Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry

Indexing and Abstracts

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SYMPOSIUM

DEFINING, ASSESSING, AND ENCOURAGING SUPERVISORY COMPETENCE: STATUS AND INNOVATION

Introduction

Paul Giblin

Let me first apologize for the lateness of this volume of the journal. The Board of Editors and I functioned as editors of this symposium in contrast to the usual practice of inviting guest editors. The goal of this symposium is to explore supervisory competence as it is defined, evaluated, and encouraged across the disciplines of pastoral counseling, clinical pastoral education, theological field education, and spiritual direction. Our goal was to invite two writers from each of these disciplines. As the reader will discover, the fields of pastoral counseling and clinical pastoral education reflect extensive, ongoing evolution of their supervisory structures. The institutionalization of competency defining and evaluating processes within these fields are well established. In contrast, there are no national regulatory bodies nor generally agreed upon certification standards for supervisors within theological field education and spiritual direction. We were then hard pressed to recruit authors to participate in the symposium from these later two ministerial areas, and we are most appreciative to Mark Fowler and Dwight Judy for agreeing to contribute at a very late date. We hope that you the reader will find

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this symposium an engaging exploration that invites you into the process of creating and/or transforming structures for mentoring supervisors into our respective ministerial professions.

In the field of clinical pastoral education, Steven Ivy describes a decades-old process of certification within the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) that is about to be compared to a creative alternative design. He characterizes the certification process as "a mix of mystical passage, existential crisis, and professional competency review." William Scrivener writes from his experience as former chair of the ACPE Certification Commission. For pastoral counseling James Pruett writes as chair of the Association Certification Committee of the American Association of Pastoral Counselor (AAPC), while Werner Boos provides an extensive narrative of his experiences of formation as an AAPC diplomate. Mark Fowler describes how theological field education is a program of the seminary or university and that authority for setting supervisory standards remains at that level. If national standards for credentialing field education supervisors are agreed upon it will likely be through the work of the Association for Theological Field Education. However, Fowler cites several factors that may mediate against this outcome. Dwight Judy, a seminary professor of spiritual formation, traces the long-standing practice of Christian spiritual direction back to early desert mothers and fathers, ammas and abbas respectively. He goes on to describe the current practice of spiritual direction as very new and for which neither national standards nor a national regulating body exist. Recognition of spiritual direction competence has rested with specific training programs. If national standards are eventually agreed upon it will likely be the work of Spiritual Directors International founded in 1990.

The reader is invited to reflect on: the striking similarities in the evolutionary processes within AAPC and ACPE for defining, evaluating, and mentoring supervisors; the marked differences in the institutionalization of these certification processes and the lack of the same for theological field education and spiritual direction, and whether the later reflect relative age and maturity differences or something deeper and more complex; and how one may personally contribute to the ongoing transformation of professional structures.

The symposium either directly or indirectly addresses five questions:

How is supervisory competence defined? Competence is typically determined by a demonstrated ability to integrate theory with practice and personal with professional functioning (Scrivener).

What are the goals of the certification process? On the one hand, certification is intended to assure a consumer public of the competency of supervisor and

practitioner, i.e., a gate-keeping function. On the other hand, certification is a rite of passage into the professional community. It is a statement of role, responsibility, and expertise that the certified person brings to the professional community. It is largely in terms of this second function that significant changes are emerging.

How have these processes evolved over time? Within clinical pastoral education and pastoral counseling, there has been a strongly felt need for change. As contexts have changed, and demographics of applicants changed, and reports of negative experiences with "in-crowd" certifying committees and "stress interviews" increased, ACPE and AAPC have responded. Practices within these two disciplines are elaborate and admirable even as they seek change. Typically, these involve some combination of the following: writing a learning contract at beginning stages of training; gathering supervisory reports addressed to the learning; presenting clinical case material; presenting written theory papers to a panel of readers; meeting with regional and then national committees. It is usually a multi-year process. In what ways are these processes changing? The following changes may be noted across AAPC and/or ACPE: (1) Where previously a goal was to form supervisees in the image and likeness of the supervisor, i.e, "creating clones," current processes seek to honor individuality. (2) Where a one-sided "hermeneutic of suspicion" focused on deficiencies, now a more balanced "hermeneutic of hospitality" focuses on growth and strength areas. (3) Where isolation and/or perhaps shame characterized the process, the intent now is connection. (4) Where processes were conducted "blind" and relied on strangers, now representation from the supervisee's community of peers and supervisors is sought; learning is guided and evaluated in terms of co-created covenants. (5) Where single theories once dominated, increasing openness to diverse theory building and integration are becoming normative. (6) Overall sensitivity to diversity is increasingly a necessity, and this is reflected in terms of cultural, religious, lifestyle, and gender differences. (7) Evaluation processes are being opened up and supervisee input may be sought in constructing committees and choosing evaluation sites; evaluators from outside the discipline are invited as needed; there is increasing collaboration between professions.

What do the four disciplines share in common as they encourage supervisory competence? (1) Most amazing is the fact that volunteers from within the discipline and/or faith tradition support them. Certification processes are time intensive, with no financial remuneration; they are "costly and worthwhile processes" (Pruett). Motivation for this process is the desire to give back to the discipline, to mentor, and/or to improve imperfect processes. (2) Faith is at the base of each of the

disciplines. The supervisor is expected to clearly articulate a personal faith journey, to make connections between experience and religious tradition, and to help the supervisee do the same. Theological reflection is an essential skill for each of these areas of ministry. (3) Self-awareness, ability to articulate strengths and limitations, appreciation for individual uniqueness, and the ability to make therapeutic/pastoral use of self are essential skills.

What images or metaphors guide the supervisory processes? Boos cites a number of individuals who were instrumental mentors on his journey. Pruett describes this process as formation and the supervisor as the "forming person." Do you the reader see other images embedded in the articles?

The ACPE Certification Review:
An Alternative Model

Steven S. Ivy

The process for certifying Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE) supervisors is crucial to the clinical pastoral education movement. The Board of Representatives of ACPE is considering a pilot project to test a significant revision to the certifying process. This article describes the pilot project and its status as of November 2003 and discusses ways that the project may improve the experience of both candidates and certifiers.

Certification has been a central process since the earliest days of clinical pastoral education. Yet since the 1950s, certification has been a mix of mystical passage, existential crisis, and professional competency review.[1] The ACPE Board of Representatives Task Force on Certification is developing the proposed pilot trial to test revisions to the certification process that adopt an approach to certification rooted more in a hermeneutic of collegiality than a hermeneutic of suspicion. The revisions seek to build community as a context for objectivity. Ongoing relationships among professionals are utilized as core to the certification process.[2]

Although exact parameters of the pilot are still under development, it is recognized that this trial will not change the mystical, existential, or competency

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components of becoming a CPE supervisor. The trial, however, may change this mix and, more importantly, may instill ACPE values in a slightly different way than does the current process. The values expressed in the ACPE Vision statement that are most emphasized in this pilot proposal include: encouraging creative response to the changing context of spiritual care in the communities we serve; sustaining a welcoming organizational culture in which members are encouraged to learn and grow; and embracing diversity, collaboration, and accountability on a national and international level.[3]

A Brief History of Certification

The act of certifying a professional is one hallmark of professional institutional-ization. To certify is to privilege the professional to practice. Certification also expresses to the user community that the professional is qualified to do the authorized activities. Thus, a certifying body has a public responsibility that it must manage in light of an individual's right to practice. Certifying is a gatekeeping function. Thus, an ethic of justice must undergird the certifying process.

Early accounts of certifying clinical pastoral educators indicate that all manner of formal and informal methods were used. These ranged from observing a unit in progress, to conversations at a social event, to simply being well known by a supervisor. A key element was whether the candidate could relate to the committee as a peer.[4] A 1950s attempt at federation of the various clinical groups floundered at several points, but perhaps the most significant was that the groups did not believe that others' certifying processes (then named accreditation) were to be trusted. Issues of power, secrecy, and purity surrounded certification.[5] Today, emotional dynamics around the certification processes continue.

Since the separation of the accreditation and certification functions within ACPE in 1974, the Certification Commission has engaged in ongoing modifica-tions of its processes, requirements, and expectations. A 1993-94 President's task force recommended several revisions in ACPE processes that directly impacted certification. These included the development of a written exam (since abandoned), preparation of three position papers submitted and evaluated apart from a personal appearance, and moving the locus of acting/associate from region to national and full/CPE supervisor from national to regional.

Thus, today's ACPE supervisory certifying process includes four marker events that usually require three to five years to complete:[6]

- Supervisory candidacy is granted through personal interview with a regional committee, usually six months to two years after beginning supervisory training.

- Position papers on theology, personality theory, and educational theory are individually "passed" by a team of three readers from a region other than the candidate's. This usually occurs six months to one year after candidacy is granted.

- The title of associate supervisor is granted through personal interview with a national committee, usually six months to one year after papers are passed.

- The title of CPE supervisor is granted through personal interview with a national or regional committee, usually one to two years after being named an associate supervisor.

During my service on the Certification Commission (1994-99), the commission diligently considered methods to evaluate how candidates integrated theory and practice in their supervision. Although the internal sense of the commission was that this work was done with great diligence and considerable consistency, there was always noise from the association about inconsistencies, problems, and mistrust regarding the overall process, parts of the process, and committee methods in particular. The system has been tweaked in a variety of ways since 1994. One of the key tweaks has been to increase the commission's responsiveness to ethnic and cultural distinctions. Despite these tweaks, however, there have been no substantive changes in certification processes or requirements.[7]

BACKGROUND TO THE PILOT PROPOSAL

During the Pacific Region meeting in fall 2000, ACPE Chair-elect Jim Gibbons, Certification Commission Chair Bill Scrivener, and this writer were invited to examine how certification processes address the needs of persons entering ACPE supervisory training with increasingly differing religious, sexual, cultural, and life experiences. Based upon this conversation and his own prior convictions, President Gibbons requested that this writer form the Task Force on Certification on behalf of the Board of Representatives to propose to the board possible changes in the certification process. Specifically, the spring 2001 charter was to imagine possibilities for changes in certification processes that might be beneficial in terms of making the process more creative, more hospitable, and more affirming of diverse gifts

and graces. Possibilities are to be examined in two areas: (1) paradigmatic changes; (2) categorical adjustments.

The task force met several times via conference call and agreed to discuss its ideas with at least three persons outside the task force. The task force presented four "ideas for change" to the board at its spring 2002 meeting. The board requested that the task force develop one of these ideas for further consideration: "To move from stranger certification to a community of certification." A second idea was assigned to a board workgroup, and a third was incorporated into the pilot proposal. Only the idea of establishing a formal training/mentoring review for learning supervision of supervision was not accepted for further study.

More fully developed proposals were submitted to the fall 2002, spring 2003, and fall 2003 meetings of the board, who also received comments from the Certification Commission on these proposals. The board intends to make a final decision regarding implementing the pilot at its spring 2004 meeting.

A Paradigm of Hospitality

Perhaps the most salient issue addressed by the proposed pilot is the nature of hospitality as experienced by persons in the certifying process. Voices have claimed less than optimal hospitality was experienced in situations such as:

- when position papers accepted by one group were "used against" the candidate during certification review;

- when recommendations from one committee did not cohere with, or even contradicted, recommendations made by another committee;

- when meeting in hotel conference rooms was experienced as counter to the candidate's culturally determined experiences of hotels;

- when all observers and participants affirmed functioning within a ministry location, but this competence could not be effectively communicated in an "objective" setting;

- when the addition of one person on the certification committee who represents some diversity concern is thought to make the committee experience responsive to that diversity concern.

To practice hospitality in face of these critiques will require that a deeper model of hospitality guide certification processes. This model will be rooted in Parker Palmer's conviction that genuine hospitality demands changing our usual

epistemological convictions. Hospitality is not about intimacy, civility, or account-ability, although these are not excluded. "The hallmark of the community of truth is in its claim that reality is a web of communal relationships, and we can know reality only by being in community with it," according to Palmer. [8] If implemented, this pilot will offer an experiment in how certification processes could be changed to create more effective hospitable communities of truth. Thus, a hermeneutic of community becomes the controlling metaphor of the certification process.

The task force also considered ways to apply the ethic of justice to certifi-cation and focused on these dimensions:

- Evaluation must be related to professional functioning;

- Evaluation must be grounded in the ACPE Code of Ethics;

- Evaluation must embody an ethic of hospitality;

- Hospitality is expressed through an evaluation process that respects various cultural and personality expressions.

PRACTICAL DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT[9]

An Implementation Committee composed of members of the Board of Represent-atives and Certification Commission will implement the proposal. Thus, this article cannot describe the exact steps for admission and evaluation. Interested persons should give careful attention to announcements in "ACPE News" and regional newsletters for details on when and how to apply. However, broad parameters are clear.

The pilot project seeks to address issues identified in the evaluation of position papers and the associate supervisor review. Since one of the issues that the pilot is designed to test involves how persons of differing cultural backgrounds respond to the key changes, a priority for admission is maximizing the diversity of the pilot group. In addition, because the pilot needs to be accomplished within a relatively brief period, persons who apply must be prepared immediately to submit their position papers. Those who have had one or more position papers already accepted are not eligible for the pilot. Candidates should plan to meet the Certifi-cation Review Team (CRT) for associate review within a year of having papers passed. Those whose life situations require a more leisurely certification journey are discouraged from applying.

The ten to twelve persons who are accepted into the pilot project will engage the process in the following steps:

1. A supervisory candidate who is prepared to submit position papers for review will notify the Certification Commission chair. The chair will recruit a CRT composed of two national commission members, two members of the candidate's regional certification committee, and a fifth member suggested by the student. While all of the members must be acceptable to the candidate and none can be in a conflict of interest, the fifth person may represent the biggest change to the current CRT make-up. The student can attempt to address unique issues in the CRT by the choice of this fifth person. Such issues may include theoretical positions, diversity concerns (ethnic, cultural, religious, sexual), or other meaningful distinctions. Thus, the commission chair, regional chair, student's supervisor, and candidate will all have voice in determining the composition of the CRT.

2. The CRT will not change until the candidate is certified as an associate supervisor. Thus, if a person rotates off the commission or the regional committee, they will continue to serve on the CRT. Of course, this ideal will not be able to be maintained in every case. Over the course of twelve to twenty-four months, many unpredictable changes can occur. But the intention is to keep the CRT as stable as possible.

3. The candidate will submit position papers to the CRT as soon as it is established. The team will review the papers via the current process and criteria. The candidate will have one month to submit any required rewrite. Each additional paper will also be subject to the one-month timeline. Persons entering the pilot should be in situations where they can be attentive to the requirements and responsive within the time parameters.

4. Once the position papers have been passed, the candidate must present for certification the first or second unit supervised. The timelines are intended to focus attention, make it more likely that the CRT can be cohesive, and allow a quicker evaluation of the pilot process.

5. The time and place of the certification review will be negotiated between the candidate and CRT chair (who consults with CRT members and the chair of the Certification Commission). The expected time and place will be during a regularly scheduled meeting of the National Certification Commission. However, candidates may request alternate times and places, such as a Regional Certification Committee or an individually scheduled time and place, not excluding the candidate's own work environment. The candidate must submit to the CRT chair and team in writing the rationale for an alternate place. At least three of the five CRT members must agree with the rationale. If the candidate negotiates for an alternate meeting time and place,

the candidate or the candidate's center must pay all travel costs of the CRT, but the certification appearance fee will be waived.

6. Only two changes to the paper requirements for associate supervisor have been recommended. First, the training supervisor of the unit presented for certification must include in the unit evaluation or on a separate statement an assessment of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses in light of certification requirements. Second, the student's peer group of supervisory students will also indicate the group's assessment of the candidate's readiness to be certified as an associate supervisor.

7. A frequently asked question is whether the candidate and CRT can have contact between certifying events. The practice will be allowed in the pilot, just as it is currently. The difference will be that, for the pilot, the student will consult with CRT members who will also assess competence at their next review. The task force believes that members of CRTs and candidates understand and respect the difference between consultation, mentoring, and supervision. CRT members are available as consultants, but not mentors or supervisors. The tight time parameters required by the pilot assist in maintaining consultative stances. Some examples illustrate my understanding of these differences: (a) a candidate whose paper was failed may talk with members of the CRT in order to more fully understand their expectations; the candidate cannot send a draft of the paper requesting their feedback; and (b) the candidate may discuss with a CRT member a situation that he believes demonstrates integration of theory and practice for the purpose of hearing what the CRT members think about the process; the candidate should not submit a written vignette for feedback in preparing required papers for the CRT review.

8. An Evaluation Team (ET) will be formed to evaluate the pilot project. While the ET will have to determine exactly what their questions and criteria are, they will be seeking to determine whether the pilot produced changes, such as: (a) How do candidates feel about the process? Are there discernable differences based upon cultural differences? (b) How do CRT members evaluate their experiences? Do they value the pilot project in unique ways or criticize it in unique ways?

While it would be wonderful to determine whether different types of people are successful under different conditions, such determination will likely be beyond the scope of this project. The ET findings will be reported to the Board of Representatives, the Certification Commission, and ACPE membership.

CERTIFICATION BY A COMMUNITY OF CERTIFIERS

The pilot project tests the current certifying paradigm in the following ways:

1. Is certification of supervisory competence better accomplished through a one-time interview with strangers or through a coming-to-be known process within a stable community?

2. Can evaluation of position papers and integration of theory and practice be better integrated in the review process through maintaining continuity of evaluators?

3. Is the professional person to whom ACPE grants privileges more likely to emerge from a system that depends upon a one-time stress interview or from a system that allows open conversation through time?

4. Should the candidate's formative community (supervisor and peers) have voice in the person's certification review or must that be reserved only for the authorized committee?

5. Should the certification of supervisors be the sole prerogative of those elected by the association as commissioners or can the certifying body be larger?

These crucial issues are described further:

1. *A stable certification review team*. The key procedural change instituted by the pilot project is the continuity of the CRT. The CRT will be named prior to submission of position papers. The same team will review position papers and meet with the candidate for associate supervisor until the candidate is certified or ends participation in the pilot.

   The current certification review for associate supervisor usually involves the candidate meeting five strangers. Even if the review committee includes one or two representatives from the candidate's region who happen to know the candidate, ACPE culture requires that they stay in the present moment and limit their interventions based upon external knowledge of the candidate. Even though review committees consciously intend to make a welcoming space to receive the candidate, the space is still strange.

   Spiritual hospitality involves the discipline of creating a welcoming space in which the stranger becomes known. One way to create such a space is to facilitate a process that provides "knowledge through time." Neither the candidate nor the CRT will have to create knowledge of the other at every encounter. Rather, each review will be based upon the candidate's expressed positions and contextualized to the candidate's situation. Many will appreciate this change, but perhaps especially those who experience marginalization by the dominant culture of CPE.

2. *Position papers*. The pilot project addresses concerns about position papers in two ways. First, those who review the papers will also certify the candidate. Second, the review team can include a content expert at the request of the candidate who can help the CRT understand whether the candidate has expressed a position clearly. That clarity may be helpful when the underlying theory is not well known to the CRT or when cultural components of the position are unfamiliar to the CRT.

Review and evaluation of position papers has been one of the ongoing contentious aspects of the certification process since the current system was instituted. During my time on the commission, we considered proposals for modification almost every year. Commissioners frequently expressed angst during evaluation of a candidate's integration of theory and practice because commissioners either did not understand the underlying theory or thought the candidate had no position that should have been passed.

The possible addition of a person with no previous certification committee relationship or even a non-CPE supervisor to the CRT may be one of the more controversial aspects of the proposal. It challenges ACPE's current paradigms that only commissioners are permitted to certify and that only CPE supervisors can recognize another supervisor. The psycho-spiritual grounding of either of those perspectives is suspect. However, to honor this anxiety, the pilot will not consider the vote of the outside person on the committee for either approving position papers or certifying the candidate. That person will serve with voice, but not vote.

3. *The value of "knowing through time."* The single interview stress experience has been one of the hallmarks of pastoral certification for over fifty years. In recent years, however, the American Association of Pastoral Counselors has essentially abandoned this method, the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education has modified their approach considerably, and the Association of Professional Chaplains emphasizes consideration of the breadth of the candidate's experience. Although I have not been able to determine what principles have informed these changes, the shifts must be considered significant.

Does a stress experience reveal more of a person's capacity for flexibility, integration, and creativity than does knowledge gained through occasional relationships through time? Is ACPE's stress model better suited to determine the unique skills of the supervisor than is a relational model? Does the stress interview belong to a particular culture that limits the capacity of persons from other cultures to engage the event effectively? The task force is convinced that these questions must be tested.

I am reminded of C. S. Lewis's reflections of the power of sin in life. He wrote that if one really wants to know what rats are in the basement, one

should open the door and turn on the light very quickly. Surprise and novelty do reveal truths that may otherwise lie undiscovered. The task force does not disagree with the notion that stress reveals components of our personality and functioning. The task force does propose to test whether those components are the most essential determiners of one's competence as a supervisor.

One of the stated challenges to this model is that the CRT may lose "objectivity." Proponents of this challenge are frequently utilizing a psychoanalytic perspective on the certification review process. They are concerned that the CRT may not manage their counter-transference well. Some fear that collusion between the student and CRT will lead the CRT to view the candidate more positively than is warranted. Such critiques assume that commissioners usually manage their own stress and counter-transference well in the current model. It also assumes that commissioners somehow keep each other honest in ways that the CRT will not. Neither of those assumptions is necessarily true.

The distinction "knowing through time" as a way of assessing competence in light of professional standards is the key paradigmatic shift promoted by the proposed pilot project.

4. *Giving voice to the candidate's community*. The supervisor of the candidate has always had some voice through written unit evaluations. Supervisors, however, have not been expected to declare their convictions about their student's readiness for certification. I had several conversations with supervisors following committee reviews of their students in which they indicated that they doubted the candidate's readiness to see the committee, but thought the experiment of meeting the committee would assist in the candidate's supervision. Is that a good use of very expensive Commission time?

Again, the pilot relies on the principle that a candidate's immediate community has knowledge of the candidate's capacities and limits. The project requires that both supervisor and peer community directly state their convictions concerning the candidate's readiness for certification. This requires that the community think critically about certification requirements and the candidate. While their feedback will not determine the CRT decision, it will be another voice added. It is another step in reducing the stratification between certifiers and the community. It is a step toward becoming a community of certifiers.

5. *A larger community of certifiers*. Those who serve the gatekeeping function for membership in the association clearly have both informal and formal power. Appeals and complaints have led the commission to practice in a more private and protective way. Desire for clearly demonstrated

competence can lead to an emphasis on the purity of the certifying committee and/or certified person.

These practices raise important questions. Is there any natural barrier between commissioners and the rest of the association? What are the reasons why any certified supervisor cannot recognize a competent supervisor? What would change if the entire association was to perceive itself as nurturing the next generation of supervisors? Could occasional participation on CRTs assist in developing this perception?

This pilot will not directly test these questions. But it does begin to open the door to greater numbers of supervisors taking more responsibility for certification of supervisors. The current ACPE model places huge demands upon a few people, e.g., annually approximately ten days of meetings plus extraordinary reading and writing time. Perhaps having more people participating in certification processes can enhance the ACPE members' ownership of the process. Concerns related to community and power do lie behind the challenges that the pilot presents to the status quo of ACPE certifying processes.

CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

The task force's intention was to create a forum for reflection within ACPE about supervisory certification processes. There is no doubt that such conversation has been engaged, particularly among members of the Board of Representatives and Certification Commission. The task force believes that the pilot offers a rich opportunity to consider how certification processes are responsive to changes in culture, create a more welcoming organizational culture, and embrace diversity and collaboration. Thus, even if the pilot is implemented but does not demonstrate good changes for certification processes, it will have served a very valuable purpose.

We trust that the publication of this article will encourage broader conversation within ACPE as well as allow those invested in clinical education outside of ACPE to comment upon our processes. Certification is one of ACPE's key professional responsibilities. The wisdom of the larger community is needed to ensure that hospitality, justice, and accountability continue to be embodied by our process.

NOTES

1.   Edward E. Thornton, *Professional Education for Ministry* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1970), 141.

2.   Persons who have participated on the ACPE Board Task Force on Certification, many of whom offered critique of this paper, are: Mildred Best, Carl Buxo, Jim Corrigan, Priscilla Denham, Bob Grigsby, Steven Ivy, Satkartar Khalsa-Ramey, Orlando Perez, Calvin Runnels, and Sandra Yarlott.

3.   The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education Inc. *Mission and Vision Statements*. Decatur, Ga.: ACPE web site, <www.acpe.edu/mission.htm>, accessed January 22, 2004.

4.   John Rea Thomas, *A 'Snap Shot' History* (1975-2000) of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education Inc. (Privately published, 2000), 22-23. ISBN 0-615-11447-4.

5.   Thornton, *Professional Education*, 141-2.

6.   See *The Certification Manual*© *of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education* (ACPE, 2001) for a full description of competencies evaluated at each level. Decatur, Ga.: ACPE web site, <www.acpe.edu/manuals-standards/certify.htm>, accessed December 2003, available for downloading as a PDF file.

7.   I should be clear that my service on the Certification Commission was one of the most satisfying professional experiences of my career. My judgment was that the commissioners usually did a wonderful job of creating space for candidates to present their best selves. However, I also trust the testimony of those who were both successful and unsuccessful in their appearances that their individual appearances and the process as a whole seldom felt hospitable to them.

8.   Parker Palmer, *The Courage to Teach* (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1998), 95.

9.   Please remember that the following description is based upon the current proposal. Details may well change before the ACPE board's spring 2004 meeting or the board may choose to not implement the pilot.

Competence in Supervision:
Reflections of a Former Chair

William E. Scrivener

INTRODUCTION

The certification process is the sine qua non of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). Every ACPE supervisor has gone through this process, and all supervisors I have known see their certification history as an essential element in their formation and self-understanding. Some have gone through the process with relative ease, in that they never experienced a denial in the process. More, however, have experienced some degree of difficulty—experiencing denials at any or all levels of certification and all that those denials entail. Some have found the experience affirming; others have found it demeaning. Some seemed to have had a clear sense of the certification process, but many others found it mysterious, even unknowable. But whatever our particular experience of the process, it has marked us in an important way.

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I entered supervisory training in 1977 in what we now refer to as the "old track" and was certified as acting supervisor in 1980 in the eastern region on my first attempt. There then followed seven years "in the wilderness" as I struggled to make it through the final hurdle. I was denied certification as a full supervisor twice, in 1982 and 1986, before finally getting certified in 1987 in Philadelphia. There were a variety of reasons for my struggles, but one thing that strikes me in retrospect is how much emphasis was placed by nearly everyone on how one presented oneself in the committee. A typical question posed to me—and I suspect to many others—was, "You're a good supervisor. Why can't you get through the committee?" This is not an unimportant question; the ability to present oneself as a peer to committee members is a part of what helps a committee decide whether to certify someone. But the questions that were not typically asked included: "How do you know you are a competent supervisor?" and "How do you/can you/will you demonstrate that competence to a committee?" Competence as a supervisor was, it seemed, assumed. Competence in meeting the committee was something else.

When I began serving on the Certification Commission in 1994, I found myself both eager and anxious. I was eager to see and experience what happened on the other side—how the committees actually functioned and went about the process of granting or denying a candidate's request. I was anxious because I wondered what I would have to contribute to the process and whether I would have enough wisdom or insight or whatever to contribute meaningfully to the process. I had served three years on the regional Certification Committee, and so I was somewhat comfortable with committee work. But clearly more was at stake here than in the Readiness Committee or even in the Candidacy Committee.

What I saw, heard, and learned was both fascinating and informative. What became clear to me after a short while was that the committees were consistently attempting to discern competence—as determined by a demonstrated ability both to integrate theory and practice and to integrate the personal and professional functioning of the supervisor. This is not to say that there was not the occasional bit of acting out by a committee member with an axe to grind or a need to show off, or that tangential issues did not occasionally inject themselves into the conversation. But by and large, the focus stayed almost relentlessly on those two main considerations.

What I observed, by and large, was that the decision seemed based on more than how one met the committee, if by that we mean simply whether the candidate remained affectively engaged and non-defensive. Some candidates did not meet the committee particularly well in that sense, yet were able to get across what they

knew and understood—enough so to allow the committee to feel comfortable with certifying them. Others were quite engaging, but clearly lacked some vital ingredient. Competence was the key, and while effective self-presentation was helpful, it was not the be all and end all.

Yet it remains clear to me that the process continues to look and feel mysterious to many in the organization. And while there is nothing wrong with that, it has led, over time, to distrust and anger on the part of some, and a tendency to identify the Certification Commission as "them," almost as if it were a creature apart from the organization. This I believe is not healthy for ACPE, or for those going through the certification process. If nothing else, it means that attempts to "fix" whatever may be wrong will remain focused on what goes on in a sixty- to ninety-minute committee interview, rather than on the larger dynamic of how we as an association train and prepare men and women to become certified ACPE supervisors.

In this paper, I will first describe our overall process and assess what it does and does not do. Then I will reflect on a few pertinent questions about certification, suggesting at least some of the questions we ought to be asking ourselves. I am not ready to propose more than some tentative approaches, because I do not believe we have looked at our processes thoroughly enough to know what is really wrong, if anything, much less how to fix it.

STEPS TO CERTIFICATION

A short definition of our process was aptly provided by Susan Gullickson in an e-mail to the author: "ACPE uses a combination of papers and assessment committees made of volunteers who are elected from among our ranks to determine who is competent to practice supervision." To that might be added that, particularly at the national level, we use what some term a "stranger approach" to certification, meaning that the candidate is largely unknown to most of the committee members prior to their face-to-face meeting. They have not worked with the candidate, have not seen the candidate in action, and base their assessment primarily on the materials the candidate presents and how the candidate presents himself to the committee.

The process can be outlined in the following way. A student is accepted into a program of supervisory CPE. At some point after that, preferably sooner rather

than later, the student meets a consultation committee for readiness. The purposes of the consultation include making sure the student is on the right track (i.e., has a learning contract and at least an outline of a plan for moving through the training and certification process), providing an initial opportunity for the student to reflect with a group of supervisors on the student's desire to become a supervisor, and offering feedback both to the student and the training supervisor about work the student will need to attend to. It is the more common practice for the student to meet with the regional certification committee for this consultation, but centers have an option of putting together their own committees, as long as one member of that committee currently sits on the regional certification committee.[1]

The next step is candidacy. This is the first formal step in the certification process and requires a vote by the regional certification committee. The purpose of this meeting is, primarily, to evaluate the student's potential to become an ACPE supervisor.[2] This is done in a number of ways, but a primary resource for the committee is the clinical presentation.[3] The committee uses this presentation in two primary ways: to assess the student's pastoral competence and to assess the student's capacity for self-supervision. Pastoral competence is one of the four competencies the candidate is evaluated on when seeking certification as an associate supervisor. At the candidacy stage, the committee looks to pastoral competence, as demonstrated in the case conference material, as an indicator of the student's capacity to be pastorally competent in the supervision of students.

Self-supervision is equally critical. CPE students have been asked to evaluate their pastoral care since the first case conference material of their first unit of Level I CPE. At candidacy, the student is expected to have mastered this process well enough that self-evaluation becomes self-supervision, i.e., an ability to evaluate one's work that is rooted in a solid understanding of one's strengths and limitations as a person and a pastor.

It should also be noted here that students in supervisory CPE are not allowed to function as the primary supervisor (i.e., meeting with students for the majority of seminars and individual conferences) until they have been certified as candidates. This requirement was added by the commission as a corrective against the overuse (and some would have said abuse) of supervisory students who, in some parts of the country, came up for candidacy having supervised multiple units of CPE over several years as the primary supervisor.

At this juncture, the candidate embarks upon two simultaneous paths towards certification. The first is gaining experience, under supervision, as a supervisor. Students are exposed to a variety of theoretical perspectives, and are given

increasing opportunity to supervise independently of the training supervisor. They learn how to develop curriculum and work to gain mastery of both the theory and practice of supervision. The nature of this training varies from center to center, but is ideally always informed by *The Standards©* *of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education*.[4]

The second path is that of writing the position papers.[5] Essentially this process entails developing academically grounded and integrated theoretical foundations for pastoral supervision in Theology, Personality Development and Education. Candidates must have all three papers passed before applying to meet the commission for associate supervisor.

There are several things to note about this part of the process. One is that this part was established in order to correct what was seen by many as a major flaw in the certification process in the old track. That is, the task of the committee included reviewing both the candidate's supervisory work and theoretical grounding. This was thought to be too much for one committee to do in a meeting lasting ninety minutes, and so it was decided that the candidate should demonstrate theoretical competence prior to meeting the committee. Thus, while the committee could look at how the candidate applied theory, it would not need to and, indeed could not, pass judgment on the theory itself.[6]

Also noteworthy, readers from another region assess the papers. This is done in an attempt to insure impartiality. Indeed, for the first several years candidate and readers were anonymous to each other. This ultimate application of the stranger approach was eventually abandoned in favor of all parties being identified to each other, in order to facilitate dialogue as the need for re-writes emerged.

This has proven to be perhaps the most difficult stage of the certification for many candidates. This difficulty is sometimes a function of the candidate's own struggle to develop and present coherent and integrated theories. But it is also a function of the vagaries of the reading process. These range from difficulties in finding reader groups in a timely manner, to the reader's own scheduling difficulties, to the uneven quality of the readers themselves and the reality that not all readers are equally well-versed in assessing the varieties of theoretical perspectives that are increasingly evident in papers being produced today. While it is not uncommon for a candidate to get papers passed within two years, it can more typically take a candidate three years or more to meet the commission for associate supervisor, with several re-writes of at least one paper the norm.

It should also be noted here that, if the candidate has not met the commission within two years, the candidate is required to meet the regional certification

committee for an extension, and is required to do so every year after that until certification is achieved. (The same requirement is in place for associate supervisors as they move towards certification as full ACPE supervisors). The primary purpose of this meeting is to keep the candidate, along with the training supervisor, connected and accountable, although the committee has the authority to remove the candidate from the process if it believes the candidate is failing to make significant progress towards certification.

Once the papers have been passed, the candidate applies to meet the commission at one of its regularly scheduled meetings—there are three each year—and is assigned a committee of five to meet with. The candidate prepares a host of written materials.[7] The candidate is required to present a specific unit of CPE that she has supervised, and most of the substantive writing is done in relation to that unit. One committee member serves as the presenter, reading all the materials the candidate has prepared (as outlined in the Manual) and writing a report that summarizes the materials and raises issues for discussion in the committee meeting. The other committee members receive some of the materials to read prior to the meeting. The presenter's report is a key document in the process. My own practice in writing them has been to present the materials as objectively as possible, and to highlight, if possible, both strengths and limitations as I experience them through the materials. I raise questions throughout the report and, possibly, at the end. I make connections when I think they are pertinent to understanding what the candidate was doing in supervision (e.g., a theme from the candidate's life story that seems to be emerging in a supervisory relationship, or a dynamic that seems to recur with several students). Although there are general guidelines for writing these reports, the style and organization varies from presenter to presenter. The report is made available to the candidate the night before the committee meeting.

The committee meets with the candidate for ninety minutes, and the format has changed little since at least the early 1980s. The focus of the committee's interactions with the candidate is, as I have said above, supervisory competence. What is looked for primarily is integration of theory and practice, and integration of the candidate's self-understanding into supervision. More formally, the candidate must be assessed as "satisfactory" in all four competencies: Pastoral, Supervisory, Conceptual and Integrative.[8]

If the candidate is denied, then he goes back for further training and may meet the commission at a later time. (It is possible for the committee to remove the candidate's status, effectively reverting the candidate back to pre-candidacy. This

might be done if the candidate was felt to have regressed in some significant way during training, or if it were felt that the candidate were a danger to students). If the candidate's request is granted, it may be granted with notations, which focus on specific areas of concern that the committee believes must be addressed before the associate supervisor is fully certified. Only a subsequent national committee may remove notations, and regional committees may not amend or add to notations.

With certification, the individual is able to supervise independently, while attending to whatever recommendations may have come out of the committee, and certainly addressing the notations. This is meant to be a time of seasoning, a time of deepening and broadening one's skills. Once again, the supervisor is required to seek extensions after two years and each year thereafter. The one difference is that associate supervisor certification is limited to seven years.

When the associate supervisor feels ready, she meets the commission again for ACPE supervisor. This may take place at a regional meeting, as long as the presenter comes from outside the region. (Usually this is a current member of the Certification Commission, but circumstances sometimes require that someone with recent commission experience serve as presenter).

This meeting has two primary foci: the "Use of Self" paper and consumer reports. The associate supervisor needs to demonstrate how he uses himself as a primary tool in supervision, and needs to show, through the consumer reports, that students are finding him effective in the overall running of a CPE program. As stated above, notations must also be satisfactorily addressed. If they are not then, no matter how well the associate supervisor does otherwise, he may not be certified. (Conversely, even if the notations are removed, the associate supervisor may not be certified if other areas are deemed unsatisfactory). Once this final and full certification is received, the supervisor is finished with the process, although he is expected to maintain himself in good standing as outlined in the *Certification Manual*.[9] (Again, it should be noted that the committee may revert the associate supervisor back to candidacy, or even remove candidacy, for the same reasons as stated above. This is a rarely used option, invoked perhaps two or three times in the nine years I served on the commission).

That is our process. It would be worth another paper to discuss the many ways things have changed since 1977, the year I began my supervisory training. Certainly the overall structure has changed. Emphases also shift from time to time. When I was first getting ready to meet the national commission, committees focused on educational theory. Currently, I think group theory receives more attention. There have been shifts and changes in the training process as well. But

the core certification process remains the same: The candidate prepares a variety of papers, presents an actual unit of supervision, and meets a committee of relative strangers who decide practically in the moment whether or not to grant the request.

DYNAMICS OF THE CERTIFICATION PROCESS

Beyond describing the process, however, we must look at the dynamics of this process. I think the first question that usually gets raised by someone trying to make sense of what we do is: How is competence demonstrated in committee? What are the benchmarks that guide a committee both in its interaction with the candidate and in making its final decision? Gordy Hilsman, ACPE supervisor, identified four roles taken by certification committee members that speak to the variety of expectations the committee as a whole brings to its job. To quote from his paper, the roles are:

> **Coach**—A competence view emphasizes supervisory effectiveness. Excellence of function is the criteria and only the best can play.
>
> **Policeperson/Judge**—A regulatory view emphasizes the Standards—are they met in the person of this applicant or not … Can this applicant prove s/he is conceptually competent from various perspectives, has a solid supervisory identity, and has integrated theory with practice of supervision?
>
> **Chieftain**—The peership view is here to ascertain if this applicant can function in the here and now about familiar supervisory data, as a peer, with some experienced supervisors. Maturity of professional relationships wins the day … The content of the interaction is important, but only as it is congruent (or not) with the relationships the applicant can maintain with the present peers.
>
> **Mother/Host**—The family view wants to protect the home, but will try to invite (almost) anyone who knocks. The heart is a major consideration … People grow into competence and … deserve a chance to develop, over time, a practice that is excellent." (All emphases added.).[10]

Each committee member may embody each role/perspective to some degree, and the committee as a whole embodies them more fully. I have known commission members who seem to operate very strongly out of one particular role, but committees as a whole tend to be pretty balanced. This, however, raises some interesting questions about the reliability of the committee's assessment. To put it another way, would a different committee arrive at the same general conclusion

(i.e., grant or deny, with similar concerns and recommendations)? There are many cases where I believe it would. That is, there are candidates who are clearly ready, or clearly not ready, and I believe any committee would see them similarly. But what about those times the committee is divided? A committee placing more emphasis on, say, the "Mother/Host" role might be more willing to certify someone who seems headed in the right direction and whose students seem to learn, as opposed to the committee more dominated by a "Policeperson/Judge" perspective. I can think of no effective way, however, to test this hypothesis. Certification remains a human process, with subjectivity built in. It also remains a matter of professional judgment. In certification, no less than supervision or pastoral care, competent practitioners may disagree in their assessment and in how to respond in a given situation.

There is one way that the Certification Commission has sought to bring more intentional balance into its deliberations. Historically, as new groups have come into the process (e.g., women and African Americans), attempts have been made to provide representation on the committee from that student's community. More recently, as Jewish and international students have entered the process, attempts have also been made to include members from their community. This can range from having an African supervisor sit on the committee for an African candidate to having a presenter fluent in Spanish so that the candidate (a Latina woman who was presenting a group of Spanish speaking students) did not need to translate her students' evaluations before presenting them. While such things do not guarantee success for any given student, they do speak to the growing desire in certification to make the process more hospitable.

Some questions, however, about the membership of the certification committee/commission need to be addressed. For instance, who gets to do this, and what makes them expert enough to do it? In all cases, regions elect committee/commission members—with the occasional exception of at-large commission members who may be appointed by the Representation and Nominations Committee to insure greater diversity. Just as one must be a fully certified ACPE supervisor to supervise students in supervisory CPE, so one must be fully certified to serve on the commission.

At the regional level, there is no one particular rationale for how people get chosen. In some regions, certification is considered a prize assignment and careful consideration is given to those chosen. In other regions, the committee slots may be apportioned more liberally, making sure more people have an opportunity to serve. Smaller regions are more likely to recycle members. Regional committees

may include associate supervisors, although there are those who argue that someone still in the certification process ought not to have responsibility for those also in the process, even if they are at an earlier stage. Interestingly, I know of at least one region that uses (or used) non-supervisors on its regional committee. This person was typically a seminary representative, someone academically grounded and with solid knowledge of our Standards and processes.

Each region has three representatives to the ACPE Certification Commission. One is normally the regional certification chair, and the other two are elected from the regional membership. Typically these are supervisors who have had at least regional certification experience, although there is no rule to this effect. But this is the only expectation of expertise at the Commission level. Otherwise I think most people would say that being a fully certified supervisor is enough of a qualification. Certainly this is an untested hypothesis.

Further, there is very little training for committee or commission members. At the regional level, I think folks are expected to jump in and "learn by doing." When I came on the commission, there was no orientation or training there either. During my term as chair, I provided an orientation to all new members prior to the first meeting with candidates. What I offered was simply a nuts and bolts overview of our work, but it at least afforded the new members an opportunity to ask questions and clear up misunderstandings. At the commission meeting, there is always a time before the committees meet when the chair goes over the docket and highlights the key points in the process. This includes talking about what is being looked for at each level of certification (as I described it above) and also making sure everyone knows the time frames, the role of the process observer, etc.

The question might fairly be asked, is this enough orientation and training, given the significant gate-keeping responsibilities laid on the committees and the commission? Based on my experiences, I would argue that the need is not so much for more up-front training. Certification is a little like pastoral care and supervision itself, in that real learning only takes place as one does the work and then reflects on it. So I would argue that what is lacking is time for that reflection. Usually the docket and business agenda are so time- and energy-consuming that there is little left over for any continuing education. So while it is clear that such activity would be in everyone's best interest, it is equally clear that finding the time for it is quite problematic. This is, in general, a growing problem for ACPE as an organization, the bulk of whose work is done by volunteers. How do we make more time to enhance the quality of our work when (a) the work itself can be so demanding and

(b) more and more people are finding they have less and less time to devote to it because of pressures at work?

A further word on the writing and grading and use of position papers is also in order here. Based on the considerable number of position papers I have read (either as a reader or as a presenter), I would say that that the theoretical perspectives of our more recent supervisors are growing more diverse. Certainly, there is ample evidence of feminist and African American perspectives being used and developed. However, I have also heard complaints from some students that their theory papers aren't receiving fair consideration because the readers don't know how to understand or assess their theories. To the degree that this may be true, it points to a couple of problems. One is that the reader pool is a mixed bag of supervisors. It certainly contains people with solid academic backgrounds who are well-read and open-minded. It also includes supervisors with considerable experience both in supervision and in certification, who understand well the importance of good theoretical underpinnings for good supervision. Yet, it also includes people who are serving because no one else will, and people who may not have cracked a book since they were themselves certified. It is a volunteer group, with no training and little accountability. It is not surprising, therefore, that some readers will have little expertise in assessing theories outside their traditional models.

This complaint may also point to a problem at some of our training centers. How adept are the training supervisors in helping their students find theoretical positions that are congruent with their history, theology, and self-understanding, and in articulating them in a way that might make them more accessible for readers unfamiliar with these perspectives? It is also not clear whether and to what degree training centers are providing broad-based theoretical background, so that students can be reasonably well-versed in a number of perspectives (perhaps particularly the more traditional ones) even while developing their own unique theories. This is not something ACPE has studied, but may be very much worth looking into.

I think it fair to say that the certification perspective is that the bottom line is not what the theories are, but how well they are articulated and integrated into supervisory functioning. And it may bear repeating here that certification committees do not assess (or reassess) the validity of a candidate's theories. They are interested in how the candidate uses that theory in supervision of students. Does the candidate's theory work in any given situation, and can the candidate make clear how it works (or even be clear about places where it might not be adequate)?

CERTIFICATION AS PART OF THE ACPE SYSTEM

Having looked at our overall process, I would like to take a little time to examine some larger issues facing not just certification but ACPE as a whole. As I indicated early in this essay, I have some concerns as I experience the anger and frustration that is directed at the Certification Commission from time to time, especially when the number of denials gets particularly high. "What's wrong with Certification?" is the cry often heard, the implication being that the low success rate is more attributable to the workings of an isolated and elitist committee that is either out of touch with the rest of ACPE, or at least has set the bar so high that few can hope to reach it, at least on the first try. (For the record, the success rate at the associate supervisor level is roughly 50 percent over time, while at the ACPE supervisor level it is probably closer to 75 percent). These feelings get translated into a desire to fix or at least change the process, in order to make it more "user friendly" or at least more productive in terms of outcomes—i.e., more supervisors certified at a given time. Indeed, one such pilot project, now being studied by the ACPE Board of Representatives, will establish an alternate track that will take candidates through a very different process towards final certification.

But I would like to suggest a couple of areas that need further exploration. And I do so because my concern is that, if the certification process as it is currently constituted is isolated from the other activities that connect to it, then we exchange one problem for another. Certification is part of a system, and good systems theory tells us that the part is related to the whole and is best dealt with in the context of the whole and not apart from it.

So, to begin with, certification is only one step, one part of a long process that involves many players. Indeed, it can be argued that certification can only deal with the person who comes into the room as a product of that process: the training the candidate has received and, to a lesser degree, the support, confrontation, and feedback the candidate and the training supervisor have received from the regional certification committee. And those processes are further informed by the Standards and by the accreditation process as it seeks to insure adherence to Standards and promote quality education in the centers it accredits.

I believe that all this happens unevenly in ACPE. The quality of training is uneven. Oversight of training programs is uneven. The ability and willingness of regional certification committees to challenge students and training supervisors

when they see problems are uneven. The willingness of training supervisors to make themselves available for that kind of dialogue is uneven.

It is not in the purview of this paper to unpack the history of ACPE in order to account for this fractionalization. But I believe it is a fact of life in our organization. And until we begin to take the interrelatedness of the parts more seriously, and begin to own the whole of the process, I do not think we will be able to see clearly what about the certification process can and ought to be improved or even changed.

Connected to this is the issue of excellence. I think ACPE contents itself, as an organization, with setting standards and then trying to make sure that programs and supervisors adhere to those standards. Some would argue that if everyone adhered to the standards in their spirit as well as their letter, then excellence would abound. I am not so sure. Centers and supervisors are not created equal; they do not all have the same resources, be they material, cognitive, or creative. Supervisors get isolated. Their lives get messy and even out of control. Administrators place inordinate demands on them.

So I find it fascinating to think about how ACPE as an organization would define excellence and, having defined it, would foster it. A minimum standard of excellence for CPE centers, for example, might include a center's success rate in getting students through the certification process (including the Association of Professional Chaplains/the National Association of Catholic Chaplains/the National Association of Jewish Chaplains). But I can imagine other benchmarks as well, including curriculum design and innovation, research and publication, etc.

But such an exercise would require more than focusing on centers and supervisors. It would also mean evaluating our processes in order to see whether and how they support the development of excellence in ACPE. This will entail a different kind of conversation within ACPE, one that will speak more to high expectations and accountability than it has in the past. In terms of ACPE's certification process, it will mean identifying and supporting centers (and curricula) that produce well-trained candidates, fostering greater accountability at the regional level through the Certification and Accreditation Committees, and assuring that the Certification and Accreditation Commissions and the Standards Committee are working collaboratively and that their work is informed by what is being learned at the regional and center levels.

This is, admittedly, a tall order. But I believe it is essential that ACPE move away from seeing its certification process as somehow isolated from everything else. It is, rather, a final, vital gate-keeping stage of a process that is woven

throughout the life of the organization. It is a shared enterprise and should elicit from each of us the best that we can offer.

NOTES

1.   *The Certification Manual*© *of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education* (Decatur, Ga.: ACPE, 2001), 3. Available for downloading as a PDF file from the ACPE web site, <www.acpe.edu/manuals-standards/certify.htm>, accessed January 2004.

2.   For a full and formal statement on the purpose of this meeting, see *Certification Manual*, 6.

3.   *Certification Manual*, Appendix A, i.

4.   *The Standards*© *of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education* (Decatur, Ga.: ACPE, 2002). Available for downloading as a PDF file from the ACPE web site, <www.acpe.edu/manuals-standards/standards.htm>, accessed January 2004.

5.   *Certification Manual*, 10-14.

6.   See Mary Wilkins's paper, "The Evolution of Theory Paper Writing: A Thirty-Year Perspective," published in this issue (*Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 24 (2004): 83-96) for a more thorough review of the place of theory in supervisory education.

7.   *Certification Manual*, 16-17.

8.   *Certification Manual*, Appendix F, xiii.

9.   *Certification Manual*, 20-21.

10.   Gordon J. Hilsman, "The Basis of Inclusion—Certification Archetypes in the ACPE," *Pacific Region Newsletter ACPE* (Fall, 2000).

Pastoral Counseling and Supervision Competence:
A Formation Process

James W. Pruett

The central focus of both pastoral counseling and supervision is formative. As Nancy J. Ramsey has written, formation "is a term often employed to describe the intentional process of developing and articulating a theological self-consciousness."[1] This self-consciousness is rooted in a pastoral identity that develops within the context of the pastoral counselor's and supervisor's faith, vision for ministry, and praxis.[2] Integral to this process, as Henri Nouwen has observed, is the "intangible tension" between self-affirmation and self-denial, self-fulfillment and self-emptying, and self-realization and self-sacrifice.[3]

The American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) contends that formation is at the very heart of both pastoral counseling and supervision certification and that formation is crucial to both being an integration of art and science. The organization supports, monitors, and evaluates this professional development through its expanding body of knowledge, learning covenants, periodic evaluations, and the review either of an integrated theory of counseling/therapy paper

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(required for fellow applications reviewed after July 1, 2004) or a clinical supervision theory paper (for diplomate candidates), followed by a non-evaluative consultation interview with either the AAPC Regional or Association Certification Committee, depending upon the level of certification pursued. Whether for pastoral counselors or supervisors, the consistent goal is that certified persons are educated, trained, and formed for competence in the AAPC tradition and are active participants in the AAPC's overall formation as a cognate group.[4]

COMPETENCE: DEFINED AND REFINED

For many years, the AAPC's definition of competence in both pastoral counseling/therapy and supervision has been evolving. Early in the tradition, competence seemed associated more with the work of the supervisee rather than the competence of the supervisor, the supervisory alliance, or even AAPC. At that time, supervisees were inclined to seek out master pastoral counselors from whom they sought to learn what to do. Thus, the emphasis tended to be on imitation of the supervisor.

With the formation of the AAPC, competence measurement has shifted more to the forming of the supervisee's unique gifts and utilization of temperament, learning styles, and a diversification of theoretical orientations. Supervisors have moved away from making disciples or even clones of their own theoretical orientation and skill set in order to encourage and facilitate the individual process of each supervisee. Instead of knowing one theory or approach, forming pastoral counselors and supervisors now need to know both a breadth and depth of theory midst a rapidly expanding clinical and supervisory literature base; they then need to evidence practice from their own inner locus of authority. Supervisee and supervisor alike are becoming their own theory. Use of self is their best skill.

The AAPC has recognized this movement and has refined its certification standards accordingly, as stated in the *AAPC Membership Standards and Certification Committee Operational Manual (CCOM)*, revised April 2003.[5] Care has been taken to use inclusive language reflective of the broad base of pastoral counseling/therapy and supervision perspective and practice. The personhood of the pastoral counselor and supervisor is honored and valued in the recognition that no one theoretical orientation can explain fully the mystery of the clinical or supervisory moment.

Historically, most persons certified by the AAPC have emerged from AAPC-approved training programs or at least have been in supervision with AAPC-approved supervisors. In recent years, this trend has shifted. Countless numbers of pastoral counselors and supervisors who have been formed outside the usual structures of AAPC are applying for AAPC certification. Most of these applicants hold one or more state licenses or certifications and/or certifications by other cognate groups. Establishment of common ground, acculturation, opportunities for redefinition of competency, and recent revision of the AAPC body of knowledge are but a few of the efforts that the AAPC has undertaken to honor the unique formation of pastoral counselors and supervisors and define measurable certification standards. With various paths to be certified as competent by the AAPC, opportunity exists to diversify training and extend further the formation of this cognate group.

A pertinent question in understanding competence is: What is its relationship to licensure and certification? The position taken by the state regulatory boards and virtually all cognate groups is important to this question. Licensure and certification do not guarantee clinical or supervisory competence. Instead, these designations denote satisfactory completion of minimal standards. Thus, competence can best impact licensure and certification in the framing of minimal standards. The AAPC has intervened at this place. In order to link certification standards to competency, AAPC standards also reflect the pastoral counselor's or supervisor's current level of formation and expectations for the future. The AAPC's certification designations for certified pastoral counselor, fellow, and diplomate are based on standards that correspond generally to a typical formation process for pastoral counselors and those who become clinical supervisors. Completion of these standards signifies that the person clearly is engaged in a process of forming. The supervisor's and supervisee's quality assures this process when they are attuned to the person's special formation needs at each phase and utilize these needs to inform learning covenants. When this attunement occurs, AAPC certification also authenticates competency and formation.

Competence: Innovatively Normed, Measured, and Evaluated to Certify

The inter-relationship of certification, competence, and formation for pastoral counselors and supervisors is measured in two contexts. The first context is the broad-brush perspective: the overall certification requirements of the AAPC. These requirements are clearly articulated in the AAPC *CCOM* for certified pastoral

counselor, fellow, and diplomate. The second context for measurement and stand-ards is the formal learning covenant that the applicant has with either a particular training program or with a clinical supervisor outside a formal training program. This learning covenant/contract should include a mutually agreed upon description of how competence and formation will be measured and evaluated.

Appendix G of the *CCOM* clearly delineates the required content for each su-pervisor's written evaluation of applicants for certified pastoral counselor, fellow, and diplomate. Training programs and supervisors ideally should form learning covenants/contracts with supervisees that enable them to write these evaluations. In order to comment on each content area within a supervisory evaluation, the supervisor necessarily also must assess the fellow applicant's level of competence within the supervisee's unique formation process. Supervisory reports address the applicant's learning, professional development, and theory and practice of pastoral counseling, including therapeutic competence. These supervisory evaluations and a clinical case sample assist regional certification committees in providing non-evaluative consultation interviews that focus on the applicant's formation. Candidates for fellow, after July 1, 2004, also must submit with their applications their written theory of pastoral counseling/therapy, which will be sent to a panel of readers who evaluate whether the paper meets the *CCOM* standards or needs revision.[6] This panel of readers provides concrete feedback regarding necessary revisions. The theory paper is then utilized as an essential part of the consultation interview. Consultation interviews for both certified pastoral counselor and fellow include specific feedback to the applicant regarding the person's current level of formation and how this process might be enhanced. Supervisors for certified pastoral counselor and fellow applicants are responsible for assisting them in making preparation for and utilizing the consultation interviews for maximum benefit.

During 2003, AAPC made an important decision regarding the distinct-iveness of AAPC-approved training programs and how they interface with the AAPC certification process. Both the Association Institution and Accreditation Committee and the Association Certification Committee have charged these pro-grams to authenticate that certified pastoral counselor and fellow applicants have successfully completed all *CCOM* requirements pertinent to the application. Through training program reaccreditation site visits, the Institution and Accreditation Committee now evaluates the effectiveness of this program function. Simultaneously, the competency of program supervisors in maintaining these training standards and quality assurance of certification also is evaluated. In an

important development, certified pastoral counselor and fellow applicants now may elect for their consultation interviews to occur at the approved training program site with representatives from both the Regional Certification Committee and the training program serving on the consultation interview committee. Integral to this interview are ethical changes facing the applicant and how the person is developing as a leader.

Supervisors for diplomate candidates must assess the applicant's sufficient:

1. understanding of pastoral counseling and therapy theories;

2. understanding of theories of supervision that inform one's theory of supervision;

3. ability to discuss one's theory of supervision;

4. facilitation of theological/spiritual reflection with supervisees relevant to supervision;

5. understanding of the pastoral/theological basis for pastoral counseling supervision;

6. respect for the development of pastoral identity, personal growth, and theology/spirituality of supervisees;

7. articulation of one's own belief system/spirituality and demonstration that this is congruent with the practice of supervision;

8. identification and work with the learning issues of the supervisee;

9. clear supervision contracts;

10. conceptualization and ability to teach theories of pastoral counseling supervision;

11. maintenance of adequate records of supervision, including dates and issues;

12. awareness of one's limitations and practice within the scope of one's training;

13. treatment of supervisees with dignity and respect, including supervisees' feelings, thoughts, behaviors, and relationships;

14. boundaries with supervisees;

15. respect for sexual/gender differences and multiculturalism;

16. awareness of how one's feelings and needs could affect the supervisory relationship;

17. flexibility in working with theories of pastoral counseling that may differ from one's own theory; and

18. compliance with the Code of Ethics of AAPC.

As part of the diplomate application, applicants submit their theory of pastoral counseling supervision paper to the Association Certification Committee for evaluation. A panel of readers must approve papers before a consultation interview occurs. If a paper is not approved, the writer then is given specific feedback regarding how the paper is to be revised. Reports from clinical supervisors of supervision, a clinical supervision case sample, and the theory of pastoral counseling supervision are used in the consultation interview to encourage the new diplomate's formation and leadership within the AAPC.

The AAPC measures and evaluates competency on various interdependent clinical and supervisory levels. Sensitivity to the integrity of the supervisory alliance dynamics is crucial to accurate evaluation and reporting as well as to faithfulness in the facilitation of competency, certification, and formation. Part of AAPC's own formation is evidenced in its increased competency in defining its certification terms, expectations, and standards in order to determine what is normative. Consultation forms for the various certified levels of membership, found in Appendix C of the *CCOM*, can inform applicants and their supervisors regarding what to expect in consultation interviews. Supervisory standards associated with each certified membership category are detailed in the *CCOM* immediately following the descriptions and requirements of each category.

COMPETENCE: CONTINUED TOEING OF THE BOTTOM LINE

Competence is not a fixed state, nor is it perfection. Rather, it is the ability, fitness, and skill sufficient to respond to need. In a changing world, needs and their expression also are changing. New care delivery systems have been established with associated means of quality assurance. Licensure, certification, managed care, Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act compliance, and varying state and federal laws all impact the complex clinical arena for which the pastoral counselor and supervisor, as well as their training programs, are responsible. Categories of clinical and supervisory competence from the early 1960s necessarily have been in formation to face the needs, demands, and quality assurance measures of the twenty-first century. Rather than training all pastoral counselors the same way, clinical supervisors and AAPC-approved training programs are challenged to be more competent regarding gender differences, multiculturalism, learning styles, sexual orientation, systems thinking, and formation.

In order to remain clinically and supervisorly competent in response to a changing bottom line, the AAPC, for some years, has been involved in reinventing itself. Self-study and re-visioning for a new strategic plan has included a new intentionality regarding certification and its meaning in the marketplace. The cognate group has reaffirmed that an integral part of its mission is the certification of pastoral counselors. AAPC's dialogue with other cognate groups facing similar challenges and its making available certification paths for pastoral persons from other clinical organizations have provided the opportunity for meaningful collaboration and formation. As the AAPC is successful in these endeavors the organization enables itself to be a vital, competent, and professional guild that can shepherd the formation of pastoral counselors and clinical supervisors. AAPC's front-line catalysts for this enterprise are competent clinical supervisors who are intentional about being formed. Pastoral counselor and clinical supervisor formation are interdependent to the overall competence of the field within the market-place.

<div align="center">COMPETENCE: SPECIALIZED AND MONITORED</div>

Pastoral counseling and clinical supervision that is competent and being formed seeks accountability, support, and authorization by both the respective faith group and the clinical community. This ministry is never offered in isolation. On-going consultation and supervision is sought in the local ministry context as well as within the cognate group, AAPC. Supervision routinely complies with that which is reasonable and customary to the discipline. Supervisory reports reflect consideration of the unique dynamics of the supervisory alliance and best practice principles. They are written with openness to consultation from colleague supervisors, particularly those who also have supervised the applicant.

The AAPC, on both the association and regional levels, has sought to engender the formation of diplomates and others providing clinical supervision. An ongoing working group for these persons meets annually during the AAPC convention. Several pastoral supervision workshops are offered at this meeting. A number of regions have begun inquiry groups for persons who aspire to become diplomates. Attention is given to such themes as the value of becoming a diplomate, the new standards for diplomate, the role of learning style in supervision, formulation of a pastoral counseling theory, and the role and scope of practice for diplomates within the AAPC.

Important challenges face the AAPC and its supervisors who seek to practice competently, including: (1) the rapidly expanding, more complex clinical arena with more than 100 interlocking intrasubjective and multisystemic components; (2) multicultural supervision that is more than acculturation; (3) identification of and response to faith group and ethnic traditions for whom "clinical supervision" or even the terms "pastoral" and "counselor" may not be the best label or means to facilitate the service provided; and (4) the most helpful means to host, value, and bless credentialed, licensed therapists with the desire to integrate "spirituality" and "faith" in their practice with the endorsement or authorization of their respective faith group. The AAPC and its supervisors clearly must be open to formation and view these challenges as opportunities to improve how the organization and they themselves serve new as well as long-standing certified members.

COMPETENCE: THE COSTLY, WORTHWHILE PROCESS

Pastoral counselors typically will understand professional formation and competence development as a worthwhile process in proportion to what they experience with their clinical supervisors. The clinical supervisor who models and directly communicates with integrity to supervisees that the supervisor has paid the price in forming but for whom the journey is even more worthwhile than the cost is likely to hear a similar testimony from supervisees. Paying the price has many aspects, including risk-taking and vulnerability to the process, loss that is necessary to change, time and energy investment, and financial investment for education, training, personal therapy, books, supplies, and travel.

In order for pastoral counseling to become an integrated art and science, the journey involves much commitment and cost. Competent, formed pastoral counselor supervisors know this cost and do not begrudge it. As a result, they manifest at least these important traits:

1. an understanding that enables the holding of supervisees who struggle to invest;
2. a genuine desire to give back to the discipline and the cognate that has held, encouraged, and challenged them;
3. commitment to the formation of the discipline and the cognate group;
4. a deep personal and professional fulfillment resulting from voluntary service to the discipline and cognate group, including some pro bono work with special needs supervisees with hardship;

5. an on-going intrigue and humility at the opportunity to supervise;

6. an openness to be available to and learn from supervisees;

7. an unyielding desire to pass a brighter, stronger AAPC torch to the next generation of pastoral counselors and supervisory leadership; and

8. openness in retirement to serve as a community sage to the profession and organization.

Persons who serve on the AAPC Association and Regional Certification Committees typically report such experiences as having been very important to their own formation process. They learn new ways to work, establish new collegial relationships, and experience personal fulfillment from helping to improve the certification process and its standards. Parallel reports come from applicants and institutions. Persons now meeting AAPC certification committees for consultation interviews that focus on formation overwhelmingly report extremely positive outcomes and benefits. They feel professionally engaged, personally valued, and challenged to form. The removal of the voting aspect of the interview clearly has freed both candidates and committees from much of the negative anxiety associated with the experience. Candidates and their committees appear more open and able to learn from each other. Persons who serve on diplomate consultation committees describe these experiences as very rewarding, worthy of continuing education units, and important to their own formation. Committee members state that they bring back to their organizations far more than is lost in time and energy investment.

CONCLUSION

Pastoral counselor and supervisor formation is a costly process, not for the faint-hearted, and yet, formation can be one of the pearls of great price experienced as costly grace. Formation is the journey, and updated levels of competence the mile markers. Competence says you have taken the journey and here is where you have been. Formation declares who you are and how you are becoming. Each is vital and important, and they are interdependent. No one is fully competent for every clinical or supervisory situation. Formation helps the pastoral counselor and supervisor define areas of personal incompetence graciously and, where possible, engage one's individuation process for change and integration.

The forming person knows the meaning and value of limits and does not self-recriminate. Regardless of the level of competence, this person also knows if and when to stay the course and seek new supervision and consultation to move into personally uncharted waters. For example, multicultural supervision or supervision of a person with a significantly different theoretical orientation may lead the forming supervisor to seek supervision or consultation from someone clearly competent in those areas and thereby promote personal formation, competence, and the assurance that the supervisee is appropriately held. The AAPC Association Certification Committee has modeled this practice through establishing consultative relationships with persons having particular expertise who might inform them regarding standards, policies, procedures, and equivalencies, as well as how to respond to specific applicants.

The AAPC has set the pace by engaging its own formation process so that it might be more competent in the certification of pastoral counselor and supervisor applicants. By this action, its certified members are freed and encouraged to be in process, embracing one's own formation, as well as that of the organization. Clinical supervisors by virtue of their leadership responsibility are to be among the first to extend this modeling with integrity.

To all of us, the paraphrased and redirected words of President John F. Kennedy can be useful: Ask not what the AAPC or the discipline of pastoral counseling and supervision can do for you. Ask what you can do for them. In so doing, we pass along the torch with a stronger, brighter flame to the next generation. And who knows? Someone carrying this torch may one day shed light on the path for one of our children's children.

NOTES

1.   Nancy J. Ramsay, *Pastoral Diagnosis: A Resource for Ministries of Care and Counseling* (Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress, 1998), 76.

2.   Ramsay, 76.

3.   Henri Nouwen, *Creative Ministry* (NewYork: Doubleday and Company Inc., 1978), xxiv, 52.

4.   Han van den Blink, "Life-Long Formation in AAPC," posted to the AAPC web site, <www.aapc.org/formation.htm>, accessed March 2004, 1-2.

    5.   American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC), *Membership Standards and Certification Committee Operational Manual (CCOM)* (Fairfax, Va.: AAPC, 2003). The 2002 version is available for downloading as a PDF file from the AAPC web site, <www.aapc.org/cc manual.pdf>, accessed March 2004.

    6.   AAPC, *CCOM*, appendix B, 38.

Personal Reflections on the Formation
of a Pastoral Counseling Supervisor

Werner K. Boos

Who Am I?

My name is Werner Boos (Bōz). The following is a narrative of my formation as
an American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC) diplomate. I will high-
light key persons, situations, and opportunities that shaped much of who I have
become and what I do. I will also clarify how, during my preparation to supervise
pastors and therapists, I journeyed through an ever-changing AAPC culture that
sometimes wounded, certainly challenged and healed, and then eventually
equipped me for the ministry that I now exercise every day. I also will document

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some insights, skills, and wisdom learned through the course of my own clinical supervision.

How Did I Get Here?

Obviously, I did not just jump from a Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree into my practice as overseer, guide, and coach of others' pastoral counseling. Along the way, I had the help of key mentors. The first of these was Len Wuerffel, director of the Master of Sacred Theology (S.T.M.) program in pastoral counseling at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, Mo., back in the early 1970s, who took me under his wing after I had returned from my pastoral internship in Minneapolis, Minn. Len listened carefully to my tale of woe. On "vicarage," as we called that internship year, I learned that I was terribly unprepared for the people-part of pastoring. I had been an industrious academic theology student, but had not yet run into the people issues that parishioners and members of the community brought to my intern supervisor. Although I had some people skills, many were born of my immigrant family of origin's needs to appease, please, and succeed. These themes were never addressed in undergraduate school or in seminary up to that time.

Len suggested that I consider taking more people-skills courses in my fourth year at the seminary and dropped the hint that upon graduation, I might want to enroll in the S.T.M. program in pastoral counseling—a full-year's immersion in precisely those competencies that I had been lacking. This course of study was affiliated with Care and Counseling Inc., an ecumenical pastoral counseling center with multiple offices in the metro St. Louis area. Its intense practicum served as counterpart to an excellent seminary curriculum and appealed to my desire to integrate theological theory with spiritual praxis. It was not long after I graduated with my M.Div. degree that I first passed through the gate of an AAPC-informed culture of pastoral counseling.

Becoming an AAPC Member

I was energized and hopeful as I learned how to help clients approach their problems more effectively. Agency Director Ed Stevens, along with medical consultants George Benson, M.D., and Steven Post, M.D., did a marvelous job in helping a greenhorn become a more confident apprentice. Interdisciplinary case conferences smoothed the rough edges of my excess presenter's anxiety, and peer support gave birth to a counselor who could function well in brief, supportive therapy under supervision.

It was in fall 1972 that I appeared for my member interview at St. Paul's School of Theology, Kansas City, Mo., before three male members of the Midwest Regional Membership Committee. I recall being quite naïve about what the committee could and could not do. Although I felt quite confident that I was at the member level, I secretly hoped that the committee would grant me fellow status. Needless to say, AAPC was not about to grant a level of membership not applied for, nor one that was expected by entitlement. This would be the first of my narcissistic woundings from which I would recover and grow into a more seasoned counselor—a process facilitated by my clinical supervisors and peers over the next several years.

On the Way to AAPC Fellow

The Care and Counseling certificate program ended after two years. However, when agency needs dictated, noteworthy students could qualify for a third year, which offered part-time employment at the Center and prepared candidates for AAPC fellow. I jumped at the chance to stretch my skills, while serving my first congregation in St. Louis. I wanted to develop pastoral psychotherapy within the local church. Continued counseling training did not serve as an escape from the parish for me; rather it informed and empowered that in-house ministry.

While in the third year at Care and Counseling, I steadily improved my ability to be in touch with what was going on with clients, what was going on with me, and what was happening between us—while the therapeutic hour was unfolding. Through excellent pastoral supervision by Bill North, future president of AAPC, and Jim Ewing, future executive director of AAPC, I moved from appreciating

what was happening in a session ex post facto, to realizing what was going on in vivo. Moreover, with their help, I learned to translate therapeutic process into Christian theology and vice versa.

Jim Ewing and I conducted several groups during that third year of training. In our supervisory reflections on group process, I found myself more and more a colleague than a trainee. Whereas I first found Jim to be the nurturing American father that I had never had, he now served as a mentoring older brother. Needless to say, my interview for AAPC fellow in fall 1974 went very well, despite the fact that it took the form of a stress interview, based on the old clinical pastoral education model. Through good supervision, I was able to keep my anxiety in bounds and to channel it into a positive encounter with the committee. I emerged as an AAPC fellow just prior to moving to the Denver, Colo., area, where I became the first pastor of Hosanna Lutheran Church, Littleton. It was at Hosanna, near the foothills of the Rocky Mountains, where I took my next developmental steps as minister, therapist, and fledgling supervisor.

FUNCTIONING AS FELLOW

During my first year in Colorado, I got wind of the opening of a new School of Professional Psychology at the University of Denver, and was fortunate to be one of two clergy to enroll in fall 1976. The curriculum took six years of part-time work—including a clinical internship. All that while I led a growing suburban church and tried to learn how to co-parent a then two-child family. I used the DU experience to sharpen clinical skills, to gather pastoral depth, to parent more confidently, and to develop preliminary supervisory skills.

I counseled people from both congregation and community. I also sought a place in the regional AAPC leadership while working in supervision with Floyd Greiner, an AAPC diplomate and licensed clinical psychologist. With his encouragement, I received my Psy.D. degree, earned my clinical psychology license, and started my diplomate preparation. My chief developmental milestones while with Floyd included a greater confidence in working with a variety of clients, greater efficacy in managing couple and family sessions, and greater ability to stay differentiated in the midst of swirling congregational dynamics. Moreover, I held regional AAPC offices including chair of the Rocky Mountain/Plains Region and chair of the Membership Committee.

In Floyd, I found a gentle, caring brother who saw potentials for leadership in me and had the skills to call them forth. He also was not overly competitive with me, so that it was just fine if I excelled in areas that he had not yet mastered himself. In a surprising role reversal, I was privileged to minister to him and to his family prior to his untimely death. In fact, I conducted the memorial service when he died of prostate cancer in March 1991.

Preparation For Diplomate

Floyd and I worked hard to prepare for my first encounter with the Diplomate Interview Committee in spring 1987. I was anxious and, to a lesser degree, so was Floyd. It was the first time that any local talent had come before the Denver-based committee. Unknown to us at the time, the interview committee was even more anxious than we. That reality, plus my own unfinished emotional homework proved my undoing.

I personally hoped to be recognized as a leader among my pastoral counseling peers, but was not yet ready to claim it. I still came at leadership from the bottom of my immigrant soul, rather than approaching it from the top, where I claimed my own authority, rather than grasping it through someone else or convincing someone to give it to me because they knew me and liked me. When these dynamics met the regional committee, which had no diplomates among the nine interviewers, things ended poorly. Jean Clift, a future AAPC president, who was interviewed by that same committee, concluded with me that the meeting was one of the worst professional experiences that both of us had ever had. Although she passed her interview and I did not, we both felt that the process was deeply flawed and resolved to learn the specifics thereof before she moved on to her national interview. (At that time, candidates had to jump through a regional hoop before passing through the final one at the national meeting of the Membership Committee). I licked my wounds and regrouped before scheduling another committee encounter.

What went wrong? I didn't know it then but now recognize that the culture of AAPC needed a major overhaul. As the reader of this narrative can tell by now, all the people whom I have mentioned as influencing my AAPC journey thus far were male. In addition, they were all white. Moreover, there were no women or persons of color on my interview committee, and very few, if any, were non-

ordained. What an in-crowd this was, and what a setup for letting inexperience, blind spots, sibling rivalry, good-ole-boy Protestant competitiveness, abuse dynamics, and down-and-dirty meanness dictate a process that none of us would allow with counselees or supervisees. Full awareness would dawn slowly, and would not come to the surface until I had long since become a diplomate. Suffice it to say, our regional AAPC Membership Committee had a long way to go before members would look for candidates' unique competencies instead of hunting for their deficiencies, which when found, became the defining word about them.

HINTS OF A BETTER PROCESS

In the two years between my first appearance before the Regional Diplomate Committee and the second, I tried to own my part of what went wrong in the first visit. I realized that I did not give myself adequate time to prepare for the interview. My family was moving across town from our home of 12 years at that time, and stress levels were high. That left me vulnerable to my unresolved authority and performance issues and to my partly completed therapeutic agenda, with its shame, repressed anger, and passive-aggressive behavior. I vowed to work on these matters and hoped that my efforts would bear fruit. In the meantime, Jean Clift lobbied for changes on both local and national levels.

What helped me reach my goals was a combination of solid clinical supervision, a renewal of wisdom from a previous therapeutic stint, and the development of a team ministry at Hosanna, which freed me from many parish tasks to pursue work as a full-time director of a congregationally sponsored pastoral counseling ministry. My maturation, despite my pain—or because of it—led me to prepare another time to meet with a downsized, mixed gender, mostly-diplomate committee in fall 1989. This time things worked well. The committee conducted a vigorous but fair interview. I claimed my own authority, dialoged spiritedly with my colleagues, and celebrated my arrival as a peer leader in the organization. The committee strongly recommended me to the national Membership Committee, set to meet in January 1990, in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Ralph Datema, then chair of the Rocky Mountain-Plains Region Membership Committee, facilitated my successful meeting with this national group. Since he had served in that capacity over a number of years, he was well acquainted with the national committee's personnel and culture. I went to Ralph for some coaching,

while I continued productive peer supervision with Floyd Greiner. Behavioral rehearsal of case materials with Floyd, plus helpful tips from Ralph regarding committee process, cut my isolation and connected me with the regional community while interviewing far out of state. The connection served me well; I was now a diplomate.

A SHIFT IN AAPC CULTURE

My experience of two very different regional diplomate interview committees paralleled ways in which I experienced AAPC itself. Diversity multiplied steadily in what once was a very homogeneous organization. Over a decade or so, AAPC intentionally opened its gates to include folks who changed the culture of AAPC beyond ordained, long-term psychoanalytically trained therapists who were pre-dominantly white and male. This greater inclusiveness made for a strange mix, to say the least—a mix that became volatile, as old Membership Committee containers no longer held rapidly expanding content.[1] AAPC reached critical mass in the mid-1990s, and the old parochial system of bringing people aboard blew up.

Some in AAPC are still trying to pick up the pieces, but more importantly, most of us are building a new inclusive community with containers appropriate thereto. We practice new ways of accessing members—ways that respect and welcome diversity of all kinds. We actively market our new-yet-old niche in the counseling marketplace—"professionally integrating spirituality and psycho-therapy," as AAPC's tag line puts it; we mostly leave licensure to the states via cognate disciplines, while we make opportunities for candidates to integrate their therapeutic savvy with their own and clients' spirituality.

I personally served on the Certification Committee for the last eight years and experienced the turning of our ways from the old culture to the new—from a Membership Committee which tried to ensure competencies to a Certification Committee that verifies standards met; from a high stress evaluation interview to a collegial consultation; from an accent on accomplishments, publications, and honors to a focus on mentoring future pastoral counselors, giving back to the church community, and offering servant leadership to the larger society; from a focus on a rite of passage that made us "do unto candidates, that which was done unto us,"[2] to a mutually satisfying example of excellent pastoral care.

AN UPDATE TO THE PRESENT

Parallel to my years on the new Certification Committee are the years that I've spent as executive director of Pastoral Counseling for Denver, a faith-based counseling center currently with ten staff at seven locations. As director of an agency, I am able to do more for which I am specifically trained. I currently supervise some of our staff, who are independent contractors, a few pastoral counseling students, and selected peers from the greater Denver community. As I do so, I am aware of my role as one who helps shape the pastoral counseling identity of those who will carry some of AAPC's future. Furthermore, as I conduct myself in this role with others in church/community, I am also aware that those who have helped me to become a pastoral counseling supervisor still "live, and move, and have their being"[3] as I counsel, consult, supervise, preach, and teach.

One of the ways that I continue to grow as a supervisor and therapist is to meet with my staff on a weekly basis for interdisciplinary peer group supervision. In this very interactive hour, staff and community pastoral counselors meet to share insights from a whole spectrum of therapeutic modalities and to challenge each other with theological wisdom from a host of Christian traditions. Because safety is a priority and deep respect for one another is the norm, good things almost always happen. None of us ever presents a case with which we are working easily or fabulously. Our rule of thumb is this: bring cases that challenge, unsettle, or disturb. Such cases multiply exponentially the clinical and theological growth of everyone in the group.

Some other ways that I stay sharp as a supervisor include: (1) attending national AAPC meetings to take advantage of continuing education with diplomates and center directors; (2) staying in touch with the Certification Committee by volunteering to read diplomate papers and to interview candidates; and (3) reading/studying the literature that continues to abound in the areas of both psychotherapy supervision and pastoral counseling supervision.

CONCLUSION

The foregoing narrative makes clear that my formation as a pastoral counseling supervisor depends heavily on persons acquainted with or connected to AAPC. Len

Wuerffel did the work of initiation; the Care and Counseling senior staff did the startup education; Floyd Greiner presided over matriculation; Ralph Datema prepared for graduation; and my peers at PCD provide for ongoing maturation.

Furthermore, the narrative illustrates how an evolving society forces adjustments in the acculturation process of a sometimes slow-to-change organization. Such adjustments do not come without pain. Nevertheless, they are necessary and ultimately welcome.

Moreover, the story documents developments in pastoral ministry that parallel my growth in pastoral counseling and supervision. At first, I did counseling as part of solo pastorates in smaller congregations. Then, I did full-time counseling and supervision as the associate pastor of a growing multi-staff congregation. Finally, I became director of a pastoral counseling center whose work of psychotherapy and supervision continues metro-wide.

I hope that, in sharing my journey to diplomate, I have caught the spirit of where the AAPC supervisory process has been, is now, and may be going. I fully expect it to evolve further as I prepare to become a productive diplomate emeritus.

NOTES

1.   An allusion to "old wineskins that cannot hold (contain) new wine"; see Matt. 9:17, Mark 2:22, or Luke 5:37-38.

2.   Matt. 7:12 and Luke 6:31.

3.   An adaptation of St. Paul's adage that Christians live, move, and have their being in Christ.

Supervision in Field Education:
Emerging Patterns from Creative Chaos

Mark A. Fowler

There are no juridically agreed upon norms, qualifications, or credentials for supervisors within the discipline of theological field education. Further, there is no single credentialing body from which certification would derive its meaning and authority, nor is it certain who field educators would mean with any singularity when they speak of supervisors. This is a multi-layered discipline in terms of sources of authority. A complex matrix of persons is included in the process of supervision, supervision takes place in a variety of places, and varied institutions place variegated expectations on its outcome. From the swirling chaos of authorities, definitions, personnel, identities, and goals, however, there emerges an illustrative sense of what the supervision process is engaging the supervisee to do: to live a called Christian vocation with growing congruence, awareness, and skill wherein the self, the context, the culture, and the riches of theological discipline are expressed in the growing effectiveness of ministry.

In this article, I lay out the sources of authority and defining characteristics for field education, its relationships, leadership, and expectations. I then describe

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the elements of the supervisory structure in a seminary program that has familiarity, if not universality, throughout the discipline. I note creative variables that establish a locus for "norming" and "credibility," as distinct from credentialing, within a variety of field education models. Finally, I note attributes that are familiar hallmarks of supervision in theological field education and what they might mean for the future.

AUTHORIZING THEOLOGICAL FIELD EDUCATION

The Association of Theological Schools

Theological field education is fundamentally an academic program. The Association of Theological Schools (ATS), among other associations and denominational bodies, accredits such programs. Field education programs provide for the recruitment, training, and evaluation of students undergoing "supervised experiences in ministry," as required by ATS for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) degree, various master in Christian education degrees, and specialized masters of arts degrees.[1]

The field supervisor is defined as one who meets qualifications and is trained in supervisory methods and in the expectations of the academic institution.[2] The institution is required to establish procedures for the selection, development, evaluation, and termination of supervised ministry settings.[3]

In its standards for M.Div.,[4] ATS is brief on defining qualifications for supervisors or the supervised ministry programs of the various seminaries in its constituency. Nor does ATS specify an association or credentialing body that could further establish and regulate the standards and grant certification for supervisors. The authority for determining the standards for supervision in selection, development, evaluation, and termination is left to the seminary itself.[5] This leaves each seminary to determine qualifications and the relative importance, authority, and place in the curriculum of not only the field supervisor, but also the program, leadership, relatedness, and institutional support of supervised ministry or field education—the common term now used for the program.[6]

The Association for Theological Field Education

The Association for Theological Field Education (ATFE) is drawn "... primarily from member seminaries of the Association of Theological Schools. ..."[7] ATFE is

constituted to relate to ATS around areas of common concern and participate in ATS meetings and committees, with voice but no vote.[8] The main arena for ATFE's work centers on a biennial consultation. Quality, issues of personnel, the input of content fields into experience-centered learning, and methods of training are consistent themes in each of the consultations.[9] This body has the potential to be adopted as a certifying agency. It might take on the task of determining minimum standards for directors of field education and through them provide the framework for credentialing supervisors. ATFE has birthed a number of regional as well as denominational associations. These meet to focus on particular issues of interest and as direct support and reflection on practices in their particular ethos.[10]

Some combination of the regional and denominational bodies could be called upon to be certification panels if that were deemed desirable in terms of credentialing supervisors for field education.[11] However, because of the nature of the program and its constituencies, ATFE's greatest value may be as a source of supervisory relationship, vocational formation, and reflection, as well as the focal point for mutual resourcing, rather than as a source for setting criteria and certification.

Appealing to a body external to the seminary, such as ATFE, to set specific standards for programs and personnel would present distinct challenges for field education. One challenge would be agreeing on the purpose and place of field education within the larger context and curriculum of theological education.

Through a Lilly Foundation grant, Emily Click of Claremont School of Theology has taken on the task of comprehensively describing theological field education. Through research of field educator's writings, interviews with current field educators, and a series of consultations, she is assembling a reflective survey of the discipline as it is emerging.

To determine where field education fits within a larger sense of the theological curriculum, it might be helpful to determine whether either ATS or ATFE have defined its purpose. Click observes that it is difficult to identify a "single overarching definition or mission statement for field education."[12] She further observes that field education has no goals similar to other academic disciplines. Field educators seem to be more united in describing what field education is not, rather than in finding unanimity in purpose.

Given the requirements for assuming the leadership of a field education program in the seminary, it is understandable that there is a lack of uniformity of articulated purpose. Unlike the other academic disciplines, there is no regular course of graduate theological study to prepare a person specifically for field

education or supervised ministries in most seminaries.[13] The majority of directors of field education have had parish experience; many have served in the pastorate for many years. Some maintain their service in a local church as they direct the seminary program. Most directors would suggest that they never fully make the transition from self-identifying as "pastor" to "field educator."[14]

To complicate the situation, the leadership within the discipline of field education is highly transient. This has concerned ATFE consultations for many years. In a letter written following the 1997 biennial consultation and shared with colleagues, Don Beisswenger, retired director of field education at Vanderbilt and formative writer in the field, was alarmed at the turnover in leadership of seminary programs. At each consultation, a workshop is given to orient new directors. In many ways, save the transitional meetings at the seminary and self-motivated learning, this is the only formal training a new director receives. The percentages vary from consultation to consultation, but Beisswenger's concern is voiced at each consultation:

> I was again reminded that at least 40% of the persons who came were there for the first time. This continues to trouble me. The opportunity for field education to make its significant contribution within a particular school as well as systemically is diminished by this reality. How can we stabilize this field so persons can stay in it, be sustained and do a good work?

> Some of us have been able to stick it out and make a place for ourselves. This has been important. We have been able to secure the resources and influence within the system that made our work valued and valuable. Being able to stay at it for a longer time made that possible. But many persons will not sweat it out if the governing purpose of field education cannot be clearly explained to other faculty. Thus clarifying the role of field education within theological education remains an important task in my judgment.

Further, the leadership of the new director's training events is different from biennium to biennium. ATFE sets aside time and hospitality for new directors as a focus point of the consultation. Trainers have come from the disciplines of CPE, various denominations, or regions with a variety of styles and long-serving directors. Each training event highlights the importance of training field supervisors, but time and resources make it only indicative and anecdotal rather than systemic and comprehensive.

The Academy

One issue that consistently faces field education is its place within the curriculum. ATFE considered this issue in its 1999 consultation and advocated for directors to

be given faculty rank in tenure-track positions. Some seminaries have moved to this model; some have faculty rank without tenure; and some place the director as an administrator without faculty rank or tenure opportunities.

The workshop report on this issue was bold in stating "… for Field Educators the issue of tenure concerns the place of Field Education in theological education as a legitimate academic function of the curriculum."[15] Further:

> … Field Education is beginning to be understood as an academic function of the curriculum that demands a faculty member trained in this specialization. In some schools Field Education is an integrative course of study in which the knowledge base is a praxis one, that is, a knowledge base of reflected upon action that produces its own take on theorizing. In this view Field Education demands the skill of praxis thinking and acting, rather than the skill of applying. Therefore, it is a fundamental element of the course of study of theological education. Its role in the curriculum is intellectual and academic, rather than administrative.[16]

In its recent curriculum revision, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary placed field education as the praxis matrix of the curriculum. As director of field education there, I hold faculty rank and have access to the deliberations of each academic field and area in terms of their relationship and participation in the curricular aspects of the field education program. Faculty participates with seminary supervisors[17] and their student teams to develop praxis thinking and action. Seminary supervisors are generally pastors from the surrounding area who are selected and trained to lead teams of students in their reflection, didactics, and praxis. Seminary supervisors are granted the rank of adjunct faculty at Garrett-Evangelical. The cadre of seminary supervisors has been formed over the years with the intention of maintaining a consistent group with low turnover. The group meets twice a year for extended training. The group then meets monthly for mutual supervision and reflection. Unique gifts—such as spiritual direction and understandings of systems theory or conflict management—distinguish the leadership of each supervisor, but there is a collegial ethos and accountability that leads to program-wide innovation, revision, and affirmation of the work of the groups. The reflections and advocacy of the seminary supervisors are also shared with the whole faculty in it's shaping of the general curriculum. This feedback is not at the point where it is foundational, nor fundamental. However, it has grown in its authority through the revision process.

On the other hand, in a consultation and training that I led in 2002 with the interim director of field education and a cadre of field supervisors at Louisville Presbyterian Seminary, the interfacing of the faculty with field education was a

new and important idea that the participants strongly endorsed. Reports from the ongoing process indicate resistance from the "academic" faculty to a model that places field education as a matrix of praxis and maintains the necessary, yet separate place of field education within the program of the seminary. This does not detract from the efficacy of the field education program at Louisville. It is simply illustrative of its place in the curriculum.

At the same time, the field supervisors with whom I worked at Louisville saw themselves working with the seminary program, but primarily working for the presbytery by preparing pastors for the church and serving in a screening and formational function for the local judicatory. This self-understanding of the field supervisors presents another dynamic to the authority, assumptions, and standards out of which the field supervisors operate. Particular functions for the judicatory were primary in their self-understanding. The work of the seminary was seen as important, but not as foundationally formative as the norms and expectations of the local presbytery for ordination or the local church/agency for practice and skill development.

This dynamic adds yet another element in certifying and regularizing the credentialing of field supervisors. Like the gathering in Louisville, many field supervisors see themselves as pastors or agency executives, primarily accountable to the institutions in which they are ordained or employed. Pastors remain pastors, never primarily self-identified as field supervisors. The authority many of them hold is in the ability to prepare and advocate for candidates in the ordination process. They are recommended as field supervisors by the local judicatory for a variety of reasons. Effectiveness in empowering praxis thinking, theological reflection, and action are not always chief among them.[18]

Field supervisors and agencies also experience dilemma in discerning how much time and attention they will give to developing skills and methods specific to field education. Simply put, not every field supervisor or placement will receive a student every year. Field supervisors are not generally compensated for their work and are asked to assume this rather large responsibility as part of their ministry— and the expectation is that field supervision is a major focus of their ministry. The variety of interests, demographics, numbers of students to be placed, developments within the placement, movement of supervisors from one church or agency to another, reduced resources, and amplified expectations of staff affect the consistency of participation as a field supervisor and placement. There are also considerations for student pastors or military chaplains whose supervision is primarily determined by other institutions, yet seen as part of field education.

Those who have been involved in embracing a student and nurturing them in ministry have also experienced the migration of the seminary's understanding of deploying students from field employment, where the student was an employee to gain experience and financial support; to field service, where the student was a volunteer and the local church served as a talent scout and vocational counselor; to field education, wherein the seminary and the local church or agency participated together in professional education under "qualified supervision"; to what is now emerging as supervised ministry, whose purpose is the formation and transformation of a student toward leadership in the church to empower the whole people of God.[19] The expectations of field education under this last rubric—supervised ministry—have become an encyclopedia of needs expressed by the academy and the church. With the well-boundaried definitions and reflective ethos of academic fields and the shortening resources of the church to provide formative and continuing experiences for skill development and leadership training, field education is called upon to find a way of being fast, fluid, flexible, and responsive to the needs of both institutions who share an ethos usually slow to respond to rapidly emerging needs.

The director of field education is primarily a negotiator of all of the elements that I have outlined above. The director must be able to form and reform the program to respond to the shifting developments within each of the constituent parts and to envision what the future needs of the students in their charge will demand. The director must be able to understand and communicate the purposes of field education and the expectations and skills of supervision within the academy and the church and be able to formulate a variety of ways to reach out and constantly nurture and supervise those skills.

Matrix of Supervision

In the majority of field education programs, there is a multi-layered approach to supervision. In concurrent programs, wherein the student is taking classes while also in a field education placement, there are a variety of settings and purposes for supervision. These are settings, not universally utilized, but commonly recognized. In yearlong internships or non-concurrent settings, it is more common to have only the field supervisor and judicatory supervision than the large complement of supervisory settings.

Discernment and Advising

Through Introduction to Ministry groups and a mentoring process, the students clarify and articulate their callings and vocational trajectories. This becomes the foundation for discernment of call, placement, growth, and vocational development. In many cases, this is a function of the faculty and is supervised through meetings of those who convene the various introductory groups. Faculty advisors or participants in the field education program may continue the ongoing functions of discernment. It is also understood that this function will have a "shadow" in the denominational process of the students. Cooperation from this variety of voices is not usually intentional, but my experience is that when field education is empowered and authorized to bring the voices together in a reflective and prospective supervising conference with the student, clarity of direction and understanding are enhanced, as well as the responsibility of each participant in nurturing the ministry of the student. Field education also serves as a bridge and negotiator of understanding between the church and the academy in the supervision and growth of a student in the practice of ministry.

The director of field education, if they are a member of the faculty and involved in the regional judicatories, can also assign supervisors with specific goals and assignments for each student. Some field education directors make it a practice to visit students and field supervisors in their placements to observe the practice of ministry and supervise the supervisors in their nurturing of praxis thinking and action with the student.

Seminary Supervisors

In many seminary programs, the seminary supervisors are the "quality control" for supervision. Generally meeting with a small group of students once a week, the seminary supervisors are in regular contact, supervision, feedback, and training with the director of field education and may serve as the immediate conduit between academy, student, and field placement. Seminary supervisors also train students to be in peer supervisors. Seminary supervisors may be drawn from the ranks of the faculty, but are often recruited by the director of field education from amongst the leadership of the church in the surrounding area. They are selected because of their skills in group process, the capacity to facilitate mutuality in learning among the group, formative experience in leadership in the church, availability and interest in nurturing students into leaders for the church, and advocacy with their contemporaries to enhancing commitment to field supervision and its requisite skills.

In many ways, the seminary supervisors are the chief advising council to both the academy and the church. As the director may have years of experience in the local church, they are oftentimes established in the academy in their day-to-day work. They remember and observe the ongoing life of leadership in the local church or agency, but the seminary supervisors—if they are drawn from the surrounding churches and agencies—are the immediate agents for vital responsiveness and reformation of the program and its methods; or they provoke appropriate reflection on didactic methods and supervision.

Patterns of training that join the best work generated and resourced by denominations, the academy, and associations, such as ATFE, with the wisdom and experience of seminary supervisors from the field, form the training and "certification" of seminary supervisors as adjunct members of the seminary faculty and formative mentors for the church. Ongoing collegial meetings and mutual supervision among seminary supervisors is crucial to developing effective patterns of group supervision and empowering peer supervision.

Field Supervisors

The field supervisor is perhaps the most influential and intense supervisory relationship available to a seminary student. The normative expectation in concurrent field education programs is that the field supervisor and the student will meet together for the purposes of supervision for at least an hour each week. Distinct from task assignments, the field supervisor is asked to engage the student in theological reflection upon praxis.[20] This assignment seems to be the crucial area of focus for training and skill building with field supervisors.

However, the time and attention necessary to develop this distinctive ministry and skill is not regularized throughout the field education discipline. The Boston Theological Institute (BTI) requires an intensive academic course in the discipline. As a Doctor of Ministry (D.Min.) candidate at Andover Newton Theological Seminary, I joined those who were prospective field supervisors in a yearlong course that scrupulously covered the theory and practice of supervision. The supervisory session itself was developed and practiced under supervision. The instrument for supervision was established as the ministry event report, and there was a great deal of time devoted to every aspect of its use. I remember fondly the session when retired director of field education George Sinclair spent an entire class session asking us where we would put the first comment on the page and how to phrase it for effective supervision.

Following the foundational courses in field supervision and the requisite review for certification, Andover Newton and other cooperating schools of the BTI

provide continuing education courses and field supervisor support meetings. Fundamental to this model is bringing field supervisors together for intensive common experiences and holding certification as an important identification among clergy and other agency leaders in the Boston area. Within the community ethos of field education in the Boston area is an understanding that everyone who supervises must be in supervision—a concept clearly shared with other disciplines that hold supervision as essential to professional effectiveness and growth. In this model, credentialing for supervision is valued; those who seek to be engaged in the ministry of supervision view centralized education for supervision as worth the investment of time and attention.

However, not all seminaries find themselves within that ethos, nor is centralized education for supervision a priority of their partners in field supervision. This is not an evaluation of commitment or effectiveness, simply of priority of resources. It is clear that if field supervisors do not come to a central location for education, then it is important for the director of field education, assistants to the director, and seminary supervisors or designated visitors and trainers to "ride the circuit" to supervise the supervisors as they do their work on behalf of the field education program. With a restricted number of persons under supervision, some directors are able to visit each site and supervisor one or more times during any given year.[21] In this way, the supervisor is personally mentored in the skills of supervision in particular contexts. Through the personal interaction with the field supervisors in their placements, the director becomes aware of the skills, learning, insights, and needs that can be addressed in the growing collegial and supervisory relationships. Generally, there has been some sort of training session open to all field supervisors in a program at the outset of the program and prior to visitations, but the attendance at these is usually far from universal. The individual attention given to each field supervisor constitutes the most effective means of developing skills and competence in theological reflection, praxis thinking, or practicing "strategic practical theology."[22]

Continued training/supervision of supervisors is an ongoing focus of the field education program. If the seminary supports it with resources and the judicatories that partner with the seminary view it with priority, then the process will gain credibility and attention from those recruited and nurtured as partners in field education. At the 27th Biennial Consultation of ATFE, Charles E. Singlar gave a paper on the training of contextual supervisors in Methods of Theological Reflection.[23] The denominational endorsement for ongoing training was cited. In addition, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops have written: "An

important task of a director of field education is the development of supervisory skills on the part of those who oversee on-site the pastoral assignments of seminarians. Supervisory skills cannot be presumed and teaching them is a high priority of a field education program. Good supervision guarantees that pastoral experience remains systematically educative and formational."[24]

The Field Education Director

Out of all of this chaos of authorities, demands, expectations, fluidity, and confusion, it seems that the course of field education is left to the comprehension, integration, guidance, and negotiation of the director of field education. Between academy and church, between faculty, students, judicatories, and practitioner supervisors, between theological thinking and praxis thinking, between various certifying and authoritative bodies and their expectations, between varying levels of commitment and understandings of supervisors, in the context of the swirl of changing circumstances in the church and the increasing demands for skills within the leadership, the director of field education fills the role of bringing some comprehensible order for understanding praxis and how it is supervised and nurtured. The director of field education is an interpreter to the constituent parts of the program and authorities that have a claim on the leadership of the church. In my opinion, given my experience and research, it is in the training, credentialing, and empowering of the office of director of field education that supervised ministry will respond most effectively to the ethos in which it operates. The variables incumbent on each seminary and each program in the turbulence of the current epochal shifts in the church and society require persons skilled for leadership in the critical role that has been given to field education by the academy and the church.

Development of and participation in D.Min. programs that are focused on the formation of directors of field education will help fulfill the essential leadership in this area. These programs will also further the development of effective supervisors (faculty, seminary adjunct, field, peer, and lay) within the varying contexts of ministry that will continue to mark the emerging church.

Criteria, Descriptions, and Assumptions for Field Supervisors

A picture of the qualities and skills that field supervisors are expected to possess and develop in relationship to their own formation, the student, the practice of ministry, and the context within which they will share ministry with the student has emerged from policy papers developed by ATFE, from supervisor's clinics hosted by George Sinclair and Julieanne Hallman, directors of field education at Andover

Newton Theological School, and from surveys of denominational and seminary descriptions of supervision.

Presented below, these necessary qualities and skills point toward the importance of the director of field education as the matrix of understanding, interpretation, and authorization of supervisors and their work.

Who can serve as mentor[25]

- Has faith in Christ,

- Relates biblical images and theological understandings to the practice of ministry,

- Listens actively and hears others,

- Nurtures others with sensitivity,

- Communicates passion and understanding,

- Exudes self-confidence and self-esteem,

- Manifests joy, humor and laughter,

- Understands the role of supervision and mentoring,

- Commits time to a continuing covenant relationship,

- Exercises appropriate boundaries,

- Models the spiritual disciplines.

Some theological assumptions about supervision for ministry[26]

- Supervision is a covenantal relationship of which God is the center.

- Supervision seeks to embody the conviction that each person is created in God's image with inherent dignity and worth.

- Supervision honors the experience of God's call to ministry in each person as the person tests that call in a community of faith.

- Supervision serves to assist another to reflect theologically on the present call and current practice of ministry.

- Supervision is prayerful dialogue rooted in awareness of God's presence.

- Supervision affirms another's gifts and assists that person to name and claim personal gifts for ministry.

- Supervision affirms and assists another to identify the limitations of personal gifts and respect the boundaries of that person's call.

- Supervision for ministry seeks to reflect God's ongoing work of creation, liberation, and redemption in the world.

- Supervision seeks in any particular situation to discern God's call, individually and communally.

- Supervision is a commitment of faith, acceptable to a faith community.

- Supervision requires substantive theological reflection that draws critically upon other disciplines, especially the behavioral sciences.

- Supervision can be a means of grace through which persons mutually form their vocational identities and develop their ministerial skills.

- Supervision for ministry, at its best, is therapeutic, although it is not therapy.

- Supervision for ministry, at its best, evokes spiritual growth, although it is not spiritual direction.

- Supervision assists another to make choices about interventions in various situations, but resists giving advice.

- Supervision, as a specialized ministry of forming and equipping another for a call to ministry, requires ongoing peer support and supervision.

Field education supervisors can be described as follows[27]

- Know the site well and its social context.

- Be committed to intentional learning, both for themselves and for the person on the site.

- Provide opportunities for actual ministry, not "shadowing" or mock experience.

- Be committed to a process mode of learning.

- Be able to listen and reflect.

- Be aware of the academy and willing to be in partnership with it.

- Understand the implications of on- and off-site supervision.

- Think critically and do social, cultural, and theological analysis.

- Produce work in a timely fashion.

- Distinguish between supervisory training and the final approval as a permanent supervisor.

- Observe ethical behavior and appropriate boundaries with students throughout the program.

- Be available.

- Be willing to do the written work of reporting and evaluating, and so forth.

- Nurture their own spiritual life and encourage student's formational process.

- Participate in peer supervision or in continuing education (as required by one's denomination).

- Have facility in using experiential learning as a resource for reflection.

Skill in all of these areas and the "completeness" of learning and character to fulfill them seems relatively impossible if one is trying to set a standard for credentialing and certifying. If these are, rather, the guidelines, principles, or values held in field education (among a host of others), then they argue for strength of leadership and vision and a clear voice that articulates the program and is able to recruit, train, nurture, supervise, encourage, and evaluate those who partner as supervisors in the raising up of leaders in a turbulent time for the church. I believe that is the trajectory on which the discipline of field education should be headed.

NOTES

1.   Association of Theological Schools, *Handbook of Accreditation* (Pittsburgh: ATS, rev. 10.01), sections A.3.1.4.3 *ff*, B.3.1.4, and C.3.1.1.4.1. The handbook can be downloaded as a PDF file from the ATS web site, <www.ats.edu/accredit/handbook.htm>, accessed February 2004.

2.   Ibid., section A.3.1.4.4, quoted in note 4.

3.   Ibid., section A.3.1.4., quoted in note 4. Note the shift in emphasis from supervisor qualifications in .4 to the process for a setting in .5.

4.   The standards for the various masters in Christian education and specialized masters degrees contain the same requirements with minor specific revisions pertaining to each degree, but not important for consideration here. The following is from the section of the *Handbook of Accreditation on the Masters of Divinity*: "A.3.1.4.3 The program shall provide opportunities for education through supervised experiences in ministry. These experiences should be of sufficient duration and intensity to provide opportunity to gain expertise in the tasks of ministerial leadership within both the congregation and the broader public context, and to reflect on interrelated theological, cultural, and experiential learning. ... A.3.1.4.4 Qualified persons shall be selected as field supervisors and trained in supervisory methods and the educational expectations of the institution. ... A.3.1.4.5 The institution shall have established procedures for selection, development, evaluation, and termination of supervised ministry settings."

5.   In some cases, the Boston Theological Institute (BTI), for example, a group of seminaries have agreed to a particular academic course that all supervisors must take to be certified and further training to maintain certification. This grows out of the models of training and supervision inherent in the disciplines of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education and licensed independent clinical social worker.

6.   There is an argument that the ATS nomenclature of "supervised ministry" may foreshadow the next step in the progress of the discipline from field work to field education to supervised ministry.

7.   From Article III, membership, "By-Laws of the Association for Theological Field Education," in *A Report of the Proceedings of the 27th Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education*, 2003, 202. The proceedings can be downloaded as a PDF file from the ATFE web site, <www.atfe.org>, under "Proceedings," accessed February 2004.

8.   Ibid., Article II.

9.   Each consultation has produced a report of the proceedings. Important papers are included and posted to their web site; see note 7 for directions on downloading such documents. There is a policy on standards for supervisors produced in 1997. In addition, there is a focus on supervisory meetings, critical incident reports, and legal issues in relation to field/site supervisors.

10.   The Presbyterian ATFE produced a helpful guideline on legal implications of field education. The United Methodist Association will be dealing with issues surrounding the challenge of adequate approaches to field education for Korean students. Regional groups meet for support and are most intensely focused on preparing for the biennial consultation if they are the host city.

11.   Some of the member schools of the BTI have agreed upon a certification process and academic course requirements for training field supervisors and specific course work to keep current. Examples of this can be found through the field education manuals and web sites for Andover Newton Theological School, Boston University School of Theology, and Harvard Divinity School.

12.   Emily Click, Claremont School of Theology, Claremont, Calif., "A Report Describing Theological Field Education," Lilly Foundation grant (draft 2003): 12.

13.   Andover Newton Theological School, however, trains and requires leadership in the disciplines of field education and supervised ministry in its D.Min. degree.

14.   Click, "Report," 3-4.

15.   ATFE, *Report of Proceedings of the 25th Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education*, 109.

16.   Ibid.

17.   A description of the seminary supervisor's place in the field education structure follows later in this article.

18.   Pyle & Seals, *Experiencing Ministry Supervision* (Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 1995), 25*ff*. In a report to the General Synod of the Anglican Church in Australia in March 2001, the Supervised Theological Field Education Network of that denomination noted the difficulty and importance of convincing denominational leaders of the importance of supervision in the formation and effectiveness of ministerial development. I have been invited to help the Methodist Church of Southern Africa to develop a system of supervision partnered between the seminary/ministerial training programs and the judicatory. Ongoing networks of supervision and mentoring were also contemplated in the 1996 action of the United Methodist General Conference as a major part of the probationary process toward ordination and full membership.

19.   Taken from an extension of the chart in Charles R. Fielding, *Education for Ministry* (Vandalia, Ohio: Association for Theological Education, 1966) as found in the *Report of Proceedings of the 24th Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education*, 1997.

20.   In Emily Click's recent work, she is attempting to discern a commonly held understanding of what constitutes theological reflection among field education programs. I will leave any conclusions to her good work.

21.   Robert O'Gorman is able to do this at Loyola.

22.   Don Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1991), 55.

23.   Charles E. Singlar, "Field Supervision and Theological Reflection" in *A Report of the Proceedings of the 27th Biennial Consultation of the Association for Theological Field Education*, 155.

24.   National Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Program of Priestly Formation*, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: United States Catholic Conference, 1993), 77-78.

25.   *Clergy Mentor Tool Kit for Annual Conference Leaders*, (General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of the United Methodist Church, Division of Ordained Ministry, Clergy

Mentor Resource Team), 11. The team that designed this resource was heavily influenced by the Andover Newton definitions of supervision and grappled with their model in developing this document.

26.   Field Education Supervisors Clinic, January 18, 2001, led by Julieanne Hallman and George Sinclair, Andover Newton Theological School, Newton Centre, Mass.

27.   Taken from the manual of North Park Seminary with the following notation "excerpted from the Association for Field Education Policy Paper Excellence in Supervision, January 17, 1993." I include the excerpt to amplify the point that it is the director of field education that must appropriate and interpret in the living out of the discipline.

Wisdom from the Desert:
Qualifications for Supervisors
of Spiritual Directors

Dwight H. Judy

A QUALIFICATIONS CONUNDRUM

In addressing the theme of qualifications for supervisors of spiritual directors, I am tempted to say simply, a supervisor is one called forth from a particular Christian community for this task. Such a supervising person is one deemed by others to posses the qualities of person, understanding, and wisdom necessary to advise others in the tasks of spiritual direction. Such a simple statement is probably the most accurate reflection of the state of the practice of spiritual direction supervision at this time. Supervision resides within localized training programs in spiritual direction. There are no national standards. There is no regulating body, although Spiritual Directors International is currently developing guidelines for training programs in spiritual direction.[1]

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This current situation reflects the recovery and application of spiritual formation practices as a major movement across Christian denominations. This recovery is new. It can be marked by pivotal writers, for example, Thomas Merton in the 1960s, Morton Kelsey in the 1970s, with a wealth of Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox resources that emerged in the 1980s. Depth programs for personal exploration, such as The Upper Room's Two-Year Academy for Spiritual Formation, also arose in the 1980s. Within the Roman Catholic Church, Vatican II (1962-1965) gave rise to a renewal of spiritual direction as companioning one another, offering alternatives to the confessional as the primary place for spiritual direction with congregants. In the last thirty years, there has been an explosion of written resources on themes as varied as spiritual formation disciplines, retreat guidance, group and individual spiritual direction, using discernment practices for administrative decision process, worship as spiritual guidance, and prayer healing. There are books that speak to the differences and similarities between spiritual direction, pastoral care, and various forms of counseling. A wide variety of training programs in spiritual direction have sprung up, many rooted within Roman Catholic monastic communities. Mercy Center, in Burlingame, Calif., and Stillpoint, in Nashville, Tenn., are among those programs with a national reputation. There are training programs in all areas of the nation. Retreats International maintains a large list of retreat centers, many of which have spiritual direction programs.[2]

The Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation in Bethesda, Md., offers a widely respected training program in spiritual guidance.[3] Shalem is a freestanding, non-profit religious organization, which identifies itself as "an ecumenical Christian community dedicated to the support of contemplative living and leadership." Many short- and longer-term programs are offered in addition to the training program. Shalem's program emphasizes peer supervision groups as the proper format for ongoing supervision of spiritual directors. In 2000, the United Methodist Church approved a certification in spiritual formation, as a specialized ministry. The Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, in Evanston, Ill., developed the curriculum. Such a curricular-based program is also available within the Presbyterian Church. San Francisco Theological Seminary (Presbyterian) in San Anselmo, Calif., was one of the first Protestant seminaries to offer certification and doctoral studies in spiritual formation. Several seminaries are creating such specializations. Fordham University offered one of the first Roman Catholic Doctor of Philosophy programs in spirituality; however, it is no longer offered— perhaps a sign of a movement rather than an institutionalized field. Creighton Uni-

versity is well-known for its training programs and Master of Arts degrees. Many others could be listed.

In stating this seemingly simplistic answer—a supervisor is one called forth from a particular Christian community for this task—we may be capturing an essential ingredient of a movement. This movement has not yet given birth to ac- creditation bodies—and perhaps will not do so in a formal way. Recognition is given through various training programs. SDI was founded in 1990, as a member organization for those offering spiritual direction and those interested in the field. SDI has grown to over 4,000 members. However, this organization has not become a credentialing body for spiritual directors. Instead, it has focused on networking, creating a member directory, and sustaining conversation about the art and practice of spiritual direction in a journal, *Presence*, and in conferences. It has developed guidelines for ethical conduct for spiritual directors. At the time of this writing, SDI is working on standards for training programs, but has not yet adopted those. SDI suggests that there are some 350 training programs in spiritual direction around the world.[4] A brief survey of these sites shows three primary settings for training programs: independent non-profit organizations, academic programs, and those centered in religious communities.

The earliest days of Christianity saw a spiritual awakening similar to that occurring in our time. The desert regions of Palestine, Syria, and Egypt saw the rise of one of the most enduring Christian movements, which we now call the Desert Fathers and Mothers. People fled into the desert in imitation of Jesus' call into the wilderness temptations. There, people sought to live a life in the transforming presence of God. People also began to search out one another for guidance in the treacherous world of interior awakening. Those who were sought for wisdom were given the title of respect of abba or amma, meaning "father" and "mother." We have stories of the abbas and ammas, arising from the third and fourth centuries. These stories show the wisdom of spiritual direction given and received. They are frequently humorous. They show a deep regard for the power of inner awareness. They show people steeping themselves in prayer. Hence, guidance is often given for prayer. They show the attempt to become whole persons in Christ. The spiritual direction given is informal.[5]

Communities began to arise around an abba or amma. These communities laid the foundation for monastic communities. How was such a person chosen as leader? Informally. They were deemed to have received a certain level of wisdom and to give good counsel to others. It was not until the fifth century, that the Rule of St. Benedict codified such communal life.[6] It seems to me that the present-day

movement of spiritual formation/direction is at the tentative stage of developing the rules of the practice of spiritual direction and the way individuals might be called out as supervisors. There is not yet the equivalent of the Rule of St. Benedict for the practice of spiritual direction, although SDI's guidelines for ethical conduct begin this process. At present, the qualifications for supervisors with respect to advanced degrees will vary widely, depending upon whether or not training in spiritual direction takes place within an academic program. Many training programs in spiritual direction in the United States have risen from the practice of spiritual direction given within monastic religious communities. For these, the question of advanced degrees is less certain. In many cases, those individuals who are teaching spiritual direction or giving supervision to spiritual directors are sanctioned for this task from within a religious or academic community. This primary way of calling forth supervisors for spiritual directors contains an inherent system of checks and balances. It has been the most consistent way for such persons to be named throughout the history of the church. The ecumenical Shalem Institute safeguards the practice of supervision through rigorous training of spiritual directors and then the expectation of continuing to function within peer supervision groups. The most complete written description of concerns for supervision is contained in Maureen Conroy's *Looking into the Well: Supervision of Spiritual Directors*.[7]

I have alluded to the desert abbas and ammas; there have been, however, other signal times of spiritual awakening, in which a similar naming of persons deemed appropriate for offering spiritual guidance to others has occurred. One of the clearest of these is the Wesleyan renewal of the late eighteenth century in England. The model for spiritual renewal was group spiritual guidance. John Wesley, the leader of the movement, appointed the leaders for the groups of persons beginning the process of formation in intentional disciplines. As spiritual directors of others, these small group leaders themselves participated in group spiritual direction with other leaders. Small group accountability was deemed necessary for their own continued growth in faith. John Wesley was himself a part of such a group, which on occasion successfully questioned his decision processes. In this model of small group spiritual direction, all persons had some form of accountability through group wisdom, an interesting model for supervision and for supervisors. It is intriguing to note that, in adhering to small group peer supervision for spiritual directors, Shalem Institute is utilizing a model clearly supported in historical precedent. SDI frequently assists the forming of such peer supervision groups through its regional membership clusters.

BEYOND THE CONUNDRUM—NAMING THE SKILLS
FOR SPIRITUAL DIRECTION SUPERVISION

Even though we are in such an informal state of the teaching and practice of spiritual direction, we can begin to name qualifications of supervisors for spiritual directors if we can articulate the range of information and the quality of personal formation required of those training as spiritual directors.

Areas of Information for Spiritual Directors
One of the most challenging issues for persons in training as spiritual directors is the daunting range of congregational and individual themes to which the term spiritual direction can be applied. Thus, it is entirely appropriate for supervisors of spiritual directors to have unique areas of expertise that they lend to the enterprise. Yet, there are perhaps also some common requirements, which are independent of specialization. The range of possible expertise can include knowledge of:

- Prayer practices,

- Inner life development,

- Retreat guidance,

- Theological and biblical understanding of personal and corporate trans- formation (ascetical or mystical theology),

- Life stages and transitions,

- Personality styles and differences,

- Group dynamics,

- Psychodynamic process and struggles with addictions,

- Integrative listening skills,

- Applications of discernment to organizational structures,

- Worship and preaching as spiritual direction,

- Prayer healing, and

- Understanding of particular challenges within a denominations or religious structures.

While it is clear that most of us are not able to possess understanding of these areas with equal wisdom, it is possible to offer spiritual direction within a particular configuration of this range. One of the key tasks for supervision is to enable

spiritual directors under supervision to claim their unique gifts and graces and to learn to refer to others for areas beyond their expertise. Teresa of Avila, a sixteenth-century woman renowned for her spiritual direction within the communities of Carmelite women she served, had no qualms about seeking out advice from others. She and John of the Cross had such a relationship with one another, a friendship in which to discuss issues of the inner life. However, she also had her personal confessor to guide her, and other persons she would consult if matters of theology arose for which she understood her own wisdom to be inadequate.

From this list of possible areas of specialization, some are essential to all modes of practicing spiritual direction and, hence, are required of those offering supervision. Those include the understandings of:

- Prayer practices,

- Inner life development,

- Theological and biblical applications to spiritual direction (ascetical or mystical theology),

- Life stages and transitions,

- Personality styles and differences,

- Group dynamics, and

- Integrative listening skills.

Thus, a supervisor should be conversant with the range of prayer forms arising from Christian tradition as well as different modes of Christian expression of faith;[8] Richard Foster in his recent book, S*treams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith*, described very well the range of authentic expressions of Christian spiritual life.[9] There needs to be a deep and abiding appreciation for the power of listening.[10] One must be seasoned within group spiritual direction work.[11] It is essential to have both a subjective experience of one's own inner life development and to know psychological and spiritual literature on life-stage developmental themes, personality styles, and differences,[12] and it is necessary to have a clear sense of integration of one's theological and biblical understandings with the demands of existential life issues.[13] Experience and oversight of many people's experience in spiritual direction is essential.[14] One must also embody a spirit of hospitality, a hearth of the heart offered to others, that they might open themselves gently to the emerging individuality within.[15]

Why is it essential to be well grounded in each of these areas of knowledge? Because the essential work of spiritual direction is offering the role of mid-wife to others in the birth, rebirth, renewal, and transformation of their own souls. We would not entrust our bodies to physicians who do not have the understanding and wisdom to help us decide a course of treatment. We will not want to entrust our deepest life questions and our interior journeys to one who has not traversed that journey herself or who is unfamiliar with the various roadmaps that can assist our journey. These roadmaps are provided within psychological and spiritual models of adult development. They recur in the sagas of Scripture. Our great theological doctrines, such as incarnation and the transformative power of death/resurrection, undergird our journey. Liturgical practices may be very important to mark moments of the journey.

The Way of Transformation

In addition to areas of knowledge, a wisdom of the heart that is learned in the fires of personal transformation is essential to offering oneself as spiritual director and, hence, to those who would take on the role of supervisor of spiritual directors. I have begun to touch upon this in speaking of the necessity to understand dynamics of inner life process.

We again can reference the wisdom of the desert. Persons were sought out for spiritual guidance because they were known to evidence wisdom gleaned from life experience. The abbas and ammas were people of profound prayer and self-reflection. In fact, Thomas Merton writes that it was their heroism of solitary life, which imprinted the possibility of true individuality into Western consciousness.[16] Herbert Workman, in his signal book *The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal*, stated this dynamic in a powerful way, when he wrote: "The monk, whether in the East or West was the voice in the wilderness crying the lost truth of the worth of one soul. ... His was the protest of the individual against the collectivism which tended, both in Church and State, by its institutions and foundations, to lose sight of his value."[17] Well, is it any wonder that there would be a renewed interest in the practices of spiritual formation and the work of spiritual direction in our time? We, too, live in a period in which it is extraordinarily difficult to find one's unique voice, to sing one's own unique song, to discern the unique calling of God within one's own life. We need helpers along the way in this challenging task. We need the help of others who have also made that journey variously described as the "journey into God," the "journey into Self." Such a journey has required us to encounter unconscious forces within ourselves. It has required periods of deep introspection. The journey has

demanded that we learn methods of prayer and engage in processes of self-discovery. For Christians, it has required a continual wrestling with statements of doctrine and Scripture. It has required the shift of authority from external sources to internal resources, grounded in the mystery we name God or the discovery of the mystical presence of Christ. Many have discovered the Divine Feminine. We have had to withstand the process of surrender to One beyond ourselves and make sense of that surrender in the language of faith. I don't want to be guided in this fierce landscape of the soul by one who has not been there before me. I want a guide who can reassure me when the powers of doubt and confusion arise and who will gently keep offering the confirmations of grace and the challenge of faithful living before the requirements of justice and compassion.

One can readily see that such a quality is independent of a particular credentialing process. However, we can draw a conclusion. A supervisor of spiritual directors should have engaged in a sustained process of self-discovery before God. This might well have taken place in a formal program, such as the Two-Year Academy for Spiritual Formation, the two-year Shalem Institute program, the three-year United Methodist Certification in Spiritual Formation, a three-year masters or doctoral program, which requires spiritual formation disciplines, with a spiritually attuned mentor, or any of the numerous spiritual direction training programs. It may have been in a sustained period of retreat and renewal, independent of degree or training programs. Because the practice of spiritual direction draws on the resources of Christian theology, prayer processes, and psychological understandings, a formal training may well be in a variety of formats. Does one emerge from such a program with a profound passion for the awakening of the individuality of others before God? Does one find joy in sitting with another, as that person explores deep life questions? Is it natural to ask the questions of faith? Does one have a sense of how to gently offer resources of prayer forms, journaling, artwork, or dream work to the other? Has one learned the exquisite delight of being in a group in which holy conversation begins to happen? Is one ready to offer the gifts of hospitality to the souls of others, because one has deep gratitude for the way one's own soul has been tended by the grace embodied in others? Then, perhaps that is a person ready to offer spiritual guidance to others. And perhaps that person will be called forth after some years of practice of these gifts to mentor others into this task.

SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS

A supervisor of spiritual directors will be expected to maintain those practices in which all spiritual directors engage: personal and corporate disciplines of prayer and self-reflection; giving and receiving spiritual direction; maintaining a schedule of reading in literature relevant to the field; attending to continuing education opportunities.

Supervisors of spiritual directors, however, need also to maintain a system of accountability, perhaps with a peer of supervisors, certainly within their sponsoring institutions. It is extremely rare to find a training program in Christian spiritual direction or a system of supervision offered apart from a religious community, a non-profit religious or ecumenical organization (with board for accountability), or an academic institution. There is deep wisdom, as well as tradition, from which this practice springs. Christian spiritual direction constantly refers to the communal aspects of our lives, as we struggle to love neighbor as well as love God. Hence, I suggest some wariness be attached to any completely independent person offering oneself as supervisor for spiritual directors. Again, we return to the inherent checks and balances of such programs arising from within a particular Christian faith community or Christian academic community. We are discovering that one aspect attracting people to the United Methodist Certification in Spiritual Formation is that an accountability structure is required within a regional body of the church for regular reporting of one's leadership in spiritual formation ministries, as well as documenting continuing education in the field. Supervisors of spiritual directors should be conversant with SDI's guidelines for ethical conduct. As SDI completes work on its guidelines for spiritual direction training programs, independent and communally based programs may well find it possible to achieve accountability by adopting these two standards from SDI.

With these thoughts informing us, let us seek to imagine basic qualifications, however tentatively, for supervisors of spiritual directors. I suggest the following themes for conversation on this important issue. My proposal is that supervisors of spiritual directors should embody the following trainings and life-experience:

- Advanced study in Christian theology and Bible (including an understanding of ascetical or mystical theology);

- Advanced study in dynamics of inner life development, spiritually and psychologically;

- Advanced study in historic forms of Christian prayer;

- Training, under supervision, in the art of listening for the soul's emergence;

- Training, under supervision, in group spiritual direction and group dynamics;

- Evidence of a sustained period within one's own life-journey of attention to the process of inner life awakening, accompanied by psychotherapy, pastoral counseling, or spiritual direction;

- Leadership in guiding others in group spiritual direction and retreats for five to seven years;

- Offering spiritual direction to others, under supervision, for five to seven years; and

- Evidence of the gift of hospitality, as borne out by support of a Christian community or Christian academic institution, to name such a person as supervisor of spiritual directors.

Because of the overlap of theological training, psychological understanding, and training in prayer practices, we are in a period in which some of those areas of expertise may have been gained in formal academic degree work, while others of those areas of knowledge will have been gained through one's own personal learning and in programs of continuing education. Other aspects must be gained through a mentoring process with the abbas and ammas of one's various apprenticeships in ministry and spiritual direction.

Nevertheless, for a supervisor of spiritual directors, we might well expect some configuration of the following trainings:

- Advanced degree in theology;

- Advanced degree in spiritual direction or related field, such as pastoral counseling or psychology, along with training in spiritual direction; or advanced training program in spiritual direction;

- Five to seven years of practice in offering individual and/or group spiritual direction under supervision;

- Five to seven years receiving personal spiritual direction;

- Recognition within a Christian faith or academic community as a person deemed appropriate for the supervision of others; and

- On-going structure for accountability within that Christian faith or academic community.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION IN A MULTIRELIGIOUS WORLD

We live in a fascinating age. Never before in human history have the prayer and meditative practices of the world's religions been so accessible. A visit to any major bookstore can fill your personal library with this wealth of information. In just the last few years, issues of spirituality have come to the forefront of medical and psychological practice. In such a time, it is challenging to name and claim one's area of expertise within spiritual direction. Can one offer spiritual direction apart from the beliefs of a particular religious tradition? Can one be a generic spiritual director?

Well, I want to say usually, no, but occasionally, yes, to that question. Depending upon one's depth of understanding and integration of multiple spiritual practices and teachings, some individuals do seem to have the capacity to offer those words of encouragement to people from a variety of faith perspectives. However, it will be an extremely rare individual who possesses the level of knowledge of such a variety of religious traditions to be able to do this task well. The question brings to the forefront the issue that we name in Christianity as theology and biblical understanding. With what faith framework is our life journey supported? What is the underlying symbolic faith system at work deep within us? How do our personal and corporate practices—such as prayer, worship, and group sharing—support the process of personal appropriation of a faith tradition?

There is a notion in Buddhist teaching that one needs three aspects of the tradition for growth: the teachings, a teacher, and a community of practice. We readily see that it is extremely difficult to know the teachings of more than one religious tradition well enough to guide persons into that pathway. Some rare individuals do possess such deeply learned wisdom. For most of us, it is simply very important to name with clarity what our faith tradition is and how we utilize its milestones of faith to help mark the spiritual journey.

For this reason, I have used the term "Christian" spiritual formation/direction throughout this article. As I have developed the qualifications for supervisors within Christian spiritual direction, I suggest very similar qualifications could be applied to other faith traditions.

One of the well-articulated principles from ethical guidelines for psychologists is that one must not advertise or practice outside of one's area of training and competency. This principle acknowledges the many schools of psychological training and recognizes that a practitioner will have certain competencies but is not

expected to know or equally practice all schools of psychotherapeutic intervention. I suggest a principle derived from this ethical stance would be the final item we should add to our list of qualifications for a supervisor of spiritual directors: a person who acknowledges her frame of reference, who can articulate her unique scope of practice within spiritual direction, who knows her place within historical Christian theology, is straightforward and clear about articulating those—and assists all persons in supervision to continue naming the uniqueness which they bring to the enterprise of tending to the souls of others. It is also perhaps incumbent upon those of us who have been called into this ministry of supervision in spiritual direction to keep learning from the wisdom of many faith traditions.

NOTES

1.   Spiritual Directors International's web site is at <www.sdiworld.org/index.html>.

2.   Retreats International's web site is at <www.retreatsintl.org>.

3.   Shalem's web site is at <www.shalem.org>.

4.   A listing of training programs in spiritual direction is maintained on the SDI's web site at <www.sdiworld.org/html/train.html>.

5.   Cf., Thomas Merton, *The Wisdom of the Desert* (N.Y.: New Directions Publishing, 1960); for more complete text: Benedicta Ward, *The Sayings of the Desert Fathers* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Cistercian Publications, 1987); for contemporary discussion of themes of desert sayings: Roberta C. Bondi, *To Love as God Loves* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).

6.   For a history of Christian spiritual direction, see Kenneth Leech, *Soul Friend: Spiritual Direction in the Modern World* (Harrisburg, Pa.: Morehouse Publishing, 2001).

7.   Maureen Conroy, *Looking into the Well: Supervision of Spiritual Directors* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 1995).

8.   Cf., Dwight H. Judy, *Christian Meditation and Inner Healing* (Akron, Ohio: OSL Publications, 2000).

9.   Richard J. Foster, *Streams of Living Water: Celebrating the Great Traditions of Christian Faith* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1998).

10. Cf., Margaret Guenther, *Holy Listening: The Art of Spiritual Direction* (Cambridge, Mass.: Cowley Publications, 1992); Jean Stairs, *Listening for the Soul: Pastoral Care and Spiritual Direction* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2000).

11. Cf., Rose Mary Dougherty, *Group Spiritual Direction: Community for Discernment* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1995).

12. Cf,. Gerald G. May, *Addiction and Grace*, reprint (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); Gerald G. May, *Care of Mind/Care of Spirit: A Psychiatrist Explores Spiritual Direction* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992); Michael Washburn, *The Ego and the Dynamic Ground: A Transpersonal View of Human Development* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1995); Morton T. Kelsey, *The Other Side of Silence: Meditation for the Twenty-First Century*, rev. ed. (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1997); Chester P. Michael and Marie C. Norissey, *Prayer and Temperament: Different Prayer Forms for Different Personality Types* (Charlottesville, Va.: Open Door, 1991); W. Paul Jones, *The Art of Spiritual Direction: Giving and Receiving Spiritual Guidance* (Nashville, Tenn.: Upper Room, 2002).

13. Cf., Evelyn Underhill, *Mysticism: The Nature and Development of Spiritual Consciousness* (Oxford, U.K.: Oneworld, 1999).

14. Cf., Conroy, *Looking into the Well; Janet K. Ruffing, Spiritual Direction: Beyond the Beginnings* (Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 2000).

15. Cf., Marjorie J. Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

16. Merton, *Wisdom of the Desert*.

17. Herbert B. Workman, *The Evolution of the Monastic Ideal* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1962), 23.

The Evolution of Theory Paper Writing:
A Thirty-Year Perspective

Mary Wilkins

With the advent of clinical pastoral education (CPE), the dualism between experiential learning and academic learning in theological education has sharpened. This dualism persists within CPE and is reflected in the way we supervise students in the process of developing their position papers and in the ways we evaluate position papers and assess the integration of theory and practice in the certification process. In this paper, a model is proposed for recovering the experiential method of learning in the development of the position papers by paying attention to the experience of supervision, by discovering and naming the theory and theology that is operational in those experiences, by bringing this naming of one's experience into conversation with the theories and theologies of others, and by honing the resulting theory in one's practice of supervision. In this paper, I also explore implications of this model for reviewing the position papers and assessing integration of theory and practice in a world that is very different than it was thirty years ago.

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A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

When CPE began in the 1920s, much of theological education was focused on the three primary disciplines: theology, Bible, and church history. It was assumed that if one mastered these disciplines one would be prepared for ministry. CPE emerged in this environment, distinguishing itself from rational education and extolling the virtues of experiential education. In some quarters of clinical training, there was a decided anti-intellectual bias. Into the 1970s, certification committees not infrequently looked with suspicion on candidates for certification who were also pursuing a Ph.D. When the writing of position papers was introduced, many veterans of the war against academia felt that CPE was losing its heart and soul as a model of experiential education.

While the virtues of experiential education were staunchly defended, what passed as experiential education in many programs expressed itself in one of two ways, depending on the geographical area in which the supervisor was trained and the theory and methods employed by the training supervisor. In both instances, the students were involved in the practice of ministry within a clinical setting. In one camp, there were those whose focus was primarily on the personhood of the student, and the methods they employed were more therapeutic. In the other camp, were those whose focus was on the learning of pastoral care, but their methods were more didactic. Most programs fell somewhere along the continuum between these two models, drawing something from each approach. While both involved the student's practice of ministry in the clinical setting, the focus of learning and the methods employed were not essentially experiential education.

In the early 1970s, Don Browning, professor of Religion and Personality Studies at the Divinity School of the University of Chicago, saw a third model of clinical training emerging, which he named the Chicago School of CPE. This model developed out of the work of CPE Supervisors Jim Gibbons and Bernie Pennington at Rush Presbyterian St. Luke's Medical Center in Chicago. It focuses on the education of the person in ministry. It takes seriously the experiences of the student in the clinical setting and in relationships with peers, supervisors, and the interdisciplinary staff. First, it employs a model of reflection on clinical experience that helps the student form a picture of the one with whom he is ministering from the experiential data at hand. This contrasts with teaching theory to be applied to the clinical experience. Secondly, it helps the student begin to discover a sense of who he is being as pastor in response to that understanding of the other with whom

he ministers. Thirdly, it encourages theological and theoretical integration by helping the student begin to name how he arrived at his pastoral assessment of the patient/client. And finally, it explicates how he understands the theology of his pastoral identity as it was expressed in this pastoral relationship. In this model, there is no dichotomy between experience and theory. It is not that one first has experiences and then goes apart to overlay these experiences with theoretical and theological knowledge. Rather, it is uncovering and naming the theory and theology that is operational in the experience itself. My experience in this program provides an illustration of how this model functioned for me.

When I began seminary over forty years ago, I struggled mightily with systematic theology. I experienced theology as little more than abstract concepts that didn't seem to connect with anything in my life experience. To my astonishment, I passed the course and thereby experienced some of what grace is about. Like some of you, it was in CPE that theology first began to make sense to me. I listened to the various ways that hospital patients understood how God was at work in their crises with illness, suffering, and death. As I listened I became aware that each in their own way was living out of one of the various doctrines of the Atonement I had studied in seminary. In reflecting on these visits, I further discovered that the doctrine they "chose" to identify with impacted the way they coped with and gave meaning to their particular crisis. This was a great "aha" moment. Not only did theology begin to make sense, but it also provided me with a way of understanding my pastoral experience; it also informed my pastoral response. Thus, the dialogue between theology, experience, and practice became real for me.

The process for certifying CPE supervisors has developed over the years reflecting these various models of clinical training. In the 1970s and early 1980s, candidates for certification wrote one key paper showing how their theology and theory of education and personality theory informed their practice of supervision. These papers—along with other materials focused on the practice of supervision— were presented when the candidate met committees for acting supervisor and for full supervisor. My experience, and the experience of many of my students who met committees during that time, was that the focus was primarily on the person of the candidate, the candidate's practice of supervision, and the candidate's ability to engage the committee. While the importance of developing a theory and theology that informed one's supervision was recognized in the stated requirements for certification, in practice certification committees tended to focus on the supervisor, her supervisory practice, and her engagement with the committee.

In the mid 1980s, with the implementation of new standards for certification the focus changed dramatically. The three separate position papers—theology, personality theory, and educational theory—were to be reviewed by three anonymous readers and were to pass before the candidate could proceed for certification as an associate supervisor. The review of theory was separated from the review of practice.

This change in the standards impacted the way theory and theology are taught in CPE. Suddenly, training supervisors rushed to put together bibliographies. Supervisory students made a mad dash to the library. Some supervisors wondered if they were qualified to train supervisors using new standards that required significantly different work than they had had to do for their own certification. Many supervisors trained and certified under the previous standards could be seen huddled together at regional and national CPE meetings bemoaning the fact that this was the end of CPE as they had known it. The new standards were viewed as a missal that would obliterate the cherished values of experiential learning and take us back to the academy where we would intellectualize about CPE. ACPE had sold out, and there was nothing left but to grieve or join the march to this new drummer.

A shift was also noted in the kinds of work the supervisory peer groups focused on. Before the standards changes, the focus of supervisory peer groups was primarily on the practice of supervision and the person of the supervisor. Beginning students in supervisory education tended to present issues that emerged from doing admissions interviews and serving as silent observers of groups supervised by others. As they began supervising, they brought issues that emerged from their practice of supervision with students and group dynamics that challenged them or raised questions for them. As they got closer to meeting committees, they might share some of their papers with the peer group and use the peer group as a mock committee. After the change in standards, the predominant focus of work in the supervisory peer group was on discussing theory resources and presenting drafts of theory papers. While this is appropriate work for those who have reached the stage of theory paper writing, the newer supervisory students entering the process became caught up in the anxiety to start thinking about theory before they have experienced supervision.

I have two major concerns about this development. First, by focusing on the reading of theory before the new supervisory student has had an opportunity to experience who he is as supervisor, the likelihood increases that supervisory identity will be shaped by theories of others rather than by the experience of supervising in conversation with theory. Secondly, if the development of theory has not

emerged substantially from the practice of supervision, the risk is increased that the practice of supervision and theory will appear to be Scotch™ taped together without genuine integration. In either case, the dualism between experiential learning and the learning of theory is perpetuated. This is the real tragedy for the future of CPE.

Recovering the Experiential Model in the Development of Position Papers

How do we recover the experiential learning process in the development of theory? Or, put another way, how do we teach theory and theology and supervisory methodology experientially? My thoughts on this issue are likely to disappoint those on both sides of the argument—those who like the current emphases on theory and those who long for a return of the good old days. The development of theory and theology in conversation with the practice of supervision is critical if we are to be taken seriously as theological educators. Theory enables us to articulate what we are about, provides assurance of reasonably predictable outcomes in response to given supervisory stances, and provides a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of our practice. Theory integrated with practice avoids the pitfalls that accompany supervisory practice done when we fly by the seat of our pants.

I am proposing that we recover the best of our heritage as experiential educators and bring it to bear on the task of learning to teach theory using the methods of experiential learning. The task as I see it takes me back to the model developed in the Chicago School of CPE referred to above. And that task is to recover the theory and theology that is operational in one's practice of supervision and bring it into lively conversation with the theories and theologies of others, leading to a genuine integration of theory and practice that is true to the core of one's being. The "others" referred to here include supervisors, peers, and the recorded wisdom of those who have gone before us found in articles and books. The library is neither the god nor the enemy of experiential learning, but another voice in the conversation when seen from this perspective.

How does the training supervisor help the supervisory student discover the theory and theology that is operational in the student's practice of supervision? We begin by taking seriously the experiences of the supervisory student as she becomes increasingly involved in the activities of supervision. We assume that the choices the supervisory student makes and the stances she takes are rooted in some

understanding or meaning that may contain the seeds for a developing supervisory identity and for an emerging theory and theology. As supervisory students begin to do admissions interviews, assess the readiness of students for CPE, select students for the program, develop curriculum, plan orientation, begin to supervise students, focus learning issues, develop appropriate supervisory stances, and evaluate students, they typically do things the way they were done in their own CPE experience. The supervisor's task is to help the supervisory student begin to wonder and to develop a curiosity about why he is doing these things in this particular way. The goal is to help a supervisory student develop a consciousness about the choices he makes. This is an opportunity to experiment and try new ways of being supervisor, to try different stances and interventions, to explore what other options there might be, to identify the outcome of this choice versus another choice, and to assess if the action taken resulted in the intended learning.

The supervisory student becomes increasingly conscious that there are assumptions and meanings underlying her supervisory activities; the first step in this process is helping the supervisory student begin to name the assumptions and meanings operational in her practice of supervision. For some supervisory students, this process may begin with telling the story or describing in a vignette what they did in a particular supervisory activity, such as an admissions interview. Most of us, at this point, would focus on what could be learned from examining the practice of the supervisory student in this activity, and stop there. If we are to avoid perpetuating the dualism between practice and theory, we need to begin early in the training process to help the supervisory student experience how practice and theory are interwoven. Looking at the description of what was said and done and felt in this activity, the supervisory student is encouraged to name the dynamics that were operational in this story, using the language of process not of description. Supervisory students will vary in their ability to grasp the difference between descriptive and process languages, and some may need more time and experience with this than others. Using the dynamics and process that have been named reflects on the practice of supervision. As the training supervisor enables the supervisory student to bring the naming of the dynamics into conversation with the practice of supervision in, for example, the admissions interviewing process, the training supervisor is, on one level helping the supervisory student learn something about the practice of interviewing. On another level, the training supervisor is helping the student appreciate the underlying meanings and understandings operational in the interviewing process. These underlying meanings and understandings that are operational in the interviewing process will eventually

become seeds for the development of a theory and a theology that emerges out of experience.

The supervisory student becomes increasingly adept at naming the dynamics and using process language to understand his supervisory activity; the next step is to begin to connect these dynamics to larger themes and patterns that surface in his practice of supervision. For example, what emerging themes and patterns begin to form a picture of the student's supervisory identity? Is the picture that is emerging congruent with who the supervisory student wants to be as supervisor? The training supervisor pays attention to the gaps and dissonance that occur between how the supervisory student articulates his supervisory identity theoretically, versus the supervisory identity that is operational in his practice of supervision.

For example, when one supervisory student was asked to reflect on the dynamics that were operational in her relationship with her group of students, she exclaimed, "Oh my ..., I've become my parents!" While believing she was show-ing great care and respect for her students, she had unwittingly adopted a model of authority as critical parent, which had been very painful in her own development. She was focusing on what her students were doing wrong, and felt she was being helpful to them by pointing out the error of their ways. While her assessments of what students were doing were on target, her method of addressing these issues with students resulted in shame in some, compliance in others, and resistance in yet another. She was not being the person she wanted to be. She wanted to develop a style of supervision that focused on wholeness and not on the pathology of her students. In reflecting on this dissonance, she remembered her experience with a teacher who had been particularly meaningful to her. As she began to name what was meaningful to her in the relationship with this teacher, she tried out some of the insights gleaned from this experience in her own practice of supervision. As she brought this experience into conversation with the theories of others in her peer group and in her reading she found that relational theory[1] helped her find the words to name her own experience. As she applied this theory in her practice of supervision, she found she was becoming more the person she wanted to be. As a result, her students were learning rather than defending themselves against the old parental style. Her theory enabled her to come alongside her students in ways that fostered genuine growth and learning because in her relationships with them they experienced the pastoral model she was teaching. Herein lies an operational definition of integration of theory and practice.

As seen in the example above, as the supervisory student becomes increasingly conscious of the underlying themes and patterns that are operational

in his practice of supervision, he is then encouraged to look at ways these patterns and themes connect with others in his own practice and in the theories and theologies of others. The training supervisor, the supervisory peer group, and the reading done by the supervisory student may help foster the conversation between theory and experience. Out of this conversation, the supervisory student begins to find ways of naming what he is about as supervisor, using the language of theory and theology. The supervisory student discovers that others who have thought about personality theory, learning theory, and theology may have framed positions that connect with and help the supervisory student name his experience. The supervisory student is encouraged to try out these understandings in his practice of supervision and see how it fits. Ongoing reflection on this living conversation between theory and practice helps the supervisory student to refine and develop critical purchase of his theory. The training supervisor and peers can be useful at this point in helping to recognize areas of tension or discord between the supervisory student's understanding of what he is about and the theory and theology he is developing.

In another example, a supervisory student who is a member of a conservative faith group wanted to honor her own tradition and not give in to what she perceived to be the liberal perspective held by many in CPE. The theology taught by her faith group held an understanding of an omnipotent God that implied a theodicy that was incompatible with her own experience of God. She had worked on a large neonatal unit where she ministered with persons wrestling with painful losses and had experienced a God who suffered alongside these families. To be true to her faith group, she felt she had to ignore the dissonance between her experience and the theology she had learned in her church. Her wish was to resolve the dilemma by pretending there was no conflict or to proceed as if the conflict didn't matter. Others told her she should find a different theology. I encouraged her to stay with the tension and wrestle with it until she found an understanding that felt right for her. She wrestled mightily with this and included faculty from her denominational seminary in the conversation. This conversation eventually led to the discovery that there was more that one perspective within her faith tradition. Out of her own wrestling and her conversations with others, she developed a theology that both honored her own experience as pastor and as supervisor and maintained the integrity of her own faith tradition.

I invite you at this point to return to the role of the supervisory peer group in helping its members in this conversation between theory and practice. What typically happens is that a supervisory student goes apart to read and reflect on the

experience of supervision and then brings drafts of his theory and theology to get feedback from the peers and other supervisors. The supervisory student then returns to his computer to incorporate the feedback and may then bring another draft for review by the peer group. In this model, the student and the peer group focus on the supervisory student's theory separated from his practice. How can the supervisory peer group be a place where the conversation between theory and practice are engaged in ways that lead to the development of integration and critical purchase?

In a web published paper entitled "Conversation as Experiential Learning," the authors see conversation as an ontological way of knowing experienced between persons, "where all participants are viewed as equally potent centers of consciousness."[2] The meanings that emerge from such conversation are greater than those of any one participant. The authors suggest that conversational learning is enhanced through the simultaneous engagement across five dialectical dimensions: apprehension and comprehension; reflection and action; epistemological discourse and ontological recourse; individuality and relationality; and status and solidarity.[3] The tension between the opposing ends of each dialectic is to be approached as an integrative resource where "the full range of possibilities within the dialectic become available to inform the conversation. This is in contrast to a dualistic position [which creates] an adversarial orientation where determining right and wrong becomes the focus."[4]

Perhaps the model of conversation developed in the paper cited above would be useful in the supervisory peer group. Rather than one person working alone to prepare a draft of a theory paper and then gathering feedback from peers, what might it look like if, in all of its work, the peer group holds together the conversation between theory and practice using this dialectical model of conversation as experiential learning? For example, when a student presents a supervisory experience, in addition to focusing on the supervisory practice, the peer group might also engage in a dialectical conversation using the above model. The theories and theologies that are operational in that experience are viewed from a variety of perspectives revealing meanings that are greater than those of any one participant. At this point in the conversation, the students would avoid judging and evaluating any one perspective but could appreciate the variety of perspectives available to them. As they continue in the process, students may begin to gravitate toward a particular perspective that best helps them name their experience. From there, they are ready to hone their own theory in conversation with their practice of supervision. From the very beginning of supervisory education, students would

learn to hold together the reflection on theory and practice, thus, avoiding the dualism in current practice.

I have shared one model that I believe helps us recover experiential learning in the development of the three position papers. In addition to the model cited in this paper, there are other models that may also contribute to this process. John Patton's work in his book *From Ministry to Theology* and Beth Burbank's use of story theology may be adapted to reflect on experiences of supervision that could inform one's theory and theology.[5] One former supervisory student shared his experience with an interdisciplinary peer group that he found helpful in the development of his personality theory. This peer group included physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, social workers, and CPE supervisors. There are likely other models in use that could be brought to this discussion that would help us in the endeavor to recover the experiential method of learning in our teaching of theory and theology. While there is not space in this paper for a more complete discussion of these various models, we, as a profession, need to be in conversation with one another about ways of using the methods of experiential learning in the development of theory. We forget that today's well-honed theories were once a practitioner's experience. Furthermore, as we help supervisory students utilize the experiential method of learning in the development of their theory and theology, we are also helping them experience a model useful in the supervision of their own students. They, too, in verbatim sessions are helping students recover and name the theory and theology that is operational in their practice of pastoral care.

THE EVALUATION OF POSITION PAPERS
AND ASSESSMENT OF INTEGRATION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

We turn now to the process of evaluating theory papers and assessing the integration of theory and practice. ACPE is indebted to a large number of supervisors who volunteer countless hours of their time either as readers and evaluators of theory papers or as members of certification committees. As one who has done both, I have great appreciation for the hard work that accompanies these important tasks.

We have already noted that our process separates evaluation of the practice of supervision from the evaluation of theory in ways that can continue to perpetuate the dualism between theory and practice. While this was done for good reasons,

ACPE is currently reviewing this process and is proposing a new model for evaluation of theory that will hopefully remedy this situation.

The evidence is all around us that our world is changing and these changes are having an impact on CPE. The impact is felt, in particular, as we explore the evaluation of the position papers and the integration of theory and theology with the practice of supervision. As recently as the early 1970s, ACPE was predominantly white, male, and Protestant. The influx of women and Roman Catholics, quickly followed by an increasing number of African Americans, brought rich new perspectives, traditions, and values to the table. Increasingly, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender persons are making themselves known within the ACPE community. Today the circle is growing ever wider as persons of all cultures, nationalities, and religions contribute to the diversity of our association.

In contrast to this increasing diversity, the categories students are required to address in the position papers tend to reflect the traditional categories of Western culture and the Judeo-Christian heritage. As an association, our ability to develop a structure and a process for evaluation of position papers that is respectful of this diversity is crucial if CPE is to be a relevant participant in this new world.

Supervisory students today are drawing upon theorists and theologians representing very different understandings than were used by those of us in the process thirty years ago. Several former supervisory students I gathered feedback from in preparing this paper referred to the anxiety they felt when presenting a theory or theology using theorists other than the "old war horses" commonly used thirty years ago. There was a time when most supervisors could speak the language of Freudian psychology whether or not we used it in our own practice. It was a common part of our culture. It comes as a surprise to us today that, when we speak of the "unconscious," some of our students respond with a blank stare. Similarly, supervisory students today are drawing upon a rich variety of theoretical and theological resources, and our eyes are glazing over. The problem is compounded when supervisors of one generation are the reviewers of theory for today's generation of supervisory students. For example, when a reader brings one's assumptions about authority, anger, and confrontation from Freudian psychology to the evaluation of a supervisory students' inter-subjective theories, there is a disconnect that leads to significant misunderstanding.

What can we take from this more inductive model of theory development with supervisory students that will help the readers and certification volunteers in reviewing theory papers and assessing the integration of theory and practice? We will look at the attitude with which we approach the review of the papers, the

process used in reviewing the papers, and how we apply the test of functionality to the papers.

The attitude with which the reader and/or the committee approach the review of the position papers is crucial. One of the premises we hold dear in our teaching of pastoral care is that we demonstrate an awareness of our own values, assumptions, and biases and are able to "provide pastoral ministry to a variety of people, taking into consideration multiple elements of cultural and ethnic diversity, social conditions, systems, and justice issues without imposing one's own perspectives."[6] The ability to work from within the framework of the other without imposing one's own agenda is at the heart of good pastoral care. This attitude is equally applicable as we enter into conversation with another's position papers. Constant vigilance is required as our best intentions easily falter.

For example, a few years ago, I had the privilege of supervising two units of CPE in India. One of the CPE groups spent a week out in a small village along with students from the medical school, nursing school, pharmacy, dietary services, rehabilitation schools, and the school of hospital administration. We went door-to-door in small interdisciplinary teams visiting the families in this village, caring for, and assessing the physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and economic health of this community. As our group of CPE students gathered to reflect on their experiences at the end of the first day, one student was excited about the "counseling" she had provided for a distraught woman whose alcoholic husband had beaten her and left her alone with small children. A wise Indian physician sitting in with our group raised the question, "What has happened to this community and to the leadership in this community that would allow this man to treat his wife this way?" I suddenly became aware that in spite of my efforts to be sensitive to the culture, the student had adopted my Western individualistic perspective in her care of this woman and had ignored the Indian perspective with its values on extended family and community.

As we look at how we bring the conversation between theory and experience to the process of evaluating theory papers, the image of the reader coming to the table with a red pencil is not helpful. Rather, the image of the reader as one who pulls up a chair to the kitchen table and enters into lively conversation with the papers may better serve the purpose. I would propose that the reader enter into this conversation by asking several questions of the papers. Is there evidence that the author has entered into conversation between his practice of supervision and his theory and theology? Is there evidence that the author has recovered the theory and theology that is operational in his supervision, named it, and brought it into

conversation with the theories and theologies of others? Is there evidence that the author has honed her theory and theology by trying it out in her practice of supervision and developed critical purchase? Is there integration or congruence of her theory and her theology?

Finally, the reader and/or committee would assess the functionality of this theory by assessing whether or not it serves the purposes intended of a theory. Does the theory provide the meanings and understandings that enable the author to articulate what he is about in the practice of supervision? Does the theory provide assurance of reasonably predictable outcomes in response to given supervisory stances? Does the theory provide a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of one's practice?

It seems that I have succeeded in stating the obvious in this paper. Perhaps this will serve as a reminder of the richness of the CPE model of experiential learning as we seek to bring that model into conversation with the development and evaluation of theory and theology.

As I was working on this paper, Dan DeArment, an experienced retired supervisor contacted me and shared his experience in attempting to write the three position papers and submit them for review. He graciously shared these papers and the comments of his readers with me. Though only one of his papers passed, he found the experience helpful in "systematizing the theoretical underpinnings for his supervision." He passed along this story about the tribal elders assembled in an African village discussing the lion hunt, which is a rite of passage for young men in the village: "A Western visitor noticed there was one old man off to the side, who seemed to be rejected by all. When the visitor asked about the old man, they said, 'Oh, he never killed his lion.' I learned in writing these papers, and presenting them, that I and that old man had a lot in common."

I can echo these sentiments. While I protested when asked to present this paper, it has been immensely helpful to me to articulate what I believe I am about in ways that bring greater intentionality to my supervision. I encourage other experienced supervisors to take advantage of the invitation provided by this continuing education fund to try your hand at writing the position papers. Let's keep the conversation going.

NOTES

1.   Jean Baker Miller, *Toward a New Psychology of Women* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986).

2.   Ann C. Baker, Patricia J. Jensen, David A. Kolb, "Conversation As Experiential Learning," web published paper, 2003, 2; available from George Mason University's Program on Social and Organizational Learning's web site, <www.psol.gmu.edu/psol/degree2.nsf/Perspectives%20Frameset?OpenFrameSet>, choose "articles" and the article's abstract, accessed April 2004.

3.   Ibid., 3-15.

4.   Ibid., 3.

5.   Beth Burbank, "Reflecting Upon Stories as a Way of Doing Theology in CPE," *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* 9 (1987): 147-156. John Patton, *From Ministry to Theology, Pastoral Action and Reflection* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1990).

6.   *The Standards© of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education* (Decatur, Ga.: ACPE, 2002), outcome 252.2. Available for downloading as a PDF file from the ACPE web site, <www.acpe.edu/manuals-standards/standards.htm>, accessed April 2004.

Descent into the Underworld:
The Hero's Journey as a Model
for Group Development

Logan C. Jones

The developmental process of groups over time is well documented. This process has been studied extensively since World War II in different settings and among different disciplines. Even the studies have been studied. What has emerged in the research is that the group developmental process, for the most part, is remarkably predictable. Groups move through the same stages and dynamics in the beginning, in the middle, and in the end of their lives. This is true if the group is a work team with a specific task, a psychotherapy group, or a group of clinical pastoral education (CPE) students learning about the art of pastoral care.

Below, I review this developmental process and offer another model or way of understanding the process. This model will be based on mythologist Joseph Campbell's journey of the hero as he articulates it in his classic work *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*.[1] The primary emphasis will be on the essential nature of conflict in the group process. As will be seen, the stage of conflict parallels Campbell's

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hero's descent into the underworld. Finally, I discuss the implications of this model for the group pastoral supervision of CPE students.

A Brief Review of Group Developmental Process

Group development has been defined as "the maturity and degree of cohesion that a group achieves over time as members interact, learn about one another, structure relationships, and roles within the group."[2] As a group goes through this developmental process, theorists have used a variety of descriptions to talk about these concepts of maturity, cohesion, interaction, learning, relationships, and roles. Usually, this is done by giving a name to the different stages as they emerge during the group process. The actual names and the number of defined stages vary among the different theorists. This naming of stages implies there is a predetermined, rigid process. This is not the case. Group development, while clearly predictable, is more fluid than linear, more mysterious than rigid, and more dynamic than static. While the use of stages to describe group development promotes understanding of the broader frameworks, room must be left for the subtle and not-so-subtle exceptions to the stages. Yet in spite of these differences, similarities abound.

In general, a group, as a whole, moves through a developmental sequence of four stages.[3] First, there is a period of orientation or encounter. Here the issues of safety, inclusion, and acceptance are primary. These issues have to be attended to in order for the group to develop further. Second, there is a time of dominance and conflict. This is the most difficult stage for group members and leaders alike. Individual members and the group as a whole struggle with scapegoating; resistance to authority grows; and rigidity of roles may set in. This stage must be worked through successfully if the group is to move on to more productive work and relationships. Third, the group moves into cohesiveness and productivity. Once the conflict is processed sufficiently, if not successfully, the group is able to risk more self-disclosure. There is deeper intimacy. Morale is high. There is a clear sense of success in the group work. Fourth, the group must deal with consolidation and separation. The end is near. The group must make meaning of the overall experience. The end of the group is anticipated. There is grief to acknowledge; there is loss to mourn.

In *Introduction to Group Dynamics*, Knowles and Knowles summarize the stages of group development put forth by eleven different theorists.[4] Their

summary points to the similarities and differences in naming the different stages as well as differences in the number of stages. For example, Knowles and Knowles cite Bion's three famous stages of Flight, Fight, and Unite. Also noted are Tuckman's well-known stages of Forming—Testing and Dependence, Storming—Intragroup Conflict, Norming—Development of Group Cohesion, and Performing—Functional Role-Relatedness. These two schemes, particularly Tuckman's, continue to be used as a reference in the field. Other models of the stages of group development are found in Johnson and Johnson and in Napier and Gershenfeld.[5]

Scott Peck put forth one of the more interesting theories in recent years of group development. In *The Different Drum*, Peck, a popular psychologist and amateur theologian, offers a four-stage process of group development based loosely on Bion's work.[6] The stages are (1) pseudocommunity, (2) chaos, (3) emptiness, and (4) community.

In the first stage of pseudocommunity, the group simply tries to fake it. Members are overly polite, almost to a fault. Accommodation to the other is the unspoken norm. Everyone gets along fabulously. On the surface, it looks as if real community has happened quickly and easily. It seems too good to be true. Of course, it is. In this stage, members withhold the truth from each other. Conflict is avoided at all cost. Feelings are kept inside for fear of offending someone. Becoming a group, Peck says, "requires time as well as effort and sacrifice."[7] In pseudocommunity, there has not been enough time for a real community to develop; neither has there been effort or sacrifice.

As the pseudocommunity wears thin, chaos, which has been lurking in the wings, finally emerges. For Peck and others, chaos is an essential part of the group development. It may be the most essential part. Usually chaos centers around a member's attempt to heal, convert, or control the others. Individual differences come out of hiding and into the open. There is no longer a way to avoid offending someone. This is a time of fighting and struggle, usually within the group and, more often than not, with the leader. It is an unsettling and uncomfortable time in the group. Peck suggests there are two ways out of chaos for a group. One way is through organization. That is, a member tries organizing the group through the assigning of tasks and roles to different members. This keeps the conflict at bay, and the emotional content contained. It keeps the process in the head, or intellectualized, rather then moving down into the heart, or into the affective dimension. The group then stays in pseudocommunitiy. The other way out is through emptiness.

Emptiness, for Peck, is the bridge between chaos and community. By emptiness, he means the emptying of the self's barriers to communication with the other group members. This means giving up expectations and preconceptions, prejudices, ideologies and theologies, and solutions. It means relieving oneself of the need to heal, convert, fix, or solve. It means, most of all, giving up the need to control. This is incredibly difficult work. Peck suggests the process of emptying is much like dying. The person's transformation from an individual who happens to be in a group to a group member means there is a sense of loss. There is no way to avoid this if true emptying is to occur. However, the joy and satisfaction that comes by being in a real community, by being part of a real community, temper this sense of loss.

The stage of community in Peck's model parallels Bion's Unite stage or Tuckman's Performing stage. The task is completed. The work is done. The anticipation of the end and the need for a good good-bye moves to the forefront. In community, there is high group morale. A deep and abiding understanding of the other emerges where there is room for the individual and for the group as a whole. For Peck, community represents life lived in the abundance of deep joy and deep sorrow, all of life is felt more intensely. It becomes a spiritual, and even a mystical, experience.

However, not all groups end "happily ever after." This is important to remember in group development. Groups do fail to achieve community. Groups do fail to be productive. Some groups do stayed mired in pseudocommunity unwilling to move into chaos. Groups do get stuck in chaos and are unable to move on to the other stages, or recycle through them over and over again. In fact, Yalom suggests that the evidence of a sequential pattern of group development across time is weak at best.[8] As a caveat, he writes, "Thus, the boundaries between phases between are not demarcated, nor does a group permanently graduate from one phase."[9] Simply put, the process of group development is paradoxical; it is predictable and mysterious, sequential and dynamic. Such is the nature of the beast—the group.

The Descent into the Underworld

The journey of the hero is a universal, archetypal theme. It is found in all of the world's literature and mythology. In its essence, the hero is an individual who undertakes a journey, which, like the process of group development, is predictable

in its sequences of events and stages. Campbell describes it thus, "A hero ventures forth from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder: fabulous forces are there encountered and a decisive victory won: the hero comes back from this mysterious adventure with power to bestow boons on his fellow man."[10] One only has to think of persons such as Jason, Odysseus, Jesus, Parsifal, Buddha, and Luke Skywalker to see the universal nature of the journey. While Campbell's work, originally published in 1949, focused on male archetypes, I would suggest female heroes could be named as well. I think of Joan of Arc and Mother Teresa as two examples.

The parallels between the hero's journey and group development are striking. Thus, another model of group development can emerge using the language and descriptions of this journey. Campbell sees the journey of the hero as consisting of a three-part cycle: (1) call and departure, (2) initiation or descent into the under-world, and (3) return.[11] The similarities between this cycle and Peck's model of group development are evident.

In Campbell's model, the hero is first called to an adventure. The call, Campbell suggests, "signifies that destiny has summoned the hero and transferred his spiritual center of gravity from within the pale of his society to a zone unknown."[12] Nothing will ever be the same again. The call of the hero is similar to the beginning of a group. The individual, for whatever reason, joins a group. He may be invited or assigned to a group. Membership in the group may either be required or voluntary. No matter, the individual is now faced with the task of how to be a part of the group. There are relationships to negotiate, tasks to perform, and decisions to be made about taking risks and being vulnerable. The individual has to decide at what level to participate and engage. In other words, will she be a leader or follower? This is part of the call. In short, the call represents the initial move-ment into the unknown. Just as a group tries to fake it in the stage of pseudo-community, the hero may try to fake responding to the call. But since the hero's spiritual center of gravity has moved into the unknown, there can be no faking it. Effort and sacrifice are now required.

Just as a hero is called to an adventure, a person joining a group is likely to be called to a life changing adventure. As the call unfolds, there is a protector who appears almost magically. The task of this protector is to help the hero along the way. The help may take the form of wisdom or guidance or a weapon or a magic spell. Likewise, in its early stages, a group turns to its leader for help. The leader helps to structure the group, set appropriate boundaries, manage the environment, and monitor issues of trust and safety. The protector is here at this point to help the

hero cross the threshold of liminal space and move into the unknown. Likewise, the group leader helps the group, as a whole, cross the threshold of liminal space and enter into the chaos.

As with group development, this threshold of liminal space is the critical part of the hero's journey. Without crossing over the threshold and descending into the underworld, the journey is aborted. It cannot be finished. It cannot be completed. This threshold then represents the door to the stage of chaos. On the other side of the threshold is darkness and terror. The way is unknown and full of danger. Campbell writes, "The adventure is always and everywhere a passage beyond the veil of the known into the unknown; the powers that watch at the boundary are dangerous; to deal with them is risky; yet for anyone with competence and courage the danger fades."[13]

As the hero crosses the threshold and descends into the underworld, Campbell notes he is required to do battle with dragons or demons, face threats of dismemberment or crucifixion. The hero may be abducted or even forced into the belly of the whale. What is required of the hero at this threshold and beyond is not easy, nor for the faint of heart. Group work is not for sissies. In a group, this is indeed chaos. Feelings run high. Anger may be expressed. Tears may be shed. The fighting and struggling are real and may seem like a battle with a dragon. The depth of feelings may cause the person to believe she is indeed lost in the whale's belly. The only way out is through. The ease, comfort, and niceness of pseudocommunity are gone. The chaos cannot be avoided, nor can the battles be fought from the head; they are of the heart. Emptying is now required.

The hero is required to descend to the depths of the underworld. It is only in the depths where the gift of the gods can be received. The gift cannot be received in the shallows. The gift is bestowed as a result of the ordeal of descent. Likewise, in a group, growth, learning, and transformation only come as the group, as a whole, moves through the chaos into the emptiness and then into community. This is the hard, difficult work of a group. Campbell puts it like this, "The agony of breaking through personal limitations is the agony of spiritual growth." If the group stays stuck in pseudocommunity, then there are none of the benefits. If the hero does not respond to the call, then he will never receive the gift.

Once the hero receives the gift, the final work is that of return. The hero now returns to the known world. This return is much like the ending work required of a group. The task has been completed, the reward gained. For group, now is the time to say good-bye. The hero has been changed by her descent into the underworld,

and the group has been changed as well by its descent into and through chaos and emptiness.

The return to the known world is a time to celebrate. Often it may be simply a celebration of survival. Equally true, it may be a time of deep satisfaction and pride about achievements made, gifts received, and battles won. For a group, to return to the known world means there is recognition of being in a community where understanding and compassion are the norm, where intimacy is fostered, and where individuality is respected. The journey is now complete.

IMPLICATIONS FOR CLINICAL PASTORAL EDUCATION

As a supervisor of clinical pastoral education, I teach students the art of pastoral care. CPE is professional education for ministry. Students learn about the art of pastoral care through the actual practice of ministry to persons while under the supervision of a certified CPE supervisor. They learn about ministry by doing ministry. A peer group experience provides a significant part of the curriculum. It is in the group process where the students learn both to provide pastoral care and to reflect upon and evaluate that care.

Much of the students' learning and growth in CPE occurs in the group process. The group provides support, nurture, confrontation, clarification, and challenge. As the students are faced with intense crisis situations in ministry, they discover their own grief is touched and felt deeply. As they learn to listen to the pain and sorrow of the other, they learn to listen to their own. The group, then, becomes the container in which these feelings are processed and explored.

As the supervisor, or leader, I am required to be aware of the group dynamics at play. That is, I pay attention to the issues surrounding the call to adventure of the group. The ever-present issues of inclusion and safety are addressed. Often, it seems, groups of seminary students move rather quickly into pseudocommunity. Everyone likes one another. Everyone gets along so well with each other. It can be so sweet it is sickening. But the call to cross the threshold into chaos cannot be avoided for long. Grief and pain surface. Doubts and questions come out of the shadows. Tears, long held back, spill over. Anger, often cloaked under a pious version of Christianity, explodes. This is indeed the descent into the underworld for these students. They begin to discover that the descent does not destroy them, nor does it destroy the patients and family members they encounter. On the contrary,

they discover that paradoxically the descent into the underworld is healing. Just as the hero has to battle dragons, the CPE students battle with their own feelings and their understandings of faith.

As supervisor, it is not my place to rescue the students from this descent into the underworld. I have been there. I know what it is like. I know how terrifying it can be. I know courage is needed. I know someone needs to point the way through. I also know no one can descend for the students. They must do it themselves. Thus, my role is to guide and guard the process. I want to help the students move from pseudocommunity and respond to the call to descent. I want to provide the safety and trust to allow them to enter into the chaos and conflict. I seek to help contain the feelings of agony as they experience the breaking of personal limitations so there can be spiritual growth. I want them to receive the gift from God. I guide them in the return to the known world. I lead them into saying good-byes and celebrating their accomplishments. I desire to help them speak their truths and experience intimacy with each other. I know I cannot do the work for them. I can only guide, encourage, and challenge them in their efforts and sacrifices.

The group process in CPE invites students to turn inward and downward, to move from the head down toward the heart, to descend and receive in order to be able to give back. James Hillman says, "If we discover the place of the soul—and the experience of God—to be darkly within and below, we must reckon with a perilous voyage."[14] Students do not undertake this perilous voyage alone. As a CPE supervisor, I stand with the students as witness to the value of the journey. "To teach," as Laurent Daloz says, "is to point the way through the fire."[15]

NOTES

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3.   Joan Hemenway, *Inside the Circle: A Historical and Practical Inquiry Concerning Process Groups in Clinical Pastoral Education* (Decatur, Ga.: The Journal of Pastoral Care Publications, 1996), 110-111.

4.   Malcolm Shepherd Knowles and Hulda Knowles, *Introduction to Group Dynamics* (N.Y.: Association Press, 1972), 72.

5.   David Johnson and Frank Johnson, *Joining Together: Group Theory and Group Skills*, 7th ed. (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 2000), 30; and Rodney W. Napier and Matti K. Gershenfeld, *Group Theory and Experience,* 6th ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 63-101.

6.   Scott Peck, *The Different Drum: Community Making and Peace* (N.Y.: Touchstone Books, 1998), 86-106.

7.   Peck, *Different Drum*, 88.

8.   Irving Yalom, *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy*, 4th ed. (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1995), 303.

9.   Yalom, *Theory*, 303.

10.   Campbell, *Hero*, 30.

11.   Ibid., 30, 245.

12.   Ibid., 58.

13.   Ibid., 82.

14.   James Hillman, *Insearch: Psychology and Religion* (Dallas: Spring Publications, 1990), 49.

15.   Laurent Daloz, *Effective Teaching and Mentoring: Realizing the Transformational Power of Adult Learning Experiences* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1986), 237.

For the Sake of Humanity:
Reframing the Eucharistic Celebration
and the Art of Preaching

Graeme D. Gibbons

THEOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The process theologians, influenced by Whitehead and Wieman, saw that truth grows through the interchange between those whose experiences and understandings are different from each other.[1] In the process tradition, the more divergence between theorists, the greater the challenge and the opportunity for growth in truth. According to John Cobb:

> Growth occurs when the conflicting beliefs are converted by creative thought into what Whitehead calls a contrast. That is, their distinct integrity and power are retained in their mutual tension. But a new understanding or perspective is attained in which the truth of each can be realized along with the limitation of each. In this relation each is transformed by its new relation to the other, and the total experience and vision is widened and enriched.[2]

This method is discernible in the theology of Cobb as well as Daniel D. Williams, Seward Hiltner, Ian McIntosh, and Henri Nouwen, to name just a few. It is also recognizable in the standards of the Association for Supervised Pastoral

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Education in Australia Inc., where the Advanced Level Standards of clinical pastoral education (CPE) identify one of the outcomes of "abstract theological and pastoral conceptualisations" as "the capacity to consider and explore in what way the particular challenges or reframes a general theological theme or concept."[3]

In this paper, I explore how the context of a medical center and CPE ministry reframes the way in which an ordained ministry of Word and Sacrament might be practiced. The exploration centered in personal reflection on a thirty-year ministry of medical center chaplaincy and supervision within a CPE center. I initially explore the way in which my understanding of the sacrament of Holy Communion was influenced by celebrating the Eucharist for over three decades in an ecumenical environment and within a medical center milieu. Secondly, I investigate how the context of preaching to patients gathered for worship in a medical center chapel influenced the way in which preaching was practiced and taught.

EARLY UNDERSTANDINGS OF HOLY COMMUNION

My understanding of Eucharist has developed out of my ecumenical experiences in my role as interchurch chaplain supervisor. My initial theological education was within a Presbyterian theological hall. In that tradition, I was licensed to preach by the presbytery that accepted me as a candidate; three months later, the presbytery within which I was to work as a minister of the Word and Sacrament ordained me. My ordination took place in the chapel at St. Andrew's Presbyterian Hospital in February 1971 where I had been appointed as chaplain. I think I was the first candidate for ordination, or one of very few, within a presbytery of the Victorian Presbyterian Assembly to be ordained into a ministry based in a place other than a parish. Upon the emergence of the Uniting Church in Australia (UCA), I elected to move with the significant number of Presbyterian ministers into the UCA.[4]

The sacrament of Holy Communion was a special sacrament in the Presbyterian Church. In my youth, it was celebrated only quarterly. The elders delivered communion cards inviting all members on the communion roll to attend. Since the time I was appointed as an interchurch chaplain supervisor in February 1975, I have conducted a monthly Sunday service of Holy Communion in the medical center for patients. In conducting this service, I have been privileged to have the support and practical assistance of volunteers from neighboring UCA churches.[5] In our current medical center, I oversee the delivery of church lists to the wards and the assistance of nurses in identifying the patients who wish to attend services, together

with the collection of the lists by the Saturday duty chaplain and the transporting of the patients by volunteers to Sunday services. The latter, pre-Communion visitation, is an important part of the contemporary medical center ministry.

TRANSITION IN PRACTICE

While participating in basic, advanced, and supervisory CPE at the Austin Hospital, I was introduced to the Anglican-style Eucharist, which was held weekly.[6] When I took up the appointment as chaplain supervisor in 1975, I continued that practice for CPE participants. At about that time, the Anglican Church brought out a New Australian Prayer Book; department members had participated in writing the draft for its "Communion of the Sick." When the UCA came into being, there were several years when we were without a prayer book and the old Presbyterian orders of service no longer seemed relevant.

In my early leadership of Holy Communion within the context of CPE programs, one of the issues that created some difficulty in our ecumenical celebrations was my discovery that I needed to respect the conscience of CPE people joining the department who felt it was important to consume the remaining Bread and Wine. At that time, this was a concern of mainly Anglicans who were Anglo-Catholic. I found St. Paul's letter to the Corinthians helpful.[7] This gave me a practical principle that I could apply. Even though my conscience was not offended by not consuming the remaining Bread and Wine, as that was the way I was brought up, I could attend to and care for those whose conscience was disturbed.

Since the emergence of the Austin and Repatriation Medical Centre in 1995, we have held a weekly service for department staff and CPE interns, involving up to thirty-five people, in which the leadership has been shared. In addition to myself, there are now three regular celebrants: our co-director, a layperson who received authority from her Baptist denomination to preside at the celebration of Holy Communion, and the Anglican chaplain who is the coordinator of chaplaincy services within the department.

REAL PRESENCE

Another matter that I have had to wrestle with over the years of trying to hold together an ecumenical community is how to understand the real presence of Christ

in the Sacrament. My challenge was to be true to Scripture and tradition and hold together opposite trends in Reformed and Catholic theology.

Since 1975, the Eucharists that I have led (with the exception of two) have all been ecumenical. This in itself is a fascinating statement. Beginning in 1975, Catholics have joined us—first the women religious, then some of the priests, and, in recent years, lay people studying theology. Respecting the Catholic view of the real presence in the Eucharist has been important. How do I today understand the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist?

Right at the end of his lengthy attempt to remind the extremes of the reformation about the real presence of Christ in the sharing of the Bread and Wine, John Calvin hinted at a new insight. Calvin struggled in his understanding of the Eucharist to be true to all the Scripture, to uphold the importance of the oneness of God through the belief in the Holy Trinity. What follows is my interpretation of Calvin's view of the real presence. The real presence of Christ in the Holy Eucharist is achieved through the faithful being lifted up into Heaven. In the prayer of Epiclesis, we ask the Holy Spirit to lift us up into the presence of God where Christ is present to drink the cup with us again as He promised in Scripture. While Jesus has ascended to Heaven, the Holy Spirit comes to us in our various celebrations here, there, and everywhere around the globe and lifts us up into the eternal heavenly community, just for a brief time, where the Ascended Christ is at the right hand of God. For Calvin, only this makes sense of the Scripture—"I tell you that from now on I shall not drink of the fruit of the wine until I do so in the reign of God."[8] For Calvin, it also underlined the oneness of God and the Scripture's reports of the Ascension.

At the end of the service, we do not waste the Bread and Wine not because they have become Christ's body but because they are the Bread and Wine of the heavenly meal. I have no objection in my doctrine of this Sacrament or in my understanding of creation to feed the Communion bread to the birds of the air or to take it to eat at our meal tables.

REFRAMING THE GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

At the 1987 International Congress on Pastoral Care and Counselling, held in Melbourne, Australia, I was impressed with the ideas and leadership given to us by the Rev. Dr. Padmasani Gallup from Madras, India. Gallup suggested that, in her search for appropriate pastoral counseling for the stressed Indian woman made to feel

dependent and powerless, help and direction were found in taking the old Indian myths and reworking them from a Christian feminist perspective. Gallup demonstrated beautifully how the old heroines of Indian mythology could be reinterpreted. She pointed out that the women in the stories were really intelligent, patient, knowledgeable, and dependable.

Gallop's paper encouraged me to take a new look at some of our Bible stories. In the process of this review, I decided that an important value of the Great Prayer of Thanksgiving is the opportunity to bring before the congregation stories of faithful characters with whom they could identify. Over the years, I have developed the following Great Prayer of Thanksgiving that has included significant stories that have been overlooked in previous liturgies.

GREAT PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

L. The Lord be with you.

P. And also with you.

L. Lift up your hearts.

P. We lift them to the Lord.

L. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

P. It is right to give our thanks and praise.

L. We give thanks to you, Lord God,
   for your creation of light and darkness,
   and the separation of water, land and air.

   We give thanks for the emergence of this great southern land in its pristine beauty, a primordial garden, and nourishing mother feeding your creation. We give thanks for the original owners of this land, especially the Wurundjeri people whose home was this hillside.

   You made us after your likeness,
   with sight to see the goodness of your creation.
   You blessed us, and our humanity,

   And provided for our hunger and thirst.
   You declared that we should set aside a day
   to rest from our labours of the week.[9]
   We give thanks for our consciousness
   Of deliverance from servitude and slavery;

   You shared your Spiritual Presence with Moses, directing his attention to your people's afflictions.[10] You appointed Aaron to speak with Authority[11] and the prophet Miriam to lead the celebration of our freedom with music and dance.[12]

In the experience of Samuel you remind us to listen and perceive your call;[13] and through the lives of Tamar,[14] Ruth,[15] and Rachael you have taught us the importance of self-agency, loyalty and lamentation.

We thank you for the life of Jesus, through whom you provided in our hearts the grace of forgiveness and reconciliation. Through him you expressed your loyalty to us even to the point of suffering crucifixion, death and burial.[16]

At the dawn of a brand new day, women of faith discovered an empty tomb.[17] Jesus appeared to Mary in the garden. Sent by Him, Mary proclaimed "The Risen One" to all the others.[18] Breaking bread with Cleopas and a friend, Jesus set their hearts on fire.[19] He gave faith to Thomas,[20] courage to Peter[21] and changed the heart of Paul.[22] He commissioned the disciples, Mary and the other women, along with the eleven and those with them, to proclaim forgiveness and reconciliation beyond the boundaries of nationality.[23]

We thank you for our sister Phoebe and other deacons of the church,[24] for the beloved Epaenetus, the first convert in Asia,[25] and for Andronicus and Julia,[26] who we only know by name but who were prominent among the Apostles.

And so we praise you with the faithful of every time and place, joining with the choirs of angels and the whole creation in the eternal hymn:

P. Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

L. On the night before Jesus died, Jesus and his friends gathered in the upper room. During supper he took some bread, saying:

"Blessed is the Holy One of Israel, Sovereign of all that is, who brings forth bread from the earth." After the blessing, he broke the bread, and gave it to his disciples, saying: "This is my body given for you." Then he took a cup, saying:

"Blessed is the Holy One of Israel, Sovereign of all that is, who creates the fruit of the vine."[27] Having offered thanks, he gave the cup to them saying: "Drink from it all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, shed for all for the forgiveness of sin."

"I tell you never again shall I drink from the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it again with you in God's reign."[28]

Loving God, we bring this bread and this wine to this celebration, remembering his death and celebrating his resurrection, and ascension. Send the Holy Spirit to raise us up from this earthly place that we might be truly present to share this meal with Christ in his ascended glory within the Heavenly Community.[29]

In these moments of spiritual presence make us one with Christ, a twinship of selfgiving. That through us he may hold the heavy hearted, maximize the sight of the blind, lift up the shamed, watch over the sojourner, console the inconsolable and pray for those people who live in spiritual exile; until justice and righteousness and "shalom" abound. In this hope, and as your people, we praise you.

P. Through Christ, with Christ, and in Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all glory is yours, God most holy, now and forever. Amen.

In their enlightening book *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience*, Eugene d'Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg suggest that "… effective ritual, can, and usually does, produce the powerful subjective experience of the integration of opposites."[30] From the feedback I have received, the emerging Eucharistic celebration being developed in our department, does contribute to the reconciliation of the opposites. Catholic and Protestant, female and male, Hebrew and Christian, darkness and light, north and south, speaking and dancing, self-agency and loyalty to others, death and life, heaven and earth are reconciled in a ritual that "allows individual humans to become incorporated"[31] into story and conversely allows the incarnation of the story.

SACRAMENTAL PRESENCE

The Protestant Reformers took the view that there were only two sacraments, Baptism and Eucharist. There position was formed in reaction to the Catholic Church, which at the time of the Council of Trent officially affirmed the sacraments as seven. The number seven is rather symbolic and is used to indicate the perfection of grace. For example, the gifts of the Spirit are seven.[32]

These days, I like the Eastern Orthodox position. While influenced by the Catholic view, they hold that to place a limitation on the number of sacraments is to view them from a narrow perspective. If a sacrament happens whenever God's grace is mediated to humanity through matter, then there is no limit to the number of sacraments. Indeed the whole of creation becomes a sacrament, a theophany, through which we see God. Fr. Thomas Hopko states: "Traditionally the Orthodox understands everything in the church to be sacramental. All of life becomes a sacrament in Christ who fills life itself with the spirit of God."[33] A number of Orthodox writers give prominent importance to the two sacraments that initiate us into life of Christ: Baptism and Chrismation. Fr. Kallistos Ware writes: "Somebody

coming to see you when you are sick can be a sacrament. Looking into a stranger's eyes and finding out they are not a stranger can be a sacrament. Christ looks at us through the eyes of all living images, 'even the least of my brethren.' In fact when Jesus calls us to 'light' and 'salt' and 'yeast,' is he not calling us to be sacraments of His presence in the world? We would have to be blind not to see that all of life is sacramental."[34]

PREACHING IN THE MEDICAL CENTER CHAPEL

In the context of a profession whose chief function is the proclamation of the biblical message, a reading of certain biblical passages not only requires clear explanation but ingenious interpretation in order that suffering people can hear the Gospel. In an earlier paper on preaching, I depicted a preaching rhombus to assist in the explanation, understanding, and improvement of the process. The rhombus illustrates the connections between the preacher, congregation, Scripture, and stories from life experience (Fig. 1).[35]

Fig. 1 Preaching rhombus.
    Reproduced with permission from the editor of *St. Mark's Review*.
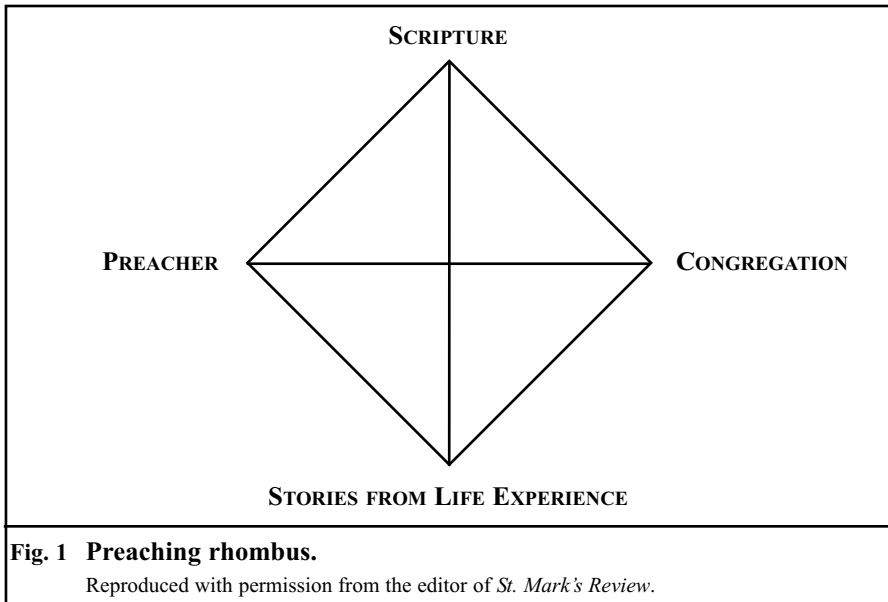
Leander Keck suggested that the contemporary "preacher stands in the church as a modern Lazarus: hands and feet bound with bandages, face wrapped with a

cloth." He thought the preacher was immobilized, showing no face to the public. Keck felt the preacher needed to hear the command "Unbind him and let him go."[36]

In a medical center, preaching is like the person waylaid by robbers and left in a ditch. The robbers in this case are the televangelists and other long-winded preachers who have done harm to preaching and left it by the wayside. In teaching, I need to continually remind the new preacher that for every minute they go over the six minutes recommended they have to deal, not with the reality of preaching for another two minutes, but with the rising anxiety of the patient. Patients can begin to worry that they will have to endure a lengthy sermon as they did as a child or like they glimpse on their televisions. Preachers have robbed and wounded the art of preaching. Preaching needs the approach of a Good Samaritan who can pick up preaching and pour some oil on its head and restore it as an art. The words of preachers need to be healing oil.

Jim, a contemporary healer, remembering an interaction 20 years earlier tells of his experience to a large group of listeners. Jim says: "In a psychotherapy session I was making an interpretation and was priding myself in what I thought was a particularly astute formulation. When I finished, my patient said, 'Oh Jim, your words are so soft and comforting, just pour them over me.'" Reflecting on this experience, Jim said the content of his words was meaningless. He went on, "My tone carried the day. It seems I was able to be in action, inadvertently, what my patient needed, probably intuitively. I moderated my vocal tonality in keeping with her need for soothing and comfort."[37]

Jim's experience reminds us that, when a caregiver communicates an understanding of the basis of therapeutic action, the exchange with the patient can be extremely powerful. This is true whether the time spent together is a counseling reflection, an interpretation, a prayer, or the preaching of a sermon. Out of my experience in the medical center, mothers of young children are probably the best preachers. I wonder whether this has something to do with gaze. It has been "found that, during breast feeding, that mothers spend about 70 percent of their time facing and looking at their infants. Accordingly, what he is most likely to look at and sees is his mother's face, especially her eyes."[38] In the medical center chapel, gaze may be essential if the preacher is to communicate.

Preaching is like the lost sheep of the pastoral fold. Chaplains have cared for and nourished their abilities to counsel, debrief, spiritually assess, pastorally converse, and pray, but preaching in the medical center has become lost.

THE CONGREGATION

My experience of preaching in a hospital chapel is a little like the experience of the disciples Peter, James and John, the three disciples who are invited to experience the Transfiguration of Jesus.[39] I am also reminded of Jesus saying to the disciples that, when they accompanied one of the least of these, they accompanied him.[40] Standing in the chapel, looking out at the circle of people gathered, I, as the disciples at the Transfiguration, have a vision of those present being joined by others who have travelled the road they are now on—brave people who had come to worship and pray and listen for God's word for them.

One of the features of being part of this medical center service has been observing patients sitting in their wheelchairs or even lying in their beds. Similar to the disciples seeing those great characters Moses and Elijah, I have the privilege of looking up at royalty coming out onto a balcony, characters who have earned their stripes through many transfigurations.

STORIES FROM LIFE EXPERIENCE

Recently, I conducted a Eucharist in the medical center chapel at which a pastoral care intern preached the homily. There were eighteen patients and fifteen volunteers present. Three patients had spinal injuries and were in beds, and the remainder of the patients were in wheelchairs. The Gospel that the intern read included the story of the confrontation of the wedding guest who was improperly dressed.[41] It is very difficult in a medical center to point out that, in this parable, Jesus was speaking to his opponents not to his followers. When the story was read, I wondered how the preacher would deal with the horrible rejection of an individual who was cast out into that place where there was wailing and gnashing of teeth. I also wondered if the patients would identify with the man who was judged harshly. What impact would it have on patients? Most had come to the chapel dressed in pajamas and dressing gowns and some had wounds dressed with bandages.

I thought the preacher would need to deal with the rejecting Scripture early, before it raised anxiety. He only attempted this later in the sermon, and as he did so, one patient indicated he needed a volunteer to assist him to leave. My experience has been that, if patients need to leave the service, it is usually during the

sermon. We were later informed from this patient's wife that his liver was failing. He was in that space of wailing and gnashing of teeth. I think that this kind of Scripture needs to be addressed smartly and with sensitivity. Two principles about preaching in the medical center that could be applied in this situation are:

1. Work on ways to redirect possible traumatizing, shaming, and patronizing Scripture verses away from the patient and toward the preacher; and

2. Work on ways to redirect possible judgemental Scripture verses away from the patient who is present and toward those who have stayed away.

I think the above text could have been dealt with in either way. I would have chosen the first option. I provide the following as an example of how this might be done with the text set for that day.

I guess if people were walking past and looking in on us today they would wonder why I am dressed in this robe this morning. To many people today it would seem a silly garb to be wearing in this modern world. I guess, for many today this would confirm that we clergy are out of touch. That we live in another world and are not dressed for the day. Many people today would probably think that this kind of dress went out with the last Millennium.

I was told recently by a clergy colleague how he had gone into a department store in his dog collar and was confronted by a woman who pointing at him shouted, 'Look everybody, here is one of those priests who sexually abuse people.' He knew it would be a waste of time arguing the point. He wasn't a priest. He was married and had a family. He felt offended and hurt. He just headed for the door as quickly as he could and spent sometime recovering from the verbal assault.

If it had been me I think when I got outside I would have been wailing and gnashing my teeth in the rejection of that experience. We all find ourselves feeling rejected at times. Even when we come to church, if everyone is singing and we don't know the hymn or the tune, we can feel rejected. Sometimes we can remember how when we were adolescents we were made to eat our meal alone in the kitchen just because we expressed a different point of view at the family dinner table. All of us can feel rejected when terrorists target us, "Why would they want to target us?" Sometimes if we have cancer cells going wild in our body we feel like we have been cast out into a place of wailing. We know what it is like to feel that way. Jesus himself knew what it was like to be cast out, to die outside the city. That is why in him we have a brother who knows our pain, rejection and suffering.

We need to know Scripture and to know the background to it. In the medical center chapel there is not the time to educate the listeners and to give the kind of background you would give if you were preaching in a parish. One needs to cut to the chase. In the parish, with the Gospel passage used in the above example, the preacher can take time to point out that it would be wrong to interpret a parable spoken to one's critics and opponents as one spoken to the faithful. The most important objective for preaching in the presence of the sick, however, is to guide the sick person into the presence of the good and to help the sick identify with the community of faith. It is essential to ensure that the person who is vulnerable through sickness is not further weakened by fear, anger, shame, humiliation, or guilt.

The direction you will find in the Order for the Visitation of the Sick, contained within Cranmer's *Book of Common Prayer* (1549), no longer stands up. There, the priest is instructed to inform the ill person that "whatsoever your sickness is, know certainly that it is God's visitation," for, "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." In today's medical center chapel, this approach is contraindicated.

In a long ministry to the mentally ill, Anton Boisen constructed a ritual for a particular community by putting together his own hymnal and deleting potentially destructive religious images that might evoke anxiety among patients with mental illness. While chaplains can delete verses of hymns and prayers in liturgies, for many preachers, it is not as easy to simply delete passages of Scripture. The creative preacher, preaching in the medical center chapel, will need to find alternative principles as those suggested above.

The situation calls for ingenuity, and I encourage the preacher to seek creative alternatives when faced with Scripture that could be harmful to patients. I believe that, while maintaining a respect for Scripture, we can help patients in our congregation experience twinship with the good and faithful figures in our history without being traumatized, patronized, and judged.

AN ABORIGINAL PAINTING: A GUIDE FOR PREACHERS

The method of sermon or homily preparation that I now teach to pastoral care interns found its way to us. Some years ago our department received a painting

from its artist, Jennifer Summerfield, an Aboriginal women from the Maryvale community, southeast of Alice Springs. Summerfield painted the piece as a gift for the department in September 1992.

For some years, it hung in our department's seminar room. I don't think we understood the depth of its meaning for us. The painting found us. It elicited our curiosity and active interest. In the last two years, it has generated excitement. In the artist's understanding, the painting depicts "the story of the Samaritan Woman and Jesus, met by the well."[42] Let me introduce Jennifer Summerfield's description of her painting.

At the bottom left-hand corner of the painting is Judea and the footprints leaving that place are the footprints of Jesus, leaving Judea to travel back to Galilee. In Judea, there is both Bethlehem, the place of his birth, and Jerusalem, the place where he will die. In this story, he sets out for Galilee remembered in the Gospels for places such as Nazareth where he grew up, Cana and Capernaum, and the Sea of Galilee where he was famous for telling parables and healing the sick. On his journey, he travels through Samaria.

At the bottom right-hand corner is a village in Samaria, Sychar. On this day a woman from that village sets out to travel to the well to draw water and carry it back to her village. At the center of the painting is a well—according to the artist, an unexpected place for the woman to meet Jesus.

One of the problems for a preacher or homilist when they start out as a preacher, especially if they are male, is to identify with Jesus and want to start out from Judaea and follow in his footsteps. However, if we follow that path in inter-preting this story and a number of other stories to people who are sick, we will find ourselves in difficulty. We will end up placing our congregation in a situation where they will feel patronized, something we certainly don't want to do if we want to be pastoral.

What I try to do in teaching homiletics in a medical center is to encourage the preacher to begin from Samaria. Sometimes to preach a helpful sermon and remain respectful to scripture, the preacher has to help the congregation of patients identify with Jesus; to do this the preacher may need to stand in the shoes of the other person in the scriptural dialogue.

There is a sound scriptural support for taking this approach: "I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was sick and you visited me."[43]

SUPERVISING A BEGINNING PREACHER

In CPE in Australia, I have worked extensively with beginning preachers. Let me share with you the experience of Amy Murphy,[44] a CPE intern in the first week of her program. When Amy first looked at her CPE schedule, she gasped for breath. She was scheduled to preach the homily at the Sunday chapel service in two weeks. She had applied for CPE highly motivated to learn pastoral care skills. Her nursing background gave her a quiet confidence in being on the wards with patients; however, she had never envisaged herself as a preacher.

Alarm bells rang inside her head, "What have I got myself into here? There must be some mistake." Amy's internal response in not unusual for beginning CPE interns, especially in Australia where trainees may come to CPE as a second career prior to formal theological education.

Amy, 39 years of age, is married with two teenage children, and while she had listened to sermons regularly since her own childhood, she had never thought that she would be delivering one. Amy's anxiety, while eased some, was not alleviated entirely by reassurance from her supervisor who said that, from his experience, married women—who had nursed babies, cared for children, and been consumers of good theology through listening to effective preaching—were the best preachers in the medical center chapel.

It was two weeks later, the Saturday evening prior to her preaching engagement; Amy sat staring at a blank screen on her home computer. She wished that something would materialize; she had read and reread the Scripture for the day, John 12:20-33. Suddenly verse 27 took her attention. Here Jesus said "now my soul is deeply troubled … too troubled to know how to express my feelings."

Amy began to write: "I suppose this line stood out to me because I can relate to Jesus here. I have felt deeply troubled in my life at times. I have felt too troubled to express my feelings and sometimes I have felt alone in my troubles."

The next day Amy faced her congregation of twelve patients, two of whom had been wheeled to the service in their beds and ten voluntary helpers from local churches. As she stood up to speak, Amy was nervous but also excited. She began,

> "Hello everyone. My name is Amy. I am one of the intern chaplains here at the
> Austin. This is the first time I have spoken here so I have been a bit nervous.
> My husband can't understand why, he says I have been preaching at home for
> a long time and that I should be used to it by now, but I am still nervous."

As she spoke she noticed the silence, then laughter, then silence again. She could have heard a pin drop; all eyes were on her. Everyone appeared very inter-

ested in what she was saying. She shared her connection with Jesus feeling deeply troubled; she also knew what it was like to be too troubled to know how to express herself and imagined many of the patients also knew that experience. She told of her memories of the physical pain of giving birth and the emotional pains of divorce:

> "I know how I cried out to God in my pain and how God answered." How did Christ deal with his pain? The Bible tells us that Jesus wept. So we know he cried; we know that he felt his feelings and that he prayed to God. Sometimes when I am in pain I can't see any greater good, sometimes I feel consumed by my own pain. Jesus was able to see beyond himself and his own pain. Jesus says in his passage, "Should I say, 'Father save me from this time of suffering?' No I came for this time of suffering."

HOMILY EVALUATION RECORD

To help beginning preachers, I have developed a homily evaluation record, and Amy's response enabled both her and her peer group to learn from the first sermon she ever presented.

In her evaluation Amy wrote, "I felt a little teary and choked up at different times during the homily. Many volunteers congratulated me and thanked me; one wife of a patient came and shook my hand and looked me straight in the eye and thanked me. The silence spoke to me too. Some patients said they appreciated what I said and that my nerves did not show."

Reflection upon Amy's experience indicates that her method of interpreting Scripture was effective. It connected the patient's attending chapel with the Scripture she had read and the experience of Jesus. We would identify this approach as a twinship hermeneutic. Amy could relate to Jesus, knew the experience of being deeply troubled, and connected with the patients in their experience. Amy identified with Jesus and helped the congregation to see that they had something in common with Jesus. For a moment in time, congregation, preacher, and Jesus were triplets together.

PSYCHOLOGICAL UNDERSTANDING

Amy's experience of preaching in the medical center chapel and her evaluation of her experience helps to conceptualize what is an important psychological dimen-

sion in pastoral preaching. It is the twinship that she herself experienced with Jesus, a twinship she helped the congregation experience. Twinship was first noted by the psychoanalyst Heinz Kohut as the third of what he initially called a selfobject transference. The first of the transferences he called the idealizing transference; the second, the mirroring transference. In preaching in the parish setting, the well-known pastor activates the unmet needs of parishioners to experience a merger with the pastor's strength, greatness, and calmness; this is the idealizing transference. In the medical center, there is more possibility that the preacher activates the unmet needs of patients for recognition, affirmation, and acceptance (mirroring) or the need to experience the presence of essential likeness through twinship.[45]

Amy experienced the twinship when she read the Scripture "now my soul is deeply troubled … too troubled to know how to express my feelings." Amy then began to write: "I suppose this line stood out to me because I can relate to Jesus here. I have felt deeply troubled in my life at times. I have felt too troubled to express my feelings and sometimes I have felt alone in my troubles." Amy then helped the patients experience that twinship when she said she imagined many of the patients also knew that experience. Helping the congregation identify with Jesus or with a human or a figure in Scripture who is human, courageous, and good is important in our pastoral preaching.

PREACHING GUIDELINES

In our CPE program, I am now able to give pastoral care intern chaplains constructive guidelines to help them organize their thinking and bring to their sermons their own experience in connection with the Scripture that is read on the day. We no longer need to throw our preachers in at the deepest end of the pool. We can assist them to enter the preaching pool at a point in the pool where their feet can touch the bottom, where they are not over their heads, and, most importantly for the preacher in the medical center, a point where they feel safe. This is presented to the interns in a workshop format. A summary of these guidelines follows.

As a preacher:
- Set out from your village, the place where you are at home;
- Read the Scripture set for the Sunday when you are to preach;
- Engage in pastoral ministry with patients;
- Stop at the well with your patients and help them draw water from the depth of the well;

- Reflect on your encounter and recollect the story of their journey;
- Write succinctly the story of their courage (their spring of water welling up to eternal life);
- Explore what connections or disjunctions you can find between your home, your Scripture, and the patient's story;
- Move from your reflection to the preparation of a homily;
- Reread the Scripture set for the day, having in mind the congregation;
- Work on ways to redirect possible shaming, patronizing, traumatizing, and judging Scripture verses away from the patient and toward yourself, the preacher, or others not present;
- Remember the well is distinct and separate from the mountains, (don't prepare a homily for the cathedral), the graves of our fathers (don't rub patient's noses in death and dying), and spiritual gifts (don't speak in tongues);
- Explore ways you can present the truth you have discovered to the gathered congregation;
- Increase the interest of the congregation step-by-step rather than seducing them with humor or a spectacular opening and then loosing their attention;
- Remember that patients attending worship in a medical center concentrate for a very short time span (i.e., six minutes);
- Track the responses of the congregation, look for feedback through facial expressions, such as shame, fear, distress, anger, boredom, interest, excitement, and enjoyment;
- Develop the connections between the scripture and life experience, being aware that the greatest paucity in preaching is the lack of connection between scripture and life experience; and
- Remember that the task of the pastoral preacher in the medical center is to communicate to patients that they are courageous, accepted, and valued.

In supervising beginning pastors, we must mirror, recognize, and value the preacher's strengths and affirm their own self-supervision. Further, we need to encourage preachers to assist the congregation to identify with and feel a twinship with Jesus and with other human, good, and courageous figures in Scripture.

NOTES

1.   In my doctoral dissertation, I explored an interchange between the pastoral theology of Daniel D. Williams and the object relations psychology developed by Melanie Klien and Wilfred Bion. One outcome from this work was the recognition of the inadequacy within object relations psychology of working with disruption and disjunctions. The dissertation proposed a model for

working toward reconciliation once a disruption had been disclosed. This discovery also eventually led me to Kohut and intersubjective and selfobject psychology.

2.   John B. Cobb Jr., *Process Theology as Political Theology* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1982), 619.

3.   Association For Supervised Pastoral Education Inc., *Standards for Clinical Pastoral Education* (Kerrimuir, Victoria, Aus.: ASPEA Inc., 1995), 2.3.3.

4.   The UCA is a union of the Methodist, Congregational, and Presbyterian Churches.

5.   Volunteers from neighboring churches have provided this service for more than sixty years.

6.   The introduction came through Rev. Roy A. Bradley, who was the pioneering CPE supervisor in Australia and is an Anglican priest.

7.   1 Cor. 8 New Revised Standard Version: Not offending your brethren's conscience when it is different from your own. This is the version referenced throughout the article.

8.   Luke 22:18.

9.   Gen. 1, 2.

10.   Exod. 3.

11.   Exod. 4.

12.   Exod. 15.

13.   1 Sam. 3.

14.   Gen. 38.

15.   Ruth 1.

16.   I am indebted here to the thinking about Atonement developed by Daniel D. Williams.

17.   Mark 16.

18.   John 20.

19.   Luke 24.

20.   John 20.

21.   Acts 4.

22.   Acts 9.

23.   Luke 24; John 20.

24.   Romans 16.

25.   Romans 16.

26.   Romans 16.

27.   The Blessing of the Bread and Wine is the traditional Hebrew blessing.

28.   Luke 22:18.

29.   In his discussion of the real presence, after exhaustive considerations, John Calvin seems to come to this conclusion.

30.   Eugene d'Aquili and Andrew B. Newberg, *The Mystical Mind: Probing the Biology of Religious Experience* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1999), 91.

31.   Ibid., 93.

32.   Isaiah 11:2-4.

33.   Anthony M. Coniaris, *These are the Sacraments* (Minneapolis: Light and Life Publishing Company, 1981), 11.

34.   Ibid.

35.   Graeme D. Gibbons, "An Approach to Educating Preachers," *St. Mark's Review* no. 93 (1978).

36.   Leander E. Keck, *The Bible in the Pulpit: The Renewal of Biblical Preaching* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon Press, 1979), 38.

37.   James L. Fosshage, "Listening/Experiencing Perspectives and the Quest for a Facilitating Responsiveness" (paper presented at the eighteenth annual conference on the Psychology of the Self, San Francisco, Calif., Oct. 22, 1995).

38.   Daniel N. Stern, *The First Relationship* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1977), 52.

39.   Mark 9:2-9.

40.   Matt. 25:31-45.

41.   Matt. 22:11-14.

42.   John 4:1-42.

43.   Matt. 25:35.

44.   This person is fictitious, and an amalgam of at least three actual people. I am grateful to Kathlyn Dawes for her assistance in creating this story from various different sources.

45.   Heinz Kohut, *How Does Analysis Cure?* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 192-210.

Rural Canadian Congregations:
"We Need To Be Included and Involved— Not Forgotten or Taken For Granted!"

Arnold D. Weigel

The message is repeated again and again—both in mainline denominational congregations and in ecumenical ministries. Canadian Protestant small rural congregations frequently feel neglected, forgotten, and taken for granted by the church at large, by the synodical unit, by the theological school. One church council chairperson put it this way:

> We don't count as much as the big city congregations do. We receive the graduates from seminary as our pastors, especially for first call, but few of these graduates have learned much about ministry in a small rural congregation. Most of their training has been in urban churches, which are geographically close to the seminary and which can afford interns. In our congregation, we feel strongly that seminarians should be immersed more in the culture of a small rural congregation, with such immersions including the contextual education placement of students, internships and the involvement of people from the country parish in seminary education.

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This chairperson is in a two-point rural parish where the average stay of a pastor has been slightly more than three years for the last ten to twelve years.[1] "I know that we need to change with the times," says the chairperson, "but we do not appreciate simply being a stepping stone. We believe that we have something important to teach the rest of the church, including seminary education. We need to be included and involved—not forgotten or taken for granted."

It was exactly claims like these that led me to devote a one-term sabbatical (January 1 through August 31, 2000) to exploring what it is like today to be in a small rural congregation—both as a pastor and as a layperson.[2] I worked with a focus group in designing the questionnaires and consulted with pastors and laity in small rural congregations prior to and throughout the project.

This sabbatical study was undertaken with Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada congregations in the Georgian Bay Conference of the Eastern Synod; the Georgian Bay Conference covers the geographical area from Wiarton to Listowel to Port Elgin to Midland in southwestern Ontario, including at the time fourteen congregational units with eleven pastors. My methodology was that of a qualitative field-based study utilizing a participatory research model and process—questionnaires with church council members and semi-structured interviews with pastors. The research focused on appreciative inquiry, concentrating on strengths and assets, rather than the more prevalent focus on small rural congregations as a problem to be fixed, a weak sibling in the system, or a social unit awaiting closure. Assumptions that I carried into the sabbatical studies included:

- Small rural congregations are often neglected and forgotten;
- Small rural congregations are important to the life of the church in Canada and in the world;
- Small rural congregations are significant in that they constitute about seventy percent of the congregations in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada; and
- Small rural congregations need to be included and involved in the educational processes of the seminary; the small rural congregations have a lot to teach both faculty and students especially in terms of rural life and culture.

Together with Anthony Pappas, I hold that:

Small churches have a unique ministry in the twenty-first century. Much of what they have to offer is what they have always had to offer: the incarnation of the living presence of God in real social relationships. ... The primary quality of small churches is their relational dimension. Small churches offer family-like connections. ... The second quality of small churches is that every congregation

is, or can be, important. ... The third quality of small churches is their ability to enable spiritual growth in a natural and customized way. In a small church the pastor is not far from any member. ... Finally, when it lives into its divine nature, the small church is a redemptive presence in society. The small church is often dismissed as quaint, old-fashioned, peculiar, filled with "characters," and so on. While those labels are sometimes accurate, they can obscure a more profound truth: the small church is a subversive element in our culture. A healthy small church takes the prophetic stance that bigger is not always better! Powerful things are done in and through small churches for very few dollars. In the small church, people matter more than "success."[3]

I was particularly interested in learning what makes church worthwhile for laity and clergy in the Georgian Bay Conference and how seminary education can feed into, connect with, and build on that. Three concerns formed the focus for the sabbatical study:

  a. What is it like today to be in a small congregation in a rural context, as a pastor and as a layperson?
  b. What are some leadership and support concerns of small congregations in a rural context?
  c. How can seminaries prepare graduates better for ministry in these times in small congregations within a rural context?

In this article, I devote particular attention to:

  1. specific learnings relative to seminary practical theology emphases and contextual education matters, including field education student placements as well as interns in small rural congregations (Since I am a faculty member at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, the counsel offered by study participants and shared here will be focused on Waterloo.);
  2. the need to be intentional in developing collaborative leadership in ministry within the educational processes for seminary studies;
  3. the evolvement and continuation of a particular course of study on leadership in a small rural congregation; and
  4. what this study means in terms of experiencing a significant partnership in ministry.

INSIGHTS ON PRACTICAL THEOLOGY AND CONTEXTUAL EDUCATION

Within my sabbatical studies and as recorded in my seventy-four-page project report, more than 150 laity and eleven clergy provided helpful insights on what is

expected of a pastor in a small rural congregation.[4] Laity responded as follows to the question "What expectations do congregants have today of their pastors in a small congregation in a rural context?"(not ranked):

- "visitation: there for us in crises and in celebrations";
- "flexible and approachable";
- "able to communicate with all age groups";
- "a good listener";
- "a good sense of humour";
- "an effective worship leader and preacher";
- "maturity: be willing to lay aside prejudice and preconceived ideas about what being 'church' should be so that our 'church' can be a response to God";
- "an understanding of rural life and culture";
- "the ability to adapt to difficult circumstances and what can be an isolated/lonely life in the country. ... Weather and/or road conditions can be horrible, especially in winter. A good sense of humour comes in handy during these times! ... an outgoing personality is an asset. ... open-mindedness, availability or flexibility to accept what could be a sudden change of plans (one needs to learn to 'go' with the flow)."

Clergy responded to this same question with (not ranked):

- "just be there/be available and accessible/genuinely present";
- "spiritual integrity: scriptures and sacraments taken seriously";
- "they want the pastor to accept them as they are, yet willing to challenge them to become all God wants them to be and to be sensitive to the difference and to timing";
- "visitation, in hospitals with sick and with shut-in and generally with membership";
- "grasp rural culture, life and rhythms (seasons)";
- "empower, honour and respect laity, their gifts and their leadership";
- "to be there in the midst of crises and celebrations";
- "what they want are pastors who stay and implement, not suggest and leave";
- "there's a high regard for the office of pastor, yet a desire for the pastor to be a real human being."

When asked about how and where best to learn these pastoral sensitivities and skills, as well as to gain an appreciation for rural life and culture, both laity and clergy responded: "Within the context of a small rural congregation over a period of time." "Immerse students in rural life and culture—include field placements and

internships in the small rural congregation." "We realize that it isn't always practical to negotiate placements with small rural congregations. Yet, we believe that a more concerted effort on the part of the seminary needs to be made in this direction."

Context matters. Context is spatial, temporal, and communal. Where we are, how we are in the here and now, and how we perceive and experience "small" and "rural" matter. Culture matters. The way we are, the way we do, the way we live, and the values we hold and embody—all these matter. How we perceive and value "small" and "rural" matter. Burt and Roper wrote: "Many have attempted to numerically define the 'small church'—number of members, communicants, pledging units, and worshipers averaged per annum. We resist those data for the most part. Figures seem too arbitrary, as if describing a person as a 'hundred pounds of clay.' Numbers are most often used when judging the small church, singling out its inadequacies, or devaluing its effectiveness. ... Based on our experience and understanding, we have chosen to describe the small church experientially as a living, caring, changing community."[5] In my sabbatical studies, I also chose to define both "small" and "rural" experientially including an emphasis on: How do I/we perceive ourselves? With what image(s)? With what attitude(s)?

Canadian author William Adamson underscores the power and the value of images: "Images are important for the small congregation. Images have power to motivate or to immobilize a people. If people have positive images of themselves, they feel a sense of worth, they feel capable and thereby will be motivated to live out these images. If people absorb negative self-images and see themselves as incapable or of little worth, they are likely to be immobilized."[6]

Lawrence Farris helps us appreciate that small towns, unique in character and cultural distinctions, present special challenges for pastors, especially for those whose models of ministry are grounded in urban or suburban contexts. "An almost universally experienced barrier to discovering the history of a small town is the internal image of small-town America [Canada] that a minister brings to the context. This image, no matter where it falls on the spectrum from small town as romantic ideal to small town as narrow and backward can blind one to the true story of a small community."[7] Hence, the plea for immersion of students—contextual education students and interns—into the life and culture of a small congregation in a rural context.

Within interviews, in responses to the questionnaires, and throughout the study, both pastors and laity within the Georgian Bay Conference were literally unanimous in saying that:

- Seminarians need to be more immersed in the realities of rural culture;

- Seminarians should have field placements in small congregations in a rural setting as part of their training (three to six months at least). This would help them experience rural culture and learn from rural culture;

- Seminarians who would serve in a small congregation in a rural context need to see this as their calling and not simply as a stepping stone to a larger and/or urban congregation;

- The seminary needs to have at least one or two internships within a rural context every year, with funding provided by the Eastern Synod, the seminary, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada;

- In the teaching of seminary courses, especially courses in practical theology, have pastors and lay leaders from small congregations in a rural setting participate in class sessions at the seminary.[8]

NEED FOR COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP IN MINISTRY WITHIN THE EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES FOR SEMINARY STUDIES

Participants in the sabbatical study expressed concern that a fair bit of teaching in the seminary appears to be feeding and supporting a "lone ranger model of pastoral leadership." They were emphatic in asserting the need for the lone ranger model to be replaced by a collaborative, collegial model—expressive of "the priesthood of all believers" and affirming each person as gifted and important for the well-being of the whole community of faith.

Jean Morris Trumbauer, consultant, trainer, and author of *Sharing The Ministry*, in a separate article states:

> A major challenge for congregational leaders today is how to engage in the practical steps that represent living out our emerging images of church and of the ministry of the laity, both within the congregation and in daily life. ... More than a change of language is required to live out a new vision of church for our time. It necessitates new ways of structuring and engaging in leadership roles and processes. ... Shared ministry can be described as "living out the affirmation that God calls all people to ministry." As members of faith communities, we are invited to serve together in a spirit of mutuality as partners. Working collaboratively, we strive to discover, develop, engage, and support the gifts of each person and, as responsible stewards, to participate in God's ongoing creative and restoring activities in our communities and the world.[9]

What Trumbauer is saying here squares with what we experienced in the sabbatical studies on leadership in small rural congregations. Here are a few examples: "This church is like an extended family. We belong together. The Bible tells us that we're the body of Christ. Each of us has an important part to play. We use our particular gifts in shared ministries." "It's a ministry—a mutual ministry affirming not only the importance of the ministry of the seminary to us here but also affirming our ministries as equally important. There's a sense in which our coming together has reinforced how we are partners in ministry." "The way in which this study has integrated a collaborative and participatory model and process is to be applauded. I've appreciated the way in which you have put a focus on strengths, on positive reflections and on appreciation. We really don't feel so alone any more. It means a lot to us that a seminary professor thinks highly enough of us to include us in the formation of a seminary course."

Roy Philips reflects on the significance of focusing on collaborative leadership. Says he: "The great new challenge for seminaries will be to train leaders of shared and mutual ministry as distinguished from the customary solo ministry. ... Among the practical abilities that seminaries should help to develop are skills in gifts discernment, in evoking the ministry of others, and in training, coordinating and supporting lay ministry. Seminaries need to address the issues and dynamics related to the ministry of the congregation as a whole. In the past, skilled leaders were thought of as people with loyal followers; we now need to think of leaders as those in whose presence leaders appear."[10]

Alice Mann puts the leadership challenge this way: "Unless a congregation reconnects faith with context in a fresh and powerful way, no strategy, structure, or program will make much difference in its long-term viability. Since the social context of the 1950s (or whatever decade was your golden age) will never return, discernment of a renewed faith identity and purpose is essential."[11]

Consider this reflection from my sabbatical studies relative to the challenge to embrace and to embody a collaborative leadership style: "The transition times in which we live present us with particular challenges. We understand that challenges are tough realities in our context that we must face in order to live out our vocation today and into tomorrow. But we believe that these are challenges we should not be asked to face alone. Although we feel that we've been neglected, overlooked and disregarded far too frequently, we also believe that together—with the church at large, with the synod, with ecumenical approaches, with imagination and creativity, with trust and confidence in God—we can face these challenges and learn how to live through them."[12]

One of the challenges is surely that of leadership—pastoral leadership, congregational leadership in context! As Pappas says: "Most seminary graduates start out in a small church, from whence an interesting distribution process occurs. Some, ill-suited, drop out of ministry before (hopefully) or after (unfortunately) inflicting much pain on themselves and a small congregation. Some find their calling realized and stay on for many years ministering productively in small church settings. Others pay their dues and move on."[13] With Pappas, I contend that one should not wait until graduation to address matters of leadership in a small rural congregation. This should take place in seminary education.

With regard to leadership, small rural congregations also need to have opportunities to explore alternative possibilities—hence, the expressed desire that pastors and laity in small rural congregations be invited to join in on class sessions for seminary courses pertinent to context. Pappas continues:

> It is evident that the predominant form of pastoral leadership for the rural church will be that of licensed, commissioned, or bivocational clergy. Small and rural churches have been "priced out of the market" of the full-time seminary-trained model of pastoral leadership, although many still cling to this model with a wistful yearning. Some yoked ministries are still able to support a full-time person but they are increasingly rare and are often fraught with the tension of a leadership style that is out of harmony with the congregational setting or that bears conflicting expectations. A fully trained lay ministry can provide a creative alternative to such dysfunctional relationships and empower the congregation in its ministry. Perhaps, in the 21st century, we shall see the Reformation principle of the "priesthood of all believers" fully appropriated by the church. The rural church may lead the way![14]

EVOLUTION OF SEMINARY COURSE:
"LEADERSHIP: SMALL CONGREGATIONS IN A RURAL CONTEXT"

Ironically, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary—which prides itself on having an effective contextual education emphasis in its course offerings—did not, prior to 2000, have a single course on leadership in a small rural congregation. Another dimension of this irony is that Waterloo Lutheran Seminary graduates have generally received and accepted first calls to small rural congregations. In a very real sense, Waterloo Lutheran Seminary was not equipping its graduates fully from a contextual stand-

point. Although there were some courses addressing congregational leadership, there were no specific courses devoted to leadership in small rural congregations.

Recognizing this gap, my sabbatical studies in 2000 quite intentionally moved toward addressing the need for a course on leadership in a small rural congregation. When I explored this intention with the people in the Georgian Bay Conference, I discovered deep appreciation in being invited to be a part of the genesis for such a course; I discovered overwhelming support, enthusiasm, and commitment to such a course. In fact, both laity and clergy identified this course as a necessity. Clergy identified this course as something they wish they had when they were in seminary. Both clergy and laity readily volunteered to be a part of such a course. To a person, each saw the addition of this course as strengthening Waterloo Lutheran Seminary's contextual ministry emphasis.

The course description that emerged is:

> This course will explore leadership in small congregations within a rural context—pastoral leadership as well as leadership of laity. Small congregations in a rural context have unique qualities, call for particular leadership dynamics and present structural, programmatic and administrative challenges in the 21st century. This course will devote attention to the current and emerging rural context with its changing social, economic, environmental and technological patterns as well as the impact of these contextual changes on small congregations within a rural setting. Rural community, rural culture, and ministry in the rural congregation will be addressed within the course. Included in the course's proceedings will be seminars, case studies as well as guest presenters and dialogue partners from small congregations within a rural context.[15]

In reflecting on the nature of the course, the following aspects became apparent and were identified as needing to be integrated into the course's offerings:

- Students should participate in a weekend immersion experience in a small rural congregation and its culture;
- Each participant in the immersion weekend should complete a reflective paper on experiences and integrate insights from related literature;
- Particular and current texts on ministry in small rural congregations should be included;
- Clergy and laity from small rural congregations should be incorporated into the teaching of the course, with clergy and/or laity co-teaching, with the course professor, up to fifty percent of the class sessions;
- Although initially offered as an elective, it is recommended that this course be mandatory for all candidates seeking ministry in a small rural congregation;

- Rural community, rural culture, and ministry in the rural congregation will be explored in the course; and
- The course needs to give opportunity to explore the merits of "small" and the merits of "rural," as well as the intrinsic challenges in each, especially in the twenty-first century.

This course, called "Leadership: Small Congregations in a Rural Context," fully approved by the Waterloo Lutheran Seminary and Wilfrid Laurier University Senates, has been taught in the school years of 2000-2001, 2001-2002, and 2002-2003. Although the Georgian Bay Conference highly recommended that it be a mandatory course in the seminary's curriculum, it is still an elective at this time. Course evaluations for the past three years clearly indicate that participants believe this must become a core course. This may come to be through a deepening and continuing dialogue with seminary administration.

EXPERIENCING A SIGNIFICANT PARTNERSHIP IN MINISTRY

Ministry is a partnership. We are in this together.
One interviewee reflecting on the processes of the study noted that "this study restored his sense of being in a community of faith—a community in which we honour one another's gifts, celebrate those gifts and call them into service to God's people!" Another interviewee said: "Don't judge us for our size; see us for the many and varied ministries taking place here. We care deeply for each other. We care deeply for our community. We care deeply for our church. ... It's the people— everybody knows everybody else! It's the relationships—we're all related to each other in some way. We participate as family. The congregation is family. It's the fellowship—the warmth of the people, not only in the congregation, but with other Christians, with other people in the community—all this is really great! There's a lot in small rural congregations which gives voice to the Gospel and which helps us live into God's remarkable mysteries!"

As a result of this study, there is now at least one seminary course at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary on leadership in small rural congregations. In addition to adding this course focus, in 2001-2002, 2003-2004, and 2004-2005, we have been able to place interns in small rural congregations in the Georgian Bay Conference with joint funding from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada, the Eastern Synod, and the seminary. This internship has turned out to be a fascinating and

stretching experience for all parties concerned—truly a marvelous internship in the best sense of the word. The congregations came to believe in themselves as learning and teaching congregations; the intern came to see the many and varied realities of life and ministry in a rural context and in a relatively small congregational community; the seminary came to see that internships in small rural congregations are vital, can be successful, and offer much to a seminarian; the synod and the endorsing committee realized that a small rural congregation has a lot to offer and is able to address contextual learning goals interconnected with the possibility of one's first call in a small rural congregation. Such internships need to be continued in order to provide a fuller balance in the educational processes toward graduation and ordination.

This internship demonstrated how together we can strengthen partnerships, build bridges, and bring congregations, candidates, seminary, synod, and the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada into regular and ongoing conversations. This internship also demonstrated how vast and varied are the gifts in a community of faith that gathers regularly as a small congregation in a rural context; these gifts are often neglected, forgotten, or taken for granted. As with the course on "Leadership: Small Congregations in a Rural Context," so in and through the internship we demonstrated how challenging, fulfilling, exciting, and beautiful the learning process is when we are co-learners and co-teachers in a context of exploration and discovery.

Canadian sociologist Reginald W. Bibby has conducted *Project Canada* national surveys every five years since 1975 and youth surveys of Canada's teens in 1984, 1992, and 2000; these surveys have produced valuable and stirring insights as to the state of organized religion in Canada. Bibby believes that congregations in Canada, including small rural congregations, have a lot going for them at this time. There is a yearning and a hunger for spiritual fulfillment, for correlating faith and life in meaningful and helpful ways. In his most recent book *Restless Gods*, Bibby affirms an essential process: "I remain convinced that if you want to know what people are doing in the religious realm and why they are doing it, you *have to ask them*."[16] Having asked them, and searched through, digested, and presented the available data, Bibby notes: "The churches are restless. Canadians are restless. It may well be because 'in the beginning' of this new century, the 'Spirit of God which moved upon the face of the waters' back then is moving across the country. What remains to be seen is what will be created ... this time around."[17] The same is true of leadership in small rural congregations. Indeed, it remains to be seen what

will be created. We need to be included and involved—not forgotten or taken for granted.

NOTES

1.   "Two-point parish:" This refers to two congregations near to each other that are formed into one parish and served by one pastor. Eastern Canada has some two-point and three-point Lutheran parishes.

2.   I have been a member of the faculty at Waterloo Lutheran Seminary part-time from 1975 through 1983 and full-time since January 1, 1984. A number of my course offerings deal with leadership at the congregational level.

3.   Anthony G. Pappas, *Entering the World of the Small Church*, rev. ed. (Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute, 2000), 5-7.

4.   Arnie Weigel, *The Dawning of a New Day—Conversational Wisdoms from the Georgian Bay Conference—Eastern Synod* (ELCIC) (Self-published, Kitchener: Pandora Press, 2000), 30-31.

5.   Italics in original; Steven E. Burt and Hazel E. Roper, *Raising Small Church Esteem* (Washington, D.C.: Alban Institute, 1992), vi.

6.   William Adamson, *Small Churches: Understanding and Encouraging Them* (Saskatoon: Adam Enterprises, 1993), 35.

7.   Lawrence W. Farris, *Dynamics of Small Town Ministry* (Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute, 2000), 18.

8.   Weigel, *Dawning of a New Day*, 38-41.

9.   Quote from: Jean Morris Trumbauer, "Gifts-Based Shared Ministry Systems: Living Out a New Image of Church," *Congregations* (November/December 2000): 6; Jean Morris Trumbauer, *Sharing The Ministry* (Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress, 1995, 1999).

10.   Roy D. Phillips, *Letting Go: Transforming Congregations for Ministry* (Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute, 1999), 22.

11.   Alice Mann, *Can Our Church Live?* (Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute, 1999), 62.

12. Weigel, *Dawning of a New Day*, 59.

13. Anthony G. Pappas, ed., *Inside The Small Church* (Bethesda, Md.: Alban Institute, 2002), 175.

14. Ibid, 184.

15. Weigel, *Dawning of a New Day*, 49.

16. Bibby's italics; Reginald W. Bibby, *Restless Gods: The Renaissance of Religion in Canada* (Toronto: Stoddart, 2002), 3.

17. Ibid, 248.

Dialogical Encounter:
Being Present "At the Edge"

Connie M. Bonnor

PREFACE

Being present, listening to the reality of another's situation is dialogical encounter. Engaging in dialogical encounters is pastoral work, the pastoral work of accompaniment. Inherent in life is change and movement. Life is lived in a dynamic space between utter chaos and perfect order. In the new scientific paradigm of quantum physics and chaos theory, the phrase "at the edge" refers to this dynamic space.[1] At the edge, dialogical encounters provide companionship amidst the complexity and movement of life. A unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE) occurs at the edge, a dynamic space between what is known and unknown, where the students and I have opportunity to develop our capacities to be present in dialogical encounters with patients and one another.

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My supervisory work at the edge is informed by my Christian understanding of "God with us," Emmanuel, amidst life's dynamics, my call to incarnate that presence to others, and my engaging two paradigm shifts, one into relational psychology and one into the new science of quantum and chaos theory. Relational psychology and self-psychology assist my understanding of students' development as pastoral caregivers able to engage in dialogical encounters with others at the edge. Dialogue education in a collaborative learning environment fosters the quantum thinking necessary in the providing of pastoral care at the edge.

Theologically, I am grounded in the process of dialogue with my Lutheran tradition, Scripture, and theologians as I supervise. God's grace is foundational as I search for dynamic truth amidst the complexity of life. Luther's theology of the cross articulates that God is with us even in our suffering. I endeavor to remember and embody "God with us," Emmanuel, as I journey with students. Buber furthers my understanding of "God with us" in his discussions of the I-Thou encounter, of God in the between.[2] The Christian story of the Samaritan woman meeting Jesus at the well exemplifies a dialogical encounter in which God became present in the between. As a supervisor, I am curious as to what fosters and what inhibits the students' being present, their being open to I-Thou encounters with their peers, patients, and me.

Being present occurs in relationship. Relational psychology provides insight into the dynamics of empathy that foster and the dynamics of relational paradoxes that impede being present. Understanding these dynamics informs my participation in my supervisory relationships and my teaching about pastoral relationships. Relational psychology and self-psychology provide insight into the dynamics of growth and development of the pastoral caregiver self and inform my understanding of my students as learners.

Educationally, my supervisory practice is informed by a paradigm that has emerged from new scientific thinking—quantum physics, chaos and complexity theory, and the latest brain science. This new paradigm moves toward contextualism; appreciating pluralism and diversity and accepting ambiguity, complexity, and paradox; qualities requiring quantum thinking and qualities significant to pastoral practice. Dialogue education fosters quantum thinking in a collaborative learning environment, such as a unit of CPE.

In these papers, I discuss my theological paradigm of dialogical encounter through the story of the Samaritan woman at the well; my use of the relational paradigm in understanding the growth of the self-in-relation; and my educational grounding in the new science paradigm, which includes quantum thinking and its

development in a collaborative dialogical educational environment. These paradigms and theoretical understandings inform my self-understanding and my practice as a supervisor at the edge.

NOTES

1.   In quantum theory, there is an edge between stability and instability, between the predictable and the unpredictable, between chaos and order. At this edge, the chaotic system is open and adapting to change; it exhibits structure that is responsive; the system is self-organizing. This edge is not a cliff, but it is a border where self-organizing occurs from the meeting of the stable and instable. An example: Look at a stream. Upstream where the water is deep and flows smoothly, an ordered system exists. Downstream, where there is white water, chaos exists. In between, there is a section where the flowing water meets rocks or twigs and forms whirlpools. Here the system is poised between order and chaos, between being in control and out of control. The patterns of the whirlpools evolve in dialogue with the environment while also maintaining a recognizable whirlpool pattern. Danah Zohar, *Rewiring the Corporate Brain: Using the New Science to Rethink How We Structure and Lead Organizations* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 1997), 76-77.

2.   Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (N.Y.: Scribner, 1970).

Personal Introduction

Connie M. Bonnor

My journey in writing my position papers and my process of formation as a supervisor continues to be a "quantum experience." I make steps forward and sideways and back. I stall; I ponder; I experience leaps; I have "aha" moments. For me, the joys of such moments—of meeting God in the encounters with students, peers, supervisors, readings, and myself, all living alongside the struggles, anguish, and hard work—are life giving.

I am a 45-year-old female Caucasian Lutheran pastor and former oncology nurse. I grew up near Chicago in a single-parent working-class family with one younger sister. Living on the edge of town, coming from a broken home, surviving in the midst of a chaotic, alcoholic family, I felt "un-precious." I longed to feel understood and supported and longed for accompaniment and guidance amidst the turbulence of life. These longings motivated me at school, work, and church. I worked hard, yet felt unworthy to answer a call to ministry. Detouring into nursing, these longings translated into a focus on patient education and spiritual care. I sought answers and connections. Achievement did not assuage my feelings of worthlessness.

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Through a dialogical encounter with one of my peers in my first unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE), I experienced the graceful acceptance of God. In our dialogue, in her listening, in her being present, in her accepting my story and me, God was manifest between us. Resonating with Buber, this was an I-Thou encounter.[1] Through that encounter, I experienced myself as precious, having inherent value as a child of God. Similarly, a diamond's inherent worth remains whether it falls into the trash, is stolen, or is displayed in an exquisite pendant.

Profoundly affected by that encounter, I began to participate in my own life, in my own faith journey, in new ways. I discerned family rules of "don't talk, don't feel, don't trust" and "don't tell" that were impeding my voice and sense of self. My journey to uncover the secrets that those rules protected and to find my voice took place within significant relationships within my church and seminary communities, as well as in therapy and spiritual direction. Living into my call to ministry, other significant relationships changed or ended. I divorced, remarried, and divorced again. Since my ordination, I have served as a chaplain in a psychiatric department, as a palliative care program coordinator, and now as a CPE supervisory candidate.

My call to supervision comes out of my longings for answers and connections amidst turmoil and chaos, my transformative experience as a CPE student, my experiences of the life-giving nature of dialogical encounter, my love of theological reflection and pastoral care, my vision that mutual and collaborative community is the arena in which individual growth and development are fostered and God is made manifest, and my desire to share this with others. My Lutheran theology in dialogue with Scripture, relational psychology, and quantum theory inform my supervisory practice. As a supervisor facilitating the CPE educational process, I serve as mentor to my students, meeting them where they are, challenging and accompanying them as we learn together. For me, it is a blessing to encounter God in the process. It is a journey of faith to trust that God is with us, manifest and hidden, as life unfolds at the edge.

NOTES

1.   Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (N.Y.: Scribner, 1970).

Dialogical Encounter "At the Edge":
God Hidden and Manifest

Connie M. Bonnor

Being present, listening to the reality of another's situation amidst the complexities of life, engaging in dialogical encounter is the pastoral work of accompaniment "at the edge."[1] It is the pastoral work that I love. In supervising, I engage in dialogical encounters with my students as they develop as pastoral caregivers capable of being present. My supervisory practice is grounded theologically on a dynamic process of dialogue with my Lutheran tradition, Scripture, and theologians such as Buber, Heyward, and Lundblad. Informed by the Christian understanding of "God with us," Emmanuel, I seek to embody that presence to my students. Buber furthers my understanding of 'God with us' in his descriptions of the I-Thou encounter, of God in the between. Heyward challenges me to embody God's love and justice in relationship, and Lundblad deepens my understanding of grace.[2] In this paper, I discuss my theological paradigm of dialogical encounter through the story of the Samaritan woman meeting Jesus at the well, a story that exemplifies a dialogical encounter in which God became present in the between. It serves as a metaphor for my story and as a paradigm for my theological thinking about supervision.

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In the Gospel of John, a Samaritan woman comes to the well at the heat of the day.[3] She is alienated and alone, on the periphery of the village, at the edge. At the well, Jesus sits tired and alone. Jesus speaks to her—breaking social convention. His request for a drink traverses the divide between them of gender, culture, religion, and circumstance. Surprised, she both backs away and engages. "How is it you ask me?" He further intrigues her, suggesting he has "living water" for the asking. The conversation moves to the heart of her dilemma—her shame of being widowed or divorced by five husbands and now kept by a man who will not marry her. Her circumstances render her judged as Godforsaken by her community and herself. Jesus, however, treats her not as Godforsaken but as significant. He accepts her. He engages her in discussion of religious matters. As her truth was revealed in their encounter, he reveals his truth to her. He reveals himself as "I am," Messiah of God in her midst. God is present. Through their dialogical encounter, she experiences God's presence and power in her life in new ways.

In her new relatedness to God, she gains a new sense of self, a self no longer ashamed and no longer judged as Godforsaken. She can look people in the eye and talk with them. She invites members of her community to "Come and see"; she engages them "He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" She traverses the divide and invites them to encounter Jesus themselves. And some do. Members of her community meet Jesus, opening them to the possibility of following his lead to accept one another in new ways, to shatter the conventional assumptions, to build an inclusive community, to treat one another as precious in God's eyes in all circumstances. These new ways complicate life. Everyone had known how to act toward a Godforsaken woman. What would it mean to be a community that included the Godforsaken? How would they move into such an open and complicated future? They found themselves at the edge, between the known and the unknown.

Her Story as Metaphor for my Story

In my first unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE), I encountered God in a way that profoundly changed me. My sense of myself changed from that of "unprecious" victim of circumstance to "precious" participant in life. As a nurse, I

began the unit wanting to become a chaplain. I discovered my fear of being exposed for "who I am." The "who I am" was burdened by the shame of family secrets that fostered loneliness and alienation. Three secrets came to light during that unit: the alcoholism of my parents, the memory of a date rape at seventeen, and the troubled nature of my marriage. As I revealed and acknowledged these secrets, I experienced being known and loved, accepted by my peers and supervisor. Their acceptance mediated God's acceptance and brought healing to my shame.

As I experienced healing, I was able to participate more fully in our life together. Being known and loved by God through them, my capacity for relatedness increased. I began to grow as a wounded healer, to face needed changes and attend to my recovery.[4] My ability to be present and accompany others increased. During that first CPE unit, my call to chaplaincy deepened. I responded to that call, persevering through many changes. I changed careers, attended seminary, divorced, and became a chaplain. As I had been accompanied, I seek to accompany, as a chaplain and as a supervisor.

Her Story as Paradigm for my Theology

The story of the woman at the well provides a paradigm for my serving as a supervisor. Jesus took initiative; he met her at the edge of her community where she lived; he engaged her in dialogue. He spoke truth; he extended acceptance. She participated. Having met God in this dialogical encounter, she initiates dialogue with people in her village. In those dialogical encounters, there is possibility for God's presence to become manifest; there is possibility for God's presence to remain hidden. As I supervise, I seek to follow Jesus' example as risk-taker, truth-teller, bearer of grace, and partner in dialogue. Resonating with her, I seek to engage others in dialogical encounters, trusting God is in the process, both manifest and hidden.

Engaging as a partner in the dialogue with students at the edge of what is known and unknown, I attend to risk-taking, truth-telling, grace-bearing and community-building. This work is founded upon certain theological constructs: God's presence, hidden and manifest, is a reality as life is lived at the edge; dialogical encounter is a means of experiencing God's presence, grace, and truth;

God risks in extending love and grace, which reveal human preciousness and sinfulness; and God creates people as relational and calls them into community.

PARTNER IN DIALOGUE

At the well, Jesus requests the Samaritan woman's help. By making a request, the one opening the relationship both initiates dialogue and implies worth. At the outset, CPE begins with a request for the student to visit patients. The student's reply echoes that of the Samaritan woman, "How is it you ask me?" The student asks the patient, "Help me to know you, today, in this place." The patient replies, "How is it you ask me? You have the chart. You have special connections to God and to the hospital." I value the students I encounter. This worth is based on my belief that persons are precious in God's eyes and created to be in relationship.[5]

On this point, the inherent worth of persons, I argue with my tradition. Lutheran theology sees persons as *Simul iustus et peccator*, simultaneously just-ified and sinner in God's eyes.[6] Both conditions, being justified and being a sinner, imply inherent worthlessness, inherent taint. Through my experience of God's grace, my reading of Scripture, Christ's actions of love toward those assumed to be Godforsaken, and my comprehension of the Lutheran understandings of grace and Gospel, I conclude that each person is precious, each has inherent worth that sin cannot destroy.

Valuing my students, I recognize each of us contributes to the dialogue. Our dialogue is an endeavor of mutuality. It is about mutual listening and responding, fostering an I-Thou relationship; imagining the real of the other.[7] It is conversation that seeks understanding of the world of the other and seeks to cross the divides that make people strangers to one another. Mutual does not mean same, rather that each significantly contributes to the relationship, to what is in-between. For example, I bring knowledge of pastoral care competencies, familiarity with the CPE process, and experience as a chaplain. The students bring their theology, their previous ex-perience, their relationship with God, and their aspirations. Engaging in dialogue, our horizons expand. One of my Jewish students taught me about the *Shekenah* of God. He shared that God is present as *Shekenah* over the heads of two who gather and study Torah, over two who gather and study in supervision, and over the head of the bed of the person who is sick. A Buddhist student shared her journey in

coming to terms with the reality of suffering and the way that reality calls her to be present in the moment.

My students expand my horizons. Sometimes I experience God in the process as the students share their questions, their beliefs, their intentions, and their stories of pastoral encounters. At those times, I find myself on holy ground. Sometimes I recognize it in the moment, sometimes in hindsight, and sometimes others name it. Each of us has our own experience of being in the presence of the Holy. As one names it, the other can respond.

Dialogue is a process of valuing the other and the other's story. The book of Ruth illustrates God's working in an ordinary life. The pastoral task is to listen to others' stories and collaborate in the story-making by encouraging the tellers to speak their truth, to pay attention to the overlooked realities of God's hidden ways, and to speak up for what is wanted or needed.[8] Telling the story and being heard promotes transformation and the development of a coherent sense of self.[9] I listen and collaborate with the students in the telling of their stories and uncovering God's hiddeness as they speak of their realities. They listen to the patients' stories, uncover God's hiddeness, and encourage the speaking of their realities. In the telling and in the listening, true meeting can occur. God is present, hidden or revealed, in the between.

RISK-TAKING

Risk-taking occurred at the well; both Jesus and the Samaritan woman risked in their meeting. Risk-taking occurs in CPE. Boundaries of polite conversation and social propriety are crossed. Students practice putting thoughts and feelings into words. They deal with life issues, e.g., death, dying, uncertainty, fear, loneliness, ambiguity, ambivalence, and paradox. Accompanying patients and advocating for them involves risk. Trying out their pastoral authority involves risk. Offering support and critique to peers involves risk. Jesus risked, not for the sake of risking. Jesus risked in embodying God's love and justice toward a woman on the margins. Following Jesus' example, I strive to embody God's love and justice toward students and toward patients, when it comes easily and when it involves risk in relationship.[10]

Engaging in dialogue, the Samaritan woman met truth and grace in Jesus. Having her reality unveiled and her self accepted brought a freedom she had not known before. Truth-telling is difficult and potentially freeing work. Truth is a realistic appraisal of the dynamics of the situation and the person involved. Grace is the manifestation of valuing the person who is in the situation. Without truth, grace is unnecessary. Without grace, truth is destructive.[11] Grace brings forgiveness and reconciliation, acceptance and inclusion, or recognition and accompaniment. Grace brings what is needed to the particulars of a situation whether the person has sinned, has been sinned against, or is in bondage to the powers of sin and death.[12] As supervisor, I can serve as a channel of grace; so, too, the students.[13] In group, we assess the ways the students bring grace and truth to the patients and to one another. Did the student recognize the patient's confession? Did the student minimize the confession? Speak words of forgiveness? Did the student bring acceptance to a patient burdened by shame? As we offer critique to one another, are the dynamics shaming or constructive? As we pay attention to the dynamics of our life together, each of us has opportunity to grow as a channel of grace and truth.

Jesus knew the Samaritan woman's experience of being labeled as God-forsaken, of assuming her suffering indicated God's judgment. Amidst her difficult circumstances Jesus affirmed her reality, confirmed her worth, and extended compassion. She experienced grace, truth, and compassion—that she could then extend to others—in their encounter. Marginalized, she had known the power of evil in her community, of being labeled as Godforsaken in the midst of her suffering. Jesus countered this understanding she and her community had of Godforsakeness. Suffering did not mean Godforsaken or condemned by God. In his encounter with her, he embodied God's presence, revealing that he, God's Messiah, cared about the one suffering. He revealed that she was not Godforsaken.

Luther's theology of the cross states that, in the cross event, God is both hidden and revealed.[14] Through the cross event, God demonstrates that God knows suffering, is definitely present in suffering, and calls God's people to be with those who suffer, to accompany in grace, truth, and compassion.[15] Suffering does not indicate Godforsakeness. Bringing truth and grace, Jesus saw the woman differently than she saw herself. He held up a mirror to her so that she could see herself as he did. Following this example, the students and I serve as mirrors to one another.

Serving as mirror, conveying truth and grace, can mediate God's presence. Encountering the mirror, each of us has the choice to see or not to see.

Luther's theology of the cross maintains that through the cross event God demonstrates that God is present even when hidden. When God is experienced as hidden, dialogue can include lament or argument. Repeatedly in the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures people call, plead, yell, invoke, and chastise God. The Psalms, Job, Lamentations, the prophets, Jesus, and so forth, give many examples of people pouring out themselves to God. In the book of Job, God responds to Job; Job responds to God.[16] They dialogue; they argue. Each of them asks questions and listens. They each want the other to understand their experience. They struggle. In the struggling, Job experiences a deep connection to God and ultimately surrenders to the largess that is God, that is beyond words. The relationship transcends Job's suffering; it does not mitigate nor dismiss it.

At the well, the Samaritan woman met God in an encounter with a stranger. In the Christian tradition, Jesus identifies with the one receiving care, the stranger, the prisoner, the patient.[17] Jesus also inspires and accompanies the one who gives care.[18] God is in the process. Students pay attention to their awareness of God's presence in their giving and receiving care. They look at what gets in their way, makes it hard to visit this patient, and was significant in this visit. Together we assess their talents, abilities, and growing edges.

COMMUNITY-BUILDING

After her encounter with Jesus, the woman was empowered to participate in her community in new ways. God creates people as relational and calls them into community. In the CPE unit, a group of strangers assembles and works to build a learning community. My aim is to provide a safe enough place for them to experience, reflect, struggle, and emerge. As one student remarked, "CPE was a place, a container for my struggles, my struggles with myself and with God." The metaphor of container surfaced again when another student shared a text from the Talmud. It was a story of a group of rabbis who sought to comfort a grief-stricken colleague at the death of his friend. The text says, "The Rabbis had grace on him." The Hebrew word used can be translated "grace," "holding space," "being with or providing the holding space." The Hebrew root for this word "grace" is the same as

that for "womb" (*rahamim*), a flexible, expansive holding place. As supervisor, I aim to facilitate such a space so that the students emerge from the unit better able to provide a hospitable space for those to whom they minister.

As the Samaritan woman experienced, community life can be difficult, even destructive. In the group life in CPE, I am called to watch for destructive dynamics and to intervene, to serve as a focus for aggression, to establish a safe environment where difficult feelings can be expressed rather than acted out.[19] For me, the way I tolerate, acknowledge, and work with the students' negativity, anger, rage, and frustration is that I know "it" is bigger than me, that I am not personally responsible for all of it, and that working with it can be life-giving. I also remind myself that God is bigger than the situation and is with us in it.

Jesus and the Samaritan woman discussed theology; so too, theological dialogue takes place in the group. Students come to CPE with the theological foundations they have learned and received from their traditions and their personal study. In CPE, that "received" theology enters into dialogue with experiences encountered in their clinical work. Via this process of dialogue, an operational theology forms. This is difficult work. I trust God is large enough to hold their struggles, even as they may experience a deep crevice between themselves and God.[20]

God was with the woman at the well, at first hidden, then manifest. Supervising, I trust God is with us, both hidden and manifest, as we engage in dialogical encounters and increase our capacity for the pastoral work of accompaniment.

NOTES

1. For a definition of this phrase, see the preface to this set of articles, beginning on page 139.

2. Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (New York: Scribner, 1970); Carter Heyward, *Touching Our Strength: The Erotic as Power and the Love of God* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1989); and Barbara K. Lundblad, *Transforming the Stone: Preaching through Resistance to Change* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2001).

3. John 4:3-30, 39-42 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV).

4.   Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Wounded Healer* (Garden City, N.Y.: Image Books, 1979), 88.

5.   Isa. 43:4; Gen. 2:18 NRSV.

6.   Carl E. Braaten and Robert W. Jenson, eds., *Christian Dogmatics*, vol. 1 and vol. 2 (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 406 *ff.*

7.   Buber, *I and Thou*. "'Imagining the real' as Buber ... calls this event ... is a bold swinging into the other that demands the most intense action of one's being in order to make the other present in his wholeness, unit and uniqueness." Maurice Friedman, *The Healing Dialogue in Psychotherapy* (N.Y.: Jason Aronson, 1985), 4; see also 1-6, 133 *ff*; Buber uses the phrase in: Martin Buber, Ronald Smith, trans., and Maurice Friedman, ed., *The Knowledge of Man: A Philosophy of the Interhuman* (N.Y.: Harpercollins, 1966).

8.   Eugene H. Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones for Pastoral Work* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans,1980).

9.   We never know how good we can look, how delightful we can feel, or how strong we can be until we hear ourselves addressed in love by God or by the one who represents God's love to us. Peterson, *Five Smooth Stones*, 65.

10.   Heyward, *Touching Our Strength*.

11.   William B. Oglesby, Jr., "Implications of Anthropology for Pastoral Care and Counseling," *Interpretation* 33 (1979): 164.

12.   David W. Augsburger, chapter 4, "Inner Controls, Outer Controls, Balanced Controls: A Theology of Grace," in *Pastoral Counseling Across Cultures* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1986), 140. Augsburger delineates guilt, anxiety, and shame and their relationship to grace. He writes: "Whether one's theology has stressed the anxiety-punishment-release motif of grace or the shame-alienation-reconciliation model or the guilt-condemnation-forgiveness pattern, grace offers acceptance, inclusion, forgiveness as gift." He differentiates between guilt and shame in such a way that envisions the inbreaking of God's grace into each situation in similar but different ways. Guilt develops in relationship to social conformity and results when norms are thwarted. Shame is linked to individual perception of self in relation to others—shame is culturally deter-mined and causes one to experience alienation from one's community. When dealing with shame, the goal of the pastoral encounter is to aid the individual in reframing an inner sense of self and self-worth. God's graceful acceptance of the person is the antidote to shame. It brings healing so

feelings of self-worth grow. He also emphasizes that all therapeutic interventions stem from grace even if it is not named as such. In dealing with shame, the pastoral caregiver's acceptance can symbolize God's acceptance.

13.   Lundblad, *Transforming the Stone*.

14.   Luther, *Heidleberg Disputation*, 1518 theses 21; see Jaroslav Pelikan, Helmut T. Lehmann, eds., *Luther's Works on CD-Rom* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 2002).

15.   The theology of the cross reveals a God who suffers rather than exerts power over; it reveals a God who loves those God has created; it reveals a God who intends for the Kingdom to be ruled by love not coercive power; it reveals a God who is hidden in weakness; it reveals a God who names suffering what it is. It reveals a God who does not abandon us to suffering, that God is not punishing and demonstrating judgement through suffering, and that God suffers in love for God's creations and creatures. The cross reveals stuff about God; it does not reveal that suffering is good or salvific or okay or to be desired. See also Braaten and Jenson, *Christian Dogmatics*, vol 2, 47 *ff*.

16.   Rabbi Rami Shapiro, "This Too Shall Pass: Suffering and the Wisdom of Ecclesiastes and Job," workshop presented at the Association of Professional Chaplains Conference, March 11, 2002, Cincinnati, Ohio, APC-02-2.7, audiocassette; to order from the APC web site, access <www.professionalchaplains.org/professional-chaplain-services-store-audio-video.htm> and click on the 2002 meeting (accessed March 2004). In the English translation of the interchange between Job and God, words such as "spoke" and "answered" are used. In the Hebrew, the same word is used throughout. It means "responds." Job and God respond to one another. This connotes mutuality and relationship between the two. The two dialogue with one another. As they dialogue, they wrestle and grow closer to one another. Eventually words are left behind and silence ensues. See Job 42:1-6 NSRV: "Job then responded to Adonai: 'I knew that You can do everything, and that nothing can impede [Your] purpose ... Who is it that would deny [Your] counsel without knowledge? Therefore I declared, yet, I understood nothing. It is beyond me. I shall not know! Listen please and I will speak; I will ask You, and You will inform me. I had heard of You from hearsay, but now my eye has beheld You! Therefore I renounce speech and surrender to dust and ashes.'" Rabbi Shapiro suggests that here Job has come to a place of intimacy with God that is beyond words; that rests in silence. Job enters the silence and surrenders, becoming a part of all, experiencing being valued in the relationship, and giving up his attachment to his previous expectations and living with what is. In this place of increased intimacy, there is a timelessness and a connection that transcends the suffering.

17.   Matt. 25:34 *ff* NSRV.

18.   Matt. 28:20, Luke 10:37, and John 14:12,16 NSRV.

19.　Yvonne M. Agazarian, "The Phases of Group Development and the Systems-Centered Group," in *Ring of Fire: Primitive Affects and Object Relations in Group Psychtherapy*, eds., Victor L. Schermer and Malcolm Pines (London: Routledge, Chapman, and Hall, 1994), 36-85.

20.　Rom. 8:38 NRSV.

Dialogical Encounter "At the Edge": Self-in-Relationship

Connie M. Bonnor

A unit of clinical pastoral education (CPE) occurs "at the edge," a dynamic space between what is known and unknown, where students have opportunity to develop a pastoral caregiver self and increase their capacities to be present in dialogical encounters with patients and one another.[1] This growth and development occurs within relationships with patients, peers, and supervisor. Recognizing this, each student needs to grow curious about the "self-in-relation," to become increasingly aware of their relational patterns, their ability to extend empathy, and their competency in executing pastoral care skills.

Relational psychology and self-psychology provide insight into the dynamics of growth and development of the "self" from infancy to adulthood amidst relational interplay. Their vantage points are somewhat different. In relational psychology, it is the self-in-relation that emerges amidst relationships; in self-psychology, it is the autonomous self that emerges out of relationships. In a complementary way, both inform my supervisory practice.

Relational psychology provides insight into students' development of relational and empathic capacities (pastoral identity). Self-psychology provides

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insight into their development of ambitions, ideals, skills, and talents (pastoral authority and pastoral skills). Relational psychology also provides a frame for teaching my students about empathy, interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships, and group dynamics.

In this paper, I discuss insights gleaned regarding pastoral formation from relational and self-psychology. First I address the development of the self-in-relation and "the cohesive self," then, empathy in supervision, and lastly, the supervisory relational matrix.

DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF-IN-RELATION

Relational psychology suggests a paradigm shift from a focus on the development of the autonomous self to the development of the self-in-relation. Major theorists in this area are Jordan, Miller, Stiver, and Surrey, in conjunction with others at the Stone Center. According to their work, growth and development occur for each of us within relationships, as children and as adults. Their work informs my work with students who are adults experiencing growth and development as pastoral caregivers.[2]

The relational approach to development maintains that the deepest sense of one's being is formed through making connection with others and experiencing the relational movement in those connections.[3] In the midst of healthy, responsive connections that move toward increased mutuality, a clear sense of a self-in-relation emerges. From the beginning, the infant desires to make interpersonal connections and to move in those connections toward mutual empathy and empowerment.[4] "Mutual" means each participant is responding in the present moment to the extent possible; "mutual" does not mean "same." Infants respond and seek response. The dynamic interplay of participation and connection in relationship is both the source and goal of development, not gratification.[5] Connection, an interaction between two or more people in which each person is responsive to the thoughts and feelings of the other and gains clarity about personal thoughts and feelings, enlarges the participants and the relationship. In connection, people see their personal impact on others. This fosters a sense of worth, of purpose and empowerment.[6] This informs my vision of supervision. The connections and participation that students experience amidst the matrix of relationships between

patients, peers, staff, and supervisor foster a sense of pastoral identity—a sense of worth and of purpose and empowerment as pastoral caregivers.

According to relational theory, growth-fostering relationships make room for difficult, painful, and destructive feelings, and misperceptions and misunderstandings. Experiencing acceptance of difficult thoughts and feelings and receiving an empathic response, a person can often move into action, rather than feel immobilized, powerless, and ineffective.[7] In supervision, I strive to enact mutuality in relationships with the students and make room for their difficult thoughts and feelings. As our relationships enlarge, the students increase in their capacities for mutuality and empathy, as well as agency, in their pastoral relationships. They become increasingly able to be present to the difficult thoughts and feelings of patients and staff.

Engaging in relationships is activity at the edge between me and the "not me," where self-organization occurs in response to a sense of self and the situations encountered. The self works not to extricate from relationships; rather the self works to find ways to participate,[8] to grow and change within relationships, to come to a greater clarity about self and other. Through engaging in relationships of all sorts, from growth fostering to traumatic, a person acquires a "thinking-feeling" understanding of one's self in relation with others. If there have been significant experiences in growth-fostering relationships, in making healthy connections, a person grows a sense of self-in-relation that can navigate participation in a variety of relationships and situations. The person grows to be an active initiator and responder in life. If there have been significant experiences of disconnection the person grows a sense of self-in-relation that is less sure and less clear.[9] The formed thinking-feeling self-understanding establishes a knowledge base for action and inaction within relationships.[10] The students bring their thinking-feeling self-understandings to their pastoral relationships. I strive to establish a collaborative learning environment where students can explore with empathy and curiosity the thinking-feeling self and the actions that derive from their knowledge base.

For each of us, the actions derived from this knowledge base enact the basic relational paradox. This paradox states that during the course of one's life, in the desire to make connections, each person experiences disconnection, harm, or violations that lead to developing strategies to keep large parts of the self out of connection. In facing the yearning for connection, and in order to remain in the available relationships, the person develops strategies that keep more and more of the self out of the relationship. In short, in order to stay in connection, a person keeps parts of the self out of connection.[11] The strategies result in restricted and

distorted images of the possibilities within relationships, in constructing internal messages that disparage the self, and in a limited ability to act within connections and to know one's own thoughts and feelings.[12] Three main categories have been identified: emotional disengagement, including non-attention, preoccupation, withdrawal; role-playing or "performing"; and replication of familiar relational patterns from the past.[13] As students engage in pastoral relationships, their relational strategies surface with all their complexities.

As supervisor, I look for and honor the strategies being employed in their pastoral relationships with patients, peers, and supervisor. Examples of emotional disengagement can include: a student criticizing the lack of participation of another peer in interpersonal relations group (IPR) while not sharing her own thoughts or feelings (withdrawal); a student breaking a silence in IPR with a question that puts another center stage (preoccupation); a student switching the topic of conversation from the patient's fear of surgery to the patient's visitors the evening before (non-attention). An example of role-playing is when a student immediately offers to pray for the patient upon entering the room on a cold-call visit, to act as the "pro-fessional chaplain prayer-giver." An example of replication is when a student treats the patient like the student's child, mother, or father, enacting a family pattern with the patient. Often students alert me to the strategies that they themselves employ through their complaints about relationships with peers or patients. For example, one student was repeatedly agitated that his patients were not talking about substantive issues; in IPR, I observed that he often broke the silence with a question or comment that distracted the group rather than engaged it. As another example, a student complained that a peer was not contributing enough in verbatim sessions, and in IPR, I observed that the one complaining provided little input in verbatim sessions and IPR. The dynamics of the employed strategies can be explored empathically. I dialogue with students in a desire to understand their motives, hopes, and intentions, as well as their assessment of the outcome. Celebrating their intention to connect, we identify what enabled and what impeded its fruition.

My supervisory goal is to establish an environment conducive to growth-fostering relationships—relationships that are resilient in the face of disconnections and that are able to hold difficult feelings. In this environment, the students expand their capacities for relatedness, for empathy, and for being present in pastoral relationships with patients, peers, and colleagues.

Relational psychology informs my supervisory practice and is part of our curriculum. It assists my understanding of students as they develop their relational and empathic capacities as pastoral caregivers (their pastoral identity). Relational

psychology highlights the importance of extending empathy to students. Its limitations include: its relative newness and its foundational work focused on women's development—although more recent work explores its applicability to human development; an added limitation is that its vocabulary is in formation. My understanding of extending empathy as a supervisor is further informed by self-psychology. It guides my empathic responses as each student develops a cohesive, pastoral caregiver self, with ambitions, ideals, skills, and talents (their pastoral authority and pastoral skills).

Development of the "Cohesive Self"

Self-psychology, building on Kohut's work, understands the development of the infant into a mature person with a cohesive sense of self to occur in the context of the relationships with its caregivers.[14] The infant experiences the caregivers as an extension of self (selfobject), not as a separate entity. The infant responds to the mirroring, the allowed idealizations, and the twinship communicated by the care-givers who are attuned to the infant's emotional and physical well-being (selfobject functions) and begins to internalize these functions for the self when empathic failures are experienced. The child's coherent sense of self grows in response to both empathically attuned care and empathic failures.

Four different types of selfobject functions have been identified: the mirroring need, the idealizing need, the need for twinship, and the adversarial selfobject need.[15] The mirroring need is a need for acceptance and accurate appreciation. The idealization need is the need of the child to look up to, feel connected to, and be protected by a powerful, wise, calm, and admired caregiver. The child feels enhanced by the association. The twinship need is the need of the child to belong to someone like the child, to experience acceptability in being like an acceptable other. The adversarial selfobject need is the child's need to engage in confrontation with another that is benevolent and resilient,[16] learning that conflict can be worked through. The child, who is celebrated, confirmed, and engaged in caregiving relationships that tolerate confrontation and idealization, grows a coher-ent sense of self as the selfobject functions/responses are internalized (structur-alization).[17] The self develops ambitions out of the grandiosity that responds to mirroring, ideals out of the internalization of the idealized caregivers, and skills and talents out of the twinship connections. Early experiences in relationships establish

internalized patterns that inform present interactions within relationships. From infancy onward, the goal is for an embryonic sense of self to grow into a more complex sense of self. Experiencing significant empathic failures results in defects, distortions, and weaknesses in the internal structures that foster a fragmented, rather than cohesive, self. Through empathic relationships, the fragmented self restructures, growing into a cohesive self that is able to engage in healthy adult relationships (mature selfobject functions).[18]

Educationally, selfobject needs surface for the adult student engaging in the process of developing a pastoral caregiver self.[19] As supervisor, I assess and respond to the mirroring, idealizing, twinship, and adversarial selfobject needs of my students. The mirroring need of the student can be evidenced by unrealistic expectations, self-criticism, and intolerance of imperfection for oneself. I can respond by providing accurate celebration and confirmation of demonstrated skills, e.g., being concrete in commending the student on the prayer he spontaneously constructed at the bedside or admiring the student's use of her pastoral authority when she asked the patient's sons to step out and honor their father's request for time alone with the chaplain.

The idealization need of the student can be seen when a student regularly defers to the supervisor or sets the supervisor on a pedestal. In response, I am called to tolerate the idealizations of the student for a period of time as the student grows into competence; for example, I take care of those aspects of the program I need to, thereby engendering confidence and trust; I avoid self-deprecating comments or minimizing of my own actions when complimented by a student.

The twinship need of the student can be evidenced in voiced uncertainty or intense emotion after the first time the student is called to the bedside of a dying patient, intervenes with a family in crisis after a sudden death in the emergency room, or provides care to a person with a new diagnosis of a terminal illness. In response, the student needs twinship experiences with the supervisor and the peers. The student needs to share the experience and receive feedback and support that identify similarities between his feelings and experiences in pastoral care with those of others; for example, time is spent processing in individual supervision, in IPR, during a verbatim session, or informally in the office. The supervisor and peers normalize the experience, identify with the feelings, and share their own discomforts.

The adversarial need can arise early in the unit when a student provokes an argument with the supervisor that feels like a test: "Will you relate to me if I have this opinion?" Responding to the adversarial need, I accept diversity of opinion and

anger in the supervisory relationship and peer group and facilitate the communication of difficult feelings. As the supervisor, I invite the student to speak of disquiet in our relationship. For some, this is a new experience. Self-psychology is helpful in understanding my supervisory relationships with students, not the group dynamics. It focuses on individual, not mutual, experience of relationship—on what is received in relationship, not what is given.[20]

<center>SIGNIFICANCE OF EMPATHY IN SUPERVISION</center>

For Kohut, Buber,[21] and Jordan, empathy plays a significant role in human relatedness. Integrating their work with that of others, I conceptualize empathy as an ability that requires the complex integration of cognitive (thinking), affective (feeling), psychomotor and spiritual (compassion/anger) capacities in an effort to imagine the reality of the other.[22] Extending empathy fosters connection, opens relational possibilities in the face of the basic relational paradox, and incarnates God's presence. Extending empathy in the supervisory and peer relationships provides experiences of connection and mutuality. Dialogical encounter, being present and listening to the reality of another, is a way to extend empathy. The paradox of empathy is that in the joining process of listening to the truth of the other, the other is experienced as more differentiated and one's response can be specific and attuned to the other's need.[23] Experiencing acceptance and accompaniment, students are able to bring more of their selves to supervision to look at and reflect upon, and they will grow in their capacity to extend empathy to patients.

In supervision, we look at the student's ability to extend empathy. Some students get lost in the feelings of the patient and need to further develop their cognitive and psychomotor empathic capacities, e.g., focus on their sense of self-in-relation, increase their awareness of their own thoughts and feelings, and increase their competency in implementing pastoral skills. Other students have difficulty resonating with the affect of the patient and need to grow their affective and spiritual capacities, e.g., gain experience in connecting with their own feelings as they engage with others; explore their understanding and experience of God's compassion.

THE SUPERVISORY RELATIONAL MATRIX

I supervise within a matrix of relationships: I am in relationship with each student, with the entire peer group, with my own peer group, with my supervisors, and with the institutions in which we are situated.[24] Informed by a supervisory-matrix-centered relational model of supervision,[25] I focus on the supervisory dyad in the midst of the greater matrix. In this dyad, I extend empathy to my students. I engage with them in dialogical encounters to explore their experience of providing pastoral care. I work to see from their side the wisdom of their strategies and the meanings they make of their encounters with patients, with peers, and with me.

In our supervisory relationship, both the student and I have impact on one another. Both of us are called to be present and to participate. Part of my responsibility is to make room for the difficult thoughts and feelings in our relationship. Experiencing acceptance and empathy here, the students can increase their sense of agency as pastoral caregivers and increase their capacity to accept the difficult thoughts and feelings of patients and peers. Making connections with peers that include a spectrum of thoughts and feelings fosters a collaborative learning environment.

The collaborative learning environment of CPE is intended to develop the capacity of the pastoral caregiver to participate in complex relationships, to become more self-aware and self-observant because relationship is the medium for providing pastoral care. This collaborative learning environment, the learning process, and the supervisory alliance will be discussed in the education position paper.

NOTES

1.   For a definition of "at the edge," see the preface to this set of articles, beginning on page 139.

2.   Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, and Janet L. Surrey, *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center* (N.Y.: Guilford Press, 1991); Judith V. Jordan, ed., *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center* (N.Y.: Guilford Press, 1997); Jean Baker Miller and Irene Pierce Stiver, *The Healing Connection: How Women Form Relationships in Therapy and Life* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1997).

3.   Jordan, *Women's Growth in Diversity*, 15.

4.   Jordan, *Women's Growth in Diversity*; Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*.

5.   Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 22.

6.   Jordan, *Women's Growth in Diversity*; Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 35.

7.   Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 46.

8.   Mary Gail Frawley-O'Dea and Joan E. Sarnat, *The Supervisory Relationship: A Contemporary Psychodynamic Approach* (N.Y.: Guilford Press, 2001), 50 *ff*.

9.   "Disconnection" means encounters that lack mutual empathy and empowerment where a break in connection is accompanied by a feeling of being cut off from the other(s); Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 50 *ff*.

10.   Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 36.

11.   Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 82 *ff*; Nicolina M. Fedele, "Relationships in Groups: Connection, Resonance, and Paradox," *Work in Progress* No. 69 (Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, 1994), 2.

12.   In other theories, these are classified as resistances or defenses.

13.   Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 107 *ff*.

14.   Ronald R. Lee and J. Colby Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut: A Textbook of Self Psychology* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1991); Heinz Kohut, *The Restoration of the Self* (N.Y.: International Universities Press, 1977); Maurice Friedman, *The Healing Dialogue in Psychotherapy* (N.Y.: Jason Aronson, 1985).

15.   Maria C. Gilbert and Kenneth Evans, *Psychotherapy Supervision: An Integrative Approach to Psychotherapy Supervision* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Open University Press, 2000), 64-65.

16.   Ibid.

17.   Lee and Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut*, 238 *ff*; the authors discuss the development of the term "structuralization," which replaces Kohut's phrase "transmuted internalizations." Structuralization is a process of internally building "structures of experience," which inform the sense of self in relation to other persons and the world.

18.   Kohut, *Restoration of the Self*. Lee and Martin, *Psychotherapy after Kohut*, 230-1; through a therapeutic relationship new internal structures can develop so that present relationships are less determined by earlier patterns; the person develops "a network of healthy adult relationships that provide an ongoing 'empathic matrix' ... after therapy."

19.   Gilbert and Evans, *Psychotherapy Supervision*.

20.   Thus, self-psychology is not very useful in understanding group dynamics because another person is seen primarily as an object who fills functions and serves needs, not as a co-participant in the relationship. According to Jordan, "any system that emphasizes the ascendancy of individual desire as the legitimate basis for definition of self and interpersonal relationship is fraught with the possibility of creating violent relationships based on competition of need and the necessity for establishing hierarchies of dominance, entitlement, and power." (Judith V. Jordan, "Clarity in Connection: Empathic Knowing, Desire, and Sexuality," in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center* (1987; chapter reprinted, N.Y.: Guilford Press, 1997), 50-73.) More recent developments in self-psychology by the intersubjectivists are working to address relational dynamics. For example, see William DeLong, "From Object to Subject: Pastoral Supervision as an Intersubjective Activity," *Journal of Pastoral Care and Counseling* 56, no. 1 (2002): 51-61; Donna M. Orange, George E. Atwood, and Robert D. Stolorow, *Working Intersubjectively: Contextualism in Psychoanalytic Practice* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Analytic Press, 1997).

21.   Friedman, *Healing Dialogue*.

22.   Affective: Miller and Stiver, *Healing Connection*, 42-43; spiritual: Andrew Purves, *The Search for Compassion: Spirituality and Ministry* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1989). Cognitive capacities entail ability to know one's own thoughts and feelings, to observe and reflect on one's relational patterns, and to know about intrapersonal and interpersonal dynamics (e.g., age associated capabilities, dynamics of grief and loss, crisis intervention strategies, and so forth). Affective capacities include having access to one's feelings and the ability to respond out of them. Psychomotor capacities include knowing possible options in ways of responding to and caring for others (e.g., in pastoral care, facilitating prayer at the bedside, recognizing the need for privacy for a family and facilitating it, or initiating referrals to other healthcare professionals). Spiritual capacities encompass compassion and anger in response to one in need as an extension of God's care. Compassion is a gut-wrenching inner recognition of another's suffering that moves one to respond and to remain open to the one suffering. Anger is a gut-wrenching inner recognition of another's suffering that moves one to distance the self from pain of the other or to respond against the cause of the suffering with force. For example, in the hospital, compassion can be expressed in caring for a patient with cancer whose own behavior contributed to the illness, sitting at the bedside with a person whose injuries are difficult to look at, or visiting a patient admitted to the detoxification unit who has been convicted of rape. Anger can be expressed by

cutting off from a patient, by serving as an advocate for the patient, or by verbally joining the patient in their outrage.

23.   Judith V. Jordan, "Empathy and Self-Boundaries," in *Women's Growth in Connection: Writings from the Stone Center*, eds. Judith V. Jordan, Alexandra G. Kaplan, Jean Baker Miller, Irene P. Stiver, Janet L. Surrey (N.Y.: Guilford Press, 1991), 73.

24.   Frawley-O'Dea and Sarnat, *Supervisory Relationship*, 41 *ff*.

25.   Ibid.

Dialogical Encounter "At the Edge":
Education as Collaborative Inquiry

Connie M. Bonnor

My educational foundation for my supervisory practice is informed by a paradigm that has emerged from new scientific thinking—quantum physics, chaos and complexity theories, and the latest brain science. The more I grow in understanding the philosophical basis of this scientific thinking and this new paradigm, the more I feel grounded in my work. Since the 1600s, Newtonian physics shaped Western culture. The resulting Newtonian paradigm is deterministic, reductionistic, and atomistic. It emphasizes objectivity, expertise, reason, laws of cause and effect, and absolute truth. This new paradigm moves from absolute truth to contextualism, from simplicity toward accepting complexity, and from certainty toward appreciating pluralism and diversity and accepting ambiguity and paradox.[1] This paradigm does not replace the old, but rather incorporates it.

"At the edge" between the chaos of all that could possibly be known and all that is known, clinical pastoral education (CPE) is a collaborative educational endeavor.[2] Collaborative learning requires an environment structured so that learn-

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ing can emerge and where the group can tap into its own collective wisdom and knowledge that is larger than the sum of its members.[3] As knowledge, understanding, and learning emerge, the group and the individuals grow.

Philosophical foundations of my supervisory practice include the following: (1) at-the-edge recognizable responsive patterns emerge as situations are encountered; (2) each participant, each element of the curriculum, and each experience is interrelated with every other part; (3) quantum thinking fosters an increased capacity for recognizing responsive patterns and paradoxes that enable living with diversity and complexity. Because pastoral caregiving is relational, its practitioners need to utilize quantum thinking and need to be able to extend empathy. Therefore, its educational program needs to attend to the growth and development of quantum thinking and a capacity for empathy. Dialogue education does both in a collaborative learning environment, such as a unit of CPE. In the CPE unit, as supervisor, I set the frame and mentor within the process, trusting God is with us. In this paper, I discuss quantum thinking, dialogue education, supervisor as mentor, and collaborative learning.

QUANTUM THINKING AND LEARNING

Extrapolating from quantum physics, it is hypothesized that quantum structures in the brain produce quantum thinking. In the brain, multiple synchronistic oscillations occur at once in multiple locations and self-organize into creative, intuitive, insightful thoughts, and questions. Quantum thinking integrates, unifies, and self-organizes, constructing a sense of meaning and being in the midst of multiple stimuli. Quantum thinking looks at what isn't fitting and explores new possibilities through reflecting, questioning, constructing, creating, observing, believing, and envisioning.

Quantum thinking builds on my understanding of cognitive development as described by Piaget. Through studying how children think, Piaget discerned the cognitive process of adaptation. A person assimilates (builds on what is known and brings new information into alignment with previous information) and accommodates (engages new experience to construct new information and make it available) in a dynamic, shifting process of equilibration when adapting in the face of new challenges.[4] Similarly, quantum thinking is a process of adapting to new challenges. As new and complex experiences are encountered, a person engages in

intrapersonal and/or interpersonal dialogue; the brain finds new patterns of organization, constructs new knowledge, and comes to new ways of understanding. The process of dialogue builds on past learning, is assisted by sequencing of new material, and yet is not linear. It is a process of steps, stalls, and leaps; questions, wondering, and testing. New neurological tracts are laid and incorporated; learning occurs. Piaget's model of adaptation and the model of quantum thinking help me understand learning and the interactive, changing dynamic qualities of relational development.[5] This compatibility between Piaget's model of adaptation, quantum thinking, and a relational model of development informs my understanding of my students as persons and as learners and informs my understanding of the collaborative learning community that we create.

Learning and providing pastoral care uses quantum thinking in addition to serial and associative thinking. Responding with creativity, intuition, and insight to the patient; honoring the uniqueness of the person; recognizing identifiable patterns regarding dealing with illness, family dynamics, grief, loss, crisis, and so forth; reflecting on one's own pastoral practice; engaging in theological reflection; attending to the spiritual dimensions of self or patients—all these require quantum thinking.[6] The clinical method fosters it. First-hand experience alone does not necessarily generate new understanding. Collaborative and individual reflections on the experience are needed. Through reflection, a student's capacity for complexity in work grows. Through collaborative reflection and dialogue, meetings may occur that embody the presence of God, in the between, in I-Thou encounters.[7]

DIALOGUE EDUCATION

Dialogue is the tool for developing quantum thinking.[8] Standing at the edge between the known and the unknown, the students and I engage in educational dialogue about pastoral care. I serve as facilitator and mentor in the process. Individual supervision, weekly reflection papers, theological reflection papers, group supervision, and small-group process time provide opportunities for collaborative learning about pastoral care. The process is not linear; each of the parts is related to the others. This can engender excitement and fear. The multi-dimensionality and interconnectedness of the CPE experience can be intense and confusing. It fosters and requires quantum thinking. I resonate with the excitement and empathize with the fear.

Certain principles guide me as I teach dialogically via the clinical method.[9] They guide my formation of the curriculum and my mentoring. These principles include the following: (1) the student participates in identifying what is to be learned through a learning contract and via decisions regarding material to present and subject areas to study; (2) the supervisor collaborates with the students to establish a learning environment that assumes a spirit of exploration, risk, learning by doing, trial and error, and reverence for each learner; (3) the supervisor and student identify those factors that enable and that inhibit the formation of a supervisory alliance; (4) the supervisor considers the multi-dimensionality of the student's learning, the cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and spiritual aspects; (5) the supervisor incorporates learning activities that actively engage the student and call forth the application of didactic material, using both inductive and deductive teaching methods; (6) the supervisor presents educational content sequentially, from the simple to the complex and reinforces the material over time; (7) the student and supervisor are mutually and asymmetrically accountable for evaluating the learning that is taking place; (8) learning is collaborative. The collective wisdom of the group is greater than the sum of its parts. Each member's questions and realizations contribute to the learning process.

Each student comes with a particular amount of desire to engage the learning process as well as some trepidation. Relational paradoxes are at work; the student desires to engage in the process, while at the same time utilizes strategies (behaviors) that look like engagement but keep much of the student's self out of the process. In other theories, this is labeled as resistance or problems learning and learning problems. I honor the strategies, extending empathy to the student. I am interested in the student's experience, the student's reality. I approach the students with an attitude of curiosity, interest, and acceptance that strives for understanding. As I join with the student, a learning alliance can form, and trust can grow. In the context of that alliance, there is space for the student to bring more of the self into the learning process. I set boundaries and ground rules that establish an environment of safety and trust in which to risk. As a supervisory alliance is forming, collaborative alliances are forming with peers.

Some students in CPE do not want to be there. They enrolled as a forced choice, perhaps as a requirement for ordination or certification. They come armed with horror stories, skepticism, and reluctance, yet are determined to survive and get what they came for: the credit. Working with them, I invite their critique, horror stories, and frustration. I listen. I desire to ally with them emotionally and to translate their aspirations into attainable learning goals for the unit. Desiring to establish

a learning alliance,[10] I communicate my intention to work with them for their learning and observe the ways the paradox of conflict-in-connection is enacted. Some students who were determined not to learn in CPE find themselves engaging with patients, peers, or the supervisor and learning. Learning and engagement foster more learning and engagement. I honor the paradox and provide space for risk-taking.

Supervisor as Mentor

My authority as the supervisor derives less from expertise than from having greater experience at the edge: experience in reflecting on the craft of providing pastoral care and in processing the experience that unfolds in our relationship.[11] This role is similar to that of mentor or master craftsperson. As supervisor, I mentor via guiding, supporting, challenging, envisioning, role modeling, and exploring with a relational consciousness and an understanding of the mutuality of the supervisory encounter.[12]

My vision is that participation in our relationship will be mutual, even as it is asymmetrical: mutual in that each of us is present and responsive to the other, participating as fully as possible in our encounters, and sharing insights, hypotheses, and wonderings; asymmetrical in that I have responsibility for defining and maintaining boundaries, for focusing and refocusing our attention on the student's work, for assessing the learning needs of the student, and for guiding the process in addressing them. Due to the power differential, I invite and encourage the student's growth as a partner in dialogue.[13] Mindful that relational paradoxes are at work, I empathize with the strategies the student employs to keep parts of the self out of the relationship. I continually focus and refocus on the here and now, observing when either the student or I move out of the room. I self-observe the relational paradoxes at work in my supervisory practice, identifying those strategies that keep me out of relationship. The goal is clarity of thought and feeling. Patient encounters can expand and deepen, as the student is able to expand in clarity and accessibility in supervision as well as grow in knowledge, ability, and insight.

CPE is a collaborative learning experience. The components include group super-vision (e.g., verbatim sessions, theological reflection papers, video clinics), didactic presentations (led by supervisor, student, or guest), and small group process time (e.g., interpersonal relations group, IPR). Each of us, supervisor and student alike, collaborates in the learning and participates in the dialogue. As the interactions take place, a web of interactive relationships develops, a dialogical matrix. Working at being present in the here and now with an increased clarity of thought and feeling, the students increase their capacity for relatedness in dialogical encounters with patients, peers, and supervisor, and the students utilize quantum thinking in constructing knowledge and understanding of pastoral care. Learning fosters engagement; engagement fosters learning.[14]

Collaborative learning is a dynamic process at the edge. The IPR component is particularly challenging. The goal of IPR is for students to learn to do the work of a self-reflexive group: a group that studies its own dynamics as group life unfolds. The intention of the IPR experience is for the group to foster individuality, inclusion, and responsibility[15] and for the individual members to increase in their ability to engage in pastoral relationships and in their capacity for relatedness in a group setting. To this end, each member is called to share their thoughts and feelings about their life together in the here and now, to use "I" statements, to observe their own behavior, and to respond to others. Becoming more self-aware and self-observant increases a student's capacity for being present within mutual, symmetrical relationships (e.g., peers) and mutual, asymmetrical relationships (e.g., patients, congregants).[16] Recognizing that each collaborative learning component is related to the other parts, the last fifteen minutes of each IPR session is spent sharing surprises, learnings, observations, and applications to patient care. This is an exciting time as discoveries and connections are shared.

Establishing a collaborative learning community is a process.[17] Relational paradoxes are evident as the collaborative learning community forms and attends to its work. These paradoxes and relational dynamics are studied most directly in the IPR group setting. A paradox contains an inherent truth amidst a contradiction. Relational paradox describes the dynamic that each member of the group yearns for connection and enacts strategies that serve to keep part of the self safely out of connection. As a mutually empathic, accepting environment is established group members can bring more of themselves into relationship and into the collaborative

learning process. They can bring more of their wisdom and their questions, engaging in quantum thinking and dialogical encounters as they develop into pastoral caregivers.

The relational paradoxes include the basic relational paradox, the paradox of similarity and diversity, the paradox that sharing disconnection leads to new connection, and the paradox of conflict-in-connection.[18] The basic relational paradox describes the yearning in each member for connection, while engaging in strategies that look like engagement yet actually foster disconnection. In responding to this paradox, it is important to honor the yearning, to empathize with the strategies, and to avoid focusing on the disconnection or interpreting the strategies as movement toward autonomy. The paradox of similarity and diversity describes the tension between the desire for connection around universal feelings and the fears of becoming isolated due to differences. Navigating this paradox is possible through a process of giving voice to similarities and extending mutual empathy to expressed differences. This fosters understanding and acceptance of each member. This process enlarges the empathic capacities of the individuals and the group. It is paradoxical that sharing feelings of disconnection leads to new connection. Voicing the feelings of disconnect in a group that is responsive and accepting of the feelings builds new connections. In naming and responding to disconnection, relational movement occurs. The paradox of conflict-in-connection describes the process whereby understanding different opinions and realities fosters connections amidst conflict. This occurs through empathically understanding and containing divergent opinions and realities.

This collaborative learning community experiences phases of development.[19] The phases that take place in the larger collective of group life are paralleled in the life of the IPR group. First, a period of orientation and getting acquainted, a vocabulary related to the subject matter, is established; formal and informal procedures about the process are instituted; and the navigation of trust/mistrust begins. The supervisor sets the frame in which the dialogue occurs and establishes some vocabulary specific to the discipline. Next, the group moves into a period of fluctuation. In this phase, the group wonders if it can tolerate conflict and differences. It struggles to value the contributions of each member. It experiences times of engagement and disengagement in the learning process and addresses the dynamics of pastoral relationships and pastoral care delivery in increasing depth.[20] Using relational psychology, this phase is a time of growing in trust of the process of relational movement; relationships can move from connection to disconnection to new connection.[21] It is a time of witnessing new connections growing through the

sharing of feelings of disconnection, of witnessing isolation resulting from not sharing, of navigating conflicts within connection. Movement in this phase is not a steady progressive journey to a place of tolerating and managing conflict well. It is a growing in experience so that the capacities of the individuals and the group to hold differences, opinions, and feelings expand and become more flexible.

As the CPE unit comes to a close, the group moves into a period of termination.[22] The work of the group to share in the here and now, to accept feelings and incorporate differences, now includes saying good-bye and facing grief and loss in the here and now. As supervisor, I set a frame and a vocabulary, empathize with the feelings, and participate in the work of leave-taking.

Serving as the supervisor, collaborating with the students as life unfolds between us at the edge, I remain mindful of God's presence—manifest and hidden—dwelling in the midst of our dialogical encounters and accompanying us on our journey. Trusting in God's participation with us, I continue to grow as a relational, mentoring supervisor.

NOTES

1.   Danah Zohar, *Rewiring the Corporate Brain: Using the New Science to Rethink How We Structure and Lead Organizations* (San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers Inc., 1997), 5-9.

2.   For a definition of "at the edge," see the preface to this set of articles, beginning on page 139.

3.   Tarule describes collaborative learning; see Jill Mattuck Tarule, "Voices in Dialogue: Collaborative Ways of Knowing," in *Knowledge, Difference and Power: Essays Inspired by Women's Ways of Knowing*, eds. Nancy Goldberger, Jill Tarule, Blythe Clinchy, and Mary Belenky (N.Y.: BasicBooks, 1996), 289-299; Vella maintains that the adult experience of dialogue education involves team work; see Jane K. Vella, *Learning to Listen; Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002), 22-23, 191 *ff*.

4.   Jean Piaget, *The Origins of Intelligence in Children* (N.Y.: Norton, 1952).

5.   Judith V. Jordan, "A Relational Perspective for Understanding a Woman's Development" in *Women's Growth in Diversity: More Writings from the Stone Center*, ed. Judith V. Jordan (N.Y.: Guilford Press, 1997), 13.

6.   Spiritual aspects include searching for meaning; listening for and articulating the meanings, values, and vision of the patient and of the self; and reflecting on the experience of God in the encounter.

7.   Martin Buber, *I and Thou* (N.Y.: Scribner, 1970).

8.   Zohar, *Rewiring*.

9.   These principles build on the work of Freire, Knowles, and Vella; see Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, rev. ed. (N.Y.: Continuum, 1970, 1993); Malcolm S. Knowles, Elwood F. Holton, and Richard A. Swanson, *The Adult Learner,* 5th ed. (Houston, Texas: Gulf Publishing, 1973, 1998); Jane Kathryn Vella, *Learning to Listen; Learning to Teach: The Power of Dialogue in Educating Adults*, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

10.   Vella, *Learning to Listen*, 10.

11.   The ability to process means having "the capacity to participate in, reflect upon, and process [encounters] and to interpret relational themes that arise within either" the pastoral care or supervisory relationship. Mary Gail Frawley-O'Dea and Joan E. Sarnat, *The Supervisory Relationship: A Contemporary Psychodynamic Approach* (N.Y.: Guilford Press, 2001), 41.

12.   Laurent A. Daloz, *Effective Teaching and Mentoring: Realizing the Transformational Power of Adult Learning Experiences* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1986); Frawley-O'Dea and Sarnat, Supervisory Relationship.

13.   Frawley-O'Dea and Sarnat, *Supervisory Relationship*, 43.

14.   Fundamental to this process are empathy, collaboration, and common ground, rather than dominance and consensus; Tarule, "Voices in Dialogue," 299.

15.   J. Howard, "Interpersonal Group Seminar: A Training Method in the Pastoral Care of Groups," *Journal of Pastoral Care* 14 (fall 1960):160-166.

16.   Frawley-O'Dea and Sarnat, *Supervisory Relationship*.

17.   Tarule, "Voices in Dialogue," 290-293.

18.   Nicolina M. Fedele, "Relationships in Groups: Connection, Resonance, and Paradox," *Work in Progress* No. 69 (Wellesley, Mass.: Stone Center, 1994), 6-7.

19.   Tarule, "Voices in Dialogue," describes two phases of development of a collaborative classroom: (1) establish vocabulary and environment for dialogue and (2) work with vocabulary to explore the area of study at greater and greater depth. Yalom (1985) describes four stages of a small group: orientation, conflict, closeness, and termination. Integrating the work of these two theorists, I see three phases of development in the collaborative learning community of CPE: orientation, fluctuation, and termination. Fluctuation combines Yalom's two stages of conflict and closeness; I observe the group fluctuating between times of conflict and times of closeness, times of inhibition and times of risking; see Irvin D. Yalom, *The Theory and Practice of Group Psychotherapy* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1985).

20.   Tarule, "Voices in Dialogue," 290-293.

21.   Fedele, "Relationships in Groups."

22.   Yalom, *Theory and Practice*; Marianne Schneider Corey and Gerald Corey, *Groups: Process and Practice*, 5th ed. (N.Y.: Brooks/Cole Publishing, 1997/1977).

My Certification Process

Yvonne Valeris

My journey to be considered for certification as an Association for Clinical Pastoral Education supervisor was a 2½-year struggle—writing papers, including some that failed but eventually passed; attending seminars; supervising students; being supervised; having psychotherapy; and appearing before committees. My final hurdle was my appearance before the certification committee.

Going before the certification committee made me anxious because I wanted to engage the committee in a lively fashion. I arrived at the site the evening before the committee appearance. This put me at ease and allowed me time to become familiar with the facility and to reflect on my presenter's report.

The following morning, a snowy and treacherous day in March, I arrived in the candidate's waiting area fifteen minutes prior to the beginning of the committee appearance. I meditated on Psalm 48:14 (NIV): "For this God is our God for ever and ever; God will be our guide even to the end." This reassured me that my ancestors' spirits and the Holy Spirit were with me.

The certification process started with the chairperson graciously offering me the "hot seat" and asking the committee members to introduce themselves. I felt safe with the committee. The chairperson explained the time frame and pointed out

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who would be taking notes. This left me free to concentrate on interacting with the committee. The following vignette illustrates our dialogue:

Chairperson: Have you read the presenter's report?

Yvonne: Yes.

Chairperson: Where would you like to begin?

Yvonne: First, I thank the committee members for taking their time to be with me. I also thank my presenter for the well-written and accurate report. I like it because it affirms who I am today and my history—a Black Caribbean American woman possessing the determined spirits of her ancestors.

[The committee was listening attentively.]

Yvonne: My purpose for appearing before this committee is to demonstrate that I am certifiable as a full ACPE supervisor. I will do just that by demonstrating my authority and autonomy as a supervisor. Do you have any questions?

[I was anxious, yet confident.]

Committee: No.

[I felt glad that the committee had no questions.]

[After I addressed a question in the presenter's report, a committee member challenged me.]

Committee member: Why didn't you do—?

Immediately, my punitive mother was alive in my head making me think that I did a cardinal sin. In that moment, I recalled a racial, ethnic, multicultural conference in which a candidate had shared with me that he had forgotten to do something in preparation for his certification as a supervisor. He had become stuck, obsessively thinking that he had done a "bad and unforgivable" act. His committee worked hard to help move him forward, but he remained stuck in his shame of failing the committee. With this memory in mind, I decided not to allow my mistake to bury me. I addressed the issue, and the committee accepted my response.

Later, a committee member asked what I had made of a particular score on an item in the consumer report. This touched my vulnerability. I referred to the student's resistance, but the chairperson stayed on the issue. Finally, I realized that she wanted me to take a closer look at myself as a supervisor. I said, "I am aware that my personal instrument needs some fine tuning every now and then." From

this experience, I decided to use the consumer report as a mid-unit evaluation tool. This would help me meet students' needs of more effective supervision. Although the certification process was challenging, it also helped me grow.

There were also, in fact, moments of laughter. Here is an example:

Committee member: Have you ever had a student whom you never liked?

Yvonne: Yes.

Committee member: What did you do?

[I immediately reflected on a student whom I regretted taking into the group.]

Yvonne: I struggled through the unit and prayed for the unit to end.

Committee: [Laughter]

The moment of truth approached. I waited 30 minutes for the committee's vote. It felt like days. Finally, the chairperson called me back and slowly said that the committee voted "granted." I screamed, covered my face, and cried joyful tears of relief. After 2½ years, I passed this final test. Two hours after the vote, my entire body became painful and stiff. I could not walk upright for two days. I hadn't realized that my body was under such stress from the certification process. Thankfully, I recovered.

Becoming certified takes a team effort. My team consisted of the excellent HealthCare Chaplaincy's supervisors (D. Haines, P. Steinke, J. Bucchino, Bob Anderson, and Jo Clare), my peers, and the northeastern region supervisors who had participated in seminars on supervision. In addition, my psychotherapist (D. Nissing) reassured me that I was normal. Also, my consultant (Jerome Calvin Banks, whom I found through an advertisement in *ACPE News*) helped me understand the relevance of my ancestry to my supervision. Finally, my greatest and most challenging teachers were my students. Completing the certification process is my greatest achievement and is my way of honoring them all.

Reflection on Supervisory Process

Osofo Banks

I am an Afrikan American supervisor, who was certified as an acting supervisor in 1983 and as a full supervisor in 1986. I was part of the last group to become certified under the old system; yet, I was clearly aware that my supervisors were instrumental in the construction of the new system. I felt dually aligned. For at least fifteen or more of these twenty years, I have served in varying capacities on regional and national certification and accreditation committees and commissions. I have witnessed the development of the certification and accreditation processes through the last two decades. In my supervision, I have directly engaged supervisory candidates at all levels of the process, i.e., entry into the process, paper and theory development, group and individual supervision, committee preparation, and so forth. These years of exposure and experience provide the insight into the serious issue that I address in this brief presentation.

One of the primary hurdles of this certification process has been the writing of theory papers. Centers where I have worked, and those with whom I am familiar, often begin to push candidates to pick theorists as soon as they commit to supervisory education. The caring intent is to get candidates to begin to think theoretically and to prepare to clear this major hurdle of the process. Over the

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years, I have watched several Afrikan American candidates struggle with paper approval. Often the comment returned was that the theory or theorists are neither congruent nor integrated with history and/or supervision. Candidates became frustrated because they believed they had so clearly articulated theory. I have served as a consultant to several of these frustrated persons. A common thread existed in their processes. They chose theorists before developing theory. Therefore, the crux of their energy was spent defending theorists, rather than concretizing theory.

Yet, those who followed my process became certified often with no notations and noted honor. They were clear, congruent, and integrated. The fist major mistake I recognized was the encouragement of an Afrikan American to pick a theorist first. I will admit that many of the candidates who secured me as a consultant to their process were initially suspicious of my lack of desire to know their theorists. Oftentimes, I informed them that they were not in a position to pick a theorist. The response was echoed, "But my papers are due soon." I responded, "The papers will write themselves when you get clear about your theory and theorems." Those who finally trusted my process, became crystal clear in their theory and completed the process soon there after.

For many Afrikan Americans, theology, development, and learning are part of the fabric of their existence through family, history, community, and culture. These theories emerge from the DNA of the person and culture. They are not the developed constructs of published authors. The first document I asked from candidates was an autobiographical history. Some candidates considered me mistaken in my request and sent me paper outlines. I kindly reminded them that I would only begin with the autobiography. Crystal clear was the fact that once Afrikan American candidates began with chosen theorists, the remainder of their process would be defending those theorists, rather than understanding their theories. However, once they struggled through the process of constructing their own theories, they could dialogue with multiple theorists knowing clearly points of intersection, parallel, and digression. Much of the time the chosen theorist(s) had little to no identity with the Afrikan or Afrikan American culture. I have watched candidates go through enormous efforts to attempt to make congruent and integrative a theory that had little identity with their history or culture. They become so efficient with the theorists that they lost perspective of their informing theories, which got flagged as "lack of congruence" and "lack of integration."

From the autobiography, I pushed and prodded candidates to sketch out theories as a result of history and culture. The time and energy spent at this juncture

often centers on trust and unlearning—trust to be able to defend their process to the center and/or supervisor, who keeps asking, "Who are your theorists?" and unlearning the chosen theorists' perspective on the matter. Once the candidates trusted the process and articulated the constructs of theology, theory of development, and theory of learning, lights began to come on. I invited them to clearly articulate the threads of theory in their family of origin, in Afrikan American history, and in Afrikan development. Immediately, candidates began to dialogue with the afore-chosen theorists to clearly articulate where they were helpful and where they digressed in their aid.

Often candidates began to research other theorists more congruent to their process. These candidates were able to more articulately detect, and dialogue about, the development of their theoretical themes in supervision with students and programmatic functioning. They readily shared theoretical justification for supervisory decisions and interventions. Defense of their positions at the commission level was eased by their clarity of theory. Clarity of their theory enhanced the dialogue with multiple theorists. For Afrikan Americans, I strongly recommend knowing clearly the theory before ever considering theorists.

Five E's of CPE: Perhaps Not So Easy

Roger J. Ring

In the mid 1970s as a resident at the University of Michigan Hospital, I was struck by the pointed request of a visitor to our Department of Pastoral Care. After a brief tour and a few questions about our clinical pastoral education (CPE) program, our visitor concluded: "I don't have time to take the class. Could I just read the book?"

Wouldn't it be marvelous if it were that simple? Yet, we all have come to love the genius of the immediacy, spontaneity, and unpredictability of the human and spiritual experiences that we engender and are a part of in CPE. I attempted to crystallize this last fall while I was feeling exasperated in a verbatim group. We had a stimulating residents' group, except for one of our students; he seemed to have less capabilities than the rest to conduct and present visits with vitality and energy. This resident thought that he was doing an adequate, if not an exemplary, job. My goal was to be instructive to him; I went to the white board and said, "Here is what I hope can happen in a visit. I expect and hope you might project the following E's." I spontaneously wrote on the white board: (1) Encounter, (2) Engage, (3) Experience, (4) Embrace, and (5) Empower.

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1. **Encounter.** We go to the floors to have an encounter with the person who is in the bed or on the ward. We endeavor to initiate a relationship of significance with a total stranger.

2. **Engage.** Once we get into the room, we hope to engage the patient with emotional availability and form a sense of genuine spiritual presence and human affirmation. We are open to hear the patient's story, issues, and understanding of life with respect, wonder, and appreciation.

3. **Experience.** We try to create a live experience in the here and now. The experience may be from one person to another. The experience may be from person, to God, and back to person. Or it may be from person, to the faith community, to the hospital experience, and back to the person. No matter the case, we try to create an experience of spiritual communion in the here and now.

4. **Embrace.** When an "alive" moment happens, we hope to embrace that phenomenon with gratitude. We appreciate the sacredness of that experience and celebrate with wonder and awe what may possibly happen in a pastoral relationship.

5. **Empower.** This visit may be the only pastoral visit the patient receives during this hospitalization. We hope that the wonder of this experience does not stay in the hospital room. In introducing, or reminding patients of, their intrapersonal, interpersonal, and faith community resources, we encourage patients to feel empowered and to use these resources in the near future.

Could it be as simple and as complex as that: Encounter, Engage, Experience, Embrace, and Empower? Can this be taught in a book? Perhaps, but it would be the extraordinary student who could learn these from a book. CPE provides feedback, reflection, peer group support, affirmation, confrontation, supervisory encouragement, and consultation. We are called to a wonderful and unique career where we can transform and educate our students through the power of relationships if they are willing and courageous enough to join us in the process.

Homer U. Ashby, Jr., *Our Home is over Jordan: A Black Pastoral Theology* **(St. Louis, Mo.: Chalice Press, 2003).**

Ashby writes in response to the threats to survival and well-being that face African Americans today. Utilizing the method of conjuring, the author applies the story of Joshua as a hope for African Americans as a people to meet these challenges.

The author identifies the challenges embodied in the African American as cultural identity confusion, disconnectedness, and the lack of a vision for the future. These challenges are integrated and in need of attention for the survival of African Americans as a people. To address this situation, Ashby reclaims the method of "conjuring" from its tradition within the life and culture of Africans prior to their "transport to America" (p. 12). This was a means of bringing "to bear the power of transcendent forces to affect change in the this-world context." That is, story has the power to transform and empower.

Ashby uses the Joshua story as such a power for change through careful hermeneutical reflection. By conjuring on the Joshua story, he reflects on the African American tradition, explains the present realities of African Americans by exposing the underlying meanings and feelings of its words and actions, and offers hope and liberation.

The home over Jordan that the author speaks about through the Joshua conjure is the home reflected in the spiritual "deep river." America has been no promised land for the African Americans, and the "deep river is a place of refuge, safety, and protection. It is a place of promise and expectation. Home across the Jordan is where full humanity is realized in the company of others" (p. 10).

The author maintains that the black church plays a critical role with unique resources and the ministries of partnership with the living God in the African American community in getting to this home. The black church is to be a Joshua Church. A Joshua Church, the author contends, will move the African American people as a people beyond its liberation enterprise of the last fifty years into full humanity and cultural fulfillment.

This movement is through the deep and murky waters of discerning black identity (chapter 3), connecting as a people in the midst of the disconnections of class and gender (chapter 4), and establishing a vision for the future with hope as an extension of the vision presented in Exodus and Deuteronomy (chapter 5). This latter chapter explores reparations in which he affirms the need for some form of material goods for "victory" as not enough. What is needed "is the recovery of a sense of pride of African American people in a rich cultural history that predates

Western civilization" and regains the internal sense of a people that are committed and provide love (p. 135).

Homer U. Ashby Jr. clearly states that African American churches must offer "the creation of transformative visions that take persons from their debilitating past and transports them to a vital future" (p. 138), across the Jordan into the promised land of God's destiny of full humanity and cultural fulfillment. He has written a "must-read" book for all African Americans and, I submit, for all of us. He is leading us into a new society as God intended.

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W. Daniel Hale and Harold G. Koenig, *Healing Bodies and Souls: A Practical Guide for Congregations* **(Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2003).**

Hale, a professor of psychology at Stetson, and Koenig, a professor of psychiatry at Duke, have teamed up in this writing to assist congregations to continue in the age old tradition of Christian communities being places of healing and health. They use case studies and case histories of congregationally sponsored health ministries from several denominations in Florida. They also include an example from a Hispanic congregation.

Hale and Koenig make the case that local congregations are ideal sites for health ministries because they are located throughout the community, because they are one of the few multigenerational organizations in a community, and because they have well-established communication networks and strong traditions of volunteerism and civic engagement (p. 5).

The impetus for beginning these health ministries generally came out of the leadership's reassessment of the congregational needs and vision or in response to a specific need of a congregational member, followed by concerted planning and organizing to sustain the ministry. Some of the ministries sited were primarily education and prevention ministries, such as those dealing with end-of-life issues, CPR and childcare classes, health-screening opportunities, and dealing with stress. Others developed more hands-on ministries, like adult daycare, support of caregivers, and psychotherapy. One even developed a free clinic and worked with state politics around the uninsured or the underinsured. Specific medical issues that the book deals with include diabetes, skin, breast and prostate cancer, strokes, heart disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, glaucoma, and depression.

One thing is clear, that "... unequivocal support of the clergy is essential to the success of health ministry" (p. 114). This does not mean that they need to take on many additional time- and energy-consuming responsibilities. Rather, the extended examples in the book demonstrate that it is possible to develop meaningful health ministries with out hiring additional staff or shifting major financial resources away from other parish programs (p. 115).

The book has a very useable format. Each chapter is a case study of one ministry. At the end of the chapter is a brief educational writing about a specific disease or concern, followed by suggestions of what can be done within a congregation. At the end of the book, there are several pages listing congregational health ministry resources, including sources of congregational grants. About the only thing missing from this book is a discussion of obstacles or struggles one

should be prepared to encounter. It is very positive. This would be an excellent resource for those beginning a health ministry or those looking for additional ideas and resources to expand a health ministry

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Melvin A Kimble and Susan H. McFadden, eds., *Aging, Spirituality, and Religion*, vol. 2 (Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress Press, 2003).

The opening chapters of this book define a framework for aging as a pilgrimage and a time of great potential; and it uplifts the central role that faith communities play in this journey. "Conscious aging finds the 'pearl of great price' in expanded consciousness and personal growth as guiding principles for an aging society. We [the faith community] have the distinct and humbling privilege of accompanying them" (p. 253). This framework is divided into five major sections: late-life spiritual potentials, aging in faith communities, pastoral care with older people, theological perspectives and ethical issues, and anticipating the future: an aging society. Together this work and its first volume represent an extensive library on aging.

Although there are many excellent chapters, I will address only three of them—an extended aging theory, substance abuse among the elderly, and ethical issues in the care of Alzheimer's or dementia patients.

In Part II, Henry Simmons provides a ministry framework for "the last third of one's life." He effectively describes the seven stages as "retiring, extended middle age, early transitions triggered by things like the death of a spouse or failing health, revised lifestyle, becoming dependent, transition and death" (p. 90). This work would assist a congregation in developing a comprehensive ministry with the aging. Later in that section, Robert Albers's work on addictions in the aging challenges the church community to see the signs in the aging and address them with courage, remembering "the spiritual dimension of a person's life is usually the first to suffer when addiction is an issue" (p. 228). Ladislav Volicer and Paul Brenner's chapter on ethical issues in the care of individuals with Alzheimer's disease was on the mark. It gave both a theoretical framework and practical and useful information for those of us in families who struggle with this issue. I think this section would also be helpful for families who have loved ones in care facilities and those who work with them.

This book is an excellent resource for clergy and laity responsible for designing a comprehensive ministry for and with the aging. It also provides ample, up-to-date material for training ministry volunteers. Sections could also be a useful resource for families struggling with various issues. As always with materials that have many authors, the writing is uneven.

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Andrew J. Weaver, Linda A. Revilla, and Harold G. Koening, *Counseling Families Across the Stages of Life: A Handbook for Pastors and Other Helping Professionals* **(Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2002).**

Using case studies, the authors examine twenty life passages such as family issues, marriage preparation, infertility, parenting, and retirement, as well as special conditions like dependency, terminal illnesses, and Alzheimer's disease. The book uses different perspectives but only one motivation: the creation of a culture of caring. According to the writers, participation in faith communities can help one struggle with the isolating effects of punitive religious practices, faceless technology, or special life circumstances.

The first chapters make a case for a partnership between clergy, religious organizations, and mental health professionals for the care of families. It states that religious beliefs and care from clergy or faith communities are essential components for enabling people to cope with mental and physical illnesses or other life stressors by giving hope and stability.

The second part of the book presents case studies. The authors cover work with all of the parties involved in a specific context, including not only the one in the center of the attention but caregivers, health care professionals, the family, and the community at large.

The book is what it promises—a good reference and textbook for when we first encounter a problem in families. Every chapter has an easy to follow structure as well as resources and references for making a diagnosis and dealing with cross-cultural issues. However, one should be aware that this book does not give long-term help in dealing with family issues.

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Andrew J. Weaver and Monica Furlong, eds., *Reflections on Forgiveness and Spiritual Growth* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2000).

In a collection of short essays, authors from the United Kingdom and the United States look at forgiveness from both a spiritual and psychological perspective. In this work, forgiveness is understood to be a process, not a one-time act of the will. That is, one must grow tired of being angry, give up the idea of revenge, and finally be able to "pray for the well being of the enemy" (p. 21). Theologically, it is only through the power of the Holy Spirit to call a group into community that one would work at forgiveness. Also, God is understood through incarnational theology. That is, God is present in this process through healing touch and embraces, reconciling words, shared meals—especially the Eucharist. These are concrete marks of the beginning of the end of conflict.

This is no lightweight book. The authors have personally worked and lived through the issues like ethnic cleansing in the Balkans and Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa, and the Clinton impeachment hearings. Justice and the issues of systemic evil and forgiveness are core values for all of them. How does one deal with atrocities and the betrayal of the public trust? Are some things unforgivable by humans? How does one lead people through the challenge of corporate forgiveness when all members of a faction are not of one mind?

As with many collections, the quality of the writing is uneven, and there is some repetition. Yet, this is a timely set of writings to help wrestle with a framework to talk about a God-centered, forgiving response to issues of September 11 and other terrorist attacks and the war in Iraq.

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Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry

The Goals of the *Journal of Supervision and Training in Ministry* are to preserve and extend the field of supervision and training in ministry formation through the written word; to encourage potential authors to become published contributors; and to enrich and expand our understanding and practice of supervision and training in ministry by including new participants and perspectives in our critical reflection on this work. Only articles related to these goals will be considered for publication.

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