

My Journey With God

An interview with Cody Hall, Chaplain at Lancaster County Prison

Support for Prison Ministries Director Nelson Martin recently sat down with Cody Hall and heard a fascinating story about how God changed his life. You will be challenged by Cody's journey.

Nelson: I've heard you refer, Cody, to the promise in Jeremiah 29:11 as a special word from God for you. Tell me more about that.

Cody: "I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future". This wonderful verse challenges me each day. As I work within the prison walls, I see much despair and hopelessness. God's promises have come true for me. It is exciting to pass that hope and blessing on to others.

Nelson: Was your life always this purposeful and "driven by God?"

Cody: No, not quite. I grew up in a dysfunctional family in Virginia. From the age of 14 to 28, I was involved in alcohol and drug addictions. In 1987, my life hit bottom and I knew I needed a change. I decided to strike out for California, hitching a ride with a friend that was coming to Lancaster, PA. On arriving here, my life was a mess. I desperately needed some temporary work to get money for my trip west, so on a "whim" I applied for work at the Lancaster County Prison.

Nelson: I suppose there was no way you got that job?

Cody: God was amazingly at work, even though I didn't realize it then. In spite of my messed up life, I was quickly hired as a corrections officer and began almost immediately. The first four weeks on the job I was assigned to be trained by Ben Snavelly, a long-time employee at LCP. He showed

me much more than how to be a corrections officer. Ben loved God and walked out his faith in such a way that it planted seeds of faith into my hurting life. The night before my 28th birthday, I went out and partied. When I woke up Sunday morning, I was sick of my life and knew that something had to change. I went to a local church, the Worship Center, not knowing anything about it except



Cody & Stephanie Hall

that it was where Ben had gone to church at one time. That morning I heard a wonderful message about how much God loved me, and if I would put my trust in Him, God promised to be faithful to me. I responded to an altar call and accepted Jesus as Lord and Saviour of my life.

Nelson: Tell me about the changes that happened to you that day, your 28th birthday.

Cody: I realize now how ignorant I was of spiritual things. I remember the discovery that there was another life out there that I knew nothing about. The church gently disciplined me, involved me in life changing instruction and gave me much needed spiritual mentoring. The other obvious changes came while I was on the job. My language and attitudes changed. I sought to be consistent with disciplines and fair with in-

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mates. I saw value in people for the first time. I began to have respect for all people.

Nelson: How was your new lifestyle received?

Cody: As you can imagine, I was ridiculed by my peers for sometime. But many inmates responded positively to my new relationship with Jesus and them. I began to see my employment as a mission field. I studied the Bible and prayed for God to use me in sharing my faith with inmates and staff. Dave Myer, who was then the chaplain, involved me on an advisory board for prison ministry. God began opening doors that I could never have imagined or planned.

Nelson: So when and how did you "move" from being a corrections officer to a chaplain in the same institution?

Cody: God worked out many of the details. In 1993 I sensed a strong call from God when He said to me "*Just as Moses was used by me to lead the Israelites out of Egypt, I will use you, Cody, to lead people out of prison*". I developed an aftercare ministry called "Word and Wings" in 1994. I connected with Support for Prison Ministries, the group that was contracting chaplain services to LCP. In 1996 I was hired by SFPM as a part-time chaplain. I became full-time in 1998. And the journey continues. There is never a dull moment in my journey with God. And He is working in many ways in Lancaster County Prison right now!

Nelson: Tell me a few things that you love doing in your chaplain assignment.

Cody: I am a people person and a teacher. I love to illustrate scriptural principles, knowing how they have changed and impacted my own life. I love to build bridges, both with inmates and with staff. I love to impart God's vision for people lives. God's word certainly is true that "*some plant, some water, some harvest*". I see that happening everyday that I am inside the LCP.

Nelson: Tell me yet about your family, your life outside the walls.

Cody: I have a loving, committed wife Stephanie. We have 3 growing sons, Christopher, Colby, and Cameron who add a special dimension to our lives. I am ordained by the Worship Center and we are active in many areas of our church life. For relaxation, I love helping my boys in their many activities. I also do creative work using computer graphic design programs.

I thank God for His plan for my life, for the exciting journey He has taken me on. He has truly been faithful in giving me hope and a future.

NEW IN 2001

SFPM is working with a new "Transition to Community" pilot project. This will be a 2 part program, teaching inmates spiritual life-style principles before release, followed by churches and mentors relating closely at their release from prison. More details will be coming later.

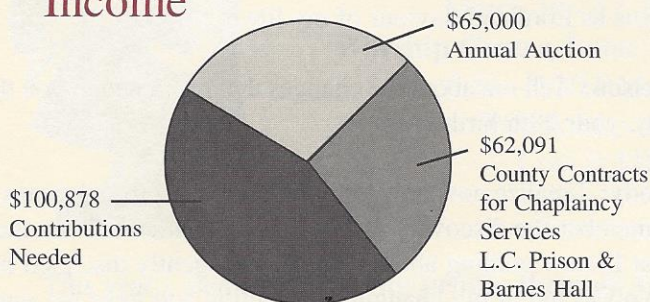


Focus On Finances

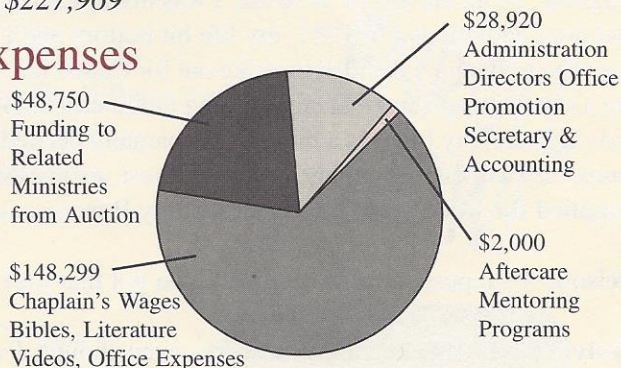
A strong ingathering of financial gifts at the end of the year of 2000, helped us close our fiscal year in the black, for which we are thankful. The 2001 annual financial plan is \$227,969, an increase of 16% over 2000.

Total Annual Budget - \$227,969

Income



Expenses



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

GOD AT WORK IN LCP - WOMEN'S SECTION



My name is Sandra Ortiz. I am 29 years old. I have 3 beautiful children and currently live at New Life for Girls.

Since I was a little girl, I felt rejected and lonely. I started to find love in the wrong places. Drugs was one that filled a void in my life, but that led me to stealing, cheating, prostituting and even jail. In 1996, I stepped in the door at Lancaster County Prison with a

P.V. violation and burglary charges. The 9 months that I did my first time in prison didn't stop me from drugs. I could not function without them.

I knew a little bit about God because my grandmother was a Christian. I accepted the Lord in my heart in 1996, but at the same time I was in a homosexual relationship, which made it hard for me to let go and follow God. I was in and out of jail for several years. Every time got worse. On April 16, 1999, I reconciled my life again to the Lord. I was tired of living in sin.

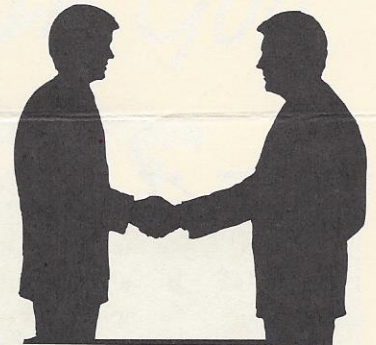
The chaplains at LCP and the church services helped me very much. I began to let God work in my life. I went through inner healings, deliverance, etc. The chaplains showed me that what I needed was inner healing from past experiences. With their help, I began to trust in God and learn to be open. Now, at New Life for Girls, I am learning how to be a more successful Christian. I also got my G.E.D. I feel free from shame and guilt. I am in the process of getting my kids back for which I praise God. I thank God for His grace and mercy and for the help I received from the chaplains in LCP. Their support and encouragement means so much to me.

✓ An Update On

The Jesus Connection of Lancaster County

This much-needed ministry was established in the winter of 1999 for the purpose of ministering to the hurting and dysfunctional of Lancaster County, with a primary focus on helping inmates when they come out of prison. We are based in Ephrata wherein homes are open to take in formerly imprisoned men and women.

This is a "relational" based ministry rather than a "program" based ministry because it is through relationships that people change. Each person gets a job and experiences inner healing prayer ministry and one-on-one discipleship. Each guy or gal also builds relationships



with those around them so they can learn how to experience the journey of life in a healthy and godly way. Little by little they learn to establish their own Christ-like lifestyle.

Training is available to help others within the county learn how to establish and develop this type of extremely effective ministry. Our vision is to have a center wherein families broken up due to abuse, addiction, crime, etc. can come and learn how to become whole in Christ.

The Jesus Connection also provides training in inner healing prayer ministry. Another training session is occurring February 2,3, and 17 at Shiloh Community Church in Lititz. You can call 721-6796 or 627-7700 for more information.

----- SFPM STAFF PERSONS -----

Pray for these persons who represent about 1,200 hours per month in prison ministry. They work in places of spiritual darkness where the light and truth of God's Word is breaking through and changing lives.

Paid Chaplain Staff:

AL HUBER and CODY HALL, LCP
(Lancaster County Prison)

MARVIN REED, (divides time between LCP
and Barnes Hall Juvenile Facility)

FAYE STAUFFER, Women's Chaplain, LCP
DIANE FULMER, Chaplain Secretary/Office
Coordinator, LCP

Regular Chaplain Volunteers: (LCP)

J. R. FISHER, WILLIAM GEIGER, JANICE HESS, DAVID
HORNSBY, LINDA INGHAM, BOB LEWIS, MARVIN LYONS,
ISAIAS MALDONADO, DENNIS NOLT, LENNY PELSINSKI,
EXPEDITO SANTIAGO, KARIN WHITE, AND DICK YORGEY
LEE STAUFFER (Barnes Hall)

Administrative Staff:

NELSON W. MARTIN, Director of SFPM, Office in Lititz.
CRYSTAL HOOVER, Secretary/Accountant for SFPM

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A Report From Our Director

We began the new year of 2001 with much **joy** and **hope**.

JOY: Because numerous inmates have found Jesus as their Saviour this past year; for the many generous financial gifts we received from churches, businesses and individuals; for the committed staff, both paid and volunteers, who are giving quality time to prison ministry; because of the many churches and pastors who assist us with church services, visits, counseling and praying for those in prison.

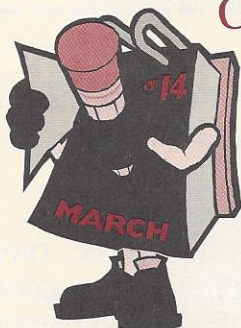
Hope: That the new "Transition to Community" aftercare and mentoring program will be a success in 2001; that SFPM's increased budget will be met with continuing strong financial gifts; that we will be able to increase staff chaplain time to have more Bible studies and one-on-ones in prison; and that in all we do, Jesus Christ will be exalted and honored. What a mighty God we serve!

I am so thankful for the partnership many of you have with us as we proclaim freedom through Jesus Christ. Quantities of this NEWSLETTER as well as a DESCRIPTIVE BROCHURE are available at no charge for churches or individuals to distribute. Please let me know if you can use literature, need more information, have suggestions for this newsletter, or have any questions or concerns. Write, email, or phone. *Nelson W. Martin*

*P O Box 134, Lititz, PA 17543 (717) 626-6301
email: nelsonmartin1@juno.com*



THIRD ANNUAL LANCASTER COUNTY PRISON CHAPLAINCY TEAM TRAINING SEMINAR



March 14 - 17, 2001 to be held at the
Worship Center, Route 23 (New Holland Pike) Leola
6:30 - 9:30 P.M. Wednesday - Friday
9:00 A.M. - 4:30 P.M. Saturday
Cost is \$10.00 per person

**ENROLL
NOW!**

This year's theme is "**Helping people through transition**". This seminar will be practical and inspiring. A time of instruction about ministering in prison, how church teams can best function within the chaplaincy system, and how persons and churches can assist inmates through transitions.

*To register or for more
information, call the LCP
Chaplain's Office
(717) 295-2089*