



# TAMEONTA



## One Thing Is Necessary: Learning to Sit at the Feet of Jesus

By Mark Walker

*"Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named Martha welcomed him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who*

*sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving. And she went up to him and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me.' But the Lord answered her, 'Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.'" (Luke 10:38-42 ESV)*

I have just come to the end of a long season of very hard labor. I spent nearly ten years in school, first Bible College and then seminary, studying God's word and learning skills to serve Him and others more effectively. At the same time, I was working a full-time job, and trying to faithfully steward the Lord's vision for the new ministry of The Cell Church. It has been an intense, exhilarating, and exhausting season. I wouldn't trade the experience for anything, and I am as confident now as ever that it was the Lord's will and His chosen path for me during those years.

However, recently God has made it clear that it is time for me to "pump the brakes" for a while. In this new season, He is teaching me how to rest well in ministry. The lesson has been surprisingly difficult to learn, and I know I have a long way to go toward maturity in this area. After all, there is never any shortage of work to be done, and there never seems to be enough time or people to do it. Doesn't faithfulness to Christ mean denying myself and diligently persevering in the ministry He has given

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me to do?

The Lord has shown me that the answer is yes...and no. Faithfulness in the work of the Kingdom is vitally important (Matt. 9:37-38; 25:14-30; 1 Cor. 15:58; Eph. 2:10). At the same time, Scripture makes it clear that we cannot labor for God in our own strength (e.g., John

**“We must pursue regular seasons and rhythms of coming away from the work to simply be with our Father and to nurture our unity with Jesus.”**

15:1-5; 1 Cor. 3:5-7; 15:10; 2 Cor. 3:4-6). Therefore, just as our Lord did during His earthly ministry, we must pursue regular seasons and rhythms of coming away from the work to simply be with our Father and to nurture our unity with Jesus (Matt. 14:23; Mark 1:32-39; Luke 5:15-16; 6:12). We are insufficient in ourselves for the work of ministry, so our first priority must be to continually abide in Christ. If we are not deeply connected to the vine, His life and grace cannot flow freely through us to those we serve, and all our work will do little good.

As God has been calling me to rest in Him, no passage of Scripture has been more significant than the story of Mary and Martha in Luke 10:38-42. I would like to share three observations from the passage which have helped me to begin this journey. The first involves how Martha received Jesus, the second considers how Mary received Him, and the third evaluates the way Jesus responded to them both.

It is significant to note that Martha welcomed Jesus and gladly received Him into her home (v. 38). It is not as though she turned Him away or ignored Him. Martha's serving came from a desire to provide Jesus with the best hospitality she could offer, to honor Him by giving Him as much as she possibly could. The problem, Luke tells us, is that Martha's "much serving" (πολλήν διακονίαν) of Jesus and others "distracted" her (v. 40). The word "distracted" (περιεσπᾶτο) suggests that Martha was overburdened and troubled, and as a result she was pulled away. More than this, Martha became so frustrated with her sister Mary for not serving with her that she essentially ordered (εἰπέ - imperative) Jesus to tell Mary to help her (v. 40; cf. Geldenhuys, 316). Martha's focus on serving not only pulled her away from Jesus, but led her to attempt to pull others away as well.

Mary, on the other hand, didn't try to serve Jesus at all. Instead, she simply sat at Jesus' feet and listened to His word (v. 39). Mary's fundamental response to His arrival was not to attempt to provide Him with anything, but rather to simply receive from Him. She refused to allow Martha to draw her away from Jesus with the pressing demands of "much serving."

Jesus' response to Mary and Martha is fascinating. He rather gently chided Martha for being "troubled" – that is, disturbed and in turmoil – about many things (πολλά) when only one thing (ἐνός) was necessary for her (vv. 41-42). Jesus didn't say that any of the work Martha was doing was not good (Geldenhuys, 316). The problem was not that her

serving was bad, but that it caused all her attention, energy, and emotions to be divided among a multitude of non-essential tasks (Bock, 1041). As a consequence, Jesus said, she was missing the one essential thing she deeply needed (Earle, 162).

At the same time, Jesus defended Mary's decision to receive from Him rather than serve Him in that moment. Mary was sitting at His feet, the classic position of a disciple receiving instruction from a rabbi. In Jesus' day, women were typically not permitted to learn from rabbis, so this would have been a surprising picture for Luke's original audience (Bock, 1040; Ellis, 162). Yet Jesus did not rebuke Mary for this, or for her apparent failure to show Him the hospitality which might have been expected of her as His hostess. Instead, He affirmed Mary's choice to simply sit quietly and listen to Him, because that was the "good portion," the one thing absolutely necessary for her. He would not take it away by compelling her to join Martha in serving (v. 42).

As ministry leaders it is very easy for us to become Marthas. As we labor faithfully in the Lord's service with the best of motivations, we can become so burdened and troubled with the many demands of ministry that they begin to pull us away from our vital relationship with Jesus - the one thing we absolutely *must* have. Sadly, this is a very common experience for ministers of the gospel. Paul Tripp observes:

When I talk to a group of pastors about the lack of private personal worship, I am often looking out at a group of men with their heads down. Many of my listeners have confessed that they cannot remember when their devotional time was consistent and vibrant. Many of them have told me that they have just quit trying to fight the battle. They get up, get themselves ready, and jump in the ministry saddle. They're ready to jump in to serve Jesus; they just have little personal time to spend with him in a life of urgent ministry demands...Many pastors out there are seeking to lead and teach well, but it is simply not fueled or directed by the devotion of their hearts to their Savior...They have lost the center of it all, and their hearts have been kidnapped, and many of them don't know it (185).

As leaders this should alarm us. It is a travesty, not only for us, but also for those to whom we seek to minister. We cannot bear fruit in service to others if we are not connected to the vine. We cannot pour our lives into others if we do not first have Christ pouring His life into us, because in ourselves we are empty vessels. We don't have anything of value to offer, any resources of our own to use. Apart from Jesus we can do nothing (John 15:5).

This was Martha's mistake. She thought that in order to honor Jesus she needed to use what she had and work very hard to serve Him. But God does not need anything we bring

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to Him because it is all already His (Acts 17:24-25). He graciously invites us to participate in the work of His Kingdom, not because He needs us, but because He desires to give us the great joy and satisfaction of seeing His Kingdom expand and the name of Christ lifted up through our meagre efforts. We do not glorify Jesus by acting as though He can't get along without us and desperately needs us to serve Him in order to accomplish His will. We glorify Jesus by recognizing our emptiness and His fullness, and coming to Him as Mary did: a desperately thirsty soul coming to drink from an overflowing fountain. When we simply sit at Jesus' feet and receive from Him, we demonstrate to the world that He alone is sufficient to satisfy our deepest longings, to fill us with joy, and to fit us for serving others in the strength that only He can supply (1 Pet. 4:11). That is the "good portion," and Jesus does not ask us to sacrifice it in order to busy ourselves with "much serving."

Let us therefore strive to imitate Mary, and to always prioritize our personal, vital connection to Jesus and His word over all the "doing" of our ministries. Let us seek first – even in the middle of all the busyness and constant demands of ministry – to sit at the feet of Jesus and to receive from Him, to ask Him in prayer to pour into us His life, His Spirit, His truth. And let us refuse to be pulled away from Him and distracted by the Marthas around us who complain that we are not constantly helping them serve. If we make this one thing our priority, and insist on it no matter the circumstances, then Christ will be truly glorified through our ministries. Only after we have rested a while at Jesus' feet, and received from Him all that He has for us, can we rise to serve with a fullness that will deeply bless others. "The disciple should never be too busy to sit at Jesus' feet" (Bock, 1042). How would your schedule look different tomorrow if you built everything around the one thing that is necessary?

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## **In Loving Memory of Chaplain Dan Jackson**

*By Glenn Fritts*

**I** was honored to serve on the Worship Team at Fremont under Chaplain Dan's direction for about fourteen years. It is impossible to find the words that would encompass



how he touched so many hearts and helped so many men through extraordinarily difficult circumstances during his time as a chaplain at Fremont. The Lord used him to reach the

congregation through his spirit-filled sermons, and help men on an individual basis through his wise counsel.

Even while his eyes were in pain from surgeries, he would be there. When his ears were bothered by noise from his hearing aids, or his heart condition was causing him extreme fatigue, he was there. With eyes that saw past the surface of things, ears that listened with empathy, and a heart that was overflowing with compassion, he was there.

When my mother was in the hospital, Dan and Lt. Narva Courtney went out of their way to work through the procedures necessary to drive me to Denver so I would be able to spend some time with her in her last hours. This was God's love and compassion working through His people.

We are in debt to Sandi and all of Dan's family for the immeasurable time that they shared him with us.

While he had helped me through countless situations and difficulties, and we shared so many beautiful, spirit-filled times, there is one service that stands out to me as the best picture of Chaplain Dan. At an Easter, Resurrection Day service, I read my favorite verse, "...By His great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." Chaplain Dan told the congregation how he preferred the translation that read "...we have been born anew to a *lively* hope..." We began singing the old hymn, "He Lives!" About the time we began the second verse, Dan said to the

congregation, "Wait a minute, wait a minute... Worship Team, stop playing, stop singing. What are we singing about? Our Lord and Savior was dead, and now *He lives*. Do we want to keep this a secret?! Or do we want to shout about it?! We should be singing at the top of our lungs! He asked us to begin playing again, leading us through "He Lives!" with such energy, enthusiasm, and joy; the Holy Spirit working through him and touching every heart in the room, touching people walking down the hallway outside the chapel... a joy that would not be contained! For all of the times I've seen him bless others, and bless me, that Resurrection Morning stands out as the most vivid image of who Chaplain Dan was. The most committed, joy-filled servant of Jesus I have ever known.

Although we will miss him dearly, it fills my heart with happiness to know that, with that same joy and passion, he is singing with all of his heart in the presence of the Lord right now.

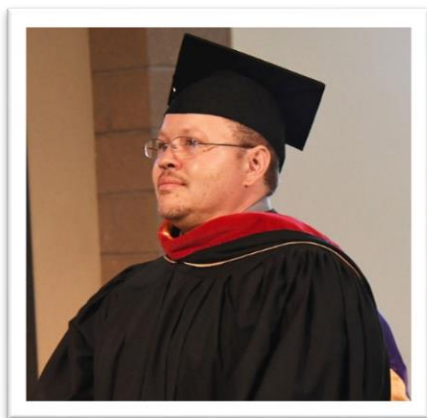
We love you Chaplain Dan. We look forward to seeing you again before His heavenly throne.

*"For the Lord himself will descend from heaven with a cry of command, with the voice of an archangel, and with the sound of the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive, who are left, will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and so we will always be with the Lord."*

- 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17



## MINISTRY UPDATES



### Finally Done! Mark's Blessed Season in Seminary Comes to a Close

*By Mark Walker*

By God's grace, I have finally finished my seminary degree! It has been a long and challenging road, but also a season of incredible growth and blessing. The Lord shaped me, strengthened me, and refreshed me at every step along the way. I recently realized that I have been working full time and going to school for almost 10 years

straight now - in addition to my responsibilities with The Cell Church! I am definitely looking forward to a much-needed rest, to spending some time sitting quietly at the Lord's feet, and to redirecting more of my time and energy into this ministry.

I am deeply grateful to everyone who has supported me and The Cell Church during this period of preparation. I have not been able to stay in touch with all of you as much as I would have liked over the past few years, and it has taken me far too long to answer prisoners' letters or grade our students' papers. All of you have been so patient and understanding with me, and have continued to encourage me and support The Cell Church through everything. I am deeply grateful to God for each one of you!!



As I now turn my whole attention to this ministry, I pray that the Lord will bless and grow our efforts, and that my preparation in seminary will enable me to more effectively serve and equip prisoners for the ministries to which God has called them. My prayer is that the name of Christ would be magnified by the expansion of the kingdom of God in the prisons through His faithful incarcerated servants!

## 2018 CMCA Summit

At the beginning of June, Mark and Q had the great opportunity to attend the 2018 Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association Summit on the campus of Wheaton College just west of Chicago. We met and networked with a lot of great prison ministries from around the country, and attended helpful workshops and plenary sessions which were relevant to our particular ministry.



Workshops we attended include:

- *Spiritual Greenhouses: Church Planting Behind Bars* (Dwight Anderson)
- *Creating Church Culture for Correctional Ministry* (Dr. Harold Dean Trulear)
- *The Onesimus Project: Welcoming Former Prisoners* (Don Allsman)
- *Empowering Returning Citizens in Church Life* (Mark Vander Meer & Greg Chandler)
- *Empowering Released Citizens to Plant Churches* (Bob Engel)

We were also privileged to spend some time with a couple of other Colorado prison ministries - Chris and Suzanne Mays from Doing HIS Time, and Dick and Carol Gott from In HIS Name - as well as Dr. Don Davis and some other brothers and sisters from The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI).

We pray the Lord will use what we learned at CMCA to better equip us for this ministry, and we thank Him for all those whose support made it possible for us to attend!



*Mark and Q sharing a meal with Dick and Carol Gott and Chris and Suzanne Mays.*



*Mark and Q with Dr. Don Davis and Don and Cathy Allsman from The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI)*

## The Cell Church Joins Ethné Church Network

Around two years ago The Cell Church started a weekly Bible study in Mark's home for parolees who, for one reason or another, did not yet have permission to attend church in the community. The study has grown since then, and now includes a fellowship meal, the

Lord's Supper, and musical worship. Not only does the service provide an opportunity for parolees to worship and fellowship, but The Cell Church also helps attendees to find and connect with a church home by acting as advocates with local church leaders. For some time now, we have been prayerfully considering using this study as the seed of a full house church plant, and by God's grace that vision has now become a reality.

WELCOME TO  
**ETHNE**  
CHURCH NETWORK



This year The Cell Church officially joined the [Ethné Church Network](#), a global network of churches of all kinds and sizes, many of them among refugees. Ethné also has a particular heart for former prisoners, which is why it is a great fit for The Cell Church. The network is conservative and evangelical, and partners with several Baptist associations, including the Southern Baptist Convention. The Network Mentor, Dr. Allan Karr, was one of Mark's professors in seminary, and pastors an Enthé house church in Larkspur, Colorado which is Q's home church.

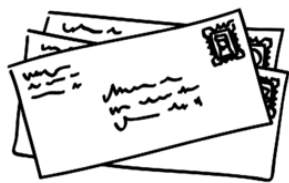


*Mark and Q being ordained by Dr. Allan Karr and the elders of Ethné Church Network. Q's father and Mark's father and mother are also shown here.*

In December Mark and Q were both ordained by Ethné as ministers of the gospel on behalf of The Cell Church. As Dr. Karr explained during the service, formal ordination is an extra-biblical (but not unbiblical) practice. However, we do have a New Testament example of church leaders setting people aside for the work to which the Holy Spirit has called them (Acts 13:1-3). That is what the elders of Ethné did at our ordination. We are excited to see how the Lord will use our partnership with

Ethné! Our prayer is that our house church will continue to be a welcoming place for parolees to worship and serve, and that we will serve as a bridge between the prison churches and local churches in the community.

## 2018 MINISTRY IMPACT & FINANCE REPORT

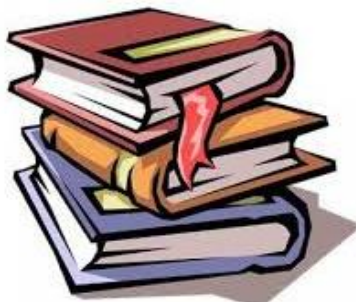


**65 letters** written to prisoners, plus 2  
**volunteer mentors** regularly  
corresponding



↑ **31%**

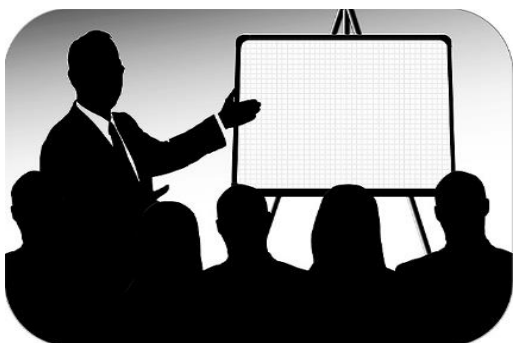
**Increase in giving** from 2017



**110 books** provided, including 84 TUMI workbooks and textbooks, 7 re-entry training books, 6 commentaries, 5 books on theology, plus assorted books on marriage and church history, study Bibles and foreign language Bibles, lectionaries, and Hebrew dictionaries



**~45 house church services** held for parolees, including fellowship meals, prayer, musical worship, and study of Scripture



**2 ministry leaders** attended the Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association conference in Wheaton, IL



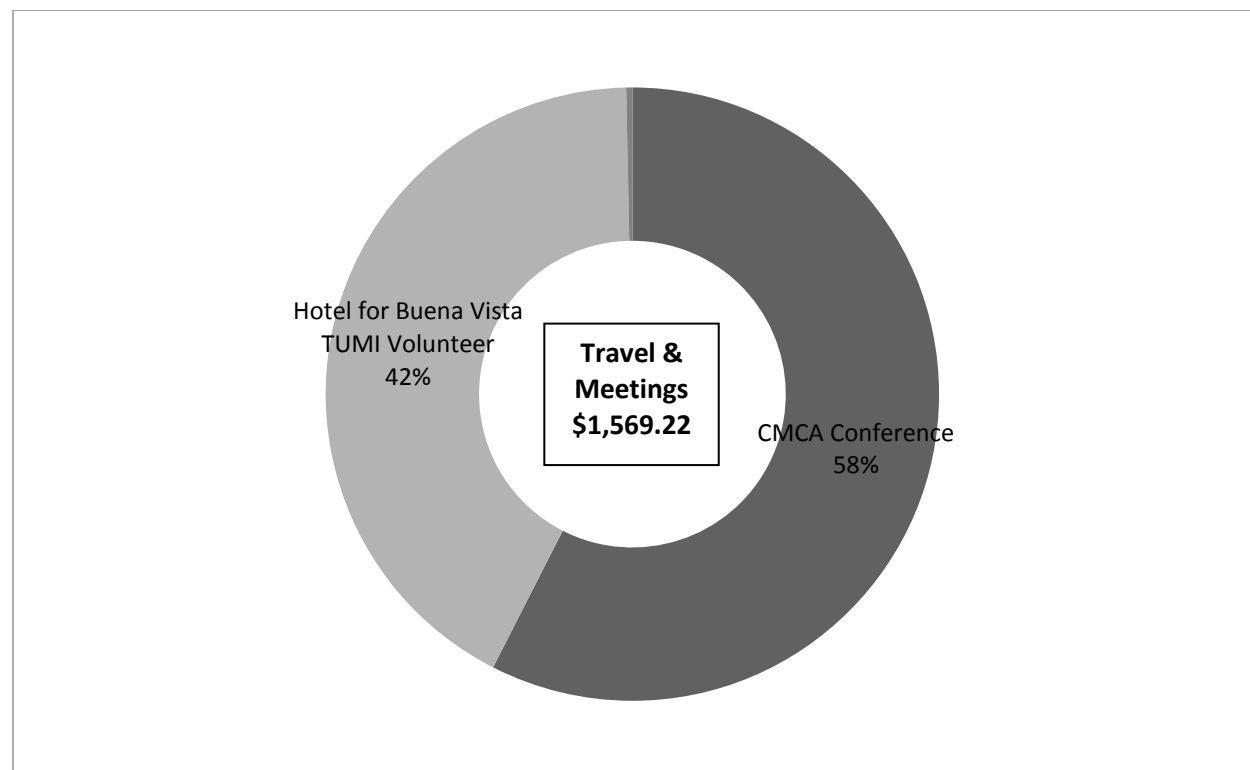
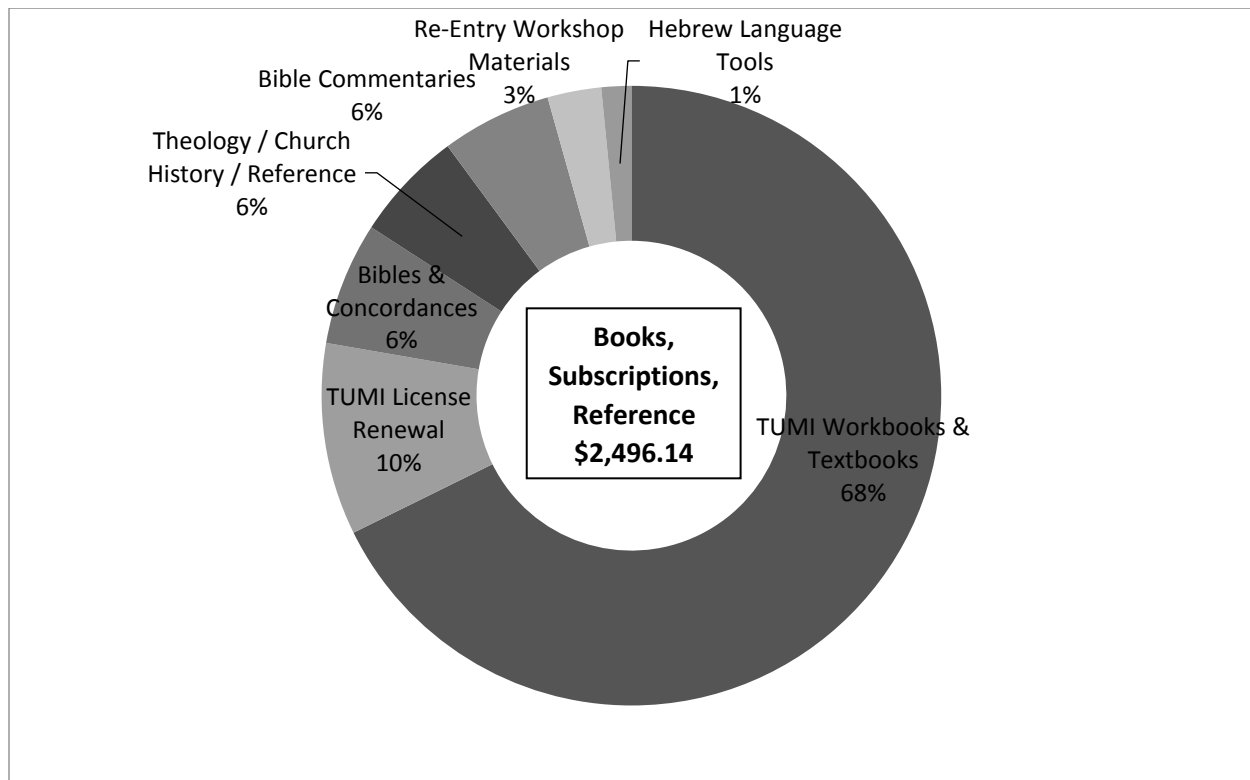
**17 TUMI students**, studying 7 **different modules** including biblical interpretation, Old Testament, Christian leadership, evangelism and spiritual warfare, and theology proper



**3 volunteer TUMI mentors** and **3 volunteer graders** serving TUMI students

**The Cell Church**  
**Profit & Loss**  
**January 1 through December 16, 2018**

|                                      | <u>Jan 1 - Dec 16, 18</u> |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>       |                           |
| <b>Income</b>                        |                           |
| <b>Direct Public Support</b>         |                           |
| Individ, Business Contributions      | 6,297.75                  |
| <b>Total Direct Public Support</b>   | <u>6,297.75</u>           |
| <b>Total Income</b>                  | 6,297.75                  |
| <b>Expense</b>                       |                           |
| <b>Business Expenses</b>             |                           |
| Business Registration Fees           | 10.00                     |
| <b>Total Business Expenses</b>       | 10.00                     |
| <b>Facilities and Equipment</b>      | 83.43                     |
| <b>Operations</b>                    |                           |
| Books, Subscriptions, Reference      | 2,496.14                  |
| Postage, Mailing Service             | 401.03                    |
| Printing and Copying                 | 55.00                     |
| Supplies                             | 331.26                    |
| Telephone, Telecommunications        | 577.69                    |
| <b>Total Operations</b>              | 3,861.12                  |
| <b>Other Types of Expenses</b>       |                           |
| Other Costs                          | 516.44                    |
| <b>Total Other Types of Expenses</b> | 516.44                    |
| <b>Travel and Meetings</b>           |                           |
| Conference, Convention, Meeting      | 505.05                    |
| Travel                               | 1,064.17                  |
| <b>Total Travel and Meetings</b>     | 1,569.22                  |
| <b>Total Expense</b>                 | <u>6,040.21</u>           |
| <b>Net Ordinary Income</b>           | <u>257.54</u>             |
| <b>Net Income</b>                    | <u><u>257.54</u></u>      |





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## LETTERS FROM THE CHURCH

“The opportunity The Cell Church has provided for us through TUMI, individually and corporately as the Body of Christ, is unmatched in my 20+ years in prison. I thank you brothers for your love, faithfulness to our Lord, your example, and your heart toward us. And I praise God for you, and we stay in constant prayer for you all and the ministry.”

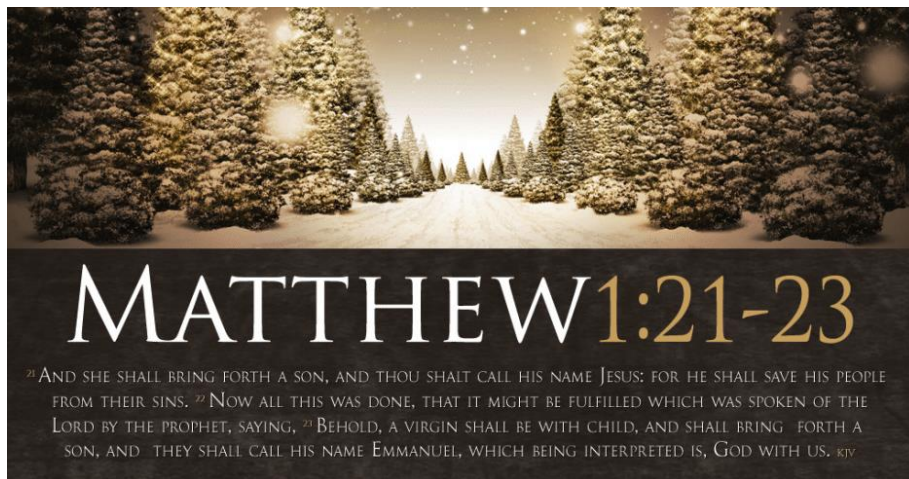
- *Mo, Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility, CO*

“You have truly blessed me beyond imagination! Thank you so very much for the Bible and concordance! They are both awesome! The concordance has so much additional info in the back that is awesome! I’ve been using them both and I love them! Thank you again! You have truly been a Godsend! It’s taken my studies so much deeper! My passion and desire just keep growing! I’ve been spending at least a couple of hours a day in the word and studying. I pray the Lord continues to increase more and more within me every day!”

- *Dan, New Lisbon Correctional Institution, WI*

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## MERRY CHRISTMAS!



In years past we have enjoyed mailing Christmas cards to all our friends in the prisons, but current CDOC policy prohibits prisoners from receiving cards. While we are disappointed to lose the opportunity to send each of you a more personal

greeting this Christmas, we still want to encourage you to make the most of this annual rhythm in the life of the church. There is value in setting aside time to meditate on the wonder of the incarnation, to praise and thank God for the gift of His Son Jesus, and to look forward with eager expectation to the second advent of our Lord and Savior! Our prayer is that God will use this season to renew your joy in the gospel, to deepen your relationship with Christ, and to bring you new opportunities to share the good news of Jesus' coming with those who do not know Him.