OUR GOD IS AN AWESOME GOD

We wish to welcome a whole lot of new folks to become members of the God Squad through Someone Cares Prison Ministry. As they have done for many years Voice of Prophecy and staff did a great job with their last airing of our program. Many thanks to those of you who listened on your computers and sent the information to your friends - this may have been the best program ever done. As a result of working with VOP these many years, at least over 1 million inmates have completed free Bible Studies. Most of those inmates are free today, leading better lives. Thanks to VOP and all of you!

BEING A WITNESS FOR JESUS

The Pen Friend Program has been and will continue to be the corner stone of this Ministry through Jesus. The prison system of our country is as messed up as the government. Depression is a major problem, along with loneliness. When I became a Christian from being an atheist, it was hard. My wife, with tender patience, took her time.

The Pen Friend program allows inmates a chance to get some stuff out in the open. Writing an inmate that is a stranger can be a real challenge, but you should feel free to openly ask questions to learn more about them, such as – are they interested in learning about the Bible and Jesus? Or, are they looking for a platonic friendship? (Just don’t pry into why they are incarcerated. As your friendship grows, they may feel comfortable sharing that information in time.)
WHO ARE WE WRITING?

Men and women, boys, and girls in prison are a very mixed group from all walks of life and backgrounds. They request Pen Friends for one of many reasons, but most often because their families have cut them off. Many really want to try and change and find a way to make it when they get out.

They are aware that this is a Christian Ministry. Here is an example: “Yvonne, you matched me with an older lady and she is now like a mom. But all she writes about is the Bible and her church. I am taking a Bible study but when I try to ask questions she can’t answer, she does not.” This problem is common. If your inmate is asking questions you can’t answer, have someone in your church help.

One of our pen friends, Bob, was matched with a street gang leader named Tony. Bob called us and said they had nothing in common, but I asked him to try something before giving up. Bob loves to garden, so he sent Tony magazines on gardening as well as a sports magazine. Today Tony has a small landscape business and is active in helping youth who are susceptible to becoming gang members.

Your letter is going into a prison full of bad folks. Your job is friendship, which may lead to an inmate finding Jesus and a new life. Many prisons have no Chapels. We are very content with our belief, but we pray you use your doctrine as a bridge, not a barrier, to Jesus.

433 PEOPLE

We just spent hours going through a whole lot of names - 433 folks heard us on the radio and contacted us about Someone Cares, and we matched them all with an inmate. Sixty seven of them decided this was not for them, or a family member was not in favor, and they returned the information. The rest did worse than nothing, as they did not write, nor did they return the inmate’s information.

We did receive three beautiful letters to inmates; however, there are no names or addresses on the envelopes, just letters. Obviously, we do not know who gets these letters or even who sent them? We have begged to make sure the envelope to the inmate has their name, number and address on it and that the return address has the pen friend’s name or “pen name” with our address (but without the name of “Someone Cares.”)

Please read all the paperwork we send, and if you are not sure about something call us. If you missed our radio program, go to www.vop.com to see how you can get a copy of “The Five Days of Prison Ministry.” Don’t forget to share it with your Church! Remember that Jesus said, “I was in prison and you visited me not.”
**Yvonne's Corner**

**Never Give Up!** That’s the title of a wonderful song written by Chuck Fulmore! It has lifted us up many times over the years.

I would like to try to explain to you how little an inmate has. The state issues their clothes which are prison-made and not many. They are forced to stay in a cell 23 hours a day with no radio or TV. Hardcore inmates are not bothered; others are scared to death. Their food is so bad you wouldn’t feed it to your dog, and they only have a short time to eat and get out of the mess hall. Luxury to them is a small light bulb, soap that doesn’t make your skin break out, shampoo, a pencil, a piece of paper, and an envelope. In order to mail a letter they may give up a meal or two for a stamp. They may ask for money. Five or ten dollars once in awhile is ok, but stay in control, and if you do not want to send any, do not. Gang members often put pressure on weaker inmates for money and make them write free folks.

Good news - we now have additional staff, and all letters should again be read by us. We want you to know how important you are to this Ministry, and want to help you in this process. Don’t forget, if an inmate bothers you we will provide you with a new one.

**PEN NAMES**

Although we mentioned in the past that using a pen name for your protection is acceptable, as you can see it does create problems. It is simpler and preferable if you use only one name. Keeping your location a secret is why we have lasted 35 years.

If you are not receiving letters from your pen friend, please contact us, as we have a stack of letters and don’t know who they belong to. We have about 40 letters sent by inmates to Someone Cares, but not addressed to a pen friend’s name. On the letter there is also no full name, but only first names (Barbara, Bob, Janet), or “Hi there.”

**A VERY SPECIAL FUND HAS BEEN STARTED**

As mentioned in past newsletters, we have a lot of video interviews, and a play done by Soledad inmates which we will be putting together on DVD. A fund was started and is being added to for this project, so all that Yvonne and I have done over the years can be shown in your church to learn how to do Prison Ministry. I love coming to your churches and putting on programs, but the expense and the miles, and my slow-moving body makes it difficult. The new DVD will be a great tool that can reach many to teach about what has worked for us in this Ministry.
AN AMAZING THING HAPPENED

With the country in a financial mess we really were worried how we would keep on keeping on. We started getting lots of dollar bills, mostly with no names attached (we prayerfully thank you).

A friend of our does a lot of selling on the internet, so if you have anything lying around the house you do not need, please send it our way. We will use the proceeds to lead men and women, boys and girls in prison to Jesus.

Those of you who have been with us awhile may remember Jake, our grandson, who is now working with us. Yvonne’s daughter, Ronna, is also a team member and a big help. We are in need of a good computer (used is fine) for Jake to use. He lives across town and in the winter we can work together via computer.

GOING BACK MANY YEARS

When God chose us for this Ministry we had to learn as it grew. Soledad Prison had five different volunteer groups going in each week, one Chapel for all and five different doctrines. Yvonne got the group leaders together and started an All Faiths Chapel. Now we had different Christian faiths, and a few Jewish, Muslim, Hindu and Indians meeting together. It was a wonderful experience.

We taught what the Bible said and others asked questions or gave input as to what they were taught. Sure, I got stuck often - remember, I was an atheist turned Christian and a Minister in three months. (Thank you, Jesus!).

THE PROCESS IN DETAIL

Newcomers: When you receive the information in the mail, read it all and then keep it. There is a form you need to complete and send to us (add your phone number to that). An information letter showing how to address envelopes is included. You will also receive an application filled out by an inmate, and a letter. Or the application may be blank – if so, please send it to the inmate with your first letter.

When we get your request to join, your name goes on the bottom of a pile and all inmate’s requests are in another pile. When your name comes up, the name on top of the other pile is yours. If you are not comfortable with that person, return the inmate’s information (application and intro letter) and we will rematch you both.

I don’t know about you, but I want to be a light for Jesus and give my best. How about you? If we match you and you get no answer, write again! If no answer, send us the paperwork and please take another lost sheep.

He said to him again a second time, “Simon son of Jonah, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes Lord, You know I love You.” He said to him, “Tend my sheep.”

- John 21:16

Donations are gladly accepted online through our website: www.someonecares.org