The Guardians: Reshaping History Project and Exhibition

Interview with Pastor Terrye Moore, 2021

Pastor Terrye Moore (00:02):
I'm Pastor Terrye Moore and I am the senior pastor of New Solid Rock Fellowship Church, which is located in the Woodmire neighborhood of Baltimore city. I call this area greater Park Heights because we are between Reisterstown Road and Park Heights Avenue. And our church has been here since 2011 and shortly after we arrived, one of my goals was to find out who the other pastors were. Who else, who did we labor amongst. We had an open house here, invited all the pastors to come and just to find out what was going on in this community. Shortly thereafter, Melvin, Chief Melvin Russell Baltimore City Police called, he had what he called a clarion call of all of the pastors or faith leaders from all over Baltimore city met at the JCC on Park Heights Avenue. And his charge was to the churches that we would come outside of the walls of our churches to begin to get engaged in the community.

And that was my desire as well, because when I met with the pastors in that first open house, the charge was how could we work better together to make a difference in the community. Well, after that time, it was around 2013. We began meeting monthly. A group of pastors began meeting monthly to figure out what kinds of initiatives we could work on that would have some impact, some positive impact, because as I see it, the problems, the social ills, the problems that we see with hopelessness, really hopelessness is at the root of most of all the social ills. But I felt like if we were to work together and come outside of the walls of the church, as I mentioned, then we would begin to see some differences in the problems that we face. Part of what I felt is the reason for the social ills was that the church had been absent or silent.

Pastor Terrye Moore (02:21):
And that was what Chief Melvin Russell had challenged us, that we had to become commuter churches as opposed to community churches, where people come in to the community. Then they go out and they live someplace else. So we formed this group called the Northwest faith-based community partnership as a result. And over time, we've evolved to where we, we focus on five specific areas, public safety, public health, education, spirituality of course, and community development and economic empowerment. And so the things that we had been doing pretty much focus on those areas. One of the things for public safety, one of the, my baby so to speak, was a project called operation on guard, where we were creating a virtual community watch for a community that was fearful of sharing information with the police for fear of retribution. And so through the use of video doorbell cameras, we had partnered with a major video doorbell company to provide us with doorbells and the project is where we install these doorbell cameras.

And then folks will be able to record what's happening and then voluntarily share information with the police to hopefully lead to some sort of arrest or eradication or reduction in crime. So that's one of the things that we're currently working on. We have health fairs, a food giveaways, especially during the pandemic. One of the first things we did was to try to provide some sort of COVID-19 awareness and what we did, we created a postcard that had contact information, like who to call, what to call, who to call, when to call, where to get food. And also a prayer request line, because in addition to serving the physical needs, meeting the physical needs of the community, we wanted to also meet...
the spirit needs. So whenever we have an event, we incorporate some aspect of spirituality. Prayer is the main thing that we do we offer.

Speaker 2 (04:51):
Okay. And what led you to this work? Like where did you grow up? Did you grow up with parents that were in leadership positions or what is it about you that led you here?

Pastor Terrye Moore (05:05):
Well, actually it's interesting because this particular church, New Solid Rock was founded by my parents. Okay. It's a family business. In 2017, I became senior pastor, but up, we were formed in 2002. And so for several years I served as their assistant pastor. So it has always been, I guess, in my DNA, in my blood so to speak, to want to see people healthy, whole, every, you know whole beings, body, soul, and spirit. And, so part of the work that we're doing through Northwest is an attempt to bring all those components together. So when I, I thought that when I went away to college, my desire was to be a doctor. I wanted to help heal sick people right? I learned shortly, I think it was my second year that I didn't like to see people in physical pain. And so I ended up going the research route. My career took me to, from science, from natural science to computer science, and I spent 30 years in IT.

Speaker 2 (06:25):
Wow.

Pastor Terrye Moore (06:26):
Right. And as it, in IT my focus was quality assurance and quality assurance is the process of testing software for the removal of bugs. Okay? Or defects. And so really everything about me is sort of about trying to improve the quality of life. I think that's just, that's part of who I am, trying to improve the quality of life.

Speaker 2 (06:54):
And when things are hard for you. I can, I'm sure I know part of the answer to this, but what are some ways that you kind of lift yourself up and stay healthy and positive and those kinds of, you know.

Pastor Terrye Moore (07:12):
Well, fortunately part of what I do and what I am as a pastor, spiritual disciplines are key. And what I mean by spiritual disciplines, is exercising our spiritual muscles so that we can grow closer to God. So for example, things like prayer, meditation, spending time in solitude, fasting, all those disciplines help to unload, help us to cast our cares upon God. And then you know, our particular church is nondenominational. But which means that we’re not associated with any hierarchies, anybody like, conferences or some things that are governing bodies that rule, but we are what we would call Pentecostal. And so what we believe is that the gifts of the spirit are still in operation today.

Speaker 2 (08:20):
And when you think about your work, moving forward in Baltimore, in this community, what are some things you would like to see happen?

Pastor Terrye Moore (08:31):
Wow, I have a really big vision because being female, you know in the real world we have limitations, even within the Christian in the church, there's sexism within the church, there's racism within the church. I mean, I'm teaching a course right now called power to the people about the transformative power of the gospel to turn the tables on injustice, and I mean, the church is just so divided. My vision is if there were a way that we could put aside all of our isms, and the church, all these various denominations, people of faith, Muslims, Jewish people, whatever faith tradition you have, that we could work together on common things. And I mean, I can see what I would call like centers of excellence, where each congregation has within it, some level of expertise to solve some problem.

So let's say, the problem is, I don't know, teenage pregnancy or something like that, but you have within your church counselors or people who would be mentors or, and your church would be known as the church that would solve or tackle that particular problem. We have 140 plus some congregations, houses of worship within the Northwest district alone.

Speaker 2 (10:15):
Wow.

Pastor Terrye Moore (10:15):
Imagine if each church identified a single problem that they were going to be focused on tackling and measuring that there was some success and all of the congregants will marshal behind that vision. Can you imagine? And the power, I mean, so that is a vision. And so through this Northwest faith-based community partnership, first we just started by developing relationships, people getting to know who was whom and what they did, or what services their congregations could provide and then working together to do things. But I really would love to see something formal, like a problem solving network.

Speaker 2 (11:06):
Like a resource, like clear resources that each church could provide to the immediate community.

Pastor Terrye Moore (11:13):
Right. Everybody not duplicating the-

Speaker 2 (11:16):
Efforts.

Pastor Terrye Moore (11:17):
Right, right reinventing a wheel. I mean, I just think that, that first we have to know what's going on, know who the people are, respect each other, whether you're a female pastor or not because that's a challenge I have that some of the male pastors don't respect. But nevertheless God's program is going to get accomplished. So, but yeah, that to have like this network, I mean really a robust, inner workings, you know people knowing what their charge is and working for that one thing and just garnering all of the resources within that congregation to help fight whatever it is.

I mean, it's a whole host of things, you can just look outside, let's say, let's say we had just one church that said, I'm going to eradicate litter within my community. You know, and everyone's got together and figured out a way to do it. If it was a matter of purchasing those little mobile vacuum cleaners. And they had a crew that went around every day.

2021.09.07-MD-TheGuardians-PastorTerryeMoore-ParkHeightsNWNeighbood-18... Page 3 of 5
Transcript by Rev.com
Speaker 2 (12:31):
That was their focus.

Pastor Terrye Moore (12:32):
Right. Because churches I mean, not only have spiritual power, but people pool their money together, I mean, and we have resources to do things financially, so.

Speaker 2 (12:46):
Yeah. I hear your role being lots of different things, but how would you describe your role in the church and the community and your family like?

Pastor Terrye Moore (12:57):
Well, in my family, I am the oldest of three girls. And so as the oldest, generally, I guess the oldest sort of always takes the leadership role. I mean, I'm six years older than my middle sister, and 10 years older than my baby sister. So I guess I've always been a leader from that respect. And now that I'm a pastor. My family sees me in the role of, they, a pastor sometimes, I have to put on my pastor hat, they allow me to do that. And they respect my opinion, my counseling, my, they covet my prayers. You know, people are quick to pick up the phone to ask for prayer. So, but I think if I were to say, I think my role or my purpose almost, is to be someone who brings light into a situation. And I mean, that's kind of how I see, you know, we call our church a lighthouse on the corner, that we're just a beacon of light that people are drawn to us, to me.

And then to my message, because I'm emanating some level of light, and of course, in the context of Christianity, Jesus is the light of the world, but he says that we are also a light, and so we need to let our light shine. So, and part of that light is also trying to bring hope to the community. You know, part of what's driving my, what's driving me with respect to the Northwest faith-based community partnership is that I felt God saying that the Northwest district is a holy district.

We've been set aside for renewal, revival and restoration. And he gave me a scripture clear as day, what that all means. And so we may walk, you know you can drive around Woodmere, the Woodmere neighborhood and see places that look like burned out, bombed out, war zones. But I can see that change is coming, even though it may not be evident, but that slowly but surely the light is going to come, people are going to be walking according to doing what's right for the, each other, for themselves and for their neighbors. So I just have a, I have a lot of hope that this place is just going to shine and you're going to come back and say, wow, is that the same neighborhood?

Speaker 2 (15:58):
Mm-hmm (affirmative). And what would you recommend? I think we're almost good, but what would you recommend for other young people or people that want to lead and be a part of things, like if you were to look at yourself when you were younger, or maybe you counseling young people now, even through the church, but how do they be a part of the change and how do they engage you think?

Pastor Terrye Moore (16:30):
That's a good question? What would I tell a young person? I would probably encourage them to not be afraid. Don't be afraid of what, doing it wrong, or even what others may think, because sometimes I think when I was young, I felt different a lot of the time and it's okay to be different. I was thin and tall and just physically I was different. And then I was, I grew up in predominantly white schooling, school
settings. And so I was different. And you'll find that different is good, that being unique and whatever God gives you to do trust, trust and move forward. And there'll be people that will support you and buffet you. So I would just say, don't be fearful, just go on for it, you know?

Speaker 2 (17:43):
Yeah. And is there anything else, a story, a moment or Something else you want to share about?

Pastor Terrye Moore (17:53):
Well, I think maybe I'd share the story about meeting sister Israel.

Speaker 2 (17:57):
Yeah.

Pastor Terrye Moore (17:58):
Yes, because this was shortly after the death of Freddie Gray, the murder of Freddie Gray, I should say. And at that time, one of the, I have a co-laborer or like a co-facilitator for the Northwest faith-based community partnership. And he called and said, we need to just go and stand on a corner and just lift up a prayer. Sometimes we'll do that. We'll just show up somewhere and pray. And this was the particular week when the national guard had been called to the corner of Park Heights and Belvedere. And so we were there praying, and I think he had set up like a little boombox or something. We had a microphone and we were on in the 5,100 block of Park Heights. And I saw this little lady cross the street and she was waving to us and she came over, introduced herself as sister [Ishia 00:19:01] Israel.

And I don't know, something just clicked, and I don't know how we really started working together so closely. I mean, I guess it just sort of happened over time, but I guess she began to come to the meetings, we meet every second Tuesday of the month. And sister Israel just has so much energy, that she was just talking about the things that she wanted to see accomplished. And so we had similar goals. And we just started partnering on different activities. And the next thing I know, we're going down to the, you know meet with the mayor together, we're going to Annapolis together to fight an issue about the methadone clinic. I mean, we just, and I was just like, this is a person that very much like myself wants to get things done. Not just going to say, let's write a plan and then put it on the shelf. But, and so she has been together, you know we have been this like dynamic duo working together on various issues.