

*Seeing More Clearly*  
*Thanks To Pecans & Carrots*



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# NEWSLETTER

May, 2008

[www.christianfoodmission.org](http://www.christianfoodmission.org)

## **PURSUIITS:**

The following are the pursuits in which this organization is involved:

1. Distribution of meals and visitation to the elderly, especially widows.
2. Distribution of grocery orders to needy households.
3. Distribution of Bibles, tracts, booklets, and other Christian materials.
4. Accepting speaking opportunities to preach, teach, and evangelize.
5. Promotion of prayer, faith, and relationships among Christians.
6. Financial and material support of select local and foreign missionaries.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS:**

The following people are presently voluntarily serving on our Board:

- Mr. Al Moore, elder (President)
- Dr. Cary Kimbrell (V. President)
- Rev. Bart Terry (Treasurer)
- Mrs. Suzanne Dykes (Secretary)
- Rev. Phillip Smith
- Mr. Garland Miles, deacon
- Mr. John Ripley, deacon
- Mr. Robert Rayburn, deacon
- Mr. Robert Smith, missionary

## **FINANCIAL POLICY AND PRACTICE:**

-Under no circumstances will the ministry contract debt. We will not presume on the future, but will trust God to provide funds as needed.

-We will not state current financial needs but will share, after the fact, how God has provided for this ministry so that He alone might receive the glory.

-We will pray to God and ask Him alone to supply this ministry's financial needs; therefore, no money will be solicited nor will "fund raising" be engaged in by our Board of Directors or paid staff.

-Staff salaries are established by the Board of Directors and given only as God provides the funds. No special appeals will ever be made to obtain any salary.

-Annually, an account of all funds received and spent will be prepared and will be made available, upon request, to any desiring the same. A financial report will be publicly presented at our Annual Meeting in April of each year.

Near the end of January, one quiet Sunday afternoon, I was munching on pecans from a plastic bag given to my family by friends from their pecan trees. As I ate the shelled pecans I considered how plentiful pecans had been this fall. In fact, they had been amazingly plentiful. As I absently ate, my thoughts turned to acorns. Acorns had been abundant and large this season too. The acorns made loud sounds as they fell in quantity from the trees. They pelted roofs and cars with loud thuds and littered yards and driveways in great numbers. Also, hickory nuts were in much greater evidence than in past years. They seemed to be everywhere from only a single tree. I'd seen the hard nuts blanketing the ground in several locations.

As I contemplated the over-abundance of nuts- pecans, acorns, and hickory nuts, I came up with a theory. Hurricane Katrina came through in 2005, breaking and damaging lots of limbs from the trees which are still standing. In 2006 the trees were recovering from the battering they took. In 2007 the trees sprang to new life and, in the fall, produced a banner crop of nuts. They had, in effect, been pruned by the high winds which, after a time, caused them to be more productive.

When I voiced this idea I was confirmed in that others had expressed the same view. Hurricane Katrina had been overcome; God had given us pause from the normal to learn lessons and consider what is truly important in life. We should be more focused and fruitful from this unpleasant but instructive experience of two-and-a-half years ago. John 15:2 says: "Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit."

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This letter is being written at the end of April and the beginning of May, as a follow-up to our Annual Meeting held on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Our Annual Meeting is held as a "requirement" of our corporate by-laws in order to make a public report to the community-at-large, while newsletters are written as a "voluntary" means of informing those involved or interested in this work. It is our desire to not compromise our stated policies while, at the same time, being accountable to our supporters.

As always, I pray this report will be more than a dull source of factual information or more than a novelty intriguing the readers. This is written as a sincere attempt at portraying our work as it is. I trust our Father with the results and hope it is a blessing to the readers.

#### WHAT WE ARE NOT TRYING TO DO

Due to many recent conversations, thought-provoking experiences, and pointed questions, it seems appropriate to emphasize what we are "not" attempting to do. This is not an exhaustive list or given in any certain order. Admittedly, it is written in a very straightforward and uncompromising way. It is important that the meaning be understood as we take what we sincerely believe to be an overtly Christian and biblical approach to ministry. It is important that we strive to maintain a character which evidences both love and holiness in both our personal lives and the associations we form.

- (1) Self promotion. It is not our goal to draw attention to ourselves or others because of accomplishments or service rendered to our fellow man. It is our goal to exalt Jesus Christ and hold Him before others. It would be a shame to seek praise or privilege or position for ourselves because of good works done for Christ. Certainly we appreciate encouragement from our brothers and sisters from time to time, and we recognize (publicly every year) the good examples set before us by other believers who serve unselfishly, seeking no accolades or benefits to themselves. Recently a brother reminded us of Hebrews 10:24 which states: "And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works." Recognition is given to those who serve effectively in order to motivate others to similar Christian service for our Saviour. Our end is not service to mankind, or recognition of the servant, but service to Christ by "doing unto the least of these" (Matthew 25: 31-46) in need.
- (2) Government entanglement. In 1997 I wrote a booklet entitled "Biblical Charity", of which thousands of copies have been distributed, to explain the biblical basis for implementing true benevolence. Charity should be voluntary (non-compulsory) and the especial domain of the individual, family, and church, not the government. Forced taxation to care for the needy is not charitable and is illegitimate. Reputable voluntary associations and organizations, especially Christian, should be given support and encouragement rather

than government “entitlements” funded through forced taxation. There are many excellent “voluntary” projects building homes to provide affordable housing, feeding the hungry, making available prenatal/newborn care and resources, providing literacy and educational classes, ministering to the addicted, homeless, imprisoned, sick, aged, etc.

- (3) Fund generation. Not only do we not solicit money as a means of funding our work, we do not engage in selling items or services to anyone. Further, as an organization we do not engage in or support gambling, or anything that could be viewed as a form of gambling like playing bingo for money or prizes, “selling chances” or raffle tickets. Money generated from such lotteries is absolutely not in keeping with our practices as a faith work. We do not encourage or promote gambling among Christians and “caution” believers involved in such practices, as innocuous as they may seem. Certainly we do not believe someone buying a raffle ticket is not a Christian or is in serious sin, but we do not engage in such fund-raising or support others in doing so.
- (4) Building self-esteem. Our goal, first and foremost, is to serve Jesus Christ and not to make people feel good about themselves by their service. Our identity is found in Christ and not in our own self worth or actions (works). [We have been distributing an excellent little booklet on this topic entitled “The Biblical View Of Self-Esteem” by Jay Adams.] Example: A young woman came in for an interview who had shown interest in serving as a volunteer. In conversation it was revealed she was taking medication for psychiatric problems. She wished to volunteer to help herself, as a sort of therapy. It was emphasized to her that, as Christians, we are serving others for the Lord. Certainly serving others for Christ does have persona advantages to the volunteer, but this is a by-product and not the ultimate goal for service. The young woman was unsuitable as a volunteer for us. Generally speaking, service and generosity toward others becomes self-serving if it is done to relieve guilt (which only God can do) or to enhance some feeling of spirituality or worth. Suitable service to others comes from one who loves God and seeks no benefit for himself. This is not disinterested service but is done for a higher purpose beyond one’s own advantage.
- (5) Criticize churches. It is not our purpose to find fault with the Christian community, but to pray for, encourage and strengthen the local churches. It is my firm conviction that the church is to bring believers together for worship, to equip the saints for ministry, evangelize the lost, and do good works in the name of Christ. Churches are not to be established to provide services to the community-at-large. It is my position that Christian weddings and funerals for unbelievers and/or those who evidence no involvement in the church of Jesus Christ should not be provided by the church. Political rallies and meetings, and gatherings to address social issues apart from the gospel are not appropriate for a church venue. Secular concerts and public ceremonies for officials should not be the primary function of the church and should be limited. Example: Interviewing clients for assistance has often revealed stories of how horrible home life was for the person as a child, how wicked friends were a bad influence on them, or how an individual was sorely hurt and mistreated by a church (maybe years ago). Surely there are bad churches (and rotten parents and dishonorable people) in the world. It is our contention that people are responsible for their own spiritual maturity and have the freedom to attend the church of their choice, under God’s guidance. A church is not to be blamed for one’s problems. In general, blaming others, especially those in the past, for one’s current problems is unhealthy and does not encourage healing and success.
- (6) Cultural Religion. It is not our intention to follow the course of what is the most popular or acceptable trends in Christianity or religion at the moment. Many professing Christians do not seem to understand what it means to be a committed follower of Christ. We are not to admire Jesus – His humble life, His teachings, even His sacrificial death on the cross, and think such admiration is what is required to make one a Christian. Admiration must move us to repentance, relationship, and a changed life. Also, there is a trend among the affluent, who have experienced lives of opulence with no satisfaction, to turn to lives of simplicity to seek fulfillment; they have experienced plenty and now seek to experience a life of little. Instead of serving God they are struggling to serve themselves; instead of seeking to know God, they are looking within themselves for truth. There is no real merit in living either a life of poverty (simplicity) for its own sake, or, as many have discovered, there is no fulfillment found in a life of ease and plenty. Life’s meaning and purpose is unlocked only in God through Jesus Christ.

Simply put, in general, it is our purpose to encourage volunteerism and generosity. It is our goal to motivate service to others by individuals not being compelled by governmental pressures, not motivated by personal gain in some fashion (or the “possibility” of acquiring some prize), and not to the detriment or dishonoring of the church.

### **A SINGLE SINGULAR VISIT WITH THE DYING**

A recent home visit which stands out the most to me, from among many visits, took place on March 17<sup>th</sup> in Calhoun. Mr. N explained his lengthy battle with bladder cancer and now leukemia; he alluded to his wife who sat in an Alzheimer’s stupor next to him in a separate chair. As our conversation continued he raised his hands and said, “I’m tickled to have someone to talk with, I’m so lonely!” As he continued to voice his woes, he becomes very emotional and cried. He explained, “If you come here at eight o’clock in the morning we’ll likely be asleep. We spend the night a-hollerin’ and taking medicine. I hurt all over.” Pointing to the floor he said, “I couldn’t vacuum that floor for three months because I couldn’t push the vacuum cleaner across it. I ain’t got no bone marrow left from all the cancer treatments.” Mr. N turned to his wife when he said, “She’s in the last stages of the disease; she don’t have long to live. I don’t know why God let me have so long [he’s 81], I guess to take care of my wife. Everybody’s got to die and I’m ready to go. I done payed for my funeral and had the stone placed for me and my wife. All my daughter has to do is get my suit out of the closet and a dress to put on my wife. I don’t want it to be no trouble for her. I’m just waitin’ for my Father to reach down and take me. Everybody’s got to die.” He finished with: “I want to ask you to do something for me if you got the time. Say a prayer every day for a minute or two for me and my wife.” He collected himself as I prepared to pray for him right then.

### **A SINGLE SINGULAR VISIT WITH THE ABUSED**

On the afternoon of January 8<sup>th</sup> I interviewed a client for groceries in our entrance room at the Mission. As I filled out the application on the 45 year-old woman, she was very open and agreeable to talk. The woman boldly declared herself to be a Christian although not affiliated with a church. Her parents were dead, her brother in prison, her sister addicted to crack, and her husband and she had divorced. According to her, he had cheated on her.

The hurting woman relived her childhood in the Christian children’s home. “There were some very bad people in charge,” she said, “They did things to me and I saw things a child should not have to see.” Before this her father had abused her. Consequently, she has developed a distrust of people; she trusted no one. Her evaluation was that in the church she saw the behavior and lives of professing Christians which proved they were not real either.

She had worked before health problems forced her to quit. She reported having had a stroke, cancer, Crohn’s disease, and thirteen back surgeries! I asked if she took drugs for depression or anxiety or other mental problems. She was decisive when she said, “No, they tried to give me that stuff but I don’t need it, I trust the Lord.” I asked if she was seeing a psychiatrist. Again she was firm when she said, “No, they wanted me to but I don’t need to; I believe the Lord will help me.”

I encouraged her to pray about resolving her distrust of people, to ask God to bring people into her life who can be trusted and supportive and strengthening. I challenged her to seek guidance on finding a church where she could worship. I prayed with her and loaded a box of groceries into her car.

### **A TRUCK OF CARROTS “UNLOADED”**

On the evening of March 2<sup>nd</sup> I received a call from my daughter about carrots. A truck hauling carrots had turned over on the interstate near Ellisville earlier that day when the driver fell asleep at the wheel (fortunately he was uninjured). My daughter knew the owner of the towing company who retrieved the wrecked truck and thus learned of the carrot truck wreck. With flashlights in hand, in the dark we bagged up loose carrots into white trash bags and loaded them into my little pick-up truck. Since it was a cool night I left them on the pick-up in my driveway overnight. Bro. Greg and I stored them in our walk-in cooler the next morning. The front page of the newspaper carried pictures of the wrecked truck with carrots strewn all over the road.

Eleven days later I picked up a second load of carrots once they had been released by the insurance company. These carrots were not loose but in whole 50-lb. plastic sacks. We’d worked hard for the first load; the second load was quickly piled in the truck in daylight and I was off.

We get unexpected food from the most unexpected sources.

Needless to say we've had lots of carrot and raisin salad, seasoned sliced carrots, english peas and carrots, carrots in chicken pot pie, etc. for our clients. Their eyesight has got to be improving!

### **SOMETHING TO READ AS YOU WASH**

We continue to distribute Christian tracts, booklets, and Scripture portions "as we go". On March 11<sup>th</sup> I was replacing tract trays in a laundromat when an elderly lady caught my eye. She was reading "Forgiveness" by J. C. Ryle. When she noticed me placing fresh literature, she stopped me from leaving by telling me how much of a blessing the reading materials had been to her. The older lady had been reading what I was leaving and giving it to friends also. Mrs. A asked me to wait because she wanted to give me something. Soon the woman returned from her car with a folded, worn \$10 bill. With humility she declared it not to be much but wanted to give me something for the reading material she enjoyed while doing her clothes at the washateria.

That afternoon the elderly lady had given me more than her money. When I shared this story with someone, it was suggested I keep the \$10 bill as a reminder of the lady's sincere testimony and encouragement. Instead of keeping a souvenir for myself, I determined to apply the \$10 toward the printing of more literature to be given away.

Interestingly, exactly one month later, on April 11<sup>th</sup>, I was handed a check for \$30,000.00 from an individual donor from a neighbor state! The Lord continues to bless and encourage as only He can....and in unexpected ways.

### **A FEW WORDS ABOUT THE ANNUAL MEETING**

Our Twenty-Third Annual Meeting was held once again at the Laurel Train Depot. This has proven to be an excellent meeting place for us. Many in attendance commented on how blessed they were by the tone of this meeting and how thoroughly Christian it proved to be. All of our Board members were given a part in the program and did an exceptional job. My wife, Beth, was responsible for the delicious refreshments served after the meeting. Thanks to all those who made for a meaningful evening.

Boy Scout Troop #38, under the direction of Scoutmaster Scott Wiggins, performed the opening flag ceremony and led us in the "Pledge of Allegiance". Robert Rayburn told one of his signature jokes as part of the welcome. Andy Dial, president of the Jones County Board of Supervisors, made a proclamation declaring "Christian Food Mission Volunteer Week". The Mill Creek Church of God was recognized for their years of support and volunteer service by accepting this year's "Pass It On Award". John Ripley gave a spiritually stirring (and long) closing prayer which touched many who were present. Every year our meeting is interrupted by the loud passing of a train and this year was no exception. We always wonder who will be speaking when this happens. Dr. Cary Kimbrell had read Matthew 25:31-46 and was making some brief commentary on the passage when the train drowned his words. The passing train had contributed its element of uncertainty to our tightly structured program of speakers and presentations.

In love, in Christ,



Robert Smith

**CHRISTIAN FOOD MISSION, INC.  
2007 TREASURER'S REPORT**

**COMPARATIVE FUND BALANCES  
FOR THE YEARS 2007 AND 2006**

	2007	2006
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<b>OPERATING FUND:</b>		
<b>Fund Balance, January 1</b>	\$ 37,187	\$ 36,671
<b>Receipts:</b>		
Contributions	199,199	184,402
Other Income	4,100	-
Investment Earnings	-	44
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	203,299	184,446
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<b>Disbursements:</b>		
Salaries, Benefits & Payroll Taxes	107,635	112,973
Building - Insurance	5,013	4,480
Building - Repairs	3,363	3,670
Building - Utilities	13,261	11,554
Telephone	876	844
Vehicle Expense	8,822	15,819
Supplies - Food & Other	23,791	18,476
Office and Other Expenditures	15,166	8,114
Donations	11,000	8,000
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	188,927	183,930
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<b>Increase (Decrease) in Fund Balance</b>	14,372	516
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<b>Fund Balance, December 31</b>	\$ 51,559	\$ 37,187
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<b>ENDOWMENT FUND:</b>		
<b>Fund Balance, January 1</b>	\$ 41,289	\$ 40,576
<b>Receipts:</b>		
Investment Earnings	889	713
<b>Disbursements:</b>		
None	-	-
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<b>Fund Balance, December 31</b>	\$ 42,178	\$ 41,289
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<b><u>M. Bart Terry, Treasurer</u></b>		

