

“Proclaiming Freedom for Prisoners”

Support For Prison Ministries: The Nelson Martin Era- Part Two

By Del Burkholder, Director



Nelson Martin, SFPM director from 1999-2014, at a retirement party given for him by the board and staff of Support for Prison Ministries.

In the last newsletter, we looked at the beginning of Support for Prison Ministries and the involvement of one of the founders in an interview with Glenn Hoover. Several years after SFPM’s beginning, the ministry entered into a chaplaincy agreement with Lancaster County Prison and Barnes Hall. This led to additional work and the need for a ministry director. This is where we pick up the story with the first director Nelson Martin.

What was your ministry background?

Nelson Martin: Anna Mae and I were married in 1965 and soon afterward we moved to Pottsville to manage a Christian book store. We were also involved in the Palo Alto Mennonite church plant. While there, I was licensed to minister for a few years. We lived in Pottsville from 1966-1979 with our children Randy, Gary, & Jewel. Anna Mae and I are now married 50 years and blessed with our children and 10 grandchildren. We moved back to Lancaster County

and I became an ordained minister in 1983 with my current home church, Millport Mennonite. Then from 1992-2009 I was bishop for the Lititz District of Lancaster Conference.

How did the director position with SFPM come about?

Nelson Martin: I was working at the Lancaster Conference office as a finance/stewardship director. One day Glenn Hoover called asking the conference for help in finding a director to work for SFPM. Glenn asked me if I know of anybody that would be a candidate for this position; my ears perked up and right away I thought this may be a position for me. Shortly afterward, I was hired as part-time director at SFPM. That was in 1999. In 2009, I retired as a bishop and began to work full-time for SFPM.

What were some of the challenges associated with your new job?

Nelson Martin: I had no history to follow, so the role was fairly open-ended. The chaplaincy was growing and with increasing volunteers and employees, many policies had to be written. I became aware that many inmates lives were changed while in prison, only to turn away when they got out. That was difficult to see. Some churches were not friendly to prison ministry. Their position was “lock them up and throw away the key.” Part of my work was making every church aware that someday they may need to help an inmate from their congregation.

(continued on page 3)

WHAT’S INSIDE?	
Volunteer Spotlight.....	pg. 2
Auction News.....	pg. 2
Chaplain’s Corner.....	pg. 3
Focus on Finances.....	pg. 4
Director’s Report.....	pg. 4



Volunteer Spotlight: Vernell Hightower

“Volunteers are special and they make a difference”

Chaplain volunteers give about 75 hours per week. This spotlight features one of these committed persons who shares so much inside the prison walls.



It is an honor to be a part of the prison chaplaincy family at Lancaster County Prison. Father God saved me from a life of sin. I started experimenting with drugs at 13. I started popping Valium, Speed, drinking Alcohol, smoking weed, and later snorting cocaine and heroin. Father God sent a TV evangelist to tell me 27 ½ years ago that God loved me and Jesus Christ went to the cross to set me free. I received Jesus Christ into my heart by faith and the power of God delivered me instantly from the power of drug addiction, sin, darkness, and hopelessness.

Father God called me 15 years ago to prison ministry and placed Isaiah 61:1-2 into my heart. My greatest challenge is getting people to understand the importance of pursuing God with all of their heart, soul, and spirit. My greatest reward is when I see lives transformed by the power of God.

It is an honor to be able to minister and connect with many of the women who come through the doors of LCP. I always pray and ask our Father to let me see each woman through the eyes of His Holy Spirit. Many of the women are unique in their own way. My role is to represent Jesus Christ and speak life and purpose into their lives. Also my role is to minister the Word of God, the grace of God, and the love of God to the women who are incarcerated at LCP. I enjoy every minute connecting with each of the women. It is a privilege to tell the women the truth that God loves them and that their life matters to God. To God be all of the glory.

THANK YOU, VERNELL, FOR YOUR MINISTRY BEHIND BARS!!



**COME TO THE 32nd ANNUAL AUCTION
OCTOBER 23 & 24, 2015
EPHRATA BUSINESS CENTER
400 W. Main St, Ephrata**



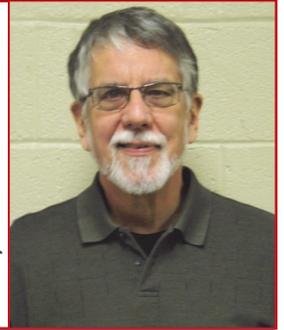
Our auction goal is to clear \$105,000 after expenses, to be shared with Lancaster County Prison and Youth Intervention Center Chaplaincy Programs, Freedom Gate, Spirit & Word, Transition to Community/The Potter's House, and We Care Program.



Since the SFPM annual auction began in 1984, over \$2 million has been contributed to prison ministries.

Check our website's Annual Auction Pages for more information at www.supportforprisonministries.org
Or our facebook page for pictures of items for sale.

Chaplain's Corner



Al Huber is the Head Chaplain at Lancaster County Prison. He's been a chaplain since 1989. Al & his wife, Anna, live near New Holland and attend Petra Christian Fellowship. Here are some of Al's thoughts about working behind bars.

It seems strange in a place where people become institutionalized that the one constant is change, everyday something different, brought on by the sheer number of people involved. Administration, correctional staff, medical staff, kitchen workers, laundry, supply, maintenance, other contracted services, chaplains, and inmates - about 1,300 people, many in crises. Broken people, all of us, broken by sin and the effects of sin. *But where sin increased, grace increased all the more. Romans 5:20.* Because of God's grace everyone who wants to experience God's love and redemption can.

Heading up the Chaplains Office with 22 chaplains and hundreds of volunteers has its challenges but thanks to SFPM I have a wonderful supportive staff and due to God's faithfulness, ministry takes place. Two things that have enabled me to endure are 1) I am not anyone's Savior, but am in need of one. Jesus fulfilled that position. 2) We are loved by God more than I can comprehend. This is the message to anyone who will hear.

The Nelson Martin Era- Part Two, continued from page 1

What were some good days in ministry?

Nelson Martin: There is the day you open the mail and there is that unexpected check or checks from a donor that helps offset the bills. There is also the two-dollar gift that is given in the spirit of the widow's mite (Luke 21) that means just as much. Or a call, "When do you send the next newsletter? I use it in my prayer time." I also enjoyed meeting with inmates in prison Bible studies. These are many good memories.

Support for Prison Ministries experienced extreme growth and success under your tenure. What were some of the reasons that contributed to that?

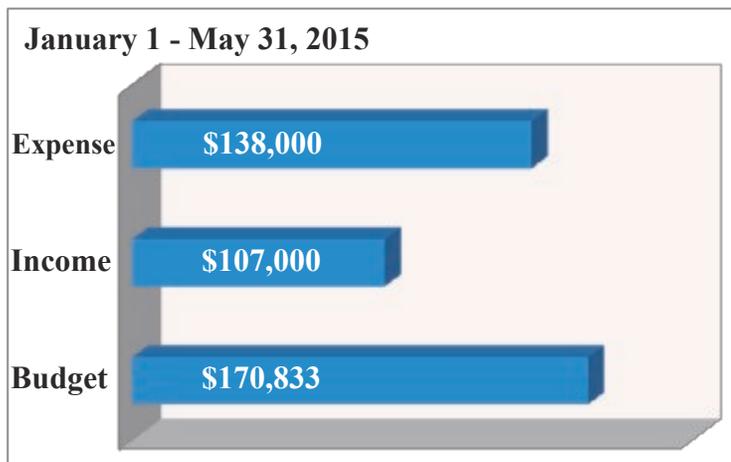
Nelson Martin: Much of the growth came from just telling the story of our prison work and becoming a face for prison ministry with genuine stories. Also building the newsletter distribution and putting together an informative website helped get the word out about who we are. The auction continues to get bigger every year, with lots of hard work. We have had committed staff and volunteers. We are a ministry that was never big on committees, but we just delegated tasks and put people with capable hands in charge of their respective areas, both at the auction or in the prison system.

What will retirement look like for you?

Nelson Martin: I am still active on a part-time basis with SFPM. I do some accounting work for SFPM and speaking to churches and groups to promote prison work. I am also doing volunteer work at Landis Homes, active with my church at Millport, and I'm able to spend more time with my family. I also enjoy yard and garden work.

What thought would you like to leave with those who followed the ministry under your tenure?

Nelson Martin: Prison ministry is a huge mission field right here in Lancaster County. Keep on planting the seeds of hope into hopeless lives. Even though we'd like to see more results, there is great hope in the following verse from I Corinthians 3: "Some plant, some water, but God makes things grow."



Focus On Finances

SFPM's budget for 2015 year is \$410,000. About ½ of this budget (\$200,000) is needed from contributions that come from churches, businesses and interested persons.

Expenses stay fairly constant each month (chaplain wages and ministry costs) while some regular contributions are smaller in the first six months of the year.

**AN ENVELOPE IS ENCLOSED FOR YOU TO PARTNER WITH US.
A SPECIAL THANKS FROM THE CHAPLAIN STAFF AND INMATES
WHO WILL BENEFIT FROM YOUR GIFTS.**

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

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit #1746
Lancaster, PA
17603

Email: info@supportforprisonministries.org

(717) 859-5519
P.O. Box 134, Litz, PA 17543
Support for Prison Ministries

DIRECTOR'S REPORT **By Del Burkholder, SFPM Director**

One of my more popular prison messages over the years has been called, "A Tale of Two Cities." It is based partially on the Charles Dickens' book of the same name, but more largely on John Bunyan's book, Pilgrim's Progress. It is a story of two kingdoms on earth: the kingdom of God and the kingdom of man and these two are at war with each other.



Recently, you may have noticed, SFPM has added a second postal address in Brownstown, which is closer to me and more cost saving for the ministry as we go through the next year or so of a gradual address change of the ministry. Changing addresses is not only physical sometimes, but is similar with an individual when he accepts Jesus Christ; he needs to move his address from the city of man to the city of God.

Please remember us in your prayers and gifts as we continue the work of changing hearts and helping prisoners move from the city of man into the City of God.