

Berean Prison Ministries

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The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek: He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Isaiah 61:1

FROM CRIME TO CHRIST

Imagine hearing the words “You are sentenced to a maximum-security prison for your crime”. These were hard words for Nate Terry to hear, yet not totally unexpected either. Nate grew up in the projects of Chicago – a place filled with poverty, gangs, violence, drugs, and despair. Young Nate Terry had little hope of ever escaping the negative influences that were slowly strengthening their grip on him. Raised by a single mom after his dad left him at age 6, he did what most kids would do...rebel. At first, rebellion seemed to fill the natural void in his life. Nate would hang out with younger gang wannabes and drink alcohol, use drugs, and commit petty crimes. His big day came, or so he thought, when Nate became a full-fledged Gangster Disciple at the age of just 11 years old. Finally, he belonged to a family. However, his life quickly spiraled out of control. Arrested at age 12 for stealing a purse, he was released back to his mom in the same hopeless environment. Nate was soon arrested again and sent to Juvenile Detention. Just 30 days after his next release, Nate Terry found himself incarcerated once again, this time at St. Charles. By now, it was no big deal to be arrested and locked up because it gained him status in the gang and many of the Gangster Disciples were confined with him. At age 15, Nate was out of confinement and back on the streets.

Nate’s involvement with guns and shooting a man helped to propel him

up the ranks of the Gangster Disciples. Sentenced again, this time for armed robbery, it was back to Juvenile Detention until he was released at 18. Finally, Nate did the unthinkable. He shot and killed a man. Now sentenced as an adult to several years in a maximum-security facility, Nate enters prison lacking what he needs the most – Faith in Jesus Christ. Nate knew little about Jesus. He never went to church, never heard Bible stories about Jesus and, most important to Nate, he had never witnessed Jesus’ help when he got into so much trouble. “Where you been all my life Jesus?” Nate would think. The only thing that Nate believed was that Jesus didn’t care for him.

The amazing grace of salvation, found only in Jesus Christ, was about to explode into Nate Terry’s hopeless life. The only Bible verse Nate knew was John 3:16. One of his past cellmates in Cook County Jail, had written the words of John 3:16 on the wall. Every time Nate was in his cell he would read these words, eventually committing John 3:16 to memory, but he still refused to apply them to his life. Nate was fortunate enough to be allowed to work in the prison cafeteria to break up his day. He always worked on Sunday to avoid church service, which the Gangster Disciples were required to attend the 3rd Sunday each month. Nate decided to attend the service one Sunday, instead of

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YOUNG NATE TERRY



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NATE TERRY AT RELEVANT CHURCH

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PRAYER REQUESTS:

- As our representatives return to Romania this May, pray that God will open more doors of opportunity to expand His kingdom in Romania and throughout Eastern Europe.
- For volunteers to serve in more prisons and jails in the U.S.
- For additional individuals to grade the Bible study lessons returned by inmates.

working, to find out about this “fake stuff being preached.” The decision to investigate would definitely change his life forever! That Sunday morning Nate took a seat at the service and listened to a remarkable sermon on John 3:16. The minister seemed to be speaking directly to Nate about how much God loved him. His message was exactly what John 3:16 said. Nate realized Jesus was speaking to him in a mighty way. The Holy Spirit convicted Nate Terry that morning. Nate stood up and screamed out, then fell to his knees and gave his heart to the Lord Jesus Christ. Tears streamed down his face. In front of the gang members, at the age of 25, Nate discovered Christ’s forgiveness. His new faith in Jesus Christ set him free from sin! He prayed for God to show him that his conversion and faith in Christ were real. God did just that with a powerful miracle – Nate was able to turn his back on the Gangster Disciples with no reprisal from the gang. Nate Terry’s hunger for the Word lead him to Bible studies, and found him longing to attend church services to be with his newfound family...

his brothers in Christ. The more Nate learned about Jesus, the more deeply he loved and adored him.

As time drew near for his release, Nate met a man named John Holleran, from Faith, Hope and Love based in Peoria, Illinois. “What are you going to do when you get out” was a question John posed to Nate. John then helped get Nate paroled into the FHL facility in Peoria and continued mentoring Nate during his stay. Nate secured a job at the River Station Restaurant, lived at Faith, Hope and Love, and found a Bible believing church to attend.

God moved someone to ask Nate to speak at the South Side Mission and it was there that he met Dan Meister. Dan told Nate that he had a powerful message that people needed to hear

and that Nate should meet his dad, Paul Meister. Paul and Nate met and a relationship based on faith in Christ was established. Paul invited Nate to speak at the Peoria County Jail on a Sunday and, as Nate says, “the rest is history”. God has opened many doors of opportunity for Nate to share his powerful testimony and give hope to inmates around the State of Illinois. Nate speaks in Berean facilities at Peoria County, Tazewell County, Fulton County, and Illinois River Correctional Facility. Nate has also been blessed to present his testimony to inmates, both in and out of state, through the Bill Glass Ministries. Most amazingly, though, is that Nate has spoken of the healing power of Jesus Christ at several of the facilities that he was incarcerated in as a youth. God has used a man with a seemingly hopeless past to now offer the hope of eternal life in Jesus Christ to inmates of all ages and backgrounds. Inmates pay special attention when Nate speaks. They all can identify with Nate as he delivers his powerful message of salvation found through Jesus Christ.

You could easily write off Nate’s life as one born to fail, but God had other plans for this young man from the projects, who was surrounded by hopelessness, drugs and crime. Nate knows what those plans are...he was born to speak about Jesus Christ to the lost, incarcerated souls of prisons and jails. Berean Prison Ministries is truly blessed to have a man dedicated to telling inmates the wonderful saving power of Jesus Christ. When you listen to him speak, there is no doubt that God has transformed Nate Terry into a strong Christian man who loves the Lord. Nate has a wife and family and works at Sunbelt Rentals in East Peoria. He attends the Relevant Church, at Landmark in Peoria, where he is one of the Church Ministry leaders.



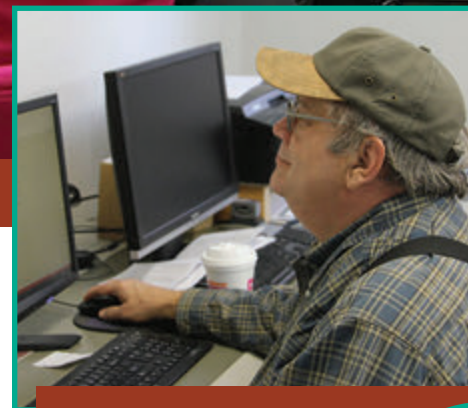
VOLUNTEERS SORTING, SEPARATING AND PREPARING STUDIES TO MAIL

BEREAN BIBLE DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Each week volunteers at Berean Prison Ministries process hundreds of pieces of mail at their Unsicker Farms distribution center. When the mail arrives, a whirlwind of processing begins and each piece of mail is handled several times by volunteers at different stations. Staff quickly sorts the letters into two different groups: completed Bible studies or requested Bible studies. The Bible studies are processed and put into each inmate's computer data log for tracking completed studies. The studies are then sorted for grading and mailing. Envelopes are stuffed with the next series of Bible studies, sealed and stamped for mailing out to the inmates.

Bible requests from inmates often contain personal spiritual information, prayer requests and a "thank you" for providing a free Bible. Their letters express a new found "hope in Jesus Christ" and how their hearts have been "set free" for the first time. Bible request letters are also logged into the computer and a Giant Print Bible and the first four Bible studies are placed in shipping sleeves and stamped for mailing. Finally, a label is applied directing the Bible to one of the jails or prisons within the continental United States like Pascagoula, MS, Waco, TX, or Ocala, FL. The Bible studies are then distributed to churches, etc. where volunteer graders, like Gertrude Gammon or Jerry and Marie Hoerr, read and comment on the studies. Amazingly, Jerry and Marie Hoerr have graded over 50,000 studies to date. Finally, the graded studies are mailed back to the inmates.

As you can see, the Bible distribution center relies heavily on volunteers of all ages to ensure the inmates receive the Gospel message of salvation found only in Jesus Christ. Volunteer work can be done at the distribution center or in the comfort of your home as a study grader. If you would like to become a part of this dynamic, Spirit filled ministry, feel free to contact Judy Sceggel at 309-208-3840.



BILL LOGGING
INMATE DATA

GERTRUDE, A FAITHFUL
VOLUNTEER, GRADING
BIBLE STUDIES



FINANCIAL REQUESTS:

- A gift of \$38.22 provides a Bible and the postage costs for an inmate to complete all 150 of our Bible study lessons.
- The \$3,000 per month needed to provide support for our one representative and the transportation expenses for Berean's 50 volunteers in Romania.
- All contributions of any amount to this ministry are gratefully received.



LONG TIME GRADERS JERRY AND MARIE [FROM PAGE 3]

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

I have been thinking of Jesus' words in Matthew 25:36, "I was in prison and ye came unto me." Our Lord recognizes anything done to His own as done unto Himself. Hence, the importance of His call to this act of mercy. Not all respond to this call, but the ministry of those called has made Berean Prison Ministries a special work for our Lord. It should be noted such an act does not depend on wealth, ability or intelligence. It is a simple act freely given.

When Jesus spoke these words to go to the wretched outcasts in prison, it was an unheard act of charity in those days; it was to enter places horrible and foul beyond description. Today we have better conditions, but the called still respond to a special act of charity (love). How thankful we are for our loved ones who have responded to the call.

I share a special case. My niece "Jody" was arrested, a few years ago, and incarcerated in the Tazewell County jail in Pekin, Illinois. After her trial, she would spend six years in a federal prison. Jody received loving acts as she worked with our counselors and attended worship services. While there, she asked Jesus to be her Savior. Wanting baptism, she was told it was not available at the Tazewell jail. Thankfully, she was moved to a jail in Fulton County where baptism was permitted. Giving a good testimony, we baptized her. Her strong faith would take her through the next six years. With joy, she serves her Lord today free from prison and free indeed.

We are so thankful for our volunteers who respond to the call of mercy and love to the people in prison. To serve may mean going into the jails and prisons, but equally important are those who serve outside. We have many on the outside who grade Bible studies and send out Bibles to the prisoners.

Are you called? We have a great need for people to grade Bible studies, help in mailing, as well as, going into the jails and prisons. As our Lord said "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren he has done it unto me", Matthew 25:40.

Blessings,


Ken Hoerr

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