

*In memoriam of Wayne Welbon, one of our original Metanoia mentees, who passed away from COVID-related illness in 2020. Our loss is heaven's gain.
11-15-1955 -- 9-15-2020*

Annual Report 2020



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 NKJV)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND HIGHLIGHTS

Mark Casson
Executive Director

Jim Prieb
Board President

Strategic Highlights

2020 is a year most of us would like to forget. Metanoia Ministries is normally a mobilization ministry through which we recruit Corresponding Disciplers and Mentors all across the country. In March of last year, we lost the ability for our volunteers to physically go into the prisons, so we changed from mobilization to maintenance. With Churches holding on-line services, we weren't able to visit them to recruit volunteers for the ministries. By God's grace, we were able to add a dozen or so mentors and to add 138 Corresponding Disciplers; however, we didn't add the usual number of volunteers that we do during a normal year. In November I "attended" my first virtual ministry conference in which I did my presentations via Zoom!

Financial Highlights

We had no idea what giving was going to look like in the midst of a pandemic and a global financial crisis in which more than 35 million Americans lost their jobs. By God's amazing grace, Metanoia finished the year meeting our expenses with about \$9,000 in surplus. God met our needs and we are thankful to the many partners we have. Metanoia's income sources include individuals, churches, presbyteries and foundations.

Operating Highlights

- We were able to hold 4 mentor trainings and add more than a dozen new mentors to our ranks in both SC and TN/GA. We also sponsored trainings for The Next Door women's facility in Chattanooga, TN.
- We added about 138 new Corresponding Disciplers to our ranks.
- Metanoia's Regional Directors met with various chaplains in their regions to begin talks about starting mentor ministries. When the prisons reopen, we hope to have new mentor sites in NC, SC, TN, and TX.
- More than 800 new prisoners contacted Metanoia to sign up as students in the Correspondence Ministry. Our Correspondence Course Facilitator received more than 150 new applications in April alone!

Board Highlights

Metanoia's Board of Directors was not able to meet face-to-face in 2020 due to Covid, which was difficult for all. The annual in-person meeting is always a highlight of the year for our staff. The Board extended President Jim Prieb's term to June of 2021, keeping a continuity of leadership during the pandemic for which we are thankful.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for the person who will become Metanoia's next Board President.
- Pray for our leadership as we begin ministering in a post-covid world with all that it will entail.
- Pray for the prisoners. As of March 15, 2021, most prisons in the U.S. remain on some sort of lockdown protocol, with no family visitation and no outside volunteers. They have been this way for a full year!
- Pray for our financial support to remain strong as we enter a second year of Coronavirus and economic uncertainty.

Personal Note

The photo on the front of this report is of Alan Bonderud, Metanoia's former Board President, and his mentoring partner, Wayne Welbon. Alan and Wayne were one of the very first mentoring pairs that met at Walker State Faith and Character Prison in 2012. Over the years, Wayne became family to Alan and he became family to me and a member of our church. All who knew him were saddened by the loss. Our prayers go out to all of those, prisoners and otherwise, who have lost loved ones this year.

CORRESPONDENCE MINISTRY

Metanoia's unique discipleship-through-correspondence ministry touched more than 2,000 prisoners in 2020! In addition, we added 138 new volunteer Corresponding Disciplers. As always, many prisoners come and go, but that doesn't change our commitment to providing one-on-one discipleship via church members. We have volunteer Corresponding Disciplers who have been with the same student for five, ten, and even twelve 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 CO

"I am writing to express my thanks to Metanoia for the extended knowledge and scriptural understanding I have gained since I began the best Bible study I have ever been able to do! I share with other men every chance I get on how much I've benefited from this amazing Bible study."



From a Volunteer Corresponding Disciplex in AL

"We've all heard plenty of sermons on the Great Commission in Mathew 28:18-20. We desire to obey our Lord's command to make disciplers. We are to make disciplers by going, baptizing, and teaching them to obey all that I commanded you. This is why I absolutely love Metanoia. I can obey the Lord Jesus! I go by mail into the prison and build a relationship with an inmate. Then, through the Metanoia curriculum I can facilitate real disciplers--teaching everything the Lord has commanded. Jesus is building His Church through the ministry of Metanoia!"

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.
- For every inmate who sends in their first booklet, that there will always be a Corresponding Disciplex available to them.

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 (Women's), Chattanooga, TN
- FCI Butner, Butner, NC
- Perry Correctional Institution, Pelzer, SC
- Leath Correctional Institution (Women's), Greenwood, SC
- FMC Fort Worth, Fort Worth, TX
- Lockhart Correctional Facility (Women's), Lockhart, TX

From a Corresponding Disciple and Mentor in TN who has been serving with Metanoia for 11 years

"I became acquainted with Metanoia Prison Ministries at a Mercy Ministry Conference I attended in 2010. After hearing Mark, I signed up to be a correspondence Bible study grader/instructor and have been helping prisoners in their studies ever since. [A few years later], I had an opportunity to become a mentor at The Next Door...Had I not met Mark and become involved in Metanoia, I might still have gotten involved in prison ministry, but I would not have had the training, support, and encouragement I received, and continue to receive through Metanoia."

Mentoring to Date

- 365 mentors (men and women) trained in three states.
- 24,058 hours of mentoring completed over eight years (that's 2.5 years of nonstop mentoring!).
- 500+ prisoners have experienced individual, life-on-life mentoring.
- 2.11% recidivism rate for our former mentees (national average exceeds 60%).

Matters for Prayer

- In-person mentoring was put on hold in March of 2020 due to COVID concerns. Please pray for prisons to be able to safely re-open as soon as possible so that fellowship might resume.
- For new mentoring programs to be launched in NC, SC, TN, and TX.
- For God to raise up men and women to meet the need of the many prisoners currently waiting to be mentored in the facilities where we operate.
- For perseverance for our staff, mentors, and chaplains 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.

From a Mentor in TN

"I will never forget my first night as a mentor. My mentee welcomed me with a big smile saying, 'You are the answer to my prayers. I have been praying for nineteen months for a mentor.' WOW, why didn't I volunteer earlier? We hit it off immediately as we shared our lives and the Word. I gave him my time (I was his only visitor), a listening ear, prayer, love and respect. He gave me his deep appreciation, his concerns and trust. He honored me by asking me to be his family at open houses and by calling me his father in Christ. He has since been transferred and I continue to stay in touch. Now on my third mentee, God continues to grow me through this ministry."

NOTES FROM OUR REGIONAL DIRECTORS



Mark Andrews (NC) - 2020 was a difficult year for many as Covid changed the way we live. It certainly changed our ministry to the least of these in prison. When Covid lockdown started I felt like I was beginning to gain traction in my efforts in encouraging church members to minister to those in prison. I look forward to better access to churches and prison as Covid is tamed in 2021. God is sanctifying me, as he always has, greatly through this season when church and prison access is limited.



Tim McCracken (CA) - The virus crisis has required that all work in prison ministry with the believers be done remotely. In all California State Prison facilities, no on-site visitors have been allowed since March, 2020. Since then, fellowship has been maintained each week with nine chapel groups in four facilities, with a core-group attendance of about sixty and with semi-regular attendance swelling sometimes to about ninety. I have written weekly letters of encouragement to about one hundred men all year. Many men respond in writing, and some key connections have been made with local churches. Finally, we were able to develop an introduction to the Bible DVD series called The Whole Bible in Six Sessions and distribute it to twenty-two area chapel libraries. Re-integration has been a main topic of work, and some key resources have been and are being developed.

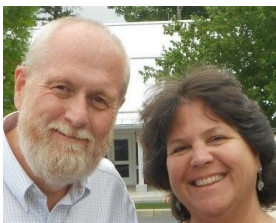


Paul Miller (TX) - Despite COVID-19, 2020 was a very good year for Metanoia Texas. In January and February, I was able to present Metanoia in front of several churches and the entire South Texas Presbytery, both of which have been fruitful in adding corresponders to our numbers. Following the lockdown, I spent time reaching out to inmates, corresponders, and ministry partners. Later in the summer, Spring Cypress Church in Houston became a champion church, zealous to love the prisoner. Following a meeting with the Houston-Metro Presbytery, several Houston churches invited me to speak to their congregations.

More recently, I have been in conversation with the mentoring coordinator of a federal prison in Fort Worth who is excited about Metanoia coming to her facility; moreover, I have had ongoing discussions with a number of chaplains who are excited about inviting Metanoia to minister once their facilities have reopened.



Tony Rogers (SC) - Last year I continued to keep in contact with prisoners through email, written correspondence, and phone calls and finding creative ways to minister to them and help them during the lockdown due to Covid. This year I am looking forward, Lord willing, to the prison's eventually reopening and for consistent opportunities to go into the prisons as well as to speak at churches and gather and train new mentors for the work.



Barry Smith (TN, GA) - I serve as Metanoia's Regional Director for Tennessee and northwest Georgia and as Metanoia's liaison to the MINTS Seminary-in-Prison. During 2020 we pivoted the mentoring ministry at Walker State Prison in Rock Spring, GA to a correspondence ministry (where over 100 mentoring pairs have kept up via letter writing), reestablished our relationship with The Next Door (a woman's transition facility in Chattanooga where mentoring has taken place over Zoom), and have begun preparing to launch mentoring at both a men's and a women's prison at the Bledsoe

County Correctional Complex in Pikeville, TN (where we hope to have 50 mentors ready when the shutdown ends). As for MINTS, at Walker State Prison there are five students who have earned Master of Arts Degrees in Theological Studies from the MINTS Seminary-in-Prison. Two of those men were appointed professors and have continued teaching classes during the pandemic. In 2020 we graduated 13 students with AA, BA, and MA degrees.

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.

From a Former Chaplain in GA

"Metanoia exceeded all of my expectations as a Department of Corrections Chaplain. Too often ministries over promise but under perform. This was not the case with the Metanoia...It is a worthwhile program to have in any institution. The ministries' life-on-life approach provides a platform which promotes change for both the incarcerated individual and the volunteer. I am thankful for the lives that have been positively impacted by the work of this ministry."

From a Deputy Warden in GA

"Metanoia ministries allow offenders to have 1 on 1 relationships that they are not able to have in any form or fashion elsewhere. Offenders are accustomed to quid pro quo relationships and are not used to authentic relationships where the other person does not want anything from them...Metanoia's emphasis on 1-on-1 relationships fill the offenders' time and energy with positive content and conversation instead of negativity."



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 discipled, who build godly relationships, and who integrate into caring churches upon release.

Donate to:

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