



the connection

SPRING 2015




2015 Statistics

- 5 Days
- 27 Facilities
- 93 Chapel Services
- 99 Approx. Attendance per Service
- 398 Participants
- 6,994 Approx. Volunteer Hrs. in Prison
- 25,892 Reachable Inmates

Lives Impacted for Eternity...

Incalculable!

WWW.WECAREPROGRAM.ORG

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Making a Difference

by Steve Martin

The Call to Prison Ministry

My initial introduction to Henry Horst was on my first day in prison in April 2000. As a first time volunteer in a Gospel Express Prison Crusade, I was feeling somewhat unsettled. Henry, a veteran of prison ministry, helped me know what to expect, gave me some pointers and was a great source of encouragement. Recently I sat down with Henry to ask about his own prison ministry journey.

Henry originally felt drawn to prison ministry in 1977 after a fatal truck accident in which he was at fault. During this low point in his life, he heard God say he was to work with those in prison. He responded to an appeal in a church newsletter stating that the Lancaster County Parole & Probation Board was looking for mentors for prisoners who were being released. One such individual, Jamie Santiago, requested a Christian mentor and was connected with Henry.

Thus began a relationship that still exists today. According to Jamie, "Henry is my spiritual father. He was the dad I never had growing up. By watching Henry live his everyday life, I learned how to be a Christian husband and father."

In 1982, Henry heard that We Care Program was looking for volunteers for a Prison Revival in Alabama and he signed up to go. One of the earlier more memorable experiences was accompanying We Care Chaplain Steve Longenecker to death row. "Steve broke me in good," Henry remembers. Back then they were able to wander all over Holman prison with very little restriction.

A True Friend

Then in 1987, he met Anthony in Holman. For the next 26 years Henry related to him. Some years he was glad to visit; other years he wasn't sure if he wanted to because Anthony could be very aggressive. But Henry would at least drop in, say hi and visit a little. At one point he lost contact, but reconnected when he started going into Donaldson during the crusade. In late 2010 he received a letter in which Anthony really

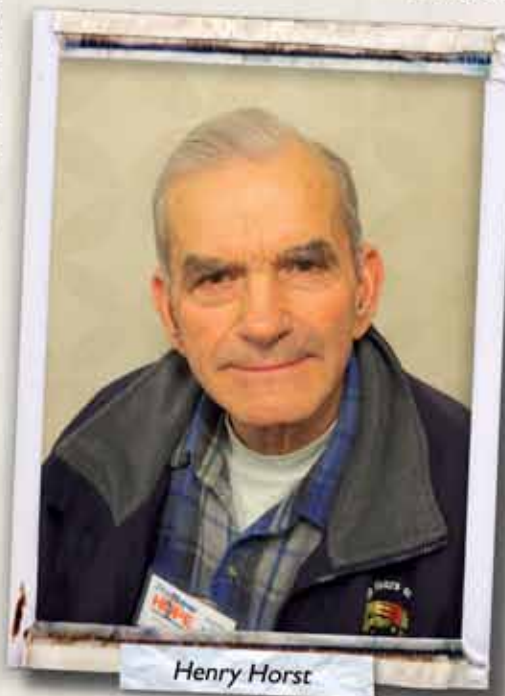
tried to intimidate him and said he would never change. Henry wrote back saying he wouldn't write again but would continue to pray for Anthony.

A few weeks later during the 2011 crusade, Henry felt strongly that God wanted him to say some hard things to Anthony. When he went by to visit, Anthony seemed surprised to see him and started to become aggressive again. But Henry was able to say what he felt he needed to say. "He had been a friend for a long time," Henry said. "It was hard to say some of the things I said to him. I told him it was time for him to quit blaming everyone else and take responsibility. When

I was finished, I was so spent I broke down and cried." By the time Henry returned home, there was a letter from Anthony. After 42 years of being involved in another religion, he had submitted his life to Christ.

God completely changed Anthony. He was a totally different person. Within a few months he was baptized. For the next two crusades, Henry and Anthony were able to connect in a special way. Even when his parole was denied, Anthony had a good attitude. Soon after he was denied, he asked Henry to pray with him that God might open a window where the door is tight shut. A few months later he was stabbed and killed. "He was so tired of prison and maybe this was God's way of answering his prayer," Henry reflects.

"This experience taught me endurance and perseverance."



A Faithful Servant

Henry has shared with many inmates over the years. Heaven will show the results of his faithfulness. Although he is nearing 75 years old, it was evident again this year at ReNew Hope that he still has a passion for ministering to inmates.

"I've learned a lot from We Care," Henry concluded. "I always look forward to going to ReNew Hope. It's a great opportunity to sow the seed and let God give the increase. God has provided me many opportunities to connect with the prisoners. I give a little bit, but I get much more back. It's been a great learning experience."

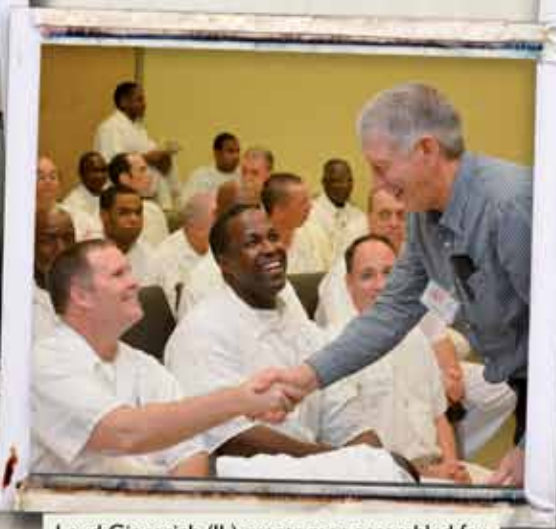
**ReNew
HOPE
2015
January 25 - 29**



Michael Randle (MO) extends a call to commitment at Century Correctional Institution.



Mark Stoltzfus (VA) visits with an inmate friend in the dorm.



Lloyd Gingerich (IL) greets men assembled for an evening chapel service.



Volunteers and inmates join together in a rousing game of basketball.

Don,

January 30, 2015

I wish I could thank you personally for the incredible ministry you have with us. By our count, 917 souls were ministered to in the chapel this week and hundreds more were ministered to on a one-on-one basis in the dorms throughout the week.

Thanks to all those who work so hard behind the scenes and on the front lines seeking to reach others with the Gospel. The volunteers were gracious, professional, and more importantly had an obvious heart for the ministry here. Truly only eternity will fully disclose the fruit of your ministry here. The effect will be ongoing as those who trusted Christ and dedicated themselves to Him can be used by God here and in the free world as well.

Thank you for allowing God to use you all to bring others into His Kingdom and changing lives for eternity.

By His Grace,

Paul Johnson

Chaplain, Kilby Correctional Facility

Mark your calendar!

**ReNew Hope
2016**

January 24 - 28

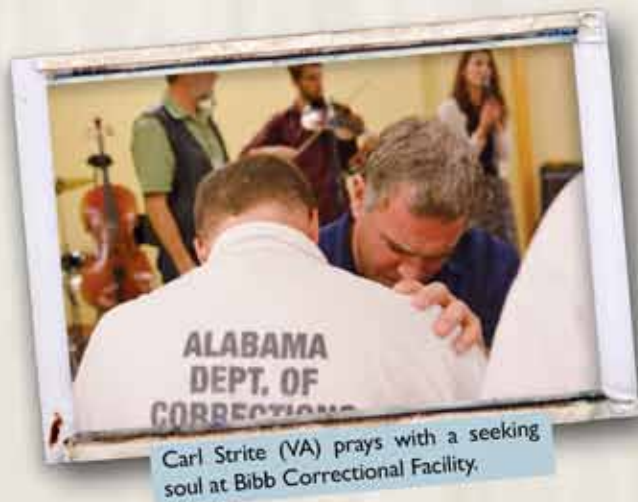
Describe a specific situation where you saw God at work:

A man commented to me, "I want what you guys have." It goes to show the world is hungry for something only the Lord Jesus Christ can give. Hallelujah!!

– **Marvin Isch, IN**

It was neat to see God matching inmates to workers. I used to work in labor and delivery, and a woman with a 2-week-old baby came in to talk.

– **Rose Trevilian, VA**



Carl Strite (VA) prays with a seeking soul at Bibb Correctional Facility.

I got to be in segregation and hear a testimony of one who testified that she became saved by reading her Bible during her time there.

– **Lois Garman, PA**

God moved among the volunteers—prayer, confession, healing.

– **Jason Shelly, PA**

Death Row inmates praying for their family and the family member's salvation.

– **Richard Baldwin, OH**

We were so blessed to see men wait in line at the altar.

– **Robin Goettl, CA**

A woman who was denied parole, just smiled and smiled and said, "It's okay because God is in it." She will serve five more years. She said God may be protecting her from something on the outside. I told her God might need to use her as a missionary five more years.

– **Erma Brueckhart, PA**

Team member who said on Monday evening, "I don't know if I'll be back tomorrow" then was so sorry when she was unable to go one day.

– **Doris Bender, PA**

Inmates singing at the top of their lungs, so loud we had to sing at the top of our lungs to hear ourselves.

– **Jeff Janton, PA**

When inmates sang with us in lockup. – **Clair Hoover, PA**

I was impressed with the powerful testimonies of several volunteers who had experienced very difficult life situations. A common theme was complete and total surrender to Jesus Christ before a turn-a-round could begin.

– **David R Landis, AL**

One of the volunteers was approached by an inmate. "How is it that you are still alive?!" he asked. The inmate recognized this now transformed man from his BC days, and now God brought them together in a prison chapel service.

– **John Schmid, OH**

During a morning session we were encouraged to remember that our ministry was not just to inmates but to whomsoever we would encounter, from hotel personnel to waitresses, etc. As it happened, I was in McDonalds having lunch before an evening service at the prison. I overheard two employees in conversation at the table in front of me. It sounded as if they might have been inmates out on work release from the facility I had visited the previous night. I prayed that God would open the door for me to speak to them, and He did. They were indeed from that facility, and I was able to pray with and share with one of the ladies. Truly a God moment.

– **Troy Walker, AL**



Many respond to an altar call following a message brought by Marc Schlabach (FL).

A man asked me about Genesis 3, and I LOVE Genesis 3. Only he was questioning. Then he shared Ezekiel 28. He's wounded, but seeking. He agreed to come to chapel, and the text of the devotion was Genesis 3 and Ezekiel 28! Confirmation to the truth.

– **Heath Tappe, WI**

The altar call and seeing inmates coming for prayer.

– **Tyler Rice, PA**

What was one significant memory that will stay with you?

I had the opportunity to lead Teresa to the Lord. She is now my sister in the Lord, and I thought I could almost hear the angels rejoicing. It's difficult to put into words the feeling. I am humbled to be used of God in that way.

– Susan Martin, PA



Volunteers unite in praise and worship during orientation at Alabama State University.

An inmate's words, "I'm so lonely." – Doris Bender, PA

Doing an exercise with the women at Montgomery WF and seeing them all shouting with laughter and joy—unforgettable.

– Robin Goettl, CA

The verbalized affirmation from an inmate to her friend regarding several mentions from our group of our own difficult life experiences. "These women know how we feel. They understand us. We can talk with them."

– Wilma Mullet, OH



The Fraser family (MN) touch hearts through their music ministry at Montgomery Women's Facility.

When the men were dismissed from our final service, many were crying as they shook our hands and said their goodbyes. Of course, we cried too.

– David Bogovich, SC

I was delighted and charmed by the diverse group assembled on Sunday. I sensed a room void of judgment, in which hearts were unified to serve one Master. I was very moved by the worship, the speakers and the encouragement.

– Vanessa Lorentzen, IN

An old infirm man at Hamilton A&I, one I almost skipped over. He told me in difficult breathing that he did know where he was going—to hell. I was able to take him through John 3:14 and 16. He said he wanted that salvation, but was not able to pray and ask for it, because he could barely talk and didn't know how to pray. I led him very slowly in prayer. Afterward I asked if he was saved, and with much stronger voice (and laughter) he said, "YES!"

– Daniel Martin, AL



Tiffani Heisey (AL) shares in one-on-one conversation and prayer with a friend during an altar call.

As we gave in ministry and worship, we felt like we received way more in return.

– Ken Wengerd, OH

Watching young men who were scared to talk in a group setting grow to the point of sharing their hearts with the church and blessing many men.

– Darrell Helmuth, IL

The joy of a Hispanic woman when she heard a song in Spanish.

– Daniel Pollard, NY

When I watched inmates (life without parole) singing loudly "I am free" at the chapel service.

– Richard Baldwin, OH

Seeing all the prisoners singing praises to Jesus.

– Nathan High, PA

A couple of inmates I talked with saw for the first time that there was hope.

– Andy Hilty, IN

NEWS

NEW OUTREACH AND BUSINESS DIRECTOR SELECTED

After a yearlong search, we are grateful to announce the selection of Kevin Kennell from Camilla, Georgia, to the position of Outreach and Business Director. Kevin will begin his role in early summer. We plan to introduce Kevin and his family in the next issue of "The Connection."

WELCOME

Julie Gehman joined our office staff in February. She is currently in training and will assume full responsibility as bookkeeper when Hannah leaves at the birth of her first child. Newly married to Tristan, Julie came to Atmore from Reading, Pennsylvania. Julie and her husband are active in their church, Mennonite Christian Fellowship.



Tristan & Julie Gehman

BOARD OF DIRECTORS UPDATE

At the annual members' meeting on January 24, 2015, four names were on the slate for affirmation to fill four vacancies on the Board of Directors. Marvin Fisher (VA), Alvin Landis (PA), and Durell Orendorf (MD) were each affirmed for another three-year term. We welcome Aaron Martin (PA) back after a two-year break. Outgoing director Loyd Gingerich was recognized for his years of faithful service.

NEW ARRIVAL

On February 27, 2015, Edward Troy was born to David and Veola Bucher. Siblings Cheney, Ethan, Sean, and Benjamin are also excited to welcome their new little brother. David serves as an assistant chaplain at Donaldson Correctional Facility, near Birmingham, Alabama.



Edward Troy Bucher

Reflection

By Richard and Wilma Graber



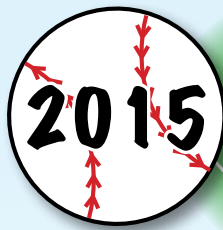
(We have been greatly blessed by Richard and Wilma's volunteering in various capacities at We Care for several months each of the last two winters. Following is a brief reflection of their experiences.)

As we head back to Kansas to settle into the routine of work, church and family that we call home, eager anticipation might describe our general mindset. At the same time, when we reflect on what we are leaving behind here, the welcome and the friendships we experienced while in Atmore have more than filled in for any lack of

natural beauty in the eyes of most people when they think of Alabama.

Serving at We Care has given both of us an opportunity to share our resources, gifts, and talents in ministry to "the least of these" and others in the community. Yes, it was a sacrifice to leave home behind the past two winters in order to mow grass, do maintenance projects, clean, cook, work at a desk, or go to prison as a chaplain. However, when we consider what we have been blessed with, we're not sure what else we would rather be doing.

It is our understanding there are more than enough people to play shuffleboard, and the fishing boats and golf courses in warmer climates are well staffed. But the Lord can always use one or two more people to help with the Harvest. We can highly recommend We Care as a great place to spend the winter.



Softball Outreach

June 4 - 6

Share Christ's love with men in prison while enjoying some competitive softball.

ADOC training will begin Thursday, June 4, at 11:00 a.m. at the We Care headquarters in Atmore.

Games will begin Thursday afternoon and conclude Saturday afternoon.

Teams and/or individual players (ages 20-45+/-) are welcome. Men only please.

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

Applications due by April 30th



Read-A-Thon



We Care Program

Summer 2015

Watch for info coming soon to your mailbox.

More information available online May 1

www.wecareprogram.org

Young Adults!

Discover

with We Care Program

An eight-month missions experience focused on building relationships, sharing Christ, and making disciples

Begins September 9

Applications due by July 31

For more information:
www.wecareprogram.org



GOD'S HIGHER WAYS

A MESSAGE FROM DON METZLER, PRESIDENT

don@wecareprogram.org

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways," declares the

Lord. "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55: 8 & 9)

These words of scripture have been demonstrated to me in the search for someone to work with me here in the office. Shortly after I agreed to become President of We Care Program, we began to look for someone to fill the role of Business and Outreach Director. I contacted a number of men who could have easily and capably filled the position, but after prayer and consideration, for one reason or another none of them sensed God's leading to

*"I am so thankful
God knew all
along what
He was doing."*

serve in that way at that time.

So it was at the October meeting of our Board of Directors that I told the Board I was out of ideas and did not know where to go from that point. Thankfully, about that time God began to put the wheels in motion to have someone give me the name and phone number of a person to consider for the open position. To make a long story short, it was clearly a "God thing" for me to make a phone call out of the blue that led to a conversation that led to a visit that led to an application which eventually led to the hiring of Kevin Kennell as our new Business and Outreach Director.

I am so thankful God knew all along what He was doing. All of us look forward to Kevin's joining our office staff in May and are excited to see how God will use him to help lead We Care Program.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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