



MASTERLIFE NEWSLETTER

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MASTERING LIFE IN CHRIST

Give 'em a Purpose and a Platform and they'll Change the Prison System

"What are we going to do today, Brain?"
"The same thing we do every day, Pinky; take over the world." Pinky & The Brain

By James Benoy NCFMP, MasterLife Minister, Nash

While the promises for prison reform and resentencing continue to echo in the hallways of North Carolina's chief officials, something truly awesome is happening at Nash Correctional-prisoner reformation. Yes, it appears that the administration at Nash Correctional have decided to try a new approach to bring reformation to their prison, and the men and staff are beginning to respond. What exactly makes this approach different than others that have been tried in the past? As absurd as this is going to sound, they have found an answer that might not only transform the prisons but effect the recidivism rate as well. They are

displaying trust towards inmates, giving them a platform to exercise their talents and purposes, and training them to help other inmates.

Incarcerated men have talents, ideas, purposes, and dreams of fame & success just like people within society; and believe it or not most inmates have a desire to help others. However, these hopes and dreams get suppressed or were never encouraged and developed in these men. Many men come to prison at young ages and immediately become indoctrinated by survival tactics. They are told, "this is the way you have to think, act, and believe if you want to survive in prison." These ideologies become a way of life for many, thus they cannot function in society upon their release. The talents these men possess are encouraged by negative groups of people and used in negative ways. They do not intentionally become institutionalized and criminalized, rather, the influences are just too powerful for most to resist—especially the youth and first-time offenders. Officers are not allowed nor trained to encourage, show interest or concern, taking part in the lives of the men they oversee, but instead, are taught to address each person in a detached manner, a manner that over time destroys the officer's ability to communicate outside of dictates and commands. Consequently, both groups are being harmed unknowingly.

This edition of the MasterLife Ministry Newsletter consists of testimonies from MasterLife group leaders and participants, NCFMP students, and letters from men who live in the dorm with them at Nash Correctional. Most of the articles highlight Christmas events that the men held within the prison dorms and the experiences they shared.

Other articles:

Explanation of MasterLife Ministries. This explains the goal of MasterLife in the prison systems.

Give 'em a Purpose and a Platform and They Will Change the Prison System. This article gives one opinion on Nash Correctional's approach to prisoner reform.

Poem: Jesus Never Let's Go
by James Kelliher

What is happening at Nash Correctional is combatting negative energy and building up the inmate's sense of self-worth. At first, it was happening only within the new N.C. Field Minister Program dorm. The students in the program were given permission to conduct services within the dorm, make burritos for the whole dorm on Sundays, give

testimonies, and move freely to help one another with school assignments. They had a Christmas party for their dorm that made a tremendous impact on everyone. The administration assisted in whatever they needed to make these things happen. One inmate bluntly commented, "I ain't never seen no guards help us do anything positive." This is the newest and most unheard-of tactic ever used within these fences. Nevertheless, it is working; this year the whole prison has been affected by not only field ministers, but many men in the general population and more staff members are involved in the transformation of Nash Correctional.

Mrs. Lee is known as a stern but fair administrator; an administrator who works hard to advocate and execute programs that build up the inmates. Well, recently she has been promoted to superintendent of programs, a position that perfectly suits her. Because, Mrs. Lee immediately jumped in and did what Mrs. Lee does—transform things! During her first speech to the general population she used words such as "special... community... family", words that brought instant transformation to the hearts and minds of many inmates who have never felt a sense of community or family. Just to recap the first month, with the team efforts Mr. Pulley, Mrs. Chisel, Mrs. Williams, Ms. Ebron, Mr. Ward, Mr. Herring, Mrs. Edwards, Mrs. Knight, and unit managers Ms. Tant and Ms. Webb, and a unified staff of officers, they spearheaded the best Christmas Nash has ever seen: by allowing the inmates to orchestrate a talent show, have a Christmas play, organize individual parties for their dorms, and allowed the outside community churches to come in and minister to the population. What Mrs. Lee is actually doing is not prison reform, but prisoner reform. Building a community; a community where officers don't hate the citizens and the citizens don't hate the officers; And, many are following her lead. Who even believes in that anymore? She does! Because she knows that these attitudes carry on after prisoners are released.

Years of guilt, shame and regret have caused many men to give up on life. If the leadership allows oppression, abusive treatment, and hostile communication to be poured out on top of that, the men under that leadership will unintentionally grow colder and meaner than they ever were before and eventually act out. Many of the men that have been given opportunities at Nash were previously full of shame, regret, anger, and low self-esteem. This new approach has built up the confidence a sense of self-worth which in return has transformed their behavior they

walk different, talk different, and act different. In fact, several officials have commented on how respectful and well-mannered the inmates are towards them. One inmate admitted that it wasn't his attitude that changed, but the staff's attitude towards him that has changed him.

Some may scoff saying, "I wouldn't do nothing for those criminals," but is that really the attitude to have? These men will be returning to society someday, they have children that will emulate their attitudes and behaviors. Do we really believe by continuing to use the "foot on the neck" tactic in criminal justice that our society will get better? It might make some feel better for a moment but in the long run we can see that it isn't working. Look at how many fatherless homes we have, not to mention what our education system is producing. Something isn't working and it is time for change in tactics—Prisoner reform is the answer. Great success has been achieved by encouraging, building up, and giving men a purpose with a platform to execute that purpose; great leaders throughout history know this secret. Others would criticize this idea by proclaiming, "this is absolutely unheard of," "trusting inmates is against policy," "they'll take advantage of this or use it to manipulate staff." This is true to some degree and sounds good to the uninformed voter, however, the indoctrination of our youth by negative influences is still going to continue with or without the approval of the administrations in prison; indoctrination that promotes negative behavior and violence in our youth. And it is obvious that the time and money invested in stopping them is wasted. Administration and staff at Nash are training up men to go out and teach others that they do not have to conform to the ways of the "prison codes" to survive. If this attitude spreads to other superintendents, there will truly be a prisoner reformation throughout the state of North Carolina that will benefit future generations and possibly decrease the recidivism rate.

Certainly, one can give many justifiable examples as to why we should "lock 'em up and throw away the key." There are, indeed, many terrible people behind these fences. Does that deem them all as menaces to society? No! Good cops get a bad rap by the media because of the actions of a few bad cops, but does that justify the idea that we should rid society of all cops? No! The fact is, there will always be evil men in the world, our job is to try to reform and disciple/mentor as many as we can, not throw away a human life because we are mad at them. Programs such as Nash's Field

Minister Program have already proven this idea actually works.

Warden Burl Cain began a seminary program in the most violent prison in the nation—Angola. Within just a few years, that prison was transformed from the worst prison to the best prison. It all started when he became the warden and his mother told him that he was "responsible to God for the souls of those men in that prison." What? Angola is a Lifer prison. He could have just brushed off that comment, but he didn't; instead, he took it so seriously that he has dedicated his life to implementing this program in every state in the nation. This program gives "lifera" a purpose and a platform to disciple other prisoners, prisoners who go out and disciple others. Cain's decision to step out and make a difference had powerful consequences, consequences that have impacted the individual inmates as well as their families and the history of prison reform in America. Furthermore, the light he has shined on Jesus' teachings on forgiveness, restoration, and discipleship begs the question "why are Americans afraid to put Christ's teachings at the forefront of our education and penal systems again?" It works!

Prison is not so bad when you have a Christ-centered purpose and a platform to express that purpose. One might credit all of this to a variety of sources; however, the spiritual eye can clearly see the source of transformation taking place is Jesus Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Yes, through much prayer and supplication the Lord is moving at the Nash facility, and He is using people that He has cleverly disguised as administrators, officers, volunteers, inmates, teachers, nurses, psychologists and many others who are behind the scenes donating and pushing policies. I say cleverly disguised because if you ask them why they are doing what they do, most will respond: "Because, I am a Christian!" They have their purpose and their platform too!

The Spirit of Christmas Alive at Nash and Growing!

By Kenneth Nichols, Nash 2-C block

When God moves on the heart of man, be it free men or men locked behind fences,

amazing things happen! Last year (Christmas 2017), James Benoy had a burden on his heart that no one at Nash could have dreamed possible to execute—to have a Christmas party in our block. I didn't believe it would be allowed to take place inside the walls of a prison, but he claimed to have done this at every prison he had been housed at for the past twelve years. Well, it happened, and that's proof that when the hand of God moves, all things are possible for anyone even behind these walls.

Because of the faithfulness of men like Benoy obeying the leading of the Spirit of God combined with God's grace and hand at work in the hearts of the administration, the doors were opened to allow the most amazing transformation ever. The hardened hearts of these men were changed into the most joyful and peaceful attitudes I've ever seen. I must conclude it would be an injustice to call this a "Christmas party." I am left with no option other than to call it a "Christmas Transformation Event" (C.T.E.).

Last year Benoy plowed the ground and planted the seeds, this year the fruit of his labor and the other men in the seminary who labored with him produced not only one block C.T.E., but this year there were three blocks being blessed by a C.T.E.! Allow me to add that this totals 240 inmates, staff, and all being exposed to the love of God being poured out on us all. For my block, James was the Christmas pasts this year because he moved to another block. So, this year I tip my hat to Marcus Burnett for stepping up to the task. Marcus was instrumental in facilitating and structuring this year's C.T.E., but not without help. There were so many of the new cohort of seminary students who labored in all of these events, giving of their time, money, prayers, and most of all the love of God that they all shared will never be forgotten!

This year's event lasted all day and well into the night on Christmas eve. We had cookies, games, prizes, coffee, men laughing, smiling, and coming together in fellowship. There were men that I have never seen smile enjoying themselves, having fun and laughing—the hardest hearts melting!!! TO GOD BE THE GLORY!!!

I want to thank Travis and the Master Life Ministry members, the newsletter team, Benoy's family & Friends, and all the ex-cons who are contributing to this ministry. TO my brothers in bonds, "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh."

Just want to say "Thanks"

By Rodney Whitaker—Nash 2-B, A.K.A. Bobby Boo-shay

Look, you guys have done something for me that nobody has ever done before, I mean never. And I am very appreciative for what you have done. I have been in prison for fourteen years and I have never experienced anything like what yall did last night. All day was very good. Forgive me because I am crying a little as I write this. You know, both my mom and dad are up in age; momma is about to be sixty-eight I think, and daddy is about to be seventy-one May 14. A couple of weeks ago my daddy has a mild heart attack and was in the hospital. When he told me this, I cried real tears. My momma and daddy can't send me no money cause I owe the state \$1800.00 for past write-ups and sick call appointments, also a court case that cost me \$700.00 to process. Look, yall, meaning you seminary guys, blessed me Monday night, I was crying with tears of joy. This is the best Christmas I have ever had on state. I want to thank you guys for helping me with the things that you have given me. I ain't got nothing, nothing at all and yall know it. I feel like I am nothing! I need help, spiritual help. Yes, I know Jesus, yes, I love reading His Word and doing these Bible Studies. I learn a lot, but I don't have what yall have. I need a lot of help, help, help from someone who knows how to show me and get on the right path. It is very hard for me. I still have issues from my past, and I don't want to think about this stuff. Please, please, please help me you guys, to stay on the right path. It is very hard for me. I want to tell you guys thank you and I really do appreciate yall and being in the dorm with yall and all that yall give me. I love you all very very much. Thanks for the coffee which I love very much. And the ten stamps per month that one of you gives me so I can write my family. I also send off my Bible studies. Some of you help me out when I am hungry. I will never be able to pay yall back. Just want to say thanks to Larry, Barry, Benoy, James Kelliher, Hambone, and everybody! Yall are Grrrrrrreat! And this is to Johnny Bullins for being my friend. You are a real blessing. Thank you buddy! You have come a long way. I have a way to go in my walk with Jesus. Please keep me in yalls prayers and I will keep yall in mine. Thank you Jesus!

Jesus showed up and Showed out!

By Kirston Angell, Nash

Well, we whooped another year, I am grateful that we got to take it out with another MasterLife

Christmas party. It's amazing to see the power of Christ at work. First, I would like to thank Walt, Scott, and Jon Daniels who have once been confined behind these walls at one point in their lives. These men further developed their relationships with Jesus while incarcerated, and now they continue on as disciples in obedience to the Great Commission (Matt. 28: 18-20). I mention these men because they—along with a few others—are supporters, financial backers, and prayer warriors for MasterLife ministries that are active here at Nash Correctional and various other institutions around the state. THANK YOU GUYS for all the love and support! They are the ones who made the Christmas parties possible. I pray a special blessing over you and yours.

A common comment heard throughout night was, "Man, this is the best Christmas I've ever had in prison," and sadly some even added "at home too." To paint the scene for you; Many people gathered early in the morning to start fellowshiping and decorating the block and the tables that would be used throughout the day. Many men drew placemats for the tables, hung up artwork all around the block, but it was Michael Benoy and Timothy Russell who went absolutely bonkers with decorations! (At one point there may have been some confusion on what was and was not allowed to be decorated, and long story short, the law called the law on them, but it was quickly cleared up and all was well) These two took 108 total yards of dental floss, about 85 Christmas ornaments, and they strung them up from the blocks exercise machine to both of the stairwells, then they ran the sting to the big center pole in the dayroom. It looked awesome, and I got some free floss after the party!

The party actually started about 5:40 p.m. with a random drawing for trivia teams/tables. Once all ten tables were formed and everyone was seated brother Charles Young brought a powerful gospel message. Young appealed to the "I am" statements of Jesus—as well as other biblical

text—showing that Christ is God; moreover, he showed all of us why Jesus is worthy to be worshipped as the sovereign Lord, King, Creator and Sustainer of the universe (see Col: 1:15-21; Phil 2:5-8; John 1:1, 14, 18). It was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. After Charles closed us out in prayer, the trivia game cranked up. Team "White Christmas" won the bout after an hour and a half of questions, commands to sing as a table, and a wall squat completion that set each table chosen participants legs to quaking. The eight-man team split up a one-hundred-dollar prize bag. Our good friend and Nash News photographer Caddell "Monty" Kivet came up from unit one to run the trivia game for us, which we greatly appreciate. After trivia there was a short intermission where three different types of burritos was passed out to all in attendance. While the food was being passed out, brother Dustin Green ran four games of bingo, which paid out five to fifteen-dollar prizes for each bingo. At 9:00 p.m. the reins were turned over to brother Anthony Smith, who was in charge of the orchestration of the talent/art show. He introduced many participants, and offered prizes for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place finishers in the talent show, and a 1st place prize in the art show. In combined total these prizes added roughly to \$100 bucks! As for the acts, Twan had everybody cracking up with the recounting of his "Dorothy Dix" mental hospital experience. DI and Jay told some jokes of their own, then Lucas Gentry gave a rendition of some "Easy E." Rodney Whitaker created a custom version of "Twelve Days of Christmas," and Def Jam (a deaf inmate in our dorm) danced like he had played in "Stomp the Yard," but it was Lucas Rash who stole the night with a performance of his original song called "The King is Coming!" Rash was aided by me (Angell) and Aaron Estes. All three of us wore black raincoats, states boots, and sunglasses. Estes kicked the song off with the chorus, and he kept the drum beat while I coaxed the guitar riffs out of my acrylic painted custom cardboard "Dime bag Darrel Abbott" signature lightning bolt guitar, which was complete with "Q-tip" frets and floss strings! Rash sung like he was Jon Bon Jovi, and at one point he screamed "Repent!" while ripping open his raincoat to reveal a bare chest painted with flames!

After the talent show the night came to an end with everyone cleaning up the mess we made, and a few words that were spoken by James Benoy. Benoy pointed out that the nights festivities were not done for his glory, the seminary programs glory, MasterLife's glory, but for the Glory of the Lord Jesus. I personally would like to thank all the administration who allowed us to hold this party and make it possible. Thank you, Ms.

Lee, Ms. Ebron, Mr. Pulley, Ms. Tant, Ms. Webb, and last but not least all of the officers who deal with us each day. May God richly bless all of you in a special way this coming year. I also would like to say that I am grateful for the opportunity to organize and administrate this event. It was a great learning experience.

Dear MasterLife friends and family,

There has been yet another successful Christmas gathering here at Nash to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior. However, I would like to speak to you all about an aspect of our world (the incarcerated) that many people may not be aware of. First, the simple act of giving and sharing freely, with no ulterior motives, is pretty much unheard of in prisons everywhere. Although I will admit there is an exception to this concept which is usually homeboys looking out for homeboys. At some point even the homeboy that is breaking bread will expect his homeboys to participate in some nefarious deed eventually. Second, it basically boils down to our environment being a dog eat dog world, and in my seventeen years of incarceration that is exactly the experience that I have witnessed.

In my seventeenth year of incarceration, here at Nash as a participant of the North Caroline Field Minister Program and as a participant of the MasterLife Discipleship Program it is the first time I have witnessed men generously and without complaint sharing their finances with other men without any ulterior motives in mind or without expecting anything in return. These men are doing this simply to spread the Gospel message and the love of Christ to other men. Not only is it great to see this type of fellowship in prison, but it also inspires and motivates me to be a better man. For years I have been saying how much worse prisons are going to be in the future, but now I believe that there can also be a major shakeup within the hearts of men in prison which can in turn change the environment making prisons safer and more of an environment that men can thrive and grow in to better prepare them for when they get out.

Speaking of getting out. There are men getting out of prison every day that promise their homeboys or the so-called friends they've made that they are going to do all sorts of things for them. Rarely do these people do what they say. However, I would like to mention three men who have gotten out and continue to help ministries and men in prison. So, let's send a huge shout-out of thanks to John Daniels, Scott, and Walter.

MasterLife family and friends keep these men in your prayers as they continue to support ministries and men inside. Also, I would like to give a special shout-out to the Benoy family and Travis M., and MasterLife family keep them in your prayers as well.

With the love of Christ, **Justin Walker, Nash**

Drawing Closer to God at Nash

By Hollis D. Stinson, Jr.—Nash unit 2-B

Well, I do not really know how to do this testimony writing, so I'm just going to start writing and let God do the rest. I am new at this prison thing; I have always feared the worst and here I am at sixty-seven years of age.

I had been participating in the Master Life group for four weeks when all of a sudden, I was transferred to Lanesboro Correctional. Oh, what a difference!! But I took what I had and what the Lord has given me, and I made the best of it. I witnessed to a whole block of brand-new people whom I have never met before. Within a week I had made 80+ new friends who were curious about what I was studying and what I had learned. WOW-GOD is good! Three months later I was transferred back to Nash Correctional with the old Master Life group again. And, of course, I re-entered the Master Life group in block 2-B.

With thanksgiving just around the corner, I noticed something different at Nash. First, they fed us a great meal...oh what a meal. And then the seminary students had a Christmas play for the whole camp. Another blessing. I laughed until I cried. I also loved the message of the play, for it had many parts. Acting, singing, and witnessing. These guys really out-done themselves hands up Praise God! That's not all...

The MasterLife guys and the seminary guys gave a Christmas party to glorify God and honor the Lord Jesus unlike anything I have ever seen. They fed us, had games, gave out prizes, fed us again, had more games, and more prizes. Then, they had a talent show with comedy and testimonies to all of us. A great thing to share.

I, myself, have enjoyed the MasterLife Discipleship program. It has helped me become more close to Jesus than I have ever been in my whole life. I now have Jesus at the center of my life and am learning how to let God use my life to bring Him glory.

I would like to thank Kyle Triplett, James Benoy, Larry Doyle, Lynny Barbour, Charles

Young, and the rest of the guys in the Master Life and seminary programs for all of their hard work they have done while still handling their studies and their major exams. May God bless you all. I thank God and Jesus for each and every one of you. Praise Jesus and glorify God in the Highest!

"Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. 3 For the LORD is the great God, And the great King above all gods" (Ps. 95:1-3).

Expressing Gratitude

by Hoss Flowers, Nash, Unit 4

I would like to send a special thanks to the Master Life guys for a special Christmas. They and others held a Christmas party in unit four C pod on December 22 that was a blast! We got to eat (which is my favorite thang to do 😊) play bingo and had lots of fun. Thank you MasterLife guys for making this Christmas a special one. Also, a big thanks to Mrs. Barber and her staff for being so kind to allow us to hold this party. Most of all, BIG THANKS TO GOD for touching their lives so that they could touch mine!

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised!

By Richard Dowless, Nash Unit two

We at Nash greatly praised and lifted up the name of our Savior highly during this holiday season. We had a great Christmas celebration with all of the Spiritual fireworks. It was a real blessing to be a part of it! And to witness so many yielded vessels laboring together for the Lord in one area. It had a tremendous impact on all the guys in unit two! Praise God!! In closing I want to give a shout out to my 1988-89 co-laborer pastor Tim Jones; keep pressing towards the mark my brother- Prov. 11:30.

Recently we had our second Christmas Block party here at Nash Correctional with an even greater turn out than last year. The following day I was asked an important question "what makes someone do such a thing?" He was referring to a few men who provided their own finances for the whole block to have a wonderful Christmas party. This particular brother who asked this question had not long rededicated his life to Christ and never seen anything to what he was witnessing here at

Nash. Hence, I turned my attention to him and said, "it's the very same thing that drives you day in and day out in sharing your food and things with everyone else. The love of Christ is what compels you. Every day I look at the joy on your face when you have given either half or all your food away and you're not happy unless you provide for someone else or display God's love."

Many years ago, when I came to prison, I was abused physically, psychologically, and emotionally. I said no more and begun to put on a mask when out in public, while not allowing anyone to take advantage of me in any shape or form. Yet, this Christmas I met this particular young man who thinks he isn't that bright, when in my eyes he is quite intelligent. He has taught me what it truly means to give, love, let the walls down, and just be myself. You see, he thought he was learning something, when all the while it was he who was teaching me. Never will I forget this Christmas and the impact this brother has had on my life.

We can all learn from someone, even those who seem to not be as smart as others.

Grandma Gladys told me once that a child can teach a parent a lot about loving. Paul said it best, "But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong" (1 Cor. 1:27). Without Jesus I do not know where I would be today. I know this very truth; He will use anyone to get you where you need to be.

Loren Hammonds, Nash

Nash Christmas

By James Kelliher, Nash

Living behind a prison's razor-wire fences is difficult enough, but even more so during Christmas. On Christmas, the separation of incarcerated individuals from their loved ones is compounded by the reality that this infliction is self-created. A "prison" Christmas is summarized in a different meal, pining for loved ones and the freedom to be with them, depression, stress, and a heightened state of tension due to various expressions of self-loathing lacking a healthy outlet. Can anyone really blame those who bury their pain beneath the sheets and blankets, seeking an escape from these realities in sleep's embrace? However, something surreal surfaced at Nash Correctional Institute,

disturbing the status quo of the "prison" Christmas.

Christmas is representative of the birth of Jesus and convicted cross-carrying Christians recognized the opportunity to display the love and hope they have in Jesus with others. While the format at Nash was a party (one with three burritos per person, tang, candy, cookies, a trivia game, a talent show, art show, bingo, and a series of prize giveaways), Jesus Christ was the true reason as Charles Young would explain in his sermon "He is worthy." Young read Luke chapter two, explaining how the angels came to worship the birth of the Savior and the Shepherds did likewise while proclaiming Jesus' arrival to the world. From this foundation, Young took the audience to second Philippians in order to reveal seven reasons why Jesus is worthy of adoration: 1. Because He is God; 2. Because He left the heavenly glory for earth; 3. Because He gave up independent authority for submission; 4. Because He gave up divine attributes; 5. Because He lived as a poor, lonely human instead of the rich king He is; 6. Because He took on sin, leaving a favorable relationship with God the Father for wrath; and 7. Because Jesus provides worth and meaning in salvation for the unworthy (adopted from The MacArthur Study Bible). Christ is the reason for breaking the "prison's" Christmas status quo.

MasterLife participants and Field Minister Program students are honored and grateful for the opportunity to serve; any chance to walk out the faith and alter the normal prison environment is a true blessing. Seeing the joy and hearing the laughter of all completes the twostep mission: Spread the Gospel and alter the status quo. One individual— who will remain anonymous had tears well-up in his eyes when he awoke late to the transformed prison block, one of decorated tables, strings of Christmas ornaments, art work, and free cups of coffee, "Dude, I didn't know where I was or what to think. Seriously! I went to sleep-with no idea-to get up to all this."

When most prisons in North Carolina are taking activities away and suspending privileges, Nash is going in the opposite direction. Such a difference is possibly only because of who is steering the ship: Ms. Lee and Ms. Tant. A special thanks to them and the shift staff for granting MasterLife participants and FMP students the opportunity to alter the status quo. Thanks to the population for the honor to serve them. For all those who served and donated (Benoy, Anthony, Dustin, Charles, the many cooks, food servers, and Mr. Trivial [Monty], thank you for exercising your gifts for a higher calling and purpose.

Continuing On

By Jonathan Ramirez, Nash

Christmas is almost over brothers. As we do every year, we appreciate James Benoy, family and friends for organizing and spend his money on this party. But as soon as January arrives, we forget about the meaning of Christmas and what it means to be a Christian. I know that Christmas is important date for many. I really enjoy it. This last party I laughed for three hours. But later on, I started to think about my situation and my family. I want to encourage you brothers after this special season to continue with your faith and commitments as Christians. We can celebrate every day for our salvation. We can rejoice every day in the Lord. It is very important to continue learning about our Lord and master. Even though we have struggles and problems, we need to keep Christ in the center of our lives. We need to focus on our goals when we are alone and pry for God to do amazing things for those who have faith in him. The Christmas party was a blessing, but brother remember that only one can bring peace into our lives. Christ. The eternal Savior God. Merry Christmas Brothers

Gospel Re-Directions

By Devon Carter, Nash

Hello, my name is Devon Carter and I am member of the North Carolina Field Minister Program. I know the guys that knew me in my prior life would find this hard to believe. I am a living testimony that God has a plan for all of our lives. His grace and mercy extends to all. I want to tell you brothers that I have become a new creation in Christ Jesus! I hope my personal testimony will enrich the lives of others." So, with much love here I stand before the thrown of our Heavenly Father. To God be the Glory! At the tender age of nineteen, I was sentenced to life in prison. I was a child in need of direction and sought acceptance in the midst of other directionless kids. As I came to prison, I felt alone and scared. I had no idea how I would "do time". My family was left feeling broken by the outcome of my trial, left searching for healing and restoration. My grandmother, who was raised in the church, continued to emphasize the importance of prayer. At that time, I felt as though God had abandoned me and that I was without his love. My family could have been categorized by a series of statistics. Teen pregnancy, my mom had me when she

was sixteen years old. My father is a three-time felon and has been in and out of prison my whole life. During my first year in seminary I was blessed to be a part of a New Testament course, where I learned in the book of Luke, that Jesus came to preach the gospel to those so-called statistics. The ones society saw as undesirable or of little worth. God has used my life and the life of my parents as a means to show off his awesome power and love. My mom, dad, and sisters have come to be saved. We participate in family discussions centered around the teachings of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Gospel has provided me and my family with a peace that surmounts all other peace. The Prince of Peace has poured out his love on the whole Carter family. His divine stewardship has sustained us through the death of my grandad and the heartache of separation of family due to incarceration. The word of God has taught me that, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Phil. 4:13). This year has been filled with many revelatory moments that have strengthened the faith of me and my loved ones. I am standing patently waiting on God to reveal to me the abundance of his love. We are too blessed to be stressed, to anointed to be disappointed!

REDEEMING THE TIME

By Michael Benoy, Nash

I sat watching Alice in Wonderlands – Through the Looking Glass with my brother last night and heard a statement that caused me to consider another aspect of time, how it is measured, how it is perceived, and how it is spent. What is its value, cost, and redeeming qualities? I came out with a clearer understanding of my roll in free will, predetermined – free choice, predestined creation. When you add:

TIME + CREATION = (PRODUCT?). Answer: LIFE.

Add LIFE + PREDESTINATION = PURPOSE.

Add PURPOSE + FREE WILL = DECISION.

DECISION + CHOICE = CONSEQUENCE.

Alice, looking for a way to save her friend stole the element of Time from the Keeper of Time, in an attempt to change the past. After realizing that changing past events in time undermines the free will of the people to cause those events, she would ultimately be

taking away their predestined purpose to make choices and fulfill their individual role in Time's predetermined path. Her result? Stopping time, freezing creation, and destroying life. She returned the element of Time to the Keeper of Time with this comment: "I'm sorry I didn't listen. I used to think that time was the friend of no man. Now I realize that time is more than a friend, it is kind and loving. Always giving before it takes. One second, one minute, one moment at a time ..." she went on to talk about cherishing every second and making right decisions in each moment she is given.

Whatever "doing time" meant in the past doesn't apply anymore. You see, I witnessed something this past Christmas that is nothing short of predestination occurring, as a result of men and women living out their purpose, by making right choices in the right moments. The consequence? An absolute blessing from God, the transformation of a prison dorm into a micro-cosom of Whoville on Christmas Day.

A party like no other, with games, trivia, singing, acting, story-telling, and worship. A huge meal, gifts, jokes, laughing, crying, handshakes, and hugs. No man's face or heart displayed anger or disagreement – more than 80 men (hardened criminals if you believe such absurdity) softened by responding to the Spirit of God, joined together to decorate a prison, and praise the birth of Christ. I've even been blessed to spend the holidays with my brother and enjoy an extremely rare opportunity to see him on the mission field, making disciples of men and helping them Master Life through Christ with the MasterLife discipleship study.

How could all this happen? Not only in this dorm but in several others in various institutions across the state? There are literally hundreds of people involved and thousands of dollars! (I'll tell you what I believe – know, "Whatever ye ask in my name, ye shall receive..."). A family of MasterLife volunteers and graduates, inside and outside of these prison walls, giving of their time and money, resources and talents... an administration of prison officials responsive to the Spirit of God and displaying faith in His word to prosper anything that glorifies Him... unabashedly stepping forth to cherish each second, make the right decisions in each moment, and allowing a group of condemned men to repent and do those very same things, restoring their free-will, giving them a purpose that glorifies God. WOW!

Just look at the consequences of these actions. Thank you Jesus for these men and women.

An Encouraging Word

By Craig Williams, Nash

Dear MasterLife Alumni,

Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ, our blessed Lord and Savior. Praise be to his glorious grace, we've made it to a New Year (Happy New Years to all of my brothers and sisters by the way). I thank God for the MasterLife groups here at Nash. We had an awesome time this past Christmas. So many attended the Block Party in Unit-2 and had a ball. Gifts were distributed, Bible trivia took place, shared snacks, games, and had prayer. A great number of guys expressed experiencing the love of Christ from the Christian community and Seminary students. All to the glory of God. My personal and special thanks goes out to the Administrators here at Nash: Interim Superintendent, Mrs. Hawkins, Superintendent of Custody, Mr. Pulley, and Superintendent of Programs, Mrs. Lee, for allowing us to conduct such a life-changing affair, which is a positive investment in the lives of men. Also, James Benoy, MasterLife facilitator, Marcus Burnette for having a servants' heart to conduct the party in our block (C-Block), along with everyone who contributed. You guys are the real difference-makers. Thank you. The Lord bless you all.

I hope everyone has enjoyed their holiday season and are now looking forward with great anticipation to all the wonderful opportunities that life in Christ Jesus has for you during this new year. The Apostle Paul encourages in his letter to the Corinthian Church, "What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind can conceive—the things that God has prepared for those who love him" (1 Cor. 2:9). This includes you brothers and sisters. You are the apple of God's eye, and he delights in you. If you can only begin imagining, and allow that to spark your faith to believe, God can and will do exceeding, abundantly above all that we can ask or think. So, tell your soul to be encouraged, and put your hope in God for great things this new year. Trust and obey him (for obedience is better than sacrifice) and watch God be God!

Remember, we are all connected regardless of where you may find yourself, because we are one body in Christ. Know that you are not alone. You are in my thoughts and prayers. May the Lord bless your life in many amazing ways this New Year in Jesus Name, Amen.

To all my Caledonia friends, Love you guys. Stay encouraged in Christ. Continue to contend for the faith that was entrusted to you, as you continue to entrust it to faithful

men and women who will do likewise. Chaplain Tysor, we hope you drop in to see us soon—you and Chaplain Hardison.

Greetings from Christmas

By Zeek, Nash Unit Block 2-C Block

To all my brothers and sisters in Christ, I pray that everyone had a blessed Christmas and that we all were able to remember what this time of year is all about. This is my first Christmas here at Nash and I must say that it is one I will never forget. This Christmas I was blessed with being a part of orchestrating a Christmas party for the dorm that I reside in and it was awesome to see the joy in the hearts of so many men. I have seen the faces of men light up when their name was pulled to receive a gift, the mood in the block was great as we played bingo, trivia and, corn hole. I have been in prison for twelve years and this was not like anything I have experienced behind these walls. I know now that no matter how little you may have God can take it and bring joy and blessings to someone else's life. This Christmas I experienced a great thing, I saw men who are not believers stand hand and hand with believers and pray and give thanks to God in Jesus name because of the love of God that was shown to them, not for recognition or vain glory but all to glorify Christ and build relationships. I don't know how much longer I will be confined to this prison, but I know that I will give my all to see this joy on the hearts of men who society has given up on. I thank God for what he is doing here at Nash and other institutions, I thank him for all of my Christian family, and I will continue to pray that lives will be transformed in this place, sometimes all it takes is something that we see as so small.

God Bless you Bro.

Sharing Love

By Thomas Johnson, Nash

On December 22, my Master Life group and I got together and showed the love of Christ. We took eighty burritos and ten state cakes and brought smiles and laughter to the unit where we live. Afterwards, we played some bingo which brought about some peace and joy. Personally, I have been in prison for fifteen years and I have never seen this much love displayed in one place in prison.

God Word says, "Dear children, let us not love in word or tongue, but with actions and in truth" (1 Jn. 3:18). I believe that we displayed this love to our dorm for Christmas.

Christmas in Unit 4- C Block

By Chuck Atkinson, Nash

I'm certain everyone is aware of the Christmas party that took place on 12-22-18 in unit 4-C block; a Christmas party organized by the Master Life group. What everyone might not be privy to is that because of the efforts of a few men housed here in the block was this party possible. It was through their financial contributions and labors to put this party together that made it possible. As most will agree, the Christmas/ New year holiday season can be very depressing and lonely due to the isolation from loved ones. I'm thankful that because of these few men, I was able to escape these feelings and feel the relief that I am not alone—even if only for one brief night. Thank You guys!

Seven Extraordinary Christians

By Rodney Liverman Sr, Nash

On December 22nd, 2018, an incredible event took place in C-Block on Unit 4 at Nash Correctional. A Christmas party was held by inmates for inmates. It was filled with three hours of food, games, name pulls at the top of each hour for prizes, and much fun.

The food, prizes, and games were either bought prepared, or made by inmate sponsors. A group of seven extraordinary Christian inmates sponsored the event out of their own pockets. The food and prizes were bought and prepared from the canteen. The games were made by hand. A lot of love, time, and work were put into this event---and it paid off.

Defying the prison norm, these seven gentlemen followed their hearts and brought together a block of 84 men with different backgrounds of color, religion, creed, and nationality. That alone is a remarkable feat worth acknowledgement. As I looked around the block on that special night, almost everyone was in fellowship with each other—laughing, talking, and joking around in all

modesty, myself included. So yep, I really enjoyed this event. It was a sight to behold and one with a lasting impression of Jesus' glory in those seven men's heart. Jesus' love for thy brother is real.

Christmas Anywhere

By Justin Moore, Nash

I have always known that no matter the situation we find ourselves in Christmas for a Christian can be celebrated anywhere, because it's not about being around family and giving gifts that makes Christmas special. Now please don't misinterpret what I'm saying; I would love to be with my family for Christmas, but for Christians the birth of our Lord and Savior and the hope and love given to all mankind is the reason we celebrate. That's Christmas, and that's why we can celebrate from behind prison walls, apart from our family.

God has reminded me of that very special point this year. At a party given by God through the MasterLife group in 4-C, I was given a chance to see Him work in the lives of men all around me. I witnessed this work while the brothers and I served burritos, state cakes and popcorn to everyone in 4-C. A Christmas story about the birth of Jesus from the Angels' point of view was read at the table. Afterwards, the guys enjoyed three hours of fellowship and Bingo.

Where there is usually depression, loneliness, and despair at this time of year, God filled the men of 4-C with laughter, fellowship, and most of all, Hope. The face of every man was alive with it. God was able to show us once again the true meaning of Christmas. "And the Angel said unto them, 'Fear not; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great Joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.'" (Luke 2:10-11).

Merry Christmas

The annual MasterLife Christmas party here at Nash Correctional grew exponentially this year. Last year one block had a party this year, four blocks had a party. MasterLife has been approved for the entire compound and begins in 2019, the Seminary school is growing and flourishing, non-believers are being converted. God's power is being made manifest among men.

All of this should encourage us in our work.

However, when God's people glorify Him, Satan kicks his forces into overdrive. The day after the Christmas party there was a fight in the dorm. Six days later an inmate committed suicide. These things can be very discouraging. It can feel like all of the effort put into Ministry and Christmas parties is for naught. But these thoughts are the work of Satan as well. That's what the devil wants. He wants us to be discouraged and say "What's the point?" Well, there can be no doubt that one Christmas party isn't going to change the World. It's not even going to change the penitentiary. But one Christmas party is a start. And we have to start somewhere.

So just because Christmas is over, that doesn't mean the war is. Satan is going to work harder and harder to stop what God is doing. That means God's Army is going to have to fight longer and harder. Yet be encouraged brothers, we are fighting downhill—because the victory is already ours.

By T.D. Russell, Nash

One Atheist's Christmas

By Phillip Vance Smith, II, Nash

I am an atheist. I have studied many faiths, but I do not follow any religious doctrine or god. I have always believed that if we want our lives and our world to be better, our compassion for other human beings will make this possible. I have encountered faith that could make me change my mind.

On December 22, 2018 I saw my principle of belief come alive when a few prisoners from the MasterLife hosted a Christmas party for the seventy or so men in our cell block. Five of them pooled their money and handed out homemade burritos and slices of what we call state cakes (honey buns stacked and iced with Oreo cookies) to everyone. After we ate, forty or fifty men pulled up chairs in front of the block where the MasterLife group put on ten rounds of bingo. Each round had a stuffed prize bag, and luckily, I won the first one.

Seeing such a diverse group laughing when they filled a spot on their card or huffing when someone else hollered "Bingo" was a nice change from the prison norm. The MasterLife guys pulled off the unthinkable, they gathered a group of guys together who would otherwise walk right past each other without saying a word. It was a great night... even if I had to spend it in prison.

I have no intentions of believing in a god, but the men who participate in the MasterLife program gave me a reason to believe in them and the compassion they share for others.

Love in Action

By Jonathan, Nash 4-C

We have the word "love" thrown around a lot; but, to see it actually put into action really opens one's eyes. On December 22, I was experienced that genuine love firsthand, in action. The MasterLife group in unit 4-C block, allowed themselves to be used by the Lord Jesus Christ, to show His love to others. By having games, burritos, candy, popcorn, and cakes for everyone in the entire dorm. People from every background came together for fun and fellowship. It's amazing how when one allows the love of Christ to flow freely through them to others, there is no bitterness or fussing, it's just simple fun! I praise God for that and give Him all the glory!

I Stand Corrected

By TJ, Nash

I've been in prison for fourteen years and I ain't never seen nothing like this! Yeah, I've heard a lot of these prison Christians talk a good talk and play the church game. But, what I witnessed on December 22 caused me to rethink my position towards some of them. These guys actually put action to the talk!

About six months ago, I watched them start this little MasterLife group in the dayroom in 4-C block. I thought to myself, this won't last a week and they'll be fussing and cussing at each other. But, I stand to be corrected, not only have they continued without a single problem, but they have actually added new members to the group since that. I am truly amazed.

But, that's nothing to what really amazed me. On December 22, these guys came out of pocket and blessed the whole dorm with burritos, cakes, popcorn, and prizes. They had bingo and it was like a Christmas on the street. I still can't get over it. I used to be negative towards jailhouse Christians, but after seeing what these MasterLife Guys did, I'm gonna rethink my position on this. There is a verse that says to be a doer of the word and not hearer only— these guys did that. I respect that! I ain't ready to give all to the Lord, but I believe in Him. I know need to change my ways soon—pray for me.

MasterLife Christmas Party

By Joseph Bromfield, Nash Unit 4-C

Greetings to everyone in the name of my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For those who are reading this MasterLife newsletter, which is now coming upon a new year. Praise the Lord! Thanking him for another year and for the year that just passed with its many blessing. That's right, blessings, but not only the blessings lets thank you for the trials and testings that we were able to overcome as well. Those trials and testings came to make us grow and become strong in Christ. May we continue to grow in our knowledge of his will for our lives. Especially for those of us in the MasterLife program that has now been established here a Nash Correctional. I thank the many brothers and sisters in Christ who helped to establish the program here at Nash, and I will not mention them by name for I know that they do their works for the glory of Christ. You're probably wondering now: Who is this person writing this? My name is Joseph and I am coming up on three decades of being incarcerated, which is a long stay, but I can still praise the Lord. This past year was a blessing in the fact that some people were not blessed to be able to see the year 2019. I give my condolences to those who have passed. I want to say that unit 4 c block was blessed to bless the entire block over the Christmas holiday. There was the sharing of the birth narrative of Jesus Christ, the Savior of those who call on him. The main delight of the evening was coming together and sharing the love, joy, and peace of fellowship, and a couple hours of bingo. There were 10 games played with one in ten being the "cross" bingo and those who won got a bag of goodies. There was ice cream given out in between the bingo games. Everyone who played had a blessed time even if they didn't get to "bingo" for the win. What do I have to say about the evening? To God be the Glory! What they got was love, joy and peace from the fellowship of the brothers and ultimately the love of God. As for 2019 may you all be blessed and grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus. If you are reading this and you don't know Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior, you can come to personally know him right now if you will confess that you a broken sinner and asking for forgiveness for you sins. In doing so you will become a new creation. You are now a born-again believer! I can tell you from experience because I have been where you are, and I am now a new creature in Christ. To God be the Glory! There is no better life to live. Happy New Year to you all! Merry Christmas

If Nothing Changes, Then Nothing Changes: the two-fold solution

By James Benoy, Nash

Once again, the men in the North Carolina Field Minister Program came together in the Spirit of Christmas; and with the help of others in their dorm they created an atmosphere of love, joy, and peace on Christmas eve—all in the name of Jesus. What took place is unheard of inside of a prison dorm, but for the second year these men accomplished what some would say is impossible. Seventy-five out of the eighty men in Unit 2 B dorm participated in: decorating the dorm, wrapping presents, an art contest, team trivia game, talent show, bingo, door-prize drawings, the preaching of the gospel message, and a feast of food. The fellowship was great, the singing and laughter was amazing, and the camaraderie caused many to forget that they were in prison. The dorm party was not the only event held by NCFMP; Anthony Smith wrote, directed, and executed a Christmas play; a Christmas play that poured out the true love of Christmas into the hearts of the entire NCI population. Several men commented that they have been in prison for years and never experienced anything like this before. Even the officers were astounded by what they witnessed taking place. The thing that has made this year different than last year is hearing that other dorms picked up on the idea and had a party of their own. The love has spread throughout the institution and many men will never forget their Christmas experience at Nash Correctional. One might ask, how is this possible at some prisons, yet others remain so violent and full of despair? The answer is simple—Jesus transforms. However, the underlying issue is two-fold: First, it takes at least one inmate who is willing to step out and go against the grain. Second, it takes an administration that is willing to drop political correctness and give inmates an opportunity.

At Nash, superintendents Mr. Pulley and Ms. Lee believe in incentive for good behavior. Because of their approach, they have gained the respect of the inmates and the institution runs more smoothly. They are also willing to implement the ideas of the inmates and give them a platform to express their talents and ideas. This creates purpose and a sense of self-worth in the inmates. If you give a man a hope and a purpose in life, a change of behavior and attitude will occur. Of course, it takes more

than excellence in leadership; there must be a shared vision at every level of the administration; this is where Nash truly excels. Ms. Chisel, Ms. Williams, Ms. Edwards, and Mr. Herring, along with other staff members are quick to assist in anything positive that the inmates initiate. Ms. Tant and Ms. Webb are the unit managers for unit two, and their dedication to their unit goes above and beyond their job requirement, and the men know it. As a result, they are respected and held in high esteem by everyone. Without their help, the Christmas event would not have been as successful as it was. With the help Mr. Ward, Mrs. Knight, Mrs. Edwards, Mr. Howard, and Ms. Chisel; Mrs. Williams orchestrated a talent show that cannot be compared; they put a lot of time and dedication into the Nash talent show, that did not go unnoticed by the inmate population. Great leadership knows that respect goes a long way and makes all the difference. They have earned it among the population at Nash Correctional because of their willingness to open up avenues of opportunity for the population.

Not only does it take a special kind of administration to create change, it also takes inmates who are willing to step out and do something. But this takes a heart that is willing to be selfless, serve others, and handle opposition. Maybe they have an idea that will benefit the institution, maybe they have talent. Whatever an individual has, he must be willing to use it. Be like the persistent widow that kept asking the king until he finally granted her what she wanted. Some of the men at Nash that have stepped out: Charles young teaches a daily Bible study and brings a message weekly in the dorm; Larry Doyle, Kyle Triplett, James Benoy, John Brant, Justine Moore, John Williams, John Reese, and Mike Kollman lead Master Life groups in their dorms; Anthony Smith writes and executes plays & talent shows; Tim Johnson, Christopher Jacobs, Tim Russell, and James Kelliher assist people with their school work; Dustin Green did a bingo game for his dorm during the Christmas party. There are also those who write articles and do interviews for the Nash News. Many men have stepped out to do something positive for the institution and they take it very seriously. This is the answer to why it is better at some institutes and bad at others; men with a purpose are encouraged to utilize their talents.

It is proven that this two-fold solution is the key to creating a successful prison environment. The problem with executing this idea lies within the attitudes of the heart: if administrators aren't willing to question political correctness, policies, and attitudes;

and inmates aren't willing to get out of their comfort zones and go against the grain and be willing to risk persecution; it does not matter what is done: If nothing changes, then nothing changes! Yes, someone will always come along and do something to mess things up, that's life and this is prison. It is easy to lock down the institution and write the men off as savage criminals. However, these savage criminals are people with issues; issues that with a little help and encouragement could possibly be transformed into the fathers, sons, and husbands they were created to be. The Nash administration recognizes this and continues to move forward, and Nash Correctional is changing—Glory be to God!

Explanation of Master Life Ministries

We have been asked, "What is Master Life Ministries?" MasterLife is a discipleship program that teaches us to change our character into Christ-like character, change our values to kingdom values, and involve us in God's mission in the home, church and the world. In short, we are learning to "MasterLife through the power of Jesus Christ." Avery Willis wrote and designed the original MasterLife study; however, in the material he continuously stressed teaching the material "in one's own words." This study has been restructured by inmates into a twelve-week program especially designed to focus on incarcerated men within their context. The mission of the program is to teach and equip men within the prison system to effectively disciple other men. This is done by discussing various ideological belief systems, by teaching Christians "What's next?" in the Christian walk, by witnessing through building relationships, and by exercising spiritual gifts within the body of Christ.

There are many men "on the yard" (general population) who will not come to church because of their ideological strongholds, belief systems, and perceptions of Christians within the system; and their incorrect view of "jailhouse religion." These men have been indoctrinated by gangs, convict-codes, creeds, and false religions. Satan has blocked them from even considering Jesus as the answer to their problems. These men are hurting, lonely, lost; some of them have grown mean, hostile, and bitter throughout the years; others are angry at God and have completely given up on ever having a life of love, joy and peace that Christians have through the Lord Jesus. MasterLife focuses primarily on these men.

Many men are believed s in Jesus yet have never been taught what to do after they become Christians, so they never really grow or gain victory over the sin in their lives. MasterLife teaches how to have a "quiet time"; how to pray, how to hear God speak to us through His Word what God says about our friendships and fellowshiping in the church, and how to effectively witness to others. MasterLife helps these believers get 5 refocused on Christ and learn to gain victory in their daily lives.

There is a wide gap between the Church crowd and the other men within the system. Many times, the church crowd doesn't get involved with these men because it might cost something; maybe they want to avoid the problems that can often come with dealing with some of them. Then there are some who honestly do not know how to reach out or witness. Maybe they lack the confidence needed. Master life creates a platform to build relationships with these men, and it teaches some very important skills for witnessing and bridging the gap between the church crowd and the men on the yard.

Another important thing MasterLife Ministries does is to create purpose and allow faithful brothers to exercise their Spiritual gifts. There are only a few positions within the church at each prison, the chapel clerks and the choir. These are great places to be used by God and are needed and appreciated; however, what about the rest of the body? One of the greatest things that can be done for a man inside these fences is to give him a purpose; a purpose that enables him to actually help others. MasterLife creates more opportunities to be involved with serving and advancing God's kingdom together. There are several avenues that MasterLife Ministries has created for men to be involved: First of all, once a brother has completed the program, there will be opportunities for him to be a part of the next program as a helper. There are group facilitators and assistants for each group, there are set-up teams, attendance records that have to be kept, and ushers to greet men coming in Next, there is a newsletter that is printed two or three times per year. One can submit a testimony, an article or scriptural insight, a shout-out or prayer request, make their own regular column up, or any idea created that will edify the body of Christ. The newsletter is designed for the men to stay informed with the growth of the program and gives opportunity for ministry. Finally, the MasterLife Ministries organization is open to new ideas that one may have to add to the prison ministry edition. Through this, men are able to

exercise their gifts and talents, learn to become responsible and faithful, learn to work together corporately in unity, and builds confidence and a sense of self-worth. Having purpose in life is the key to transforming the prison environment and for success as one reenter society.

The next benefit that is gained from participating in MasterLife is learning how one can start their own version of MasterLife. By the time one finishes the program, they are able to go out and start their own program using the tools gained. The idea is not to duplicate or memorize the exact program, but to use the principles and teach it in your own words, according to your context and experiences. This material and information can be used to disciple others in the dorm, on the yard, in visitation or on the phone. Whether it be a one-to-one study, small scale class, or a large program, one will know how to organize and execute a successful discipleship program. Whatever area of Spiritual growth one might need help in, MasterLife offers help; help that will transform your character into Christ-like character, your values into kingdom values, and involve you in His mission in the home, church, and the world. Most of all, for the incarcerated, it gives a platform to get in the game and serve the Lord Jesus Christ behind these fences.

A Courageous Disciple, Part 3

by John Reese, Nash

It takes more courage to be right than anything else. It certainly takes a lot of courage in this hour for the disciple to stand up for truth in the midst of this atmosphere, where everything is becoming the church and where the churches are joining with others in playing down the real doctrines of God. The courageous disciple must stand up against this. Cheap grace is being sold in the marketplace like cheap jacks were. The sacraments, forgiveness of sin, baptism, and consolations of faith are thrown away at cut rate prices. The modern church preaches heaven without a hell, communion without discipline, church membership without fruits of righteousness, and when caught up in the tide of cheap grace, the church refuses to proclaim the whole council of God, for fear of offending those worldly souls who cheapen the grace. These people will grace the church on Sunday morning, claim to be disciples of God, yet will live like the devil on Monday. It is this cheap grace which you and I must have

the courage to stand up against. The church must say to such people, you cannot live like the devil and have God working in you. The disciples were not afraid to lift their voices against such mockery. Their dedication wasn't to success, it was to Jesus Christ.

Grace is represented as a church's inexhaustible treasure from which showers of blessings without asking questions or fixing limits. We dare to print books and call them Bibles that only contain the promises of God, no one has a right to claim a promise of God when that promise is taken out of context. For instance, in Exodus 15:26 you have, I am the lord that health thee, but God is not man's Lord or healer if he does not obey the first part of that verse. He said if thou wilt diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord thy God, and wilt do what is right in His sight, and wilt give ear to the commandments, and keep His statutes, I will put none of these diseases upon thee, which I have brought on the Egyptians, for I am the Lord that health thee. You have no right to quote the last part of that verse, unless you quote the whole of that verse. If you do not obey God, He is not your Lord and He will not heal you. Cheap grace does not fix limits, it does not place the responsibility upon the believer, it says, just come and accept Jesus as your savior, then live anyway you like. The Lordship of Christ is optional. The essence of grace, some suppose, is that the price has been paid in advance, and because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. That is the message sounded in this hour.

Cheap grace, as a doctrine or principle, offers forgiveness of sin as a general truth. Jesus said that God's love is more than this ambiguous thing the world talks about. If ye love me, keep my commandments (John 14:15), that is love. The very essence of idolatry is to imagine what God is like and then act like it is so. An intellectual ascent to these human presuppositions is held to be necessary to secure forgiveness of sin. In such teaching, the world finds a cheap covering for its sin. A man can preach against almost anything and the public will stand with him but let him speak out against false religion and there will be an outcry. When you speak against false religion, you are dealing with the world's sacred cow and if you are going to preach against that, you are going to find yourself with opposition. You can preach against homosexuality and many will stand up with you. However, let the same man speak against false religion and he will be the loneliest man in the city. Everybody is supposedly born again according to the preaching today. Some claim there are 60 million born again believers in America, why we'd already be in the millennium if that were true. There may be 60 million people that go to church once a month

but being born again is an entirely different thing. A born-again believer is a vital force on this earth. He is a new creation, Christ is in that person. You cannot have 60 million Christ filled people in a nation without seeing a restraint on evil. The truth is society has gone to hell faster in the last two or three decades than any time in history, yet we have more religion than we ever had before. According to a Reader Digest's survey, one out of every 10 people has become a homosexual, or at least a bisexual in the last twenty years. At the same time, we are bombarded with religion. There is more than there is more religious broadcasting per week in the United States than any country on this earth has in six months. Everywhere there are mailings of Christian literature, bumper stickers, radio, television and yet there is no restraint against evil. Fifty-three percent of all marriages end up in divorce. There are 2 million babies aborted each year. Drug addiction has reached down into the grammar schools. Violent crime is rising, and the age of the offender is getting lower all the time. The demoniacs stalk our streets. It is time that we deal with the culprit, and that culprit is religion itself. If we are to see revival, then we must stand for the truth, to stand for the truth automatically puts me against the lie that affords the world cheap covering for its sin, a lie that offers salvation without repentance, and no real desire to be delivered from sin. When you put the cross where it belongs, the crowds begin to thin. But if we are going to see the power of God work in our lives until deliverance comes, we must come back to the Bible. You cannot live like the devil and have God working with you. Cheap grace amounts to a denial of the living word of God, a denial of the incarnation of Christ. Cheap grace offers justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Cheap grace is not the kind of forgiveness of sin which frees us from the toils of sin. Look about you at those who claim to have been redeemed by the grace of God, has anything changed in their life? A faith that does not change a person means nothing to God, only the Word of God is sharp enough to cut through the soul and touch the spirit. For the Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). Cheap grace is preaching of forgiveness without repentance. Just accept Jesus your personal savior but you must understand that there is absolutely no forgiveness without repentance. You must turn from what you are to Christ. When John the Baptist came preaching his message of repentance, he turned the banks of the Jordan river into the front street of the world. Men came from

everywhere with the question, what must I do to be saved? The Baptist minced no words, to the soldier he said be content with your wages, treat everyman justly. To the tax collector, John said exact no more than that which is appointed you. To the religious, John said, o generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee the wrath to come? King Herod, sitting out there in his gold bottom chariot, listening to this wild man from the desert, asked the question, what about the king? John loaded his rapid firing gospel gun with the seventh commandment and hurled it at Herod. It I not lawful for you to have your brother's wife. It cost Jon his life. It takes courage to be a disciple. We must be ready to give men an answer, and that answer must be the Word of God. The commandment of Jesus must be acknowledged by perfect obedience in one's daily life and vocation. God's plan is not for us to hide from the world and go through the rituals of religion. You confront men on the main street of the world as a godly, holy person living in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Christianity is not a thing of environment, it is something within. It is on the main street of the world that we are to demonstrate this Christian life. The conflict between the Christian life and the life of the world is constant. It's a hand to hand conflict between Christ and the world, which are totally incompatible. Men confess Christ and continue life as usual. Men now are saved by a formula, by a handshake, or water baptism. We now have a Pentecost without Calvary. People talk in tongues who have never been born again. Rather than God giving the utterance, somebody teaches them what to say, this is sadly a popular practice today. If we are to be disciples of the Lord, then we must stand against the tide. The mark of a disciple is courage, the courage to hold to one's convictions, and that conviction must be that we speak the truth as it is in Jesus and live that truth at all times. We are here to make disciples. You can make converts to most anything, but a disciple is a learner. He learns, then he puts into practice what he learns. It isn't a thing of the head, it is a thing of the heart. He not only knows holiness from the Word of God, but he lives holiness, in the market place of the world. He knows truth and stands for truth. It takes great courage to do that. Today the crying need is for true disciples that will stand up courageously to preach the gospel, without fear nor favor, no matter what the consequences may be. We need disciples who are not afraid to stand against the religious mixture that God will have no part of. May God create such disciples out of you who read these lines.

Dear MasterLife Ministries

Father in Heaven – how great is your Word! Thank you for salvation – through Jesus our Lord. Christ died upon Calvary – to save you and me. Through the blood of Jesus: God’s mercy is free.

I received the MasterLife Newsletter and enjoy every issue. Thank you, Mr. Mileur and volunteers, for sending out this encouraging publication. May God continue to make all grace abound toward you in this good work.

As I read the testimonies, it’s a blessing to know that lives are still being transformed by the Gospel of Christ. It’s also uplifting to read how many of my brothers in Christ are continuing in the grace of God. In Christ by Grace, **Gregory Ross, Piedmont**

Thanks be to God for using the least of us for His glory and our good. Instead of prisoners at Nash seeking a hand out the Lord allowed us to be His hands and feet and become a hand up this Christmas. First of all, all the praise belongs to God, yet it is important to also give credit where it’s due, Nash Administration and Custody Staff. A special thanks to Ms. Lee, Mr. Pulley, Ms. Taut, Ms. Webb, Lt. Mincey, Officers Connie, Jackson, and Ms. Mitchell. The atmosphere was transformed in Unit 2. Each block had a trivia bingo and gifts were given out every 15 minutes as names were pulled randomly. All this was a photo copy of what the Lord did through James Benoy and Cohert 1# 2017. The Lord them to sew a seed that took root in Cohert 2# and sprouted in C block. James Benoy and Cohert 1# moved to B-block sewing seeds there and trail blazing to the next place God will lead them to. It’s amazing how God has used MasterLife, South Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Game Plan for Life to teach His miracles to the least, showing light and love from above, to the friendless and forgotten. **Marcus Burnette, Nash**

Hello brother in Christ

I pray that my letter finds you in the greatest of health. I just wanted to write you, wish you a merry Christmas and happy holidays. Also, I wanted to thank you and everyone that help keep this program going. This has been one crazy year for me. One of my home boys, Glenn Johnson, wrote and told me to find Benoy and to get in MasterLife program. Benoy is also my home boy. I had got out of seg. And a guy said James Benoy’s name. I met Benoy and started the MasterLife. Another good friend of mine, Ham Bone, said that God had put me in that block for a reason. They moved me out of that block with Benoy

and I have gone downhill ever since. They say they want to put me back in close custody. I just pray and let God handle this problem. This MasterLife program is one of the greatest things. I really enjoyed the meetings, the Bible study’s and the prayers. This program really touched my heart. I’ll close this letter for now. Take care! Happy Holidays!!!

James Stout, Nash

One Family

By Anthony Smith, Nash

Throughout my years of incarceration, I have never experienced so much spiritual growth I have in the final two weeks of December. It all started with being blessed to be one of many moving parts in this year’s Christmas play held here at Nash. Approximately ten days leading up to the play, myself and twelve other students in Seminary, rehearsed daily to learn our lines for the play. Admittedly, as in any environment relatable to our prison context, at first sight it looked a little shaky. However, as the peace which surpasses all understanding began settling over our hearts, the feeling of shakiness was removed. And, in the process of our purpose we became family. Although the theme of family did not just stop there because God had a plan.

The following day the annual talent show was held in the Gymnasium, in where not only did the general population attend, but also did church volunteers, program staff and administrators. Also did members or supporters of (SEBTS) Field Ministry Program. Together we got to eyewitness the many hidden gifts and talents that only God could instill into the hearts of men who have been broken by time. Though each of them came from different walks of life, they brought joy and laughter to our hearts during one of the most difficult times of the year—Christmas. Altogether It was an eventful day, but it was the words spoken by the current Head—Administrator which resonated within my heart most, "Here at Nash, We are a Family!".

Five days later I was again privileged to host the annual Christmas party held in B-dorm of Unit-2 which is yearly sponsored by Master Life. Before the sun rose, I observed men collectively working and moving together in a united spirit—Family. Slowly the visual familiarity of metal tabletops metamorphosed into tabletops draped with Christmas décor. While some meticulously fashioned tables as though they were competing in some fictional HGTV show 'Flip My Tabletop', others stood at a nearby table sipping on coffee while eating strawberry

cookies. Honestly, myself and another unnamed culprit visited the strawberry cookies quite a few times. Note: Don't tell J. Benoy. By mid-afternoon the dorm was transformed completely. Artwork adorned every wall for the nightly art contest; Christmas ornaments stretched all the way from the stairs all the way to the indoor fitness machine. Trust me, nothing was left undone. However, if it were not for the spirit of family, none of this would have been accomplished.

These three separate events affected me spiritually, because for the first time in my incarceration I can honestly see and sense God's spirit at work for the purposes of restoring family. Whether black or white, bound or free, believer or nonbeliever, God has been at work here at Nash in bridging those insubstantial lines which have divided us. Although many of us were taught contrary to God's word—family has no shade or color, chain or link, religion or belief, because we are all created in the image of our Creator.

Greetings from Alexander Correctional:

As this year is coming to an end, we have a new beginning right around the corner. By God’s grace we have an opportunity to be better examples in the coming year. To all my friends at Nash, I am so proud of you for answering His call. Each of you have special gifts and one day you will assist so many within and without this system. You have the ability to give back in an extraordinary way. Stay the course and realize God’s plan for each of your lives. I have witnessed growth in several of you and I hope to witness so much more. I thank God for His saving grace because it is necessary and vital for the beginning, the progress and growth, and the completion of salvation. I’m very thankful to have met you and I’m grateful for your friendship. (John 15:12) "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you". I love you, my brothers, and I pray this year’s new beginning will be prosperous for us all.

Michael "MJ" Johnson, Alexander

Get Wisdom Get Understanding by Gregory Ross, Piedmont

Available at Amazon. Gregory is an inmate at Piedmont, he has written a thoughtful book on wisdom and understanding. If you have a chance, get a copy.

Jesus Never Let's Go

By James Kelliher

On a frayed strand,
 Life was suspended.
 Swirling shadows were beckoning from below,
 As another string unravels.
 Yet, You wouldn't let me go.
 A heartbeat of putrid oil,
 Pulsing in a rusted heart of iron.
 Bulletproof thinking full of holes,
 I mocked your existence.
 Yet, you wouldn't let me go.
 I thought myself a man,
 Though my actions and years said different.
 What need do I have of You,
 The tension overcomes the threads,
 Yet, you wouldn't let me go.
 The rushing air of descent,
 A chill before the heat,
 I cried out to You just before
 My heart sounded its final beat,
 Yet, you wouldn't let me go.
 My actions are no longer my own,
 Renewed heart of flesh, cleansed of putridity,
 Some days I walk, some I limp, but never alone,
 Life after death, in You I have eternity...
 Because, *only because*, You wouldn't let me go.

SPECIAL THANKS

Thanks to Rachel Morris, Bequita Mileur and First Baptist Church - Pryor, OK on copying and assembling the newsletter.

Please forgive any miss-spellings, the typist is somewhat old and it was inspiring to read these many testimonies.

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MasterLife.Ministry@gmail.com
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OTHER RESOURCES AVAILABLE

Dictionary Project
 PO Box 1845
 Charleston, SC 29402

Prison Book Collective
 PO Box 625
 Carrboro, NC 27510

Asheville Prison Books 67 N.
 Lexington Ave.
 Asheville, NC 28801

International Bible Assoc.
 PO Box 225646
 Dallas, TX 75222

Prison Mission Assoc.
 PO Box 2300
 Port Orchard, WA 98366

Prison Book Project
 PO Box 1145
 Staples, FL 32959

Harvesttime Books
 PO Box 300
 Altamont, TN 37301

Christian Book Distributor
 PO Box 7000
 Peabody, MA 01961

Billy Graham Evang. Assoc.
 Attn: Christian Guidance Dept.
 24261 Billy Graham Pky.
 Charlotte, NC 28201

Adopt-A Life is designed to help support a "lifer" (someone doing a life sentence or a long sentence) in his ministry, in prison. Basically, you can be a co-laborer to him and an encourager through letters and some financial support. Be a Brother, Sister, Father, Mother to these men.

MasterLife teaches some very important skills for witnessing. It also teaches the men to start a relationship with Jesus without the religious hang-ups; it simplifies Christianity, and it creates an atmosphere that brings the church men and lost men together, thus tearing down barriers.

Mastering life in all areas of bible study, scripture memory, fellowship, witnessing, serving, behavior, relationships, the church, the community, the world.

Books

Prison Literature Project
 PO Box 1253
 Berkeley, CA 94701

Prison Book Program
 Attn: Lucy Parsons Bookstore
 1306 Hancock St., Suite 100
 Quincy, MA 02169

Book 'EM
 PO Box 71357
 Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Prison Literature Project
 Bound Together Books
 1369 Haight St.
 San Francisco, CA 94117

Louisiana Books 2 Prisoners
 1631 Elysian Fields # 117
 New Orleans, LA 70117

Books to Prisoners

Bellingham
 92 Pike St. Box A
 Seattle, WA 98101

International Prison Ministry
 PO Box 1088
 Chula Vista, CA 91912

Bethany Fellowship Inter.
 11400 Hampshire Ave., South
 Bloomington, MN 55438

The Bible Says Ministry
 PO Box 99
 Lenior City, TN 37771

Bibles

Pilgrim tract Soc.
PO Box 126
Randleman, NC 27317

Heart of America Prison
Ministry
PO Box 1685
Independence, MO 60455

Voice of God
Recordings
Attn: Prison Dept.
PO Box 950
Jefferson, IN 47131

Tyndale House Publishers
Attn: Inside Journal Bible
351 Executive Drive
Carol Stream, IL 60188

Peaceful Retreat Ministries, Inc
PO Box 208
Hutchinson, KS 67504

The American Bible Society
101 North Independence Mall
East FL8
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Salvation Army Ministry
1424 N.E. Expressway
Atlanta, GA 30329

Spiritual Success Inter.
210 N. Beacon St.
Greenville, 29609

Lamp Light Pub.
26 Road 5577
Framington, NJ 87401

Source of Light Ministry
1011 Mission Rd.
Madison, GA 30650

Country Wide Ministry
PO Box 1030
Dellslow, WV 26531

Set Free Ministry
1299 Columbia Ave., Suite E-2
Riverside, CA 92507

Christ for the Nation
PO Box 76900
Dallas, TX 75376

School of Christ
630 1 St.
Beaumont, TX 77710

Mt. Nebo Prison Ministry
PO Box 1848
Gilbert, AZ 85299

The Bible Says Ministry
PO Box 1703
Gray, GA 31032

Emmas Correspondence School
PO Box 1028
Dubuque, IA 52004

Mount Zion Bible Institute 2603
West Wright St.
Pensacola, FL 32505

Bible Studies/ Self-Help

Walking the 12 Steps with Jesus
Christ
PO Box 4321
Ocala, FL 34478

Know Your Bible
C/O Northside Church of Christ
4545 N. Meridian
Wichita, KS 67204

Devotionals/Tracts/Magazines

In Touch Ministries
PO Box 7900
Atlanta, GA 30357

Our Daily Bread
PO Box 2222
Melbourne, FL 32941

On Wings like a Dove
Ministries
PO Box 557
Clemmons, NC 27012

Turning Point
PO Box 3838
San Diego, CA 92163

Hope Aglow Ministries
PO Box 10157
Lynchburg, VA 24506

RZIM—Ravi Zacharias
P.O. Box 921939
Norcross, GA 30010

RBC Ministries
PO Box 2222
Grand Rapids, MI 49501

World Missionary Press
PO Box 120
New Paris, IN 46553

Jesus Christ Prison Ministry
PO Box 770
Lucerne Valley, CA 92356

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Coming Soon: www.MasterLife-Ministry.org, pending 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization (Thanks MDB!)

Please send in your letters, testimonies, and mailbag for the next edition.



It maybe Saturday
night but remember
Sunday is coming!