



ARTICLE BY DANIEL WOOLMAN

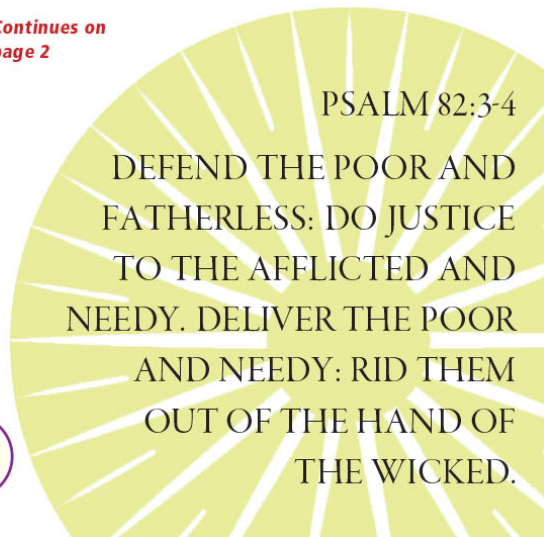
WHEN THE MISSION IMPLEMENTED a new policy a few years ago limiting the time that people could stay at the mission it was done out of concern and love for our guests. What was realized was that there is a fine line between providing genuine help and enabling a lifestyle that is neither healthy nor productive. To God's glory what we found after starting this policy was that many people were given that little extra push to take a step forward in life and start making important decisions towards progress and healing. Amazingly, individuals who had been in our facility for years joined our addictions recovery and Bible programs.

This being said, the new policy was prayerfully enforced with love and discretion. Individuals without the resources or physical ability to work were shown patience and love. Over the last four years I have been here I have formed relationships with some of these people that truly lack the ability to work and the resources to survive on their own. Sometimes we tend to form assumptions

about homelessness and it's cause but what I have come to learn is that with each individual comes a completely unique set of circumstances that have led to them being homeless. We are sharing three stories in this month's newsletter, two of men that are still homeless utilizing the resources of PGM and one which was homeless but as a result of the new policy, he joined our New Day Program and is now living a completely changed life.

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**A rest from the storm, the PGM day room, shown here can sometimes be the last hope for many on this earth.**

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Walking into our transient guest day room can be a bit overwhelming. It can be noisy, smelly, and many times take on an overall gloomy presence. When you look around most of the faces lack joy, hope, and that spark of life that you tend to see in most people. Often, there is a spirit of defeat and sadness. It is almost as if you can sense it in the air. Imagine losing everything. Many times, though, it doesn't take much for that spark of life to return and can be done through a simple genuine smile, a pair of gloves, a warm meal or an encouraging Gospel Message.

## Robert

**Robert, a 63-year-old man** who I first met several years ago at PGM, lost the use of his legs after having a stroke. He had been a cross-country semi-truck driver and suffered a stroke while delivering here in Chicago. After spending several months in the hospital doing rehabilitation, he was released. After spending the last of his savings on medical bills he found himself with

no job, no resources, and having to use a wheelchair. Without money or family to help him he had no other choice but to seek out shelter, which led him to Pacific Garden Mission. It took him several years before he received disability which he just recently obtained. Even with that, it is not enough to find housing right away. While he is on a long waiting list for housing, he still does not know when a place will become available for him.

I have tried witnessing to him and have found that simple acts of kindness can be just as effective as a sermon. As I formed a close relationship with Robert, who admittedly is not saved, he recently made a comment to me that shed light on the fact that God is working on his heart. "When I first got here, I was completely closed to the idea of Jesus and Christianity, but now, surprisingly, I am open to it and will actually listen with open ears."



Robert

PSALM 32:7

THOU ART MY HIDING  
PLACE; THOU SHALT  
PRESERVE ME FROM  
TROUBLE; THOU SHALT  
COMPASS ME ABOUT  
WITH SONGS OF  
DELIVERANCE. SELAH.

## Najah

**Najah, originally from Israel** emigrated to the U.S. two decades ago. A decade after arriving here he lost his leg in an automobile accident. For the last nine years he has been struggling and because he is an immigrant, he has been unable to return home to Israel or to get help here in the U.S. His son, the only family he has left, sends him money when he can afford to but it is not enough to live on. Unable to get disability and unable to return home he is stuck in an unfortu-

nate predicament. With no proper documentation, being diabetic, and having only one leg, he is unable to support himself.

Najah could be in the cold right now with little to eat, but instead, he is in a warm safe place where he is also exposed to the Gospel Message of Jesus Christ. When I asked if there was anything in particular he would like to say, he initially said no. Shortly after, however, he approached me saying that he wanted to thank Pastor Phil and Pastor Green for everything they have done.

\* \* \*



Both of these men, unable to work and with no family to help them, would be out in the cold and lacking food if Pacific Garden Mission was not here. If they had found another shelter to go to they would not have been exposed to

the Gospel Message. Here there is both hopes of salvation and safety. Both men, even if they would rather be in different situations, still are grateful for the help they continue to receive.

*If you would like to write to Robert Travanty or Najah Aslim with words of encouragement you can send your letters to the mission here and they will be delivered to them.*

## Ricky

*After being in our day room* for over a month, and knowing that his time here was running out, Ricky knew he needed to make an important decision about his life. He shared his testimony recently with me. You will be inspired by the work God has done for him.

“My childhood was kind of rocky. My father was in prison, and I was a ward of the state. I had a grandmother who I thought loved me but looking back she was very

abusive. I remember at six years old being sexually abused by a family member. I got put into a mental institution as a child. I remember going there and being with other children locked up in a room and being forced to take medication at about seven or eight years old.

As a teenager, I started following what the other older guys around me did and that is when I started learning ‘the streets’. I started stealing and would break into places. At that time, I started going to jail. I was arrested at the age of eight for the first time for stealing a pair of shoes. That started a repeating cycle of going to boy’s homes to group homes to foster homes and going through the sexual and physical abuse. Because of all of this, I started experimenting with drugs. I became a young alcoholic. I would drink and drink and drink. At the time, I didn’t know it, but I was drinking to drown out my pain. I was a human garbage can. Whatever I could take to get high and numb the pain I would. At 17 years old, I started smoking crack cocaine. My life spun out of control from there. I was in and out of jail and went from drugs to gangs to prison over and over.”

“Eventually, I had come to a place where I had just given up. So finally, at the age of 48, I came to a point where I had lost everything again. With nothing left and nowhere to go I came to Pacific Garden Mission. I was always trying to find a way out myself without having to come back to the Lord and do it. I finally remember saying ‘Lord, please help me! I can’t stop getting high.’ I realized I could not stop on my own.”

“I was sitting in the day room here at the mission, and someone came in and offered for people to sign up for the Addictions Recovery Program. The guy asked if anyone wanted help from their addictions and I raised my hand. I looked around and realized I was the only one raising my hand. They got me into the program right away.”

As I went through the New Day Program, I started to realize that all of the pain and suffering in my life had happened for a reason. What was the reason? I truly believe it was the Lord using it to draw me close to Him and become totally reliant on Him. I knew this time I had to let go of everything. If I wanted this thing to work out right and for me to truly be delivered from my addictions, my pain, and my anger I would have to let go of everything and



completely surrender. With God's help, that is what I did. I let go of the anger of my childhood, the abuse, the abandonment, the guilt of my past, and now I feel so free, free from all of that bondage. If somebody were to ask me how they could change their life, I would tell them "Jesus Christ." I would say, Jesus Christ, that is the only way. If He could change my life He can change anybody's life. I really believe that."

Ricky is now married. He is living outside of the mission with his wife and is employed full time at PGM. He is a member of a church. Speaking to him recently he mentioned that he is no longer angry for the injustices he faced as a child. He has forgiven those that hurt him. "Life is good now," he told me. I see it in his demeanor too. He is a very patient and kind man who, if you didn't know his past, you would not ever guess he had lived the life he has. It is a powerful testimony to the transforming power of God.

*With prayer,* I believe no one is beyond God's reach. Sometimes it can be discouraging to see people who are constantly and repeatedly exposed to the Gospel Message but aren't open to it. It makes you wonder what can be done to spread the love of Christ more effectively. For people like Robert and Najah, it is a relief on my spirit that they have a safe place to sleep, eat and spend the day. For 140 years PGM has been open 24 hours a day seven days a week. For 140 years we have never closed. This simply is amazing and is all through the Grace of God. Our donors are what makes this possible. Ricky, who went from being drug and jail-bound is now

PROVERBS 3:5-1  
TRUST IN THE LORD WITH  
ALL THINE HEART; AND  
LEAN NOT UNTO THINE  
OWN UNDERSTANDING.  
IN ALL THY WAYS  
ACKNOWLEDGE HIM,  
AND HE SHALL DIRECT  
THY PATHS.



Ricky



**A transformed life. After graduating the New Life Program he has gotten married and is working full time in Maintenance.**

a role model and a fully functioning follower of Christ. Imagine how many other people have been changed here at Pacific Garden Mission and the threads of faith they have woven throughout the world now. Only God knows the true impact of this old lighthouse, but through the stories we see here daily, we know God continues to work miracles. May we continue in prayer for all the lost souls that come through our doors.



**THE NEW DAY PROGRAM:** PGM's highly successful ministry of helping people reclaim their lives from the stronghold of addiction through discipline, counseling and Bible study.





## A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

# The Brightest Spot in Chicago.

In the book, *A Doorway to Heaven*, author Carl F. H. Henry wrote of his conversation with Mel Trotter, saying: “He returned to Pacific Garden Mission as often

as he could, considering his tremendous travel and his duties at Grand Rapids. ‘The Pacific Garden Mission means everything to me,’ Mel said. ‘I consider it the brightest spot in all Chicago. Every time I go to Chicago the first place I start for is the old mission, and find the spot on the altar where Jesus spoke peace to my soul.’ ” Mel Trotter himself was powerfully saved at PGM and spent the rest of his life as an influential evangelist.

The phrase that stands out is, “I consider it the brightest spot in all Chicago.” Of all of the places in Chicago to see, to many today, this is still the brightest spot. Chicago is a city of darkness, pain, and suffocating despair. Drugs and violence are ubiquitous, in 2017, the city had 2,785 shooting incidents and 3,457 shooting victims, resulting in 650 murder victims. These numbers are staggering, we have seen many people wash ashore at our doorstep that have been shot, brutalized and emotionally spent, just looking for some help. I still remember the story of a man showing one of our counselors his scarred legs as he recalled

how his mother would dip him in scalding water as a child up to his waist for some sort of diabolical punishment. Last



**Mel Trotter's life was transformed at PGM. He became one of the 20th century's most renowned evangelists.**

week a lady in the hallway told me about her head being stomped on in an act of domestic violence.

For some, the physical wounds have healed, but the emotional scars are as fresh as the day that they happened. We offer more than just the basics which can only meet a temporary need, but as Isaiah says, “The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;” Isa 61:1

We see so many that are thankful for the smallest act of kindness, an extra bowl of soup, a kind word, a pair of gloves on a bitterly cold day. Another man that is a member of our New Day recovery program telling me that instead of watching the super bowl he went to his bunk and could not put his Bible down. He said he came here just for treatment but now God has opened his eyes to His dear Son Jesus Christ. Still today for many the brightest place in Chicago is not the skyline, or the lake but that rescue mission in the south loop, Pacific Garden Mission.





## FINANCIAL UPDATE Stephen Welch, Director of Development

Through the faithfulness of God's people, we have seen a tremendous impact on our debt. We have come a long way but are still nowhere near where we want to be. With our mortgage, our \$300,000 water bill, and heating costs over the winter (\$17,000/month), at times it can be overwhelming. The fact that the people of God are responding to our needs is a tremendous blessing. I received an email from our independent financial consultant on January 10, 2018, stating the following:

*"I am pleased to present a very good 6-month financial report, and 5-year Operating Trends exhibit. We continue to report several key excellent trends when compared to budget and prior year results: We reported a net gain of \$788 Thousand compared to a prior year loss of \$337 Thousand. This is driven by favorable expense variances in compensation and benefits along with \$752 thousand of Legacy Gifts in November and December coupled with good growth in donations.*

*Our Operating GAIN increased by nearly 186% from the Operating LOSS for the same period last year. The contributors to this large reduction included a sustained (6%) growth in our donations along with PGM total compensation running nearly 3% below budget. FY 2018 Operating expenses are nearly 5% lower than FY 2017. The primary drivers are reduced salaries and an increased emphasis on expense review, resulting in favorable expense variances in the Operations and Unshackled Ministries.*

*Our mortgage debt is now well below \$3,600,000. At the beginning of 2017, our unpaid mortgage was \$3.820 Million, and during the year, we paid down our mortgage by \$259 thousand, including principal pay downs, funded by donor-designated gifts that totaled \$166 thousand. On December 31, 2017, our mortgage stood at \$3.561 Million. If you were to look at interest expense at 1/2017, monthly was \$13,983, and at 12/2017, monthly interest was \$12,777."*

On behalf of all of us at Pacific Garden Mission and those you'll spend eternity with—thank you for your faithful support. You are making an eternal difference. To God be the glory for the great things He has done!

## 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 (JANUARY)

Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services....**622**

Number of men and women enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board....**101**

Approximate number of plates of food served....**42,556**

Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions....**34,186**

Number of patients treated in our free medical/dental clinic....**188**

Number of persons who professed faith in Christ....**357**

Stations and outlets in the U.S. and around the world broadcasting "Unshackled!"....**3,088**

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