

THE HARVEST IS READY



By Nelson W. Martin, Director

While snowflakes fall and cold January winds blow, many of us don't think much about harvest. **But in prison ministry today, harvest is happening in some big ways. God is working.**

An idea that I often encourage staff with is found in the writings of Paul to the Corinthian church. "Some plant, some water, and some harvest, but it is God that makes things grow. We are servants, God's fellow workers, building a kingdom for God."

Let me highlight 4 areas that are challenges to us as we enter this new year – and as we continue to work with the harvest.

1. INCREASED MINISTRY AT LANCASTER COUNTY PRISON

Recently I did some reviewing of our past 2 years at LCP to prepare a report for the warden and county commissioners. Since September 1999, our staff time has increased from 850 hours to almost 1,200 hours per month; Bible correspondence courses completed from 100 to 175 per month; clergy visits to inmates from 275 to 400 per month; and total requests to and/or chaplain office contacts by inmates from 600 to 1,000 per month.

2. NEW PROGRAMS AT JUVENILE CENTER.

Early in 2002, the Barnes Hall juvenile program will move to a new building. Currently under construction in the Sunnyside area of Lancaster city, it will be called the Lancaster County Youth Intervention Center. This huge facility will have up to 144 beds when totally finished. SFPM is committed to supplying a full-time equivalent chaplain staff and to providing a library of Christian books and videos.

3. MORE PERSONS ARE GETTING INVOLVED IN PRISON MINISTRY.

In these times of harvest, it seems God is placing an interest in many hearts to minister to the unfortunate and incarcerated persons that are from our communities. Over 60 churches and agencies distribute our quarterly newsletter in bulk, about 35 churches have prison ministry teams that come on a regular basis to do worship services at LCP and Barnes Hall, and groups of persons have committed themselves to pray regularly for prisoners and their families.

4. AFTERCARE MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES.

Many lives are changed during the time persons are incarcerated, but a weak area is to keep in touch with them when they return to society. Recidivism (when an inmate returns to prison within a year after being released) is high, around 65% in our area. We are working closely with The Jesus Connection, directed by our previous chaplain Cody Hall (*see article on page 2*) to provide financial support to and networking with those who are being released.

SFPM is glad to have a small part in what is happening. What an exciting time it is to work with the harvest.



Staff outside prison (L to R): Marvin Reed, Faye Stauffer, Isaias Maldonado, Diane Fulmer, Al Huber, J.R. Fisher, and Nelson Martin



CONNECTING INMATES TO THE OUTSIDE

An update about the work of The Jesus Connection By Cody Hall, Director



On October 1, 2001, I made the leap from working full time at Lancaster County Prison in the

Chaplains department, to being Director of The Jesus Connection. This transition from one ministry to another came with its share of adjustments and unexpected challenges. I have always tried to look for what God wants me to learn from my everyday experiences, and once again I feel that I have been taught some valuable lessons.

The Jesus Connection is a ministry dedicated to providing a ministry of care that imparts God's heart and will for those that are moving from incarceration, back into a community setting. The transition for those being released from

prison is a very difficult and scary process. The problems are vast and the solutions are as varied as the faces of each individual.

The Jesus Connection continues to address these issues with those being released from prison. Over the past 2 1/2 years this ministry has worked with many men and women. The lessons learned over this time have been many, but there are those reoccurring obstacles that hinder the successful re-entry process.

Currently the ministries focus is two-fold. 1) Providing a transitional pre-release ministry inside the prison that helps lead them to a successful re-entry back into a community setting.

2) Developing bridges of opportunity within the community.

Developing bridges of opportunity is the most challenging part. In Lancaster County the reality still remains, that there are very few healthy places for people to transition to. Most individuals are in great need of a continuum of care that helps establish their

identity within the community.

To do this, we must not only help with Spiritual needs, we must give legitimate opportunities that addresses needs such as housing, employment, education, medical, financial, and other basic needs.

Psalms 37: 3-4 reads, "*Trust in the Lord, do good; dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness. Delight yourself also in the Lord, and He shall give you the desires of your heart.*"

God fully intends for us to take possession of his promises. We also need to bring with us those that are weak in the faith, those that are still recovering from the fall that has held them captive. It is the Father's will and desire that people be restored.

In this new year of 2002 we will walk in expectation. The power of God to restore people and heal the wounded is available. But we must be willing to enter into the Father's desires and make them our desires.

UPDATE! UPDATE!

Chaplain J. R. Fisher, who was introduced in the Fall Newsletter, is now a full-time chaplain at Lancaster County Prison. He previously spent several days a week at LCP as part of his pastoral assignment from Faith Covenant Church. Since October 1, J. R. has been associate chaplain, an assignment previously done by Cody Hall.

SFPM STAFF PERSONS

Pray for us who are involved in prison ministry. We work in places of spiritual darkness where the light and truth of God's Word must break through to change lives.

Paid Chaplain Staff:

AL HUBER, J. R. FISHER, ISAIAS MALDONADO, (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 in LCP

Regular Chaplain Volunteers: (LCP)

WILLIAM GEIGER, JANICE HESS, DAVID HORNSBY, BOB LEWIS,
MARVIN LYONS, DENNIS NOLT, ADRIAN RODRIGUEZ, 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

FREEDOM GATE MINISTRIES

Halfway Houses/Prison Ministry
Directed by Rev. Junior Oriol

Freedom Gate is so grateful for SFPM and all those who help support SFPM in every way. Freedom Gate has been ministering to men and women who have been incarcerated for 25 years. Currently we have a Men's Home at 131-133 South 9th St., Reading, PA. We have a house for the women, but it is currently closed.

We are looking forward in 2002 to make the transition from Half-way House to an Induction Center for Men. The Men who come to Freedom Gate must make a commitment to 1 year of discipleship training. They will spend 4-5 months at FGM, then graduate to Second Phase and move to Teen Challenge Training Center in Rehrersburg, PA. During the course of that year they will have taken classes that will consist on how to deal with life controlling problems such as addictions, anger, low self-esteem, etc., through Biblical teachings and hands-on-training. The resident will not only receive Biblical Training but will be able to put into practice what they have learned by having the opportunity to be part of an Outreach Ministry.

The following story by Kerry is just one of the many men FGM has had the opportunity to minister to.

My name is Kerry Moore. I am 48 years old and have been blessed to have been a resident of Freedom Gate since September 6, 2001. I am a divorced father of twin daughters. I had been using drugs since the age of 16. For the 32 years I used drugs it was practically on a daily basis and as a result I lost my wife of 14 years whom I loved very much.



Rev. Junior Oriol, Kerry Moore, Diana Oriol

Because I didn't have to resort to stealing to support my drug use, I would wrongly justify to those who cared, that I was hurting no one but myself. Even after being incarcerated I felt that way until I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. Finally the wakeup call I regret did not come many years earlier.

I was arrested on March 12, 2001 for violating my probation. In April of 2001 I was saved! From that moment on I knew my life could only get better. I have been drug free for nearly 9 months. Although six of those months were spent in prison, the only time I had the urge to do drugs was on Fridays and Saturdays. Not because it was the weekend, but because on Friday mornings I was required to attend a drug and alcohol program and in these sessions it was nothing more than watching videos of people using drugs.

I would not lose this urge until Sunday, when I would attend Sunday School and Protestant worship services. It was then

that I saw just how important it is to have an intimate relationship with God.

It hasn't been easy, and I am grateful to some good people who have stood by me and been a tremendous inspiration: Chaplain Paul Long at BCP (Berks County Prison), Chris Readinger from Yokefellowship, who would lead a weekly Bible Study at BCP, and of course Junior and Diana from Freedom Gate.

Although it is ultimately up to me, these brothers and sisters, as well as countless others have been a perfect example of the kind of life I want to and need to live. Freedom Gate has been instrumental in this.

As Paul says in Ephesians 4:1 "As a prisoner of the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." Through prayer, God's word, and faith I know I will prevail and be one of Christ's own.

Mennonite Heritage Chorale Annual Hymn Singing Festival

The Mennonite Heritage Chorale will be hosting its tenth annual program of sacred music. The itinerary includes two concerts to be held on Sunday, April 7. The first concert beginning at 2:00 PM, will be held at the Midway Mennonite Reception Center, Lexington Road, Lititz. The second beginning at 7:00 PM will be held at the Ephrata Business Center (formerly the Moyer's building), route 322 Ephrata.

The chorale is comprised of approximately 100 vo-

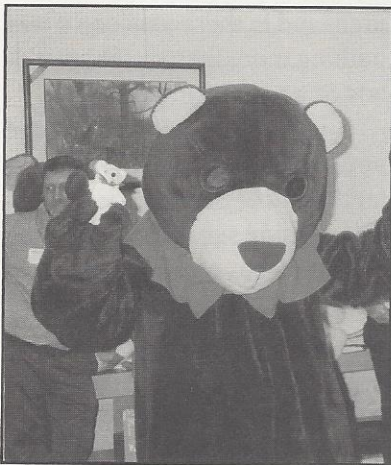


calists from Virginia, Ohio, and various locations in Pennsylvania. John H. Miller of Hartville, Ohio will serve as the guest conductor. Also included in the program is the Children's Choir directed by Irene Moyer of Paradise, PA.

No entrance fee or tickets are required. A freewill offering will be received. **Proceeds will benefit Support For Prison Ministries of Lititz, PA.**

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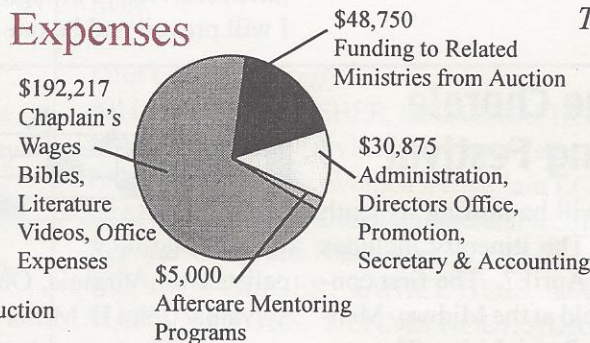
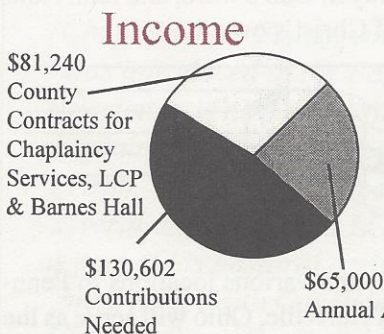
AUCTION DAYS WERE SUCCESSFUL

Hundreds of persons came to our annual Benefit Auction at Farmersville Auction Grounds October 26 and 27. It was a great day of fellowship, good food and enthusiastic bidding for quality merchandise and gift certificates donated by many area businesses and professionals. \$65,000 was cleared from the sale to share with 6 different prison ministry groups.



**Mark your calendars for our next auction -
 October 25 & 26, 2002**

Focus On Finances



Total Annual Budget - \$276,842

A strong ingathering of financial gifts at the end of the year of 2001, helped us close our fiscal year in the black, for which we are thankful. The 2002 annual financial plan is \$276,842, an increase of 22% over 2001.

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

**Remember to include SFPM in your estate planning. Counsel is available to help you with will preparation, asset distribution and tax savings.*