SOMEONE CARES PRISON MINISTRY
Quietly Changing Lives
Archived Newsletter

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Someone Cares is a faith ministry, supported by God's love and your gifts. It is a non-profit corporation; all donations are tax-deductible.

Don & Yvonne McClure
Directors

THE WINDOWLESS SOCIETY

No windows, but it sure is bright,
The lights shine through the night.
   I’m in this cell alone,
   No TV, no radio, no telephone.

   I feel so lonely I could cry.
   Mail call again passed me by;
   The guard working tonight
   Put me here because of a fight.

   I wonder how long I’ll be here?
   If I’m not careful, it puts the fear in my soul because I don’t know.
   In my stomach a knot will start to grow.

How many years I’ve lived this way,
   When people see me they say,
   He will never change his ways.
   With my life I continue to pay.

Some days I’m happy, some days I doubt,
   Someday I hope I figure out,
   How to get my life back on track,
   Figure out just what I lack.

   I’m so tired of doing time,
   For my life of prior crimes.
   So God, I’m praying show me how,
   Thank you Lord, before You I bow.

HAPPINESS IS TO KNOW THE SAVIOR
We have had the joy of again being on 3ABN TV (Three Angels Broadcasting Network). While
getting ready for the show, we thought of all the joy we have received serving God in the prisons, now around the world. Both Yvonne and I could start now and keep on telling stories how the Lord has used us. But still, and again, the credit goes to you who are a vital part of this growing ministry. We do pray that you can get 3ABN in your area; if not we can provide a tape of the program for a stipend.

WHEN SOMEONE CARES GOT STARTED

We lived in Aptos and had a typewriter, an adding machine, and little talent. God and great friends helped us go and grow. I remember when we got our first computer, and all the fear that went with it. God kept us growing. Now a simple thought has exploded into putting an idea into action: Pen Friends by E-mail!

A friend in Canada asked if he could E-mail his friend here at Someone Cares, as it would save time and postage, and we are about being good stewards of God’s funds. So we tried, and it worked well. A little more work for us, but... So if you would like to Email your Pen Friend, or Friends, here we go. Make sure you start your E-mail a few lines down, as we will neatly cut off your sending address. Make sure you start your letter as you would on a regular sheet of paper, with the inmate’s full name and number and address, then start the letter. Hopefully we can develop an inmate label program and kick-start Someone Cares into the Computer Age.

One lady who had only one Pen Friend now has ten. She sends all a base E-mail and then alters each to personalize it. Also, if you have email, send us your address so we can chat from time to time. Ours is: sdapm@someonecares.org Yvonne’s: ymeavon@aol.com. Down the road, we can try shifting into high gear and send the newsletter to you on line, saving even more time and postage!! Let us know if you would like to receive it this way, or if you would prefer to read it on our web site at the Someone Cares address above.

HEY, FOLKS, GIVE ME A BREAK

I’m an inmate, in prison for committing a crime. I was not a very good person then. I’m starting to try to put my life in order. I don’t get a newspaper, don’t have a radio, and am given a limited choice of what I watch on TV if I get to watch at all. When I first came to prison I joined a bunch of Pen Pal things to try to get ladies to write and visit and send stuff. One day I listened to a radio show, don’t remember what “Voice Of Prophecy” was, but was told about a Pen Friend Program.

The word “friend” really impressed me as I have not had one for a long time. Well I got a letter from a real nice Christian couple. They spent four pages telling me about how great it was to be a Christian and all this Bible stuff—woah! I did not have the foggiest idea what they were talking about. So I wrote them and guess what? They did not have to foggiest idea of what I was talking about. Well, Don & Yvonne helped, and we both learned a little about each other and bit-by-bit I learned about Jesus.
A LITTLE HELP FOR OUR FRIENDS
Start your letter writing ministry with the principle on which we started this ministry. Do not let your doctrine be a barrier, but a bridge to Jesus. Be about friendship; talk some about current events, and your family. Ask questions, not prying; do not ask why they are in prison. Be overjoyed if they tell you.

Sports are of interest to most male inmates; if you are not into that, ask a church member to help. Now, if you get a friend who knows the Bible— well, have at it.

Most Chaplains have their main Volunteers from their own religious persuasion, so don’t step on their thinking, just nudge them with yours. We once worked at a prison that had a lot of different Volunteers. Monday: they got a little of Once Saved Always Saved. Tuesday: a bit or a lot of Speaking in Tongues; Wednesday, a lot about What Not to Eat; Thursday: State of the Dead; Friday: The Proper Day to Worship. We were able to start an all faiths Chapel and bring all the different doctrines into play without offending anyone.

I have told this before, but a group that had been going into a prison for a long time was having their regular Bible study. They always opened with prayer requests. They had a new member in their group and the new inmate asked, “My mom died several weeks ago and is in heaven. Please pray for her.” This should not be a problem, but the Volunteer made it into one by saying she was not yet in Heaven. This took the young man’s beliefs and others into confusion. It also got the group kicked out of the prison and they are still out! Bible study will clear up all problems.

What says the Bible,
The Bible to me?
Words of men so often confuse,
What says the Bible to me?
On my Mothers gravestone it says. “Asleep in Jesus.”

FROM THE INSIDE
When the judge said 13 to 20 years, I went blank. All I could think of was Jake. He still dominates my thoughts. I was taken to prison and “7 block” after being stripped, searched, and showered. This block is one of the largest in the U.S. It’s 5 stories high, 50 single cells to a floor.

My first letter: divorce papers. If that had not been followed by a card with a smiley face from a friend, I might have dived off the 5th tier. In less than a year I had taken all the hopelessness I could stand. I managed to get enough heroin to overdose. Thankfully, a Christian inmate reached out to me. He got me to pray and prayer brings hope.

That was then. Now, just four nights ago a friend was stabbed in the neck. At any moment someone could snap, every day is the same. Jesus is again working out the plans of my life. I’ve only gotten a couple of letters this year. Those of you writing inmates are saving lives and minds. Jesus said to remember those in prison.
HAND MADE, PERSONALIZED GREETING CARDS
Birthdays, Holidays, Sympathy, etc. Mike can make, they are nice. He needs the name of the person, the occasion, and a short message. Please allow at least four weeks for the mail to complete its cycle.

5x7 (large) $5.50
3 ½ x 5 ½ (small) $3.50

To order: Send Money Order to: Michael Coates 193922 SRF
9625 Pierce Rd,
Freeland MI 48623

His name and number must be on the money order. Drop Mike a note — he needs prayer.

THE SNOW BALL IS ROLLING
I still remember telling Yvonne that once we started the Pen Friend Program, it would give us something to do if we ever retired. It seems each time we get one request and match them they recruit someone else; we wish that worked as well with the free folks. Friends, this ministry has gotten HUGE. Today we received 510 pieces of mail! There will be times when we just cannot read all the mail and things can go wrong. Send any problems to us. The expenses are going up so please, if you need a tax deduction, we need you! We also need a computer program-mer to write a donation program. We do need you.

SPEAKING OF DONATIONS
It seems I made some errors. Some of the receipts were not correct - not seriously, but wrong. If it happens to you, please contact us at once. This will not happen again, because until we get a new program, I’m doing it the old fashioned way—by hand.

A quality used car is going to be needed soon. The car we got from Wayne & Harriet is neat; our other two are both on their last legs.

YVONNE’S CORNER
How many times do we really let the people around us know that we really do care about them and what they might be going through??

When someone takes the time to listen,
   When someone reaches out,
When someone does a thoughtful thing
   That makes you warm throughout.

When someone lends a helping hand,
   Finds ways in which to share,
When someone makes you feel secure,
By always being there.

When someone senses there are times
When you have special needs,
When someone gives you inner strength
Through words as well as deed,
When someone seems to take an interest
In just how you’re faring,
It’s time to tell that special Someone,
“Thanks so much for caring.”
by Bruce B. Wilbur

This is what each of you does as you write to a Pen Friend. You take time out of your world to share and care, and what a marvelous way of caring. We pray that God will bless each of you.

HELP US FIND
It is a shame this always seems to happen but it does. We cannot deliver the following letters to their intended people. Many are because you used a Pen Name and forgot to tell us, or the handwriting is bad. Please check. The first name is to, second is from.

S Mackenzie fr. C Ramires
Marcie Amto fr. Larry Patrell,
Pam Berry fr. Tim Hamron
Jamie Bo fr. Tim Spence
Bob Sutter fr. V Washington
Mary Field C Harris
Ann Goodard fr. Joe Gaskins,
Amy Greer fr. David Bays,
H Ham John Jansing,
Nancy Hiller fr. James Cover,
Marcie Jan fr. Rick Hancock
Brenda Jackson fr. ???
Jessica fr. Brad Sims
Kathy fr. C Brown @ Jon Simione,
Noni Liebold fr. Larry Lewmki,
Larry Noel fr. Brad Brown
Paul fr. Larry Smith
Auntie P fr. Greg Walker,
Tony Sasso fr. Norma Woodruff,
Pat Surrells fr. Helen Gatel,
Tina fr. Juanita Hawkins,
Jackie White # L Stewart,
Bonnie Woods Cory Dedrick.

Again, “Someone Cares” should NOT be on the address line of your Pen Friend mail! They are
writing to your name or Pen Name.

**IT WAS THERE ALL THE TIME**
I came to prison at 19 and it is an experience I will never forget. I was assigned my cell upon arrival — small, but neat and clean; even had a bookshelf with a Bible and a couple of books, not for me. I spent the next couple of years attaching myself to the safety of gangs, but stayed out of trouble.

Then there was a riot and my life changed forever. I was stabbed several times, but obviously lived. I was lucky to return to my cell. Now the days became very long and the books on the shelf got my attention. First I read a book called Three Hours to Live, about a bad dude who changed his life before he died. Then I read Steps to Christ. It was about me!

Never in my life had I ever called on Jesus, but now I did. Both books were there all the time and might have stayed there if Satan had not stirred up the troops (or did God just get my attention?)

Thanks, folks, if you are ever near, stop by. Two days later, Don & Yvonne were at my cell door. To Be Free In Jesus is to be free indeed!

Tom Janks

**JEAN’S JOTTINGS**
I’m learning a lot this year, first-hand, about how it feels to be the family of an inmate far away. Is there a reason the “system” separates us so far from one another? I’m told it’s to keep convicts apart who would otherwise “keep in touch” to continue the habits that caused their imprisonment.

It’s very costly to visit someone two to four hours away. Six to eight-hour trips are grueling physically and financially.

We worry about how they really are, not just how they put on a “good face” to keep us from worrying between calls or letters. We’re fortunate when our loved one has a gift for making friends instead of enemies of both cell mates or guards.

If our inmate is male and has a faithful “ol’ lady” at home waiting for him and looking out for their interests, he’s blessed, indeed. My own son is one of these, I believe. He and his fiancee were to be married when the storm hit, and they are hoping for his transfer soon. If it doesn’t come through, they plan to marry where he is now, (the eight-hour trip).

Early releases aren’t unusual now, due to severe overcrowding. Those who pass their GED test are up for earlier release, on tether.

For instance, more than 2,000 men are processed through the Jackson, Michigan each month. From there they are shipped all over the state, even above the Bridge at Mackinaw, even if their families are from the lower part of the state.
Becoming a ward of the state is usually preceded by a few weeks in a local jail; I’m told that the jail time is far worse than prison time.

Those who learn their lesson by being suddenly torn from the arms of their families have a firm foundation on which to build a stable life when they get out. They quickly learn to appreciate the warmth of the soft bed, tasty home cooking, and being able to move about that goes beyond 8x10 feet, or maybe the presence of an agreeable (or disagreeable) “cellie.”

Some even begin doing some serious Bible study, and build a firm foundation for a solid lifestyle. Even if it’s “jail-house religion,” they’re exposed to what’s right and wrong while they’re confined. Boredom can result in an interest in the history of humanity. Scripture is full of object lessons in our stubbornness, to learn what God is trying to teach us.

I’m blessed by the “ol’ lady” who’s holding the fort until my son comes home. There are a lot of problems being faced by those left behind, and it’s heart warming to know that friends and neighbors respect her enough to make sure she has most of her needs met. She keeps me posted on what’s going on.

Please pray for all of us as we go through this “time of trouble” together. Don and Yvonne and their family need to be included in this group as well. It will all be better when Jesus comes to take us home.

There won’t be any prisons in Heaven, or a desire to do anything that caused imprisonment on earth!

Have you ever played the game “We Won’t have THAT in Heaven?” Try it sometime. As you travel, think of things like telephones, cars, noxious weeds, leaves to rake, illness, doctors, computers, laundry, TVs, cages for animals, hair spray, landfills, furnaces, rusty water, violent storms.

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