

# Alpha Prison Ministries Newsletter

## May 2017 Edition

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

## Bob Veldman, Laborer

A tribute to Bob Veldman by Leon Alderman

Bob Veldman was a laborer in God's harvest. The word "laborer" probably has diminished in value in our 21st Century culture. Yet, in God's Kingdom, a laborer is the highest term God calls his saints. *"The harvest is plentiful but the laborers are few. Pray ye therefore the Lord of the Harvest, that he will send laborers forth into his harvest."* Matthew 9:37-38. Bob was no ordinary Christian, he was a laborer!

Bob was one of Alpha's pioneer volunteers, bringing God's word into Riverside Correctional Facility along with Bob Whitehead and Marv Wood in the early 1980's. He continued into the 1990's and 2000's advancing Christ's gospel through weekly service at Carson City.

He served as a Board member for APM for many years. When he retired from active ministry a few years ago due to age, many inmates wrote to the office how they missed him, his concern, his service, and his gentle sense of humor.

We send our prayers to his loving wife of 68 years, Bernice. May she take comfort in the words Jesus surely said to her husband,

"Well done, good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of your Lord."

### EDITOR'S NOTES:

Having served with Bob on the Board for many years, I count it a privilege to add a few notes of my own to this tribute. Bob passed away on April 10th at age 90 and outlived many other APM friends, so we know the reunion in heaven had to be incredible.

To call Bob a *friend* is an understatement. Bob's children and many grandchildren spoke at his funeral. Several fond memories were shared, especially about his signature sense of humor.

But one highlight in my opinion came when a grandson said that if you wanted to see Bob light up, just mention his prison ministry. Bob was committed to APM. Although I never saw Bob display strong outward emotions, no one could doubt his passion for APM or his commitment to serve. He invested his life well and I'm glad I got to be a small part of it.



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- ◆ The APM Bible study at Muskegon Correctional Facility has been "rebooted" in April after a being canceled due to a chaplaincy vacancy. Pray for the men at MCF and the Bible study along with Sherwin, our key volunteer there.
- ◆ Please begin praying for our fall banquet. MDOC Deputy Director McKee has agreed to be our guest speaker. The event is October 9, 2017 and more details will be given in future newsletters.
- ◆ Please join the Board in praying for Corky, our ministry bookkeeper. Corky has been diagnosed with cancer and is currently undergoing treatments. Pray for her strength and full recovery.
- ◆ Ask God to grant his peace to Bob's family as Bob is now celebrating in heaven but also thank God for Bob's example and faithfulness.

Prayer Requests

MAY 2017

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

Alpha  
Prison Ministries

ADVOCAATE

## I Was Never a Real Big Believer in God

I am writing you in regards to receiving a study Bible. I got your info from a fellow inmate. I have to be honest, I was never a real big believer in God. I just recently opened my heart and mind to him and started talking to him, asking him for his blessings and his guidance.

I believe he is starting to listen. I'm not sure how this works but I would like to learn some prayers and how to pray; and how do I go about reading the Bible? Do I just go from start to finish or are there certain parts I should start with?

I'm hoping you can help me with my questions and furthering my belief in God and bettering my life. By the way, my name is Alan, I'm 33 years old and I've been locked up for 3 years now. I hopefully have about 9 months left to do. I'm ready for a change in my life and I think God is the way to go.

Alan

## Open Response to Alan's Letter

Knowing that our newsletters are received by inmates and often get passed around, it seems fitting to publish an open response to Alan's inmate letter and questions. This could help many others in similar situations.

First of all, I would congratulate anyone in Alan's situation. Not the locked up part, but seeking God. God is very responsive to those who seek him. He's ready and waiting for you to ask. The Bible is full of promises about that but perhaps one of the most comforting would be found in John 6:37 where Jesus says, "Whoever comes to me I will never drive away."

Let's start with the question about praying. The answer: be yourself. Don't be afraid to ask tough questions, don't seek a formula, just begin right where you're at. God's not the least bit offended by your honesty. He wants your relationship with him to be "real" and nothing you say is going to surprise him in any way. Truth be told, there's no requirement to even bow your head and close your eyes. It does help remove to distractions but prayers can be as quick and short as "help" when you're facing a situation.

Over time, you'll learn important principles of prayer from the Bible itself. There are many prayers recorded in the Bible. The best one is what we call the Lord's Prayer where Jesus gives us a prayer and a pattern for praying. The Apostle Paul recorded some great prayers, as did other Bible authors.

How to study the Bible is subject to many different opinions but I can offer what I consider a great guideline. One of my volunteer activities is praying with people who either just became a new believer or came back to God after straying away. I get this question often.

The most important point is to have a Bible translation that is easy to understand. The New International Version (NIV) is a good choice.

My personal advice is definitely start with the New Testament. I favor starting with the book of Romans and read through to the end of the Bible. After completing Revelation, go back to Matthew at the beginning of the New Testament and read through the entire New Testament.

Eventually, you'll be ready to read the Old Testament but I advise getting well grounded in the New Testament first. You'll discover a lot of surprises when you read the Bible on your own. Don't worry about understanding every bit of it. God is very skilled at giving you what you need when you need it. Be patient, you are in for a process that will last you the rest of your life. Enjoy the journey.

## The Rose

An inmate poem by Brian McDonald

It's only a tiny rosebud...  
A flower of God's design;  
But I cannot unfold the petals  
With these clumsy hands of mine.  
The secret of unfolding flowers  
Is not known to such as I...  
The flower God opens so sweetly,  
In my hands would fade and die.

If I cannot unfold a rosebud,  
This flower of God's design,  
Then how can I think I have wisdom  
To unfold this life of mine?

So I'll trust in him for his leading  
Each moment of every day,  
And I'll look to him for his guidance  
Each step of the pilgrim way.  
For the pathway lies before me,  
My heavenly Father knows...  
I'll trust him to unfold the moments,  
Just as he unfolds the rose.

## Pray for Corky

The Financial Summary you see below is just a small part of an outstanding job Corky does in making sure our ministry books are in order. Please pray for Corky as she is currently undergoing cancer treatments.

## 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 [alpham.org](http://alpham.org).

Newsletter written/edited by APM Board member Steve Chittenden

### APM Financial Summary January-March 2017

Total Income: \$13,126.96

Total Expense: \$21,472.48

Net Income: **-\$8345.52**



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