

While 2020 is almost behind us, the effects of this year will certainly carry into the New Year. The challenges for our ministry have been significant, but our God is able to provide, even when we cannot always see how He is working. Among the challenges, there were victories as we adapted our approach to raising necessary funds to sustain the increasing amount of work...

New Mentors: **15** Total **-51**; New Mentees: **29** Total **-96**; Families of mentees that we are assisting **-11**; Newly released prisoners released during COVID: **21**; Thanksgiving dinner for **20** families and Christmas provided for **5** families. We also received "In Kind" donations from Northeast Christian, Bernheim Ministries, Kentucky Harvest and many others. We now have around 115 volunteers who assist in many areas of the ministry and two volunteer staff positions: Community Connections Coordinator in Indiana, Mike Myer and Case Manager, **Glenda Wagner**

#### **Programs...**

We are participating in several programs we believe will help us improve re-entry success for our ministry and other organizations that work with returning prisoners. 1) A statewide **reentry group** which meets biweekly with a group of 70 advocates from across KY to problem solve issues pertaining to reentry services. 2) Created a comprehensive "Re-Entry Resource Guide" to help navigate services available to effect a successful return to society. 3) Joined with **Smart Justice Advocates** to help create and launch KY campaign **#LiberationIdentification** bringing awareness to the need of a State issued ID upon release from prison. A video series appears on our FB page at [facebook.com/ThePrisonersHope](https://www.facebook.com/ThePrisonersHope).

#### **Donations and financial support...**

We were able to hold two events this year, GiveForGood Louisville and our First Annual Fairways of Hope Golf Scramble. With the increase in the number of mentees and families needing services, the budget has been strained. Though we have accessed financial assistance available as a result of COVID, we still have a tremendous need for donations of any amount as we serve mentees and families. We know that God is good and we trust in His provision. God bless all of you who have faithfully partnered with us financially as we labor together. Without your help, we could not provide the holistic support that changes one life at a time.

*From Executive Director, Darryll Davis*



"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God. For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ."  
2 Corinthians 1:3-5

What a promise: "That God will comfort us in all of our tribulations."

Lord knows that 2020 has been a year of tribulations and trials. And for those of whom are not in Christ, how sad! That they have no Savior to turn to, little if any hope and no comfort.

The word comfort in Greek is 'parakaleo' and is defined as 'to call us near'. What an amazing thought; that synonymously, comforting us is a calling to be near. I think we can also assess that the opposite is true: that when we shift from that position of close proximity, we become fearful and lose consolation. In fact, I'll take this one step further by saying: it seems to be a natural (fleshly) propensity that when tribulation comes, we tend to move away from God, becoming self-navigating and fearful.

That's not to say that we do not at some point realize and discern that distance and respond, but a priori, we most likely fade in times of tribulation. In His presence is grace, mercy, healing and wholeness. And yet the promise is to comfort us in ALL of our tribulations. The Greek word for tribulation is 'thlipsis', meaning times of affliction or pressures.

Life is full of pressures and afflictions. I pray today that as we feel those pressures and afflictions of life's circumstances, rather than autonomous navigation, we will lean into His call to be near, to be in His presence; that He may console us with an awareness of His presence throughout our day. Coram Deo *Darryll*



**NOT LATE TO DONATE!**

[Donate](https://www.theprisonershope.life) through website visit:  
[www.theprisonershope.life](https://www.theprisonershope.life)



*A Merry  
Christmas and  
Blessed, Healthy  
New Year to All!  
Darryll & Tiffany*

We are in the season of Advent drawing us nearer to Christmas and the closing of a year most strange. What expectations do you have as we journey closer to 2021? A Christmas season with family and friends? I would like that. Some further good news on combating COVID-19? That would be worth rejoicing over. We pray for those things, but they are not guaranteed. Yet this can be a season of joyful expectation. December 1st was the first day of Advent, a Greek word meaning “arrival”. No one is sure of the exact date Advent was first celebrated, but it is observed in many churches as a time of both expectation of Christ’s birth and of His second coming in triumphant glory to claim His bride, the Church. It is celebrated on the four Sunday’s preceding Christmas Day, continuing into December, ending on Christmas Eve. With so many prophecies in the Old Testament speaking of the coming of a savior to redeem and restore, a season of expectation seems very appropriate as we approach Christmas and celebrate Christ’s birth. Here is just one scripture foretelling of God’s plans. “Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel”. Isaiah 7:14 For centuries after Isaiah, the Jews waited expectantly for the Messiah, wondering when the prophecy would be fulfilled. That prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew 1:18-25, as the angel reminds Joseph that his wife Mary has conceived this very child by the Holy Spirit. Here is what the apostle Paul said about the timing of Christ’s birth. “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons”. Galatians 4:4-5

Paul makes four points in these two short verses:

- Christ came at the right time – we often wait impatiently, yet God knows when the time is right
- Christ was born of a woman – not as royalty, but as a humble servant
- Christ was born as a Jew, under the Law – to show that He could live sinlessly and fulfill the Law
- Christ came that we might become sons of God – not to condemn us, but to save us and adopt us into His family.

Paul also spoke of the nature of Christ’s return this way.

“For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord”. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17

Whether you celebrate Advent or not, these words are worthy of our thanksgiving to God as we wait in joyful expectation for Christ to return again.

“Heavenly Father, you sent your messengers to tell of the birth of your Son, that people might believe in Him. Open our ears to hear your call now that He has come, to repent of our sins, and to seek our heavenly inheritance. May we proclaim His holy name until He comes again when we will stand, by His grace, before the glory of Your majesty. Grant this in the name of Your Son and our Savior. Come Lord Jesus, Come! Amen.”



## Working for Reform



Since Governor Beshear took office in December 2019, over 1,800 Kentucky prisoners have been released early. On August 25, it was announced that another 646 prisoners will be released soon, bringing the total to more than 2,500. Any inmate eligible for release must meet certain criteria, according to the governor and Department of Corrections Policies and Procedures. "Eligible inmates include those serving Class C and D felonies who were not convicted of violent or sex-related crimes." The governor also said the state is, again, targeting inmates with "serious medical conditions" who may be at a higher risk of severe COVID-19 symptoms. "Many eligible inmates have 'a relatively small amount of time remaining' on their sentences", Beshear added. But something is seriously missing from the formula: adequate pre-release preparation. Without preparation for what an inmate will face upon release, luck is the only friend they have. The Prisoners Hope is working to take on some of those newly released, but many more are not finding the resources they will need to maintain successful re-entry and avoid re-offending.

In March of this year I was blessed to join a weekly call in regards to issues with navigating reentry through the pandemic. One of the things at the top of my list, and many others, was the ID issue. They were being released without one and no way to get one due to the DMV's being closed; only a KOOL (Kentucky Online Offender Look-up) sheet to use as identification. It has the mug shot and all charges of the said individual. Can you imagine the sheer horror of going for a job interview and handing over that for your ID?

A little over a year ago I joined another group called Smart Justice Advocates comprised of advocates and formerly incarcerated people who work together on problems those reentering society face. We have contributed to changing 3 KY state laws and bringing said issues to the attention of policy makers. As a result, we've created a state wide campaign called #LiberationIdentification, addressing the ID issue. We are bringing awareness to all people through a video campaign, presenting a new video each week in a mini docu-series of the problem and solution. In January, we will meet with legislators in Frankfort weekly to solve the ID problem that is crippling our state and those reentering society. Please watch our Facebook page for the videos and current info regarding this state-wide campaign. Feel free to share with your FB folks and be part of the solution that helps bring change...one life at a time.

"The end game of recovery or coming out of the criminal justice system should not just be rehabilitation; it should be a meaningful return to work." Beth Davisson, Kentucky Chamber of Commerce. Kentucky has one of the lowest workforce participation rates in the country despite a growing number of willing, able, and motivated fair-chance employers. To change this trajectory, we must ensure reentering workers have the most basic requirement for employment—a photo ID.

To me it means life or death. It means whether I'm going to succeed or fail." —LaToyna McNeal. Kentucky needs to provide the most basic tool for successful reentry from incarceration—a photo ID. Without it, our returning community members cannot access housing, employment, nutrition assistance, healthcare, mental health services, nor substance use treatment.

"In 72 hours you really need to get your healthcare set up, you need to find transportation, you need to have a food source, and if you don't have that identification and it takes a month to get it, that 72 hours just went out the window," Lt. Doug Miles, Warren County Regional Jail. Implementing a program providing photo IDs upon reentry is URGENT for returning residents AND for Kentucky.

Kentuckians leaving jail and prison need valid ID to get back on their feet. Warren County has tried it, and the results are clear. Providing IDs gives people the resources to seek housing, healthcare, employment, and more. This reduces incarceration rates, saves tax dollars, and strengthens our communities. "IDs are not expensive, and they don't cost a fraction of what it costs to house someone." - Warren County Circuit Court Clerk



### *Looking Back on Freedom by Jonie L*

Looking back over one year out after serving 14 flat on a 25 year sentence, I thank our God for His protection, provision, strength and The Prisoners Hope. I spent 2 years of my 14 with no sunlight or windows; His Son has been my sun. I lost my family, my freedom, my health, my home. God led me to The Prisoners Hope while incarcerated where they mentored me, encouraged me and my faith grew. God showed up and escorted me out of those prison gates on November 27, 2019!



I left with PTSD, scared of the world, no possessions, no knowledge of a society I was taken out of 14 years ago. I was scared of a hug, when people talked to me I was suspicious of their motives. I couldn't order from a Rally's fast food menu and cried when I tried to make a coke because I didn't know how the machine worked. Every smell made me sick, food made me sick, people talking loud scared me. I had not had a coffee cup, real silverware, a soft pillow or mattress...anything soft and I was so lost. The hardest still today, a year later, was/is housing. As soon as they do a background check, you are denied no matter how much money you make, what kind of person you are and how many references you have.

I really never expected life in society to be so hard but I had my faith and love for Jesus Christ. And He did not disappoint. He was my firm foundation under every step, choice and waking moment. When I sit down on my bed, walk in a store, take a bubble bath, light a candle, feel carpet under my feet, I am reminded of my struggles and how different life is now. I struggle with what I have survived but the horrific reminds me of how blessed I am every single day. I have a new car, am in a committed relationship and a shared faith. I am a year into my job I found through a career center. One year behind me has been an education and update on how things have changed while I was away. Without a doubt, I believe God opened the door to The Prisoners Hope which assisted in my first year re-entry survival and success. For me, and for every ex-prisoner, TPH makes the difference between triumph and defeat.

"And He has said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.' Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me." 2Corinthians 12:9

### *Cheers to Jonie from Selena*

Y'all help me wish a wonderful congrats to my friend for being out of prison a whole year!! She served 14 years flat and hit the ground running from the moment I picked her up on November 27, 2019 and hasn't stopped!! She has a career, family in her life and just purchased a car. From a transitional house worked her way to an apartment and is now seeking a home of her own! I couldn't be more proud of and grateful for her!! You see, she is my first mentee and she helped me fall in love with helping people transition from prison to real life! Since Jonie, I've had the opportunity to work with lots of folks; some make it and some don't. Either way, I get to be part of planting the seed!! Thanks, Jonie! Love you to the moon and back girl!!!

