

MAY 2018

# GATEWAY

## RESCUE MISSION



**WE MISS YOU  
ELMER...**

### OUR MISSION

To offer life changing hope through the Gospel of Jesus Christ to homeless men, women, and children through programs to deliver food, shelter, counseling and discipleship

# FROM THE DIRECTOR

REX BAKER



“Some wish to live  
within the sound of  
church or chapel  
bell. I wish to run a  
rescue shop within a  
yard of hell.”

—C.T. Studd

Elmer McGee was what we at Gateway Rescue Mission call a repeater. His first tour through our New Life Program came back in the early 1990s. He came through Gateway many times after that. Elmer taught Bible classes, did carpentry work, painted walls, even replaced the light fixtures in my office about ten years ago.

When I was a rookie Program Coordinator in 1999, Elmer served on staff as my dorm monitor. He was the best dorm monitor I ever had, playing the tough cop to my good cop role with the guys. He meant business. But one Monday morning Elmer abruptly told me he was leaving. I asked why and he said “I messed up this weekend and I’m not going to hang around and drag the mission down.” Out the door Elmer walked.

Elmer returned to Gateway numerous times over the years. He was a good man with a strong work ethic. He knew Jesus Christ as his personal Savior. Yet, the drugs and alcohol had a hold on him, as did those cursed cigarettes.

When Elmer came back to Gateway a few years ago, he declared he was home for good. Elmer finally attained victory over the drinking and drugging that had alluded him for much of his life. His soul appeared settled and free of anger.

Then came the diagnosis of lung cancer. Elmer fought hard. He underwent years of chemotherapy and radiation treatment. The cancer was too near his throat for surgery. On any given morning, Elmer might hang around after chapel and ask for prayer. He had good days and bad days; silent days and talkative days.

Huey Howerton, our chief cook and bottlewasher, drove Elmer to UMC so many times he lost count. Director of Ministries Michael Sweet and Program Director Forea Ford prayed for Elmer’s healing so many times we lost count.

Through it all, Elmer ministered to the men in our New Life Program. He was part drill sergeant, part Bible teacher. Elmer faithfully tithed on his disability check to Gateway Rescue Mission. Oh, how I wanted Elmer to beat the cancer, for God to heal him because we desperately need a man of his character and personality to work with our guys.

Earlier this year Elmer was placed in outpatient hospice while continuing to live at Gateway. Then one day they moved Elmer to permanent hospice. Gateway staff members visited Elmer at various times and consistently prayed for his healing. One particular day, I felt impressed to pray for Elmer’s divine healing. So, Brother Sweet, Elder Ford (as we affectionately call them) and I went to see Elmer and prayed for God to heal him.

Elmer gave us all a piece of fruit that day. I received an orange and ate it that following weekend. We laid hands on Elmer that day and prayed fervently for his healing, quoting scripture and claiming the power of God to heal.

Elmer died the following week. It’s not my place to question why God sometimes heals and other times does not. But I know this. While Elmer had his weaknesses, he kept his right mind and stayed strong in his witness for Jesus right up until the moment God called Elmer home.

Today Elmer McGee has no cancer. He does not struggle with drugs and alcohol. His body isn’t skin and bones from cancer treatments. No more staying up all night with coughing fits. He is whole. Elmer had some regrets, but made peace with his Maker in the end.

Elmer’s life also serves as an ode to the repeaters; those guys who in the world’s eyes bounce in and out of Christian rehabilitation programs and struggle to get it right. Yet in God’s eyes, Elmer’s repeating sins, just like our repeating sins, were atoned for by Jesus Christ at Calvary. Elmer stands as an example that we should never give up on the repeaters because God doesn’t.

Elmer, we miss you. You have a special place in our hearts at Gateway Rescue Mission, but most of all you have a special place in the heart of Jesus Christ, your Lord and Savior.

Rex Baker  
Executive Director  
Gateway Rescue Mission



## WE MISS YOU ELMER...



I've been at Gateway Rescue Mission 20 years. Sometimes I wonder whether I'm good enough. I question whether my life's body of work at Gateway Rescue Mission counts. After all, we can always do more, do better. We cook more meals, preach more chapel services.

As the old Bob Seger song goes, "twenty years now, where'd they go; twenty years, I don't know; sit and I wonder sometimes where they've gone." The other day I was scrolling through some pictures. Came across one of Michael Sweet praying for Elmer. Came across another of Elmer working in a Gateway garden. I've still got a bottle of Elmer's pepper sauce.



It dawned on me while looking at these pictures that God's work is not always about numbers. It's about loving people. Elmer had a special place in my heart. I've got a team of staff members who I have grown to love. We've been through some stuff together.

Allow me to brag. I'd put our staff against any other staff of comparable size and mission scope. In fact, I know some bigger missions that don't have some of the expertise of our staff. That's not because of me. It's because the Lord knew I needed lots of help, so He sent it!

I believe Elmer would have taken a bullet for me. He's one of the few people who was at Gateway when I started. His death inspires me to do more, to reach out to the other Elmers out there, but instead of giving them a handout, challenging them to join forces in the fight to show we are Christians by our love. —Rex Baker

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### GATEWAY RESCUE MISSION

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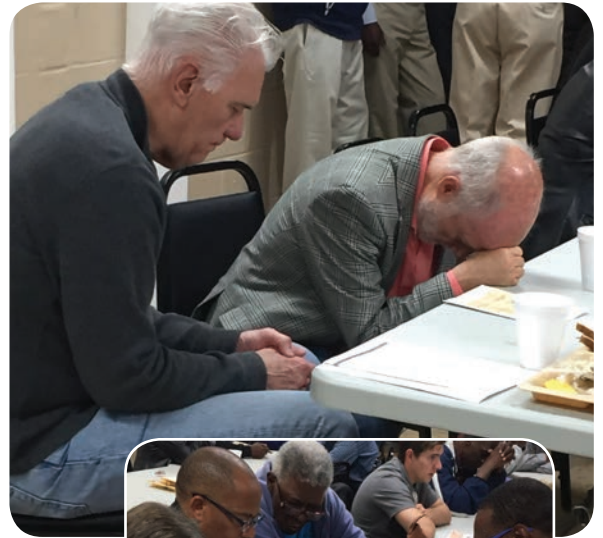
**G**ateway Rescue Mission recently hosted a Mission Mississippi prayer breakfast. We love it when these good folks drop by. We'll have a crew of Mission Mississippi faithful who will break bread with those in our programs.

Then we break into teams of three or four for a time of prayer. If you've never attended a Mission Mississippi prayer breakfast, I'd recommend you attend one if your schedule allows. The Mission Mississippi crowd is good people.

Our folks always enjoy their company. And we believe the Mission Mississippi delegation finds a freshness and openness when praying with residents at a rescue mission.

Speaking of breaking bread, we broke 200 at a lunch service recently. Our lunch numbers are increasing at a surprising pace. Not that long ago 100 was a large crowd. We've effectively doubled our lunch numbers in the last couple of years and the numbers continue to climb monthly.

*Thank you for your continued prayers and support. We also pray for donor prayer request during our Wednesday staff meetings, so if any of you would like prayer or would like to help us set up an intercessory prayer ministry, we'd like to talk with you!*



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**YES! I will help Gateway Rescue Mission care for the homeless and hurting people of our community!**

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MAY 2018

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