

Star Gospel Mission

Fall 2007

The Newsletter of the Star Gospel Mission, Charleston, South Carolina

Shining brightly since 1904



STAR GOSPEL MISSION
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Charleston, SC 29403

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Doug Donehue, Smiling With Approval! By Ron Brinson

It's been nearly a year since Doug Donehue left us. His family surely misses him, and so does a legion of friends. His was a life of soaring spirit and an energized heart. He was generous, loyal, compassionate – and genuine. And he was courageous with a strong faith. At the end, he put us all at ease. He knew his Savior, he assured us, and he was ready for His call. And in the early morning hours of October 11, last year, Doug escaped the painful bonds of the terrible disease he had confronted with supreme faith and dignity, and across a beautiful sky found his heavenly home. It's just one more confirmation of this good man's good life that our memories of him sharpen, day-by-day, even as we deal with his absence.

Anyone who knew Doug quickly admired his zest for experiencing the grand edges of life. He was a hunter of new experiences, anything that promised the satisfac-

tion of personal growth and the sense of helping others. He always seemed to appreciate that his journey sketched an unusual approach to life. Alas, that was his intent. He was the one and only Doug Donehue. He was good in that role, and he



Photo courtesy of The Post and Courier

enjoyed one of life's most elusive luxuries – he enjoyed being himself. And we enjoyed him.

So many of us miss our pal, our mentor and our boss. With his unqualified friendship, he truly touched our lives. And surely Doug's good works penetrated deeply and broadly in our community. His Star Gospel

Mission experience was a two-way channeling of faith and service for Doug. He was proud of his leadership role in bringing strength and stability to one of our community's most effective human service charities. But Doug also saw his Star Gospel Mission work as a chance to share his Christian values and to give witness to the powers of faith and redemption. "I even get up there and preach sometimes," he proudly declared. "It's an amazing experience."

Doug once asked a chief executive about business-world strategies for guiding the Star Gospel Mission. He was reminded that even charitable enterprises are governed by the same realities of commercial business, and there are no shortcuts. Doug became intrigued with the "S.S.S" strategic guidance model. An enterprise must first "survive", and then step-by-step be guided to a position of "strength", and only then can it be directed to a point of "soaring". Doug then made an instant assessment of his Star Gospel Mission work. "We're 'surviving', we're about to get 'strong',

Please see Donehue, page 3



Rev. Christian and Brother Jackson during service.



Charles Hargett



Sunday worship service at Star Gospel Mission.

Meet Our New Executive Director

The Rev. Bill Christian is no stranger to the Star Gospel Mission. With the untimely death of The Rev. Miles Smoak in the summer of 2001, Doug Donehue sought out his long-time friend, Bill Christian, to take on the role of manager. Since then, Bill has served the Mission in several capacities ranging from managing director, to fundraiser for the 100th anniversary celebration, to that of public spokesperson on behalf of the Mission. In all of these responsibilities, Doug was Bill's mentor, guide and friend. Shortly after Doug's death, the Board of Director's selected Bill to assume the responsibilities of executive director.

Bill comes to the Mission with an extensive background in professional ministry. Ordained as a Lutheran Pastor in 1978, he served his first congregation in Denver, CO. In 1985 Bill transitioned from the Lu-

theran Church to the Episcopal Church and was ordained as an Episcopal priest in 1986. Bill served Episcopal churches in St. Louis, MO, Surfside Beach, SC, and San Antonio, TX, before relocating to Charleston in 2001. This past June, he was ordained as a minister in the A.G.R.M. (Association of Gospel Rescue Missions), an interdenominational ministry based in Kansas City, MO, numbering over 1,000 Missions worldwide. The Star Gospel Mission is affiliated with the A.G.R.M.

Bill brings a great deal of enthusiasm and passion to this ministry, always striving to help the men who reside at the Mission to overcome their addictions, resolve issues with past behavior that has gotten them in trouble with the authorities, assist in helping them find good jobs, and, in general, helping them get back on their feet.

His goal is to encourage the men to begin to believe in themselves and strengthen their self-confidence. He said, "I want them to have a new lease on life, a brand new start, a new beginning. It's my fervent goal to extend the grace of God to each one of them and to let them know that they can experience a second chance, because the God we believe in is always a God who goes by the name of Second Chance." Bill has a compassionate heart for the men and for those less fortunate people who live in the surrounding community. "All the people of this community are my congregation. Here at the Mission there are no geographical, racial, social, cultural, economic or even ecclesiastical boundaries. I am a dispenser of the Gospel of God's love in Jesus Christ to all people, no matter what their situation in life may be," he said.

Please join us in keeping the ministry of the Star Gospel Mission thriving for the next 100 years, by sending your tax deductible contributions in the enclosed envelope.



Doug Donehue, Smiling With Approval (from Page 1)

and we'll be 'soaring' in a couple of years." That was Doug Donehue, inquisitive, wanting to learn, seeking a fresh sense of achievement and willing to work for it. And before the conversation had ended, he promised to add a fourth "S" to the well-recognized strategic formula he had just heard about. "What comes after 'soaring'?" he asked, and then spontaneously answered his own question: "Sustain", that's what we will do. The Star Gospel Mission will "soar" and we will "sustain". We will sustain the Lord's work."

For sure, the Star Gospel Mission has soared. And Doug made sure the Mission's good works were sus-

tainable beyond the presence of any one man, including himself. He provided his Board with a long term strategy, and he recruited an able and dedicated replacement. The Reverend Bill Christian brings the same personal embrace of the theme that organizations doing the Lord's work must soar.

The initiation of this newsletter is evidence of an organization that is strong in its capacities to sustain a soaring mode of service, as it does, in Doug's words, "the Lord's work." It is a timely continuation of Doug Donehue's good works and no doubt Doug is smiling with approval.

Ron Brinson considered Doug Donehue a close personal friend and mentor since Ron joined the Post and Courier apprenticeship and college program in 1963. Ron rose through the newspapers' ranks and became associate editor of The News and Courier in 1972. He later entered the maritime industry, moving from the executive staff of the S.C. State Ports Authority to become the president and CEO of the American Association of Port Authorities headquartered in Washington, D.C. in 1979. In 1986, he was named president and CEO of the Port of New Orleans. When Ron retired at the Port of New Orleans in 2002, he and his wife Peggy returned to the Charleston area with their three young sons. Ron is now a frequent commentary contributor to The Post and Courier.

**"We're 'surviving', we're about to get 'strong', and we'll be 'soaring' in a couple of years."
J. Douglas Donehue**



Dinner time at the Mission

Mannie's Journey by Pastor Christian

When Mannie Legette arrived at the Star Gospel Mission in 2001, he was a broken man. When he left, he was a new man; a man who would go on to become a real life success story. This is the story of Mannie's journey.

In a frank and open interview with Mannie he is quick to say that he suffers from two addictions. "My workaholicism came from my mother and my alcoholism came from my father," he said. "I started drinking when I was about 9 or 10. I discovered a bottle of Vodka under the car seat one day when my father went into the barber shop. I said: 'Hummm, let me try this.' That's where it all began."

Mannie didn't enjoy school and stopped attending while

in the 8th grade. He never attended high school, but when he was 18, "while drunk on wine, I took the GED, and, I don't know how I did it, but I passed."

Mannie was hard-headed and wouldn't listen to his parents. "I wound up going to the penitentiary three times. The first time for house breaking grand larceny, the second time for violation of probation, and the third time for accessory before and after the fact of armed robbery." For this third crime he served five and a half years at Kirkland Correctional Institution. While at Kirkland, he attended school and received an AA degree in psychology. In 1979 Mannie got out on five years parole.

After his release he said that

he still used, but stopped dealing drugs for fear of returning to the penitentiary. "It's jail or hell... meaning six feet under," he said. In 1985 Legette met Martha, his wife to be and they married. They had three children, two girls and a boy. The girls were taken from them by DSS when the oldest was five and the youngest was six months. Mannie has never seen them again. He said, "it was that traumatic experience that kept me drinking."

Because of three DUI's and no driver's license, he worked for temp agencies for the next 11 years, living in public housing or at Crisis Ministries, a local shelter for the homeless.

One morning in May of 2001, he woke up in North Charles-

Looking Toward The Future



We are deeply indebted to the many Charleston area churches, civic clubs, business and industrial organizations, and concerned individuals who have voluntarily supported the Mission for more than a century. The Board of Directors is keeping faith with the founder of the Mission, Obadiah Dugan, by providing help for the needy of our community and sharing the message of the Gospel with those who seek it.



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Mannie Legette

Mannie's Journey by Pastor Christian (from Page 3)

ton, following a three month drinking binge, thinking that he was having a heart attack and a stroke all at the same time. "I knew I'd reached rock bottom. All the other things that had happened to me were nothing compared to this. It scared me so much, it was the final wake-up call. I called the detox center at MUSC, spent eight days there, and haven't had a drink since," he said.

Mannie's next stop was the Star Gospel Mission where he spent the next fifteen months. While at the Mission, Legette said that he "saw the world and the way people were living outside of the Mission and decided... 'I just didn't want to go back to that life style.'" He made the decision to

start life all over again and stuck to that resolve. Mannie believes that, "God has got to have some greater purpose for me since I'm still alive! I believe that God had a hand in my recovery. He must have a purpose for my life, because I'm still here." When asked about the influence that the Star Gospel Mission had on him, Mannie says that "It was a great place to stay; I slept there, I had food to eat, I was able to bank some money, it's where I got back on my feet. I wouldn't be where I am today had it not been for the Mission."

Mannie left the Mission in 2002. Since then, he has gotten his driver's license back (using Doug Donehue's old Jeep to take the test), purchased a truck, secured consistent employment as a lead carpenter for a large construction company. Mannie

has now become an independent contractor with his own company, Wolf Field Services, and just recently he has begun to purchase his first home. Mannie, who turned 56 a week ago, lives with Martha, his wife of 22 years, and their 20 year old son, Rusty, who is a second year student at Trident Tech studying culinary arts. We're very proud to claim Mannie Legette as one of our true success stories here at the Star Gospel Mission!

Mission Needs

Pillows, towels and washcloths, men's clothing, paper towels, toilet paper, personal hygiene essentials, meats and canned vegetables, cleaning supplies.