



the connection

APRIL 2012

REVIVAL

CRUSADE 2012
SPECIAL REPORT

WWW.WECAREPROGRAM.ORG


An Overview of Crusade 2012

During the We Care Crusade, people not normally involved with prison ministry have an opportunity to step inside prison walls for a firsthand experience in ministry to inmates. The annual five-day event begins with a day of worship, teaching and orientation, and this year that gathering was held on the campus of Alabama State University in downtown Montgomery. After the orientation, volunteers not serving in the Montgomery area, traveled to one of the other three areas (Troy, Birmingham, or Atmore) that served as regional gathering points for the rest of the week. The following morning the participants in each region were led through a training session required by the Alabama Department of Corrections. On the remaining three mornings the training was replaced by a time of worship and a brief meditation to challenge and encourage the volunteers. This time was also used to share with each other how God was working and answering prayers in the 21 participating prisons.

After the morning session each day, the teams dispersed into their assigned prisons across the state to mingle with and share with the inmates and invite them to the evening chapel service. Evangelists and music groups entered the prisons in late afternoon. Following the music and message, most services concluded with a time of response and further ministry to the inmates who chose to respond to God's voice. These services are often the highlight of the day, and this year the men and women behind bars were challenged with the theme of revival and called upon to allow God to revive them. As happens each year, the volunteers were greatly encouraged by the church in prison and found it a privilege to walk alongside their incarcerated brothers and sisters for the week.

OUT OF THE FLAMES

by Lester Huber, Staff Associate



Sunday, January 22, 2012, was orientation day in Montgomery in preparation for the prison crusade. That evening on our way back to Atmore, my wife and I and three other crusade volunteers were traveling along normally when just seconds after our van passed an 18-wheeler, one of the men heard a muffled "boom." Looking in my rearview mirror, I saw to my horror the tractor trailer we had just passed had burst into flames. Possibly due to blowing a tire, the truck swerved into the guardrail, igniting the fuel tank, and then flipped onto its side.

We immediately stopped, backed up, and ran to the scene. The driver had already been pulled out through the windshield of the flaming cab by a very alert witness from the opposite side of the interstate. The shoeless driver and his rescuer were running away from the fire as we arrived. One of the crusade volunteers "happened" to have an extra pair of shoes with him in his luggage, so after retrieving the shoes, Sam graciously tied them on the feet of the truck driver.

As we talked with the stunned driver and waited for rescue equipment, I was impressed with this vivid illustration of how the We Care volunteers had the great privilege and responsibility that very week to be quick and available to help pull the doomed from the flames of hell. I was also reminded of the brevity of life as I thought back to the car-truck accident which took my own son's life 15 years ago. Darrell was ready to die, but God gave this driver another opportunity to prepare, if he hadn't already. The scene will be forever etched in my mind.



We Care Staff



MacDonald Family Singers, MA

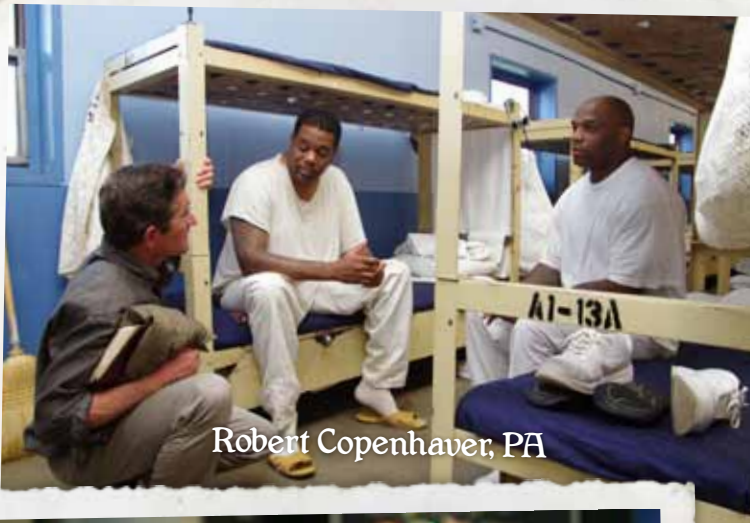


Preparing for Ministry

Volunteer Reflections



Frank Lee Team



Robert Copenhaver, PA



Bethany Hollinger, PA and Tiana Martin, PA



Carl Strite, VA and Daniel Wagler, IN

☞ The church in prison is growing! It's wonderful to see the more mature in Christ helping the new believers along.
- Karla Maust, MD

☞ The first evening's service there was such a spirit of brokenness in the chapel. Grown men were coming together and making amends, forgiving each other, saying they were sorry for the way they had acted towards each other. I could not stop crying and praising God because He was so tangibly present. Revival came to my heart through the Spirit of God.
- Dean Miller, AL

☞ It was a blessing to come again and see some of the ladies that I had met last year and see that they had remained faithful! And when talking with them, I could tell they had grown in their walk with God.
- Naomi Schrock, MO

☞ God can still use me, at 72 years old.
- John High, PA

☞ Men facing a date of execution are happy, thankful for prison...they say they would not have made it to heaven if it were not for church in prison.
- Randy Atkins, MI

☞ We had the awesome experience to witness the reconciliation of a father and son within our team of volunteers and then hear them share their testimony to the inmates. Just awesome.
- Carl Strite, VA

☞ I was made newly aware of the many Christian inmates who are struggling to maintain an ongoing relationship with Jesus.
- Monroe Hochstedler, FL

☞ It has strengthened my desire to be a missionary wherever I am.
- Luke Landis, VA

☞ I've definitely been challenged to pray diligently for the church behind bars.
- Rachel Maust, MD

☞ I was uplifted, inspired, refilled, and renewed in spirit and mind from the theme of revival and the speakers and groups that shared.
- Joyce Eby, PA

To view more Crusade photos,
visit www.wecareprogram.org

Behind the Wire

by Chelsy Bontrager



My heart is so full. How can I describe this week in words? How can I describe my thoughts as I walked behind these fences on Monday for the 32nd time in six years? How can I describe the honest JOY that filled my heart at the thought of what would happen during our three hours in prison each night? How can I describe what it is like to see these men and women inmates broken before God? How can I describe seeing God's power come down and literally, physically, heal the sick? How can I describe the fire of God that fell each night as my 20-year-old cousin passionately proclaimed the gospel and the truth of God's redemption and grace? How can I describe singing to men and women who were weeping, laughing, shouting, and weeping again? How can I describe the testimonies we heard every night from inmates? How can I describe the church behind bars? How it is SO alive? How it puts our churches to shame? How it makes me want to know God more? How can I describe all this? I can't. Words can't express it...I just know that it changes me every time I experience it. I come away with a renewed sense of what I have in godly family...a renewed sense of God's glory...a renewed sense of thankfulness...a renewed sense of the POWER of Jesus in changing lives. Yes...my heart is full!



Micah Hollinger, PA

1-29-12

Dear Greg (We Care volunteer),

Grace and peace to you! I wanted to write you a short note to express my deep gratitude for this last crusade. Over the last eleven years of experiencing We Care crusades, I have never been so blessed as this last time. Our conversations around the table truly nourished my soul and endeared my heart to you guys like never before. I hope that it blessed you at least as much.

Thank you for your faithfulness to come year after year. It's hard to say what the impact of your efforts are in others' lives here, but you have ministered to me. Thank you.

Your Brother,
Scott (inmate)



Glenn Weber, AL



Noah Hurst, PA

2012 Crusade Facts

- 18 Music Groups/Soloists
- 21 Correctional Facilities
- 24 Evangelists
- 26 States Represented
- 80 In-Prison Chapel Services
- 396 Total Participants
- 19,736 Reachable Inmates

**Lives Impacted for Eternity:
Incalculable!**

We Need Each Other

by Steve Martin, Development Director

Meet my new friend Scott. Scott is a believer and deeply involved in the church in prison. He is one of the many people I learned to know during the week of Crusade.



In a conversation with Scott, he was thanking We Care and the volunteers for sacrificing their time and money to visit the men and women behind bars in Alabama. His comment to me was “You have no idea of how much you are impacting the men just by being here.”

I responded, “And you have no idea how much you are impacting the volunteers. These men are going home changed. You have impacted their lives, families, churches and communities in a very positive way. Lives are being changed, local ministries are being started and priorities are being rearranged because of your faithfulness and testimony!”

I’ve thought a lot about this conversation since that day. Now more than ever, we need each other. Every part of the body of Christ is important. We are all broken. We all need a savior. We all need God’s grace. In addition we all have something to offer each other. We all have much we that can learn from each

other, and as we listen to each other, the church is encouraged, whether it’s located in a prison in Alabama, a street corner in New York City or a corn field in Ohio. Barriers are being torn down and the church is being unified as we proclaim the Gospel to a needy world.

So we traveled to Alabama to encourage the church behind bars. Thank you to all who made this year’s crusade “the best ever.” But somehow I believe we got the best end of the deal. I look forward to hearing about how the crusade impacted you. Call me directly at 610-909-9285 or email me at steve@wecareprogram.org.



JoyLynn Strubhar, PA



Glick Family Singers, OH

Join us next year: January 27-31, 2013

NEWS

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

Several volunteers blessed us tremendously with their willing service at headquarters during the busy winter months. Dave and Ruth Ann Kulp (PA) gave two months of their time assisting with crusade preparations in the office and various other chores around the building and the economy shops. Steve and Ella Mae Martin (PA) joined the headquarters team for one month working on details for the spring banquet tour and pitching in to help where needed. Thanks so much to each of you!



Martins & Kulp

NEW ARRIVALS

Jeremy and Andrea Miller welcomed Jadon Andrew on December 18, 2011. Big brother Joshua and big sister Alyssa are excited over their new baby brother. Jeremy serves as assistant chaplain at St. Clair Correctional Facility.



Jadon Andrew

Jacob Scott was born to James and Charmaine Smoker on January 16, 2012. He is also welcomed by his older siblings Dexter, Isaiah, and Ava. James is an assistant chaplain at Donaldson Correctional Facility.



Jacob Scott

WELCOME

Ramona Rosser recently joined our “family” as a We Care Associate. Ramona conducts a weekly Bible study and jail ministry with the women at Boaz City Jail. Living in Albertville, Alabama, along with her three daughters, she is also actively involved in her church, Potter’s House. Welcome, Ramona!



Ramona Rosser

ELECTION RESULTS

The annual members’ meeting on January 21, 2012, included an election to fill four vacancies on the Board of Directors. Re-elected to a three-year term was Loyd Gingerich (IL). Marvin Fisher (VA), Alvin Landis (PA), and Durell Orendorf (MD) are new to the board.

We extend heartfelt thanks to outgoing directors John Bender (PA), Harvey Fox (PA), and Eli Yoder (KS) for their years of faithful service on the board.

FOUNTAIN CHAPEL

Plans are underway to give the chapel at Fountain Correctional Facility in Atmore an “extreme makeover.” After years of heavy use, the chapel is in a state of disrepair. Most of the labor for this project will be “volunteer labor,” but we invite you to consider making a contribution toward the \$55,000 needed for materials (including a new heating/ac system, sound deadening classroom dividers, seating, audio/visual equipment, etc.) Please make your checks payable to We Care Program with “Fountain Chapel Project” in the memo line and send them to 3493 Hwy 21, Atmore, AL 36502.



LEAST OF THESE TOUR

We extend a special thanks to all who helped to make our spring tour a success—first, to Steve Martin and the committees in each location who coordinated the events and solicited sponsorships, then to the businesses and individuals who underwrote the meal and travel costs, and finally to our friends and supporters in Harrisonburg, VA, Franconia and New Holland, PA, Bittinger, MD, Plain City, OH, and Arthur, IL, for their hospitality and generosity. We are praying that seeds which were planted will bear fruit in due time.



Jacob Potsander and Steve Martin in tour skit



Softball Outreach

June 7-9, 2012

Share Christ's love with men in prison while enjoying the game of softball. Games will be played in the Atmore area prisons and beyond with mound ministry following each game. Teams and/or individual players (ages 20-45+/-) are welcome. Men only please.

For an application or further information:
stan@wecareprogram.org or 251-368-8818

GO

June 15-24, 2012

GO is a short-term missions experience for **YOUNG ADULTS** with a focus on gospel-centered living. Includes group interaction, training, and in-prison visitation.

For an application or further information:
discover@wecareprogram.org or 251-368-8818

Have you felt God speaking to your heart about the "least of these" in your community?

MINISTERING TO THE "LEAST OF THESE" CONFERENCE

Friday & Saturday, September 21-22, 2012

Acts Covenant Church, Lancaster, PA

Sponsored by We Care Program

More information will be available in upcoming newsletters and on our website.

Info: Steve Martin at steve@wecareprogram.org

Volume XLIV

Issue 1

Published six times a year, The Connection provides news and views to friends of We Care Program, a non-profit, interdenominational organization consisting of Christian men and women who share a burden for and commitment to "Proclaiming Christ and Discipling Inmates." We are accomplishing our purpose by placing and training missionary chaplains, fostering relationships with inmates, encouraging Christian inmates to live in community, teaching Biblical studies, mentoring, providing outreach opportunities, and collaborating with those who support our purpose.

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THE VALUE OF PRISON VISITATION

A MESSAGE FROM DAVID R. LANDIS, PRESIDENT

dave@wecareprogram.org

It is very hard to get around the fact that spending time with someone in a mentoring and discipleship-based relationship is the best and surest way to bring about life-changing transformation. Even research confirms this. A study entitled THE EFFECTS OF PRISON VISITATION ON OFFENDER RECIDIVISM, conducted by the Minnesota Department of Corrections, confirms that visiting prisoners can significantly improve their re-introduction to the community after release.

But what stands out as most encouraging to us about this study is the fact that two types of visits

had the greatest impact on reducing recidivism: clergy and mentors. We Care chaplains are spending over 600 hours each week inside prison walls...encouraging, listening, sharing, teaching, discipling, and praying with men and women in prison. Day after day, month after month, and year after year. And that has only been possible through the prayers, involvement, and generosity of many of you. We thank you for that.

Many state chaplains and wardens recognize the value of prison visitation and are asking for our help. We currently have specific requests for chaplaincy assistance at 10 different institutions! If you are feeling called to prison ministry, I'd love to begin a conversation with you.

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