

A Day Behind Bars

There are no "typical" days in the life of chaplains and Support for Prison Ministries staff at Lancaster County Prison (LCP). The following journal reflects some of the events on a recent cold February Tuesday that director Nelson Martin spent behind bars with SFPM staff.

Eight men sit attentively, with eyes and ears focused on a video presentation by Jack Frost. "Experiencing the Father's Embrace" is a powerful teaching series with 9 sessions that God is using to change lives of inmates. Some of the men write notes, while others nod or make affirmative statements as the animated speaker says "Live with your roof off and the walls down". He goes on to explain that nothing is hid from sovereign God (the roof off) and persons need to walk in love and understanding with each other (the walls down).

For several of the chaplains, this Tuesday morning started at 6 AM with their weekly breakfast meeting at a local restaurant to share together and encourage each other for the upcoming challenges of the day. Chaplains sign in at LCP between 7 & 7:30 AM, giving opportunity for them to attend staff shift change line-up. This is the time when incoming correctional officers are given assignments for the day. Chaplains are able to chat with prison staff and administration, giving encouragement, answering questions or providing information about chaplain services.

While J. R. Fisher sets up the room for the video series, Dick Yorgey goes to one of the housing units for contacts.

Diane Fulmer starts answering the phone and organizing paper work for the day. Al Huber leads a third floor Bible class. Al's class includes a number of Spanish students, usually taught by Isaias Maldonado who is currently visiting

his home area in Puerto Rico. Books and Bibles are pulled together for Marvin Reed to deliver to various inmates. Most of Marvin's time is spent at the Youth Intervention Center, but he does help several mornings a week at LCP.

During the morning, Chaplain Faye Stauffer conducts a women's Bible study with another local woman who feels the call to prison ministry. Sounds of singing and praying drift across the room partitions in the area used by chaplains for Bible studies and counseling. Several other ministry volunteers and area pastors come and go from the first floor visiting room, where they share and pray with many hurting individuals.

Staff chaplains assemble in the chaplain office area (a small room always full of activity) for a quick lunch and updates of inmate requests. There are several "must do" phone calls and administration requests to take care of. Meanwhile, the phone keeps ringing with pastor's requests for scheduling visits, and Diane finishes reports of those who attended morning sessions. Diane is thankful for the part-time help that Katie Mininger provides in the chaplains office.

During this afternoon there is time for chaplains to do one-on-one counseling and deliver Bibles and books that inmates have requested. Plans are reviewed for the men's Wednesday Alpha class, which has been very well received in LCP. By mid-afternoon, some of the volunteer chaplains leave for the day. Other staff finish paper work, make notes for next day volunteers, and try to return several phone calls. By late afternoon, staff lock the chaplains office and begin the long walk down the halls, through 7 locked electronically controlled doors to the front lobby. Sounds echo sharply behind them through the long concrete halls. Chaplains are tired because they have given out much today. They realize they are involved in spiritual warfare. They saw many needs and heard inmates battle the forces of darkness. But, as the final locked door clangs behind them and they step into the lobby, they are also joyful and at peace. They are thankful for the opportunities to share God's hope and healing with inmates. They are confident that today some seeds were sown, some were watered, and they are praying for a harvest tomorrow.



SFPM Paid Staff at Lancaster County Prison (l - r) Isaias Maldonado, Katie Mininger, Marvin Reed, Diane Fulmer, Al Huber, Faye Stauffer, J. R. Fisher, and Prison Warden Guarini.

The Power of the Printed Word

NEW BOARD MEMBER

At their February board of directors meeting, SFPM affirmed Anthony Martin to begin a 3 year term on the board. Anthony lives near Lititz with his wife Kendra and 2 children. He is a member of Lime Rock Mennonite Church and owns a computer service business.

Anthony Martin replaces Anthony Zeiset who chose not to continue on the board at the end of 2003. Anthony Zeiset will continue to serve with the Heart to Heart ministry that operates out of 545 E. Strawberry St, Lancaster (in a house owned by SFPM) as well as working with juveniles at the Youth Intervention Center and Manos House in Lancaster city.

SFPM GIVES THANKS TO ANTHONY Z. FOR HIS PAST SERVICE ON THE BOARD AND WELCOMES ANTHONY M. TO HIS NEW BOARD ROLE.

Thank You

by Nelson W. Martin, SFPM Director

question remains: Can you achieve positive social outcomes with faith based programs if you strip out the faith?"

The board of directors and staff of Support for Prison Ministries are thankful to God for the cooperation of County and Prison Administration who support the chaplains and their programs at Lancaster County Prison and the Youth Intervention Center. We know that God and faith are making a big difference.



During the past year of 2003, Support for Prison Ministries chaplains have distributed about \$5,000 worth of books and Bibles at Lancaster County Prison and the Youth Intervention Center. \$3,300 were purchased, and the rest were donated by area churches, Christian publishers or Bible societies.

During the past few months, one of the exciting books being used is "The Purpose Driven Life" by Rick Warren. This Biblical based and life challenging book has 40 easy to read chapters. By reading one chapter each day, a person is able to define the purpose that God has for his or her life.

Forty books were initially brought into the Lancaster County Prison by Chaplain Dick Yorgey. These books were donated by his congregation, Ephrata Church of Nazarene. These books were distributed in eight pods (housing units) but arguments broke out among the inmates who wanted to have their own book to read each day. Word of this need prompted another 50 books to be donated. Then more money came from the church to buy 112 additional copies. Then requests came for the women's section to use the book, as well as the

Thursday evening EXIT group which meets on the outside to help ex-inmates in their return to society. We are also aware that some correctional officers are reading them as well. Thirty more books were purchased. As of the date of this writing, another 60 books had been ordered, making a grand total of about 300 "The Purpose Driven Life" books.

Pray with us that the challenges in this dynamic book will change many lives. "The Lord gave the Word, and great was the company of those who proclaimed it". Psalm 68:11. WHAT AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY.



DIRECTOR'S REPORT

It is so exciting to see how God is moving in prison ministries today. Good things are happening on local prison levels as well as renewed interest in faith based programs that are reaching state and federal prisons.

Over the years, Chuck Colson's Prison Fellowship has worked at various levels of faith dorms and Inner Change Freedom Initiatives. Since the late 1980's highly successful programs were run in Brazil and Ecuador. In 1997, Prison Fellowship opened the first InnerChange prison in Sugarland, Texas. Since then, other similar Bible based programs have spread to several states. Officials are amazed at the changed lives and drop in recidivism rates that are being documented.

A recent Prison Fellowship newsletter quoted "Do faith-based so-

lutions work? Take a look at what has happened in our program at Houston, TX. Recidivism in America's prisons is over 70 percent. But in the 3 years we have run the Houston program, 47 men have completed the full 18 months of Bible and discipleship training, and are now out, in churches, working at jobs, and walking with mentors. And not one of them has come back into custody."

A June 2003 Wall Street Journal article also looked at faith based prisons. They reported "Studies show that inmates who completed Bible based programs were significantly less likely than those who didn't receive this teaching to be either arrested or incarcerated in the first 2 years after release. Apparently there are some who want the results but don't like the religion. But the

Introducing Jewel Sensenig

Thirty-two years ago Nelson Martin, Director of SFPM, became daddy to a little girl named Jewel. Today that little girl is grown up, married, mom of two and the newest staff member for SFPM.

Hi, I'm Jewel. Neal and I were married in 1997 and after living a quiet, peaceful year along the Conestoga River near Leola, we found ourselves living in the Philippines. We were there through the YES (Youth Evangelism Service) Program, sponsored by Eastern Mennonite Missions. During our time in the Philippines we helped to lay the foundation for a Discipleship Training Program for Filipino young people who had the desire to go into missions.

In 1999 we returned to the U.S. and made our home in Harrisburg, PA. We spent the last four years living in Harrisburg and working at the Harrisburg Discipleship Center (HDC) as the Directors. HDC is the training center for the YES program. We met hundreds of young people and loved watching God change their lives and instill in them a deep love for sharing the Gospel with others.

Christmas of 2003 we returned to the Lancaster

area. My number one job is being mommy to Tyler and Emily. Tyler will be four in March. He loves trains and books. Emily will be two in April and has unlimited amounts of energy. She loves to do anything Tyler is doing! During the day we love to read, paint, play trains, bake cookies, and look forward to evenings when Neal is home and they can wrestle and play hide-n-seek.



**Neal and Jewel Sensenig
Tyler and Emily**

If you were to stop in and visit during the children's afternoon nap times you would find me sitting at the computer working for SFPM. I do accounting and deposits, write receipts, pay bills and keep office records and reports. God has called me to be home with our children full-time (and I LOVE it) but I am grateful to still be able to be involved with a ministry that is spreading the love of Jesus to others.

For your Planning and Information

MARK YOUR CALENDARS NOW FOR THE annual Prison Ministry BENEFIT AUCTION to be held October 22 and 23, 2004 at the Farmersville Auction Grounds, located between New Holland and Ephrata, PA. Early plans are being made for this 21st annual auction to be bigger and better than ever. The Board has set a goal of clearing \$65,000 (after expenses) to be donated to various prison and reentry ministries. Items to be sold include a hand-carved 3-D picture, pedal tractors, framed paintings and handcraft items (some done by inmates) quilts and wall hangings, children's toys and games, fresh meat, fruit, produce, and lots of groceries. A special feature will be beautiful gift and theme baskets and many valuable gift certificates from area businesses and professionals.

Another highlight of the BENEFIT AUCTION, to be held Friday evening and all day Saturday, are the home-made food and baked products, including a Friday Chicken BarBQue and a pancake and sausage breakfast on Saturday.

Since the SFPM annual BENEFIT AUCTION began in 1984, over \$1 million has been contributed to a variety of prison ministries, touching lives behind bars and providing quality care and Christian teaching that assists inmates to return to society.

?? HAVE YOU VISITED OUR NEW WEBSITE ??

www.supportforprisonministries.org

Informative, with photos of staff and ministries. Has pages related to SFPM vision and goals, finances and operating budgets, and guidelines and directions for prison visitors and ministry. Also links with related agencies that we partner with. Has this quarterly newsletter FREEDOM FOCUS and a monthly PRAYER GUIDE that can be downloaded. Please let us know anytime you have suggestions about how we can make our website more useable and informative.

LANDIS HOMES RESIDENTS RAISE OVER \$3,500 FOR PRISON MINISTRIES.

Renewal meetings were held 4 evenings during a cold, snowy January week at Landis Homes West Bethany Chapel near Lititz. Speaker for the services was Nelson Martin, local Mennonite Church bishop and director of Support for Prison Ministries.

The theme of the series was "Living in Freedom" and featured Bible studies from Bible characters that were imprisoned as well as current happenings of what God is doing in prisons.

A full size model of a prison cell was set up in the chapel lobby which served as a powerful visual aid. Many residents of Landis Homes pray regularly for and give generously to a variety of prison ministries. On the closing night of the meetings, an offering of over \$3,500 was received for Support for Prison Ministries.

Support For Prison Ministries
 P.O. Box 134
 Lititz, PA 17543
 (717) 626-6301
 Email: nelsonmartin1@juno.com
 www.supportforprisonministries.org

Nonprofit Org.
 U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
 Permit #1746
 Lancaster, PA
 17604

UPDATE FROM CHAPLAIN OTHA BELL

Chaplain at State Correctional Institution in Chester, PA. (Financially supported by Jubilee Ministries, Lebanon with some partnering funds from SFPM, Lititz)

Many missionaries have gone from United States to many parts of the world. However, I consider myself a "Missionary at Home". I am privileged, yes blessed, to be a missionary sent into the field known as the SCI-Chester.

My ministry at SCI-Chester involves conducting regular Bible Studies with some 40 to 65 men in attendance. Many of these men have never experienced sound Bible teaching. Many were raised in a religious setting, but not in a Christian atmosphere. Many of these men are preparing to leave prison. I believe the Biblical teachings they receive will effect a change in their homes, their communities and churches.

My ministry also includes one-on-one counseling, which involves answering spiritual questions, correcting doc-

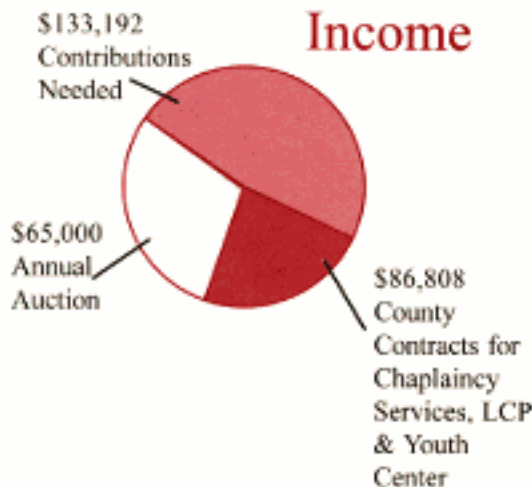
trine, problem solving, death, bereavement and serious illness counseling and inmate family support. I also conduct Sunday services, participate in other institutional events and programs, and oversee various volunteer classes and programs.

As a PA. Department of Corrections staff member, I also receive valuable training in various areas that help me in ministry. I am involved in ministries outside the prison walls, such as aftercare programs and groups dedicated to ministering to men. I thank God for organizations like Support for Prison Ministries that provide prayer, encouragement and financial support to a number of "home missionaries" who daily go to the home mission fields known as prisons.



Focus On Finances

The budget for 2004 year totals \$285,000. Of this total, about \$135,000 is needed from contributions. About 12% of our total expenses go for administration and promotion, leaving 88% of all income for direct chaplain wages, programs, and services.



2004 Annual Budget - \$285,000

- An envelope is enclosed for you to send a gift to partner with us.
- Remember SFPM in your estate planning and long-term gift giving. Counsel is available to help you with will preparation, asset distribution and tax savings.

