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PGMNews

YOUR KINDNESS BROUGHT ME OUT OF THE COLD AND INTO CHRIST'S ARMS

Chicago in winter can be a cold, brutal, and deadly place for the homeless. With wind chills below zero in February and March, many times the cold is the one thing that drives the homeless to seek help and find what differentiates Pacific Garden Mission from other warming shelters—the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. At PGM we see record numbers during these frigid months, and we use this as an opportunity to witness and share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Many are born again. And while many are here for warmth and food, the seeds of salvation are planted in their hearts with your help. We would like to share the

story of one such man that came seeking refuge from the cold and ended up accepting Jesus Christ into his heart.

Biaya

“At one point in my life I was a successful business man living the American Dream. My father had emigrated with us from Africa and raised us well. My success, money, and possessions, however, never filled the void I felt in my heart. After I realized this I turned to drugs and gambling, trying desperately to find meaning in my life and to numb the pain from the hole in my life.

**“For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ:
for it is the power of God unto salvation
to every one that believeth” —Romans 1:16**

Out of the Cold—continued from page 1

This road of destruction eventually led me to where I was, sleeping on trains all night in downtown Chicago seeking shelter from the cold. My pride kept me in a state where I would rather stay in my sin than face the reality my choices created. Shame and guilt kept me from turning to my family for help. I tried to get some rest on a train to no avail. The noise, jostling, smells, and other homeless people riding the train made it impossible to sleep, and for two months I struggled through this, night after night.

During the day, I would find shelter on the buses that went to and from casinos. One cold afternoon while riding the bus, I spoke with another homeless man about my needing to find a place to sleep. He told me about Pacific Garden Mission and that is where I headed. I became so humble at that point, and I began to cry. I asked God what it was He was trying to reveal to me. I had all of these questions and after seven days I joined the Bible program. I started to learn who Jesus is and how I had been disconnected from God through sin.

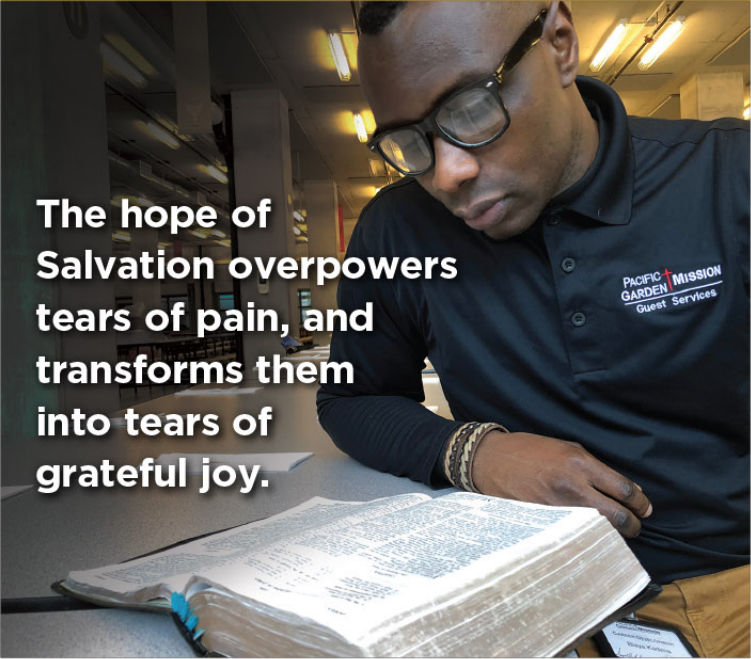
I began to learn the Word of God and how to apply it to my life. I became aware of the bondage in which I had been wrapped for so long. I accepted Jesus Christ into my heart and He freed me from that bondage. My heart became light and my guilt and pride began to fall away.

Now, I minister to the guys who are coming in from the outside. I do their intake, I share my testimony with them, and I help them see the power of God. God took me from a dark, sinful world into a marvelous light. I am free now. I tell them about the Bible program and how it helped me and encourage them to join. God is working through me to help other people. It is the most meaningful job I have ever had.

As I share my story with the new



Biaya working in the PGM Dayroom



The hope of Salvation overpowers tears of pain, and transforms them into tears of grateful joy.

Biaya went from sleeping on trains trying to escape the cold, and being estranged from his family to living a wholesome life that allows him to share God's Word and love with others. Biaya graduates the one year New Life Bible program on January 31. With your help, God has made PGM a place full of Christ-based resources for Biaya to heal and grow. Now he ministers

men and they share their stories with me, we sometimes find ourselves in tears as we share the

"My heart became light and my guilt and pride began to fall away."

pain of our pasts. But the hope of Salvation overpowers tears of pain and transforms them into tears of grateful joy. I have also been allowed to share sermons to the men and tell them about the hope and love of Christ.

Because of PGM and the wisdom of God I have seen my relationships with my father and my daughter restored. I visited my family this Christmas and was moved to know they too see the deep change in me.

to others, proclaiming the Gospel and love of Jesus Christ. Praise the Lord! In these cold months, with record numbers seeking help, we could not do this without you. The Gospel Message is being shared daily to the hurting, and His transformative power continues to change lives forever.

Counseling and sharing the Gospel





Seeking shelter in the Women's Dayroom

Thank you for helping us provide 14,149 nights of safe lodging to our guests this past December. Did you know that over 1,000 of those nights of safe shelter were provided to those with physical disabilities? Many are wheelchair-bound like Pavek (below, left), who lost his leg from infection and also has his identity stolen. Everyone has a story. Without family or friends to help them and due to a lack of government resources, the

disabled need our help more than ever. Together we are making a difference in their lives. A little bit of love and kindness shown by God's people can have an unimaginably powerful impact on the hurting and lost. What's more, such compassion and care is a living testimony of the love of Christ.

GIVE NOW at pgm.org





A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

“I came for a coat, but God gave me a cloak.”

Sometimes God puts us in situations in which he gives us what we need, and not necessarily what we think we want.

We see this clearly in Acts 3. A man who was born lame wants alms from Peter and John and, instead, they give him not what he wants but what he truly needs. Acts 3:6: “Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk.” When I reflect on this story, I think of so many stories I have heard through the years.

Edgar Howard was a lawyer who came to the mission wanting a coat. He had left his top coat and attaché case for collateral at a bar, and on a cold winter night was drawn to the Mission to get a warm coat. At the time, Edgar was representing drug dealers, who would often pay him with their own product. His life was a mess. When he came asking for a coat, a counselor told him about the only one who could change his life, Jesus

Christ. Edgar received Christ as his savior and soon joined our program. Afterward, he founded Christian Legal Services, married, and continues to volunteer his professional services here at the Mission. God used his want to get him what he needed most: eternal life. “I came for a coat,” Edgar testifies now, “but God gave me a cloak.”

Current resident Biaya was on a bus heading to a casino and in need of shelter. While on the bus someone told Biaya he could go to Pacific Garden Mission and sleep for free. He was estranged from his family, used alcohol and drugs, and was ready to give up by the time he walked through our doors. After hearing the Gospel, he received more than a night’s sleep, he surrendered to Jesus Christ. He is now set to graduate from the Mission, finish his degree in computer science, and is reunited with his daughter and family. God used his want for shelter to get Biaya what he needed most: a new heart. Like the lame man, Biaya’s want led him to his need.

Your compassionate support keeps our doors open so we can continue to address the deep wants our neighbors need, while God addresses their deepest needs: Him! In the winter, multitudes make their way to our doors. Their stories differ, but the heartfelt needs are always the same; they find their needs met in Jesus Christ.



Edgar Howard

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GODLY STEWARDSHIP

Stephen Welch,
Director of Development

I have personally witnessed many men and women receiving the Gospel and accepting Jesus Christ. I have learned about the myriad ways in which God led them to Pacific Garden Mission.

I understand and hear the dire physical needs that can be life-threatening — needs such as food, water, and shelter. Once people are settled and out of harm's way, we can present man's greatest need—the need for a Savior.

We are grateful for our faithful supporters in prayer, volunteer hours,

donations and letters. You are partnering with God to bring men and women back to life and to their highest potential.

Sixty-five percent of our staff at Pacific Garden Mission walked through these doors as direct beneficiaries of your love and support—and who better to help the lost than disciples of Jesus Christ who have experienced being lost themselves? We cannot thank you enough for helping us provide a spiritually nourishing environment at Pacific Garden Mission over the course of so many years.

You are making an incredible difference as we advance the Kingdom together. We realize it's not us but the Message:

But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth. —Acts 1:8

WHAT YOUR MONEY SUPPORTS & 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 support us financially, you're not only giving *to* the Mission, but *through* the Mission to people that need your help the most. In December your support made a true difference:

On average, **459** homeless people receive aid and Gospel services each day

104 men and women are enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board

13 mothers with their children sheltered

About **41,766** plates of food served

50,350 items of clothing distributed

311 patients treated in our free medical/dental clinic

326 people professed faith in Christ

3,098 media outlets around the world broadcasting *Unshackled!*

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