

2025 COMISS NETWORK FORUM

*Celebrating 100 years of Excellence in Clinical Pastoral Education
and Training: Past, Present and the Future*

Forum Host

Ivan Omaña, D.Min, BCC, BCPC

Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries at the
General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

We are grateful to the World Headquarters of the Seventh-day
Adventist Church in Silver Spring, MD, for graciously hosting
our COMISS conference and generously supporting the
conference in a slew of tangible and intangible ways.

Host Center

**Seventh-day Adventist
Church-Headquarters**

12501 Old Columbia Pike,
Silver Spring, MD 20904

The Day's Agenda

8:00 - 8:30 Check-In

Registration & Continental Breakfast

8:30 - 8:40 Welcome Message

Dr. Ivan Omaña, D.Min, BCC, BCPC

The Rev. Steven Voytovich, D.Min., LPC, COMISS Chair, COMISS Network

8:45 - 8:50 Opening Meditation

Rabbi Dr. Joseph S. Ozarowski, BCC

8:50 - 9:00 Overview of Agenda

Including meeting format details, and introduction of speakers, by the Rev. Denise
Parker Lawrence, D.Min., CPSP Diplomate, COMISS Chair-Elect, COMISS Network

9:00 - 9:40 Plenary 1: White Paper on Clinical Chaplaincy Formation

Presenter - The Rev. Steven Voytovich, D.Min., LPC

We are, this year, celebrating 100 years of clinical training, recounting Dr. Richard Cabot's invitation to theological students: "*A Plea for a Clinical Year in Theological Education*" and Anton Boisen's invitation for others to experience caring for those facing psychiatric illness.

Since then, the history of the clinical training movement has been complicated on multiple fronts, and today, it remains something of an incomplete quilt, with portions of fabric sewn together, and other portions remaining as patches yet to be incorporated or not.

In the meantime, the chaplain's role remains an open question in caregiving environments, complicated by a branding dimension. Perhaps a fitting way to celebrate this 100th anniversary involves a plea for open dialogue among all stakeholders, occurring in the context of a national round table.

A live example of this will be shared!

9:45 - 10:20 Plenary 2: Spiritual Care Week

Presenter - Clyde Angel, D.Min., BCC, LPC;

Honoring and Educating. Engage in a historical review of Spiritual Care Week and its impact upon chaplaincy and spiritual care in specialized settings while examining the early beginning of Pastoral Care Week and its evolution to Spiritual Care Week.

10:20 - 10:30 Break

10:30 - 11:10 Plenary 3: CCAPS

Presenter - Russell H. Davis, PhD.

Dr. Davis presents the exciting history and evolution of CCAPS from its origins in the last century to its latest developments. The current CCAPS Standards connect to a compelling story of visionary predecessors who were pioneers in establishing benchmarks for the assessment of chaplains and their organizational structures.

11:15 - 11:50 Plenary 4: Exploring the Human Condition

Presenter - Dr. Francine Hernandez

Helen Flanders Dunbar's Contribution to the Psycho-Dynamic Approach to Training. Reflection on the psycho-dynamic approach in the context of training. How can this approach be used to understand and improve human performance and well-being? We will further consider critical techniques and methods used in psychodynamic training.

12:00 - 1:20 Chat and Chew

This is your opportunity to network, dialogue, and exchange contact information as we plan for future encounters. It's the time to communicate, network, and advocate.

1:30 - 1:55 Morning Reflections and Insights

2:00 - 3:50 Business Meeting

Presenter - The Rev. Steven Voytovich

- Minutes of Forum 2024
- Report of Chair
- Report of Budget & Finance - Treasurer
- Report of CCAPS
- Report of Spiritual Care Week
- Election of Leadership
- Election of Nominating Committee
- New Business
- Revision of Guidelines

4:00 Dinner

4:30 Key Speaker, Dr. Robert C. Powell

Crisis as a Means toward Meaningful Growth – Perhaps through Provoking Inspiration & Insight

5:30 Questions and Answers

5:45 Closing Remarks and Adjourn

The Rev. Denise Parker Lawrence

Our Objectives:

Celebrate

the 100th Anniversary of Clinical Pastoral Education and Training (CPE/T)

Educate & Envision

explore the history and development of Clinical Pastoral Education and Training and the impact of some of its founders; examine the history and development of Clinical Chaplaincy Formation, Spiritual Care Week, and CCAPS; envision and discuss possible future developments.

Plan & Grow

conduct the business of the national chaplaincy network, COMISS, also known as the Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings.

Network

Develop and strengthen relationships among individuals and organizations engaged in chaplaincy education, endorsing, accreditation, credentialing, employment, and support.

Our Host



Dr. Ivan Omaña

Dr. Omaña serves as the Director/Endorser of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries and President of Adventist Chaplaincy Institute at the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. He assumed his duties on November 1, 2021.

Born in Venezuela, Omaña's family history is tied closely to the growth of Adventism in that country. During a family trip to Florida, Omaña learned more about chaplaincy in a conversation with a chaplain at Florida Hospital.

Before he returned to Venezuela, a chaplaincy position opened, and Omaña applied and was hired. Omaña began his chaplaincy at the Adventist Care Centers in the Greater Orlando area.

In 2002, Omaña transitioned to Florida Hospital Kissimmee as the full-time chaplain. In 2015, Omaña assumed the duties of Assistant Director of Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries for the North American Division.

Omaña holds a Master of Divinity degree from Florida Center for Theological Studies and a Doctor of Ministry degree from Denver Theological Seminary and is an ordained Seventh-day Adventist pastor.

He is a Board Certified Pastoral Counselor by the American Association of Christian Counselors, a Board Certified Chaplain by the Association of Professional Chaplains as well as the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, and an Associate Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor with the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy.

He is also certified in Acute Stress, Grief, and Trauma Intervention by the American Association of Christian Counselors. He chairs the Adventist Chaplaincy Institute Board of Certification and is endorsed as a chaplain by Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries—North American Division.

Our Presenters



Meditation Speaker

Rabbi Dr. Joseph S. Ozarowski

Rabbi Dr. Joseph S. Ozarowski is a Rabbinic Counselor and Chaplain for JCFS Chicago. He is also an adjunct professor at Spertus Institute for Jewish Learning and Leadership and the Academy for Jewish Religion in Los Angeles.

Rabbi Ozarowski was cited by Chicago Jewish News as a “Top Jewish Chicagoan of 2013” and received the “Rabbi Mordechai Simon Award” from the Chicago Board of Rabbis in 2014.

He served as president of the Board of Rabbis from 2015 to 2017 and now serves as Immediate Past President of Neshama: Association of Jewish Chaplains (NAJC).

An engaging, nationally known teacher and speaker, Ozarowski has served congregations in Pennsylvania, California, Minnesota, and the New York area.

Rabbi Dr. Ozarowski is a Board-Certified Chaplain. He received his undergraduate degree from Loyola University of Chicago, his rabbinic ordination from Skokie’s Hebrew Theological College, and his doctorate from Lancaster (PA) Theological Seminary.

He has served on the Jewish Federation of Chicago (JUF) Board and on the North Shore University HealthCare System Institutional Ethics Committee.

A prolific author, Rabbi Ozarowski co-authored *Common Ground* (1998, Jason Aronson) and has written numerous articles. His first book, *To Walk in God’s Ways - Jewish Pastoral Perspectives on Illness and Bereavement* (hardcover 1995, Jason Aronson, paperback 2004, Rowman and Littlefield) is considered a standard in the field of Judaism and Pastoral Care.

Rabbi Ozarowski is married to Ashira (née Rapoport) and has four children and nineteen grandchildren.



Reverend Dr. Denise Parker Lawrence

The Reverend Dr. Denise Parker Lawrence is the Chair-Elect of the COMISS Network on Ministry in Specialized Settings (COMISS). As such, she is the Chair of this year's Forum, *Celebrating 100 Years of Excellence in Clinical Pastoral Education and Training: Past, Present and the Future*.

Dr. Lawrence is a Board Certified Chaplain, Pastoral Counselor, Teacher, Writer, and Community Leader who strives to "live her life as the only Bible one may ever read."

In addition to her chaplaincy work, she has a rich consulting practice. She is a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) Diplomate with the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy, Co-Chair of the Chapter Re-Authorization Committee, and Facilitator of Women in Leadership with CPSP.

Rev. Lawrence served as the Nassau County Pastoral Care Coordinator for Metropolitan Jewish Health Services (MJHS) and was responsible for coordinating pastoral and religious support services to hospice patients across the MJHS Community. Rev. Lawrence is an Elder on the Ministerial Staff of Kingdom Fellowship African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E) with Pastor Matthew L. Watley in Calverton, Maryland.

Before relocating to Maryland, she served as an Associate Minister at The Greater Allen A.M. E. Cathedral of New York under the tutelage of Pastors Reverend Dr. Floyd H. Flake and Reverend Dr. Elaine Flake. While there, Dr. Lawrence was the Director of the federally funded *One Choice, One Voice: Abstinence Until Marriage Project*.

She is a sought-after preacher, speaker, and teacher. She has been interviewed and quoted numerous times by print media and has received multiple awards and citations for pastoral care, leadership, and community service. After her seminal experiential work, [Covid 19 Reflection: A Pernicious and Silent Enemy](#), Dr. Lawrence published her inaugural children's book entitled, *Walking By Faith*. A leadership member of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, The Links, Incorporated, and the NAACP, Dr. Lawrence is the wife of attorney Mortimer Lawrence, and they are the proud parents of Michele, Mac, Misha, and Maya. She is especially delighted to be Grandma to Alia, Ryan, Addison, Ava, and her grandson, William Isaiah.



Archpriest Steven Voytovich, D.Min., LPC

Archpriest Steven Voytovich, D.Min., LPC, serves as the founding Director of the Office of Institutional Chaplaincy (non-military), as endorser for the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) in 2000.

Since the OCA joined COMISS in 2005, he has served in this endorsing role and on the COMISS Network Leadership Team, currently serving as its chair. He has similarly served the Association of Religious Endorsing Bodies (AREB) and the International Council for Pastoral Care and Counseling (ICPCC).

Steven has published and taught on many chaplaincy and pastoral/spiritual care-related topics.

In celebrating 32 years of ordained ministry this year, he has served in parish ministry as chaplain (APC certified), directed spiritual care departments, trained chaplains as supervisor/educator, and conducted accreditation reviews (under both ACPE and CPSP), is a Licensed Professional Counselor in CT, and served as Dean of St. Tikhon's Seminary, carrying the academic title of Associate Professor, and Department Chair of Pastoral Arts and Praxis.



Dr. Clyde Angel

Dr. Clyde Angel is currently employed part-time by Iron Bow Technologies as a TeleHealth Clinical Review Specialist in support of the Veterans Health Administration Office of Connected Care. Dr. Angel continues to provide couples communication training, leading Veteran groups through the "Search for Meaning" protocol and public speaking events related to spirituality and trauma.

Dr. Angel serves as a first responder (Engineer) and voluntary chaplain for his local voluntary fire department, and for the local police department. Dr. Angel retired in 2019 as Chief Chaplain Services at the Richard L. Roudebush VA Medical Center in Indianapolis, Indiana.

He worked extensively with Veterans in relation to Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and provided couples counseling, individual counseling, and substance abuse counseling in addition to his administrative responsibilities as director of the Chaplain Service Department at the Indianapolis VA Medical Center.

Dr. Angel is the author of a 10-week group process that addresses spiritual/moral injury and has collaborated with other professionals to develop participant and leaders' manuals for the protocol. Two research projects related to Search for Meaning have resulted in several research publications.

During his tenure as director of spiritual care, Dr. Angel established a Family Support Center (FSC) that focused on couples and family therapy. The FSC employed a LMFT Supervisor who provided direction for a MFT residence program to include three paid MFT student residents.

Dr. Angel, in collaboration with clinical staff chaplains and psychologists developed a 6-week group process to address grief. He also developed a 12-week protocol to address the spiritual intervention for Veterans who participate in the Substance Use and Drug Rehabilitation Programs (SUDRP) 12-week intensive outpatient program.

Dr. Angel began his career as a VA mental health chaplain in Atlanta, Georgia in 2006. Prior to this appointment, Dr. Angel worked as a pastoral counselor in Louisville, Kentucky and established a satellite center in Madison, Indiana doing individual and family counseling from 2000 to 2006. Chaplain Angel served as a senior pastor in two churches in Kentucky and Indiana from 1987 to 2000.

Dr. Angel received his bachelor's degree from Carson-Newman College, Jefferson City, Tennessee, in 1981 with a major in psychology, religion and education. He graduated Magna Cum Laude and was a member of the Alpha Chi honor society. He completed a Master of Divinity in 1987 and a Doctor of Ministry degree from The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky in 1993. Dr. Angel completed post-doctoral work in counseling and mental health and is currently a Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Georgia, a Board-Certified Chaplain with the National Association of VA

Chaplains.

He was a certified Alternative Dispute Resolutions mediator for the V A and a certified Coach/Mentor Trainer. Dr. Angel is a veteran of the US Army serving in the Army Security Agency and holding a Top-Secret Crypto clearance for the performance of his duties. He was honorably discharged in 1977. Dr. Angel is married and has 6 children and eleven grandchildren. He enjoys fly fishing, golf, and travel.



Rev. Russell H. Davis

The Rev. Russell H. Davis, PhD. is the current chair of CCAPS, The COMISS Commission for the Accreditation of Pastoral Services, and a former Chair of COMISS.

Russ spent his career in specialized ministry. He is a retired ACPE Certified Educator and also a former ACPE Executive Director. He has taught full-time at Union Theological Seminary (New York), the University of Virginia, and Virginia Commonwealth University.

He served The Riverside Church in the City of New York as an Associate for Pastoral Care.

He is the author of one book *Freud's Concept of Passivity* (International Universities Press, 1993) and a number of articles and reviews.

He has worked as a chaplain educator in various settings, including a prison, a state psychiatric hospital, the Veterans Administration, and several university-affiliated academic medical centers.



Dr. Francine L. Hernandez

Dr. Francine L. Hernandez is an ordained Baptist Minister. She is a graduate of Columbus University in Columbus, Georgia, B.S. (Sociology) in 1974 and an honors graduate from Morehouse School of Religion at the I.T.C. in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1996 with a Master of Divinity Degree in Psychology of Religion and Pastoral Care.

In 1995, she was listed on the National Dean's List and in Who's Who Among Students in American Colleges and Universities. While studying at ITC, she received the Isaac Clark Preaching Award given to select students by the Homiletic Department. In 1996, she was inducted into the Theta Phi International Honor Society.

She served as a Pastoral Counselor for HIV/AIDS Clients in Miami, Florida (1997) and later that year organized New Harvest Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee. She received her Doctorate of Ministry Degree from New York Theological Seminary.

Her Dissertation Thesis: *Breaking the Stigma: Embracing Mental Health and Empowering the Congregation by Creating an Awareness of the Need for a Compassionate Ministry* (2012).

Reverend Dr. Hernandez is a Board Certified chaplain and Board Certified Pastoral Counselor and certified Clinical Pastoral Education Supervisor. She is the former Director of the National Clinical Training Seminar for the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy. These seminars take place twice a year, May and November at the Loyola Retreat Center in Morristown, New Jersey, and are designed for chaplains, pastoral counselors, pastoral psychotherapists, and ministers.

Dr. Hernandez served as Interim Director for the Department of Pastoral Care at New York Presbyterian Hospital in 2006, where she was already Program Administrator of Clinical Pastoral Education.

She worked at NPH from 2003-2007. She was the 8th President of the College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy.

Presently, she supervises in the Residency Program at Episcopal Health Services.

Reverend Dr. Hernandez is a Golden Soror in Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. She is the organizer of the “I’m Just Saying” Women’s Retreat, which has now transformed into the Daughters of Sarah: An Intergenerational Movement. This movement is designed to help women reframe and re-author their stories of pain, shame, and disappointment to bring a cross-pollination of learning and growth between the younger and older generations.

Dr. Hernandez is a published author. Her debut book: *The SafetyPin: Holding Your Life Together When it's Bursting at the Seams*.



Keynote Speaker

Robert Charles Powell, MD, PhD

Dr. Powell, in 1969 – while considering a career in psychosomatic medicine – discovered that (Helen) Flanders Dunbar (1902-1959) – an early leader in that field – had earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree before earning her three doctorates. That intrigued him. Immersing himself in the many archives, he found that – as an early research colleague of Anton Theophilus Boisen (1876-1965), the inventor of professional chaplaincy – Dunbar had run, during the 1930s, both “The American Psychosomatic Movement” and “The Clinical Pastoral Chaplaincy Movement” out of one office – as the “research division” and the “education division” – under The Joint Committee on Religion and Medicine (of The New York Academy of Medicine and the Federal Council of Churches).

Beginning his historical research in earnest in 1969 – fifty-five years ago – Dr. Powell was able to interview and correspond with Dunbar’s and Boisen’s many relatives, classmates, and colleagues who were then still alive. He published major historical manuscripts touching on clinical pastoral chaplaincy – in 1974, 1975, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1982, 1999, 2002, 2005, and 2012 – plus many shorter essays in recent years. He

acknowledges that getting to “know” closely the healing work of Dunbar and Boisen changed his life – and has continued to shape his work with patients.

Dr. Powell’s many publications include:

Healing and Wholeness: Helen Flanders Dunbar (1902-59) and an Extra-Medical Origin of the American Psychosomatic Movement, 1906-36 (1974; 2nd greatly expanded. 2022/2024) [this heavily foot-noted volume could have been titled: *Healing and Wholeness: Helen Flanders Dunbar (1902-59) and an Extra-Theological Origin of the Clinical Pastoral Chaplaincy Movement, 1906-36*].

*C.P.E. [Clinical Pastoral Education]: Fifty Years of Learning, through Supervised Encounter with “Living Human Documents” (1975; 2nd greatly expanded, 2021, re-titled as *Clinical Pastoral Training, Education, & Transformation ...*)* [>20,000 copies distributed across 50 years].

Anton T. Boisen (1876-1965): Breaking an Opening in the Wall between Religion and Medicine (1976; 2nd greatly expanded edition, 2021) [>2,000 copies distributed across 49 years].

The ‘Subliminal’ versus the ‘Subconscious’ in the American Acceptance of Psychoanalysis, 1906-1910 (1979/2015) [much on “The Emmanuel Movement” founded by Elwood Worcester (1862-1940); Worcester, Boisen, & Dunbar crossed paths throughout the 1920s & 1930s].

Psychosomatic Aspects of Affect in Psychoanalytic Theory, 1950-1970 (1979) [how the Dunbaresque/Boisenesque psychological/ sociological focus on the person as a whole in his or her total environment – outer and inner – quietly re-emerged].

When Death Is NOT Theoretical: The Readiness of the Music Group “Queen” for Living with Freddie Mercury’s Dying (2014; 2nd expanded, 2018) [embracing life while facing death, evil, negativity – & grief – head-on].

Pentoxifylline: A Versatile Off-Patent Medication Best Not Overlooked: Overview with Extensive Bibliography (2015) [enhances circulation & reduces inflammation throughout the body – including the brain – seeming to improve “social consideration”/ “social comfort”/ “an understanding of others” – in some but not all.]

Listening Closely to Patients: Without Jumping to Conclusions...
(2021) [with extensive bibliographies on ascertaining the level
of ego organization plus neurologic, nutritional, &
endocrinologic aspects of psychiatric problems.]

Unpublished: *Psychiatric Admissions related to Premenstrual
Syndrome &, Frequently, also related to Soft Neurologic Signs.*