



The ChapLine

Lewis County
Chaplaincy

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A Word From The President

The three men had anticipated the early morning hunting trip for some time. As they headed east on Highway 12 they had high expectations of a successful trip. The trip turned to tragedy when their Toyota pickup truck slid sideways on the ice-covered road. The vehicle slid into the oncoming lane and was struck by a logging truck. The three men were instantly killed when their vehicle was destroyed.

It was the next morning before family could be located. The coroner, Warren McLeod, had worked throughout the night trying to contact the families to notify them of the deaths. As he notified the first family he was able to contact, he realized that the three men were from the same family. Two of them were brothers and the other a cousin. Warren then requested a chaplain through dispatch.

I was sitting in church when I got the page. Upon calling dispatch, then talking with Warren, I realized the home he was at was just down the road from where I was and responded to assist him.

At the home, the family members began arriving as they learned of the horrendous accident. All family members were Hispanic and were speaking in Spanish although they could also converse in English. My Span-

ish is very limited, but the grief seemed to permeate any language barrier as the tears flowed, and they supported each other. I am always grateful when I see strong family support at a scene.

As I spent time with the family, it struck me how universal tragedy can be. Regardless of race, age, culture or economic background, it is a painful experience for those involved, and none of us are exempt from it. As chaplains, we respond to assist families with all kinds of backgrounds. In every situation we try to identify the needs of the family and help as much as we can – even if it is just helping to walk them through the steps they will face over the next few days.

Being allowed into a family's home during the worst time of their lives is a humbling experience that we don't take lightly. It is only because of the emergency agencies requesting us and those that support the LCCS that we are able to serve these families when crisis strikes. We thank all of you for that support as we continue to serve our community.

Kevin Curfman, LCCS President



Kevin Curfman

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Our Mission

Chaplains serve victims at emergency scenes, fires and other traumatic events such as death notifications. Chaplains are able to stay with victims or their families until friends or family members can be contacted. Chaplains further assist emergency personnel by providing a confidential and caring person to speak with while working through a difficult time.

For more information, see our website at: www.lewiscountychaplaincy.org

The ChapLine

is a quarterly newsletter of the Lewis County Chaplaincy Services—a volunteer organization dedicated to serving emergency responders and citizens of Lewis County, Washington.

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Story Ideas?

Please feel free to contact me if you have story ideas, calendar items, photos, etc. or any suggestions on what you'd like to see in the newsletter at: Kistler_technical@q.com or 360/785-3840

Terri L. Kistler



Retiring With Honor—Bob And Willita Hale

By Chaplain Mel Lyon (2C2)

Bob and Willita Hale, a husband-wife chaplaincy team with Lewis County Chaplaincy Services, are retiring after more than 10 years of faithful service.

Both Bob and Willita are well trained and fully commissioned chaplains. Willita is affectionately known to their many friends as “Willie.”



On the sunny morning of Wednesday, November 2, I found them both diligently digging dahlia bulbs at their rural home near Glenoma. I apologized for interrupting their progress, but Bob just leaned forward to rest his arms on the hood of his tractor, saying, “It’s OK, Mel; I need the break anyhow!”

We talked of Dahlias for a bit, and they shared with me some insights on their methods for developing new strains of beautifully cross-bred dahlias. Achieved by patience on their part and by the pollinating work of their honey bees, they now have a stunning variety of blooms that are indigenous to their own little *piece of heaven* there in pastoral Glenoma.

In looking back on their decade of chaplaincy service—years of purely voluntary service—they can speak of many memories. Terms such as “death notifications, funerals, grieving families, tears, tragedies and heartaches” appear. On the

positive side, terms like “thankfulness, appreciation, prayers, comfort, sympathy, empathy, children, elderly, great people, good families and caring deputies” also surface. Each word has a story behind it.

Bob and Willie both agree that: “Meeting nice people and lending help in time of need have been the most satisfying parts of our service.” The Hales look back with satisfaction and no regrets.

On behalf of Kevin Curfman, our Lewis County Chaplaincy President, and all chaplains serving throughout the county, this note of recognition and esteem comes with commendation and heartfelt appreciation for the Hale’s selfless ministry.

To Bob and Willie, we say, “*Vaya con Dios*,” and may your lives be truly blessed.





Recent Responses

From August 1, 2011 to the end of November 2011, chaplains have answered 20 calls through central dispatch, including death notifications and responding to incidents. Many of the calls generated follow-up visits with the victims. Some chaplains have even presided at funerals.

Dysfunctional Family Systems

By chaplain Lorraine Railsback, 2C11

One of the things I appreciate the most as a chaplain is the ongoing training provided and the personal one-on-one time we have with other professional providers in the community. As I travel by each day on my way to work I have always wondered about the beautiful brick home near Yard Birds. There always seems to be a flurry of activity and a multitude of cars. I found out this the home of New Directions Counseling.



Our training in September was provided by Meri Ford of New Directions Counseling. I am certain we only had a glimpse of all the ways these caring professionals serve the community we live in. Although it appears the main function of the group is serving those who suffer from addictions, it is much broader than that.

The discussion led by Meri was on the “dysfunctional family system”, which is made up of key figures centering around an Alcoholic-Addict. We learned about the Lost Child, Scapegoat, Mascot, Hero and Chief Enabler. Some times, a person is a little bit of each type. We learned about the “tank family” - emotions you suppress, your partner will feel and express causing a see-saw effect works in a family.

It was very interesting, and I was disappointed to see our time come to an end. I listened in awe and admiration, understanding so much better how dysfunction survives. I went away thinking the citizens who find their way into this loving, compassionate group, whether by choice or by court order, are blessed!

The Forces of Good And Evil

In October, chaplain Bill Bowlby, 2C5, handed out a 22-page paper he wrote entitled “*The Forces of Good and Evil (Why Does God Allow Evil)*”.



The training deals with how to respond to and help victims when they ask “why me?” or “why did God allow this?”. It teaches chaplains how to assist victims in a compassionate, loving and meaningful way. Bowlby uses examples of calls he has been on and scriptural references in the handout. He also references some book material.





Unsettling, Distressing and Overwhelming

By chaplain Brian Carter, 2C14



It has to be an unsettling feeling to have some die in your own home. It's surreal. Uncomfortable, eerie and, for some, downright creepy.

It has to be distressing to have your home 'invaded' by several people you don't know. As many as a dozen strangers can descend upon a death scene at one time: firemen, EMTs, police and detectives, the coroner and the funeral transport who all come with their own set of questions and procedures.

It has to be overwhelming as more and more family members learn of the fate of a loved one and more and more family members arrive at the scene, each with their own way of dealing with the news. The scene can get rather chaotic. The firemen and EMTs see this sort of thing frequently and, although they *do* care and are sorry to see anyone die, they can almost seem cold as they reserve their strength and energy for the rest of their work day.

The police have a job to do, looking for clues and circumstance and anything that might give a reason for the cause of death. They too care a great deal, but they, like the other first responders, must conserve their strength and energy. The coroner's office deals with death day in and day out – they are a kind and compassionate group of people who are more than helpful in giving information to the family's question of "what do we next?"

The majority of the calls I have responded to have been scenes such as this. It is known as an "unattended death" where someone has been discovered dead, either having died in their sleep or for some other reason died while no one else was around. As a chaplain, it is an awesome calling to be able to work with each one of these agencies and to work with the families of those lost loved ones. Each agency has their role, and each one of them care a great deal for the people they help or they wouldn't be doing it.

A chaplain's care can go on long after the first responders, police and coroner have left. In some cases, a chaplain can be with a family every step of the way. Although I have not had the honor, some chaplains have performed funeral services if a family didn't have a pastor or a church affiliation. There was one instance, however, where an unattended death occurred just down the street from where I live. I was able to be there from just a short time after the first responders arrived until they were able to remove the body of the deceased.

It was very unsettling for the family to have someone die in their house. They felt invaded by the parade of people entering their home. They couldn't understand why the police were being brought in. They had to be continually reminded that it was all "standard procedure", and they were not being looked upon as criminals. And of course, it was overwhelming as the task of informing family members ensued and questions of "what do we do next?" came to mind.

It is truly an awesome calling, and I thank God for the privilege of serving His children in this way.



Crime Lab Reality

On TV, crime labs process evidence for a single case and identify the suspect within an hour. Have you ever wondered what it is like in the real world? An article in the Longview Daily News on November 4th attempted to answer that question.

In reality, there are only five main state patrol crime labs statewide. Located in Seattle, Tacoma, Marysville, Spokane and Vancouver, the labs employ 38 forensic scientists and analyze fingerprints, hair and fibers, narcotics, handwriting and firearms, as well as DNA. The Vancouver lab also has an arson lab to identify accelerants used to start fires. DNA testing includes extracting DNA from 'touch' samples—DNA leftover after someone has handled an object.

The Vancouver lab analyzes evidence for cases from Cowlitz, Lewis, Clark, Pacific, Wahkiakum, Yakima, Skamania and Klickitat counties. This lab has space for 12 forensic scientists, but has only eight currently. The lab has about a 90-day backlog. The lab lost three positions in 2008 and has been approved to replace only one. And the number of cases they are handling is growing: 462 in 2008, 861 in 2009 (when the lab began handling cases for Yakima and Klickitat counties) and 1002 in 2010.

300-330 cases are submitted to the five labs each month. One forensic scientist can test and analyze about 5-10 DNA cases in a month. If you do the math, that's 190 to 380 DNA cases a month that the labs can process. This leads to a backlog of evidence waiting to be processed.

A shortage of staff, evidence submitted from old cases and TV's portrayal of crime labs that solve all the questions of a crime within one episode all have contributed to increase the workload handled by the crime labs. Forensic scientists work as quickly as they can and still yield accurate results.

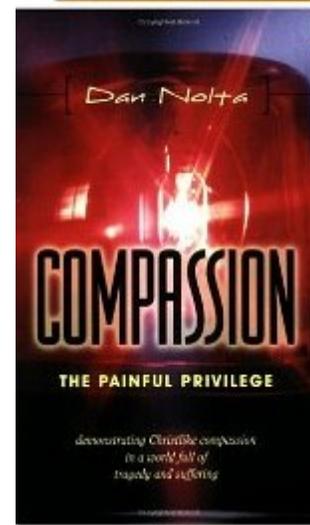
So the next time you watch CSI Miami or NCIS's wiz kid Abby, remember the hard working folks in our state's crime labs. It's not as simple as it is on TV.



Book Review—Compassion, The Painful Privilege

By Grant Kistler, 2C12

This gripping biography is about Dan Nolta, an emergency services chaplain with the Tacoma, WA, Police Department, the Tacoma Fire Department and the Pierce County Sheriff's Department (PCSD). Nolta founded the Police and Fire Chaplain's Training Academy in partnership with the Washington State Criminal Justice Training Commission. Retired from active chaplaincy in December 2004, Nolta continues to serve as International Conference of Police Chaplains (ICPC) international liaison.



In the book, Nolta describes how he became a Christian and got into the Chaplain ministry. Raised in a non-Christian environment, the only time he and his siblings heard the name God or Jesus was when it was used for cursing. Growing up, he endured poverty, frequent moves, an alcoholic and often-absent father, the divorce of his parents and an alcoholic stepfather.

Nolta reveals his innermost thoughts in this book, including his doubts about his own worthiness. He talks about his concerns about meeting his own needs versus the needs of those he is helping.

The book makes good use of cases Nolta worked and what the Chaplaincy has meant to him. He discusses his 'defining moment' in 1985 in the "Spanaway Junior High Incident". Nolta was on scene and said that this was the incident that "married him" to the Pierce County Sheriff's department. In Nolta's words, "Here I could freely practice a ministry of compassion and be welcomed, understood and encouraged by these men and women who too often appear cynical and hardened. Here in an agency whose core values included compassion for people, I would fit right in."

As a teenager he met people that he describes as messengers, people who influenced him in a positive way. He learns to deal with old wounds through prayer and forgiveness and comes to the realization that the trials and experiences of a dysfunctional family are what shaped him and enabled him to see other's pain. "Compassion is the gift that suffers with, the gift that wills us to walk alongside and enter into the pain, suffering and woundedness of others."

I had the opportunity to meet this wonderful man when I took my training at the Police and Chaplains Training Academy in March of 2010, an organization that he was instrumental in founding. I highly recommend this 102-page paperback for anyone who deals with those in pain and suffering.



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