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
To paraphrase King Solomon, there’s a time to preach and a time to vent. In this letter, I wish to vent about two subjects I see doing harm. One is the movement to legalize recreational marijuana. The other is the state-sponsored lottery. Gateway Rescue Mission is impacted by both, hence my addressing these two particular issues.

I noticed our thrift store sales taking an unexpected dip recently. Upon checking around, I heard stories of small businesses and restaurants experiencing a similar decrease in business. The culprit appears to be the Mississippi lottery, which kicked in late last year.

A lottery is fool’s gold that glitters with promises of wealth. In reality, it’s a regressive tax on poor people that sucks millions out of the local economy and hurts small businesses. Wealthy people do not buy lottery tickets. All those millions the politicians claim the lottery provides for needed state services come from the pockets of poor people buying hope in the form of a scratch-off ticket. Those dollars mean fewer customers for beauty salons, restaurants, neighborhood shops, thrift stores, and even church coffers.

I remember as a young reporter how casino gambling was sold as a cure-all for state budget woes. The money came rolling in, infrastructure and jobs sprang up and life in Mississippi was grand. Until it wasn’t. Competition from nearby states led to the closing of several casinos and falling revenues. Now, we can’t afford prison upkeep. Likewise, the lottery will suck money out of local communities and a few years from now the state of Mississippi will still be broke.

Now, for my second vent. Folks, I’ve seen some stupid moves in my day and legalizing recreational marijuana is one of them. I am not addressing the issue of medical marijuana, at least not yet. (A medical marijuana initiative is underway in Mississippi.) I’m talking about legalizing marijuana for the distinct purpose of getting high, as in Colorado and California.

At Gateway Rescue Mission, we deal daily with the destruction caused by marijuana. Studies show that “pot psychosis” is real, meaning marijuana use can cause brain damage. Marijuana is a gateway drug that too often opens the door to even more destructive drug use.

Marijuana was illegal for a reason. It’s bad for you in too many ways to detail here. However, the push to legalize “weed” is leading to the mistaken belief that it’s a relatively harmless drug. Come to Gateway and we’ll introduce you to people whose brains have been fried by marijuana. It’s ironic that the rush to legalize pot coincides with the crack down on opioids.

I’m hearing from friends in Colorado how people who would have never used cannabis when it was illegal are now getting hooked on the stuff. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention says THC-laced vaping has led to at least 12 deaths in the United States. Should we be surprised with these outcomes when common sense is thrown to the wind?

The legend of Pandora’s Box describes situations in which something that seems like a good idea at the time unleashes unexpected negative consequences. I’m not judging those who see no harm in lotteries or think legalized marijuana is an expression of modern enlightenment. I am stating that in my belief, both are already bringing negative consequences.

Those of us who minister at Gateway Rescue Mission are far from perfect. However, we trust in a God who is perfect in all ways. God doesn’t play the lottery. He doesn’t roll the dice and hope things turn out for the best. The Apostle Paul writes “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.” So we choose to place our trust in Him, God Almighty.

Rex Baker
Executive Director
Gateway Rescue Mission

Visit gatewaymission.org for more information on how you can help someone today.
Sometimes a picture speaks louder than words. It tells a story that touches the human heart. This picture shows Darren, one of our New Life Program residents, guiding a blind man from our kitchen to the shelter. This moment in time, captured by the camera of our own Norman Snow, tells a story of the human heart.

People come to Gateway Rescue Mission in need. God touches their heart while here. Then He uses those same people to reach out in kindness to someone else less fortunate. We have the privilege of watching this happen. We also face the realization that this miracle of a changed life comes through Jesus Christ rather than through the work of our own hands.

Look again at the picture. Darren represents all who give to support our ministry or volunteer at Gateway to help others. This is a collective effort larger than any one person. God’s love extends from the height of heaven to touch the homeless on the streets of Jackson.

*Thanks be unto God, for His indescribable gift — 2 Corinthians 9:15*
Things are popping these days in the Gateway Rescue Mission kitchen. We continue to feed lots of hungry people and volunteers file in daily to serve food seasoned with love and care.

We want to give a big Gateway Shout-Out to a group of students from Simpson Academy. These young scholars recently dropped by with a donation of blankets, complete with notes written from the students to the blanket recipients. Their smiles did a lot to brighten our day!!

We wish to thank all who donate blankets, food, care packages and the like for those who come to Gateway Rescue Mission. You provide a lifeline that says someone cares. Life on the streets and in homeless shelters can be lonely. But God’s divine spark still shines through the love of all who give and share through Gateway Rescue Mission.

Gateway Needs

Editor’s Note: Gateway sincerely appreciates the outpouring of support over the last year to this section of our newsletter. It warms our hearts to see donations of food, clothes, notebooks, journals, hygiene supplies, etc. come in. These donations go straight to the front lines to help the people who need them. If we ask for some things on a regular basis, it’s because they are regularly needed items.

• Men’s underwear and t-shirts. This includes sizes from large to XXX Large. We often get people with large-sized clothing needs.

• Copies of devotional books such as My Utmost for His Highest by Oswald Chambers. We have some folks who take to reading when they come through our program.

• Healthy snack items, such as peanuts, raisins and sunflower seeds, preferably shelled. We’ll also accept other items such as Vienna sausages and potted meat. Items like these work well in care packages.

• Personal hygiene supplies. This is a standing, monthly need that never goes away. Why? Because we require everyone to take a shower daily at Gateway Rescue Mission, whether they need to or not. Soap, deodorant, shampoo, toothpaste, toothbrushes, etc., get some serious use around here.

• Prayer: Prayer changes things and the biggest need at Gateway Rescue Mission is for those who come here to have a life-changing encounter with God. So lift up those who visit our kitchen and shelter in your prayers that they may have life, and have it abundantly.

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