

JUST FOR MENTORS

Tips, inspiration and encouragement as you mentor men and women in prison



MAY 2022

Dear Mentor,

History has always been an interest of mine. When we visit museums, my wife, Hendrina, always has to pull me along. I am the type of person who lingers at each display to read the words on every placard. In studying history, I have learned that, since the foundation of the United States, our approach to criminal justice and punishment has continued to evolve over time. Rooted in the English common law system, it has since adopted a complex series of procedures. With good intentions early in our nation's history, Quakers, who embraced the concept of paying penance for wrongdoing, helped establish the penitentiary model that shapes how we punish those we incarcerate today.

On a trip to Washington, D.C., a ministry friend introduced me to different members of a committee that he is working with to influence government policies. One of the groups we visited was affiliated with the Quakers. As we sat and talked with the director of their justice reform efforts, I asked him what their goals were.

He said, "We are trying to undo what we started."

That made me think about my personal history. My past will always be a part of me, but it does not need to dictate the story of my future.

In Acts 26, we read about Paul sharing his story with King Agrippa. He explained how he had opposed Jesus and forced early Christians to blaspheme against Him. He sought out believers and had them incarcerated and punished (Acts 26:9–11). The story could have ended there, but God had a different plan for Paul's life. On one of Paul's journeys of terror, Jesus appeared to him and said:

"I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting," the Lord replied. "Now get up and stand on your feet. I have appeared to you to appoint you as a servant and as a witness of what you have seen and will see of me" (Acts 26:15–16).

Paul's past was not undone, but through Jesus, his story was redeemed. Because everyone had known Paul as a persecutor of the Church, God's transformative work was obvious. Paul's story is a testimony to God's grace and mercy. Despite his past, Paul became a powerful witness, and his story shows us that no one is beyond redemption.

"Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst" (1 Timothy 1:15).

Although the justice reform director's organization had admirable goals and intentions, no one can undo what has already happened. It is only through the redeeming power of Jesus that our past can be transformed to reveal what was, what is and what can be. Please share with your student the hope and knowledge that God can indeed redeem our past and give us new life.

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"I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe" (Ephesians 1:18–19).

Serving alongside you,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Douglas Cupery".

Douglas Cupery
Church Mobilization Director

Have a question? You can contact the mentor support team at mentor@cpministries.org or 800-668-2450.

NEWS & NOTES

Mentor Community Gatherings

Join us as we gather virtually to equip and empower one another to serve our students well!

Tuesday, May 17, at 8:00 p.m. (EST)

Wednesday, May 18, at 3:00 p.m. (EST)

URL: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84182956475?pwd=QWs1OGlYZTZlejVOSkcyOEc5NW9SUT09>

Meeting ID: 841 8295 6475

Passcode: 329410

Pastor Packets Available

We are currently working to make connections with more pastors and church leaders to raise awareness of the impact that members of their faith communities are making behind prison walls. To do this, we will be sending informational packets to new mentors who have been volunteering for six months and belong to faith communities we haven't connected with yet. Our hope is that these mentors will give these packets to their church leaders and share about their Crossroads experience, encouraging their pastor or church leader to help them raise awareness of the ministry in their church.

If you would like a pastor packet to share with your church leader, please email mentor@cpministries.org.