



Alpha Prison Ministries Newsletter

December 2024 Edition

"I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:36

20 Years with Alpha

This fall marks 20 years since I developed Alpha's first web site and was asked both to contribute my talents to writing and editing (and redesigning) this newsletter and to serve on the Board of Directors. Alpha themselves celebrated 41 years as a ministry last month and my first newsletter was November 2004, so my 20 years means I've been with them barely under half of their history and next year will be exactly half.

Such long tenures are not unusual for Alpha. Many of our volunteers have served close to this long or longer. Leon was fairly new when I started but when he stepped down as our Executive Director a year ago he had held that position for over 23 years. He's still actively going in a different capacity as a volunteer. Bill Spurrier and Mike Vredevoogd have been with Alpha longer and Mike was on the Board before I joined.

I've said this before but I don't mind repeating it because this ministry not only grows on our volunteers in such a way that they keep going for years, it requires a love of what we do that

nurtures being a true and humble servant. There are no ego trips on the Alpha Board of Directors. There never have been and I'm glad to be a part of that. The group of men currently serving on the Board are a pleasure to work with.

And all those I've served with over my 20 years so far have been an enrichment in my life. I've gone to a few funerals during that time for men who are now enjoying the heavenly rewards for the treasure they laid up in heaven. Men like Marv Wood who got into prison ministry after practicing the ultimate act of forgiveness when he forgave the man who murdered his son.

Bob Veldman, an original Alpha team member, was already elderly when I met him but he was a man of subtle wit who always had a story and served inmates and former inmates until he was no longer physically capable, which was the only way to make him "retire" the last few years of his life.

Ray Chester was a man of incredible generosity and means

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- ◆ Praise God for a great Impact Night annual fundraising and awareness banquet last month. We had good attendance, good ministry presentation and results, and a good time and food for everyone to enjoy. We'll be able to share the actual numbers later but we're very happy with the way the whole event was able to be a blessing for everyone who could make it.
- ◆ Thank the Lord for many years of service to APM, Alpha House residents, and prison inmates by Bill Spurrier, probably our longest serving volunteer. He has suspended his volunteer activities and resigned his Board of Directors position but everyone is grateful for his service and he would be welcomed back immediately if he were able in the future.
- ◆ New volunteers and Board members would be greatly appreciated so it is fitting to make this a prayer request so God can provide the right people.

Prayer Requests

DECEMBER 2024

Please cut around these prayer requests and use this as a bookmark in your Bible.

Alpha
Prison Ministries

ALPHA

20 Years with Alpha (continued)

who didn't know the word *impossible* because he would say himself often, "God's not broke." Ray didn't limit himself to just writing checks, though he wrote good ones, he got his hands dirty and served in the trenches.

I served with Elmer DeRitter for more than 12 years before he passed away four years ago this month. To say he was well invested in prison ministry would be a serious understatement. Besides serving on the Alpha Board and that of other ministries, Elmer was a teacher who brought seminary level instruction to inmates inside of prison who became pastors and church leaders after their release.

All right, highlighting and condensing my 20 years with Alpha to such a short review isn't easy. It doesn't even touch on the impact we have that I get to feature in these newsletters, let alone the material we don't have room for. It would be a good time to mention that we would welcome more Board members as you'll see next. Perhaps you could join us.

We've Accepted Bill's Board Resignation

Bill Spurrier is one of the longest, perhaps even **the** longest, serving

volunteer for Alpha and he has served on the Board of Directors for many of his years with us. For several months now, we've asked prayer for Bill as he had a serious fall earlier this year that forced him to suspend his activities, including his volunteer work and role as a Board member.

Bill made the painful decision to resign his Board membership and step down from his in prison volunteer work. We understand this need to resign and accepted his resignation but it is revocable if he were to recover and become capable of continuing. He will always be welcome with us and we know for sure that inmates both past and present would feel the exact same way.

We Have a "New Bill" on the Board of Directors

Earlier this year we voted unanimously to accept the application of Bill Heys for membership on the APM Board of Directors. We've kept this mostly quiet and mostly due to circumstances that prevented a full Board meeting that everyone could be present for. We were finally able to do that and get a new picture taken, including Bill Spurrier's long missing honorary presence. Let this serve as the official newsletter announcement publicly welcoming Bill Heys to the Board.



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Newsletter written/edited by APM Board member Steve Chittenden

APM is an **undenominational Christ-centered ministry** to prisoners and ex-offenders

APM Financial Summary January-October 2024

Total Income: **\$71,101.60**

Total Expense: **\$88,802.10**

Net Income: **\$-17,700.50**



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