

## EDITORIAL

I am writing this editorial on September 11, the '9:11' which has branded itself into the soul of a generation of US citizens. The collapse of the twin towers brought down into the dust the self-understanding, the national story, the sense of the coherence of things, in the minds of so many, leaving behind an eerie silence, now filled with the rhetoric of war. Into what narrative will 9:11 be woven in future years? 'When storytelling fails, what then?' asks Heather Walton, as she explores the limits of narrative theology. We weave our stories, and they give sense to our lives. In their way, the first three articles all allude to this need to be part of a story. Kelly begins by exploring aspects of the spiritual carer's story, the story that may be challenged and changed in the pastoral encounter. Beuken explains how Christ's story can incorporate and give meaning to the sufferers anguish; while Walton moves into the wilderness of a pain that destroys language, coherence and connection.

We include two contributions from the field of mental health. Chalmers writes of the subtle abuses of power to which the mental health chaplain can fall prey, while Brown tackles the complex relationship between religion and psychiatry. His remarks on the neglect of the spiritual in mental health care call to my mind the words of Stavros Kofinas in his European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy (ENHCC) co-ordinator's report of August 6<sup>th</sup>, of whom and of which, more below. In conversation with American chaplains, he recognises that the mutual suspicion of psychiatrists and pastors is a problem common to chaplaincy in many countries.

Which remark brings us to matters European! In June of this year, Fred Coutts attended the 7<sup>th</sup> consultation of the European Network of Health Care Chaplaincy (ENHCC), as SACH representative and architect of the network's website. At this consultation, 40 representatives of 21 European countries agreed and took back home with them, European standards for health care chaplaincy. This is an exciting development, and the fruit of considerable labour. In addition, the consultation agreed a structure for the Network, and elected as its co-ordinator Fr Stavros Kofinas, Protospesbyter of the Orthodox Church, the representative of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople. We are delighted to welcome Stavros as a new consulting editor, and we hope that he will help broaden the journal's vision and deepen our mutual understanding as European chaplains. We also have hopes that through him, chaplains Europe-wide will consider contributing articles to the journal, sharing experience and vision, and exploring points of similarity and difference.

May Yuri Zelentsov's article be the first of many! Yuri allows us to gain an insight into the life of a young Salvation Army chaplain who works in St Petersburg caring for children with AIDS. His story moves us to sadness at times, and yet there is so much of hope, joy and love here too. Here, surely, is reflected the true heart of chaplaincy, always and everywhere.

*Georgina Nelson*