

## The Harvest is Ready

*Leon Roy Martin, from Lititz PA, is the chairman of Support for Prison Ministries board. Each January, Leon takes a break from his Martin Paving business and spends a week in Alabama helping with the We Care Crusade. Nelson Martin, Director of SFPM, recently interviewed Leon about his experiences in Alabama.*

**Nelson:** *Tell me, what is a We Care Crusade?*

Leon: We Care Program, based in Atmore, Alabama, has been ministering in prisons for the past 30 years. They conduct an annual crusade that places counselors, singers, and evangelists throughout the Alabama state prison system. The 2003 Crusade, held January 12 - 17, had 327 volunteers from 18 states. Pennsylvania topped the list with 150 persons. These volunteers went into 15 prisons with a total inmate population of over 11,000. The Crusade had 60 preaching services and 7,450 volunteer hours with at least 39 inmates making first-time commitments to the Lord. In addition, 204 others made recommitments. Countless hours were spent sharing and praying with the inmate population.

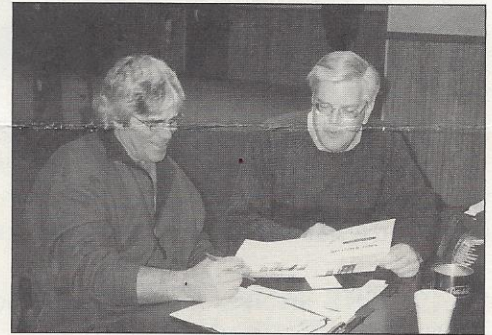
**Nelson:** *Why do you participate in this annual event?*

Leon: It gives me a hands-on opportunity to share my faith with those who are needy and hurting. I got started in prison ministry almost 20 years ago when some local business persons began an annual auction to support We Care. During the 1980's, I also got involved in the Lancaster County Prison's VIP program, which linked an inmate to a mentor and a church on the outside. My congregation, Middle Creek Church of the Brethren, encouraged me in this ministry. I have worked closely with a number of prisoners over the years after their release and have kept some contacts and friendships.

**Nelson:** *How often have you gone and do you always go to the same prison?*

Leon: This year was my 18th year to go to Alabama. I've been in several prisons while there. For a number of years I was team leader at Elmore. For the past 5 years or so, I've

gone to Staton, a huge facility near Montgomery that houses almost 1,400 men, many of them for long terms. Going to the same prison year after year allows you to build relationships with, to pray for and correspond with several brothers in the Lord throughout the year.



*Leon and Nelson reviewing  
newsletter articles*

**Nelson:** *What do you do during the Crusade week?*

Leon: The teams stay in a motel in the area of the prison. Each morning, one of the evangelists has Bible study and some powerful input that inspires us for the day. When we arrive at prison, we usually pray together as a team, are checked in behind the bars, and then fan out across the compound. Sometimes you sit one-on-one on an inmate's bunk, lift weights or shoot basketball, answer questions like "What makes you give up a week of work to come way down here? And you don't get paid to do this?" Throughout the day, invitations are given to attend each evening's special service, where dynamic singers and a powerful evangelist share about the love of God. The evening services close with an altar call, which allows volunteers to do ministry with the many who respond.

**Nelson:** *What is the most exciting thing that you experienced during these weeks?*

Leon: I have many wonderful crusade memories. A highlight is to see the spiritual passion that is inside the prison. I am always impressed with the church that exists there. Although faced with many hardships and temptations, they are truly part of the church of Jesus Christ. These crusade weeks

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# Transition To Community

Reported by Nelson W. Martin, SFPM Director

Although Support for Prison Ministries has focused primarily on chaplain ministry behind the bars, they have also been increasingly aware of and supportive of the need for quality aftercare and guided reentry back into society. Since early 2000, SFPM has been observing and interacting with other ministries that are working at reentry. In their Summer 2002 Newsletter, they intro-

duced some of the vision of Cody Hall, a former SFPM chaplain, who is now directing the Transition to Community (TTC) program in Lancaster County. SFPM gives a quarterly contribution to TTC, plus shares a % of the annual auction income. The following is an update about two phases that are developing relating to this important ministry of reentry.

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## THE TTC PROGRAM

The goal of TTC is to oversee a network of services and ministries that provide a continuum of care for those impacted by the judicial process. TTC is organized to be a hub for reentry management that churches, faith based organizations, and community interest groups can tie into. County, parole and welfare officials are also supportive of this approach.

PHASE ONE involves a pre-release study of special curriculum inside Lancaster County Prison. Courses include "Family Life Skills", "Inside/Outside Critical Thinking", and focused times of Bible study and prayer. Each participant designs a written "Life Plan" under the direction of Cody. These classes are reinforced and encouraged by prison chaplains and other persons from the faith-based community. Since it's beginning in May 2001, about 60 inmates have taken part in this pre-release program.

PHASE TWO involves Residential Care, where qualified participants can live for another six months with guided exposure to principles of change. Here the "Life Plan" goals developed in prison will be put to practice. SEE ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE ABOUT THE REENTRY HOUSE.

PHASE TWO also involves active outreach to non-residents. The TTC house and office, located at 39 W. Vine Street in downtown Lancaster, serves as a center for a variety of ministries to local persons with needs. Alpha Bible studies are being planned for Friday evenings, organized financial guidance and budgeting help is available, and men can participate in group interaction about sexual integrity and pure living. Individual care and case management will be provided by the TTC staff.

PHASE THREE is anticipated for the future - that exciting time when reentry will be accomplished in the life of an ex-inmate. The time will come that this person will no longer be part of the judicial or parole process, but rather find their identity in God, family and community. This will happen when hearts are changed and when wounds are healed. The best release a person can have is to choose to follow Jesus

Christ in all of life. That is the reason why TTC exists: to introduce Jesus to others, to restore people, to renew communities, and revitalize the Church.



Cody Hall in his new office.

## THE REENTRY HOUSE PROGRAM

There is a lot of excitement these days at the 3 story brick building at 39 W. Vine Street in Lancaster. There is also the smell of new paint and carpeting. After much hard work repairing, painting and cleaning, the offices of TTC are now set up. New lighting makes the office area comfortable and inviting. Here Cody Hall directs a number of volunteers who are working hard to make the goals of TTC a reality.

In addition to the office, the first floor has a kitchen and cozy dining room. The second and third floors will be used for bedrooms, counseling offices, and resource room. Although some persons are currently walking in daily for assistance, the men's residential part of the program will be ready to go as soon as a live-in person (Transitional Life Coach) is found. This person, preferably a single adult male, will need to have a strong Christian life commitment and a heart for missions.

This reentry program will fill an important need in the ongoing journey inmates have from the time they are released until they can find their productive place again in society.

**For more information about TTC, to volunteer to help in the program, or to provide assistance in any way, contact Cody Hall at (717) 394-6780.**



Reentry house/TTC office  
at 39 W. Vine St.,  
Lancaster City



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encourage the inmates in their faith, as well as giving them opportunities to invite fellow inmates to come to services and to get to know more about God.

**Nelson:** *Are there also discouraging times or happenings?*

Leon: Times of discouragement come when you feel like you were there all day, trying to make connections but you don't feel like you accomplished anything. Sometimes there seems to be a spiritual darkness over the prison. And, of course, being tired and away from the comforts of home make it seem more negative. But I always remind myself that some plant, some water, and some harvest - - and we know that God is the One who works in people's lives.

**Nelson:** *Anything else, Leon, to share with our SFPM partners?*

Leon: Two things I'd like to say; First, go once or twice to Alabama (the next Crusade is January 11 -15, 2004) and check it out. Or try prison ministry at a local prison or juvenile center. A number of our current SFPM board and chaplain staff have experienced life changing events while serving in Alabama. Secondly, and probably most important, each of us has the gift of reconciliation. There are so many hurts right around us that need hope and healing. It is needful that we as believers find and use our spiritual gifts for the glory of God. Yes, everyone will operate differently. But all of our tasks is to somehow bring the unsaved to Christ. May we all find that joy and purpose as we continue on our journey of life.

## Our Paid Staff and Regular Volunteers




(Left to right on photo) Marvin Reed - Youth Intervention Chaplain; Faye Stauffer and Isaias Maldonado - Lancaster County Prison Chaplains; Diane Fulmer - LCP Office Coordinator; Al Huber and J. R. Fisher - LCP Chaplains; and Nelson Martin - SFPM Director.

Other Chaplain Volunteers: LaRue Breasett, William Geiger, Janice Hess, Al Hocke, Bob Lewis, Marvin Lyons, Dennis Nolt, Adrian Rodriguez, Expedito Santiago, Karin White, and Dick Yorgey.

Other part-time paid staff are Lee Stauffer, Chaplain at Youth Intervention Center and Crystal Hoover, Office Secretary. Regular financial support is also given to Cody Hall, Transition to Community outreach and Chaplain Otha Bell, State Correctional Institution at Chester, PA.

**WE ARE AWARE THAT MANY PEOPLE PRAY REGULARLY FOR US. THANK YOU.**

## DID YOU KNOW??




During December 2002 the Lancaster County Prison Chaplain's staff had a **record number (1,240)** inmate requests for help and services. The annual amount of requests in 2002 was about 11,000.



**HELP!**

A monthly Prayer Letter with both requests and praises from our prison ministries is available to anyone upon request. Copy can be mailed or emailed. Contact our office if you are interested in joining those who pray regularly for us.



Number of Correspondence Bible Study Courses distributed last year to inmates in Lancaster County Prison - 2,800

Number of Courses completed - 1,850



## Support For Prison Ministries

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Lititz, PA 17543

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Email: nelsonmartin1@juno.com

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## THE POWER OF THE WORD OF GOD

*A report from SFPM Director, Nelson W. Martin*

Apostle Paul, writing to church leader Timothy, wrote these exciting words "The Word of God is not bound" II Timothy 2:9. The Greek meaning of the word bound relates to "be tied up, knit together, restricted, chained to." What an interesting idea that even though Paul himself was in chains and being treated like a criminal because of his love for the Lord Jesus, he knew that the Word of God he was sharing to others was powerful, alive, and could never be kept captive.

HOW TRUE THIS PRINCIPLE REMAINS TO US TODAY. As we work at prison ministry, we are often bound by time restrictions, depleted energy and inadequate finances. The persons we minister to are bound by prison sentences, parole limitations, or dysfunctional lifestyles and family systems.

BUT WE HAVE SEEN THE POWER OF GOD CHANGING ALL THAT. HE GIVES US AS SERVANTS THE MINISTRY OF RECONCILIATION. HE CONTINUES TO GIVE FREEDOM AND HOPE TO PRISONERS THAT CALL UPON HIS NAME. WILL YOU JOIN ME IN PRAISING GOD FOR THE WORD THAT IS NOT BOUND? WILL YOU CONTINUE TO PARTNER WITH US IN OUR TASK OF SHARING WITH PRISONERS?

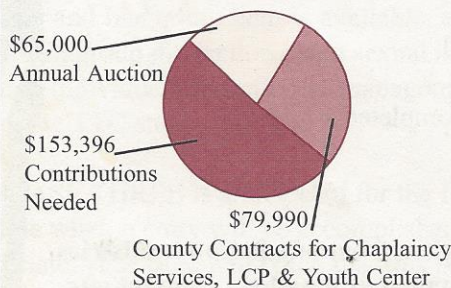
## Mark Your Calendars Now

*Our 20th Annual Prison Ministry Benefit Auction is being planned for October 24 and 25, 2003.*

## Focus On Finances

2003 Annual Budget - \$298,386

### Income



*As Christians, we are responsible for stewardship of all of life, including our finances and giving. Whether you have little or much to give, we challenge you to share this year to help those in prison find freedom and hope.*

### Expenses



*Please use the enclosed envelope to share a gift with SFPM. A tax-deductible receipt will be sent for each contribution received.*