

STAR GOSPEL MISSION

The Newsletter of the Star Gospel Mission ♦ Charleston, South Carolina ♦ Fall 2015

Shining Brightly since 1904 *Transforming hearts and lives through Jesus Christ*



STAR GOSPEL MISSION

*Providing Over a Century of
Christian Service to Charleston*

474 Meeting Street
Charleston, S.C. 29403

www.stargospelmission.org

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*Design and Layout:
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From the Bottom to the Top

An interview of Danny Daniels by Pastor Christian

www.stargospelmission.org

So tell me a little about your roots. Where did you grow up? Tell me a bit about your family.

I was born in Monroe, NC in March of 1950. At a real early age my parents split up so I ended up living most of the first part of my life, the first 7 years, with my grandparents. My mother remarried and moved to SC where we lived a couple years and then we moved on to Washington, D.C.

Why did you move to D.C.?

My step dad moved us up to D.C. because work was a lot better up there. He was actually a carpenter and movin' up north meant better pay.

Do you have any brothers and sisters?

Yes, I've only got one sister left. I had another sister and a brother. I also had two sisters that, when my mother was goin' through hard times, were put up for adoption. I don't have any contact with either one of them. And then I lost another brother, my younger brother, Bubba. He died in a

motor cycle accident on January 2nd of this year.



**Mr. Arthur
"Danny" Daniels**

Were you raised in a religious family?

No, not really. We spent a couple years in SC where we had some religious backin', but once we moved to D.C. it wasn't there. Not until I started in the Marine Corps did I start goin' back to church.

Tell me about that. Did you join the Marines right out of high school?

Yes, I did. I joined the Marine Corps in 1967. I went to aviation school in Beaufort, SC for two years before I went to Viet Nam. I was an F-4B and an F-4J plane captain in the Marine Corps. I inspected the jets, got them ready for flight, put the pilots in them, they went out for flights, came back in and we did a post inspection to make sure the aircraft was OK. It was in Beaufort that I joined my first squadron. It was there that I volunteered for Viet Nam.

You volunteered for Viet Nam?

Yes. I was in Viet Nam for a year. I picked up a little shrapnel and they pulled me out and sent me to Japan where I finished out my time. When I left Japan, I came back and was honorably discharged from four years of active duty.

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A Word from the Executive Director



The Rev. Bill Christian
Executive Director

This year once again I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to so many of you who have made such generous contributions to the work and ministry of the Star Gospel Mission. Thank you! If you have not yet had the opportunity to make your 2015 gift to the Mission, we've enclosed an envelope for you to do so. I would also encourage you to visit our website at: www.stargospelmission.com to make an online contribution. It's very easy to do! Please remember that we are a 501c3 organization and that any contribution you make will be tax deductible. Since we are solely a "faith based ministry," we receive no support whatsoever from local, state or federal government agencies. All of our financial resources come from individuals, churches, civic organizations, and foundations.

I want to briefly tell you about several important capital improvements we have made to the Mission during the course of this past year. Since our current building dates back to 1992, it was necessary for us to replace our 23 year-old refrigerator, freezer and oven/cook top. With generous grants that we received, we were also able to replace all the beds and mattresses in the dormitory with 22 brand new steel beds, along with all new bed bug proof mattresses.

We also put a fresh coat of paint on the ceilings in the dormitory and hallways. This coming January we will be replacing all the lockers in the dormitory. All of these improvements make for an excellent quality of life for the formerly homeless men who reside here. I often remind the men that, for better or for worse, for however long they're here, by the grace of God, **THIS IS THEIR HOME!**

There's nothing we
can do to make God
love us more than He
already does, and
there's absolutely
nothing we can do to
make Him love us
any less!

This past year our Board of Director's elected two new board members: Dr. Melvin Brown and Mr. Alex Shortridge. Following his retirement as a Commander in the United States Navy, Melvin returned with his family to Charleston where he is currently employed as an emergency room physician with Trident Health System and the VA Medical Center. Melvin is a graduate of Porter-Gaud and the U.S. Naval Academy. He and his family are members of St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church.

Alex is Manager of Ecosystems Operations at BenefitFocus and will provide the Board with extensive experience in management, team-building and integration of technology. Alex is a graduate of Bishop England High School and Wofford

College. He and his family live in Mt. Pleasant and they are members of Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church.

Also of note is that this past year the Mission engaged the services of Byers Design Group to assist us in the preservation and eventual renovation of an abandoned house we own directly behind the Mission at 83 Nassau Street. You may recall that we renovated the house at 89 Nassau Street, the Beatty-Spaulling House, and dedicated it in 2013. This is yet another step in the Board's effort to continue to provide additional low-income transitional housing for formerly homeless men in our community.

Taking into consideration all that we've accomplished throughout this past year and what we are hoping to achieve in the next year and years to come, it is my sincere hope that you will find it in your heart to make a special gift to the Mission this year so that we can continue to provide a wonderful, Christ-centered home for the men who reside here. Here at Star Gospel we offer the men a hand up, another chance at getting things right in their lives, and a new beginning through the ministry we offer them in this amazing place, where hearts and lives are being transformed daily through our Lord Jesus Christ.

May God richly bless you through your generosity toward the Mission!

Your servant in the risen Christ,

The Rev. William K. Christian, III



Tracy and Keegan Kennedy (mother and daughter) delivering food at Thanksgiving.

Always remember, never look back, keep your eyes on the future, and not on the past!



Ashley Hall upper school Christmas Assembly. Junior and Senior Girls collect new clothing gifts for Mission residents.



Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd Law Firm delivering Thanksgiving Dinner.



Staff, Volunteers, and Charleston police officers who assisted with the "2014 Good Cheer Fund Food Gift-Card Giveaway" on the Monday following Thanksgiving. Each of the over 700 needy persons received a food gift-card to Bi-Lo valued at \$60.00.



United Methodist men from John Wesley UMC preparing dinner for Mission residents.

Jesus said: "Truly, I say unto you, as you did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, so also you did it unto Me."
Matthew 25:40

When you got back what did you decide you wanted to do with your life?

I was pretty much lost in the beginning. There wasn't too much work goin' on. I started doin' some construction work. I got married and moved to Sumter, SC for several years until that marriage failed.

Any children?

Yes, I've got a son, Jamie, I've got a son, Michael, a daughter Sarah, a daughter Patty, and a daughter Roxanne.

Are you still in close contact with your children?

Most of my children are a pretty good ways off. I see my daughter out in Arizona maybe once a year. My oldest son lives in CA. I've got one son in Sumter that I see more than I see the others.

Were all these children from your first marriage?

No, they were spread out. Actually I've been married several times. Rev. Let's see, I married Karen, then I married Regina, then I married Angie.

So during these years, how were you making a living?

The majority of the time I had several different jobs but I guess it was all pointing towards drivin' tractor trailers. I drove 18 wheelers everywhere from the east coast to the west coast. That's pretty much

why my marriages didn't last, because I was gone all the time.

Was that a good career; did you find it fulfilling?

I'd say it was. Once you become a truck driver you still have to get a break before you can make the big money, keep your nose clean, try not to do too many drugs.

To forgive is to set a prisoner free, and that prisoner is you.

Did you keep your nose clean?

No. I kept a pretty good habit of crystal meth., which was high intensity speed, which allowed me to cross the United States, from coast to coast, without a break. I've actually crossed in 56 hours, from South Carolina to downtown LA.

That's a pretty quick trip. Did you ever get picked up for speeding?

Oh yea. At one point in time I had 19 existing tickets. The name of the game was to take the load and run with it! Of course truckin's changed a lot these days, but back when I was doin' it, that's pretty much the way it was. We had a log book that we called the "lie book".

Drivers always doctored their books.

Danny, I recall talking with you one time about a group of cyclists you were involved with. Could you tell me about that?

It was in the early 90's and I was still drivin' tractor trailers. I lived near Charlotte, NC. I was ridin' a Harley Davidson, and got up with some biker's that were Outlaw affiliated, meaning we were affiliated with the group call the Outlaw's. We were an anti-Hells Angels group. I rode with that group for 6 years.

What made you decide to get into that group?

What it was is that their way of life pretty much fit mine at the time, other than I kept on workin'. It was probably about the wildest I've ever been. There were plenty of drugs: crystal meth., pot, cocaine. We rode through neighborhoods and the other biker's around the Charlotte area would kind of cause hate and discontent.

Were you ever arrested or serve any time in prison?

No, I never served any time in prison. Most of the times I've been to jail were for drunk, disorderly conduct. One time I was busted for Marijuana back in my earlier years. I spent a couple weeks in jail for that. No felony charges ever.

So you were a truck driver for many years. What did you do after that?

I quit drivin' trucks because I lost my license and went back into building construction full time. The company I worked for was family oriented, so when my wife and I split up (another marriage), I decided it was time to leave Charlotte to get away from the motor cycle life (actually I had a lot of my brothers from the group that were either dead or in prison and I was hurt). I just had to leave. My lifestyle was just not goin' the way I wanted it to so I picked up roots and moved to Charleston. That was around the year 2000.

What kind of work did you do once you moved to Charleston?

I worked mostly day-labor jobs. My first actual full-time job was workin' on the Ravenel Bridge. I stayed on the bridge for about a year and a half. The construction I did took me all the way to the top, 575 feet in the air. I could look right into the blinking red light on the top of the spires. I was a carpenter. I helped build and set all the forms for the concrete to be poured into. Even though I was hooked on with four hooks, the height still gets to you.

Continued, Page 5

So how did you happen to come to the Star Gospel Mission?

After the bridge job was completed, I went back to day labor jobs. I was still doin' drugs. My nephew and I rented a place on Dorchester Road. When we split up, I'd been working with a man who thought the Star Gospel would be a good place for me to live and I contacted you. Actually when I came to Star Gospel, I walked up to the front door, I had enough money for one weeks rent at the time, with about ten dollars to spare, and half a paper bag of clothes. That's all I had. I was pretty much at the bottom. The weekend before I came here (which was my birthday weekend) I did cocaine, smoked reefer, and that was the last weekend I did cocaine or meth. ever again.

Tell me what it was like when you moved in. Was it a conducive environment for you to make some significant changes in your life?

Oh, yes it was! When I moved in I seen right from the beginning that this could be a new beginning for me. It was as much a home as anyone could imagine, considering I was movin' in with 20 some other men. I called it my home. I still felt homeless, but at the same time, I felt like I had a home here.

How long did you stay at the Mission in total?

March 15 of this year (2015) made it seven years.

Danny, you were a really great resident and after a couple of years I felt that you would make a great night manager, and hired you to take that position. Do you recall how that came about?

I always tried to follow the rules. We never had any discipline problems. I always kept up with my rent. I think it was good because it helped me get more stable in my life, to be able to work steadier, to hold on to a job longer and save money at the same time. It was the perfect opportunity for me.

It meant taking a leadership role as well, didn't it?

Yes, and I kind of liked that because I always felt as though the reason I ended up at Star Gospel was because it was where God really wanted me to be.

Do you feel you were an example for the men and that you were able to help these men get on the right track?

Yes, because every different thing I had to do with the men was setting an example for them. I wasn't goin' out doin' drugs, I wasn't coming' in staggering, and I think

they saw that. Plus, there were always times that I would sit down and talk with different men, repeatedly over the years, tryin' to get them to do what was right. Since I've left here, I've had other people tell me that they just kind of followed me by example, they were proud that I was able to do that, and it set them wanting to do the same thing.

“I’ve talked
with God many
times and I
believe He has
forgiven me.
I’m a forgiven
sinner, just like
you”
-Danny Daniels

You had a real bond with the men here. They both respected you and many of them considered you to be a friend.

I was friends with a bunch of them here, but my friends didn't get away with any more than anyone else. There were even times when I had to put friends out to straighten up their lives, and they understood.

Danny, in the seven plus years that you were here I've never really talked with you extensively about your faith. What I can say is that you never

missed a Sunday church service, you sang all the hymns, and you were always very attentive. Can you tell me, were you affected in any way, shape, or form, while living here, in terms of your spiritual life, your faith, your relationship with God?

The whole time I was here! I never felt it was a mandatory thing to go to church. I always felt like, it's Sunday morning, it's time to go to church, and I actually looked forward to going to church!

Did you feel that this was a time of spiritual growth for you?

Oh yea. I had spiritual times, in my earlier years, goin' to church with my mother and all, but for the last handful of years I didn't go to church. I felt that once I started goin' to church here, it was something that was supposed to have been in my life all along.

Despite your past, what you've done and what you've been through, multiple marriages, drug use, your involvement with the biker group, do you have any regrets about any of that?

No, I really don't. I feel like my past has made me who I am today. Rev., I've talked with God many times and I believe He has forgiven me. I'm a forgiven sinner, just like you.

This past February, when you turned 65, you retired from your day job as maintenance manager at the Airport Hilton, and shortly thereafter from the Mission? Before leaving the Mission some dramatic things happened in your life. Could you say something about that?

I was going through a really bad time. My little brother had just died in a motor cycle wreck when I met Shirley. She was the mother of his girlfriend. I

met her and I kind of had that feelin' that she could be the one. I pursued it for months and months and kept tryin' to date her but couldn't get weekends off. After I retired from the Hilton, it made it possible for me to see her. We're very happy together.

I understand that you also got a new job in your retirement.

That's right, I'm a delivery man with NAPA Auto parts.

Where do you see your life going from here?

Only to the better, only to the better!

Danny, is there anything else you'd like to say?

Only that I think that this place is open to anyone that wants to make it work, to do right, that wants to get their life back together. When I came here, I had no license and was \$3,000 in debt. When I left here, I had a five digit savings account, I'd

gotten my license back, had purchased a Ford pickup truck, I had a steady job, and found a great woman, Shirley!

So would you say that the Star Gospel Mission made a significant impact on your life for the better?

Oh, yes indeed, completely! When I came here I was at the bottom, and now after seven years here, I'm at the top. ∞



The Hoffman and Dial families from Wesley UMC prepare Sunday breakfast for Mission residents.



The Awaken Church Group preparing dinner for the men at the Mission.



Karen, Morgan, Royan, and Anders Turner delivered dozens of home-made cookies to the Mission.

Jesus said: "Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For the measure you give will be the measure you get back."
Luke 6:38



Lynn and Mark Fitzpatrick deliver food from Trader Joe's every Friday morning.



St. John's Lutheran Church group prepare dinner for Mission residents.



Youth Group from John Wesley UMC prepare monthly Sunday breakfast for the men.



The Rogers family and Eli Stullenbarger from John Wesley UMC. Eli organizes all Sunday AM breakfasts.



The Hoffman and Dial families from John Wesley UMC preparing Sunday morning breakfast.



Members of First Scots Presbyterian church do landscaping at the mission for their local mission service day.



John Wesley United Methodist Youth Group.



Dr. and Mrs. David Spaulding in front of the Beatty-Spaulding House.

Thanks to those who provide regular support to

STAR GOSPEL MISSION

- John Wesley United Methodist Church
- Grace Episcopal Church
- St. Michael's Anglican Church
- First Scots Presbyterian Church
- Second Presbyterian Church
- Christ Our King Catholic Church
- The Cathedral of St. Luke & St. Paul
- St. Stephen's Episcopal Church
- St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church
- Congregation Beth Elohim
- Bethel United Methodist Church
- St. John's Lutheran Church
- Trinity United Methodist Church
- John's Island Presbyterian Church
- St. Andrew's Anglican Church
- St. Matthew's Lutheran Church
- Tri-County Family Ministries
- Catholic Charities of Charleston
- The Exchange Club of Charleston
- The Saul Alexander Fund
- Good Cheer Fund/Post and Courier
- Washington Light Infantry
- New England Society
- The St. Andrew's Society
- The German Friendly Society
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- Southern Season's
- Kudzu Bakery



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**Obadiah Dugan and others
in the SGM boat mobile
evangelizing the City of
Charleston.**

-Circa 1915-

The Star Gospel Mission was established in 1904 in the old Star Vaudeville Theater. The theater was closed by the city fathers in 1902 because of the undesirable element associated with it. Following a dramatic conversion experience, Obadiah Dugan, a successful furniture dealer, determined to devote the rest of his life to serving people who needed spiritual, psychological and physical help. He founded the Mission after petitioning the mayor to let him use the theater as a shelter for homeless persons. On April 24, 1904, more than 500 people came to the Mission for its first worship service.

Dugan's heart went out to the poor, the homeless, and disenfranchised men and boys of the City of Charleston. He invited them to sleep in the old theater because they had no other place to stay. After continuing his mission work among the homeless at the Star Theater for 16 years, Dugan acquired the abandoned Holy Rosary Roman Catholic Church at 474 Meeting Street, which is where the Mission has been located ever since.

**CURRENT MISSION
NEEDS:**
Men's clothing, pillows,
twin size sheets, pillow-
cases, towels, wash cloths,
paper towels, toilet paper,
napkins, canned vegeta-
bles, cleaning supplies,
used books and DVDs.

Following Obadiah's death in 1936, his son, The Rev. Ernest Dugan, a Methodist minister, continued operating the Mission. When Ernest retired in 1973, a third generation Dugan, Ernest, Jr., also a Methodist minister, became its director. Ernest Jr. retired in 1986, bringing the Dugan family's 86 years of leadership to a close. Under the direction of a Board of Director's and the leadership of J. Douglas Donehue, the work of the Mission continued until his death in 2006. In 1989, Doug was instrumental in assuring the Mission's survival and reconstruction in the aftermath of Hurricane Hugo. Upon Doug's death, The Rev. William Christian became the Executive Director. Under Bill's leadership, the Mission has begun a new chapter by expanding their influence in the community and acquiring and developing additional transitional housing for successful graduates of the Mission.