SPENDING TIME WITH JESUS:

Everyday we spend time with Jesus asking for his guidance and direction. With our world in dire trouble knowing HE holds the answer. If only we were like Jesus with a forgiving heart. We keep jamming more and more people into prison, giving them little chance to improve. With budget cuts, programs are being removed. States are shipping inmates to other states and paying that state to care for them. What happens when all the beds are full?

As a new Christian a long time ago I remember reading about Paul and Silas going to Prison. As I read the story something did not fit. They were beaten with rods, chained, put in stocks (a large board with groves for legs giving the jailer a chance to stretch them painfully), and arms were chained overhead. What did they do? They sang praise to God. The inmates listened! God sent an earthquake which woke the jailer who set the inmates free. Soldiers came and grabbed the jailer and were about to kill him, when Paul said: “They are all here”. These two men had broken into prison to have a church service. I’m sure the jailer has a new job as a Christian. Regeneration works - Prison Ministry is crime prevention.

DO THE CRIME DO THE TIME!

At times we give the impression that there should not be prisons. Not at all, but we do think that sentencing should not be determined by a system that is broken and in some cases corrupt. A book, “The Rich get Richer the poor get Prison” illustrates that when sent to prison a person should get a chance to improve. It is sad because of over crowding many volunteer programs are being done away with. Men and women will try if they are given a chance. Yes, some are truly bad and will stay that way.

The prison system was built to be self-sufficient. This keeps inmates busy and earns a little in shops, farms, dairy, chicken etc.

ONE VERY MEMORABLE MOMENT:

One program that works well in prison is Stop Smoking. Years ago a friend and Member of our Board, Dr. Williard put on such a program. He drew quite a crowd. To start with he collected everyone’s cigarettes. Using both medical and Biblical reasons he explained the reason to quit, and how the men listened. Some were boys. Being talked to not down to is very important - especially in Prison. Dr. Williard did what we try to teach all to do. Get down to where they are - not bringing them up to
where we are. The program was a great success.

Oh! One small problem, someone stole all the cigarettes.

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR INMATE ART AND POEMS:**

Related to Prison, with permission to us in our newsletter and A pending book. We will give them credit.

**ALL FAITHS CHAPEL:**

We, Yvonne and I, learned a long time ago that Ministry in prison would be difficult, not because of the inmates, but because of the Churches.

Most of you know we ask that you do not let your doctrine be a barrier, but a bridge to Jesus. Even going into prison by mail can be affected. A problem many inmates have is their Bible is just the New Testament only. We are about Jesus and HIS Word. But what about Jewish, Muslim, or Indian? Our job is to lead men and women, boys and girls, to growth in religion.

Many years ago a young inmate killed himself. He was raised in a Christian home (what religion I do not know). He joined in with a group of inmates in the yard who taught? He was told that if he did not speak in tongues he could never go to heaven. He spent hours trying to teach the gift to himself. To him the only thing he loved was his family and he would never see them again.

In another case an inmate new to prison and new to the chapel asked the Volunteer leading the prayer service if they would pray for his mother who had just died and was in Heaven. The request was a prayer for his mother not for a Bible study on the state of the dead.

As those in prison do grow, the Lord will direct them. When we started and even today if I am not sure I ask. Ignorance may be bliss but it also says learn. In a letter you have time to get help. We have matched a lot of inmates lately, and we have opened a door we need to go through. Many in prison write really bad and have little education and we need folks that can assist them.

Yvonne has done it but she needs a break for awhile and your prayers.

**SO MANY DOORS ARE OPENING?**

Why us Lord. Over the years we have been carried, pulled, prayed for, prayed with, picked up, and never pushed.

**Pen Friend Program:** One inmate who had not had a letter in 17 years asks for one. Yvonne said “sure”, and we gave him two. This was the start of Paper Sunshine.

In our attic is a note binder that we started this all with - the birth of Someone Cares. I learned as I taught that I need a little more time to get the answer right. I learned well for a grammar school dropout and with a great Help Mate. The Lord reminded me HE chose me. We worked full time in Prison and had to raise our own funds. Although we have grown it was that jolt from Jim Finn, Lee
Grady Daryl Retzer, Chaplains Read and Howard that helped us. We were given a chance to raise funds at a Camp meeting where I had been working on a sermon on the 144,000 - always playing with numbers - loved the number 7. So I asked all to give us $18.00 a year for 7 years. Boy that was easy and our funding was handled for 7 years. Add quite a few more sevens. But this put Double Trouble Yvonne and I in gear and up, up and away to our first Mountain Top experience. Walking across the yard at Soledad an inmate stopped Yvonne. “Chaplain, I’m getting out in two week and sure could use some clothes”. She told him she would try and get his sizes via a string - Between the church ADRA and Lee and Pat Grady we started the “Dress Out Program”. Thousands of inmates have left Prison because one man asked Yvonne. This was done with the help of the Warden and State of California and “Double Trouble.” One night at Soledad in the Chaplain’s office, Yvonne was directing a Choir when the phone rang. Chaplain Read was sick and asked if I could stay over in quarters on the grounds and preach two sermons!!! I had never preached “one” before! If ever asked to do anything in the name of the Lord, say “I’ll be happy to”.

I had a cassette by one of my favorite Preacher’s, Walter Pearson, and I stayed up all night and the next days, preached and read two services. AMEN

I even made and alter call - Walter got 6 to come forward. God is so Good.

YVONNES CORNER:

Many years ago I had just returned from the beach and Don pulled in behind me. Are you sick I asked? No, but God asked me to start a Prison ministry! You already teach a Bible Study there. He was not sick, he was nuts. He called the prison and asked if they would take two full-time volunteers free. I got the free - missed the two. “Honey, a year ago you were an atheist! Who is going to pay us?” He assured me God would provide. Well I saw the excitement, and days later we were cleared as full time unpaid staff at what would be one of the nation’s largest Prisons. Soledad was three prisons in one. I was given as my own a yard with 800 men.

I hired a clerk who was a Muslim. With him we started a Bible study every morning which my clerk on his own joined. My next job was to find a choir and a leader. The leader was a black man who had been a pastor and I played the piano. Telling this over the years I will answer a question you can not ask. For over thirty years and through three riots no inmate ever tried anything - several officers but when word got out, never again.

I was amazed how often we were in the hard core section and the respect we received. Most of the men knew where Don had come from.

I was worried about funding but with that $18.00 a year for 7 years we survived (although not that many signed up.) Since the accident and Kidney problem I have pretty much enjoyed the Ministries Mission reading mail. I got lucky when God turned my help mate into a partnership with him. Please, if in the area drop by or if you need to chat, my e-mail is: Ymeavon&AOL.com, God Bless us all

VOICE OF PROPHECY:

In October (Oct 20-24th) for a week Yvonne and I and friends are going to share Someone Cares around the world. We need special help. Many hear a little of one program; It is featured daily that
week on VOP Radio. You may not get it.

Any time day or night each day you can go to VOP.COM, click the daily broadcast and listen or download it and have your Pastor put in the Bulletin. Ask friends to share it and send it to all in your address books.

VOP will have CD’s I think for $5.00. If you go to their archived broadcasts - they go back to 1999

WITH OUR GROWTH:

Yvonne and I are going to have to make some changes. One thing we assure is that the Pen Friend Program will be around until Jesus returns.

A friend asked me about retirement. Before that I owe Yvonne a Honeymoon and a Vacation which we have never had. We look at the cross and pray - Heaven comes first, somehow we will work out the rest.

BEING A PEN FRIEND:

I wrote E.W for quite awhile and both of us were uneasy. We settled in our 3rd or 4th exchange, and after eight or nine months, my family started asking question about E.W They started adding notes in with my letters. Then he started telling me about his family. I told him of mine. We both encouraged each other in our own ways. E.W made it past, strikes, and stabbings, set ups to take him down to other terrible things. When trouble brewed our letter writing seemed to go slower and slower.

I think he encouraged me more than I did him. There was nothing or no one who was going to take him away from Jesus. I came to the conclusion that there were no more obvious or stronger relationships with Christ than inmates in our nation’s prisons. Throughout that time the Lord was with me and my friend E.W…HE (The LORD) put 10 to 12 serious problems before us. Both, him and myself as well as our families were protected. During the last spring we were writing I decided to surprise him with a visit. Visiting a prison can be tedious. Going through gates, pat searched and then the wait. One of the guards told me he was in the next group to enter. I know the look on my face was between joy and fear.. We hugged and found a table. I guess the thought he was black and I was white had never come up, and it sure did not matter.

After our visit, I did not hear from him for awhile and was worried as gang tension was bad there. God had blessed our friendship, and we continue to stay in touch now that he is home. E.W and a friend decided to bind Satan on the yard of that prison. They went out arm in arm praying loud without fear, with love in their hearts. No one touched them or bothered them, Of course he is writing another inmate at the same prison. I want to thank you and Yvonne for this great Ministry. I Pray all that read this try and try again to write an inmate. Rob

I AM SORRY ABOUT LABEL:

Our program had a problem. I printed the next label and we missed it. Also we have too many names with the same Pen Names. Please make your Pen Name two names.
WE PRAY that YOU ALL JOIN US ON VOP.COM October 20, 21, 22, 23, 24th you may hear it on you computer any time

WAS IT AN ANGEL?

My name is Joan and my husband’s name is Peter. We were driving to visit our son in prison when we saw a man whose car had broken down and we stopped to offer help. He had a flat tire and no jack. His car was a mess, and frankly, so was he.

We had been figuring out how to break some bad news to our son who was getting paroled in 6 weeks. The State would not let him parole to our home and he had to be paroled to the county of commitment. This was several hundred miles from us and we did not have the funds to help. The man using our Jack had changed his tire and returned the jack. He asked if we knew of anyone looking for a job? He said he had a place in nearby Lompoc, Calif.

We looked at each other and asked what kind of work. He said he had a farm and needed a general farm hand. Our son had been doing farm work the five years he was in prison. We told him about our son.

The man who said his name was Jim told the prison to call and he would have a job and a place to stay. We said, “Would you pray with us?” which he did. We then parted. I looked in the rear view mirror to see if he got going and he was gone! We stopped for a bite and my husband called the number and asked for Jim. The person on the end of the line said, “no Jim here”. He followed that he helped a Jim fix a flat and was told that he was looking for a farm hand. He had told him he knew someone and would have them call. Our son got paroled and got the job. He is off parole and is home. If you see Jim say, “HI”.

AS THE TREES TURN:

We are about to change Seasons and be a season nearer Jesus.

We have lost a lot of friends this year and know we will see them again.

Please have someone know that you are a part of this Ministry so when that happens we can contact Their Pen Friend, Yvonne

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