

STREAMS

of Life

Volume 14, Winter 2019

REFLECTIONS FROM AL HUBER



Al Huber

Al Huber was a Chaplain with Support for Prison Ministries at Lancaster County Prison from 1994-2016, when pulmonary fibrosis and a lung transplant caused Al to step down.

Al started in prison ministry in 1981 after hearing a call from We Care founder, Martin Weber, for chaplains to go help in his work in Alabama, then called New Life

Foundation. Al, his wife, Anna, and four young daughters moved to Alabama for a year to be a Chaplain Assistant at Fountain Prison near Atmore, Alabama.

In 1989, Al began volunteering in prison ministry at Lancaster County Prison under Chaplain Dave Myer. Dave was a great example and wonderful mentor. Al witnessed how successfully Dave ministered and modeled his way of chaplaincy after Dave, who left in 1994.

Are there any ex-inmates that you stay in contact with?

There is an ex-inmate who currently lives on the West Coast. God showed up in a mighty way and changed his life. I keep in contact with him today and he has a very successful walk with the Lord. Then there is the one that I call son and he calls us mom and dad. He has a strong walk with the Lord. He has been a part of our family since 1994. He has been very supportive of me during my transplant journey.

How did you counsel prisoners?

I try to teach them to quiet their mind and listen, coaching them on hearing from God. I remember a man that was set free from hating his dad. I was praying with him and God spoke to him and like a switch the man forgave his dad and began sharing the good and fun things they did together.

I also had great help from volunteer chaplains. Chaplains Lenny Pelsinski and still current Chaplain Ed Bare of Keystone Church were two chaplains, in particular, who were instrumental in helping inmates deal with their past to get freedom and healing.

A verse that always helped me in counseling was John 12:47, "If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world."

I embraced this verse and that allowed me to get close to those of all walks of life including Satanists. This friendship resulted in one Satanist wanting to put curses on people for my benefit. Obviously, I did not accept this from him but it gave me opportunity to share God's love.

I also had many opportunities to befriend the LCP staff and that created a bond between the chaplaincy staff and the LCP staff.

Were there difficult situations you encountered?

A suicide in prison would put the inmates on the edge. After this would happen, chaplains would flood the block to talk to the other prisoners and calm them. Also death notices of a family member and breaking the news to the inmate was usually difficult. But at times it would allow us to build a lasting relationship with the inmate.

What were good days for a chaplain?

A good day was when the temperature in the chapel was pleasant!! The heat of summer and the cold of winter greatly impact the chapel! But on a serious note, good days were when there were no lockdowns, staff were in a good mood, and inmates were in good moods. A good day for the inmates was good news on a phone call home or a visit or a birth in the family.

After years of Chaplaincy, what advice would you give to those thinking about prison work?

Love the inmate without judgement, recognize their brokenness, pray with them, help them to process. The large amount of mental health inmates has changed prison work and requires chaplaincy in a different way. Kent Martin and Jake Riehl are chaplain volunteers who work on the Medical Housing Unit and have my deepest respect.

Respect and honor the prison staff. This was modeled by Chaplain Myer and Prison Councilor, Ben Snavelly. This resulted in a closer relationship with staff and numerous salvations. One thing to remember is: when we minister successfully to an inmate, then that inmate will minister to his cell mate. When we minister to a Correctional Officer, they will affect the whole housing unit.

Al is now retired from chaplaincy, but he is happy that the work is continuing in ICP. Al is now enjoying spending time with his daughters and fifteen grandchildren. Al and his wife, Anna, are part of Petra Church in New Holland.

When God Says No



Del & Tammy Burkholder

Over the last year we have seen the release of many Junior Lifers in prison, which we rejoice with them greatly as they are being provided a second chance in society. Now some lifers that have been down for a long time are being selected to appear before the Commutation Board at a more frequent rate under the Governor's orders. There is an excitement in the prisons as a few men which have had life sentences are being released. Also I have been personally around some too that were

selected to appear, then denied approval of Commutation of their sentence. Some being men that have faithfully served in the prison church. It made me think of how we as Christians handle when God says no in our lives. I remember specifically many years ago earnestly praying for an important specific need that was only logical that God would grant and say yes to. Before I had got off my knees I spiritually in my soul heard the No from God. No explanation, no granting a human logical requests. This moment taught me to trust God even when he does not grant my request. I John 5:14 says "And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us." Now enters the equation is it God's will or our will.

There are four ways God often answers are prayers.

• **God says Yes** - While this is the most direct answer we want and sometimes expect, I have found this sometimes is not God's answer.

• **God says No** - God's no is often very sharp and sometimes with explanation. For example, Moses wanted to go into the Promised Land without the children of Israel. This was a simple request from this true and faithful leader of Israel. God not only told Moses No, but said speak no more of this matter again. Deuteronomy 3:23-28.

• **God say Not now** - In the business world they say timing is everything. But remember God holds time differently than us and God's time is always the right time. When Jesus was in Galilee early in His ministry, his brothers were prodding him to go into Judea and display his miracles openly. John 7:1-9. Jesus simply told them it was not yet His time.

• **God says I got something better** - In Acts Paul and Silas were planning to go into Bithynia to minister but the Holy Spirit allowed them not. Acts 16:6-40. Instead they were sent to Macedonia where they experienced a mighty move of God including the saving of the Philippian jailer and his family.

In conclusion when God doesn't always answer our prayers or it may be something else, remember that an all knowing Father knows what is best for his children and we should not lose faith. "Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us". Ephesians 3:20

Tammy Burkholder Update

Del's wife Tammy has been dealing with a very serious neurological illness for some time and many prison church Bodies throughout Pennsylvania have been praying for her regularly, for healing and comfort during this health journey. Tammy sends a message of thank you to all those that have been praying for her.

"I am deeply grateful and touched by all the prisoners throughout the state that are praying for me as Del and I are trusting Jesus during this struggle. Please continue to keep me in your prayers. God Bless you all, Tammy."

GUEST CHAPLAIN: DENIM McDEMUS



Denim McDemus

Denim McDemus is a Chaplain at Schuylkill County Prison and Frackville SCI. He is employed by Jubilee Ministries and help funded by Support For Prison Ministries parent ministry of Streams of Life. Denim has a very effective Pastor and Chaplain in the prisons pointing men to Jesus Christ. (Del Burkholder)

"A Light in the Darkness"

Schuylkill County Prison has long been a spiritual void, so maybe that's why God keeps drawing me back there? The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. I first started volunteering there in February of 2001, teaching Bible Studies for Yoke Fellowship Prison Ministry, and I've never really left. That prison has etched out a special place in my heart, so I was excited when God opened the door for Jubilee Ministries and Support For Prison Ministries to send me in as a Chaplain, something SCP has needed for a long time. It has been an opportunity to reach men, mostly from the local area, who have been forgotten about or written off by society. But God has not forgotten nor forsaken them.

Due to space limitations, I get to go directly onto the cellblocks, meeting with the men where they live. This allows them to lower their walls a little, since we are on their turf. The casual atmosphere of sitting around a table together allows us to meet at eye level, as equals. You will never reach someone by ministering to them from a pedestal, looking down on them. Every single person in this world, incarcerated or not, is either a sinner or a sinner saved by grace. I've met both in churches and in prisons. Every sinner is a potential sinner saved by grace, no matter how far they have strayed or how long they've been avoiding God. He doesn't brand you the way this world does. The only label he places on you is "son" or "daughter."

The casual Bible Study setup also allows curious passersby to listen from a distance, dipping their toes in to test the water, before deciding to fully dive in by sitting at the table as part of the Bible Study group. Many loyal attendees started out in this way, then eventually recruited others to join us.

In the past year, I have seen hearts and lives changed, skeptics becoming strong believers, tough guys weeping before the God they walked away from, white supremacists sitting with minorities, depressed men turning to God instead of suicide, men who can barely read trying hard to study the Bible, violent men experiencing the unconditional love of God, inmates witnessing to corrections officers, sins confessed and habits broken, a sincere gratefulness

Lessons from the Spotted Lanternfly



Esther Zeiset

Look out for the spotted lanternflies, said the news anchors at the outset of summer. They warned of the invasive pests' imminent arrival, showed photos of its life cycle, and begged the public's help in eradicating them.

It was near the end of summer before I saw the first ones, just two or three of them. I may not have seen them, camouflaged as they were by their grayish forewings, had they not hopped about and flashed their brilliantly red hindwings. I studied them closer. Bright colors. Exotic markings. Beautiful little creatures, really. Still, knowing their insidious nature, I squashed them beneath my shoe and foolishly hoped that was the end of them.

But by early October we noticed dozens of spotted lanternflies crawling up the trunk of our sunset maple tree, blending in against the rough bark. Their red wings gave them away with every movement and, when we looked closer, saw them covering limbs higher than our house. Hundreds of them. Maybe thousands.

Huh-uh. Not here. I wasn't about to sacrifice the lovely maple tree that shades our patio.

A google search advised me to set out a foil pan filled with water and dish detergent but that lured only a few. The grandchildren came by one day and, drawn in with promise of monetary reward, they swatted lanternflies out of the tree with brooms and rakes, mashed them with fly swatters, and cheered raucously with each fatality. But for every one they killed, there were another thousand on our tree, greedily sucking the sap and leaving it vulnerable to other opportunist bugs and diseases.

A second google search suggested we might douse them with fruit tree spray. Bingo! That brought them down on contact and they writhed on the patio in exotic color, dying a slow, painful death. Such a pity. They really were very pretty.

Our landscape has also suffered from downright ugly pests. Brown marmorated stink bugs and *lymantria dispar* (otherwise known as gypsy moths) will never win a beauty contest. Nor will earwigs, or thrips, or whiteflies, or cutworms. Unchecked, they collectively chomp my landscape to skeletons and I don't appreciate that one bit. So I keep up the fight against the hordes of pests.

And I'm reminded of the pests against our souls that need to be fought with equal diligence. Some are simply ugly, the kind we hear about on the evening news. Galatians 5:19 spells it out for us this way: *"Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these."* We know those things have no place in the life of follower of Jesus.

Some other sins, like the beautifully colored spotted lanternfly, are deceptively attractive. An inflated ego can masquerade as confidence, manipulation as sweetness, gossip as a prayer request.

The Psalmist knew that wrong motives and skewered attitudes take us to dangerous places. He cried, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me."* (ESV, Psalm 139:23,24) He invited God's spotlight to shine in the darkest corners of his heart and show it for what it is. But he didn't want to remain stuck in that dreadful place where the search ends with only a bald exposure of sin. He knew that God's work is always restorative and prayed, *"Lead me in the way everlasting!"*

Identification of a problem is only the first step in dealing with it. It would have done little good to merely identify the spotted lanternflies in my yard, had I let it go at that. I needed to do something. The fight is not yet over. Now the search is on for the egg masses of those beguilingly pretty insects. Vigilance is key.

Even more so for the pests in our souls.

A Light in the Darkness *continued from page 1*

for the opportunity to learn the Word of God, and real efforts to apply its redemptive powers to broken lives.

I have seen spiritual growth in many men. One man was "pierced to the core" by scriptures about being lukewarm. He became emotional, saying he is ready to give his life to God 110%. A man I had mentored came to me, crying, apologizing for coming back to prison. He is now out of prison again, but he is doing things God's way this time. When reading scriptures aloud during our study, an inmate stopped reading and simply commented, "Wow!" A man was seeking peace after receiving bad news. He was reading in Exodus, but a bug was running around in circles on the other side of his Bible. When he brushed away the pesky critter, he saw Ex 14:14, "The Lord will fight for you, you need only to be still," right where the bug had drawn his attention to. Our Father God does amazing things, when we tear down our walls, invite him in, and humbly receive his outstretched hand. The hardest things to admit are: 1. I was wrong, 2. I need someone else's help to fix it. But humbling ourselves before God is the strongest choice a person can make, and one they will never regret. These are the reasons I go into Satan's den to steal souls back for God. The impact can be life changing for those souls rescued from the darkness.

I'm not there to focus on their past. It's over and done with. It can't be changed. If someone's drowning, you can't help them by describing the water. Once we come back home to our Father God, our past no longer matters. We don't have to carry that guilt and shame any more. Jesus bought it from us with his blood. God has plans for us to prosper. He has plans for us to spend all eternity with him. God doesn't care about where we've been, only where we go from this point forward. It only matters that we came back home to our Father. He sees our potential, who we could be, if we follow the path he sets before us. We were lost, but now we're found. We were dead, but now we're alive again.

The drastic change I have seen in many of these men is why I do what I do, and never regret it.

Streams of Life Newsletter

Editor - *Esther Zeiset*
Publishing & Design - *Bock Creative*
President of the Board - *Ken Martin*
Prison Director - *Del Burkholder*
Prison Teacher - *Delmar Weaver*
Treasurer - *Ken Haller*

If you would desire to financially support Streams of Life Ministries' work in prison and churches, you are welcome to give, as you are able. All donations are tax deductible, and will be followed with a receipt to the donor. **If you are an inmate, we ask you not to donate to Streams of Life as it could jeopardize our status in the institutions we minister.**

Checks can be made payable to: Streams of Life Prison Ministry
Support for Prison Ministries
PO Box 727
Brownstown, PA 17508

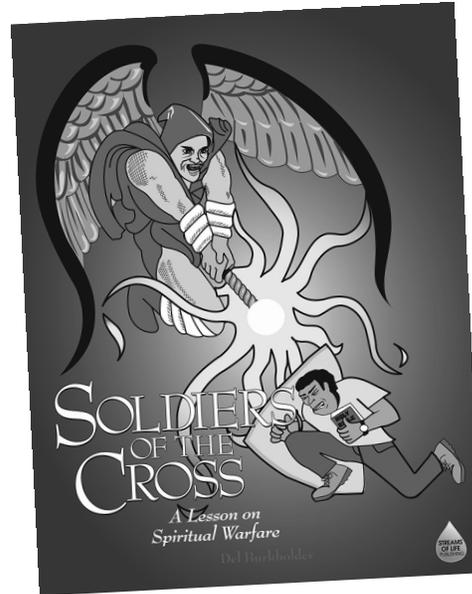
To contact Streams of Life Prison Ministry
717.859.5519
sfpm@dejazzd.com
www.SupportForPrisonMinistries.com

If you would like to be taken off the Streams of Life newsletter mailing list, please let us know by emailing delspeak@dejazzd.com or writing to Streams of Life Ministries, PO Box 727, Brownstown, PA 17508

If you are an inmate and would like a free copy of Del's popular book on spiritual warfare, "Soldiers of the Cross", you may request a free copy by writing

Streams of Life Ministries

PO Box 727
Brownstown, PA 17508



If you are a PA inmate, please include the new proper ship to address that the DOC requires for books from publishers with your request.

Due to prison policy, we are not allowed to send to anyone else but the requesting inmate.