HAPPY BIRTHDAY, JESUS

As we state every year, we pray that more find Christ in Christmas. A group of us at Corcoran were reflecting on Christmases past. Some of us remembered that, as youth, on Christmas Eve we decorated the tree, not in November. We went caroling and drank real egg nog. Christmas morning we opened the gifts—one or two and mostly homemade. Many never had any kind of Christmas or a tree. We thought that, even though it was not likely Jesus was born in December, what the celebration of His birth really meant.

Then we reflected all the gifts he gave us: (a) eternal Life; (b) forgiveness; (c) grace; to name just a few. Then, we thought, what could we give him if we could? Our dear Lord only wants us. No amount of money or effort could provide Him the simple gift of our accepting Him and living for Him.

As we close out 2000 years Jesus could (if all believed) close and do away with prisons and crime. The war on drugs, which has been lost, would be over. Teen pregnancy would be gone. No need to ban guns, no need for them. Well, we are ready to start the New Year and pray that all of you put Jesus on your shopping list.

AWAY IN A MANGER

Did you ever think of Jesus' parents trying to find just a room?? ending up in a humble stable? Then think of the massive debt that celebrating His birth causes?the material things we all build up, so someone else can get them if we go.

"Sure" some say, "Jesus was given gifts of great wealth, but spent His life with only the love through God to guide Him."

Would you give up all for his birth place? No, and the inner peace we have is that He does not want us to. Will He again weep when some of us don't give Him the time of day this Christmas?

WE THREE KINGS

Wow! How would you like royalty at your birthday party? It would be neat. Of course they would drive up in big cars with directional guidance, instead of divine guidance. The value of gifts they brought Jesus then would be massive by today's standards. What joy they must have felt, holding the Christ Child. What joy we will have, seeing Him in the clouds,
coming to get us.

JOY TO THE WORLD

We look around and think of all the things we see around the world that our Savior told us about in His word: wars and rumors of wars; pestilence; starvation; earthquakes; massive storms; crime and really not much joy. If we all took the time to share the love and teachings of the Lord whose birth we celebrate, how much the world would change.

We could find homes for the homeless, feed the hungry, visit those in prison, provide clothes for those without. We could take the good news of the birth of Christ and share it with another person.

Our joy in the year 2000 will be each and every person in prison we can lead to Christ, with your help. Time is short and our days numbered.

PEACE ON EARTH

Will we ever see it? I was talking to an inmate who, like me, went to war in Korea as a young man. A terrible place! I was there.

It changed him. He kept going to battle until he became a killing machine, then they kicked him out because he was the trouble maker they had created. He is serving life but has finally found peace within though a relationship with the King of Kings.

WHITE CHRISTMAS

This will be a sad time for us this year, losing Yvonne's mom and dad. I can't say we will miss the snow, but most of our family will be in it as well as many of you. We pray Jesus brings happiness for you and those you love.

We will suffer in above-zero weather knowing the happiness being felt throughout the world.

We also know it is a lonely time for so many, not just in prison. Put a stocking up and give it to a stranger from Jesus.

Several years ago I was walking down the street just before Christmas. I had bought a gift for a Chaplain friend and was taking it to the car. A man approached, looking so sad and lonely. I stopped him and said "Here is a present from Jesus. I'm glad we found you." His face beamed and eyes twinkled. Over a meal he had not had in a long time, he told me of six years living on the streets.

At one time he made over $100,000 a year. A broken marriage and drinking put him in the gutter. I don't know where he is, but I pray the bit of joy we shared made a difference.

THESE ARE A FEW OF OUR FAVORITE?
CHRISTMAS STORIES
When working at Eddyville Prison in Kentucky the Warden allowed us to have a Christmas dinner with Death Row inmates and their families.

No, we don't like the things they did to get there but in God's eyes they are HIS children. When an inmate goes to prison, so do their families. The joy shared that night will go down in my Top Ten.

TOUGH HOME BOYS

We put on a Christmas party at Paso Robles Boys School, a Prison for tough street gang members.

There were presents for all the boys, and all the pizza they could eat. For this we got the help of local church members. Most have never been so close to a convict. Many hearts were touched through fellowship, singing carols, most of which these kids did not know. A lot of tears were shed that night. I wonder if anyone has had a Christmas party there since?

SOLEDAD PRISON

We were there every Christmas for eleven years. We were separated from family, so were they, so we made up for our losses. It is truly amazing what can be done for hardened men and women by a little bit of love. Several times we took folks out on the yards after lock down, sang carols and God's choir joined in.

SAN QUENTIN

We were very lucky to have a couple of very generous donors who wanted to do something special for Christmas. We thought a lot and came up with the idea of giving something to every inmate there-4700 of them! First we had one dollar put on the books of every inmate, from Jesus. The we passed out Christmas cards and a book called Steps to Christ to every inmate. That meant going cell to cell and putting these in the hands of each inmate. We still hear feedback from this massive effort. God Is so good.

WHAT DO WE DO NEXT

Only God knows. We end a year and start a new millen-nium. We will start the year in the black again-barely. We ask those of you who support-ed us this year to match, or just a mite increase, the amount next year so we can get a jump start with Jesus. It gets harder and harder to get things done, and your support saves us valuable time otherwise spent in raising funds. In wishing you all a Merry Christmas, we wish you a New Year full of the Joy Of Jesus. Start the millennium claiming His promises. May God above increase HIS love for you and Yours. Remember always: Because Of You, SOMEONE CARES. We love you and will pray for each of you this coming year. Thanks for being a part of The God Squad

HAPPY HOLIDAYS TO ALL

Yvonne and I wish to thank each of you this Christmas. Every year during the holiday season, we receive so many blessings... mostly cards from inmates or their family members
who have been touched in some way by this ministry. The birth of the Christ Child made all this possible. This is also a very lonely time of year for so many of us. Many have lost loved ones in the past year and are spending the holidays alone, but not really. Jesus gives us all the reason and the time to reflect on all HE has done and will do with us. The separation from loved ones is temporary. Soon we will see and hear the return of The Christ Child. I had a letter from a Pen Friend saying "I have written to eight men and three women over the years; all but three are out and doing well. I still, as you know, write to all of them through you. Paper Sunshine has really brightened my life over the years it will be such a joy to meet these dear Friends in Heaven. I thank you and Yvonne for promising to keep in touch if ever anything happens to me, as I'm going to be 91 Christmas Day.

AWAY IN A MANGER

The time, December 1980. The setting, the Main Yard at Soledad North Prison. The eventual participants: a group of inmates, Yvonne and me. The topic: the birth of Christ.

Yvonne and I had gone to prison, as we did every day. The difference this day is that we met with Chaplain Reed for a brief meeting. Stan told us of an idea he had been toying with, and that was a ministry on the yard. Take Jesus to the Main Line. He had talked to Warden Stangner and it had been cleared for Yvonne and me to go on the yard.

Bibles in hand, we went through the large gates out to the main yard. On the yard inmates can play ball, lift weights, chat with each other, run, be by themselves or friends. As we walked around, few paid much attention to us, thinking we were staff. We finally stopped in the middle of the yard and I pointed up at the sky. One inmate asked what I was looking at, soon others. When the group reached about twenty, I turned and said "That is where Jesus is coming from someday to get some of us! Want to hear the story?" we asked.

We started with the Birth of Jesus and its meaning to us. Not Christmas trees, presents and bright lights, but a real Joy To The World. We ended up with a pretty large group of men and invited them all to church for Christmas services. Because of movement restrictions, we had to get each man's name and number to get a pass to hear more about our wonderful Savior. All but two came. What a Fellowship, What A Joy Divine.

MERRY CHRISTMAS JESUS!

Don & Yvonne, I am writing this to you as I feel you might need to hear it. I met the two of you many years ago at Soledad and at one of your services. I accepted Christ. Or I went through the motions of that endeavor. I got out of prison twice since then and am out again. This time it has been over a year and the Joy Of The Lord is with me. I remember something one of you told me once to plan your work and work your plan. Well, with Christmas rapidly approaching I'm making a list and checking it twice. The most important thing is this year, I'm including a gift for Jesus, ME.

I am totally dedicating my life, my wife is joining me, and we are going to be a real part of the family of God. The card and check are not much but because of your dedication to men and women in prison I can claim in God's word "To be free in Jesus is to be free indeed,"
YVONNE'S CORNER

I asked Don what he wanted for Christmas as I do every year. He said "Honey if it's O.K. I would like to spend it in prison with the fellas. You will not have to wrap that and it will last a real long time."

I'm not able to spend any time with my family this year as they are all in Michigan, so it was easy to say yes. I have some fond memories of Christmases past spent in prison.

One Christmas we went cell to cell in San Quentin, giving each inmate Steps To Christ. Another year we spent Christ-mas Eve in Death Row fellow-ships with inmates and family members. Another year we spent with an inmate with AIDS as he went through the last hours of his life. I often think how many inmates, now free, think of us at Christmas. Funny thing about working in prison- we plant a lot of seeds and often don't see the results.

A Christmas card read, "I just got through putting up our tree with my husband. Had you two not led me to Christ in prison, I would never have met such a wonderful man. I think of Christmas growing up, and all I remember is drinking and a big mess, fighting and feeling sad if we did not get what we wanted. Yvonne, you will never know how much you did for all of us at Coldwater Prison. We pray that God will bless both of you and anyone connected with what you do. Teaching us to follow in the footsteps of Jesus makes the joy of Christmas so easy since I now have a relationship with my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. There is so much meaning in celebrating the Birth Of Jesus when we know why!"

JESUS, SOMEONE CARES, AND YOU

We never in this world thought this ministry would take the course it has. It started off with a preacher's daughter meeting an atheist and Jesus putting a robe of righteousness around both. We have stumbled so often but Jesus was there. Jesus taught us to help fix the broken pieces of broken lives through HIM.

It has been the true Widow's Mite that has taken us from a simple Bible study at Soledad on Friday night to a ministry that now reaches around the world. He took a grammar school dropout who could hardly speak properly and (those of you who remember the early newsletters) couldn't spell. The power of The Holy Spirit has driven Yvonne and me a long way. I have now preached in over 400 different Churches, and in prisons from California to Florida, Tennes-see, Kentucky, Michigan and now back to California. If asked, we would come to your church. Yes, this birth of the Christ Child has been marvelous in the growth and maturity of this ministry.

RISING SON

A Prison Ministry of good works had gone into a holding pattern while our dear friend Jan put the pieces of her life together. We are proud this excellent ministry is again alive and well. And we would like to borrow, this season, a bit of their recent publication.

WHAT JESUS GIVES TO ME
Perfection: Ephesians 4:11,12; Philippians 3:14
Promises: 7,487 in the Bible,
Place: John 14:23,
Power: John 1:12, Luke 10:19, Acts 1:8,
Partners: John 14:23.
Prayer: "Ask and it shall be given unto you." Mt: 7: 7-11, James 4:2

CHRISTMAS CARDS

Inmates do not have money for Christmas cards, and each year we give them out to send to their loved ones. Please send them early, as we need to get them passed out in time.

WE SEND OUT TAX RECEIPTS THE FIRST PART OF JANUARY 2000.

JEAN'S JOTTINGS

It's dawn as this last issue of the year, the century, the millennium, goes to the printer. What an exciting year it's been, with all its new adventures. Life is never dull, friends, when you serve Jesus!

It's been a year of joy to share with you those who have met Christ in prison and those who have been successful after their release. It's been a year of special sadness with the loss of Yvonne's parents, but what a legacy of loving service they left behind in their daughter and her husband.

School has been an adventure for me, and even with the long commute, I'm awestruck with the stars at 6:30 a.m., and the awesome sunrises that follow. It's been rewarding to watch 40 classmates under intense pressure become a family that shares work, joy and sorrow. Those who love the Lord have become a quieting influence on those who don't know Him. Our demeanor DOES make a difference in those around us. May the fragrance of the Rose of Sharon touch the lives of those we meet in year ahead.

Someone Cares Home Page