

The Spiritual Caregiver

A Newsletter of the Ecumenical Institute for Pastoral Care

How CPE Change Me

The Essence of CPE

At Work

I went to visit Jane, a nursing home resident who was hospitalized. Instead of her usual calm, peaceful self, she was agitated, depressed and in a lot of pain.

She was dying, and she was very afraid.

Of course I wanted to comfort, encourage and help her to feel secure and loved. She said she felt abandoned by God. I talked with her and prayed with her. I asked God to send her an angel to bring her comfort. I left feeling like I hadn't done enough.

As part of the CPE learning process, without naming names, I shared the heart of visit. I was so uplifted and encouraged by the feedback and support. I realized then that I had done as much as could be done in this situation. *I had been "Jesus with skin on" or the "angel" I had prayed for.*

Lesson learned: Keep trying to help! Sometimes we do so much more than we realize. Before getting the support from the class, I felt like a failure. After class I was ready to go minister again!



Karen Borchers is the Director of Advancement for Ecumenical Institute and a graduate of the EI 2000 / 2001 CPE class.

Building Community Through Training Pastoral Caregivers



Building Community by Training Pastoral Caregivers

Being a Wife

My husband was going on an errand to Cherokee where a friend was hospitalized. I yelled across the house to him in a commanding tone, "Go see Bob while you're in Cherokee." Then my CPE training kicked in and I walked to where he was getting ready to leave and said, "If you have time, I'd appreciate you stopping to see Bob while you're in town."

Lesson learned: Look at life through your spouse's eyes and understand their needs and be able to explain yours to them.

Being a Mom

I have always been a workaholic so I am very concerned about getting a job done and being efficient. I was hurriedly doing farm chores when my son said, "Watch this Mom." He had a helicopter spinner that would fly up in the air when he pulled the string. So I stopped for a few brief seconds and watched it fly up and then quickly resumed my work. He immediately and disappointedly said, "Mom, you're supposed to watch it

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come down too!" Then I watched it go up and down.

Lesson learned: Take time to clarify and to understand your child and know what is important for them. Have an open, trusting relationship with your child so you can know when you screw up so you can do better the next time.

Conclusion: A wise person once said – it's not how far you go, or where you end up, *but how many you touch along the way.* I thank God for the opportunity of CPE, to have learned how to touch the many people God puts in my path.

— Karen Borchers

New Group Begins CPE Training

9-11 this year was a *very good* day for at least eight people in NW Iowa!

September 11th was the starting day for Certified Pastoral Education (CPE) for *eight* new students. This group will meet one afternoon per week (1 to 5 PM) for *thirty weeks*. This meeting schedule, which accommodates some incredibly busy people -- is still much more classroom training than required by national CPE accreditation standards.

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Chaplain Gene Sitzmann is the Training Supervisor of Ecumenical Institute. In addition to training over 400 students in CPE, Sitzmann has served parishes in Northwest Iowa for over forty years.

The Ecumenical Institute — 1



The class of 2003/ 2004. Back row: Elaine Doorenbos, Alice Sporrer, Judy Bauerly, Benjamin Meeks, Donald Kunkel, David Schol and Arturo Gomez. Front: Training Supervisor Gene Sitzmann and Curtis Matson

When added time outside the classroom -- actual ministry, journaling, reading, writing up ministry reports (verbatims), each learner's total hours are at least 400 hours. This 400 hours is the minimum amount necessary for the unit to be 'certified', that is, to receive full credit for the experience. A significant commitment!

From the trainer's perspective, a top priority in recruiting a class is having diversity in the group. On that score, this class is superb! Four are ordained and four are lay ministers and/or clinicians. There are three women and five men in the group. Six faith traditions are represented: Lutheran, Presbyterian, Catholic, United Methodist, Reformed Church (RCA & CRC) and a non-denominational Christian Church.

Class members minister in churches, nursing care facilities/programs (Hospice), hospitals and in the community served. Ages range from young (e.g. just married) to, shall we say, 'advancing years'. Mix it all together, and we have

lots of shared energy, enthusiasm, experience, wisdom and good humor!

Members hail from LeMars, Akron, Sioux Center, Merrill-Adaville and Sioux City. Meeting locations rotate, so that each learner periodically hosts the entire group, either at the student's parish church or at some community service agency. This model replicates that of last year's program, which was held in Buena Vista, Clay and Ida Counties. Meeting in different locations proved to be very effective and meaningful -- still one more way to "gain a different perspective."

Those now enrolled are: Alice Sporrer, Rev. Curtis Matson, David Schol, Elaine Doorenbos, Rev. Donald Kunkel, Rev. Benjamin Meeks, Judy Bauerly and Rev. Arturo Gomez. Each has a special, personal reason or reasons for enrolling at this time. In the pre-enrollment interview process, each indicated that having the CPE program readily available right in their immediate community -- not at a distant institution --

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was a highly ranked factor in the decision to participate.

Your thoughtful prayers of care and support are greatly appreciated. Look for updates on "what we learned in school today" in the next EI Newsletter!

One Learner's Perspective



Dear Gene,

*That fateful day:
September 11,
2001*

Between the time I got in my car in Spencer, to the time I arrived for our first CPE class together, the world changed. The world changed, but the world also stayed the same – people will always need effective and empathetic pastoral care.

As I look back upon my training for ministry, college, seminary, ministry conference and on-the-job training at the two churches I served in Atlanta, GA and Spencer, IA – I am grateful that I was able to take CPE with you in Cherokee. Like Naaman the leper, who received healing from his wife's servant, an unlikely source, I have received some of my best ministry training from what I considered an unlikely source, a Roman Catholic priest leading a CPE program in rural Northwest Iowa. Gene, you challenged me when I needed to be challenged, made me think when I needed to think, cared for me when I needed to be cared for and embodied to me what us Wesleyans call "Scriptural Holiness."

When I think of taking CPE with you, the word that comes to mind is "relevant". CPE traditionally means Clinical Pastoral Education. I

experienced another form of CPE, *Community Pastoral Education*. I was grateful for the opportunity to write about, discuss and reflect upon my service as a pastor in a local congregation and to the larger community. I rarely recall a session where I found myself asking, "How is this going to enhance the ministry that God is calling me to do?" I learned much about issues I deal with as a pastor on a regular basis: family relationship disorders, death and dying, pastoral skills, ministry with the sick and on and on and on. As grateful as I am for those pastoral skills being developed, I am even more grateful that because of CPE, I am a better husband to Amber and a better father to Benjamin.

You taught me that I can say "Yes" to God by saying "No" to the church. As a person who is wired to achieve and to do things, you let me know that boundaries are necessary, modeling authentic relationships is essential and that sometimes it is necessary to "Be still and know that God is God." I will never forget the day that you used the analogy about the car with the empty gas tank having one of two choices: either running out of gas or going to the filling station. As Christians our filling station is the love of God and the love of others. That day in Cherokee, my tank was almost empty and my engine was about to shut down. About two years later, my tank is almost full. Thank you for

blending both professional and personal development.

I know that the CPE program has undergone a transition since I have last seen you. No longer do the students meet at the Mental Health Institute. I know that must have been a difficult transition, especially financially. I am not aware of other CPE programs that have done this. But, I praise God for your courage and insight to do this. I pray that this new model is something that "bigger" and "more established" programs are able to duplicate.

"I have received some of my best ministry training from what I considered an unlikely source, a Roman Catholic priest leading a CPE program in rural Northwest Iowa."

As you know, the world has changed in recent years and the way we must minister to our world must change as well. I remember well during my hundreds of hospital visits at the Spencer Hospital that I ran into the same dilemma during about half of my visits – the patient wasn't in the room because he or she had already been sent home. During my last months at Grace, it was difficult to even figure out who was in the hospital with all the HIPPA regulations and requirements. So much more of our ministry needs to be done in

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Significant Progress Towards \$500,000 Challenge Goal!

An estate challenge gift of \$500,000 remains in effect through the end of 2004. To date, over \$310,000 has been raised – nearly \$80,000 in just the last two months. If Ecumenical Institute raises the *full* \$500,000 by December 31, 2004, an anonymous donor has pledged an estate gift of land and cash valued at over \$500,000. **Thank you for prayerfully considering what you can do to build up people throughout Northwest Iowa.**

One Learners Perspective, cont.

the community. As a Roman Catholic, you are aware as I am as a United Methodist, with a challenge (and an opportunity) that both our denominations (as well as virtually every other organized denomination in rural America) face: a shortage of seminary-trained pastors.

The challenge is that ministry needs to be done according to a different model. The opportunity is that lay people can use their spiritual gifts and passions to embrace and serve in a ministry of caring and sharing. The early church in the book of Acts did "pretty good" without an abundance of seminary-trained pastors and I suspect today's church can too. I pray CPE in northwest Iowa becomes a training center to equip and inspire lay people of all Christian flavors to go back to their churches and communities to "bear each other's burdens and fulfill the law of Christ" (Galatians 6:2.)

The Greek word for priest, as you know, is "bridge". Gene, I pray that you continue to be a "bridge" to Jesus Christ as you have been for so many years. I also pray that you keep training people to be a "bridge" between the brokenness of the world and the holy God that we both faithfully attempt to serve.

May God bless you always and in all ways,

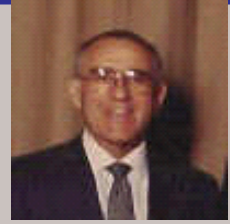


Craig Finnestad

Readers can contact Craig through his web-site:

www.CraigFinnestad.com

In Memoriam



Following a prolonged illness, Dr. Howard H. Marty passed into eternal life on Tuesday, July 29th at Sartori Memorial Hospital, Cedar Falls, Iowa.

Howard's many interests, together with highly developed professional expertise in many areas, made him a *clinical-pastoral* person, par excellence. By inclination, Howard was a pastor, indeed an Elder in his United Methodist Church. By profession, Dr. Marty was a well-trained clinical psychologist.

Howard was able to meet and comfortably relate to a wide variety of people. His perspective was holistic and integrated -- always respectful of the human condition, both body and soul. Dr. Marty was widely known and respected as a devoted, effective, compassionate and dependable friend to those carrying heavy burdens.

When first approached with the idea of bringing Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) from an institution right into the home communities of students, Dr. Marty latched on to the idea with vigor. He never forgot the deep significance of CPE to his own life from a CPE unit he had taken years earlier at the Mental Health Institute in Independence, Missouri.

Widely read and never short of vision, Howard knew the needs of the community and took a leadership role in pursuit of fulfilling the dream of a community-based CPE program. He was articulate, convincing and dedicated to the Mission of the *Ecumenical Institute* and served as our first president (1993-1997) until retirement and relocation to Cedar Falls.

Howard's vision, love and care for the Institute will be greatly missed. His beloved wife and faithful companion, Emogene, has offered the following reflections addressed to all of us working with Ecumenical Institute:

"Thank you so much for the lovely bouquet of white spider mums, yellow snapdragons and purple Larkspur. It was striking and a beautiful memorial of his interest and work with your organization. Thank you so much, Gene, for your help with the burial and your presence and concern. Your attending was greatly appreciated."

Howard was laid to rest in the LuVerne, Iowa cemetery, just a brisk walk from where he grew up. Here he gained his first 'doctorate' in learning to care for the soil, its trees, plants, flowers and water. This first love - *nurturing* - was the bed-rock of an entire life well lived.

Rest now in His Peace: Howard Henry Marty
- Fr. Gene Sitzmann

Fall 2003 Challenge Grant: \$40,000

Several key supporters of Ecumenical Institute have pledged \$40,000 in additional contributions if others will contribute an additional \$40,000. Gifts given in response to this newsletter, as well as all Christmas and year-end giving, will be matched dollar for dollar.

Making a Difference in Time of Need

Vicki Baxter has worked at Buena Vista Regional Medical Center since 1987. She has been the Director of Outpatient Addiction Unit and, more recently, a part time social worker on the hospital's Geriatric Behavioral Health Unit.

In 2001, Vicki took the community based CPE training. She volunteered as a spiritual counselor on the Oncology Unit of the hospital for her CPE practicum. The staff saw that Vicki's being there made a difference. In September, 2002, she was hired as the Oncology Unit's spiritual counselor.

"Having a spiritual counselor fills a void in our Oncology Unit," says charge nurse Joan Christen. "Every Oncology Unit should have one. Vicki Baxter has a calming effect; she helps people put things in perspective. The patients look forward to seeing her."

One particular woman really found it helpful to have someone listen. She invited Vicki to her home for lunch, for a private chat. There she asked

The Word Is Out - and Spreading!

Rev. Gary Sartain, Director of the North Central Region of ACPE, recently disclosed plans to feature the *Ecumenical Institute* in the region's upcoming Newsletter. Sartain indicated that the Mission and achievements of Ecumenical Institute deserve recognition.

Sartain indicated that Ecumenical Institute should be a model for other CPE programs, particularly those located in hospital settings. Many hospital CPE programs have been downsized out of existence in the cost-cutting epidemic to the medical profession.

The North Central Region includes most of the mid-western states including Iowa, North and South Dakota, Minnesota, Illinois, Missouri and Wisconsin.

ACPE - the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education - provides Ecumenical Institute one of two national accreditations. More to follow about this in Ecumenical Institute's next newsletter . . .

— Father Gene Sitzmann

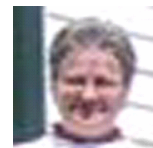
Vicki to participate in her funeral. Just two weeks later, the woman died.

Another man was so distraught with his life situation that he was ready to end his life. For this situation, Vicki's intervention was critical. She helped him sort things out, and he left a totally different person. The nurses do care - - but simply don't have enough time to listen as much as they would like.

Staff and patients are glad Vicki is there. She offers a listening ear, suggests resources, gives insight to nursing staff and humor when she appears as "Bertha". Christen comments, "She adds a whole new wonderful dimension to our program!" Today, patients at the Center fill out a survey indicating if they want

to talk to a spiritual counselor and, if so, what their needs or concerns are. Care is taken to compliment the support given by pastors, family and friends.

Each year, Vicki returns to the CPE classroom to teach about "Enneagrams," a powerful personality profiling system. This popular training provides insight into basic personality types. Students understand themselves better, so they can enhance their strengths and work on their weakness. By learning to be more understanding of people with different personality types, they serve others better - professionally on the job, and personally at home.



Vicki Baxter is Spiritual Counselor at Buena Vista Regional Medical Center, Storm Lake, IA.

Thank You!

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Prayer Team EI Prayer Partners

Do all this in prayer, asking for God's help. Eph. 6:18

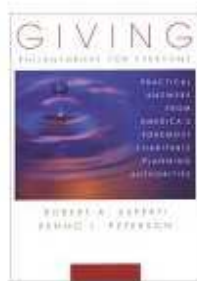
We are developing a formal Prayer Team. If you would like to be part of Ecumenical Institute's new prayer partner program, call or e-mail me at (712)368-2500 or caregivingnow@yahoo.com.

Let's unite our hearts and minds in prayer. Please pray that we may do God's will as we continue our fall class. Join us in praise for the completion of another fulfilling class. Pray that people see the vision to build community through pastoral care. Pray that donations will flow generously so we can hire a new supervisor in the near future. Thank you.

-Karen Borchers

Free Book for Legacy Donors

Attention Legacy Givers to Ecumenical Institute: If you have included Ecumenical Institute in your estate plans, just let us know to receive your free copy of Giving: Philanthropy for Everyone. This easy-to-read book is loaded with helpful information on how you can increase your charitable giving impact. Over 400 pages – all in simple "Question and Answer" style. Just call Karen Borchers at (712) 368-2500 to receive your copy – our way of saying THANK YOU for so thoughtfully including us in your estate plans.



We'd love to hear from you!

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