



CHRISTMAS 2022

# NEWSLETTER



**NADIA ZEVERSENUKE**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## EXPERIENCING CHRISTMAS IN PRISON

### THIS YEAR MORE THAN 250 NEW BELIEVERS IN CHRIST WILL CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS!

Over the last several weeks I have been reminiscing about my first Christmas as a follower of Christ. While Christmas had always been a special time of year, filled with many family traditions, gifts and one too many potlucks, it lacked significant meaning. Once I realized that this day was meant to honour my Saviour's birth – everything about the way that my family celebrated changed.

As I write this letter, New Life has received report of 250 salvations this year through our Bible Correspondence courses. As we celebrate this amazing movement of God within the Canadian prison system, I can't help but wonder how these transformed souls will feel this Christmas. Perhaps they will be filled with peace beyond understanding, or regret for so many Christmases that did not include Jesus, or maybe they will be longing for a visit with their loved ones. Whatever they are working through, I know that God will provide comfort in their new belief.

For my family this season brings a deep sense of gratitude for Jesus and the work He continues to do in our hearts and home. My prayer is that each of you experiences the joy of Christmas and that your season is filled with joyous worship for our Saviour. Please pray for all NLPM students in prison, that their hearts will be at peace in midst of their circumstances.

Merry Christmas!

**Nadia Zeversenuke**, Executive Director

NLPM student Donald shared what his experience was like in prison over Christmas 2006. Since leaving prison, Donald has completed more than 30 studies and continues to work through the NLPM curriculum. We are thrilled to say that Donald is doing so well now, he has a solid job and attends church regularly. Even more exciting is that he will become a senior soldier with the Salvation Army.

"Christmas 2006 I was in the middle of a one-year sentence and started reading a lot of Christian books and doing New Life courses. The course that really made an impact was the Christmas study. I never really understood what Christmas was all about, but my outlook was different. Even in prison I started to understand that Christmas is about the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ and the way I celebrated changed. It was hard to be in prison during the holidays but when I started to understand who Jesus was and why He was born, my life changed forever.

Now every year I go to church and celebrate His birth. Today I enjoy my freedom, the food and the festivities of the holidays are always my favourite, but I will never forget my Christmases in prison. It really was hard to be in jail but if it wasn't for that one-year sentence, I would not be the person I am today.

I am thankful that I know Jesus and I am thankful that New Life gave me this Christmas gift."

**Donald**, NLPM Student since 2006





**CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS ALL  
YEAR LONG!**

**Dave Hancox, NLPM Instructor**



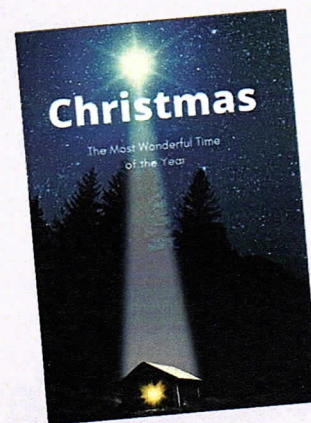
Christmas means so many things to people. This certainly applies to me.

I came to faith in Jesus later in life and the meaning of Christmas has changed so much as I have journeyed with God. I have so many fond memories of Christmas when our kids were little. Perhaps my favorite memory is the sight of my boys – around 8 and 6 years old – sitting together at the top of the stairs in their flannel pyjamas waiting with eager anticipation for my wife to come home from her night shift at the hospital so they could run downstairs to see what Santa gave them. They almost squealed with excitement when they heard her car pull up. They gave her a quick greeting and then burst into the family room to look at their gifts. Those were wonderful times but Jesus wasn't part of our Christmas in those days. We didn't even go to a Christmas service. It seemed disingenuous to do so as I wasn't celebrating Jesus' birth in any way.

I compare that to today when my wife and I sometimes try to see how many Christmas services we can attend/watch. More than that, the celebration of Christmas has become a year-long activity. This is one of the many ways in which I am blessed to be an NLPM instructor. Questions such as what is the reason for Jesus to become human, and what was Jesus' main purpose in coming to earth as a man are great teaching points for the students whom God has led to the program. They also serve as wonderful reminders to me about the true meaning of Christmas and how this is to be celebrated every day. To paraphrase Ebenezer Scrooge, I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. The Holy Spirit will dwell within me to make me be thankful every day for the liberating and saving gift of grace that God has offered to all of us. I am so thankful to say that this is now what Christmas means to me.

**THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF YEAR.**

This year NLPM will be sending hundreds of Christmas Bible Study courses into Canadian prisons. For inmates like Donald, this may be the first time they hear the true meaning of Christmas. We pray that their hearts are softened to the word of God through this study.



*What students are saying...*

“ When I began my NLPM studies several years ago, I had no idea the journey that I would face. I was in a dark place and my life of crime destroyed so much – I was a lost soul facing a life sentence. Somehow I found a light in the darkness, the Holy Spirit gave me comfort and rest even in my cell. Now my days begin and end with prayer, I feel relaxed and at peace. I am so thankful for Jesus! ”

- Manuel





## CHAPLAIN UPDATE

*Carl Wake, Chaplain*

Many of you will remember Chaplain Carl from the Ottawa region, he recently retired from his role as chaplain but is still serving those in need. Recently he gave us an update on what he has been up to and shared some memories from his experience in prison during Christmas.

**Carl served as a chaplain for more than 30 years – he shares how he helped inmates during the Christmas season.**

“Inmates do not want to be reminded on Christmas Day of all that they are missing by being incarcerated. I often heard words to this effect, “I wish I could just go to sleep on Christmas Eve and wake up on Boxing Day.” The number of attempted suicides spikes at this time of year. Staff are on heightened alert for any signs of these intentions. While the Youth Services Unit was active at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre, we put on an annual Christmas brunch for the youth the week before the holiday. We got there early and filled the unit with delicious smells of the food we were preparing. Staff and youth suggested favourite Christmas music to be added to a soundtrack that played. It was a special time for the youth and staff alike. I still have the series of Christmas music CD’s that were “published” in house.

Though I retired from active prison chaplaincy in early 2021, I wanted to keep in touch with my network of individuals and organizations who are still caring for the needs of inmates, inside and upon release. I firmly believe that through a continuity of care from prison and back into society, an individual who decides to follow Jesus as his Lord and Saviour can successfully return to society once and for all with our help. Released for Good encourages communication among the key players through regular meetings and special events. It is most satisfying to hear how organizations are in touch with each other and helping one another out. My prayer is that this ministry will continue to grow as more chaplains and ministries and churches become involved.”

To stay up to date on Carl’s ministry, check out his website [www.releasedforgood.com](http://www.releasedforgood.com)

## What students are saying...

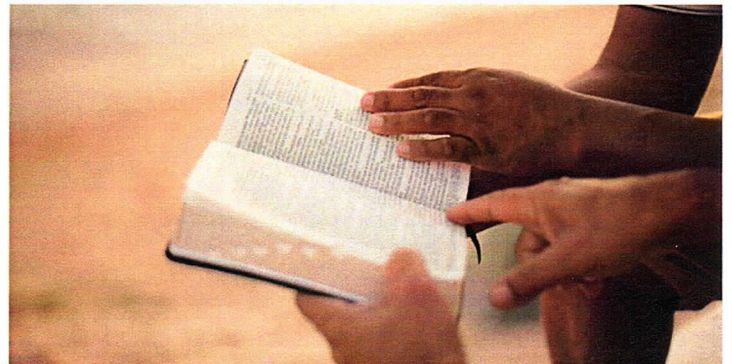
“ I really enjoy the Bible studies and have learned so much about God. I never knew what real love was until I started these studies, and I am so thankful that my life is changing. ”

- Kevin

## PRAY FOR CHAPLAINS!

The NLPM team realizes how hard chaplains work on the front lines of spreading the gospel. Our prayer is that God continues to strengthen chaplains across Canada and that He provides peace beyond all understanding in the midst of every encounter with an inmate.

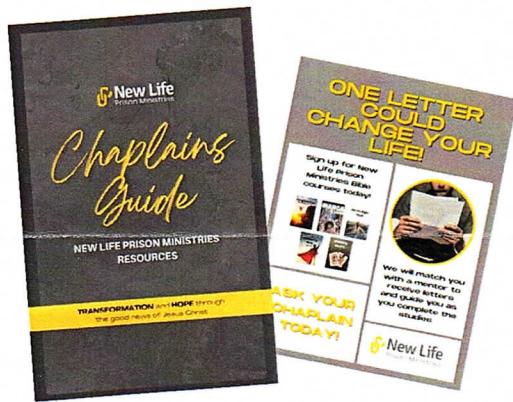
Please keep chaplains in your prayers this holiday season. May they be refreshed by the Lord’s presence entering 2023 with excitement for all that God is doing through them.





## WHAT WE HEARD FROM CHAPLAINS!

This year, we conducted a chaplains survey that included questions on how we could serve them better through our services, resources and prayer. We heard many chaplains respond with specific needs to help expand our student reach across Canada. This included creating an introductory chaplain's package with marketing materials, course information, and enrollment cards. This month we will be sending more than 130 resource kits across Canada to help spread the word about the NLPM program. We know God will use this to grow the Kingdom and we are excited to welcome all the new students this initiative brings!



The NLPM team realizes how hard chaplains work on the front-lines of spreading the gospel. Our prayer is that God continues to strengthen chaplains across Canada and that He provides peace beyond all understanding in the midst of every encounter with an inmate.

Please keep chaplains in your prayers this holiday season. May they be refreshed by the Lord's presence entering 2023 with excitement for all that God is doing through them.

## *What students are saying...*

“ The ARC helps me understand who Jesus is and I really love listening to it at night. ”

- Brian

## THANKS TO YOU WE ARE SENDING HUNDREDS OF ARC DEVICES ALL ACROSS CANADA!

Chaplains are ordering more ARC devices than ever before! Many chaplains have used these devices for Bible study purposes connecting inmates with our courses, but they have also served as comfort during the long hours of lock-down when dealing with Covid 19. We were thrilled to find out that inmates were given ARC devices to help them deal with anxiety, loneliness, and depression. This has increased our reach into institutions that have never used NLPM resources, and we are so thankful for this growth. This fall we sent the NLPM family a request to support our ARC project and we were overwhelmed by the response.



Thank you to our donors and church partners for being so generous!

## *What students are saying...*

“ I just wanted to say thank you for your kind words and prayers. I have taken your letter and hung it up in my cell to remind me to pray. ”

- Jon

**NEW LIFE PRISON MINISTRIES**  
Box 123 Arva, ON N0M 1C0  
519-666-1950

[www.nlpm.ca](http://www.nlpm.ca)

 [newlife\\_prisonministries](https://www.instagram.com/newlife_prisonministries)  [New Life Prison Ministries](https://www.facebook.com/NewLifePrisonMinistries)