

My healing journey *by Sheryl Hanthorn*

Sheryl and Larry Hanthorn have served at the Newton Prison with Bible studies and Brothers-in-Blue since 2002 when they began volunteering with the Interchange Freedom Initiative. Sheryl became a new board member for New Life Prison Community in August 2014.

I was watching a grandson's ballgame this summer when a phone call came from Rick Admiraal. He invited me to accept a new role in my commitment to prison ministry. New Life Prison Community needed a board member. Would I prayerfully consider this opportunity to serve? It seemed the obvious next step in my journey. It was December of 2002 when I first set foot into a prison. I had been asked by a church member to be part of the worship service by sharing my forgiveness story.

There is no place on earth that I feel more free than when I am worshipping...with the men of New Life Prison Community

Ever since Chuck Colson wrote *Born Again* in 1975, prisoners have been part of my heart's passion. Prison Fellowship is an organization that we have faithfully supported. We traveled to hear Chuck Colson speak in person. We got involved with Angel Tree Ministries. Yet not until 27 years later would I physically go through the security doors and gates, observe the razor wire, hear the click of locks, and walk into a place where my heart would simultaneously feel both profound love and profound fear.

In 1980, my first husband, Police Officer John E. Van Haaften was shot and killed

while on the job. Even though my children and I had healed in so many ways, it wasn't until I was asked into prison that I was able to clearly identify a deeply held fear of the occupants of prisons. So while for years I had loved and supported ministries that served them, I realized my heart was fearful of the real live people that were prisoners. I was double-minded, and God was inviting me into a new place of recognition and healing.



Sheryl & Larry Hanthorn

It is a tremendous privilege to volunteer with New Life

That healing wasn't a fast, easy, or simple journey—but it has been so good! As strange as it may sound, today I can say, "There is no place on earth that I feel more free than when I am worshipping and involved with Bible study with the men of New Life Prison Community." It is a tremendous privilege to volunteer with Rick and Rose Admiraal and to pray and plan and work with New Life in God's strength. I am delighted to serve on the board and learn more about how to love our brothers and sisters behind bars.

continued on back

The greatest gift

by Pastor Rick

Merry Christmas! As we enjoy our loved ones, we'll always remember the greatest gift. God sent His only Son to be born in the town of Bethlehem. In 2 Corinthians 9:15, the Apostle Paul celebrates the gift: "Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift!"

Matthew Henry writes: "The apostle concludes this whole matter with this doxology. Some think that by this unspeakable gift he means the gift of grace bestowed on the churches. It should seem rather that he means Jesus Christ, who is indeed the unspeakable gift of God unto this world, a gift we have all reason to be very thankful for." Inspired by the Greatest Gift from the Greatest Giver, we also become motivated to give. In this season of celebration please consider a financial gift to New Life Prison Community. With your faithful support, we'll keep sharing the Good News of the greatest gift ... ever! If you're inspired to give, please fill out the form below and send your donation today!



Pastor Rick Admiraal

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www.facebook.com/NewLifePrisonCommunity

Give your gifts to New Life

Contributions may be sent to: **New Life Prison Community, 408 Maple St., Pella, IA 50219**

I'd like to donate \$ _____ to New Life to support

New Life Prison Community.

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ADDRESS: _____



Conference in Sioux Falls

by Rose Admiraal

The first weekend in October, Rick and I drove to Sioux Falls, South Dakota, to attend a conference called "Breaking the Chain" put on by New Life Coalition of Sioux Falls and Prison Fellowship. We listened to several speakers share what they had learned about re-entry, mentoring, and ways to minister to the prison population. The executive director of Prison Congregations of America, Mary Mortenson, invited Rick to be part of a panel with other prison pastors. One of the most enlightening events was a re-entry panel, featuring men who were formerly in prison. They discussed some of their challenges as they faced life on "the outside." Rick and I were also able to connect with Pastor Jason Wiersma and his wife Ruth of Living Stone Prison Church (Yankton, South Dakota), as well as share a meal with friends we had made while serving a ten-week internship at Cornerstone Prison Church (Sioux Falls) in 2009. We thank God for the opportunity to learn and share at this conference.

Thanksgiving service

by Pastor Rick

We had an amazing Thanksgiving service attended by 118 men at the Newton Prison on November 20. The praise team sang "New Creation," a song dedicated to the men making a stand for Christ.



Joshua led the way as 11 men were baptized. It was a privilege for me to say the words "I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" before each man splashed down in the water. The last in line, Denny, was overjoyed, saying that he had waited 40 years for this great day! After baptism, Denny expressed thanksgiving: "I wish to thank everyone from New Life. I was truly blessed by my baptism. The New Life family is truly a light in a dark place!"

Next we witnessed five men professing their faith in Jesus Christ.

He had waited 40 years for this great day!

Here are Matt's words: "When I professed my faith it helped me in so many ways. Even though I still struggle, God makes me feel worthy. Thanks to all for your help and prayers."

After we sang more praise songs, I preached a sermon based on Psalm 136. I reminded the men that the Christian life is a marathon of thanks to God. I encouraged each one, emphasizing that baptism is not the finish line but the starting line of serving the Lord. With great joy, we observed the Lord's Supper. Men

Even though I still struggle, God makes me feel worthy.

participated in the worship service by praying, reading Scripture, sharing poems, and singing praises. We concluded with the song "Thank You, Lord." Here are a few powerful lyrics from that closing song: "For all You've done in my life, You took my darkness and gave me Your light." I definitely want to thank the Lord for bringing the Light of the Gospel into a dark prison.

Prayers & praise

by Rose Admiraal

*"Always be joyful. Never stop praying."
(1 Thes. 5:16-17, NLT)*

- Praise God for blessing New Life with financial, prayer, and volunteer support in 2014!
- Praise God for the 11 men who were baptized and the 5 men who professed their faith in Christ this November!
- Pray for the inmates and their families, as they are separated during this holiday season.
- Pray for all the men that have been or will be released soon that they will stay with the Lord and find a church home and employment.
- Pray for the inmates that deal with mental illness and demons within.

Would you like to pray for New Life's weekly needs as a prayer warrior? Send an email to rose@newlife-prison.org

My healing journey *continued from front*

Within days of being widowed in 1980, God gave me Isaiah 61:3 as a life-verse promise that literally sustained me and my children when heartbreak seemed to be overwhelming. In 2002 God would open my eyes to the reality of the first few verses of Isaiah 61 as he called me into prison for the next leg of my healing journey. I am eager to see what lies ahead as God deepens my engagement with the people touched by the ministry of New Life at the Newton Prison.

Isaiah 61:1-3 (*New American Standard Bible*)

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me,
Because the LORD has anointed me
To bring good news to the afflicted;
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to captives
And freedom to prisoners; 2. To proclaim the favorable year of the LORD
And the day of vengeance of our God;
To comfort all who mourn, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. To grant those who mourn in Zion,
Giving them a garland instead of ashes,
The oil of gladness instead of mourning,
The mantle of praise instead of a spirit of fainting.
So they will be called oaks of righteousness,
The planting of the LORD, that He may be glorified. |
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