

AUGUST 2017

TRANSFORMED BY THE LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL

PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION
WHERE LIVES ARE CHANGED FOREVER

"For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." — 1 Corinthians 1:17-18.

PGMNews

PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION.
TRANSFORMING LIVES WITH THE
GOSPEL OF CHRIST SINCE 1877

MEET DANIEL WOOLMAN

Besides writing for the PGM News, Daniel is Editor of the PGM TV Program, including filming and editing. He also helps with the social media.



ARTICLE BY DANIEL WOOLMAN

NEXT MONTH we are coming up to our 140th year anniversary here at Pacific Garden Mission and while the same sin still exists in the world today as it did 140 years ago the same soul-saving Gospel Message still exists too. I recently came across the verse above from 1 Corinthians during a devotional and was reminded of something that, especially after working at the mission for a period of time, one can start to take for granted. That is the importance and the ever-growing rarity of a place that preaches the simple Gospel truth daily to those most in need of it. Since it can become easy to get caught up in the daily logistics of such a large operation like PGM I sometimes have to step back from the daily routine and give thanks for what the mission was built for and that is to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Before I was saved the preaching of the cross did seem foolish. How could something so simple as what the Gospel Message declares be so powerful? I had spent years battling depression and addiction, trying everything the world had to offer

as the solution to the emptiness I felt inside my heart. I went on a quest seeking deliverance and freedom from the dark cloud that seemed to engulf my soul.

And what were the “world’s” solutions to my dilemma? A menu of antidepressant medications, drug rehabs, psychologists, and psychiatrists. All trying to apply a band-aid on a hemorrhaging wound that was my heart. Of all the solutions the “world” had, I saw one single commonality, there was no spiritual solution. Take the medicines to fix the chemical imbalances, talk to the counselor to resolve past issues, analyze your thoughts to avoid negative thinking. All of these things may have helped for a little while but it was not enough. It didn’t get to the root of the problem and that was spiritual emptiness.

In the midst of all of this, I found my own solution to numbing the pain I felt and it was drugs. What started as experimentation with alcohol and marijuana led to prescription pain-killers and then too quickly to heroin. As the old saying goes, the same problems I had when I started using were still there and then there were the new ones too. Drug addiction quickly escalated the depression and the thought of suicide became an almost daily reality. Homelessness didn’t take long to follow either. I lost the little self-worth I had left and the trust and respect from my loved ones.

Seeking relief, I focused on spiritual solutions. I tried meditating and other religions but found that these all relied on my own power. If I did this then I could be at peace. If I thought this then I could be free. They were all relying on myself and that was where the problem seemed to be in the first place. I didn’t have

the power on my own, as much as I wanted to, to overcome my feelings of emptiness and the addictions I struggled with.

I had been introduced to Jesus and the Word of God from an old war veteran that would come into the place I worked and would share the Gospel with me patiently each day. For over a year he would share with me little by little and even though on the outside it may have appeared that nothing was changing some seed was being planted and starting to take root. What seemed to be the biggest problem though is I didn’t have a place to let the root of my faith safely grow and be nurtured. I was still inundated by my circumstances around me and the pressures of homelessness and addiction were still present.

This is where the importance of Pacific Garden Mission comes in. This is also a good time to mention that as I have been at the mission the last three years, I have also had the privilege to listen to and record hundreds of people’s testimonies. I mention this to point out that in all of these other testimonies other than my own I have come to notice recurring patterns. People would try any means imaginable to overcome their problems. They would try medications, counseling, meetings, rehabs, and every other treatment under the sun. Like me, they did what the world told them to do to become whole again and it didn’t work. What the world told them to do just wasn’t enough for them to break their bonds.

Thomas was a man that came here broken after the death of his daughter. We recently interviewed him and his life story, like many of the others, wasn’t transformed until he heard the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ.

Left: Daniel outside relaxing with his father and brother

Right: Daniel working on the filming of another PGM TV broadcast



THOMAS GENTRY



“MY NAME is Thomas Gentry. I am 56 years old. My father died when I was six years old and being of African American

and Native American descent, I always had this feeling growing up that no one understood what a “half-breed” experiences. Because of this I became very secretive and introverted. When I was young I learned some things about drugs and sex that defined my life up until I joined the “New Life” Program at PGM. My first experiences with alcohol were because of my mother’s alcohol addiction. My mother drank about a fifth of scotch a day. We would call her a functional alcoholic today but this gave me the false impression that I could operate in my own addictions.

My life has been filled with bad experiences and lifelong relationship problems. Extreme violence mixed with what I have come to believe were acts of contrition marked the dispensations of my life. I was so selfish and self-driven that I was convinced if I did good works and confessed my sins that I would be blessed and in my view, I was. I received awards and trophies and was highly respected in my career field. Despite this it seemed like nothing could satisfy my desire for more nor could my successes quench the feeling that there had to be more.

One night, while praying, the feeling came over me that I had to correct certain behaviors in my life. I was living with a woman out of wedlock, I was fornicating, and using drugs. I also felt that I needed to establish a relationship with my grandchildren. I informed the woman I was living with that I was wanting to try to get back with my wife. She didn’t like that and I lost the place where I lived. God always prepares a way. I found myself in the Midwest and came to Pacific Garden

Mission deciding to stay for just one night.

While I was at the mission I began to realize that I didn’t feel like I stood out like I had felt in other periods of my life because of my mixed race. There was no black or white, no rich or poor. There was only saved and not saved. Race and background were secondary what was important is whether you accepted Christ into your heart.

At the mission, I received a level of peace and contentment that no priest or pastor could teach. During the first week, I learned that the purpose of Pacific Garden Mission was to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ. I had been truly lost! I made a choice to trust God and made a 60-day commitment to the New Life Program. I believed I could get an understanding of what they had to offer in that period of time. I attended classes every day. The more I was exposed to the Gospel and God’s word the more I began to see my true nature and how lost I was. Looking back, I saw that God’s mercy has abounded in my life.

I have so much to be thankful for. Now my desire is to be what God has determined me to be. Whatever that may be, I know that I will be equipped. I have decided to finish the full year in the New Life Program. More importantly, now my commitment in serving with the compassion of Christ and ministering with the transforming of the Gospel is a lifelong one.

I thank God for the counselors who have counseled me here at PGM. I have come to realize that for me to fulfill my desire I will need a multitude of counselors. While being at Pacific Garden Mission I have learned that the Word of God is more than just a handbook about how to be a better person. The Word of God is something to be honored. Through the gospel, I can have a closer relationship with both the Creator and His creations.”



Thomas is on the 3rd Floor Dorm Crew helping others

Thomas has now been here for almost a year and is growing in his faith.

For all of us including myself it wasn’t until we heard the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ and surrendered our will to Him that last-

ing change actually occurred. The Gospel, the thing which to the world made the least amount of sense actually is the thing that made the complete transformation within us. While the seed had been planted in me

before it really didn't have a chance to grow until I came to PGM. There was a consistent daily routine of classes, workplace ministry, and fellowship among fellow brothers in Christ. The advice and mentors of pastors and counselors also helped to nurture the young seedling of faith that was in me.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth;" —Romans 1:16a

The number of places in the United States where the Gospel message is openly preached is ever declining. Many of the ones that still do have slowly begun to take it from the main priority to putting it on the back burner as a secondary goal. Pacific Garden Mission stands out to me because they have consistently had one goal and one goal only. It is this reason that I am growing daily in my faith and that I am free of my addictions and depression.

To be honest, to my analytical mind, the simplicity of the Gospel Message still does not seem to make sense but to my heart, which once held an empty void but is now filled with something that nothing can take away, I know that it is the Gospel Message that led me to Christ and Him alone that keeps me within his arms.

It is inspiring to recognize that we as a rescue mission get 95% of our funding from faithful readers and donors like you. People that recognize the power of the Gospel Message and want to contribute not only to feed the hungry and shelter the homeless but to save their souls.

Being saved for over three years now and

being clean I am one of the many souls that have been saved here and am living a completely new and better life in Jesus Christ. The consequences of my past are still sometimes present today and while I can't erase my past I can be free from it in my heart and press forward thinking of the verse Paul said: "Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." Philippians 3:13-14.

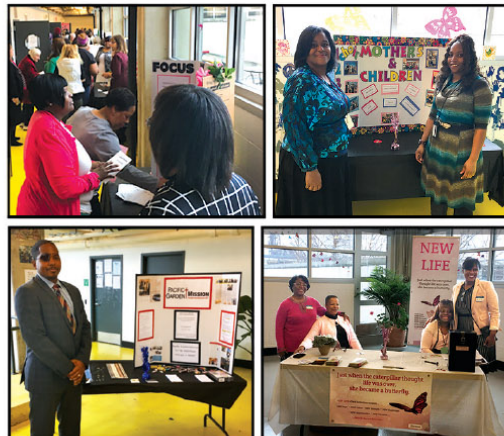
With Christ, the past doesn't have the death hold it once did on me. I can be, and am, free to be a new creation. To step back from myself and see that every day hundreds of people have the same opportunity to receive this freedom through the Gospel Message preached at PGM I can't help but become inspired and encouraged at what God is doing here. More amazingly is that this whole place is almost completely sustained by the faithful donations of those that believe in what the mission does. And yes, while we do feed the hungry, shelter the homeless, and counsel the grieving we still keep the same priority we had 140 years ago when our doors first opened and without shame and without restriction, share the simple Gospel Message trying to save the lost. Thank You to those who have helped us and continue to do so. My story is just one of the thousands that have been helped.

"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." —2 Corinthians 5:17

PGM OPEN HOUSE INVITATION!

On Saturday, September 9, 2017 we are having an open house here at Pacific Garden Mission. We are celebrating our 140th anniversary at America's oldest continuously operating Gospel rescue mission. You will be able to meet our entire staff behind the programs of transformation and those in our programs. We are offering tours to allow people to see what God is doing through His Son, Jesus Christ in the ministries of Pacific Garden Mission. Come see what God is doing in Jesus Christ our Lord. For more information please call 312-492-9410.

OPEN HOUSE HOURS: 10 am-4 pm Tours: 11 am, 12:30 & 2:30 pm
President's Update: 2:00 pm Unshackled! Live Production: 4:30 pm
Dinner: 5:30 pm Gospel Service: 6:30 pm





A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

Complex Problems Simple Solution

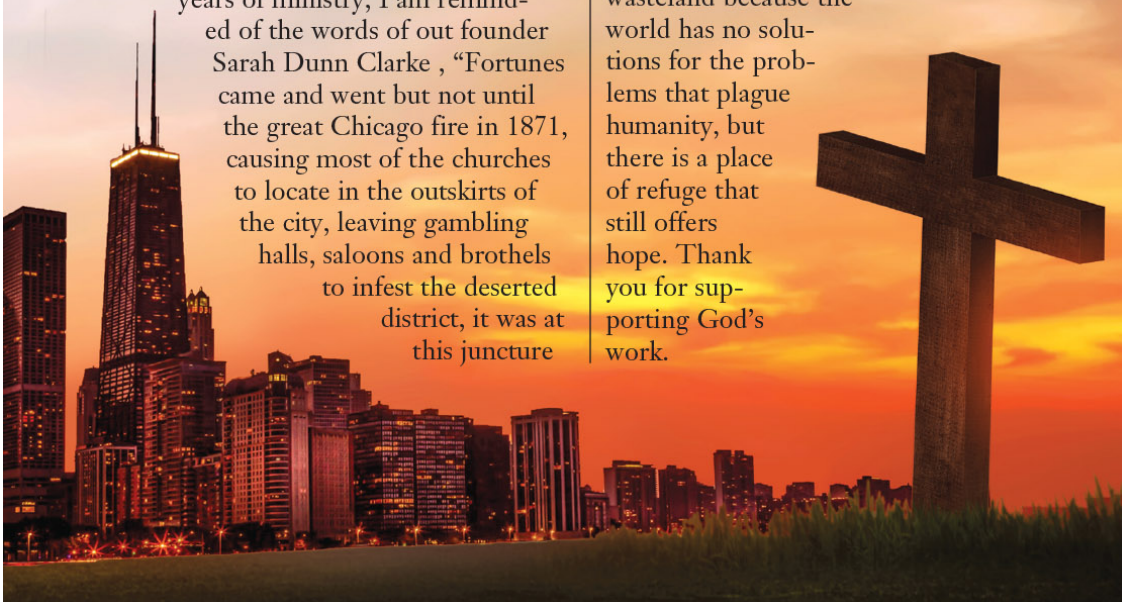
The headlines expressed the frustration at having over 100 people shot over the fourth of July weekend in the city of Chicago. The youngest is a 13-year-old boy and the oldest a 60-year-old man. Stop and think about having over 100 humans being shot during the span of one weekend. The drug epidemic continues to spiral out of control with no end in sight, the budget impasse has forced many mental health facilities to close leaving many to wander the streets with no place to go.

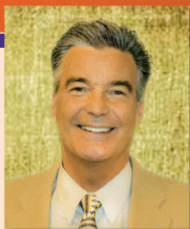
The picture being painted is bleak, but out of the midst of darkness, a light continues to shine and offer hope. That light is Jesus Christ and He is the ministry of Pacific Garden Mission.

As we get ready to celebrate our 140 years of ministry, I am reminded of the words of our founder Sarah Dunn Clarke, "Fortunes came and went but not until the great Chicago fire in 1871, causing most of the churches to locate in the outskirts of the city, leaving gambling halls, saloons and brothels to infest the deserted district, it was at this juncture

an open door seemed needed, where the neglected masses might find refuge, and in 1877 at 386 South Clarke Street the first rescue mission in the northwest was born into existence". The calendar may have changed but the times and desperation have not.

Many Gospel preaching churches have left the city but there is an open door where the masses can still find refuge. We have preached the same Gospel out of the same book for 140 years, and lives are still being changed. As I write this a man by the name of Charles just came into my office rejoicing that he has found employment. He struggled with heroin addiction for years and found freedom through Christ on our Bible-based drug program. The City of Chicago continues to be a bleak wasteland because the world has no solutions for the problems that plague humanity, but there is a place of refuge that still offers hope. Thank you for supporting God's work.





FINANCIAL UPDATE Stephen Welch, Director of Development

As we move into a new fiscal year (July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018) and look back to our recent fiscal year we will celebrate God's goodness as we witness and experience His provision and care. For God is faithful. Not only did He care for the homeless but lives have been transformed and changed for all eternity through faith in Jesus Christ.

Our donors, prayer partners, volunteers and the staff members are the saints He chose to work through to reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Together we are God's missionaries and ambassadors. We all have a role in advancing the Kingdom.

With your help we have been able to provide 238,560 nights of safe lodging and 490,891 meals but the most important thing is that 100% of our guests heard the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. We praise God that 3,446 people responded to an invitation to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

We thank God for your faithful support of God's amazing ministry to the homeless and lost who walk through our doors of hope at Pacific Garden Mission. To God be the glory great things He hath done.

WHAT YOUR MONEY SUPPORTS AND PROVIDES

Pacific Garden Mission's budget is completely donor funded. We receive no government funding. We are eternally grateful for the individuals, businesses, churches and foundations that make it possible for PGM to serve thousands of homeless men, women and children each year.

When you come along side of us financially you're not giving to the mission, but through the mission to the people that need your help the most. We are serious about demonstrating our stewardship, and we invite you to learn more by visiting Pacific Garden Mission, where lives have been transformed since 1877.

Here are just some of the ways your giving is measured (JUNE)

Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services....**499**

Number of men and women enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board....**81**

Approximate number of plates of food served....**43,348**

Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions....**56,275**

Number of patients treated in our free medical/dental clinic....**162**

Number of persons who professed faith in Christ....**204**

Stations and outlets in the U.S. and around the world broadcasting "Unshackled!"....**3,067**

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