



Emmett broke away from the cycle of destruction to a new life in Christ.

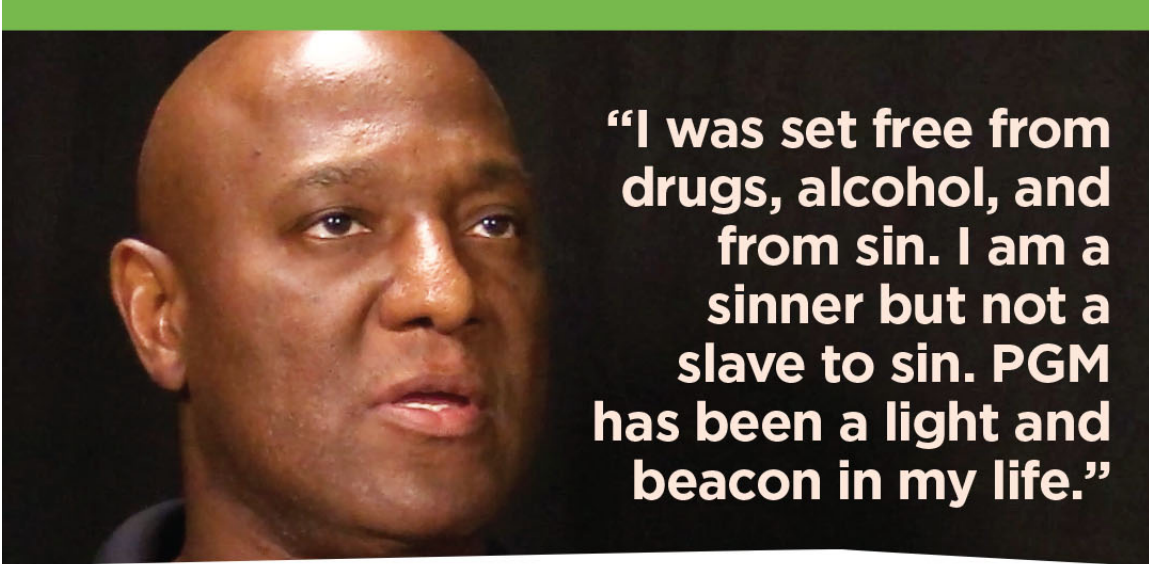
HEARING THE GOSPEL AT PGM SAVED MY LIFE

One of the most encouraging things to see at PGM is when our Bible program alums return to PGM to visit. When they do, it encourages the staff who know them and the men and women in the Bible program, showing them that long-term change and freedom from addiction and sin are possible. In this month's issue, we hear from Emmett, who graduated from the Bible program and now comes to PGM almost every Saturday to join us for our evening service and share his testimony with those still at PGM. We hope his story encourages you and reflects God's meaningful use of your support in the lives of men and women at PGM.

EMMETT

"I was born in 1960 on the west side of Chicago. One day, when I was five years old, we were going to the store and I witnessed my stepfather shoot and kill a man with a shotgun just feet away from me. I would go down into the hallway of the building where I lived and would find people dead. I grew up in the ghetto, and the rats were so bad you could hear them biting at the door, trying to get in.

"When I was nine years old, my mother died of cirrhosis of the liver because she was an alcoholic. That devastated my life. I started using alcohol and drugs at the age of ten. I started off inhaling bike glue, and then



“I was set free from drugs, alcohol, and from sin. I am a sinner but not a slave to sin. PGM has been a light and beacon in my life.”

I went to alcohol and then marijuana. It went from one thing to another: from cocaine to heroin. I struggled with drugs for 30 to 40 years. I was in and out of juvenile homes, Cook County jail, and prison. I found myself living in abandoned buildings and stealing just to keep up with my addiction.

“In total, I did 20 years and three months in the penitentiary, but it came to a time in my life when I was serving my last sentence of 12 years when I started looking back over my life and seeing everything I was doing.

I was going in a circle. I would get out of prison and begin using drugs right away and then end up right back in prison.

“One of the inmates was a Christian, and he invited me to church. When I got to the church, they started singing my grandmother’s old song ‘Jesus is on the main line; tell Him what you want.’ That let me know I was in the right place, so I started returning to church and reading my Bible. I started doing Bible studies, and the Word of God began transforming my life.

“When it came down to about six months left in my sentence, I still didn’t have any place to parole to, so somebody told me to parole back into Pacific Garden Mission. I got out of prison in August of 2016 and came to PGM. When I first went into the dayroom, I knew that wasn’t where the Lord wanted me to be, so I went into the 90-day addictions recovery program. When I completed that, I went



Emmett sings during our Praise and Testimony service.

into the year-long Bible program. Toward the end of the New Life program, I went into career development, which helped me make job resumes. While in the program, I met a lovely woman named Senora, and we married. Today, I work for the Chicago Transit Authority and have been a full-time worker for five years.

“The main thing I can tell you about being in Pacific Garden Mission is that if you apply your life, are obedient, and do the right things for the right reasons, you will become a fully functioning follower of Jesus Christ. It is not what I did, it’s the glory of God and the humbleness and obedience to His Word. His Word will transform your life. I am not perfect.

“God is always good. One Scripture I remember is Matthew 6:33: ‘But seek

“For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the Gospel’s, the same shall save it.”

—Matthew 8:35 KJV

higher every day. Jesus is my rock.

“Pacific Garden Mission taught me about the Word of God from Genesis to Revelation. They taught me not just to be a reader of the Word but a doer of the Word. I love PGM. Many mentors and people inspired me to live the Word of God. I was set free from drugs, alcohol, and from sin. I am a sinner but not a slave to sin. PGM has been a light and beacon in my life.”



ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.’ The wife, the job, the car, the love, the peace, and the joy. I had been getting high for 40 years, and at not one point during that time did the high I got compare to the high I have now. I get higher and higher and

On Saturday evenings, when Emmett and his wife visit PGM, he gets on stage and shares his testimony with those currently staying at PGM. His message to them is one of hope and that lasting and stable life change is possible through Jesus Christ. Emmett has been given the spiritual tools and biblical wisdom to successfully navigate life,

whether it is at his workplace for now over five years or with his marriage to his wife for over seven years. We want to thank you, our supporter, for being part of Emmett’s story and the hundreds of others who find solace and transformation here within the walls of Pacific Garden Mission.

Photo above: Emmett and Senora in the PGM cafeteria before the Praise and Testimony service.

Sharing the Word of God this Easter season

“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” —Romans 10:17 KJV



Pacific Garden Mission has often been described as a “little town within a city” due to all the activity that unfolds within our walls. As the largest homeless mission in Chicago, each day approximately 570 individuals find not only shelter but also the resources they need to rebuild their lives—three nourishing meals, a safe place to rest, and access to essential services such as clothing, medical care, and counseling. Amid the daily rhythm and the challenges of meeting the needs of so many, one central mission remains unwavering: to share the transformative Word of God with those in our care.

True healing and lasting change to those we serve begin when we address the deeper struggles that often lie beneath the surface—struggles that contribute to homelessness and despair. By sharing the

Gospel of Jesus Christ and offering Biblical guidance, we invite our guests into a journey of self-reflection and spiritual renewal. Through this process, we believe that lives can be healed, restored, and transformed. Especially as we approach Resurrection Sunday, it is our heartfelt prayer that every individual who walks through our doors will experience this profound change—a new beginning, both in body and spirit.



Please donate using your phone. Just scan this QR code with your phone’s camera, and it will direct you to the PGM Donate page. *Thank you!*

GIVE NOW pgm.org/donate

Visit our website at pgm.org to learn more about PGM’s multiple ministries to the needy.



A Word from Philip Kwiatkowski

President, Pacific Garden Mission

EACH ONE IS VALUED BY GOD

Pacific Garden Mission is so much more than just a place to stay in a time of need. Many come here looking for shelter but find PGM to be a place of refuge. Some come here because of a troubled domestic situation and need a place to heal. Some are facing serious medical complications.

I recently spoke to a woman who finished her chemo treatment and was recovering from surgery. Imagine being homeless, having cancer, and now needing to recover from surgery. For others, traumatic events in their life need to be addressed. One young lady told me how, as she was sleeping in bed, someone broke in and shot the person next to her. Another recounted how her only son was murdered, and on the anniversary of his killing, she holds a vigil. Instead of celebrating a birthday or a graduation, she remembered him by releasing balloons into the air. Heartbreaking.

Years ago, I remember a man I was introduced to who was given a few weeks to live. He was in an assisted living home but requested to come to PGM. When I asked him why, he simply said "I don't want to die alone."

With our considerable numbers, it is easy to forget the individual in light of the masses but the individual is the one whom Jesus went out of His way to minister to. Jesus took the time to minister to one woman at the well in John 4; "And he must needs go through Samaria." Her story mattered and so do the multitudes here at PGM.

I want to thank all of you for making PGM a proper place of refuge for many who are hurting and in need. **And to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your love, prayer, and support.**

THE IMPACT WE MAKE TOGETHER

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 who need your help the most. In February your support made a true difference:

590 average number of homeless people who received aid and Gospel services each day

39,322 plates of food were served (est.)

9,000 clothing items were distributed (est.)

3,137 media outlets around the world broadcasted *UNSHACKLED!*

42 men and women were enrolled in Bible study programs and provided room and board

7 mothers with their **10** children were sheltered at PGM

193 people professed saving faith in Christ and became new believers at PGM

With your encouragement and support, we minister hope to the homeless, addicted, and brokenhearted.

UNSHACKLED! FACILITIES ENHANCED

Pacific Garden Mission has been home to the *UNSHACKLED!* radio ministry, which shares compelling stories of redemption through Jesus Christ, for more than seven decades. Now heard on over 3,000 radio stations worldwide and through the *UNSHACKLED!* app and website (unshackled.org), this powerful program remains accessible to millions.

A New Home for Public Performances

In the late fall of 2024, *UNSHACKLED!* made a significant change by moving its public performances from the PGM auditorium to a newly renovated performance space in the *UNSHACKLED!* office. This dedicated area was designed to provide an

intimate and impactful experience for the audience and the performers.

The new performance space features:

- An elevated stage with a back curtain and wings
- Simple yet effective stage lighting
- A modern sound system
- Seating for up to 70 audience members

This move has brought the audience closer to the performers. Actors thrive on the energy of the intimate setting, creating a more engaging and impactful experience. Feedback from attendees has been overwhelmingly positive, with many praising the enhanced quality and personal atmosphere of the performances.

A Testament to God's Faithfulness

The journey of *UNSHACKLED!*—from its early days in the auditorium to its current state-of-the-art facility—is a testament to God's provision and faithfulness. Your prayers and financial support have made every improvement and adaptation possible. We praise God for using this ministry to effectively share the Gospel message of Jesus Christ with a world in need.



The new *UNSHACKLED!* performance space enhances the audience's experience.

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Learn more about our Mission, where lost souls find hope, compassion, and purpose.