TELL IT AS IT IS

Many of you have asked questions about working in prison, and a lot about the things that really happen. Let me start with an inmate who came to see us about a really serious problem. He had gotten himself in debt to one of the prison gangs for drugs. Yes, folks, getting drugs in prison is pretty easy. He owed $80.00 and was scared. Why? because this stupidity could cost him his life.

I told him what his choices were:

1. Get money and pay.
   He could not.
2. Go to staff and tell them.
   He would not.
3. Go into protective custody, which is not easy.
4. Do nothing and get hurt.

If he goes to staff, they will do several things: Arrange a transfer to protective custody. But!!! First, and before they do anything, he would have to give up all names involved. This would give him a snitch label and almost certainly sign his own death warrant. Even in the safety of a cell he could be the victim of gang revenge.

Prison is not a nice place.

HOW ABOUT THIS?

Due to racial tension, inmates were moved to put different races (gangs) groups together. Sort of a racial segregation. When the prison officials discovered this was not doing any good, they decided to re-assign everyone. Believe it or not, this job was given to some inmates to do! If you liked your area and were comfortable, you could stay if you paid the inmate in charge whatever he asked. Insane plan! Beatings occurred almost every night. Remember we said that inmates are sent to prison as punishment, not for punishment. Almost every yard in every prison is under tension.

Most of these men have no one to talk to who can help.

Fear generated in men is not good. For the hard core it is a way of life; the rest live in pure fear (A good use for Paper Sunshine.)

In several cases inmates wrote about problems and talked about taking their lives. We were able
to intercede and all was well. It's another reason writing through us is important. We did receive thanks from the prisons involved.

OR WORSE

Inmate one was raped when he came to prison. Through this action he got AIDS. He is married and has several children. He is serving 10 years in a state that allows family visits overnight. If he tells his wife, she will not visit, or sleep with him.

Lust turns to stupidity and she also gets AIDS. The law is in the inmate's favor. Many inmates leave prison with AIDS and the family is kept in the dark. [For How Long?]

COUNTY OF COMMITMENT

Inmate 2 was passing through a California town, robbed a bank and was caught. After spending a long time in prison, becoming a solid Christian, and getting educated, he is nearing parole. He is from Southern California. The town where he committed his crime is in Northern California. He has job possibilities and a place to stay in Southern California. In Northern California he has nothing, but the law says he has to be paroled to the county of commitment. Then we wonder why so many violate parole and return to prison. Now this man was not able to work in prison, so he has no money. The state gives him $100 upon release and $100 when he gets to his parole destination. How do you start a life with no clothes, no money and no job skills? Then we wonder why as many as 80% return to prison!

SATAN ATTACKS, GOD ACTS

Living in California is a real blessing, but for me, it may be a problem. I have a form of Valley Fever, which means that the cotton, walnuts, chemical sprays and I do not get along. We have moved once since coming here and may have to move again. Medication has the illness under control, but it's not something I want to take forever. We have put it all in God's hands. I have contact-ed prisons all over the U.S., and everywhere we call the door is open. For us, Central Northern Kentucky or Central Southern Indiana is ideal. No matter where we go, our work will continue. So if you know of a home or mobile home for a long term rental (or our use and you keep the home and get a tax shelter), please contact us. If God wills it, we can face a new challenge. Nothing will change the work being done here in California.

THE WIDOW'S MITE

When we made an appeal for a dollar a month supporter, we never realized what a blessing we would receive. With gas prices out of sight here, and the Pen Friend Program exploding, every little bit helps. If you do not support Someone Cares, please think about it. We still need a used computer, and funds for a used golf cart. If one thousand of you committed to one dollar a month until Jesus comes, we would almost never need to make an appeal for funds.

YVONNE'S CORNER
Since we have been back in California I have been rejoicing with all my friends that I have known most of my life.

What a joy to attend camp meeting and to be able to embrace my brothers and sisters in Christ no matter what their color or nationality. Thank you, Mabel, for all those encouraging hugs!

I do not understand why there is racial tension among Christians. I am very proud to say that my father graduated from Los Angeles Academy, and he was also proud of it. He enjoyed his classmates.

In the Paper Sunshine Program we match inmates to Christians, and when the "Christians" find out that the inmates are not of the same race, they often do not write. Now you tell me why! I just finished watching the Olympics where they were all very thrilled for one another. As Christians, we should be able to do just a little bit better.

In prison, it matters not to me what color an inmate is. I was taught we are all children of God! There are many different shades of color in the rainbow and I praise the Lord for that. I pray that we will all be able to get this behind us and become united in finishing God's work. Don and I received a letter from an inmate that I would like to share with you:

Once upon a time, a lonely man (me) cried out and the McClures helped dry my tears. They reached out and gave me hope, friendship to help me cope, throughout these painful years. They do this out of their heart, never have they asked for praise. Two fine people filled with love, God bless their name. They understood a convict's woes and gave me Carol's name, I love them so much. So to them I wanted to say, Don and Yvonne, you mean the world to me, because you touched my hardened heart and a little bit of me you have freed.

Thank you so much, "Lucky"

May all praise go to God for this man, our brother.

The following Emails were delivered, without a source: FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Subject: How we live life...

Jack took a long look at his speedometer before slowing down: 73 in a 55 zone. Fourth time in as many months. How could a guy get caught so often? When his car had slowed to ten miles an hour, Jack pulled over, but only partially. Let the cop worry about the potential traffic hazard. Maybe some other car will tweak his backside with a mirror.

The cop was stepping out of his car, the big pad in hand. Bob? Bob from church? Jack sank farther into his trench coat. This was worse than the coming ticket. A Christian cop catching a guy from his own church. A guy who happened to be a little eager to get home after a long day at the office. A guy he was about to play golf with tomorrow.

Jumping out of the car, he approached a man he saw every week at church, a man he'd never seen in uniform.

"Hi, Bob. Fancy meeting you like this."
"Hello, Jack." No smile.

"Guess you caught me red-handed in a rush to see my wife and kids."

"Yeah, I guess."

Bob seemed uncertain. Good.

"I've seen some long days at the office lately. I'm afraid I bent the rules a bit - just this once."

Jack toed at a pebble on the pavement. "Diane said something about roast beef and potatoes tonight. Know what I mean?"

"I know what you mean. I also know that you have a reputation in our precinct."

Ouch. This was not going in the right direction. Time to change tactics.

"What'd you clock me at?"

"Seventy. Would you sit back in your car, please?"

"Now wait a minute here, Bob. I checked as soon as I saw you. I was barely nudging 65." The lie seemed to come easier with every ticket.

"Please, Jack, in the car."

Flustered, Jack hunched himself through the still-open door. Slamming it shut, he stated at the dashboard. He was in no rush to open the window.

The minutes ticked by. Bob scribbled away on the pad.

Why hadn't he asked for a driver's license? Whatever the reason, it would be a month of Sundays before Jack ever sat near this cop again.

A tap on the door jerked his head to the left. There was Bob, a folded paper in hand. Jack rolled down the window a mere two inches, just enough room for Bob to pass him the slip.

"Thanks." Jack could not quite keep the sneer out of his voice.

Bob returned to his police car without a word. Jack watched his retreat in the mirror, then unfolded the sheet of paper.

How much was this one going to cost? Wait a minute.

What was this? Some kind of joke? Certainly not a ticket. Jack began to read:

"Dear Jack,

Once upon a time I had a daughter. She was six when she was killed by a car. You guessed it - a speeding driver. A fine and three months in jail, and the man was free. Free to hug his daughters. All three of them. I only had one, and I'm going to have to wait until Heaven before I can ever hug her again."
A thousand times I’ve tried to forgive that man. A thousand times I thought I had. Maybe I did, but I need to do it again. Even now. Pray for me. And be careful. My son is all I have left.

Bob"

Jack turned around in time to see Bob’s car pull away and head down the road.

Jack watched until it disapeared. A full 15 minutes later, he, too, pulled away and drove slowly home, praying for forgive-ness and hugging a surprised wife and kids when he arrived.

Life is precious. Handle with care.

Drive safely and carefully.

Remember, cars are not the only things recalled by their Maker.

FUNNY... Funny how simple it is for people to trash God and then wonder why the world's going to hell.
Funny how we believe what the newspapers say, but question what the Bible says.
Funny how everyone wants to go to heaven provided they do not have to believe, think, say, or do anything the Bible says. Or is it scary?
Funny how someone can say "I believe in God," but still follow Satan (who, by the way, also "believes" in God).
Funny how you can send a thousand "jokes" through e-mail and they spread like wildfire, but when you start sending messages regarding the Lord, people think twice about sharing.

Funny how the lewd, crude, vulgar and obscene pass freely through cyberspace, but the public discussion of Jesus is suppressed in the school and workplace.

FUNNY, ISN'T IT?
Funny how someone can be so fired up for Christ on one day, but be an invisible Christ-ian the rest of the week. Are you laughing?
Funny how, when you go to forward this message, you will not send it to many on your address list because you're not sure what they believe, or what they will think of you for sending it to them.
Funny how I can be more worried about what other people think of me than what God thinks of me.

DRAWING GOD?

A kindergarten teacher was observing her classroom of children while they drew. She would occasionally walk around to see each child's artwork. As she got to one little girl who was working diligently, she asked what the drawing was. The girl replied, "I'm drawing God."

The teacher paused and said, "but no one knows what God looks like."

Without missing a beat, or looking up from the drawing, the girl replied, "They will in a minute."

JEAN'S JOTTINGS
Poor Yvonne listens so patiently to the phone crackling when I'm upset. Me, ticked off? Well, I confess that, as a human, there are days when I'm not Ms. "ConJeaniality." I recently had a conversation with Yvonne, and what she told me really hurt.

In case you're new to Someone Cares and don't know, she and Don match inmates in the Paper Sunshine Program by the two-pile system. When inmate requests come in, they go under Pile 1. When free folks request an inmate, they go under Pile 2. The top name off each pile forms a match God has been asked to bless in Heaven.

Many of you reached Someone Cares through Voice of Prophecy Radio. They know not, nor do they care, the race of anyone; neither does God. In a follow up on one group of matches, 119 inmates (all happened to be black) were matched, using God's two-pile system.

Twenty-two were matched with black Christians, who all wrote. Of the 97 left, all were matched with white Christians, 75 of who never wrote(!), nor even informed Someone Cares nor, as we ask, returned the paperwork. The time and money spent to get these inmates matched was all wasted!

Friends, what would Jesus do? Did He shun or rebuff those of a different culture or color? Nowhere in my Bible!

When we call ourselves Christians, we take on Jesus' name and I just don't understand how we can be selective with those who need us most. What difference does it make if a person is red or yellow, black or white? All are precious in HIS sight, as the chorus goes. It wouldn't matter if the person with whom you are matched was pea green and lived on Mars. He or she would be God's creation, who would need love as we do.

It doesn't matter what the person did to become an inmate. God loves sinners and forgives us when we ask. How can we do less? If two people of different races were the only ones left on the face of the earth after a global disaster, would they shun one another? Odds are they would be overjoyed to find human companionship.

If you are tempted to turn down a match with an inmate, look in your mind at that lonely person in a cell-not all that much bigger than a handicap-accessible restroom stall-with whom you can share how much Jesus loves you both. You've been matched with prayer. Can you really turn away from God so easily?

As I write this, golden leaves are drifting lazily to earth. They make a sound like rain as they pop loose from the tree and hit other dry leaves on the way down, and golden color pours into the house from the maples in the front yard. Remember your Pen Friends at Thanksgiving with a card, or a letter written on pretty autumn paper. Brighten the gray of a cell with color.

My 50th Academy Homecoming reunion took place over the weekend. It was lovely to be in the honor class, but most special was the bonding that took place. Teenage insecurity had been replaced with the self-confidence of having lived life to the fullest and made use of our talents. We had turned out to be loving, interesting people in that half-century, willing to share ourselves with others in service to our Heavenly Father. What joy and peace that brings!