

The Outreach of Chaplaincy

by
Michael Rudolph

The teaching I received when I first became a believer emphasized the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20) to the exclusion of all else. The way I was taught, it seemed that my only obligation as a believer was to disseminate salvation tracts, and lead people in praying to receive Yeshua so that they could be saved. When I first heard about chaplaincy and how military, hospital, and crisis chaplains ministered comfort to all and were constrained (within their respective institutions) from proselytizing, I relegated them (in my naive estimation) to "professionals" who had compromised their spiritual values, abandoned the Gospel, and sold out to liberal ecumenicalism. It took some years of maturing to come to the place of realizing that serving others in the Name of the Lord IS THE GOSPEL, and that acts of kindness and compassion often carry more spiritual weight than our words. This truth was eventually driven home to me by Scriptures such as Matthew 25:31-40:

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, accompanied by all the angels, he will sit on his glorious throne. All the nations will be assembled before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates sheep from goats. The 'sheep' he will place at his right hand and the 'goats' at his left. Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you whom my Father has blessed, take your inheritance, the Kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you made me your guest, I needed clothes and you provided them, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' Then the people who have done what God wants will reply, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and make you our guest, or needing clothes and provide them? When did we see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' The King will say to them, 'Yes! I tell you that whenever you did these things for one of the least important of these brothers of mine, you did them for me!'"

We at Ohev certainly believe and preach the importance of receiving Yeshua as Adonai and Moshiach, and that *"There is salvation in no one else! For there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by whom we must be saved!"* (Acts 4:12). At the same time, we take the message of James 2:14-18 seriously:

"What good is it, my brothers, if someone claims to have faith but has no actions to prove it? Is such "faith" able to save him? Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food, and someone says to him, "Shalom! Keep warm and eat hearty!" without giving him what he needs, what good does it do? Thus, faith by itself, unaccompanied by actions, is dead. But someone will say that you have faith and I have actions. Show me this faith of yours without the actions, and I will show you my faith by my actions!"

I am sure that everyone at Ohev is already aware of the area of chaplain service in which we are already involved, and that is our jail ministry at the Prince William County Adult Detention Center where a number of us who have been trained in prison visitation teach Bible to gatherings

of inmates each Monday morning. I am now pleased – no, excited! – to tell you that we have a new area of outreach offered to us at Mt. Vernon Hospital and its satellite facility, the Lorton Healthplex. Dr. Clyde Bush, Mt. Vernon Hospital's Chaplain Manager, will be paying us a visit on Shabbat, August 24, to speak to us about the biblical ministry of Hospital Chaplaincy, and to invite those of us who are so called, to be trained by him to become Hospital Chaplain Volunteers. The environment and duties of a hospital chaplain are, of course, different from that of a prison chaplain, but they are similar in that they both involve serving and caring for persons who are under disabilities – legal in the case of prison chaplaincy, and medical in the case of hospital chaplaincy. All of that will be explained by Dr. Bush when he comes on August 24, so let's welcome him warmly, and be in prayer about how the Lord would have each of us to serve others in some way, outside of our own families and congregation.

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