



Mentoring Ministry Volunteer Handbook

Last Update: March 2020

**Facilitated by
Metanoia Prison Ministries
of the Presbyterian Church in America**



Primary Contacts

Mark Casson, Executive Director

Phone: [559-681-7858](tel:559-681-7858)

Email: mcasson@pcanet.org

Steven Howell, Mentor Ministry Facilitator

Phone: [314-800-4191](tel:314-800-4191)

Email: showell@pcanet.org

Mark Andrews, Regional Director (NC)

Phone: [704-905-7019](tel:704-905-7019)

Email: mandrews@pcanet.org

Tony Rogers, Regional Director (SC)

Phone: [702-755-3536](tel:702-755-3536)

Email: arogers@pcanet.org

Tim McCracken, Regional Director (CA)

Phone: [559-455-3356](tel:559-455-3356)

Email: tmccracken@pcanet.org

Barry Smith, Regional Director (TN, GA)

Phone: [786-518-6736](tel:786-518-6736)

Email: bsmith@pcanet.org

Paul Miller, Regional Director (TX)

Phone: [214-385-8183](tel:214-385-8183)

Email: pmiller@pcanet.org



What I want to ask you is simply this (though it means tremendously much to me). I've been trying to get a church here in Northwest Georgia to be my home church, because I've been forsaken by all my family and past friends for the entire 28 long years now I've been imprisoned, except for just a short time of "token shows of help" by three persons who did not prove true and lasting....

Letter from Walker State Prison inmate

December 28, 2011



Foreword

Deliberate, long-term, one-on-one mentoring and discipleship of prisoners is foreign to most men and women. Aren't they bad guys getting what they deserve? Perhaps, but as Christians, nowhere do we find that we should forget them. The writer of Hebrews exhorts us to:

“Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering” (Hebrews 13:3).

We understand the very nature of our judgment before Christ in terms of the evidences of true faith: our works of mercy. Prison and prisoners feature prominently:

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. “Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world....I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you....in prison and go to visit you?’ “The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’” (Matthew 25:31-40)

Don't think for a minute that man-made walls and bars, meant to keep prisoners in, can keep Christ out. And do not think that the same Spirit of God that raised Christ from the dead will be constrained from bringing prisoners forth from prisons with great power and might to proclaim Him in their families, cities and churches, to the honor and glory of God:

“The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to

proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.” (Isaiah 61:1-3)

In God's eyes, there is no sin that has been committed by prisoners that is any worse than the sin we harbor in our own hearts this instant. All have sinned and God hates all sin:

“If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)

“...as it is written: “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

“Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive.”

“The venom of asps is under their lips.”

“Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness.”

“Their feet are swift to shed blood; in their paths are ruin and misery, and the way of peace they have not known.”

“There is no fear of God before their eyes.” (Romans 3:10-18)

What then does that make men or women in prison who have given their lives to Christ as we have? It makes them Christians like us. They are adopted into the family of God. They are fellow heirs of Jesus Christ. Their names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life. They are brothers and sisters of ours in Christ. And what is our responsibility towards brothers and sisters in Christ who are hurting? Don't we bear their burdens (Galatians 6:2)? Don't we commit not to abandon each other but encourage one another (Hebrews 10:25)? Don't we have a Christ-given Biblical charter to make disciples as did Paul?

“Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ’s afflictions. Of this church I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the preaching of the word of God, that is, the mystery which has been hidden from the past ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints, to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ. For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.” (Colossians 1:24-29)

Our chosen method of engaging Christian brothers and sisters in prisons, given the nature of the darkness in these places, is to be disciple makers in the context of relationship: long-term, deliberate, founded on Scripture, and sticking closer than brothers. This is mentoring. It is not “content-on-life” like you would get in a small group Bible study. We will practice “life-on-life”, investing ourselves and giving of ourselves like Christ gave Himself to His apostles, and like Paul gave himself to Timothy. This is a well proven model of “making disciple makers” followed by Christians throughout history. We will be the Church coming alongside Christian brothers and sisters in prison to mentor them in Christ.

There is insufficient space in this short monograph to present statistical evidence that transformation of the heart in Jesus Christ, followed by deliberate mentoring, has a dramatic impact on recidivism (the rate at which prisoners return to prison after release). We will settle for the following example. Match-Two (M2), a faith-based ministry, has 39 years experience mentoring inmates. M2 began in California in 1971 as a pilot program in four correctional facilities. By 1987, less than one-third of prisoners matched with an M2 mentor during their incarceration returned to prison. Through the 1990s, seven of ten prisoners who received 12 mentoring visits in a year didn’t return to prison. Let us share a recent letter from one such mentor during that period, concerning his experience with an inmate...

February 29, 2012...

It is a pleasure to talk about my experience mentoring a prisoner in the California prison system. It all started for me with an invitation from the local director of Match-Two (M2), a mentoring outreach ministry, who also was a member of my church. He had heard me talk of experiences I had with the Bill Glass Prison Ministry over several years of going into the prisons witnessing to the inmates. I was told that the M2 program was for prisoners with no local family to visit them and he asked if I would be available for a monthly visit over a 12-month period. Since Corcoran State Prison was only 25 miles away from my home in Visalia, I agreed.

When I arrived at the prison, I was given six or seven applications from prisoners and was told to choose one. I picked a man named Mark. From the outset he seemed to be very cordial. He was pleased to be picked. Little did I know that Mark was a Christian man. He had accepted Christ in a local jail prior to coming to Corcoran. My original thinking was that I could do about anything once a month for a year, so I visited him.

The relationship grew and I would look forward to our visits and the discussions which ranged from Bible beliefs, to living and dealing with problems in the prison system. The visits were so excellent that I told my wife that she probably would enjoy them with me. Prison officials accepted her application to serve with me, and she was cleared to visit. She began accompanying me and sure enough, she was thrilled. Even though my original commitment was for one year, we continued visiting Mark regularly until his release over a period of about 14 years.

It was obvious to us that God had big plans for Mark since he was a model prisoner with both the correctional officers and other inmates. Since his release we have followed his personal growth and development, including seeing his wonderful wife and child become such an important part of his life. As we continue to pray for his family and his ministry we know that God will certainly use him in a mighty way. What started out as a casual once a month visit to walk alongside a prisoner actually helped to change my life. I saw what God can do for someone who, in the eyes of society had committed a



serious crime, and was locked up for a long long time. God made such great changes in this man. He has become a solid citizen.

Only a loving God knew the plans for Mark and today what a marvelous Christian leader he has become of which makes my wife and I very proud of the opportunity we have had to know him.

In Christ's Name,

Vern

Today, Mark Casson is the happily married father of two children, an Elder in his church, the director of the Presbyterian Church in America's (PCA) prison ministry, and the executive director of Metanoia Prison Ministries, a national prison ministry of the PCA.

Indeed, the work of our volunteer mentors is a very high calling. Neither harsh prison conditions, nor training programs, nor educational curriculum breaks recidivism's back as does the Gospel. Through presentation of the Gospel message and the indwelling work of the Holy Spirit, hearts are transformed, and lives are made new. Prisoners who learn and apply Bible-based life skills are equipped to handle extended periods of incarceration living for God and experiencing the joy of His salvation, even while remaining in these dark places. Many more undergo periods of parole or probation well equipped and with a new purpose: living for God in their families and communities with an everlasting hope that only comes by knowing Jesus as Lord.



Table of Contents

1. Introduction..... 9

I. The Need for the Gospel and Discipleship in America’s Prisons..... 9

II. Important Correctional Terms 9

2. Understanding Prisoners 11

I. The Prison Itself 11

A. Living Quarters11

B. Culture.....11

C. Environment.....12

D. Prison “speak”.....12

E. Prisoner values13

II. Prisoner Characteristics 13

A. Education14

B. Drugs/Alcohol.....14

C. Pride15

D. Talent15

E. Normality16

III. Common Prisoner Needs and Struggles 16

3. Mentoring and Discipling Inmates 19

I. What is a mentor and what do they do? 19

A. Mentors are personal.....19

B. Mentors are life-enriching.....19

C. Mentors are teachers and guides19

D. Mentors are encouragers20

E. Mentors are role models.....20

F. Mentors hold their mentees accountable21

G. Mentors are models of love.....21

H. Mentors work to restore dignity21

I. Mentors are disciple-makers22

J. Additional Mentor Qualities and Expectations23

II. What should mentors NOT do?..... 24

III. Mentor Accountability Requirements 25

4. Rules for Engaging in the Prison..... 26

I. Dress Code for Mentors 26

II. Absences & Missing Mentoring Sessions 27

III. Confidentiality 27

IV. Basic Rules for Mentors While in the Prison Facility 27



V. Other Security Matters.....	29
A. Manipulation	29
B. How can you tell if a prisoner is “getting to you”?	30
C. Emergency Situations.....	31
Appendix A – Metanoia Mentoring Ministry Statement of Faith	32

1. Introduction

I. The Need for the Gospel and Discipleship in America's Prisons

According to the World Prison Brief, the United States of America had an incarceration rate of roughly 655 persons per 100,000 people, making it the highest in the world. In total, this comes out to about 2,112,600 individuals currently within the prison system.¹ At the end of 2016, the total number of adults under correctional supervision (includes all persons in jail or prison and those on probation or parole) was 6,613,500—just above two percent of the entire US population.²

Over 10,000 ex-prisoners are released from America's state and federal prisons weekly. More than 650,000 are released from prison every year.³ **According to a report released in 2018 by the Bureau of Justice statistics, roughly 67 percent of state prisoners released in 2005 were re-arrested at least one time within 3 years of release.**⁴

Compelling evidence shows that recidivism is reduced dramatically for persons who are disciplined in prison, have kept bridges to their families, and who are integrated into caring communities upon release. The Church has a role to play in preventing prisoners from returning to prison by honoring God as we engage the Word of Truth—that is, the Gospel, disciple Christian prisoners in the faith, and, by God's grace, be instruments through which others may hear the good news of Jesus for the first time and be transformed.

II. Important Correctional Terms

It would be helpful for all of us to understand these terms, defined below:

- a. Jail** - Confinement in a local jail while pending trial, awaiting sentencing, serving a sentence that is less than 2 years, or awaiting transfer to other facilities after conviction.

¹ Bureau of Prisons et al., "United States of America," United States of America | World Prison Brief, December 31, 2016, <https://www.prisonstudies.org/country/united-states-america>.

² Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Correctional Populations in the United States, 2016," Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), accessed March 2, 2020, <https://www.bjs.gov/index.cfm?ty=pbdetail&iid=6226>

³ United States Department of Justice. "Prisoners and Prisoner Re-Entry." USDOJ: FBCI: Prisoners and Prisoner Re-Entry. Accessed March 2, 2020. https://www.justice.gov/archive/fbci/progmenu_reentry.html.

⁴ Bureau of Justice Statistics. "2018 Update on Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-up Period (2005-2014)," May 2018. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/18upr9yfup0514.pdf>.



- b. Prison** - Generally involves confinement in a state or federal correctional facility to serve a sentence of more than one year.
- c. Probation** - Court-ordered period of correctional supervision in the community generally *as an alternative to incarceration*. Probation can be a combined sentence of incarceration followed by a period of parole and community supervision.
- d. Parole** - Period of conditional supervised release in the community *following a prison term*.
- e. Mentor** – To be understood as a Metanoia volunteer involved in the mentoring program
- f. Mentee** – To be understood as a prisoner involved in the mentoring program

2. Understanding Prisoners

1. The Prison Itself

We can ask the question, “Is there anything special about mentoring a prisoner?” The answer to this question is somewhat complex. In order to answer it, we have to figure out who the prisoners are. Prisoners are a special class of people unlike any other. They have their own culture, language, customs, values, etc. They also live in an environment unlike what we live in out here on this side of the fence. When you are walking out of the prison and back to your car to drive home, you should be aware of what the prisoner is walking back to. Compassion is defined by Webster’s as “sympathetic consciousness of others’ distress together with a desire to help alleviate it.” We need to understand what the environment is for prisoners before we can begin to walk with them as mentors.

A. Living Quarters

Imagine a place in which you live in a box that is about half the size of a small bedroom. In that 7’ x 9’ cell, you have two beds, two lockers, a small writing desk with stool, a sink/toilet combination, and whatever property the two occupants have. Two grown men occupy this space. Most of us have sheds for our lawn mowers that are larger than most prison cells! This cell is in a building with scores of others. There may be several buildings on the “yard”. This yard is enclosed by one or more fences topped with razor wire with towers scattered about manned with armed guards. This is the environment in which prisoners live their lives. Some prisoners live in dormitories instead of cells. Now, imagine yourself a Christian in this environment, surrounded by men who have broken every law known to man. You once were one of them, but now you are a new creation in Christ Jesus. What sort of fellowship does light have with darkness? You can get the idea that prison isn’t a fun place to be, especially so for a Christian.

B. Culture

The culture of prison is dark. Prisons are filled with wicked men who have done wicked things, and many of them revel in their wickedness and in the “glory” of their evil deeds. The Christian, whether a mentor from outside or a Christian prisoner, must walk as light in this darkness. As mentors, we must make sure that we don’t get caught up in this culture and partake of the wickedness that we may find there. The prison culture loves its evil deeds.

Prison is also a culture that is filled with gangs of every flavor (Black, White supremacist, Hispanic, other ethnic, etc.). Most of the gangs are racially based, and the prison culture is highly racist and full of hatred. Other points to think about:

1. This is like a foreign society or sub-culture
2. It can be a very violent place (stabblings, rape, fights, fires, suicides)
3. Prejudice prevails
4. There is no freedom
5. Prisoners are constantly demeaned
6. It is a single sex environment
7. Prisoners operate with constant suspicion
8. All signs of vulnerability are considered weakness
9. “Survival of the fittest” mentality
10. Evidence of what we call the fruit of the Spirit (love, joy, peace, kindness, etc.) are considered signs of weakness

C. Environment

Something that is unique to prison is what some term the “fishbowl existence”. This means that prison is, in many ways, like living in a fishbowl. Everyone can see you at any time and in any circumstance. Even in your cell you don’t have privacy, and this includes when you need to use the toilet. Any person can walk up to your cell at any given time and knock on the door, so you really have no escape from the environment.

Noise is an issue in prison. In the early morning hours, you might get moments in which things are relatively silent. Some men make their own ear plugs to try and drown out the constant din of the prison. Others just get used to the noise and it becomes secondary.

D. Prison “speak”

The language of prison is pretty interesting. What you find there is a mixture of urban ghetto slang, country bumpkin speak, educated institutional language, non-English phrases, and some made up stuff that is quite interesting. Some words or phrases you might hear:

1. “I’ll shoot you a kite” which translates to “I’ll send you a note/letter.”
2. “Homie, Homeboy, Holmes”, which is “close friend” Also used as a greeting.
3. “Wood” which is “white man” Also called Peckerwood.

4. “What’s Poppin/Crackin?” which is “What’s going on?”; “Que Pasa” which is Spanish for “What’s happening?”
5. “Five-0”, which is slang for the police.
6. “Nickel” or “dime,” which are slang for five years or ten years.
7. A stinger is a device used to heat water. It can be manufactured by a company, or a person can make one by using a wire and some razor blades.
8. Mainline refers to the normal prison housing unit.
9. PC refers to Protective Custody, sometimes called “the Hole.”
10. A “car” is a group with which one identifies. “I ride in the Christian car.”

In addition to this sort of unique language, you will hear a lot of profanity and vulgarity. It makes one wonder if some prisoners take pride in knowing every third word they speak is profanity.

E. Prisoner values

The value system of prison is about as backwards as it can be. Prisoners often have a ranking system based on how bad a person is rather than how good they are. So, a murderer is high on the food chain while a petty thief is down low. Think about that for a moment. The prisoners look up to the guy who has done worse deeds and they look down on the “white collar” guy.

With this being said, there are two areas in which prisoners are typically right on track with the outside world: patriotism and family. You might be surprised to find out that a good number of prisoners are former military. Prisoners are very patriotic, including those who are foreigners. Many foreign prisoners identify strongly with their nationality and heritage. Equally strong is the concept of family. Nothing is as sacred as a man’s family in prison. Generally, they are off limits when there are issues between rivals. When something happens to a prisoner’s family member (illness, death etc.) many of his fellow prisoners are there for support. There are many cases in which sworn enemies gave something to help an enemy when something happened to family members.

II. Prisoner Characteristics

When it comes to individuals in prison, you will find everything under the sun. You will find uneducated men who can’t read, and medical doctors who won awards in their field. You



will find athletes and businesspeople, gangsters and hoodlums. You will find men who live on the streets and men who live in mansions. The spectrum is very broad.

You may encounter a wide range of sins that has caused a man to be incarcerated: murder, violence against another person, sexual assault, child molestation, forgery, robbery, etc. We do not ask our mentors if they will or will not accept mentees based on their crime. Neither will we ask mentors if they will or will not accept persons of another race, socio-economic status, or any other category as mentees. We have come to serve all brothers and sisters in Christ who desire a life changing relationship with Christ.

A. Education

Most prisoners are not high school graduates. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 68 percent of state prison prisoners do not have a high school diploma.⁵ You will find persons with nine years of schooling who function on a fourth or fifth grade level. Many men and women will have little or no vocational training and many will have worked for minimum wage, if they worked at all.

While it does not hold true in every case, it has been Metanoia's experience that the longer the sentence an individual has, the more they will work to educate himself in prison. A person who has a two- or three-year sentence typically will not think about getting their GED or other education. But an individual who has 10 years or more is very likely to get his GED and probably some additional education if available. A mentor will encourage their mentee to take advantage of every educational opportunity available to them.

B. Drugs/Alcohol

In February 2010, the National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at Columbia University published a report which found 85% of prisoners either had ongoing issues with substance abuse or were under arrested for a crime involving alcohol and or drugs.⁶ To quote from the report:

⁵ Bureau of Justice Statistics. "Education and Correctional Populations," April 15, 2003. <https://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>.

⁶ Center on Addiction. "Behind Bars II: Substance Abuse and America's Prison Population." Center on Addiction, April 14, 2017. <https://www.centeronaddiction.org/addiction-research/reports/behind-bars-ii-substance-abuse-and-america's-prison-population>.

It is no coincidence that of the 2.4 million prisoners in U. S. prisons, 65 percent—1.5 million—meet the DSM-IV medical criteria for alcohol or other drug abuse and addiction. Another 20 percent—458,000—even though they don't meet the DSM-IV medical criteria for alcohol and other drug abuse and addiction nevertheless were substance involved; i.e., were under the influence of alcohol or other drugs at the time of their offense, stole money to buy drugs, are substance abusers, violated the alcohol or drug laws, or share some combination of these characteristics.

What this means for us is that it is highly likely that you will be mentoring someone who has sin issues related to drugs and or alcohol.

C. Pride

Pride is a sin that has been the downfall of mankind since the Garden of Eden. Pride is a besetting sin that many of us struggle with, but prisoners take to a different level. Many prisoners wear their tattoos as symbols of their pride. Fights and arguments break out when one person beats another in a particular game or sport. Chess matches often look like boxing matches as the two players taunt each other verbally across the board.

Pride is dangerous because it doesn't allow men and women to ask for help. It doesn't allow us to ask for clarification if we don't understand something. It doesn't allow us to lose or to be seen as weak in any way. We Christians know that pride is a killer and a liar, and we must constantly fight against it. Instead let us follow the example of Jesus as described in Philippians 2:5-11: "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Moreover, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

D. Talent

You will find some of the most creative and talented people in prison. This includes artists, musicians, poets, etc. Encourage your mentee to explore and develop their God-given gifts for his glory. If the person is a musician, then perhaps they can play music in the chapel or write songs for God. If a poet, perhaps they can write poems or songs. Artists can draw for God's glory.

E. Normality

Perhaps one of the biggest things that strikes people as odd is that prisoners are normal people like everyone else. We all are sinners. Prisoners are sinners who have committed sins that result in prison sentences. Some of us are guilty of sins which would have resulted in prison sentences in other generations. Prisons are made up of a wide range of people from all walks of life. Mentors must realize that in God's eyes, the sins for which a prisoner was incarcerated is no different than any of us on the outside harbor in our hearts at this instant.

III. Common Prisoner Needs and Struggles

Mentors will want to watch for the times when prisoners may be preoccupied, worried or stressed. It is in such times that mentors are worth their weight in gold. If ever there was a need for a mentor, it will be in crisis times such as these:

1. Going before judge or parole authorities
2. Death or severe illness in family
3. Returning to society
4. Being threatened and fighting
5. Marital and boyfriend/girlfriend problems
6. Times when other important routine life events go on without them (births, etc.)
7. Problems with sons and daughters
8. Sexual approaches

Prisoners have other needs, too. They may differ from what you will find in open society. Understand these needs and you will be able to navigate your way into special enduring relationships.

9. Prisoners need Christian friends who can show genuine concern, without leaving the impression of being "better than you". This friend may be a chaplain, another inmate, or a friend from outside. Seldom will it be a correctional officer. Keep in mind the value of your friendship to the inmate. For many, this is their only outside contact. We must be people who keep our word. We must show up when we say we will. This helps model a Christ-like life.

10. Prisoners need to be taught how to be disciple makers to live the vibrant Christian lives in obedience to Christ's call for all Christians to go make disciples. It is part of who the Christian is and what we are called to do in the Church.
11. Prisoners need people who listen more than they talk and who, through wise and loving questioning, can lead them to explore some alternatives to their problems.
12. Prisoners need worthwhile relationships based on mutual trust, respect, honesty and understanding. Our showing up can stop lives from spiraling down into "institutional nothingness."
13. Prisoners need a realistic plan of self-adjustment to their present situation and future opportunities. The mentoring curriculum we will work through will build confidence in advance of release or transition to another facility (if in pre-sentencing facility prior to sentencing).
14. Prisoners need assurance of the security a believer has, the personal value that they have as children of God and the knowledge that even though they have sinned they have an "advocate with the Father." Much is passed around in the prison culture that is unsound doctrine and very poor practical theology. Good teaching counters that.
15. Prisoners desire real love and want to love others. The non-Christian prisoner needs to know that God loves them, that Jesus died for them, and that God wants them to be a member of his family. They also need to know that you love them. The opportunity to share Jesus Christ with them may not come in the first minutes of conversation. Only the Holy Spirit can convict of sin and convert the soul. You will need to be led by the Holy Spirit.
16. Prisoners need continued friendships among other prisoners. The mentor will have the opportunity to foster a "circle of trust" between prisoners that they will not find anywhere else.
17. Prisoners need to know they can trust you to care for them and that you will not fall for the games they will try to play with you but that you will continue to love in spite of them as God loves us.
18. Prisoners feel victims of injustice. It is hard for many to face the fact that they are personally responsible for imprisonment.

19. Prisoners feel the weight of guilt and dealing with sin (need to admit, repent, humble themselves)
20. Prisoners often come from broken homes with little love or discipline.
21. Prisoners tend to have low self-esteem and cover that with an outward bravado.
22. Prisoners often deal with great loneliness. This may be the first time separated from family and friends; they may have few, if any, acceptable relationships. They tend to seek their own kind in prison.
23. Prisoners often feel frustration and lack of control over their situation.
24. Prisoners often feel fear (courts, family consequences, rape, violence, gambling or other debts, etc.).
25. Prisoners often hold onto anger against law and authority. They have a “them vs. us” mentality, with “them” including police, judges, lawyers, courts, wardens, prison officers, chaplains, pastors, and churches and “us” including all others that have been arrested and imprisoned.
26. Prisoners often hold onto bitterness as their friends and family have forsaken them.
27. Prisoners desire to be out of prison. Now.
28. If they had religious training as children, prisoners often feel God let them down.
29. Prisoners often feel insecurity as believer and are not sure God will hear and answer prayers.

3. Mentoring and Discipling Inmates

1. What is a mentor and what do they do?

Like most words in the English language, mentor means different things to different people. To some the word means teacher. To others, a mentor is a friend who is a bit older. Still others view mentor as a guide or leader of a group. For our purposes, we define a mentor as “A person who enters into a personal relationship with another for the purpose of enriching the other person’s life through their guidance, teaching, encouragement, example, accountability, and love.” Several important characteristics that make up a good mentor:

A. Mentors are personal

The mentor is entering into a personal relationship with the mentee. Personal means that we must take time to get to know the person. We must find out about them. This takes time and effort. It also involves telling someone about ourselves and allowing them to get to know us. When Jesus was choosing His apostles, He called them individually by name and entered into a very personal relationship with them. He knew each of them and they knew him. These men had a different relationship with Jesus than other people had with him.

B. Mentors are life-enriching

The mentor is entering into a personal relationship that is enriching to the other person. While this may seem something that is a given, it bears mentioning here. All too often it is possible to enter into a relationship for the purposes of “fixing” someone or “setting them straight” and such relationships end up being damaging rather than enriching. One of the characteristics of a good mentor is that they are always giving of their time, talent, and treasure in such a way that you don’t realize it. In other words, they take the time to get into the car, drive down to the prison and visit, but never say, “Do you know how much time I’ve invested today to come here and see you?” Enrichment always involves the thing or person being in a better state than before.

C. Mentors are teachers and guides

These two things are very similar, yet worlds apart. It is probably accurate to say that they belong together on the same coin. Teaching is done in various ways and so is guiding, but they are not synonymous. Guiding involves leading and direction. It is a big picture sort of thing.

One could say that teaching involves the minutia. Teaching is instruction; guiding is moving what is taught. Drawing an analogy from baseball, you can teach someone the fundamentals of the game: how to hit, bunt, field a pop fly, and take a grounder and how to slide. This is done through repetition, practice and memory. However, it takes good guidance to lead a team to victory, or a championship. Often times it isn't the team with the best players who win championships. Rather, it is the team that has the best leader who can guide the team through a good start in April as well as the dog days of August. This guide points them towards the right decisions and allows them to use their skills to maximum benefit. A mentor does both the teaching and the guiding. You may teach someone how to go through a job interview or how to eat a three-course meal. You also may guide them towards singing in the choir because they have a gift for singing.

D. Mentors are encouragers

This is one of the most important aspects, if not the most important aspect of the mentor/mentee relationship. We live in a fallen world inhabited by sinners. According to the apostles, we live in a war zone continually behind enemy lines. We are called to fight the good fight of the faith. This world is, with all its beauty and blessing, a cursed place. As such, it can often be a discouraging place. For the prisoner, prison is a highly discouraging place. It's a place where you are reminded every minute of your sin and its consequences on this earth. In the midst of this, the prisoner needs encouragement. The apostle Paul tells us to encourage one another and to bear one another's burdens. We are called to speak the truth in love to one another.

All believers have seasons in which we experience spiritual deserts and dark nights of the soul. However, this is distinct from individuals who are characterized by attitudes of pessimism. We all probably know a person who is Mr. or Mrs. Discouragement—nothing is ever good enough, nothing will ever work out, etc. If you find yourself falling into the former category at a certain point, you can use this as an opportunity to demonstrate faith in the hard times with your mentee. If you fall into the latter category, mentoring may not be for you at this time.

E. Mentors are role models

This is another great characteristic of a mentor. People are often more influenced by what we do than by what we say. We are called to "be witnesses" for Christ. Let us be continually aware that we are being watched by everyone around us, and, most importantly, by God every

second. When visiting your mentee, don't start talking badly about the correctional staff that made you wait ten minutes to get into the visiting room. Don't brag about how you saved \$12,000 by claiming phony donations on your taxes. Don't exhibit rude or sinful behavior. There should be a consistency of character that is seen by everyone. We all have sin struggles. Let us not live as hypocrites but as faithful and frequent "repenters."

F. Mentors hold their mentees accountable

A huge part of the mentor/mentee relationship is accountability. Christians should have accountability partners. This is someone you know well and trust enough to discuss your sins and shortcomings. Our hope is that you will develop such a relationship with your mentee so that he feels comfortable enough to allow you to be their accountability partner. In some sense we are all our "brother's keepers" (see Genesis 4). In other words, we all are accountable to each other as Christians. This concept has lost a lot of luster in recent years, but it is true nonetheless. What does it mean to hold one another accountable? This involves both doctrine and practice.

G. Mentors are models of love

Love is the motivating factor that compels us to be mentors. If you are involved for any reason other than love, then perhaps you should step back and reconsider mentoring. Everything we do ought to be done out of a motive of love: for God and for our neighbor. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:37-40) Mentoring works the best when those being mentored are aware that the mentor has a genuine concern and care for their development & success.

H. Mentors work to restore dignity

Mentors give the gift of self-esteem to their mentees by reminding them of who they are in Christ:

1. We are created in the image of God
2. We have been forgiven
3. We are salt and light in the world
4. We have been crucified with Christ and we no longer live, but Christ lives in us
5. We are a new creation

6. We are dead to sin and alive to Christ
7. We are children of God, adopted as sons
8. We are fellow heirs with Christ
9. We have direct access to God
10. We are indwelt by the Holy Spirit

I. Mentors are disciple-makers

When you look at what a mentor is more closely, you'll find that, at the end of the day, we are talking about a disciple-maker. A good mentor is really one whose goal is to disciple people for Christ. In his book, "The Mentor Leader", Tony Dungy writes, "At its core, mentoring is about building character into the lives of others, modeling and teaching attitudes and behaviors, and creating a constructive legacy to be passed along to future generations of leaders." Mentors help prisoners heal themselves. Teach them how to forgive. Forgiving themselves requires that they admit their wrongs to the people involved and accept the consequences of their own behavior. They pay their debts to their family, their victims, and society by doing their time, changing their lifestyle, and making any needed restitution. Then, help them to accept the fact that they now have a clean slate. Forgiveness is a decision to treat other persons like something never happened, while still holding them accountable for their actions. Accountability is to ensure that it does not happen again. Show them how to stop punishing themselves and start living the rest of their lives as if their moral failures never happened. Prisoners must understand that this may be hard to do. It becomes especially hard when they face unforgiving people who constantly remind them of their failures.

Self-esteem and the feeling of completeness that follows, has four aspects: feeling loved, feeling accepted, feeling competent, and following ethical Biblical principles. Mentors can help prisoners develop self-esteem by explaining who they are in Christ, then giving or showing them respect and acceptance as brothers and sisters in Christ. Helping them to develop areas of competence and teaching them how to practice Godly living will give them the ability to achieve the others.

Men and women will be better prepared to return to their communities as contributing members of society. They not only will become church members; they will improve the churches in which they enter. Men and women leaving via transfer to other prison facilities will be



equipped as disciple makers. Their mission will be to reveal Christ in those places and then to nurture and mentor others themselves.

J. Additional Mentor Qualities and Expectations

1. Mentors prepare thoroughly and well for each session they lead.
2. Mentors encourage mentees to take advantage of every program, Bible study and Chapel service offered at the prison. We will not be doing formal Bible study. We will be modeling Christ and engaging with the Gospel. Formal Bible studies are provided by other volunteer teams at Walker State Prison.
3. Mentors help prisoners deal with guilt realistically. Mentors do not defend their crimes and failures. Point them to the “Great Physician” who can make them whole. Tell them that God’s “Whosoever” includes them.
4. Mentors encourage prisoners about future plans. You may discuss and even facilitate plans for achieving realistic goals such as employment, schooling, and so forth.
5. Mentors challenge mentees to proper attitudes and behavior and expect them to accept responsibility for themselves. They may be looking for others, including you, to do things for them that are his responsibility. This is a natural, but self-defeating, response when one is down.
6. Mentors listen for repetition regarding things that might warrant concern (self-harm, threats of violence, etc.).
7. Mentors are not shocked or surprised at neither are they judgmental of anything told to them in confidence by their mentee.
8. Mentors are authentic and do not put on a façade of any sort. Prisoners are generally pretty good at spotting fakes. What you are and how you relate may mean more than what you say.
9. Mentors are consistent. If you are scheduled to be at the prison on a day and time, please make every effort to be there. Many prisoners come from homes where the parent figures in their life were inconsistent.
10. Mentors treat mentees as they, themselves, wish to be treated.
11. Mentors encourage prisoners to become involved in a church upon their release. This is of the utmost importance in the lives of returning inmates.

12. Mentors are flexible. You might want to discuss something, but the conversation doesn't go that way. That's okay. There will most likely be another time to discuss it.
13. Mentors are patient. It may take a little time to develop a relationship with someone. That's okay. The prisoner may not know how to relate well to others. Expect them to distrust you at first and be patient while they learn to trust you. Expect great things to be accomplished because with God all things are possible! Don't become discouraged if you don't see immediate results.
14. Mentors pray for the mentees, mentors, coordinators, chaplains, staff, etc. Remember, it is God's power that changes lives, not our cleverness.
15. Mentors submit to the rules of the institution. Breaking these rules may result in a felony for the mentor. Observe the rules for visiting and for correspondence. Do not join in criticism of the prison staff or the system by the inmate or anyone else.
16. Mentors abide by all Metanoia Prison Ministries policies. Breaking these rules may result in removal from the mentoring program.

II. What should mentors NOT do?

Given that mentors have a unique opportunity to serve as a Christ-like role model in the lives of their mentees, there are certain activities and attitudes which are unbecoming of a Christian in a mentoring role. While policies vary from prison to prison, the following are best practices to be universally observed by mentors in our program:

1. Mentors do not ask the mentee about their crime. If the mentee wishes to discuss it at some point, that is their prerogative.
2. Mentors do not believe everything they hear from their mentee.
3. Mentors do not give legal advice.
4. Mentors do not enter into any business arrangements with prisoners.
5. Mentors do not give prisoners gifts in person or through the mail.
6. Mentors do not major on the minors. Some of us can get into discussions where we have to make our point no matter what, and at the end of the day, the point doesn't matter that much.
7. Mentors do not think that they have to have all the answers.



8. Mentors do not talk about other prisoners or mentors behind their backs. This can have dire consequences.
9. Mentors do not bad mouth other religious, political, ethnic, socio-economic, etc. groups. As my mother used to say, "If you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything." We aren't there to put down a politician, or a TV preacher, or anyone.
10. Mentors are not there to promote their denominational doctrine. We bring Christ. Do not belabor predestination vs. Arminianism, forms of baptism, eschatology (end times), or other such issues. Remember what has been attributed to Augustine: "In the essentials: unity; in our differences: charity; and in all things: love." There are things Christians must agree on and about which prisoners must learn if they are to have a solid foundation such as the Divinity of Jesus, the accuracy and authority of the Bible that Jesus is the only way to salvation, etc. But we should be gentle when disagreeing.
11. Mentors do not give out personal information such as home address, phone numbers, etc. All mentors are encouraged to use the mailing address of their church as a return address (after conferring with their church staff).
12. Mentors do not think of the mentee as a project. They are Christians who need love, encouragement, kindness, etc.
13. Mentors are not surprised by Christian prisoners who know more of the Scriptures than they do. These prisoners have a lot of time to study and meditate on the word.
14. Mentors don't make promises they will not keep.

III. Mentor Accountability Requirements

As a volunteer mentor at any facility in which Metanoia operates, you agree to:

1. Notify the Mentor Ministry Facilitator of any change in your volunteer schedule.
2. Notify the Mentor Ministry Facilitator of any change in your contact information.
3. Notify your Group Leader if you need to be absent for a given session.
4. Abide by the rules and regulations of the facility where assigned.
5. Notify the Mentor Ministry Facilitator if at any time you decide to take a leave of absence for a certain time.
6. Resign as a mentor volunteer if at any time you are unable to follow these guidelines.

4. Rules for Engaging in the Prison

I. Dress Code for Mentors

Volunteers entering any correctional institution are encouraged to dress comfortably in casual attire and are expected to dress in good taste. Simple decency and modesty without excessive external adornment should be the norm. Wardens will further define these requirements in local policy.

Volunteers will find that most prisons hold to similar guidelines:

1. Clothing shall fit appropriately, and be neither too large nor too small, creating no obvious gaps or exposure.
2. Open toe shoes or sandals may not be permitted in certain facilities.
3. Steel-toed shoes, shower shoes, and flip-flops, are prohibited.
4. Make sure you know the specific guidelines of the facility in which you serve before showing up in shorts or skirts as you may be denied entrance.

Clothing that is not permitted includes:

1. Any clothing that is transparent or translucent in nature;
2. Sleeveless shirts and blouses;
3. Dresses or clothing exposing a bare chest or midriff;
4. Camouflage attire;
5. Worn or tattered clothing with holes;
6. Clothing with logos that contain pictures, slogans, or vulgarity; or contain signs or symbols of security threat groups. The association may be made by color combination, designs, or logos affixed to the clothing, or the manner in which the clothing is worn.
7. Bandannas;
8. Volunteers may not wear excessive clothing such as two pairs of pants or an extra shirt under their top layer of clothing. This prohibition is necessary in order to prohibit the exchange of clothing between prisoners and visitors.



II. Absences & Missing Mentoring Sessions

If a mentor is sick or for some reason cannot report for their volunteer work, they should contact their group leader in sufficient time to notify the prison. Failure to do so is disruptive to the program and especially to the offenders. We understand that flat tires, surgeries, periods of travel, sudden sicknesses, and the like are a part of life. However, we expect all mentors to treat their meetings as a priority. Communication ahead of time, inasmuch as it is possible, is paramount.

Metanoia reserves the right to dismiss volunteers who are repeatedly absent.

III. Confidentiality

Confidentiality is an ever-present issue that concerns both the mentor and the staff. It is imperative that the mentors respect the confidentiality of the verbal and written information about an offender obtained by the mentor. All information shared by a mentee should be considered confidential by the mentor.

However, mentors are mandatory reporters. A mentor must report any information obtained that might involve possible injury to any person (including the mentee) or about any activity which may jeopardize security or safety in the institution. Such information must be reported as soon as possible to correctional officers.

IV. Basic Rules for Mentors While in the Prison Facility

First and foremost, mentors are guests of the prison. Being a mentor is a privilege; not a right. Mentors are there to support the staff and the institution. Keep to your Christian witness before inmates, guards, facility staff and everyone with whom you come in contact at the institution. One of the easiest pitfalls for a mentor is being on the inmate's side "against" the institution. Prisoners will play one individual against another. As a volunteer, your relationship and how you relate to prisoners will be different than staff. Don't undermine security staff because of the role they must maintain. No matter how good your intentions may be the institutional staff knows more about a prisoner than you.

Other important reminders:

1. Arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled entry time.
2. Park only in the parking lot designated and be certain to lock your car.



3. Please leave everything in your car except your volunteer badge (if issued), car keys, driver's license and the materials you will need to perform your mentoring session.
4. Remember to go only to your scheduled service location. Stay with your group and escorting officer at all times.
5. Stay at the facility only for your scheduled and allotted time.
6. Be sure to follow all entry and exit rules of the facility.
7. Alcohol, tobacco, and drugs are strictly prohibited on the grounds of any correctional facility and their possession, on your person or even in your vehicle is a criminal offense.
8. Mentors shall not enter the institution if under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
9. **NO CELL PHONES OR ANY OTHER DEVICES WITH INTERNET CONNECTIVITY (SMARTWATCHES, ETC.) ARE ALLOWED IN THE PRISON.** Bringing in a device with internet connectivity may result in your being charged with a felony.
10. No firearms, knives, matches or lighters are allowed. This includes persons that may have firearms carry permits issued by the county, state, and federal governments.
11. Mentors shall not bring anything out of an institution that you did not have with you when you first entered.
12. All materials that will be used by your group for volunteer activities should be approved by the Chaplain, your Group Leader, or the Mentor Ministry Facilitator prior to your visit.
13. Report any inappropriate behavior immediately to correctional officers and your Group Leader.
14. Mentors shall not attempt or engage in any extracurricular communication by phone with a prisoner. Furthermore, communication outside of scheduled mentoring times should only be conducted through prison-approved means. If you are interested in contacting your mentee outside of your scheduled sessions, ask your Group Leader or the Mentor Ministry Facilitator how to do so.

15. Mentors shall not touch, shake hands, or hug prisoners unnecessarily. You will find that warm greetings will become commonplace. Nevertheless, physical contact is to be kept to a minimum.
16. Mentors shall not enter into a romantic relationship with a prisoner and doing so may result in criminal charges against you. By law, prisoners cannot give consent.
17. Mentors shall not enter into a financial relationship of any kind with a prisoner. Do not send a prisoner money. Do not purchase anything on their behalf. Doing so may result in your dismissal from the mentoring program. If you are interested in donating study materials to the prisoner, please contact the Mentor Ministry Facilitator.
18. Mentors shall not make calls, perform any services, or conduct any business on behalf of a prisoner
19. Mentors shall not have relationships with both a prisoner and his or her family. Any and all potential breaches of this policy must be disclosed to the Mentor Ministry Facilitator. Failure to do so may result in dismissal from the mentoring program.
20. Most importantly, the guiding principle for all mentors is: if you aren't sure, ask!

V. Other Security Matters

A. Manipulation

Manipulation Definition: to manage or control artfully or by shrewd use of influence, often in an unfair way; to “con”. Why do prisoners manipulate? They live in a deprived environment and many will use any means to make their stay as comfortable as possible. Many prisoners view people as a means to an end and as objects to be used and not respected in their own right. Thus, they see themselves as powerful if they are successful manipulators. That was their lifestyle before prison and remains their lifestyle today. It can become a game and a means of entertainment. The following may help to recognize such behavior and to avoid it:

1. Realize that some prisoners will take advantage of you if you let them.
2. Do not do anything you would be ashamed to share with your peers.
3. Keep everything out in the open.
4. If an inmate's actions cause you to raise an eyebrow, ask for advice and assistance.
5. Know the policies and procedures you are required to follow.
6. Learn to be assertive and use the word “No” appropriately.

7. Be aware of verbal and non-verbal messages you send out, particularly body language.
8. Confront manipulative behavior; take action as issues arise.
9. Verify information before you take action.
10. Know your personal and volunteer goals.
11. Understand your value system.
12. Be firm, fair and consistent.
13. Understand your strengths and weaknesses.
14. Realize that prisoners view themselves as victims.
15. When a prisoner is told “maybe”, this often is taken as a promise.

B. How can you tell if a prisoner is “getting to you”?

1. You feel anger towards the system and see yourself as an advocate for the prisoner against the system (losing your professional distance).
2. You often are irritated at officers for delays in getting you to your volunteer site, for not letting prisoners out of their cells in a timely fashion, etc., to the exclusion of considering that there may be valid reasons for delays (for example: a count has not cleared, the officer’s must do several at the same time, the shift is short-staffed, etc.).
3. You presume that staff causes a delay, not considering that a prisoner or prisoners may not assume responsibility for being ready on time.
4. You enjoy hearing stories of how other volunteers are awful and you are wonderful.
5. You begin to think about bending rules for the inmates or take steps to bend a rule for an inmate.
6. You feel a strong sense of pity for inmates, often to the point of wanting to rescue them from the natural consequences of their actions.
7. You feel superior to other helping people or have an inflated view of what impact you can have on an inmate.
8. You fail to report questionable behavior or requests because you do not want to get a prisoner into trouble.
9. You unquestionably believe stories about cruel officers and find yourself buying into the “gossip.”

10. You engage and welcome the prisoner's flattery of you.
11. You are uncritically empathic or sympathetic with prisoners. Prisoners will tell you truthfully and sometimes untruthfully about the problems that they have such as a sick child, a dying mother, etc.
12. You buy into the "us/them" mentality. Prisoners will try to put you and them against the system, especially if they can determine that someone or some organization has treated you unfairly. They will point out a similar thing has happened to them and try to establish a commonality.
13. You have trouble resisting prisoner requests. Prisoners will ask for certain things, some of which may be acceptable and others which may be illegal, to see what you will allow them to do. Prisoners will break minor rules to see how you react.
14. You are overly impressed by prisoner actions or words. The prisoner will suddenly offer favors, do extra work, and be excessively nice and or overly complimentary.
15. You begin to take pride in and be blinded by comments such as "You're the only one who understands." "You're the best teacher, preacher, counselor, etc, I've have ever had." "You're the only one who can help."

C. Emergency Situations

As a volunteer, you will be exposed to the potential for emergency situations. During your orientation, training and certification at the detention facility you will receive specific instructions about how to act in situations including but not limited to: fights between inmates; altercations between prisoners and guards; major prison disturbances, including riots; loss of power; coming face-to-face with a hostile inmate; fire; hostage situations; and contact with blood and body fluids.



Appendix A – Metanoia Mentoring Ministry Statement of Faith

We believe in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament as inspired by God and inerrant in the original writings and that they are the supreme and final authority in faith and life.

We believe in one God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, infinite in being and perfection. He exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, who are of one substance and equal in power and glory.

We believe that Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary and is true God and true man.

We believe that man was created in the image of God; that he sinned and thereby incurred not only physical death but also that spiritual death which is separation from God; and that all human beings are born with a sinful nature.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, as a representative and substitutionary sacrifice, and that all who believe in Him are justified on the ground of His shed blood alone.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of our crucified Lord, His ascension into heaven and His presence there for us as High Priest and Advocate.

We believe in that "blessed hope" — the personal and victorious return of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We believe that all who receive by faith and repentance the Lord Jesus Christ are born again of the Holy Spirit and become children of God.

We believe in the bodily resurrection of the just and unjust, the everlasting blessedness of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the lost.

We believe the believer, having turned to God in penitent faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, is accountable to God for living a life separated from sin and characterized by the fruit of the Spirit. It is his responsibility to contribute by word and deed to the universal spread of the Gospel.