

Pilgrim Theological Seminary
1229 38th Street N, Box 262, Myrtle Beach, SC 29577

“Equipping the Church-behind-the-wall.”



Dear Christian Friends,

Myrtle Beach Christian College (www.myrtlebeachcc.org) and Pilgrim Theological Seminary (www.pilgrimseminary.org) will open in Myrtle Beach, SC in September, 2016. Our mission is to provide high quality, affordable, and easily accessible higher education in Christian perspective to those who live in or visit coastal South Carolina and to people around the world through our distance education program.

In addition, the seminary extends the opportunity for theological education to incarcerated men and women in state and federal prisons throughout the United States. This letter is about those students.

There are approximately one thousand federal and state prisons in the United States. Many are larger than the small towns that often surround them. Inside every one of those prisons the Church is present, made up of the believers who live there. We call this the church-behind-the-wall.

It is a wonderful thing that local congregations carry on ministries of many kinds with those who are incarcerated. However, only so much can be done by the church outside the wall. The primary work of the Kingdom in prisons is entrusted to the believers who live on the inside. They know the language and culture of prison life. They are there 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Just as it is the task of God's people everywhere, it is their task to teach, proclaim, evangelize and serve in an effort to win and transform their community for Christ.

Unfortunately, the church behind-the-wall is often educationally under equipped to best fulfill its mission. Pilgrim Theological Seminary is committed to do as much as we can to help equip the believers in prison for greater ministry and service. The seminary is especially interested in identifying and educating incarcerated men and women whom Christ has called to the pastoral ministry of the Church.

Beginning in January, 2017 the seminary will be offering a Certificate in Biblical Studies for those in prison. This is a 15 credit hour certificate which includes five courses: Principles of Biblical Interpretation; Old Testament I; Old Testament II; New Testament I and New Testament II. We are being assisted in the development of study resources by: Dr Robert Yarbrough, Professor of New Testament at Covenant Seminary; Dr. Jonathan Watts, Professor of Old Testament at Geneva College; and Dr. David Watson, Dean and Professor of New Testament at United Seminary in Ohio. The study and video resources being created will be made available to prison chaplains in late fall.

As Christians, we believe that the redemptive power of Christ can rescue the worst of us from who we once were and make us into new people. So it should be of no surprise to any Christian that God would be calling those who once knew the depths of sin to now proclaim the heights of redemption. God's redeeming grace is not bound by human expectations but is freely given to all who will believe.

Pilgrim Seminary does not charge tuition to any of our students, inside or outside of prison. We do ask all of our students to donate, as they are able, to help defray the cost of their education. This is extremely difficult for prisoners and their families who often have few available funds to donate. That is why we are requesting the financial support of individual Christians and local churches to help do for the church-behind-the-wall what it cannot do for itself.

More than 1,500 incarcerated men and women have already applied to be part of this program. It will cost the seminary about \$375 per person (\$125 goes towards required textbooks) to provide the educational resources needed to complete the Biblical Studies Certificate program. Without your support we will be completely unable to meet this need.

Your contribution of \$375, or \$30 per month, will make a tremendous difference in preparing and equipping incarcerated Christian leaders for more effective ministry and service in a mission field of more than two million souls. There is little in prison life that can change a person for the better. But Christ can. Please prayerfully consider this opportunity to help the church-behind-the-wall proclaim the great news that captives really can be set free.

Sincerely,
The Board of Governors

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PS. Yes, we accept contributions of all sizes. You can contribute \$125 to cover the cost of the Biblical Studies textbooks for one prisoner. Or you might wish to contribute \$35 to cover the cost of one study Bible. And, one last idea, please consider the possibility of contributing a roll of postage stamps. We go through a lot of them.