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ONE PASTOR'S story

FALL | 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:

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

Kevin's voice breaks as he rehearses the pain of his experience.

The tears are for his four children and the heartbreak they have endured over the past six months.

Kevin's marriage and pastorate were the stuff of storybooks – a lovely wife, four children, and a ten-year ministry in a church that was prospering. But that world shattered four months ago when his wife suddenly disappeared, taking their four children with her.

But that was just the beginning. Weeks later Kevin's children watched as their mother was arrested and taken into police custody. Within days, the storybook marriage was a memory, as Kevin's life became a surreal struggle with courts, family members, and the stunned members of his congregation. And because his wife's crimes had a direct impact on the church, he watched as the church body he had so lovingly built fragmented and split.



After receiving a referral from Rev. John Barner,

Director of Pastoral Ministries at Focus on the Family, John Smith initiated contact with Kevin, a call that was literally God-sent. As a father, Kevin's heart was breaking for his children, and more than anything, he desired a quiet place to retreat with them from the pain of their lives. Days after John Smith's call and a subsequent meeting, Kevin and his four children were settled into a cottage in a picturesque northern community, enjoying the sand, the solitude, and supportive encouragement.

Kevin's thank-you note encapsulates his gratitude:

"At a time when we felt we were sinking as the trials of life came, you threw us a lifeline. Your example was of true Christ-like love, with no motive or agenda except to minister the love of God."

Kevin's battles continue, but he is assured of the ongoing, loving support of the man and the organization that ministered to his greatest need in his darkest hour.

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John Kimmons, M.Div.

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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.

Hangin' at the 15th Hole

When does real ministry involve golf? When that ministry is taking place at the Pastors' Invitational Golf Outing in Holland, Michigan.



Four years ago, concerned businessmen in the Holland area felt called to the task of verbally, practically, and publicly applauding their pastors in a celebration of appreciation. From the vision of these men, the Pastors' Invitational Golf Outing was born, a four-person scramble honoring local pastors, as well as providing proceeds to area ministries. This year's designated outreach was Barnabus Ministries, who will use the funds to help purchase a house and provide houseparents for teenage foster girls who are separated from their families.

The event was held at Diamond Springs Golf Course. Each year, community churches form foursomes with a pastor included in each group. Lunch is provided, and all prizes won by the teams throughout the day are given to the pastors on that team. But far more than a game of golf and prizes, the goal of the day is affirmation, appreciation, and encouragement.

Participants are encouraged to use the day as an opportunity to express their gratitude to their pastors for their commitment and sacrifice.

This year, John Smith was privileged to participate by waiting for teams at hole 15 and overseeing a brief time of encouragement and prayer for each group. His ministry included asking team members to share words of encouragement for their pastors and allowing pastors to share their prayer concerns. John then prayed over the group, blessing, encouraging, and affirming the participants with the love of Christ. The event also provided the opportunity for John to increase his network of relationships with area pastors.

Our thanks to the sponsors of the Pastors' Invitational Golf Outing for helping to provide this win-win opportunity for PastorCare, Barnabus Ministries, and local pastors.

THE NEED.

50% of pastors have considered leaving the ministry in the past 3 months.

71% of pastors report that they have no one they consider to be a close friend.

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.

CREATIVE FINANCING CREATES INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES

Director John Smith has already taken creative steps to underwrite the costs of PastorCare's outreach in the Great Lakes Region. Because every element of PastorCare's budget, including staff salaries, comes through the gifts of supporters, the organization's needs are always pressing. Everything from paper clips to phone bills to crisis support depends upon the generosity of supporters.

In an effort to undergird ministry costs, John has partnered with corporations and businesses in a unique endeavor. Office furniture is donated to PastorCare, creating a tax benefit to the donor, and that furniture is then leased by PastorCare to area businesses, with the revenues applied to the ongoing budget needs of the ministry. John hopes to increase both donations and leasing clients in order to provide a stronger financial base for PastorCare's growing needs.

Should you know of an individual, organization, or corporation able to donate office furniture for this endeavor, please contact John at 616-940-9860 or at john@pastorcaregreatlakes.org.



Introducing the Kimmons



If you have a heart for hurting pastors and want to be a CareGiver in one of the ways mentioned in this newsletter, call or visit our website.

For the spiritual health of our nation, join with PastorCare – The National Clergy Network – in encouraging our nation's spiritual leaders!

It's our delight to announce the addition of John and Carol Kimmons to our ministry staff. John comes to PastorCare with a wealth of experience caring for people. A graduate of Western Theological Seminary, he served on staff with Campus Crusade for Christ in Grand Rapids and on staff at Christ Memorial Reformed Church in Holland. The impact of John's ministry of changed lives reaches around the globe.

On March 13, 2005, John left his position as Senior Pastor at Christ Community Church in Greensboro, NC – a work that John and Carol birthed twenty-five years ago. John now mentors pastors and church leaders in California, Virginia, South Carolina, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and wherever else God calls him. His heart for mentoring pastors and his passion for God are already impacting PastorCare's outreach in our area.

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From the Director's Heart



It should come as no surprise to learn that wounded pastors don't know where to turn when they're in pain. Transparency can be a risky business in ministry, and many pastors respond to conflict, whether church conflict or personal conflict, by isolating themselves and withdrawing.

But pastors, like everyone else, need to be met where they are – at their point of pain.

A PASSION TO SERVE

My passion is to initiate contact with wounded men, women, and families in ministry and to walk alongside them, providing mentoring, encouragement, hope, and biblical support. This passion has led me to PastorCare, an organization that shares my heart for binding the wounds of the embattled.

By God's grace, I and my family navigated the highs and lows of pastoral ministry for twenty-three years at New Life Community Church on Long Island. Through the years, I found pastoral ministry to be more lonely and painful than I had anticipated. I learned from experience that relationships provide the context for both our greatest blessings and our deepest pain. At a point of crisis, my family and I were wounded deeply. But at the time when we most needed it, dear friends walked beside us and directed us to Blessing Ranch, a renewal center for Christian leaders where we received counseling, healing, and restoration.

IN GOD'S TIMING

On January 6, 2002, I responded to the call of God on my life to leave New Life and follow God's leading to something new. Eventually, God called me to a ministry to pastors and missionaries called Alongside. During my two years there, God allowed me to use what I learned from my own painful experiences to mentor others in ministry. Shortly thereafter, God led me to PastorCare, where I now serve Christ by initiating contact with hurting pastors, connecting them with other caregivers, Christian counselors, and renewal centers. Pastors trust me, knowing I have walked in their shoes. During my first nine months with PastorCare, I ministered to forty-five pastors, Christian leaders, and spouses from Michigan, Canada, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT

PastorCare is a 100% faith-based, non-profit Christian ministry. We sell nothing and do not charge for our services. I am required to raise my own support, set up my own office, and pay my own expenses. But this is God's work. He has called us to it in partnership with those He is leading to join us in this ministry. Our opportunity is proportionate to our need. We are asking for your monthly support to continue to build on the foundation we have only begun to set in place. Please prayerfully consider your role with PastorCare as we extend Christ's hands to shepherds in need.

Striving to make a difference,

John W. Smith
Great Lakes Regional Director

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

Shelly Beach, Editor