing, who so faithfully prints all our newsletters.

So many are responsible for this ministry we just want each of you to know how much you are appreciated. Thank you.

Yvonne

If you can't sleep
Don't count sheep
Talk to the Shepherd

(from a song by Buddy Houghtaling)

NEW PEN FRIENDS

I thank God for the opportunity to write letters to my Pen Friends. Thank you for allowing me to do this.

In your last newsletter, you related the story about the prisoner with no preparation before being released. The prisoners must get out with a load of guilt and regret, and not know how to function. Imagine going to jail and not getting out before your mother died or your baby becomes an adult. For an ex-con there is much that must be forgotten, or it would drive a man crazy. If you need me to take another pen friend, I'd love to. God bless.

David Burdick

GOD'S NEW FRIENDS

The following letter from Chaplain Jordan looks like part of the reason we came back home - this is a big open door!

Hi Don,

I've been so busy, I haven't had a chance to reply to your Email. Received your vital statistics and am processing your gate clearances for entry on Sunday, October 25th with arrival at the prison at 9 a.m.

We will conduct our morning services from approximately 9:45 to 10:45 on level ONE 'E' YARD, then proceed to LEVEL THREE 'A' YARD for services commencing at approximately 12 noon. The plan is for you and Yvonne to conduct the program and for me to see what type of
program you offer.

I have hopes of placing you into our level one yard which has approximately 300 inmates. Right now we're getting a fair turnout of about 35 inmates. A little better than 10 percent. Attendance on the level three yard has fallen off somewhat due to the strife we've been having. Used to get about 10% there also, nearly 90 people in a place for 50.

Also, I thought if we could hold off on any decision about the baptismal until after your visit with us, you might see if we would be better off to use it in the level one setting. If that's what happens, the two of you might just be the ones to be doing the baptizing. Right now I make the inmates take a little pre-baptismal written test before being baptized. It's nothing more than my seeing if they truly understand the purpose of baptism. What it is and what it's not, what it does or doesn't do for a believer or sinner.

Anyhow, I'm anxious to make your acquaintance. Stay in touch via Email.

God bless....

Chaplain Rich Jordan
North Kern State Prison
Delano CA

MY FRIEND JIM

My brother sent this to me from Washington. I thought it worthy of being shared with you and so am forwarding it. Everyone's lives are so busy it would do us good to take a few minutes and contemplate the message of the poem. Please share it with as many others as you choose.

Around the corner
I have a friend, In this great city
that has no end,
Yet the days go by
and weeks rush on,
And before I know it,
a year is gone.

And I never see
my old friend's face,
For life is a swift
and terrible race,
He knows I like him
just as well,
As in the days
when I rang his bell,
And he rang mine.

If... we were younger then,
And now we are busy,
tired men.
Tired of playing a foolish game,
Tired of trying to make a name.

"Tomorrow," I say
"I will call on Jim,"
"Just to show
that I'm thinking of him."
But tomorrow comes
and tomorrow goes,
And distance between us grows and grows.

Around the corner!
yet miles away,
"Here's a telegram sir-"
"Jim died today."
And that's what we get
and deserve in the end.
Around the corner,
a vanished friend.
If you love someone, tell them.

Remember always to say what you mean. Never be afraid to express yourself. Take this opportunity to tell someone what they mean to you.

Seize the day and have no regrets. Most importantly, stay close to your friends and family, for they have helped make you the person that you are today and are what it's all about anyway.

Pass this along to your friends. Let it make a difference in your day and theirs. The difference between expressing love and having regrets is that the regrets may stay around forever.

MY FRIEND SCOTTY

Dear Mr. and Mrs. McClure:

I just wanted to pass along the news about my Pen Friend, Scotty ___. You may remember that I asked you several months ago to try and speak with his parents so they could renew their relationship. Ever since Scotty was convicted, his parents severed their relationship with him. For four years they had no contact. Well, I'm not sure if you ever talked with them or not but suddenly they have contacted Scotty again. I'm sure it will take awhile to catch up on the last four years but it seems like such a miracle that all of a sudden they had a change of heart. It's an answer to prayer.

Anyway, just thought you might be interested.

Stephanie McIver

LOST FRIENDS

These inmates have mail waiting for SOMEONE. If it’s you, please claim:

- Patrick Alexander
- Timothy Bell
- Michael Bennett
- William Bradley
- Teresa Carrasio
- Lu Terry Chambers
- Ciccia Charles
- Marty Cole
- Darryl Edwards
- Aaron Elias
- David Evans
- Eric Forch
- Michael Galindo
- Freddie Garcia
- Ruben Gutz
- Edward Hicks
- Willie Love
- Vickie Mayberry
- Alfred Moore
- Donald Moore
- Kenya Morris
- Art Mulholland
- Tony Petit
- Donald Pierce
- Tracy Risinler
- Bill Schneider
- Leonard Smith
- L. D. Stanley
- Ronnie Teddler
- Anthony Williams
- Glen Wilson

If one of these is your assigned inmate, even if you don't wish to write, let us know.

INTERNET FRIENDS
I liked this one so thought I’d pass it on.... Wendy

A mother was teaching her three-year-old daughter The Lord’s Prayer. For several evenings at bedtime, she repeated it after her mother. One night she said she was ready to solo. The mother listened with pride, as she carefully enunciated each word right up to the end..."And lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us some E-mail, Amen."

THOUGHT-FULL FRIENDS

Dear Friends in Jesus Christ, This one will open our eyes! Love to you!

Your brother, Gary G.

JUDGE ME BY THE FOOTPRINTS I LEAVE BEHIND

A story is told about a soldier who was finally coming home after having fought in Vietnam.

He called his parents from San Francisco.

"Mom and Dad, I'm coming home, but I've got a favor to ask. I have a friend I'd like to bring with me."

"Sure," they replied, "we'd love to meet him."

"There's something you should know," the son continued, "he was hurt pretty badly in the fighting. He stepped on a land mine and lost an arm and a leg. He has nowhere else to go, and I want him to come live with us."

"I'm sorry to hear that, son. Maybe we can help him find somewhere to live."

"No, Mom and Dad, I want him to live with us."

"Son," said the father, "you don't know what you're asking. Someone with such a handicap would be a terrible burden on us. We have our own lives to live, and we can't let something like this interfere with our lives. I think you should just come home and forget about this guy. He'll find a way to live on his own."

At that point, the son hung up the phone. The parents heard nothing more from him.

A few days later, however, they received a call from the San Francisco police. Their son had died after falling from a building, they were told. The police believed it was suicide.

The grief-stricken parents flew to San Francisco and were taken to the city morgue to identify the body of their son. They recognized him, but to their horror they also discovered something they didn't know—-their son had only one arm and one leg.

The parents in this story are like many of us. We find it easy to love those who are good-looking or fun to have around, but we don't like people who inconvenience us or make us feel uncomfortable. We would rather stay away from people who aren't as healthy, beautiful, or smart as we are.

Thankfully, there's Someone who won't treat us that way—Someone who loves us with an unconditional love that welcomes us into the forever family, regardless of how messed up we are.

Tonight, before you tuck yourself in for the night, say a little prayer that God will give you the strength you need to accept people as they are, and to help us all be more understanding of those who are different from us!!!

There's a miracle called Friendship that dwells in the heart. You don't know how it happens or when it gets started. But you know the special lift It always brings and you realize that friendship Is God's most precious gift! Friends are very rare jewels, indeed. They make us smile and encourage us to succeed. They lend an ear, they share a word of praise, and they always want to open their hearts to us. Show your friends how much you care.

NEW DAY COMING

All over the world Christians are waiting the return of JESUS. Churches spring up everywhere. There is a massive movement in church growth, to which we say Praise The Lord. We also see a massive movement out the back door. I think we see in the prisons of the U.S. a strong movement trying to get it together with Jesus. On the street we have freedom of choice and can join whatever church makes us comfortable. Is this right? There are churches that teach ‘believe in Jesus and do whatever you want and you will make it to Heaven.’ There are churches that teach the Old Testament was nailed to the cross. In prison, most men and women soon find the only way to be free is to be free with Jesus. They join programs like ours, or some of the many others going into prison.

The Holy Spirit moves in and they start studying God's word. We all know studying the Bible is difficult. It is much more difficult when
everyone has a different opinion of what the Word means. There is the Eternal Salvation group; the speaking-in-tongues group; the in-the-name-of-Jesus-only group; there is the Saturday over Sunday group; there is the what-you-eat-and-drink group. The Bible says there will be a remnant church. Remnant means the last piece on the bolt of fabric.

We want to send an alert. The life and ministry of Jesus Christ is the most important teaching we should do. We see so many of you preaching through your letters the doctrines of your church. This is fine if your Pen Friend is grounded on Solid Rock with Jesus. Try the best you can to center your ministry on The Life of Jesus.

SET ME FREE

I do not know why I am writing your ministry. I guess to get something off my chest and ask for a little direction. I grew up in an upper middle class home, was an excellent student through High School— straight "A". Accepted to Stanford and my life was really joyful. During the summer I got caught up in the world of sex and drugs and was into it before I knew what was happening. At a beach party I met a girl who was really a knockout—way ahead of me in things of the world. For what-ever reason, she liked me and pushed a little hard. I was a virgin and she said "here try this it will make you loose."

I don’t remember much of the next few months. Fights with my folks, lying, stealing, and then murder. I have no idea if I killed that girl or anything else. But I do remember jail, court and prison. I was arrested and put in jail and the first few days were foggy, still full of drugs. The fog cleared quick when I was raped by three guys. The shame I went through I will never forget. I went to court and was sentenced to 15 years to life. Now I go to prison. Fear is an understatement as to those first few days. I was again raped, I'm nineteen and weigh 155 lbs. What do you do. If you tell, you are most likely to get killed. If you go into Protective Custody, you carry a label forever. In my case an older con took me in. He gave me protection in return for sexual favors. I took this for awhile and then met a young Christian inmate. He, too, had been raped but he fought back, and fought again. He joined a gang for protection, While in a gang he met Jesus—Jesus who gave him the will to make it. Sort of carry a Bible or carry a knife (shank). He told me about Someone Cares and your Bible School and I am writing to see if there is help for me.

We have gotten him into a Bible Study and assigned him a Pen Pal, and pray he finds peace.

UPSET FRIENDS

I got chewed out by a woman for an article I wrote about helping another inmate after I could not help one of hers. Location has everything to do with the help we can offer. We cannot be everywhere, and we do not have willing workers everywhere. Things like home placement are badly needed. We cannot do this unless we really know the inmate and have someone to take them in. A little information we do need to share: Many men and women in prison do change and accept Christ. Many go through the motions while they are in prison, only to change when released. We do need to link together with other support agencies, but we are all so busy and overloaded. We all need to get our inmates to attempt to find resources while in prison, not wait until they are due for parole. Please do not think the State cares!

END-OF-YEAR ITEMS

We send our receipts for your donations the first part of January.

JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON:

With Christmas coming up we need to again alert you all on what not to do.

Thou shalt not send gift packages unless you have a clearance slip from the prison!

Thou shalt not send money to your Pen Friend unless it is a Postal or Bank Money Order with your name and our address on it.

Make the money order payable to "Trust Account of [Pen Friend’s name] followed by the number.

Your Pen Friend is only informed that you have put money in his/her account, and how much.

Thou shalt not send Pen Friends checks made to Someone Cares. This means we have to send you a receipt and record it on our books as income, which could end up being taxable.

Inmates are not allowed to receive checks.
We need all the time we have to do our ministry, and unfortunately just do not have the facilities to function as a bank as well.

If thou hast any new Christmas Cards and envelopes to spare, please send them ASAP and we will get them to the inmates to send out. So many have no funds to send greetings to their families at this very lonely time of year.

MY NAME IS CRYSTAL

I have been on the scene before and like many have been making a comeback. The nice thing about me is, this time I am a lot cheaper and there is much more of me. Oh, I will make you happy, take all your troubles away, and I last longer than my friend Crack.

Getting to know me will cause you to lose all your neat friends, but you will really have a blast with the new ones I will take you to. You don't have to go into dark places or alleys to find me. I am everywhere. My friends are hams, street people, teachers, doctors, lawyers, lower class, middle class, upper class. Now some of you will take me and die; most of you will ruin your lives. Ladies, girls many of you will take me and get high with a strange bed partner and wake up pregnant with a baby that is hooked. But so what? You will be happy. Of course you will become addicted and really need me. You will steal, borrow, and rob to get me. Many of you will end up in prison; I'll be there for you. My price will be a little higher, but so what? By now you have lost almost everything.

We would love to print testimonies from those of you who have had drugs enter your home and the destruction they have done.

JESUS SAVES

Brothers and sisters, we need to take blinders off and roll up our sleeves. Across this nation and around the world, the Crystal and drugs like Crystal are killing our youth; worse yet, they are taking our youth from us. We sit and say, "well, what can I do?" Let us tell you.

Talk to your Pastor and have men and women, boys and girls from Narcotics Anonymous come to your church. If you live in California, near Santa Cruz is a place called Harbor Hills—a locked facility filled with youth who have lost their minds over drugs. If you live in a big city, go to any hospital and ask to see the Crack and Crystal babies suffering birth withdrawals. Come with us to meet the hundreds of men and women, boys and girls in prison for crimes they committed while under the influence of drugs. It is not getting better, just bigger.

MY NAME IS TERRY

When I came to prison I was like so many I read about in your newsletters. I was from a good home, with great parents. We went to church but were not Christians. I got into trouble mixing with the wrong company, not a new story. My interest in church and religion in prison was fear. I went to church as I thought it was a safe place. But in the chapel I have seen men making love to each other, drugs being passed around, and weapons of all sorts being sold. I stopped going and started doing Bible studies, 22 of them. I know there are not 22 Jesuses, or 22 Bibles, but you talk about being confused! Then Yvonne sent me the book Desire of Ages, not a Bible but a book about Jesus. I read it and leaped to the Bible to check out every reference. I learned. I have just finished Discover and am comfortable with my understanding of God's word.

THE SMILE

She smiled at a sorrowful stranger,
The smile seemed to make him feel better,
He remembered past kindness of a friend,
    And wrote him a thank you letter.
The friend was so pleased with the thank you,
    That he left a large tip after lunch.
The waitress, surprised by the size of the tip,
    Bet the whole thing on a hunch.
The next day she picked up her winnings,
    And gave part to a man on the street.
The man on the street was grateful;
    For two days he'd had nothing to eat.
After he finished his dinner,
    He left for his small dingy room.
(He didn't know at that moment that he might be facing his doom)
On the way he picked up a shivering puppy,
    And took him home to get warm.
The puppy was very grateful
    To be in out of the storm.
That night the house caught on fire.
The puppy barked the alarm.
He barked till he woke the whole household
And saved everybody from harm.
One of the boys that he rescued
Grew up to be President.
All this because of a simple smile—
That hadn't cost a cent!

JEAN'S JOTTINGS

Each issue of the news-letter takes on a life of its own, and this month it seems we’re all thankful for our friends, with the exception of Crystal, who apparently rides to work on a broom!

According to Don and Yvonne, I have friends all over the country and even though I may have to wait until I’m in Heaven to meet them, I’m thankful for each one.

There are friends in high places, friends in the depths of prisons. There are furry friends to keep me company, feather-ed friends to cheer me and this time of year they’re reminding me to set their table so they can give thanks for their food. There are family friends with whom to fellowship on special days, sister friends with whom to share, study, and pray. There are lonely friends who need the ministry of kindness and love.

There are friends in our small group ministry who meet once a week for a dinner in common, and outreach to the community. Each time our group grows to 14, it divides in joy and reaches out even further. But let me acquaint you with:

MY FRIEND STEVE

It’s been over two years since you were asked to pray for my best earthly friend’s husband, Steve, who was 69 years old at the time. For you who are newer in the Someone Cares family, he was accused of molesting a lesbian contractor who was working on a house he owned. Under Michigan law, all a woman has to do is say so and the man she’s accusing is automatically sent to prison.

My friend didn’t even tell any of our little study circle for a long time what was wrong. She just kept up an anguished appeal for prayer. I was, for a change, speechless when she finally told me about the accusation. The local community thought the charge was so ridiculous that he would surely be vindicated, and backed up their feelings in numerous letters to local newspapers once the charge was made public.

County-level “justice” was a real education for us all. Four gag orders were put in place by the Assistant Prosecutor, also a lesbian, that prevented any defense. Steve's accuser was not to have her sexual orientation exposed! Though she was an admitted Satan worshiper, this was not allowed to be mentioned, nor was her intense interest in two gravestones that were present in a walk on the property where she was working. Her long-term friendship with the prosecutor trying the case was also gagged. The trial was very obviously a quest for notches on the prosecutor’s gun, not a quest for truth.

At one point in the trial the jury was sent out and the doctor, who had been visited two weeks after the alleged attack, was instructed that if she did not answer questions exactly as asked, she would be held in contempt of court.

The jury was clueless as to the instructions and all were obviously unaware of jurors’ rights. [I’ll probably never be called for jury duty - if we were sent out in a similar fashion, I’d be inclined to vote for acquittal at that point.] To all our shock, they brought in a guilty verdict.

Several months later when the sentencing process took place, we all hoped for the sentence called for in the guidelines.

Each side had a statement to make and Steve’s accuser went on about how afraid she was to go outside her doors with him at large, and how much money her fears had cost her, not to mention counseling. She had a huge shopping list for a man who just had open heart surgery!

To Steve’s credit, he calmly reviewed how his parents had come to America and he himself served his country in the Korean war. He’d used his veteran’s grant to get a teaching degree, a pilot’s license, and later became a businessman. He and his wife had been married for 39 years and, as he said, he certainly wouldn’t throw all that away on an avowed lesbian.

The judge simply said, “I believe you’re guilty,” sentenced him to 2-15 years. We were all stunned. Were all the fasting and all those prayers pleading for justice in vain? Didn’t reading Steve’s name through Psalm 35 mean anything? Didn’t placing him and Shirley in the center of prayer circles in the hallway between court sessions have any effect? God is stronger than Satan, we knew, despite the woman’s lover standing at the end of the hall watching us in prayer, eyes full of hate burning in her face, looking like the master she served. Even the deputies in the courtroom told one of our group that Steve had really been railroaded.

He looked longingly at Shirley, waved his fingers toward her, and was taken directly to prison to begin his orientation and serve his sentence for something he did not do.

As part of serving time for "criminal sexual conduct", it is mandatory to complete a counseling program. Now, that is a worthwhile endeavor, right? Let’s look at the program.

In order to complete Phase 1 and be eligible for parole, the prisoner must say he is guilty, or else he’s in denial. That’s O.K. if he’s guilty. But if
he's not, then he has two choices: (1) to lie (bear false witness) and say he's guilty and be allowed to go home to his family. The counselors
then say to the public, "See, our program is 100% effective! The prisoner is no longer in denial. He has been rehabilitated. We can recommend
him for parole."

(2) He can hang in there, and go to parole hearing after parole hearing, knowing he'll be "flopped" (denial of parole and having to wait until
the next hearing date to try again). This can go on while waiting for one's appeal process to make its rounds.

In Steve's case, the appeal attorney petitioned the higher court for him to be out on bond pending completion of the appeals process, something
experienced people flatly said not to expect. It didn't happen. But Shirley got a phone call one day while I was there, raced out to the kitchen
with joyous whoops, and we danced around the room, small as it was. She went into high gear; put the proper paperwork together with the help
of the trial attorney, and next day she went to bring Steve home.

While she was gone, I raced to find Snickers bars, an aquarium stuffed with sea-colored paper to put them in (it was related to a joke I'd told
Steve once), decorate the house with helium balloons, then disappear. It was their moment to be enjoyed privately.

He enjoyed more than two years out on bond, with the prospect of going back always in the background. The last appeal had been filed and
rejected. Yes, there were mistakes made, but they weren't big enough to warrant a new trial, the courts said. So how much would it matter to
them if they were in the same position, I wonder?

Soon after Steve had come out of the hospital from a second knee replacement surgery, they received the word they had dreaded for so long,
and a date for him to turn himself in.

The head prosecutor's office began by being macho, then softened and allowed the family to be with Steve. When they called the Sheriff to
come for him, he, too, was very kind, walking slowly enough so Steve could go at his own pace with his two canes for support. He was
mercifully not handcuffed, either. When he reached the prison, he was once more treated kindly by guards who were very surprised to see him
back. As a further kindness, one of them handed him a parole application, and he was taken directly to his unit without doing the orientation
program again.

No, it's not fair that he's in prison. We keep thinking God has a work for him to do inside the walls. A man he'd known before, sent word out by
a friend before he died, saying "Tell Steve I accepted Jesus because of him."

We keep thinking perhaps there are others who need some kindness, some word of encouragement, a knowledge of the Gospel, who will
respond to Steve's salesmanship and the Holy Spirit's call. He has a hearing before the Parole Board on Monday, as I'm writing this. People
with impressive titles behind their names—police officers, a social worker, newspaper people, medical professionals, business people,
pastors—all have written letters on his behalf for release. A number of us will spend Sunday in fasting and prayer.

The outcome is in God's hands, His will be done!

MY FRIEND JESUS

The best is saved for last, for the most wonderful Friend of all--my lovely Jesus. I invite you to come share Him with all of us at Someone
Cares, then with joy in your heart reach out to someone else with a smile, a prayer, a hug, a sandwich, a cup of cold water in His name.