

QUIET WORDS - - - IN A LARGE PRISON - - - IN A LOUD WORLD

Nelson W. Martin, SFPM Director

You may have heard the expression "Preach the Word at all times - use words if necessary." That is another way of saying that people come to faith by many means, not just the spoken word. Some observe believers lives, some read the Bible, and some are touched by the beauty of God's creation. All must be drawn by the quiet power of the Holy Spirit.

We live in a loud, busy, bustling world. The Lancaster County Prison is a large maximum security facility, housing over 1,000 inmates. Within this maze of hallways and cells with clanging doors and blaring loudspeakers, the Spirit of God is at work in quiet ways, with quiet words.

We are thankful for the many opportunities we have to share behind the bars. Our chaplains take time to sit and listen, to walk their talk in the prison hallways, to pray with many hurting inmates, and use words as they counsel and teach.

Currently, our Support for Prison Ministry Chaplain office staff, paid chaplains and regular volunteers are spend-

ing about 1,200 hours per month in Lancaster County Prison. This is a full-time equivalent of about 7 persons on a daily basis.

So far this year, SFPM has purchased over \$2,000 worth of Christian books and Bibles. In addition, several Sunday School classes designate offerings for literature and some individuals and publishers donate books and Bibles on a regular basis. We believe the promise from God "My word that goes out will not return empty or void, but will accomplish what I (God) desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it" Isaiah 55: 11

WE SEE THAT BIBLE PROMISE BEING FILLED AS WORDS, SOME QUIET, SOME PRINTED, SOME SPOKEN, ARE BEING USED BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD TO CHANGE MEN AND WOMEN'S LIVES. Thanks for your continued prayers, counsel and financial support of our prison ministries. Your partnership is very important. We are excited about sharing quiet words, in a large prison in a loud world.



INTRODUCING OUR LATEST STAFF MEMBER



Katie Mininger joined our staff in March 2003. She works about 25 hours per week, dividing her time between both chaplain offices at the Lancaster County Prison and Youth Intervention Center.

"I lift my eyes up to the hills. Where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, maker of heaven and earth." Psalm 121: 1-2

This is one of my favorite verses! It reminds me that I can't do anything on my own. God is my source of strength and my help comes from him! My name is Katie Mininger and I am 20 years old. I attend Mellinger Mennonite Church and graduated from Conestoga Valley High School.

After high school, I went into the YES (Youth Evangelism Service) program. I spent six months in Cusco, Peru with a team of five people. We worked with the four Mennonite churches in Cusco, helping with the youth groups and teaching English. It was a great time of learning about God's faithfulness and sovereignty as we faced many challenges and exciting times. I also enjoyed learning about a different culture and serving the people there.

In January of 2003 I was invited to go to Nazareth, Israel for a three week work trip. It was awesome walking where Jesus walked and lived.

I came home from Israel wondering what was next. I knew God had called me to be at home, but I did not know what I'd be doing. Going to college? Working? Through this time of discernment, God taught me to trust Him for the future and the plans that he has for my life. I heard of Support for Prison Ministries through the YES program and

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Sharing Good News

Support For Prison Ministries interacts with a number of Lancaster area ministries that provide help to ex-inmates and other persons in need. **HERE ARE SHORT GLIMPSES INTO THREE OF THESE IMPORTANT OUTREACHES.** They are very different in function but each has a vital place in meeting spiritual, physical and emotional needs.



EXIT (Ex-Offenders In Transition) meets in Lancaster city each Thursday evening at 440 Pershing Avenue. This is for ex-offenders and those seeking a safe community. It is a time for Bible study, worship, sharing and praying together. SFPM chaplain volunteers Dick Yorgey, Lenny Pelsinski and Karin White give direction to these times, assisted by mentors from area churches.



Here are some happenings at a recent meeting: *Since EXIT is currently studying ALPHA materials, about 20 men and women arrived by 6:30 to share a tasty meal. There were a lot of hugs and laughter, sprinkled with some tears and calls for help with several desperate situations.*

Following an ALPHA video teaching and review of Bible

study outlines, the participants broke into smaller groups. Since EXIT meetings encourage transparency, several shared personal needs and struggles. One desired victory over alcohol, another is seeking to get her children back from Children and Youth services. One was rejoicing in her recent release from prison, while another was thankful that her unbelieving husband asked a question about faith and may be seeking the Lord. These prayer requests led to times of intense prayer and praise.

The Thursday evening EXIT meeting is a wonderful time for worship, Bible study, praying and sharing together. It is true that needy persons come to EXIT. It is true that the leaders may not have quick answers to some hard questions. It is true that resources may not be available for every need. But above all, it is very true that the Lord is transforming persons lives and hearts, helping them to return to their homes and communities as different persons, saved by God's mercy and empowered to live free in Jesus.

THE GATHERING PLACE

What started out as a routine visit and ended up changing an entire family's life forever?

In April of 1987, Bob Lewis was asked to go to the hospital and visit the friend of a church member. At this meeting Bob met his first HIV-infected person whose name was Al. After leading this young man to Christ, Bob, his wife Melanie and their three children continued to befriend Al and help with other needs. Soon Al introduced the Lewis family to 12 other HIV infected people. That was the birth of The Gathering Place, named from the Genesis scripture verse "Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be."

Although Bob and Melanie continued their full-time jobs, they worked with an ever-increasing population of people with HIV/AIDS. The Gathering Place was incorporated as a non-profit agency in 1989. In 1990, Bob left his regular job to immerse himself in full-time ministry. Melanie began full-time in 1995.

The Gathering Place, located at 440 Pershing Avenue in Lancaster, provides many HIV related support ser-

vices, each within the context of crucial confidentiality. Starting with case management and advocacy, additional services were soon added such as transportation, Bible study, bi-lingual translation, food bank, emergency funding, housing assistance, counseling, visitation to prisons, hospital, shelters and homes.



Robert and Melanie Lewis

The Gathering Place currently has developed a wide range of collaborating support agencies to work with HIV/AIDS persons and families. They continue to provide basic one-on-one caring for each client. From doing an initial intake to developing a plan to help families with funeral arrangements, The Gather Place staff take each client by the hand, walk step by step with them in each and every need.

Currently The Gathering Place has seven employees. They are working with over 180 clients and their family members. According to Executive Director Bob Lewis "Our goal is to pack 32 hours of God's love and care into a 24 hour day. What most people truly want in life is to be loved while they are here and missed when they are gone. We try our hardest and do our best to be their friend."



Sharing Good News *(Continued)*

HEART TO HEART MINISTRIES

In the year 2000, Heart to Heart was searching and praying for a house in Lancaster city to use as an outreach. The Lord answered those prayers when our group leader, Anthony Zeiset, became aware of a house at 545 E. Strawberry St. that had been donated to Support for Prison Ministries and was available for use.



Girls baking cookies

After much hard work, the house was ready to be used to bring a blessing to others. What a parallel of how Jesus comes into our hearts that were filled with sin. First Jesus cleans out the trash (sin) and then washes and cleanses us with His blood and makes our house (body) able to be a blessing to others. (See I Corinthians 3: 16, 17)

Heart to Heart has a women's group that works with women at the house. It has two female groups from local placements that use the house on a weekly basis. Another important weekly group is a children's ministry reaching out to local children ages 5 - 12. Usually 10 - 15 children come to this Bible study. Church programs are also given at Youth Intervention Center, and rehab placements and shelters Manos House, Prescott House and Fulton Shelter.

Most group meetings have an activity like games, craft, singing or cooking projects. This gives opportunity for interaction with persons and works as a great "ice-breaker". Then a volunteer leads



Learning from flannelgraph lesson

in a Bible story or devotional and a snack is enjoyed. Snack time is a wonderful time to share one-to-one about spiritual things and current situations persons may need help with.

Truly what we do in the neighborhood around East Strawberry Street is the Lord's doing as He builds the family of the Lord. (See Ephesians 3: 20-21) Your prayers for Heart to Heart Ministries are welcomed.

Much work had to be done at the property. Three to four pick-up truck loads of junk were hauled away. There was scraping, sanding, and other repairs before the house was repainted, recarpeted and windows were replaced.

SFPM VISION STATEMENT:

To assist the local church in the ministry of reconciliation to men and women involved with the criminal justice system.

MISSION AND PURPOSE:

- * To assist local pastors and prison ministry team workers to gain access into prison.
- * To provide chaplains to bring Christian teaching and encouragement to all those within the prison walls.
- * Network with reentry/aftercare ministries to aid ex-offenders in their return to society.
- * Provide training to local churches, community and interested persons.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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A local volunteer chaplain was helping a 7 year old print a note to her mother who is serving time in a State Prison. She wrote "Do you pray for me? I pray for you. I miss you and wish you were here. Why don't you call me? Lots of love and kisses."

Faith and Jesus do make a difference. According to a recent Prison Fellowship Newsletter (Chuck Colson's ministry) their Christ-centered prison programs, (now operated in four states) have reduced recidivism to just 8% of program participants. The national recidivism rate is around 67%. Recidivism: Repeated or habitual relapse into crime, when inmates return to prison after release.

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thought it could be something that I would enjoy and that God might be calling me to. I was excited to learn they were looking for a secretary in the prison chaplain's office, and someone to relate with the girls at the youth center. Through God's leading and guiding that is where I am now. Working with the girls has been challenging and an incredible learning experience. I am so thankful for the many opportunities I have to share God's love!

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Support for Prison Ministries ANNUAL BENEFIT AUCTION

October 24-25, 2003 at Farmersville Auction Grounds

Friday Evening

4:00-7:00 PM Chicken Barbeque
(*\$6.50 for complete meal, eat in or take out*)
5:30 PM Auction of quality merchandise, hardware,
flowers, gift certificates, toys, and collectibles,
meats and groceries

Saturday

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

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

For more information, call: Nelson Martin (717) 626-6301
or Glenn Hoover (717) 733-7301
or Cliff Martin (717) 336-6411

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

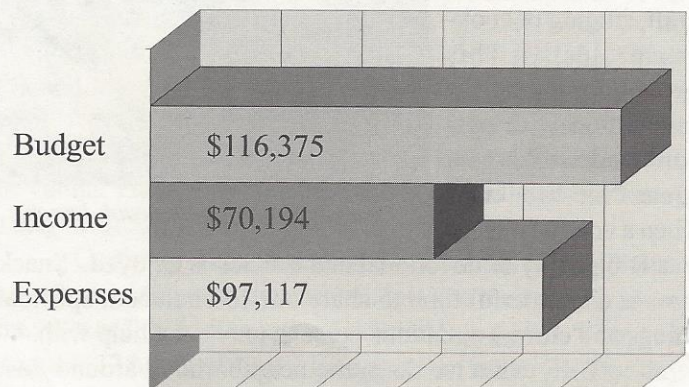


Focus On Finances

Our annual budget is \$298,386. Of this amount, about \$150,000 is anticipated from contributions. We are thankful for good giving so far this year, including some first-time donors.

As you can see from the chart, we receive more of our income toward the end of the year because of our October auction and strong year-end giving by individuals. Since our monthly expenses stay fairly constant for salaries and programs, we are thankful for regular giving that helps fund each month of the year.

January 1 - May 20, 2003



An envelope is enclosed for you to share a gift with us. A receipt will be sent out for contributions.