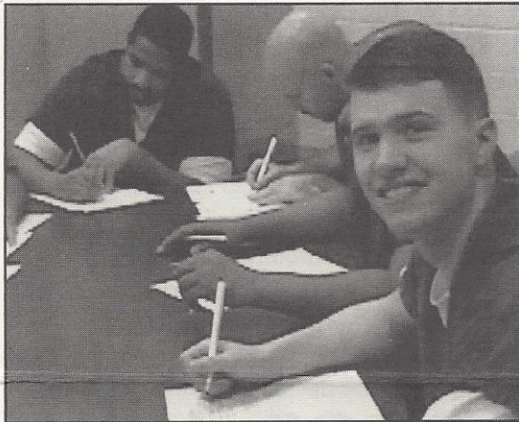


## The Inmates Journey Toward Transition

*By Cody Hall, Executive Director of Transition To Community (TTC)  
A ministry outreach of the Jesus Connection*

In current prison ministry care models, Prison / Aftercare is being replaced with a continuum of care ideology that addresses the transitional realities of those who will return to our communities. I believe that this is a quantum leap forward in truly seeing a change in the recidivism rate that plagues our nation.



*Inmates studying pre-release materials*

that eventually leads to a return to a community. Over the past six years of interaction with hundreds of men and women preparing for release, seven categories of need have surfaced time and time again: Finances, support structure, basic needs, education, employment, housing, and legal responsibilities. Add the lack of hope and vision plus an extremely wounded soul and you set the stage for hopelessness that inmates face on the return to a community. One young African American man said, "Why should I plan for my release? It is going to be short lived."

In May of 2001, pre-release classes were begun to a small and select group of people. The first group was made up of a middle aged Hispanic male, a 56 year old African American

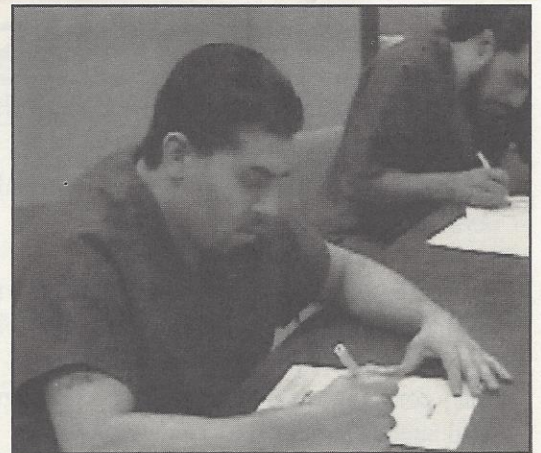
female, and a pregnant mid twenties Caucasian female. From this original group one out of three did not return within this past year. The two that did return to prison attended more prerelease training and were released again. As of the writing of this article both are still out, but signs of their eventual return seem to be rumbling.

Let me introduce you to the realities of the journey of transition for a number of people that we at Transition to Community are currently working with.

An incarceration experience is one

Since that first group we have worked with many on a formal and informal level. Currently TTC is working with eleven men and women placed in a variety of locations. Some are housed locally with families. Others are living on their own and others are placed in a treatment center in the United States. The greatest fear of inmates preparing for release who have made a commitment to Jesus is lack of housing that will help them to continue to grow in their faith. Lancaster County needs to provide the environment and treatment programs during this time of transition.

Recently I interviewed a group of men who had just completed Phase One of Transition to Community. Phase One is made up of classes that help prepare those in prison for transition to the outside. Following are a few excerpts of the question and answers.



*(Continued on Page 3)*

# The Enjoyment of Ministry

By Otha Bell, Chaplain,  
Chester, PA. State Correctional Institution

I remember two sayings from my childhood. The first is that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy" and the second is that "work is something you have to do, play is something you want to do". I have entitled this article "the enjoyment of ministry" because truly what I do day by day as a Chaplain at SCI Chester I can call play (following the above definitions). My duties as a Chaplain involve ministering to the inmate population on a daily basis. There are some 1,100 men at SCI Chester. About 170 attend weekly chapel services, over 65 attend our Monday and Thursday evening Bible studies. I teach the Monday evening class, which has averaged from 35 to 65 men. We spend two hours every Monday evening in an intense Bible course on the Blood Covenant. I provide one-on-one counseling daily; ministering the Word

## SUPPORT FOR PRISON MINISTRY BOARD UPDATES

At their April board meeting, SFPM directors welcomed **Warren Hackman**, from Newmanstown, PA as a new member. Warren replaces Ken Burkholder who had been on the board for many years.

A new treasurer, **Larry Martin**, was also elected to serve on the **Executive Committee** with **Glenn Hoover**, chairman; **Leon Roy Martin**, vice-chairman; and **Brian Black**, secretary.

The board took action to hire 3 young adults to work part-time with **Chaplain Marvin Reed** at the new **Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center**: **Lee Stauffer** and **Audra Witmer** as chaplain assistants and **Rebecca Fulmer** as Chaplain office secretary.

of God in real practical terms dealing with life issues and situations that these men face during incarceration.

I also give oversight to a number of volunteer groups in various areas, such as Christian Recovery class (a Christian volunteer-led alcohol and drug recover ministry), restrictive housing unit visitation, Bible studies, chapel choir and parenting classes.

I truly enjoy what I do! God has blessed me, through Support for Prison Ministries and Jubilee Ministries, to be in a place where He is preparing his last day army of men who will leave the prison walls and bars behind and impact this nation and the world for Jesus Christ! I have seen personally true, honest success stories of men, young and old, black and white, leaving prisons and becoming responsible fathers, husbands, sons, brothers, and pastors.

The ministry does not stop when I leave the prison. About a year ago, my wife Carol and I began a church (Blood Covenant Fellowship Church) with a vision to continue ministering to these men when they are released from prison. We also help their families and loved ones during their incarceration. We dedicated our new meeting facility on Resurrection Sunday, March 31, 2002. It is located in the heart of Chester, about 3 blocks from the prison.

Our vision is also to have a transitional house for men and women upon release from prison or from a Community Corrections Center. This "safe haven" will be a place of continued learning of the Bible, serving as an entrance into Christian based programs that deal with marriage and family issues, life skills, job assistance, mentoring, and other personal issues. The main thrust of these programs will allow these men and women to be trained as to how to find meaningful and gainful employment so they can save finances so that they can live on their own. We also need to provide a home for a number of people being released who are homeless and have no family in the immediate area.

Thanks for your prayers, encouragement and gifts to enable many persons to minister to those in prison.

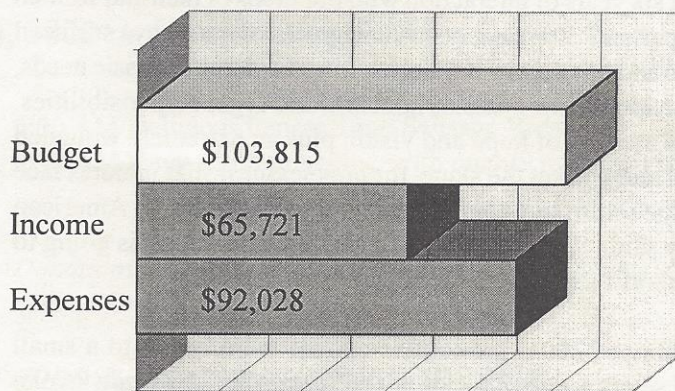
## Focus on Finances

Our annual budget total is \$276,842.00. Of this amount, \$138,102 is anticipated from contributions. We are thankful for good giving so far this year, including some new persons and congregations.

Generally, we receive more of our income toward the end of the year because of our October auction and year-end giving by individuals. Since our monthly expenses stay fairly constant, we are thankful for regular giving that helps fund each month of the year.

*An envelope is enclosed for you to share a gift with us. A receipt will be sent for each contribution received.*

January 1 - May 15, 2002



# The Inmates Journey Toward Transition

(Continued from Page 1)

**What are some of the principles that you gleaned from the Transition to Community classes?**

**Boyd:** I had thrown a lot of principles out the window. I really had lost hope and value for my life; I have been involved with the system for a long time. But now I really do sense a value for who I am and the plan that God has for me.

**Aaron:** The principle that really clicked for me was the statement that I can paint my own picture of life. For so long I have allowed other people to paint the picture of my life and even who I am. But now I know with God's help and applying the principles that I have been exposed to I can continue the disciplines that I have started here. I now know that I have the ability to process events in my life and choose the right response.

**Sean:** I realize now that I do not have to be ruled by my emotions. God can heal my pain and wounds and I can regain control of my life.

**What are some of the fears you still have about getting out of prison?**

**Tony:** I am not going to have any supervision when I get out because I will not have parole. This is a bad thing for me because every one of my relationships are potentials to take me back to the old ways of life.

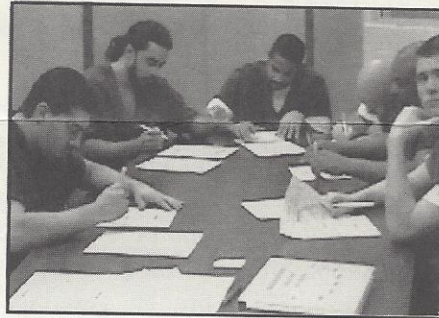
**Sammy:** My fear is my legal responsibilities. I have the tendency of allowing the stress of those things to make me

run. Also I have a PFA from my old relationship with my girl. This situation is a high-risk problem that I need a lot of help to stay away from.

**Sean:** I am afraid to fail! I am a co-dependent person that is going to have to push my old friends away but can I trust new people who want to play a part in my life to be there for me?

**Jose:** I have to return to the same place that I came from. That scares me.

**How important is it for transitional homes to be available for those being released?**

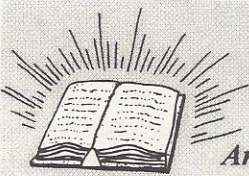


**Boyd:** I believe one of the keys is having a safe place for us to go when we leave prison. I know that if I seek and ask with a pure heart that God will never let me down but for a lot of us we have never experienced this. That is where transitional homes can play a role in helping people to experience God's faithfulness.

**Sean:** I am still a baby in Christ. I have been in prison for eight months. I really need mature Christians around me to help me grow. If I go out to just anywhere it is going to be very difficult for me to make it.

**What would you like to say to those in the church that will read this article?**

**Boyd:** Jesus was the good shepherd who came to save those who were lost. Don't miss the souls in your own back yard. There are a lot of hurt and wounded people right here in this county. Don't feel like you need to go far away or travel overseas, because there are a lot of hurt souls right here. We are not bad people, we are hurt people who need a Shepherd and a friend.



## May Kimberly Have A Bible?

*An exciting chain of events that shows the power of the printed Word of God*

Marian Harnly, a member of Erb Mennonite Church, has been involved in prison visitation for many years. She has faithfully shared her faith with many women in Lancaster County Prison. Recently she saw some Bibles on a 1/2 price sale table at a local discount store. She bought several, and during prison visits gave one each to inmates Brenda, Glenda and Krissy.

Brenda shared love and hope from her Bible with Glenda. Glenda next shared thoughts from her new devo-

tional Bible with Krissy, showing her the need to give her life to Jesus as Savior and Lord. Next Krissy shared Bible verses about comfort to Kimberly, who was depressed about being separated from her 3 year old son. Then Kimberly asked if she could have a Bible. Since her cellmate cannot read, Kimberly reads to her each evening. Neither of them know much about the Bible or how to apply it to daily living, but the Word is taking root. Marian is answering questions and helping them with their studies.

Praise God for how some inexpensive discount store Bibles are making differences in the lives of inmates at Lancaster County Prison. **The Word of God truly does not return empty or void, but accomplishes that which pleases God.**

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## CHAPEL DEDICATION AT YOUTH CENTER

On Tuesday evening, April 23, 2002, the Support for Prison Ministries board of directors and several prison ministry supporters met at the new



*Youth Center  
Director Generette*

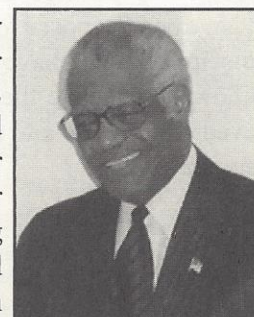
Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center. Their purpose was to have a dedication of the new chapel. Nelson Martin, SFPM director, welcomed the group and gave a brief history of the juvenile center



*New Chapel Area*

building and the expanded ministries now offered by SFPM staff. Youth Center director McKinley Generette shared about

his vision to help troubled youth, saying that the chaplain office is an integral part of the new center's mission. County Commissioner Ron Ford brought greetings from the Lancaster County office, thanking SFPM for



*Ron Ford, Lancaster  
County Commissioner*

years of partnering with the prison and juvenile center in ministry. After some scripture reading and a Litany of Dedication, Chaplain Marvin Reed and SFPM chairman Glenn Hoover led in prayers of dedication, remembering the staff and residents. The guests then had a tour of the building, meeting with staff and hearing more about the expanded treatment, schooling and educational programs available.



## Support for Prison Ministries ANNUAL BENEFIT AUCTION

October 25-26, 2002 at Farmersville Auction Grounds

### Friday Evening

4:00-7:00 PM Chicken Barbeque  
Auction of quality merchandise, hardware, flowers, gift certificates, toys, and collectibles, meats and groceries

For more information, call: Nelson Martin (717) 626-6301  
or Glenn Hoover (717) 733-7301

### Saturday

6:00 AM Delicious Pancake and Sausage Breakfast  
8:30 AM Huge Auction begins, with quality merchandise for home, farm and business.

Donations of quality merchandise and gift certificates are needed for the auction.

**PRISON DISPLAYS OPEN, HOME MADE FOODS AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT SALE  
PROCEEDS GO TO VARIOUS PRISON MINISTRIES, CHAPLAIN PROGRAMS AND AFTERCARE MINISTRIES**