

PGMNews

A NEW CREATURE IN CHRIST

JANUARY 2017 . PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION
TRANSFORMING LIVES WITH
THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST SINCE 1877



(C) Stephen Welch 2016



BEHOLD ALL THINGS BECOME NEW, (EVEN THE YEAR)

"What a blessing it is to be transformed from a selfish man serving the world to a servant who desires to serve the King!"

—DAVID MEAD (pictured above) came to PGM broken and seeking answers. Through the power of the Gospel he is now a new man, with a renewed spirit in Christ!

ARTICLE BY **STEPHEN WELCH**

FOR 139 YEARS PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION has been a place of refuge and transformation where Jesus Christ has met every year he created with new men in Christ capable of changing the world we live in today. Men like Billy Sunday, Mel Trotter, Ervin McNeill, Sampson Green, and Percy Edmunds met Jesus Christ through our doors of hope, and the list continues ad infinitum.

After hearing hundreds of testimonies at PGM and also looking back at my life and my testimony, I experience one verse of scripture, in particular, come alive in my heart, and the verse is 2 Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore if

any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new."

We all have had times in our lives that something went wrong and in the case of many that walk through the doors of Pacific Garden Mission, terribly wrong. Many, like me, but not all who come to the Mission are victims of self-inflicted consequences and often when things go terribly wrong the world, friends and relatives will point out the errors of one's past, offering little hope for change. It's no doubt that the vast majority of men and women that stay here believed

at some time that there is no hope ever to return to a normal life.

While the enemy, friends, family and the world might show us our hopeless mistakes and past—Jesus wants to offer us a new future. More than a New Year, He offers a New Life. Jesus stands waiting to show anyone, looking for help or a way out of their mess, a new future. I have witnessed miraculous transformations, including my own, here at Pacific Garden Mission that dwarfs the byproduct of any New Year's resolution I have ever made. Therefore, I am writing about a "New Creature" instead of a New Year in our first newsletter of 2017.

We all look forward to a New Year with hopes and dreams of change, yet man's best intentions fall short of what God has planned for all of us. "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works,

which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10)

Families repeatedly see impossible changes in their loved ones at Pacific Garden Mission. Here we get a chance to sort out what went wrong in a safe and nutritive environment as we let the Word of God pour over us for over a year. "The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple." (Psalm 19:7) God's law is perfect and provides total transformation of the soul—restoring, reviving and converting. Simply said, scripture is a manual for man's life.

As we move into the New Year of 2017, let's focus on Jesus Christ and where He is taking us. "... 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)

The following testimony of Percy Edmonds will encourage you and share what Jesus Christ has done in his life.

The **PERCY EDMONDS** Story

I GREW UP in a pretty decent family. Both of my parents worked in management positions. It was in high school when my life started changing for the worst. My freshman year in high school I was an honor roll student at Proviso West High school, got all A's and B's. I played on the wrestling and football team. I was in the youth choir at the church I attended in Maywood. Within that next year, I was put out of high school and joined a street gang. I was in the state penitentiary at the age of 17. The second time I went to prison when I was 19 years old, that was in 2002. It was at that point in my life that I was so depressed that I seriously contemplated suicide.

It was in prison that God got my

DARKNESS INTO THE LIGHT



Percy is shown here on left in a photo that has survived from his days in the state penitentiary. On right we see a transformed Percy with his wife, Lea, and son, Noah.



attention and I decided to trust Christ. I got into the Word of God, I dropped my gang affiliation, and then I was transferred to the Christian tier in prison. We had Bible classes, we had churches come in every week, and I got serious about my faith right away. I started

to have a Bible study with the other inmates, and we would gather every morning and read the Daily Bread together. It became real to me right away; it wasn't a gimmick or a routine. I had nothing to gain from it besides a sincere faith in God.

December 30th of 2004 I came here to Pacific Garden Mission. I was paroled here and came that day straight from the penitentiary. I joined the Bible program that day actually. I graduated a year later. I

was able to work here for a year after graduating as an in-house staff member in what was called office B at the time. We sat down with men one on one, evangelizing, sharing the Gospel, and going over the rules with them. I was helping the mission's chaplain every Saturday by giving tours. I just stayed involved, and that kept me on the straight and narrow.

I went over to Dayspring Bible College and Seminary which is in Lake Zurich. I was able to go to school free of charge. When I graduated in 2009, I was debt free from Bible College.

Pastor Phil made it clear to me that there was an opportunity to come here to the mission to work full time. So, I came back here to PGM to work here in August of 2011. I've now been working here a little over five years. I'm in the men's division teaching Bible classes, counseling, and working with the men one on one. I'm grateful that God has been able to use even my bad for His good. It's kind of like a practical application in Romans 8:28: "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose."

I thank God for the opportunity to reach men who are like myself. Everyone that comes here to PGM isn't here because they are a bad person. People come here who have degrees, who have business degrees, who have been to college, tradespeople; we have men who have been in the military. PGM is not just a place for bad people, it is a place for men and women who at some point have gotten off track. They can get on track through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In 2009 I met my wife, and we got married in June of 2013. So, I've been married a little over three years now. I've been fortunate enough to get married, and my wife and I have been blessed with our first child,

Noah, who is now six months old.

I continue to serve as evening Pastor here at PGM and I've been the youth pastor at Christ First Baptist Church in Winnetka, Illinois for the past year. I have been blessed here at PGM to meet many great people who love the Lord. Jesus Christ has transformed my life.

* * *

Pastor Percy's testimony of transformation and hope at Pacific Garden Mission represent what Jesus Christ did, is doing and will do for anyone who believes. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever." (Hebrews 13:8)

As we begin 2017, let's embrace the future in the power of Jesus' name. Embrace "a new creature in Christ". The words "in Christ" refer to being in union with Jesus. I want this for myself and others, and I know you do too. Genuine conversion begins life transformation, but not by reforming the "old" nature. The indwelling Spirit creates a divine life in believers, enabling a life of new things—as seen in Pastor Percy's testimony. Men and women need a safe place to grow spiritually after they are born again. Pacific Garden Mission offers such a place.

This New Year we can make a difference—an eternal difference. As you partner alongside Pacific Garden Mission, think about the stories of transformation happening at Pacific Garden Mission. The Kingdom is advancing every day.

Let us all look at our New Year with hope, joy, and thanksgiving so that in the middle of the world's turmoil we can live for Christ with our living testimonies and advance the Kingdom together in Jesus' name.



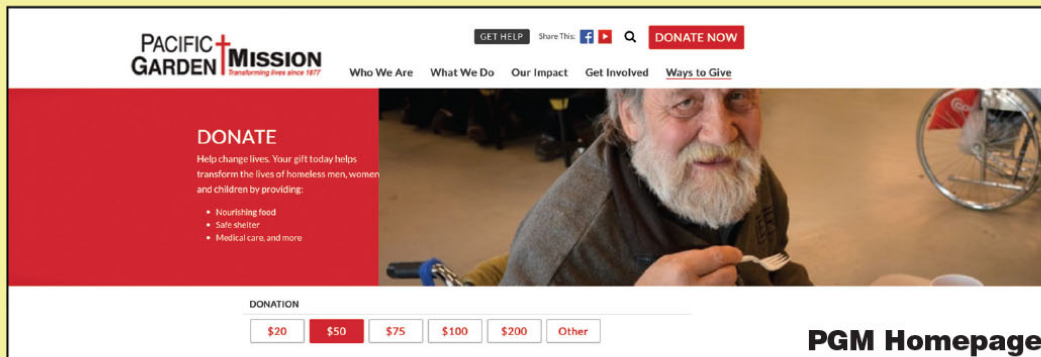
Christ First Baptist Church, Minooka, Illinois, where Percy serves as youth minister



Percy ministering to youth at a special service at the James Memorial A.M.E Church, Maywood, Illinois

"... 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)

PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION Media and Online Resources

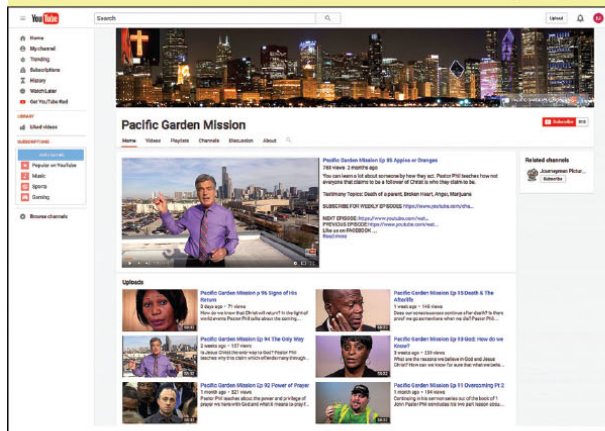
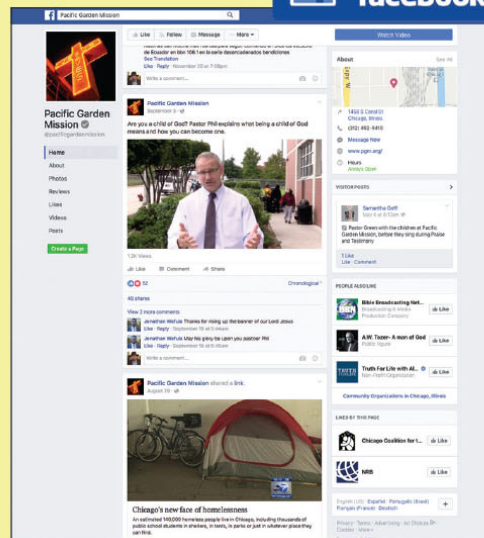


Please visit our newly designed website. You can access **Facebook** and all of our television testimonies on the **YouTube** link available on www.pgm.org.

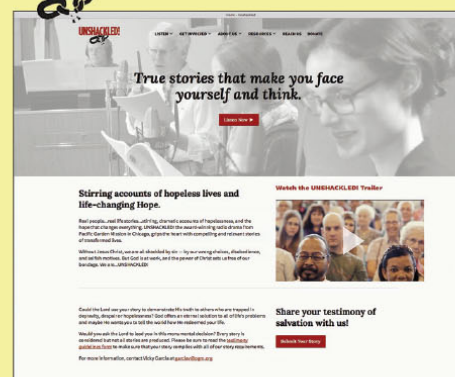
Share these testimonies of lives changed by Jesus Christ and then a Gospel message by our president Pastor Phil. This one hour program will bless your friends and reach the lost in a real life way. The entire program is unscripted and unrehearsed. We share stories of lives transformed by Christ and a Gospel message from the Word of God. Every program is concluded with a crystal clear invitation to receive Jesus Christ as Savior.

Please also check our new **Unshackled!** website. America's oldest radio drama at www.unshackled.org. You can listen to the audio stories on your computer or phone.

We are so grateful to have friends like you helping us reach the lost. We are collaborators in Christ reaching the lost. Yes we provide means, safe nights lodging, clothing and programs, but the most important thing we do is reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you for being part of this ministry.



UNSHACKLED! Website





A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

Renewed from Within

When many people think of the New Year, they think of change. The term resolution is a popular term used by people wanting to change some area of their life. But for most resolutions simply do not work.

We can modify our behavior for a period of time but often revert back to what we really want. One reason places like Pacific Garden Mission have been successful is that we don't focus on behavior modification, but life transformation. Rules don't change people. Rom 8:3: "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." The Law could not change you or save you. Something needs to happen on the inside. That is what God has done, Rom 8:4: "That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." "In us" is the keyword. We can suppress desire and behavior only so long, but sustainable change only starts on the inside.

- 1. We need regeneration, not resolution.**
- 2. Change is not an event, but a process.**
- 3. Focus on renewing the mind, not restraining your behavior.**

I like this illustration.

Once there was a brier growing in a ditch, and there came along a gardener with his spade. As he dug around it and lifted it up, the brier said to itself, "What is he doing?"

Doesn't he know I am
a worthless brier?"

But the gardener took it into his garden and planted it amid his flowers, while the brier said, "What a mistake he has made planting me among these beautiful roses." Then the gardener came once more and made a slit in the brier with his sharp knife. He grafted it with a rose, and when summer came, lovely roses were blooming on that old brier. Then the gardener said, "Your beauty is not due to what came out, but to what I put in."

—Source Unknown.

True change happens not by rearranging what you have but by what God puts in. At the Mission, I have met many people that have gone to many programs and have tried to change their lives but to no avail, but when they experience the new birth, God begins a work that they could never do in their own strength.

This New Year I want to thank all of you for supporting this ministry, and the many lives that have been transformed.





FINANCIAL UPDATE Stephen Welch, Director of Development

Pacific Garden Mission continues to be America's oldest Gospel rescue mission. As we continue to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ, we are moving from a shelter that people stay at while being exposed to the Gospel towards a transformational ministry. This change has taken additional funds, but it is the answer to many prayers. Men and women who stay with us are excited that there are more tools and programs for those responding to God's invitation. We pray daily that you will continue to support what God is doing here every day.

As we end the 2016 calendar year, we are excited to report that:

Mortgage balance has declined to slightly above \$3.8 million dollars

We are making strides to cover our operational expenses (budgeted at \$600 thousand per month) through the generous donations of the friends of PGM.

Remember when you give to Pacific Garden Mission, you are not giving to the Mission, but through the mission to those that need it the most. Like the testimonies you have read about in this newsletter, heard on Unshackled! or watched on the Pacific Garden Mission television program, none of this would be possible without your support. This September we will celebrate 140 years of faithfully preaching the Gospel to the lost with the same Bible the Mission was founded on.

Finally, if you have any questions or concerns, please call or email me or Ambrose Wallace.

Ambrose Wallace (312) 429-6701 email: wallacea@pgm.org

Stephen Welch (312) 429-6700 email: welchs@pgm.org

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 (NOVEMBER)

Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services....**625**

Number of men and women enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board....**108**

Approximate number of plates of food served....**35,290**

Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions....**41,184**

Number of patients treated in our free medical/dental clinic....**212**

Number of persons who professed faith in Christ....**410**

Stations and outlets in the U.S. and around the world broadcasting "Unshackled!"....**3,077**

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