

Read Brian's story of a life changed through the power of God.

A FAMILY RENEWED THROUGH CHRIST

You helped Brian restore his family and his relationship with God!

There's nothing like the pain of witnessing a loved one destroy his or her life in the grips of an inconceivably powerful addiction. While those who watch feel helpless, the most devastated of all are the families, children, and loved one who physically and emotionally experience these events. Seeing these tragedies tearing families apart may seem overwhelming . . . but the joy and healing that comes through a life transformed and set free from strongholds is equally uplifting!

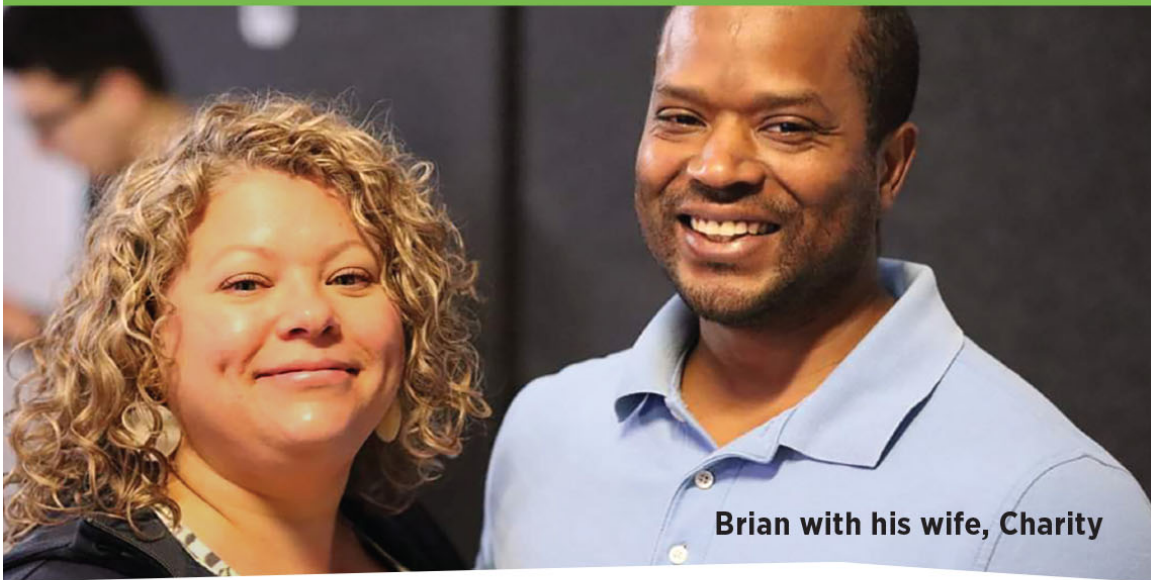
Brian's testimony—made possible with your generous help—reveals this kind of transformation

that lets us know *it's never too late, or too hard, for God to transform, heal, and restore!*

BRIAN

"I was an introvert growing up and was very shy. I grew up in a Christian home, a strict household where no one in my family cursed or drank. I went to college never having had a drink, but I started experimenting, drinking, and partying. The pull of cocaine was that it helped me not be shy and get out of my shell. I was off to the races.

"After college, I got a good job as a project manager at an engineering firm—a six figure job—and started to



Brian with his wife, Charity

climb the corporate ladder. *But, I had this double life.* During the day, I'd be in the office designing pipelines for oil and gas out in west Texas, and at the end of the day, I'd be sitting in a crack house with bedbugs crawling all over me and no bathroom or lights. I was two different people.

"I got married and had three kids. When my third kid was born, my wife was in the hospital with high blood pressure. She'd just given birth, and I remember leaving multiple times to get high while she lay there. That is how powerful the drugs had become; I had no control. I was totally hopeless. The addiction was punctuated by spells of short-term clean seasons as I tried to shake the habit. I think this intermittent abuse made it worse because hopes would rise and fall.

"My wife, parents, relatives, and friends shed more tears and sent up more prayers on my behalf than I will ever know. I had a

"God has moved mightily in restoring relationships that were beyond repair. The contrast between my life before PGM and after is like night and day."

job and a family, but I was close to death—literally, physically, and emotionally. So, I made my way to PGM where I joined and completed the New



A family restored, Brian poses with his children Lilly 9, Jacob 7, Rose 4.

Day addictions recovery program. My life has a distinct delineation, Pre-PGM and Post-PGM. Before I surrendered to Jesus at the Mission, I poured my time, my love, my devotion, my money, my heart and soul, my worship into the pipe. After I left the Mission, the real challenge began.

"I left a very different man than when I came. In the weeks that followed, I did as much as I could to continue the daily routines I learned at Pacific Garden Mission. That kept me focused on the One who was keeping me. I knew I had to continue my service work (I worked in the kitchen at PGM), and I had to stay connected to Godly men. To that end, I sought out a mission in Houston and immediately began serving in their kitchen weekly.

"God has moved mightily in restoring relationships that were beyond repair. I am daily in awe that I still have a family. I came very close, many times, to permanent separation from my wife. The contrast between my life before PGM and after is like night and day. I am present in the lives of my children. My 6-year-old son puts on the armor with me and has Eph 6:10-12 memorized from the KJV! My wife and I are rebuilding our marriage, and I have asked her to forgive



Brian receives his certificate of completion for the PGM 90-Day Addictions Recovery Program.

me for a lifetime of wrongs. Our pastor and counselor meet with us weekly and lead us in Christ-based marriage counseling.

"God continues to show up in the healing process. He is there for me in my moments of trial and weakness as He teaches me to be the husband and father He intended me to be. My father and I minister to the homeless and addicted people of downtown Houston on Sundays together. This has been a true blessing to me. God brings to remembrance the brokenness, the absolute need I have for Him, my utter dependence on Him to sustain me. If I have a fear, it is that I will become unplugged, forgetting how much grace I require daily.

"When I was drowning in my bondage, I would grasp onto anything, boldly rebuking and binding Satan, chanting the serenity prayer, NA, CA, AA, various outpatient and inpatient treatments . . . It was like grasping at little bits of wood and flotsam—they would hold me afloat for a

***"Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord,
and in the power of his might."
—Ephesians 6:10***

while, but I would eventually become waterlogged and sink beneath the waves, flailing wildly again for something to sustain me. For years, I went on like this, scrambling from scrap to sinking scrap of false hopes. To the untrained eye, PGM may look like a big foreboding building full of lost and sinking men—but to me, it was my big, beautiful rescue ship!”



Brian and his father witness and share the Gospel with the homeless living on the streets of Houston.

The joy of children having their father and a wife having her husband healed and transformed is something to rejoice over. Brian, back at home now for more than a year, has become the Godly husband and father God intended for him to be. For those seeking lifelong change that can weather the storms, through both

peaks and valleys, the Gospel message of Jesus Christ holds strong with the same eternal truth it proclaimed two millennia ago—the same truth we have proclaimed here at Pacific Garden Mission for over 143 years. Thank you for your role in spreading God’s love and truth.

A SPECIAL GIVING REQUEST!

THANK YOU to all our faithful supporters for helping PGM lead guests to put their faith in Christ. Let’s take advantage of the opportunity we have this Resurrection Sunday to be a strong Christian light to Chicago’s neediest through generous giving by April 4. Your support will provide a warm welcome and meals to all seeking shelter at PGM.



GIVE NOW pgm.org/donate

Guests are treated to warm hospitality with Resurrection Sunday meals.



A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

ROOM WHEN THERE IS NO ROOM

“And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” —Mt 25:40

This winter has brought us many unique challenges. In addition to the usual winter weather in Chicago—the dreaded polar vortex, sub-zero wind chills, and more residents seeking relief from the extreme conditions—the virus has added additional obstacles. While we have prioritized safety measures to keep our residents healthy and make sure we do not go back to the number of positive cases we saw last spring, we still have our God-given calling to help those who have nowhere else to go.

As a staff, we met and had various ideas about fitting more people into the building while also maintaining a CDC-compliant facility. Tents were too expensive, so we converted our large greenhouse into additional shelter for the men. While I was in the converted greenhouse, one of our guests was writing about his experience in this new environment. I asked if I could read it. The following is from one of the homeless men in this area:

“On Nov. 25, 2020, in the state of

Illinois, 125 people died from COVID-19 . . . but the Lighthouse (PGM) wanted to continue their purpose, which is to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ. They wanted to continue providing shelter, guest services, and beds, but there was no more room, according to CDC social distance guidelines. This is when the Holy Spirit intervened in the imagination of the 143-year-old organization: they converted the greenhouse into a day room! The greenhouse was built for beautiful and exotic plants and flowers—but now, it houses men who need shelter and answers to life’s questions. The guests in the greenhouse are being described *as a good bunch of men, special, blessed . . .* and one speaker even called the men *precious*. At this time, the greenhouse really is special and precious. It’s providing room when there is no room.”

These words were touching. Thank you for your love and support. Keep praying for us as God continues to provide and make a way when there is no way.

And as we approach Resurrection Sunday, please pray that the guests who have sought shelter here this winter will also seek spiritual refuge in Christ!

The homeless who come to PGM are treated as welcome guests, and receive food, shelter, and the Gospel.

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GODLY STEWARDSHIP

Stephen Welch,
Director of Development

We have been praying for wisdom, and we invite you to join us. We know God has a plan, and we trust Him. Almost a year ago, in April 2020, many of our guests and staff tested positive for COVID-19, and we knew we had to make lightning-fast changes to our building setup to stop the spread of the virus. That meant protecting the Gospel ministry and the people serving in it while also continuing to minister to our guests with the Gospel's transforming message.

We began strict guidelines on social distancing and capacity along with many other safety procedures. By September 2020, we had a perfect negative COVID-19 test score of every soul in the building—staff, and guests!

Our greatest challenge has been how to accommodate the homeless in the winter because the bitter cold can cost them their lives. But, Pacific Garden Mission has been committed to remaining a place of safe refuge in the winter, especially when temperatures drop. One February, a few years ago, we had 1,178 souls in the building. Last year, a man died less than a block away, frozen under a tarp by the Amtrack building. Warm food, clothing, shelter, and showers are essential—but the most important thing is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which transforms lives

for all eternity. And over the years, we realized that God uses the elements to reach the lost with the Gospel.

As cold weather continues over the next several weeks, there is a significant need right now, and we do not want to turn these loved ones away. We've implemented a plan to use the greenhouses for overnight stays, the second-floor dorms as day rooms, and all other available spaces. We hired more seasonal employees and added three shifts to cover the additional areas and needs seven days a week.

We want to be known as Chicago's Gospel Warming Center. As you know, there are multiple services with invitations to receive Christ and join the programs we offer. Everything is free, and each person who comes here will meet with a counselor in our intake center to lay out a plan to help all of our guests *to* become fully functioning followers of Christ.

We'll soon be preparing for Resurrection Sunday, celebrating all that Christ accomplished through His sacrifice for us. We pray that many who have come to PGM to get out of the cold will join us in celebration as redeemed sons and daughters of God!

Please pray for the men, women, and children we minister to—they are each someone's child, sibling, or parent. No one should die in the cold or in their sins. Jesus is the answer for all eternity, and He is using you and PGM at a time like this.

Thank you for your faithful support.

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