

THE GREAT COMMISSION: TO REACH THE LOST WITH THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST

ARTICLE BY STEPHEN WELCH

Jesus gave us the command in Matthew 28:16-20.
We know this as the Great Commission.

¹⁸ And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. ¹⁹ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: ²⁰ Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

AS CHURCH MEMBERS, we often support missionaries who travel the world to share the Gospel. But an amazing thing happens at Pacific Garden Mission; the world comes right to our door. This month we want to share testimonies of people from various parts of the world that have come here with different issues but have encountered the living God through His Son Jesus Christ. Their lives have been absolutely changed. Open your heart to see what God is doing through the ministry of Pacific Garden Mission.

The following three testimonies are from people who came to the mission from a foreign land. More importantly, they were saved by Jesus Christ when they walked through our doors. Since 1877 we have been sharing the Gospel message of Jesus Christ to all who walked through our doors.

*We have cleaned up the broken
English for easier reading*

Nenad Nikolic - Serbia

I grew up in a Christian family. My grandpa was a pastor. They tried to introduce me to God when I was a kid. They taught me a lot about God, but I didn't really "know" God.



When I became a teenager, I began to hang around the wrong guys. I started smoking weed then I started using heroine. I started to like heroine and began to enjoy my sin. I knew there was something wrong with me. My parents saw that something was going on, so they took me to rehab. After that, I was sober for maybe a year. I began to use again and go back and forth between rehabs.

I decided I want to do something with my life. I was clean during this period of my life. In my country of Serbia, it's hard to find a job. So, I had a chance to come to the United States and start a new life. I was happy and decided to come here in 2012. I found a job and worked. Then I met the wrong people again. I heard about heroin again and started to use again. Then I began to buy cocaine and mix everything together. I started to go to parties and sleep around with women.

My boss gave me 2-3 days off because I was doing a great job. He told me you could go to Chicago for a little bit to rest if you want and then come back here. So, I decided to go to Chicago. At the bus station in St. Louis, I bought a drink even though I don't drink. I have

Continues on page 2





Nenad is in the New Life Program. He is growing in Christ, enjoys helping others and the mission. He is responsible for the Men's Division Laundry and has started learning the television ministry. Nenad graduates in January 2017. We are excited that God sent him to PGM.

no idea why I bought it and decided to drink. I was drunk and fell asleep on the bus. I slept the whole way to Chicago. The bus driver woke me up in Chicago. When I stood up, I twisted my left leg. I told him to wait a minute I can't stand on my leg. I said give me a minute, and I tried to stand up again and twisted my leg again. I knew something was wrong. After that, my foot was purple, red, green, all kinds of colors. The next ten days were terribly painful. I couldn't work or sit or do anything.

On December 7th it was very very cold and raining. I had two garbage bags with my clothes in them. I had to go somewhere, but I didn't know where. When I got to Pacific Garden Mission, they asked me to wait in the day room until after lunch and then they would find me a place to go. After a couple of minutes, Pastor Phil and Pastor Green came up to talk to me. They asked me if I wanted to join the Bible program. They asked if I wanted to learn about Jesus Christ. I said, "Yes of course!" They told me to grab my stuff and head upstairs to get some rest, and we'll see you tomorrow.

So, I've been here nine months on the New Life program. I feel great! I met Jesus Christ here. He is my Savior! I know I cannot expect change overnight but I came here a smoker, and I do not smoke anymore. I feel much better now because I can confess my sins to God and I don't have to worry about what I did in the past anymore. I know now that I'm clean and living for Jesus Christ, Satan is mad because I'm not on his side anymore. I believe all my strongholds are going away little by little. I don't want ever to forget from where I came and what Jesus Christ has done for me. I've given my life to him, I trust him, I believe in him, and I want to follow him.

Javier Pecunia – Puerto Rico



My name is Javier. I am from Puerto Rico. I want to tell you how God has started working in my life. At the age of 16, I started storing drugs for a drug cartel. Through that relationship my drug business started. I started selling and at the same time started using drugs. And, that is when the consequences started. Being in prison five times. I lost everything including hope.

I remember one night my cell mate told me about a program called "Unshackled." He told me, "Why don't you listen to this?" I remember that night it was about eleven o'clock when they aired the "Unshackled" program. I started listening to it. I began to hear the testimonies. The testimonies were very interesting how God had transformed their lives through this program. So, then I said God can do the same thing for me! I had heard about God before so I knew a little bit about him. I felt in my heart that he could do something for me as he had done to the people which I heard on the "Unshackled" program.

A couple of months after that it was time for me to leave the prison. And, then the friend that I had in prison who was from Waukegan, IL told me, "Why don't you give yourself an opportunity in the United States?" I told him I have nowhere to go. Then, he told me that since he was getting out before me, he told me, "I am going to give you my number," and to think about it. "If you want to give yourself an opportunity call me." After thinking about it for awhile, I called my sister. I decided I am going to give myself an opportunity somewhere else. So, I told my friend, yes, and they came and talked to me. That is when they talked to Angel and Pastor Green at Pacific Garden Mission. And, through them, I was able to come here. They helped me with my airfare. So, I came to this place even though I don't speak English. My language is Spanish, so it was difficult for me here at Pacific Garden Mission. They started giving me classes in English. They



Javier Pecunia, New Life Program graduate and Pacific Garden Mission employee serving in Logistics. Javier picks up food donations across metropolitan Chicago to help feed the multitudes.



started helping me. It was frustrating because I couldn't understand them and they couldn't understand me. Through all of this, I thank God that I started growing closer and closer to Him.

After being here, I started working in transportation. I started as an assistant driver. I also started taking classes in English, and I had a bilingual Bible. Even though I didn't understand, God helped me through it. Then, I started to be a part of the Spanish Ministry, where I started growing spiritually in my language. I thank God that they gave me the opportunity to start preaching in Spanish. And through the glory of God, I say it. This place has been a blessing by the hand of God. Now, I find myself here working as a driver. I have my own route to pick up donations of needed food for the mission.

What God has done in my life is change my life of hopelessness to a life full of hope. Now I have a life of motivation. It has been tremendous. He has changed my life completely. That is why I am thankful. Because God used this ministry, Pacific Garden Mission, as a tool to change my life so that I could keep on growing. The language was not an impairment. I have gotten an opportunity to grow not only in my language but English also. I have been able to demonstrate what God has done in my life with actions. Thank God for what he has done in my life!

So, like I tell you, through this program is where I have been growing. Each and everyone of us has their own opportunity. I tell the Hispanic people who are listening to me that there is a place here, Pacific Garden Mission, who has open arms to everyone. To the people who are listening to me, I give you an invitation to accept Jesus Christ. If you are in need of any assistance in drug addiction or in anything we are here to receive you in the name of Jesus Christ.

Gvansta Gogoladze: Georgia



My name is Gvansta. I'm from the country of Georgia. I am 23 years old. Last year I ended up trying to commit suicide in my own house. The neighbors called my mother, and she came to the house and saw the situation. It was horrible. I was drinking.

I have two wonderful daughters, and I am divorced from my husband. I tried everything to keep my family together, but I was too young. He cheated on me, he was abusive, and an alcoholic. I had no choice, so I had to divorce him.



Gvansta graduated the New Life Program, became employed and is living independent of the mission.

I was trying to be a very good mother and a wife, but after the divorce, my life was messed up. Every day was full of nonsense, and I just didn't know what to do. I didn't know what I wanted from life. I didn't know anything. I was confused. The main problem was I knew that the Lord was chasing me. He's a chasing God. He got my attention when my mother came home and saw me on the floor.

Then, I thought I was going to give up on life. I continued to try to find different ways to commit suicide. I felt like I should go away from Georgia. Maybe I should change something. Always doing things my way and leaning onto my own understanding. I decided to come to my dad.

First, I thought I had ended up in a shelter. I was planning to be here for just a few days just to be away from my dad for a little while. I was sitting in the day room, and I was an overnight guest for awhile. I heard about the one year Bible program. I just looked up and said, "Lord I know it's all about you and that you're trying to get my attention." What I've learned here is that leaning on your own understanding instead of God's is not the right way. I'm trying to look at good examples because I was in a bad circle of friends. That was my main problem. God brought me out of that bad circle and put me into this wonderful Christian circle. I'm trying to learn more and more each and every day. My faith is growing and my trust toward God. It's amazing.

I grew up in a Christian family, and I always thought I was a Christian, but I was not saved. I got saved here at Pacific Garden Mission. As soon as I got here, I accepted the Lord. That's when my path began to shine. That's when God truly started getting my attention. He began to transform my life. He has done a great job, and he is still working on me.

I'm now ready to be a real Christian mother to my daughters. I've spent a lot of time away from them. I was always confused as to why this is hap-



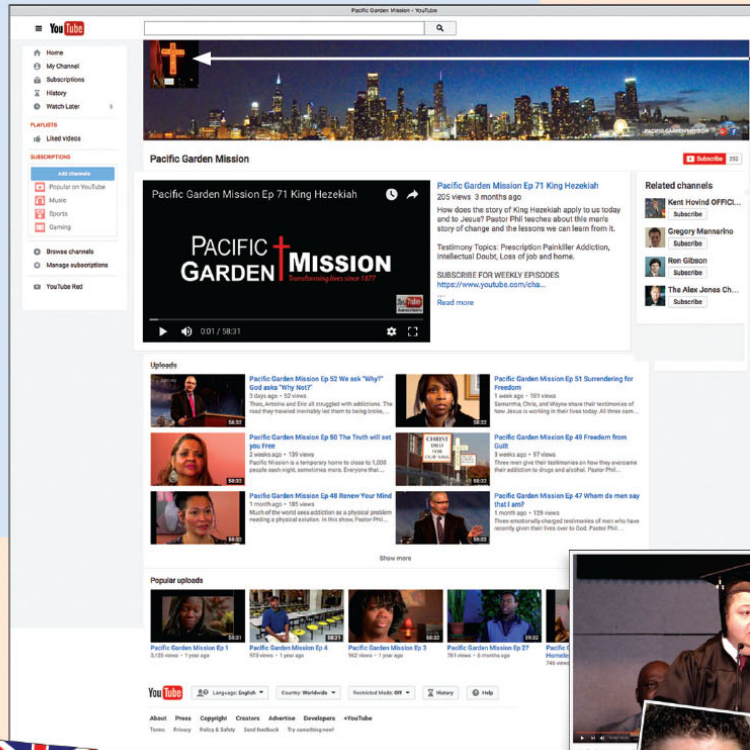
pening to me, and now I realize it was necessary so I could be the mother that my children deserve. Now I know that I'm going to be a good example. I thank God for that!

The testimonies you have just read and others can be watched and shared on our official YouTube channel.

Continues on page 5

PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION YouTube Channel

Go To: www.YouTube and type in "Pacific Garden Mission" in the search field. Then, click on the cross that says "Jesus Saves"



When you follow the instructions above you have access to over 70 inspiring programs. We ask you to please share them with family, friends, and acquaintances and fulfill the Great Commission. Our purpose is to reach the lost with the Gospel of Christ.

Pictured below: Christopher Lee seen on PGM's YouTube Channel giving his testimony at his Bible Program graduation.



CHRISTOPHER LEE came from England, and you can watch his testimony on Episode 72. He was watching television in his hotel room and miserably drunk. He came across our television program on TLN. The message spoke to him and he came to the mission and believed in Faith that Jesus can save him. He graduated the New Life Program, and his life is being transformed by Christ. He is now a staff member at Pacific Garden Mission (pictured below) using his skills in our development department.



Please share this and our other Episodes with friends who need a Savior. The one hour program is made up of one-half hour of testimonies (like the ones you have been reading in our PGM News) and the last half hour a sermon by our President, Philip Kwiatkowski, affectionately known as Pastor Phil. The invitation at the end is very clear and a great soul winning tool.

Thank you for being part of this ministry. We are able to advance the Gospel because of friends like you who are making an eternal difference.





A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

Beauty for Ashes

Isa 61:1 **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;**

²**To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;**

³*To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.*

When I think of the ministry of Pacific Garden Mission, v. 3 “to give unto them beauty for ashes” comes to mind. So many of our residents come to us hurting and in pain. Saturday night during the invitation, a woman came forward that was the victim of an abusive relationship. She removed her sunglasses to reveal two severely swollen eyes that were blackened to the point that her pupils could not be seen. Her hair was cut with box cutters and she was terrified. Of all the places she could have gone for help, she came to the right place, where she can be loved and the gospel can be shared. I prayed with her and comforted her by letting her know that we will do everything we can to help. God can give beauty for ashes.

Chicago has just experienced its most violent month in almost twenty years. The numbers are staggering: Chicago has recorded 487 homicides and more than 2,800 people shot so far this year, compared to 491 homicides and 2,988 people shot all of last year. Some

of the victims end up at Pacific Garden Mission. I walked through the day room and saw a young man in a wheelchair. I conversed with him and he stated that he was the victim of a gunshot. Someone walked up to him and shot him in the back. Now as a 22 year old young man facing the possibility of life in a wheelchair, and with no high school diploma and no place to stay, life looks bleak. Praise God he is here where we can minister to him, and God can give beauty for ashes.

I believe that God has placed us in the heart of a city torn by violence and sin to be a light to those in darkness and to bind up the brokenhearted. Continue to pray for this ministry, and thank you, because your support has made it possible for those in darkness to come here and be given beauty for ashes. If we were not here, where would they go? Thank you.



Our day room at PGM is a mission field where the lost can come, hear, and experience the Gospel.

MISSION FIELD—Continued from page 4

There are many here at Pacific Garden Mission from foreign lands; Central America, Africa, Asia, and Europe. Others are from all over the United States. Some have traveled great distances to receive help. They heard that Jesus Christ transforms lives. The vast majorities

have come a short distance from a massive city known as Chicago. A city buzzing with lost souls. Those who arrive here at PGM all have one thing in common. When they walked through our doors of hope they encountered the living God through His Son Jesus Christ. To God be the glory!



FINANCIAL UPDATE Stephen Welch, Director of Development

The Lord has blessed us with many wonderful developments during the month of August. What stands out to me are the lives that are forever changed by Jesus Christ. I hope you have enjoyed learning about those lives and the transformational testimonies of those men and women. None of this would be possible without your financial support.

The first month of our new fiscal year reported a \$200,000 shortfall in donations needed to fund operations.

As our program grows we have experienced a greater reliance upon leasing cargo vans, resulting in a projected annual expense of \$50,000. Instead, prayerfully consider donating towards the \$40,000 needed so PGM can purchase two new transport vans?

I am also working closely with human resources, and have developed a business plan to provide us with an adequate and competent staff. For years we have been overwhelmed and understaffed. We are praying for this growth so that we can adequately care for the guests we serve. Commitment to excellence will require additional revenue.

Please pray with us as we ask God to advance His kingdom at the Mission according to His will.

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 (August)

Daily average of homeless receiving aid and attending Gospel services....**703**

Number of men and women enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board....**109**

Approximate number of plates of food served....**30,301**

Estimated number of items of clothing distributed or given to other missions....**25,520**

Number of patients treated in our free medical/dental clinic....**185**

Number of persons who professed faith in Christ....**179**

Stations and outlets in the U.S. and around the world broadcasting "Unshackled!"....**3119**

PGM NEWS OCTOBER 2016 • Vol. 81, No. 10 Published monthly by **PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION**

1458 South Canal Street, Chicago, IL 60607-5201 E-mail: pgmnews@pgm.org Phone: 312. 492. 9410

Fax: 312. 492. 9414 Websites: www.pgm.org www.unshackled.org

PHILIP KWIATKOWSKI, PRESIDENT STEPHEN WELCH, DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT PAUL HIGDON, DESIGN