

**LIVING, DYING – GAINING, LOSING –  
CHANGE (WHETHER CONSCIOUSLY OR UNCONSCIOUSLY)  
ALWAYS INVOLVES GRIEF**

On the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dunbar’s study on “The Medieval Mass in the West.” 1924

[she entered seminary soon after writing this]

On the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dunbar’s 1<sup>st</sup> of 3 doctoral dissertations: Symbolism in Medieval Thought ..., 1929.

On the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dunbar’s quite poetic – and still widely cited – article,

“What Happens at Lourdes: Psychic Forces in Health and Disease,” 1934 <sup>1</sup>.]

On the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dunbar’s founding of the journal, Psychosomatic Medicine.

On the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Dunbar’s – oddly enough – breakthrough – and still widely cited – article,

“Effect of the Mother’s Emotional Attitude on the Infant,” 1944.

On the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of Helen Flanders Dunbar, BD, PhD, MD, MedScD

[despite her Bachelor of Divinity degree, Dunbar did not have ordination as an option within her faith group – although at least one of her theological school classmates was ordained within another faith group]

[her BD thesis concerned “Methods of Training in the Devotional Life Employed in the American Churches,” a study on the use of symbolism and ritual]

On the 95<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the appointment of Anton Theophilus Boisen, BD, as chaplain at Worcester State Hospital.

On the 90<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Boisen’s article on Mary Magdalene: “The Woman to Whom Jesus First Appeared,” 1929. <sup>2</sup>

On the 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginning of “The Boisen Books Project” –

for the fresh republication of at least three of the five classic writings by Boisen. <sup>3</sup>

“Praise be to G-d for giving us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this day.” <sup>4</sup>

G-d only knows if any of us will be here tomorrow.

The original calculation was that I would be dead by now. I am not.

After brooding about it for five years,

I finished writing, five years ago, When Death Is NOT Theoretical ... <sup>5</sup>

The book was about many things, but specifically about

death from an illness with a somewhat known, non-immediate time course – that is, death that is

non-violent,

slow in coming,

with an anticipated likely time, and

unlikely to make the headlines. [p.6]

That is, the book was about “death on the horizon” – “death on the calendar”.

The book was about when

one knows death is

coming slowly – but

coming sooner than an otherwise “natural” death.

One just does not know when.

Dunbar knew that she was dying –

although it does not appear that anyone else did at the time.

If one reads closely –

between the lines, so to speak –

a paragraph deep in her last book suggests as much,

even as she wrote extensively about centenarians.

Indeed, she died –  
quite unexpectedly to most –

on the day the publisher’s galley proofs of her last book arrived. <sup>6</sup>

Now, let us go back and,  
instead, of considering “death,”  
let us consider “change”.

Some changes are wanted. Some are not. Changes can involve both losses and gains.

Let us consider when  
one knows change is  
coming slowly – but  
coming sooner than what otherwise would seem “natural”.

One just does not know when.

It may not be death, but significant change is coming to clinical pastoral chaplaincy.

It may be death indeed, as the significant change that comes to many of us today in this room.

The College of Pastoral Supervision and Psychotherapy has weathered a lot of  
internal change during this second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century – that is, since about 2011.

I mention that time-frame specifically, since –  
if an historian is allowed to approach being prophetic –  
2011 is when I first became inspired to write a series of articles –  
six articles on “Tolerance and Encouragement,” to be exact –  
articles that attempted to keep CPSP grounded as it crafted a number of needed internal changes.

CPSP indeed – slowly and carefully – modified its governance structure –  
retaining ideals while positioning itself to handle the reality of considerable growth.

The focus today is on  
external changes –  
changes already occurring and fairly certain to accelerate in the coming decade.

CPSP indeed – slowly and carefully – may need to modify its self-perception as a community.

In 1999, when first I spoke at CPSP, about 40% of those in the audience were female chaplains.

This was quite notable to my eyes, as, when I had spoken at other chaplaincy gatherings,  
only about 10% of those in the audience would be female chaplains.

Clinical pastoral chaplains in North America at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century were mostly men –  
mostly Protestant white men at that.

Furthermore, in 1999, most of those doing clinical pastoral chaplaincy  
had attended seminary and had earned masters or doctoral degrees.  
Completing one unit of clinical pastoral training was viewed as mandatory – and

completing four units was viewed as preferred.

As early as 1999, CPSP understood the need to encourage clinical pastoral chaplaincy at the parish level.

Increasingly since about 2011, CPSP and other chaplaincy groups have needed to consider “equivalent” credentials – as applicants for membership might come from faith groups that did not have seminaries – or easy access to graduate school – or religious endorsing bodies. Applicants also might not have access to ordination.

A lot of pastoral care – and counseling – and psychotherapy – was needed out there in the world – and “untraditional” candidates were stepping forward, requesting guidance on how to help those who were suffering, bewildered, or vulnerable.

Today’s Dunbar Awardee has been both traditional and untraditional from the beginning, seeking to add new voices to the clinical pastoral tradition.

Like Dunbar herself, today’s awardee listened closely to an inner voice – and followed it “with perseverance and belief” – and got things done.<sup>7</sup>

Today’s awardee suggested a new path in theological scholarship – one seeking “to identify, uphold, and lift up acts of noble intention, courage, and love” – positioning these “as sources of empowerment for people in their struggling”.<sup>8</sup>

The title of this introduction – “Living, Dying – Gaining, Losing – Change (whether consciously or unconsciously) Always Involves Grief”

has arisen directly out of our Dunbar Awardee’s writing across the last two decades.

Actually, it appears to have arisen from more than three decades of discernment – and grieving – before that.

Boisen emphasized that “no one is condemned who is in the process of becoming better” – even of becoming “best”.<sup>9</sup>

Today’s awardee reminds us that all “becoming” – all gain – all change – involves grieving for a loss.

“Half the work of grieving is naming and recognizing that a loss has occurred or is occurring.”<sup>10</sup>

Everything that the College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy might gain – while becoming “better” – even “best” – also will involve loss.

Yes, today’s awardee has taken a closer look at loss – including “ambiguous loss” and “linger loss”.

As our Dunbar Awardee has noted, “no matter how I try to escape from the reality of loss, *grief will find me.*”<sup>11</sup>

If CPSP can remain, to quote our awardee, “centered, confident, humble, flexible, and knowledgeable”  
 its community –  
 and its individual chaplains –  
 can handle whatever further *internal* and *external* change comes along.<sup>12</sup>

Please join me in welcoming our newest – and 19<sup>th</sup> – recipient of  
 “The Helen Flanders Dunbar Award for Significant Contributions to Clinical Pastoral Training,”

Dr. Roslyn A. Karaban.

#### Endnotes.

This presentation opened and closed with the song, “Time” (1986), written by Dave Clark and Jeff Daniels, sung by Freddie Mercury. The key words:

*time is running out for us ....*

*Time waits for nobody.*

1. Dunbar, 1934 is available online at <http://www.unz.com/print/Forum-1934apr-00226/>
2. Boisen, 1927: Chicago Theol. Sem. Reg., Mar. 1929; 19:16-18.
3. Becoming involved in “the Dunbar story” and “the clinical pastoral chaplaincy story” has been an integral part of my life – even though I set out to become an historian of the American psychosomatic movement.

On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this author’s visit to Dunbar’s very distinctive home in South Kent, Connecticut, followed by an awarded manuscript about Dunbar’s work: “Emotions, Bodily Changes, and Symbolism ...”.

On the 45<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this author’s becoming an official historical consultant for clinical pastoral chaplaincy, followed by his doctoral dissertation about Dunbar’s work: Healing and Wholeness ....

On the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this author’s first presentation to the College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy, a keynote address on “Whatever Happened to ‘CPE’ – Clinical Pastoral Education?”. followed later in the year by the 1<sup>st</sup> Helen Flanders Dunbar Memorial Lecture on Psychosomatic Medicine and Pastoral Care: “Emotionally, Soulfully, Spiritually ‘Free to Think and Act’.”

On the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this author’s invited essay, “ ‘Chapter Life’: ‘Thinking and Feeling Together about the Things that Matter Most’ – ‘A New and Vitalizing Experience’.”

4. This Jewish blessing is called the “Shehecheyanu”. I’ve used it with other presentations, but it seems especially pertinent today, as we acknowledge that many of our members are aging – and might not be here next year.
5. See, [www.robertcharlespowell.com](http://www.robertcharlespowell.com) for this and several other of my publications. A number of writings on clinical pastoral chaplaincy are expected to be republished during 2019.
6. Dunbar, 1959. Psychiatry in the Medical Specialties; p.374.  
 Powell, 2002. “The ‘Continued Ability to Create and Invent’: Going for One Hundred Years of Clinical Pastoral Transformation.” delivered March 2002, at the Plenary Meeting of The College of Pastoral Supervision & Psychotherapy, Virginia Beach, VA; contains the key quoted material; on the internet at <http://www.cpspdirectory.org/pastoralreportarticles/3778836> ; revised edition prepared, 2014.
7. Karaban, 1996, “Misconceptions of Mary: The Immaculate Conception. Mary in Tradition and Scripture.” in Roslyn A. Karaban & Deni Mack, eds., Extraordinary Preaching: Twenty Homilies by Roman Catholic Women [that is, not “ordinary” preaching as defined by canon law]. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications; pp.15-19; p.18.

8. Karaban, 1996, "The Unnamed Woman of Mark 14:3-9; Mary, Mary Quite the Contrary!" in Roslyn A. Karaban & Deni Mack, eds., Extraordinary Preaching: Twenty Homilies by Roman Catholic Women. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications; pp.53-58; p.57. [re the woman who anointed Jesus with a costly aromatic oil; some allege this to be Mary of Bethany; others allege this to be Mary Magdalene; Karaban doubts that the woman was either]
9. Boisen, 1936, The Exploration of the Inner World ..., pp.257, 279, 284-285; p.178.
10. Karaban, 1998, Responding to G-d's Call: A Survival Guide. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications; pp.52, 56, 72.
11. Karaban, 2000, Complicated Losses, Difficult Deaths: A Practical Guide for Ministering to Grievers. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, 2000; p.vii.
12. Karaban, 2005, Crisis Caring: A Guide for Ministering to People in Crisis. San Jose, CA: Resource Publications, 2005; p.47.
13. For the record:

<p>HELEN FLANDERS DUNBAR AWARD FOR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CLINICAL PASTORAL TRAINING [recipient must be alive &amp; not a member of CPSP] :</p> <p>2002, Robert Charles Powell (1<sup>st</sup>) 2003, Allison Stokes (2<sup>nd</sup>) 2004, Myron C. Madden (3<sup>rd</sup>) 2005, Robert C. Dykstra (4<sup>th</sup>) 2006, A. Patrick L. Prest (5<sup>th</sup>) 2007, Henry G. Heffernan (6<sup>th</sup>) 2008, Edward Everett Thornton (7<sup>th</sup>) 2009, Rodney J. Hunter (8<sup>th</sup>) 2010, John Edwin Harris (9<sup>th</sup>) 2011, Orlo C. Strunk, Jr. (10<sup>th</sup>) 2012, Kenneth Holt Pohly (11<sup>th</sup>) 2013, Donald E. Capps (12<sup>th</sup>) 2014, J. Harold Ellens (13<sup>th</sup>) 2015, Glenn H. Asquith, Jr. (14<sup>th</sup>) 2016, Richard Morgan-Jones (15<sup>th</sup>) 2017, Eric J. Hall (16<sup>th</sup>) 2018, Pamela Cooper-White &amp; Kerry Egan (17<sup>th</sup> &amp; 18<sup>th</sup>) 2019, Roslyn A. Karaban (19<sup>th</sup>)</p>	<p>HELEN FLANDERS DUNBAR MEMORIAL LECTURE (in NYC):</p> <p>1999, Robert Charles Powell, MD, PhD. 2000, Marcia Dunbar-Soule Dobson, PhD, PhD 2001, Myron C. Madden, PhD. 2002, Donald E. Capps, PhD. 2003, Rodney J. Hunter, PhD. 2004, none 2005, James Hillman, PhD. 2006, Timothy E. Quill, MD 2007, Robert C. Dykstra, PhD</p>
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Dr. Powell's website: [www.robertcharlespowell.com](http://www.robertcharlespowell.com)

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