

## **PROFOUND HUMANNESS AS CARE**

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I'm Kay Lush and I'm from Kelapa Dua Human Development Project, about one and a half hours outside of Jakarta in Indonesia. When I was asked to give this talk, I was very offended. My response to the call was that I don't have anything profound to say. The committee's response to my response was "Oh yes you do." And so, finally, the only thing that's given me the courage to come up here today is that I used the methodology of getting clear on what you know and what you don't know. The one thing I'm sure about is that I am a human being. Now profundity or profoundness I'm not sure about, so I just decided that I'd bracket it and worry about it after this talk. I have discovered after listening to the talks this week and working through this, that profound humanness is not new. We know all about it, but we are looking for different ways to express it and clarify it. It is a many-faceted diamond. There are twelve different ways we've decided to talk about profound humanness. And the twelve overlap. You cannot have care without action. You cannot have action without consciousness. Today I'm going to talk about profound humanness as care.

First of all, profound humanness as care is overwhelming reality. Man is care, period. Man is care and he participates in the care that flows from Being itself. I'll repeat that because I think it's important. I am care. You are care. You don't have it. You don't earn it but you are it. And you and I participate in the care that flows out of Being itself. Another way to say that is that man is his relationships. That's nothing new. Our relationships define who we are. You and I are loaded with anxieties and concerns and all kinds of cares. Say to yourself, "Try not to care." It's impossible. Remember in teaching Bultman, you'd ask somebody if it was possible not to care, and somebody in the seminar would say, "Oh, yes, there are times when I don't care." And then another person in the seminar would say, "You are a liar." Because not to care is not to be alive. It's just pulling the curtains down and being dead.

I bet you think you know who I am. You think I am Kay Lush, and I'm five feet two and a half inches tall and I'm not going to tell you how much I weigh. I'm forty years old and I have brown hair with a little gray that I dye. That is not who I am. I am Kay Lush who is related to my mother; in fact, I'm her daughter. I have sisters. I'm related to the government in Indonesia. I have a semi-permanent visa there. I'm related to the rice farmer without whose rice I would not be here today, for I've eaten a lot of rice. Finally, I'm related to the Mystery of life. Man is related to the final reality which is the Mystery of life. And that Mystery sustains you and me. Mystery sustains me. Care sustains me. If it weren't for the care of those people in the kitchen right now, you and I wouldn't be here.

All the actions of history arise out of care or the misuse of it. The fact is that I'm being cared for by a cab driver who drove me here or I'm being cared for because my mother's birthing got me here. My husband being my husband has sustained me also. Our relationships sustain us, literally. Without them we'd be nothing, a nought. We wouldn't even be an it, we'd be a "nought". Did you ever think that when you declare war on another country it's

because you care? When you fight with somebody, it's because you care. When you see somebody walking down the street and you walk on the other side to avoid them, you care. You don't want to talk

to them. When you turn off the TV because you can't stand the news, you care. Care happens to you and you respond. You participate in care because you participate in all of life. Not to participate in care is to be really dead. Care touches you and you're profoundly human. It is not an emotion; it is not a feeling. Care is an isness, a happening that happens to you.

I become aware of my relationships. I become aware of being sustained by them and I become aware of the fact that if it hadn't been for my father, I wouldn't have enough courage to do anything. If it hadn't been for that pilot on the 747, I literally wouldn't be here. I have really grown to an appreciation of Thomas Jefferson. I'm so glad I'm an American these days. Now don't get me wrong. I'm a global citizen and I'm a human being, but I'm also an American. It dawned on me how grateful I am for the Declaration of Independence and the people who wrote it. The kind of sustaining force that's been in my life is phenomenal. Because of them, I have individual freedom and rights. I'm thankful for those relationships. They cared for me.

Care has given me my life, which is a chance to do life as it has never been done before. That same caring has also smashed me to pieces and driven me to my knees screaming, but that, too, has sustained me. Without that, I wouldn't be here, and I'm thankful for that. Somehow, you want to repay all those people and all those actions. I wish I could shake hands with Thomas Jefferson.

The suffering of mankind has sustained me because that is part of the totality of life. And that suffering is everywhere. It's in Wichita, in Bombay, in Brussels and in Paducah. It is everywhere. It's in the small towns and the large towns. You walk through the innocent suffering and suddenly care touches you and catches you unaware. Something happens to you and you make a decision. I was walking through the rice paddies to my assigned stake, Stake 1. The paddies were a beautiful, deep lush green. I gained another appreciation for my last name, which is "Lush." On this particular day, the rice was full and there was a bright blue sky. It was simply gorgeous.

I was walking down a path crossing Stake 3 to the irrigation ditch. In the irrigation ditch with water about the color of our brown tabletops, there were 3 water buffalo and two kids on them. In the same irrigation ditch were two ladies. One was washing her hair and the other was washing the plates from her lunch. Something happened to me. I just stopped. Care happened. I was angry. I stopped and at that point, I declared war on the water system.

When care focuses in and grabs you like that, something happens and your life is different. You decide self-consciously wherever you go, wherever you are that you are going to build structures to release humanness in others. I had decided, by golly, that over my dead body, we were going to have an adequate water system here! It took just one moment and this happens to other people too. You watch this event going on. Only ten people in our village can read and write. We sent five villagers to another consult in Malaysia, which was a great happening

for them.

Pa Darma, a 45-year-old illiterate man who was a leader on the local level, visited Sungai Lui. He saw Muslims like himself who could read signs. I tell you, care happened to Pa Darma that day. When he returned, he got up at the guild meeting and said, "If those villagers in Sungai Lui can read, so can we.

Now everybody, even women too (this was new) are going to be literate." About 100 people are in literacy classes every day because profound humanness happened to that man. Well, you watch it and slowly, self-consciously, you begin to develop a critical conscience wherever you go and whomever you meet. You build structures and relationships that release the profound care in others.

Profound humanness as care is impassioned detachment. When life gives you profound humanness as you find in care, you become very clear what you must do with your life. Care has been objectified when it happens to you and you focus it. It is really a formula because you know where the contradiction is and you head straight toward it. You are convinced that if you don't move on this contradiction, history will stop. That's how impassioned you are and it's the resolve of "over my dead body." Over my dead body will this innocent suffering go on.

So you head to Jerusalem. But before you do that, you have a conversation with God. It goes something like this: "Now, look. I've seen this and don't you worry. I'm on your side and we are going to do something about this. You can count on me." You get your sword (I'm a coward so I use my shield) and you move. I understand now what it means to "defend the honor of God." Jesus walked so fast because he was scared. But more than that, I think it was a maneuver. You're scared Satan will catch you, so you walk fast. And you pray for courage.

This is the time for petitionary prayer, and then it's intercessory prayer. You walk fast and you don't have time to bury your father. You want to bury your father, your insides scream, but you can't. You're full of passion, yet you walk straight and fast to get to the scene of the contradiction. This is where maneuvers come in. Jesus had to go to the proper turf which was Jerusalem. You have to know your turf and your timing and all that type of thing. And you declare war. When I saw that lady bathing in the irrigation ditch, I declared war on all unpure water in this limited geography.

In 85% of Indonesia, women live like animals. Given this fact, they are unbelievably gracious. Their job is to have babies, plant rice, harvest rice, have more babies, carry this heavy burden on their back so that when they straighten up, they are still stooped over. That's what it means to be a woman. Sometimes you forget how much suffering goes on there. You hide from the suffering.

I want to introduce you to a lady named Iou Santinah. We needed a preschool teacher (this was a gimmick to get to the women). When we asked the men about women to teach, they laughed us right out of the building because women as teachers is an utter impossibility. But something happened to one woman, Iou Santinah. She decided she could risk coming over every day to be a community preschool teacher. Her friends told her we were going to Christianize her, so she should be careful. But she came anyway. Furthermore, she never missed a day. Because of her, three or four other people have come to teach. Profound humanness in the form of care happened to that woman. She responded by making a radical decision about her life. She chose responsibility for those structures that released the profound care.

Profound humanness as care is universal service. My life is doing the necessary deed for the sake of all mankind. That is human care. My life is radical engagement. My life is choosing responsibility, because our lives are always about building the earth. Once you've decided you are going to attack the major contradictions of the day, you are about building the earth. There is nothing else to do. You ride the tide of history. When profound humanness happens, you only face impossible obligations. If you weren't

being chewed up and spit out, you wouldn't be at the right place in history. That's what the apex of history means.

If you weren't dying inside, screaming, you'd be in the back lines instead of the front lines. It's your interior history or what's going on inside that tells you what's going on. You're being loved. You are being loved so dearly. And God is caring for you. All you people on Town Meeting circuits, did you ever think during your day and night circuits to little towns and big towns, that you were being cared for? Did you realize that you were aiming those deeds at the contradictions of our time? Doing those deeds radically expended your life. Being chewed up and spit out is being loved so dearly.

A lot of people wrote letters back here. I sat down to write a letter. In fact, I started four of them but I felt what I was doing wasn't worthwhile. I didn't want to say this but I understand how it fits in. What could I write? Last night we had a stake meeting in Stake 5 and they decided to build a bridge. "Big deal, a bridge. Who cares?" I would say to myself. But it is a big deal. A real big deal that people decided to build a bridge and to do it together. One of our contradictions has to do with corporateness! At the time it was happening it seemed so insignificant. I didn't understand the profundity of that.

Profound humanness happened to those people and what they are doing is altering their environment. That is radical expenditure. When care happens, three things take place, almost as a formula. First, something happens to focus care; you turn to the contradiction and move on it; you take care of it and move on to something else. There is always a new horse to hop on, a new cloak to wear or a new assignment with new turf and new weapons. The enemy is always the same even though he wears a different face.

Profound humanness as care is finally perpetual expenditure. My care is being released on history all the time. Our corporate care is being released in history. That's what happens when you walk into this room or when you look at a map of the world. The map in our collegium room, with all the dots, says "corporate care is being released on all history" to me. It didn't say that to me before. I suspect I am putting on different glasses to see the same reality, and I am talking about humanness in a different way.

God has given me the great opportunity to participate in care and to choose responsibility. These are great times to be alive because they are care-filled times. You visit people and they want to participate. If we are smart in maneuvers, with timing and weaponry and so forth, people will choose responsibility. And profound humanness or profound care will be released.

I believe this is true because people see the demand. The world is on their back. The troops will come. Now is the time. We have a ritual that goes "These are the times; we are the people." It is a good ritual. Care allows us to love, to love everything, even our enemies. I respect the reminder that you are not cynical with your enemy but you respect him. If you find you are not loving and respecting your enemy, you are going to lose. That's not moralistic; it's just smart.

I have a story to tell you. We live 18 hours from Jakarta and every day some of us travel there for development and self-support. We work at a fancy school for the 15% of the world. It is a private international school with carpeting, air-conditioning and it's great. The children of ambassadors, corporation presidents, oil company officials and leading businessmen are there. The parents of these

children come into your office daily.

We leave the house between 5:40 and 6:00 A.M.. every day to catch the bus to Jakarta on a road that is filled with everything. It reminds me of Africa. There are geese, goats, bicycles, people and bumps on the road. In the rainy season we have difficulty getting the cars over the road because of the mud. When it floods, we literally walk through the water to the hard road which is a mile away. When we got stuck, it was not unusual to push the car. So what I would do (this is painfully funny) is wear my clothes inside out to prevent them from getting dirty. I think that's what it means to get into battle sometimes. Anyway, we'd push the car, get back in, and go to school.

When I got to school, I'd do my ritual which was turning my clothes back right, putting on my good shoes and my face. Now I see that this was a ritual to get ready to meet the enemy because I respect him or it. My colleagues and I were asked many times about what we were doing. Isabelle is the principal's wife. She's from Boston but spent a lot of time in France so you have to imagine a Boston-French accent, whatever that is. One day, Isabelle commented to me, "My, you certainly don't look like you just stepped out of a village." She went on to ask, "Kay, why do you do this? Why do you live so far out in that village? You never come to our parties and you always go to those village meetings?"

When I began permeating, I had an abstract, elusive, evasive answer to questions like this. These days, however, when people ask, I just tell them the truth. I told Isabelle, "I do this because I care. You know the future of Indonesia lies in changing the face of the villages. And I care what happens. I care about the suffering, Isabelle. Do you know that people don't have anything to eat and it's not just a few people out there? Most of Indonesia is like that." Then I said, "Isabelle, I have only one life to live -- and I don't want to spend all of it at this school. If I had to spend my whole time at this school, I'd die."

Well, she was shocked at that. I continued with, "What gives me life is doing what I am doing. Isabelle, I want to bend history. I'd like to change it! After I leave, I want it to be different. I want the blocks to be gone. I want the people to be human, more profoundly human. They're just as human as you and me, Isabelle."

By this time Isabelle was really done in. But, being the sensitive person she was, she pushed on. She said, "Well, what about pensions and things like that? What are you going to do when you retire? Do you know, Kay, there's a cholera epidemic out there and you could get it or your son could get it. And you drive so much, you are certainly going to have a wreck." Everything she said was true. You know, the enemy always tells the truth. And my only response was "Isabelle, I just care what happens."

The only thing I have to say today is that profound humanness is me. If you want to see care, it's me. I'm it. Profound humanness has happened to people in Town Meetings and Global Social Demonstrations. These are vehicles which allow it to happen. These are the vehicles which release the profound care that everybody has. And Isabelle doesn't understand that, God bless her.

I know why we're not so anxious over our assignments. It's because we know the battle is the same anywhere. There may be differences in the turf, our timing or our weapons or the face of the enemy, but finally we all know that the cruciform life looks just one way.