

## Bringing Joy to Their Lives

ARTICLE BY DANIEL WOOLMAN

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

*Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the Lord thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee. —Deuteronomy 31:6*

Despite the various circumstances that bring people to Pacific Garden Mission many of those staying here find the Christmas season a difficult time of year. Whether it is estranged families, broken families or some who never really had a family to call their own at all, loneliness is a very real thing. Even for those that know Christ as their Savior, the despair of

loneliness can be painfully difficult; even worse, however, is this feeling for individuals who are alone both physically and spiritually.

Fortunately, and to God's glory, rays of light can shine out of these difficult times. The testimonies of those who have once found themselves in these tough situations only to escape the darkness and step into the Light can be very powerful. In this newsletter, we will be sharing the testimony of Brian Matthey, who only a few years ago was at PGM, with little hope, but experienced the healing restoration of God's grace. Brian, a former heroin addict, suffered from hopelessness to the extent that it tore his family apart.

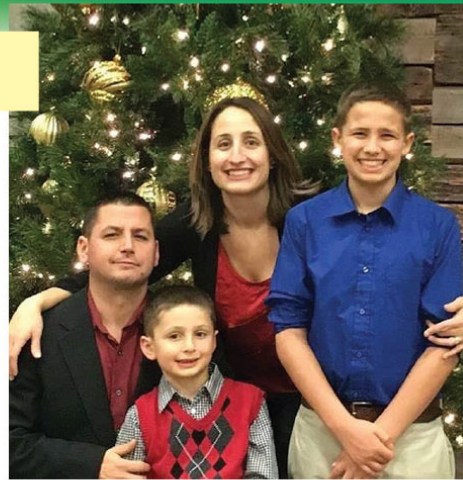


## BRIAN MATTEY'S STORY

"For over 20 years I used drugs. I had been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD) and would often use that as an excuse for my irresponsible behavior. What started as experimentation of drugs led to a prescription pain killer and heroin addiction. I was unhappy, sad, and depressed. I had grown up in a Catholic family but I didn't care about God. In fact, I even got high in church. I even stole from church and because of these things I believed I was going to hell.

When I got married, at the age of 27, I thought things would change. During the first half of my marriage my wife would catch me with all types of drugs and I would only come up with excuses for my behavior. I tried my best to hide my addiction from my family. I would get fired from my jobs again and again, always blaming everyone else for what would happen. I would even steal people's medicine to get high on from people's homes that I did work for.

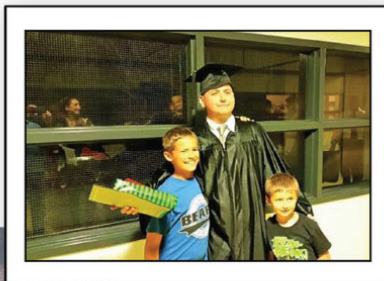
After trying an inpatient addiction program and shortly after relapsing I realized I needed to change something in my life. My marriage was broken. I was not being the father that my two boys needed. My oldest son who was 10 years old knew what was going on and although my 5-year-old was too young to know exactly what was happening he knew "Dad" wasn't around. Finally, after a failed drug test, I moved out and away from my wife and children. I had reached a point where I stopped caring about any-



**Restored to his family, Brian shares the love of Christ this Christmas season.**

thing. I truly believed my marriage was over.

When I joined the New Life Program I had no idea how my marriage would turn out. All I knew was I needed to finally surrender my life to Christ. Going through the year-long Bible program wasn't easy. I made mistakes but the more I trusted God and turned things over to Him, the more peace I had. I may not have known how things would turn out but I had the assurance that things would work out. Romans 8:28 comes to mind, "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 was exposed to Biblical truth every day and with the friendships I built with Christian brothers we helped to sharpen one another spiritually. The structure at PGM allowed me to focus on my relationship with Christ and I knew my relationship with Him alone would be the basis



**In September 2015 Brian received his New Life Program diploma from Pastor Green and gave an inspiring testimony to attendees.**

**Afterwards he shared a proud moment with his two boys.**





of all other healing and change.

Through God's grace, I did graduate the New Life Program at Pacific Garden Mission. I now live with my wife and kids. A few months ago, my wife and I renewed our wedding vows. Things are healing and getting better. My relationship with my children is healthy now and I am able to be the father they need. I have even started my own business and am employing others allowing me to witness Jesus Christ to them.

Looking back, many of the hurdles my family and I have overcome would not have been possible without God. If I hadn't recommitted my life to Jesus Christ and had the chance to grow spiritually at Pacific Garden Mission, I don't believe my marriage would have survived. It was only through surrendering to God that I was finally freed of my addiction to drugs. It wasn't until I turned my marital problems into God's hands that healing and restoration began. Pacific Garden Mission gave me a fresh foundation to start a new, Christ-centered life, upon. Without my relationship with Jesus Christ I would not be where I am at today."

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*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. — Jeremiah 29:11*

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While talking to Brian he said that when he hit rock bottom Jesus was "The Rock" that he found and he has been clinging to Him ever since. Accepting Christ into your heart is the most powerful life changing thing one can experience. For Brian's children and wife, nothing is a stronger testimony than seeing their lost father/husband completely change his life for the better. As a business owner and boss, Brian also is able to spread the love and example of a Christian.

The amazing thing about Pacific Garden Mission is that when a lost soul hears the Gospel Message and is born again, not only their lives are changed but the light of their salvation spreads to those they encounter. For all of you that help us, through financial support, prayer or volunteering, you are helping to spread this light in ways that we

**An exciting new beginning: This July Brian and Anna Maria renewed their wedding vows, with sons Kyle and Elijah in attendance.**



can only truly realize when we are in Heaven with our Savior.

It is the love of others that allow stories like Brian's and thousands of others who came through our doors seeking help which allowed them to have a place to hear the Gospel and grow spiritually.

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*And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed.*

—Joel 2:25-26



**To learn more about PGM's Women and Children ministry visit our website at [pgm.org](http://pgm.org)**



## September Graduates!

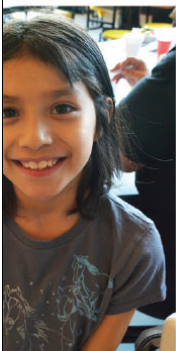
FOR THE MEN AND WOMEN who decide to join and persevere through our New Life Program it can be a great milestone. What they learn here sets the foundation for a new life in Christ. The programs we offer and the graduating class in the photo shown wouldn't be possible without the faithful help of our donors. The class of September 2017 and all the staff at PGM thank you.

**From top left to right: Andrew Stone, Emmitt Hasey, John Ayres, Solomon Nalls, Jerry Davis. Center row left to right: Richard "Blue" Penick, Robert Washington, Archie Kendrick, John Pollina, Vance Johnson. Bottom left to right: Rickie Phillips, Danny Van Dang, Ayonda Muhammad Sullivan, Christine Jusko. Front row: Mrs Felicia L. Hudson, Career Development Administrator**



## PGM's Christmas ministry to homeless children

Being in a large foreign building like Pacific Garden Mission can be intimidating for young children especially during the Christmas season. Our employees do their best to make it as warm and nurturing as possible. While we do distribute gifts, many donated by our readers, we also and most importantly share the love and teachings of Jesus Christ to every child.



**PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION**  
Transforming lives since 1877  
A caring, nurturing environment  
for children in need.



Opening Christmas presents, some for the first time, allows these children to experience the joy associated with this special season.





## ***A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski***

*President, Pacific Garden Mission*

### ***Caring for Children***

*And they brought young children to him*, that he should touch them: and his disciples rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not:

for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein. And he took them up in his arms, put his hands upon them, and blessed them. — Mark 10:13–16 KJV

“Compassion was not a well-developed virtue among the pagan Romans; mercy was discouraged, as it only helped those too weak to contribute to society. In the cramped, unsanitary warrens of the typical Roman city, under the miserable cycle of plagues and famines, the sick found no public institutions dedicated to their care and little in the way of sympathy or help. Destitute families lacking any resources to help sometimes even abandoned the chronically ill to die. In Rome, sick or elderly slaves were routinely left to waste away on Tiber Island. Unwanted children were often left to die of exposure. Ancient Rome had no regard for the weakest among them, the elderly, the sick and homeless children. When the Church arrived in Rome, everything changed. “By the first century A.D., however, a new culture began penetrating the classical Roman world: the culture of the Christians, revolutionizing morality and behavior. Palestine couldn’t hold the new faith long, and within a century, it was already spreading rapidly across the empire.” (Ferngren, 2011)

The early church took the lead regarding caring for children. “Christians began collecting infants abandoned by their parents and raised them as their own. If pagans took in such abandoned children, it was most often

for immoral purposes. The second century Christian Justin Martyr spoke out against the practice of abandoning children: As for us, we have been taught that to expose newly born children is the action of wicked men... We refuse to do this, first, because we see that almost all so exposed—boys as well as girls—are brought up for prostitution. As the ancients are said to have reared herds of oxen, or goats, or sheep, or grazing horses, so now we see that you rear children for this shameful purpose.” (Severance. Ph.D., 2017)

Modern day Chicago is not a lot different than ancient Rome; consider these stats: “According to the CCH, families made up half of Chicago’s homeless population, including more than 48,000 homeless children with parents and another 12,000 people younger than 21 without parents or guardians.” (Lansu, 2015, para. 18).

Just think, that is the size of some cities! At Pacific Garden Mission women and children are our largest growing demographic; our dorms are often full and the need for more housing and staff has been a major concern. Our goal is to not turn any women or children away. With a staggering water bill, a mortgage to pay, heating costs the challenge seems great. They are not preaching the Gospel at city shelters but we are here; we need to make room and trust Jesus for what He will do. Pray with us this coming year as our staff and supporters seek to address this ever-growing issue; the people of God need to be there for these little ones.

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## FINANCIAL UPDATE Stephen Welch, Director of Development

As we prepare to head into 2018 my heart is filled with gratitude for God is moving here at Pacific Garden Mission in a mighty way. Men, women, and children have come to Jesus Christ here at the Mission and are born again. The volume of people that walk through our doors is vast yet a few thousand will receive Christ as their personal Saviour in 2017. We praise the Lord but our work doesn't stop there for Jesus called us to teach the truth and make disciples (John 8:31-32) and he reinforces that in Matthew 28:19,20 ("Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, ...Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:") which produces fully functioning followers of Christ.

Yes we are much more than a shelter; we are a transformational ministry where Jesus Saves and sanctifies. We share testimonies every month that reflect what God is doing in many lives here and to encourage you. God is faithful and with your faithful support, a new staff has risen to the challenges that we face here every day. Without Jesus and you, there would be no ministry and we know that. I am thankful for a place like Pacific Garden Mission where thousands of people can find refuge and new hope in Jesus Christ.

We thank God for your strong partnership with God to help us come to our fullest and highest potential in His amazing ministry as we finish 2017 and head into 2018. The harvest is great but the laborers are few. Thank you for being co-laborers with God. "For we are labourers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building." —1 Corinthians 3:9

Merry Christmas in Jesus' name from our family to yours.

### 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 (OCTOBER)

Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services....**573**

Number of men and women enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board....**87**

Approximate number of plates of food served....**34,654**

Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions....**37,953**

Number of patients treated in our free medical/dental clinic....**133**

Number of persons who professed faith in Christ....**277**

Stations and outlets in the U.S. and around the world broadcasting "Unshackled!"....**3,070**