

DUMB GOD TALK

Yearning for a new way will not produce it. Only ending the old way can do that.

You cannot hold onto the old, all the while declaring that you want something new.

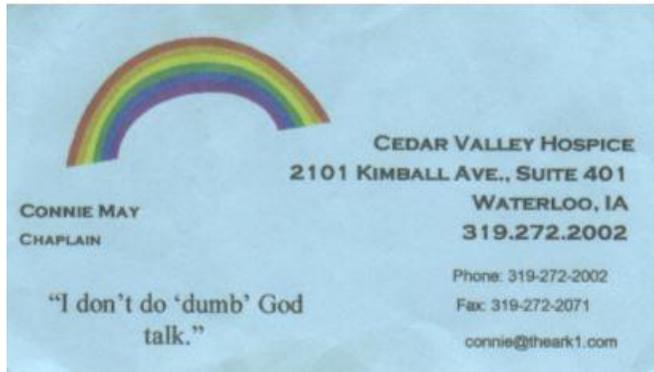
The old will defy the new;

The old will deny the new;

The old will decry the new.

There is only one way to bring in the new. You must make room for it.

Neale Donald Walsch



These words flung me back to my time as a hospice chaplain. In those 20 years where more and more people had no affiliation with a faith community at that most important time in their lives, I began to see something happening. People were saying in so many words, "If that is what God is like, I don't need that". In a strange sort of way they were making room for the new. The old way wasn't big enough for the new reality they were facing. In visiting with them one lady said she didn't want any dumb God talk. I eventually put her quote on my business cards and it got me in doors and hearts that were closed before.

Many people, especially the young, are done with 'dumb God talk'. Talk that makes God smaller, meaner, and less loving than they are. A test for such talk would be to introduce someone with the same language they use to describe God. Would they be insulted? Many of my families were living the kind of Gospel lives that Jesus taught in the ways they lived into their mystery of death and dying. They just needed someone to point out that being spiritual (which they always accepted) wasn't the same as being "religious". Love, especially in the face of loss, can bring out the truth that it is stronger than death. Isn't that the truth of the Resurrection?

So my mission is to identify and challenge myself and others when facing dumb God talk. Seems like Jesus had that same problem with the religious authorities of his time. He kept saying "You have heard it said, but I tell you". Isn't it funny that the ones who crowded around him were the ones rejected by the 'religious'? Are we seeing this same thing today? When people are touched by a couple of [women in pop up tents offering to pray](#) with someone, could they and others like them be the way God is bring the new (Sneaky) Spirit into our world? I am beginning to wonder. We can continue to defy, deny, decry all we want but that same Sneaky Spirit has never been effectively contained yet. I trust this is just the newest angle God is using to make room at our inns. Then we can truly move from being like the Godfearers of Jesus day to the God bearers of our own time.