

# Alpha Prison Ministries Newsletter

## November 2014 Edition

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

## My First Decade With APM

This month marks 31 years since APM began in 1983. But it also marks the 10 year anniversary of my joining APM as the ministry web designer, graphic designer, computer tech, newsletter editor and writer, and Board member.

My approach as newsletter editor has always been to focus on the ministry so I haven't made a practice of attaching my name to the articles I write for the newsletter. I do mention myself every once in a while but some of our subscribers still aren't aware of who the writer is. It came up at our last Board meeting that some of you are curious about my identity.

With this being my ten year mark I already planned on this article to commemorate; now the timing means I can also satisfy your curiosity. The discussion at the Board meeting was about people knowing who to *compliment*, which I appreciate, but I jokingly said, "I don't get any *complaints* this way either."

My name is Steve Chittenden. I am a self employed web designer with several talents and gifts which include writing. APM tends to produce long term volunteers and my ten years is nowhere near the longest. I count it a privilege to be part of this ministry.

How I came on board was just God being God. I had donated a web design certificate to a ministry auction with a stipulation of a minimum sell price so my donation would yield appropriate value and the buyer couldn't get it too cheap as if it didn't have value. I'll confess at this point that charity auctions turn my stomach when they're reduced to "getting something for almost nothing" instead of providing meaningful revenue for the charity/ministry.

My certificate did not sell but it didn't go to waste either. Pastor Joe Szendre from my church was also connected with APM and gave the certificate to this ministry. When I was contacted to do the APM web site, I recognized the *God move* right away.

I became a Christian in November 1982 and for my first several years as a Christian, I was with a group that ministered at a jail facility doing *Bible study* type church services for inmates. I also knew APM founder Bob Whitehead during the late 80's, early 90's but had forgotten he was involved in prison ministry. What more perfect match could there be? If you're going to develop a web site for a prison ministry, it helps to have experience like mine!

*Continued on other side...*

Visit us online at: [www.alphapm.org](http://www.alphapm.org)

- ◆ Remember our Alpha House residents in your prayers. We have 2-3 new arrivals this month and they will need to find work, churches, and face many challenges reintegrating into society.
- ◆ APM continues to face budget shortages but thank the Lord that he is our source and we don't have to worry or fret. We neither hide the fact that the challenges exist nor pressure anyone to give. We do ask that you seek the Lord on your role so you don't miss what he wants to do through you, and that no one else called to give would miss out either.
- ◆ New volunteers this year are down but opportunities are not. Jesus instructed us to ask the Lord of the harvest for laborers because the harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Please follow our Master's instructions and ask.

Prayer Requests

NOVEMBER 2014

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

Alpha  
Prison Ministries

ADVOICATE

## My First Decade With APM (continued)

I completed the web site for APM which I have managed, redesigned, and updated ever since. Leon then asked me if I would be willing to take over on this version of the newsletter. Being the graphic design snob that I am, I was thrilled to make this newsletter represent the Lord with a standard of excellence. It looks like the ministry has a big budget this way but that's an illusion. I would just be ashamed to do anything but my best.

Without digging, I don't know the exact date the APM web site launched but I do know my first APM newsletter was published November 2004. It was at that time I was invited to join the Board of Directors and accepted by vote as the newest member. In reality, I sat in on a few meetings before that as preparation for developing the web site. I was already connected to APM, being accepted to the Board just made it official.

Prior to this, I have never served on a Board. Based on what others have told me, many ministry boards aren't always much different than those of corporations, complete with hidden agendas, power trips, and behaviors more heathen than Christian. I can gladly report that I haven't experienced anything even close to that.

My experience with APM has been 100% positive which is an amazing claim after 10 years. The men I serve with are a genuine pleasure to be around. What APM is able to accomplish with our small budget is impressive. The unity and harmony on the Board is refreshing. I actually look forward to every meeting. These are men who love God and his word, love prisoners, and are committed to our mission to evangelize and disciple men who happen to be prisoners and former inmates.

When you think about it, it kind of makes sense that prison ministry would be this way. There's no glamor in it, there's no way to be profitable in earthly terms, there's no room for self righteousness, the people we minister to are unable to repay us—only people that God has called would be attracted to or last very long in prison ministry.

But as many of you reading this already know, it is addicting. God is real. He still changes people's lives. My own history prior to turning my life over to the Lord in 1982 did not involve prison, but I was a total mess and only Jesus Christ could fix me. I was the kind of person most people would have considered hopeless.

Prison ministry specializes in hopeless cases. It demonstrates the reality of Jesus Christ radically transforming people from the inside. This month I celebrate 32 years of being a Christian, 29 years of marriage, my son's 20th birthday (he's the youngest with two older sisters), and 10 years with APM. I am genuinely glad for all these blessings and more.

## Inmate Response to a New Bible

I am an inmate at Bellamy Creek and have just finished your One on One Discipleship program. I have an extensive church background but in all of that, it has taken my arrest to truly bring me to the foot of the cross. I have felt like I had a "spiritual stroke." I still have my head knowledge of my faith, but feel I had to start from scratch as far as really walking with my Savior.

When I received my new Bible from Alpha, I went back to my room and wrote the following on the inside cover:

*I was heading to my room at the Ionia Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility when a guard told me I had property in the PC. I had no idea what it might be. When I saw it was a Bible I was overwhelmed. My emotions were too much for me to control. By the time I sat on my bunk I was sobbing. This was such a wonderful gift from almost strangers. This book represents all that God has done in my life this past year. As I looked through it, I realized that from these pages I will receive my tutoring from the Holy Spirit. From this book I will teach my family. From these words I will be used as a conduit by Jesus, share his insight with others. I will study from this, I will share from this, and I will cherish every word on every page as the personal letter from You, God. Many hours will be spent living these words. Many mornings will be spent pouring over every page. Many lives, beginning with my own, will be changed through the power of the Holy Spirit. This may be the last personal Bible I will ever own. May this represent my covenant with the Holy God.*

*If you trust Me, I will be faithful.*

I cannot thank you enough for this gift and thank you for being Jesus, along with the volunteers who selflessly come to love on these broken men.

His clay — David

## “We're God's Children—Not Beggars”

The above is one of my favorite expressions I made up which probably isn't unique due to its simplicity but it's an important principle to remember. God's not stingy or withholding anything from us. We don't have to plead with him or hope for the best. We don't have to earn his favor or appease him. Those are religious ideas from fallen man, not Bible.

When we share with you that our finances are behind budget, currently by almost \$15,000, it's not from a position of worry or fear. I didn't make this one up but, “Fear begins where faith ends.” We thank you for your prayers, volunteering, and support, and we confront the shortages with faith.

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### APM Financial Summary January-September 2014

Total \$ Income:  
68,751.00 (budget)  
59,449.29 (actual)

Net \$ Expense:  
71,603.62 (budget)  
74,382.46 (actual)



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