

HISTORY AND VISION OF PASTORCARE

The National Clergy Support Network

by Dr. Bert Moore

Reflections on Life

As the beloved disciple has said, “Truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son, Jesus Christ. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. And the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin.”

William Barkley, the great theologian and Biblical commentator once said, all of history is really “History,” And so it is true that the Lord is the Creator of all the universe, and is the one who is the Sustainer of each of us; of myself, of pastors and of men and nations. If we praise Him, in all that we do, we need to make sure that He is the One that gets the glory. And that is my hope for this presentation. I am very grateful for the PastorCare staff, and the Regional Coordinators for the opportunity to make this video. I have had those ask me to give a personal history of the founding of PastorCare. It’s really His work because He was the One, as the Psalmist says in Psalm 139, who knit me in my mother’s womb; who knew me before I knew myself, and He it is who is in charge and has brought this ministry into being. He has called it; it is not my ministry, it is the Lord’s ministry. And to Him be all the glory and praise.

It is my hope, you that see this video, will be encouraged in your own walk of faith. That you will see the Lord’s hand at work, yes, in my life, but way beyond my life; in the lives of others who have been a part of this ministry from the very beginning. Yes, I am Dr. Filbert Moore, pastor, ordained since 1965. It is the Lord who has laid this ministry upon me.

People ask, why is there such a need for PastorCare, a national clergy support Network? I would say upfront, that there is a direct connection between the health of families, of a community and of a nation, and the health of its Spiritual leaders, its pastors, priests and rabbis. Biblical and secular histories have demonstrated that a nation is only as strong as its spiritual leaders.

Today in America, 73%, according to a Gallup Poll, said that morality in America has declined. And when we note the ever-increasing pornography, and violence in TV, in the media, in print, and in Hollywood today, is it any wonder that many people are saying, “Where is the hope; where are the teachers; where are the people that can lead and disciple families and give leadership to a nation; to lead us out of this into a strong spiritually solid moral foundation?” My concern is that America not self-destruct, as did the great Roman Empire, which was very successful in its materialism and its wellbeing physically.

I harkened back to our Lord’s words, when Jesus spoke to Martha, that Mary had chosen the better part--Martha, so concerned about the physical needs, but Mary concerned about the Lord’s teaching as He came to the end of His ministry on earth. So I see PastorCare today, strengthening pastors, connecting them with the resources and the caregivers all across our land who can help them stay strong in pastoral ministry for the moral and spiritual foundation of this nation.

Believers know well that the Psalmist, in Psalm 30:12 is correct, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,” And PastorCare is uniquely rooted in the character of God and His plan for a healthy nation and a healthy people; for it was God’s plan that the eleven tribes of Israel were supposed to be the caregivers

of the one tribe of priests and Levites whose role it was to keep the eyes of individuals and the nation upon the Lord.

In the beginning, the priests and Levites weren't supposed to own anything. And it was the eleven tribes that were supposed to provide for their physical needs and to look to them in order that the priests and Levites might give direction; might seek the will of the Lord for their lives, the lives of their families and the lives of the nation.

The conclusion that has been ever impressed upon my mind and heart through the last ten to twelve years has been that America will only be strong, not because of the economy, not because of the educational system where we throw more dollars toward schools, not because of which party is in the White House, but the strength of the nation will come because we have strong spiritual leaders who are building into families the kind of character, integrity, strong morality, honesty, truthfulness, righteousness that exalts a nation.

God is concerned; the Lord God is concerned, not only about the nation, and desires that all people would be drawn to Him. Yes, John 3:16 is really true, that "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whoever believes and trust in Him will not perish, but experience everlasting life."

It is God's will that the ones who sound this call, pastors, leaders, and spiritual teachers will be the ones that help keep this nation strong. It is God who has called PastorCare into being. It is God who sees the plight of small churches, that two-thirds of them in America today are under a hundred members; and twenty-six percent are fifty members or less; many without adequate budgets to keep pastors not having to worry about family budgets, having another job. He sees those one out of every six pastors having to be a tent-maker by necessity; to have another job, just to stay strong in ministry, because the church can't afford adequate health-care for the family of the pastor. And many pastors today drop out of ministry because they cannot afford to take care of their families, their first church, and still pastor a small congregation.

And then there is the pressure that the Lord sees, and certainly grieves over, of the ever-increasing consumer mentality in the American culture today. Far different from my father's generation when he came to the church and he would say, "How can I serve? How can I help this church grow?" Or "Pastor, how can I help you in ministry?" But today, we hear increasing voices that say, "How do you meet my needs, because, if I can't meet my needs like I get at K-Mart I will just go over to Walmart."

And so of this much today accounts for the forced termination of pastors--1,300-1,500 a month in America--our pastors are being force-terminated, and many of them not because they have done anything immoral or illegal, they have not extorted funds from the church, or run off with the church secretary, but a small group in the church felt that their needs were not being met by the pastor. And, maybe they better get someone else who maybe could meet their needs in the ever-increasing, high-pressure, tensioned culture in which we live today.

And I ask you to stop and think, for it certainly grieves God's heart, in terms of the marriages of pastors today. Who does a pastor's wife turn to? Where does she go to let her hair down and share with someone with confidentiality--with safety? Not many pastor's wives can speak openly and honestly within their congregations. Then there is PastorCare. God called us there to help in this area, as well.

Forty percent of the calls that come into PastorCare offices today come in from pastor's wives who are lonely, isolated, as they seek to serve and come alongside their husbands in ministry. Incidentally, only four percent of pastors in America are women, but we hear from their voices, too, at PastorCare.

The situation among pastors today: seven out of ten pastors today do not have someone they call a close friend--acquaintances, yes; golf-buddies, yes, maybe, but, not a close friend to which they can open up themselves. And part of that is due to the fact that ninety percent of pastors today are working between fifty-five and seventy-five hours per week. The burnout rate is high, and depression as well among pastors. Many of them cannot afford a get-away; to get away just on a vacation away from the phones and the pressures of ministry; of running everything from running the church bulletins to preaching the Sunday services, and then mid-week Bible study, and all the pastoral needs expected from a pastor today.

So, the PastorCare network is definitely needed to strengthen more pastors in this nation that they might model and be the strong kind of men this nation as spiritual leadership and modeling as teachers and pastors and comforters of people today.

Hopefully, you will see the need at this time for the country to have a strong clergy support network for the moral and spiritual foundation of this nation. When I think of the founding of this ministry, I think of one of the board members who said to a small group of us, in the beginning, quoting the words of Mordechai to Queen Esther, when he said to her, "For such a time as this"--God has called this PastorCare ministry into being, because He cares, and He loves His spiritual leaders who He has called. And hopefully, you might see a little bit from my own personal story how the Lord, and I'm not sure fully why or how He chose me; how He called me into this. I do not have the full answer. Maybe some of you will have ideas in terms of what you hear from what I say, about my life and how the Lord used me and was preparing me, even from the beginning to be a part of this ministry.

Often we share with hurting pastors at PastorCare, Romans 8:28. If that is true, that "ALL THINGS work together for good, to those of us who love God, and are called, according to His purpose," then, hurting pastor or hurting spouse, nothing in your life is wasted. And so, I have discovered that in my life, and I would like to share some of that with you now...

Reflections on Life

Winston Churchill once said, "The future is unknowable, but the past should give us hope." And what you see, and what I see in the past with 20/20 hindsight, we can see and thank the Lord for what He has done and continues to do.

Formation Years

I was born on Easter Sunday, April 17, 1938, which day was very, very special to my mother, and she never let me forget it. Especially when Easter Sunday and my birthday occurred again, and never occurred since, when I was 10 years old. She did not know why it was special, but she never let me forget it.

My earthly father was like so many of the men of the World War II and depression era: quiet; a man who worked and sacrifice deeply in order that I could have a stay at home mom and know the security of a loving family. And the freedom of getting on my bicycle, long before TV was in our homes and taught

us about kidnappings and the like. I could travel far and wide on that bike, and explore God's creation and learn so many, many things.

I was a most active youth when I was young. It was before the age when they diagnosed ADD-- Attention Deficit Disorder. And I was not a good student. Academics were hard for me. And my parents, (and you might see the Lord at work in this) pulled me out of all extracurricular activities, even Boy Scouts, which I really regretted, in order that I might concentrate on my academics. The only exception was church in which I was in a great and wonderful youth fellowship group, receiving the fellowship of healthy peers. Receiving the affirmation of my pastor and my peer group too, who elected me the treasurer of the senior high fellowship group who raised a lot of money to put in a fantastic stained-glass window above the front door entrance of that church, was a great affirmation.

And finally, the respect that began to grow in my heart for the Lord through worship, in which I in which I stood next to my father who was not an evangelical, by any means, quiet man, but as I stood singing lustily the great hymns of the church, having him hold that hymn book down at my level so I could read the words, I began to experience a deep love and respect for the Lord, even as a young lad in my home church.

Saturday night, after my dad finished drying the dishes with my mom, he would quietly reach up into the kitchen cabinets and take out the offering envelopes. Each of us kid gave every Sunday in our small little envelope, no matter if it was a nickel, or a dime from our \$.25 allowance. It was respectful and honoring of God.

At the end of high school there came a series of wonderful summers in which I was financially successful in summer jobs in industry. But something or Someone caused me to speak to my pastor at door of the church at the end of a worship service. I told Pastor Galloway I wanted to do something different for the summer coming up, my last summer home before going off to college.

And he said to me, "Come on into my office." I walked in he picked up the phone and called Massanetta Springs at the Massanetta Springs Bible Conference. But I told him, "I don't want to go for just two weeks as a token, I want to do it for the whole summer."

He spoke to Ruth Campbell, and she said, "You send him down here we'll work him for the whole summer." And I went...

It was there in the evening, toward the end of the summer at the end of the Conference, where I was working the sound system, following the address by the great Presbyterian Pastor Dr. Louis Hadley Evans, Senior Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Hollywood, California, as he finished his address for the evening, he got up and walked behind the curtain where I was closing down the sound system, and he looked over at me and said, "Son, how about a milkshake?"

That led to him asking me what I was going to do with the rest of my life. And before the evening was over, I was standing in his hotel room. He reached into his valise and pulled out and gave me his book and autographed the copy of *Youth Seeks a Master*. After he prayed with me that night I went back to the dorm and sat under a bare light bulb and read that entire book that night, and gave my life to Christ.

In my senior year in college, I came in late for a Sunday School class. Lead by the nearly blind history professor, Dr. William Fisk. Dr. Fisk wore such thick glasses that he had to held his papers right up to

his face to read any book or document. And so when I slipped into the Sunday School class and sat in the back, I did not think he saw me, but all at once I heard this voice from the front of the Sunday School class over the heads of all these college students, “Mr. Moore, you’re going to seminary, you should be able to answer this question.”

I don’t remember what the question was, to this day, because I was nearly blown out of the water because no one had ever spoken to me about going to seminary; no one, ‘til that moment in that class, that day in College Drive United Presbyterian Church.

My best buddy from college, Ken Watts went off to Princeton. We used to play intramural basketball together each Friday night after Intervarsity Bible study group. Ken wanted me to follow him to Princeton, but there was no way with my grades that I was going to be able to follow him to Princeton. Yet at a Bible conference, in my senior year of college, the phone rang in the lobby of the hotel. The answerer called out across the lobby, “Moore, it’s for you.”

I went to the phone. Dr. James Franklin Armstrong from Princeton Seminary, the registrar said, “We want to see you up here in three weeks.”

The joy that I could not contain as I yelled across that lobby was soon to be covered at the end of my first year at Princeton, when I was not able to adequately pass both Hebrew and Greek. Humiliated that I had to drop out of Princeton, I could not go home. But took my Greek New Testament and Bible, and got into the Word like I had not gotten into it before, while I drove busses for Tiger Bus Line to keep bread on the table.

Back into Princeton in the fall, working hard, because the work was hard, it was the great hymns sung by hundreds of men and a few women, in Miller Chapel that sustained me the remaining three years there in the seminary.

Reflections on Church Ministry

When I graduated in 1965, with my Masters from Princeton, the Lord was leading then into the next phase of my education into the real life of the church, where I was to be in preparation, though I did not know it, for what He was to call me to do.

- I experienced Senior Pastors dumping on Youth Pastors what the Senior Pastor did not want to do.
- I experienced the tension between youth who want a change and the adults who want to keep the church pretty much the same.
- I experience politics in church hierarchy manipulating pastors, moving them around, some of them against their will.
- I experience the pain of living in old manses. (I will say more about that, later).
- Of living on a small church budget.
- Experiencing false sexual harassment charges, and a forced termination.
- The poor church housing: in that rural church, living in the 1835 farm house with 32 single-paned windows, that you could lay in bed at night and watch the cold wind blow the curtains on the inside of the house, where my two daughters were born. A number of nights we had to put them in bed with us to keep them warm at their tender young ages.

Reflections on Brokenness

But nothing could match the brokenness, which would have been my third stage in life in preparation for PastorCare. Nothing could compare to that Sept 9, 1990, which was my “Pearl Harbor” or “9-11” spiritual day which I thought would live in infamy. Cannot share the details of the incident because of confidentiality. I keep reflecting back on Charles Swindoll's comment, “God often has to break a man before he can make a man.”

And so, as it was with Abraham, and Moses who killed a man and spent forty years on the backside of the desert to be prepared to be the savior of the Old Testament people; as it was with David who was both a murderer and adulterer, yet was a man after God's own heart; and the disciples who were broken and all forsaking the Lord, and running away in His crucial time of need: to Saul who became Paul, the persecutor of the church who became the great apostle who spread the Gospel throughout the Mediterranean; on down to the present age when many pastors today, myself included, who experience the brokenness and yet the blessing of the Almighty and powerful, loving God; yes, I experience a brokenness on that September ninth, and incident in which my wife broken and it tears said, “I can't take it any more. It's the marriage or the church.” And I resigned.

The next day, I agreed to stay on a couple of months to bring closure, but when I left I did not realize how much love that I had received from that church, and I became depressed. My wife could not take it, even from me. She went off to a college with a scholarship where she became a very fine chef; met a family friend, served me divorce papers one night in my mailbox. I would like to have died, and ran down the street with the papers in hand hoping a car would hit me. But as God willed, there were no cars in that lane that night.

I crawled back to the house, where a ringing phone met me. It was a pastor from a small pastoral care ministry who had been following me and now reached out to me. In my brokenness and sickness, he asked me to come to his house where he ministered to me and my physical sickness with chicken soup and the Word of God. And nursed me back to health. In which I was to learn a lot as to what PastorCare would be to hurting pastors in years to come.

Later he invited me to come and be a part of the ministry, that the Lord might be able to use me to counsel others out of my pain. So I was invited to be a part of Biblical Wellness Ministries out of Raleigh, NC. Where I spent the years from 1992-1995 growing and being put back together and healed by the Lord and some of his fine servants. “God can use you and your pain.” he said. And so it is with many pastors making them better men because of the brokenness that God has allowed them, as “broken pots,” as Jeremiah would say, shaping them and reforming them to be the kind of pastors He needs and wants; obedient and submissive to His will in their lives.

The Building Period and the Birth of PastorCare

That began the building period of my life. In 1994, Dr. Warren Thyssen of Biblical Wellness Ministries said, “I want you to set up a file of ministries that are close to where pastors are serving in the nation. They don't need to spend thousands of dollars to come across the nation to Raleigh, NC to receive help from us. And I still have that original box of file cards with those ministries. That box has been multiplied many, many times over in the caregivers that are a part of PastorCare today.

In the summer of 1994, I received an invitation, again, a strange thing; for me to attend a caregivers forum in Colorado Springs, CO. Without asking a question, Dr. Thyssen reached into his pocket and wrote a \$110 check for the initial registration. My own early father said here's \$300 to take care of the airfare. And I went to the caregivers forum to quietly test this growing vision of a support network for

pastors that would span the nation. At the end of the conference, when I flew into Charlotte, on the connecting flight back to Raleigh, I just happened (?) to meet a representative from Promise Keepers organization, who said to me, “Bert Moore, there just happens to be a Pastor’s conference with thousands of pastors coming up on Valentine’s weekend in February, 1996. You would have about a year to get ready. You might be able to help.”

So with family and friends as an advisory committee, in 1994 and on into early 1995, I sought the larger body of Christ and their wisdom, for there is wisdom, as Proverbs says, in a multitude of counselors; and the board and PastorCare knows this well, to see if maybe more people around the country would support such a ministry. I sold my van put it up for collateral in faith, and reserved Peace College for the dates of August 7-9, 1995, where on those dates there would be a symposium gathering, hopefully, of people from around the country, who would really care about pastors and their spiritual health.

Fifty-four people from ten states showed up. On the third day, before they departed at noontime, that Saturday, to return to their homes, I had them break up into small groups of three and four; out of which a representative from each group would share back with the whole group as to what the Lord had showed them in the two days proceeding. Each one of them started to share. As they did, the advisory committee that I had asked to sit near me in the front of that dining room, some of them began to cry. And one lady with tears running down her cheeks, blurted out, “I have never seen anything like this before in my life.”

One man got up from across the room and handed me a check for \$500. He said, “This is your first contribution to this ministry.” His wife had cerebral palsy and was on crutches at that time. He was a retired navy chaplain, and they had taken in forty-five pastors, doctors, dentists and their spouses, at their little retreat house up on Lake Gaston.

Another man came up to me and said, “I’ve just called my office, and I’m not leaving Raleigh, NC, until I see you set up in an office and this ministry under way.” And he delivered on that promise.

A week later, I arrived late at an Appleby’s restaurant, where I met with a number of ladies and men who were a part of my divorce care recovery ministry group that were a part of my life and my healing. They must have been talking before I got there, because a young man spoke up and said, “Do you need a lawyer to help you in this ministry?” And then he said, “Do you need an accountant?” And both of those men are still with us in this ministry to this day.

God was at work, using his people and calling them forth, touching their hearts and minds. And so, by September 27, 1995, PastorCare was officially incorporated as a 501C3 non-profit organization. It started in one tiny space in a former motel room, with a modest rent, and a mission-minded church. Today, 40% of the calls are from pastor’s wives. Quite a number of the ladies would hear me on the phone. As I sat in the office and listened to the calls, time and again the women would say, “Have you been through a divorce?” when I would never mentioned it. “How did you know?” I would ask? They would say, “I could tell by the way you listened and responded to me, cause that’s where I am.”

Today, Lois Evans, the wife of Tony Evans, a pastor out of Texas said, almost 50% of pastor’s wives have either gone through a divorce or have contemplated it sometime in their marriages.

Sunshine and Shadows

After ten years of singleness, through which the Lord had to bring me through to accepting my singleness, the Lord brought me to a beautiful lady. One who would and is helping me carry the ministry through what may be the final phase. She came out of six and a half years of singleness, a widow; her first husband having died. Only two weeks before we met, I had had to say, "Lord, you have given me the blessedness of serving you in this ministry of PastorCare. And if that is all you give me, that's fine." Two weeks after having said that, the Lord brings my dear Anne, with an "e," into my life. July 9, 2000, Anne and I met for the very first time. By November fifth, that year, we were married. The kindest and most caring lady I have ever known, of the test we went took, our counselors said we were closest they had ever seen on the premarital tests. Another of the Lord's doing and His work.

But then came the big "C" word, cancer, in which the Lord, just two weeks after my father died and I preached his memorial service, my beloved father who sacrificed and gave the first \$100,000 to set up and endowment fund for PastorCare. Two weeks after he died, I began to feel very weak and by the end of June, I was diagnosed with cancer. And I have had to step down, as executive director. But great is His will that others might step up to the plate. Fresh blood. New contributors. It's not Bert Moore's ministry, no one could say, but the Lord's ministry.

The beautiful thing about it is, Jesus said to His disciples, I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done unto you. The great pastor of the sheep, for unto us who are His under-shepherds, He would say to them, if I do not go the Holy Spirit will not come to you. If I go away, I will send the Holy Spirit to comfort, yes, and to guide you. And lead you into all truth. Chuck Swindoll says, "What all pastors need today is not so much more instruction as compassion." And that is the mark of PastorCare today; men who live out those first verses of 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, who are ministering with the comfort that God has comforted them in Pastoral ministry.

Loving these ministers back into ministry, helping to rescue, reclaim and restore them back into ministry, to help them under-gird, encourage, and help model and lead them, and help sustain that in ministry today. So, as Jesus departed, my time will come very soon, and it is my prayer that as the Lord has worked with the National Clergy Support Network, one day, all nations will know, throughout the world will have a support network in their nation, ministering to their pastors.

Yes, I hear the benediction, and it is to Him be the glory, and to Him who is able to keep us from falling, to the only wise God, our heavenly Father, be glory and majesty in our lives as individuals, in the ministry of PastorCare, and in His church. As He is the Creator, He will be the Sustainer, of PastorCare, and all of us. And to Him be glory and praise. Amen.