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Peltomäki, Isto Johannes

2019-09

Peltomäki , I J 2019 , ' Theology and Philosophy of Care : The Common Pastoral Care in
Finnish Lutheranism in the Light of Love ' , Neue Zeitschrift für systematische Theologie und
Religionsphilosophie. , vol. 61 , no. 3 , pp. 370-387 . <https://doi.org/10.1515/nzsth-2019-0020>

<http://hdl.handle.net/10138/319414>

<https://doi.org/10.1515/nzsth-2019-0020>

unspecified

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Isto Peltomäki*

Theology and Philosophy of Care

The Common Task of Pastoral Care in Finnish Lutheranism in the light of Love

<https://doi.org/10.1515/nzsth-2019-0020>

Summary: This paper explores pastoral care as a common task of all Christians in the light of theology and philosophy of love in contemporary Finnish Lutheran theology. Pastoral care is about taking care of one's suffering neighbours, which theologically is about love. The so-called Finnish school of Luther studies considered Luther as a theologian of love. Finnish theological ethics has concentrated on interpretation of Luther's theology. Luther's concept of love has been reinterpreted by Risto Saarinen with the idea of gift and recognition. Following Saarinen, and Jaana Hallamaa's ethical theory of agency, the paper illustrates how the Lutheran idea of love can be based on agency, gift giving and reciprocity and so be understood as praxis in terms of Christian life. To conclude, the question of what makes caring Christian in nature, or pastoral care in other words, is explored in the light of faith as trust.

Keywords: Pastoral care, theological ethics, Lutheran theology, theology of love, philosophy of love

Zusammenfassung: In diesem Beitrag wird Seelsorge als eine gemeinsame Aufgabe aller Christen im Hinblick auf Theologie und Philosophie der Liebe in der zeitgenössischen finnischen lutherischen Theologie untersucht. In der Seelsorge geht es darum, auf die leidenden Nachbarn zu achten, dabei handelt es sich theologisch um Liebe. In der sogenannten finnischen Lutherschule wurde Luther auch als Theologe der Liebe betrachtet. Die finnische Diskussion der theologischen Ethik hat sich auf die Interpretation der Theologie Luthers konzentriert. Die Interpretation von Luthers Liebesbegriff wurde von Risto Saarinen mit der Idee der Gabe und der Anerkennung ergänzt. Dieser Beitrag unterstützt diese Ergänzung mit Jaana Hallamaas ethischer Theorie, die auf Agenten basiert. Dieser Beitrag zeigt, wie die lutherische Idee der Liebe auf Agenten, Gabe und Reziprozität basiert und somit als Praxis im christlichen Leben verstanden werden kann. Im letzten Abschnitt dieses Beitrags wird die Frage, was Pflege christlich – in

***Corresponding author: Isto Peltomäki**, University of Helsinki, Faculty of Theology,
E-Mail: isto.peltomaki@helsinki.fi

anderen Worten zu Seelsorge – macht in Hinblick auf den Glauben als Vertrauen erforscht.

Schlüsselwörter: Seelsorge, theologische Ethik, lutherische Theologie, Theologie der Liebe, Philosophie der Liebe

I. Introduction

Pastoral care in Lutheran theology is regarded as a task for all Christians. Although priests, through the office of the church, have a particular pastoral responsibility, all Christians are called to the ecclesial task of taking care of their suffering neighbours. This is based on Luther's theology of secular offices and the gifts of God being conveyed through acts of love. According to Luther's idea of secular offices, all Christians have a spiritual vocation to bear God's calling through work and roles of everyday life. Also, Christians share and convey God's good gifts through acts of love and thus have a task of conveying the gospel, as Luther expressed, for example, in the Schmalkald Articles.¹

The task of this paper is to analyse how pastoral care as a common task should be understood theologically and philosophically within the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland (the church). For this task, I examine pastoral care in the light of the theology and philosophy of love. The vantage point of love is taken because pastoral care can be understood as the Christian practice of taking care of one's suffering neighbours, based on Christian teaching.² Then pastoral care is practice of Christian love. Although pastoral care as a common task is central to

1 According to Luther, the gospel is conveyed also “per mutuum colloquium et consolatio fratrum (Matt. 18:20)”, Martin LUTHER, *Die Schmalkaldischen Artikel* – Druck 1538 (StA 5, 1538), 344–447, here: 419. Luther's sermons at the time of writing the articles confirms Luther meant consolation between “brothers” as one form of conveying gospel, and that this practice takes place in “homes, fields and gardens”, not just within the physical spaces of the parish or connected to liturgical functions, Martin LUTHER, *Matthäus Kapitel 18–24 in Predigten ausgelegt 1537–1540* (WA 47, 1537–1540), 232–627, here: 297(38)–298(19).

2 I want to avoid going into the theology and theory of pastoral care, which in the contemporary church primarily concerns the question of how religious and spiritual matters are conveyed in therapeutically oriented care, e.g. Isto PELTOMÄKI, *Paternalismista terapeuttiseen kohtaamiseen – Irja Kilpeläisen sielunhoitokäsitys ja sen merkitys suomalaisessa luterilaisuudessa*, in *Teologinen aikakauskirja* (2019), 18–32. With this definition I simply state that both elements – spiritual matters and therapeutic care – are integral to pastoral care.

Lutheran teaching and very much topical within the church,³ it has not been much examined systematically as a theological question. Love, in contrast, has been an object of quite intensive theological exploration.

By exploring pastoral care in the light of love, I connect to the discussion of theological ethics in Lutheran teaching. I present the main lines of Finnish discussions in the twentieth century, which focussed on reading Luther's theology of love and on Lutheran ethics in general (sections 2 and 3). This paper draws particularly from Risto Saarinen's philosophical typology of love and Jaana Hallamaa's ethical theory that is based on the idea of agency and philosophical analysis of cooperation (section 4).⁴ With these means, I examine love with the idea of gift and consider the issue of gift giving in the light of moral agency (sections 5 and 6). I also present Björn Vikström's ideas of theological ethics and his explicit proposal for renewing the Finnish interpretation of Luther's theology of love,⁵ which Saarinen has done too, although implicitly. This way I present the current state of the so-called Finnish school of Luther studies in terms of love and ethics.

Exploring common pastoral care in the light of love, and as love to be precise, raises the question of *what* kind of love should be understood as Christian in nature and thus pastoral care. This question cuts into the theology of pastoral care as a common task by asking what the necessary theological conditions of Christian love are. I first discuss the issue as a matter of theological ethics and construct Lutheran ethics philosophically as a praxis mode of action (section 7). Then I concentrate on the question of faith, and how this determines moral action (section 8). When faith is seen as trust, according to traditional Christian teaching, it can be connected conceptually to love and moral action and thus further justify Lutheran ethics as the praxis of life in the general sense.

3 The church has strategically chosen to concentrate on “encountering parishioners” and thus building “a church of personal encounter”, although this emphasis has merely been extended to church employees and priests, so common pastoral care *should* be topical in the church.

4 Risto SAARINEN, *Oppi rakkaudesta* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2015); Jaana HALLAMAA, *Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka* (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2017).

5 Björn VIKSTRÖM, *Monta rakkautta: Seksuaalisuuden, parisuhteen ja avioliiton teologia* (Helsinki: Kirjapaja, 2016).

II. Lutheran Theological and Social Ethics in Finnish Discussions

Traditional Lutheran ethics proved problematic in Finnish society after the mid-twentieth century. Traditionally religious knowledge was thought to provide a comprehensive explanation of ethics that could be applied to societal contexts. Due to secularization and general societal development, however, the church has lost its position of moral authority.⁶ A theological social ethics is needed that enables the church to discuss ethical issues without confining itself to the margins.

The answer has been to detach theological ethics from social ethics. Practically this has meant the perception that the church does not hold any “higher knowledge” regarding societal questions, which has been confirmed in the early 1990s when the central Synod proposed that the bishops’ convocation prepare a presentation of Lutheran social ethics. The bishops answered that they could not do this, because religious truths does not provide a comprehensive social ethical understanding. Theologically this was based on Luther’s examinations of natural law and the idea that the world is inevitably sinful, so reason has to be used in ethical consideration within the secular realm.⁷

The perception that religious truths do not produce knowledge of ethical truths has been based on Tuomo Mannermaa’s interpretation of Luther’s theology of justification and love. Mannermaa was the father of the Finnish school that has emphasized the effective nature of justification through participation of Christ in Luther’s theology. For him Luther is a theologian, not only of justification, but also of love.⁸ Mannermaa illustrated Luther’s theology of love with two kinds of love. The first and primary one is *agape*: the love of God that is self-sacrificing and has power to create from nothingness. In contrast, human beings are always bound to their selfish ambitions and dependent on God’s self-giving creative force, and thus human love is different from God’s love. Although human beings are reformed in faith through justification by Christ’s habitation of the heart, this does not lead to possession of higher ethical knowledge because, following Luther’s idea of two kingdoms, Mannermaa argued for two “baskets” of Christian

6 Jaana HALLAMAA, Etik i Norden – lutersk produkt?, in *Etisk pluralisme i Norden*, ed. by Lars ØSTNOR (Kristiansand: Høyskole Forlaget, 2001), 219–238, here: 234–235.

7 Antti RAUNIO, Järki, usko ja lähimmäisen hyvä: Tutkimus luterilaisen etiikan ja diakonian teologian perusteista (Helsinki: Suomalainen teologinen kirjallisuusseura, 2007), 19–20, 28–30.

8 Risto SAARINEN, Justification by Faith: The View of the Mannermaa School, in *The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology*, ed. by Ludomir BATKA et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 264–273; Werner G. JEANROND, *A theology of love* (London: T & T Clark, 2010), 97.

doctrine. The first basket considers the unchanging doctrine of faith and the second considers understanding of love and ethics that always need to be re-valuated in the given context. So, human beings are bound to function within the terms of human love and thus ethical issues have to be addressed with reason.⁹

III. Luther's Ethics and Lutheran Teaching of Love

2.0

Antti Raunio has criticized the interpretation made based on Mannermaa's theology by arguing the sharp distinction of two baskets is a one-sided illustration of Luther's ethics. Although Luther stressed the need for reason, particularly in the secular kingdom, he did not mean justification would not affect ethics. Instead, especially in his early writings, Luther presented ethics as completely conditional on justification and faith. Practically, according to this scheme, good deeds follow only from personal justification and, vice versa, there are no good deeds without personal justification.¹⁰ Luther turned love into a matter of justification, not of divine gift employed with God-given reason, as roughly was the idea in scholastic theology following Thomas Aquinas.¹¹

Raunio has rightly pointed out the problem of the idea of two baskets. Instead of a sharp separation, there is a continuity from religious truths and justification to ethical truths and love, because purification of the human heart by habitation of Christ through justification has to be understood to have an ethical reach of some kind. Raunio has clarified the double-sided nature of Luther's ethics, which is based on the idea of two regiments. On the level of an individual, actions and deeds are judged in terms of the spiritual regiment: do they stem from a purified heart through justification? Only justification can truly orient one towards the best for the neighbour, to become his or her Christ. This ethics demands the limitless love and forgiveness that Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount. In public office, in contrast, one functions in the sphere of secular regiment that requires not just bound-

9 TUOMO MANNERMAA, *Two kinds of love: Martin Luther's religious world* (Finnish original: *Kaksi rakkautta: johdatus Lutherin uskonmaailmaan* [1983]) transl. by Juhani FORSBERG (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2010).

10 RAUNIO (see n. 8). Luther outlined his ethics by explaining the first commandment, Martin LUTHER, *Treatise on good works* (WA 6, 1520), 196–276, here: 202–216. There are no good deeds without faith in Christ and, in fact, good deeds without faith mean striving to show one's own excellence without God's help, which is the worst kind of self-righteousness.

11 JEANROND (see n. 9), 102.

less mercy but also use of public force and restriction, because of the sinfulness of the world. Though, this does not lead to double ethical standards because Christians are called to act according to the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount in secular and public office too, and thus to act upon two modes of morality.¹²

Natural law is important to understand Luther's grasp of ethics. For Luther, natural law was neither a naturalistic description of how human beings act morally, nor a set of universal moral principles deduced from human nature to determine how human beings should act. Instead, Luther described natural law as the pure and unspoiled divine love that is the *nature of God*. Thus natural law is equivalent with the golden rule, the ethical principle that captures the nature of divine love. But the original pure nature of human beings has been shattered, leading to a selfish quest for one's own good, which can be corrected only through justification and purification of the heart. Reason is part of the original and divine nature of human beings but alone it does not find the true good that can be found only with God who is present in faith. Thus morality is about spiritual striving to contemplate the golden rule that demands reasoning to determine what is the best for your neighbour, and do it.¹³

Björn Vikström has proposed a revised Lutheran teaching of love, distinct from some of Luther's other views. Vikström holds that Luther's emphasis of God's absolute power distances God from human beings, who have no way of responding to God; Luther's God seems alien to human life. In reality life is dynamic, both in the spiritual and ethical sense, and God is involved in it: in suffering, in joys, in spiritual doubts and so on. Vikström also maintains that *eros* should not be overlooked in Christian teaching because self-interested love does not necessarily mean egoism, as self-interest is a vital component of humanity and human action. *Eros* is needed because every good human action cannot be judged by how it represents and fulfils self-sacrificing love. Human love is not just spontaneous, selfless *agape* but also about passion and reason, justice and reciprocity.¹⁴ Thus, Vikström argues, love can be ordered, whereas pure *agape* cannot. Further, Vikström specifies ten kinds of love or contexts of love: God's love, love towards God, romantic love, erotic love, parental love, friendship, neighbourly love, sibling love, self-love, and love of idols, ideas and communities. Vikström names his scheme the Lutheran teaching of love 2.0.¹⁵

¹² RAUNIO (see n. 8), 232–234.

¹³ RAUNIO (see n. 8), 57–77.

¹⁴ VIKSTRÖM (see n. 5), relies on Saarinen's thinking on *eros*, SAARINEN, Oppi rakkaudesta (see n. 4), that originates from C. S. LEWIS, *The Four Loves*. (London: William Collins, 2016, first ed. 1960). I present Saarinen's thinking in the next section.

¹⁵ VIKSTRÖM (see n. 5). In reality, Luther described God as very much involved in human spirituality. For Luther, although justification is a one-time event gifted in baptism, spirituality is an on-

IV. Philosophy of Love, Gift, and Reciprocity

To present a more profound philosophical understanding of love, I rely on Saarinen's analysis. Saarinen has specified four kinds of love: striving (*eros*, *mania*), help (*pragma*, *agape*), friendship (*ludus*, *filia*) and respect (*time*). Saarinen points out all kinds of love are important for balanced human love and pursuit of good. Classically *eros* refers to striving and passion in a sense of romantic and erotic love, but Saarinen explains striving and passion for also other goals as *eros*. Such goals are for example knowledge, wealth, power and reputation. *Eros* is a much-needed form of love but it risks taking over the whole person and becoming *mania*. *Pragma* refers to unselfish love but in sense of pragmatic helping and is thus a tamer form of *agape*. *Ludus* is playfulness and a lessened form of friendship, or *filia*. *Filia* has classically been regarded as the noblest form of love, but it cannot be seen as its foundation, because it focuses on one's inner circle, or people who have found each other worthy of loving based on their similar characteristics. Friendship is of course an essential part of human life, but love should be based on openness to differences, realized through respectful recognition, or *time* love.¹⁶

Respect is the kind of love that drives to recognize other people as they are despite their difference, and it is the basis on which the other forms of love construct on. In its extended form, it is neighbourly love. Saarinen reminds us of traditional Christian teaching about hospitality, referred to with the Greek term *philoxenia*. *Philoxenia* in the sense of respectful recognition is the basis of neighbourly love, which Jesus urged people towards. Thus, for Saarinen, *agape* is not the highest form of human love; it is God's love. This is because human *agape* tends to emphasize self-sacrifice as a goal, which puts the lover in focus, though they should not be; gift and reciprocity are more important.

The philosophical idea of gift, initiated by Marcel Mauss, has been found useful to conceptualize good things – both material objects and abstract acts – that we give to each other without expectation of getting anything back. In other words, gift is a useful philosophical tool to examine acts of love. The groundbreaking aspect of Mauss' theory is the notion that gift giving does not only consist of (1) giving a gift and (2) receiving a gift but also of (3) a gift in exchange.

going process: God is the giver and the human being the recipient who should daily return to the gift of mercy.

16 SAARINEN, Oppi rakkaudesta (see n. 4), 51. Saarinen connects to Hegelian philosophical succession, especially by reading Axel Honneth's theory of recognition. He focuses on the philosophy and theology of gift, Risto SAARINEN, *God and the gift: An ecumenical theology of giving* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2005), and especially on gift as a fundamental character of Luther's theology, Risto SAARINEN, *Luther and the Gift* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeckm 2017).

Although a gift has to be given without expectation of getting anything in exchange, giving and receiving forms a bond between the giver and the receiver through moral obligation to give something back.¹⁷ Thus a gift always involves an invitation and a moral demand to reciprocity. In a reciprocal relationship, a gift has been received and a gift has been given in exchange. The receiver has turned into a giver and vice versa. The gift in return can also be given to a third-party subject(s), when gift exchange becomes a general process. Fundamental ethics of life, in society and in general, can be seen to be based on the idea of gift-exchange relations: “I give because I have been given”.¹⁸

Jaana Hallamaa argues that reciprocal gift relation is the desirable form of love. *Agape* does not build reciprocal relationships but thwarts them, as it does not expect anything in return. The fundamental moral failure of *agape* is the failure to respect the agency of the receiver. For Hallamaa, agency is the *fundamental good* of an individual, and all moral action should be considered in terms of how it strengthens the agency of those who are affected by the action. Agency is an individual’s capability to reach for the desired ends and to make ethical decisions about what is good and how it could be reached.¹⁹ In the light of agency, the golden rule should not be understood as concerning the content of moral actions for one’s neighbours. Instead, it should be understood as a formal ethical rule that expresses how the other should be regarded: as an equal agent who has something to give. In other words, ideal love requires *respect* of the other’s agency, which, in Saarinen’s typology corresponds to *time* love.²⁰ This ethical attitude is the starting point of reciprocal gift-giving relations, both in the philosophical and practical sense.

17 Marcel MAUSS, *The Gift: Forms and functions of exchange in archaic societies*. (French original: *Essai sur le don* [1925]) transl. by Ian CUNNISON (Illinois: The Free Press Clencoe, 1954). Jacques Derrida has pointed out that the idea of gift is inevitably paradoxical (for history of the idea of gift, see Olli PYYHTINEN, *The gift and its paradoxes: Beyond Mauss* (Farnham, Surrey: Ashgate, 2014); Christian PAPILLOU, *Gift: History of the Concept*, in *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, second edition (Amsterdam: Elsevier, 2015), 139–143.

18 HALLAMAA, *Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka* (see n. 4), 239–255. See also Matt. 10:8.

19 Hallamaa conceptualizes agency with three conditions: intentionality (agent’s action is purposeful in a sense that it strives to gain something), reasonability (agent is aware of the causal nature of the reality) and ability (agent is able and has resources to reach for the desired ends), HALLAMAA, *Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka* (see n. 4), 20–24. With these conditions Hallamaa captures the common idea of an agent as a being with capacity to act who is or should be aware of the consequences of their actions. In this article, following Hallamaa’s ethical theory of action and cooperation, I apply philosophy of action to theological ethics.

20 HALLAMAA, *Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka* (see n. 4), 255–258.

With building on the idea of reciprocity as the ethical ideal, Saarinen, currently the leading figure in the Finnish school of Luther studies, has effectively proposed a renewed interpretation of Lutheran ethics in the Finnish context. Instead of considering how a human being could express self-sacrificing and all-giving love, or *agape*, Saarinen has built on the idea of gift as exchange and reciprocity. I take this, bolstered by Hallamaa's concept of agency, as my starting point.

V. Care in the Light of Love and Gift Giving

In this section, I explore the task of caring in the light of the philosophy of love, in order to then examine how care could or should be understood as pastoral or Christian in nature. To start with, Vikström's specification of different contexts or types of love is helpful. Pastoral care is realized at least in friendship and neighbourly love.²¹ Friendship is directed to people who are close or already known, whereas neighbourly love is directed to people who are more distant or unknown.

In Saarinen's typology, friendship, or *filia*, is one form of love. *Filia* is about the joy of sharing thoughts and experiences, which is based on deep mutual trust, shared interests and history. Compared to many other relationships, *ludus* or playfulness is often emphasized in friendship. Respect for each other is central in friendship and *filia*, and it is otherwise similar to *time* love, or respect, but the latter can be directed to unknown people who do not necessarily reciprocate in gift exchange. *Time* love towards unknown people is the basis of *filoksenia*, or neighbourly love.

Regarding neighbourly love, drawing from Saarinen and Hallamaa, I argue that all Christian interaction within parish communities should be characterized by *filoksenia* – profound hospitality – that is based on *time* love. Neighbourly love comes true in *filoksenia*, but hospitality should not be understood merely as one-way giving to a certain group of people who are in need. The practice of care should be based on the expectation of reciprocal relationship, so that the recipient can become a giver either in return or in terms of third parties. So, receivers should not only be seen as in need of help, but also as givers. This is important because, due to the strong tradition of Christian love and *diakonia*, parish communities tend to be seen merely in the light of *agape* and selfless giving. This runs

²¹ I do not explore parental love and family as a context of Christian love here. For Luther, family had a particular role in God's earthly order and taking care of one's children was a particular Christian vocation, but this is more related to upbringing than to the subject of this article, pastoral care.

the risk of assigning certain people the passive role of needy recipients and the active community the role of giver. But everyone in the community is in need and, philosophically, in need of gifts. Thus everyone is both a giver and a receiver.

The idea of a community reminds us that love should not be built purely on the idea of hospitality and taking care of others. Playful friendliness, *ludus*, is also important. Communal life characterized only by *philoxenia* would be dull, boring and flat. One could argue, convincingly in my opinion, that parishes as communities often lack light-hearted playfulness and humour.²² And one should also strive to build friendship, *filia*, among the members of the community, although, I would argue, communal cooperation should be based on neighbourly love expressed in respect for each other, *philoxenia* and hospitality.²³

Parish communities are not the focus of this article however, but common pastoral care in the everyday life of Christians. Friendship is normally the context for deeper interaction in terms of taking care of others. But *philoxenia* has a place in everyday life too. Although modern Western society has in many senses replaced the need for *philoxenia* with institutionalized practices, minor acts of recognition, *time* love and hospitality are essential to generalized gift processes, that is, gift giving to third parties without questioning or calculating how oneself benefits. This kind of love is expressed in openness towards others, minor acts of kindness, and greater acts of benevolence.²⁴

Openness and kindness are often experienced easier when visiting or just after moving to a foreign country – that is when you are the other and the stranger. *Philoxenia* appears more valuable when encountering otherness and seeking to find one's social circles and path in life, possibly in a new environment. Wel-

22 Thomas Jay OORD, *Defining love: A philosophical, scientific, and theological engagement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2010), 67–68, explored how religious and non-religious people rate themselves in terms of different modes of love. Those who self-defined as religious rated themselves as expressing *pragma* and *agape*, whereas they had much less emphasis on *ludus* than the non-religious participants. Although not definitive, the result may hint that humour and playfulness are not strongly (enough) emphasized in Christian faith.

23 I oppose the view that parish communities should be based on friendship, e.g. Steve SUMMERS, *Friendship: Exploring its implications for the church in postmodernity* (London; New York: T & T Clark 2009). This is an ecclesiological question that is not only systematic theological, but also practical, and thus highly contextual. As a state church, the Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church still holds a strong cultural position: about 70 % of the population are members. In contemporary secular society, the church cannot base its practical ecclesiology on an idea that religious life is primarily lived in the close parish community.

24 HALLAMAA, *Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka* (see n. 4), 249–255. The classical Christian description of *filoksenia* is of course the tale of Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:25–37).

coming strangers is a particular call for any Christian community, which originates in the very roots of Christianity, and is a task for all individual Christians.²⁵

VI. Love and Gift Giving in the Light of Agency

Talk about neighbourly love, hospitality, openness and kindness easily paints a romanticized picture of human encountering. While *time* love and *philoxenia* should not be questioned as the normative basis of moral action, taking care of others and love shown towards others needs to be explored also in the light of human *resources*. Practically, people are not able to spend endless time and energy to help people in need. This is because human (and financial and material) resources are limited, which are essential in helping and taking care of others, but I concentrate here on the restricted nature of human action and its implications for love and gift giving.

Theologically the limited nature of life connects to the sinfulness of human beings and the whole natural world. Original sin, the choice of human beings to try to take the place of God, broke the state of paradise where Adam and Eve lived in perfect harmony with God and each other.²⁶ Yet it would be a mistake to identify the limitedness of human resources with original sin. Instead human beings were created as creatures in need: in need of company, as the tale of the creation of Eve describes, and in physical need, for instance for water and food. Before the image of God was shattered through the original sin, human beings also had limited cognitive and physical capacities. Yet, while sinfulness continuously creates more human needs in terms of all the physical and mental agony caused by evil and immoral actions, original sin should be primarily identified with constant and inevitable failure to meet the needs of our neighbours: we fail to provide love as we should.

Providing love to respond to the needs of our neighbours is equivalent with the task of pastoral care: taking care of one's suffering neighbours. Situations that are particularly about pastoral care are when the needs are overwhelmingly mentally distressing, for example when encountering someone grieving the death of a loved one. This definition of particular pastoral care is analogical with pastors'

²⁵ On *filoksenia* or encountering strangers in Christian tradition, see e.g. Joona SALMINEN, *Vieraanvaraisuus ja muukalaisuus: Ekumeenisessa teologisessa symposiumissa marraskuussa 2010 pidetyt esitelmät*. Helsinki: Suomalainen teologinen kirjallisuusseura, 2011).

²⁶ On Luther's understanding of sin, see RAUNIO (n. 8), 188–190; Derek R. NELSON & Paul R. HINLICKY (ed.), *Sin*, in *The Oxford Encyclopaedia of Martin Luther* (Oxford University Press, 2017).

professional work: certain encounters are specifically about care, but at the same time, the general task of caring should penetrate all pastoral action.

My analysis from now on is built on taking seriously the limited nature of human life. I aim to avoid the kind of theological ethics that draws a rosy picture of human interaction by merely concentrating on what should be done, without acknowledging the often unclear and muddy reality. We indeed should love, but we are also inevitably unable to love to the extent that would meet all the needs of our neighbours. That is the nature of life: all needs are not met; agony, pain and misery exist. The limitedness of resources to answer the moral call to love is fundamentally an insoluble ethical problem, because human life is finite. I explore the ethical tension of needs and demand to love in the light of action and human agency.

Since resources are finite, it is important to identify what they are intended to achieve, or in other words, what people aim to do with their limited energy and abilities. People use their time and energy to do what they themselves find pleasant, purposeful and meaningful. Philosophically, it can be said that a human being uses his or her resources to realize personal *interests*. An interest is a larger object that is valued as *good* and thus desirable.²⁷ Such objects could be, for example, educating yourself, doing meaningful work, or leading a healthy life by regular exercise and eating wholesome food. This pursuit of personal interests is a mode of *eros*.

To make sense of how a human being who is seeking his or her own good can truly love and take care of other people, we need to clarify the relation of interests and love. Traditionally this issue has been discussed in terms of altruism, asking whether human beings always base their actions on egoist motives.²⁸ Altruism should not be philosophically identified with the absence of interest; in this case being altruist would mean having no personal interest at all. But if interest is regarded as good and desirable, the logic is that altruist action and deeds – the good of your neighbour – are in the very interests of the giver.²⁹

Therefore, not just *eros*, but also neighbourly love and *philoxenia* can be explained as fulfilling interests: it is a personal interest to love your neighbour and show hospitality to others. Then we can add some common and general interests to those listed above: to be able to take care of your close ones when they are in

27 HALLAMAA, Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka (see n. 4), 41. Interests are larger objectives or ends that are held to be good; goals or aims are concrete objectives or ends which are striven for.

28 Richard KRAUT, Altruism, in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. ZALTA (Spring 2018 Edition).

29 HALLAMAA, Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka (see n. 4), 35.

need, to take good care of your children, or to benefit the common good by being an active citizen.

VII. Theology of Common Pastoral Care: Christian Life as Praxis

What makes love Christian in nature, or in other words, what makes care pastoral? This question has to be explored both from the point of view of Christianity as a set of beliefs and of an individual as a Christian. Regarding Christianity, the question is how love in terms of ethics connects to doctrine. And regarding the individual, the question is how moral action relates to personal Christian faith or lack thereof.

The relation of ethics and doctrine is a traditional and complex question in Lutheran theology. It emphasizes the absoluteness of mercy that is not bound to good human deeds. Nevertheless, receiving the love of God through justification should lead to good deeds and thus God's love and the gift of salvation is expressed in moral action by an individual, which is the logic of human beings conveying the divine gift through acts of love. The challenge of the relation of justification and deeds is how to hold on to the elementary condition of boundless mercy, and thus more of a matter of dogmatics.³⁰ From the point of view of ethics, however, the idea of boundless mercy sets human beings morally free. If justification, the ultimate good, were bound to deeds, morality would be dependent on seeking salvation, which would make good deeds vehicles for other purposes than morality itself. In a model of boundless mercy, deeds are done only because of what is best for the neighbour.

Christian morality and life can be understood as *praxis*. Praxis is a philosophical distinction of a mode of action in which the objective is partly in the action itself and partly in the result of the action. Whereas in *poiesis*, the objective is only in the outcome of the action, which could be exemplified by a production line where the only goal is to make the certain product. The verb of *poiesis* action is 'to produce'. In *theoria* there is no objectives besides the action itself. The classi-

30 The more precise challenge is how to hold on to the kind of justification event where the human being is merely passive as God is active. Other questions are, what role sanctification has in relation to justification and whether justification is understood as forensic or effective in nature. Saarinen has explained justification as effective in nature, the human role as passive and sanctification as included in the event of justification, Risto SAARINEN, *The Language of Giving in Theology*, in *Neue Zeitschrift für Systematische Theologie und Religionsphilosophie* (2010), 52(3), 268–301.

cal claim of philosophy having no other objectives than itself would be one example of *theoria*, and the verb of *theoria* action is ‘to contemplate’. Praxis action is described with the verb ‘to practice’.³¹

To explore religious morality in terms of praxis highlights that religiosity is not a separate part of life with distinct functions especially reserved for it. In a practical sense, being a Christian is not only about taking part in liturgical and sacramental tradition, but everyday life in itself is religious, as an individual acts or should act based on Christian faith. Thus the whole of life is both an expression of religious faith and about living faith out in practice. For instance, Luther saw everyday life as sacred itself.³²

The problem of understanding morality as a divine endeavour is equivalent to the problem Luther saw in monastic life. Luther grew suspicious of the monastic ideal of devoting everything in life to the noble aim of serving God. The problem was that in monastic religiosity every mundane act is harnessed as a vehicle to serve God, with the result that all earthly matters lose their own meaning.³³ Instead, earthly matters need to be valued as they are and not to be subordinated to some higher purposes, although, in the sense of praxis, meaningful earthly matters are religious by their nature of action and are more than just the direct result or product of action.

For Christians, then, life is not just a vehicle to actualize Christian ideals. In Lutheran theology, in principle, being a Christian is not a matter of noble striving but rather of living life as it is.³⁴ Nevertheless, religious matters of God as the creator, redeemer and sanctifier are seen as fundamental moral conditions, which give life an ultimate meaning and purpose, without subordinating earthly matters to the sole goal of nobly serving God. God is the fundamental condition of life, the ultimate presence that enables one to fulfil the basic human drive to make life as true and right as possible.³⁵ Then, love should not be seen strictly as a matter of

31 HALLAMAA, Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka (see n. 4), 50–52. I follow Hallamaa’s presentation of *poiesis*, praxis and *theoria*, which is the classical typology of action revived by Hannah Arendt.

32 Jane E. STROHL, The Framework for Christian Living: Luther on the Christian’s Callings, in The Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther’s Theology, ed. by Ludomir BATKA et al. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 365–369.

33 STROHL (see n. 34), 367–368; HALLAMAA, Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka (see n. 4), 52; Saarinen describes the same issue in the light of the concept of passion, Risto SAARINEN, Oppi luottamuksesta (Helsinki: Gaudeamus, 2017), 136–137.

34 Luther captured this with his teaching on Christian callings or vocations, STROHL (see n. 34).

35 Ingolf U. DALFERTH, Transcendence and the secular world: Life in orientation to ultimate presence, second revised and translated edition (German original: Transzendenz und säkulare Welt, Lebensorientierung an letzter Gegenwart [2015]) transl. by Jo BENNETT (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2018), 41–46.

how we respond to the needs of our neighbours, but as the force and substance of how we seek to live our lives. Taking care of our suffering neighbours is part of this endeavour.

From the point of view of the individual, the relationship between faith and morality is complex. Basing Christian love on the idea of deep and conscious faith is problematic because it binds God and divine action to human beings.³⁶ Instead, Lutheran theology emphasizes the absoluteness of God and God's mercy effecting through sacraments regardless of human nature.

By highlighting the absolute nature of the divine good, it can be argued that God's work of love in the world is not bound to human consciousness. Therefore, all earthly good and love is seen as conveying the love of God. This understanding can be called *the universal model*.³⁷ Yet what happens to religiosity itself, if everything unlimited is determined as religious: would religiosity become unnecessary? This can be countered with the traditional and well-recognized theological premise that although God is absolute and omnipotent, God's existence in human history is bound to the human history itself.³⁸

So we have two premises regarding God's existence and presence in human history. First, God is the omnipotent creator of existence and true in Godself. Second, God's presence in history is bound to human beings. The first premise signifies Christianity inevitably as a universal and normative set of beliefs, which leads to the conclusion of the universal model: God is the source of all good and thus everything good is about conveying the good given by God. Christian faith cannot escape its imperialist nature as God's actuality concerns everyone regardless of what one thinks.³⁹ But the second premise means that religiosity, speaking

36 Another problem with the confessional model is that it expects a kind of "*faith-informed thought*" that replicates and codifies the ideology-conditioned contrasts of life in terms of thought", which could lead to dogmatism and distort the insight into Christian life as praxis. Though Dalferth does not use the term praxis, he does say that "(t)he truth of faith (comes) into play – only if we recognise and acknowledge, in day-to-day living (life of faith) and in its reflective illumination (theology), the way in which this truth gains precedence – within all our experience, awareness, comprehension, deliberation, and analytical thought", DALFERTH, *Transcendence* (see n. 37), 51.

37 On the theology of *diakonia*, see Antti ELENIS. *Avaran teologian puolustus*, in *Auttamisen teologia*, ed. by Kari LATVUS/Antti ELENIS (Helsinki: Kirjapaja, 2007), 158–176.

38 Wolfhart PANNENBERG, *Systematische Theologie: Band 1* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1988). His theology was based on the idea that knowledge of God has to be validated through human historical events and understanding.

39 The issue of the moral action of a person who rejects God is tricky. Luther solved this by stating that although deeds could be morally good, they are good only in the "external" sense if they are not carried out with faith in God, because the corruption of the fall can be remedied only by Christ and justification through faith. Another solution would be to state that God's gifts given in creation have

about God and church as the sign and fulfilment of God on earth, is always necessary. There is always a need to specifically orient oneself to God.

VIII. Faith and the Common Task of Pastoral Care: Love and Trust

In this final section I propose for a scheme for understanding how Christian faith directs to love and gives conditions for love in terms of human action. These conditions are both theological or philosophical and practical in nature. In other words, I use philosophical means to explain how justification by faith equips a human being to love, and thus how faith and love intertwine philosophically and theologically. This analysis further casts light on the praxis nature of Lutheran religiosity. Naturally there are no means to explore justification regarding God's agency and effect on the level of an individual. Instead I focus on the theological content that has implications for moral action, in terms of the philosophical conditions of human action. I do this using the concept of trust, first in terms of human action and cooperation, and then in terms of Christian faith as trust in God.

Trust is a central element in love and care, and in all human encounter and cooperation. As a philosophical definition, trust is the belief or attitude of a subject towards an object that the object meets the expectations of the subject. An important question is what cognitive basis the trust is grounded in. Trust can be built on belief that lacks actual evidence, reasoning, or valid factual knowledge. Nevertheless trust is the cognitive belief of the agent, yet there is always an element of uncertainty as to whether the object will meet the certain expectations, otherwise there would no need to talk about trust.⁴⁰ But trust is also a matter of general attitude that considers the individual and attachment to others.⁴¹

In terms of love and gift giving, trust is the force that enables human beings to reach out to other people and to both give and receive gifts. Love and gift-giving

not been corrupted in a way that would hamper the human ability to act morally. I endorse the latter view, as ethics cannot be subordinated to religiosity.

40 Russell HARDIN, *Trust and trustworthiness* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002), 1–13.

41 With this illustration of trust I have followed both HALLAMAA, *Yhdessä toimimisen etiikka* (see n. 4), 125–149, who relies on Hardin in characterizing trust as cognitive belief, and SAARINEN, *Oppi luottamuksesta* (see n. 35), who separates three economies or contexts of trust: appropriation of the self (basic trust, self-confidence), economic exchange (trustworthiness, reliability, credit value) and gift exchange (mutual trust). The idea of basic trust as a psychological phenomenon is based on Erik H. ERIKSON, *Childhood and society* (New York: Norton, 1950).

relationships can be understood in terms of how deeply the parties trust each other. Friendship is built on deep certainty of each other and *filoksenia* should be practised with some reserve of true motives on the part of both giver and gifted. Yet openness towards others and strangers requires some basic trust in people. The acts of simple *philoxenia* illustrated in the previous section – such as guiding someone – are examples of acting on basic trust. You would hesitate to talk to a stranger who you sense has some hidden motive. These acts are necessary resources for building general trust between people. Basic trust is more of an individual attitude than a cognitive belief, which is an important notion when reflecting on religious faith in terms of trust.

In the Lutheran confession, faith is described as trust in God, and more precisely, faith is about trust in God that is absolutely good and the source of all good. Today, whether God exists or not often seems to be the primary question of faith, but for Luther the question was more about whether one truly trusts God to be absolutely good and does not base one's hope on seeking some earthly good, such as money or power.⁴² Both questions are important, but the latter is the crucial one for this article. My exact question is what implications trust in a good God has for moral action.

To answer this, we have to look more closely into what faith as trust actually means. In principle, trust in God is to regard life as a divine gift, to trust life as fundamentally good and to trust in God's presence in life. These premises have deep ethical implications. Briefly, in Christian thinking, viewing life as good is the primary source of the hope that is an essential condition of moral action. To hold life as a gift from God implies the ethical demand to respect other people and to recognize them as worthy moral agents, which is theologically based on the idea that while all creation is worthy of respect as a divine gift, every human being is respected as the image of God.

Christian faith implies the fundamental moral demand to respect others that is the basis for love and reciprocal gift giving. In other words, Christian ethics is not about *poiesis*-type action, or external obedience to moral rules, such as the golden rule. Instead, faith and moral action intertwine, as in the concept of praxis. In the light of agency, the relation of trust in God and moral action is explained by the notion that belief is based on action, whether the beliefs are cognitive or more of a general attitude. Therefore, faith is expressed in action, which was Luther's understanding of how faith and deeds relate.

42 Martin LUTHER, *The Large Catechism*, (WA 30, 1, 1529), 125–238, here: 132–139 (explanation of the first commandment).

The principal ethical demand to respect other human beings entails the demand to respect, guard and cherish the fundamental *freedom* of each individual. To trust in God's presence in life adds a perspective on human freedom, which, I believe, is rarely pointed out. Trust in God's presence is to trust that God is a continuously influencing force.⁴³ This understanding of providence entails a general attitude of leaving things in the hands of God. In terms of human interaction and cooperation, this calls for respect for each individual's freedom to seek fulfilment of both their chosen aims and of what they will become through events and circumstances beyond their control.⁴⁴

In short, *time*-based love of neighbour and *philoxenia* are not just expressions of Christian faith but essentially faith is *lived truly* in the praxis mode of action. Faith as trust that leads to moral action, relates to the Biblical understanding of faith as a matter of relations between a God and people who act. Faith is not principally a matter of personal attitude or cognitive content, as it has been reduced to in the history of theology, but primarily a matter of trust and thus a social phenomenon.⁴⁵ Furthermore, the way to meet the challenge of the secular world – to find the truth of human life, not the pros and cons of religiosity⁴⁶ – is to concentrate on fostering and promoting general trust between people.⁴⁷

43 In the light of agency, to trust in God's presence is to trust in God's agency.

44 Ingolf U. DALFERTH, *Creatures of possibility: The theological basis of human freedom* (German original: Umsonst [2011]) transl. by Jo BENNETT (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2016), ix.

45 With this I follow SAARINEN, *Oppi luottamuksesta* (see n. 35), 130–131, and oppose Dalferth's view that social and cultural aspects of faith have been emphasized at the cost of cognitive decisions of faith in the modern era, DALFERTH, *Transcendence* (see n. 37), 6. I would say exactly the opposite, that modernity has emphasized faith as a matter of cognitive content over the social and cultural nature of faith.

46 DALFERTH, *Transcendence* (see n. 37), 40–41.

47 SAARINEN, *Oppi luottamuksesta* (see n. 35), 131. To focus on expressing faith in action is equivalent with the notion that "(t)true faith constantly refers back anaphorically to that to which it owes its existence, thus pointing the way cataphorically to a new understanding of everything", DALFERTH, *Transcendence* (see n. 37), 51. Then, Christian morality is not about showcasing your beliefs but rather about action that stems from a certain set of beliefs.