SURE AM GLAD HE CHOSE ME!

Some are called, some are sent, some just flat got up and went.

When I became a Christian, after being called to Yvonne, the Lord called me into prison ministry. Now, all these years later, we are overjoyed with HIS blessings. Looking back, there’s a smile on my face.

A friend and mentor, Jim Finn, told me once that he was amazed at the success of Someone Cares. We seemed to invent so many mistakes. Our first newsletters, as many of you remember, were ter-rible. A grammar school drop-out, I was running a ministry on faith.

I still remember quitting a great job, going home and telling Yvonne we were stepping out on faith. I still hear her words: “Who is going to pay the bills?!” But, like Jim, God surrounded us with good people like the pastor who got me into the water and his neat family. The Retzers. I wish I could list all of you by name.

I remember how, when we started the Dress-Out Program we went out to speak at churches (maybe yours), and loaded up our small car with used clothes. One afternoon, Yvonne and I prayed for a van – a custom van with air and lots of stuff. A little while later we had a call from someone donating a van! We drove over to pick it up and thank the good folks who had called. Waiting in the driveway for us was a custom, loaded, 1960 VW bus!

Thank you, Jesus, I needed humility. As invitations to speak in churches increased, our travel budget did as well, especially the motel costs! But God came through, laying on someone’s heart a burden to give us a motor home! He led us every step of the way, opening doors to churches, increasing the Pen Friends, and giving us credit for what HE was doing.

AN INVITATION TO LODI

We were putting on a pro-gram, thanks to the Clarks. I had preached in the morning, extending an invitation to the evening program.

Doug told me that evening turnouts were not good. Minut-es before the start, the
church was almost empty. In seconds, it was FULL. Donations of clothes, Bibles, books, and a love offering that has never yet been exceeded, made all the angels in Heaven smile, I’m sure.

HAVE WE BECOME TOO BIG?

At times we have been buried in keeping everything going and growing. God has often sent us the right person, or touched someone to write a little larger check. The loss of a dear friend who had named us in her will made our move to Indiana possible, an incredible blessing to Someone Cares. At times, the mail will move a little slower, but then speeds up in answer to prayer.

VOICE OF PROPHECY

We talk often of the first time we went to the Media Center to talk about prison ministry. Our dear friend, Dan Matthews, invited us. Now, yearly visits at VOP features us and Someone Cares on the air around the world. Soon after writing this, I am leaving for California to do another show, and drive back a car. Thanks again, Wayne and Harriet. This show will bring many new friends to help us help Jesus.

The Pen Friend Program, started by Yvonne’s love to serve Jesus, has exploded. Only God knows how many men, women, boys and girls in prison will be touched and brightened through Paper Sunshine. Even better, many will be in Heaven as a result of God’s effort through us.

WE RECEIVED A CALL...

...telling us that one of our dear friends had included us in a Living Trust. God’s ministry through us, thanks that person or family. The information needed was our current address [see page 1, column 1], and Tax ID no. [611190123]. Please, if this might be your wish, inform your family members.

GOD’S MORE THAN AMAZING GRACE...

Yvonne and I often think of what an unusual ministry God gave us. We are supported by people we have never, in most cases, met.

They write to inmates in prison whom they, or we, have never met. Thousands of inmates have come to know Jesus through Paper Sunshine.

Men have gone to church because they were released from prison wearing clothes donated by you, to this ministry, for them.

We have lost track of the numbers of completed Bible studies, but it is well over 750,000.
A friend told me how blessed he was, seeing that I learned the Bible by teaching it. Before I learned to write a sermon, I copied sermons from cassette tapes—Walter Pearson and Henry Wright, mostly. In a little church in Kentucky I was asked by someone who had heard me before not to preach, but just tell stories. I have been doing that ever since. In prison, we try to make the sermons a Bible study on the life and ministry of Jesus.

**PRISON MINISTRY VIDEO**

We have been asked what it will include:

How to start a prison ministry, or how to start a ministry in prison. We will cover:
- The Dress-Out Program
- One-to-One ministry
- Dress Code
- Remedial Reading
- Pre-release and Re-entry
- Inmate testimonies

We will take you “inside” wherever we can. Please feel free to make suggestions for things you would like to see.

**YVONNE’S CORNER**

It doesn’t seem possible that summer is almost over, and the children will soon be going back to school. We pray that you all were able to have some kind of vacation time, even if it’s just to be able to go to Camp Meeting somewhere.

Summer time is a rough time for inmates: the heat, no air conditioning, and tempers flare, especially with so much over-crowding. Friends, if you don’t hear from your inmates for awhile, please keep writing. They may be locked down, which means even getting a letter out is almost impossible.

We are responsible for keeping the ministry’s cup-boards stocked, upkeep of vehicles, grounds and living quarters, The postage bill is the largest budget item, along with keeping the computers humming so the outreach programs can run smoothly. A few little extras make life run smoothly as well.

God is so good but, like the inmates, we have learned to not take life for granted, not even the smallest things. We have learned to rely on God for all things.

If you have anything you might like to see us cover in the video, please feel free to give us your input.

You are important.

You are this ministry!!
BITS AND PIECES

With conditions as they are, inmates are asking for more and more. For example, if your friend asks for something and you are comfortable with the request, find out the proper way to do it. A $300 TV is nice, but may not be allowed; and then one for $79 may be. When we catch requests, we try to advise; sometimes we miss them.

Books must come from the vendor, and no hard-backs are allowed. When I was locked up so long ago, I made a knife shank from a hard back cover, tape and glue. If your friend is asking for something in every letter, that is all he/she is interested in, and may need replacing or a letter from Yvonne. Cash cannot be sent.

MY SON DIED IN PRISON

A long time ago I started getting your newsletter - no idea how. I read them every now and then but threw away most. I did read the one about you running away from home as a youngster, your mother not knowing where you were.

My son ran away, also. I did not hear from him for nine years, then I received a call from a prison Chaplain saying my son had died in prison. I was devastated.

Due to the expense, we had him buried locally. His property was shipped to us. In it was a box of letters from you and Yvonne, giving him advice, and about a hundred from several Pen Friends. When he found out he had AIDS, he looked for help and it seems he found it through Someone Cares.

I ask you, as a mother, to ask your writers to inform their parents where they are. In your life you are putting the broken pieces together; mine are scattered too far away.

[We contacted both Pen Friends and found out he had talked about his mom as if she was near. We preach and teach, but also listen.

If your Pen Friend attends Chapel, share this story with them and maybe the Chaplain can help them make contact with their parents. Sometimes fences can be mended. The time of separation from one’s family can bring the happy outcome of the prodigal child in the Bible story.

CHURCH IN PRISON

Most large prisons have chapels, most share one with all faiths. The pulse of the chapel too often is the religion of the Chaplain. Some prisons have plenty of volunteers, so often the inmates get very confused. Maybe I can get our friend, Harry Howard, to deal with this.

Doctrine has often led men and women away from Jesus, and that is a shame. I remember once, in a church service, an inmate asked me if I spoke in tongues. I do
allow questions when I preach. I explained that I believed in all the gifts of the Bible but had not experienced them all. I also explained that it was not the gifts but the giver who saved us.

Often, Chaplains are too close to staff and not trusted by the prison population. Try not to argue with your friend, but linger on the saving Grace of Jesus.

I sure wish I could go back to when I was in prison. I will never forget—I was in the hole for punching a guard. There was a knock on the wall and an elderly man said, “Hi.”

Thinking he was a cop, I said something that was not nice. He said to me, “Son, for you there are two directions, up or down. I don’t know you and you may not be here when I return. But I see your name here on the wall. I will pray for you.”

I chased him away, but I pray in that Heaven I can tell him, “Thanks, your prayers were answered.”

Some of you have a really difficult time with your Pen Friend. Get a friend to help, or ask us. Some cannot be helped by you, but someone else may be. We can rematch.

Some write too often. Tell them how often you can, and they will probably understand.

Some don’t write at all. Tell us so we can help.

**WHAT IS A FAITH MINISTRY?**

Interesting question. When God called me to minister, I called Chaplain Stan Reed at Soledad Prison. I asked if he wanted two full-time (I included Yvonne) Chaplains. We served at Soledad full time for eleven years.

On weekends, we preached to pay ourselves. We never received a dime that was not donated. Then we became a 501C non-profit ministry. [With all the election stuff going on, I will say a donation to us is more of a write-off than a donation to your political entity of choice...]

For a long time, we have never known from week to week, month to month, how much we are going to receive. We have a modest home, eat healthy food, and stay well. God provides health, makes sure our bills are paid, and we have a small cushion of $111.11 in a savings account.

I understand our account in Heaven, thanks to all of you, may be full. Faith ministry is simply giving your all to God’s glory and He does the rest. J

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR PEN FRIENDS**
1. Write, Call, or E-mail Someone Cares for a Pen Friend application. Register on line @ Website.

2. Fill out the application and return it to Someone Cares.

3. When your inmate packet arrives, review the contents. It contains more details about your inmate. Write your inmate’s information in your paper and/or computer address book. You might want to record more information such as things you share in common, to make your letters more relevant.

4. If, for some reason, and after you have prayed about it, you change your mind, please return the information packet to Someone Cares so the inmate won’t be left waiting for a Pen Friend.

But please try to stay with the one God has matched you with.

5. Supplies you will need:

   Pen, typewriter or computer
   Paper (look for colorful paper to brighten your inmate’s life)
   Envelopes: #10, two sizes. (one needs to fit inside the other)
   Your local office supply store can help you with your selection.
   Stamps:
   If you’re very conversational, you might need the 2-ounce kind, but generally the regular ones are suitable.
   One stamp goes on Envelope #1 (the larger one)
   One stamp goes on Envelope #2 (the one to your inmate.)
   Return Address Labels
   Postage Scale (unless you live within walking distance to the Post Office).
   This will save you money so you don’t have your mail returned.

6. NO STICKERS! NO WAY!

   Self-adhesive postage stamps and return address labels are the only exceptions that I know of. Most labels have strong enough adhesive to cling and tear paper once applied. “Stickers” are often removable and used as a delivery system to smuggle drugs into prison. Your mail will be returned with a terse message.

7. MAIL TO INMATES:

   Keep it cheerful, newsy, pure and pleasing to God. Any problems? Contact us.

   Mail is monitored to prevent problems.

   O.K., now you’re ready to mail your letter

   Envelope #2: Is his/her name, number and address on the letter? Is yours, with Someone Cares’ PO Box as your return address? Is it the same on Envelope 2? (smaller envelope)
Fold the inmate’s letter and put the letter inside Envelope #2.

Apply a postage stamp.

Do not seal the envelope.

Envelope #1: On Envelope #1, put your real return address, postage, and Someone Cares’ real address (P.O. Box on pg. 1 of your newsletter)

Put Envelope 2 inside Envelope 1. Seal Envelope 1 and mail to Someone Cares.

Wait for a reply from your inmate.

Someone Cares Home Page