

The Christian Chaplain and Multi-faith Ministry

Gloria J. Woodland MA
Regional Coordinator, Spiritual Care
Fraser Health Authority
British Columbia, Canada

The Salvation Army
Social Services Conference
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INTENTIONAL MINISTRY

“lingering with intent”

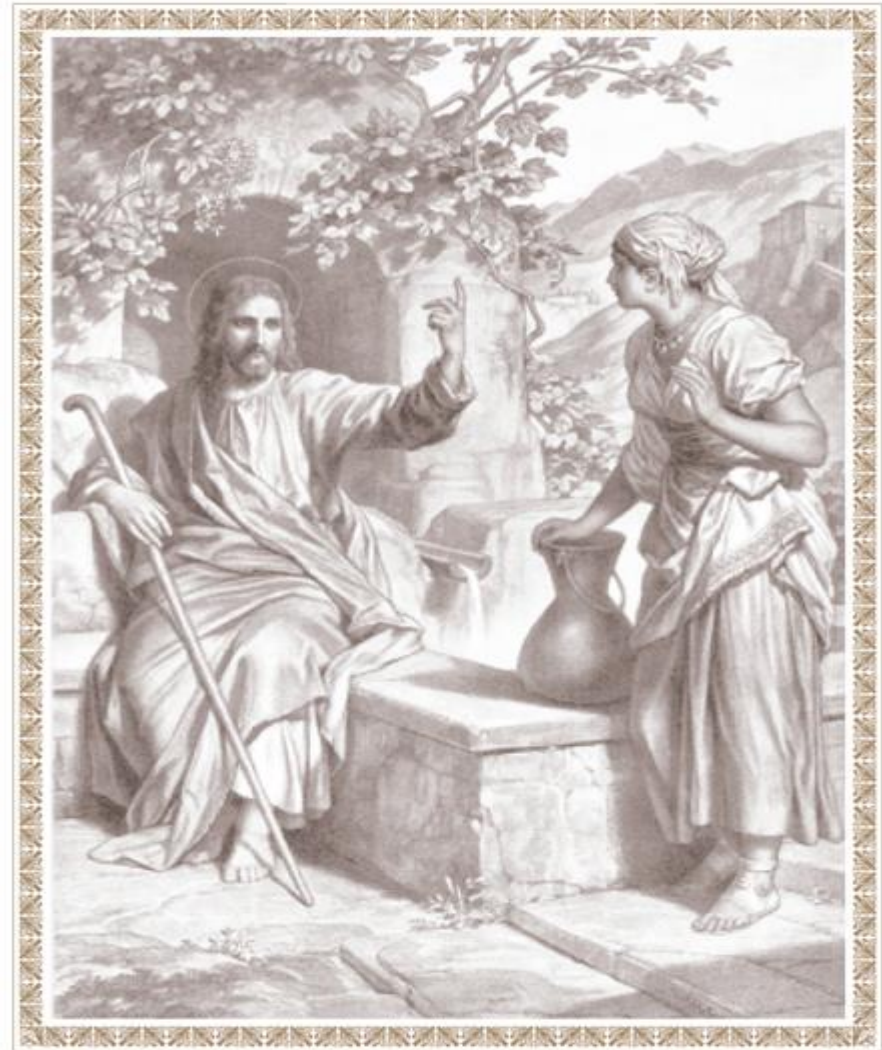
- Parker Palmer

- “Most of us from experience know what real hospitality feels like. It means being received openly, warmly, freely, without the need to earn your keep or prove yourself.

An inhospitable space is one in which we feel invisible – or visible but on trial.

A hospitable space is alive with trust and good will, rooted in a sense of our common humanity. When we enter such a space we feel worthy, because the host assumes we are.”

- Intentional Ministry
- Jesus and the Woman of Samaria



Diversity

- Our clients come from a variety of cultural, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, each with distinct histories and goals
- The varied points of diversity all converge in our facility, or ministry center.

Where their perspectives merge with ours!

- Kluckhohn & Murray claimed three dimensions for all humans: “Every person is in certain respects
 1. Like all others
 2. Like some others
 3. Like no others.”

Diverse ... yet with similarities

We are alike in that we all have basic human needs,

For:

Nutrition

Hydration

Human connection

Security

- Soup ~ Soap & Salvation



The more we are intentional about our ministry to diverse populations the more we become aware of differences

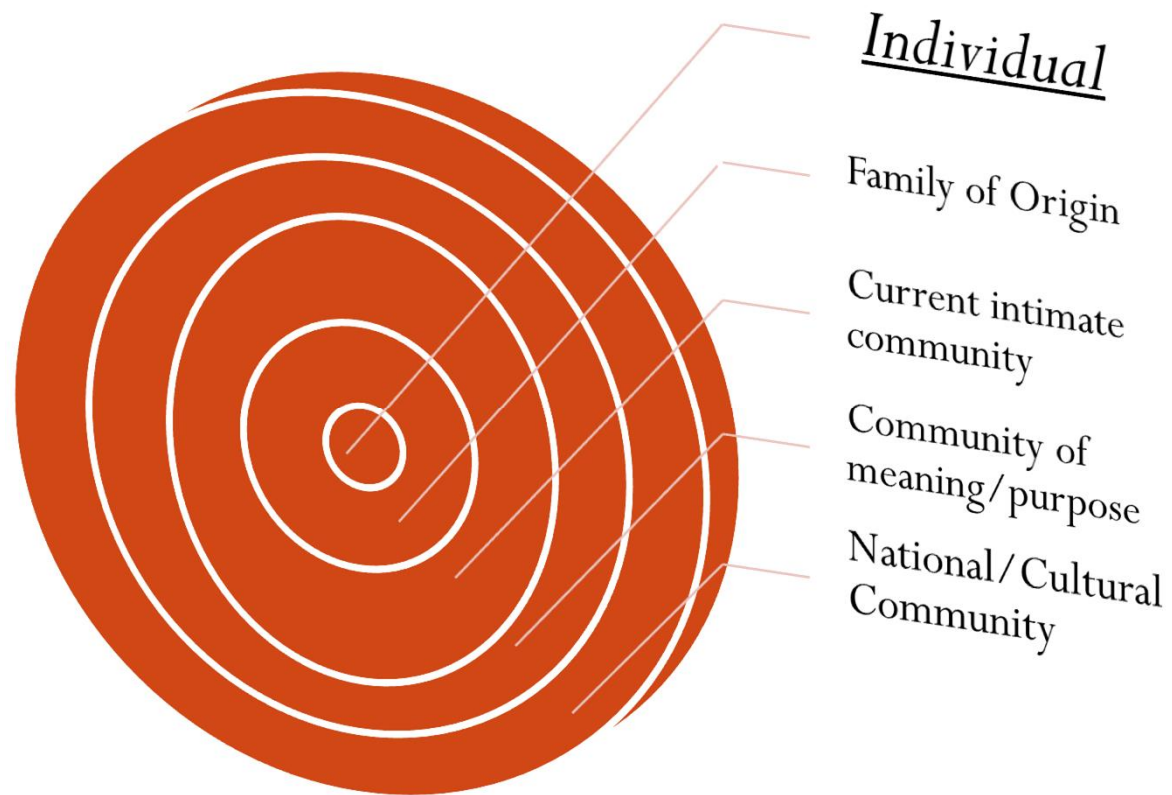
Every client is unique, with very individual preferences, personalities, hopes, and dreams.

These dimensions remind us of the importance of culture.

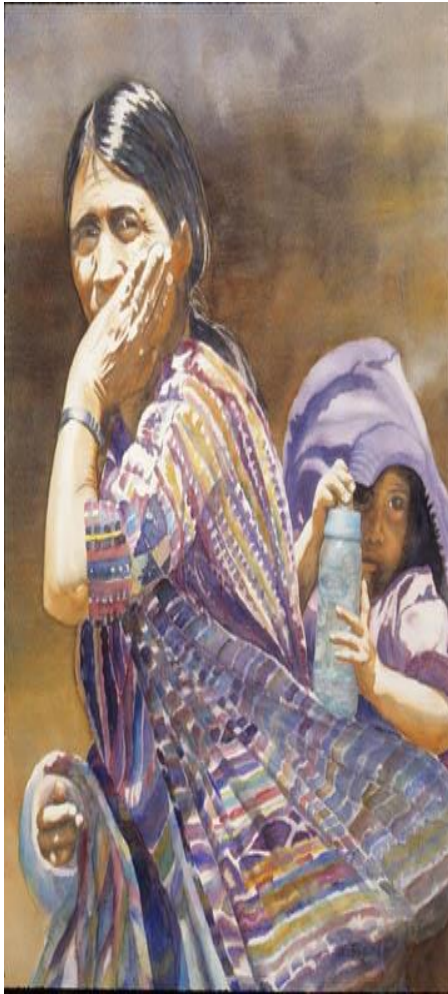


Chaplains doing “*intentional*” ministry are aware that the circles of context contribute to the behaviors observed and are important to cross-cultural ministry.

Circles of Context



Diversity *exists in every group of humans*



- “There is greater *intracultural* variation than *intercultural* variation”

Dr. Terry Bowman U of T

- Some believe that if we do not participate in our cultural heritage we are not affected by it.

As Chaplains providing inter-cultural and inter-faith ministry it is important that we ...

1. Increase our awareness of differences, which includes
2. Increasing our valuing and respect of the differences and
3. Then developing a skill for interacting amongst the differences of the people around us.

Greatest skill for interacting with the differences is to recognize the similarities.

- The work of the Chaplain → lingering with intent
- My intent → to provide spiritual care ~ no matter who ...
- Therefore I must recognize that there is a

TRADITIONAL CALL TO SPIRITUAL CARE

“Love God

Love others as self

...connect...

...relate...

Show Compassion”

Traditional Teachings

- JUDAISM

- Deuteronomy 6:4 -9

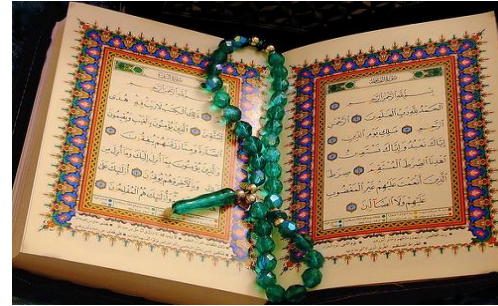
- Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength ... IMPRESS this on your children...talk about this...LOVE... wear it as a symbol...put it on your door posts ...
... LOVE >>>> BE LOVE



- Leviticus 19:18

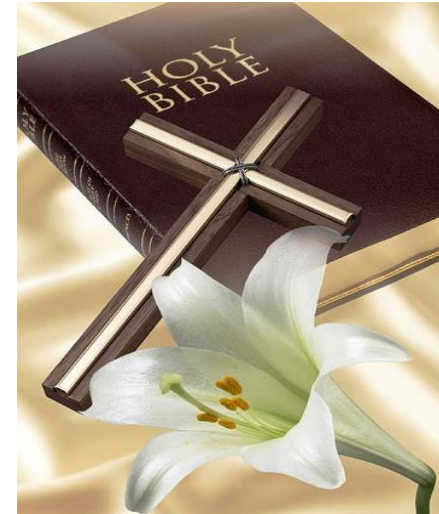
- Don't seek revenge – don't bear a grudge ... LOVEYOUR NEIGHBOUR as much as you love yourself

Islam



- Qur'an
 - Teaches that those of faith are overflowing in their love for Allah... therefore ...
 - 002:165 – love others as love Allah – overflowing in love
 - 002:177 – give all you have to others out of love to Allah – be steadfast in prayer and practice regular charity.
 - 003:148 – Allah loves those who are kind – Allah loves those who do good to others
 - 005:013 – Bear with them and pardon them. Low Allah loveth the kindly.

Christianity



- Matthew 22:36 – 40
 - The greatest command → Love the LORD your God with all of your being.
 - The second command → Love your Neighbor
- Colossians 3:12 -14
 - As God's beloved people, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, be forgiving and love others

Buddhism

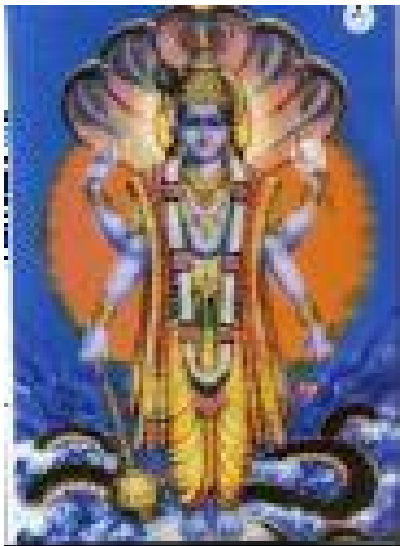
- **Majjhima Nikaya *** (middle length discourses of the Buddha)
- 22:47 – simple faith in Buddha is expressed in simple love –
such destines one for heaven



Hindu – *tradition of non-violence*

- Unnithan & Singh * (commentary)

- 1973:45, 46, 70 – teachings of



- compassion
- non-violence
- protection of the poor

- Explains that all love for others is self love



Sikhism



- Don't create enmity with anyone, as God is within everyone
- Practice Love
 - Guru Arjan Devji 259,
 - Guru Granth Sahib ...



Native Spirituality

- Aboriginal people believe there is a *God* who is seen as *Great Spirit* and *whose presence is felt in every object, in every person, in every place.*
- Throughout Native teachings there is *respect, love, & honor.* From this flows intelligence, knowledge and wisdom.

“We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.” Chief Dan George



Traditional Religious Teachings carry the same theme

- Theme: “Healthy Spirituality” leads to physical and psychological health and emphasizes reverence and dependence on a higher power (God).

Spirituality = connection for meaning

- Relationships in balance – God ^ Others
- Love God ^ Love Others
- Balance

Be Aware of Shifting Paradigms:

“The entire constellation of beliefs, values, techniques and so on, that are shared by members of a given community are no longer the simple givens they once were.”

(Thomas Kuhn)

- Typical Situation – Traditional Society / Beliefs provided - highly reliable plausible structures
- Modern Societies are characterized by unstable, incohesive, unreliable plausibility structures.

“The times they are a changing”

Intentional Ministry

Lingering with Intent

Compassionate Connecting

- Relationships that are successful reflect inherent characteristics that create an atmosphere of acceptance, encouragement and hope.
- Spiritual Care must also reflect such characteristics through the lives of those in ministry.

Intentional Ministry ~ moves beyond empathy

- Qualifications for our job = empathy & sympathy
- Although empathy & sympathy may be helpful, chaplaincy in an inter-faith /inter-cultural context requires something more.
- David Augsburger calls this something more
“INTERPATHY”

Interpathic caring

Interpathic identification

Interpathic presence

Interpathy

- The experience of a separate other without common cultural assumptions, values and views.
- It is embracing of what is truly other.
- Interpathy is the key to cross-cultural and interfaith chaplaincy.



- **Interpathic Caring** awaits the discovery of how caring is given and received within that culture or faith before initiating caregiving on patterns from one's own tradition.



- **Interpathic Identification** prizes the meeting of humanness in which universals of life experience coincide, but without assuming that the interpretation or the emotional savoring of these universals will overlap or necessarily even touch.



- **Interpathic Presence** enters another world of human energies and risks, making the self available to entertain what was formerly alien, to be hospitable to what is utterly new.



DISCUSSION

- How comfortable are you in coming alongside of clients of different faiths and cultures?
- Can you be an Interpathic Presence?
 - Challenges
 - Opportunities
 - Equipping
 - other thoughts ...

Four Characteristics for inter-faith & inter-cultural ministry

1. When doing interfaith ministry the Christian chaplain will be aware of their own and their institutions' faith & cultural perspectives and assumptions
2. Inter-faith chaplains will be able to “join” other worldviews without diminishing their own.
3. When ministering cross-faith/culture chaplains will take a systematic and contextual approach.
4. Christian Chaplains can use their own beliefs, theories or models appropriately without being controlled by them.

1. Being aware of personal and institutional faith perspectives

- What do you believe?
 - Your personal statement of faith...
- What statement of faith are you required to uphold while on the job?

2. “Join” other worldviews without diminishing your own.

- Sufficient confidence in your own experience and faith relationship so that it will not be too anxiety-provoking to bracket your personal worldview in favor of understanding the client’s view.
- Use the opportunity to see through another’s eyes as you form the plan for pastoral or spiritual care.

3. Taking a systemic and contextual approach

- Understanding how and to what extent people's responses to the life situation they are in are formed by their faith/culture context.
 - Illness behavior is a normative experience governed by cultural rules and faith context – we learn 'approved' ways of being ill.

Response to illness . People differ in

- their experience of pain
- what they label as a symptom
- how they communicate about their pain or symptoms
- their beliefs about the cause of their illness
- their attitudes towards Drs. and caregivers
- desired or acceptable treatment

- Interventions may be initiated from more than one point, a discovery to those of us accustomed to doing things one way.

4. Using our own beliefs, models, theories appropriately

- We believe spiritual or pastoral care to have a healing focus.
- Ethnicity and culture and alternate beliefs may confound our theories and models for care.
- Not being controlled by one's belief and theories allows people with different theologies and culture to express themselves without fear of having the theory of another being used to diagnose or judge them inappropriately.

(hospitable environment)

“Sacred Truth is a very deep well into which human beings have been lowering leaking buckets for millennia. ~ The more we learn about what other traditions have fetched up, the more we learn about our own. Barbara Brown Taylor

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Can you share a learning experience from another's well ...



“Christianity is the well that nourishes many of us. For some time it has been far too easy to assume that we have all the answers. We are in the majority after all, and there are so many expressions of Christianity, surely some of us must have things right.” Paul Campbell

- “BUT ... in this new Century each of us has the possibilities (necessity) of living peaceably with folk whose commitments are very different than the traditional majority.
- AND it is time for the majority to listen carefully/prayerfully to caregivers whose spiritual commitment has been unfamiliar and perhaps unwelcome in the past.”

Paul Campbell

Christianity

Catholic, Protestant, eastern Orthodox

- Founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ
- The world and everything that exists was created by and depends on God
- Belief in afterlife and soul integral to faith.

Sikhism

- Philosophy is combination of Islam – one God and the basic ethical beliefs, plus Hinduism's world views
- Common God for all mankind
- Preach religious tolerance

Islam

Muslim (Moslem)

- Complete way of life
- Belief in God – all people created, live, die and return to God by god's command
- Death is part of life and a rebirth into another world
- Pork and intoxicating substances prohibited.

Hinduism

- A wide variety of beliefs held together by an attitude of mutual tolerance – all approaches to God are valid.
- Goal is to break free of imperfect world and to reunite with Brahman
- Reincarnation and transmigration of soul until reunion with Brahman
- Vegetarian – killing of living things outlawed

Buddhism

- Seeks 'truth' through middle way between extremes of asceticism and self indulgence.
- "Right" living will enable people to attain nirvana
- Reincarnation of the soul
- Emphasis on meditation to relax mind and body to see life in true perspective.

Judaism

- God has a covenant relationship with humans and if one obeys God's laws salvation may be achieved.
- Chosen to be examples to all
- "Messiah" will come to bring world to perfection
- Strong family focus

The Golden Rule

- **Buddhism** – treat not others in ways that you yourself would find harmful.
- **Christianity** – in everything, do to others as you would have done to yourself.
- **Native Spirituality** – we are as much alive as we keep the earth alive.
- **Judaism** – What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary. Go and Learn it.
- **Islam** – Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself.
- **Sikhism** – I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me, Indeed I am a friend to all.

Intentional Ministry to those of other faiths and cultures... begins with Respect and Hospitableness

- Jesus was intentional
 - Jesus was respectful
 - Jesus was hospitable
-
- God gave us all free choice.
 - Christian Chaplains should respect all faith cultures because only complete religious freedom inspires genuine faith.
 - True commitments to Christ would be rare if Christianity were the only option.
 - **Because we believe in our God-given free will, we can respect other's chosen faiths. Of course we believe that only Christ is the way, the truth and the life, and with knowledge and respect we can endeavor to persuade – not coerce others to believe the same.**

- “Men may believe what they can not prove.”
- “Religious experiences which are as real as life to some ~ may be incomprehensible to others”

William O. Douglas

Inspiration

“I offer you peace.

I offer you love.

I offer you friendship.

I see your beauty.

I hear your need.

I feel your feelings.

My wisdom flows from the Highest Source.

I salute that Source in you.

Let us work together for unity in love.”

Mahatma Gandhi