Someone Cares Prison Ministry

September 2008

**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

**HARD TIME:**

Doing any amount of time is Hard Time. The Prison system is set up for 6 levels. Level one, low custody, to level Six, maximum custody.

We do not restrict who can be a part of this Ministry. We do weed out and keep out known trouble makers or those who request female companionship. That does not mean that those that request a Pen Friend do not try to get more than friendly with a female. Most level 5 and 6 inmates are locked down 23/7.

We also have found hardcore inmates come to God easier than those that can count weeks to the street. With the idea that long sentences will cut down on crime many serve rebellious sentences. Thus their time is hard - very hard. Asking you to enter this system can be hard on you as nothing in your life can compare with this. But! We have watched with amazement the job some of you have done. Holy Boldness has directed the conversion of many an inmate.

**JIM**

Serving double life and a gang leader, Jim wrote us. I am writing this out on the yard on a sunny day in California.

I have in front of me a letter I received from a family about a year ago. I joined your organization as I had many others as a scam to get money. Instead I found out what real caring people there are in the world. I have been stabbed many times. I am serving a forty year sentence, and had I not met the Verbal’s, I would have pulled every day of that. Through them and your newsletters I do see a light at the end of a tunnel and Jesus is there with arms out-stretched.

I left the gang and am still alive - a Miracle. I only make $22.00 a month but am going to send you guys $2.00. Your Ministry shows Someone Cares.

Jim

**HOW ARE YOUR PEN FRIENDS CHOSEN?**

The inmates’ applications arrive here and are placed in a pile (actually three piles). We now attempt to match by race! No do not jump on us - we have done this for a long time and inmates refuse, most of the time, to write someone of a different race. Prejudice in the world is bad enough, in prison it is
terrible. This is mostly caused by the very serious gang problems. These piles of inmate names are separated by race, the free folks are not. I keep track of what pile I’m drawing from with a penny. Unless we are told, we do not know the race of the free person. This is based on over thirty years of experience working with this program, our success in prison, and the fact most inmates know they can not misuse this ministry - many do try.

BEFORE RECEIVING JESUS:

Mary writes, “I was in the drug business. I used to smuggle dope into Soledad Prison before searches made it too difficult. What I want to convey here is, now instead of dope I bring in Christ. Thank you for what you and your Ministry does.

We thank her for the great job she is now doing. We would love to say drugs are not being smuggled into prison these days, but they are. Here are some of the ways it is done: in the glue of stamps and stickers; bulky envelopes (prisons do not allow such bulky envelopes); books (they must come from vendors because of their wrapping); also candy, cakes, and such which are not allowed in anyway. So be careful what you send as it may be rejected.

PLEASE SEND US YOUR PHONE NUMBER
E MAIL PEN FRIENDS:

When you choose to write via e-mail it works like this. You start the e-mail by letting us know who you are, the inmate’s name and number and address, then your letter, signed with name or pen name. We cut off all reference to you and your e-mail address. We snail mail this to the inmate and their answer to you. This does put two stamps on the Ministry!

IF THIS HAPPENS:

I got a call from a Pen Friend asking advice. Her inmate wrote and told her he was scared of getting beat up or stabbed. He was in a lock down unit and the threat was verbal from another cell. I asked her to pass on the information to the prison as it came to her not us. I missed it when her letter came through or I would have called.

I brought this up to make a request. If you are comfortable with your pen friend and do not need their letters read, let us know. We then will put a large X on your label letting us know we can pass it on. But if we miss something, call us or e-mail. Also I have been moving a bit too quickly in moving mail, and when printing a label some times we print the wrong label. We are sorry. I am going to retire by 8 June 2013. But we really pray that Jesus comes way before that, and we all meet in Heaven soon, very soon.

NOW IS THE TIME:

We are going to start seriously looking to make some update changes. I do not want to retire, but this Ministry is getting so very big. My eyes after hours at the computer and reading mail are not as good as they once were.
The only error we have made is not planning for the day when it would be too much.

I was asked what would happen if? Well! I’m not sure. I can assure all the mail will go back and forth and you or your inmate’s mail will not be forgotten. Funding has been good and if we can raise enough to hire a person or two we can handle all. We will complete three Videos next year showing every phase of Ministry we have done. Some of you have folks that go to prison to preach or teach. The Ministry that is vital in prison is Two Care - A one to one visitation program, Remedial Reading - Helping prepare for a GED, The Pen Friend Program (We pray that every one writing takes one more inmate and asks a friend to join.), and Dress Outs - providing good used clothes to be worn upon release or they buy the clothes they have been wearing?

STRANGE BUT TRUE:

I contacted the Department of Corrections in California and found out the following: It costs the tax payer between $27,000 to $36,000 a year to house one inmate, $36,000 for medical inmates. Pay runs between 13 to 24 cents an hour; Medical visits cost $5.00; gang activity runs about 60%. I was alerted these costs will raise a lot as the population gets older.

California is forced to ship inmates to other states and then pay for them. Violence is on the increase, as a result, inmates are locked down more often. Upon release they get whatever they have saved and few save. The State gives them $200.00 upon release. When we were there, it was $100.00 cash at the gate, $100.00 cash when they got to parole office. Now they give checks?? Checks are mostly cashed at check cashing places at a fee up to 30%. If they do not have a place to live, they join the street people. Then they wonder why recidivism is so high.

YOU DO THE MATH!

Recidivism (return to Prison) is 60% or higher. At a tax payer cost of $27,000 plus - that is a bunch of bucks!

Since there is little or no rehabilitation in most prisons, wouldn’t it be wise to set up a graded reentry program and those that qualify given $1,000 a month for a year to get on their feet, and give a tax incentive to employers who hire out of this program?

Something is wrong - when we started, there were less than 1 million inmates in prisons now there are over two million?

OUR FRIENDS AT VOICE OF PROPHECY

Provide free Bible study lessons that make a step to leading men and women in prison to Christ. But they need funding to take it far beyond the first step in more advanced lessons. It is a proven fact that Jesus saves.

Several have asked about Spanish lessons for their Pen Friends. Go to VOP.COM and enroll them. If no rehabilitation, how about regeneration?
YVONNES CORNER:

I just want to let all of you know how much we appreciate your faithfulness. As Don said, you don’t really understand the world of prison, but it is a challenge and a learning experience which I believe Jesus wants us to experience as the scriptures tell us. We can all do this from the comfort of our homes, and V.O.P. provides the bible study. That is about as easy as it gets.

Now I do agree that some are just not called to prison, but we all do have our neighbors, and the soup kitchens, and they all need our help.

There is a church not far from us, and once a week they take a truck full of food to the projects. The truck just pulls in and parks in the middle of the parking lot, and the people start running with their sacks. I saw one little boy run out barefooted in the snow. You see he wanted an orange.

We need you - but if that is not your calling, God needs you elsewhere. We all have work to do, and May God Bless You as you do it.

I want to thank all of you for your prayers and get well cards, God is so good.

IS THANK YOU ENOUGH?

My name is Mary and I grew up a drug addict and a hooker - in an out of jail abused and used by cops. I made the mistake of hooking up with one bad Pimp. Most of a year was spent in a fog so I am not sure what happened. I came to in the back of a police car. I had been found in a motel room with a dead man. I was charged with murder. Funny I was almost happy! Maybe some peace in Prison. While waiting trial and during my trial I was visited by Richard and Mona, sent to me by a long lost brother. I did start reading a lot even as scrambled as my head was. I got around to the bible. Two years went by and I was convicted of manslaughter - 25 to life. I could tell you of many things that went down in jail and prison, but I would like to tell you of a friend. This dude ended up showing me a new path, not very wide, pretty narrow. I went to lots of dark places and terrible times and after a couple of years in prison, ended up in a tunnel. At the end of it - a light. Yes that light was Jesus. That dude that died for my sins. In His dying moment he said to ME!! Go and sin no more. I am e-mailing this to you because it seems through your Ministry, the stone cold Pimp became a Christian and confessed to killing the man I was accused of killing. I am free with good friends and pray to see you both soon.

Yvonne and I get calls, notes, letters and e-mails all the time but this one is what this Ministry means to others. I do not have a clue who Mary is, nor do not know, I don’t think, Richard and Mona - nor the stone cold pimp. So often Yvonne and I get credit for work many of you do. When we were in the trenches, it was a bit different but whoever, whatever - God is so good!

WHY DOES IT ALL CHANGE?

I accepted Christ through a Bill Glass Crusade in prison. The experience I went through for the next 18 months was a true blessing. Having a Pen Friend through your Ministry helped a lot as did the Discover Bible studies.

As my release date came closer and closer my Prayer life really grew and the Christian brothers here...
helped a lot. I was released from prison with no money, except the clothes the Prison sold me which I was wearing. Also I had no place to live. I had Jesus and soon would find a Church. I had a Christian backbone to find a cheap motel on credit for a few days.

I got a job, not as a computer programmer, but a dishwasher. Then I went to a Church. The biggest embarrassment in my life was when a lady came up to me and said “we Christians do not come to Church dressed like that.” I left and went to another church. No one spoke to me. In prison we were overjoyed for fellowship.

Don, who never gives up, brought me to a little church where everyone greeted me. Praise God. I now have a great job and have put all the pieces together. I have a nice apartment and good clothes. I went back to both churches and asked the Pastors to tell my story. I told them of the records kept in heaven and asked them if they wanted to get there to come to a little God loving church I had found.

The Holy Boldness I learned from you and Yvonne and Bill Glass. I have been sober for nine years - 3 in 6 out.

I hope this check helps. I love your newsletter it reminds me were I came from and were I’m going.
Tony Armstrong

I PREACH AND TEACH BUT ALSO LISTEN:

When God made a preacher out of me with no formal experience or education I was blessed.

I was able to take real experiences and turn them into Bible lessons. I am not proud of the past, but am glad I am able to relate to men and women who are where they are, and I can show them I came from there also and God has the answers. The true joy was God also forgave me for the past that leads to my future, Thank You Jesus!

WE ALL NEED TO BE WHAT WE SAY WE ARE:

From all over the United States we get calls, thank You Jesus, from folks asking for help. These calls are from young people in trouble from all walks of life. Remember “Just Say No To Drugs” is a great message, but we forgot to tell them what to say yes to.

Young people are in trouble because the Church needs to wake up. I ask Pastors if they have ever been to an A.A meeting? No! N.A Meeting? No! E.A Meeting? No! Often when we speak I hear “but we don’t want those kind of folks in our church”. Like my friend, Pastor Walter Pearson, says “THERE’RE HERE”!

Way back I was the Keynote speaker for an A.A. Convention - Got fired from A.A (kidding), but when I stood up to speak I did not say my name Is Don, I am an Alcoholic. I said “My name is Don, I am a Christian.” Jesus took my problem as if it never was. May HE bless You and have you Join Us with HIM, Amen

HEART PRINTS:
Whatever our hands touch we leave fingerprints. Walls, furniture, door knobs, dishes, books. As we touch we leave our identity. Please whatever we touch today help us leave heart prints! Heart prints of compassion, of understanding and love. May my heart touch a lonely prisoner, a runaway daughter, an anxious mother? A dear friend!

I shall go out today and leave heart prints - care to join me - touch someone?

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