

▶ Learn how when God stands at the crossroads of our lives, even broken hearts can be blessings in disguise.

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▶ See how God's plans for us extend beyond geographic boundaries and the boundaries of our earthly perspective.

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▶ Sharon Brown shares her heart that beats for hurting pastors in her ministry role with PastorCare.

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▶ John shares how the greatest truth we can seek is the truth that flows from a contrite spirit and a heart open to God.

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ONE PASTOR'S story

● FEBRUARY | ● NEWSLETTER | ● 2006

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

He entered ministry expecting complexities and challenges.

What he didn't anticipate was one day facing his own brokenness as his marriage disintegrated and his wife left him.

Mical Pugh describes himself as "beaten up, a pile of broken pieces" when he met John Smith, Great Lakes Regional Director of PastorCare. As a senior pastor, Mical was familiar with the role of counselor, but he had never anticipated the blows of his own loss – family, ministry, even the parsonage he had called home.

"When a pastor loses his family in such a devastating way, the pain encompasses every area of life. We not only lose our families, but we lose our vision, our call, the support of our church body, our identity, our sense of connectedness."

As Mical struggled to face the complexities, John Smith stepped in beside him, providing encouragement, prayer, and a listening heart.

"When I first met John, I was at a crossroads as

to whether to resign my position as pastor. Our conversations were a divine appointment."

John offered encouragement, a network of support, and insight and wisdom – all simple gifts.

"God used John to bring encouragement, acceptance, love, and wisdom when I desperately needed it. He has a heart for hurting pastors and the experience to back up what he says."

Today Mical Pugh ministers as the Pastor of Care at Fair Haven Ministries in Hudsonville, Michigan, offering hope to others facing crisis. John was there to celebrate Mical's installation and to affirm his story of God's grace in brokenness.

Mical is grateful for the gifts that ministered to his heart in his time of need: encouragement, affirmation, and grace -- gifts that are reaping a reward in his life and the lives of those he now serves.

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John Kimmons, M.Div.

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Mark Vander Meer, M.Div.

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.

John Kimmons: A Heart that Reaches Around the World



The ministry of PastorCare is sometimes as simple as picking up the telephone and listening or sharing compassion over a cup of coffee. At other times it seems much more complex, at least from an earthly perspective.

In December I was presented with a pastoral support and mentoring opportunity that took me to Mexico. A pastor there had been accused of moral failure, although neither his church nor his presbytery had presented any formal charges or an opportunity for him to even plead his case. According to Mexican tradition, he was considered guilty until proven innocent.

Those within the seminary where this man had taught had accused him of sin but had never allowed him to see specific charges or given him the opportunity to answer them. Ultimately, this man lost his church and his teaching position within the seminary.

God orchestrated my meeting with this brother in Christ, and I flew down with a fellow pastor

to investigate the charges. I spoke with this minister's wife, children, extended family, six pastors, one presbytery representative, people in the church, as well as both the present and past seminary presidents of the school where he had taught. It became obvious as the inquiries progressed that this man had been wrongfully accused and given no recourse for the truth to be presented. It was a scenario that would crush any man's heart.

From an earthly perspective, this brother in Christ had been defeated by lies and the Father of Lies. But God can use even the most heart-rending attempts to destroy us for our good. Today this restored brother is faithfully serving in a church here in the United States. His painful circumstances were used in other ways, as well. While in Mexico, I had the opportunity to present the love of Christ and the truth of Scripture in six churches. I was also allowed to minister to several Mayan churches, churches considered to be at the lowest cultural level in Mexican society.

In the midst of this man's pain and through the grace of God, pastors were encouraged, churches were presented with a biblical challenge, a man of God was restored, and God was honored. What a blessing to be a part of God's plan that extended beyond geographic boundaries and the boundaries of our earthly perspective.

THE NEED.

80% of seminary graduates will leave the ministry within the first five years.

80% of pastors' wives feel left out and unappreciated by church members.

PastorCare is a faith ministry. Our funding comes from individuals who believe in our mission. All contributions are tax deductible, as PastorCare is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. Any gift you are able to send will be used to expand our outreach to pastors and their families. We thank you in advance for your generosity. Contributions can be sent directly to the PastorCare Great Lakes office at 2660 Horizon Drive SE, Suite B, Grand Rapids, Michigan 49546.

Introducing Sharon Brown



Sharon Brown vividly remembers finding John Smith's business card as she and her family were preparing to transition from ministry in England to ministry in Grand Rapids.

Her husband, Jack, had interviewed for a pastoral position at Thornapple Evangelical Covenant Church. During that interview weekend, Jack providentially met John at a gas station, and John gave Jack his business card. When Jack returned to England and showed the card to Sharon, she was intrigued and visited the website. Immediately, the description of the mission to help hurting pastors and their families resonated

with her. Years before, Sharon and Jack had experienced a painful season of ministry at a Midwestern church. She decided that if their family moved to Grand Rapids, she needed to contact John Smith and initiate a relationship with someone who had experienced similar hurt and walked the same path of forgiveness.

Sharon's heart for hurting pastors flows from her life experience, her role as a wife, and her understanding of Scripture. A graduate of Princeton Theological Seminary, Sharon has served in pastoral roles here in the United States and in the United Kingdom.

PastorCare Great Lakes is privileged to have Sharon on the team to mentor and minister to those in need. In addition to her ministry with PastorCare, Sharon speaks at retreats, leads small groups, and draws alongside those desiring compassionate care and teaching.

Gifts for Your Pastor's Heart

The most precious gifts you can give your pastor are the gifts of loving encouragement and practical support. Here are four "gift ideas."

- 1 Pray for **acceptance** for your pastor. Many pastors are discouraged and wounded, often at the hands of brothers and sisters in Christ. Reflect the words of Romans 15:31 in your prayer: "Pray . . . that my service in Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints there."
- 2 Pray for **deliverance** from attacks of the enemy. Pastors need prayer for protection from physical, emotional, and spiritual harm as they serve their congregations.

- 3 Pray for **fruitfulness** within individual lives and the life of your church. "Finally, brethren, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honored, just as it was with you." (2 Thes. 3:1)

- 4 Pray for your pastor and his family to feel the **love** of the congregation. "Love does no harm . . . love is the fulfillment of the law." (Rom. 13:10)

HELPFUL BOOKS FOR WOUNDED PASTORS

The Wounded Minister: Healing from and Preventing Personal Attacks

by **Guy Greenfield**

This book relates how pastor Jerry Cook applies biblical principles to people seeking real love, real acceptance, and real forgiveness.

Holy Burnout: Turning Brokenness Into Blessing Through the Power of God's Restoring Love

by **Steve Roll**

Steve Roll uses his experiences with burnout to identify six factors in the church that contribute to this growing problem.

The Search for Significance

by **Robert S. McGee**

McGee shows readers how to be free to enjoy Christ's love without basing self-worth on accomplishments or the opinions of others.

Character Forged From Conflict: Staying Connected to God During Controversy

by **Gary Preston**

Preston explores how the church can sometimes steal its leaders' desires to serve God and people.

Clergy Killers: Guidance for Pastors and Congregations Under Attack

by **G. Lloyd Rediger**

Rediger offers strategies for pastors and congregations who want to support leadership and build healthy congregations.

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care@pastorcaregreatlakes.org

John W. Smith, M.Div., D.Min.
Regional Director
john@pastorcaregreatlakes.org
616-304-8543 cell

National Office, Raleigh, NC
919-787-7024
pastorcare.org

Special thanks to Ed Conrad at Forbes for printing and mailing our newsletter.

Shelly Beach, Editor

From the Director's Heart



"Let my heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God."

These words are the often-quoted heart cry of Bob Pierce, founder of World Vision. But they are words that reflect my heart, as well.

I write to you today as a man with a heart broken by the cruelty Christians are expressing toward their pastors with growing frequency:

- * Church members and leaders proclaiming their love for God while delighting in removing their pastors
- * Churches that bear a stronger resemblance to clubs than churches, with a focus that is inward rather than outward
- * Churches where character assassination is permitted
- * Churches with wealthy givers who abuse their resources to gain control
- * Churches where manipulation and behind-the-scenes maneuvering influence decision-making
- * Churches where leaders are unwilling to confront those who quietly exercise inappropriate control
- * Churches where members withhold or redirect giving to send a message, rather than giving as an act of worship

I realize I am taking a risk by addressing these issues. But I believe the risk of not speaking the truth is even greater. Facing the truth can be painful, but it can also set us free.

The heart of God is broken over His church in regard to the way we often treat our shepherds. But how willing are we to look into our own hearts? We must all ask ourselves, "Where is my heart when it comes to power, control, and money in the church? What in my attitudes, motives, or actions break the heart of God?"

In her book *Man of Vision*, Marilee Pierce Dunker reveals the irony of Bob Pierce's now-famous quote. Known throughout the world as a man of spiritual passion who changed the face of missions, Pierce broke the heart of God in his dealings with family members and lived for many years estranged from those closest to him. His greatest battle was not in building a worldwide ministry, but in dealing with the flaws of his own heart.

Even in the most painful ministry exits, God does good things. Many times it is through our deepest pain that we experience the reality of God's grace and love. He is the one we cling to. He is our only hope.

The truth is, we are all broken people who desperately need the Savior. It is only as we keep our hearts focused on Him and submit our thoughts, motives, attitudes, and actions to His scrutiny that we can glorify His name. This is my heart cry today for the Church of Jesus Christ.

Seeking to remain faithful to Jesus,

John W. Smith
Great Lakes Regional Director