

► See what happens when God weaves seemingly random threads into a brilliant tapestry.

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► Let Peter Scazzero's book, *The Emotionally Healthy Church* challenge you, your family and your entire church.

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► Find new ways to connect hurting pastors and their families with other care giving ministries.

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► John Smith shares how we can make a difference when we use what we have to meet someone's needs.

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ONE CHURCH'S story

● DECEMBER | ● NEWSLETTER | ● 2005

THE HEART OF PASTORCARE

PastorCare is a faith-based, non-profit national clergy support network that exists to help hurting pastors and their families by providing local access to mentoring and support. Services include:

- | confidential friendship
- | employment networking
- | health care
- | hospitality hosts
- | mentoring
- | prayer intercessors

A Tapestry of Grace

God's gifts of grace often come disguised as the incidental, the accidental, the conflicted, and the tragic. But the seeming random threads of our lives are woven together in a brilliant tapestry by a God who is continually at work.

This is a window into just one of those sovereign acts of grace.

Cathy

It seemed a chance meeting over coffee at a Christian women's leadership seminar in Canada. Cathy and Lynn had never met, but within moments they discovered their shared passion for ministering to Christian leaders who have been wounded by the church. Later that day, as they explored their visions for ministry, Cathy told Lynn about her friend, John Smith, who worked with an organization that provided counseling and restoration services to pastors. It was a conversation that would link them in a shared vision of caring for the wounded, and, ultimately, of ministering to a pastor and his wife whom neither Cathy, Lynn, nor John had ever met.

It was a sovereignly appointed meeting, as the threads in a tapestry of divine timing and relationships began to converge. Not long after that meeting, Cathy called John and encouraged him to contact Lynn. John called Lynn, and a deep friendship was born out of a shared vision of caring for the wounded.

Lynn

As a child, Lynn had known fear and suffering, but she had also experienced the overwhelming grace of God. He spoke into her life through the compassion of a neighborhood woman who loved her unconditionally and ministered truth and life to her soul.

After coming to Christ in 1989, God infused Lynn with a desire to extend Jesus' hands of compassion to the wounded. As a highly successful businesswoman in Canada, Lynn created opportunities to network with individuals and organizations that offer support to people in crisis. Her vision to provide compassionate care for the hurting was fulfilled, in part, when she purchased property near Toronto to establish a Christian retreat center called The Psalms.

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Grace Team:

Three PastorCare team members (names not listed) are available to walk alongside Christian leaders desiring to gain victory over pornography addiction. These individuals have experienced freedom from bondage in this area and desire to serve as confidential friends, mentors, and encouragers to others engaged in the struggle.

The Pastor's Wife

She was deeply immersed in leadership alongside her husband -- Senior Pastor at a moderately-sized Midwestern parish -- when she received her cancer diagnosis. Initially, Stage Four breast cancer. Typically, a diagnosis of death.

Recognizing the struggle that might end her life, she anticipated the surgeries, chemotherapy, and radiation that would sap her physical strength and transport her to the precipice of death. In this battle, the strategy was clear, and the war would be waged against an identifiable opponent.

Yet unbelievably, cancer would become an almost secondary struggle. It was about to become a metaphor for a larger battle.

In the ten years they had pastored their parish, battle lines had been secretly drawn within the church body. Hostilities were brewing, and casualties would follow. The church was about to become a war zone, and the pastor and his wife, along with elected lay leaders, would be engaged on the front lines in every clash. But in this battle the strategy was uncharted, and the opponents wore the faces of brothers and sisters in Christ.

This pain was unlike any they had ever experienced.

In the ensuing months, life became tenuous on both fronts. It slowly ebbed from the pastor and his wife as they battled the challenges of surgery and the ravages of medical protocols. Facing the carnage within their church family only deepened the sorrow. God's servants became worn, wondering if the church would be better able to move ahead if they just stepped aside.

An Intercessory Jewel

Living hundreds of miles away in Canada, a precious jewel of a relative offered up the gift of prayer in support of the pastor and his wife. Recognizing the power of corporate intercession, she enlisted the women who attended her prayer group. Her compassion for her family, the church and its leadership was apparent to the other women. They earnestly joined the battle in prayer for both the pastor's wife and the church family.

The gifts of intercession and compassionate grace were a palpable presence to both her sick sister-in-law and the embattled congregation. This woman was another of the sovereign threads of God's plan.

The Gift

The tapestry pattern began to take shape as Lynn sat in the prayer group alongside her friend, the interceding jewel, listening to her brokenness as

THE NEED.

50% of pastors report feeling that they are unable to meet the demands of the job.

75% of pastors report significant stress-related crises at least once in their ministry.

PastorCare is a faith ministry, and 100% of our funding comes from individual donations. All contributions are tax deductible, as PastorCare is a 501(c)3 non-profit ministry. Please send your monthly donations to our national PastorCare office for processing, at 809 Spring Forest Rd., Suite 1000, Raleigh, NC 27609. Please designate your gift to PastorCare Great Lakes Region. Your donation will be applied to operational expenses and the cost of expanding our outreach to pastors in the Great Lakes area.

she shared the burdens of the pastor, his wife, and their church. Lynn's heart resonated with the need.

Neither Cathy, Lynn nor John had ever met the pastor or his wife or stepped within the walls of their church, yet their connection would impact the lives of this Midwestern congregation.

Before the day ended, Lynn provided the God-ordained link between the pastor and PastorCare. John Smith's call came at a climactic moment. His act of initiating outreach came as church leaders were pondering life-changing questions. Would they move forward under their pastor's leadership? And if so, how? They didn't have the answers.

The Pastor

He describes the agony of church conflict as one of the most painful experiences of his life. Hostilities, accusations, and allegations were circulating. The battle within the church mirrored the war being waged with his wife's cancer.

John Smith's call came at a critical juncture.

"John stepped in at a time when we were our weakest. Emotionally, I had given up. John provided encouragement and resources that brought us back to our bearings based on biblical principles and an empathetic, experienced heart."

One of those resources was *The Emotionally Healthy Church*, a book that shows churches how to gain emotional and spiritual maturity. The pastor and his chairperson read the book, then asked other church leaders to do the same.

"It was miraculous. From that moment on, everybody had the energy and willingness to hang tough and see the problem through. We had friends out there to help us walk through it. The book and John encouraged us all the way."

The Board Chairman

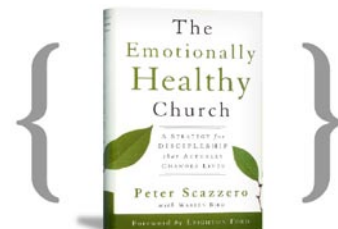
He is quick to say that their congregation is still on the learning curve for conflict resolution. But the spirit of the church is being transformed as leadership models compassion and gentleness in the face of opposition.

New faces are flooding through the doors as a result of the church's missional outreach, and lives are being transformed. Clear vision is taking shape in the hearts of the leadership and the congregation as they pursue new direction, loving discipline, and increased unity.

For the first time in a long time, both the pastor and leadership see the church as truly evangelical as they see Scripture lived out and people modeling what is expected of a Christian community impacting its world.

Today, the pastor's wife is cancer free. It is one of God's many gifts of grace to her. And she and her husband are grateful for the many threads of other lives that have been woven into their own.

In the lives of the pastor, his spouse, the church leaders, the intercessors, Lynn, Cathy, and John, God has woven together a marvelous tapestry of grace. In His grace, we hear the assurance, "Behold, I [God] make all things new!"



THE GIFT THAT CAN CHANGE YOUR CHURCH

During this holiday season, consider a gift that could change the dynamics of your life, your family, your marriage, your entire church.

Peter Scazzero's book *The Emotionally Healthy Church* presents a strategy for church health that impacts lives in practical ways. Readers will identify immediately with anecdotes that illustrate the turmoil of emotional ill health that characterizes churches today. With compelling insight, Scazzero dissects the emotional complexities facing the contemporary church: defensiveness, intolerance, unbalanced priorities, superficiality, and lack of self awareness.

The book rests upon biblical principles and presents a practical plan to assist churches in spiritual formation. In the words of one pastor, "The book showed us principles of a healthy church and gave us the strength to determine that we should see our problems through and not give up. This book showed us biblical thinking and gave us courage."

It is a valuable tool for those seeking to delve beneath superficial spirituality and to discover abundant life in Christ.

ENCOURAGING | SUPPORTING | CONNECTING



Encouraging Our Nation's Spiritual Leaders
CARE@PASTORCAREGREATLAKES.ORG

PastorCare specializes in connecting hurting pastors and their families with other care-giving ministries.

Here is a partial list for ready reference:

Alongside

www.alongsidecares.net

Blessing Ranch

www.travel.to/BlessingRanch

Community of Jesus

www.communityofjesus.org

Davidson Clergy Center

www.davidsonclergycenter.org

Marble Retreat

www.marbleretreat.org

Ministering To Ministers

www.mtmfoundation.org

Quiet Waters

www.QWaters.org

SonScape Re-Creation

www.sonscape.com

Additional Listings

www.pastorsnet.com

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Shelly Beach, Editor

From the Director's Heart



I love to hear the words, "I love you" from family and friends. But even more, I love when God whispers my name and says, "I love you, John. You are precious to me. I delight in you!"

JESUS TEACHES US ABOUT LOVE

Our model for love comes from Jesus. "This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth" (1 John 3:16-18).

As followers of Jesus, we must lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters. When we see their need, we must respond with action.

USING WHAT WE HAVE

We make a difference when we use what we have to meet someone's need. A boy gave his lunch to Jesus, and He used it to feed more than 5,000. In Jesus' hands, that gift was multiplied beyond what anyone dared to dream. Jesus alone saw the eternal magnitude of a simple gift offered in love. Just imagine the heart of that child as he saw his lunch multiplied in the hands of the Savior! We can only assume that his life was changed forever.

PastorCare is about using simple gifts – encouragement, compassion, hope – to revitalize hurting pastors and revive wounded churches. In these past months, I have encouraged friends to join this ministry, using what God has given them. One friend, Ed Conrad, is giving to the ministry with a gift that touches each of you. As Director of Distribution and Postal Affairs for Forbes in New York, Ed is able to allocate part of his charitable giving budget to print and mail the PastorCare Great Lakes Newsletter. Like the boy who placed his lunch in Jesus' hands, Ed cannot begin to comprehend the impact of his gift, a gift that is influencing the way pastors and their families are cared for around the globe.

WAYS TO LOVE YOUR PASTOR AND FAMILY

The gifts of sincere appreciation and encouragement may be the most meaningful gifts you can offer your pastor this holiday season. Many pastors labor for years without hearing the words, "We love you. You are precious to us, and we delight in you." Seek to know your pastor well enough that you know what ministers encouragement to his heart, then offer those things with intentionality. Your gifts of encouragement, compassion, and hope will be multiplied in Jesus' hands.

In this Christmas season, may you hear God whisper your name. May you hear Him say, "I love you. You are precious to me. I delight in you!"

Forever grateful,

John W. Smith

Great Lakes Regional Director