2002! PRAISE THE LORD!!

As we charge ahead, we do so very humbly. Each Year we pray this may be the year of Jesus’ return. We see a world in turmoil; Harry Potter, a movie, gets more attention than predicted world strife; boys wear earrings and girls dress like boys. What does Jesus think as HE looks at this world today?

OUT WITH THE OLD!

2001 really ended with a bang for us. The events of September 11th caused a real slow down for Someone Cares. As funding slowed, we thought our run of staying in the black was over, but God was in control. We’re so grateful for all of you who support this ministry.

Receipts for last year will be coming out this month. Please, when you get them, check that the amount is right. A computer crash lost some information, so call us if the amounts are not correct. Last year saw almost 4,000 inmates join the Pen Friend Program, and several thousand finishing Bible studies. Six new prisons were opened to Someone Cares because YOU Care. God Bless You all.

We came across a juice that has brought my blood sugar into place, and my cholesterol way down. Yvonne bowled her first 200 game and I bowled a 259. My doctor had also told me to take up golf to make myself exercise. My slice is now a hook, but who cares? Both our year-end physicals were great and we are ready to charge!

RIGHT INTO 2002!

We want to start the year on visitation of inmates. Men or couples with men, women or couples with women inmates. If you think you would like to visit an inmate, drop us a line and if a chance comes up in your area we will be ready. If you want some-one to visit someone in prison, send their name and we will try to make it happen. It’s a great Sabbath or Sunday outing.

IF EVER ASKED

to do anything in the name of Jesus, say " I'll be happy to!”

Are the events we see happening final events, as we are told in God's word? Wars and rumors of
wars? Is our house in order? If HE came would we go? Are our kids, even if grown, ready? Satan is working very hard to destroy the family structure. Pastors are spread so thin and do not have training in all there is going on. The Satanic church is growing. Witchcraft is growing, churches are not. We cannot give just a moment or two to the service of the Lord and make it. Yvonne and I are going to pray daily for each of you receiving this news-letter, and any names you send us. We are going to expand an Internet Prayer Network. This might push some of the smut off. We are going to ask you to pray for us and be Someone who does care. The end result: a picnic under the Tree Of Life near the Sea of Glass. Happiness IS.

SOON AND VERY SOON

The Government is going to have to look at the failing Prison System’s overcrowd-ing, and lack of funds, in an already too-expensive function. There was a day when Corrections meant Rehabilitation. No longer. There was a day when men and women went to prison as punishment not for punishment; not any more.

Join me in your mind’s eye. Picture yourself in a room the size of an average bathroom. Now in that room, picture two men or two women locked down. Better yet, go into your bathroom at night, turn off the light and feel the darkness. Feel the fear, desperation, and loneliness. Now strike a match and see how bright everything can be. That is the Light our Jesus brings into prison through you.

"C' SECTION SAN QUENTIN

This Hell hole is five tiers high with fifty cells per tier. In each cell, one man—the prison’s worst. The toughest of the tough. Smell the stench, hear the yelling—at times, 250 men at once. The hate festers. They plug up toilets or throw human waste at guards just to create a problem.

One night Yvonne and I had stayed late at the prison. We decided to go into the cell block and quietly slipped up to the 5th tier, hearing the cries and yelling, screams of fear. We stopped short of a real hard-core inmate’s cell and listened to him cry like a baby. A week later, we were blessed to lead that man to Christ, who has taken away all the tears and fears.

We have held the hands of men dying of AIDS; prayed with those sentenced to die; walked the yard with hardened criminals, as safe as a baby in its mother’s arms. Why? Because we really do care.

SHAKEDOWN

Every now and then prisons do massive shakedowns to get all the weapons, drugs, etc in hand. But no matter how hard they look, the system rebuilds what is taken away. Shanks (prison knives) are made out of almost anything, to kill or maim.

Because of lack of pro-grams, men and women work on beating the system. When they spend all their time doing this, what kind of person will they be when released?
TONY

I went to prison when I was 18 and joined a white group for protection. I stabbed about ten guys and have gotten stabbed six times. Sentenced to six years, I spent nine. I was bad coming in and twice as bad going out. I was back in after six weeks, this time on a nine-year ride. Sitting in Solitary, I made a deal with God and He kept HIS end and I found peace. With Jesus, my nine years turned to four and I’ve been out for six. Thank You Jesus.

WAYNE

I came into the system from Watts. A Blood on the street and a Blood (a black gang) in prison. I was in prison 20 minutes and had a shank, ready to settle in. For two years I spent more time in the Hole than in my cell. I met an old black man from the south. He told me I would die in prison or going to prison. He told me there was a way out, to stay out. He told me about Jesus. I thought back to when I was little and my grandma took me to church. It was fun—it got me out of my life for a bit.

I gave my life to Christ and my shank to the old man. With Jesus, I left the Bloods and lived.

STAN REED

was the Chaplain of Soledad, a good Methodist, who we would end up working for, and with, for over ten years. Stan taught us we could not beat the system or change the system, but Jesus could. I don’t think he ever saw anyone as a convict, but as a future child of God. No one on earth knew more verses to Amazing Grace than Stan. A Chaplain’s job is really thankless, as the system does not want the inmate to change, but change them Stan did.

Yvonne and I really miss Stan and Shirley, but we are blessed for all they taught us. Stan had to cover our back sides often, as we broke a few rules trying to get things done. In fact if it were not for Stan I would be??????????

HARRY HOWARD

was the Chaplain of San Quentin, a good Baptist when we went there. He was a Chaplain who had a volunteer program blessed by God, as he was. I got to see a magic at work in many of the convicts who had accepted Christ and returned to prison to serve HIM, not serve time. These men knew the score, having been there. They knew the ropes, and knew the answers. Harry worked with his wife, Kay, who we will see again _When We All Get to Heaven_.

Many prisons are closing their doors to volunteers, especially ex-cons. Harry, my friend, we thank you for teaching us that Jesus is the answer, not our church, or church doctrines. We have used the simplicity of the Love of Jesus to lead many a man and woman to HIM. Thanks, Stan, Harry, Jim Finn, Tim O'Dell and each of you— because of all of you, SOMEONE CARES!

JEAN’S JOTTINGS
Some of you are puzzled by our office procedures at Someone Cares. Don has just taken you through the mental image of a prison cell (and many of the bunks are made of steel or concrete slabs with very thin mat-tresses!) so now let’s go on another journey into our ministry. I received a note from a reader who sees us all working cozily together in Indiana and wonders what part each of us plays in the clockwork we call Someone Cares.

It amazes me that God can put a group like this together, keep the clock wound and on time month after month. Don and Yvonne do all the barge-toting and bale lifting and the actual hands-on ministry part. That includes the mail, matching Pen Friends, reviewing letters to make sure no one exposes him or herself to danger, prison chaplaincy duties, preaching at churches to raise funds and inspire new Pen Friendships, relying on your generosity for food, shelter, clothing and transportation. [Pause for breath.] This is a dedicated couple who are still going, like the Energizer Bunny, after most of us have “retired.”

The Board that oversees this ministry consists of a group chosen for their wisdom and trust in God. Because the members are located all around the country, each board meeting is conducted via teleconference instead of spending money on transportation. That’s good stewardship.

Your humble servant (in Michigan) is responsible for keeping you informed, period. Don and Yvonne send me the rough draft of the newsletter via E-mail; I save it to a work file to tweak what they’ve sent. This means editing for grammar, spelling, sometimes re-phrasing a sentence so it flows better. When it’s finished, I print out a copy, put it in a file folder for that month’s edition, and send it to the printer located in another city, then wait to see the mistakes that weren’t apparent, but pop out to embarrass me later.

The printer adds the color you enjoy so much, runs the copies, folds them, and ships the finished job to Don and Yvonne. They recruit church and neighbors to help stuff envelopes so you can have your copy ASAP.

My last step is to E-mail a copy of the file to the web site in still another city so you can go there to read, as well as your Paper Sunshine version. (See pg. 1, col. 1)

**BLOOMS IN THE GARDEN**

Another letter came in via Email that was very disturbing to me. Satan rejoices when he can tempt us be so discouraged that we feel willing to give up life. He’s had some parties at my expense as well, until I discovered that God really does love me, unconditionally. I recently discovered that He has even promised to be my husband!! My sister found the promise first, in Isaiah 54::4-6, and hung onto it desperately during a most devastating era of her life. To anyone who is discouraged, this chapter is a special comfort. “All the fifty-fourth Chapter of Isaiah is applicable to the people of God, and every specification of the prophecy will be fulfilled. The Lord will not forsake His people in their time of trial. He says, ‘For a small moment have I forsaken you; but with great mercies will I gather thee. In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer.’ Are these words of comfort spoken to those who are making void the law of God? No, no, the promise is for those who amid general apostasy, keep the com-mandments of God,
and lift up the moral standard before the eyes of the world who have forsaken the ordinance, and broken the everlasting covenant (EGW, RH Aug. 20, 1895).

What an awesome God we serve! He will NEVER give up on us, and we must never give up on Him.

A note for all church members, no matter our denomination, are we truly happy to see visitors, and does our behavior make them believe it enough to come back? Someone Else isn’t going to fill in for us here. It’s up to us to be that Someone who Cares. It used to be a custom to invite people home to dinner after church, get acquainted, and make them our friends. We have unfortunately moved away from those gestures because society changed. Or have we let it change us? Yes, those who feel un-loved are often preoccupied with their feelings, but isn’t it as much our mission to show them God’s beautiful love so they will see His face and receive hope?

Husbands and wives, do you lift up your spouses in prayer and tenderly encourage them in their walk with God and with you? Or do you simply tell your partner if they’d just read the Bible and pray they would be OK? How many of our young people have been driven from our midst with that platitude!

It’s not just about being modern or conservative as a church, it’s about being loving as God is love, and Jesus is love. Some of the most conservative churches are very loving. Is God’s rest day a pleasure for your family, full of joy to have a day to spend with your Creator? Or is it a day of “do” and “don’t” served with green persimmons at dinner?

Dear reader, the world is growing cold, and your age is irrelevant in this equation. It takes a lot of grit to pray for those who despitefully use you, but you’ve hung in there thus far. It will take time to put each enemy in his or her place (God’s hands) and to let Him deal with their problems. It’s impossible to hate those for whom you pray. Our God, who gave you the capacity to feel hurt, also gave you the power to love others unconditionally, That reaching out will inspire love in them.