

WORKSHOP
BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN THEOLOGY AND PASTORAL CARE

Moderator: Anne Vandenhoeck

CONTENT OF THE WORKSHOP:

- Introduction (5 min): Anne Vandenhoeck (aims, introduction panel, method)
- Panel: Each member has 10 minutes to answer three questions

1. Tell us one story from your religious tradition that relates to your pastoral care and represents the theology behind it.
2. What does a chaplain in your tradition represent?
3. How does theology in your tradition influences the organisation of health care?

PASTORAL CARE AND PROTESTANT THEOLOGY

Dana Kalnina-Zake

My presentation will focus on protestant theology in health care chaplaincy. I am very aware of the broad and extensive literature written on pastoral theology and of the broad spectrum of protestantism, the numerous *isms* and accordingly theologies within these. In spite of my sincerest aspiration to present this subject in general it will inevitably be influenced by my own tradition. My hope is that it's a good not a bad thing! Therefore first of all I would like to specify that I belong to and represent the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia which undoubtedly will color my perspective.

My intention is not to reflect in particularly Lutheran or even Protestant concepts, but rather on what is MY theology as a Christian and as a chaplain. This kind of perspective itself reveals something about Protestant theology and namely, that each individual Christian is involved in personal relationships with God who reveals Himself directly through Jesus Christ's redemptive life and death. Each Christian "can enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5) since he or she "is born from above" (John 3:6). "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. *So is everyone* who is born of the Spirit." (John 3:8)

As Anne has kindly asked I would like to present one of the most well known and beautiful Christian Sacred Stories and then try to walk together with you across the bridge this particular story is building among divine and human and among us.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

Luke 10: 25-37 (New King James Version)

25 And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

26 He said to him, "What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"

27 So he answered and said, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,*"* and '*your neighbor as yourself.*'"*

28 And He said to him, "You have answered rightly; do this and you will live."

29 But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

30 Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. 31 Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. 34 So he went to *him* and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 On the next day, *when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave *them* to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' 36 So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" 37 And he said, "He who showed mercy on him."

Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

The core of Lutheranism can be summoned up in the well known thesis: as Christians we are justified by God's grace through faith, and that there is nothing we need to do, or can do to earn our salvation. God's Grace precedes anything – faith, compassion, love, care, good works – anything. God's Grace goes before anything like the Glory of God went before Israel in desert as His Presence in a cloud. So what shall we do with our lives, now that we don't have to do anything? How to keep our faith alive and how to walk in Spirit? We are sent out to serve our neighbor and to see to his/her well-being. As Luther said, "We are free lords of all, subject to none; and we are servants of all, subject to all." A paradox that is never said to be free of tension or easy to live out.

The story of Good Samaritan tells about true relationship between two human beings who are total strangers to each other. Jesus tells nothing about the wounded man's nationality, faith or life orientation. Moved by compassion Samaritan, a disguised stranger himself, cares about man who is wounded. This help is not abstract but very concrete which can be described and which has outcome – the half dead man is turned back to Life. To care means to fulfill love out of compassion, so the question "who is your neighbour" now changes to "who are you".

As a hospital chaplain I represent first of all a human being who cares about other human being. I am God's child, member of Christian Church, set apart by God, blessed by special gifts of Holy Spirit in order to fulfill a special task. What is this task? The story of the good Samaritan answers – to show mercy to my neighbour, that is to ANYBODY who needs care, and this is the work of God through human relationships.

As a chaplain I am not on this road by chance but by God's will to fulfill His special purpose to walk this road not once but back and forth again and again. To find out people wounded and in need of care, often half dead in literal or in figurative sense. To represent the hidden Christ to them like He did to His disciples on the Emmaus road and reveal the Sacred Story in the Human One and at the same time to be the disciple of my fellow-traveler who represents Christ to me.

Three words that come to my mind when I think about chaplaincy of my vision: freedom, passion and activity. Freedom to choose the road I am going, passion in my heart, active position in life. These are the basic values we cherish in the planning, organizing and developing the chaplaincy in our country.

The purpose of spiritual care how we understand it in Latvia Association is not mere comfort and care for health care community and society in large – for this is the duty of the whole community and responsibility of every human being. First of all for us it is a specified MISSION to remind that we as human society must become a caring community that embodies incarnated God's Word, love, mercy and care to those in illness and sufferings. A caution - with mission we do not mean bringing *people* somewhere or changing them. With mission we do mean walking together our mutual journey of life, serving to everybody as reminders that God remembers and cares about us.

Professionalism of chaplaincy is challenging because it brings tension to chaplain's pastoral identity. In Latvia there are fifteen chaplains, ten of them are Lutherans of whom two are pastors.. As non-medical personnel chaplains do not belong to the medical community. As representatives of faith community chaplains serve outside this community. Lay chaplains have certain limitations to represent priestly function of a pastor. Of course these are tensions. Now how to build bridges across them? Or may be these tensions themselves help us to build bridges? How to “be wise as serpents and harmless as doves?” (Mark 10:16)

In this process we meet many challenges and one of the biggest is hidden in ourselves – how to keep freedom, passion and activity in the midst of slavery, insensibility to human sufferings and passivity. How to keep our mission alive and our vision vivid in our hearts?

One of the most necessary bridges that must be built and that certainly influences healthcare chaplaincy within healthcare system and therefore all healthcare system, is the dialogue between

different denominations of the country. And not only dialogue but mutual sharing, learning, witnessing and ministering together – the common and “good ground” for the seed of God's Word to grow.

Latvia Association now is formed of Lutheran, Catholic, Baptist churches and representative of Salvation Army. As a lutheran chaplain I often have experienced the healing presence of my colleagues from different denominations. At the same time we together have experienced the painful seperatedness in the Lord's Supper. From my catholic colleagues I have learned the humility, respect for subordination and deep, more emotionally than rationally lived faith, from my baptist colleagues I have learned fearlessness and the deep spirit of community. From lutheran colleagues I have learned freedom, passion and activity. These lessons have enriched us greatly, without them we could not have accomplished what we have accomplished – in two years we have founded professional association, registered profession, made dialogue with Ministry of Health, Parliament and other state institutions, made our voice loud regarding Law on Patients Rights, achieved major EU project in children's palliative care and doubled the number of chaplains.

This influences healthcare system subtly, at first not very visibly, but deeply as the seed who has “fell on good ground and did yield fruit that sprang up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.”(Mark 4:8, KJV)