

# Alpha Prison Ministries Newsletter

## January 2016 Edition

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

## Past • Present • Future

We're not in the habit of looking back too much or getting too concerned about the present in such a way that we lose focus on the future, but the beginning of a new year is a great time to reflect back, realistically evaluate where we are now, and plan ahead.

Here's a recap on APM for 2015:

- ◆ Over 100 inmates in WEEKLY Bible studies in the six Michigan prisons we serve
- ◆ APM volunteers are in Michigan prisons leading Bible studies almost 300 times per year
- ◆ APM receives and answers 800-900 letters from inmates EVERY year
- ◆ APM sent at least 46 Bibles to Michigan inmates and 27 formal Bible study completion certificates (as of Nov.)
- ◆ APM answered OVER 1000 phone calls from inmates, former inmates, family members, social workers, parole agents, and others asking for ministry information
- ◆ The APM web site averaged over 100 visitors per week from people seeking ministry information

Not mentioned on that list is Alpha House residents who study the Bible with Leon and meet with mentors every week.

If the theme of *Bible* shines through, that's deliberate. It's not just about getting men into the Bible, it's about getting the Bible into them. God uses his word in tandem with his Spirit to change lives.

By reaching inmates and former inmates this way, you're showing them that someone still cares, that God still cares, and you're doing something about the crime problem even if it seems overwhelming by appearances and society never recognizes you for it.

APM has only one paid staff member, Leon. The 800-900 letters and 1000+ phone calls we get, he answers them, sends out the Bibles requested by inmates, and so much more.

APM thanks you for your prayers, volunteering, and financial support to help make this happen, and for your continued participation as we look forward to 2016 and the eternal difference we all make together this year.



APM Executive Director: Leon Alderman

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

- ◆ Thank God for the success and opportunities we had in 2015 and ask that we can do even better in 2016 as the Day of the Lord draws nearer.
- ◆ Please take advantage of the beginning of this new year to pray for APM and our financial success so we can continue reaching prisoners with the message of hope and freedom through Jesus Christ.
- ◆ Remember our Alpha House residents in your prayers. Current residents are: Al, Chris, Ed, Elmer, Ernest, Jeff, and Robert.
- ◆ Praise the Lord for our volunteers and supporters. The fields are ripe and we need more, but we also appreciate what we have.
- ◆ Prison ministry is exciting and rewarding, but it can also be demanding and discouraging. Pray that those confronting this demonic stronghold stay strong.

Prayer Requests

JANUARY 2016

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

Alpha  
Prison Ministries

ADD VOICED

## 800-900 Inmate Letters to APM Per Year

With 800-900 inmate letters per year to APM, only a few that we have limited space for make our newsletters. Since we answer all of them but have so little room here, it seemed fitting to include a couple more examples of previously unpublished inmate letters from 2015. In July, we published an excerpt from one of Justin's letters, but another one shown below has was received later; it just wasn't a letter alone (see editor's note).

## Sunday Services Running Out of Room

I hope everything is going good with you and everyone at Alpha House. Everything is going real good here. I am just waiting to see the parole board. I should be doing my Parole Eligibility Report (PER); as soon as I do that I will know what day I will see them.

I really enjoyed the newsletter. Tim's testimony was powerful. It shows you that with Christ on your side, all things are possible.

God is really doing many great things here. We have 2 services on Sunday. We have so many people who are in both services we are running out of room. If it keeps on going like this we will take over the gym for services on Sunday. That is the kind of problem I enjoy solving.

God has really blessed me so much I can't even explain the joy I have for him; he is awesome. On Monday nights, Alpha Ministries is doing really well.

I really look forward to coming to Alpha House. That is going to be amazing to meet all my Christian brothers and sisters when I go to church. God bless all of you and keep me in your prayers.

Your brother in Christ,  
Justin

EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter was included with a \$35 donation which is a **lot of money** to an inmate.

## DeShawn Seeks Transitional Housing

My name is DeShawn. I'm writing this letter to inquire about your housing programs for parolees coming home from prison. I heard about Alpha House from my counselor here at Pugsley Correctional Facility so I was inquiring about different community placements: transitional housing programs for parolees throughout the City of Grand Rapids, MI.

Be advised, the reason I'm requesting this information is because I've seen the parole board, though they gave me a continuation pending the

completion of a Violence Prevention Program (VPP) which I've completed.

My question is, if it is at all permissible, could you please send some information about what I need to do to be a part of Alpha House and what are the requirements expected of me to be a part of the program?

Unfortunately, I have to return to Detroit because I'm going to a community placement but I'm willing to relocate because I have no family down there. They've all moved out of Detroit, but I've been locked up for 15 years.

I was charged with 2nd Degree Murder with Felony Firearm and I'm not proud of it, but this is why I'm trying to go to community placement in a different location. If you could please honor this request, I'd gladly appreciate it. Thank you for taking time out of your busy schedule to read this letter.

Sincerely,  
DeShawn

## From the Editor

You can probably tell that DeShawn's was a first time letter by the way it reads, unlike many others such as Justin who write to us on a regular basis. Since APM has no physical presence at Pugsley, it demonstrates that word about us gets around and that the need for transitional housing is a big challenge for parolees.

There are other elements of inmate letters that you don't get to see as I prepare them for publication. Sometimes, it takes me a bit of effort to not only decipher handwriting (sometimes a great deal of effort), less than perfect communication skills often require close examination before I can effectively translate them into an easily read newsletter.

There's also that fine line between making corrections for clarity and preserving the authenticity of inmate letters. I usually only correct spelling, sentence and paragraph structure, and make excerpting decisions for space limitations, but in spite of my efforts to demonstrate the diversity of writing skill levels found in prisoners, one thing still doesn't show.

DeShawn's respectful tone and grammar skills are part of his handwritten letter. Only the punctuation and paragraph breaks were corrected. His spelling is flawless. **His handwriting is particularly impressive.** If you find it shocking about his 2nd Degree Murder charge in print, it's even more so with the pen and paper original. I don't know the circumstances that led to his crime, but I have read what the Apostle Paul was like before and after Jesus Christ literally knocked him off his horse.

## Easily print this newsletter from our web site

We also offer easy access to an identical version of this newsletter so you can print extra copies. Please feel free to make as many copies as you need. Get it at [alphapm.org](http://alphapm.org).

Newsletter written/edited by APM Board member Steve Chittenden

### APM Financial Summary January-November 2015

Total Income: \$83,458.00

Total Expense: \$88,943.33

Net Income: **(\$-5485.33)**



PO Box 9216  
Grand Rapids, Michigan  
49509  
(616) 538-4090  
[alphapm.org](http://alphapm.org)  
[info@alphapm.org](mailto:info@alphapm.org)

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