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**Metanoia
Prison
Ministries**



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He Said He Was My Friend

When I came to Walker State Prison, I was broken. I arrived with no support from the outside. When the opportunity arose to get a mentor, I nervously anticipated finally having someone from the outside to talk to. I did not know what I possibly would have in common with a man 15 years my elder; much less that I was an inmate and he a church leader. When we first met, he started by sharing his story, and I did as well the next week. We both realized God had ordained our match; we had so much in common. Early in our relationship, he made me feel comfortable sharing anything with him, and he was transparent with me about his life. My mentor didn't come across as someone who had everything all together and was going to teach me how to get where he is. He shared his struggles, weaknesses, and failures. He cared enough not to sugarcoat anything, but to be honest about his outlook on me and the circumstances I go through.

I have been a pretty private person and have kept a small circle of influence.

So, when he said he was my friend, it took me aback for a minute. I had to think about it and was able to say he is my friend too. I was raised not to show affection. The first time my mentor initiated a hug, I'm sure he could feel me tense up. Now, after being together for five years, I'm comfortable enough that I'm the one who initiates the hugs.

Throughout our time, my mentor talked a lot about his church. I knew the importance of church membership but didn't know how to be part of a church while I was locked up. I discussed it with my mentor, who is an elder in his church, and we began the process of me officially joining his church. Once I had been admitted to the membership, a service was planned at the prison so I could be publicly received. I was amazed. One of the pastors, a music team, and many church members came to worship and celebrate with us.

I immediately began receiving letters from church members welcoming me, offering words of encouragement, and asking how they could pray for me. It's been a few years now, and many still write to me every month. One couple even got on my visitation list and started coming to see me. They now call me their son.

My mentor and my church have promised to be there for me when I get out. God has used Metanoia Prison Ministries to grow me spiritually, provide me with a good friend, a church family, and even an "adoptive" mom and dad. I don't know where I would be without the love and effort Metanoia has shown me.

--Phillip

Comings and Goings August and September

- Monthly orientations for prospective mentors.
- Presentations at three churches and a church small group.
- Weekly Seminary-in-Prison classes.
- Finished teaching a Summer Sunday School at my church.
- Monthly worship services at Walker State Prison. Invited Brian Salter, pastor of Lookout Mountain Presbyterian, to preach in August.
- Meetings with prospective volunteers.
- Approximately 15 to 20 hours a week on administrative tasks for the mentor ministry and the Seminary-in-Prison.
- Preparations for a Seminary-in-Prison graduation in October.

- Mission to North America's Interim Coordinator Steve Dowling and Metanoia National Director Lowell Ivey made a two-day visit to observe all our ministries.
- Continued preparations for our first Metanoia House.



Mentor Ministry Report

- 128 volunteers meet twice a month with mentor partners.
- YTD, there have been 1,400 mentor visits for 2,450 mentoring hours.
- 87 men are on the waiting list for a mentor.

Seminary-in-Prison Report

- 20 students are enrolled. There is a waiting list of 40 men.
- Courses taught in 2026: Biblical Hermeneutics, Christology, Wisdom Literature, Mark, Romans, Biblical Leadership, Apologetics, and Homiletics.
- Courses for the winter term beginning at the end of October are: Acts and Introduction to Reformed Theology.
- 2026 Graduates: Two with Certificates in Theological Studies, five with an Associate of Arts in Theological Studies, five with a Bachelor of Arts in Theological Studies, two with a Master of Arts in Theological Studies, and one with a Doctor of Ministry.

Metanoia House

Metanoia House is a transitional housing program for men and women leaving incarceration. The purpose is to provide a safe and encouraging living environment, disciple residents in the Christian faith, and help prepare them for successful independent living. We hope to open the first Metanoia House in early October. It is for women leaving incarceration in the Tennessee Department of Corrections. We will provide Christian discipleship, a supportive community, life-skills education, and job placement support.

Financial Update

YTD Income: \$78,928.06

YTD Expenses: \$91,995.69

YTD Deficit: **\$13,067.63**

Annual Celebration and Benefit Dinner

For the past few years, we have held a Celebration and Benefit Dinner in September. Friends join us to rejoice in what the Lord has done through our ministries and to consider partnering with our ministries. Typically, that dinner provides 25% of our ministries' annual financial support. Due to scheduling conflicts, this year's dinner has been postponed until March 2027.

Will you prayerfully consider making a donation this month to help make up for what we'll miss because of this year's postponement?

Go to the link below and select Barry Smith in the drop-down menu, or send a check to:

[Metanoia Prison Ministries - Mission to North America, Presbyterian Church in America](#)

Mission to North America

PO Box 890233

Charlotte, NC 28289-0233

On the memo line, write: Acct # 1796-Barry Smith

Health Update

I continue to have chronic pain issues from arthritis in my feet, knees, hips, and spine.

In July, I had prostate resection surgery to deal with an enlarged prostate. It was discovered at that time that I have prostate cancer. However, the surgeon only told me last week. In two weeks, I have an appointment with another

doctor to discuss a treatment plan.

Prayer Requests

- That our volunteers, mentoring partners, seminary students, and donors grow in their faith in Christ, love for the saints, and hope for the future life with God.
- For many more volunteers.
- For adequate financial support.
- For sufficient health to carry out tasks to which the Lord calls me.

Much love, Barry

