



ONE PASTOR'S story

● JUNE | ● NEWSLETTER | ● 2006

THE MISSION OF PASTORCARE

Based upon Biblical principles, **PastorCare** provides personalized support and encouragement for pastors and their families.

○ | Preventing

○ | Intervening

○ | Connecting

PastorCare is a faith-based, non-profit national clergy support network that exists to help hurting pastors and their families.



John W. Smith
Regional Director

Reason for hope

My world broke in the fall of 2001 as a result of my own sinful choices. I experienced public disgrace and separation from the church family I'd served and nearly everyone I'd called friend. My wife and I separated, I moved to a new community, and I soon found myself questioning myself and everything I'd ever believed.

The grace and love extended to me by a pastor and my four children enabled me to survive those days. My children loved me unconditionally, and we built a stronger connection than we'd ever had before.

While reading the paper over the Christmas holiday in 2002, I came across an announcement of a winter hike at a local park. Following the hike, a naturalist would read nature poetry in front of a fireplace, and hot chocolate would be served. Since my children were scheduled to be with their mom that morning, I decided to attend.

But when the day arrived and I walked into the meeting area, I realized there was no

hot chocolate or fire in sight, and it looked suspiciously like the participants were going to be asked to write the poetry. Because only six people were in attendance, I couldn't see how I could graciously leave, so I decided to make the best of it.

The naturalist encouraged us to look for something inspiring while we were hiking so we could compose poems and share them with each other. It was evident to me that the other members of the group had been brought by an agency working with impoverished and marginalized people. One older lady struggled to keep up with even the slowest pace. The naturalist was doing the best to accommodate this woman who needed to stop every 30 seconds to catch her breath.

It soon became apparent that we wouldn't be able to go even a half a mile as a group. The naturalist wisely suggested that we turn around and start back using a shorter path that would take us by three of the oldest trees in the area.

[\(continued on page 2\)](#)

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors:

Renwick Brutus, Chairman

President, Achievement Resources

Larry Orange, Vice-Chairman

Executive Vice President, Retired,
Foremost Insurance

Curtiss Chadwick, Treasurer

Director of Finance, Retired, Warner
Norcross & Judd LLP

Ken Stults, Secretary

Agency President, Stults & Associates,
Nationwide Insurance & Financial Services

Mark Barber, Director

Senior Vice President of Investments,
Oppenheimer and Co., Inc.

Richard Craig, Director

President, Craig Architects, Inc.

David Garrett, Director

Garrett Law Offices

Joseph Horness, Director

CFO, Integra Investments, Inc. &
Turnkey Funding, Inc.

Ministry Team:

John W. Smith, M.Div., D.Min.

Sharon Brown, M.Div.

John Frye, Th.M., D.Min.

Rod Jones, M.Div.

John Kimmons, M.Div.

Bob and Bette Smith, D.P.M.

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.

(continued from page 1)

She told us that these trees appeared to be planted in a row by Indians who may have used them as some sort of marker. They were magnificent, huge trees that bordered an old cemetery. I noticed that the second tree in the row was bigger than most of the others in the area, despite the fact that some of its major limbs had been reduced to stumps, cut off right near the trunk.

When we returned to the meeting room, we weren't offered hot chocolate but were invited to write our poems. I hadn't written a poem in years and chose to do a Haiku, reasoning that I could count syllables better than I could rhyme words. The image of the large tree near the cemetery had spoken to my heart.

*Grand but deeply scarred
Amputation cannot hide
Majestic greatness
Overcoming such deep wounds
Crowns the bearer with greatness*

It wasn't great poetry, but it reflected my heart – my thoughts about the struggles of people who have succeeded in spite of handicaps. Their heart, character, and courage are visible to everyone as they struggle to overcome. Their deepest scars can go beyond the physical to the

emotional. I shared my poem and my thoughts with the group that day.

A girl who appeared to be about 17 and in her final months of pregnancy spoke up and said that she agreed with me and that she thought that being able to survive those scars

showed the greatness of the tree. Sometimes, she said, just surviving the hurt is enough to show greatness.

I know that most of my scars are self-inflicted. They will remain with me for life, but I'd like to overcome them. I don't aspire to

"greatness" by the world's standards any more. But I'd like to be content, happy in a relationship with my wife, respected by my children, loved and looked up to by my grandchildren, at peace with God, a man of prayer, quietly faithful, able to enjoy simple pleasures, contributing in some kind of service, and not afraid to look in the mirror. That would define "greatness" for me. It's something to work toward.

Three years after observing that grand tree I'm grateful to be able to say that I'm surviving and even beginning to grow. God has shown me that He's not finished with me. Through the finished work of His Son, I am crowned with greatness and have the hope of a future. I bear the scars of the Savior, and that's reason for hope.



Susan and Bruce Sparks

THE NEED.

70% of pastors say that they've experienced depression or burnout to the extent that they need to take a leave of absence from ministry.

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**

Treasurer, Mr. Curt Chadwick, CPA, 121 Mill St., Saranac, MI 48881.

Introducing Renwick Brutus

Renwick Brutus is a man of unswerving faith who sees himself as an ambassador of Jesus Christ. Committed to the mission of shaping the lives of people, he sees his role as Chairman of the Board of **PastorCare Great Lakes** as an incredibly effective way to accomplish that goal.

Renwick was raised in British Guiana, today known as Guyana, by parents who instilled in him and his siblings the highest work ethic and sense of stewardship. His mother and father passed



on a strong spiritual heritage and taught their children that God would provide and not to fear people or consequences as long as they were doing what was right.

Renwick was taught early on to develop his mind, and his parents provided incentives for learning. Because of their encouragement, he was able to win scholarships to the nation's premiere high school. He later earned his undergraduate degree in economics from the University of Guyana and his masters degree from Fordham University in New York City.

After graduation, Renwick went to work on Wall Street as an investment advisor, but he soon found himself drawn to

human potential more than the potential of a portfolio. Increasingly, his passion for investments became a passion for investing in people's lives, and he began to see a pattern emerging. He came to the realization that stewardship is a philosophy of serving and using talents to glorify God, and an integral part of stewardship is helping people

discover their talents, develop them, and deploy them. Renwick believes that one of the most effective ways to do this is to mentor and encourage pastors.

“My vision is for **PastorCare** to emerge as a preeminent source of comfort, reassurance, and strength to pastors in particular and leaders of church organizations and to assist them in being the most impactful leaders they can be in our community.”

Renwick's voice resonates with the confidence of a man whose has seen the abundance of God poured out in his life. This is his passion for the ministry of **PastorCare**: to pour out an abundance of God's refreshment and rejuvenation upon the lives of pastors in the Great Lakes Region.

BLESSINGS BY FORBES



Ed Conrad, John Smith, Angel Sauri

On February 21, Ed Conrad took Sue, Andrew, and I on a personal tour of Forbes Magazine in New York City.

When we arrived at the lower level, Ed introduced us to Angel Sauri, a member of the Forbes team who prints and mails the **PastorCare Great Lakes** newsletter. Angel and the team had just completed printing the first 1,000 copies of the February 2006 newsletter.

Ed and Angel consider it a privilege to be part of the **PastorCare** team and support our ministry by sharing their gifts and talents, even though they're hundreds of miles away from the Great Lakes region.

○ PREVENTING | ○ INTERVENING | ○ CONNECTING

pastorcare
THE GREAT LAKES REGION

Encouraging Pastors And Their Families
CARE@PASTORCAREGREATLAKES.ORG

PRACTICAL WAYS TO LOVE YOUR PASTOR

1 Give your pastor's spouse freedom.

Allow members of your pastor's family to be themselves. Appreciate them for who they are.

2 Buy something for your pastor's family – perhaps something totally frivolous but fun!

3 Give new ideas a chance. “But we've always done it that way” are the seven most deflating words a creative pastor can hear.

pastorcare
THE GREAT LAKES REGION

2291 Burton Pines SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49546
616-940-9860
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



John, Sue and Andrew Smith

Our deepest scars are often invisible to the human eye. They are those we carry from emotional wounds.

The emotional trauma Christians often suffer at the hands of other believers can be trauma like no other. Some who experience these deep wounds never recover completely. Yet there is hope for true healing and restoration.

In 1994 I spent a week with Dave Roeber as we participated in the Gospel Association of India's Evangelistic Crusade. Dave experienced life's scars in a profound way. During the Vietnam War, he was carried away as dead after a white phosphorus grenade exploded in his face. His chest was ripped open, and his right hand was severed almost in half. He went blind in his right eye and deaf in his right ear as one side of his head was stripped to his skull. As he inhaled, he sucked fire into his lungs and throat, scorching his mouth and vocal cords.

After fourteen months of hospitalization, thirteen major operations, and so many minor surgeries that he lost count, Dave was released from Brooke Army Medical Center.

His wife Brenda loved him tenderly and accepted him unconditionally, but Dave couldn't accept himself. What he saw in the mirror wasn't what he wanted to see. The moment he stepped out of the hospital and into the world, his identity overwhelmed him. He was hideous. When children saw him, they went wild with fear.

Dave pleaded with God to take away his scars, but when he looked in the mirror, they were still there. But after months of spiritual wrestling, his conclusion was life-changing.

“God, Your grace is sufficient. With or without these scars, You're the Potter, and I'm the clay. Whatever You make of me doesn't matter, just as long as Your hands form me.”

We wrestle with God over our scars as well. Like Dave, we often see ourselves as hideous because of what we have done. Sometimes our scars have come at the hands of others, and the gaping wound that tears most at our soul is our bitterness.

What can heal the gashes that scar our hearts? Only forgiveness can close the gaping wounds and leave scars as evidence of faith, growth, and healing.

The Bible says forgive or we can't be forgiven. To forgive seems to suggest forgetting and enabling, but this is not the case. Forgiveness does not require that we forget.

Every time Dave Roeber looks in a mirror, puts on his hair, sticks on his ear, and starts his day, he's reminded of those who've sinned against him. Forgetting is not possible, but forgiving is. Dave has learned to embrace the dying words of Jesus.

“Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”

Forgiving those who've sinned against us is the most divine thing we'll ever choose to do.

Seeking to remain faithful to Jesus,

John W. Smith
Great Lakes Regional Director