

# GAP in the Bars

The Holy Spirit at work in the Prisons of Texas

## Prison Ministries of Texas

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### GAP behind the Bars

By: Bill Kesler

Prison Ministries of Texas, Inc. has made a continuous series of small steps, steadily growing its presence in Prisons in Region I of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. The founder of the Ministry, Rick Henderson has used his excellent repute and relationship with the department, developed over a career in the system, to move inexorably between the bars of the several units, providing a chance for communication of the Word of God on the other side of the bars, in one unit after another.

In the 1970's when Col. R. B. Thieme, Jr. first taught the principle of GAP, I must admit that I had some reservations about the principle itself. At that time, I had a payroll consisting of a good many people who had utilized their daily ration of intelligence when they got their shoes on the correct feet. Frankly I couldn't contemplate such as them ever understanding any of the more advanced doctrines the Colonel was then teaching.

In the prisons of the TDCJ, I became exposed to some of the most undereducated, anti-intellectual people I had ever encountered. It

seemed that an extraordinary number of these people found their way to my classes and I, at first, despaired of communicating anything more complex than the gospel to some of these people. However, with each passing week I saw progress on the part of many of these men who in the early days of the classes could not have constructed a proper sentence.

Don't get me wrong, there is no way under the sun that I could ever take any credit whatsoever for this progress – this advance. I have never enjoyed a superabundance of patience and had never had a real teaching experience in my life before joining this prison ministry.

**(continued on page 4)**



Bible Teaching at the Estelle Unit



#### Inside this issue:

GAP	1
Origin	1
Testimonial E2	2
E2 Group Picture	2
Mind of Christ to Ferguson and Luther	3
Testimonial WY	3
Mission Statement	4
Testimonial WY	4

#### Special points of interest:

- Salvation from the penalty of sin is faith alone in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.
- The Church Age spiritual life is the filling of God the Holy Spirit + Bible Doctrine + application to the circumstances of life.

### Origin of the Prison Ministries of Texas, Inc.

The Prison Ministries of Texas, Inc. came into being in 2002 beginning with the perception by Rick Henderson of the existence of positive volition toward Bible Doctrine that existed in the Wynne Unit of Region I of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. This phenomena was made apparent by the presence of a great many of

the books written by R.B. Thieme, Jr. and the fact that so many of the men had read and re-read these books, manifesting a very real hunger for a regimen of spiritual growth.

With the unrelenting encouragement of his mother, the late Virginia Avant, Rick began putting together a plan for regular bible classes to be conducted in the Wynne

unit and with the acquiescence of the Warden and Chaplain of the unit, he began classes in late August of 2002. Rick was joined by David Dunn, the pastor of Grace Bible Church of Houston and together they began conducting two classes

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## Origins of the Prison Ministries of Texas, Inc. (cont from page 1)

Soon they were conducting classes Monday through Thursday afternoons with each class two or more hours in duration.

With positive volition unwavering, the classes have grown from the original dozen or so attendees to an average of 55 students per class, with a waiting list to join the class of more than 20. In addition to the regular curriculum, Greek and Hebrew classes were established for those offenders who had discerned the possibility of having a communication spiritual gift. The Wynne class has covered a course in Doctrinal Basics, The books of Esther and I Corinthians, the Doctrines of the Angelic

Conflict and Escrow Blessings. The classes are now studying The Life of Christ on DVDs from classes being taught by Rev. R. B. Thieme, III, pastor of Berachah Church of Houston and the Book of Romans, taught by Rick Henderson.

The State of Texas has observed the benefit of the classes being conducted in the Wynne Unit and in early 2011, Rick was awarded the Outstanding Volunteer Service Award for his service.



## Testimonial from Estelle

The Bible Doctrine class which I have been enrolled in for approximately six years is a study that has taught me many doctrines. This has been augmented by Greek word studies, historical, economic and cultural information pertaining to ancient history with particular emphasis on the period of the dispensation of Israel.

Aside from biblical studies I have taken by correspondence, the Doctrine class is the longest study I have been involved in. With face-to-face instruction, our teacher has been very helpful in our inculcation of the mind of Christ and through our class the faith-rest drill has become a problem solving device of daily use

for continued growth in an unfriendly environment. Our growth in Grace has been our strength and help in the spiritual warfare we are engaged in.

For me, this class has been more interesting than many of the correspondence courses I have taken. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.

Training by repetition has been very beneficial to making the doctrine so real in my life. When our teacher was putting a principle on the overhead projector the other night, I thought, shoot, I could duplicate that in my sleep. With this ability, you instantly apply pertinent doctrines to your needs in combat.

I've truly enjoyed the

Doctrine class and until I leave this facility, I look forward to continuing my participation in this class.

Chris Hutchins  
# 480349  
The Estelle Unit



## Taking the Mind of Christ to the Ferguson and Luther Unit

For almost a year I have been teaching O.T. Survey at the Ferguson unit. Although we are still in the book of Genesis our study has caused us to research much of the Canon of Scripture in validation of the salient scripture under study. It was my opinion that it was important to get rooted in the beginning so that as we travel through God's Word the class attendees would develop a better understanding of that upon which their faith is anchored. As a result, many of these offenders are realizing spiritual growth and are able to dispel so much of the false doctrine to which they have been subjected in their past.

One of my great encouragements each week is seeing a lot of these offenders in our class begin to minister to others in their cell blocks who also have struggled with

false doctrine and its effects. Many of these young men have launched a personal discipline of self study, carefully reviewing what we have studied in class and among those I am certain are some young men who have a communication spiritual gift which they are now preparing to execute. Some of the next generation of great communicators of the Word of God are going to be former incarcerants who had to be reduced to prison for the Lord to get their attention.

At the Luther unit, in Navasota, we have concentrated on basic Bible Doctrines since I began that class in May of 2011. Much of our concentration has been on the doctrine of eternal security since a large percentage of class attendees were convinced

that they could lose their salvation and a few loop upon other inmates as being hopelessly beyond salvation because of the sins of their past. Much of my teaching in the Luther unit is from Dr. Charles C. Ryrie's "Survey of Bible Doctrines."

My greatest encouragement is the eagerness with which these men anticipate our Bible Class and on those occasions when classes are cancelled because of glitches in the administrative process in the prison, their disappointment is palpable, almost making me feel somehow partly responsible. Like in the Ferguson unit, a great deal of teaching time is needed for clearing up false doctrines which the men have absorbed in their backgrounds. Unteaching seems to take up more time than teaching at times. However, (Continued on page 3 – Ferguson and Luther)

## Testimonial from Huntsville

I am very grateful to have been made aware of the Bible Doctrine class in the Huntsville Unit where I am incarcerated. I became a Christian in prison and soon started studying the Bible on my own. I kept finding issues that I needed help understanding. I signed up for the Bible Doctrine class that Brother Bill teaches and it is a great class that I would recommend to anyone. He doesn't consider any question too dumb and takes the time to explain things to class people no matter how much time it takes. I look forward to the class each week

and only wish the class was more frequent and lasted longer.

Faren Ray Truelove  
#790252  
Huntsville (Walls) Unit

## Testimonial from Wynne

My name is Brett Skully and I have been here at the Wynne Unit for several years now. I started attending Rick Henderson's Original Language Bible Study class 8 years ago. It has been the most incredible Bible study I've ever been exposed to.

In the first 6 months I learned more about the Word of God than I had in ten years of earlier various Bible studies. Through this class I have come to know my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ like never before. The practical application of the Word to my life as taught by Bobby Thieme has been more to me than I can describe. I was berated by preachers and teachers in my early

Christian life and constantly told to stop sinning and be spiritual.

Thanks to Rick's class, I have a crystal clear understanding of the spiritual life and the path to spiritual maturity. I am absolutely convinced that this class, with the teaching of Bobby Thieme, Rick Henderson and David Dunn assures that I will never be the same again. Thank you – thank you very much.

## Estelle Class Pictures

Our teacher



Getting Instruction  
in Righteousness



Let us pray.



## Ferguson and Luther

(continued from page 2)

the positive volition of the men in this class is at least as great as that which I find at the Luther unit and the response of the men in the class is greater than I would have hoped for, initially.

The ministry to these offenders is humbling beyond words. The fact that God would use someone like me to further disseminate His Word to places where so much hunger for spiritual food is so manifest, provides greater blessing than I can describe. I never cease being thrilled by the fact that these men are so intent on the application of what they learn from the Word of God, while they remain in prison and in anticipation of their return to the free world.

I humbly request your prayer support that God the Holy Spirit will continue to equip me for this ministry on a daily basis, that I may continue to lead these men to experience the reality of John 8:32. I would be thrilled to talk to anyone who may have considered volunteering in this ministry. I can assure you that it is a work that will bring fantastic blessing.

## God's Word should focus our priorities!

**Hebrews 4:12** – For the word of God is alive and powerful. Sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it is a critic of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

**2 Timothy 2:15** – Study to show yourself a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of Truth.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17** – <sup>16</sup>All Scripture is God-breathed and is

profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction and instruction in righteousness, <sup>17</sup>so that the man of God may be mature thoroughly furnished unto all good works.

**Romans 8:28** – <sup>28</sup>For we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His pre-determined plan.

**Lamentation 3:21-25** – <sup>21</sup>This I recall to my mind, Therefore I

have confidence. <sup>22</sup>It is of the LORD'S lovingkindnesses they we are not consumed because His compassions never fail.

<sup>23</sup>They are renewed every morning; Great is Your faithfulness. <sup>24</sup>"The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I have hope in Him." <sup>25</sup>The LORD is good to those who wait for Him, To the person who seeks Him.

**Romans 8:32** – He who spared not His own Son, but gave Him up as a substitute for all of us —how shall He not also freely give us all things?

**Romans 8:38-39** – For I am persuaded that nor death nor life, neither angels nor principalities, nor the things present nor things to come, nor any powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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**Our Mission:** To provide inmates in the facilities of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice with accurate teaching about the absolute truths of God's Word.

**Purpose:** To facilitate the teaching of the Biblical Truths on a consistent daily basis and to identify those that have the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher and to provide training for that gift.

**Method and Means:** The grace communication of Bible Doctrine is taught by means of face to face teaching or by DVD lessons from Berachah Church and/or R. B. Thieme Jr., Bible Ministries.

**Goals:** Our Lord Jesus Christ provides deliverance from the penalty of sin to those who believe in Him. He then provides a unique spiritual life based on His grace. This spiritual life has potential for absolute happiness regardless of the circumstances of life. It only requires the believer to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. Not only will those who execute the spiritual life have a fantastic life but will also have rewards that last for eternity. We use His grace to execute His Predestined Plan. We shall hear Our Lord say the words "Well done my good and faithful servant."

### Bible Church inside the walls!

**John 15:11** - These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.

**2 Peter 3:18** – But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to Him be the glory, both now and to the day of eternity. Amen.

**Luke 19:17** – And he said to him, 'Well done, good slave, because you have been faithful in a very little thing, you are to be in authority over ten cities.

## GAP behind the Bars (continued from page 1)

I saw men who had been exposed only to religion in their past, and little of that (fortunately). The greatest resistance I first experienced was to acceptance of eternal security. Many have a hard time grasping that people who do the kind of things they have done can maintain their membership in the royal family of God. Then another phenomena is the repeated standard, "the Bible is full of contradictions – you can prove anything you want to with the Bible because it has so many contradictions." When these men begin to understand that what they perceive to be contradictions are actually confusing translation of many passages of scripture, they come to see that the completed

canon of scripture is inerrant and consistent in its presentation of what God wants us all to know.

In the prisons you encounter men who experience only despair in the acceptance of what they perceive to be an unfair life that cannot have meaning, suddenly build enough doctrine on doctrine that their perspective begins to change. They come to understand that every aspect of life is predicated on the decisions we all make from moment to moment. It's not society's fault that they are in prison and suffering friendless indigence. It is because of their poor decisions.

In this environment you get to see men accept Christ as their Savior and grow to the point where

they give thanks for their incarceration because on the outside, they never would have given a moment's thought to the gospel of salvation.

You see men for whom Bible Doctrine has become the most important thing in their lives and because of which their development of Grace Orientation is not impeded by their environment. You see men for whom the prospect of sharing the perfect happiness of God is the objective they hold most dear. Yes indeed, GAP is alive and well behind the bars and walls and a good many incarcerants in late 2011 are looking forward to the best Christmas of their lives.

## Testimonial from Wynne

I find it hard to express in words what Mr. Henderson has done for me by providing sound doctrinal teaching to me and the other members of the Original Language Bible Studies class. This class has made me aware of the objective of spiritual maturity as I advance in my knowledge of my Lord and Savior, Christ Jesus. I have been in this class for 9 years and have had the wonderful experience of taking in doctrine from Bobby Thieme, truly gifted pastor-teachers. As a result I've been motivated to enroll in and successfully complete a seminary course in Early Church History and advance daily in my understanding of the original languages of the canon of Scripture.

I am a fundamentalist, dispensationalist, premillennialist secure and confident of eternal security. I continue to pray for Mr. Henderson as opens up other prison units where offenders will hear the gospel, become positive to doctrine and begin their advance to spiritual maturity.

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