THE ABRAHAMIC MODEL OF HOSPITALITY: HOSPITALITY TO THOSE *IN NECESSITUDINE*.

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ABSTRACT

This paper focuses on hospitality for the needy and considers how throughout history, even when religion is subjugated, there has always been recognition of the importance of hospitality *in necessitudine* or charitable hospitality. The paper presents a brief historical summary of hospitality based on the Abrahamic model of hospitality, which is shared by the three monothematic religions of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. It then compares those historical practices to the hospitality offered by the Archdiocese of Glasgow. It concludes by reflecting on the constantly evolving religious practice of providing hospitality to those in most need, through exploring this aspect of hospitality which is often overlooked in the current hospitality management literature.

INTRODUCTION AND BRIEF HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Throughout the last 2000 years the biblical instruction to be hospitable has been interpreted and developed in different ways, often at the forefront of medical as well as spiritual advances in hospitality. This began with the letter of St Paul[1] to an apostolic delegate sent to oversee the Church in Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:3). The instruction in the letter is: "A bishop then must be blameless, faithful, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality…" (1 Timothy 3:2). Thus, the Bishop, as 'overseer' of the local Church, has been mandated from the beginning of the Christian faith to charitable hospitality.

Two fourth century writers articulated the unmistakably Christian concept of charitable hospitality. The first was Lactantius, a Christian apologist, who explicitly contrasted Christian

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[1] The letter is datable to the year 60 or shortly thereafter if it is not by Paul's hand or dictation.

hospitality with Greco-Roman practices. He used the example of the gods assuming human form to go into the world to exercise their right to hospitality. Recognising hospitality as a 'principal virtue' for philosophers and Christians alike, Lactantius criticised those philosophers who tied it to advantage. Noting that the "houses of illustrious men should be open to illustrious guests" (Lactantius, *Divinæ Institutiones.* 4:12) he then rejected the argument that hospitality must be bestowed upon suitable persons; he reasoned instead that a Christian's hospitality must be open to the lowly and abject, in other words reinforcing hospitality as a charitable act. The other writer was St John Chrysostom, one of the leading voices within the Christian community; he was one of the great Greek Fathers and Bishop of Constantinople to whom is ascribed the Orthodox Liturgy used throughout the East in both Orthodox and Catholic Churches. He described exactly how a Christian was to conduct himself:

> "He must be well awake; he must be fervent in spirit, and, as it were, breathe fire; he must labour and attend upon his duty by day and by night, even more than a general upon his army; he must be careful and concerned for all, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality (Chrysostom, *Homily on Timothy* 1:10)"

This was not prearranged hospitality. Christians were to be ready at all times to receive and welcome guests; due preparations were always to be in place (Chrysostom, *Homily on Acts* 45). Embracing earlier teachings Chrysostom highlighted this hospitality was not to be left to the servants; it must be done by the masters of the household (Chrysostom, *Homily on Timothy* 1:14) He was a realist and he recognised the earthly benefits Christians could gain from entertaining persons of high status. However he also criticised such a practice. He develops his teaching by showing that generous hosts, as long as they are not seeking gain, would nevertheless find themselves blessed in the hospitality relationship. Central to his teaching was the idea, that by offering hospitality to a person in need one ministered to Christ.

Reinforcing the role of the church for charitable hospitality, the Ecumenical Council held at Carthage in AD 419, decreed that hospitality was an exception to what was otherwise regarded as forbidden, namely the use of church buildings for festal meals: Canon 42 was entitled 'Concerning the not having festal meals under any circumstances in churches' and it stated as exception:

> "That no bishops or clerics are to hold festal meals in churches, unless perchance they are forced thereto by the necessity of hospitality as guests pass by. The people, too, as far as possible, are to be prohibited from attending such feasts." (Migne 1865:147)

With Emperor Constantine's support of the Christian church (AD 312), it became richer and undertook substantial responsibilities, not least in charitable hospitality through the care of the needy. Later the Emperor Julian in AD 362, although attempting to suppress the Christian Church and reintroduce paganism across the Empire, explicitly urged his governors to maintain the Christian practice of the *xenodochein*[2]. In a letter to the Hellenic Archpriest Arsacius, he wrote:

> "If Hellenism is not making the progress it should, the fault is with us who practise it ... Do we not see that what has most contributed to the success of atheism [Christianity] is its charity towards strangers...? Establish numerous hospices in every city, so that strangers may benefit from our charity, not only those of our own number, but anyone else who is in need ... For it is disgraceful that not a single Jew is a mendicant, and that the impious Galileans [Christians] maintain our poor in addition to their own, and our needy are seen to lack assistance from us (Browning 1975: 179)."

Julian then went on to give the specific command "Teach those of the Hellenic faith to contribute to public service of this sort." Thus Emperor Julian gave clear witness to the significance of Christian institutions to care for society as a whole. Christians carried on establishing many more *xenodochia* to care for strangers, but particularly for poor strangers who had no other resources, and for the local poor. Gradually these were differentiated into separate institutions according to the type of person in need: orphans, widows, strangers, sick and poor.

The *xenodochia* led to "... a social classification built on poor versus rich with poverty not only a material and economic condition, but also a legal and social status..." An arrangement which constituted "... a privileged establishment for the Church..." endowing "... it with the means of sustaining the burden of relief which the Byzantine Emperor [Justinian] could henceforth devolve on it (Patlagean 1981: 71)." Beggars and travellers were treated by the law as total strangers and therefore did not enjoy protection. Unlike slaves, who were some citizen's property

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[2] Or hospice - Before 800AD Latin documents tended to refer to houses of public hospitality and charity using the Greek term *xenodochein*, after this period, however, the Latin word *hospital* became more common although certain confusion can arise from a number of writers still used the Greek term.

and, as such, enjoyed the protection of the law (Mollat 1978). The *xenodochia* treated these legal non-persons as legitimate inmates, forcing Emperor Justinian to grant them legal status (c. 530 AD).

METHODOLOGY

The contemporary focus of the paper is to report on a the work in progress in case study on the extensive provision the Archdiocese of Glasgow makes for hospitality *in necessitudine* today. In 2002 the Archdiocese established 'The Mungo Foundation,' named after the Eighth Century diocesan founder St Mungo. The Foundation has independent trust status and has its own legal persona and a measure of autonomy. It has the opportunity to develop its own marketing and fundraising strategies, create its own distinctive ethos in the marketplace of care and carry on the traditions of Christian caring in the modern world.

The method which has been chosen for this research topic will be an interpretive case study. Yin (1994) advocates this type of case study is when there is a contemporary phenomenon which is being investigated in its real-life context. The contemporary phenomenon is charitable hospitality investigated within the context of the work carried out by the Mungo Foundation in Glasgow from a pilot study visiting three of the projects (Table 1).

Project Name	Purpose of the Project
Stravaig	Immediate access to a safe environment to young homeless people with chaotic lives
Annandale Street	Offers support to older people with mental problems (other than dementia)
Red Tower	Provides a 12-month programme for those suffering with drug abuse to gain recovery (different from other projects as people contribute to the cost of treatment)

Table 1: Projects visited in the pilot study

The data was collected through a variety of means including: observation, participant observation and semi-structured interviews with management, staff and those who use the projects.

PRELIMINARY FINDINGS

The Mungo Foundation now has the opportunity to develop its own marketing and fundraising strategies, create its own distinctive ethos in the marketplace of care and carry on the traditions of Christian caring in the modern world. The Foundation provides a wide range of social care services and is run by a Board of Trustees, which employs a large operational staff of around 700 full-time and part-time people. Included in its comprehensive mission to offer support to those in *necessitudine* include:

> "… to promote welfare, relieve poverty and advance education for the public benefit by the provision of wide-ranging social services to children and adults with care and support needs within Scotland." (Mungo Foundation, 2007)

With a generated income of approximately £14m, the Foundation is able to support over 1,000 people in its community based care and support services throughout the West of Scotland. The services help many people with learning disabilities, sensory impairment, dementia, mental health problems, people affected by drug and alcohol misuse and young homeless people, including asylum seekers from countries such as Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Somalia and Kenya. Today, much of the work of The Mungo Foundation in Scotland is funded by local authorities. The organisation also depends on the efforts of staff, volunteers and families who raise funds to support local work. The Mungo Foundation continues to depend on donations from the wider community and remains committed to its founding values of life, justice and community.

CONCLUSIONS: EVOLVING BUT UNCHANGED ESSENCE OF CHARITABLE HOSPITALITY

What is evident from the historical summary of hospitality for the needy (not all of which is included in this paper) is even when religion is attacked there has always been recognition of the importance of hospitality *in necessitudine.* Emperor Julian when attempting to suppress the Christian faith emphasised the importance of preserving and adapting for use by the state the Christian institutions of charitable hospitality. Emperor Justinian had been forced to give legal status to beggars and travellers due to the protection that they received due to the same institutions of hospitality. The protestant reformers had also moved them out of religious control into the secular realm of society just as Julian had attempted to do 1100 years earlier. However, most recently, instead of trying to subsume charitable hospitality, the government chose to

support and partially fund the Church's efforts. In every case the influence of the underpinning ethos remains even although the governance of the institutions may have changed.

Undeniably society has changed and evolved over the last 2000 years. Despite the continually evolving practice of providing hospitality to those in most need St Paul's mandate of hospitable behaviour is still being interpreted and followed today. One of the latest projects being developed, for example, by the Archdiocese of Glasgow is a new cloister garden, next to the city centre cathedral, that will offer a welcoming, tranquil and hospitable sacred space in the heart of the city. Hospitality provision for those *in extremis* has always continued to change and develop. As people's needs continue to change it remains the duty of the bishop and the church and now for society in general to care for those needs in a practical and compassionate manner. The provision for those *in necessitudine* continues to change and develop. As people's needs continue to change it remains the duty of the churches and now for society in general to care for those needs in a practical and compassionate manner. In particular this paper illustrates that, despite its charitable origins, this is a focussed and increasingly profession sector of the international hospitality industry. It concludes by highlighting that this a legitimate and challenging sector of employment for hospitality graduates.

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