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PERSPECTIVE

LEARNING NEVER STOPS!

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Running the risk of showing how old I am, I came across a VCR tape. Remember those? This was a video of my college graduation.

Watching the reactions I shared, I am ashamed to admit that none of what I shouted at that time became a reality. I saw a younger version of myself shouting, “This is it! No more books, baby! This is it!”

Contrast that with the Ivan, who is recorded in the iPhone XS videos as he walks out after his Doctor of Ministry graduation. Not only are there more wrinkles in his face, but less hair, which is thinning and grey. He is also calmer and more precise about the fact that the education process never ends, even after you complete what is called a “terminal degree.”

DON'T FALL INTO A RUT

We need to talk about something that is creeping in among our ranks. I have seen some chaplains fall into a rut. You may have completed your Master of Divinity and Clinical Pastoral Education training. However, it does not mean that you have reached the pinnacle of your education and there is no more opportunity to grow. You need to grow! If you don't grow, you may risk losing your relevance, and a chaplain without relevance... well, you can complete that sentence!

ALWAYS SEEKING TRANSFORMATION

Allow me to use the Apostle Paul's message to the Romans as an example. Although he did not intend his statement to be about education, there

IT IS ABOUT INTEGRATING THE NEW KNOWLEDGE TO MAKE YOU A BETTER PROFESSIONAL.

is an inherent tacit connection.

In Romans 12:2, Paul calls his readers to “be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind.” The *Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary* explains this as transforming the mind from a “flesh mind” to a “spiritual mind.” The key concept here is transformation. You see, all education is supposed to be transformational. In the educational part of my “Theories of Supervision” unit, I assert that learning is always transformative because it is supposed to improve us. This integration occurs when you incorporate what you learn into your praxis. This is much more than simply regurgitating what you have discovered in the process. It is about integrating the new knowledge to make you a better professional.

This is where engaging in continued

education and what might be called in today's corporate world “continued cycles of improvement” play a vital role in your development as a chaplain. And this is also biblical. Paul not only wrote to the Romans about continuous growth. He also wrote to the Corinthians that in “beholding, we are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory.” The verb tense Paul uses here is identified by scholars as “present continued permanent.” I know this sounds redundant, but the image of a continual present may call us to invest in our continued growth. I think our relevance depends on our willingness to learn and be taught. Hopefully, this issue of *The Adventist Chaplain* will lead you to a place where you can get the continued education you may need.

CONTENTS

- 2 | Perspective
- 4 | Growing Professionally After Academic Training
- 12 | Through the Darkest Valley to A Life Reconstructed
- 16 | We Either Believe It, Or We Don't
- 24 | The River Made a Miraculous Turn Uphill
- 26 | ACM Worldwide



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GROWING PROFESSIONALLY AFTER ACADEMIC TRAINING

A NECESSARY VENTURE AND A MINDSET CHANGE

by Israel M. Kafeero, Ph.D.,
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Believing that learning stops after college or graduate school is a grave mistake. It is equally dangerous to settle for what I call “pea-nut” when it comes to learning. Also misleading is to think that college or graduate education offers the professional skills needed to excel in a chosen field after graduation. This article proposes that professional training, besides academic attainment, is essential to excel in a chosen field.

One may argue that professional skills can be learned on the job through practicing without any training. This approach is slow and may be suicidal career-wise. Imagine a doctor who learns to do surgery on humans after graduating from medical school, where practical skills are not taught. This is why medical training, combining theory and practice, takes longer than other programs such as theology. Sadly, both professions deal with human beings.

The former deals with the physical body, and the latter deals with the emotional and spiritual components, which control the physical body.

WHERE TO ACQUIRE TRAINING

This brings me to a crucial inquiry. Where do chaplains and pastors gain skills to do surgery on the soul? This is what makes the ongoing professional training significant for those who are frequently called upon to soothe the souls of those who are hurting and/or grieving. In some parts of the world, where church districts have many local churches for one pastor to handle, elders play a crucial role in ministering to grieving families. Where do such elders/pastors get the training necessary to equip them to minister to such people?

CHANGE THE MINDSET TO EXCEL

One of the reasons that limit our capacity to expand and grow professionally, even beyond our

Professional training, besides academic attainment, is essential to excel in a chosen field.



limits, is the narrow view of the purpose of our existence. Allow me to submit that when you accepted Jesus as your Saviour and Lord, you were adopted into the broader family of God. A family is not like “our families on earth...which are temporary and fragile, often broken by divorce, distance, growing old, and inevitably, death.

Conversely, our spiritual family—our relationship with other believers—will continue throughout eternity. It is a stronger union, a more permanent bond, than a blood relationship.”¹ The spiritual family is not selfish. We are not working for retirement. We are called to give our best as long as we still breathe. God has a broader purpose for calling you and me. Why limit your potential of service? Who told you that the training you received is enough for God’s purposes? Has God told you not to continue growing professionally through acquiring more training? You must be deceived or live in denial if your answer to the questions above is affirmative.

Another reason many fear venturing into the unknown future after seemingly acquiring academic training is holding on and not surrendering. Rick Warren came down very strongly on the theme of surrender. He postulates that “surrender is not the best way to live, but it is the only way to live.”² According to Warren, all of us surrender to something. “If not to God, you will surrender to the opinions or expectations of others, to money, to resentment, to fear, or your pride, lusts, or ego.”³

Warren further encourages us to surrender to God so that He can do His most profound work in us. We must let Jesus be in the driver’s seat and take our hands off the steering wheel.

This is a mindset change

needed for one to excel in life. To continue growing professionally, an individual needs to surrender her/his life to the hands of the Owner, the Creator God. We need to understand that the one who called us desires a lot from us, requires excellence in service, and that no one can excel in her/his profession without professional training.

Educated people are so crucial to our church and to society as a whole. Where would we be if we did not have women and men who went to school? According to George Knight, education, the subset of learning, is “a process that produces the capability of exhibiting new or changed human behavior.”⁴

This echoes Socrates’s statement that “the unexamined life is not worth living.”⁵ I may add that unexamined theology can be toxic, insensitive, and give a wrong perception of God.

James Londis tries to draw a picture of toxic theology, which states that “the events in our lives, even the death of a loved one, are merely threads in the fabric of God’s design for us.”⁶ Ongoing professional training may help redefine, uproot, instill, and clean up toxic tendencies people get from academic institutions.

I suggest that the best professional training for any pastor who has gone through the seminary and wishes to enter ministry is to take at least one Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) unit.

Why CPE? Two salient but discreet needs are vital to all human beings because they affect the core fabric of living: spiritual and emotional needs.

Emotional Need—The Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary defines emotional needs as “a psychological or mental requirement...that usually centers on such basic feelings as love, fear, anger, sorrow, anxiety, frustration, and depression and involves the understanding,



God has a broader purpose for calling you and me. Why limit your potential of service?

empathy, and support of one person for another.”⁷

Finding someone who will listen to pains and provide help and guidance is desperately needed. People often need to talk to someone who can relate to their feelings, weep with them, and and share their anger and fears.⁸

Spiritual Need—is conceived as the need to find meaning during illness, suffering, or crises. There is a need to affirm relationships to self, others, God, and nature and realize transcendent values such as hope and creativity, compassion, faith, peace, trust, courage, and love.⁹ Spiritual needs are defined as needs and expectations that humans have in order to find meaning, purpose, and value in their lives. Such needs can be specifically

religious, but even people with no religious faith or not members of an organized religion have belief systems that give their lives meaning and purpose.¹⁰

As a professional training program, CPE specifically equips chaplains with tools to help clients (including church members) meet the two crucial needs mentioned above.

Using an approach that examines the “living human document,” the CPE training program is conducted in an atmosphere of openness and self-discovery. Through peer learning, participants use their life story (the living document) to help them discover their strengths, shortfalls, fears, weaknesses, and triggers.

SO, WHAT IS CPE?

CPE is professional pastoral education for spiritual care providers

or spiritual caregivers. In a clinical setting, its intensive experiential approach primarily focuses on a learner's emotional and spiritual needs, making the minister healthy to provide a healthy ministry. CPE is the recognized professional training for chaplaincy ministry, thus making chaplaincy a specialized ministry. The intense interaction with supervisors, peers, people in crisis, and various professionals challenges the participants to improve the quality of their pastoral, personal, and professional relationships.

The philosophy of CPE is anchored in the belief that clients are encountered in a clinical setting. Such settings may be people in crisis: the hospitalized, prisoners, bereaved families, etc.

By addressing their emotional (feelings) and spiritual (faith) needs or

concerns, clients are provided with an opportunity for better self-awareness and to improve their ability to relate with others.

During the training, CPE participants undergo self-examination sessions to recognize their human potential and limitations. Peer group learning provides a holistic process to journey with the participants in addressing their personal and ministerial goals under the guidance of a licensed supervisor who facilitates the process. This peer group may also serve as a support group in the future as the process progresses, more likely into deeper friendships that may develop while in training and even when the CPE unit is over.¹¹

Why is this professional training referred to as clinical? What is clinical about CPE? The table below portrays the answers to the question above.

This training is about the trainee self-awareness. It focuses on the individual minister to understand oneself more deeply.	This training leads to real acceptance of self and others and help in learning how to establish boundaries.
It help participants value and appreciate the deeper meaning of love.	The training allows for healing and eventually rendering forgiveness.
The training gives opportunity to respect and support the faith expression of others even if they disagree with them.	The training provides holistic experiential learning.

BENEFITS OF ENGAGING IN CPE TRAINING

It Forms You Into A Compassionate Chaplain Pastor For A Compassionate Ministry

All chaplains/pastors are called to a compassionate vocation. Clergy are supposed to perform their duties in the context of compassionate care. Jesus is our example when it comes to compassionate ministry.

There are numerous examples of compassionate ministry in the New Testament (Matthew 4:15; 14:13-14; 20:30-34; Luke 7:12-15; Mark 6:34). Jesus reflected the compassion of His Father. He testified that whatever He did was from the Father (John 5:19). This is true because our God is Love (1 John 4:16), and all His acts are filled with compassion. There is another illustration of a compassionate God,

The philosophy of CPE is anchored in the belief that clients are encountered in a clinical setting.



which we find in Jonah 4:2. Here, the prophet Jonah testifies that God is full of compassion, slow to anger, and abounding in love. Paul came down heavily on the theme of compassion. He not only calls his readers to clothe themselves with compassion (Colossians. 3:12), but he calls God the father of compassion (2 Corinthians 1:3-4). Neither did Apostle Peter miss this theme. He, too, calls upon his readers to be compassionate and humble (1 Peter 3:8).

Chaplaincy is a ministry of compassion. Chaplains perform their duties in the context of compassion. CPE training sharpens one's skills of compassionate care. CPE trainees are taken through self-examination sessions. Whatever stands in one's way of compassionate care is brought to the surface. The student reflects on his/her past and recalls

the deep-seated trigger that could stand in the way of opening up to compassionate care. Once the issues are brought to the surface and deepened, the student is freed from fear and empowered to move on.

As chaplains, the people we serve are hurting and hungering for a listening, compassionate ear. This process empowers the participant after discovering the triggers that may be standing on one's path to recovery. No theological training can form you into a compassionate minister. However, one unit of CPE can begin to give you the professional skills required for compassionate ministry.

It Opens More Networking Opportunities

Whenever you seek higher training or engage in professional training, you open doors for networking opportunities. I remember taking

a CPE unit at Manila Medical Hospital. The unit was online. The group was diverse, with chaplains from Venezuela, Canada, Uganda, Kenya, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines. Each of these participants had a different career. We formed friendships, networked, exchanged ideas, and learned from each other. It was a great learning and sharing opportunity which continues today.

It Can Open International Opportunities

Again, borrowing from the illustration above, each of the five CPE units I attended exposed me to several international participants. The first unit I took in Fort Wayne, Indiana, had interesting and diverse participants. I was the only Adventist and the only Black African. Each participant belonged to a different faith group. Gender equality and cultural diversity spiced the group, and great learning was achieved.

Furthermore, chaplaincy services are still in their infancy in some parts of the world. The demand for chaplains in health care, correctional facilities, industrial, educational institutions, etc., is very high. So, taking one unit of CPE or more can be an added advantage to one's career.

While working at Uganda Union, I learned an opening was available at the Adventist University of Africa. They needed a coordinator for the Chaplaincy program. I applied and was hired. This was possible because I made a conscious choice during my Ph.D. journey. I took time off while writing my dissertation and enrolled in my first unit of CPE.

Driving from Berrien Springs, Michigan, to Fort Wayne, Indiana, was not fun. I was hosted by an elderly woman who did not know me, neither did she belong to my faith group. But I cannot regret the

undertaking. It was a worthwhile endeavor. Any professional training one undertakes can take you in directions you never expected. You never know where your next assignment will be. The Lord requires you to surrender, follow His will for your life, and leave the rest to Him.

Grow Yourself Rather Than Your Bank Account

It's not about the money. It's about serving the church with our God-given talents. Barry Black declares that a harvest is certain when we faithfully use our talents. He continues to write that "as we prepare to deepen our roots, we should remember that in life all we can do is to plant and water seeds... God can bring the harvest. Galatians 6:9 admonishes us not to grow weary in doing well, for in due season we will reap if we don't faint."¹²

As you read this article, I pray you will be motivated to continue from where you stopped. "Leaning is a lifelong process that may occur at any time and place,"¹³ writes George Knight.

And according to Black, "Refusing to relinquish control to God is foolish because He knows what the future holds, and we don't."¹⁴ What is required is a total change of mindset. To achieve this, Coach Tony Robbins submits, you must challenge your limiting beliefs. He says that "nearly everyone holds on to limiting beliefs that prevent them from realizing their dreams. So, you need to face your fears, shift your perspective, change your self-talk, and get support."¹⁵ CPE is one such professional training that can help chaplains achieve a mindset change in further professional training beyond academic attainments.

Ellen White categorically reminds us that "we are debtors to God to use every advantage He has entrusted to

So, taking one unit of CPE or more can be an added advantage to one's career.



us to beautify the truth by the holiness of character and to send the messages of warning, and of comfort, of hope, and love, to those who are in the darkness of error and sin."¹⁶ "Life is a journey, not a destination."¹⁷ So, let us "aspire to inspire before you expire."¹⁸

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THROUGH THE DARKEST VALLEY TO A LIFE RECONSTRUCTED

By Patrick Kyei, Chaplain, Kwadaso SDA hospital, Kumasi, Ghana
with Deena Bartel-Wagner, Editor, Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—General Conference

The self-help author Napoleon Hill wrote, “Every adversity, every failure, every heartache carries with it the seed of an equal or greater benefit.” Patrick Kyei is a witness to the seeds of more significant benefits in his life, which led him to become a chaplain.

Growing up in a single-parent home, Patrick watched his mother handle daily challenges. She worked hard to provide for her seven

children. “Our family was poor, and my father provided no support. I never met my father until I was in secondary school,” says Patrick. “I worked different jobs to pay for my school fees and eventually finished secondary school.”

Determined to continue his education, Patrick wanted to study to become a pastor, but the fees were insurmountable. Instead, he enrolled in a teacher training course and graduated with a degree in elementary education. “I enjoyed teaching, especially the five and six-year-old children. It was rewarding to help them learn to read and write,” says Patrick. “I taught for ten years and then had the opportunity to enter the ministry in 2008.”

JOINING THE MINISTRY AT LAST

Finally, Patrick accumulated the funds to enroll at Valley View University in Ghana.

Patrick Kyei faced tragic loss, but his faith remained strong.



Once again, Patrick found happiness after losing his wife and two sons.

Following graduation, eight churches made up Patrick’s first district. “I served there for about three and a half years and then transferred to another district,” says Patrick. During those years, Patrick grew in his ministry and enjoyed life with his wife and two young sons. His training and work as a teacher helped Patrick with his pastoral ministry. “The studies in psychology and other disciplines I learned during those years have been so beneficial,” says Patrick. “I’ve been able to apply many concepts in my ministry.”

Patrick’s wife taught in a local school and was enhancing her teaching skills through a class she enrolled in at Valley View University. On the day of her final exam, Patrick and their two boys joined her for the trip to the university.

ENTERING THE DARKEST VALLEY

During the trip to the university, something unimaginable happened. Patrick and his family became involved in a horrific fatal car crash. “My wife was killed, and our two sons and I were critically injured, says Patrick.

The following months and years were filled with grief, surgeries, healing, and an uncertain future. During the year 2014, even more



grief followed. “Although I was still a patient in the hospital, the doctors would allow me to come home and visit my sons,” says Patrick. “In January 2014, five months following the accident, my second-born son died from the injuries he sustained in the accident. Then, on December 28 of that same year, my oldest son died.”

Patrick’s grief was almost unbearable. He felt alone and isolated. “I longed for a chaplain I could talk with, but there wasn’t one at the hospital,” says Patrick. “My friends would come and sing for me, but they weren’t trained in how to help me with my grief. I needed encouragement, a listening ear, and the support a chaplain could provide.”

I WANT TO BE A CHAPLAIN

Following an almost year-long hospital stay, Patrick was finally released. With his physical wounds

PATRICK’S GRIEF WAS ALMOST UNBEARABLE.
HE FELT ALONE AND ISOLATED.



Patrick and his wife are raising their children in the faith and hope of Jesus.

“People come to the hospital and cannot pay their bills. The charity fund allows us to help meet some of these needs and we can advocate for the patient with the hospital.”

Patrick can also access the charity fund if a patient is referred from the Kwadaso Hospital to another facility. “A 12-year-old girl named Abina* came to our hospital with a dangerously high fever,” says Patrick. “The doctors were unsuccessful in reducing the fever, and Abina began to decline. She was transferred to another hospital, where she was diagnosed with HIV and tuberculosis.”

The diagnosis overwhelmed the parents, and they were ready to abandon her. Patrick jumped into action and hired someone to care for Abina, purchase and administer her medications, and transport her to her medical appointments.

“Sadly, Abina succumbed to the disease,” says Patrick. “However, she is not the only patient we’ve had to intervene with at this level. When a patient is diagnosed with HIV, it is not uncommon for the family to abandon them. Our department works closely with the medical staff to ensure that pediatric HIV patients receive the medications they need. We have the parents bring the children to the hospital for treatment, and the charity fund enables us to do this ministry.”

I KNOW I AM DYING

Kwame worked in an illegal mine and became seriously ill. “Many of these miners do not have access to potable water, and they develop health issues. “When Kwame arrived at the hospital, his serious health condition was evident,” says Patrick.

healed, Patrick was determined to help others who needed the ministry of presence from a chaplain. “I applied to the chaplaincy program at the Adventist University of Africa but then learned funds from my employing organization were unavailable,” says Patrick. “I decided to ask the conference to place me in a chaplaincy position in the conference so I could minister to others.”

Patrick was assigned as the chaplain of a midwifery training school for the next two and a half years. “Following my work at the school, I transitioned to the Kwadaso Seventh-day Adventist Hospital in Kumasi.

FINDING WAYS TO HELP OTHERS

Daily, Patrick visits patients on the wards and in their homes after they’ve been discharged. “The creation of a charity fund has been a significant resource for the chaplaincy department to utilize,” says Patrick.

TODAY, HIS WIFE AND HE ARE RAISING THEIR TWO CHILDREN TO LOVE AND KNOW JESUS.

“Many tests were performed, and the doctors informed me that his kidneys were failing, and they did not expect Kwame to survive. They asked me to visit him.”

During the visit, Patrick learned that Kwame was a Christian. “We prayed and sang together,” says Patrick. “When Kwame told me he knew he was dying, we talked about how the doctors were unable to help him, but that God could intervene. Then he asked to pray for forgiveness for anything he had done wrong.”

That same day, Kwame was discharged and sent home. Two days later, Patrick learned that Kwame died. “I immediately went to visit the family,” says Patrick. “I attended the funeral because a connection was made in the hospital, and it carried on even after Kwame’s death.”

WALKING THE SAME PATH

A traffic accident changed the course of Patrick’s life. Following the death of his wife and his two sons, he has used what he learned from that experience to minister to other people in crisis.

Recently, a tragic traffic accident affected the lives of three schoolchildren and their families. “The children were getting off the bus and were hit by a car,” says Patrick. “Two of the children were critically injured, and the third child died. The children were brought to our hospital, and I saw them when they arrived.

I’ve walked this path before and knew I needed to minister to the parents.”

Patrick quickly realized that the parents weren’t there, so he contacted the police and asked for help to obtain phone numbers to contact them. “I managed to reach the father, and when he arrived, I went with him to the morgue where he identified the body of his child,” says Patrick. “The family asked me to preach at the funeral. Following the service, the father told me that he misses his child, but that my message that day brought comfort. Since then, the father has called me regularly, and we talk.” Through his loss, Patrick relates to this father’s grief in a unique way that others who have not lost a child can never do.

A LIFE RECONSTRUCTED

God led Patrick through a dark valley of death and into a life reconstructed. “When I tell my story, people often grieve for me. But I tell them, ‘I know the Lord I am serving, and He carried me through. And He will do that today for others.’”

Patrick remarried and established a new family. Today, his wife and he are raising their two children to love and know Jesus. He found his calling in ministry and chaplaincy fulfilled in ways he never dreamed. He continues seeking ways to harvest the fruit from the seeds of adversity that became a part of his story during one of the darkest periods of his life.

We Either Believe It OR WE DON'T

By Cheryl Simmons, D.Min., BCC,

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“SO, AT FIVE, I WAS IN CHURCH ALONE, AND I KNEW THAT WAS WHERE I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE.”

For more than forty years, Cheryl Simmons has been involved in some form of ministry. It all began when, at five years old, she walked across the street by herself and through the front door of a church.

“I spent my early childhood in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. My family and I lived in a high-rise building. When I looked out our apartment window, I could see the church across the street,” says Cheryl. “My parents weren’t churchgoers then, but I felt called to be in that church. My mother would dress me up, and I walked to the curb to wait for a break in the traffic. There was always a lady from the church waiting for me on the other side of the street. So, at five, I was in church alone, and I knew that was where I was supposed to be.”

HIGH SCHOOL AND BEYOND

After graduating from high school, Cheryl studied respiratory therapy, which became her career for the next 23 years. But the desire to work for God never waned. “I sang in the church choir, gave Bible studies, taught Sabbath School,” says Cheryl. “At work, I would pray for and with my patients. I thought I was doing what God wanted, and I was satisfied.”

FIRST DREAMS, THEN DREAMS WITH A TWIST

But the status quo wasn’t God’s plan for Cheryl. “I started having dreams, and I didn’t understand them at first,” says Cheryl. “I could see myself standing in front of a congregation. Initially, I thought, ‘That’s normal. I teach the lesson and do other things at church.’”

Then, the dreams began to have a twist. In her dream, as she was seated in the congregation, she imagined herself preaching. In her mind, she was saying the words the minister spoke. Her confusion grew as the dreams continued.

“I began to think I was losing my mind,” says Cheryl. “Things weren’t adding up. Then, one night, I fell asleep in the den with the television on. When I woke up, an evangelist was saying, ‘God is calling you to the gospel ministry. My initial thought was that I didn’t believe half these evangelists, and I wouldn’t start now.’”

THAT CHILD IS GONNA' PREACH

At first, Cheryl was certain God hadn't called her to professional ministry, but the dreams continued. She finally decided she needed some validation. "I began telling my mother what had been happening. I also went to my pastor and told him I needed to speak to him about something. His response was, 'Cheryl, do you want to preach?'"

Cheryl was stunned by his question and asked him why he'd asked that question. He encouraged her to tell him what she came to see him about. She responded that they'd talk later.

Following the funeral of a cousin, Cheryl's mother offered for her to pray the blessing on the food. "When

I finished the prayer, an elderly woman sitting in the corner said, "That child is gonna preach," says Cheryl. "One of the men said, 'She's preaching nothing. God ain't called women to preach.' Then the woman pointed her finger at him and said, 'I know that God just told me that Cheryl's gonna preach.'"

Still not convinced, Cheryl began to rationalize with God. "I told Him that I knew He put marriage together, and I knew He wouldn't want to break up my home. I was certain that my husband John would say no to me becoming a pastor. I told God that would be the end of this."

WE NEED TO TALK

Cheryl summoned her courage,

Cheryl studied and finished her studies for her Doctor of Ministry degree from Andrews University in three years.



"THEN THE WOMAN POINTED HER FINGER AT HIM AND SAID, 'I KNOW THAT GOD JUST TOLD ME THAT CHERYL'S GONNA PREACH.'"

and one night, while lying in bed, she told John she needed to talk with him about something. "He said, 'Okay,' but just laid very still," says Cheryl. "I said, 'I believe God is calling me to the ministry.' He took a deep breath, and I thought, 'Here it comes.'"

John's response surprised Cheryl when he said, "I knew it was coming. I just didn't know when."

Cheryl knew she would have to continue her education. She enrolled in the undergraduate theology program at Atlantic Union College (AUC) in Massachusetts. This was followed by a degree in clinical ministries from AUC, a Master of Divinity from Wesley Biblical Seminary, and a two-year chaplaincy residency.

GROWING IN MINISTRY

Following her chaplaincy residency, Cheryl immersed herself in her work as a hospice chaplain. "I loved it, but by the end of the five years, I felt I needed a broader experience," says Cheryl. "I wanted to work on my Board Certification and be exposed to other expressions of chaplaincy. I moved to AdventHealth (AnMed Health) in Anderson, South Carolina."

For the next eight years, Cheryl prayed in the hospital rooms, comforted families, encouraged staff members, and grew in her ministry skills. She earned her Board Certification and began working on her Doctor of Ministry in Chaplaincy.

"When I started my doctoral program at Andrews, we were told it

would take five years," says Cheryl. "I thought, 'There is no way I can be around for a five-year program. So, I worked hard and completed it in three years.'"

WHEN THE WORLD CLOSED

Then, not only did the world face a crisis, but so did chaplaincy. During the COVID-19 outbreak, hospital chaplains often felt adrift. "I was used to answering any call that we were needed on, whether it was a trauma, a heart attack, a stroke, or something else. No matter what, a chaplain was there," says Cheryl. "Then almost overnight, it changed to, 'If we need you to be present, we'll call you. We had to don all the protective gear—face mask, shield, gloves, and gown. It was a challenge not to be able to do ministry the same way.'"

BEING WHERE THE ACTION IS

During her second year of chaplaincy residency, Cheryl worked in the intensive care unit and the surgical trauma intensive care. "I was comfortable in this setting because my respiratory therapy training had been in the ICU and the emergency room," says Cheryl. "I liked being where the action was. My CPE supervisor encouraged me to use my respiratory therapy training as a tool in my ministry."

This was invaluable advice. "I can talk with medical personnel more easily because I understand the lingo," says Cheryl. "It also helps in

“THEN THE WOMAN POINTED HER FINGER AT HIM AND SAID, ‘I KNOW THAT GOD JUST TOLD ME THAT CHERYL’S GONNA PREACH.’”

my ministries to families because I can help them understand what life support is doing for their loved ones. I also share how that symbolizes what God does for us as He breathes new life into us.”

The trauma team came to see Cheryl as an integral part of their team. “Each year the trauma unit give a trauma team membership award,” says Cheryl. “I became the first chaplain to receive it during my time there. I was so excited because I saw this as representing all of us as a team. If I can help the staff appreciate, respect, and honor the chaplain when another chaplain comes along, the bar has “already been set.

DEVELOPING PASTORAL AUTHORITY

Each chaplain experiences their personal journey in developing their pastoral authority. “When I began studying theology and preparing for ministry, there were no female pastors in the South Atlantic Conference,” says Cheryl. “I had no one to emulate, no one to talk with about what it looks like to be a female pastor or a black female pastor. I had to work hard and figure out my way, including my own style of preaching. I asked myself what do I bring and how do I assimilate among the church members, my conference leadership, my fellow pastors, and in the hospital?”

One of the areas was how she should be addressed and introduced. “I had conversations with certain

leaders about this,” says Cheryl. “I introduced the subject by saying this was an area I was working on, and I needed their help. I asked that instead of being called Sister Simmons, my title of Chaplain, Elder, or Doctor be used. When this is done consistently, it changes people’s mindset. We do this easily with men, but women must work harder for it.”

In the hospital rooms, Cheryl found she had to direct the interactions to demonstrate the pastoral authority of a chaplain. “When I’d stop by a patient’s room, a nurse might be in the middle of a task. Many times, I’d hear, ‘The chaplain’s here. I’ll let her pray while I finish this up,’ says Cheryl. “My visits are more than a quick prayer and no interaction with the patient. I’ve learned it’s better to say, ‘No, thank you. I’ll come back at a more convenient time.’ If all I did was pray, I’d consider that an expensive prayer because of the education and training I’ve received.”

Cheryl spends time sitting with the patient and their family. In doing this, she learns who they are and in turn, they learn who she is. “Some people won’t give you information if they don’t know you. So, I want to build a relationship first. Then ask questions, second. These interactions help me to understand their needs,” say Cheryl. “I don’t go in with a set agenda, although there are things I use to do a quick assessment. Then I let them tell me their story, and we go from there.”

Guiding people through their emotions and fears is a priority for

Cheryl as she ministers. “Many people are afraid when they’re in the hospital. They often don’t understand what is going on,” says Cheryl. “Sometimes they are angry and there can be any number of things going on in their lives. I give them permission to express their frustrations and questions. I’ve had many people tell me, ‘I’ve not been able to tell this to anybody else, but I’m going to tell you.’”

Left: Cheryl believes that ministering to her patients is more than a quick prayer.



Right: Mentorship is another expression of ministry for Cheryl.

TAKING THE TIME TO LISTEN

One memorable patient was a man Cheryl met while doing rounds. “I stopped by his room and introduced myself and told him if he needed anything, he could ask for me,” says Cheryl. “He asked if I had a minute and then, told me his story and how he’d been practicing homosexuality for years. After the visit, I returned to my office. A couple of hours later the nurse called and said they needed a





The culmination of Cheryl's doctoral degree didn't mean the end of learning. She believes in lifelong learning and is always eager for the next experience.

chaplain to visit the man again.”

Cheryl returned to the room and asked if they had forgotten to talk about something. “The gentleman asked if I thought God would forgive him for his past life,” says Cheryl. “We talked and prayed together. Then he decided he wanted to be baptized, and I arranged to do it the next day. It was such a joy to see him accept Christ into his life.”

SHE NEEDED HER MOMMA

While serving others, events that can be a personal loss or struggle often happen in the chaplain's life. Cheryl experienced loss and grief during her Doctor of Ministry studies. During a five-month period, her family experienced one loss after another. “My grandmother died, my daughter was diagnosed with a lump

in her breast, my son tried to die by suicide, and my granddaughter was in a serious car accident,” says Cheryl.

One of the most severe tests of her faith during this time was the accidental shooting death of her 19-year-old grandson. “An early morning call from a friend alerted me that something had happened to Anthony, my grandson,” says Cheryl. My friend asked me if I'd heard anything about him because her son had seen a post on Facebook.”

A phone call to her daughter, Anthony's mother, didn't reveal any news. Not wanting to alarm her daughter, Cheryl said that he'd been on her mind and that she was going to make a surprise visit to him at his university.

“I stopped by her house because she'd decided to go with me,”

“I TOLD HIM WE EITHER BELIEVE WHAT WE TELL THE PATIENTS WHEN WE GO IN THEIR ROOM, OR WE DON'T.”

says Cheryl. “During the trip, my daughter received a phone call from the police. The officer told her that Anthony had been shot while leaving football practice and hadn't survived his injuries.”

While focused on her daughter's pain and grief, Cheryl stopped the car on the side of the road. “While I held my daughter, my thoughts were that I'd never witnessed a death notification being given like that,” says Cheryl. “I was angry and frustrated. I'd seen and participated in many and the news was never given over the phone.”

It would be natural for a chaplain to slip into their chaplaincy role during a loss like this. That's the known and comfortable spot. But Cheryl knew her daughter needed her mother and not a chaplain. “My daughter didn't need theology or platitudes. She needed her momma.”

As the funeral arrangements were made, Cheryl held tightly to her conviction that something good would come out of this tragedy. “A young man spoke a powerful message during Anthony's service,” says Cheryl. “His appeal led to eight young people giving their lives to Christ.”

WE BELIEVE IT OR WE DON'T

One of the principles that Cheryl shares with chaplains whom she mentors is that it's important to remember others are watching. During the season of loss in her life, a chaplain resident observed Cheryl's reactions and asked her how she

coped with it all. “I told him we either believe what we tell the patients when we go in their room, or we don't. These patients have cancer or some other life-threatening illness. They are depending on me to tell them about a God they can't see, says Cheryl. “I must tell this story in such a way that they will believe it. The only way I can tell that story is if I believe it myself. And I can't only believe it when it is convenient. I must believe it during the hard times, too.”

LISTENING TO THE PROMPTINGS

Her role today at the Spartanburg Regional Hospital in Spartanburg, South Carolina, is as a palliative care chaplain. She also works on the faculty with the medical fellows. “My role is to train the fellows how to recognize family dynamics. They learn how to write verbatims about their interactions with patients, how to perform a spiritual assessment, how to have a conversation, and other skills,” says Cheryl. Her years as a chaplain provide a wealth of experience that Cheryl uses as she mentors others.

A five-year-old child does not know what their life story will hold. But through faith and listening to God's promptings, Cheryl Simmons trusted God through the good, the difficult, and the devastating. As her ministry has developed, she knows what she believes and wants to bring hope to all she meets.

The River Made a Miraculous Turn Uphill

By Pastor Asnel Valcin, Psy.D., BCCC, RRT,

Diplomate CPE Supervisor, CPSP, Episcopal Health Services Inc., Director, Pastoral Care & Education and Pastor Freddy Boutin, MAT, Fédération SDA de La Guadeloupe

On Friday, October 28th, the Chaplains participating in a Clinical Pastoral Education unit completed rounds on the people affected by the Fiona of Rivière des Pères storm. Pastor Freddy Boutin and I visited with Sister Mariezette Phina. She described the storm's impact on her emotionally and was grateful that Chaplains were on hand to listen to her story. She had more to tell, even though she had a chance, initially, to encounter other chaplains and psychologists. She wanted to share how her faith in God sustained her during the ordeal. In the earlier encounters, she was uncomfortable that some helpers were not ready to accept that she held on to God's promise: "When you go through the waters, they will not overwhelm you." In contrast, many others hung onto trees and walls to escape the furious waters.

FAITH AMIDST RISING WATERS

Marizette has been a Seventh-day Adventist for over 40 years. She is a member of the Saint Robert in Baillif. Her husband, Philippe Phina, occasionally attends but is not a member of the Adventist family. On the night of the storm, her husband left her alone in a three-bedroom bungalow-style house to move the car to higher ground. Meanwhile, the river rose to the ceiling of her veranda. However, the water was only up to her ankles in the house as she leaned against the main door, praying, and hoping her husband would return soon. She stated, "All I remember doing was recounting God's promises to me, and I was confident that my faith would save me." When asked how she felt during her husband's absence, she said she did not feel lonely in the house. She experienced a serene presence through her prayers, which she attributed to God's angels assisting

Suddenly, the river made a 90-degree turn and went uphill just 20 feet from his house.

her. However, when questioned about her thoughts about her husband's whereabouts and how he might have been feeling, knowing she was alone in the house, she said he should answer this question himself.

WATCHING THE HAND OF GOD AT WORK

The encounter with Mr. Phina, which took place the following Sunday, revealed how God was at work in saving the occupants of the two Adventist families, who were right on the path of this furious river, which had overflowed its banks. Philippe explained that while perched from the wall about three hundred feet from his house, he watched the river descending with great fury, carrying a huge boat and several boulders aiming straight at his home. Suddenly, the river made a 90-degree turn and went uphill just 20 feet from his house. With the help of the chaplains, he recognized that, indeed, the hand of God must have influenced this change in course. From that moment, Philippe acknowledged that a miracle certainly took place. He stated, "Three times I watched the boat heading straight for my house and turned back at about 50 feet away". Finally, the boat went upstream to rest on a small island of

sand created by the violent river.

This was the moment in the conversation that Philippe began reflecting profoundly on the providence of the Divine. While, initially, his references were guided by a humanistic understanding of good fortune and reason, this time, he reflected honestly: "One must take seriously the affairs of God." Later, he admitted to the foolishness of leaving the house to save the car. However, he also realized that this allowed him to witness the awesome work of God on behalf of his family. Except for God changing the course of the river to save both Adventist families' homes, they would have been destroyed by the sheer force of the raging river, the weight of the boat, or the boulders. In fact, the only death reported in this incident came as the river washed away a home just 300 feet from the Phina's home. We ended our conversation with Philippe declaring that God must be the reason behind this miraculous intervention. He ended the encounter by repeating his earlier admission: "I will pay more attention to the affairs of God."

ADVENTIST CHAPLAINCY MINISTRIES WORLDWIDE

INTER-AMERICAN DIVISION

COLOMBIA

During a trip to Colombia, Dr. Ivan Omaña conducted training for educational chaplains. He also oversaw and led the orientation for the fourth unit of the first Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Cohort of both the North and South Colombian Unions.



Dr. Omana conducted a CPE orientation.



Training for education chaplains took place in both the North and South Colombian Union.



Chaplains were eager to being their fourth CPE unit.



SOUTHERN AFRICA- INDIAN OCEAN DIVISION

ZAMBIA

ACM Director Dr. Ivan Omaña participated in an Adventist Accrediting Association (AAA) accreditation visit at Rusangu University located in Zambia. The AAA is the denominational accrediting authority for all tertiary and graduate educational programs and institutions owned by Seventh-day Adventist Church entities. The accreditation team evaluates the quality of the denominational institutions' programs and their implementation of the Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education in order to foster the unity and mission of the Church. It was a blessing to see Adventist Education in action at the university. Prayers for a great team of dedicated educators and awesome students who daily respond to the call with a resounding "I will go!"



Pray for the dedicated educators at Rusangu University.



The AAA visits include interactions with the departments and their programs.



Music was featured during the joint meetings.



Dr. Omana spoke to those in the congregation.



SOUTHERN ASIA PACIFIC DIVISION

PHILIPPINES

Four Ministerial Secretaries Complete Clinical Pastoral Program Level I

The South Philippine Union Conference Ministerial Association, headed by Pastor Elvin Salarda, held a culmination program for four ministerial secretaries who completed the Clinical Pastoral Program Level I on December 9, 2022. The individuals who completed the training are Pastor Nower A. Gomez, Pastor S. Tepan, Pastor Roy Hendrick Gaid, and Pastor Reynaldo Merin, who was elected president of the Davao Mission last month. The 400-hour coursework aims to develop pastoral care, clinical skills, and professional and ethical responsibilities among pastors. In their testimonial speeches, the four pastors shared their perspectives about providing better services to the brethren through the knowledge and skills learned from the CPE Program, such as crisis management, intensive care and counseling, keys to active listening, and the proper ways to conduct the pastoral visit.

In a special message, Women's Ministries Director Shirley Bacus explained that the CPE is about self-awareness and that everybody should be "processed" so one can learn more about oneself. She completed a CPE course and attested that the program is "holistic that is not only for the sick but for everybody." Pastor Rene Rosa offered a special prayer for the pastors after they received their certificates. The ceremony, attended by the workers and staff, was held at the SPUC Function Hall.



Four Ministerial Secretaries from the South Philippine Union Conference completed a CPE Unit.



A special program highlighted the pastors' studies.



A special prayer was offered for the pastors during the ceremony.

*Teach me to do your will, for you are
my God. May your gracious Spirit
lead me forward on a firm footing.*

Psalm 143:10, *New Living Translation*





Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries

WORLD DATABASE

Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries is the church entity that supports Adventists who serve as chaplains in both church-related, public, or private institutions.

To support you, we need to know who you are and what you do. We have created a system to collect this information and store it securely. This information will be available to your Division and Union ACM director to help them also serve you better.

YOU CAN CREATE YOUR PERSONAL PROFILE AT PORTAL.ADVENTISTCHAPLAINS.ORG.

- Click the Create Account button.
- Complete the User Information section.
- Create your login information, supplying your email address and a password. Your password must be at least 8 characters long and must contain at least one uppercase and one lowercase letter.
- Complete the Chaplaincy Information section.
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Be sure to complete the section on subscriptions to receive your complimentary digital copies of the ACM magazines *The Adventist Chaplain* and *For God and Country*. You can also choose to receive occasional email updates and texts from Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—General Conference. Don't forget to click submit.

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Comments and/or articles will be considered for publication. Contact the editor at acmeditor@gc.adventist.org. Include your full name, complete mailing address, telephone, e-mail address, and current digital photos with all submissions. Items submitted by mail will not be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed, stamped return envelope.

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True education...has to
do with the whole being,
and with the whole
period of existence
possible to man.

Ellen G. White



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