

A SOWER WENT FORTH . . .

By: Nelson W. Martin, Director, Support for Prison Ministries

Our Lord told an exciting parable in Luke 8 about the farmer (sower) who went out to sow seed in a field. Sadly, some of the seed fell on stony ground and was trampled under foot. Some fell on rocks and couldn't germinate. Some seed was eaten by birds, and other young plants withered away because of shallow roots. And still other seed fell among thorns and thistles and harvest looked bleak. But praise God, the story doesn't end there. Still other seed fell on good soil, yielding a crop, a hundred times more than what was sown.

Today, Lancaster County farmers use modern technology and machinery to work the ground and sow seed as the days get warmer. But on a recent cold February Wednesday, I felt like I was re-visiting this parable of Jesus, although in a much different time and setting.

The field were men inmates at Lancaster County Prison. Their surroundings were correctional officers, steel gates and concrete walls. The sowers were chaplains who spend many hours behind bars bringing hope and healing to seeking persons. **Here is what I experienced by these modern day sowers.**

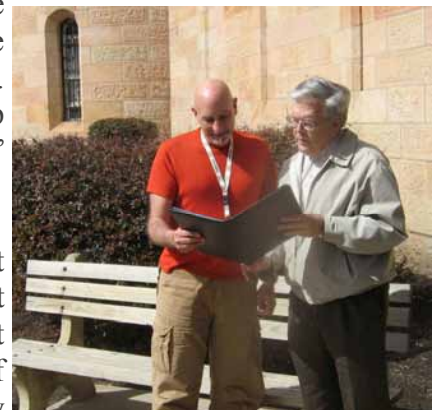
Sower Michael Booth. Only 13 men came to this class since one unit was on lock-down. Before a video teaching was shown, men took turns sharing what they had learned from their Bible readings since the previous week. A number of encouragements and counsel were given by inmates. Some quoted selected Psalms that had meaning and gave hope. One middle-aged man excitedly said, “I found two neat verses that gave me the answer to life's problems. Now I know that I need to be changed on the inside first, and then I can offer myself as a servant of the living God.” He then read Romans 12: 1 and 2. I was challenged to think how often I had heard those verses used to guide our Christian walk, but it took on new meaning hearing it come from an inmate who was learning it as a new principle of life. This time was followed by a one-hour video teaching, where each verse of Ephesians 2 was explained in detail. Some men were busy taking notes, others looking up cross-references to the powerful “alive in Christ” verses that are part of this chapter. **Seeds were being sown.**

Sower David Hain. In this group which met in the media center, 16 guys sat in a circle so they could look directly at each other and talked openly about their cluttered lives and addictions. Using David Hain's book “From Addict to Disciple” they explored how God is molding and shaping them. Some of these middle aged men gave testimony of being babies in faith. How they need to take in the word, vocalize their new found faith, and live in new hope and actions that God can bring. **Seeds were being sown.**

(Continued on page 3)



Chaplain Michael Booth
ready to enter LCP



Chaplain David Hain reviewing
prison ministry assignments with
Nelson Martin

Lititz Area Mennonite School Learns About Prison Ministry



On Wednesday, March 12, teachers and students at Lititz Area Mennonite School welcomed Katie Mininger, Nelson Martin, and Jewel Sensenig from Support For Prison Ministries for a special morning focusing on prison outreach. Following a chapel led by Nelson (SFPM Director) the middle school students had opportunities to ask questions and interact about local prison ministries. Students could also visit a life-sized model of a prison cell that was on display. Nelson told about some opportunities that happen within the prison to share God's love and hope. He also told the students that he hopes, "some of them go to prison someday"...to be a chaplain or person who helps inmates.

After the middle school was dismissed grades 1-5 had the opportunity to come and visit the prison cell. Students were allowed to go into the cell and experience what it would feel like to be in a jail cell. Katie Mininger, chaplain at Youth Intervention Center, shared stories about her work with the juveniles. There were mixed reactions from the students. Some were excited about going in the prison cell and sitting on the bed and some did not feel comfortable going into the cell.

Since no person under 18 is allowed inside prisons this was a unique opportunity for students to hear about local prisons and get a sense what it would be like to be in a prison cell. SFPM Chaplains live out the Hebrews 13:3 verse, "Remember those in prison as if you were their fellow prisoners and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering."



Please Remember to PRAY, ENCOURAGE, and SUPPORT the staff and volunteers of SFPM

2008 Paid Chaplain Staff at LCP

Michael Booth
Diane Fulmer
David Hain
Al Huber
Isaias Maldonado
Katie Mininger
Marvin Reed
Faye Stauffer

2008 Paid Chaplain Staff at YIC

Charlie Hess
Katie Mininger
Marvin Reed

2008 Administrative Staff for SFPM

Nelson Martin
Jewel Sensenig

2008 Volunteer Staff at LCP

LaRue Breasette
Janice Hess
Al Hocke
Mary Ann Hocke
Marvin Lyons
Steve Martin
Dennis Nolt
Lenny Pelsinski
Bud Roda
Adrian Rodriguez
Expedito Santiago
Karin White

**THANKS TO THESE SERVANTS OF GOD
WHO ARE BRINGING HOPE AND HEALING
TO THOSE IN PRISON.**

Notes sent from LCP inmates to chaplains office.

Male Inmate: "I want to get closer to God on a personal level. I've been around Christians all of my life, but I feel I haven't really found God. I need Him to help me stay on the right path."

Female Inmate: "By reading the Bible you gave, I am finding out how life is supposed to be. My life's goal from now on is to walk with the Lord and do His work."

Sower Mic Wolfe. 18 guys came out for this weekly study. Developed by Pastor Wolfe, it focuses on Biblical principals of being changed from the inside out. The class began with a question “Who will you serve supremely?” Discussion followed as the men shared life’s experiences about their various enslavements and controlling forces. Some gave testimony that their heart’s have been changed. . . that they know now that God is the supreme being. . . and that God truly knows and understands each heart. There was also some input about how the kingdom of God is for strong men, overcomers, those who give their all to their Creator God. **Seeds were being sown.**



Bible Teacher
Mic Wolfe
inside LCP

CONSIDER AGAIN THE RESULT OF THE PARABLE OF OUR LORD THAT HAPPENED IN BIBLE TIMES ALONG THE DUSTY ROADS AND ROCKY FIELDS OF PALESTINE. IT IS HAPPENING AGAIN TODAY BEHIND THE CONCRETE WALLS AND STEEL BARS AT LANCASTER COUNTY PRISON. . . “And the seed that fell on good ground stands for those with noble and good hearts, who hear, who retain the word, and by persevering produce a crop. . . a hundred times more than was sown.”

COME TO THE ANNUAL AUCTION OCTOBER 24 & 25, 2008 FARMERSVILLE AUCTION GROUNDS This year’s auction is SFPM’S **SILVER ANNIVERSARY**

Delicious homemade foods and baked goods available Friday evening and Saturday
Framed pictures painted by various artists and some made by inmates.



Large 3-D Handcarved Picture

Pedal Tractors



Quilts, wall hangings, and afghans



Theme baskets

MANY VALUABLE GIFT CERTIFICATES

From area businesses for food, lodging, professional and home services.

Since the SFPM annual auction began in 1984, over \$1.4 million has been contributed to prison ministries.

Check our website’s Annual Auction Pages for more information at www.supportforprisonministries.org

Check out our website for updated photos and information: www.supportforprisonministries.org

CHRIST IS RISEN!

Because of our printing schedules and Easter being early this year, by the time you read this newsletter Easter Sunday will have passed. BUT THE MESSAGE GOES ON . . . CHRIST IS RISEN !! In fact, it is our message 365 days a year, 24/7 non stop. Always available and new!! The empty tomb brings hope and new life.

We praise God for the resurrection power that is also experienced by many in prison. Even though men and women may be incarcerated, they too can have freedom and hope in their hearts, spirits, and lives.

Ephesians 1 says "The power that raised Jesus from the dead now resides in us who believe, who are part of the Church of Jesus Christ." Thanks for your continued partnering with us. We value your prayers, counsel and financial gifts.

**The Board and Staff
of Support for Prison Ministries**

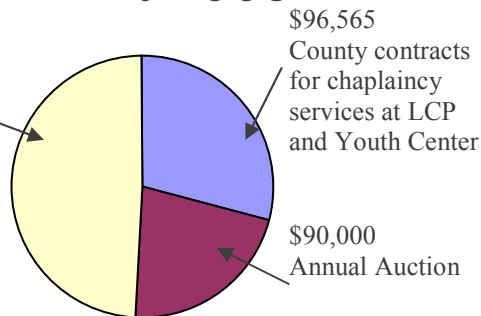


Focus On Finances

2008 Budget: \$365,000

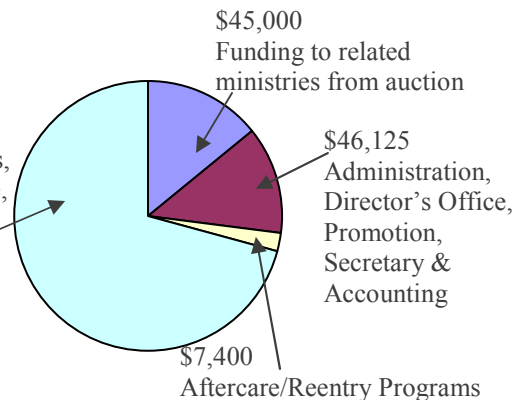
Income

\$178,435
Contributions
Needed



Expenses

\$266,475
Chaplain's wages,
Bibles, Literature,
Videos, Office
Expenses



A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your gift to partner with SFPM.

We appreciate the regular gifts that we receive from area churches, businesses and persons interested in prison ministry. In addition to cash gifts, you can remember SFPM with your estate planning and long-term giving. Counsel is available to help with your will preparation, asset distribution and tax savings.