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PGMNews

Angel and his wife Karlyn—
united in Christ, united in life

YOU WELCOMED ANGEL IN FROM THE COLD

When the cold pierces through every layer of clothing and the frigid temperatures send your body and mind into a perpetual survival-based fear . . . *that's the moment* when you have truly known homelessness in Chicago . . . when the bare necessities—food, warm shelter—become a matter of *life and death*. And for 143 years, Pacific Garden Mission has met people at their great moment of need—the most opportune time for intervention and permanent life change. Angel came to escape the cold and, in turn, opened his heart to Jesus Christ. As you read his story, remember it wouldn't be possible without you.

ANGEL

"I used to be, I suppose, a working addict. One day, I was at a birthday party and had been drinking a lot. On the way home, I got pulled over by the police. I got a DUI, which is how I ended up losing my CDL (commercial driver's license). That was all I knew how to do—drive trucks, so I had to resort to working in day labor jobs.

"I got into some arguments because of my addictions, and I decided to live in my van. That was the first time I experienced being homeless. I was really cold. I filled it with pillows and blankets . . . and for a time, if I crawled under them, I was able to stay warm.

“I know what it’s like to be in the cold and live outside. I know what it’s like to struggle.”



“The reason I came to Chicago was because I used to listen to *Unshackled!!*. Even though I would be drinking and smoking cigarettes while living in my van, I would still listen to *Unshackled!!*. When I arrived at Pacific Garden Mission, I parked outside.

“It was December 24th, and there was no place hiring. I had expired plates on my van, too. I remember hearing a preacher teach (during a PGM Gospel service) about Jacob—how he was fighting God his whole life. I was starting to open up to the idea of joining the Bible program but was still hardheaded. I looked up to the ceiling and told God if He wants me to join

“And when he saw that he prevailed not against him, he touched the hollow of his thigh; and the hollow of Jacob’s thigh was out of joint, as he wrestled with him.” —Genesis 32:25 KJV

the Bible Program, He would have to give me a sign and dislocate my hip. When I went back to my van, it was gone. I got emotional and thought to myself—God dislocated my hip!

“I sat down on the curb where my van had been and started crying and laughing at the same time. I got up and started walking toward the Mission. It got cold really quick, and I didn’t want to be out there and waste my life away. I didn’t know what this Bible program was like or what it meant to give my life over to Jesus . . . but I knew I had to give it a shot.

“Once I joined the program, I did continue to have my struggles—but I started listening to the Word of God. It was like I was being pulled into this new life. My mind started thinking right. I actually started believing, and I just gave my life completely over to God. The verse that comes to mind is, ‘So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God,’ Romans 10:17.

“After graduating from the Bible Program, I met my beautiful wife, Karlyn. We married, and together,

we welcomed a beautiful daughter, Emilia, in October 2014. In January of 2020, I began serving as the evening superintendent of PGM. Also, by the grace of God, I serve as the assistant to the pastor at New Jerusalem Baptist Church. All this is to and for the glory of God.

"I never saw myself working in ministry and leading other men like me. But, I can relate to their hardships—addiction, homeless—which brought me to the Bible program. I know what it's like to be in the cold and live outside . . . *to struggle*. So, to be able to help these men just as I was helped makes me grateful.

"It has been quite a journey since coming to the feet of Jesus through PGM. That first Christmas Eve day, I kept thinking, *'How did I end up homeless, away from my family, broke, cold, and hungry . . .'* not knowing the Lord would



Angel holding a Bible study with New Life Bible program men on the patio

use PGM to transform my life forever. I was broken . . . I'd given up on life. But the Lord not only restored my mind and my heart—*He restored my whole life*. He gave me new opportunities to serve Him in ways I never thought I would. And it all started when I walked through the Mission doors that cold, winter day."

The lighthouse and pillar of hope we represent in a struggling city is a vital source of physical and spiritual nourishment. During times of brokenness and hardship, the fields are ripe for sowing seeds of the Gospel. Angel—cold, broken, and lost—came into this refuge of safety and hope for warmth, but he found something even greater . . . *a new life in Christ!* He is now a Godly father and husband, and he counsels and witnesses to those who come here, just as he did. The full circle of transformation sheds light on the work of God—the work you have faithfully supported. During this time of holidays and family, remember that your gifts are spreading hope and light into broken lives, bearing eternal fruit.



After teaching a morning Bible class, Angel answers a student's question

SHOWING GOD'S LOVE AT CHRISTMAS



While Christmas gatherings will look different this year than these images of last Christmas, the meals you help provide will still give nourishment beyond just food. They bring warmth, compassion, and love into the lives of those who, quite often, are experiencing some of the hardest moments of their lives.

With the Gospel of Jesus Christ shared before each meal, there is an opportunity for every transient guest to be fed *spiritually* . . . not just physically. Served with smiles from volunteers, each plate of food gives assurance to these struggling guests—you are *not alone* *this Christmas season*. Thank you for being a part of this ministry of hope and salvation.



GIVE NOW at pgm.org/donate





A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

STANDING AS A BEACON OF HOPE

“If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.”

—John 8:36 KJV

A little over five years ago, we started the New Day addictions program to deal with the root problems that led to homelessness. Looking back, I praise God for His provision and faithfulness in seeing many lives changed.

A recent graduate, Dustin, wrote back and said, “March 25, 2020, I began a 90-day journey in the New Day program that would reshape the trajectory of my life—and not only my life, but the lives of my two young sons and my wife as well. When I arrived at PGM, I was broken down and willing to accept whatever they had to offer in terms of help. My marriage was hanging by a thread, and my family was scared of having me around. What did happen, however, was something far more beneficial than a quick fix or a band-aid. God was changing my life, one broken piece at a time. Now, fast forward almost 110 days later, and my wife and I just celebrated our 5th wedding anniversary. My boys now ask me, ‘Tell us another Bible story, Dad!’ multiple times a day. I have a family and a home away from

home at the Pacific Garden Mission.”

This story, and so many like it, serves as a constant reminder of why we are here. This country continues to be gripped by the pandemic. Riots and looting seem to be commonplace. Chicago saw 81 homicides in just the last few weeks and is approaching 600 for the year. In the midst of all this madness, Pacific Garden Mission continues to stand as a beacon of hope for the many desperate souls, like Dustin, who roam our city streets.

Without PGM, where would Dustin and others like him go? I want to thank you for your faithful support of PGM through your prayers and financial gifts during these difficult times. The darker the world becomes, the brighter our light shines.

On behalf of all those who have sought refuge here, THANK YOU. And may your heart be filled with joy in the Lord this Christmas!



Men who were homeless and transient volunteer for Biblical study in PGM's New Day program.

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GODLY STEWARDSHIP

Stephen Welch,
Director of Development

“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”

—Romans 10:14 KJV

At Pacific Garden Mission, we have one purpose: to reach the lost with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We are stewards of God’s message to mankind. We are America’s oldest and one of the largest Gospel rescue missions providing emergency care for men, women, and children who walk through our doors, homeless and hopeless. This year, we struggled with the pandemic at the Mission, yet we never stopped reaching the lost with the Gospel.

Sometimes, the light shines brightest on the darkest days. And this year, we had another group of people

contact us: those who were seeking the Truth and heard it while listening to *Unshackled!* radio or watching the Pacific Garden Mission television program from their homes. God’s hand at work has produced testimonies of His saving grace.

People are going to find the Truth as God directs them. This is an amazing time for that—more people responded to the Truth delivered on these two programs than ever before. The Truth of God’s Word includes the consequences of sin, the hopelessness without God, the answer of the Gospel, and the forgiveness and salvation that Christ offers. People need to hear how they can be right with God. That is the real problem today.

Your support this year has made it possible for the Gospel of Christ to go out, near and far. Thank you for your faithfulness. We know that without you and Jesus, this light would be out.

May the Christmas story shine God’s glory into your heart and home.

PLEASE PRAY FOR OUR SEPTEMBER GRADUATES

Please help us pray for our most recent New Life Bible program graduating class. Completing the year-long program is not an easy task, and transitioning back into “everyday life” will also be difficult—but it is possible with God! Rebuilding their lives on God’s Word, a firm foundation, is the basis of this program’s curriculum.



Learn more by visiting Pacific Garden Mission, where lost souls find hope, compassion, and purpose.