

The Connection

THE NEWSLETTER OF WE CARE PROGRAM

SEPTEMBER 2004

Path to Peace

“I had to face God so He could help me face the world.”



Chaplain Carpenter and “Terri”

My name is “Terri.” Basically I was pretty much a normal child. I have three older sisters and one older brother who took care of me most of the time because Mother worked a lot to make ends meet. When she was home, she cleaned, washed, sewed clothes for us and took us to church almost every Sunday and took us to revivals, too. She always taught us right from wrong. She was a strong believer in God, and she still is.

Mother had no control of anything when she wasn’t around. Dad didn’t work and stayed home most of the time. I can remember repeating the ugly words he said. He thought it was cute, but sure enough when Mother came home, I would get a beating that didn’t last any longer than until she was out the door again. As I look back on those days, I deserved every lick she ever gave me. At that time nothing helped because I wanted to be with other kids and do what they did. I’d worry about the beating later. My mother told me, “One day you are going to wish that you had listened to me or to somebody.”

When I turned 16, I gave birth to a baby. Within the next four years I had two abortions. I was a drug addict and I wanted to use drugs and not be bothered with a baby. During the eight years I used heroin I went to prison three times in another state. This was because I couldn’t stay straight long enough to get my life right. I knew what I was doing wasn’t right, but I did it anyway, and every time I did, I thought about my mother. She told me that if I kept on living that way I was going to end up dead. My life style drove me to the point of almost madness when I wasn’t high. When I looked in the mirror, I didn’t like what I saw. I was a monster and was disgusted with my own self.

I have now been incarcerated since October 1991. When I first started doing this time, I didn’t think I would make it this far. I was angry with myself, ashamed of myself, and thought I wasn’t worthy of forgiveness from anywhere! Not even God. And for a long time I didn’t even ask to be forgiven. Without the drugs I still wallowed in my own madness. I didn’t want to talk about it or think about it. Not many nights passed that I didn’t cry, and most mornings I woke up tired, angry and wondering why I had to wake up at all. I wanted to take back and correct everything I had ever messed up and every person I had ever hurt. I wanted to take it back, but I couldn’t.

One day I told somebody that I didn’t want to wake up and face another day and they said, “Have you ever thought about that God wants you to wake up another day?” I didn’t think much of that at the time. All I knew was I didn’t want things to be the way they were and I was angry about it. One night I sat in my cube looking out the window and crying all night long. Later, I noticed that I didn’t get up wondering why I had to wake up that morning. I do remember saying this, “Lord, I don’t know what You’re keeping me alive for and I don’t know what Your plans are for me, but I do know that a lot of people are hurting because of me. I’m hurting because of me. I don’t know what to do, I don’t even really know what to say, all I know is I want the hurting to go away. If not

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2005 Prison Crusade Application Inside!

Check it out!

All New
Web-Site

www.wecareprogram.org

Volume XXXV, Number 6

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.

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Inmate names changed

Peace (Continued from page 1)

for me, for other people and if I'm worthy, please forgive me in the name of Jesus."

I quit waking up in the morning mad with the world and started trying to do positive things that could possibly make life livable again. It seemed like people started coming out of the wood work then and telling me that God loves me and sent His son Jesus to die on the cross for the sins of the world (my sins), and that He would forgive me of anything that I ever did. I knew all this from my childhood with Mother, but I hadn't listened to her. I was so ashamed and missed her so much until I didn't want to think about that right then. It was time to lay all the cards on the table and really think about what was going on in my life. I had to face God so He could help me face the world.

When I started depending on Him to help me make it through the day, He started putting people in my path that always took me back to where it all started.

So here I am stuck with all these people popping up saying - for example - Chaplain Postlethwait, "Terri, would you like to come and help me do some work at the chapel?" I said, "Yes, Ma'am." I wasn't there a good 10 minutes and she would call me in her office telling me how much God loves me and that He wants to help me heal. I wonder if she knows that I'm crying out for help, and I sense that she cares. The next day Chaplain Carpenter talks to me, and before the conversation is over she tells me the same thing about how much God loves me. I have another flash back, but it doesn't have the sting it used to.

God has smiled on me and put people in my path to guide me in the right direction. Maybe through the time being spent with the chaplains, I'm just beginning to recognize where all this stuff is really coming from and taking time to deal with it. Being able to accept things for what they really are and learning how to deal with them makes life with yourself not so bad after all. I thank God for Jesus, and I thank God for putting people in my path to help me deal with things better than I know how to do by myself.

From Chaplain Carpenter...

Terri and I got to know each other about five months ago when she was assigned to clean in the chapel. She would come to the chapel as she was told and just ask what needed to be done. Terri was always quiet and stayed to herself, but was also a quick observer on how we cleaned the chapel and did other odd jobs. This often got tricky because we are very confidential minded in the chapel office. Terri tried to be obedient and polite, but it was hard for her to be sure of her boundaries all the time.

Our friendship developed under these circumstances. I tried to be a teaching, patient, obedient example for Terri. I never pried into her life—she let me in very slowly. Life seems to have taught Terri to rely only on herself and stay to herself. I have tried to encourage her and teach her how to share God's glory with me. We are gradually sharing a deeper friendship, the kind that shares God's love. Terri shared with me recently that she asked God into her heart and life. She's finally ready to learn how to turn herself over to God. She "worked" at the chapel for 5-7 months—on the surface knowing about God, doing any "work" needed, but never really sitting down and listening to God's words for her! She has asked me to help her understand some things in the Bible. So I will be studying with her on Wednesday mornings for awhile. I remind Terri of Philippians 1:3,6, I thank God for her... that He who began a good work in her will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

Davonna Carpenter serves as part-time assistant chaplain at Tutwiler Prison for Women in Wetumpka, AL, while her husband Carl serves full-time at Staton Correctional. With the support of their children Josh and Maddi, the Carpenters are truly a family prison ministry team.

PRISON CRUSADE APPLICATION

January 9 - 13, 2005

Personal

Please print clearly and fill in ALL personal information.

Last Name _____ Social Security # _____
First Name _____ Date of Birth _____
Street Address _____ Driver's License # _____
City _____ Marital Status _____
State _____ Zip _____ Race _____
Phone _____ Gender _____ Male _____ Female
E-mail _____ First Time? _____ Yes

Ministry

Please enter a "1" beside your first preference of location. Enter a "2" to indicate your second choice. *

_____ **ANYWHERE I'M NEEDED** 😊

Atmore Area



_____ **Where Needed**
_____ Holman Prison (Men)
_____ Fountain Corr. Facility (Men)
_____ J. O. Davis Corr. Facility (Men)
_____ Atmore Work Release (Men)
_____ Food Service

Montgomery Area



_____ **Where Needed**
_____ Tutwiler Prison (Women)
_____ Tutwiler Annex (Women)
_____ Draper Corr. Facility (Men)
_____ Staton Corr. Facility (Men)
_____ Frank Lee Youth Center (Men)
_____ Red Eagle Honor Farm (Men)

Birmingham Area



_____ **Where Needed**
_____ William Donaldson C F (Men)
_____ St. Clair Corr. Facility (Men)
_____ Bibb Corr. Facility (Men) **NEW!**
_____ B'ham Work Release (Women)

Troy Area



_____ **Where Needed**
_____ Easterling Corr. Fac. (Men)
_____ Bullock County Corr. Fac. (Men)
_____ Ventress Corr. Fac. (Men)

*Some locations may not be confirmed.

Legal

Have you ever been arrested? _____ If so, state dates and charges _____

If you served time in jail/prison, what institution? _____ Date of Release _____

Are you currently on parole or probation? _____

Please Return to We Care Program Before December 6, 2004.

Crusade Fees

Covers some meals, lodging, and a share of total event costs

We Care will provide meals (Sat. night, Sunday, and breakfasts remainder of week) and lodging for volunteers from Saturday night through Thursday night. In order to maintain the crusade as a self-funded event, we are asking each volunteer to pay a share of the total costs. Since the number of persons per room is a major factor in cost determination, the fee schedule is listed with the reservation request.

We ask that the fee issue be settled with each application in one of two ways: 1) Enclose appropriate payment in full, OR 2) Complete the sponsor block below in its entirety. Applicants by FAX may identify themselves as "sponsor" and mail payment. Sponsorships may be fulfilled at registration on January 8. Note that fees are not tax-deductible gifts, but sponsorships and amounts in excess of the fee are.

Room Reservations(Fees): ___ Quad (\$225*) ___ Triple (\$245*) ___ Double (\$295*‡) ___ Single (\$395*)
(per person) (per person) (per person) (per person)

Lodging needed Saturday night only (includes Sunday meals) ___ \$ 55 (per person)

Requested Roommates _____

(Atmore Area Only, Monday - Thursday): _____ I am willing to stay in the home of a local family. (Quad fees apply)

*Late applications (after Dec.6) will be assessed a \$25 late fee. ‡ Married couples are eligible for a 20% reduction.

Sponsor

If payment is not enclosed, please identify the church, business, or individual who is committed to sponsoring your ministry in the amount indicated by your lodging reservation choice. Please be reminded that we require the sponsorships to be in hand no later than registration on January 8.

Sponsor _____ Contact Phone () _____ - _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Intercessor

We strongly urge each applicant to enlist a personal intercessor with whatever communication the two of you find appropriate. We are planning to provide daily Intercessors' Bulletins including specific requests and praises from the various prisons. We would be glad to include your intercessor if you provide their name and either an e-mail or FAX number.

Intercessor _____ FAX () _____ - _____ E-mail _____

Church

Home Church _____ Denomination _____

Are you a member? _____ How long have you been a believer? _____

References

For first-time volunteers only

In respect to the security concerns of the prisons we are entering, please provide us with the name and phone number of your pastor and a Christian friend (not kin) to serve as references.

Pastor: _____ Reference: _____

Pastor's phone: _____ Reference phone: _____

Indemnification

I agree to abide by all rules and directions under which my presence in prison is allowed; Further, I release and save harmless the State of Alabama, the Alabama Department of Corrections, We Care Program, and any agents thereof, for any harm or damage, whether mental or physical, that may occur as a result of my presence in prison, or during the course of my ministering in the same.

Signed _____ Dated _____

From the Field

Atmore, AL

Fountain Correctional Facility

Recently, I started lifting weights with the inmates at Fountain. During the last three years, I shunned this activity simply because there always seemed to be too much “spiritual” work to be done. I wish now that I would have gotten involved in this type of ministry long ago. It means so much to the inmates that we as chaplains are willing to sweat along with them. Do I feel intimidated? Yes. Do I feel weak? Yes. Do I think my time is making a difference? Yes.

When you first start lifting, you have little results and you feel as if you have no power or strength. But as you are consistent with pushing weights off your chest, the power within you slowly develops. This does not come without perseverance and a lot of sweat equity. It is always amazing to me what a difference it makes when someone who is spotting above you speaks some encouraging words, and even at times puts a finger under the bar to make it feel a little lighter, even though he does not touch it.

One young man I am lifting with is working hard at his relationship with God.

I’ve been encouraged by his perseverance. I’m also beginning to understand the difference coaching makes when you have a lot of baggage to push away from you. He is becoming successful at pushing the evil away from his life by the power of Jesus being developed in him.

The apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 9:22b, “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” Let us not be so spiritually-minded that we don’t take Christ to the world in their activities for the fear of becoming part of it. God is bigger than that. Colossians 3:17 says, “And whatsoever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”

-*Sherwin Wenger*

Still Growing...

I praise God for the growth that took place in the year and half I was full time in prison ministry with We Care. I praise God for brothers and sisters I met with We Care and also in the prisons—inmates, guards, chaplains, and whosoever God placed in my path. God placed me there for such a time as this and did a mighty

work in my life and the life of my family, growing and stretching us for the next phase of ministry in our lives.

God has me in a new place of growth now at Philadelphia Baptist Church, where I serve as pastor. I feel strongly that God has placed me there to receive people who have been incarcerated, as there is a steady stream coming in and out of our doors. Wow, now I can see a little more of the picture. Wow, what a mighty God we serve! There is no greater true joy and peace than serving the Lord in a place He has prepared for you.

I would recommend anyone trying to grow in their walk with God, trying to build faith in their lives, to join with We Care for any time that God allows. It will be better than any seminar you could ever attend. We go in to minister thinking “Oh, how I’m going to touch someone with the gospel,” which sometimes happens, but the real thing is that God is growing you and stretching you and building character in your heart that will last for eternity.

How about you—are you listening to the call? It would be the greatest investment you ever made! -*Dorsey McDonald*

News of Note



Welcome

After sensing God’s call to full-time ministry for the last number of years, **Bob and Polly Depew** and children Chad, Cassandra, and Kevin responded by stepping out in faith and making the move from Hutchinson, Kansas, to Atmore, Alabama to serve with We Care Program. Bob will serve as chaplain at Atmore Work Release, assist with the two We Care Economy Shops,

and help with general headquarters maintenance. They come with the blessing of their home church, Westside Church of the Nazarene, where Bob and Polly served as small group leaders. (Note: Polly is a sister to current staff member Marvin Bender.)

PA Auction

Support for Prison Ministries will be hosting its 21st annual benefit auction to support various prison ministry and aftercare programs, including We Care Program. The event will be held near Ephrata, PA, on Oct. 22 & 23. A chicken BBQ meal will be available Friday from 4-7 p.m. with auction at 5:30 p.m. Saturday will include breakfast starting at 6 a.m., auction beginning at 8:30 a.m., and quilts auctioned at 1:00 p.m. For more information, or to donate merchandise, call Nelson Martin at 717-626-6301.

All-New Website!

We are excited to announce that our web-site has been completely redesigned and updated! Learn about our history and our purpose. Get acquainted with us through the staff directory. Now you can even give online. Check out the new look and features at www.wecareprogram.org

Perspectives



David R. Landis
President

I've been thinking a lot about commitment lately, especially as it relates to the Kingdom of God. Whether it's making the decision to follow Christ, watch after the widow or orphan, teach a discipleship class, mentor a young person, participate in a prison crusade or other worthwhile ministry, respond to an emergency by giving some time for service, sign up for a short term ministry assignment, or answer God's call to a life time of missionary work, each of these opportunities require a moment of decision, an act of obedience, a commitment to Christ's personal invitation for you.

My feeling is that most folks spend way too much of their time and energy "counting the cost," (Luke 14:28) which might seem like a really mature spiritual exercise, while forgetting verse 33, where Jesus concludes by saying "whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple."

Now I'm sure there's a proper balance between "counting the cost" and "forsaking all" but c'mon guys, are Jesus' words really that difficult to understand! How about making that commitment today!

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

The Bottom Line

1 month ending July 31

	Budget \$47,500
	Expenses \$42,200
	Income \$40,590

2005 Prison Crusade Application Inside!

Needed!

Volunteers & Intercessors

27th Annual Prison Crusade

Bringing the Gospel Message to
Thousands of Men and Women in
Alabama's Prison System

January 9-13, 2005

For more information, call our office
or visit our web-site - www.wecareprogram.org

APPLICATION INSIDE

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

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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Atmore, AL 36502-6315

