

# THE Connection

THE NEWSLETTER OF WE CARE PROGRAM

December 2008

## 2008 STAFF DIRECTORY

### REACHING PRISONERS FOR CHRIST

- St. Clair CF
- Donaldson CF
- Birmingham

- Frank Lee WR
- Tutwiler CF
- Staton CF
- Montgomery WR
- Montgomery

- Camden WR
- Thomasville LIFE Tech
- Troy
- Ventress CF

- Monroe Co. Jail

- Current Ministry Location
- CF: Correctional Facility
- CI: Correctional Institute
- WC: Work Center
- WR: Work Release

Additional ministry locations in Ohio: Belmont Correctional Institution and Ohio Reformatory for Women.

- Atmore WC
  - Holman CF
  - Fountain and JO Davis CF
  - Atmore
  - Century CI, (FL)
- We Care Program ★  
Headquarters



Proclaiming Christ & Discipling Inmates

[www.wecareprogram.org](http://www.wecareprogram.org)

# Year in Review

**January 7**

Anthony Bricker joins staff as a full-time volunteer chaplain at Holman Correctional Facility, Atmore.

**January 17**

Atmore Work Center dedicates new chapel built with funds raised by We Care and labor provided by work center inmates.

**January 27-31**

We Care hosts its 30th Annual Prison Crusade (18 Prisons Statewide).

## In-Prison Ministry Staff

—Holman—



Justin Beitzel  
Missionary Intern

—Century (FL)—



I was recently asked to replace another volunteer at Berrydale Forestry Camp twice a week. I was there for only 1-1/2 weeks when I was blessed to lead a young man to the Lord Jesus. At a recent Bible study he was asking questions and joining in the discussion. This is the kind of prison ministry that I like!

Marvin & Elaine Bender  
Jonathan, Kenton, Twila, LaRonda, Rachel  
Missionary Chaplain

—Fountain—



Dennis & Evelyn Bilbo  
Staff Associate

I remember wondering if I was doing any good. One day I said hello to an inmate I had not met yet. We spoke for a couple minutes, with him sharing how he's been watching me interact with the inmates. He mentioned that I connect well, am not afraid to interact with the black inmates, and that I seem comfortable and real with inmates. I walked away encouraged, feeling that the little I do is "something".

—Holman—



Anthony Bricker  
Missionary Chaplain

—Donaldson—



David & Veola Bucher  
Cheney, Ethan  
Missionary Chaplain

—Camden—



Sid & Susan Chapman  
Staff Associate

What a privilege to be a member of the "Church Alive!" at Camden Community Based Facility as we visit and conduct services every Sunday night.

—Fountain—



Brian gave all his pagan books away. He went on to share with the chaplain and me that he heard an audible voice one night while having a dream. The voice told him, "Come to me." He thinks that the voice was God, but isn't sure that God exists. After being counseled a little further, he willingly accepted a Bible, hoping that the truth of God's Word will penetrate his mind.

Blaine & Sheila Copenhaver  
Missionary Chaplain,  
Graphic Design

My Christian brothers in white are realizing in increasing levels that the Great Commission for them, while serving time, is to reach out, witness, teach, make disciples, and love their fellow inmates in ways they never have before. It is exciting!

—Holman—



Bob & Polly Depew  
Chad, Cassie, Kevin  
Missionary Chaplain

—Staton—



Jesse & Christina Fox  
Luke, Joel  
Beginning January 2009

—Ventress—



Richard & Marj Heatwole  
Missionary Chaplain

**April 28**

We Care staff persons begin weekly "Maximum Manhood" class at Life-Tech, Thomasville, AL, a first for We Care.

**May 20**

Alabama Governor Bob Riley introduces the Alabama CPR Network to over 500 ministry leaders in Montgomery, AL, asking churches and faith-based organizations to help inmates returning to their communities (over 11,000 per year). Confirms growing conviction within We Care to assist with re-entry initiatives.

**July 4-6**

We Care hosts first Summer Sports Outreach in Atmore prisons.

**-Holman-**



Lee & Sally Hochstetler  
Staff Associate

**-Fountain-**



Lester & Goldie Huber  
Staff Associate

**-St. Clair-**



For the final class of a seminar that I was leading, Shirley made peanut butter pudding and oatmeal chocolate cookies. After feeding the men a spiritual dessert we had the physical sweets. Many men shared how touched they were that night.

John & Shirley Kurtz  
Savannah, Hadden  
Missionary Chaplain

**-J.O. Davis-**



Irvin & Kathy Martin  
Justin, Durrell, Kaden  
Missionary Chaplain

**-Monroe Co. Jail-**



Dorsey & Karen McDonald  
Staff Associate

**-Montgomery WR & Tutwil er-**

I have enjoyed my Bible Study at the Annex with just a few ladies. We have so often been visited with the presence of the Holy Spirit as we share and encourage one another in our walk with Christ. As we walk away from our gathering, we sometimes feel like we have experienced Heaven on earth.



Anna Miller  
Missionary Chaplain

I hated to break the news to him that his wife had passed away. When I did tell him, he responded by slamming his fist into the wall and crying "No! No!" then falling into a chair, dropping his head to his knees and weeping. I quietly wept with him. The following day he gave his heart to the Lord! Now half a year later, he told me recently to pray that God would strengthen him with humility to walk away from arguments, instead of becoming defensive and getting into trouble the way he used to do. He is an encouragement to the body of Christ.

**-Holman-**



Dean Miller  
Missionary Chaplain

There were instances when talking to an individual that I knew that the Holy Spirit showed up to me to reveal the mystery of the gospel in a real way. Coming out of prison I was almost leaping for joy at what God had done and what boldness the Spirit gave me.

**-Ohio Reform for Women-**



Wilma Mullet  
Missionary Chaplain

**-Fountain-**



Kendall Nissley  
Missionary Intern

**-Atmore WC-**



I have had the privilege of meeting some rare Christian brothers, such as Palmer, a man deeply committed to Christ regardless of whether or not he makes parole, sees miraculous signs, or becomes wealthy because of his faith. The goal of men like him is simply to get to know Christ, become like Him, and follow Him faithfully.

Ed & Doris Ranck  
Missionary Chaplain and Hospitality Couple

**-Holman-**



Phil Rogers  
Missionary Intern

**-Century (FL)-**



Stan & Ruth Schrock  
Austin, Denver  
Beginning January 2009

July 26

Board of Directors adopts new purpose statement "Proclaiming Christ and Discipling Inmates," gives official approval for start of Timothy House in Atmore, and affirms five local men to serve on its Advisory Team.

October 7

Hans Stutzman, Justin Beitzel, Phil Rogers, and Kendall Nissley arrive to begin seven-month Young Adult Internship in Atmore prisons.

October 13

We Care opens Economy Shop in Flomaton, AL.

-Belmont (OH)



I wish you could see the faces of the men attending the basic Bible study at the camp. How eager they are to learn, how hard they work at their homework. How wonderful to see the light of understanding come over their face. Is it any wonder that I drove straight to the prison after a four-day mission conference because I didn't want to miss that class?!

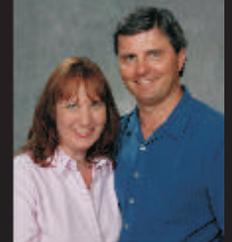
Larry Skrant  
Staff Associate

-Frank Lee



Steve & Carol Stoltzfus  
Missionary Chaplain

-Fountain



Mike & Patty Strehlow  
Missionary Chaplain

-Fountain



Hans Stutzman  
Missionary Intern

-Montgomery WR & Tutwiler



My highlight this year was teaming up with Pathway to Freedom, a two-year in-prison curriculum that also mentors the ladies once they leave prison by helping to set them up in a church and find a job. This program gives them the tools to live a productive life after prison.

Donna Wyatt  
Missionary Chaplain

-Fannin Co. Jail (GA)



Delmar & Marjorie Yoder  
Staff Associate

Lord willing, January 2009 will mark the addition of two full-time missionary chaplains to begin service assignments at Staton Correctional (Montgomery, AL) and Century Correctional (Century, FL). This will bring our total full and part time missionary chaplaincy staff to 25 persons serving in twelve state correctional facilities in the state of Alabama, two in Ohio and one in Florida. Housed in these fifteen correctional facilities are 17,500 men and women to potentially be impacted for the kingdom of God.



## Timothy House Plans Progressing

Cleaning, painting, and minor repairs are in progress at Timothy House in anticipation of welcoming its first residents. Applications are now being accepted for the nine-month program. Timothy House, located just outside of Atmore, AL, will be a place for continuing the discipleship process of formerly incarcerated parolees who have shown evidence of repentance, conversion, and a desire for continuing spiritual growth. The goal of this program will be to help men transition back to society as productive citizens, caring fathers, loving husbands, responsible employees, and fellow brothers in Christ. Immediate physical needs include household items, furniture, and linens.

For more details, contact Marvin Bender, Director, at 251-368-8818 or [marvin@wecareprogram.org](mailto:marvin@wecareprogram.org)

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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 chaplain's assistants in prisons to provide friendship evangelism, teaching, peer counseling, and encouragement.

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**November 7**

Timothy House concept introduced during fund-raising banquet in Atmore. Local community challenged to adopt ministry as its own.

**November 12-13**

Glen Sell (PA) leads two-day staff training on "The Ministry of People Helping."

**December 16**

Richard & Marj Heatwole (VA) relocate to Clayton, AL, to begin voluntary chaplaincy assignment at Ventress Correctional Facility, new for We Care.

# Administrative and Support Staff



Marvin & Emma Bender  
Volunteer Support Staff



Jeanna Fox  
Bookkeeper



Noreen Horst  
Administrative Assistant



Dave & Debbie Landis  
Diana, David, Darren, Darla  
President



Gary & Rosanna Mast  
Micah, Sydney  
Economy Shop Director



Don & Phyllis Metzler  
Brandon, Perry, Lauren  
Vice President & Business Manager

# Economy Shop Staff



FLOMATON: Lounette Baker, Diane Bennett, Lynn Canley, Mary Mastrogiovanni, Gary Mast. Not pictured: Chassity Steele



Board Members: 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



MONROEVILLE: Arletta Salter, Brooke Wiggins, Vonda Wiggins, Becky Frye, LaShandra Fountain



ATMORE: Mary Thomas, Pamela Nelson, Lori Steele, Celestine Leslie, Willernese Coleman, Ruby Thomas, Peggy Lambert, Beverly Richardson. Not Pictured: Barbara McMurray, Angie Montgomery, Mary Salter

# From the Field

## Century Cross Institute Century, FL



Marvin Bender

“Sir, you’s not the cardboard, you’s the real pain.” This is what the “fill-in” evangelist heard when he likened himself to a piece of cardboard replacing a broken pane of stained glass. Sometimes we don’t feel like we’re cut out to be what others imagine us capable of being. We feel more like the cardboard than the real pane. That, however, does not mean that God can’t use us. In fact, God may have us there temporarily for a specific purpose. When we feel inadequate (weak), that’s when God says we’re strong.

For the past couple months I have been ministering twice a week at Berrydale Forestry Camp, one of four correctional camps for which the chaplain at Century C. I. is responsible. I was sent to replace an older man who had been filling this capacity for approximately eleven years. Initially there were feelings of resentment from some of the inmates, and they wanted to boycott me. I felt like the “pain.” A week and a half after I began this assignment a young man repented and was born again. Instead of Bible study that night, I introduced him to some of the others as a new brother in the Lord!

I feel my plate is about to overflow. I wonder if God wants to replace the cardboard and insert a real pane. I’m praying for Him to reveal His will to me. Some men in authority want me there, but does God want me there? I want to be faithful with the talent(s) the Lord has given me. I want to gain even more. I want to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things...” (Mt. 25:21). I don’t know how long God wants me to be the cardboard. I don’t know if He wants me to be the real pane at this camp. I just want to be faithful until He shows me the next step.

Now, go and be a real pane!



Donna Wyatt

## Tutwiler Prison for Women & Montgomery Work Release Montgomery, AL

Prison ministry is fascinating for me. I have met countless women, each one with their own unique story and all of them carrying a lifetime of heartache and pain. Many of them remind me of myself at different stages in what was a very colorful past. Like me, most of the ladies came from dysfunctional families which makes it easy for me to relate to their negative self-images and low self-esteem.

When I met the Lord, I was 32 years old but functioning at the age of 12 to 15 emotionally. The break up of my family of origin had stunted my desire and to some extent, my ability to function and mature properly. I was easily pulled into a life of various addictions as I sought the love and acceptance I never fully received at home. Eventually, with the loving help of a close family member, I learned to overcome the weaknesses caused by our family’s dysfunction. At Tutwiler Prison and Montgomery Work Release, I seek to help the ladies recognize and deal with their problems, and I find it a joy to see many of them delivered from their pain and heartache.

Recently I was asked to teach a class for the Faith Dorm at Tutwiler Prison. The choices of subjects were numerous, but I selected “Making Peace with Your Past.” This class would give the ladies an organized support group with Christ-centered sharing to help them deal with issues related to their various family dysfunctions and past hurts. Just as this 13-week study comes to an end, I get to teach this very valuable class again at the Montgomery facility.

Although these ladies are in a physical prison, they do not have to be imprisoned in their hearts. Freedom in Christ is available to them, and I pray these classes will help each of the ladies find just that, true freedom.



Anthony Bricker

## Holman Correctional Facility Atmore, AL

“My best decision got me here.” An uncle and nephew in the same cell block in the same prison. A single mother with many men in her life, not caring if her child went to school or the friends he kept, and then her son dealing drugs and engaging in adult activities at a young age. No father figure. No solid, trusting, caring family foundation.

All of these situations I have heard about since I arrived here in January, and some of them many times. It has made me stop and reflect on my upbringing. How grateful I am that I had two parents who loved and cared about me. Parents who corrected me, wanted me to get an education, and cared if I went to school. I’m also grateful for an extended family who I trusted and I knew cared about me and who wouldn’t do me wrong. I can’t imagine growing up in an environment that is “me first,” no matter how it affects relationships with other persons in my life.

I am saddened to know that children are growing up not knowing who their father is, not being disciplined, not being taught ethics, hard work, commitment, values, or about a Savior who loves us and died for our sins that we can have eternal life.

Thank you, Mom and Dad, for loving each other.

# News of Note

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Atmore, Alabama

December 2008

## Economy Shop Opens

by Gary Mast

**W**e're so glad you're here!" "I'll be in here every day!" "Now I won't have to drive so far to shop and donate!" These are the excited comments we're hearing daily in the opening weeks of the new We Care Economy Shop thrift store.

In late July the We Care Program Board of Directors gave their blessing to plans of opening another thrift store, and those plans fell into place almost faster than we could keep up. Our third We Care Economy Shop opened for business on Monday, October 13. With no advertising other

than word-of-mouth and an "opening soon" sign in the window, sales for opening day nearly matched the sales at our store in Atmore – a good sign!

The new store is located in Flomaton, AL, about 18 miles east of Atmore on a heavily-traveled stretch of highway linking I-65 to the Florida Gulf Coast. Two experienced employees from our Atmore store are supervising the new store and being assisted by three new employees and some volunteer help. We are excited about the possibility of increasing our contributions to the ministry through sales in Flomaton and are also



looking forward to ministering through our presence in a new community.

Pray with us that all three stores will continue to find favor and thrive in the

communities where we serve, furthering the kingdom work of We Care through financial support while being a light and encouragement to our customers and staff.

## Atmore Banquet



Atmore Banquet, 2008



Fountain Corr. Facility, 2004

Sharing the stage with Michael Fields (left) and Tavis Jenkins (right) at our recent fund-raising banquet in Atmore filled my heart in a uniquely gratifying way. It was only four years ago that we had shared in conversation in a much different environment - behind the fence of Fountain Prison. It was there that we had come to know each other as brothers in Christ. It was there that we shared struggles and celebrated victories in our Christian journeys. Thanks, Mike and Tavis, for enriching our lives through your testimonies of God's grace.

-David Landis

## New Arrival!



*Emma Claire* was born to Gary and Rosanna Mast on Friday, Nov. 14. She is also welcomed by her big brother Micah and big sister Sydney. Welcome to the We Care family, Emma!

# PERSPECTIVES

with David R. Landis  
President

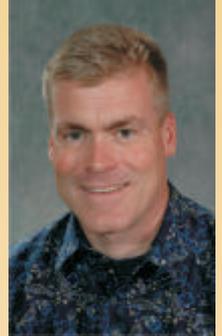
“I have a praise for you...,” one of our staff persons said as he came into the copy room where I was busy making copies at the start of another day. “He became a Christian!” I said, excitedly, knowing that the one we had been praying for had finally crossed the line. “Yes, he did!”

I can't think of anything that excites me more than to know that another has come to Christ.



Touchdowns, home runs, baskets, and goals pale in comparison. When a person surrenders to the lordship of Christ, angels celebrate! And our job is just getting started.

I'd love to hear from you.  
Contact me at  
[dave@wecareprogram.org](mailto:dave@wecareprogram.org)



Each week, We Care chaplains spend over 575 combined hours inside the fences of fifteen correctional facilities. Along with lots of friendship building, counseling, visitation, and praying for special needs, our team members also prepare for and conduct an average of thirty-six Bible studies, teachings, or special services each week.

All that we do is geared towards one thing - “Proclaiming Christ and Discipling Inmates.” It's that simple. And that's why I will never tire of hearing the words “Yes, he did!” 🙏

Crusade applications due December 19, 2008.

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