

## Reflection

“...but the Word of God cannot be chained.” (2 Tim 2:9).

Paul who was “suffering to the point of being chained like a criminal” knew that the Gospel message was not subject to those same constraints. Even while in prison, he realized the power of God’s Word and how free one could feel if they would only receive the message.

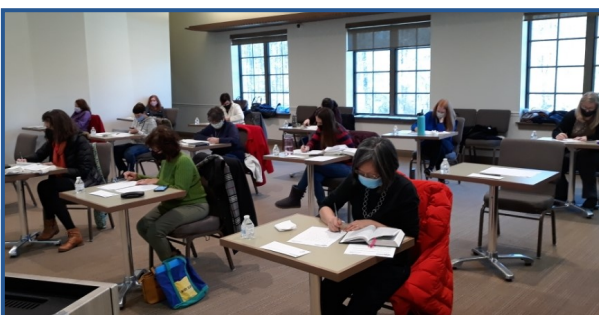
How much more then should we realize God’s power and understand that His word cannot be chained or slowed or impeded in anyway. Even now, we know that the Gospel can reach behind prison walls and into the hearts of men and women who live there. Amen!

## We’re Out and About!!!

Special thanks to Calvary Chalfont and Riverstone Churches for hosting our Letter Writing Workshops.

We believe that while men and women are still unable to meet with family members and volunteer groups due to COVID-19 restrictions, it is critically important they know they are not forgotten. As one man shared: *“We are currently locked down except for the 40 minutes a day they let us out for shower and or phone. You get use to these things after awhile.”*

Can you see how easy it is to feel invisible?



We have been encouraged by the dedication of those who have attended the workshops, virtually and in-person. The time has been a blessing for those writing and will be a blessing to the recipients.



*Debra and Regina. Disciples disciple!*

## Testimonies - God at Work

Well, guess who decided to join us and encourage the workshop attendees and share a note of encouragement with the incarcerated? You guessed it: Debra.

You probably remember seeing Debra featured in our last newsletter. She accompanied Regina and I to the last workshop. When I saw Debra at the event, it became even more evident that her time inside was positively shaped by attending the Bible studies, being mentored, and receiving prison correspondence.

We know that there is still much road ahead for Debra. But, we remain hopeful and are excited to walk alongside of her during this journey.

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“I kept some of my letters for years. I just kept them. They were sort of like a source of comfort. Right?

Everyday we were interacting with other inmates and some of those inmates don’t have your best need in mind. You are living in a basically unhealthy environment. So when you get something positive that comes toward you, you latch on to that.”

During an interview Doug shared what it was like receiving those letters in prison and how deeply they encouraged him. Doug is a director with Crossroads prison ministry and has been an advocate for prisoners for many years.

Doug’s journey, like many others, started in a 6x8 foot cell reading letters from the church.

## Thank You!

It seems like yesterday, but it was in March of 2017 that I began this journey with Life Abundant as the incoming Executive Director. As a volunteer, I was familiar with the mission, my predecessor Herb Rose, and Bucks County Correctional staff and officials.

What has been new to me, is the level of commitment of the volunteers and supporters of this ministry. Personally seeing your dedication to this work, especially during this time, has been such a great source of encouragement.

I speak on behalf of the staff and the board when I say:

**Thank YOU!**

## Our Impact

During this time, we have led the way in providing virtual Bible studies and related programming at Bucks County Corrections. We are currently **hosting weekly studies and classes and continue to grow our pen-pal audience.**

We also have begun drafting protocols for volunteers to work with men and women who are still on parole or probation and are now in their respective communities.

This past Christmas, we worked with several churches to ensure that men, women and children received a special gift from the "church."

Nicole, one of the recipients, shared what it was like. **"I would like to thank each and everyone who made this Christmas so magical. I was in jail last year, so this year (2020) was extra special. And because of the help from you guys, I was able to give the kids the Christmas that they deserved. I was able to watch them open gifts ...and those smiles were priceless!"**



## What's New?

We are excited and thrilled to have Charles Christenson now serving as our Board Chair!

Charles "Chuck" Christenson is a long time Bucks County resident, husband of 34 years to Lori Christenson, father of three sons, grandfather, and a small business owner. Chuck currently attends Covenant Church in Buckingham, PA.



When Chuck is not engaged in activities at NextWave Consulting, Inc., a computer network consulting firm in Doylestown, he is serving on the Board with Life Abundant, mentoring men impacted by incarceration or walking alongside of other small business owners in the greater Bucks County area. And, when there is a little extra time, Chuck also ministers to those experiencing traumatic events in their lives, such as job loss, death, and divorce as a Stephen Minister.

We also want to thank Bob Wood for the years of service as Chair and look forward to his continued work as a board member at large.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

We're coming to a church near you!

Please feel free to contact us if your church would like to host a **Letter Writing Workshop: Letters from the Church.** The workshops can be conducted virtually from a preferred location or in-person with proper social distancing.

**Zoom trainings** will be offered "soon" for our volunteers - Bible study facilitators and mentors. The trainings will cover updating volunteer status' and include a review of what is expected during virtual presentations and meetings.

Stay tuned for details regarding our **2021 Virtual Events.** We have a lot of stories to share and updates regarding our work in the community and future residential programming.

Do you have questions about returning citizens, prisons or parole and probation? Please feel free to contact us at [moreinfo@lifeabundantinc.org](mailto:moreinfo@lifeabundantinc.org)

## In His Service

Jonathan, Regina and Paul

