



Freedom Focus

A Newsletter with information for your partnering with us in

“Proclaiming Freedom for Prisoners”

Volume 22
Number 84
Spring 2021

Thank you, Joe Bird

By Del Burkholder

Support For Prison Ministries is thankful for the work of one of our veteran chaplains and addiction teachers, Joe Bird. Joe is a 79-year-old warrior for Christ who has recently moved to Cary, North Carolina with his wife Linda. I first met Joe when I started with SFPM in 2015. I have always enjoyed our time together and have a great respect for him as I always appreciated his honest and hard hitting style of bringing Jesus to inmates. We caught up with him before he left for North Carolina to talk a bit about his ministry at Lancaster County Prison.



How did you come to Christ, Joe?

I was born in Georgia and from 1959 to 1970 did 4 tours as a U.S. soldier in Vietnam. I was on the way to fight as a mercenary, a hired professional soldier for a foreign country, when I came to Christ. I no longer own a weapon and I am now a man of peace. My military background helped me in my service to Christ. I am a warrior for Christ as we are called to be in Ephesians 6.

Tell us about your work with Linda in B.I.R.D. Ministries.

My wife, Linda, and I had operated B.I.R.D. Ministries since 2000, which included The House of Ruth, a residential program for women released from prison. Potter’s House now operates the House of Ruth. Linda is my rock. God said it is not good to be alone and God brought her to me. She has been a rock in my life and a wonderful partner in ministry.

What called you to Lancaster County Prison to minister?

It was about 10 years ago when David Hain was leaving for Africa and I had called about getting involved in a recovery ministry and he took me under his wing and God opened the door under the SFPM umbrella. My specialty was addiction ministry.

Who was in prison chaplaincy when you started?

Al Huber ran the chaplaincy and Cody Hall, J.R. Fisher, and David Hornsby were some of the other chaplains.
(continued on page 3)

LOOK WHAT IS INSIDE

Board Member Focus.....page 2

Financial Update.....page 4

Retirement Party Highlights.....page 3

Director’s Report.....page 4



Board Member Focus

In 2021, we would like to focus on various board members who have worked behind the scenes to make SFPM what it is today. This edition we are focusing on: **Warren Hackman**

Warren has been a board member since 2000 and has been the secretary since 2002. He makes sure that the meeting minutes are in order each time the board meets.

Warren started Hackman Paving, in Lebanon County, in 1971. Today his son and daughter in law, Greg & Josie, run the business. Warren still helps as a paving estimator and truck driver.



Warren came back to the Lord in 1976 and began attending Ephrata United Zion Church. He has been a Sunday School teacher there since 1980. In 2016, he became a deacon. Warren has also been Chairman of the United Zion Camp Grove since 1996. United Zion Camp Grove is the camp ground for the United Zion denomination. They hold camp meetings every July and also it is a place that members can camp during the summer.

Warren has been a Gideon since 1978 and over winter, the off season for paving, he has been on many mission trips to help those in need through YWAM (Youth With a Mission). He has gone to many places in the U.S. as well as going to Argentina, Brazil, China, Haiti, and Mexico. Warren sees his mission work as being part of the great commission to take the Gospel to the world.

Another way Warren has been involved in missions is the Renew Hope event through We Care Program in Alabama. He has gone to this week long crusade almost every January since 1994. He often goes with other board members from SFPM. He would like to start teaching in state prison's through SFPM's state ministry, Streams of Life. This is on pause until Covid restrictions are lifted.

I John 3:17 is one of Warren's favorite verses. It says, *"If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in that person?"* This verse sums up Warren's attitude toward service to prisoners and those in need throughout the world.

Thank you, Warren, for your continued service to SFPM and those incarcerated.

In 2020 the LCP Chaplain's office.....

DID YOU
KNOW



⇒ Received 6,815 requests from inmates for Bibles, books, correspondence courses, one on one visits, etc. and we answered each and every request.

⇒ Received 141 medical and death notifications that our chaplains had to go and tell the inmate the news and walk with them through the difficult news.

- ⇒ Distributed 1,550 correspondence Bible Studies from Gospel Echoes, Gospel Express, and Emmaus.
- ⇒ From January to March 2020: 1,817 inmates attended Bible Studies and 2,228 attended church and then Covid shut down those groups.
- ⇒ You can make a donation to cover costs for Bibles and literature through our website: www.supportforprisonministries.org. You even have the option to set up a recurring monthly donation.
- ⇒ Our monthly prayer letter is available on our website, on our facebook page, or you can sign up to receive it each month by emailing sfpmjds@gmail.com.

Thank you, Joe Bird (continued from page 1)

Can you give a story or two of your prison work that comes to mind?

One of my past students was a repeat offender and the doctor told him he had to change his habits, or he was going to die. He got married, raised a family, and started his own business. Those are the results you want to hear. We also received many letters of those that went upstate that had made decisions to follow Christ. Our ministry was to plant the seed and let others cultivate the soil. At LCP we only had men a short time to work with before they were released or sent upstate.

Your “Life Recovery Groups” were popular with prisoners. Tell us about the class.

We found the Life Recovery Bible made a difference in inmates lives. You need to first surrender. That is step one. We provided Life Recovery Bibles and workbooks to participants in our Life Recovery Groups at LCP. Our materials combined both spiritual and practical aspects to present a balanced approach to life; one that encourages not only practical growth but also spiritual and emotional growth that will come from a close relationship with God.

A favorite verse or saying that you hold close to your heart?

My favorite verse would be Ezekiel 3:9, “*I will make your forehead like flint. Be not afraid or dismayed of them.*” In the ministry we do in recovery and addiction you need to be hardheaded and not discouraged easily.

Anything else you would like to share.

I would like to thank you and all of SFPM, the Board, and the chaplaincy I worked with, and also Lancaster prison officials and staff. Through SFPM it provided me a way in. I saw myself as a vessel and did what God wanted me to do during this season in my life.

**On behalf of all of us at Support For Prison Ministries, Thank You, Joe,
for your faithful and fruitful service at Lancaster County Prison.**

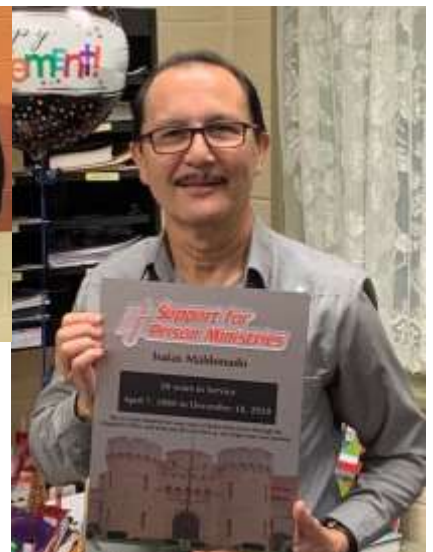
In 2020 we said goodbye to two SFPM employees who had been with us for over 20 years. Diane Pistone, Office Administrative Assistant, and Isaias Maldonado, Chaplain, both retired. While we did feature stories of them in previous newsletters here are pictures from their retirement celebrations!



Thank you, Diane & Isaias, for your many years of service. We miss you!



LCP Chaplain Staff who celebrated with Isaias on his last day at LCP (l-r): Kenny Bowman, Jorge Nazario, Stacey Catigano, Katie Harnish, Isaias Maldonado, Jewel Sensenig, Alvaro Febus

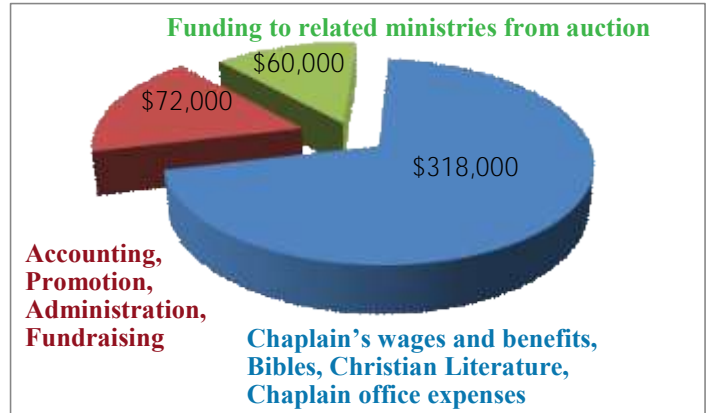
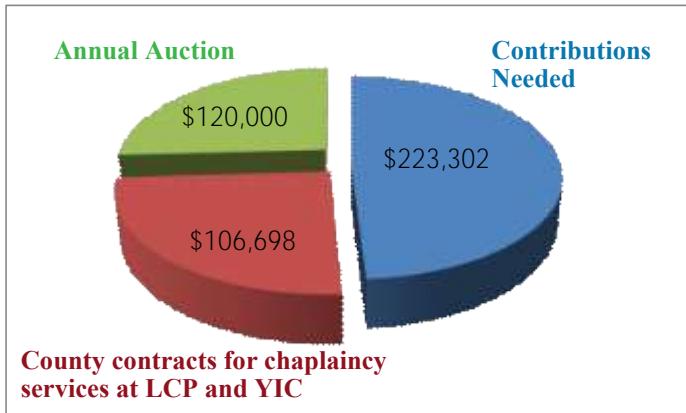


Focus On Finances

Income

2021 Budget: \$450,000

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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DIRECTOR'S REPORT By Del Burkholder, SFPM Director

A year has passed since we have been flung into one of the worst modern day stoppages of life due to the COVID 19 virus. For SFPM and our staff and our affiliate prison ministries this year was uncharted territory in prison work. I continue to receive letters from inmates throughout the country on the disappointment they have in not being able to gather in person to worship their Lord collectively. There are many things we do as Christians that we miss dearly. I miss shaking hands with inmates after a prison service. Talking, laughing with them, or laying on hands and praying with them over their hurts and needs.

We do not always understand why things happen, but we can only pray that this will pass soon and things can be restored. If anything, we have learned to never take a moment for granted. I long for the good old days which were not so long ago. I am optimistic that gatherings and fellowship meals with the Church Body can return someday to the way it used to be. And more importantly in the grand scheme of eternity we in Christ can look forward to the Marriage Supper with the Lamb, Jesus. And we can be thankful our Bible tells us that in Heaven there will no longer be any need for social distancing protocols! Hallelujah!

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. Revelation 21:4