

Opening ceremony - Arjan Plaisier

Dear participants,

On behalf of the Protestant Church in the Netherlands, I wish to greet you with warm and cordial greetings. It is an honour that you will have your consultation in our country and I hope you feel welcome. You are all involved in the important work of health care on the basis of Christian faith. In this way you respond to the call of Christ to visit the sick, to take care of our fellow human beings, particularly those who suffer and are deprived of patrons of normal life. Of course, care for the sick, health care, hospitals and similar institutions who came up in a Christian culture, have evolved and nowadays we find them in different shape and in different circumstances. Even so, the concern of the sick, the old and worn out, the physically and mentally burdened and those who are dying is still a responsibility which the church wants to take seriously. It is a concern in which you play an important role.

“Working together: the challenge for chaplaincy in an interdisciplinary era” is the theme of your consultation. There is no other way. Even the merciful Samaritan worked together with the inn keeper to restore the wounded man. God divides the skills and gifts of grace to let us work together. Caring is not only an individual prompting, but the challenge for a community, a congregation, a society. We are interconnected through the working together of different disciplines. The requirements of health care need to answer the highest standards, which is impossible without interdisciplinary efforts. I suppose you will hear enough about this, which relieves me from the obligation to say another word on that subject!

Working together, I hope that also in a professional environment this working together still applies to the relations between churches, or churches and the chaplaincy in health care settings. The care we have for vulnerable people is a care of the community. It is good to know that there is a caring community who supports your work and who is involved in the world of healthcare through you and through others. It would be a serious loss of quality and identity if professionalisation meant that the ties between the Christian community and the world of health care were cut down. I hope we will find ways to continue in realising these ties and connections.

With these remarks I now quickly finish my word of greeting. Have a good and fruitful consultation and, of course, have a pleasant stay in the Netherlands.