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Tribute to Church Mother Elois Ferguson Moore, Part IV

"Ooowee!"

I said it last week, the week before, and I'm saying it again this week as I try and bring this tribute to a close for one of our church mothers here at the In Touch forChristChristianCenter. She passed away on Tuesday, Aug. 21, 2012.

What did I say that I want each of you my readers to remember?

I SAID, "ASPIRE TO INSPIRE, BEFORE YOU EXPIRE."

Mother Moore didn't have a spiritual leader title like reverend, minister, elder, evangelist, bishop or pastor but – being in ministry for quite some time – I can say she inspired me on how her faith looked death right in the eye yet, with the "joy" of the Lord as her strength, she handled her earthly business once she realized her earthly body had a major leak and the soul was about to move to a new address being 111 Heaven's Lane – 1 for the Father, 1 for the Son and 1 for the Holy Ghost.

Let me ask each of you, my readers, a few questions with the first being… if you died today, who would be in charge to carry out your wishes? Would anybody even know what your wishes

are? Who would know where your life insurance papers or last will and testament papers are located? Who would know if you have any money to be buried?

If you died and made it to heaven what would you tell St. Peter at the gate when he asked you, “Why you leave a mess on Earth and everything out of order in regards to your affairs being handled?

You might be laughing but I’m serious. Ask any pastor how many times they heard, when a member dies, “She didn’t have no money.”

“How are we going to bury dad?”

“Did she have a life insurance policy? And, if so, where is it?”

Mother Moore on August 16, the Thursday before leaving for the Hospice on Friday August 17, after her nurse and social worker left us, asked me to pull out my black pocket notebook. Being the church administrator for years, she often saw me put notes in many pocket size booklets.

Quickly going into the pocket of my bishop’s robe, I pulled the notebook out with my red bishop’s ink pen. I remember her getting stronger in the tone of her voice as she sat on the sofa in her daughters’ upstairs bedroom, leaning on my shoulders, as she gave me her wishes to be carried out.

How well I remember her directing me to call Reverend Keenon, not only my assistant minister at In Touch but the retired judge of the City of East Cleveland and now CEO of her own law firm. At least three times she and Reverend Keenon went back and forth on the phone in regards to her wishes.

Mother Moore would look up at me and smile in between catching her breath while talking to Reverend Keenon on the phone.

Looking and taking notes from her like a second grader, she made it clear in a humble way that she wanted me to take care of everything and that her husband and daughter and her children knew this fact. We laughed as she shared what I would or might encounter but she reassured me they knew how much she loved and respected her pastor and her church. Plus all of her children, family, and friends knew me as well and my love for Mother Moore, her husband, and family.

“Bishop, don’t ask nobody for a penny. You will have more than enough to pay for everything.”

Mother More paid into a life insurance policy for years and, not even knowing what I was working with, I continued to take notes from her.

“Bishop, I don’t want no long service but I know it will be beautiful and I know how you do things. I want it to be on a Saturday so that my friends and co-workers will be able to attend without having to miss work.”

I can’t share much, but she looked death in the eye by her actions in getting prepared. I asked my assistant to come upstairs and take a picture of Mother Moore and me as we sat on the sofa together. That day, Thursday, Aug. 16, 2012, became a day I’ll never forget because of the answer she gave me after I asked her this question, “Mother Moore, as you prepare for death what would you want to tell not only your children and family, but what would you want to tell others.”

She responded, “Bishop, it’s a joy and peace in my heart to be able to get ready to see Jesus face to face.” I’ll never forget her answer.

Now, I promise each of you that I’ll wrap this tribute up next week on Mother Moore but I want to share with you what I experienced with her the Monday, Aug. 20, before she passed away around 6:05 a.m. Tuesday morning, Aug. 21, 2012.

I want to share how her children and family came together. In one day, the day of her passing, after standing around her bed as she lay there in peace, the family followed my every direction. I want to share how a family put all differences aside. After giving directions and answering questions from each of them, we all left the Hospice around 1 p.m., ending up at the funeral home at 3 p.m. followed by being at the Lake View Cemetery at 6 p.m. with her homegoing celebration to take place that Saturday, Aug. 25. This only happened because everyone pulled together. It was not about anyone but Mother Moore. I know Mother Moore was proud, as I her pastor was, in the fact that her children came together and did things decent and in order. Yes, I was in charge but, in reality, I knew I could step back and let this family follow her wishes and this they did in such a beautiful way, as each mourned in their own personal way.

Stay tuned to the conclusion next week as we the living can learn a lesson from this journey as we pay tribute to Mother Moore, who set an example of faith for all of us to follow.

You can e-mail the bishop at bishopspeaks@aol.com. Write him at the church In Touch for Christ Christian Center 969 E. 140th St. Cleveland, Ohio 44110. Check out the church website www.intouchforchrist.com . Visit the church each Sunday 11a.m. for Praise Service or Wednesday Night, "Over the Hump, out of a Slump," Bible Study from 7 p.m., till 8:30pm. You can call the church (216) 761-7100.