



Freedom Focus

A Newsletter with information for your partnering with us in

“Proclaiming Freedom for Prisoners”

Volume 21
Number 80
Spring 2020

Ministering for 29 Years To Those Behind Bars

Marvin Lyons has been serving those behind bars for 29 years. Support For Prison Ministries Director, Del Burkholder, recently sat down with Marvin to hear his story of redemption, salvation, and ministry.

Where are you from and tell us about your early family life?

I was born in Baltimore, Maryland and was the second oldest of six children. My parent’s divorced when I was 9 years old. I felt abandonment and rejection. I was bitter with my father over the divorce and we were estranged. My mom and I also didn’t get along well because I resembled my father and I felt like she was extra hard on me. After I became a Christian, God reconciled me with both of my parents and many hurts were healed.



What was your turning point to Christ?

I was using drugs; with marijuana being my drug of choice. I was working as an assistant chef at a country club and one day I was riding on a bus in Baltimore and a man by the name of Denny Denison approached me. Denny had moved from Utica, New York with a church plant and we were riding the same bus. He asked me a very simple question: “I believe in Jesus, do you?” Why he picked me out from all the other people on the bus I do not know? He gave me a tract with the address of the church. The tract was called, “Purpose in Life.” I contacted the church and Denny. Later, after receiving Christ, I started volunteering with the church. Denny and I became good friends and ministered together often.

Tell us about your family and work?

My wife, Liz, and I have 5 adult children and 2 beautiful granddaughters. I work for Howell’s Glass and have been employed there for 33 years. During most of this time I have also been volunteering in prison ministry as a chaplain. We attend DOVE Church.

What called you to Prison Ministry?

I was living in Lancaster and my friend, Andrew Bailey, introduced me to prison ministry. Dave Myer was the chaplain in 1989. We were doing church services and the services included, at that time, both male and female. It was around 1994 and 1995 that Al Huber invited me to be a volunteer chaplain. Cody Hall also was a chaplain at that time. My eyes were opened to the spiritual needs of prisoners. Previously, my ministry had been on the streets but now I realized the need for prison ministry. I have been a chaplain at Lancaster County Prison for 29 years. I have also ministered at the Lancaster Youth Intervention Center for 29 years.

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SFPM WELCOMES TWO NEW BOARD MEMBERS

SFPM has a board of 12 persons who oversee the ministry. Meet our newest members.



Willie Zook lives in Mohnton, PA and is married to Kathy Zook. Willie and Kathy are owners of Zook Masonry in Mohnton and they are active at Petra Christian Fellowship, New Holland PA.

Willie was introduced to prison ministry through John Rush at Zion Mennonite Church where they attended at the time. He also previously served on the Freedom Gate Ministries Board, a ministry Support For Prison Ministries helps support through our annual auction.

Willie and Kathy both enjoy spending time with their 4 adult sons, daughters in law, and 5 grandchildren. They also enjoy riding motorcycle together and Willie enjoys playing racquetball.

A verse that is special to Willie is Romans 12:9: *Love must be sincere, hate what is evil and cling to what is good.*



Daniel King lives in Mohnton, PA and is married to Linda. They have been married for 25 years and have 3 children. They are active at the Worship Center in Leola.

Daniel sold his construction business, DK Builder, in Blue Ball, in January 2020. He and Linda operate VRBO & Airbnb vacation rentals, D&L King rentals, and Equipter.

With the sale of his business he sensed in his spirit God was going to be using him for something new in ministry. Within days, SFPM contacted Daniel about serving with the SFPM Board of Directors.

Daniel is an avid sportsman and enjoys woodworking.

Daniel's favorite verses are Isaiah 41:10, 54:17 and Romans 8:28. They have meant a lot to him when he was healed of Lyme disease.



Congratulations to **Vernell Hightower** who received a Certificate of Appreciation from the 26th African/African-American Love Feast. Vernell was acknowledged for her commitment to service and the inspiration she has given to those within her community.

Vernell went from a life of being addicted to opioids, alcohol and pill popping to being addicted to Jesus Christ. Vernell and her husband, Tyrone, are volunteer chaplains at Lancaster County Prison. Vernell & Tyrone have ministered in prisons, shelters, substance abuse facilities, and transitional homes for over 20 years. She has also authored 3 books.

Support for Prison Ministries is grateful for the work that Vernell & Tyrone do within the walls of Lancaster County Prison. **Thank you!!**



37th Annual Benefit Auction is October 23 & 24, 2020
Mark your calendar now and plan to join us!!





You are invited: Musical Comedy "Smoke on the Mountain" by Promise Players
All proceeds benefit Support for Prison Ministries

It is June, 1938 in North Carolina. The singing Sanders family, who, after a five-year hiatus, are set to perform their traditional and bluegrass Gospel songs at a Saturday Night Gospel Sing at the local Baptist church...but they are running late. Pastor Oglethorp stalls the best he can. Finally, the family enters with gusto. They break into their first number and patriarch Burl introduces the rest of the family. There is Vera, the family matriarch, Dennis and Denise are fraternal twins, daughter June who does interpretive signing, Brother Stanley who spent some time in prison, and cousins too numerous to mention. It's a good old-fashioned, foot-stomping, music lovin' time praising the Lord!

"Smoke on the Mountain" is a musical comedy based on the book by Connie Ray. This musical will be performed by the **Promise Players** on March 20-22 and 26-29. Performance times are 7:30 PM for the Thursday, both Fridays and Saturdays, and at 2:30 PM for both Saturdays and Sundays. Performances are held at Lampeter Church of the Brethren, 1900 Lampeter Road, Lancaster.

A suggested minimum donation of \$9 for adults is payable at the door. Children 12 years old and under may bring the donation of a canned good or \$2. Free baby-sitting for preschoolers is available at all performances.

Seating is general admission and reservations are strongly encouraged, though seating is on a first come, first served basis. Doors will open one hour prior to show time. To reserve a seat, visit our website at lampcob.com/promise-players or, if needed, call the church office M-F from 8:30 - 2:30 at 717-464-2050.

Marvin Lyons (continued from page 1)

What are some of the more memorable highlights in your prison work?

Early in my chaplaincy I remember Al, Cody, and I went to a chaplain training at Taylor University. It opened my eyes to incarceration in a way I had not seen before. The verses in Matthew 25:34-46 that talk about "I was in prison and you visited me" became very clear in my life. It was during this time that I realized God's call on my life to work in prison.

Other highlights that I have seen are some of the individuals I have ministered to in prison over the years that are now serving Christ today. A while back I was at a church service where one of them was preaching and another ex-inmate was part of the worship. It is amazing to see what God has done in their lives.

What are some of the low points of your ministry?

I remember coming back from the prison training at Taylor University and I injured my knee playing basketball. I was out of work for six months. I had five children to support. My wife had a part-time nursing job and I wondered how God was going to provide for our family. God was able to provide through that situation through the generosity of many.

What are some verses of inspirations that have carried you through your ministry?

I have tried to always listen to the still small voice of God (1 Kings 19:12.) Another group of verses I love are Matthew 11:28-30, where Jesus tells us to take His yoke upon us for it is easy and His burden is light. John 14:1-3 also means a lot to me.

What message would you leave for someone getting involved in prison ministry?

Just stay the course. Be committed. Make sure your call to prison is God's voice and not your own voice. Be flexible in situations. Accept the bitter with the sweet. If God has called you to do it, don't stop, just keep following through.

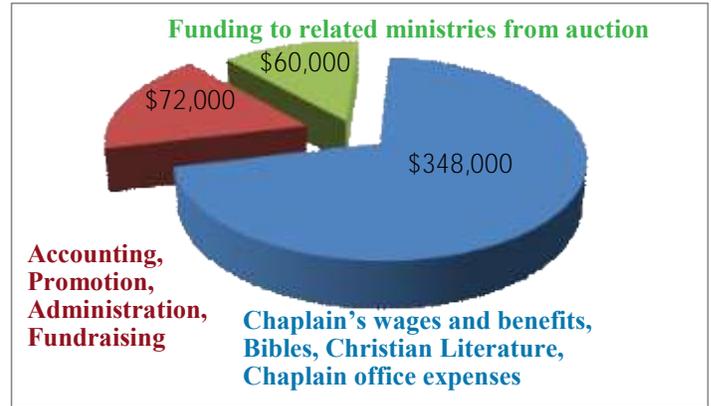
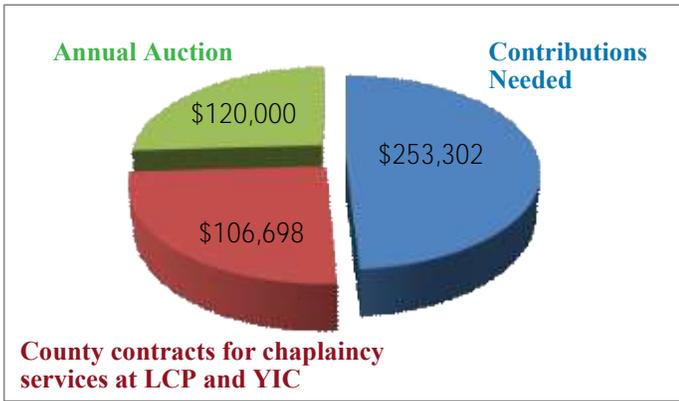
Thank you, Marvin, for your many years of service to those behind bars!

Focus On Finances

Income

2020 Budget: \$480,000

Expenses



You can also make a donation on line through our website.

A self-addressed envelope is enclosed for your gift to partner with SFPM. **THANK YOU !!**

Check out our website for updated photos and information: www.supportforprisonministries.com

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Support for Prison Ministries

DIRECTOR'S REPORT By Del Burkholder, SFPM Director

I have never forgotten the time an inmate told me about his trial experience; how every morning an angry mob would greet him at the courthouse yelling threats at him as he was escorted up the courtroom steps. This etched a hurt in his heart that remained long after his conviction.

It is said that when Catherine Booth of the Salvation Army, was a little girl she saw a prisoner dragged away by a constable to the lockup. A mob was hooting at the unfortunate culprit, and his utter loneliness tugged at her heart. It seemed to her that he had not a friend in the world. She sprang to his side and marched down the street with him, determined that he should know that there was one soul that felt for him whether he suffered for his own fault or that of another. What a heart of compassion she had at a very young age.

This same heart of compassion is what we find in prison ministry workers. To minister to those that have grievous trespasses is a calling reserved for the gentle heart.

For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6