

Star Gospel Mission

Fall 2012

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

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

The Rev. William K. Christian
Executive Director
Tel. 843-722-0980



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Design and layout:

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Putting the past in the past

By Pastor Christian.

An interview with a current resident, Carl Heyward

Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I grew up in Orangeburg, SC, the older of two boys, and lived there until age 19. I was somewhat of an outstanding basketball player in SC. In my sophomore year I was voted Best of the Rest. Two Division One schools recruited me. I ended up with a full scholarship to Alderson Broaddus College in Phillippi, WV.

So you went to college on a full scholarship. How did that go?

College and basketball didn't go well for me. In my freshman year I started drugs and alcohol for the first time in my life and it was all downhill from there. I ended up in three different schools because of the drugs and alcohol. In my senior year, my basketball scholarship was cut due to grades. I was placed on academic probation and eventually cut from the roster.

Did you ever graduate?

I didn't. Four years of college, no degree.



Carl Heyward

Tell me a little bit more about your life growing up in Orangeburg with your parents and brother before you left for college.

I would say it was a house divided. My mother played the organ at one of the local churches. We did go to church every Sun. Daddy didn't go. He'd only go every blue moon. He was a drug addict; he was what you would call a functional addict. He always helped out and always paid the bills. Every now and then he and Mom

would fight.

What do you recall about your relationship with God during those years?

I've got to relate that to my brother Todd. There were times when we would dress up in my Mom's and aunt Lotti's choir robes. We played church. We would pretend to preach. One day my brother Todd got really excited about preachin' and that's when I realized that there was something special about going to church. I noticed a difference in him and in myself. We were baptized, and what I understood was that once I was baptized I was saved. But did I live that life? No. I didn't learn to depend on God until years later.

Could you describe what happened after you left college?

I actually had professional tryouts after that for overseas teams. I had offers, but I turned them down. I was livin' with a young lady in Nashville, I was workin' two jobs, and

Continued, page 4

From the Executive Director

This is the time of year when many of us review our financial blessings and consider making charitable contributions for the current year and annual commitments for the year to come. As you make those commitments, I sincerely hope that you will consider making a generous gift to the Star Gospel Mission, Charleston’s oldest not-for-profit Christian welfare organization, circa 1904. For over 108 years we have been serving the homeless and needy throughout this community in a very significant way, by assisting them with housing, food, clothing, rent, utilities assistance, emergency medical and transportation needs, and a wide array of other services.

Please note that the Mission is a 501c3 organization and all contributions are tax deductible. Also note that we do not receive any monies from the local, state or federal government! Your generosity will help transform the lives of men who are in need of a second chance and a brand new beginning. Our thanks to you in advance of your generous gift! Always remember that the giver is the primary beneficiary of the gift.

Faithfully yours,

The Rev. William K. Christian, III

A Life Well Lived

In remembrance of Furman Fletcher Cole, 1947 -2012

Furman Cole passed away on August 30 at the age of 64. Furman served as Chairman of the Board at the Star Gospel Mission for over 20 years. He was born in Charleston on October 27, 1947. After serving in the Navy for four years, he attended the Citadel, graduating with a BA in history in 1973. Furman and his identical twin brother, Roy, went on to establish R.F. Cole Construction Company and Brewers Paint Center. The same boundless commitment he showed to his historic renovation of homes in downtown Charleston and Yeoman’s Hall Club was also evident in his tireless dedication to the community and especially the Star Gospel Mission.

Furman was selflessly devoted to his wife of 38 years, Martha, and his two daughters, Elizabeth and Ellen. He was a member of St. Michael’s Episcopal Church, The Society of Colonial Wars, Saint Andrews Society, Sons of the American Revolution, The New England Society, The Charleston Club and The Carolina Yacht Club. He also served as Vice President of The Agricultural Society.

As Chairman of the Board at the Star Gospel Mission, Furman was deeply committed to a strong ministry reaching out to formerly homeless men in Charleston. He possessed a heart and passion for these orphaned men in our society.

His kindness and spirit of generosity toward these men was self-evident, and yet always without wanting to bring credit to himself. What he did for the Mission was always done without any fanfare and with a very humble heart.



Furman Cole

In his epistle, James writes that “Religion that is pure

and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction.” James 1:27.

That’s exactly what Furman Cole did! One of his friends told me that “Furman was universally loved and regarded by everyone that knew him. That emanated from his generosity of spirit. He always spoke from his heart, he loved his family deeply; that came from his true character and he always placed those values first.”

Furman gave so much of himself to the Star Gospel Mission and he will be sorely missed. For a life well lived, for a faith beautifully expressed through how he lived, and for the life he now lives, life with God, eternal life, we say: thanks be to God!

Faithfully,
Pastor Christian



Dr. George Orvin bringing all the fixins' for Christmas Dinner to residents at the Mission.



Volunteers from the St. Vincent DePaul Society and The Neighborhood House.



Left to Right, Maggie Schachte, Mary Moody and Elisa Cheney, from Charleston law firm Haynsworth Sinkler Boyd, loading the Mission van with Thanksgiving Dinner, 2011.

A MAN'S WORST MOMENT IS NOT THE SUM OF HIS LIFE!



Volunteers who helped hand out 1,000 \$50 Good Cheer Fund food gift cards.

We can learn from our mistakes and grow from our failures.



Dr. Tom Cook and The Rev. William Christian after receiving a \$5,505.00 check from the Exchange Club of Charleston for the renovation of 89 Nassau Street.



Serving at the Grace Church Tea Room. Left to Right are: The Rev. Philip Porcher, M.E. Canaday, The Rev. William Christian. All Tea Room proceeds go to supporting local charities like the SGM.

Always remember that:
THE PRIMARY BENEFICIARY OF THE GIFT IS THE GIVER.
Please join us in keeping the ministry of the Star Gospel Mission thriving by sending your tax deductible contributions in the envelope enclosed.



Colin Kerr and Aaron Gruber, young adult leaders at Second Presbyterian delivering a pizza dinner for residents at the Mission.

Putting the past in the past (cont. from Page 1)

thought that what I was doin' was enough for me. I talked with my father one day who was living in NY. He was there because he and my mother had gotten into a fight and he pushed my mother and I drew back to hit him. He put his hands up to stop me and I told him, don't you ever put your hands on my mother again. Shortly after that, he left and never came back.

What happened after that?

Dad and I always stayed in touch. The girlfriend I was living with in Nashville got into it one night and I told myself that night, if I don't leave here I'll never leave. I went to NY and found my father who was living with my Grandmother. Long story short, there was still the drug addiction, he was sellin' drugs and still usin' drugs. I really got involved. After three years I left NY in 1985. Dad died two weeks after I left. I went back to my mothers in Orangeburg and the drug addiction got even worse.

Did you ever sell drugs?

Yes, sometimes. The young lady I ended up marrying, Pearlie, and I were working together in Orangeburg. We stayed there a while, but the drug addiction got the best of me again, crack cocaine. I ended up leaving her because of my addiction. So it was back to NY where I went to my Grandmothers and told her I needed a place to stay. She said, OK, you've got two weeks. I called a cousin of mine over in Brooklyn. He enlisted in Brooklyn, that's where his recruiter was. I went straight to that recruiter and I joined the army right then and there. I told the recruiter that I wanted Ft. Jackson in Columbia, SC for basis training. I wanted Ft. Jackson; because I

could tell my wife that I was doing something for us. Then I got stationed at Ft. Hood, TX. In 1988 I brought my wife and her daughter there and in 1989 we got married. We attended 76th Street Chapel. My wife joined the choir and I coached the women's softball team. I went to serve in the Gulf War for eight months. When I got back, my wife had moved back to SC and the bottom fell out of my life.

Why do you say the bottom fell out?

Because I went back to that life of drugs and alcohol. I was upset that my wife left. I was upset that while I was over there I got promoted and when I got back there wasn't more cash in my bank account, so I started to get in trouble.

What kind of trouble?

Late for formations and fights. I told myself one day that I needed to get out before they put me out. They were offering early out at the time and I took it. I'd served 5 years, 10 months and two days.

Where did you go when you left the army?

I came back to Bowman, SC. That's where my wife was. We got back together and I ended up working at Bowman High School as a teacher's aid and basketball coach. One day, the mayor's wife, who was a teacher there, approached me about working for the town. She wanted me to go talk to her husband. He offered me a position with the city.



The line for the Star Gospel Mission food card giveaway.

Photo courtesy of the Post and Courier.

**GOD'S GOODNESS
IS BIGGER THAN
OUR BADNESS.
GOD'S POWER TO
FORGIVE IS
GREATER THAN
OUR ABILITY TO
SIN.**



Left to right; Matt Crooks, Rob Donehue and The Rev. William Christian. The Mission loaned its van to the Grace Episcopal Church each weekend for a year while they were under construction.

Putting the past in the past (cont. from page 4)**Where did this new job lead you?**

There's a lot of drug traffic in Bowman. One day the mayor asked me to do something for him. He said the chief of police needs your help, he needs you to finger some people. He wanted me to point them out. He said, you know who they are.

How did he know that you knew? Did he know that you were doing drugs?

He did. I told him that I wasn't going to do that, because my family lives here, and I'm not going to help him do his job like that. That's when he told me that I had to step down. After that I went back out using even more. I was using on and off from 1996 until 2002. In 2002 I got tired of using and entered a 6 month drug treatment program in Augusta, GA.

How did that program work out for you?

It worked fine. When I got out of that I came back home to my wife. She took me in and two or three years later, I started up again. Every two or three years I would start up again. I'd go right back to treatment, always in Augusta. I went there three times between 2002 and 2009 and was fine up until the summer of 2011 when I started up again. I was tired of where I was going, I wanted a change in my life because drugs and alcohol had led me to jail.

To jail? For what?

In 2002 for a thing called theft by deception. I was in for two and a half months and I ended up getting out on probation. I broke my probation and left the state of GA. and was put in jail again. I went to jail three times. The first time I was in jail I asked God to... let me state it

just like this: The ones I've hurt, suffer them not for what I've done, put their pain and suffering all on me, I deserve it. As soon as I said that, it was like all the pain just hit me at once.

What was that all about?

I don't know. I think it was God showing me something, I feel it was God intervening. This is when and where I picked up a Bible to read. My Bible's got three different color highlights in it, that's how many times I read it from front to back. I wanted to make a difference in me, I was ready. But then I'd go out and use again.

So that transformation you were so desirous of never really took hold. When did that happen?

It happened in 2011, right before I came back to Charleston. I got tired of what I was doing, I got tired of hurting folks, and I called a friend of mine, come get me, I need your help. I was getting high everyday, I had a pocket full of money, I'd just gotten my reserve pay for the summer, gave my wife a thousand dollars and I left. My friend came and got me and brought me to Charleston and I went straight to the VA and admitted myself to treatment. On Aug. 2, 2011, I went into the rehab. program at the VA. I had made up my mind that whatever it was going to take I was going to do to stop using drugs. I read my Bible daily and tried to assure anybody on drugs that if God could do it for me He'll do it for you. I've had no other relapses since.

So what drew you to the Star Gospel Mission?

Ten years ago I was a resident here. I wanted to change and I knew that you had church here

every Sunday, and I liked that. Besides, Star Gospel is neat and clean, it's homey, I enjoy talking to people here, everybody gets along here, we get a great meal every day, we're allowed to stay in on the weekends, sleep late on Saturday's. I was drawn here because I felt it in my heart. I wanted to be here. God is doing some things in my life, and I believe that this is where God wants me to be in order to get me where He wants me to go.

Carl, how do you see God moving in your life, experiencing a transformation in heart, body, mind and spirit?

Everything I was praying for is falling right in place. I think I was led here; God led me here. I don't fully understand it yet, but I'm very content with where He has me right now. It allows me to minister to folks, both here, at the VA where I work, and right in these streets. I called my brother one day and I said, we're in the wrong business. I talked with him about opening a facility similar to Star Gospel in Orangeburg or Columbia. It's needed and I know God is leading me to minister.

Do you feel you've beaten the drug thing, that that chapter of your life is closed?

I feel that God has taken that away from me. He's taken the desire, the need away completely. God's been blessing me and I've just seen doors open.

How is the relationship with your wife, your step daughter and your son going?

It's going great right now. They're pleased with where I am. I help them as much as I can. They understand my situation here.

Is there anything you want us to know about that you might have left out?

Yes, Star Gospel has had a major impact on my life. Not just the doors open to men in need, but to veterans; we feel at home together here. I'm at peace right now. I enjoy your sermons and I get a lot out of them. It helps my spiritual growth a lot by being here. It gives me comfort to know that if I need to talk to someone, anytime, I can talk with you. You and Star Gospel allow me to be me. You've allowed me to step out in faith, to trust in God, and to put my past in the past.

James T. H. Buxton
Biography



James T. H. Buxton has been elected as Chairman of the Board at the Star Gospel Mission, located at 474 Meeting Street. Star Gospel is Charleston’s oldest not-for-profit Christian welfare organization, having been founded by The Rev. Obadiah Dugan in 1904. The Mission is a transitional housing community for formerly homeless men, including veterans, who are seeking to assimilate back into society as productive citizens.

Mr. Buxton is the principal attorney in Buxton Legal Group, LLC, a boutique law firm that practices in the areas of corporate transactions, private equity, taxation and estate planning. He is a Charleston native who graduated from Porter-Gaud School, Princeton University and the University of South Carolina School of Law. Mr. Buxton is also a member of the State Bars of Georgia, South Carolina and Virginia. He is a member of Mt. Pleasant Presbyterian Church and resides in Mt. Pleasant with his wife and two children.



Matt Crooks (Mission sexton), Danny Daniels (night watchman), and Pastor Christian, side view of 89 Nassau Street property.

A word from Jim Buxton,
Chairman of the Board

This year, we have embarked upon a highly ambitious undertaking. We are currently in the process of renovating a Charleston single house we purchased last year, which is located directly behind the Mission at 89 Nassau Street. We anticipate the completion of that project in the spring of 2013. Our intention is to provide additional boarding through “next phase” transitional housing in the form of four studio apartments for low-income, formerly homeless men with an emphasis on veterans.

To complete this project, we are asking for your help and invite your participation in this transformational project for the Mission. Below is a list of several construction items necessary to complete the renovation of 89 Nassau. Please discern and consider making a generous gift to the Mission in support of the creation of these much needed apartments by sponsoring some of the items on our “punch list.” At the dedication of this house, all gifts designated toward the renovation of this project will be listed on a bronze plaque and affixed to the exterior of the house.

Your participation at any level will help expand the Star Gospel Mission’s positive impact on our community by providing additional transitional housing in the City of Charleston and you will be assisting the mission’s ministry to help transform the hearts and minds of these men through the love of Jesus Christ.

Yours sincerely, Jim Buxton.

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

“I can forgive, but I cannot forget’ is only another way of saying, ‘I will not forgive.’”

§

Henry Ward Beecher

Cont. from Page 6

- Interior hardware: \$552.00*
- Light fixtures: \$662.00*
- On-demand Hot water heaters: \$1,196.00*
- Exterior trim and millwork: \$1,289.00
- Interior doors: \$2,145.00*
- Entry door: \$2,146.00
- Plumbing fixtures: \$2,159.00*
- Interior Trim and millwork: \$2,200.00*
- Hardwood flooring: \$3,004.00*
- Wood staircase and railings: \$3,202.00*
- Heating and Air Conditioning: \$3,743.00*
- Kitchenettes: \$3,998.00*
- Fire alarm/sprinkler system: \$4,235.00*
- Windows: \$4,815.00*
- Wood framing: \$4,870.00*
- Plumbing: \$4,914.00*

* indicates price per each studio apartment

We must learn to replace these two words: “If only”, with two new words: “Next time”.



Palmetto Craftsmen Construction workers beginning renovations on the 89 Nassau Street property.

The bumps in the road of life are not bumps they ARE the road.

Thanks to those who provide regular support

- First Scots Presbyterian Church
- Second Presbyterian Church
- The French Huguenot Church
- Grace Episcopal Church
- St. Michael’s Episcopal Church
- St. Stephen’s Episcopal Church
- Holy Communion Episcopal Church
- Congregation Beth Elohim
- Bethel United Methodist Church
- John Wesley United Methodist Church
- Trinity United Methodist Church
- St. Johannes Lutheran Church
- Catholic Charities of Charleston
- Good Cheer Fund of the Post and Courier
- Washington Light Infantry
- New England Society
- The St. Andrew’s Society
- The German Friendly Society
- Strickland Marine Agency
- Hughes Lumber Company
- Piggly Wiggly Carolina
- The Guy E. Beatty Foundation
- The Verhagen Foundation
- The Benson Family Foundation
- The Coastal Carolina Foundation
- The Exchange Club of Charleston
- The Saul Alexander Fund
- Ashley Hall Girls School
- High Cotton Restaurant
- Haynsworth, Sinkler and Boyd
- St Andrew’s Church
- St Matthew’s Lutheran Church
- Woodmen of the World



Rev. Christian, Linda Williams, Rev. David Williams, Abby the dog. St. Stephen Christmas gifts for residents (new blue jeans, individually sized).



Star Gospel Mission

474 Meeting Street
Charleston, SC 29403
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Over a Century of Christian Service to Charleston

We're on the Web!
www.stargospelmission.com



The old Star Vaudeville Theater converted into the SGM, circa 1904

Did you know? A brief History of the Star Gospel Mission

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.

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.

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 Directors 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 his leadership, the Mission is beginning a new chapter by expanding their influence in the community with the acquisition and development of additional transitional housing.

**JUST DO THE RIGHT
THING, WHICH
MEANS, DON'T DO
THE WRONG THING!**

Current Mission Needs
Men's clothing, pillows, twin size sheets, pillow cases, towels, washcloths, paper towels, toilet paper, napkins, meats and canned vegetables, cleaning supplies, toiletries, light bulbs, books and DVDs.

**When you forgive
you set a prisoner
free and that
prisoner is you**