

# Star Gospel Mission

Fall 2010

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

## *Shining brightly since 1904*

### *Transforming hearts and lives through Jesus Christ*



STAR GOSPEL MISSION

474 Meeting Street

The Rev. William K. Christian  
*Executive Director*  
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Design and layout:  
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#### People Can Change

Based on an interview conducted by Pastor Christian with a former resident, Willard White.

**Tell me, what was your circumstance before you came to the SGM? What was your life like?**

It was chaotic, I was struggling, trying to figure out what I was going to do or who I was going to get over on, just to get by, whether it was for drugs or even just to get something to eat.

**What do you mean by “get over on?”**

To take advantage, in any way I could because I was walking around with the attitude that the world owed me a favor, because they have it, I should have it. It was a very sad attitude.

**So, what brought you to Charleston?**

What brought me to Charleston was the luck of the thumb I guess. I hitch-hiked down from Pennsylvania with no idea of what I'd do and no sense of direction in my life. I decided I wanted to just go out and see what I could find. Charleston was my first thought and it's where I landed.

**What brought you to the SGM?**

Aside from the fact that I was living on the streets, I walked by here one day with somebody I met on the street and

he pointed to the Mission and said “you don't want to stay there, they charge you money.” Needless to say, a week went by, I woke up one morning in a puddle of water, the next day I got my first pay check and I came to the Mission.



*Willard White*

**Do you recall how you were received?**

I was received with open arms from everybody. The thing I remember most is that after staying on the streets for the past two or three months, I was able to come in, sit in a chair, sleep under a blanket, and just relax.

**So you felt that this was a place of sanctuary?**

It felt like home. I had some belongings in here and I was

very comfortable.

**Tell me about your work.**

At first, when I first came down I had no job, I had nothing. Shortly after I came to town I got a job working on the new hospital.

**What changed in your life from when you were living on the streets? What changes occurred when you came to the Mission?**

At first there was no change, I still had the same mindset as when I first left Pennsylvania. It was a gradual change, in a way it blind-sided me; I didn't see it coming. Over the first year it was unnoticeable, but as it progressed, instead of thinking of ways to get over on people, it was more of a thought about what could I do to better myself? I got here and my thought was, get to work and become somebody. Little did I know when I first got here how big of a role God would play in my life.

**Tell me more about that, how big of a role did God play in your life?**

Honestly, I felt like for me to come here was a God moment. Over the past four years, the relationship that I've built upon Christ is inde-

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From the Executive Director

In a recent newspaper I read that charitable giving to not-for-profit organizations is at an all time low this year. However, along with our dedicated Board of Director's, I am very pleased to share with you that many faithful individuals, churches, civic organizations and foundations have consistently made generous contributions to the Star Gospel Mission throughout the year. For that I say **THANK YOU** for your continued support! If you have not taken the opportunity to make a donation to the Mission, I would invite and encourage you to do so by using the envelope that I have enclosed in this annual newsletter. All financial contributions to the Mission are tax deductible.

So why should I support the Mission? Simply stated, because in so doing you will be sharing in our mission. And what is that mission? For the past 106 years our mission has been that of **"Transforming hearts and lives through Jesus Christ."** We strive to assist men who have fallen on hard times either through the loss of a job, health issues, family difficulties, past mistakes and choices made that may have jeopardized their future, or addictions that they are trying to overcome so that they can get back on their feet, experience a new beginning, have a new lease on life. Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, we believe that God loves us all, forgives us when we choose to go our own way and make false choices, and gives us a second chance in order to begin to become the persons that He has created us to become... by His grace and with His help. That's what life transformation is all about! That kind of transformation is at work in many of the men who reside at the Star Gospel. Through your gifts you can become a part of that on-going process.

Again, thank you for your generosity and always remember that the primary beneficiary of the gift is the giver!

Yours faithfully,

The Rev. William Christian



Beth Elohim Synagogue members on Mitzvah Day (Day of Blessing) planted a herb garden, landscaped grounds and prepared a meal. L. to R. Ian Alberto, Cynthia Ava, Nora Hughes.



Judy Lochner and Matthew Crooks (Mission Cook/Custodian)

Judy Lochner, a.k.a. Our Lady of the Cakes

Judy Lochner lives in Summerville, SC and she loves to bake. However, her husband, Vaughn, though fond of deserts, is ever mindful of his weight. One day Judy came by the Mission with a plate of cookies and asked if the men might enjoy them. The answer was, of course, absolutely, since the residents at the Mission rarely get to have dessert with their evening meal. Since then, every ten days to two weeks Judy drives in from Summerville and delivers home made pies, cakes, cookies, pastries and, my favorite, strawberry cheesecake. When asked why she does this, Judy says that "I, as a mother, want these men to know that there's someone out there who cares for them as their own mother would. When I came to the Mission that day and Matthew took the cookies I had baked and said: 'thank you and God bless you', his response meant so much to me that I decided

that I would continue to bake for the men at the Mission on a regular basis." Judy went on to say that she wondered "when was the last time these men had a home-made pie, cake or cookies? I think there are men here who are really struggling and trying to put their broken lives back together. I hope that my baking for them will give them a better sense of self-esteem and self-worth. Perhaps they'll say: 'wow, my mother used to do this, Mom used to bake cakes like this.' So I see my baked goods as taking them back to a time when their own mother did this for them, and it makes me feel so good inside. When I'm baking these cakes I'm in seventh heaven." Judy's cake ministry to the men at the Mission has given her the honorary title: Our Lady of the Cakes (coined by the men who reside here). What a wonderful ministry Judy is doing for all the men at the Star Gospel Mission!

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.



Receiving an outreach check from the Grace Episcopal Church Tea Room proceeds. L. to R. The Rev. Michael Wright, Mary Bradley, Pastor Christian.

## People Can Change (cont.)

Based on an interview conducted by Pastor Christian with a former resident, Willard White.

scribable. Ten years ago I didn't want to believe in Christ. To come from scratch, from zero, to have gone from the bottom up to where I am, there's just no other way to do it but with God. I couldn't have done this by myself.

### **You left the Mission at one point and then came back. Why was that?**

Let's just say it was bad judgment. I went from working at the hospital, I met a guy in here who gave me some work painting, his name was Rocky. He was the first bad run in I had, but as time progressed, I think it was divine intervention. I wasn't adhering to the values that the Mission teaches. I got a pay check and thought, oh well, I can go buy this, buy that, buy a lap top, a cell phone, whatever came to mind, and before you know it, we had a bad run in, he did a bad thing and went to jail, and I was left with no work and no money.

### **Then what happened?**

I went back to Pennsylvania. I went up there for four months. I went up there because that was all I knew. I didn't want to be homeless down here again. I felt that would be backtracking. So I went there, got some work, but didn't like it. So I decided to come back down here and give it another try. I caught a bus and when I got here I came back to the Mission.

### **What did you do when you returned?**

I started practicing what the Bible teaches. I'll be the first to admit that I'm not practicing all that it teaches but I'm applying all that applies to me I guess. I met Tony Robinson in here, and

we ended up working together. Once again, we had a bad run in with our boss, so we decided that we were going to branch out on our own. We had very similar core values to business, that is, treat it as your own home, and don't be out to take advantage of anybody. We had to approach it with a job attitude because the money we're dealing with causes greed and all the other bad stuff that's associated with money. We had values that enabled us to work past that. These are values based on my spiritual findings. Like I said, my mind set four years ago was "take the money and run." It's all about core values... we're approaching this as a career. I'd like to be able to grow old and have something to show for it in my life.

### **Is this business taking you there?**

We recently got our painting license and our company is also bonded and insured. We have a truck, and all the equipment; anything we really need to take care of a job.

### **What is the name of your company?**

It's called: Beyond The Brush, LLC.

### **You've really made some major advances in your life. Tell me, who or what do you give credit to for making these advances over the past four years?**

If I could put my finger on it, the two things that come to mind would be my grandmother and God.

### **Why your grandmother?**

She died when I was eight years old, but for my whole life I felt like she has been watching over me. That's why I think that my trip down here was to find God, because the route I was taking wasn't getting me there. I think she watched over me to make it down here. And whenever I do something now I'm thinking of Godly views. She was like a mother to me. I'm sad, because I never made it to her funeral, I never got to say good-bye. I was working a job just a couple months ago and, while thinking about her, I just balled my eyes out. I still miss her. She was a church lady; we went to church together every Sunday.

### **How do you experience the influence of God in your life?**

When you change your whole idea and thought process 180 degrees, you know that there are things beyond your control at work. I tried for 25 years to do things my own way and it led me nowhere. To rely on God is very difficult for me, because I've never relied on anybody my whole life. The Good News that the Bible teaches about God's love for us is what I needed. I strived for it, I hungered for it, and now I really feel it.

### **How do you feel that love of God and where do you see it in your life?**

It's just faith, it really is. I see it and feel it through other people in my life, like Tom and Tony. These guys gave me a chance when no one else would. And of course, Star Gospel; that's where it

all started. I've learned that you've got to have foundations, and my life did not have foundations. When I got to Star, I was just living day to day with no plan in sight. Star Gospel gave me a strong foundation with core beliefs and values: never deny God, don't miss an opportunity, don't be greedy, and if you know better, do better. All these things made for a better life for me.

### **The mission statement of the SGM is: Transforming hearts and lives through Jesus Christ. Would you say that mission has been fulfilled in you?**

Yes, I would say that with 100% assurance. Transformation begins on the inside and works its way out. That's how it began, with a changing of my thought process, which you teach us every Sunday; to have the assurance that I can go out there and do what I do to the best of my ability, and come back here and still feel like it's home. It may be a Mission, but to the 25 guys who live here, it's home!

### **Do you have any final thoughts your might like to share?**

If I had a final statement it would be that people can change. If you're a person that wants to change, it can be done with God's help. If you know somebody that wants to change, have patience with them and pray for them.

**Life is a gift and despair is presumptuous**



## 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](http://www.stargospelmission.com)



Pastor Christian directing the line for people to receive their Good Cheer Fund gift cards.

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

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

### The ALPHA Course taught at Star Gospel

Star Gospel is the oldest Men's Christian Mission in South Carolina. It is a temporary home to 25 men who just happen to have fallen on hard times, be it economical, addictions, personal demons or simply bad luck. In any case, you or I (in our cozy lives) are only an incident or bad choice away from changing our mailing addresses to Star Gospel.

Pastor Bill Christian or "The Rev" as he is affectionately called by the residents at the Star, is the man in charge. He carries himself as such and must manage by "tough love" as this transitional housing community is not by any means a flop house to those who stay there. Pastor Christian instructs these men in many lessons necessary for a meaningful and productive life, where accountability and responsibility along with the teachings of our Lord Jesus Christ are at the core of

his messages.

The ALPHA Course at Star Gospel was a wonderful and enlightening experience. I thank God that for a few months, I was part of a little history making in St. Michael's long and storied existence. Along with Pastor Bill, I was privileged to present ALPHA to the men of Star Gospel.

The gentlemen of the Star are a most interesting group of both young and old, with life experiences that could simply blow you away, and the most amazing part of it all was the expertise they possessed when it came to knowing God's Word. Obviously much credit is due to Pastor Bill, but the convictions and worldviews of these men were astonishing. I was the one who had to reevaluate my personal perceptions and stereotypical views of

what I was to expect upon volunteering at Star Gospel. I thought I was going to help bring Christ to Star Gospel, but I quickly realized that He was already there!

Greg Morris, St Michael's Episcopal Church



2009 Food Card Giveaway helpers. L. to R. Pastor Christian, The Rev. Dr. David Williams, The Rt. Rev. Mark Lawrence, Doug Born, Hilda Jefferson, The Rev. Dallas Wilson, Dr. Thomas Cook, Theodocia Proctor.