



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

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. —1 Peter 1:6-7 (KJV)

ARTICLE BY **STEPHEN WELCH**

**M**any of the lonely souls who walked through the doors at Pacific Garden Mission had no idea what blessings awaited them. We only knew our circumstances needed changing. *There has to be a better way, but I can't figure it out on my own.* The first few days we arrived on the scene we felt temporarily harassed by all kinds of trials in the wake of consequences that brought us to the Mission. This is no accident. It happened and was needed to develop and to prove our faith which is infinitely more valuable than gold. And like the seasons God created all of us may experience a physical, emotional or spiritual winter, but spring always follows. This month we want to share how God uses the winter season to reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ here at Pacific Garden Mission and how one man's faith brought spring, summer and a season of harvest into his life.

*On a severely cold day in Chicago homeless men crowd into our facility to receive shelter, a warm non-judgemental refuge, and the Gospel of Christ.*

Just the other night here in Chicago the temperatures dropped to 14° below zero, and that's without the windchill. Even a short walk outside is painful, and I cannot imagine being outside long. The environment is merciless. People driven in by the elements come here for safe, warm shelter and receive meals, clothing, a hot shower, clean bedding to sleep in and much more—they receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

When the temperatures drop below freezing the homeless are forced in through our doors of hope having no idea that Almighty God is about to change their course. Many

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are forced in from abandoned buildings, from cars that they are sleeping in, and places the average person never imagines living. While most people are listening to the weather reports and deciding how to plan around the life-threatening weather, others are in the midst of the arctic storm trying to survive. Remaining outside for the homeless is a death sentence.

One man told me when it was almost 20 degrees below zero; “I knew if I didn’t come to the mission, I would die out there.” He was sleeping outside between a truck and a loading dock with a tarp blocking the wind and several blankets. He came in, joined the New Life Program and received Jesus Christ as Savior.

God uses the elements, the seasons, circumstances, consequences, and poverty to bring His children home. Life is not a series of random, freak accidents. Life is not totally unplanned. Life is not without meaning. God knows what’s going on.

Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

*That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: —1 Peter 1:6-7*

Over and over we see God weaving the damaged fabric of someone’s life into a beautiful tapestry. He uses all the threads—good and bad—to give richness, texture,

character and color to a new believer’s life.

Every month we are excited to share the testimonies of lives changed here at Pacific Garden Mission. Lives God changed by grace and through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ with your help and faithful prayers and financial support. God is an expert at bringing good out of bad. As you read Angel’s story below reflect on how God uses cold weather, rejection, and suffering. He does allow them because they have a purpose. God permits them and then He uses them.



**Angel R. Feliciano**

NEW LIFE PROGRAM MANAGER

“I used to be a working addict who never had a problem finding a job or keeping one either, but eventually, it caught up to me. One day I went to a birthday party, and I started drinking without control. As I left my friend’s house, I found myself, shortly after that, pulled over by an officer and I received a DUI. I used to make a living as a truck driver, but it all came to an end on that

**With fierce winter conditions settling over our area our guests—men, women and children—experience the warmth of Christian hospitality inside the comforting facilities of Pacific Garden Mission..**



night because I lost my CDL. After I had lost my CDL, I began working for temp agencies doing whatever I could do.

Looking for a fresh start and opportunity, I traveled from Ohio to Madison, WI and began working in the fields running a tractor. At that time, I was staying at my brother's house, but his wife and I had an argument, and although she was right, I decided to walk out of the house. I grabbed my things, put them in the car, and left their apartment. I only made it two miles away because I didn't have any money and I didn't have any gas. That was probably the first time I experienced being cold because I was out of gas and stuck in my car. I called an acquaintance of mine who brought me money for gas, and gave me a sleeping bag for sub-zero temperatures, and that was what I used to keep myself warm. Eventually, I totaled that car and ended up spending days out in the cold weather. My brother bought me a minivan, and I set it up with pillows and blankets in the back. I could go underneath these pillows and blankets to stay warm, and I did not have to leave the van with the engine running all night.

Eventually, I began to lose my jobs because of my addictions. I never worked on getting my CDL again, so it was very hard to find employment. My addiction at this point took me to another level, and I began to take things that weren't mine. One time I was trying to sell some of these things and somebody said they were going to call the cops on me. Again, I am on the run and again without gas. I only made it half way from Madison over to Chicago.

In the morning when I woke up I called my uncle, and he sent me ten dollars. I put the ten dollars in my gas tank and came straight to Pacific Garden Mission without paying at any of the toll booths. The reason why I came to Chicago was that I used to listen to "Unshackled!" Even as I was drinking in my van, smoking, and getting high, I would listen to these real life stories recorded at PGM.

When I walked into the Mission, a counselor explained all the rules of the Program to me. He told me that while I am in the Program, I could not work and a 60-day commitment is needed to join; I began to change my mind. I thought of the title loan on my van I just signed for, and I had to work to pay the loan; if I did not pay the loan, I would lose my van, and that was my home! So, I refused to join.

I then started to try to find work, but it



**Angel hard at work in his PGM office. He is a manager for the highly successful Men's Bible program.**

was the 24th of December, then Christmas, then New Year's and nobody had any work to offer. I spent two weeks hustling and trying to find a dollar here and a dollar there. I was still refusing to join the program. I remember one day a preacher was speaking about Jacob, and he said that Jacob was fighting God all his life, and that many of us do the same thing. I was in the auditorium and began talking to God as I was already pondering joining the Bible program but I was still hard headed. I told God "if you want me to join this program you are going to have to dislocate my hip." Days later I went job hunting. On my way there, my van, again, ran out of gas. I left the van parked by a sign warning about vehicles being towed away after certain hours, but I did not pay much attention. When I came back, my van was gone. At first, I could not believe it as I had such a mix of emotions. I was thinking then that God dislocated my hip. I sat on the ground and started laughing and crying at the same time. It was like a cry of joy, or disbelief, I don't know. I got up and started walking towards the mission.

The day this happened was January 5th, and as I was walking, I felt cold as if in my bones because I was not dressed appropriately for the cold weather. I came back to the mission and said to myself "I am not going to be out there in the cold and I am not going to throw my life away. I do not know what this program is about and I do not know what it is like to give your life over to Jesus, but I just must try." I did not join the program necessarily because I wanted this Jesus, it was more like what am I going to do with my life, wow it's cold outside, I don't have a place to go, my family is in Ohio, and none of them wanted to talk to me. I was here in Chicago and without a solution, so I decided



**Angel with his lovely wife and daughter**

to join the Bible program here at PGM.

There is a verse that comes to mind that explains what happened next. In Romans 10:17 the Bible says, "So then

faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Once I joined the program, I started hearing what God had to say. I started paying attention to the Word of God. It was as if a new life began. Days started passing. Ten, fifteen days, and I began to be sober. My mind started thinking right, and I started believing. I continued through the program and did the best that I could. I worked in food services. Then, I began to work in Office C, which is now called Program Services, working under Pastor Green. I gave my life completely to God.

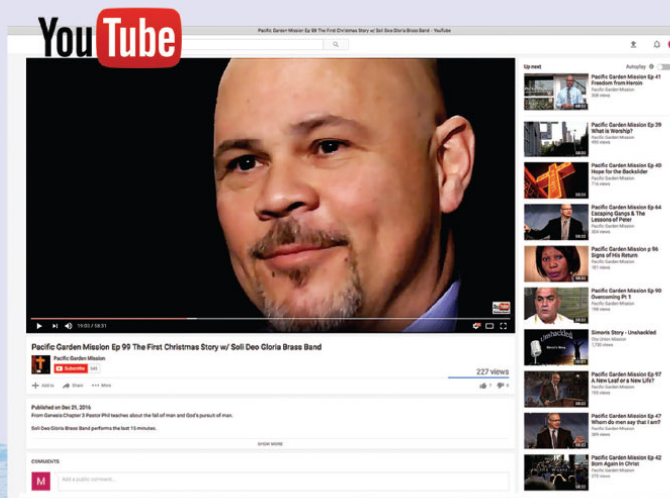
As time went by I was promoted to a supervisor position where I worked for a little over a year. After graduation, I met my wife, Karlyn. We fell in love, and we married in November of 2013. We moved into a beautiful apartment. My wife always wanted to have children, but she was not able. A month after we married she gave me the news that she was expecting and God blessed us with a beautiful baby girl. We have been serving the Lord the best that we can ever since. He continues to bless my wife and me. An undeserved grace to a sinner like me. I have not been perfect because I have made mistakes, but God has been faithful, merciful and graceful to me. All I know is I have experienced Him personally. I have seen the way He has worked in my life, and the lives of people around me, and the biggest gratitude I have for Him is that He saved me.

God has opened doors for me to walk through. I knew I was getting trained, but I never saw myself being able to do what I do now because I was a person who was addicted, without an education, a person who just came from the streets. God gave me all the tools to change from the inside out through the mentoring

and the training I received through Pastor Green to continue His work. Today I work as a manager for the men's Bible program. It's not the position; it's just that I'm able to give back and disciple men. When I talk to them about what they are going through, and they give me their complaints, I can tell them that I know what they're going through because I was there. I came through the program, I was an addict too, I lived on the streets, I know what it is like to be in the cold, I know what it is like to struggle, I know what it is like to quit smoking cigarettes, or how to stop a drug addiction. I know where they are in their walk, and I can help them because God gave me the tools to change my life. Jesus Christ and the Word of God changed me in this ministry, and They will change you too!"

As a partner in this ministry, we pray this testimony has encouraged you. What if there was no place like Pacific Garden Mission? Where would people go when the weather is life-threatening? More importantly, where would these dear friends hear the Gospel message of Jesus Christ? Thank God there is such a place.

Since 1877 Pacific Garden Mission has been a refuge for thousands in their time of need and Jesus has been waiting to receive them with open arms. We hope you are encouraged as you read these testimonies every month knowing without your help none of this would be possible. Remember that as you face trials you can be sure God is behind the scenes working in your life too.



**Visit our YouTube page and reference Pacific Garden Mission Ep 99. Watch Angel's full testimony and an inspiring message from Pastor Phil.**



## A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

### Where the Hopeless Turn

**FOR THOSE** that no longer believe in miracles, I would invite you to walk through the doors of Pacific Garden Mission. In the heart of a city notorious for its vice and corruption, God has been working miracles since 1877.

The stories of life change and redemption are unexplainable outside of the hand of God. I think of the story of Carnell; he writes, "At the age of seven my mother lost her house, and we had to move into a shelter. My mother then became depressed and began to use drugs. She then left us at the shelter alone". Imagine being seven years old abandoned at a shelter. After three foster homes filled with abuse, pain, and dysfunction he was reunited with his mom. The damage was done—he was already involved in gangs and a rebel to society.

An event happened that would change his life, "We had just left school and I was standing on the porch, and three of my friends came by and said, Hey come on we're going to rob somebody with bb guns! It was the worst mistake ever. We ran up on a guy at a bus stop. We dragged him to the alley not knowing that he already had people with him and he was from the neighborhood we were in. After we took everything from him, we let him go. We were never expecting him to come back the way he came back. As we were walking under the viaduct, they hopped out of the car and started shooting at us. My other

friend got shot in the back and didn't make it, the other got shot in the leg, so after that, we were trapped. When he put the gun to my head, my life just flashed before me. Still to this day, I don't understand how when he pulled the trigger it jammed. So, I lost one friend, and the other is paralyzed, and I made it. I never understood that." God led him to the door of Pacific Garden Mission, where he heard the Gospel, accepted Christ and is now being disciplined. Carnell states, "I now know that all the trials I go through I can get through because I have God and Jesus on my side."

I want to thank you for your prayers and support because without Pacific Garden Mission where would the hopeless turn? You are not giving to the mission but through the mission to touch the lives of those that need hope, and in this dark city you are helping to keep the lighthouse burning bright. Thank you.

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



**Above: a family with several children receives warm winter coats from PGM as temperatures dip below zero. Women and men who have no where else to go seek us out for help and protection from the elements.**



## **FINANCIAL UPDATE** Stephen Welch, Director of Development

*February is a particularly difficult time of the year for us. The numbers are increasing due to the cold weather. Other shelters have waiting lists. Pacific Garden Mission is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week and 365 days a year and turns no one away. The Department of Human Services drops off several van loads a night of people who have no place to go. Even the city of Chicago doesn't have answers, but Jesus Christ does.*

*We continually thank God for the peace and safety as we are often overwhelmed and understaffed. We offer many services, but we are here for one reason. Our purpose is to reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

*Jesus is the answer to vice, violence, every addiction and yes homelessness. How many people with your help will step inside of a warm building like Angel and meet Jesus Christ?*

*Hundreds of people receive Jesus Christ each month and begin their pilgrimage. My question is, where would these friends go if it wasn't for Pacific Garden Mission? A soup kitchen? A warming shelter? I am so glad that there is a Gospel rescue mission in downtown Chicago that ministers to all who come here with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.*

*Thank you for your heartfelt prayers and gifts that support this ministry. To God be the Glory as we serve together.*

## **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 (DECEMBER)**

Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services....**713**

Number of men and women enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board....**110**

Approximate number of plates of food served....**49,082**

Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions....**58,904**

Number of patients treated in our free medical/dental clinic....**189**

Number of persons who professed faith in Christ....**428**

Stations and outlets in the U.S. and around the world broadcasting "Unshackled!"....**3,048**

**PGM NEWS** FEBRUARY 2017 • Vol. 82, No. 2 Published monthly by **PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION**

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