

The Connection

THE NEWSLETTER OF WE CARE PROGRAM

JUNE 2006

Being Real, Making Connections

Ed Ranck

If folks come to your door wishing to share their religion, what would they have to do before you would listen to them? What gives them the right to invade your home and bring their faith to you? As a chaplain's assistant going into the prison, the living space of an inmate, what must I do to earn the right to share my faith with him? Does walking in dressed in street clothes, as opposed to prison whites, with my Bible and my little tag identifying me as a chaplain's assistant, give me the right to stand by a man's bunk and share?

Some men are Christians and are glad to see us, glad for any encouragement or Bible teaching we can give, ready for us to help with questions they may have. They also encourage us in our faith walk or give insight into prison

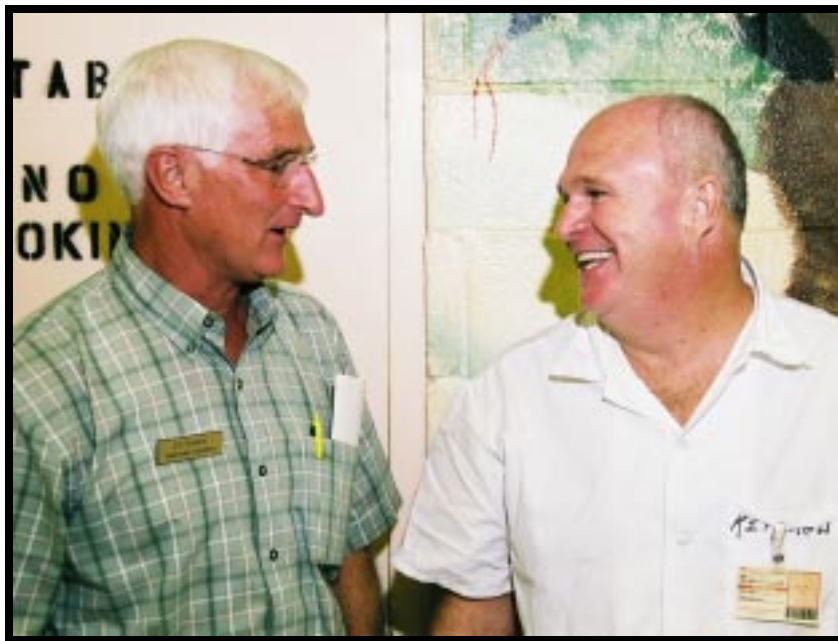
life to save us from damaging or embarrassing mistakes.

That is the easier part.

But what of the challenge of breaking through the barrier of suspicion or indifference that is often a part of an unbeliever's life? First, I need to be a real person, not just a Bible carrying chaplain's assistant, but a person with real life experiences. I shared with a Mexican fellow about a problem I was having with a We Care vehicle, and he translated to one of his friends who in turn gave some instruction in Spanish on how to deal with it. I had a need and he was able to help me with it. It made a connection.

In the low security camp

where I work, quite a number of the men work in town on various projects, and I often praise them for the beauty and neatness of Atmore as a result of their work. I thank them for making a contribution to my community. Sometimes I play a game of checkers and get beat, for prison checkers is different, or share a joke or a Pepsi. It can be more serious, sharing a struggle or concern I have or a mistake I have made. And sometimes questions come up about my life, about my faith, about why I live the way I do. It is then I know that some trust has been built, and an invitation has been given for me to share the message I have brought to their door.



Ed makes a connection through sharing a lighter moment with an inmate friend

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Fulfilling the Great Commission in America's Prisons

www.wecareprogram.org

News of Note

Special Addition

Congratulations to **Dave and Veola Bucher** on the birth of Ethan David on May 2. Along with her parents, big sister Cheney thinks Ethan is a very special addition to the family! (Dave has been serving with We Care Program as an assistant chaplain at Donaldson Correctional Facility in Birmingham, Alabama, since January 2003.)

Servant Hearts and Hands



Since his recent retirement from truck driving, **Marvin J. Bender** has joined his wife **Emma** in doing volunteer work for We Care Program on a regular basis. Living next door to the office enables Marvin to easily contribute his services in grounds maintenance, office janitorial work, and construction assistance. Emma continues to use her baking skills to contribute to staff event menus from time to time, and when it comes time to work on a newsletter mailing, we know we can count on Emma to assist with tabbing and labeling.

With both a son and a son-in-law on staff, the Benders' family involvement in We Care is greatly appreciated. We extend a hearty thank you, Marvin and Emma, for your willing and faithful service behind the scenes!

Opportunities

Summer Read-A-Thon

Wondering how you can get involved in sharing the gospel in prison? Read a book or two or three or ...! We Care's third annual **Read-A-Thon** gives you an opportunity to help support our chaplaincy staff as they share the love of Christ with inmates. Besides reading on your own, consider multiplying your effectiveness by promoting and coordinating the event in your church or Sunday School class. Encourage others to read. Ask friends, family, and business acquaintances to sponsor you. *A Read-A-Thon form with instructions is inserted in this newsletter.* Please make as many copies as needed.

Last year nineteen readers in five states raised \$8,414.55. Join us by reading and/or sponsoring readers, and let's see if we can at least double that amount this year. *Your participation does make a difference!*

Young Adult Internship

Interns in this program will work alongside our staff chaplains. Emphasis will be placed on spiritual growth through the development of inter-personal relationships with unbelievers, discipleship of new believers, and fellowship with the Body of Christ within prison walls. The team will also participate in service projects and be encouraged to grow in personal spiritual disciplines.

The internship, open to young adults ages 20 and older, will run from **October '06 through April '07**. Each team member will need to raise some program expenses and have health insurance coverage (room, board, and monthly allowance provided). Applications are now being accepted and are due by **August 15**. Contact our office for more information.

Volume XXXVII, Number 3

Published eight times a year, *The Connection* provides news and views to friends of We Care Program. We Care Program is a non-profit, interdenominational organization consisting of Christian men and women who share a burden for and commitment to helping incarcerated men and women. We are accomplishing our mission by recruiting, funding, training, placing, and administering missionary chaplains and chaplain's assistants in prisons to provide friendship evangelism, teaching, peer counseling, and encouragement.

Direct all correspondence to:
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You Can Make A Difference! . . . In the Lives of Prisoners

We Care Read-A-Thon

Supports Missionary Prison Chaplaincy Workers

Here's How It Works...

- 1 Complete reader information form below. (please print) **Set your goals.** (other side)
- 2 Ask family and friends to sponsor your reading efforts. (per book or donation)
- 3 Collect the books you want to read. (age appropriate please)
- 4 Beginning July 1, READ, READ, READ! (As you finish each book, note finish date on reading list form.)
You must finish reading books by July 31.
- 5 Beginning August 1, collect pledges from sponsors in the form of a check or money order made out to WE CARE PROGRAM. After collecting all pledges, put in envelope along with PLEDGE FORM and send to: **We Care Program, 3493 Highway 21, Atmore AL 36502**
- 6 After We Care Program receives your pledges, we will send a receipt to your sponsors for their tax-deductible gifts. (checks and money orders only)
- 7 Pledges received by August 31 will qualify reader to be eligible for prizes. (gift certificates to Christian Book Distributors)
Ages up to 12 - Most money raised - 1st place \$50 gift certificate, 2nd place \$25 gift certificate
Ages 13 and up - Most money raised - 1st place \$100 gift certificate, 2nd place \$50 gift certificate
- 8 All readers collecting over \$150 in pledges will receive a free T-Shirt from We Care Program.

Questions? Call Noreen at We Care Program 251-368-8818

We Care Read-A-Thon

Reader Info

Reader's Name: _____

Street Address: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: _____

Birthdate: _____ Church: _____

T-Shirt Size (If raised over \$150) *Please check one size*

Youth Medium Youth Large Adult Small Adult Medium Adult Large Adult X-Large

Feel free to make additional copies of this form as needed.

We Care Read-A-Thon

Sponsor List

Sponsor's Name	Amount Per Book	or Donation	Money Collected
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			
(use another sheet for additional sponsors)	My Goal: \$ _____	Total Money Collected	

We Care Read-A-Thon

Reading List

Book Title	Date Completed	Book Title	Date Completed
1.		13.	
2.		14.	
3.		15.	
4.		16.	
5.		17.	
6.		18.	
7.		19.	
8.		20.	
9.		21.	
10.		22.	
11.		23.	
12.		24.	
(use another sheet for additional books)	My Goal: _____ books	Total Books Read	

From the Field

Marysville, OH

Ohio Reformatory for Women

April 8. She hated that date and always became “a basket case” whenever it arrived. She’d been hospitalized three times for depression related to that date. On that day, in 1999, she took her 8-year-old daughter along to work. It was supposed to be a good, fun day. Instead, within eight hours her daughter was dead due to a severe fast-moving infection.

That memory had always haunted her. “I should have made the nurses check on her more often...I shouldn’t have let them take her into ICU by herself; I should have insisted they let me go in with her...I should have...I shouldn’t have...” on and on and on. Somehow she felt that if she would just have done *one more thing*, her daughter would be alive today.

We’d met a few times and she was receiving Truth and healing. But “the day” was approaching. She’d been dreading it again. A few days before that, she told me how she’d begun writing and suddenly began thinking about God and Brittany together in heaven. And she’d been overcome by peace. “It’s a miracle!”

Only God can bring the emotional healing and Truth that we all so desperately need.

- Wilma Mullet

Cherrylog, GA

Fannin County Jail

Words surely every prison and jail minister has heard many times: “I don’t know why these things keep happening to me,” and “I’m really a good person.”

Good answers include: “Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction...” (Gal. 6:7-8), and, “There is no one righteous, not even one.” (Rom. 3:10), followed by “...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Rom. 3:23)

Most of those I meet at the jail are hardly unfamiliar with these verses, having heard them several times in their

lives. Many have responded, often more than once. Yet, it is as if they never had. So, I tell them again, lovingly, with care and patience.

In the parable as recorded and explained in Matthew 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8, Jesus taught that the reason people don’t hear, that the “seed” is not received, is that the soil (mind) is hard and Satan is thus able to snatch it away before it can take root.

The remedy? Keep on sowing, in season, out of season. And pray the Lord to break up the hardness so that the “seed” can take root and begin to grow. Above all, stay the course! “He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.” (Ps. 126:6) - *Del Yoder*

Atmore, AL

Atmore Work Center

Some of the men at Atmore Work Center want to follow God and live by His rules. They are striving to please Him. I am grateful that God has allowed me the opportunity to be a part of this process. I am also aware that a lot of other religions try to convince men that their way is right. There is a lot of confusion about who God is. Many of the men believe that all religions lead to God.

Recently an inmate of a religious persuasion other than Christianity was transferred to our facility. He is pushing that agenda more than anyone else has since I’ve been there. He is requesting videos and more time

slots for services. State regulations require that I allow other religions to have materials and service times. But I’m also working to provide videos that reveal the true identity of Jesus. Please pray that I will be faithful in sharing Jesus with boldness.

- Bob Depew

Birmingham, AL

Donaldson Correctional Facility

Since this was the first time a free-world college choir came to Donaldson, the recent visit by “The Sharon Singers” was a high-profile event. As part of the program, choir members gave spontaneous testimonies, stories of **real** young people going through **real-life** situations and experiencing the power of a **real God** at work in their lives. The radiance of the Holy Spirit was on their faces and made an impression on the inmates.

Many of the world’s lost young people have a bad reputation for destruction. No one knows this better than men and women in prison, many of whom are still young “destructors” themselves. They might expect older people to give them advice on how to live for God. But when young people come into prison and demonstrate a **real** godly life before their



“The Sharon Singers” from Sharon Mennonite Bible Institute in Pennsylvania

eyes and speak God’s **real truth** for them to hear, inmates take notice.

Young adults, God needs “low-mileage” people who will go “long distances” for Him!

- Dave Bucher

HELP WANTED



*We are building a new ministry headquarters
and would love for you to help us
make it happen!*

Projected timeline and areas of need:

August 1 - Sept. 30	Foundation, Basement Walls
October 1 - Dec. 31	Framing and Roofing
January 2 until	Electrical
January 2 - 12	Soffet
January 15 until	Plumbing
January 15 until	Brick
February 19 until	Heating/Air Conditioning
March 19 until	Insulation
April 2 until	Sheetrock
May 14 - July 13	Trim, Paint, Drop Ceiling, Flooring, Attic Insulation
July 16 - 25	Finishing Touches
July 26 - 28	Move In!

Specialized work crews and general volunteers needed

For information, please contact Don Metzler: 251-368-8818 or don@wecareprogram.org
Housing and food provided



Prison Chaplaincy Services

www.wecareprogram.org

3493 Hwy. 21
Atmore, AL 36502



Perspectives



David R. Landis
President

Recently, as I was preparing to leave the prison for the day, I realized that something different was going on. Officers were acting different. Inmates were acting different. The reason for the tension became obvious as I entered the final corridor which would lead me to the exit. It was very evident by the blood and torn clothing I saw on two inmates that a fight had just occurred. An officer had brought the situation under control, but I could sense that the anger level was still high. It was a disturbing scene, but also a reminder to me of the havoc caused by sin's grip.

Fights are a normal part of prison life. Although I am not usually in the areas where they occur, I am constantly relating with men whose anger, bitterness, and unforgiveness lead to these physical confrontations. Overcrowded conditions and the summer heat do not help the situation any. (The fact that mass chaos is avoided at all within the prisons walls is a testament to the officers and administration who do their best to keep things under control.)

Two days later, I returned to the prison to find that a breakdown had occurred in the Faith Dorm leadership structure, which I oversee. The same feelings and emotions that I had sensed earlier in the week due to the fight were there due to misunderstanding, accusation, and mis-communication, but as of that moment, no fights. The chaplain and I met separately with the estranged leaders to try to wade through the reasons for the breakdown. Then we brought them together to try to work out their differences. They shared their feelings openly and honestly. It was tense, but gradually, each one saw their own actions as unacceptable. Confessions came, followed by forgiveness. Although it took several hours to accomplish, it was quite a gratifying moment to end our meeting with heads bowed in prayer, giving thanks to God for the reconciliation made possible through Jesus Christ.

As a "minister" of reconciliation behind prison walls, it is always encouraging to see a man surrender his life to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. But I must say that, increasingly, it is equally, if not more gratifying, to walk alongside a man and show him that his decision to follow Christ should and can result in everyday abundant life, even though the world around him rages on.

I'd love to hear from you.
Contact me at
dave@wecareprogram.org

GET INVOLVED!

(Information Enclosed)

Summer Read-A-Thon
We Care Building Project
Young Adult Internship

Starts July 1, 2006
Starts August, 2006
Starts October 10, 2006

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Atmore, AL 36502
Permit No. 99

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3493 Highway 21
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