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*An Inter-Lutheran Journal  
for Practitioners and  
Teachers of Pastoral Care  
and Counseling*



# CARING CONNECTIONS

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# THE PURPOSE OF CARING CONNECTIONS

*Caring Connections: An Inter-Lutheran Journal for Practitioners and Teachers of Pastoral Care and Counseling* is written by and for Lutheran practitioners and educators in the fields of pastoral care, counseling, and education. Seeking to promote both breadth and depth of reflection on the theology and practice of ministry in the Lutheran tradition, *Caring Connections* intends to be academically informed, yet readable; solidly grounded in the practice of ministry; and theologically probing.

*Caring Connections* seeks to reach a broad readership, including chaplains, pastoral counselors, seminary faculty and other teachers in academic settings, clinical educators, synod and district leaders, others in specialized ministries, and—not least—concerned congregational pastors and laity. *Caring Connections* also provides news and information about activities, events, and opportunities of interest to diverse constituencies in specialized ministries.

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# Editorial

“Lutheran Endorsement Committee.” What is that? Many people have asked a question like this in the past, and it’s still being asked today. I remember asking it myself back in 1972, when informed that before I met a CPE Committee for Advanced Standing I would have to meet a Lutheran Endorsement Committee. Now, many years and committee appearances later, I look back with some fondness upon that Lutheran Endorsement Committee meeting. In some ways it was my “favorite” committee, coming out of it with a clear sense of affirmation about my process and ministry, given by representatives of my own Lutheran faith. However, when the editorial board suggested “Endorsement” as a topic for this issue of *Caring Connections*, I was initially less than enthused, not because of my own experience, as I just stated, but because I thought it wouldn’t be a very exciting and intriguing point for articles. But the more we began to delve into the matter, the clearer it became that we’d gotten a bit of a tiger by the tail.

Endorsement is a hot subject these days, and the articles contained in this issue should help to both clarify the history and current status of the endorsement process, and offer commentary on possible developments as well. Articles were solicited from the major cognate groups, and the following articles were received:

- Judy Simonson, Assistant Director for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education in the Vocation and Education unit of the ELCA, and John Fale, Associate Executive Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, lay down the basic foundation for understanding what the endorsement process means within the various specialized ministry settings in the Lutheran church bodies.
- Herb Mueller, member of the Inter-Lutheran Coordinating Committee for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education (ILCCMPCCE), writes from his perspective as the President of the Southern Illinois District of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod about the importance to bishops and district presidents of the endorsement process as it currently is used in the two church bodies.
- Ted Lindquist, another member of the Inter-Lutheran Coordinating Committee, representing the Association for Professional Chaplains (APC), contributes his thoughts gleaned from many years of involvement with certification and participation in Lutheran endorsement committees.
- Deryck Durston is the Associate Director for the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE). He is also the chair of the Endorsement

Task Force of the Spiritual Care Collaborative, and from that perspective he shares comments about the current concerns in many denominations about the place of endorsement in the certification processes.

After you read through these articles, you might have a comment or two to share with the rest of the readership of *Caring Connections*. If so, send us an email (either Chuck at [cweinrich@cfl.rr.com](mailto:cweinrich@cfl.rr.com) or Kevin at [kevin.massey@elca.org](mailto:kevin.massey@elca.org)). We’ll include your thoughts in the subsequent issue. As proof that we will do so, be sure to read Lee Joesten’s comment on Tim Thorstenson’s article in the Fall, 2009 issue, and Tim’s response to Lee’s letter. It’s the segment we’re calling, *Letters to the Editors*.

In the Fall, 2009 issue we also included a devotional piece, and invited readers to contribute similar articles when moved to do so. Although we haven’t yet received any, we still are open to such offerings from you readers! Just contact either Kevin or Chuck.

Joel Hempel has contributed “In Memory of Rev. John Costello,” in the “For All the Saints” segment of this issue of *Caring Connections*. John died on March 14, 2010, and Joel, who met John first as a professor at Concordia Theological Seminary in Springfield, IL, wrote the tribute, more personal than a formal obituary. John Fale informed us that Costello was an Irish Catholic who became a Lutheran after reading C.F.W. Walther! I also knew John from when I took a class with him while I was pastoring a parish. In addition, he did my initial Intake Interview for CPE. He was a unique man of God, and will be missed. Read Joel’s tribute, on page 15, to learn more about him.

Joel has asked that we include comments addressed particularly to any Lutheran who is in training to become a Chaplain, Pastoral Counselor, or Clinical Educator. The **Give Something Back** Scholarship Fund - at this time - has \$3000.00 available every six months for those Lutheran brothers and sisters who are in need of financial assistance as they journey through their professional training. If you are interested in obtaining more information, contact either the ELCA “Ministry of Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education” office, [Theresa.Duty@elca.org](mailto:Theresa.Duty@elca.org) or, the grant request may be sent to the LCMS office of “Specialized Pastoral Care,” [Judy.Ladage@lcms.org](mailto:Judy.Ladage@lcms.org).

I might add that I personally have included this Scholarship Fund as a beneficiary in my will. Would those of you who have benefited from this fund before, or are just concerned that people get financial support in their efforts to join the ranks of endorsed and certified chaplains, pastoral counselors, or clinical educators, consider doing the same?

By now each of you should have received a personal notice about ZION XIV, including a brochure detailing information about this triennial gathering of Lutherans in Specialized Ministry settings. Be sure to read the details on the conference in the “News, Announcements and Events” segment of this issue. I also serve on the planning committee for that event (whoever said “retirement means taking it easy” hasn’t explained that to me!), and I join Bryn Carlson and the rest of the planning committee in enthusiastically encouraging you to make plans to join us in Atlanta, Georgia on October 21-24, 2010. It looks to be another wonderful gathering. We’ll write more about it in the next issue of *Caring Connections* as well.

As always, if you haven’t already done so, we hope you will subscribe online to *Caring Connections*. Remember, **subscription is free!** By subscribing, you assure that you will receive prompt notification when each issue of the journal appears on the *Caring Connections* website. This also helps the editors and the editorial board to get a sense of how much interest is being generated by each issue. We are delighted that the numbers of those who check in is increasing with each new issue. You can subscribe by clicking on the subscription link on [www.caringconnectionsonline.org](http://www.caringconnectionsonline.org), or by following the directions given on the masthead (p. 3), or in larger print on page 17.

## Call for Articles

*Caring Connections* seeks to provide Lutheran Pastoral Care Providers the opportunity to share expertise and insight with the wider community. We want to invite anyone interested in writing an article to please contact the editors, Rev. Kevin Massey and Rev. Chuck Weinrich.

Specifically, we invite articles for upcoming issues on the following themes.

Spring 2010 “Ministry and Dementia”

Summer 2010 “Parish Nursing”

Fall 2010 “Pastoral Care and Addictions”

# Endorsement - What Does This Mean?

One of the goals of the endorsement process as a whole is to strengthen the relationship between the candidate and the church body.

Any discussion of the term “endorsement” needs to begin with the classical question, because the word “endorsement” is used by more than one group, both within and outside our denominations, to mean different things. Many graduates of seminary think they have been endorsed - and they have. It is just that they were endorsed as part of their candidacy process so that they could go on internship in their third or fourth year of study. The ELCA candidacy process uses that term for consent by the candidate’s synodical candidacy committee that the student may move on to the next step in their seminary education.

That is a completely different context than the one we are concerned about here. Endorsement, in the sense we are using it in the specialized ministry context, is a term used by both denominations and professional certifying bodies. First, it indicates that the denomination is willing to state that the applicant for professional certification is in good standing in the denomination and has a relationship of accountability with the denomination. Second, while every denomination has a somewhat different process, the understanding is always that the denomination has determined that the candidate is suited to a specialized ministry and is ready to proceed with the certification process.

The LCMS and the ELCA take this responsibility very seriously and have developed a set of standards, used jointly, to determine the readiness of candidates. How to access these standards and the endorsement process information is given at the end of this article. It is important to note that the process, which involves submission of materials, a personal interview with a committee, and a recommendation that goes to the Synod or District for ratification, is standard for both denominations.

The particular specialties for which we endorse are chaplain, pastoral counselor and clinical educator. In most cases, the endorsed person is employed by an agency or institution separate from a congregation. Some pastoral counselors, of course, have private practices. And some congregations will call someone to spend most of their time in counseling. However, the usual situation is to be located outside a congregation. The employing agency or institution may or may not be church related. The call, in either case, comes from the church body.

One of the goals of the endorsement process as a whole is to strengthen the relationship between the candidate and the church body. Endorsed persons who go on to be certified represent the denomination in a unique way. It is important that they under-



stand this relationship and do whatever is necessary to keep connected to the supporting church body.

The consultation process is available to candidates for just that reason - consultation. Meeting with a committee does not necessarily mean that a person is seeking a decision about endorsement. Consultation committees are available to meet with those who wish to speak with knowledgeable persons about their sense of call into a specialized ministry and receive counsel about how they might proceed to prepare themselves. When and if they are

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ready to move forward, a consultation committee will meet with them again to make a recommendation.

Rather than viewing the consultation process simply as a necessary item to be checked off before moving on, the candidate is encouraged to see it as

the beginning of an on-going relationship with colleagues who are in a position to guide and support their ministry.

Another goal of the consultation process is to assess the candidate's readiness to proceed with the certification process. The certifying bodies (APC, AAPC, ACPE, and CPSP) have rigorous standards and their own criteria. Sometimes it happens that a candidate comes before a consultation committee having completed the requisite theological and clinical training, but lacking good written materials or unable to express her or himself adequately in the interview. This does not mean that the candidate fails to show potential for one of the specialized ministries. But it serves neither the church nor the individual to grant endorsement under these circumstances. The consultation committee will suggest remedial steps and be available to meet with the candidate at a future time.

Anyone interested in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling, or clinical education should begin by accessing the materials available on the denominational web sites. There is a wealth of information in the document "Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education: Endorsement Standards and Procedures". It may be found by going to the ELCA web site: [www.ELCA.org](http://www.ELCA.org) and then typing in the "search" box the words "MCPC-CE Endorsement". It should be the first item to open. For the Missouri Synod, go to [www.LCMS.org/spm](http://www.LCMS.org/spm) and click on the last item in the submenu at the top of the page, titled "Ecclesiastical Endorsement Manual."

In addition, the denominational staff persons are available to discuss a particular situation or explain the procedures. That contact information may also be obtained from the web sites.

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*Judy Simonson is presently the Assistant Director for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education in the Vocation and Education Unit of the ELCA. Previously she served as Assistant to the Bishop of the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod, ELCA. Before that she was the Chaplain at the National Lutheran Home for the Aged in Rockville, MD.*

*In addition to his role as Associate Executive Director of LCMS World Relief and Human Care, John Fale is a Board Certified Chaplain through the Association of Professional Chaplains and a certified Fellow with the American Association of Pastoral Counselors. He enjoys a small pastoral counseling practice in a local congregation in the St. Louis area.*

# Chaplain and Church: Making a “Caring Connection”

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The purpose of this [endorsement] process is to strengthen the “caring connection” between “chaplain and church.”

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The one, holy, catholic and apostolic church we confess is the body of Christ, the sum total of all who believe in the Lord Jesus. Everyone who is baptized into Christ and believes in Him is a member of His body. Jesus Christ is the Head, giving life and direction to the body. Within this one body of Christ, there is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, etc. Christ gives Himself in His body and blood to feed the Church as His body. Christ Himself is the Head of every believer, connecting all believers to each other and to Him. Wherever there are believers in Christ, there is the Church, for the Church includes all those in every place and time who are connected by faith to Christ as the Head of His body.

So where will we find believers? As Lutheran Christians we know we will find believers wherever the Gospel is purely taught and the Sacraments are rightly administered. We are justified, declared righteous before God, the Scripture teaches, solely by God’s grace for the sake of Christ alone, received through faith alone. Wherever this gospel of Jesus is purely preached and the Sacraments are given in accordance with the gospel, there God will gather His Church. There you will find holy believers who hear the voice of their shepherd.

This takes place primarily in local congregations, groups of believers the Holy Spirit gathers around pulpit, altar and font. Through God’s Spirit bringing Jesus to us, God Himself is at work as God’s people, led by their pastors, worship, baptize, preach, teach, confess & forgive, gather at the Lord’s Table and reach others with the saving message of Christ. Here God is faithful to His promises. Here Christ builds His Church. Here Christ grows His body. Here Christ gathers people for eternity. But this gathering also takes place **anywhere** the Gospel and the Sacraments are in use, whether a small hospital chapel, a large suburban parish, a mission start in the inner city, or even behind the walls of a prison!

Where do ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and clinical education fit into this wonderful Biblical and confessional picture? It is important to know that I write as a member of the “Inter-Lutheran Coordinating Committee” for these ministries and as a district president in The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, serving a district of about 100 congregations. As a district, we also sponsor prison ministry in more than 25 locations around Southern Illinois, ranging from volunteers at a local



jail to full time federal or state prison chaplains. Many of our part-time chaplains also serve as pastors of small congregations.

How does this work? The congregations of the district partner together with participating congregations, pays them a *per diem* for a portion of the

*Ecclesiastical endorsement deepens the connection, helping both the minister and the congregations see the various specialized ministries as extensions of the congregation.*

pastor’s time. Thus, local pastors go into prison to bring the Gospel to the inmates on behalf of all our congregations. The district also calls one full time chaplain to serve a community where several penal institutions are located, as well as a deaconess to serve in a women’s prison. Two of the pastors on our roster are also full time state prison chaplains (paid by the state). All of this prison work comes

under the oversight of the district president and a district prison ministry coordinator (who is also a local pastor).

What about hospital chaplains and other specialized ministry? At present our district supports the ministry of one full time hospital chaplain, an experienced pastor who entered this specialized ministry several years ago (this pastor also helps care for a small but vibrant congregation). In all cases, we see these specialized ministries as vital extensions of the Word and Sacrament ministry of our congregations. Sometimes the parish is directly involved in sending its pastor into a specialized ministry. In other cases, the whole district has called the pastor or deaconess to serve in this capacity. But in every case, our specialized ministries are the body of Christ at work, extensions of the church's ministry to bring the healing Word of God to hurting people.

Ecclesiastical endorsement is, of course, an important part of this process. The "Endorsement Standards and Procedures" Manual prepared by the ILCC defines ecclesiastical endorsement as "the recognition by the ELCA and LCMS that a rostered person has met inter-Lutheran standards for theological and ministerial competence to serve in ministries in chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and clinical pastoral education. It attests to the church body's assessment that an individual possesses the suitability, readiness, competence, and aptitude to serve as its representative in a particular ministry" (Endorsement Manual, p. 6). The process also makes clear the responsibility of the chaplain or specialized minister to his or her ecclesiastical supervisor, the respective synod bishop or district president. Obviously, not all of our specialized ministers have ecclesiastical endorsement but the purpose of this process is to strengthen the "caring connection" between "chaplain and church."

What does this mean? How is this done? Two good Lutheran questions! We believe the church as the body of Christ is expressed in the local gathering of believers. Our specialized ministries arise from the care and love the body of Christ has for others outside the body or not connected to it. Ecclesiastical endorsement deepens the connection, helping both the minister and the congregations see the various specialized ministries as extensions of the congregation. Those who serve in ministries of chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and clinical education are not outside the body but integral members of it. The purpose of ecclesiastical endorsement is to make this connection clear and strong.

How is this done? Procedures differ slightly between the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod, but the starting point is the same. Contact either the national office of your church body or your local district president or synod bishop. They will be happy to get you started on the path toward ecclesiastical endorsement. District Presidents in general do support the endorsement process and see

it as an important link connecting the ministry of chaplains and specialized ministers and the mission of our congregations. We have one goal – to see more people in heaven through the cross and resurrection of our Lord!

Why do all this? "As in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in

*District Presidents in general do support the endorsement process and see it as an important link connecting the ministry of chaplains and specialized ministers and the mission of our congregations.*

Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given us, let us use them..." (Romans 12:4-6a). Ecclesiastical endorsement is simply a way to live out this truth, making plain the "caring connection" between "chaplain and church." May God bless all of us, you and me, in our pastoral journeys!

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*Rev. Herbert C. Mueller, Jr., currently serves as President of the Southern Illinois District, LCMS. He submitted the following biographical statement, which might give some indication of his sense of humor, as well as his qualification to serve as a District President.*

*Herb Mueller was born and raised in Lutheran parsonages in North Dakota and Michigan. His passion is helping the pastors and congregations of his district confess Christ together before the world. If you wake him up in the middle of the night to ask him his favorite Bible verse, he would probably answer with: "I am crucified with Christ. Therefore I no longer live, but Christ lives in me, and the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Then again, if you wake him up in the middle of the night, who knows what you would hear! Herb has been married to Faith for nearly 35 years. They are blessed with three grown children: a pastor, a diesel mechanic and a music teacher, all gifts of God. Herb and Faith love to spoil their two grandchildren, but the only problem is that they live 600 miles away. The district provides him with a deep blue Ford Focus that his wife calls his "blue sanctum" or "blue sanctuary" because of the great sound system and satellite radio. Herb is thankful to God for the opportunity to serve the people of God in Southern Illinois.*

# Endorsement and the Association for Professional Chaplains

I believe that our churches need to see endorsement not as a requirement that needs to be addressed, but as a ministry that encourages, develops, and supports those we choose to send into the world.

When I was asked to write an article about endorsement from an Association of Professional Chaplains (APC) perspective, I agreed, with but a single caveat. My reflection would need to be that of a member of the APC, and not as representative of the organization as a whole. As you might well expect, there is no single perspective in such a sizable organization. Endorsement has been a topic of discussion for several years, and continues at this time. Currently, those talks having been picked up by the Spiritual Care Collaborative; a setting where the major pastoral care, counseling, and clinical pastoral education (CPE) organizations in North America come together to tackle issues of common concern. See Deryck Durston's article in this issue of *Caring Connections* for more on the Spiritual Care Collaborative and its concerns about endorsement.

During my tenure on the APC's Board of Directors, I made a presentation to the board about the challenges and difficulties of endorsement. Those challenges have not diminished and may even have grown. Having worked with candidates, endorsers, and would-be endorsers, I frequently experienced the variety of difficulties with the current standard. Ultimately, I came to the conclusion that endorsement should not be required by the APC as a standard for certification. The changes in the APC and in the faith communities themselves require a new direction. A brief history will help set the groundwork for my views.

The APC came into being in 1998 as a merger of two organizations, the College of Chaplains, and the Association of Mental Health Clergy. At its origin (1946), the College of Chaplains was an arm of the American Protestant Hospital Association. As you might expect from the date and name of that overseeing body, the College was comprised primarily of white, male, mainline protestant chaplains (a more detailed history can be found on the APC website [www.professionalchaplains.org](http://www.professionalchaplains.org)). As standards of certification were created and developed, endorsement was required as a means for the chaplaincy organizations to obtain the denominational approval of those seeking to enter this growing field of ministry.

Over time, the standards for certification have



grown, changed, and been adapted to new realities. In the area of theological education, for example, the original standard only obligated the candidate to meet the educational requirement that the denomination had established for ordination. After a time, the disparity of educational backgrounds of those seeking to join the organization became a concern. With

*I came to the conclusion that endorsement should not be required by the APC as a standard for certification.*

the challenges of working in a professionally charged, clinical setting in mind, the bar was raised to require each candidate to have earned a Master of Divinity degree. As pluralism and the realities of being a multi-faith organization become increasing

realities, an equivalency process was created and the standard was eventually restated as “three years of graduate level theological education or its equivalent.” Acceptable accreditation was defined for the educational process. As the number of faith groups represented in the APC grew, the equivalency process grew in prominence; it was refined, adapted, and continues to evolve.

This same kind of developmental process can be seen in other standards for certification. CPE has changed dramatically over the decades and the standard connected to it and its eventual equivalency process has adapted. Ordination was once a standard that now requires, “ordination, commissioning, or other similar standing to function in a ministry of pastoral care.” Just seven years ago a standard required 15 competencies that needed to be demonstrated in order for a candidate to be approved for certification; they were heavily focused on the internal life of the chaplain. The number and type of competencies have adjusted and grown. The current 29 competencies were adopted after the efforts of the Council on Collaboration, a predecessor to the Spiritual Care Collaborative, produced a unified document. Those competencies focus more heavily on the functional activities of the chaplain...the external life, if you will.

Through all of these clinical and cultural changes, the requirement for endorsement has remained essentially the same. While the other standards for certification have evolved to meet the needs of new situations, endorsement has stood in one place – *stalled* in one place. It sits squarely among the standards of the 1940’s. It doesn’t really matter to the APC how it is accomplished, how the faith group comes to its decision to endorse. It only matters that it happens. Each faith group endorses according to its own criteria, in its own way. For the APC, as long as the words “endorsed for ministry as a chaplain” are on a piece of paper signed by someone with the authority to grant the endorsement, the standard can be considered met. That is the most significant problem with retaining endorsement as a standard for APC certification.

The ELCA and LCMS, working together as the Inter-Lutheran Coordinating Committee for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education, have produced a strong endorsement process that examines each candidate to specified criteria. It stands among endorsing church bodies as one of the best and most complete reviews of candidates. It then requires that each endorsed chaplain or counselor go on to be certified. At issue is the reality that this process puts us at one of the endorsement “poles” in the APC. We stand there with the United Methodists, who have an equally rigorous process. At the other pole are organizations that have no idea of what endorsement is, what it is intended to do, or have no place for it in their practice.

The National Association of Jewish Chaplains, a

member of the Spiritual Care Collaboration, does not require endorsement. They don’t require it because endorsement has no meaningful place in Judaism. The APC, however, requires that Jewish chaplains be endorsed. Even though the process is almost meaningless inside of their faith system, the APC requires the needed letter before the chaplain’s process can move forward. The same issues raise their heads for Buddhist, some Islamic, independent and non-denominational Christians, and newer faith expressions.

*The reasons that an endorsement might be granted or withheld can frequently have nothing to do with the person’s ability to serve as a chaplain.*

In the middle stand those faith groups that endorse locally, typically by a judicatory leader who may or may not have an understanding of what endorsement is intended to accomplish. They endorse because it is an expected part of their role. With an understanding that seems to equate endorsement with being in “good standing,” they send the letter to the APC. What to do with those letters of good standing has been problematic. Frequently, those letters have been returned to the author so the words “good standing” can simply be replaced with “endorsed for ministry as a chaplain.” More recently, some of the letters have been accepted, provided that the tone of the letter suggests support for ministry beyond the local faith community.

The result is that, for a large percentage of APC members, endorsement can well be a meaningless process for the candidate, endorser, judicatory, or all three combined. I have become convinced that a large number of endorsements are of diploma mill quality. The paper looks good, but there is no substance behind it.

To further aggravate the problem, the reasons that an endorsement might be granted or withheld can frequently have nothing to do with the person’s ability to serve as a chaplain. Endorsements have been withheld for gender, gender orientation, marital status, and financial concerns. Amazingly, the APC has found itself in the untenable position of accepting a few endorsements that are based solely on the fact that money changed hands and that a pledge to make an annual contribution to the endorser has been made.

The APC expends significant resources, both staff and volunteer, in order to assist candidates with the endorsement process. The assistance becomes, in essence, a teaching program in which both candidate and endorser are educated to the requirement. The

benefit of this process is that new relational possibilities are created. Unfortunately, what happens to that relationship after the endorsement has been granted cannot be determined.

Endorsement was intended to be a means by which the religious body expressed support for the ministry of the chaplain. It was to acknowledge a line of accountability between the chaplain and the endorsing body. It would serve as the recognition of a ministry that flows from the calling of the chaplain, is celebrated and affirmed by the faith body, and accepted by the certifying body as recognition of the chaplain's value to that group. It would be a locus for the chaplain to have an ongoing supportive relationship with the body that has sent him or her into the world to provide care, in the name of the endorsing body, to the sick, the imprisoned, and the vulnerable. In reality, in too many places, the chaplain and endorser connect once every five years – by mail — as part of the chaplain's process for maintenance of membership.

I do not suggest that our churches put an end to the practice of endorsing chaplains, counselors, or clinical educators. Quite the opposite, they need to expand its role. But the cart has gotten in front of the horse. It is so far in front of the horse that it is dragging it, kicking and screaming, into an uncertain future. We endorse because the certifying bodies tell us we need to. We endorse because the chaplains, counselors, and educators need us to do it in order to be certified. We do it because, without certification, most of these people would find themselves unable to be employed in clinical settings. We do it without answering the question of whether or not those ministries are important to the church. We do it without answering the question about what our responsibility is, if we do want to send our rostered leaders into this clinical world.

We cannot expect the certifying bodies to continue to require chaplains to be endorsed. The problems I have described are too embedded in the system to be resolved in any meaningful way. I fully believe that sometime in the next five years, those bodies will drop the requirement. Church bodies will need to decide if endorsement is still important when it is not required by the clinical world. Will our churches be able to require it of chaplains, counselors, and educators if there is no external need?

I believe that our churches need to see endorsement not as a requirement that needs to be addressed, but as a ministry that encourages, develops, and supports those we choose to send into the world. I also believe we can do that.

I will confess ignorance of the LCMS structure in such things. In the ELCA, federal chaplaincy endorsements (those required by the US government) are handled through an office in Washington, DC. A full time director, who reports directly to the presiding bishop, oversees the process and provides for the support and training of those entering these ministries. An entire unit of the ELCA has been

established for the development, training, and support of those in Global Missions. On the other hand, clinical endorsements (those required by the APC) are handled through a quarter time staff member, two steps removed from the executive of the unit in which it sits. The differing financial commitment and reporting requirements are startling.

In our Lutheran church bodies, we can, if we value the endorsement process enough, expend the resources needed to provide, not just endorsement, but engaged, ongoing support for those in clinical ministries. I would not suggest that our churches attempt to create something that parallels what

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exists for federal chaplaincies or missions. Some of that work is handled through other structures. But if endorsement is to be truly about relationship, our churches will need to find creative ways to be in that relationship.

Chaplains also need to ask themselves if they would value endorsement enough to seek it out when the certifying bodies no longer require it. Many have already answered that question with a serious “no.” Those who minister in places where certification is not needed have frequently not bothered to engage the process. We need to answer what we want endorsement to be if it is only established for those who are to be certified.

Endorsement, as it currently exists, will not survive. As people engaged in clinical education, chaplaincy, and counseling ministries, as people who oversee these ministries and as people who issue the calls, we need to decide what we want endorsement to become.

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*Ted Lindquist was certified as a chaplain in 1991, and currently serves at St. Mary's Hospital in Madison, WI. He has held several leadership positions in the Association of Professional Chaplains, including seven years on the Board of Directors as Chair of the Commission on Certification. He is currently the APC State Representative for Wisconsin and serves as the ELCA's APC representative on the Inter-Lutheran Coordinating Committee for Ministries in Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education.*

# ACPE and the Endorsement Process

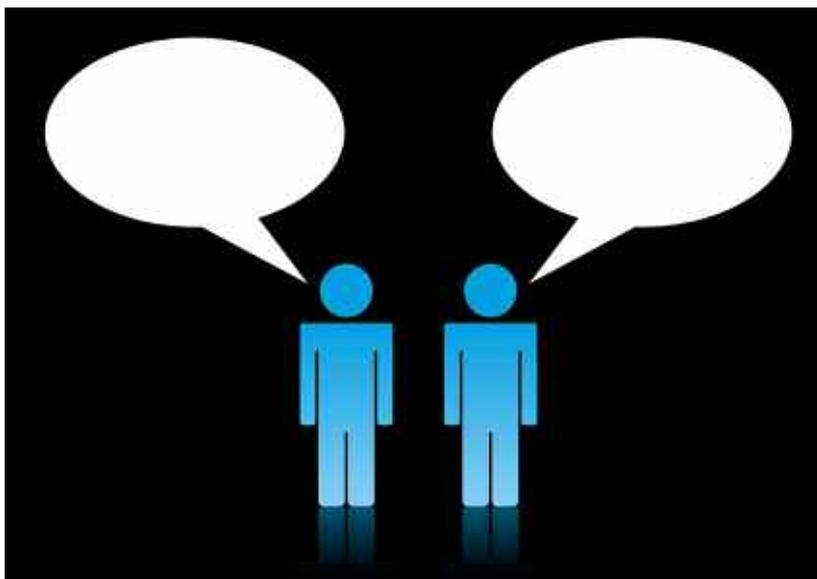
I see Lutherans as no different from other historical churches in which internal splits over various issues have obviously affected everything, even, regrettably, endorsement practices.

As convener of the **Endorsement Task Force of the Spiritual Care Collaborative** (Members: Karen Dorshimer-Chaplin (APC), Tere Canzoneri (AAPC), David Lichter (NACC), Cindy Morneau (CAPPE/ACPEP), Naomi Kalish (NAJC), Richard Gorman (AREB/ACPE), Deryck Durston (ACPE/Convener of the Task Force), I have learned much with regard to mutually understanding the issues that confront certifying organizations and various religious endorsing bodies. We focused on the civilian ministries rather than the military as the military is served by a different group of endorsers in most cases, and is less of a challenge for the certifiers. We are living in changing times, times in which many faith groups that have endorsed persons to specialized pastoral care ministries/positions are straining to hold accountable those endorsed, and those who certify are encountering numerous difficulties, such as variations with respect to endorsement practices, policies and the very existence or not of the policy or practice of endorsement, or even something like it.

Not only was I the convener for the Task Force, I also contributed a report on the ACPE's stance on endorsement. Since that is what I was asked to write about for this issue of *Caring Connections*, I decided to share that report with you.

The Association for Clinical Pastoral Education, Inc. adheres to the principle of respecting each faith group's determination of how an individual is endorsed to the ministry of CPE Supervision. We check this at the point that a Supervisory Education Student is ready to meet a Candidacy Committee. As the Associate Director, I check the appropriateness of the endorsement, and if it checks out, I send a letter of good standing for use by the student meeting the Candidacy Committee. Appropriateness relates to whether the student has adhered to the policy and process of his or her faith group. This endorsement must be confirmed at the final certification level of CPE Supervisor again, and thereafter, the supervisor is responsible to report any changes or loss in endorsement. In cases where there is no practice of endorsing in the individual's faith group, we seek a statement of accountability to the faith group in whatever way possible. A Task Force within ACPE had already agreed on the following:

- ACPE needs no loose cannons supervising without membership in a faith group that will offer the Candidate support for the arduous task of becoming certified.



- ACPE holds the value that its supervisors have a faith group identity to which they are accountable, and in which they are members in good standing.
- ACPE needs flexibility in what counts as endorsement because faith groups are diverse.
- ACPE needs a standard process and a verifier of endorsement to make the process user-friendly and consistent yet flexible.

*ACPE needs no loose cannons supervising without membership in a faith group that will offer the Candidate support for the arduous task of becoming certified.*

- ACPE is interested in avoiding legal liability for the unendorsed and is also interested in helping protect faith groups whose congregations or subgroups might “endorse” without the national endorser of the faith group having proper involvement in the decision.

ACPE has a policy and procedure for anyone in a faith group that precludes ordination or endorsement to certain membership groups such as women or gays/lesbians. This is called the Ecclesiastical Conflict Resolution Policy. It may allow the suspension of endorsement requirements for up to

seven years while the individual seeks an appropriate endorser. This has been used in several cases and has had a helpful outcome in that those making use of the policy have transitioned during this in-between time into a faith group that will endorse their ministries, including supervision.

ACPE has chosen to use the following definition of endorsement starting in 2010 as part of its new five-year cycle of standards:

Faith Group Endorsement/Accountability – formal recognition by a faith group that a person is a member in good standing of that group and affirmation of that person for admission to the status of Supervisory Candidate and/or certification as Associate Supervisor or ACPE Supervisor.

Part of the new 2010 Standards for those preparing for a Certification Review for Candidacy, under Guidelines and Requirements, states that a candidate must be able to document her or his ordination or commission to function in ministry by an appropriate religious authority, as well as faith group endorsement/accountability or its equivalent.

In preparation for review for Supervisory Candidacy, there are formal requirements for applicants that are checked by the ACPE national office for completeness: ACPE clinical membership, graduate theological degree or its equivalency, ordination or commission by a faith group, endorsement by a faith group endorser, and submission of an ACPE ethical accountability form, which is to be submitted to the ACPE Associate Director, who happens to be me!

ACPE expects those in the certification process, and thereafter as Supervisors, to report any changes that impact meeting any of these requirements, and for each new committee review in the certification process an updated version of this form is to be used. Any changes to endorsement or ordination should be reported on this form until the Supervisor retires or ceases supervising.

Particular sections of that form relevant to this current discussion include, in addition to obvious items like the name of the applicant in the Certification process or supervisor, the applicant's current ordination/commissioning status, name of their faith group, their current Endorsement/Accountability status, and an Endorser's name and contact information.

It is the student and developing Supervisor's responsibility to report any changes in endorsement to the Associate Director. Since both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod have developed a particular process for endorsement, I then advise the student on how to find the appropriate office for endorsement.

It is clear that there are convergences and divergences between endorsing bodies and certifiers and differences within endorser and certifier groups. I expect the lay of the land to be ever more shifting. I

am aware that several traditional Protestant faith groups who have most used the system of endorsement, not just us Lutherans, are in the process of examining and possibly reorganizing and downsizing their endorsement functions. Communication within faith groups about these changes has been uneven, especially of late, and students do not always have accurate current information on which to base their decision to request endorsement.

*I am aware that several traditional Protestant faith groups who have most used the system of endorsement, not just us Lutherans, are in the process of examining and possibly reorganizing and downsizing their endorsement functions.*

Certifiers may try but cannot be sure that they are directing students to the currently appropriate office within their faith group. The Task Force sees a need to continue working together, to continue learning from each other even as the landscape continues to change. We are working towards common ground and clarity, which will take walking and talking together to accomplish.

In conclusion, let me say that, to a certain extent, I am at a disadvantage in speaking of the current Lutheran process since I have not had to work with very many Lutherans coming through the CPE Supervisory Certification process in recent years. Based on the experiences I *have* had, I have seen some problems for those who have been issued letters of endorsement issued by bishops who do not know or do not want to observe the process if they do not know, either because they do not respect the national level of the church theologically, or because of other authority issues. Actually, I see Lutherans as no different from other historical churches in which internal splits over various issues have obviously affected everything, even, regrettably, endorsement practices.

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*Deryck Durston, M.Div., S.T.M., is the Associate Director of the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education. He was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1952, came to this country in 1978 and began CPE in 1979 at Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn, NY. Certified a CPE Supervisor in 1986, he became the Associate Director for ACPE in 2003. He enjoys exploring new settings for pastoral education, developing international and cultural exchange in CPE, and creating a bridge between the practice of pastoral supervision and administration.*

# Letters to the Editors

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I liked Tim Thorstenson's article in the Fall, 2009 issue of *Caring Connections* ("Redemptive Confession: Forgiveness, Trust and Medical Errors") because of my own efforts at Lutheran General Hospital to develop a disclosure program. Tim has done a great job where he's at and did an excellent job describing it in his article. I think I spotted a misstatement in his article though: I think *metanoia* is the Greek word for **repentance**, not forgiveness, as he states at the top of page 20. Actually, the point that he is making in his article is strengthened if he refers to repentance. When caregivers do make mistakes, we do need to repent (in a sense) and confess if we're going to truly learn from our errors.

Lee Joesten  
Lutheran General Hospital  
Advocate Health Systems  
Park Ridge, Illinois

Thanks Lee, for the correction. I continue to have empathy for the surgeon referred to in the article who transposed the kidneys, as I find myself transposing concepts more and more these days. The intent was indeed to refer to repentance, in line with the main theme that it is confession that soothes the soul and creates the softening of the heart in others. Much appreciated.

Tim Thorstenson

# For All the Saints

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In Memory of the Rev. John Costello  
July 24, 1928 – March 14, 2010

*A Tribute by Joel Hempel*

If you go on line and type "John Costello" in the search box, you will learn more than you want to know about John Costello the baseball player, John Costello the politician, John Costello the actor, and John Costello the musician. Although the specialties of these four men may apply to our John Costello in some indirect way, they tell us nothing about the man of God many of us have known and loved.

Professionally, John was a loyal and prophetic pastor within the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod, one of his denomination's first CPE Supervisors, and a recently certified Diplomate in CPSP. He had been a parish pastor, institutional chaplain, a seminary professor, an administrator, and a conference presenter. He served professional organizations in various leadership capacities and served his church body until the very end of his life.

In the last years of his life, following a stroke that confined him to a wheelchair, John continued to be professionally and pastorally active. One of his most important contributions during these final

years is that our brother was instrumental in getting a task force formed to assist LCMS Human Care Ministries in the recruitment of ministers for chaplaincy, pastoral counseling and Clinical Pastoral Education.

Various awards and recognitions were given to John, most notably the *Christus in Mundo* award from the Inter-Lutheran Coordinating Council in 1998, and the *Servant of Christ* award in 2005 from Concordia College, Bronxville, New York.

John was a loving and faithful husband, and he couldn't get enough of his family. He served in the United States Navy, and was an outstanding tenor who could usually be talked into singing "Danny Boy," at least after a couple of beers. He modeled hospitality, had the gift of encouragement, and loved to laugh!

John, enjoy your time in the presence of Jesus. You didn't earn it, but thanks to God, you now have a right to it!

## New and noteworthy

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ZION XIV  
OCTOBER 21 – 24, 2010  
THE LODGE AT SIMPSONWOOD  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA

*Speakers:* Commitments have been received that both the President of the LCMS and the Presiding Bishop of the ELCA will be with us for this event. Each will address the total group and also have time to speak with their own constituents.

*Theme:* The conference will explore the theme: “Firm Foundations: Theological Challenges of Pastoral Care in Contemporary Specialized Ministries.” Plenary speaker will be Dr. Fred Niedner from Valparaiso University. Bible Study will be led by Dr. Shauna Hannan of the Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbia, SC.

As in previous Zion Conferences, there will be workshops. Contact Ben Moravitz at [moravitz@bellsouth.net](mailto:moravitz@bellsouth.net) if you are interested in sharing a passion of yours with your sisters and brothers in ministry!

*Location:* Seclusion in the Heart of Atlanta! The Lodge at Simpsonwood is a Christian adult and family retreat center nestled in the heart of metropolitan Atlanta, Georgia ([www.simpsonwood.org](http://www.simpsonwood.org)). It is surrounded by 227 acres of woodlands along the Chattahoochee River with three miles of wooded trails. Designed to harmonize with nature, all facilities are within easy walking distance of one another.

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There will be time for private reflection, conversation with colleagues and friends, or touring points of interest in Atlanta.

The brochure is in the mail! If you don't receive one in the next few weeks, contact Judy Ladage at [Judy.Ladage@lcms.org](mailto:Judy.Ladage@lcms.org).

Zion XIV Planning Committee:

Bryn Carlson, Chair  
Margaret Anderson  
Evon Flesberg  
Ben Moravitz  
Chuck Weinrich

### GIVE SOMETHING BACK SCHOLARSHIP

**Attention:** any Lutheran who is in training to become a Chaplain, Pastoral Counselor, or Clinical Educator: The **Give Something Back Scholarship** Fund - at this time - has \$3000.00 available every six months for you Lutheran brothers and sisters who are in need of financial assistance as you journey through your professional training!

For more information, contact either the ELCA “Ministry of Chaplaincy, Pastoral Counseling, and Clinical Education” office, [Theresa.Duty@elca.org](mailto:Theresa.Duty@elca.org) or, the grant request may be sent to the LCMS office of “Specialized Pastoral Care,” [Judy.Ladage@lcms.org](mailto:Judy.Ladage@lcms.org).

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## Recent and upcoming events

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### Inter-Lutheran

October 21-24, 2010 Zion XIV takes place at The Lodge at Simpsonwood in Atlanta, Georgia

## How to Subscribe

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*Caring Connections: An Inter-Lutheran Journal for Practitioners and Teachers of Pastoral Care and Counseling welcomes your submissions of news germane to specialized ministries as well as announcements of forthcoming events. You may e-mail news items and announcements to one of the Caring Connections news editors: John Fale at [John.Fale@lcms.org](mailto:John.Fale@lcms.org) or Judith Simonson at [jsimonson@pennswoods.net](mailto:jsimonson@pennswoods.net)*