

*Dr. Beverly K. Yahnke, DOXOLOGY's Co-Executive Director, explores helpful pathways to identify qualified counselors for parishioners needing mental health care.*

## **Pastor, Do You Know Someone Who Can Help?**

Pastors are given the special joy and obligation to care for the sheep and lambs entrusted to them by God. Ordinarily laity receive their pastor's care as they attend the Divine Service each Lord's Day, hearing the Word preached faithfully and receiving the Holy Sacrament. Yet, as every pastor knows, there are many souls who seek personal spiritual care when they are hoping for assistance in answering questions about their faith, or as they seek guidance with personal matters, struggle to confront family dysfunction, or as they respond to marital challenges, health crises, fear, failure or painful bereavement.

In my clinical practice I have the opportunity to talk with many clients who have sought spiritual care from their pastors, but who have benefitted from accessing psychological care, as well. Pastors who detect mental health needs among parishioners are often able to suggest trusted counselors to whom individuals can turn with confidence. As pastors tend to spiritual matters, counselors attend to matters



of anxiety, depression and other disorders. Mental health professionals teach a wide array of strategies that provide clear assistance to parents, spouses and children alike. Counselors are also able to detect when an individual's mental or emotional functioning may merit special medical assistance.

How often have you heard one of your parishioners who struggles with depression, anxiety or any host of real life challenges ask you, "Pastor, do you know someone who can help?" Often, the honest answer is, "not really." Seeking a counselor can be one more (albeit important) thing to do.

Perhaps even more frequently, how often have you realized that a parishioner required psychological consultation, but you just weren't

certain how to find someone to whom you could refer with confidence? One of the most frequent inquiries I receive from pastors across districts is a plea for assistance in finding a counselor – for themselves, their family members or their parishioners. For quite a few pastors, locating a trusted psychologist is a difficult undertaking.

Finding a counselor is always a challenge and it is useful to determine whether or not a counselor will be a benefit or an obstacle to your parishioner's spiritual well-being. If you are able to connect with an individual who professes to be a Christian counselor, that could be great – or not. Sometimes a very capable secular psychologist will be superior to a “Christian” counselor with dubious Scriptural knowledge who muddles through the Chief Articles of Faith or twists/misrepresents the doctrine of our church.

### **Suggestions to identify capable counselors available in your community or region:**

1) **Call your District office** and ask if there are several reliable counselors or psychologists to whom they refer church workers with confidence. Many Districts convene a “Ministerial Health Committee” for purposes of providing advisement in the matter of church workers’ special needs. There is often a psychologist or licensed clinical social worker who serves on that committee who could connect you with colleagues in the mental health community who could be of help.

2) **Call a couple of your brothers** within 50 miles and ask the same question. Or, call a few Lutheran elementary school principals; they may have uncovered a few excellent referral resources of which you’re unaware. You aren’t looking for a Yellow Pages recommendation but you are seeking someone that another pastor or principal has actually met, spoken with or can endorse with confidence.

3) **Call the priest** in town and ask to whom he refers; you’d be surprised how many Roman Catholic priests and principals have referred parishioners to my office in the last couple of decades.

4) **Call the largest university** nearby, connect with the counseling department and ask to whom they refer students for ongoing mental health care. Or, call that same university and see if you can contact a Lutheran Chaplain who has identified a prized referral source off campus for students or faculty with special needs.

5) **Check out the web** page for the American Association of Christian Counselors. They have a locator function that will assist you to find a "Christian" counselor within 25 miles of home.

<http://www.aacc.net/resources/find-a-counselor/>

Naturally there are many flavors of "Christian" that are represented in the membership, although all profess a Trinitarian creed. Never recommend any counselor unless you have personally reviewed his or her web page; or, preferably until you have had a conversation with the individual you will suggest to your parishioner.

6) **Call your physician** to determine if he or she has developed a referral relationship with a psychologist. Very often GPs, OB/GYN offices and pediatricians have identified a number of professionals in the mental health community who are very effective.

### **Inquiries – Before You Recommend Any Therapist to a Parishioner**

Presuming you’ve found some contact information for a psychologist or counselor it will be a clear benefit if you can meet that individual, or at least have an extended conversation with him or her. Here are some inquiries (conversation starters) that may prove to be helpful in your search.

Most likely you will want to identify a counselor who has been trained as a cognitive behavioral therapist. At the outset you can ask what the therapist’s theoretical orientation is. Knowing one’s orientation will ensure that they’re not raving Freudians, Jungians or some New Age aroma therapists. A cognitive behavioral perspective ensures that this individual has been trained in, and has adopted, standards of practice that are conventionally regarded as the most useful in treating a wide spectrum of adjustment matters and disorders. It’s not sufficient for the therapist to be “nice;” he or she must be

extremely skilled at addressing the matters of particular importance to your parishioner. Therefore you'll need to ask what portion of their clinical practice is devoted to seeing clinical issues for which your parishioner seeks care (e.g., depression, PTSD, alcoholism, hoarding).

It is reasonable to ask a counselor whether or not he or she invites individuals to bring the resources of their faith with them into the counseling process. If they say, "yes" it is reasonable to ask them what that means. (Be prepared for some rather inventive answers to that question.)

Do they pray with clients and examine Scripture together? (If not, that's surely not a deal breaker. In fact you may want to avoid therapists who do Bible studies as a part of their clinical work *unless* you are knowledgeable about their Biblical literacy and their creed.) Do they make decisions and plans in light of what they believe God's will is in the matter? I also think it is reasonable to ask a counselor whether or not he or she is a practicing Christian – and to inquire how that influences the nature of his or her psychological care. If the therapist is a self-professed Christian, I'd encourage you to ask what church he usually attends. (I find that some people will say they are Christians, but then will tell you that they don't really attend any particular church on a regular basis – because they find God e-v-e-r-y-w-h-e-r-e.) Finally, you can ask if the counselor finds it useful to collaborate with clergy who provide spiritual care for their clients.

### **Assist Your District Office**

Perhaps each District Ministerial Health Committee might prepare a regionally relevant list of psychologists or social workers whom pastors and Lutheran school principals could contact for further information about referral. When you do find a counselor who is God-fearing, competent, professional and interpersonally effective, be sure to share his or her name in your Circuit and advise your Ministerial Health Committee that you've identified an important resource person whose name should be shared widely among pastors in the District.

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### **Interested In Learning More About DOXOLOGY?**

Take a look at DOXOLOGY in action! This brief video provides an overview of our three part program. You'll also see what pastors, DOXOLOGY faculty and pastors' wives have to say about the much acclaimed DOXOLOGY experience.

<http://www.doxology.us/Resources.aspx>

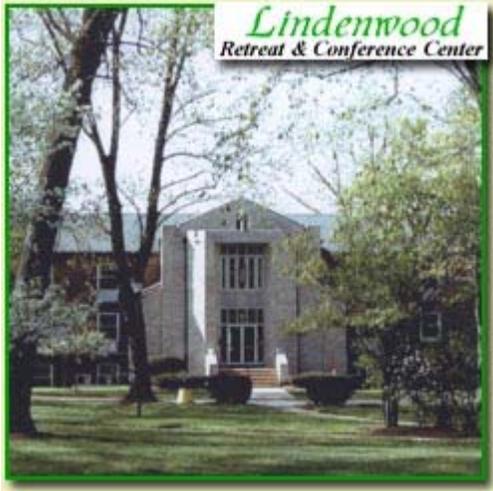
### **Schedule Announced for 2011 DOXOLOGY Events**

DOXOLOGY is pleased to announce the dates and venues for the training events scheduled to begin in 2011. *On-line registration for these events will open early in August, 2010.* Save the dates on your calendar so that you will be able to attend this much acclaimed program.

Talk now with your congregation about enrollment for one of these forthcoming training cycles. You may read a full description of DOXOLOGY's spiritual care and counsel training program on our web page.

<http://www.doxology.us/Page.aspx?id=5>

# Indiana



Lindenwood Retreat and Conference Center is located in Donaldson, Indiana.

<http://www.lindenwood.org/index.html>

Gathering 1/9/2011 - 1/12/2011

Encore 5/20/2011 - 5/22/2011

Reunion 8/5/2011 - 8/7/2011

(The Reunion will be held in Springfield, Illinois at the Chiara Center.)

# Illinois



The Chiara Center is located in Springfield, Illinois

<http://www.chiaracenter.org/default.aspx>

Gathering 6/6/2011 - 6/9/2011

Reunion 8/5/2011 - 8/7/2011

Encore 11/11/2011 - 11/13/2011

# Minnesota



Christ the King Retreat Center is located in Buffalo, MN

Gathering 6/26/2011 - 6/29/2011

Reunion 8/5/2011 - 8/7/2011  
(Held in Springfield, IL)

Encore 2/03/2012 - 2/05/2012

<http://www.kingshouse.com/index.html>

## Graduate Credit Now Available for DOXOLOGY Program

A recent decision by the Graduate Committee of Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, Indiana provides that pastors enrolled in the CTS Doctor of Ministry will receive up to 6 credit hours of advanced standing toward the D Min upon completion of the DOXOLOGY program. In addition, they are eligible for up to 3 independent studies (nine credit hours) under the supervision of Dr. Senkbeil in areas related to the curriculum of DOXOLOGY.

For further information, contact Dr. Senkbeil: [HSenkbeil@doxology.us](mailto:HSenkbeil@doxology.us)

## Fall DOXOLOGY Events

**Register Now to Hear Dr. John Kleinig and Dr. Harold Senkbeil**

DOXOLOGY will offer two short seminars in specialized pastoral care this fall as part of its "Spotlight on Ministry" series. These seminars are open to all pastors, whether or not they have previously enrolled in the longer DOXOLOGY program.

## Real Life Preaching/Helping People Entrapped in Porn

**Seminars Will Explore These Program Topics:**

*Theophany in the Pulpit: Preaching as Disclosure of God's gracious Presence*

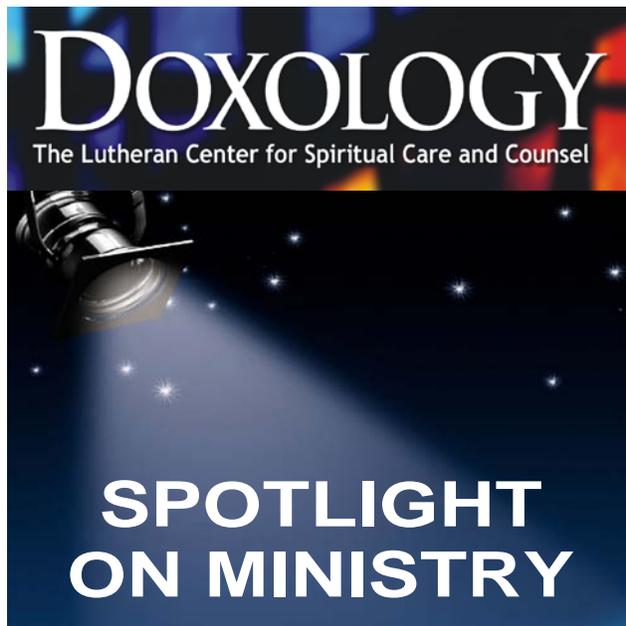
*Preacher as Prophet: Sermon Strategy and Delivery*

*Confronting Pornography: Sexual Sanctification*

*Preaching the Real Presence of the Risen Lord Jesus*

*Preaching to Postmoderns: practicalities and applications*

A SPOTLIGHT conference includes intensive instruction, collegial enrichment, worship, and relaxing conversation.



Pastors attending previous SPOTLIGHTs have commented:

- *Immensely practical w/ concrete situations and suggestions that we face in the parish*
- *Wonderfully valuable opportunity to address timely issues, make helpful contacts, and to be encouraged & renewed*
- *(The presenters were) very clear and effective, obviously seasoned veterans in their respective fields with a wealth of insights & experiences.*
- *Go! If you don't have time, go anyway – this is extremely helpful for any pastor to attend.*

## **Illinois**

**Monday/Tuesday September 13 & 14, 2010**

Our Lady of the Snows Hotel

**Belleville, IL** (near St. Louis)

<http://www.snows.org/Hotel.aspx?path=root/english/GuestServices/hotel/hotel>

Registration opens at 1:00 p.m. on Monday; program concludes at 3:00 p.m. Tuesday

## **New Jersey (NYC Area)** **Monday/Tuesday September 27/28, 2010**

Carmel Retreat Center

**Mahwah, New Jersey** (NYC area)

<http://carmelretreat.com/>

Registration opens at 1:00 p.m. on Monday; program concludes at 3:00 p.m. Tuesday

**SPOTLIGHT ON MINISTRY Cost: \$180**

(Includes overnight lodging, dinner, evening reception, breakfast and lunch)

**Reserve your spot now! Register online at**

<http://www.doxology.us/Page.aspx?id=>

## Rocky Mountain High at St. Malo Retreat Center

Pastors and their lay leaders gathered together in Allenspark, Colorado on the weekend of June 18-20 to participate in the Encore training event. Rev. Randy Golter, President of the Rocky Mountain District,



joined the retreatants and preached the Saturday morning prayer office in the Chapel on the Rock (seen in the background.) Other photos of the event are available on DOXOLOGY's Facebook page.

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/album.php?aid=182321&id=33195341594&ref=mf>

DOXOLOGY provides a weekend retreat where each enrolled congregation may send one lay leader to an event with their pastor. Some pastors bring multiple lay leaders so that a number of lay leaders can participate in the same training experience and share their insights and recommendations with their parish when they return home.

### **Pastors who have attended this event with their lay leader have commented:**

\*The opportunity to spend time with lay people from my congregation in this setting has been invaluable, both for me and for them. It is my prayer that God will continue to richly bless our congregation through DOXOLOGY.

\*Having now attended the first two parts of DOXOLOGY, I can say it has been transformational for me personally and professionally as a pastor. My personal life, family life and congregational life has improved because of DOXOLGY. I've been built up so I can now build up Christ's people.

\*DOXOLOGY has been a blessing to not only my ministry and my walk, but a blessing to the lay leaders of my congregation and their well being. This training and renewal has already helped.



Dr. Senkbeil addresses the pastors and lay leaders on “Church and Ministry”

### **Lay leaders who have attended the Encore have written:**

\*As a lay leader I have experienced many frustrations in my elected position. DOXOLOGY has rejuvenated me for service and has given me information and additional skills to support both my pastor and my congregation

\*It’s refreshing that DOXOLOGY regards Lutheran distinctiveness not as a liability, but as an asset. The weekend helped me to learn a lot as a lay leader.

\*I must tell you that I feel this weekend will have a profound impact on the life and well-being of our congregation. I can’t wait to get home and share what we have learned.



Pastors and Lay Leaders Share Perspectives in Lively Conversations

**Please share this newsletter with others who may enjoy learning about DOXOLOGY’s forthcoming programs!**