

THE Correction

THE NEWSLETTER OF WE CARE PROGRAM

August 2008

Our Purpose:

Proclaiming Christ and Disciplining Inmates

Over the course of the last year we have been working together to identify the movement of God throughout the history of We Care Program, understand our strengths and weaknesses (both past and present), seek to determine if God is taking us in new directions, and then apply those findings towards clarifying our purpose and mission as an organization so that we can follow God's leading more wholeheartedly. It was our goal to coin a phrase that would capture our purpose and then formulate a list of objectives that would best describe how we intend to pursue that purpose. What you will read on the following pages is the result of our attempts to put into words what We Care Program is all about. We hope that this effort will help you to more clearly understand our purpose and perhaps cause some to partner with us by praying, giving, or serving.

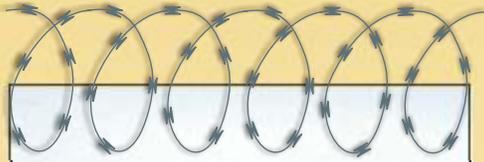
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www.wecareprogram.org

We will pursue
our purpose
by:



Volume XL, Number 4

Published six times a year, *The Connection* provides news and views of 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 chaplains' assistants in prisons to provide friendship evangelism, teaching, peer counseling, and encouragement.

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Placing and training missionary chaplains to serve in correctional facilities that request assistance, realizing the importance of maintaining healthy relationships with correctional administrations and submitting to existing authority structures.

Fostering relationships with inmates by sharing encouragement and friendship, while understanding the urgency of sharing the Gospel message with those who are not yet following Christ.

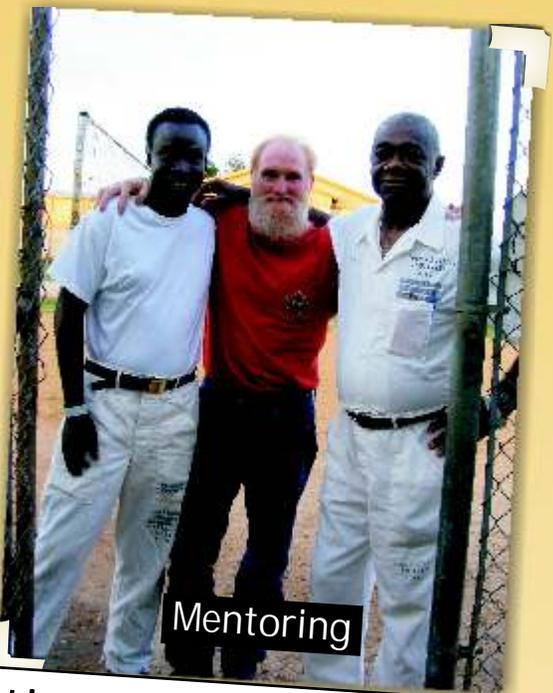
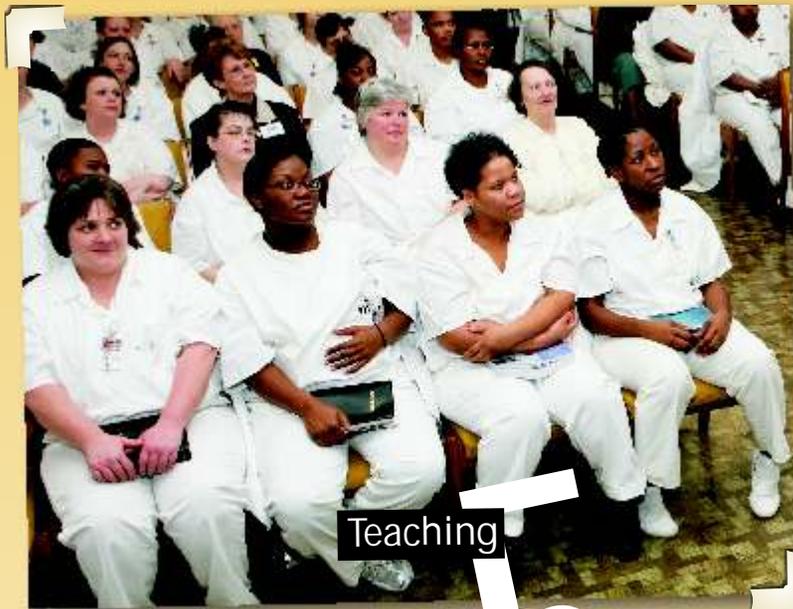
Encouraging Christian inmates to live in community within the prison by working towards unity among believers, serving others, and reaching out to fellow inmates still living in darkness.

Teaching Biblical studies and practical life skills with an emphasis on preparing inmates for successful re-entry into society.

Mentoring those who have committed their lives to following Christ by helping to nurture personal growth, offering spiritual guidance, and providing a place of transition upon release for growing Christian men who desire a fresh start (Timothy House).

Providing outreach opportunities and experiences through the annual Alabama multi-prison crusade and other events giving participants an increased passion for missions and further development of spiritual gifts for more effective service in their local churches and communities.

Collaborating with those who support our purpose, including churches, sister ministries, social agencies, and individuals.



Five priorities that we consider vital to living out our purpose in the coming years.

1. Cultivate a culture of disciple-making within the We Care organization
2. Place additional chaplains in facilities with open doors
3. Begin operation of Timothy House
4. Assist with Re-Entry Initiatives
5. Develop a Christ-Centered Re-Entry Curriculum

Thank You!

A heartfelt "Thank You!" to those who responded to our recent appeal by committing to a monthly partnership or giving a one-time gift to our General Fund. We still anticipate the need for additional funding in the coming year and are trusting that God will continue to move hearts to support this ministry.



Profile... Anna Miller



Assignment: Missionary Chaplain, Tutwiler Prison for Women, Wetumpka, AL

A Typical Day: Arrive at the prison and pray before going in. Visit the women and/or the chaplain and chapel workers. Invite the women to a Bible study, and lead the study or teach a class, sometimes more than one in a given day. Tend to clerical work as needed or requested, which can include sorting the inmate religious mail and answering the phone in the absence of the chaplain. At times meet with someone who needs counseling. Practice friendship evangelism which may include playing games with the women and/or eating lunch with them. Visiting in various units throughout the facility.

Rewards: Seeing an inmate catch the truth of the Gospel, encouraging someone who is struggling and lightening her burdens by pointing her to the One who loves her as she is, seeing an inmate's joy when by the power of Christ she overcomes a sin that had held her in bondage.

Challenges: Working with people who don't walk their talk, helping inmates work through a crisis in their families, keeping my priorities in order.

Just for fun: Working jigsaw puzzles, baking, reading, doing sewing crafts, exploring the local area and enjoying nature walks in the state parks, spending time with the family at We Care headquarters.

Softball Outreach



Local volunteers, We Care staff persons, and 13 men from Pennsylvania formed two teams over the July 4th weekend for a softball outreach to the four Atmore prisons. Games were played on Friday and Saturday, each followed by a time of encouragement and prayer on the pitcher's mound. The weekend outreach concluded with a Sunday morning chapel service in each facility. Inmates indicated that they were encouraged by the willingness of the group to spend time with them over the holiday weekend and also by the unity and teamwork demonstrated by the visitors and the way it rubbed off on the inmates.



News of Note

VOL. 40, NO. 4

Atmore, Alabama

August 2008

Advisory Team Appointed

The Board of Directors has approved a group of local men to serve on the Timothy House Advisory Team. From left to right are: Brent Yoder, Marvin

Bender (Timothy House Director), Haskell Dunn, Monroe Tucker, Jonah McIntyre, and Dennis Bilbo (insert). Thank you, Advisory Team, for being willing to serve in this way!



Couple Wed in June

Congratulations to Blaine Copenhaver and Sheila Schrock who were united in marriage on June 14. Sheila came to We Care in August of 2006 to serve as bookkeeper and graphic designer. She has since begun teaching full-time at Atmore Christian School but still handles our graphics. Blaine joined

us for the Young Adult Internship in October of 2005 and remained with us ever since, now serving as a missionary chaplain at Fountain Correctional Facility. Somewhere in the course of all that activity, their hearts were drawn towards each other culminating in a beautiful wedding at Sheila's home church, Fairview Mennonite



Church, in Kalona, IA. God bless you, Copenhavers, as you begin a new life together.

Economy Shop Approved

In an effort to increase the level of funding generated by the We Care Economy Shops, the Board of Directors has approved the opening of a third store. In addition to the stores in Atmore and Monroeville, plans are now being made to open a store in Flomaton, AL. Economy Shop Director Gary Mast is leading the effort to open the new store in the Fall of this year.



Thank You Board of Directors!

We are grateful that God has blessed this organization with a godly group of men to give direction and leadership. Currently, the Board of Directors is made up of the following men: (left to right) Lester Huber, AL; John Bender, PA; Sherwin Wenger, PA; Aaron Martin, PA; Dennis Nolt, PA; Eli Yoder, KS; Loyd Gingerich, IL; J.D. Landis, AL; LaVerne Eash, OH (Chairman); Harvey Fox, PA; Randy Bruckhart, PA.

From the Field

Atmore Work Center Atmore, AL

Going into the prisons four or five days each week and also interacting with many people in the free world, I have contact with a lot of people. Some I know very well, and some I meet for the first time. Some have been born of the Spirit and are walking intimately with Jesus, and some are not. Most are friendly and respectful to me, and I try to be respectful and nice to others as well. I believe that most individuals may admit they have a few flaws, but overall they think they are pretty good and probably consider themselves to be in the top 90% of society as far as being decent or good. I think too that most people are decent and courteous, in prison or out.

A twisted idea creeps into my mind at times leading me to think that what people need is a little money, or education, or time, or love, or better food. All of these are good and do have their time and place, but recently God has really been showing me that we as humans are not good by nature. We are not okay, and people left to themselves without God self-destruct every time. In Romans 3:10-19, Paul wrote that the law of God declares everyone guilty

before a Holy God, so that every mouth may be silenced. The law tells what sin is and stops the



Dean Miller

sinner's mouth of self-justification and declaring his own goodness. D.L. Moody said, "I can always tell a man who is near the kingdom of God. His mouth is stopped." The sinner has nothing to offer to God. He is blind, wretched, poor, naked, and miserable. The law reveals this and is good because it drives him to the cross of Christ. Then he sees that his only hope is God's grace through Jesus Christ and nothing else. All he can do is repent from sin, rejoice in the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross, pledge his life to Christ, and live for Him in every aspect of his life.

Recently I sensed that God wanted me to share the gospel with a certain individual. I was hesitant because I really didn't know him, but I did ask him if he has heard of the good news of Jesus Christ. He shook his head and put up his hand to indicate "I don't want to hear it." I responded, "He really does love you."

Maybe I should have said, "Then may I share with you the bad news?" I believe I need to share this bad news more than I do. Where there is good news, there is first bad news; where there is salvation, there is first condemnation; where there is freedom, there is first bondage; where there is good, there is first evil; and where there is hope, there is first despair. Jesus is the only hope of this sin sick world.

Ed Ranck



Lee recently accepted Christ as his Savior and thought we ought to have a new believers' class. He thought others needed the class too, so he spent several days going around the dorm with a roster, signing up anyone willing to take such a class, regardless of race, creed, nation of origin, or years of experience in the Lord. It was good to see his enthusiasm, and the class began with a dozen or so men with a wide range of religious maturity. So the older ones mentor and coach the younger ones, encourage attendance, and help with the Bible memory.

It is true that some are coming to the twelve class sessions for the certificate, graduation ceremony, and free world meal they hope to receive at the end of the class...but as a missionary much more experienced and wiser than I once said, "in every way, whether in pretense or truth, Christ is preached, in this I will rejoice." In this case, the motives for all in the class may not be pure, but because of the enthusiasm of Lee, some unlikely men at the Atmore Work Center are students sitting under the sound of the gospel.

Belmont Correctional Institution St. Clairsville, OH

To replace a previous class that was completed, we began a small support group, which is actually broken down into three small groups. During the class session we have a 20-minute teaching from the book Spiritual Disciplines for the Christian Life by Donald S. Whitney. Chaplain Burger is a firm believer in Christian support groups in order to support one another for healing and for growing in the Lord. It also provides accountability one to another. We're into our fourth week, and I can certainly see the value in this type of a meeting. So...we took it outside the prison walls, and on Monday nights at a church not far from the prison, Chaplain Burger and I meet in a small support group setting with two former inmates who have been out less than a year.

Ohio Reformatory for Women Marysville, OH

"You love only one thing more than Me: your pain killers." She really wanted to reach out to God, but for three days in a row she distinctly heard that thought in her head. The next time she heard it was as the door clanged shut behind her at the county jail; her stop before coming to prison.

But she "needed" those pain killers. They made her a different person. "I could have talked to the President without blushing. Bet I'd have gotten him to laugh, too!" And...they covered the pain of the molestation she'd endured that nobody talked about anymore because they thought she'd been so young she'd forgotten. Though it was over, she couldn't forget.

But she had another deep pain that she'd never admitted to anyone because at age 15, she got drunk and slept with one of her childhood molesters. "I think I thought it would wipe out the pain from when I was little." The next morning and ever after, she knew she was wrong.

She chose to confess that sin to God and ask His forgiveness. Her relief was so great it was obvious on her face that a very heavy burden had been removed from her. And I was left with a new awareness of the awesomeness of the knowledge that Christ died 2,000 years ago... and He still cleans us up TODAY!



Wilma Mullet

St. Clair Correctional Facility Birmingham, AL

In a Bible study at St. Clair, I recently asked what the greatest issue is that inmates face. The unanimous answer was "fear." When probing a bit deeper, there was fear of other inmates, fear of theft, fear of sexual predation, fear of the officers, and fear of the future. We all face fears. How can a relationship with Christ help with these fears?

In Matthew 10:28 (CEV) Jesus said, "Don't be afraid of people. They can kill you, but they cannot harm your soul." For the Christian, there is the real sense that this life is important, but the enduring of the soul to eternity is more important. Hebrews 2:15 (CEV) says, "But he also died to rescue all of us who live each day in fear of dying." So Christ offers also to save us from the fear of death. This happens as we draw closer to the truth of Paul's statement, "If I live, it will be for Christ, and if I die, I will gain even more." (Philippians 1:21 CEV)

What about the fear of bad things happening in our lives? These fears can be completely crippling to folks. Recently, I've read articles containing advice for surviving through the economic struggles coming on our country. Apparently, some people are beginning to panic and suffer anxiety issues. But my Jesus said these challenging words of comfort, "I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Look at the birds in the sky! They don't plant or harvest. They don't even store grain in barns. Yet your Father in heaven takes care of them. Aren't you worth more than birds? ...But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what He wants. Then the other things will be yours as well." (Matthew 6:25, 26, 33 CEV) Let us continue to learn this lesson and not be consumed with fear and worry and things.

I think many fears surround loss. "What if I lose" my job, my house, my car, my loved ones? The pain of loss seems unbearable at times and is often more than we think we can handle. This is why we must turn to God. Consider what Paul wrote... "We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despaired even of life. Indeed, in our hearts we felt the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers." (2 Corinthians 1:8-11 NIV)

There is hope in Christ for these days. There is hope in drawing close to Him and drawing close to our Christian brothers and sisters. I'll conclude with one of my favorite verses. "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit." (Romans 15:13 NIV)

John Kurtz



Larry Skrant (second from left) and Chaplain Burger (on right) with two former inmates

PERSPECTIVES

with David R. Landis
President

Two stories from the Gospel of Mark caught my eye recently. One is about Jarius, whose daughter was sick, and the other about a woman whose daughter was possessed by an evil spirit. In both cases, the parents desired healing from Jesus for their children. What caught my eye, though, is that the scriptures say they both “fell at the feet of Jesus” with their requests.

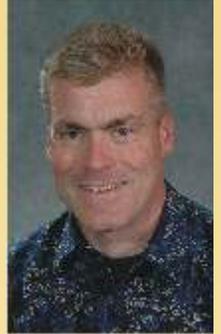
Normally, I would’ve just read over these statements and kept going, but for some reason, on this day I began to think about the crowds who were with Jesus and the courage it must have taken for these two individuals to, despite numerous onlookers, shamelessly “fall” before Jesus’ feet. I sense in these two individuals a desperation so profound that it disregarded what others might have thought about their helpless gestures. I had to wonder if others in the crowds also had dire concerns but were too proud to come before Jesus in this way.

It takes guts to, in public, reveal our pain and our

desire for the healing touch of Jesus as these two did. Most will not be desperate enough to throw off all constraints about their self-image. Most stay hidden within the crowds of self-righteousness and false comfort, including myself at times. I must confess that too often I find myself frozen by the crowd, too proud to reveal a weakness, too concerned about my reputation to reveal pain and shame. (After all, I lead a ministry to “the least of these”; I should have it all together.)

I wonder, after being reminded of these two individuals, if it would do us good to “fall at the feet of Jesus” for his healing touch more often than we do. I suspect that before we can assume such a posture we will need to acknowledge our pain, disregard what others may think about our need, and become “desperate” for Jesus. “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.” (Psalm 51:17) 🙏

I’d love to hear from you.
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