WE WILL SEE YOU IN HEAVEN

God has blessed us with many friends over the years and sadly, some have died.

Bernice Bradbury is one of those friends. Bernice was a large part of Yvonne's growing up. Our ministry often received many blessings from her. In one of our last chats she had wished we could be together with most of our family members in Michigan. She knew most of them.

Our ex-son-in-law getting into trouble (he will spend most of the rest of his life in prison) has made the closeness of family even more important. Our grandson does need help in getting through, if Jesus tarries. Often the prison groups we have started over the years falter a bit, and we need to go and help. We knew that Bernice had named Someone Cares in her Will and we might use this to place the growth of the ministry back in Michigan. (Please Pray.) We have a solid base there and we can piggy-back to California, Florida, and all points. By then we will have family trained to take over if a day ever comes to slow down a bit. Prayer will be a big part of whether this is what God wants for us and Someone Cares. We would like to put our suitcases away, but God's business seems to want us to be in The Great Advent Movement.

What a Pot Luck we will have in Heaven. My folks, my sister, Yvonne’s folks, Grandparents, The Longos, and so very many more. So we say we will meet you in Heaven and hold hands together. Amen. [EDITOR’S NOTE: It is very important, if you decide to bless Someone Cares in your Will or Living Trust Agree-ment, that you inform Don & Yvonne. Also please inform family members so there are no problems.]

 FALLING OFF THE MOUNTAINTOP

Our now ex-son-in-law really blew it. He had hit bottom and made it back to the top. He had kicked drugs, alcohol, became a Christian, a husband and father. His son, now almost eight, will grow up without Dad. He will not see his son go to school, high school or college, if Jesus tarries.

A needle in his arm for an unreal “high” got him 15 years. Even though he used a toy gun for his robberies, it was still armed robbery. We ask for prayer for our daughter and grandson, as the road ahead will be tough. As we have said before, when a person commits a crime and goes to prison. So do others, especially the bread winner, although in Mike’s case his wife really held all together. Mike could not handle the real world. It was easy for Satan to jump in and destroy all Mike had built. Fifteen Years. Folks that is a long time when you are grown. We pray he again
finds Jesus and tries to make it back. Maybe a Pen Friend will help him understand. Jesus is holding out his arms all the time. One day I will again share a letter he wrote when in prison before.

**MOST ARE VERY RESPONSIVE**

Larry writes "Thank you so much for your ministry. It is so very important. Thanks also for the dozen names you supplied me to write. Most are very responsive to the word. They really keep me busy looking things up on the Internet. I know a letter is very important no matter what the content, or how long or short it is. Someone caring enough to reach in helps them reach out. I hope this contribution will help a little in some way."

**YOUNG PEOPLE OF TODAY**

I met a young man at a meeting and he got involved with Someone Cares. He decided to pay his Tithe to us, and then recruited other young people to do the same. God bless these future leaders of some lucky church. We have almost three hundred young people involved with the Pen Friend Program.

**HI, MY NAME IS BARBARA**

I am an inmate who is serving a 20-year sentence. I am from a middle class family, grew up in the church and got into very little trouble. I met and married a childhood sweetheart, and had two children. Like most, we had problems.

Like most! Debt and keep-ing up with the Joneses put pressure on my husband and he turned into a monster. I left him after two beatings but was talked into taking him back. In just a very short time things were terrible. One night he came home and had been drinking, never a problem before. He went into a rage, and scared me and the child- ren to his death.

I guess I should have said I grew up in a middle class family on a farm. Guns were part of my life and I used one to save mine but took his. Never have I doubted that my crime was self defense, but then there is the jury. I will make it through and maybe even win an appeal, but my kids... I tell all of you, no matter what you are into, think of what may happen to your children! Mine are in a foster home; we are fighting for visitation. Only God's intervention can help that.

[We can tell You GOD did, and Barbara has seen her kids and they have been placed in a Foster home were she can see them often. Her appeal is winding its way forward, please pray for her.]

**THIRTY FIVE YEARS AGO**

...I was a young girl of 18. I was from a very mixed-up family and got messed up myself. I had run away often, always caught, no one doing anything to change me. I met Bob. He swept me off my feet into a world I would have never believed. Bob was a professional check casher. He could and did write and cash checks everywhere. We traveled and partied. No one got hurt until we started using drugs and Bob started gambling. He was a good check casher but a bad gambler.
Soon we were in debt and on the run.

We had no money and decided to rob a store. I remember once we had $33,000 in our car trunk. We robbed a store and got away with $118.00 and took the lives of three people. Two were shot by Bob, one run over by me as we tried to get away. Now I’m fifty-three and will be getting out in about a year. To do what and go where? I have lived like a convict and have adopted a convict mentality. I have a sister that says she might take me in but? I learned that Bob was killed in prison over a gambling debt, don’t even remember what he looked like. But I will always remember those three people. Jane

[Arrangements were made by her sister to get her into a re-entry home and she arranged for a job also.] I can relate to this woman myself. All the times I had gotten in trouble no one tried to help me. Thank God I found Yvonne, and through her, Jesus and now through us, Someone Cares.

Don

THEY CALL IT A BARGAIN

I was picked up and charged with murder. I had been a hooker since I was 16, and arrested quite a few times in my life. My pimp took 60% of what I made but he never beat me. I had chosen the life style and got caught up in the way of the street.

My pimp was killed, by who I have not the foggiest. But I’m the one they busted. When I got to the police station I was really scared. After hours with shifts of cops, they cut me a deal. If I pleaded to the killing they would drop the charge to manslaughter and I would max out in seven years. If convicted of murder... life in prison. I copped and got seven years, for being mixed up with the wrong people. I did 18 months of my bit (sentence) when they caught the girl that killed my pimp. Boy did I party when I got out!

I’m writing this while awaiting trial. I stabbed one of my Johns (customers). I’m told you can arrange for someone to write me, visit me, do something for me. Please tell me Someone Cares.

Frances

ODDS AND ENDS

Please do us a favor. Look at the address label on the envelope this came in. If on the address line there is a p, this means at one time you did write an inmate. Are you still? Or there may be an f. This means at one time you donated to this ministry. Will you again? There may be a w. This means you wrote and we believe you are still writing. Lastly a d, which means you are a current financial sup-porter of Someone Cares. A z means we sent a follow up letter, not knowing your status. Our prayer is everyone will be a w.d.

YVONNE'S CORNER

A Women's Prison is a rough place. While in Michigan I volunteered as a Chaplain in one of the women's prisons. This was after being in prison ministry for over 17 years; had I not seen everything there was to see? Don warned me, saying that it could be a lot rougher than I thought, but I told myself we had already been through three different prison riots. I prayed about it and
came to the conclusion that I should at least try.

I will never forget my first day. I knew with God's help all things were possible. I can't begin to tell you what the six months before me was like, worse than anything I could have ever imagined. The pain the mothers went through of not seeing their children, and when they did see them, for a very short time, how painful the good-byes were for them. How family and relatives did not visit because of hardship. It was a very lonely place where only Jesus could make a difference! It all seemed so cloudy, nothing ever clear.

They had to shower with male guards watching them, no privacy at all; dorm type living with beds side by side. Older inmates sometimes would end up living by the laundry room—no one wanted them around. If they had no money on the books, they didn't really even stand a chance to get new underwear. They would mend their worn out ones to make them last. And also no articles for female hygiene. Some of you who read this will have a hard time believing what those women and young girls endured.

We did have Bible studies and we did form a choir, with God's help, but to this day writing about it still brings tears to my eyes. Every day I pray for the women around the world who might find themselves incarcerated. Not many of them write; they are too busy trying to survive day by day. Please keep them in your prayers, as they really need all the help they can obtain.

You see, the different states were not ready for the rapid increase in females going to prison and so many times it was because of a boyfriend or husband that they thought they were just helping. They would be asked to “drop this over to a friend’s place,” not realizing that they were transporting drugs. Then they would be arrested, next jail, and then prison.

Since the states were not prepared for this, it led to overcrowding, and not really knowing what to do with this massive influx. Now I believe they are doing a little better in some states, but the women don't even begin to have what the men do, so please, if nothing else, please remember them in your prayers.

Dear Don and Yvonne,

I have just lost my last pen pal...he was executed on January 24 in the prison at Jackson, GA. I really did lose a friend here. I had written to him at least 10 yrs and maybe longer...he felt like he was ready to go and had made his peace with God - I guess the worst thing was that he could not really understand how God could forgive a sin such as his.

So, I guess I would like to have another pen friend - male or female is not important...just someone who wants to have someone write to them. Thanks so much, Lynette Hi, Don and Yvonne:

A word of encouragement to thank you for your wonderful work. I have enjoyed my ministry, corresponding with many inmates. I always write an inmate until I can’t find them, they’re moved or released, whatever the case may be. I have three who have been released and also keep in contact.

I would like to know why my request for more inmates hasn’t been acknowledged. I understand that there are more inmates searching for loyal pen pals, than there are people to write them. I
will be faithful as I am to the other 50 that I write now, and I have certainly made wonderful friends for life. Would you please send me at least 10 more inmates looking for Someone who Cares?

One of my first inmates that I had from your ministry, has a celly that wrote the ministry twice requesting someone to write. He is a very good man, and he is very disappointed that he hasn’t heard a word from you. Could you send him a pen friend, his name is [kept confidential]

I pray God will supply you with the strength and finances to continue your work for him. May he bless you daily. Joan

JEAN’S JOTTINGS

It was prison ministry day, and the pastor had been called away. Shirley, a retired fourth-grade teacher, had prepared something for our inmates, to lead the service. She tucked her notes in her Bible, ready to check in at the prison and share lots of encouragement. We stepped up to the counter to sign in, when she realized she’d left her purse and ID at home! They know us by now, but even a volunteer can’t get into prison if you don’t have your driver’s license, any more than you can get into heaven without knowing Jesus! No exceptions!! And no parking on state property, even in the parking lot. She let me take her teacher’s quarterly (I had no idea what I’d do with it) and we parted. We were not going to disappoint our inmates, but my mind was in limbo. No warn-ing, no preparation, no clue, just a blank slate. It was strictly up to God to put words in my mouth. I checked into the search room, exchanged my driver’s license for a prison ID and personal alarm, a guard let me through the last door, and with a prayer, I started the long walk across the campus. I had expected to be nervous, but soon recognized a total peace in the tangible presence of angels. I knew then how Don and Yvonne can go into the worst prisons and win the toughest of the “bad guys” to Jesus. And a holy confidence gave me courage to return inmates’ greetings, which told me my sister was praying hard for me somewhere nearby. The trip takes one around buildings, through a long “corridor” between fence-enclosed “yards” with a handball court that seems to be a favorite exercise. Our inmates watch for us to come, and look forward to Sabbath services.

The Muslim group was just leaving as I arrived and signed in. There’s a Native American group that has the main chapel and we have the smaller one across the lobby.

We sang hearty praises that day, and the study went so smoothly, the time just flew by. I’m not sure the guards approved of me walking back with the guys, but I know them to be God’s children and feel comfortable with them. They will continue praying with us for the seven in another section of that facility so we can start meeting with that group as well.

God gives His angels charge over us, to keep us in all our ways. He provided the chilly morning so most of the inmates were indoors; He let me know He was right beside me; He did give me words to say as we studied in the chapel. He has even made the Chaplain (who seems to regard other pastors as competition) act cordial toward me on the occasions when he’s been on duty.

Shirley picked me up at the front door and we made it to church on time with a good carry-in dinner after. Our Father thinks of everything!
It took several days for the glow of that experience to wear down. No wonder Yvonne, who first resisted going into a prison, was hooked after her first visit. The Lord works on hearts, and if we’re willing to serve Him, He will guide us all to bear fruit.

An internal prison letter is a kite. So with these March winds, send a kite to your Pen Friends. You can describe your surroundings, how they may change over time; funny things your pets do; what wonderful things God does for you, encouragement when they’re down; send photos you’ve made of flowers, nature or projects. It’s re-entry training of sorts, to make them feel part of a family; just be careful to keep your relationship on a spiritual level.

Someone Cares Home Page