



Dear Friends,

I really enjoy Mark Twain's quotes! Sometimes I just go online and read through a bunch. He can be funny, caustic, and practical in just a few words. Of all his writings my favorite quote is 'The reports of my death have been greatly exaggerated'.

I would like to use his saying, applying it to me, with a slight change in meaning. The reports of my retirement have been generally exaggerated!!

The reports are my own fault because I have been looking for less expensive office space and also trying to decide if I should retire. I'll be 70 in a couple of months and these ideas do cross your mind when so many people you know have been retired for years. The other consideration is what would I do if I retired? Work at Wal-Mart, the Y, or bag groceries at Safeway? I cannot see me not working somewhere! I like working! With over 25 years here at Alpha working elsewhere might be a bit boring so I guess I'll stay a little longer doing what God has gifted me with. So we are working on a one year extension of our lease here at North Kitsap Medical Center. One of the reasons I have been looking for cheaper office space is that some of the wonderful folks who have faithfully supported Alpha for many years are now retired either from their jobs or from planet Earth and our support is getting lower each year. Your prayers for Alpha's financial future are appreciated!

Here are some of the reasons Debi and I are still working at Alpha. In 2016 we counseled 937 hours working with 180 people. We saw people struggling with questions about life from a broad range of ages. I personally talked with people from age 14 up to age 80 last year. Last fall I had a cluster of 19 year olds all with differing problems and none of them knew each other. It is interesting to hear young adults open up, to an old guy like me, with such openness and sincerity. There are no subjects that people avoid once they are sure that you are interested in helping them without being judgmental. Some people take six months or longer to get comfortable with you and still others blurt out their deepest secrets on the first meeting. People are truly fascinating in their differences! It makes this job so much more interesting than bagging groceries. Many are church members referred by friends or family and often they are people who have visited with us. Last year we saw people come from five counties and talked with others, by phone or Skype, from several states.

The message here is still the same. Christ is Lord! We emphasize teaching others to be excellent at forgiving their hurts and learning to abide in Christ. Jesus explains in John 15:5 I am the vine, and you are the branches. If you abide in me and I abide in you, then you will produce lots of fruit. But you cannot do anything without me. Some people grab onto these truths with enthusiasm and others walk away because that is not what they are looking for as answers to their problems.

Thank you for being interested in and praying for Alpha as we work with those who are lonely, lost, and seeking answers they haven't found elsewhere.

God Bless you!

Richard

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