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Executive Deputy Commissioner

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JOHN S. SHAFFER  
Deputy for Facilities  
Management

SYLVIA GIBSON  
Deputy for Centralized  
Services

COMMONWEALTH of PENNSYLVANIA  
DEPARTMENT of CORRECTIONS  
STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION at SOMERSET  
1590 WALTERS MILL ROAD  
SOMERSET, PA 15510-0001  
PHONE: 814-443-8100  
August 4, 1997

Rivers Of Living Water Ministries  
Attn: Jim Newsom  
P.O. Box 211  
Akron PA 17501-0211

Dear Brother Jim,


Greetings in the precious name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I hope everything is well with you and your family. I am well and enjoying serving the Lord.

I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for the time you spent ministering here at SCI-Somerset several weeks ago. The weekend really blessed my soul. It was so nice for me to be able to sit back and receive the meat God dished out through you. So many times when I have special programs like this I have to run here and there taking care of this and that, or else I have to be so concerned about security issues that I don't really get to enjoy the service. This weekend went so smoothly that I could sit back, relax, and enjoy your teaching from the word.

Your experience as an inmate in the state of Florida enables you to reach these men where they are at. You've been there, done that, and now you are out of prison and being faithful to God. This goes a long way when you teach as you did on the grace of God. So many men come to me and identify their own personal "Heater" that they now recognize as God's gift instead of Satan's attacks. This gives such a different perspective to their lives. Another comment I've heard again and again the past two weeks is "it looks like a stone, but I know it's bread". You have a unique way of communicating the Gospel. God has really blessed you in this. You have touched the lives of the men here at SCI-Somerset with the grace of God in a magnificent way.

I am looking forward to a possible return trip for you to minister again here at SCI-Somerset. I know God has called you to minister and I hope and pray that he continues to open doors for you to minister in other state prisons. If you ever need a reference don't hesitate to contact me, because God has used you in mighty way and your live is an awesome testimony to the changing grace of God. May God continue to bless you and your ministry in a very special way.

Sincerely in Christ,

  
Pastor Phil Maust  
Protestant Chaplain