

Keynote: “Accompaniment”

[PPT- title slide] > Presentation of self (2 minutes)...explain my job-briefly...tell how i do presentations

> Opening Prayer: *Let us begin with a word of prayer. The Lord be with you...Faithful God who journeys with us, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go out with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and you love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.*

[PPT- a1:4] > ACCOMPANIMENT:

-basic definition: “walking with people in solidarity that leads to transformation, empowerment, and sustainability.”

-(present the 5 values and their definition)

-To focus on our time together, we’ll dive deeper into 3 of the 5, mutuality, vulnerability, and sustainability. We understand **INCLUSIVITY** as looking for those who is excluded, asking why, and commit to changing structures and habits that exclude people without any deliberate intention. **EMPOWERMENT** recognizes asymmetries of power in relationships and struggles to balance and correct those asymmetries. For some, this may mean learning to let go of power, becoming vulnerable, and standing up to power that hurts others in their walk through life.

[PPT- a2:4] -Mutuality: *“We work to recognize that all of us have gifts to offer to God’s mission, and to value gifts of all, while caring for one another’s needs. Mutuality is built upon giving and receiving trust as we grow together. There is a focus on developing reciprocal relationships and considers how both communities in the relationship can help one another build capacities to proclaim and serve, rather than emphasizing inequality as “donors/recipients.”*

[PPT- a3:4] -Vulnerability: *In the US culture, vulnerability often seems to be weakness, but Jesus shows us that vulnerability – openness to relationship, giving up power – is God’s way of redemption. We enter God’s mission through vulnerability, just as Jesus became vulnerable to us and with us. When engaging in mission, we are challenged to practice receiving hospitality, to give up control of our experience, and to open ourselves to reflection, change, transformation.*

[PPT- a4:4] -Sustainability: *We recognize that any given relationship will require an intentional commitment of attention and time to build up all those who are involved. In a mission project context, sustainability means embedding the project or work in the community as a whole, so that the project doesn’t depend only on one or two people, and can continue over time.*

-Accompaniment, then, isn’t something we just do globally, but rather it’s how we are with our sisters and brothers in Christ around the world, **it’s how you are with people from different cultures right here in Montana!** It’s how we stand in solidarity with and

walk alongside each other and marginalized community, together living into the reconciling love of God.

-A. Gittins: *To love you must encounter*. We can't truly know, much less love, in the abstract because human encounter, meeting each other, is the **only authentic way** to know and to love.

> MUTUALITY (elephant and mouse)

[PPT- m1:3] > 1.- What's going on in this image, what do you notice? ...which of these two is courageous?

2.- Who has more power... who is the giver/receiver? (they're eye-to-eye).

3.- What does this image have to do with accompaniment and mission? Is there mutuality in this relationship?

[PPT- m2:3] > A short story by Miriam Adeney

"Let me tell you a story about Americans," an African Christian friend said to me. Elephant and Mouse were best friends. One day Elephant said, "Mouse, let's have a party!" Animals gathered from far and near. They ate. They drank. They sang. And they danced. And nobody celebrated more and danced harder than Elephant. After the party was over, Elephant exclaimed, "Mouse, did you ever go to a better party? What a blast!" But Mouse didn't answer. "Mouse...where are you?" Elephant called. He looked for his friend, and then shrank back in horror. [PPT- m3:3]

There at Elephants feet lay Mouse. His little body was ground into the dirt. He had been smashed by the big feet of his exuberant friend, Elephant.

"Sometimes, that's what it's like to do mission with you Americans," the African storyteller commented. "It's like dancing with an Elephant." //

>COMMENTS: This is what happens when mutuality, accompaniment, or even understanding the other isn't present in the relationship

> Each needs to be aware of the others reality, context, power, importance, struggles, etc.

>Mutuality is about developing and deepening horizontal, reciprocal relationships, where trust, openness, and honesty are key components.

>Mutuality is much more about partnership and collaboration

***-EXAMPLE: *IELU's modification of a ELCA project budgeting document, he made it better for his context, this is partnership.*

[PPT- v1:3] > VULNERABILITY

*> *What's the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word "vulnerability"?*

V.1 Ask everyone to draw the Luther seal/rose on a piece of paper (can be scrap)

V.2 Ask someone to describe Luther's seal/rose out loud (as I draw it on board)

[PPT- v2:3] > *What is at the heart of our Lutheran image, our Lutheran heritage or identity?*

Luther Seal: “at the heart of our lutheran identity is vulnerability, the vulnerability of Christ crucified, our vulnerability of being Christ-like”

In his letter to (Nuremberg city clerk) Lazarus Spengler (July 8, 1530), Luther explains his seal: *“The first should be a black cross in a heart, which retains its natural color, so that I myself would be reminded that faith in the Crucified saves us. “For one who believes from the heart will be justified” (Rom 10:10). Although it is indeed a black cross, which mortifies and which should also cause pain, it leaves the heart in its natural color. It does not corrupt nature, that is, it does not kill but keeps one alive. “The just shall live by faith” (Rom 1:17) but by faith in the crucified.”*

[PPT- v3:3] V.Westhelle: VULNERABLE WILLINGNESS

Vitor Westhelle: “Transfiguring Lutheranism: Being a Lutheran in New Contexts”
*We live in a world that is broken and damaged... And our identity as Lutherans does not lie in the laudatory proficiency of reciting articles from the Augsburg confession **but in our willingness to be vulnerable** so that while being immersed in the traditions of the church our theologizing is one that allows the cries of the broken, forsaken and the frail to interrupt our traditioned listening so that God's voice might be heard.”*

-Vulnerability helps us to be transparent with one another and break down barriers that controls or inhibit relationships.

-Vulnerability isn't weakness, but vulnerability is giving up something to be transformed by the other.

-DISCLAIMER: I'm speaking to you as one from the dominant culture and offer this perspective and critique to the church of the dominant culture. Because vulnerability for oppressed and marginalized peoples may look, feel, and manifest itself differently.

-But my point is that vulnerability is an openness to relationship, a giving up of power to hear and be moved by the cries of broken, forsaken and frail who are already around us.

-Authentic engagement and relationships can only come about when we're ready and willing to open ourselves up to being vulnerable. At the center of who we are as Lutheran and as Christians, is vulnerability, because God works, redeem, and saves through vulnerability.

*****-EXAMPLE: For me, being asked to teach at the local seminary in Spanish within 4 months of arriving: i arrived with one school of training and learned from my students, there were times when i didn't say things correctly, etc. but we built relationship;**

**[PPT- s1:4] > SUSTAINABILITY
 <THIS IS A HUGE FOCUS NOW IN MY AREA>**

> Raise your hand if you've ever heard the axiom: "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime."

[PPT- s2:4] > QUICK QUIZ: Is it from Lao-Tzu (Chinese Philosopher and poet 604 -531 BCE), or from Maimonides (Spanish Philosopher 1135-1204 CE), or from British author, Anne Isabella Ritchie (1880s), who wrote a story titled *Mrs. Dymond*, sometime in the 1880s and it includes this line. "He certainly doesn't practise his precepts, but I suppose the patron meant that if you give a man a fish he is hungry again in an hour; if you teach him to catch a fish you do him a good turn."

While we may know this old axiom, we need to take it a few **steps further**...we may be comfortable with the axiom as it is: (repeat axiom),...but how does it sit with you when we look deeper, past the comfortable?

[PPT- s3:4] >> -If you teach me to fish, you have fed me for the day; or until the river is overfished or polluted or the shoreline seized for development. But, if you teach me to organize, then whatever the challenge, I can join together with my community and peers... and we will fashion our own solution. (~Barefoot Guide to Working with Organizations and Social Change, Vol 1) <-- **this is adds a much more community organizing spirit to this axiom**

>> But even within the axiom, we must read it the hermeneutics of suspicion and ask: who is doing the teaching (dominant culture or oppressed/marginalized culture?) and who is learning (the foreign companion churches or North American companion congregations and synods?) Who is teaching and who is learning? The original axiom smells like patriarchy, imperialism, individualism, and superiority.

>> *-As missionaries and as the ELCA Global Mission who accompany our companion churches around the world, we have learned to stop teaching and to sit down with our companion communities, we listen to people share about how important the river is to them, their health, their well-being, and that of their children and grandchildren...we listen to stories, and are present with our sisters and brothers in their hunger while they tell us what it was like before they became hungry and why they no longer have a fish today, we spend time getting to know their culture and reality. Our companion sisters and brothers are not poor recipients of our donated charity fish, nor students of our fishing expertise, because **[PPT- s4:4]** they are co-teachers, and co-fishermen/ fisherwomen and have something to tell us that will feed us too. // this aroma of sustainability smells differently, doesn't it?*

1.> Sustainability...keeps us firm to the commitment that relationships are neither trivial nor fleeting; rather they're developed to be extended into the future without eroding or overly using existing human and material resources .

2.> When we say sustainability, we're talking about integral, holistic, comprehensive sustainability (it lasts for the long haul) issues that our companion churches have identified as areas where they would like more help.

3.> but not necessarily from the Northern Hemisphere, but rather have asked for help in identifying and connecting with local, contextual resources, wisdoms, communities, to build mutual sustainability in: **leadership development, management and administration, stewardship, relevant theological education and pastoral formation, networking christian educators, forming disciples, being mission communities that share the Gospel of Christ, life-giving liturgy, and sustainable models of church.....**

*****-EXAMPLE: MT synod scholarships for kids in Bolivia, water pump for cattle farm that supports a congregation/after-school program; Bivocationality in Bolivia/Chile or Pastoral Teams in Argentina**

[PPT- r1:2] > SUMMARY

- > Use image to summarize the 5 values
- > Any questions?
- > Deeper in workshop space in the afternoon