

## WHY CHICAGO?

### A CITY OF NATIONS

“Baby, you need to go to Pacific Garden Mission in Chicago – you can find Jesus at the Mission.”



A prophetic word from his grandmother led Ron Childers from Alabama to the city of Chicago. Like Ron, every year hundreds and thousands of others travel from their hometowns and homelands to make the same city their home. But unlike Ron, few will ever visit Pacific Garden Mission to be introduced to Christ.

According to the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 214 million people all over the world moved out of their country of origin. Of those, 20 percent (42.8 million) moved to the United States. In Chicagoland alone, more than 1.6 million of the population is foreign born.

The Garden Church seeks to reach native Chicagoans and immigrants in Bronzeville and the surrounding communities on Chicago's South Side. Those neighborhoods include Hyde Park, Kenwood, Grand Boulevard, Woodlawn, Washington Park, and Jackson Park. Here, along with a predominantly black Chicago-born population, you'll find Chinese, Korean, Indian, Mexican, and South American immigrants, along with Arabic-speaking immigrants from places like Syria, Lebanon, and Jordan.

This presents a unique opportunity for carrying out the mandate of The Great Commission – when the gospel goes out to those in Chicago's neighborhoods and communities it has the potential to reach the world, as Chicago's foreign-born residents interact with those in their homelands.

### A CITY OF HARD CIRCUMSTANCES

While Bronzeville itself has transformed since the era of the Robert Taylor Homes into a community attracting black middle-class Chicagoans, the area still struggles with the challenges of poverty, racial injustice, and increasing crime rates.

As Ron says, “Chicago neighborhoods are hurting because they have bought into the age-old lie of Satan that there is a ‘better’ way.”

It is these circumstances that Ron sees The Garden Church speaking into, in fulfillment of TGC's Mission Statement: Cultivating Hope Through Freedom in Christ. What better hope can be offered than the gospel of Jesus Christ and a local family of faith (Gal 6:10) who put into action what they believe?

“The only possible remedy for the destruction of the family and community is for us as a multi-ethnic, regional church plant to introduce the Truth of the Gospel into those communities,” Ron explains.

TGC plans to embrace proximity to the lost and marginalized of this particular section of Chicago's South Side as the hands and feet of Jesus.