

Renowned Pastor Who Launched Beth Moore's Ministry Dies at 84

John Bisagno, a prominent Baptist pastor, died on Sunday. He was 84.

"Bro. John Bisagno—our Pastor Emeritus who led Houston's First Baptist Church from 1970-2000—went home to heaven on Sun, Aug 5, 2018. In that moment, surrounded by his family, he was reunited with his wife Uldine who went home in September 2017 and was embraced in the loving arms of Jesus—the Savior he passionately pointed people to throughout his decades-long ministry that began before his time at Houston's First and continued well after his final message here," according to the Houston First Baptist website, where he served as pastor for 30 years.

The church statement continued:

As Pastor Gregg Matte informed our church of Bro. John's passing during worship services that day (video below), he read 1 Corinthians 13:12—"For now we see only a reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

"Think of all the Sundays that Bro. John rose to come and tell people about heaven," Pastor Gregg said. "And now, on this Sunday, he is in heaven rising to worship his Jesus face to face."

Pastor Gregg then invited the congregation at every campus to rise and reach across the aisle to hold hands—just as Bro. John used to end every worship service at Houston's First. We prayed for the Bisagno family and gave thanks for the ministry of Bro. John and the immeasurable impact he had on

our church and God's Kingdom.

Bisagno authored several popular books, including *The Pastor's Handbook* with Rick Warren, *Love Is Something You Do*, *The Power of Positive Praying* and *Principle Preaching*.

Bisagno's influence was known across the evangelical world.

"He really was the leader in evangelism and soul winning and strategizing how to win people to Christ and create a culture where people were excited about seeing others saved," says longtime friend Jimmy Draper SBC Executive Committee ambassador and president emeritus of LifeWay Christian Resources.

Bisagno was ailing for several months and moved in with his son in Nashville last year.

According to *Baptist Press*, Bisagno was integral in launching women's ministries, including Beth Moore's:

Bisagno's support of women's ministry also was a hallmark of his pastorate. Draper recalled receiving a call from Bisagno in the 1990s about Moore's women's Bible study at Houston's First. "She's really going to be good," Bisagno said. Eventually, LifeWay signed a contract with Moore, and "she's been by far the biggest author in terms of sales that we've had," Draper said.

Additionally, Bisagno encouraged the ministries of women's author and speaker Jaye Martin and Carole Lewis, who helped launch the First Place 4 Health program of weight loss and healthy living.

"Bro. John empowered women in ministry," Lewis wrote in a Facebook post. "Beth Moore, Jaye Martin and I were allowed and encouraged to pursue the calling God had on our lives. He was our greatest encourager and friend. His influence will be felt for centuries."

Early this Lord's Day my pastor of 25 years, John Bisagno, saw the beautiful face of Christ. A true Paul, constantly encouraging Timothys in their callings. God alone knows how many preachers, teachers & missionaries are out there who surrendered to ministry under his tutelage.

– Beth Moore (@BethMooreLPM) August 5, 2018

Several people shared their memories of Bisagno on Facebook.

"In the mid-90s his voice was the first Pastor I ever heard. It was like listening to Dark Vader give a sermon. Can you imagine!? He lead me to know more about Christ. In 2017 I volunteered to clean homes after Hurricane Harvey. It was a surprise to me his was one. He couldn't possibly return to his beautiful home so I had to take a picture of his office. It was so peaceful," one person wrote.

Another said: "He was our Pastor in the 80's when the oil industry failed. My husband lost his job and we lost our home. One Sunday night John asked everyone who had burdens to come down front and pray. When they got there he said I don't want you to pray about your burdens. We are going to thank and praise God for our blessings! Wow! What a change in attitude we had! Went in sad, depressed and down trodden. Came out incredibly blessed people! And on top of that my husband received an offer of a job at 10pm that night. God just wanted us to change our perspective and remember that He's in control and takes care of us!!"

Someone else commented: "What an amazing yet humble servant of Jesus! Bro. John loved well, lived to share Christ and his ministry truly went into all the world making disciples. So blessed to have known him here in earth, and I can't wait to see him at our eternal Home."

Another posted: "Such a wonderfully man of God! My tears for him are of joy not sadness. He is with the Father in paradise,

alongside his beloved Uldine now. Healthy, painless and singing praises with her as they often did. See you later Brother John!"

Bisagno's celebration of life service is scheduled for Aug. 17 at the worship center at The Loop campus of Houston's First Baptist Church.

Giving thanks for Bro. John Bisagno from Houston's First Baptist Church on Vimeo.