



ENGAGE / EDUCATE / EQUIP
Annual Report 2019

Me|anoia
MINISTRIES

Mark Casson, Executive Director
Metanoia Ministries
www.metanoiaprisonministries.org

Remember the prisoners as if chained with them – those who are mistreated – since you yourselves are in the body also. (Hebrews 13:3 NKJ)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

Mark Casson
Executive Director

Jim Prieb
Board President

Strategic Highlights

2019 was a wonderful year of expansion for Metanoia Ministries. By the end of the year, we were blessed to have a total of eight full- and part-time employees. The largest area of growth was in the addition of several new Regional Directors: Mark Andrews (NC), Tony Rogers (SC), Barry Smith (TN and GA), and Paul Miller (TX). These all join Tim McCracken, our Regional Director in Central CA. The Regional Directors serve the churches and prisons in their areas, facilitate new mentor ministries, recruit corresponding disciplers, and help churches assist returning citizens with reintegration. We are thankful to God for these Directors.

Financial Highlights

Of all the I've served as Executive Director, 2019 was the hardest financially. We had increased our budget significantly over 2018 and at times things were tight. However, in God's great mercies, we saw more than 20% of our budget requirements come in December, and we finished the year with a slight surplus! We were reminded that we serve the God who is Jehovah Jireh, the God who provides! Year in and year out, God has continued to amaze us with His provisions. We are thankful to our individual donors, partner churches, supporting presbyteries, corporations, and foundations who invest in God's kingdom expansion in the prisons. We ask that you continue to pray that God will supply all of our needs in 2020 and beyond.

Operating Highlights

- We met with the leadership at Leath Correctional Institution in Greenwood, SC (a women's facility) and trained several mentors to lay the groundwork for mentoring with hopes to begin in 2020.
- We met with the leadership at Lockhart Correctional Facility in Lockhart, TX (also a women's prison) to lay the groundwork for mentoring to begin there in the summer of 2020.
- We graduated our first class of MINTS seminary students at Walker State Faith and Character Based (F&CB) Prison in Rock Spring, GA with seven men receiving certificates, three receiving Associate of Arts degrees in Theology, and one man receiving his Bachelor of Arts degree in Theology. We expect to see more graduations in 2020, including some master's degrees.
- In November, Metanoia held its first-ever fundraising concert and silent auction to benefit the ministry. The Quebec Sisters played for us in Chattanooga, and it was a great success! We look forward to future concerts with the Quebecs. They are amazing musicians.
- Between new Corresponding Disciplers (99) and new Mentors (95), God added 194 new volunteers to our ranks in 2019!

Board Highlights

Metanoia's Board of Directors added two new members in 2019: Mr. John Johnston, a deacon at Christ Covenant PCA in Matthews, NC, and Rev. John Theoharis of Atlanta, GA. They join Mr. Jim Prieb (NC), Mr. Brent Andersen (NC), Mr. Mike Peoples (GA), Mr. Greg Musto (GA), Mr. Rodger Jenkins (TN), Ms. Susan Richardson (TX), and Mr. Ron Hickok (CA). We are grateful to God for their oversight.

From a Seminary Student at Walker State F&CB Prison in Rock Spring, GA

"Thank you for your care for us. Thank you for being the light that these men needed in our time of darkness. Thank you for bringing the glass of water that is needed in this desert land. It is your gracious acts that speak to my heart and mind and reinforce the reality of His GRACE in my life. It is in your action, my beloved, that I can see the hand of God and truly say that the gospel of grace belongs to me, even me, a man convicted by the world, but set free by the Savior Jesus Christ."

CORRESPONDENCE MINISTRY

Metanoia's unique discipleship-through-correspondence ministry touched more than 1,400 prisoners in 2019. In addition, we added 99 new volunteer Corresponding Disciplers! As always, many prisoners come and go, but that doesn't change our commitment to providing one-on-one discipleship with church members. We have volunteer Corresponding Disciplers who have been with the same student for five, seven, and even ten years! Just imagine what sort of relationship develops through monthly correspondence over such time. Our volunteers greatly enjoy the studies which help their own Christian walk, and for many of our students, this is the only personal contact they have with someone on the outside who isn't a staff member. Our Corresponding Disciplers are certainly fulfilling the scriptural mandate to "Remember the prisoner as though chained with them" (Hebrews 13:3a).

Metanoia is also blessed to be in our tenth year of a strategic relationship with Ligonier Ministries. Ligonier supplies advanced coursework for prisoners who have finished the Metanoia studies. We offer many studies and tools, including R.C. Sproul lectures on CDs where allowed.

From a Correspondence Student in WA

"Metanoia has made a very positive change in my daily life in prison. It reminded me that even in prison, God loves me through Jesus Christ His Son. Thank you so much, and may God bless you all and strengthen you to continue helping men and women who are in prison."



From a Volunteer Corresponding Disciplex in TN

"Participating in the correspondence ministry through Metanoia is an enjoyable time for me. I could tell that my student was blessed by and appreciated our interaction. I was blessed by reading his answers and comments and seeing his faith grow. Once I sat down to check his work, it really didn't take long to complete. I looked forward to receiving his packet in the mail."

Matters for Prayer

- For Shelly Marshall, Ministry Coordinator, as she juggles everything it takes to effectively manage the coursework and mailings of thousands of booklets each year.
- For more Corresponding Disciplers and more students.
- For long-lasting and deep relationships to form between students and Corresponding Disciplers.
- For our students to grow greatly in their knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

LIFE-ON-LIFE MENTOR MINISTRY

Sporadic visits and one-off interactions in prisons have little potential to bring transformation. We don't do "drive-by" ministry. Our mentors enter into one-on-one, personal relationships with prisoners after undergoing special training to understand prisoners and prison culture. They enrich prisoners' lives through guidance, encouragement, accountability, and love. Intentional, regular visits each month focus on prisoners' long-term spiritual well-being and life skills to benefit prisoners upon release.

Current and Soon-to-be-Launched Mentoring Locations

- Walker State F&CB Prison, Rock Spring, GA
- Hays State Prison, Trion, GA
- Phillips State Prison, Buford, GA
- The Next Door (Pre-release), Chattanooga, TN
- Perry Correctional Institution, Pelzer, SC
- Leath Correctional Institution, Greenwood, SC
- Lockhart Correctional Facility, Lockhart, TX

How You Can Become Involved

Mentoring started in 2012 when a state prison Chaplain asked a Metanoia Board member if his church would be the catalyst to create a mentor ministry at his prison. In 2019, Metanoia trained 95 new mentors in three different states. Contact us if you see potential for your church to launch mentor ministry at a prison near you. We'll evaluate the opportunity, approach prison leadership, provide training materials, and administer all the details. The work is vast, and we gladly work with churches from other denominations.

Mentoring to Date

- 350 mentors (men and women) trained in three states
- 23,000+ hours of mentoring completed over eight years (that's 2.5 years of nonstop mentoring!)
- 500+ prisoners have experienced individual, life-on-life mentoring
- 2.3% recidivism rate for our former mentees (national average exceeds 60%)

Matters for Prayer

- For new mentoring programs to be launched in FL, NC, TN, and TX
- For God to raise up men and women to meet the need of the 150+ prisoners currently waiting to be mentored in the facilities where we operate
- For perseverance for our staff and mentors in faith and service in this ministry
- For the whole armor of God for our volunteers and our staff as we engage in spiritual warfare

Psalm 107:10-16

¹⁰ Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, ¹¹ for they had rebelled against the words of God, and spurned the counsel of the Most High. ¹² So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor; they fell down, with none to help. ¹³ Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. ¹⁴ He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst their bonds apart. ¹⁵ Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man! ¹⁶ For he shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron.



NOTES FROM OUR REGIONAL DIRECTORS



Mark Andrews (NC) - I started with Metanoia near the end of 2019. I presented Metanoia recently at Catawba Valley Presbytery and have upcoming presentations at Eastern and Central Carolina Presbyteries. I have also presented at three churches and seven more upcoming. I have met with two prisons and am exploring whether mentoring might be allowed at the largest prison in NC—Butner Federal Prison. After a slow start, I confess that one of my foremost sins is self-sufficiency. After more time in prayer, God's work was more productive. Pray for me that I would seek God and his ministry goals rather than serving in my own strength, and that God would provide my first prison for, life-on-life, ministry. Also, that God would prepare the hearts of chaplains and church members to partner with Metanoia to minister to prisoners.



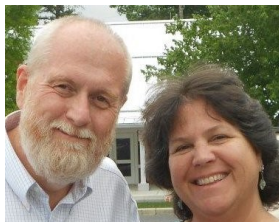
Tim McCracken (CA) - Weekly Bible Studies are offered in 10 locations within four regional prisons near Fresno, CA, but within that same commute range there would be 30 opportunities. In any given week, 60-90 persons attend the studies. The range is wide because lock-down and other interruptions are constant. With 5 of the groups, an additional Discipleship Resource track is offered. With those serving longer sentences, the Discipleship track is geared toward equipping them to be disciplers. For those serving shorter sentences, it is geared toward developing a regular Bible-reading habit, with the ability to understand what is being read. Principle prayer requests include these: the cultivation of area church participation in the regional work, and the cultivation of relationships between still-incarcerated men and churches LONG before release.



Paul Miller (TX) - I am so grateful to the LORD for all that He has done since we began this work last September. In six months, the LORD has blessed us and we have been able to raise about 70% of our budget; I co-led a small Metanoia conference in New Braunfels, TX with Mark Casson. I've been able to preach in prisons and I have spoken in PCA churches about the mission of Metanoia. I had the privilege of preaching at the South Texas Presbytery, introducing them to Metanoia. We have also been commissioned by our home church to be missionaries to prisoners in Texas. That is to list just a few things God has done in the past six months! Please pray that we will have access to many prisons in Texas, that our correspondence ministry will grow, that financial support will continue, and that our new mentoring ministry will be allowed into Lockhart Correctional Facility.



Tony Rogers (SC) - The work is underway and bearing fruit in South Carolina, but it is still in the beginning stages with much to be done. I, am currently visiting churches with a goal to: 1) raise the support needed to go full time; 2) get people to be part of Metanoia's Bible study correspondence ministry; and 3) find people who will pair off with prisoners as part of Metanoia's mentorship program. I am also gearing up to take over the mentorship training classes and other duties from Mark Casson in the near future. May the Lord continue to bless this work for His glory and the salvation and edification of His people.



Barry Smith (TN, GA) - I joined Metanoia and came to Chattanooga in July where I serve as the Regional Director for TN and Northwest GA and the liaison to MINTS Seminary-in-Prison. In TN, I have met with the Director of Faith-Based Initiatives for the state as well as the Assistant Commissioner for Rehabilitative Services for the Department of Corrections, visited 15 churches, met with 16 pastors, made presentations in three churches, and attended a meeting of the TN Valley Presbytery. In Northwest GA, my focus is recruiting mentors for Walker and Hays State Prison. We trained 33 new mentors in 2019. As MINTS Seminary liaison I oversee the seminary at Walker. We graduated 11 students in 2019. Please pray for the correspondence ministry to be promoted in every Tennessee prison, to begin mentoring in at least one Tennessee prison, and for God to provide 100 additional mentors for the ministry at Walker.

A TESTIMONY OF GOD'S GRACE



Greetings, I'm Mark Casson. Serving prisoners comes from knowing Jesus Christ as lover of my soul. He saved me for all eternity from my sinful depravity and hopeless rebellion. Whether "free" or incarcerated, only Jesus saves. Neither the gates of Hell nor the prison gates can prevail against Him. Read the words from our brothers, below. Then prayerfully consider joining and supporting Metanoia. Like the Samaritan who gave extravagant assistance to an injured stranger, Jesus says, "Go now and do likewise." Please join us in God's work of saving the lost and discipling the faithful in prison.

A Testimony from a Chaplain in South Carolina

"I have been deeply involved in prison ministry at Perry and other institutions within SC for 30+ years. I am very confident and comfortable in saying that in all that time, I have never encountered any ministry or program that has had the immediate and lasting effect on the atmosphere and culture of the prison as Metanoia Mentor Ministry. The impact is palpable and quantifiable. The violence and disciplinary actions of the men involved (and in some ways the whole yard) have decreased dramatically. Life within the walls here is easier on the inmates living here but also on the staff. There is less tension and pressure in the air now. That is new and I give much of the credit for that shift to Metanoia. Even the volunteers and the surrounding community have benefited from it and have been permanently changed by it." --Larry Epps, Senior Chaplain at Perry Correctional Institution in SC



P.O. Box 11092
Chattanooga, TN 37401

Metanoia engages, educates, and equips the Church for the discipleship, mentoring and reintegration of prisoners.

The mission field is at our doorstep with 6.6M individuals under correctional supervision (2% of the US population)— including Christians.

Recidivism drops for prisoners who are disciplined, who build godly relationships, and who integrate into caring churches upon release.

Donate to:

Mission to North America
Designate - Metanoia / Casson
PO Box 890233
Charlotte, NC 28289-0233

Contact Mark Casson:

mcasson@pcanet.org
(559) 681-7858

Website:

www.metanoiaprisonministries.org