DO PEN FRIENDS MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

Thought I would take a few minutes to say thanks for connecting me with the Clarkes. I appreciate your caring and sharing attitude. Because of this match I have grown closer to God and a higher way of life. The Clarkes are such a wonderful, caring couple. They add a quality and quantity in my existence that I have NEVER known before. I am so happy they have allow-ed me to be a part of their life. Thanks to all for Someone Cares; because of you, I do.

Robert Green

HIS STORY IS INSPIRATIONAL

Jimmy, an inmate I wrote to for years, was released last April. I could not get the Pastor from Augusta to visit, but the Personal Ministries Secretary and wife got really involved. They kept in contact regularly, supplying him with certain things we did not. He is now off restrictions, has his own place, and works with his father. I believe he is also preparing for baptism.

Prison took a heavy toll on Jimmy, as it does on all. He is hanging in there and does need special prayer. This is the best example to me personally of the power of prayer and the ministry of Someone Cares. Thanks to the Angel who guided Don's hands in pairing up this old lady with that young man.

Madeline Gahr

REWARDING EXPERIENCE

Thank you for the rewarding experience of Someone Cares. I'm on my second Pen Friend in this wonderful program. Thank you for your time and patience to do this program. God is surely lending a helping hand.

Denise Palka

OH WHAT A FOOL I WAS

Don & Yvonne, there is no way I can make up to you for what I did, in turn for what you now have done. I asked for and received a Pen Friend. I never wrote. Your newsletters came month after month and I just threw them away. Then it happened to me-my Grandson was sent to jail, on his way to prison. I was lost and bewildered. My daughter called and asked me if I knew anyone in California who could help him. I said "no." Hung up and went to the mail box and there was your newsletter. This one I opened and it was about your
move to California. As you both know, I called and first confessed. Don's gentle understanding I will never forget. Nor will any of my family forget that within three days you had someone visit John. In two weeks you had him enrolled in a Bible study.

Then your promise to visit him when he gets to prison was a joy to all of us. Blind eyes now see. The enclosed check is for all of you, and I surely ask those reading Someone Cares newsletters to become some kind of help to the McClures.

Mary Rothen

THERE ARE SO MANY BROKEN PIECES

It does surprise us how many ask to be a part of this ministry, become a part and then don't follow through. We matched 347 inmates in 1998 who never got one letter from the person we matched them with! 101 of these folks where nice enough to send the information back. We sent personal letters to 188 people to find out what was wrong and only 33 answered! This is not an easy ministry when we have to spend so much time on follow up.

Again we ask those of you who can, to ask your pastors to put an appeal in your church bulletin for those willing to be a part of "Paper Sunshine" through our Pen Friend Program. Also, please, those of you who have Email addresses send them to us, and then send our web page location to all your address book.

www.someonecares.org

Having a Web Page is really neat, as almost daily we add new folks to the God Squad.

I PREACH AND TEACH BUT ALSO LISTEN

There is great joy preaching to and teaching men and women in prison. Some inmates made a comment that they enjoyed my sermons because they were Bible-based and good, but more than that, when I preach, they then spend days on my sermon scriptures. I try my best to make sermons more like a study to take inmates through the Bible as much as possible. One inmate from a church-going family said "I have never heard a sermon from the Old Testament, or one that ties the Old to the New until you and Yvonne came here". Yvonne and I often preach dual sermons which the inmates enjoy.

HEAVENLY SUNSHINE

Yvonne is about to start another prison choir with almost 30 voices. To watch this start and see the progress is always a new experience to me, I can't carry a tune in a bushel basket. Inmates love to sing and love the Word sung. Also, speaking of music, a prison near us still has the organ we donated to them 15 years ago; now they again have someone ( neat word ) to play it. It is wonderful to sit and watch inmates sing and the tears in their eyes, knowing they are thinking of better times past.

LOVE OFFERINGS

If you are reading this news-letter and have not received your receipt for donations sent in 1998, please drop
us a line. All donations to Someone Cares are tax deductible. If you are not a Faith Partner, please pray over becoming one. But always remember, you do not need to support this ministry financially to be a part of it. Praise God and thank you all for being good stewards so the ministry ended 1998 in the black. Special needs: a quality used Laser printer for a MacIntosh Computer, for Yvonne.

THE NEW PRISON WHERE WE ARE WORKING

The new prison where we are working has over 5,000 inmates and almost no Bibles. We have done this in the past and would like to try again, a Bible Bin Drive. We like to be good stewards of God's money. We can buy Bibles fairly reasonably. But quality used Bibles are good also. Could you have your church collect good used Bibles, take all names out of front cover and send them to us. We, in turn, will pass them out cell to cell. Any good Christian Books would be neat also.

MY PEN FRIEND RELEASED

You can write your friend through us when they get out. Yes, and please provide us with their new address so we might get a local church to visit them.

WHY DOES IT ALL CHANGE?

I accepted Christ through a Bill Glass crusade in prison. The experience I went through for the next eighteen months was a true blessing. Having a Pen Friend through your ministry also helped, as did the Discover Bible studies. As my release date came closer and closer, my prayer life grew, and the Christian brothers helped me in that area. I was released from prison with no money, no clothes except the ones the prison sold me, and no place to live. But I had Jesus and would soon find a church. God gave me the back bone to go to a cheap hotel and bargain for a room on credit. In two days I had a job, not as a computer programer, but a dishwasher. Then I went to church.

Friends, I have never been so embarrassed in my life. I still only had the one set of clothes. A couple of pay checks have changed that now. A lady came up to me and said "We Christians don't come to church dressed like that?????"

Well, I left and went to another church and no one spoke to me at all—infact no one came near me. In prison the fellowship was so neat and no one cared, but on the street? Again, or still, prayer led me to a little church and the warmth and joy I found in prison. I now have a good job back in my field, computers, and a nice apartment, and a wardrobe. I went back to both those churches, this time welcomed. I asked the Pastor to allow me a minute on the platform and told both churches what had happened to me my first visit. I told them Jesus would keep track of what had happened and told them if they ever wanted to find the love of Jesus, to come to my little church. Thanks to folks like you and Yvonne, and what I learned from you and Bill Glass, I faced the problem instead of running back to my old ways. By the way, I have been sober for nine years: six in prison and three out. Praise God! I hope this check helps. I really enjoy your newsletter; it does remind me where I came from, and thanks to Jesus I'm set free.

Tony Armstrong.

Yvonne's Corner
It is such a joy going into the prisons and sharing Jesus with all the inmates, but the greatest joy for me is to play the piano and listen to the inmates sing. I must tell you that just before Christmas Don was preaching in prison, but before he got up to preach we had a lengthy song service. Some of the brothers had formed a quartet and blessed us with some real soul music right from their hearts, then the Spanish brothers did the same. Well, when Don started preaching they all listened and took notes. He preached for two hours, and that was his second sermon for the day. I was glad to get home, but to see the joy of the inmates and Don was worth it all.

This month so much commercial interest will be put on the ?heart? for Valentine's Day. It made me stop and think how we as Christians would go through the month and what kind of love we would turn our thoughts toward.

Love is a gift God gives us,
A joy to have and share.
Love is of earth and heaven,
Its home is everywhere.
It's a gift to give of freely,
For though given, it's never gone.
Love will always return to us,
Each time we pass it on.

Our prayer is that each of us will keep Christ in our hearts throughout the whole year in all that we say and do. Remember that investing in eternal salvation is becoming lost in love with your personal Savior.

HEARTPRINTS

Whatever our hands touch-
We leave fingerprints!
On walls, on furniture,
On doorknobs, dishes, books,
As we touch we leave our identity.
Oh please, wherever I go today,
Help me leave heartprints!
Heartprints of compassion;
Of understanding and love.
Heartprints of kindness
and genuine concern.
May my heart touch a lonely neighbor
Or a runaway daughter,
Or an anxious mother,
Or, perhaps, a dear friend!
I shall go out today
To leave heartprints,
And if someone should say
"I felt Your touch,"
May that one sense be...YOUR
LOVE touching through ME.

Author Unknown
ONE COLD DAY IN NEW YORK

This is an eyewitness account which happened in the City of New York, on a cold day in December some time ago...

A little boy about 10 years old was standing before a shoe store on Broadway, bare-footed, peering through the window, and shivering with cold.

A lady approached the boy and said, "My little fellow, why are you looking so earnestly in that window?"

"I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes," was the boy's reply.

The lady took him by the hand and went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel, and he replied: "Certainly," and quickly brought them to her.

She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet and dried them with a towel.

By this time the clerk had returned with the socks. Placing a pair upon the boy's feet, she purchased him a pair of shoes, and tying up the remaining pairs of socks, gave them to him.

She patted him on the head and said, "No doubt, my little fellow, you feel more comfortable now?"

As she turned to go, the astonished lad caught her by the hand, and looking up in her face, with tears in his eyes, answered the question with these words, "Are you God's Wife?"

DOES GOD STILL SPEAK TO MEN?

A young man had been to Wednesday night Bible Study. The Pastor had shared about listening to God and obeying the Lord's voice. The young man couldn't help but wonder, "Does God still speak to people?"

After service he went out with some friends for coffee and pie and they discussed the message. Several different ones talked about how God had led them in different ways. It was about ten o'clock when the young man started driving home. Sitting in his car, he just began to pray.

"God, if you still speak to people, speak to me. I will listen. I will do my best to obey."

As he drove down the main street of his town, he had the strangest thought: "Stop and buy a gallon of milk."

He shook his head and said out loud, "God is that you?" He didn't get a reply and started on toward home. But again, the thought, buy a gallon of milk. The young man thought about Samuel and how he didn't recognize the voice of God, and how little Samuel ran to Eli.

"Okay, God, in case that is you, I will buy the milk."

It didn't seem like too hard a test of obedience. He could always use the milk.

He stopped and purchased the gallon of milk and started off toward home. As he passed Seventh street, he
again felt the urge, "Turn down that street."

"This is crazy," he thought, and drove on past the intersection. Again, he felt that he should turn down seventh street. At the next intersection, he turned back and headed down Seventh. Half jokingly, he said out loud, "Okay, God, I will." He drove several blocks when he suddenly felt like he should stop. He pulled over to the curb and looked around. He was in a semi-commercial area of town. It wasn't the best, but it wasn't the worst of neighborhoods, either. The businesses were closed and most of the houses looked dark like the people were already in bed.

Again, he sensed some-thing, "Go and give the milk to the people in the house across the street."

The young man looked at the house. It was dark and it looked like the people were either gone or they were already asleep. He started to open the door and then sat back in the car seat.

"Lord, this is insane. Those people are asleep and if I wake them up, they are going to be mad and I will look stupid." Again, he felt like he should go and give the milk. Finally, he opened the door.

"Okay, God, if this is You, I will go to the door and I will give them the milk. If you want me to look like a crazy person, okay. I want to be obedient. I guess that will count for something. But if they don't answer right away, I am out of here."

He walked across the street and rang the bell. He could hear some noise inside. A man's voice yelled out, "Who is it? What do you want?"

Then the door opened before the young man could get away. The man was standing there in his jeans and t-shirt. He looked like he just got out of bed. He had a strange look on his face and he didn't seem too happy to have some stranger standing on his doorstep.

"What is it?"

The young man thrust out the gallon of milk, "Here, I brought this to you."

The man took the milk and rushed down a hall way speaking loudly in Spanish.

Then from down the hall came a woman carrying the milk toward the kitchen. The man was following her holding a baby. The baby was crying. The man had tears streaming down his face. He began speaking and half crying, "We were just praying. We had some big bills this month and we ran out of money. We didn't have any milk for our baby. I was just praying and asking God to show me how to get some milk."

His wife in the kitchen yelled out, "I ask him to send an Angel with some...Are you an Angel?" The young man reached into his wallet and pulled out all the money he had on him and put it in the man's hand. He turned and walked back toward his car and the tears were streaming down his face.

He knew that God still answers prayers and that God still speaks to His people.

Grandpa and grand-daughter were sitting and talking when she asked, "Did God make you, Grandpa?"

"Yes, God made me," the grandfather answered.
A few minutes later, the little girl asked him, "Did God make me too?"
"Yes, He did," the older man answered.

For a few minutes, the little girl seemed to be studying her grandpa's, as well as her own reflection in the mirror, while her grandfather wondered what was running through her mind.

At last she spoke up. "You know, Grandpa," she said, "God's doing a lot better job lately."

THANK YOU

I have a brother that is in the prison system in S. Carolina. It was a difficult Christmas because I met my Mom and Dad there for Christmas Day to see my Sweet Brother. It was the first time in 37 years that I wasn't with him on Christmas Eve. We all made it through on a wing and a prayer. Thank you for having this web site for people like me...the forgotten families of the inmates...May God Bless You.

TNT

What Miracle?

A skeptic was lecturing on the "fallacies of the Bible" and emphasizing the "flaws of the Old Testament record." He made a head-on assault against Exodus 14:22 where the crossing of the Red Sea is commonly cited as a miracle. He said, "There was no miracle. We now know that the area where the Israelites crossed the sea was only six inches deep."

At the back of the room, a student shouted, "Praise God for the miracle!"

The lecturer asked, with obvious irritation, "What miracle?"

The miracle in verse 28. God drowned the whole army of Pharaoh in six inches of water-that had to be a miracle.

The student sat down and so did the skeptic.

Selected

A VISIT FROM JESUS

Ruth went to her mailbox and there was only one letter. She picked it up and looked at it before opening, but then she looked at the envelope again. There was no stamp, no postmark, only her name and address. She read the letter:

Dear Ruth:

I'm going to be in your neighborhood Saturday after-noon and I'd like to stop by for a visit.

Love Always,
Jesus
Her hands were shaking as she placed the letter on the table.

"Why would the Lord want to visit me? I'm nobody special. I don't have anything to offer."

With that thought, Ruth remembered her empty kitchen cabinets. "Oh my goodness, I really don't have anything to offer. I'll have to run down to the store and buy something for dinner."

She reached for her purse and counted out its contents. Five dollars and forty cents. "Well, I can get some bread."

She threw on her coat and hurried out the door?a loaf of French bread, a half-pound of sliced turkey, and a carton of milk?leaving Ruth with a grand total of twelve cents to last her until Monday. Nonetheless, she felt good as she headed home, her meager offerings tucked under her arm.

"Hey lady, can you help us?"

Ruth had been so absorbed in her dinner plans, she hadn't even noticed two figures huddled in the alleyway—a man and a woman, both of them dressed in little more than rags.

"Look lady, I ain't got a job, ya know, and my wife and I have been living out here on the street, and, well, now it's getting cold and we're getting kinda hungry and, well, if you could help us, lady, we'd really appreciate it."

Ruth looked at them both. They were dirty, they smelled bad and, frankly, she was certain that they could get some kind of work if they really wanted to.

"Sir, I'd like to help you, but I'm a poor woman myself. All I have is a few cold cuts and some bread, and I'm having an important guest for dinner tonight and I was planning on serving that to Him."

"Yeah, well, okay lady, I understand. Thanks anyway."

The man put his arm around the woman's shoulders, turned and headed back into the alley. As she watched them leave, Ruth felt a familiar twinge in her heart.

"Sir, wait!"

The couple stopped and turned as she ran down the alley after them. "Look, why don't you take this food. I'll figure out something else to serve my guest." She handed the man her grocery bag.

"Thank you lady. Thank you very much!"

"Yes, thank you!" It was the man's wife, and Ruth could see now that she was shivering.

"You know, I've got another coat at home. Here, why don't you take this one." Ruth unbuttoned her jacket and slipped it over the woman's shoulders. Then smiling, she turned and walked back to the street...without her coat and with nothing to serve her guest. "Thank you lady! Thank you very much!"

Ruth was chilled by the time she reached her front door, and worried, too. The Lord was coming to visit and she didn't have anything to offer Him. She fumbled through her purse for the door key. But as she did, she noticed another envelope in her mailbox.
"That's odd. The mailman doesn't usually come twice in one day."

She took the envelope out of the box and opened it.

Dear Ruth:

It was so good to see you again. Thank you for the lovely meal and thank you, too, for the beautiful coat.

Love Always,
Jesus

JIM'S PRAYER

A minister passing through his church in the middle of the day,
Decided to pause by the altar and see who had come to pray.

Just then the back door opened,
a man came down the aisle.
The minister frowned as he saw the man hadn't shaved in awhile.

His shirt was kinda shabby and his coat was worn and frayed.
The man knelt; he bowed his head, then rose and walked away.

In the days that followed, each noontime came this chap.
Each time he knelt just for a moment, a lunch pail in his lap.

Well, the minister's suspicions grew, with robbery a main fear.
He decided to stop the man and ask him, "What are you doing here?"

The old man said he worked down the road.
Lunch was half an hour.
Lunchtime was his prayer time for finding strength and power.

"I stay only moments, see, because the factory is so far away;
As I kneel here talking to the Lord, this is kinda what I say:

"I JUST CAME AGAIN TO TELL YOU,
LORD, HOW HAPPY I'VE BEEN,"
SINCE WE FOUND EACH OTHER'S FRIENDSHIP
AND YOU TOOK AWAY MY SIN.

"DON'T KNOW MUCH OF HOW
TO PRAY, BUT I THINK ABOUT
YOU EVERY DAY. SO, JESUS,
THIS IS JIM CHECKING IN."

The minister, feeling foolish,
told Jim that was fine. He told
the man he was welcome to
come and pray just anytime.

Time to go. Jim smiled, said
"Thanks." He hurried to the door.
The minister knelt at the altar;
like he'd never done before.

His cold heart melted, warmed
with love, and met with Jesus
there. As the tears flowed, in his heart,
he repeated old Jim's prayer:

"I JUST CAME TO TELL YOU,
LORD, HOW HAPPY I'VE BEEN,
SINCE WE FOUND EACH OTHER'S FRIENDSHIP AND YOU
TOOK AWAY MY SIN.

"I DON'T KNOW MUCH OF HOW
TO PRAY, BUT I THINK ABOUT
YOU EVERY DAY. SO, JESUS,
THIS IS ME CHECKING IN."

Past noon one day, the minister
noticed that old Jim hadn't
come. As more days passed
without Jim, he began to worry some.

At the factory, he asked about
him, learning he was ill. The
hospital staff was worried, but
he'd given them a thrill.

The week that Jim was with
them brought changes in the
ward. His smiles, a joy
contagious, Changed people
were his reward.
The head nurse couldn't understand why Jim was so glad. When no flowers, calls, or cards came, not a visitor he had.

The minister stayed by his bed, He voiced the nurse's concern. No friends came to show they cared. He had nowhere to turn.

Looking surprised, old Jim spoke up and with a winsome smile. "The nurse is wrong, she couldn't know, that in here all the while,

Everyday at noon He's here. A dear friend of mine, you see; He sits right down, takes my hand, leans over and says to me:

'I JUST CAME AGAIN TO TELL YOU, JIM, HOW HAPPY I HAVE BEEN, SINCE WE FOUND THIS FRIENDSHIP, AND I TOOK AWAY YOUR SIN. I ALWAYS LOVE TO HEAR YOU PRAY, I THINK ABOUT YOU EVERY DAY AND SO JIM, THIS IS JESUS CHECKING IN'".

WHEN I SAY "I AM A CHRISTIAN"

When I say "I am a Christian" I'm not shouting "I am saved." I'm whispering "I get lost," That is why I chose this way.

When I say "I am a Christian" I don't speak of this with pride. I'm confessing that I stumble, And need someone to be my guide.

When I say "I am a Christian" I'm not trying to be strong. I'm professing that I am weak,
And pray for strength to carry on.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I'm not bragging of success.
I'm admitting I have failed,
And cannot ever pay the debt

When I say "I am a Christian"
I'm not claiming to be perfect.
My flaws are too visible
But God believes I'm worth it.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I still feel the sting of pain.
I have my share of heartaches
Which is why I seek HIS name.

When I say "I am a Christian"
I do not wish to judge.
I have no authority-
I only know I'm loved.

WHERE IS GOD?

A couple had two little boys, ages 8 and 10, who were excessively mischievous. The two were always getting into trouble and their parents could be assured that if any mischief occurred in their town their two young sons were in some way involved. The parents were at their wits end as to what to do about their sons' behavior.

The mother had heard that a clergyman in town had been successful in disciplining children in the past, so she asked her husband if he thought they should send the boys to speak with the clergyman. The husband said, "We might as well. We need to do something before I really lose my temper!"

The clergyman agreed to speak with the boys, but asked to see them individually. The 8-year-old went to meet with him first. The clergyman sat the boy down and asked him sternly, "Where is God?"

The boy made no response, so the clergyman repeated the question in an even sterner tone, "Where is God?" Again the boy made no attempt to answer, so the clergyman raised his voice even more and shook his finger in the boy's face, "WHERE IS GOD?" At that the boy bolted from the room and ran directly home slamming himself in his closet.

His older brother followed him into the closet and said, "What happened?"

The younger brother replied, "We are in BIG trouble this time. God is missing and they think we did it!"

NO EXCUSES

"It's impossible."
All things are possible. (Luke 18:27)

"I'm too tired."
I will give you rest. (Matt. 11:28-30)

"Nobody really loves me."
I love you. (John 3:16, 13:34)

"I can't go on."
My grace is sufficient.  
(2 Corinthians 12:9 & Psalm 91:15)

"I can't figure things out."
I will direct your steps.  
(Proverbs 3:5-6)

"I can't do it."
You can do all things.  
(Philippians 4:13)

"I'm not able."
I am able. (2 Corinthians 9:8)

"It's not worth it."
It will be worth it. (Romans 8:28)

"I can't forgive myself."
I forgive you. (1 John 1:9 & Romans 8:1)

"I can't manage."
I will supply all your needs.  
(Philippians 4:19)

"I'm afraid."
I have not given you a spirit of fear.  
(2 Timothy 1:7)

"I'm always worried and frustrated."
Cast all your cares on Me.  
(1 Peter 5:7)

"I don't have enough faith."
I've given everyone a measure of faith. (Romans 12:3)

"I'm not smart enough."
I give you wisdom.
(1 Corinthians 1:30)

"I feel all alone."
I will never leave you
or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5)

JEAN'S JOTTINGS

Michigan's "blizzard of '99" has been washed away by a few warm days, plus temps in the 50s, and lots of rain. This has resulted in rivers of water cutting new ditches beside the roads, and sometimes across, causing a few detours.

Life is full of detours on our way to heaven, isn't it?

This issue appropriately became a love treasure of all kinds. We hope you enjoy the extra pages and are blessed by the stories.

A few web addresses are drifting in. We promised to send you some of our favorites. (Be sure to have www. In front of each one.) From Nancy Nobosky comes these two:

heartlight.org and
cybergrace.com

are two really fun places. She especially likes the daily verse from Heartlight.

Of course, there's our favorite:

someonecares.org!
tagnet.org

has multiple links to sources for Bible studies to do on line, lots of news, and the Voice of Prophecy, the broadcast that's been so kind to Don & Yvonne.

Their study lessons are called Discover.

TheWinds.org

has short paragraphs of news that relate to end-time events, and if one intrigues you, click on the link at the end to read the entire piece.

SoupServer.com

is a web site for the publishers of the Chicken Soup for? series of books, and has links to sponsors. You can sign up for the "cshd" (Chicken Soup Home Delivery) for daily inspirational messages. I'll be looking forward to more good locations from you before next month.

Send to: jeanius@lni.net.

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