

## STORIES FROM A DAY IN PRISON

By Nelson W. Martin, SFPM Director



It was early as I drove to Lancaster County Prison on a February morning. Some would say the dark and damp overcast winter morning would be paralleled by the despair, negativity and loneliness inside prison. But on this day, I found glimpses of hope . . . heard stories of new life . . . and met inmates whose despair had turned to joy.

After the day shift of correctional officers were given their work assignments, chaplain staff gathered in the second floor office to review plans of the day, got inmate lists of who was signed up for Bible studies, and looked over phone messages. On this Wednesday AM, lead chaplain Al Huber and I talked about a number of prison happenings and office staff reports. Next I went to third floor Bible study, led by Chaplain Ray Taltoan. While a noisy basketball game was happening in the gym on the other side of a wall divider, eight men listened intently to God’s Word and talked about what God was doing in their lives. The Bible study was based on Daniel 3, “Through the Fire,” the story of the three Hebrew government employees, who stayed true to God even when threatened with death. One area of discussion was about the many gods (with small g’s) that the King had and that the people worshipped. But when God delivered the three men from the fiery furnace, the King declared, “You are servants of the Most High God” (capital letters). Later the King said, “Praise be to this (One True) God.” At the end of this two hour Bible study, the learning seemed to be “God is near us, no matter what happens.” The men also shared how they pray for those who go to court and pray for strength for their “inmate brothers” who are going through temptations and discouragements.

While housing units were locked down for distribution of medicines and noon lunch, SFPM staff had time to re-group in the chaplain’s office. On this Wednesday, eight chaplains and one secretary were in the prison on assignments. Phone calls, prison messages, inmate requests were all reviewed while staff ate lunch and prepared for afternoon programs. While some staff will do Bible studies and teach classes, most will do one-on-ones. These are times of meeting with inmates to listen, counsel, and pray with them.

For the afternoon, I decided to sit in a class called “Inside/Out Training.” Taught by Mic Wolfe, the goal of this class is to help inmates identify and deal with inner issues that are controlling their lives. Twenty-two men read paper outlines, looked up Bible references and asked many questions. Mic said, “Repentance is not just turning from sin and being done with the past. It is also walking toward the new life in Christ.”

When I walked from the chaplain’s office to the main lobby (through 7 electronically locked and monitored steel doors), I realized what a blessing that our staff have so many opportunities to share God’s hope and healing to those behind bars. I reflected on the many who heard the Word on this day. May the seeds of truth and hope grow, mature and change more lives.



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# COME TO THE ANNUAL AUCTION OCTOBER 26 & 27, 2012 FARMERSVILLE AUCTION GROUNDS



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Original 3-D Handcarved Picture by Lorraine Reiff



Framed pictures  
Some pictures  
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Since the SFPM annual auction began in 1984, almost \$1.9 million has been contributed to prison ministries.

Check our website's Annual Auction Pages for more information at [www.supportforprisonministries.org](http://www.supportforprisonministries.org)

## ALEX GONZALEZ, A CHANGED LIFE

At age 37, Alex has been through many problems and difficulties and spent time in prison. Now a graduate of Water Street Christian Life Recovery program, he has a good job and is involved in a Lancaster city church. Here is his story:

*"I was born in Puerto Rico in 1974 and was raised by my single mother. My father was never in my life. I believe the lack of a father figure in my life led to some of my poor choices. As a child, my grandmother introduced me to the Lord and I followed His ways. But when we moved to New Jersey when I was 13, I had to learn to survive as a young teen in the inner city streets. I quickly got involved with smoking, drugs, and alcohol. I went to sniffing cocaine and then into heroin use. For 13 years, my life was consumed by drug addiction. I never seemed to finish anything I started and felt like a failure. My life was spinning out of control.*



*At the beginning of 2010, I was sitting in the parking lot of an area shopping center, ready to again steal from a store to maintain my habit. I was holding a bag of heroin and suddenly I no longer wanted to live. I cried out to God to do whatever was needed to get me out of this destruction. Shortly after this call for help, my sister called me on my cell phone. She knew the Lord and tried to keep in touch with me. Sensing something was not right with me, she said, 'Alex, why don't you try God?' A week later God answered these prayers in an unexpected way. I was coming out of the store with stolen merchandise (like I had done many times before) when I got arrested and sent to Lancaster County Prison. During my time in prison, my eyes were opened to the error of my ways. I had time to reflect on the downward path my life had taken. I needed help. I turned to God.*

*In July 2010, I enrolled in the Christian Life Recovery program at Water Street Ministries. During the one year of study and discipleship training, I learned how God can help me correct my life. I learned to deal with fears, resentments and personal desires that were destroying me. Jesus Christ was taught as the center. I learned that when He is at the center, with life revolving around Him, everything seems to work out much better.*

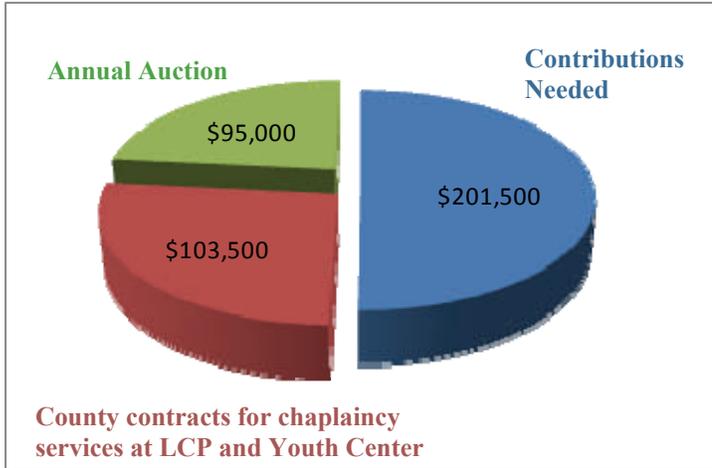
*I can truly say that I am not the same man that went to prison 2 years ago. Today I have a good job, am involved in a church, and thankful for a new life. Like Paul writes in Philippians 1:6 'I am confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.' I am SO THANKFUL to our Lord Jesus Christ who is still in the business of transforming lives. Amen."*

# Focus On Finances

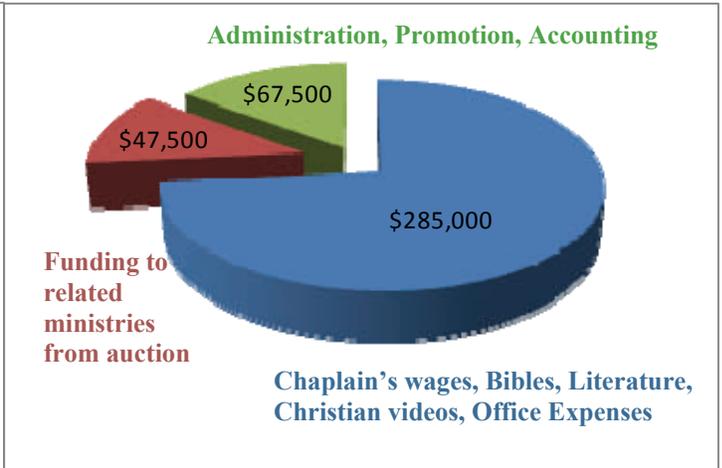
We are glad to report that we ended the 2011 fiscal year in the black. Although our contribution income was about \$25,000 below our goal, we had stronger auction income and were able to cut some expenses.

**FOR 2012, OUR BUDGET IS \$400,000, WITH OVER \$200,000 NEEDED FROM CONTRIBUTIONS.**  
**Donations come from many churches, businesses and interested families and individuals.**  
**THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!**

## Income **2012 Budget: \$400,000**



## Expenses



**A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your gift to partner with SFPM. Thank You!**

### **For Your Inspiration: Notes from Lancaster County Prison Inmates to Chaplains**

“Thank you for the good reading materials you provided for me. I spend much time reading. Your books have been such a source of strength. I never looked for God on the streets, but now in prison I have never felt closer.”

**Young man**

“I want to have a closer relationship with God. I am ready to change my ways of destruction. I want a better home life with my future husband. I want to do good things for others and the Lord. Please pray for me so that when I am released, I don't go astray.”

**Middle aged woman**

“Since I am in prison, I miss the Bibles I had at home. So thanks for getting me a Bible that I can use to study. One of my problems has been anger. I memorized James 1:19-20 and that has made a big difference in my life.”

**Older man**

**One chaplain reported:** “An inmate I worked with was able to write to his father and forgive him for not being in his life. Another inmate was very withdrawn and angry. When he finally opened up to a chaplain and cried, he was able to release the pain. Now he is one that encourages others who are going through difficult situations.”

Check out our website for updated photos and information: [www.supportforprisonministries.org](http://www.supportforprisonministries.org)

The work of Support for Prison Ministries is guided by a 10 member board of directors, persons who are active in local congregations.

Left to right: Dennis Sensenig, Warren Hackman (Secretary), Caleb Minnich, Larry Fox, Ken Haller, Cliff Martin, Ken Martin (Chairman), Leon Martin (Vice-Chair).

Not present for photo: Glenn Hoover, Anthony Martin (Treasurer).



## HELP TO BUY BIBLES FOR PRISON INMATES

AN EXCITING OPPORTUNITY FOR FAMILIES, INDIVIDUALS, CHURCHES,  
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