

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

RESURRECTION SUNDAY

PGMNews

APRIL 2017

The Message of Reconciliation to God

CHRIST, IN HIS PERSON AND OFFICES, IS THE SUM AND SUBSTANCE OF THE GOSPEL, AND IS THE GREAT SUBJECT OF PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION. OUR BUSINESS IS TO DISPLAY THE **CROSS** AND INVITE PEOPLE TO IT. WE PREACH NOTHING BUT CHRIST AND HIM CRUCIFIED. HIS CRUCIFIXION IS THE FOUNDATION OF RESURRECTION SUNDAY THAT MANY KNOW AS EASTER.

ARTICLE BY **STEPHEN WELCH**

AS WE ENTER into this season of celebration for us as believers, we face an opportunity and responsibility that I think is unique to the season and that is to be available to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ. Many people including myself have been to church services year after year when Easter lilies abound, looking forward to the family gatherings afterward, not ever knowing I was going to hell. I thought I was a good person. I thank God for ministers of the Gospel like Pastor Adrian Rogers who lead me to the Lord on a highway in Indiana over the radio. I pulled my car over and got out on my knees and was saved by grace and through faith.

I thank God for a place like Pacific Garden

Mission that faithfully preaches the Gospel of Jesus Christ. This same Gospel that brought me to my knees in 1985 allowed me to cry out and recommit my life to Jesus Christ right here at Pacific Garden Mission shortly after Easter Sunday 2012.

The Resurrection is a unique event in history that delivers unlimited grace to all who believe. Many of us thank God for the adherence to scripture so faithfully followed by the saints at this great ministry. They desire to obey and teach Jesus Christ crucified and sitting at the right hand of God.

We have our marching orders, and they came after His Resurrection when Jesus Christ commissioned us to go into all the world and make disciples. Matthew 28:18–20:

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

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This is our commission; this is why we are here in this world, to be ministers of reconciliation with a message of reconciliation to God that sinners might be saved.

Since 1877 we have believed in the power of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Every testimony we hear is exciting. This April, we wish to share a remarkable testimony of Matt Hebert, Education and Career Development Administrator.



Matt addresses the audience at a recent PGM Graduation

MATT HEBERT'S TESTIMONY

"I WAS BORN in Canada and raised in Maine. I grew up in a Christian home where my father preached the gospel and my mother had the Bible opened literally all day. Although I grew up in this environment of hearing the Word of God and hearing how Christ Jesus came into this world to save sinners, the problem wasn't where I grew up, the problem was in my heart. The heart of the problem is the heart. I was a sinner by nature by birth, and that revealed itself to me as I moved through life.

The enemy began to spin his web in my life as I went through high school, rebelling a bit and moving off to college. While attending college, I ended up getting a job at a bank where I started making good money, so I dropped out of school. A banker colleague of mine and I got transferred from Maine to Miami. This move was an absolute culture shock. Sin was extremely prevalent. I was in my sinful blinded condition, and helplessly lost where I couldn't even see the mess I was in.

I got to a miserable point while in Florida, where I kicked my brother out of

my apartment because we had gotten into an argument. I had never hit my brother, but that day all I wanted to do was violently hurt him. I told Mark, my younger brother, 'You're kicked out!' I will never forget that he didn't say anything. He was a fighter, but he didn't do anything to me; he just walked out of the apartment and went down to the pool where we lived, and so I followed him intent on fighting. I wanted to hurt him for the first time in our 20 year

relationship. Upon showing up at the pool, I saw Mark, and he was broken. I'll never forget what he told me as he wept. Mark said, 'Matt, you are not the Matt I knew growing up. Something bad has happened, something is wrong, and it's taken over you. You're high and drunk all the time. New women are here every night, and the fights you get into are out of hand. I don't know who you are anymore.' That night God was speaking to me. I realized I had a serious problem. But the enemy lied to me again and convinced me that I could fix this problem on my own. So, I moved back to Maine, as I thought I could correct my issues. I was with my parents for about a week, and I kept hearing the Gospel over and over again, and I said, 'I am done! I cannot handle this!' I packed my belongings

and moved to Portland, Maine with five friends in a two-bedroom apartment. It was ridiculous. We were out of control.

These events were all going on; the chaos, the craziness, the hurt, the shackles of the enemy as he had me enslaved in my sin. A friend named Lucy who I had known back in Miami called me and asked me if I was interested in moving down with her in Tallahassee to live with all of her Sorority sisters. I figured this was great, as I could live with them and go back to school at Florida State University. The day I told my father that I was going down to Tallahassee, he cried. I will never forget that. He didn't say a word, just walked up to me, put his arms around me, and wept. I believe he felt this was the last time he would see me, as I lived a careless lifestyle that treaded on the edge of eternity. He knew I was lost.

I moved to Tallahassee, and within two weeks I was so tired of partying. On Saturday evening, August 19th, 2001 I was sick and tired of my sin. I had hit rock bottom in life. I was just like the jailer in Acts 16



Matt pauses for a photo with Pastor Phil during his work as Administrator of Education and Career Development at PGM.

who got his life rocked as God shook his foundation and took it out from under him. The jailor said, 'What must I do to be saved?' I took my dusty Bible, and I asked God, 'Lord, if You are real, please speak to me when I open this Bible. I know there has to be an answer in here.' My parents had something I didn't have, and I wanted an answer from God's Word. So, I opened up my Bible. I hadn't prayed in years. I was 22 years old and just crushed under the weight of my sin. I cried out to God, and he showed me in the first page I opened to in the Bible, 'A wise son maketh a glad father: but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother.' Proverbs 10:1. And I thought, that son is me! I continued to read, 'Bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.' Proverbs 9:17b-18. And I thought, that is me again! My sin in secret, the guests of it are in hell, and that is where I am going to be.

I grabbed my Guild acoustic guitar, pushed past all rock songs, and found the mighty hymn, 'Amazing Grace.' As I played this hymn, I came to the verse 'When we have been there ten thousand years bright shining as the sun,' and it struck me this way. In ten thousand years I will be in hell, and my parents will be in heaven. Where will you be in ten thousand years? I then opened up to Isaiah 53, and I saw verse 10, 'yet it pleased the Lord to bruise Him.' Wow. Not that it made God happy, but that God was satisfied with the death of His Son, and that struck me that way for the first time in my life!

I read John 3:16 because I remembered reading that verse as a kid and it struck me like this: 'God so loved Matt that He gave His only Son for Matt and if Matt believes in Him, Matt will never perish, but Matt will have everlasting life all because of Jesus Christ.' That night I accepted Christ

as my own personal Savior. The next morning I woke up and moved back home, where I was baptized in our local church in Maine. I then moved up to Boston to be with some friends and joined a church out there called the Saugus Gospel Hall. These Believers loved and cared for me like I was family. A Believer named Dan introduced me to my current wife, Alison, and we were married in Chicago in the summer of 2004. After marriage, we moved to Arizona to develop on our own as a family unit. In 2005, we had our first son, Harrison.

Our Christianity at the time was complacent, which is really death to a Believer. We had the German car, truck, house, and toys. We lived the American Dream. Life was smooth until one night. We had just gotten home from counseling friends in their marriage. It was about 10:30 p.m. and I said, 'Alison, I am so thankful we don't have problems. Our life is so good; there is money in the bank, we have cars, we have a new house, and we are doing what we are supposed to be doing. We are living the dream.' We went into the house, there was a missed call from her mom, and she called her back. That night we found out my wife's father, Allen, had died while working out on a cycling machine at the gym at the age of 54. He was wealthy, established, great health, and yet now he is gone. My wife crumpled in the kitchen and sobbed. God was speaking.

After that moment God dramatically worked in our lives and reminded us of James, 'For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.' James 4:14b. We had just thought life was going so good, and God said 'Wait a second! You are going to listen to Me. You've been marching to the beat of your own drum and I am going to get your attention.' We decided as a couple that since we had been in Arizona for nine years, we were going to help out a preacher friend of ours, Tom, out in Washington. We would visit Alison's Mom Paulette back in Chicago before proceeding in our move to Washington. In the interim, though, my wife's brother was in federal prison, and he was a drug addict. My own brother was a heroin addict, so God gave us two siblings that had challenges. So, we go to Chicago just to spend time with my moth-



Matt in a recent photo with his proud parents.

somewhere. Here I am focused on moving to Washington, and God had other plans. Since that first visit to PGM, I've been preaching the Gospel for the past four years on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday nights with a Brother from our church, Kerwin. I was preaching while doing analytics in the corporate world until I received a call one day here in the summer. Pacific Garden Mission offered me a position managing Career and Education Development in the New Life program. I said goodbye to corporate, and embraced my calling to full-time Gospel ministry. God was working.



Matt and Alison with their three beautiful children.

er-in-law, and my brother-in-law just happens to get out of prison while we're in Chicago and needs a Program to join. I searched the internet for a Bible Program, and the first place that came up was Pacific Garden Mission.

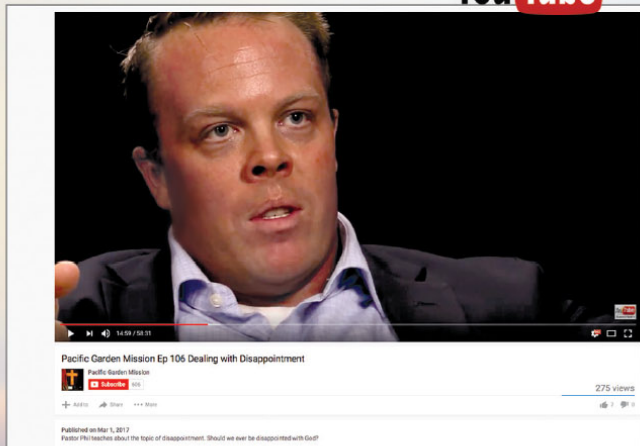
The first day I visited Pacific Garden Mission to inquire about this Bible Program for my brother-in-law, I heard a guy preaching in the auditorium. I asked security what was going on, and they told me they have 40+ gospel services every week! I wanted to be part of that. God was working yet again and steering me

Here at Pacific Garden Mission, I am not working with individuals that I would have worked with in corporate, all identified with bachelor's degrees or master's degrees with years of experience. I partner with individuals that perhaps didn't have the same opportunities and resources that, for example, I did growing up. They have gone through challenges in their life and are now in our year long Bible Program. These Believers are focused and disciplined now, but their past reflects years of scattered jobs, or there was an addiction that stole all their opportunities. I work with people who are broken vessels just like we all are, and trying, with God's help, to shape and mold them to be more like Christ. Our goal is that our residents become fully functioning followers of Christ as they transition from our Bible program into secular work

to start positively impacting society for His glory. This role is eternally rewarding, as I have the privilege of watching our awesome God supernaturally provide employment for our students and transform their lives. We see God come into a precious soul's life, and we watch from the sidelines as God saves them through the blood of Christ, and guides them along life's journeys. God then takes that person and finds them work here in Chicago, which is outside my human capability. Only God can do that, and we worship and praise

Matt Hebert's complete testimony is on Episode 106 on the Pacific Garden Mission YouTube Channel.

YouTube



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A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

Living the Resurrected Life!

As Christians, we celebrate one of the most significant events in history (Jesus birth and death were also significant), the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Here are some of the reasons for this significance.

1. The Resurrection proves that Jesus was divine.

Rom. 1:4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:

2. The Resurrection proves Christ's power to forgive sin.

1 Cor. 15:17 And if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins.

3. The Resurrection proves Christ's power over death.

Rom. 6:9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him.

4. The Resurrection proves that we can change.

Rom. 8:11 But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

Every month I try to highlight amazing testimonies because the heart of Pacific Garden Mission has always been and will always be the Gospel. The fact that a man or women coming from the streets can have hope that change is possible is a comfort to all that walk through

our doors. We do not just feed, house and clothe the poor and needy; we share the Resurrection power of Jesus Christ so they can change forever. Many social service agencies focus on the physical needs of the homeless, but while meeting their physical needs, our concern is the inner man. The Resurrection makes this change a reality.

Take the testimony of David, a young 23-year-old man. David's mother was a prostitute that was addicted to drugs; he was raised in various foster homes. After a life of gangs and guns he was tired one day and searched online for "programs for help." As he tells it, "up popped Pacific Garden Mission. I called them and they told me to come here and that I would be okay. I've been here for over five months now. It's the best thing I've ever done in my life. I am David J. Mendez. I am God's son, a born-again Christian! I misused my body, God's temple, by wanting to store anger, pain, and hatred. He died on the cross for me, and His blood washed away my sins. I believe God raised Him from the dead three days later."

The only person to make this possible is Jesus our Resurrected Savior. Thank you for your continual support of this lighthouse in the midst of a dark city.



THE MATT HEBERT STORY Continued from page 4

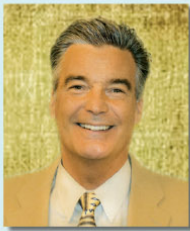
Him because our God is amazing. It is all done for His glory.

* * *

All of the stories you read in our newsletters are about dear friends who are growing in Christ at Pacific Garden Mission. This testimony is a beautiful picture of Christ conquering sin. He gave His life for us so He could live

His life through us. Amazing Grace!

In 2016 we saw almost 5,000 unique individuals that came through our doors for their many needs, only to meet Jesus Christ. Many made decisions to join programs to grow in Christ. We are grateful for all of you who faithfully support God's ministry in prayer and deed. Together we will celebrate His resurrection as a reminder of His victory over sin and death.



FINANCIAL UPDATE Stephen Welch, Director of Development

Great are the needs of the dear souls that arrive at the Mission daily. They are tired, hungry, sick and discouraged. We do all we can to serve them with the compassion of Christ. We know that God sends them here to solve their complex problems with one simple solution—His Son Jesus Christ.

We accept no government or state funding. We want God to provide through those that love His ministry.

The city began charging for water a few years ago, and our water bill is over \$300,000, yet the city of Chicago drops off dozens of people daily for shelter. We make the payments as we can. Praise God we have made progress, but we still have a mortgage.

We are in the last quarter of our fiscal year that ends June 30, 2017, and we need \$450,000 per month in April, May, and June to meet operating costs and payroll. We also need more Godly employees. We know that with God all things are possible, and together with you we will meet our obligations.

Finally, we are grateful and blessed for your loving support of prayer, and treasures that allow this ministry to stay open to reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Your partnership with us is a picture of how you minister to us as we minister the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to every man, woman, boy and girl who walks through our doors.

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 (FEBRUARY)

Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services....**683**

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

Approximate number of plates of food served....**35,783**

Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions....**34,178**

Number of patients treated in our free medical/dental clinic....**147**

Number of persons who professed faith in Christ....**311**

Stations and outlets in the U.S. and around the world broadcasting "Unshackled!"....**3,049**

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