

*Experiences*  
&  
*Emotions*



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**NEWSLETTER**

November, 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.

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

First let me say thank-you to all of those who have donated to this work this year. This year has been especially hard economically. We [ Bro. Greg Brown, who shares in all areas of daily supervision and management, and myself] certainly appreciate all those who have given money, purchased food for our use, bought expensive gasoline to deliver meals, etc. For some I'm sure this has been a sacrifice and we are humbled by your commitment to "keep us in business". In addition, we thank all of those godly people who give of their time as faithful volunteers, who pray for us, who send kind notes and cards, and who speak words of encouragement. [A former volunteer came by with a donation of \$25 on November 7<sup>th</sup>. Because of health concerns this dear elderly sister was released from delivering meals. With tears in her eyes she handed me the check and said, "I miss all of you."] All of this causes me to feel a rush of sentimental emotion and think: We must continue on, as we are encouraged by such love and bolstered by such magnanimous support.

Conversely, I am sometimes discouraged as we deal with issues which frequently arise while operating this organization as a corporation (which it is), interacting with the public which sometimes brings us into contact with rude and difficult, or even angry, people, feeling ill-equipped to adequately answer the diversity of personal problems brought to our attention by clients, striving to be consistent and maintaining standards which have been held for years when others are not supportive.

There is a good reason for me honestly sharing my feelings to the readers. We receive encouragement in many different ways, for which I am very thankful and need, but we handle a variety of situations which tend to discourage and disappoint as well. This is why we cannot base our service, and a choice of continuing or quitting, on how we feel or what we experience. Emotions and experiences are real but not trustworthy. They change quickly and often. We must base our lives and work on truth.

This letter is being written on the heels of the highly emotional and passionate presidential race through which our country has just come. Many months have unfolded since the beginning of this political process and we've been privy to lots of raw emotion. The candidates have told touching stories of their experiences in life which have shaped them. Certainly experiences are important and all of us are endowed with feelings. It is our contention that experiences and emotions be put in their proper perspective, not ignored.

Let me give an example of a surreal experience. In June while in Long Beach, California I sat with eighteen others in a circle with a woman directing a meeting of "Spirituality" on a Sunday morning. She asked for each person to give their view of who God is to them and their feelings about God. In turn, we went around the circle. The woman moderator was fairly passive as the sharing proceeded. Answers included things like "God is love; God is everywhere and in everything; God is the good and powerful and benevolent; God is distant and far from us; God is within every person." My answer was simply that my understanding of God is based on what He tells us about Himself in the Bible. This seemed to be a curious answer to some in the circle. After this meeting, I asked the moderator about her spirituality. She was candid in saying she was not familiar with the Bible but affirmed her belief in a "higher power" and the power of love. She was "all about loving others."

Let me give another example of a real experience. I had cataract surgery on my left eye on August 4<sup>th</sup> and on my right eye August 8<sup>th</sup>. I have a history of vision problems. Following the surgery there was a recovery period. Circumstances of my recovery were troubling and caused me much concern. I was back at the Mission on Monday, August 11<sup>th</sup> wearing sunglasses and trying to see well enough to do my work and drive. I was called to the telephone that morning. The caller, a complete stranger to me, identified himself as Pastor Madhava of Mercy Grace Christian Fellowship. He explained that he had pulled up our web site and was intrigued. He had completed a Bible study that morning and had had a time of prayer. He felt impressed to call and encourage me. After some general questions, he asked if anything unusual had happened in my life recently. I reported having just had eye surgery. He told me to "have no doubts" and to "continue in doing good work". Pastor Madhava was calling from India! My Father prompted a believer in India to call me with encouragement!

Experiences and feelings (emotions) are important, and the Bible gives us a grid through which we can properly understand and interpret them. Nevertheless, we must base our lives on truth. Truth must be accepted and acted upon on a personal level, a national level, and an international level. It transcends all boundaries and barriers,

and supersedes all experiences and emotions. Pilate asked Jesus, “What is truth?” (John 18:38) Earlier Jesus had said of the Father, “Sanctify them by your truth. Your Word is truth.” (John 17:17) and of Himself, “For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth.” (John 18:37)

## EXPERIENCES & EMOTIONS (INTERVIEWS IN-HOUSE)

July 15

An interview of Mrs. W revealed a life crippled by anxiety and depression. She was under the care of a psychiatrist. When asked what she thought was the cause of her emotional problems, she immediately answered, “My daughter.” She went on to explain how her daughter had made bad choices and was living an irresponsible lifestyle. She characterized herself as being overwhelmed by worry. This generated a lengthy conversation.

As a Christian she was fully aware of what the Bible says about worry. Also, she blamed herself for her daughter’s behavior since she had divorced and re-married. Mrs. W had quit going to church because she was sure people were talking about her. Anyway, she did not have nice clothes to wear. Several times in the midst of talking she wiped tears out of her eyes. As the woman spoke, I observed she nervously shaked and had an extremely sad countenance. The poor lady could not function without medication and could not sleep without pills. Nevertheless, she reported reading her Bible every day without fail and praying. How long had she been in this state of “disability”? Seven years. Mrs. W had been emotionally crippled for seven years!

July 16

When Miss P was asked if she was a Christian, her response was a shrug of her shoulders and the off-handed comment that she was “really not interested.” Her application affirmed she was not affiliated with any church. She had much more to say. “People in the church talk about you behind your back.”

It was pointed out to her, by me, that she had approached a church for help and been referred to us, at their request, for assistance. At this she shrugged her shoulders again. The woman stood to leave and off-handedly responded, “It’s hard to explain.” She managed to mumble her thanks for the box of groceries for herself and her disabled father and uncle for whom she cares.

July 17

Mr. H moved to Jones County six weeks earlier from Missouri. His wife of 38 years had died in September of the previous year in Missouri. He produced a picture of her and became quite somber and reverent when he spoke of her. Living in Matthews, Missouri, not far from the Mississippi River, his house was flooded for three weeks before he was able to return. Most of Mr. H’s possessions, according to him, were stolen during his absence by looters.

He moved to Mississippi because he has a sister residing in Overt. Mr. H had some health problems and, due to his adverse circumstances, had become very discouraged and found himself in need. Also, living with him are his daughter-in-law and five children from Missouri. The husband/father stayed behind in Missouri. Mr. H appeared obviously weighed down by the cares of life and talked openly of his distress.

From these three interviews it was clear there are “crippling” issues of unresolved guilt, bitterness, loneliness, blame-shifting, ingratitude, co-dependency, etc. involved. The ultimate solution to these problems, as simplistic as it may sound, is to embrace the truth and act on it. It will take a solid investment of time to unravel all the details and address issues as they are unearthed in candor. It will take wisdom and compassion to move each person to resolution as they honestly deal with their hurt and relationships in light of their responsibilities before God.

Client #1 has included her daughter at the very center of her mental problems. Client #2 has brought up the issue of people in the church as a contributing reason for her indifference. Client #3 has added to his woes the grief he is experiencing over the loss of his wife.

We are receiving many people for assistance who report mental problems and phobias. (A woman in May said she was unable to leave her bedroom for four years because she was afraid of people!) A common thread is women without husbands who are struggling – divorce, abandonment, abuse, children out-of-wedlock, etc. (A

woman in July explained her husband was in prison.) We've assisted the recently unemployed, the physically infirm elderly, increasing numbers of working families who are struggling with the high cost of gasoline and food, house fire victims, unskilled and/or illiterate clients, etc. (Today a 37 year-old widow, who has a 15 year-old son, came in for assistance as this was being written.) Of course, we are regularly screening dishonorable and dishonest repeat clients who seek to practice deception. We must be wise and we must be compassionate. We feel a great responsibility to be wise stewards of the resources entrusted to us and not waste what is placed under our care to assist the worthy needy. Our limited resources and time have been stretched and stretched by increased requests for food boxes.

## EXPERIENCES & EMOTIONS (INTERVIEWS AT HOMES)

November 3

Visit #1 In Sandersville, an elderly woman was interviewed for meal delivery. The conversation began in her yard and moved to her dilapidated trailer's little porch. The interior of her trailer was the picture of squalor. The little lady's story was that she had been walking to a nearby diner up the road for food. Mrs. B cannot walk her route now because she got "run over". When I expressed concern and asked about her injuries from the road accident, she announced, "The bicycle tore up my leg!" She pulled up her pants leg to reveal the damage to her lower limb and the infection. Since having been hit by the bicycle, she complained of having increased back trouble as well.

When asked by me, for the application, who could be called in case of an emergency, she could think of no one. When I pressed her, she did come up with a daughter but she didn't know where the woman lived or her telephone number. How about a neighbor in the trailer park? The old woman retorted decisively, "I don't have nothing to do with these people around here! They just come over to use my phone!" We had a colorful conversation indeed.

Visit #2 At the home of a male referral (by phone), a middle-aged woman stood in the doorway behind the screen in answer to my knock at her door. Dogs were loudly barking behind her so I had to yell to identify myself and my purpose for the visit. With "I don't know anything about it," she showed no interest in discussing this matter. I looked at the number on the side of the house again to confirm the address and tried again to yell over the dogs that she did not attempt to quiet. The woman was unmoving in her refusal to talk with me about the meals. [That morning I had called the man to let him know I was coming that same afternoon for an interview.] I drove away puzzled.

Visit #3 In Glade I stood beside the bed of a sick woman as she moaned and held her head in answer to my questions. The poor old lady had had back surgery. Her husband was talking loudly on the telephone in another room, trying to solve a problem with Medicare. Mrs. B, as we continued, became more peaceful in her bed. This godly, sincere woman expressed her love for her pastor as we talked in the bedroom of her neat little brick house. Mrs. B listed both her and her husband's medical problems, and explained that he has no feeling in his feet, as we heard him continuing his loud conversation down the hallway. They lived alone and depended on their daughter and a neighbor for transportation. Mr. B hung up the telephone, just as I was leaving, and thanked me for coming.

Visit #4 At the trailer of another male referral (by a volunteer), I caught the older man just getting out of his truck. The man had a weathered face as he spoke to me behind his truck. I identified myself and told him of the purpose for my visit. He blandly broke in with, "I tried them meals and I can't eat them. They're too salty." I expressed my surprise at this statement because we do not add any salt to our food. He was firm in his criticism of the meals and his rejection of them. [I could not call him to make an appointment to visit because he had no phone.] I drove away puzzled for the second time that afternoon.

Of the four visits, the third was representative of the widows and elderly couples we target for our meal delivery. The first visit shows how unusual circumstances may be found, from time to time, surrounding someone who has a need. The second and fourth visits were very perplexing and certainly out-of-the-ordinary of our typical experiences when visiting potential clients. No one has ever said our meals are too salty, just the opposite! We are well known for our meal delivery service and receive new referrals each week, while at the same time, losing

existing clients to nursing homes, death, diet restrictions, etc.

## TRUTH IN PEOPLE, PLACES, AND PRINT

Jesus said, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." (John 8:32) and of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me." (John 14:6)

We have determined to carry out this work as an overtly Christian missions project, not a secular endeavor. We have been careful to portray ourselves in this fashion and have made decisions we believe are consistent with that end in mind. Our volunteers are professing Christians, and our voluntary Board of Directors and paid staff are dedicated Christians who are called to be in conformity to our policies and purposes. We make no apologies for this stand as a private organization supported exclusively by voluntary, non-solicited contributions.

We are careful not to entangle ourselves with secular endeavors to the point of compromising our distinctiveness as an evangelical Christian ministry. We are not opposed to secular programs which benefit communities like public libraries (although there are books and movies that we might not choose) or civic clubs. We are certain of the necessity of establishing secular local, state, and federal governments (although certain uses of taxpayers' money may be misguided or illegitimate). Certainly, as fellow believers have argued to me, they can voluntarily serve on secular boards, volunteer with secular organizations benefiting the community, and assist all sorts of worthwhile community causes which are not "Christian"; as individuals, they argue, they can be a Christian influence in these places. I love my brothers and sisters and respect their views.

We have chosen to structure this organization as thoroughly Christian. We have "Christian" in our name. This is not because we serve only professing Christians, but because we are Christians and that is our motivation for service. This is not an individual commitment but an organizational commitment.

We distribute large quantities of Christian printed materials. It is often a costly expense to us to maintain a stock of appropriate literature for free distribution. For example, we have given away thousands of handsome booklet copies of the "Gospel of John" (in Spanish and English) locally. This is one way we can share the truth with others. Enclosed is a copy of a booklet I wrote, and had printed recently, entitled "Flattery: Our Words Give Us Away". This is a way that I can show, from Scripture, that the truth cannot be avoided or hidden - men are guilty sinners. People regularly drop by to pick up booklets or tracts we have available that we have purchased, printed at our cost, or made donations to other ministries for their use. [Here are two small examples. On October 7<sup>th</sup>, a client who had received groceries the previous week came back to request copies of "A Call To Prayer" (Ryle) so she could give them away to friends and people at church; she'd gotten one of the booklets when she came for assistance and found much value in it. I gave her a stack of 50 booklets for her to distribute. Today, November 11<sup>th</sup>, a call was received asking if we had another copy of "Our Daily Bread" that might be picked up.]

## SUMMARY

People of the world sit in a circle and talk of their feelings about God, based on their personal experiences; people of the Church read the Bible to learn about God and, based on this knowledge, pray to Him by name. We must be careful not to place faith in our individual experiences and not to trust our uncertain emotions to guide us.

There are many experiences we cherish and many lessons learned from the same; there are many people who are dear to us and they conjure up special feelings in us. We thank God for all these which have affected our lives and enriched our time on this earth. Our Father certainly uses such things to make the journey far from dull. Each of us will end our earthly journey but the truth will remain. Experiences and emotions are temporary; truth is eternal.



Robert Smith

**CHRISTIAN FOOD MISSION, INC.**  
**Statement of Faith**

1. The Bible, containing the Old and New Testaments, was written by the inspiration of God and is His infallible Word. Scripture alone is the ultimate authority for faith and practice. (Proverbs 22:19-21; Luke 1:3-4; Romans 15:4; Matthew 4:4,7,10; Isaiah 8:19-20; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; Luke 16:29, 31; Revelation 22:18-19; Luke 24:27, 44; 2 Peter 1:21; Matthew 5:18)
2. There is only one God who has existed form all of eternity in three persons - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory. God is limited by nothing other than His own nature and character. (Deuteronomy 5:4; I Corinthians 8:4, 6; Psalm 90:2; I Timothy 1:17; I John 5:7; Matthew 3:16-17; Matthew 28:19; 2 Corinthians 13:14; John 1:14, 18; John 15:26; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:11; Job 11:7-9; Job 26:13; James 1:13,17; Malachi 3:6; I Kings 8:27; Jeremiah 23:23-24; Romans 11:33-34; Psalm 145:17; I John 1:5)
3. Jesus Christ, born of a virgin, was God in human flesh, both fully God and fully man. Jesus lived a sinless life, performed miracles, suffered death on a cross, was bodily resurrected, and ascended to the right hand of the Father. (Luke 1:27, 31, 35; Colossians 2:9; Romans 9:5; I Peter 3:18; I Timothy 3:16; Romans 1:3-4; Hebrews 7:26; John 1:14; Acts 10:38; John 2:11, 22-23; John 11:43-45; John 20:30-31; Acts 8:6; Matthew 4:23-24; Matthew 27: 35, 50; Mark 15:25, 37; I Corinthians 15:3-5; Matthew 28:5-6; Mark 16:6, 19; Romans 5:6)
4. Man is by nature and choice sinful and unable to restore himself to favor with God. All stand condemned before God and are in need of salvation - forgiveness for sin. (Romans 5:12; Romans 15:16-19; I Corinthians 15:21-22; Ephesians 2:1; Jeremiah 17:9; Romans 3:10-18; Psalm 51:5; Ephesians 2:3; Romans 6:23; Galatians 3:10; Lamentations 3:29; Matthew 25:41; 2 Thessalonians 1:9)
5. Salvation is through God's grace and accomplished only in Christ's work of substitutionary atonement by His death on the cross. Justification before a holy God is attained by faith alone, following the convicting work of the Holy Spirit, and is not the result of individual merit or personal works. (Romans 5:19; Hebrews 9:14, 16; Ephesians 5:2; Romans 3:25-26; John 15:13, 15; John 3:16; John 1:12; Romans 3:28; Romans 5:1; Acts 10:44; Galatians 2:16; Philippians 3:9; Acts 13:38-39; Ephesians 2:7-8; Titus 3:4-7; I John 2:1; Ezekiel 36:26-27; 2 Thessalonians 2:13; 2 Corinthians 3:3, 6; Romans 8:23; Isaiah 64:6)
6. Good works are the fruit of saving faith and an evidence of true justification before God. Faith in Christ is a living faith which enable us, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to live a godly life, evangelize the lost, and perform good deeds for our Lord. (Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 6:18, 22; James 1:14-22; 2 Peter 1:5-10; Galatians 5:22-23; Hebrews 13:20-21; Hebrews 6:10; Matthew 25:41-45; Matthew 23:3; Matthew 5:48; James 1:27; Romans 6:6-7; Galatians 5:24; Romans 8:13; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Matthew 28:18-20; Colossians 1:21-22; Luke 24:46-49; Matthew 10:18-20)

By my signature below, I acknowledge my agreement with the above six statements.

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NAME

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DATE

[This resolution was adopted by the Board of Directors at the regular monthly meeting of September 21, 1995. It is required of a new Board member to read and sign this statement. It is required of a new church wishing to participate in the Pantry to have a representative of the congregation to sign the statement (and be approved by the Board). It is required of a perspective volunteer, wishing to become involved on a regular basis, to read and sign the statement (and be interviewed by at least one of the Coordinators).]

