

A MILLION DOLLAR IDEA

from God



NEWSLETTER

June, 2012

www.christianfoodmission.org

E-mail: widowsinneed@comcast.net

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. Support of select local and foreign missionaries.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

The following people are presently voluntarily serving on our Board:

Mr. Garland Miles (President)

Dr. Cary Kimbrell (V. President)

Mr. David Dill (Treasurer)

Mrs. Gail Hilbun (Secretary)

Mr. Al Moore

Mr. John Ripley

Mr. Greg Baldwin

Mrs. Carolyn Holifield

Mr. Steven Morgan

FULL-TIME STAFF:

Greg Brown

Clark Lowery

Robert Smith

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,

Several people have requested/suggested I write a newsletter for those interested in the work of the Christian Food Mission. It has been two-and-a-half years since I mailed a newsletter. Why? I've had difficulty with my eyesight and do not read or write nearly as much as I did in the past. Also, we decided to begin sending e-mails as a means of communicating with our supporters and volunteers. E-mails require no postage, printing costs, envelopes, and folding. Here's what I've discovered.

It's easy to get mailing addresses off checks we receive. It's also fairly easy to compile a data base of addresses for churches, organizations, and businesses in a few days. An e-mail address book is more of a challenge. E-mails are not on checks, many people (especially older folks) do not have e-mail accounts, and some do not check them very often. Also, printed material can be distributed in different places. Many people still prefer to read print on paper rather than scanning a computer screen.

We are definitely moving away from traditional mailbox mail, but we are not all the way there yet. Therefore, here is your personal "hard copy" newsletter.

Getting Wisdom In Grief, Suffering, And Sickness

Words and experiences, even unpleasant ones, are used to give us wisdom and assist us in our personal growth. A quote cited by a friend gave me a unique insight into prayer: "Work yourself to death and pray yourself alive again." We are to pray consistently and work constantly. A dear friend died suddenly and unexpectedly in early December. At the Biloxi Military Cemetery the service began with a flag ceremony and ended with the trumpeting of taps. The power of ceremony was impressive. My wife, Beth, was hospitalized in early February and began chemotherapy for cancer that same week; she has suffered much pain from the side effects of treatments. As I've looked on, I've been instructed on how the godly are to handle suffering.

Another friend who became very sick and suffered long and nearly died, because she refused for a long time to get medical help from doctors and hospitals, wanted to "live by faith." The unbearable pain drove her to have surgery in the hospital which she characterized negatively as "goin' down to Egypt." I received instruction from this whole matter. The problem with this view is that God is being limited. God does not always work the same and He heals as He chooses. He may heal miraculously in stunning fashion; He may heal quietly without fanfare; He may choose to use doctors and medicine. To believe otherwise is to limit God and put Him in a box. God is big and works as he chooses. This is consistent with Scripture.

Wisdom is gained by testing words and experiences through reading Scripture and praying.

#1 Cramped Quarters On Pearl Harbor Day

The Lord began awakening me to an idea in December. Here's what happened.

Larkin Simpson, with the Economic Development Authority of Jones County, contacted me about scheduling this year's class of Leadership Jones County for a visit. The date selected, December 7th, was one in which I could not be available. [I had been a participant in the program and graduated in 1992. That year, and for a couple of years thereafter, LJC visited the Mission as part of their monthly slate of programs. Our inclusion had faded out, and now, after a long silence, I was contacted.]

I mentioned this to Bro. Greg. He decided to host the class and enlisted our little staff (Bro. Clark and Sis. Shirley) and a couple of volunteers to help. [Greg graduated from LJC in 2000.] The 20 participants were coming to observe our operation, hear a short presentation, and then leave to deliver meals into two areas of the city. Following the deliveries they would return for lunch, consisting of the same foods they delivered, and discuss their experience.

This was accomplished in my absence. My hesitancy and the difficulty in carrying this out is found in the fact that our building is not adequate to receive such a group. With our added regular volunteers we are cramped for space and do not have a single room big enough to comfortably seat 20 people for a meal. Nevertheless, it was done, and considering the difficulty, it went well.

That same morning, I attended a school program where I “happened” to meet Kory Duncan in the auditorium. He discussed bringing his church youth group over again for a morning of service. I reminded him that we could not manage the entire group at once. He would have to bring a portion of his teenagers or come on two separate days. Again, one of our limiting factors was having adequate space. The youth group did not come during Christmas break but took another project instead.

Proving Who We Are To Get Money

I returned a call from Ann Tucker at Northeast Jones High School. It has been her practice to call in December with a check for CFM from the Jr. Beta Club. This year was different. She informed me of a new policy requiring organizations to fill out a form W-9 before money can be released. I picked up the little form from the office and filled it out, supplying our employer identification number and verifying our non-profit, tax-exempt status. On December 9th, after the form had been received by the office, my picture was taken with the officers of the club receiving a check for \$500. The picture appeared in the newspaper a little later.

Not long after this I was contacted by Ryan Griffin of the “Impact” paper about a monetary contribution. This was my first time to be contacted by this business. They also required a W-9 before a check could be released. A copy of the little form was e-mailed to me. I promptly filled it out and dropped it off at their offices. Two days later, on December 16th, a check for \$400 came in the mail.

This had never happened before. I had never heard of or seen a form W-9 until being contacted by the school!

#2 Testing The Waters Before Jumping And Diving

When 2011 came to a close, I was still thinking about the events of December 7 (it was also my dear wife’s birthday). I prayed and thought and came to a conclusion. At the January 19th Board of Directors’ meeting I voiced what had been impressed on my mind. I took the plunge and proposed the idea of constructing a new building at another location to allow us to reach our potential.

Of course, questions were asked I could not answer at this early stage of the process. I was given consideration by the others, although I had caught the group completely off guard. I was told to pursue the idea and see where it led me. If something developed, it was recommended that I make a presentation at the upcoming Annual Meeting in April.

From that meeting I left wondering how to proceed.

Let’s Have A Cup Of Coffee With That Bread

The weekend had come and gone. On Monday morning, January 23rd, I was surveying our food. We had recently gotten a large donation of 60 cases of canned goods in gallon cans. I desired cranberry sauce for a turkey and dressing meal but we had very little. Two hours later we received an unusual donation of 60 small cans of cranberry sauce from a completely different source! No request had been made to any person about this. He notices things like that and loves to give His children good gifts.

On January 30th, I noted another out-of-the-ordinary donation. We unexpectedly received 32, 14-oz. gold packets of coffee. It was perfect for our big percolator.

[On May 22nd we received fresh loaves of bread, after a call from a local grocery store asking if we could use “some bread.” To our surprise a bread truck backed up to our door and began rolling off stacks of flats. The plastic bags each had a single tiny pinhole and was rejected by the store because of this. We received a total of 719 loaves of perfectly good bread! This was due to a contact Bro. Clark had made weeks ago with the bread distributor.]

#3 Clearly Seeing The Vision In Color

I called Ronnie Clark at Clark Engineering and told him of my building proposal. My only reason for contacting him was to get his advice on how to proceed. To my mild surprise, he was immediately very interested in this plan. He asked me to come to his office the following day so we could discuss this further.

On the afternoon of January 26th I was seated in the conference room. I was introduced to Michael McKinnon, an architect on staff, and we discussed the plausibility of constructing a building. Before I left the room, Michael had been assigned the project and we were underway - just like that!

Over the next few weeks Michael devoted great amounts of his busy world to this project. He threw himself into it, working sometimes at night and on weekends. I met with him on a number of afternoons over the next two months. First, a floor plan was laid out and altered until it was deemed what we needed. Michael took me through a succession of building shapes which papered a wall with images on big white sheets; photographs covered another wall of buildings in the area we were considering for a construction site in order to design something compatible; computer models were considered with views from different perspectives.

On the day of our March 15th Board meeting I picked up a fresh copy of the proposed building on foam board. On this white board was a colorful depiction of the building exterior, cut-aways through the interior, and a detailed floor plan. It was professional and impressive. Needless to say, those in attendance, including myself, were amazed by the progress that had been made conceptualizing the idea I'd voiced only two months earlier! I did not discount prayer and the reality of Divine guidance.

Adding To Our List Of Widows

Our regular activities were never interrupted by attention to the building project. I sat in the presence of one of His widows. I met with the elderly lady in her house for an interview for meals. Her noticeable ailment with which she struggles is severe difficulty breathing and was winded, as if from much exertion, as she sat deep in her chair. I felt, strangely enough, the same atmosphere of peace and calm I'd experienced while in the presence of other such godly widows. Mrs. M said flatly of her Lord: “If it weren't for Him, I wouldn't be here. He knows everything, even my thoughts. We are to love one another but I get frustrated with some people and I know it's wrong...” She is constantly examining her life and seeking to please God. We prayed. She thanked me with appreciation for the literature I'd offered her to read. The elderly, sick lady began receiving meals in February.

#4 Unveiling The Future (Not The End Of Time)

One month later, April 19th, was the planned Annual Meeting to be held at the Laurel Train Depot. The details of this meeting were time consuming because it was necessary to address several matters to internally maintain the organizational structure, in accordance with our by-laws. While all of this was taking shape, Michael was busy again.

He constructed a scale wooden model of the building and had it ready for display at the Annual Meeting. [Later, David Buck made a plastic “dome” to cover the model and protect it.] I made a presentation before those in attendance entitled simply “An Exciting Vision For The Future.” This publicly unveiled the proposed

building for the first time. WDAM-TV sent a cameraman to cover the meeting; a spot was run about the proposed “expansion” of the Christian Food Mission on the 10 o’clock news that same evening.

This Project Has God’s Fingerprints All Over It

It dawned on me that I had become extremely busy with the initial planning of this building project at a critical time in my personal life. I had voiced my proposal on January 19th to my Board of Directors and subsequently met at Clark Engineering to simply seek counsel. I did not even know there was an architect on staff and I did not ask them to actually do anything. The project took on a life of it’s own, suddenly, and I was caught up in it for weeks before I knew what had happened.

On the afternoon of February 3rd I was very encouraged by a meeting I had with Michael. As I was leaving, I met Ronnie Clark coming out of the office of another man. He turned to the other man and began happily telling him of the project on which Michael was working. He added, to my amazement, “I believe this is why the Lord has kept me alive - for this project. We want to help Robert.”

My wife became sick and was hospitalized soon thereafter. Shortly following her hospital stay she began taking chemotherapy. The building project was used of God to keep me busy and help divert my mind from habitually dwelling on the plight of my wife. I even shared at a staff meeting, “I believe God has given me this project.” Is there any doubt that it will be completed?

#5 I Couldn’t Make It In The Real Estate Business

A challenge that presented itself early on was securing a location as a building site. I puzzled over this while taking a couple of long walks and praying. I did not want to ask anyone for a piece of land outright and we had no money to buy property. How could this be solved? A plan was impressed upon me. Why not make a proposal to a church that owns unused property to allow the Christian Food Mission to build on it? To accomplish this both parties would enter into an agreement whereby the Mission would pay the church \$1 a year for 75 years to occupy the land and the church would retain ownership of the property. If the Mission was ever dissolved in the future, the property and improvements would immediately become the possession of the church. This would require us to buy no land and no one would have to give us land. This solved the problem. Also, as a 501 (c) 3 corporation we are required to declare where our assets will go if the organization is ever closed. It seemed to me to be a sound plan so I decided to test it.

Privately I discussed this project and plan with a few people to get their impression. Helpful suggestions were made and I began to gather a small audience. Rena Register of the Jones County Baptist Association suggested I write a brochure explaining the project to generate interest. [A copy of that brochure is enclosed.] Steven Morgan, a volunteer and member of Westminster Presbyterian Church, was very interested and made some contacts. He informed me of property owned by the church on 12th Street near Wansley Road, and this was quietly discussed as a potential site under the \$1 per year plan. After some investigation, this seemed to be a suitable building site and an excellent location.

On May 14th I made a presentation to the officers (elders) at Westminster to seek their approval. I left the meeting to allow them to discuss this matter among themselves. The next morning I was called with the news that they wished to express their support of the project and gave their approval to allow us to plan construction of the building on this site.

#6 A One Million Dollar Idea From God

We know what we want to build. We know where we want to build it. We have a wooden model and a colorful foam board of the 8400 sq. ft. building in our entrance room. We have secured two acres of property as

the future building site. To accomplish this will not only strengthen our work, but help insure its perpetuation.

We are praying and calling others to pray for the necessary money - no less than one million dollars!

Volunteer John Thibodeau handed me a folded bill while I was on the telephone one morning. He said, "This is for you." I unfolded and studied the fake \$1,000,000 bill, which was well patterned after real currency. He caused me to chuckle over his antics.

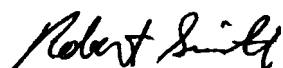
Concerning this building project, this is no lark. This is no dream; this is no scheme. It is a big project which will require us to trust God in a big way. We seek only His glory in this endeavor, not only in seeing the project completed, but also in the process as we proceed toward it's conclusion.

He has only begun a good work.

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS WE WILL HAVE A POWER POINT PRESENTATION READY TO BE SHOWN TO INTERESTED GROUPS.

BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS OUR WEB SITE WILL HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY UPDATED AND THIS NEWSLETTER POSTED ON IT.

In love, in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robert Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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.

NAME

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).]