



ASSOCIATION CATHOLIQUES
CANADIENNE DE LA SANTÉ

CATHOLIC HEALTH
ASSOCIATION OF CANADA

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Chaos can breed creativity, says leading anthropologist at CHAC meeting

Ottawa—Catholic health care leaders' most crucial role in these times of radical changes is to be proactive and prophetic, and to refound the healing ministry of Jesus, said internationally-renowned anthropologist Reverend Gerry Arbuckle to the Catholic Health Association of Canada's (CHAC) Board of Directors. The CHAC Board was gathered in Châteauguay, near Montreal, September 14 to 16, for a retreat and a board meeting.

The current challenges facing the health care system require a movement into chaos as a prerequisite to refounding, Rev. Arbuckle added. Every change evokes grief, he said, even when we understand that change has to take place. "Lead your groups in the rituals of grieving, allow space for people to let their anger be named, knowing that if you let go of things that are no longer part of the mission, God will bring the new, which is beyond all human imagination."

Refounding is the process of re-owning the founding experience of a group. "Either you get frozen into visioning Catholic health care as it was, or you can return to the founding story of Catholic health care — the vision of Jesus healing holistically — and thereby open yourself to creativity."

Board members expressed their profound appreciation for Rev. Arbuckle's challenging words. "We have been inspired to go back to our own mission and restate Catholic health care," said Leo Steven, CHAC Chairperson and Chief Executive Officer of St. Joseph's Health Centre in Toronto. "Our tendency is to try to make perfect sense of chaos. Father Arbuckle has given us a sense of legitimacy for some of the unknown," said Sister Elizabeth Davis, Chief Executive Officer of the Health Care Corporation of St. John's. "I go home with an affirmation of hope for the healing mission of Jesus," said newly-appointed Board member Lt-Colonel David Luginbuhl, Health Services Secretary of the Salvation Army. During its business meeting, the CHAC Board considered its workplan of activities for the coming year. Board members focussed their discussion on priority issues and directions, including health care reform, threats to medicare and social programs, euthanasia and assisted suicide, reproductive technologies, and marketing strategies for CHAC products.

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September, 1995

