

# Monthly Newsletter

September, 2025



**ACTheals**  
Working in the Healthcare Community since 1975



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Working in the Healthcare Community since 1975

## ACTHEALS 2025 INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE *“Jesus, Our Joy Giver”*

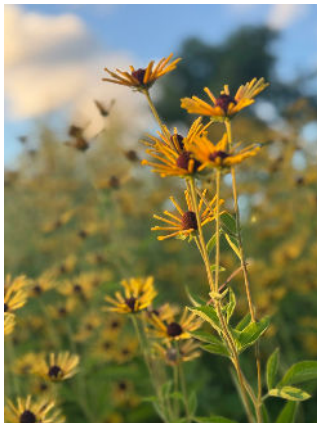


**JOIN US FOR OUR  
50th Anniversary Celebration!**

**OCTOBER 23-26, 2025**

MARYWOOD CONFERENCE CENTER  
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[Register for the Conference](#)



## *President's Corner*

Recently, I was meditating on the Parable of the Mustard Seed from Matthew's gospel. "The reign of God is like a mustard seed, which someone sowed in the field. It's the smallest of all seeds but becomes the largest of plants, like a shrub that birds and insects can come to rest in."

The mustard plant is really a weed, not a desired plant in grain or soybean fields. It's something to be gotten rid of, if possible, without destroying the crop. It's very large and has beautiful yellow flowers. From the road, it is pretty, but if you are walking the bean fields to rid them of weeds (like I did as a kid), it's one of the hardest plants to pull out. It has a root system that is deeply implanted in the ground. One almost needs a spade to dig it out.

If a weed can be so deeply rooted in desired crops and be destructive, how deeply am I, a good seed, hopefully, rooted in the Lord? Are my roots so deeply planted in God's Word and ways? Is my crop growing to fruition in God's ways of life, or are there weeds choking life out of me? What weed of life do I need to root out so my crop can blossom and yield a rich harvest?

My closing thought for this month is this: May our Lord bless you with rich soil, free of weeds, and a developing crop to yield a rich harvest this fall. May He grant you wisdom and perseverance to remove the weeds of your life while being deeply rooted in Him. And may He grant us all safety in the fields of life and a return to Him to celebrate our anniversary conference.

**Kris Sendelbach, RN,**  
Your Servant Leader

## ACTheals Regional News

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### **Central Atlantic and Northern New England SEW Groups Meet Virtually**

On August 9, the Central Atlantic and Northern New England SEW Group gathered for their Regional Roll Call, and we want to extend our heartfelt thanks to all who attended. The event was filled with fellowship and engaging discussions about the ecumenical community we share in ACTheals.

One of the memorable quotes from the event, shared by a member, was: "Everyone who loves God and loves Jesus has so much to offer one another."

Attendees also had the opportunity to

### **Regional Spotlight on ACTheals Italy: Serving Together in Europe**

On Tuesday, August 6, 2025, ACTheals Italy hosted an inspiring online gathering titled "Transfigured by the Light: Healing and the Glory of Christ." The event took place from 9:30 AM to 10:30 AM (Rome time) and featured a reflection on the Gospel of the Transfiguration (Mt 17:1–8).

Fr. Giovanni Grappasonni delivered an insightful talk, guiding participants through themes of healing and the glory of Christ. The gathering provided a time of prayer, listening, and spiritual sharing, especially for those working in health care and Christian healing ministries. This event was a beautiful opportunity for attendees to deepen their faith and

watch a short video provided by Pastor ("Papa") Joe Johnson and received a blessing prayer.

The next SEW Group meeting for these two regions will take place virtually on Saturday, September 6, 2025, from 11:00 AM to 12:00 PM EST. **Doug Schoeninger, PhD**, a past president of ACTheals, will be sharing a short reflection with us during this meeting. If you are an ACTheals member who is not a part of this region but would like to attend this group, email [apemberton@actheals.org](mailto:apemberton@actheals.org).

We look forward to seeing you there!

*Created with the assistance of Microsoft 365 Copilot AI.*



Follow ACTheals Italy On LinkedIn

*Vision for ACTheals Italy Inspired by the words of 1 Peter 5:2-4:*

*“Tend the flock of God that is in your charge, not by constraint but willingly, as God would have it; not for shameful gain but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd is manifested you will obtain the unfading crown of glory.”*

connect with others in the ACTheals community.

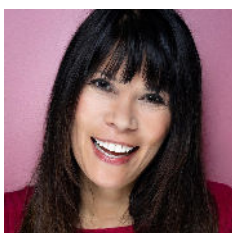
ACTheals Italy, under the coordination of **Rev. Alessandro Olivieri Pennesi**, is dedicated to serving together in Europe. Last May in Rome, a warm and fruitful conversation with ACTheals leadership helped renew the connection with our Italian region. ACTheals Italy can serve as a bridge to the European context, offering their presence where it is most needed. In the spirit of Christian unity, ACTheals members walk together from different traditions, serving those who suffer.

If you would like more information or wish to join upcoming meetings, feel free to contact the ACTheals Italy region at: [acthealsitaly@gmail.com](mailto:acthealsitaly@gmail.com)

*This article was generated with the assistance of Microsoft 365 Copilot AI. For more information, please refer to the original LinkedIn post by ACTheals Italy Region.*

"Guided by this, we seek to nurture the flock entrusted to us with generosity of heart, building a community of healing and prayer rooted in Christ. Our mission looks not only to Italy but also toward Europe, in an open and ecumenical spirit, walking together with other churches and Christian communities, so that the gift of healing may serve the unity and renewal of all God's people."

**-Rev. Alessandro Olivieri Pennesi**



**Member Spotlight:**  
**Michelle Lenz**

We are delighted to introduce

Michelle's vision is to see captive hearts set free, broken hearts healed, and people living life in and through the love and power of Jesus Christ. With over 20 years of experience in counseling, educational, and

**Michelle Lenz**, a new member of ACTheals who attended the ACTheals International Conference in 2024 and was inducted as a new member. Michelle's journey with ACTheals began during her graduate school years when her mentor and supervisor, Dr. Clark Barshinger, recognized her passion for integrating healing prayer with clients. Dr. Barshinger recommended that she explore the Association of Christian Therapists, now known as ACTheals. Together, they engaged in several speaking engagements at churches, incorporating listening prayer and Christ-centered meditation as methods for connecting to Jesus and healing anxiety.

Michelle first learned about the ACTheals International Conference through a Facebook post last year and decided to sign up. Reflecting on the experience, she shared, "The conference was so Spirit-led and Spirit-filled. It was what my own heart needed to refresh, reset, and refuel. I give out so much to clients, and it was so timely for me to receive. I love how so much of our time was centered on Christ and the ministry of the body one to another. I'm thankful for God's timing and look forward to growing in my relationships with those I have met through ACT. I also hope to serve in some capacity in the future as God leads."

conference settings both in the States and overseas, Michelle brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise to her practice. She currently works at Meadowspring Counseling, a group counseling practice, and hopes to establish her own counseling practice next year. Michelle provides individual, couples, and group counseling, with her office located in Bloomingdale, IL.

In addition to her counseling work, Michelle leads Selah Healing Retreats for women and other leaders, inviting others to experience the true rest of Jesus and healing in their body, soul, and spirit. She has also been trained in Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy and Immanuel Healing Prayer.

Michelle earned her B.S. in Pre-Med Biology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and her M.A. in Mental Health Counseling at Trinity International University. She is a Licensed Professional Counselor in the State of Illinois and is working on earning her LCPC later this year. Michelle recently launched her book, *"My Self-Care & Wellness 30 Day Journal: Taking Care of God's Temple."*

We are grateful to have Michelle as part of the ACTheals community and look forward to witnessing the impact of her dedication and passion for healing through Christ.

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## Feature Article



### ***A Journey of Healing and Faith: An Interview with Dr. Benjamin Keyes, Ph.D., Ed.D.***

Ben Keyes shared his journey with

Dr. Keyes explained, "Carl Jung insisted that to really deal with people, we had to deal with the spiritual part of people. This was actually the argument between him and Sigmund Freud. Jung insisted that spirituality needed to be a part of the personality that was dealt with in counseling, while Freud believed that spirituality was simply a crutch and a

ACTheals in an interview with Angeli Pemberton, LMHC. The two discussed Dr. Keyes' research in the field of traumatology and the benefits of belonging to a Christian healing community as healthcare providers. The Zoom interview, which was recorded, will be made available at a later date for viewing.

### **When did you join ACTheals?**

Dr. Keyes: "When ACTheals was first put together, one of their lifetime members was a psychiatrist by the name of John Draeger. John and I were friends and I was involved in a number of groups with him as Christian providers in our area. He was getting involved with the original group of charismatic nuns. He would tell me about it... I joined but I never attended meetings. I believed in the concept of Christians being in an organization regardless of your professional background and talking about and supporting the idea of working with the Holy Spirit in the work that I do. I was a member for pretty close to 20 years without attending any of it. I have been pretty active for the last 20 years having an earlier connection for about 20 years. I think we are coming up on a milestone for the organization. I have been around it with people who have been in it for quite some time."

Dr. Keyes added, "That is probably the single most important aspect of the group to me- is that when I go to conference, it's really a time of being away from everything else. It's a spiritual oasis that often just totally recharges me and gets me excited about God's work, not just through me but many people. It's palpable... I have some very special friends as a result."

### **Serving in Kenya**

Ben Keyes is the Director of the Center for Trauma and Resiliency Studies at Divine Mercy University. He created an immersion program in the summer for students and anyone in the community who is interested and willing to be trained in trauma.

defense mechanism..."

Dr. Keyes went on to share, "If you had any model for working with the personality, you had to include the spiritual part of that... He (Jung) did set the stage for the entire profession of Christian counseling by insisting on the spiritual part of self being a major issue that you dealt with..."

Dr. Keyes talked about the evidence base of the HEART model: "Without research, the model was not going to be taken seriously enough. I decided that for it to be accepted, we would have to do the research and make sure that it works. We started with a three-year study that turned into a seven-and-a-half-year study. We worked with eight programs across the United States that worked with survivors of human trafficking. Almost 2 to 1 have PTSD, borderline personality disorder, or Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)- the far end of the spectrum of trauma."

"It's a model that's designed to basically get a person to a place where they let themselves off the hook- where they are able to forgive themselves for basically anything they feel that they might have done. The reality of course is that anything they were exposed to was forced on them...victims tend to blame themselves...it's finding a way to let go of the things that led up to what happened to them and things they may have said and done during that period of time. It's also used as a way of reconnecting to God but reconnecting to God in a personal sense. Not from any church denominational base or theological base.... what it deals with is the one-on-one relationship between you and God and finding a way to reconnect that. We serve a very living and dynamic God. If we help people to find their connection to that, then the rest is between God and the person."

Dr. Keyes has been working with the HEART model and EMDR recently as the two modalities supporting

In his recent trip this year, he went with 23 people to Kenya, 70 miles outside of Nairobi up in the mountains. They did presentations to various groups, and individual and group counseling. Dr. Keyes explained, "This part of Kenya is plagued with a lot of domestic violence in relationships. They are having a major problem with human trafficking right now, and sexual trauma, especially early childhood sexual trauma, is rampant."

The group was hosted by an orphanage and had sixty children around them most of the time. They worked with the staff on trauma training and did presentations on self-esteem with the children. Dr. Keyes shared, "Our students were able to work with them therapeutically both individually and in groups. We did presentations to a Christian area of people that were interested in the work that is done both there at the orphanage and the team coming in. We focused a lot on presenting about compassion fatigue and focused on the problem they are having with trafficking. We worked with a group of church personnel from all denominations and various religious backgrounds."

Dr. Keyes added, "We presented to the women in the area and the men in the area. We focused those on relationship issues- conflict resolution...we focused on ways we can decrease tensions. We focused on domestic violence issues and trafficking because it's happening everywhere."

"The second week we actually went to various places. We spent a day at a Kenya prison where we worked with both security and the prisoners themselves- group and individual presentations. I think our folks took a lot away from that. The prisoners were very engaged with us. We went to a number of Catholic schools when we were there- dealing with issues of corporal punishment and abuse,

each other in the process, and he is finding success with it. He explained, "It helps them (trauma survivors) process the material of what happened to them at a much faster rate." Dr. Keyes plans to conduct more research with survivors of human trafficking that have DID in the near future.

### **Advice to Students in the Field of Traumatology**

Dr. Keyes: "Learn as many techniques as you can. Also, within the boundaries of ethics, learn to be creative. The people that get creative and take the time to bond with their clients and to learn about their clients...those are the artists. Learn as many of the theories and techniques and be fluid in your ability to use them when working with clients."

### **ACTheals Community**

ACTheals is a community of healthcare professionals that believe in the power of integrating Christianity in the work that we do and we also need healing. Dr. Keyes shared about his favorite aspects about joining ACTheals:

"I spent a number of years as the chair for the psychotherapy group. When I first came to that, I met Charles Zeiders. Charles and I have become very good friends over the years. Having a friend that meets you at such a deep level every time you connect has been a Godsend...it's a continuation of the relationship every time we connect. Charles has such a deep walk with God that I am just naturally attracted to it. Doug Schoeninger also reached out to me very early. The friendships I have had over the years have very much tended in that direction. It's just wonderful to have life companions traveling along the same journey with you, and an understanding that God is with us all the time. We just have to take the time to get quiet and connect. We spend so much time in prayer that is outward, and not enough time that is inward."

again with trafficking. We did a presentation for staff on the effects of trauma and how they interrupt the educational process and talked about the chemical reactions in the body, and what teachers can do to continue teaching without having to disrupt things."

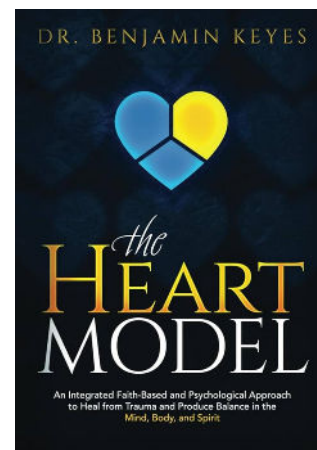
"We put this type of trip together so that students could get experience before they even get into their practices and to be certified in Green Cross as a traumatologist you have to have a certain amount of hours working with people. This trip allows them to gain hours and supervision so they can qualify for the certification."

### **The HEART Model**

The HEART model is an evidence-based treatment model that integrates Christian spirituality in the treatment of trauma. Dr. Keyes developed it over a period of approximately 20 years and takes an inner healing focus. Ben Keyes was moved by two books that David Siemens wrote. David was a missionary with no experience in counseling but had a book on Jungian psychology with him.

### **Future Goals**

Dr. Keyes' book is available on Amazon and Barnes and Noble. His goal is to make the HEART model a best practice. He shared, "Currently, there is not an identified faith-based best practice in the area of trauma." He would like the HEART model to be the first or at least one of the first models accepted as a best practice. He is going to replicate in Europe and around the world the program he did over the seven years. If there are similar results, he will approach SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association), to include it as a best practice that is faith-based.



Purchase Dr. Keyes'  
Book

*Created with the assistance of  
Microsoft 365 Copilot AI.*

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## **September is Suicide Prevention Month**

*Heavenly Father,*

*As we enter the month of September, we lift up our hearts to You in prayer for all those who are struggling and for those who feel hopeless and alone.*

*We pray for Your comfort and peace to surround them, reminding them that they are deeply loved and valued. May Your Holy Spirit fill their hearts with hope and the assurance that they are never alone, for You are always with them.*

*Lord, we ask for Your guidance and wisdom for those who are in positions to help – family members, friends, counselors, and healthcare professionals. Grant them the compassion and understanding to reach out and offer support to those in need.*

*We ask all these things in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.  
Amen.*

A MINDFUL PAUSE:  
Spot the Words That  
Uplift Your Week



There's something powerful hidden in today's puzzle. Can you find these words? **Restore. Healing. Grace. Surrender. Faith. Hope.** Which word resonates most with your heart right now?

## Upcoming Events

### ACTheals 50th Anniversary International Conference

Join us for the ACTheals 50th Anniversary International Conference, a milestone event celebrating five decades of healing. Don't miss this opportunity to connect with fellow healthcare professionals, clergy and interested persons in healing ministry to deepen your spiritual journey. Our plenary speakers will also include Judith MacNutt of Christian Healing Ministries and Rev. Nigel Mumford of By His Wounds Ministries.

Please contact [info@actheals.org](mailto:info@actheals.org) for more information.

### Empowerment of the Holy Spirit

Join us for a day of renewal and spiritual empowerment at the Empowerment of the Holy Spirit event on Saturday, **September 6, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM Pacific Time** at the American Martyrs Church in Manhattan Beach, 90266. This special day will have dedicated times for healing prayer. Room location is to be found at the Welcome Center.

We are honored to have Fr. Pat Crowley SS.CC as our speaker. Fr. Pat Crowley SS.CC, is a gifted retreat director, conference speaker and spiritual director, who is renowned for moving Christians into a deeper faith

## Support, Empower and Witness Groups

ACTheals Support, Empower, and Witness (SEW) groups are hosted monthly by regional coordinators, offering both virtual and in-person gatherings. These sessions provide ACTheals members with valuable opportunities for healing and fellowship, supporting them as they continue their healthcare and prayer ministries. Through SEW groups, members can connect, share experiences, and receive the encouragement they need to thrive in their spiritual and professional journeys. ACT members, be on the lookout for this month's e-blast for more details about September's SEW groups! **Save the dates:**

Central Atlantic and Northern New England Regions: September 6, 2025, 11:00am to 12:00pm EST (Zoom)

Midwest Region: September 13th, 2025, 11:30am CT (In person) for lunch followed by Unbound Video training. Mass at Holy Trinity at 4:00pm

ACTheals Italy SEW Group: September 15th, 2025, 3:15 p.m. to 3:45 p.m. (Rome time).

Mid-Atlantic Region: September 13, 2025; 5:00pm EST in person and 6:30pm on Zoom.

Southeast Region: September 24, 2025, 7:00pm to 8:00pm EST (In person)

ACTheals Africa: September 27th, 2025 at 5pm (Ghana time).

Los Angeles Region: September 28th, 6:00pm to 7:15pm PST (Zoom)

*For more details, contact Angeli at [apemberton@actheals.org](mailto:apemberton@actheals.org).*

experience through the healing love of Jesus Christ.

**Contact: Bernadette St. James, PsyD, Regional Coordinator**, for more information at **310.991.2256** and to RSVP.

## ACTheals Canada: Mobile Health Team

Join us for a day of learning and spiritual renewal on **Saturday, September 20, 2025**. This will be a dynamic event and all are welcome.

Email **Toni Bianchi, Regional Coordinator**, for more information at [tonibianchi24@gmail.com](mailto:tonibianchi24@gmail.com).



### Presents

Education, knowledge, Resources, and References on Forgiveness, MAiD and Faith

### Presenters

DR. LISE. POIRIER. M.D. PSYCHOTHERAPIST  
DR. MARY J CHAKKALACKAL. M.D. PSYCHOTHERAPIST  
PETER CHOW. REGISTERED MASSAGE THERAPIST  
FATHER TERRY McKENNA. RETIRED ACTIVE PRIEST

**Location**  
SAINT PATRICK'S CATHOLIC CHURCH, WILDFIELD  
11873 The Gore Road, Brampton, Ontario L6P 0B2

Date: Saturday, September 20, 2025

**Time**  
12:00-3:30PM

**Registration**  
Registration \$20 (Cash or Cheque), Cheque payable to ACTheals Canada  
Carmen Pacheco 416-303-3127  
E-mail: [tonibianchi24@gmail.com](mailto:tonibianchi24@gmail.com)



[www.actheals.org](http://www.actheals.org)

*ACTheals: Where God and Healthcare Meet*

*This is the official newsletter for ACTheals (Formerly known as the Association of Christian Therapists). Member **comments**, **suggestions** and **submissions** are appreciated. Submissions are preferred with a digital photo, or else, a prior one from our files will be used. Member names can be withheld by request. Contact Angeli at [apemberton@actheals.org](mailto:apemberton@actheals.org).*

ACTheals is a Christ-centered association of healthcare professionals, clergy, religious and associates who seek to integrate healing prayer to give full expression of God's love in their professions, ministries and personal lives.

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