

Stewardship and development support in the work of an educational institution (Zabezpečovanie zdrojov a podpora rozvoja v práci vzdelávacej inštitúcie)

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1. Kresťanské šafárenie – biblické a teologické základy

Každá generácia kresťanov, každá generácia cirkvi Ježiša Krista potrebuje odpoveď na otázky: Akým som kresťanským šafárom? Ako používam a ako sa delím s darmi, ktoré mi Boh dáva? Vydaj počet zo svojho šafárenia! Tieto otázky sú také staré ako Nová zmluva a také súčasné ako titulky dnešných novín. Ježiš hovoril o šafárení v živote, o daroch a o zdrojoch svojím učeníkom, keď ich pripravoval na službu. Nám, ktorí sme v Jeho službe, takisto hovorí cez Novú zmluvu vo svojom mene a v záujme Jeho služby v našich zboroch, našej cirkvi a v našich spoločenstvách.

Otázka, ako používame Božie dary, aby sme Mu slúžili a vykonávali našu službu v Jeho mene, je podstatná pre všetkých kresťanov a pre všetky generácie. Zvlášť v čase, keď sa menia historické modely a ideály, v čase, keď sa stávajú minulosťou staré formy a vzťahy, na ktoré sme boli zvyknutí, treba nájsť nové spôsoby, ako vykonávať našu službu, byť cirkvou v našom čase, na tomto mieste a v tejto generácii. Keď sme postavení pred novú realitu a nové výzvy, nemôžeme sa jednoducho spoliehať na spôsoby, ako to bolo alebo ako sa to robilo predtým v našich zboroch.

Ako však nájsť pochopenie, nahliadnuť do podstaty budovania nových spôsobov služby, vykonávania cirkevnej práce – ako nájsť správnu motiváciu pre naše kresťanské šafárenie v 21. storočí? Obráťme sa najprv do minulosti. V Ježišovom učení a v živote kresťanských spoločenstiev v Novej zmluve vidíme jasne, ako Ježiš Kristus od nás požaduje, aby sme správne nakladali s darmi v Jeho službe, a tiež ako kresťania prvého storočia našli formy a vzťahy na to, aby vykonávali svoju službu.

Počas mnohých rokov sa však tieto formy a vzťahy zmenili. Podpora a konanie služby v cirkvi boli iné, realizovali sa na iných miestach a v iných generáciách. Ale zmysel a motivácia pre službu vždy bola a musí byť vždy založená na Kristovom povolaní a Kristovej výzve nielen prijať Božie dary a požehnania, ale sa s nimi aj podeliť v kresťanskej službe, ktorú konajú ľudia cez cirkev. Treba tak robiť kvôli cirkvi a kvôli Božiemu svetu.

V celom svete sa dnes dejú veľké zmeny. Vidíme rapidne zmeny v sociálnych a v rodinných štruktúrach, spoločenstvách, ekonomických vzťahoch, ale taktiež nové chápanie rasových a kultúrnych formulácií. Ak niekto kýchnu v Ázii, niekto v Rusku dostane nádchu. A potom niekto z nás, vy alebo ja, sa z toho nakazíme a dostaneme zápal pľúc. Mohli by sme vymenovať celý zoznam takýchto zmien. Vy sami na Slovensku to takisto viete, možno lepšie než iní, aká je sila zmien – v lepšie i v horšie – ako to zažívate od roku 1989.

Tieto zmeny však nekončia. Snáď sa ešte zintenzívnia, pretože komunikácia a technická revolúcia vo svete neustále prebieha.

Cirkev Ježiša Krista je povolaná k službe: byť silná vo viere a silná v štruktúre tak, aby mohla odvážne prinášať radostnú Božiu zvesť v Ježišovi Kristovi svetu, ktorý to potrebuje; slúžiť ako svedok vzoru Kristovej lásky; dávať samu seba v láske pre Krista a v láske pre svet, pre ktorý On umrel.

My v našej krajine a vy vo vašej potrebujeme vlastne spôsoby, ako udržať cirkev silnú a slúžiť tak, ako je cirkev povolaná a obdarená Duchom Svätým, aby sa stala Božím agentom – silným, dynamickým, nebojácnym a starostlivým. Agentom, ktorý je postavený do dnešného sveta, nie do včerajšieho, agentom Božieho zajtrajška s našou osvedčenou kresťanskou vierou a životom, ktoré určujú metódy a služby 21. storočia.

Čo vy a ja nemôžeme robiť, je myslieť si, že tradičné spôsoby existencie cirkvi a tradičné spôsoby podpory cirkevnej služby nám budú naďalej stačiť. Aby sme mohli vydať v našej službe v 21. storočí dobrý počet z nášho šafárenia s Božími darmi, ktoré dostávame v našom čase, na tomto mieste a v našej generácii, bude potrebné nájsť nové spôsoby a formy ako identifikovať, prijať, deliť sa a používať tieto dary, ktoré nám – svojim ľuďom – Boh dáva.

A je tu ešte jedna vec, o ktorej som presvedčený, že ju nebudeme môcť robiť. Nemôžeme povedať, že hovoriť o používaní Božích darov, povzbudzovať úmyselne samých seba a ľudí, ktorým slúžime, aby dávali štedrejšie, je niečo nesväté a nemiestne. Najprv sami so sebou, potom s tými, čo sú v cirkvi, potom s ľuďmi vo svete, v ktorom je cirkev postavená, musíme hovoriť o spravovaní darov.

Bezpochyby, že formy a spôsoby, ktoré vy budete používať na podporu a rast služby svojej cirkvi tu, budú v určitých veciach iné ako tie, ktoré my praktizujeme v našej cirkvi (v Evanjelickej luteránskej cirkvi v Amerike – pozn. redakcie). Ale otázka šafárenia s Božími darmi, podpora a práca v cirkevnej službe, výzvy k dávaniu a dávaniu viac na Kristovo dielo zaiste neprestanú, budú také isté pre nás všetkých, ktorí sme tu v tejto miestnosti a pre nás všetkých, ktorí patríme do svätej, všeobecnej (katolíckej) cirkvi. A preto skúmajme spolu s otvorenou myslou a srdcom miesta, kam nás Ježiš Kristus a svedectvo svätých písniem vedie dnes, v našom čase, na tomto mieste a v tejto generácii.

Teda strávim dnes s vami čas, aby som sa podelil s tým, v čo ja verím ohľadom základov kresťanského šafárenia.

Podľa teologického základu kresťanského šafárenia musím identifikovať Boha vo svojom živote (alebo bohov vo svojom živote). Kresťanské šafárenie je odpoveď; je to moje konanie, ktoré vyplýva z chápania môjho života. Moje kresťanské šafárenie je výrazom mojich najhlbších presvedčení ako stvoreného a spaseného dieťaťa Božieho. Kresťanské šafárenie je to, čo robím potom, keď poviem, že verím.

Pochopenie kresťanského šafárenia začína tým, čo vy a ja veríme o všemocnom Bohu, pretože je to táto viera, ktorá dá do pohybu odpoveď, naše kresťanské šafárenie, náš život tak, ako sa rozhodneme ho žiť.

Čo teda veríme o Bohu? Vyznávame, že veríme v Boha tak, ako je to napísané v kréde cirkvi. „Verím v Boha Otca všemohúceho, Stvoriteľa neba i zeme“ - čo tým mienime, je to, čo píše Luther: „Verím, že ma Pán Boh, ako aj všetky ostatné stvorenia ráčil stvoriť a dal mi telo a dušu, oči, uši i všetky údy, rozum i všetky zmysly a ich doteraz zachováva; k tomu mi hojne a na každý deň dáva odev i obuv, pokrm i nápoj, dom, dvor, manžela (manželku) i dietky, pole, dobytok a rozličný majetok so všetkými potrebami života, mňa pred každým nebezpečenstvom chráni a od všetkého zlého zachováva. To všetko činí z čirej otcovskej a božskej dobroty a milosrdenstva, bez akýchkoľvek mojich zásluh a hodností. Za to všetko povinný (povinná) som Jemu ďakovať, Jeho chváliť, Jemu byť slúžiť a Jemu byť poslušný (poslušná). To je iste verná pravda!“

„Boh ma stvoril a všetko, čo existuje...“ ja som to neurobil. Boh to urobil. To hovoria príbehy prvej knihy Mojžišovej v prvej a v druhej kapitole – nie ako stvoril, ale kto stvoril.

Boh Izraela a dnešnej doby kontroluje celý kozmos. Písmo hovorí, že je dôležité poznať, kto je Boh, pretože vy a ja budeme žiť naše životy ako odpoveď, kto je bohom nášho života. Martin Luther hovorí vo Veľkom katechizme, že „boh je to, v čom hľadáme všetky dobré radosti a v čom nachádzame záchranu v každej úzkosti.“

Kresťanské šafárenie vo svojej podstate nebolo nikdy vecou peňazí, času, či talentu. Kresťanské šafárenie vždy bolo a bude vecou viery, toho, čo je zakorenené v poznaní, kto je a kto bude bohom môjho života. Nech v akejkoľvek forme vyjadrím svoju odpoveď, akokoľvek si zvolím žiť svoj život, musím sa najprv starať o to, čo sú Božie ciele, ktoré sa môžu uskutočniť vtedy, keď sa naučím dávať seba, svoj čas a to, čo vlastním, ale tieto ciele sa musia najprv chápať ako otázka spravodlivosti, láskavosti a pokorného nasledovania Boha.

A práve pre toto je Nová zmluva taká kritická, čo sa týka pochopenia kresťanského hospodárenia. Je to práve tam, kde Kristus stelesňuje (dáva konkrétnu formu) a opisuje Božie úmysly s ľudstvom a celkový náčrt života ako odpovede na to, čo Boh urobil a robí. (Všimnime si, že hovoríme o celkovom náčrte života ako odpovede). Čo je v podobenstvách v učení Ježišom, nie je dost' na celkový náčrt, aby umožňoval ľudstvu vypracovať detaily odpovede z generácie na generáciu, od človeka k človeku. Je to tak, ako to povedal Ježiš: kráľovstvo Božie možno

prirovnať..., bol raz jeden človek, ktorý..., atď.,atď'. A teraz si predstavte – čo budete vy robiť svojím životom; ako odpoviete? Toto je sloboda evanjelia!

Sme bohato požehnaní Pánom Bohom ako naším Stvoriteľom, Spasiteľom a Udrživateľom a sme povolani ako Božie deti žiť v odpovedi na to, čo Boh urobil a robí – žiť vo vďačnosti, učiť sa, ako povedať ďakujem Tomu, ktorého voláme Bohom, Tomu, kto nám dáva život.

Zaiste ste si uvedomili, že jedna tretina Ježišových podobenstiev a jedno zo šiestich Ježišových učení sa zaoberá peniazmi, majetkom. A to je značne viac času ako Pán strávil hovorením o modlitbe. Prečo? Myslím si, že je to preto, že Ježiš vedel veľmi dobre, čo na tejto zemi hrozí, ak sa peniaze stanú „boh“ života. Peniaze, majetky majú všetky atribúty božstva: všemocnosť, moc, produkujú vinu, zaisťujú bezpečnosť; alebo ako to opísal Luther: „to, na čo sa zameriavame, aby sme získali radosť a v čom nachádzame útočisko v každom súžení.“

Prečo sa ľudia v našej kultúre a v našej cirkvi tak zdráhajú hovoriť o peniazoch; a čo berú ešte horšie je, keď farár hovorí o peniazoch, káže alebo učí o nich? Je to preto, lebo vy a ja možno utláčame svojho Boha. Kde oni (my) vkladáme svoju vieru a dôveru?

Kresťanské hospodárenie začína s presvedčením, kto je Boh a kto a čo boh nie je. Odpoveď – spôsob, ako vy a ja žijeme naše životy – musí vyrásť z pochopenia základného vzťahu Stvoriteľ – stvorený, vzťahu, ktorý prišiel spasiteľ Ježiš Kristus.

Vo svojej podstate – ako ja tomu rozumiem – kresťanské šafárenie je: (1) poznanie Boha v mojom živote počínajúc so vzťahom Stvoriteľ – stvorený a zhrnutie v Kristu; (2) chápanie šafárenia ako prostej odpovede, pričom konám zo základného presvedčenia môjho života ako pokrstené a spasené dieťa Božie; zároveň i (3) poznanie, že ako stvorený Bohom na Jeho obraz, ktorý je vo mne, je potreba dávať – potreba, ktorá vždy bude dôležitejšia ako potreba akejkolvek inštitúcie dostať môj dar (aj EBF UK) – a v súlade s mojou potrebou dávať, zakúsím tú najhlbšiu radosť...

Stručne teraz identifikujem niektoré princípy a implikácie:

1. Všetko, čo máme, je od Boha. Nie sme vlastníkmí ničoho, ale sme šafármi všetkého. Myslím si, že toto je najťažšia časť, keď sa vysporadúvame s kresťanským šafárením v dnešnej dobe. Väčšina z nás bola tak vychovávaná, že sme presvedčení, že dobrí ľudia zarábajú peniaze „oni si ich zaslúžia“. To, čo si zarobím, to vlastním. A čo vlastním, to je moje. A čo je moje, to je pre mňa. Jednoducho musíme pochopiť, že všetko nám je len zverené od Boha. Zverené, aby sme sa o to starali, zverené nášmu šafáreniu. Pripomenutie, že človek si nič so sebou nezoberie – ako je to pripomenuté lakomému boháčovi – je stále veľmi dôležitá a reálna perspektíva.

2. Všetko, čo je od Boha, je dar – nezaslúžený dar – a Boh nás volá, aby sme boli kanálmi Božích darov a nie ich nádržami. Božie dary majú cez nás pretekať a nie sa držať v nás! Čo spôsobuje, že táto myšlienka je pre nás – ľudské bytosti – taká ťažká? Myslíme si, že raz sa tieto dary minú, a potom nebude dosť pre nás?... Boh však zaslubuje celkom inak. Potom, ako vyzdvihol otázku chudobných cirkví v Macedónii ako príklad, apoštol Pavel ukludňuje Korintských, čo sa týka základných otázok šafárenia a ohľadom celocirkevnej zbierky v Jeruzaleme: „Nebudte ustarostení, Boh má moc vo všetkom rozhojniť pri vás svoju milosť, aby ste vo všetkom mali vždy dostatok všetkého (pre seba), aj nadbytok pre každý skutok...“, teda budeme mať všetko a ešte dosť i podeliť sa. (2Kor 9,8)

Boh hovorí: „Budte kanálmi pre moje dary a ja vás uisťujem, že budete mať dostatok, aby nimi malo čo tiecť.“ Tí, ktorí to skúsili, tí to vedia.

3. Biblické svedectvo potvrdzuje, že dávanie má byť v prvom rade v pomere k darom, ktoré nám boli dané ako čin vernosti. Týmto sa dosiahne niekoľko vecí: (1) Znovu sa upúta naša pozornosť na Darcu. Povoláva nás, aby sme si uvedomovali a zmerali – ak to vieme – šírku a hĺbku Božích darov pre nás. (2) To, čo proporcionálne dávame, má byť dané ako prvé, ako znak dôvery v Boha, ktorý nás stvoril a udržuje nás.

Proporcionálne dávanie je základom pre nestrannosť. Každý je na tom rovnako. A tak chudobná vdova opísaná v evanjeliu (Mk 12, 41 – 44), ktorá dáva dva haliere, je identifikovaná ako taká, ktorá dá väčší dar ako tí, ktorí boli bohatí a dali obrovské sumy zo svojej prosperity. Je to hanba, napr., že štyria z piatich luteránov v našej cirkvi v Amerike ani nevedia, čo je proporcionálne dávanie z príjmu. Nielenže je to hanba, ale to oslabuje aj našu službu.

4. Boh zameriava našu odpoveď von, od seba a nie nahor. To znamená, že pokiaľ všetko, čo máme, prijímame od Boha, Ježiš nás učí, že vyjadrenie vďačnosti, našej odpovede, rozdelenie sa, má byť nasmerované k ostatným – do sveta.

5. Aby sme mohli odpovedať, musíme si pamätať. V súvisе s našimi ofermi to znamená, že nám treba pripomínať, alebo my sami si musíme pripomínať, prečo dávame. Boh koná. My odpovedáme. To musí byť prirodzený rytmus nášho kresťanského života. Potrebuje spájať pamätanie s odpovedaním.

6.

Boh nás povoláva k úlohám, ku ktorým nám dal zdroje. Autentická odpoveď kresťanských ľudí je daná do pohybu pre Božie ciele a vedená k misijným úlohám, ku ktorým sme povolaní ako pokrstené deti Božie a spoločne ako cirkev Ježiša Krista. Božia milosť v každej forme je vždy dostatočná.

7. „Ak jediná modlitba, ktorú sa vôbec pomodlíme, by bola „ďakujem“, bolo by to dost“, (to povedal nemecký mních Meister Eckhart v 14. storočí, nie ja). Tento princíp redukuje celú záležitosť kresťanského šafárenia, celú aktivitu odpovede na tú najzákladnejšiu formu. Keď povieme „ďakujeme“, uznávame v tom Jediného, ktorý dáva a skutočnosť, že všetko, čo máme, je dar. A to sa dotýka základného pochopenia kresťanského šafárenia.

8. Sme zodpovední za to, ako užívame, staráme sa a delíme sa s darmi, ktoré nám Boh dáva. Toto nie je práve najprijemnejšia súčasť náčrtu kresťanského šafárenia, ale je to veľmi jasne jeho súčasť. V podobenstvách a iných učeniach Ježiš jasne hovorí, že raz budeme musieť vydať počet z toho, ako sme žili, ako sme narábali s darmi, ktoré nám Boh dal. Samozrejme, že evanjelium adresuje v milosti tie nedostatky, ktorým musíme čeliť pri našom šafárení, ale je to vydávanie počtu pred Jediným, ktorý nám dáva všetko...

To, že sme volaní k vydaniu počtu z nášho šafárenia – osobného i spoločenského – je súčasťou Božieho plánu. Boh nás má natoľko rád, že sa stále pokúša nás správne usmerniť a ukázať nám, akým krásnym môže náš život byť.

Ak si skutočne uvedomujem svoju vernosť, ak moje oči, myseľ a srdce sú čo najviac otvorené k tomu, aby sa rozpamätávali a rozmýšľali o tom, čo Boh už vykonal a neustále i vykonáva v mojom živote, musím byť úplne premožený. Tieto chvíle prichádzajú a ja za ne ďakujem Bohu.

Pamätám sa, ako sme na Veľký piatok spievali pieseň: „Ó, Hlava ubolená, ranami pokrytá, ó, Hlava, hodná úcty a venca iného...“ A tu som znovu pocítil, ako ma sila Ježišovej obete premáha, keď sa pozerám na môjho Pána, ako visí na kríži namiesto mňa. V ďalších veršoch potom spievame: „Zo srdca Ti ďakujem, môj Priateľ najmilší, za bolesti nesmierne a za smrť na kríži, daj dokázať mi vernosť i vďaku každý deň, za Tvoju veľkú milosť, že v Tebe spočiniem...“.

Ja sám ani nenachádzam slová ako povedať Bohu: za všetko toto Ti ďakujem. A Boh hovorí: áno, dieťa moje, máš nie tvoje slová, ale moje; nie tvoje dary, ale moje, máš dať a rozdeliť sa s nimi a žiť svoju vieru. To je tvoj celý život a šafárenie v ňom, naplnenie darmi, ktoré Ti ja dávam. To bude prejav vďaky, ktorý mi ukážeš.

Part II

A.

The organization, work and support of theological faculties and educational institutions, of course, differs worldwide. The differences in systems, focus and means of support are considerable but there is increasingly seen a need for a broad partnership by everyone engaged in theological and other education which would strengthen and grow the institution as it does its work. Not only administrators and officers, but also professors, students, key individuals and supporters, and organizations with similar interests and responsibilities are being gathered in an effort to ensure the existence, development and growth of theological/educational faculties, universities, colleges and other institutions of learning.

The Christian understanding of stewardship outlined earlier plays a most important role in these efforts as they relate specifically to theological faculties, seminaries, church-related colleges and universities, high schools and other institutions of learning. If we have an understanding of the Church being inclusive of not only congregations, but also of diaconal ministry, new and evolving missionary work, the education of leaders to serve in church and in society as professors, pastors, social workers, catechists and administrators, then we can see how support of and response to the material and financial needs of these institutions in church and society is also motivated by our need to respond with thanks and generosity to our Creator, the Giver of every good and perfect gift. Gifts, commitments and contributions of support to this and any theological faculty, as well as to universities, seminaries, church-related hospitals and diaconal organizations are, if based on our need to give joyously and generously because of God's gifts of life and love and hope to us, the proper and expected response of persons and organizations which profess the Christian faith and seek to be faithful in their daily lives.

Of course, the needs, financial and material, of any institution like EBF UK and other faculties, of seminaries and colleges, of congregations and social agencies are great. Perhaps they have never been greater. All the more reason why allowances and partnerships of everyone involved in those specific tasks, as well as of related agencies, organizations and institutions are forming and spreading across church and society. The task to support, grow and develop an institution like this theological faculty, the university of which it is a part, other educational and social work and ministries for present and future generations is so great that it cannot be left to one sector of society, whether government, private or philanthropic. Individual and organizational philanthropy needs to become a stronger part of the overall response in meeting the needs of EBF UK, KU and sister institutions in Europe, North America and elsewhere around the world. But this is not enough. Partnerships with government agencies, as defined by law and custom locally, creatively identifying current and new programs and possibilities consistent with the purpose and mission of the institution need to grow, not decrease, recognizing that relationships between governments and ecclesiastical and educational institutions are quite different in different countries. Your corrective is important here, but one would think that in your country as well as in other EU nations this would be a fertile field of development.

The importance of the active role and involvement of each person who is part of the institution and its mission cannot be underestimated. Professors, administrators, students are increasingly seen to be key players in representing the institutions, telling its story, interpreting its mission and needs with persons and in places where material and financial support would be possible. They are asked to do this in a co-ordinated and careful way; guided by appropriate administrators and staff (of which I say more later). Their efforts would be supplemental to their

primary responsibilities, whether teaching, learning, or administrating. But their efforts are also an important element in building a „structure of response“ which will be viable and long-term in giving opportunity for the various sectors of church and of the society to respond to current and future needs so that the mission and purpose of institutions like EB FUK, KU and so many others in countries like your and mine and elsewhere can be accomplished.

For those of us who are Christians, it is not just another organizational scheme to „raise money“ when we talk about building a „structure of response“ for individuals, government, church and other agencies, non-profit foundations, congregations and other organizations to give moral and financial support to EBF UK, KU, and other institutions. By creating a „structure of response“ through which supporters of different circumstances and means can respond and give in several ways and even perhaps with different reasons we actually become those co-creators with our God that our theology says is the call and duty of the children of God as His world lives, grows and evolves into at least an approximation of God's original intent. For us, engaging and motivating ourselves and others, individually and in other forms, this is never „simply“ an administrative model for paying our bills, but it is a matter of our faith. Our personal faithful and generous response and the efforts to motivate others to a similar response should be a key component of our daily Christian life. Standing on sound biblical and theological principles we engage ourselves, the institutions we serve like: EB FUK, KU, SECAV, LWF, my church and its eight theological faculties across the United States of America, and other obvious and potential individual and organizational partners in what, I understand, is coming to be called in the EU, „the Third Sector.“

II B.

In the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 12, v. 48, we read: „To whom much is given, of them shall much be expected.“ The issue for church-related institutions, or those serving the church directly or indirectly like EBF UK of the KU, or, in my country, leading universities like Yale, Harvard, Duke, and the University of Chicago which are private schools with important theological faculties called „Divinity Schools,“ is not that there are not enough resources for the support of their mission and purpose. The issue is the need to identify, motivate and give opportunity for financial and material support to be given by a donor, whether the donor is an individual, a philanthropic foundation, or government or other agency. Those theological faculties at Yale, Harvard and Chicago along with the eight faculties or Seminaries of the ELCA, the LC-MS faculty, other Protestant and Roman Catholic Seminaries have and continue to develop many relationships with friends, graduates, individual and organizational supporters. They speak constantly to them about the mission, purpose and needs of the institution. They ask for support openly and without reservation.

A brief „Good news – bad news“ story emphasizes the point. The head of a theological faculty which desperately needed more classroom space, a modernized library and research facilities and an enlarged faculty told an assembled crowd of supporters and potential donors that he had taken this overwhelming challenge to God in prayer and that God had answered him that he, the school, and its supporters could meet the challenge. So, the head of the school said, :The good news is that there are the necessary financial and material resources to do all we need to do. The bad news is, they are in your pockets!“

Especially we in and of the church often think that the material and financial resources for its support and support of its institutions are very limited. Yet I wonder why. God who is abundant we say, teach and preach has given abundantly so much so that Jesus even tells us not to worry about tomorrow. It is a matter of faith not only to hope but to know and act in the reality of God's abundance and, to identify, motivate and give opportunity of supporters to return a generous portion of that abundance in gratitude to the god who is the giver of every good and perfect gift from the

very beginning of all creation.

II C.

Such work is not easy. It is long-term and yields rich fruit only over time. The work requires a willingness to establish and employ a staff to lead, co-ordinate and implement the work of building a broad-based on-going partnership with those who will or who have the potential to support the mission of the institution regularly and generously. Each institution, as with EBF UK, has its own customs and procedures, culture and context to which it must be faithful while not being afraid to try new ways, create new positions, develop new, often experimental programs which would attract both new students and new donors. Since each institution is different in context, culture, society and purpose, no one or two or three models can be given quickly for the building of a „structure of response“ which would be effective, adaptable, transparent and focused. That needs to be done by a planning and organizational team of the institution. Generally speaking though, such work cannot be left to be divided among other persons who probably already have too many responsibilities. It is best to begin with staff persons with experience and or talent in identifying, motivating and giving opportunity for donors to support EBF UK and similar institutions and then to expand both the staff and the activities of this focus whether it be a foundation or an administrative department or section of the Faculty. The work of these persons will be pro-active, searching out and meeting with donors, telling the story, the purpose and the mission of the Faculty, explaining its needs and dreams for the future and enlisting support for this mission in general or for specific programs and projects. That outreach will be as wide and broad as is the church and the society in which it lives. The start may be slow as when a train leaves a station. But as the journey continues, speed comes, distance is covered and a destination, (a goal for a project, a program, a need) is reached. Then, of course, we simply go on to reach yet another destination, continuing the mission and work of the Faculty, university and similar institutions into the future for those future generations. Endowment (reserve) funds are established to assist in good times and bad. Specific programs are funded by specific donors with related interests. Scholarship aid or subsidy is sought from individuals and congregations and, often international foundations like Soros and Gates. It will also be the task of the full-time staff whether at the beginning one, or later 21, (LTSP started with one development director in the 1980's and now has six full time and seven part-time staff for its Foundation); Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota has 17 full-time staff and several part-time staff, all engaged each day in the work of identifying, motivating and giving opportunity to donors to support the mission and work of the institution. By the way, the presidents (rectors) of these institutions set aside at least 30% of their time for development work and support of their foundations.

Again, this work is not easy. Nor is it quick. Relationships, by definition, take time to develop. But the seed must be planted. The garden must be worked. With good work and good seed, good results will come.

Will everyone who is asked, everyone who is challenged by the words in St. Luke, to whom much is given, of them shall much be expected, respond positively, even eagerly? Of course not. Lutherans especially understand the sinfulness of humankind in which selfishness, greed, fear, an impractical hope for 100% financial, emotional or even spiritual security appear. But without engaging, without challenging, without asking we certainly know that no one at all will give. Let me illustrate with two short stories about a Lutheran in California and a Slovak-American Lutheran in Ohio, both of whom were generous givers to the Church.

The local Lutheran bishop in southern California some years ago was unpleasantly surprised and upset to hear that a generous layman had given a gift of \$1,000,000 to help build a large church led

by the Reformed /Calvinist pastor Robert Schuller. The bishop visited the layman and asked why he did not give that gift to the ministries of the Lutheran Church of which he was a member. The layman's simple answer: „No one ever asked me!“ Ask and you shall receive, says our Lord. Yet how are we to receive if we never ask?

The Slovak-American layman was a man of hard work and modest income who both saved and shared his gifts from early in his life where his pastor in confirmation class taught him and other young people that they were called to give, called to share the gifts of God's love and abundance. And to do so regularly and generously. When this man was in his 80's, he said he hoped he could live to 100 at least not because he was afraid to die but, as he said, „the longer I live the more I can give.“

If we do not ask, if a pastor does not teach, if Christian stewardship is ignored, if theological educational institutions do not think it is their job to actively tell their story, explain their needs and seek partners and supporters for their mission, should we expect any response at all? Or should we expect limited, reduced and declining institutions barely able to carry out their mission and purpose in the 21st Century in ways relevant to today's, not yesterday's world.

Let me emphasize, of course, that you must find your own effective and efficient model for this development work. Our contexts and culture differ. But our shared theological and biblical principles of giving as response and gratitude to God do not differ. Nor, probably, do the common realities of ever-increasing institutional needs, declining traditional sources of support, and of the need to keep fees and costs for students reasonable so that they may be able to complete their theological education and proceed to serve their church and their society.

I am convinced that institutions like EBF UK or mine in Philadelphia cannot take for granted support which comes „automatically“ from a sense of tradition or from loyalty to the institution because one was or is a graduate, a professor, an administrator, student or previous benefactor. Those times, if they ever existed, are gone. Therefore, alliances, foundations, organizations committed specifically to the specific institution need to be begun and nurtured. A theological institution or faculty today is called on to tell its story compellingly and clearly, to explain its needs and show its work transparently, to develop and maintain relationships with alumni, staff, friends, previous supporters and related agencies and organizations. The broader the base of support, the wider the network of relationships, the better the support base for the institution and, usually, the better recruitment pool for students which for us at least in the USA is always a major issue.

IN SUMMARY

Guided by our biblical and theological understanding of God's abundant gifts to us and of our joyful and generous sharing of those gifts for the work of His Church in the world, we take the responsibility to strengthen the work, mission and purpose of theological/educational institutions, specifically in Slovakia, the EBF UK. We recognize that strong material and financial support, growing ever more widely and deeply over the years, is crucially important for the future of EBF UK and for any serious institution of theological learning, diaconal training and pastoral preparation. We also recognize that if supporters and potential partners in a „Structure of Response“ do not come to know the mission, purpose and life of EB and UK, understand it clearly and well, commit to being part of it and bring others as supporters, then finally there is no purpose to the efforts of mere fundraising so that the institution will only hope to survive, not grow and serve church and society.

Basing our relationships with supporters and potential donors on the relationship we have

with our Lord and Saviour, we should and shall not arrogantly, but boldly and unapologetically put the needs, hopes and dreams of the institution before those supporters and donors, constructing and maintaining a continuing „Structure of Response“ that allows for new and creative ways of supporting the mission and work of EBF UK. The allocation or re-allocation of staff time and resources will need to reflect the importance of this effort, an effort undertaken not simply „because we need money“ but because the mission and purpose of the institution is a crucial element in the development of both church and society in the world our Creator has placed us in. Our response itself is an act of prayer. Our Christian stewardship is a matter not of need, but of faith.

Appendix: Fundraising Campaign for the Philadelphia Seminary

A Brief Case History

In 2002, The Lutheran Theological Seminary (which is a sister institution to EBF UK by documents signed in 1992) began a campaign to finance and construct a new and modern classroom building to accommodate a large increase in students and to provide a 21st Century place for the theological instruction of 21st Century students.

The goal of the fundraising effort was \$20,000,000, though the building would cost somewhat more. Those additional costs are to be mortgaged over several years. Originally, consideration was given to a library extension and to an underground parking garage but those plans were too costly and were dropped.

The Foundation of the Seminary is a separately organized, legally incorporated, non-profit entity with its own Board of directors. Its purpose is to support the Seminary in carrying out its mission in whatever ways possible and within the constraints of law and custom. (For instance, there are no lotteries, gambling, or games of chance organized to support the Seminary.)

The foundation identified the following sources of support to approach for gifts in this Campaign:

1. The seven ELCA Synods (Dištrikty) which are official supporting synods and their congregations and individual members (about 1,000 congregations)
2. Board Members, Professors, Staff and Alumni
3. Ecclesiastical Endowments and Educational Foundations
4. Local Community Foundations, and Church-related agencies and associations
5. Regional Government agencies (very limited due to church and state separation)

A several page brochure stating the „case,“ that is the need and purpose of the new building, its costs and the overall purpose, mission and budget of the Seminary was prepared. Other documents, videotapes and DVD's with introduction by the local bishop were developed to be distributed to individuals, congregations and organizations.

The Executive Director of the foundation is in overall charge of the Campaign, but full-time and part-time Seminary staff do the work of visiting, presenting, explaining and asking for gifts. When it is helpful to have the Seminary president, or academic dean, or professors, or students to visit a congregation to preach or teach about the Seminary, its Foundation staff arrange for these persons to do so. Everybody in the Seminary – professors, administrators, other staff and students are seen as partners in the fundraising effort.

The work is in its 5th year with two more years anticipated. \$16.5 Million of the \$20 Million has been met with gifts and pledges. The majority of gifts have come from individuals, congregations and foundations with educational or community issues as their chief concerns.

Major gifts have come from one Lutheran family which gave the first \$2 Million. Several other major gifts from Lutherans (some through their personal foundations) ranged from \$400,000-\$1 Million each. All this was done by the developing of personal relationships, making many individual visits, consulting about tax and inheritance laws, etc.

Several hundred of the 1,000 congregations in the region have been visited or communicated with personally since 2003. Some have had several visits made by the Foundation Staff. The remaining few hundred congregations will be visited or contacted by 2009 (*deo volente*). The majority of the \$16.5 Million so far given or pledged has come from these congregations and their members. Most of these individual and congregational gifts have been modest (\$200-\$10,000 or so) but added together in partnership have raised the most funds.

While the Campaign is directed for the new Learning Center, some prospective donors said they would prefer to support student aid and scholarships. Close to \$1 Million was given for these purposes in addition to the funds for the new building – an example of both of available resources and the flexibility needed to gain support for the whole mission of the Seminary.

We anticipate the successful completion of this Campaign by the end of 2009. Plans for a new Campaign with a new purpose beginning after 2010 are already being prepared by the Foundation Board.

Peer reviewed by: Prof. ThDr. Július Filo