HAPPY NEW YEAR

Yvonne and I wish to extend to you and yours a very healthy and prosperous New Year. We look at a world in turmoil, but if we see Jesus we know it is written about a happy ending. Each year we start afresh and pray that this will be the year Jesus returns, and that all we know and all connected with this ministry are ready when the trumpet sounds.

2002 was a good year for Someone Cares. Through the Pen Friend Program and many Bible studies, many men and women in prison start the New Year knowing and growing in Jesus. Our connection to Voice Of Prophecy again brought many blessings, and many of you to us and Paper Sunshine.

The Pen Friend Program: Is there an inmate somewhere you might be a friend to? The Program is simple. You write the inmate using our address as a return (your location kept secret). We are told to spread God's word. Will you let us send you an information packet? Inspect it and if you’re comfortable, write. If, not return all the paperwork.

Those of you who are prayer warriors, Thanks. Your prayers brought us a step closer to doing what God has planned for this Ministry. Faith Partners: again we end the year in the black, cutting it close. If all of you who gave in 2002 will give what you gave in 2003, and through Voice of Prophecy radio shows and speaking, God will grant all an increase. We understand the Government has approved a program granting a much larger tax deduction to those who donate to religious organizations. All donations to Someone Cares are tax deductible.

Closing out 2002: Yvonne and I finally got to decorate a home. Yvonne, who loves to do this, did go overboard and we did both sides of our home, front and back. There is a walk way for folks to get their daily exercise behind our home. I guess of the over 1000 homes in the area, we are the only ones who did this. Many stopped to thank us, and we got to witness.

2003 Two donations last year are going to allow us to finally start on the Two Care Program. This will get Christians all over visiting inmates near them.

As a young man I was locked up several times and never got a visit. We got a letter from a man who had never, in 22 years, had a visit or a letter. Well, God provided a retired minister and his wife to visit, and we provided a school class to write him. Amen!

TEXAS: Thanks to Someone Cares I got the nerve to contact the Chaplain at a nearby
Prison. I told him my wife and I had a burden to serve Jesus in prison. We met and really hit it off. We spent Christmas Eve with 20 of our friends caroling in prison. Never have we been so blessed!

**OREGON:** My wife and I had asked for a Pen Friend nearby. On Christmas day we went to share the love of Christmas visiting our new Friend. We arrived in the visiting room, a really new experience, and waited, and waited; finally we asked an officer and found out our friend was scared to come out, but he finally did. Sitting across from us was a big man, long hair, covered with tattoos. Small talk opened a door to his heart. Three hours later, when we three knelt and prayed together, he broke down in tears and it took 4 officers to help him up. Jesus had moved in and sent Satan packing.

In a letter following he said that for the last eighteen years in prison he had been a gang member, he no longer was. He told us he had done drugs all his life and even in prison, he no longer does. He called his brother who never had written or accepted a phone call; he does now. Thank you both for giving us a way to serve and receive God's blessing.

**MICHIGAN:** Again, thanks to your help, we sent over 20,000 Christmas cards to be passed out by local Chaplains so inmates with no funds could send them to family and friends.

**JANETTE IN MISSISSIPPI:** When I wrote for a Pen Friend I never dreamed that my life would be so changed. I have been in and out of prison all my adult life. All my life I had been a taker, not a giver, even in prison. The luck of the draw got me a neat couple, Chad and Judy, as Pen Friends. Their first letter to me blew me away. They acted like they had known me all my life and really believed we were friends. In our words, they really were square and had no idea of the life I came from, and nothing about prison.

In their excitement they even sent me their home address. I remembered the rules and wrote through the ministry. They told me that from the get-go their family and friends and church would be praying for me.

A very special day: It was December the 2nd and I was called to the Chaplain’s office. I had never been to church in my life. The Chaplain said, “I have a present for you from Chad and Judy,” and he handed me a beautiful Bible with my name engraved on the cover. The Chaplain knew I did not know the Bible and he showed me how to start. A note enclosed said "Jan, this book was written for you to guide your life, and to give you Peace and Freedom" I’m serving life for murder.

That gift was given on December 2, 1988. Jan spent Christmas 2002 with Chad and Judy, a Free Person! Amen! To be free in Jesus is to be free, indeed.

**YVONNE’S CORNER**

Starting a New Year in all the turmoil there is around could be frightening to someone who isn’t a Christian. The old saying that they have in prison is so true: If you talk the talk you’d best be walking the walk, and I pray that will be something that we do more of in this New Year! We want to thank all of you for all you have done. We want you to know
that each one of you is appreciated and loved, and yes, we remember each of you in daily prayer. We pray that soon and very soon we will all meet in Heaven, and what a glorious reunion that will be! I am looking forward to that, and I'm sure many of you are. What more can we do for our Lord this year that we didn't do last year? Well for one, I am going to try to be more friendly to those in church and visiting church, and try to really get to know some of the folks who would like to keep to themselves. There are many more ways that I feel like I can improve in my witnessing. How about You?? An idea: Many of you are lonely; would you like to write a non-inmate Pen Friend?

JEAN'S JOTTINGS

Our Chaplain was happily passing out Christmas Cards last time we were at the prison for our ministry day. He never said whether they came from Someone Cares, but they certainly put a smile on his face. The note above from Michigan reminded me.

And the couple in Oregon that God sent to care for a gang member...sometimes it’s the toughest crusts on the outside that hide a marshmallow within. All it takes is some warmth to release the goodies.

It doesn’t matter how an inmate looks, he or she has suffered great loss to be in prison. One of my pen friends started out with a chip on his shoulder. We’ve gotten past the race issue and just visit on paper as brother and sister now. We’ve discovered all the things we have in common, rejoicing how God has put us together from hundreds of miles away.

When Shirley and I started ministering as volunteers, we soon discovered that each inmate we passed on the way to the Chapel was just a regular guy who messed up his life, and we exchange pleasantries with them all. In our eyes, they’re all God’s children and all treat us with respect. I want to discuss Pen Friend ministry, visitation ministry, and the status of being of a volunteer in one of these columns.

This month, we wanted to start Don Hawkins’ article Ten Months to Live. He doesn’t have that long now, unless a miracle happens with an appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which has been requested. They will likely decide the first part of February, 2003, if they will hear the appeal. If they vote not to hear the appeal, then the Federal Public Defender attorney anticipates that the Oklahoma [OK] Attorney General will ask the OK Court of Criminal Appeals to set an execution date. His letter states that:

“If the Appeals Court does set an execution date, the attorney will want to seek clemency on his behalf before the the recommendation of the OK Pardon & Parole Board. In OK, the Governor has no authority to grant any form of clemency unless there is first a recommendation in favor of clemency by the five person Parole Board. At some point the Parole Board will set Mr. Hawkins’ case for a hearing in McAlester, OK. We have no way of knowing today when that hearing will be. But it is essential we prepare for that hearing even though we hope it will not be necessary. We cannot wait until a few days before the hearing to prepare Mr. Hawkins’ clemency hearing. In other words, we have to hope for the best but prepare for the worst.

“... the Parole Board will read all letters presented to them. On behalf of Mr. Hawkins I
would request any person who wants to speak up on behalf of Mr. Hawkins to write a letter. These letters should be addressed to the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board just as if you were making a plea in person. I think the impact of these letters will be increased if they are presented at one time so the Board can see the number of letters. I would ask if you want to write on behalf of Mr. Hawkins, you send all letters to me at the above address so I can make the necessary copies and bind them together in one package of information.

“In these letters you should discuss how you came to know Mr. Hawkins, how long you have known Mr. Hawkins, how Mr. Hawkins has touched your life, things Mr. Hawkins may have done to help you or members of your family and why you think Mr. Hawkins’ life is worth sparing. You should write these letters from your heart and in your own words. They can be short or long but the most important thing is they be sincere and in your own words.

“These letters will be crucial to showing the Pardon and Parole Board there are a number of people who care for Mr. Hawkins. These letters will show a human side of Mr. Hawkins and they will reveal his growth in prison. Please take some time to think about what you want to say. We do not need to receive any letters from you until January 15th but I think it is important to make Mr. Hawkins’ friends aware of how they can help and when the help will be of most use. Thank you for taking the time to help Mr. Hawkins.”

Send a letter only if you have met or corresponded with Don for a time, for the sake of credibility. They show a fax number (405-609-5932) but be sure to address the cover sheet to Scott Braden (see below) and state that your fax is regarding

Don W. Hawkins, #153687
McAlester OK Prison.

Your actual letter must be addressed to the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board at the address below. Send the letter to:
Scott W. Braden
Attorney at Law
215 Dean A. McGee,
Ste 109 Old Post Office Building
Oklahoma City OK 73102

For those who don’t know Don well, please pray for the continuation of his life and ministry, and for those who are interceding for him that their letters will have a positive impact.

Too often we fear the darkness because we do not know what is in it. And it is human to question and distrust what we do not understand. Without communication it is difficult to sense the reality of something, so that understanding can be enlightenment. Or in the case of darkness, a light to expose what is hidden there in the dark.

Death is, for most, just as much a mystery as darkness is. We are taught that death is one of the absolutes about life. It seems to be appointed that (all) men die once¼(Hebrews 9:27). So it wouldn’t be any stretch of the imagination to see death as an absolute in the natural sense. For by one man’s sin (Adam), death is come to all flesh (mankind).
But we need not fear death as we have darkness at times in our life. He (God) has not given us a spirit of fear (evil spirit, 1 Samuel 16:14-23); but of sound mind. Understanding true reality reveals a sense of peace to know that there is no such a thing as a “boogeyman” under the bed. Perhaps we should be cautious of the corrupted souls of mankind that hide in darkness; but even at that we need not fear death at their hands.

For many it’s not so much the fear of death, but a fear of not living any more. Though we see signs of death all around us throughout our lives, we are mostly focused on living. Even to the point of seeking out that proverbial fountain of youth. It’s as if the lie of the serpent in the garden is still echoing to this day: “Thou shalt not surely die,” (Genesis 3:4). To believe this lie is to retreat from reality, which is a form of schizophrenia.

Death entered the world as a consequence of sin (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:19 and Romans 5:12). Death is an absolute while the controversy between Christ and Satan is being played out. Death seems to be referred to as a sleep. David, Solomon and the kings of Israel were spoken of as having died and are sleeping with their forefathers. (1 Kings 2:10; 11:43; 14:20,31; 15:8; 2 Chronicles 21:1; 26:23, etc). Job spoke of death as a sleep in Job 7:21, 14:10-12; as did David in Psalm 13; Jeremiah 51:39,57 and Daniel 12:2.

Jesus confirmed this belief when speaking of the daughter of Jairus (Matthew 9:24; Mark 5:39) and when referring to his deceased friend Lazarus (John 11:11-14). Many of the saints which slept, arose from their graves at Jesus’ resurrection and appeared to many (Matthew 27:52-53). Like Lazarus, who also had been raised, or the Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, they eventually died and returned to the state of the sleeping dead (as the Bible calls it).

Luke described the killing of Stephen as a falling asleep (Acts 7:60). Some Johnny-come-lately beliefs seem to hinge on eight words of a twenty-one word text by Paul where he says, in a spiritual sense, “absent from the body, present with the Lord.” It’s a wonderful thought to think of going to heaven upon the moment of death and still is an expression of faith whether it be wrong or right. However, the one text used in part seems to contradict the clear message Paul gives throughout his Epistles. He clearly concurs with the other Bible writers and our Lord in referring to death as a sleep (1 Corinthians 15:51-52 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-17).

It’s not contextual to teach that the dead saints are in heaven now. I doubt that it’s a sin to wish this for our departed loved ones, though. I just think that if they were in heaven, they’d be sleeping according to scripture and not walking streets of gold as they look down on us like some have taught us to believe. It’s no truer than there is a boogeyman under the bed. The dead know not anything (Ecclesiastes 9:5,6). His breath goeth forth-in that very day his thoughts perish (Psalm 146:4).

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave (Ecclesiastes 9:10). In sleep men do not praise God for: “The dead praise not the Lord” (Psalm 115:17). In death the breath of life (spirit) ceases and returns to God (Psalm 146:4). The body decays and returns to dust from which it was made (from dust to dust). The soul (character) of man is preserved by God until the resurrection.

Watch for the next installment of this writing next month, and keep this copy of your
newsletter so there won’t be any gaps in the story.

If you have questions about sending your letter, Email me at: jeanius@lni.net

Ten Months to Live

Someone Cares Home Page