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JOHN W. RAWLINGS SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

**Protestant Prison Chaplaincy:
Teaching Common Theology to Mature Inmates**

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by

John J. Caudle

Lynchburg, Virginia

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Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Thesis Project Approval Sheet

Dr. Dietmar Schulze
Mentor

Dr. Jason Whitehurst
Reader

THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

John J. Caudle

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity, March 4, 2022

Mentor: Dr. Dietmar Schulze

Recent literature and studies concerning prison ministry focus more on relationships, the overarching work, and the day-to-day mission. Even then, this study acknowledges that the impact of prison chaplaincy still needs further studying. Few studies focus on Protestant chaplains' theological boundaries, maintaining diverse denominations. While attempting to understand the value of chaplaincy in the prison setting, the predominant group involved in prison ministry are Protestant prison chaplains.

Protestant prison chaplains come from a diverse background of core theological beliefs and denominationally tied doctrine. This thesis looks at the theological views of 15 Protestant prison chaplains who previously or currently serve within the governmental prison system at various levels to determine commonalities for possible discipleship programs in the prison system. This research uses a qualitative approach; it looks at inmates' different potential methods to develop their theology. The research also examines whether Protestant prison chaplains offer discipleship programs to inform the inmates of theology and some historical aspects of its use in discipleship. The study provides glimpses at the difficulties concerning theology within the framework of Protestant chaplaincy in the prison system to illustrate where commonalities and differences exist. While perceptions exist that Protestantism agrees on various theological doctrines, this thesis potentially shows that Protestantism needs further discussions to develop a solid theology even within doctrines and similar beliefs. Understanding the differences in theology will assist Protestant prison chaplains in developing discipleship for those in their care.

Keywords: Chaplain, Protestant, denominations, theology, discipleship, prison, administration

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Abbreviations

BOP	<i>Bureau of Prisons</i>
CPE	<i>Clinical Pastoral Education</i>
DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
ETA	<i>Evangelical Theological Association</i>
RFRA	<i>Religious Freedom Restoration Act</i>
RLUIPA	<i>Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act</i>
RSB	<i>Religious Services Branch</i>

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

In general, the history of chaplaincy and the work of the prison chaplain only recently received attention in academia and corrections. Before that, prison chaplaincy received little consideration and emphasis in several areas, especially prisons and jails. Sundt and Cullen point out that the prison chaplain is one group whose attitudes and influence are unexplored in research while examining prison employees.¹ Prison chaplaincy does offer much in its work as an individual practitioner within the confines of the prison wall. In and of itself, chaplaincy's evolution in its work ultimately focuses on the work's changing reality within the institution. The chaplain's role often appears to have several difficulties in and of itself.

While various researchers study the roles of chaplains, fewer studies examine the necessity and roles of prison chaplains. Glimpses inside the functions of prison chaplains during the 1800s showed that they mainly served as the moral compass, which still exists for both the staff and inmates today.² The prison chaplains serve the spiritual needs of everyone placed into their care while participating as the moral compass in critical decisions that potentially affect the welfare of staff and inmates. Yet, few investigations have developed beyond particular perspectives that are only observable through a specific form of a political movement. Before the 1870s, as a prison chaplain, practices involved the prisoner's reformation and the removal of

¹ Jody L. Sundt and Francis T. Cullen. "The Correctional Ideology of Chaplains: A National Survey," *Journal of Criminal Justice* 30 (October 2002): 370.

² Hosea Quinby, *The Prison Chaplaincy, and Its Experiences*. (Dover, NH: Morning Star Steam Print Job Printing House, 1873), 63.

denominational barriers in offering services to the inmates.³ The reformation that chaplains contributed in multiple articles did not explain reformatory practices. Several studies alluded to the Bible study and lifestyle changes as a part of the improvement. The realities of working as a chaplain within the government historically revolved more around politics than servanthood and calling. Quinby noted later in his book that his neighbors thought that someone else should run for the prison chaplain's office, showing that serving as a chaplain was not necessarily out of calling but from a political appointment. Even in its appearance, those involved in the prison ministry offer a few forms of spiritual solace to those incarcerated. The need to study a few of those who served as chaplains, in general, and Protestant prison chaplains in particular, needs additional review and study from their lives, writings, and views in working as a chaplain to the incarcerated.

The difficulty lies in chaplaincy's governmental role and adherence to its affiliation with their beliefs. As Jason Byassee writes concerning the chaplains, "[W]hat is its (chaplain's) ecclesiology?"⁴ Perhaps, a better and more direct question one needs to look at is "What is the prison chaplain's theology?" From a personal viewpoint, the selection process for military chaplains operates through the needs of those who serve in the military by attempting to note the religious needs of those serving and offering a similar percentage of the denominations to the service. Basic requirements of education and experience for both federal and military chaplains to enter into service are in various ways the same. State, hospital, corporate, and sports chaplains' education and experience vary. Most agencies and organizations require formal

³ Hosea Quinby, *The Prison Chaplaincy, and Its Experiences*, 63

⁴ Jason Byassee, "On Media: A Chaplain's Place." *Christian Century* (December 23, 2015): 43.

education and licensure/ordination by a recognized religious body. Certain agencies, companies, or corporations can require additional training as part of the position.

Background of Prison Chaplaincy

Regardless of one's viewpoint on incarceration conditions, the United States makes up just 5% of the world's population but houses 25% of its prison population.⁵ Peter Enns focuses on the reality that the United States has a higher incarceration rate than any other country and an incarceration budget twice as high as any other civilized country.⁶ Those with the calling of prison chaplaincy and volunteering within prison ministry cite Matthew 25:36 (NLT)⁷, "I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me." Whether this verse alludes to such a calling may serve as a matter for future theological debate and discussion.

Several prison chaplains would suggest that Paul ministered and presented the Gospel message in prison, thus justifying their prison work. A part of Acts focused on Paul's ministry, including his prison epistles, as outlined in Scripture such as Acts 28:30-31. Though the chaplaincy work origins have vague connotations, James Beckford and Sophie Galliat note that the Latin word 'Capela' means "cloak."⁸ The imagery of serving as the "keeper of the cloak" echoes for those working in the chaplaincy. Another imagery of chaplaincy comes from the

⁵ Douglas B. Weiss & Doris L. MacKenzie. "A Global Perspective on Incarceration: How an International Focus Can Help the United States Reconsider Its Incarceration Rates." *Victim & Offenders*: 5, no. 3 (June 21, 2010). 268.

⁶ Peter K. Enns, *Incarceration Nation: How the United States Became the Most Punitive Democracy in the World*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2016), 4-5.

⁷ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the *New International Version*, (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan, 2016).

⁸ James A. Beckford and Sophie Galliat, *Religion in Prison: Equal Rites in a Multi-faith Society*. (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 25.

United States Air Force, which looks at those who serve in that position while serving to project themselves as a “visible reminder of the holy.”⁹ Whatever imagery a prison chaplain offers to the inmate regarding the spiritual can also stretch to others, including staff, the local community, and local churches.

Whatever the case, those in need view chaplains as the connection between the spiritual and the current place one is in at that moment in time. Regarding the incarcerated, Sarah Dunlop writes that chaplaincy also served as a means of “including people in the church who were unable to attend; chaplaincy remains a valuable spiritual resource within traditional settings, such as the military, prisons, and hospitals.”¹⁰ For chaplains, the focus remains on working with others and facilitating their religious practices while serving in a pluralistic environment that honors their traditions and is faithful to their faith. In prison historical settings, the discussion revolves around providing pastoral care to those imprisoned while remaining vigilant to the security needs of the institution.

Prison chaplains serve in multiple roles throughout the concourse of prisons. While prison chaplains are often associated with the federal and state government institutions, they also work closely with those incarcerated, even at the private facilities, along with county and city jails. While chaplaincy involves multiple layers, its difficulty lies with its most authentic sense of the definition. For the most part, chaplaincy’s predominant movement constantly shifts because of prison work’s shifting ideology. While Gibson interviewed Manuel Cordero, he described

⁹ Air Force Instructions 52-101. May 10, 2005. *Chaplain: Planning and Organizing*. Prepared by the United States Air Force. Washington, D.C. Bolling AFB, 2.

¹⁰ Sarah Dunlop, “Is ‘Being There’ Enough? Explorations of Incarnational Missiology with Chaplains,” *Practical Theology* 10, no. 2 (May 2017): 175.

chaplaincy as “spiritual representative(s) in a secular institution.”¹¹ The overarching reality focuses more on how chaplains do not proselytize within the correctional environment but only in their services and one-on-one with individual inmates. As Dunlop notes, one of the tensions most chaplains face is the prevention of proselytizing, either as explicitly advised by their public sector organization or through their implicit understanding of their role.¹² The policies developed by the federal, state, and local government entities address these specific issues, including proselytizing and allowances permitted by the minister to the flock.

Additionally, Manuel Cordero, former regional chaplain for the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), affirms that chaplains will conduct services of their faith group and conduct a service or facilitate services of another faith.¹³ Cordero points out that he believes that theologically can perform such measures if one is secured.¹⁴ Being a prison chaplain involves similar expressions of pastoral care that one finds in the church today. The duties of chaplaincy parallel several of those found within the context of the church and its administration. Prison chaplains face the realities of countless difficulties that differentiate them from other chaplains and those involved in ministries outside of the prison itself. While several volunteers offer programs to prisoners from the outside, full-time ministerial involvements come directly from the chaplain.

Several prison chaplains operate in multiple chaplaincy roles within the prison system. A few serve as hospice chaplains, hospital chaplains, or even teachers. Others inherit positions, such as Volunteer Coordinator. They can also represent and minister when critical incidents

¹¹ Grace Gibson, “Inside These Walls: Manuel Cordero, Retired Correctional Chaplain Talks about His Career.” *Corrections Today*. (July/August 2017): 67.

¹² Sarah Dunlop, “Is ‘Being There’ Enough?” 177.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 68.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

happen to inmates and staff in the institution. Jody Sundt and Francis Cullen serve as administrators and coordinators of religious services and volunteers; ministers and spiritual guides; chaplains are ombudsmen, pastoral counselors, educators, and community liaisons.¹⁵

For those incarcerated, the Chapel itself represents a haven. According to Jonathan Benthall, the chaplain and Chapel serves as a refuge for inmates. Benthall looks at the sanctuary and its keeper as “a taste of sweetness and symbolic richness of the outside civilized world in a system that strips the prisoners of their identity.”¹⁶ However, even more critical, the chaplain reflects the reality that they can provide comfort and safety within prison confines. Former state chaplain Judith Coleman noted that professional chaplains are God’s partners in touching hearts and bringing inner change.¹⁷

Chaplaincy carries several of the same duties as a congregational pastor. Some similar responsibilities include pastoral counseling, religious teaching and preaching, performing funeral and memorial services, and even giving death notices.¹⁸ The chaplaincy extension often revolves around the differences between the parishioner and chaplain and those found in the typical church setting. Even though the ministry characterizations change from point to point, certain areas are exclusive to prison chaplaincy. Sundt and Cullen write that prison chaplains have more responsibility, including counseling and helping inmate families, facilitating adjustment to

¹⁵ Jody L. Sundt and Francis T. Cullen, “Doing God’s Work Behind Bars: Chaplains’ Reactions to Employment in Prison.” *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation* 45, no. 3-4 (September 2007): 132.

¹⁶ Jonathan Benthall, “The World of the Prison Chaplain.” *New Society*. (August 14, 1980): 322.

¹⁷ Judith Coleman, “Chaplains: God’s Partners in Prison.” *Corrections Today*. (December 2003): 122.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 123.

prison, helping inmates make plans for their release, and providing religious and general education.¹⁹

The most significant similarity between the two roles involves transforming those ministers during their workday. Reverend Charles Riggs, former BOP chief of chaplains, saw himself as an agent of change who believes that he cannot fulfill his role if he tells inmates they do not measure up morally. The overarching move for chaplains looks beyond just the crime to reach the sin-marred person. Mary Dallao also points out that Christ “did not judge them for their crimes, but loved them despite their failings.”²⁰ The process focuses on the reality of providing hope and restoration rather than hopelessness, along with guilt and shame.

While those are similarities, a stark contrast between the ministries does exist. Phillips notes, “Pastoral care is variegated, incoherent, and fragmented, both in practice and theory.”²¹ Chaplains provide multiple forms of ministry within the confines of the facility. In addition to the potential of serving in the works of hospital and hospice forms of chaplaincy, prison chaplains often serve as a facilitator for multiple faiths. They serve as a conduit between management and the inmates themselves. Additionally, chaplains serve as the pastor to those who sit on death row and minister to those who will ultimately face death through incarceration or the death penalty.

In chaplaincy, recognizing one’s life’s brokenness often revolves around the life they did or did not have before incarceration. Allison Booker and Helen Dearnley reflect that the

¹⁹ Jody L. Sundt and Francis T. Cullen. “The Correctional Ideology of Prison Chaplains.” 373.

²⁰ Mary Dallao, “Chaplains Aren’t “Managers of the Universe.” (Best in the Business). *Corrections Today*. 58 no. 3 (June 1996): 82.

²¹ Peter Phillips. “Roles and Identities of Anglican Chaplain: A Prison Ethnography.” (Ph.D thesis, Cardiff University, 2013), 34.

individual's identity is 'deformed' upon imprisonment, and they are no longer what they were in character.²² Labels challenge the individual, believing or living those labels out while incarcerated and even in release. Several attempts to absolve the tags include changing the wording that reflectively acknowledges their incarceration but then moving away from incarcerated label to one that looks closer to suggest their current status, such as reentrant. For the Protestant prison chaplain, the deformation offers hope, not because of the reality that one's identity disappeared because of incarceration, but that a new character comes from Christ, which transforms any old identity or reduction thereof.

Ministry Context

Prison chaplaincy does offer much in the way of work. In and of itself, the evolution of chaplaincy rotates on the work's reality within the institution. The chaplain's role often appears to have difficulties in and of itself. Glimpses of the 1800's prison chaplain showed that they served as the moral compass that still exists today. The prison chaplains serve the spiritual needs of everyone placed into their care.²³ The difficulty lies in chaplaincy's governmental role and adherence to its affiliation with their beliefs.

Chaplains, in general, often can articulate within the framework of their own beliefs and perceptions. From a denominational perspective, each chaplain succeeds in agreeing with the ministerial role since they are, in some form, endorsed as a minister to perform a particular set of rituals within the framework. While a prison chaplain often comes with a denomination defines well, prison chaplaincy has more challenges. Chaplaincy still needs more research, as

²² Alison Booker and Helen Dearnley, "Faith and Identity in Prison," In *Religion, Faith and Crime: Theories, Identities and Issues*, Edited by Kim Sadique and Perry Stanislas (London, UK: MacMillan Publishers, 2016), 355.

²³ Jason Byassee, "On Media." 43.

scholarship has little on the job of a prison chaplain. In their early works looking at the chaplaincy, Sundt and Cullen acknowledge that any mention of chaplains remains unstudied by students of penology, with just passing and peripheral treatment of the topic.²⁴ In later writings, Sundt and Cullen point out that chaplains are one group whose attitudes do not receive any attention even in looking at prison employees.²⁵

The chaplain's involvement in the ministry does not only affect those incarcerated but also involves staff. According to Brown, chaplaincy commits its profession to serving the needs of those imprisoned, staff, and religious traditions by engaging all human experiences.²⁶ In the United States, situations vary between the multiple prison elements at the varying prison ministry levels. Unlike the United Kingdom and other countries, the United States' formation revolves around the Constitution and the ideals of "freedom of religion."

Still, understanding religion's freedom creates a dilemma that requires professionally staffed personnel representing the faith to come forward and assist in the overarching movement to facilitate such a request. The chaplain's imagery focuses on each minister's activity to provide expertise in other religious sects' accompaniment. The Constitution and Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act (RLUIPA) created a new formation and direction that a prison chaplain inherited from this law.

Reality focuses on balancing what the government permits and the Constitution. Also, it looks at balancing the safety and security of the institution. RLUIPA attempted to balance the difficulties of penology and the law. According to Ronald Turner, the purpose of RLUIPA was

²⁴ Jody L. Sundt and Francis T. Cullen. "The Role of the Contemporary Prison Chaplain in Rehabilitation." *Journal of Offender Rehabilitation*. 45 no. 3 (2007): 271.

²⁵ Jody L. Sundt and Francis T. Cullen. "The Correctional Ideology of Prison Chaplains." 370.

²⁶ Mary Brown, *Confession of a Prison Chaplain*. (East Sussex, UK: Waterside Press, 2014), 23.

to go back to the compelling government interest standard found in the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA).²⁷ RFRA's original intent was to return to the framers' belief of the Constitution while also removing the substantial burden of proof.²⁸ The overarching framework focused on religious freedom, establishing this foundation for those in the community and those who currently serve sentences.

Since the law of the land adds to chaplaincy duties, other duties also increased the chaplain's workload. The rehabilitative nature of prison work creates an additional workload for the chaplain, and they often work with clergy from the outside to meet the institution's extra demands. As noted by Coleman, difficulties ensue because so much conflict exists in the data presented. In her dissertation, she points out that the evaluation of the Inner Faith Initiative, operated by Prison Fellowship, showed that the organization did not reduce recidivism on the one hand. On the other hand, it does minimize recidivism compared to comparison groups (involving CBT and REBT programs), according to Sylvia Coleman.²⁹ Working with such data creates problems because of manipulation for or against particular programs. According to Rachelle Graham, the faith-based program is generously accepted not necessarily because of their religiosity but because they are inexpensive costs and use of chaplains and local clergy.³⁰

Even though the chaplaincy allows the person to participate within the formats of their religious practices, the chaplain must remain aware of the other faith groups within the

²⁷ Ronald G. Turner, "Religion in Prison: An Analysis of the Impact of Religiousness/Spirituality on Behavior, Health, and Well-Being Among Male and Female Prison Inmates in Tennessee" (PhD diss, Tennessee State University, 2008), 8.

²⁸ Turner., Religion in Prison." 8.

²⁹ Sylvia Coleman, "Prison Ministry: A Closer Look at Clergy's Beliefs of Correctional Rehabilitation," (PhD diss., Cappella University, 2013), 16.

³⁰ Rachelle Doreece Graham, "The Role of Religiosity and Faith-Based Program in Helping Inmates Cope with Incarceration," (MS thesis, Mississippi State University, 2006), 11.

institution, to include their holy observances and practices. The chaplain must spend time working within the context of ensuring that these practices meet the requirement of safety and security for the institution while at the same time balancing the demands based on the law and Constitution.³¹ A Protestant prison chaplain must remain aware of their bias when interacting with inmates, including those within their faith group. Protestant chaplains have their own theological beliefs but must maintain a sense of neutrality in the Protestant realm because of the diversified beliefs in the Protestant context of faith. Some doctrines are controversial in Protestant practices, and Protestant prison chaplains need to stay aware of them.

Even though prison chaplains appear in multiple institutions, several of the problems that exist for the chaplain occur unilaterally at all levels. Several of these aspects, the laws and even religious practices of each faith, are inherently similar. The similarities of practices within the faith group often unify the chaplain's duties in all aspects of their responsibilities without removing their theology or beliefs. Aaron Mobley noted that chaplaincy's realities involve more than just "the expectations or the structure of a particular practice that one assumes in the ministry. Instead, the chaplains epitomize the discernments and oracles of God. They must afford wisdom, compassion, and spiritual guidance to their faith's affiliates, be it a little flock or a substantial congregation."³²

Problem Presented

This project will look at the various issues within prison chaplaincy, including its own identity; this project focuses on working around the multiple theologies and apologetic points

³¹ Graham, "The Role of Religiosity and Faith-Based Program," 7-8.

³² Aaron Mobley, "A Manual for An Evangelical State Prison Chaplaincy," (DMin thesis, Liberty University School of Divinity, 2016), 1.

between chaplains, identified as Protestant chaplains, in a pluralistic environment. The Protestant chaplain is any Christian group outside Roman Catholicism and Christian Orthodox in most prison locations. Certain groups such as Jehovah's Witnesses, Christian Scientists, and the Church of Latter-Day Saints are part of Protestantism, even though various Protestant faiths recognize them as cults. As Borderud notes, Mormons do not consider themselves historically Protestant. Yet, the government routinely regards Protestants and expects them to participate in chapel services or religious education with other Protestant chaplains.³³ In exploring cults, Rhodes explores several religious groups, including Mormonism and Jehovah's Witness, and the rationale as to why one may traditionally hold them as cults rather than as Christian.³⁴

A significant problem for chaplains within the Protestant faith group is narrowing the theology chaplains should offer in a generic setting that benefits all Protestant faith groups. Prison chaplains work in government and personal settings serving as the subject matter expert on religious accommodations for faith groups while representing their specific faith group. They also attend to the spiritual needs of their imprisoned congregants.

The role of chaplains in the prison environment receives attention in academia.³⁵ Still, the study of identity, functions, and multiple other pieces within that context needs more review. Even within other arenas of chaplaincy, identity offers difficulties. Baroody noted that healthcare chaplains have difficulty maintaining their faith identity when science tempts them with its

³³ Scott R. Boudierud. *Introduction: The Attraction of Chaplain Ministry*. Retrieved from <http://isme.tamu.edu/ISME07/Borderud07.html>. accessed December 29, 2021.

³⁴ Ron Rhodes. *The Challenge of the Cults and New Religions: The Essential Guide to Their History, Their Doctrine, and Our Response*. (Grand Rapid, MI: Zondervan, 2001).

³⁵ Allison Marie Hicks, "Prison Chaplains: Heart in the Darkness," (B.A. thesis, Pacific Lutheran University, 2003), 13.

version of faith when looking at Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE).³⁶ In most United States areas, institutional Christianity breaks down into two predominant groups, Roman Catholic and Protestants. The third and sometimes fourth aspect of Christianity breakdown can include “Christian-Other” groups and Orthodox. Protestant Christian chaplains address more of a diverse group because of the label “Protestants,” which encompasses a milieu of denominational beliefs. As inherent, chaplains represent their denominations and reflect their faith groups in theology and apologetics.

Christian chaplains compete with other chaplains, including those labeled as Protestant chaplains. Chaplains must admit that competition exists because of likability among congregational participants, institutional connections, denominational accountability, and promotions. While chaplains receive training from the organization whose primary role serves to protect the religious freedoms that exist for all within the institution, chaplains represent a distinction found in their faith group that also brings in their denominational imperatives. In quoting Murton, Sundt, and Cullen, prison ministers' problems focus on recognizing but not crossing the vagueness between the biblical mandate of service and performing their duties dictated by prison officials.³⁷

Theological implications create issues as denominations hold that positions are heretical, and even more, certain things within a believer's life must occur for salvation to occur. The how of salvation for believers differs between the theological camps. It remains a topic of discussion concerning the different elements of the *ordo salutis*. Whether intentional or unintentional, competition exists because of each other's views on Scripture, televangelism, reading materials,

³⁶ Joe Baroody. Should Clinical Pastoral Education and Professional Chaplaincy Become More Scientific? It's a Matter of Salt. *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 12 no. 1-2 (February 2008): 8-9.

³⁷ Jody L. Sundt and Francis T. Cullen, “Doing God's Work Behind Bars,” 133.

and the various volunteers and volunteer groups entering the prison. Several inmates choose their theological and apologetic views because of outside ministries but cannot articulate the realities of history and truth within those theologies and apologetic beliefs. The movement of accepting confuses others with weak or heretical theology and apologetics. For chaplains, the continual struggles of balancing the professional expectations of the chaplain's duties and restrictions imposed due to security issues.³⁸

Prison creates demands for the chaplain. It must meet the supervision demands of observing multiple religious groups throughout the day while providing counsel, rounds in units, informing inmates of deaths, and other tasks. Sometimes, while dealing with chaplaincy's busyness, theology and apologetic methods move away from the pastor's priorities. Chaplains need to develop, nurture, and thoroughly explain the Christian faith's dynamics and excitement behind the walls, even when working within the framework. The problem is that Protestant chaplains need to articulate the fundamental Christian beliefs, theology, and apologetics to the inmates to show a unified front to better the Christian message. Pattison noted that the words "chaplaincy" and "theology" often do not easily hang together these days.³⁹ Why has this area not received any studies if that remains true?

Purpose Statement

This Doctor of Ministry study aims to determine whether agreements can occur between Protestant chaplains serving in prison settings on theology. The research will focus on those who currently or formerly served in Protestant prison chaplains as an agent of governmental prisons.

³⁸ James A. Beckford, "Religious Diversity in Prisons: Chaplaincy and Contention." *Studies in Religion*. 42 no. 2 (June, 2013): 197.

³⁹ Stephen Pattison, "Chaplaincy as Public Theology: A Reflective Exploration," *Health and Social Care Chaplaincy*. 3 no. 2 (November 2015): 111.

The study looks at federal prison chaplains who have served in multiple locations throughout the United States. This author served in the federal government as a Protestant prison chaplain and knows chaplains who currently or previously worked in the role. It does prove more difficult within the states as there are 50 states and numerous county and municipal jails. While reaching out to these prisons would take a little time, the more incredible difficulty focuses on which jails and prisons have Protestant prison chaplains located in the approximately 3,100 jails and prisons in the United States.⁴⁰

Within the framework of the Bureau of Prisons for the federal government, the overarching practices of chaplaincy fall into three roles:

- 1) Pastor-as-prophet
- 2) Pastor-as-community liaison
- 3) Pastor-as-manager of cultural diversity⁴¹

Several inmates enter the prison setting with little or no understanding of a spiritual or religious upbringing from a personal perspective.⁴² They receive their first exposure in the faith from various entities outside of the chaplain. The outside ministries can include volunteers who conduct Bible studies and conferences, ministers who enter the facility for services, television, other inmates, and even correctional staff.

Once a week, bi-weekly, or even monthly encounters do not necessarily build up a theology that inmates take and utilize for their life. The theology might cause new inmates to

⁴⁰ American Jail Association. *Jail Statistics: Just how Many*. Retrieved from <https://www.americanjail.org/jail-statistics>. Accessed on January 2, 2022.

⁴¹ Beckford and Galliat. *Religion in Prison*. 176.

⁴² This author currently serves in prison ministry and throughout regularly engaged inmates on this topic. Many of the inmates engaged suggested that even if they were in the church, they did not pay attention and did not know anything of the faith until they entered into prison.

struggle with their newfound faith if not articulated or rightly understood. Newfound believers get exposure to belief and theology from various sources, including televangelists and preachers. Genuine concern for the inmate needs addressing so that each believer has a proper foundation and understanding of theology and Scripture. A few inmates will lose faith before entering the chaplain's care because they cannot defend or articulate a theology from personal observation. Others may later convert to Islam or other beliefs. As noted in Scripture, one must "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves." (Matt 7:15, NASB). Even if most Protestant chaplains are willing to develop and teach new believers, the real question focuses more on the approach and outreach. This reality needs to happen to ensure that recognizing the fundamentals of faith develops a viewpoint that most chaplains can agree upon in general.

The crux of pastoral leadership centers around deepening and maturing believers into the faith. Kafinas, while looking at the healthcare chaplaincy by the European Network, points out that one crucial matter focused on safeguarding the "professionalism" of the spiritual healthcare provider.⁴³ The Protestant prison chaplain's focus needs to develop and deepen the inmates' theology under their care. Overall, the church needs to return to Scripture and boldly proclaim the Gospel message. Dynamics do happen in prison when exposed to maturing theology. When properly applied and developed, theology can assist in the safety and security of the institution.

Chaplains and volunteers can help contribute to the development of theological understanding so that inmates can gather within the *ecclesia* and counter the culture existing in prison. If correctly applied, theology develops believers who desire to serve Christ. As noted by Jericho ministries, inmates have problems that they need encouragement to live out and share

⁴³ Stavros Kafinas, "Chaplaincy in Europe," *Southern Medical Journal*. 99 no. 6 (June, 2006): 673.

their faith with others. “Through Bible study and discipleship training, we (the Jericho Ministries) enable them to develop a Christian lifestyle for the harsh setting of the prison environment.”⁴⁴

Basic Assumptions

Anonymity creates the ability for chaplains to engage freely in any dialogue since they who serve in the chaplaincy are government agents. The continued tensions between the separation of church and state and the Constitutional issue focus on religious freedom and its importance to each person. The continued tensions often lead to court battles over separation powers involving the church and state. This tension happens because of ongoing movements by others wanting stricter separations and removing chaplains from services at all government levels. While these implications usually involve military chaplaincy, fears exist that it will extend to other chaplaincies where the government serves as the employer.⁴⁵ As noted, even though a continued tension exists in the separation, the Supreme Court must find a way to acknowledge, over and over again, as Justice Douglas did in 1952, that “we are a religious people.”⁴⁶

Another assumption focuses more on the full diversity of participants involved in the prison ministry, creating a more robust theological stream of input. A more robust and diverse Protestant chaplaincy core exists at multiple levels and within the prison framework. This study assumes that while looking at numerous chaplains in various denominations, a greater hope

⁴⁴ Charles Atkins Jr., “The Path of the Logos: The Relevance of the Practice of Bible Study in an American Prison.” (Th.D. thesis, University of Montreal, 2018): 29.

⁴⁵ Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence: Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, and the Law*. (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), 28.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 139.

focuses on a more diverse denominational grouping to give the entire chaplaincy program a more varied and proper perspective.

Governmental chaplaincy creates additional focuses that all prison chaplains want to reflect God's representation from the perspective of their faith when entering into the institution to perform duties. Chaplains have multiple vocations upon prison entry to realize that specific topics must remain off-limits. While correctional departments state that religion is an off-limit topic, it is incumbent on the chaplain to stay vigilant to their duties and faith group (not necessarily their denomination) during the execution of their duties.

Definitions

Protestant - a member or follower of any of the Western Christian churches that are separate from the Roman Catholic Church and follow the principles of the Reformation, including the Baptist, Presbyterian, and Lutheran churches.⁴⁷

RFRA - Prohibits any agency, department, or official of the United States or any State (the government) from substantially burdening a person's exercise of religion even if the burden results from a rule of general applicability, except that the government may burden a person's exercise of religion only if it demonstrates that application of the burden to the person: (1) furthers a compelling governmental interest; and (2) is the least restrictive means of furthering that compelling governmental interest.⁴⁸

RLUIPA - No government shall impose or implement a land use regulation in a manner that imposes a substantial burden on the religious exercise of a person, including a religious assembly or institution unless the government demonstrates that imposition of the burden on that person, assembly, or institution unless it is in furtherance of a compelling governmental interest, and is the least restrictive means of furthering that

⁴⁷ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. "Protestant" accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/protestant>.

⁴⁸ H. R. 1308 – 103rd Congress (1993-1994): Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. Congress.gov, Library of Congress, 16 November 1993, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/103rd-congress/house-bill/1308>.

compelling governmental interest.⁴⁹ RLUIPA applies to prison and land use cases.

Theology - the study of the nature of God and religious belief.⁵⁰ As noted by Livingston and Cross in defining “theology (Gk. θεολογία), literally the ‘science of God.’ Among the Greek Fathers, it comes to have two specific references: it can denote either the doctrine of the *Trinity (i.e., of God’s being, as opposed to his dealings with the created order), or it can mean prayer (as it is only in prayer that God is truly known).⁵¹

Limitations

Looking at methods of contacting chaplains at various levels can prove challenging. Governmental agencies have a central authority, which usually has a chaplain overseeing the institutions’ programs. Even though one can contact the chaplain that oversees the chaplaincy programs in each state, it does not necessarily guarantee that they allow their chaplains to engage in the process. The number of chaplains also varies at various locations. Trying to reach out to local areas of (large) city and county governments to conduct this survey creates further blockades. Such blockades include contacting chaplains via email and other media, as several are part-time volunteers. Further, the attempts to determine which institutions have chaplains may prove burdensome and difficult to navigate.

Another difficulty focuses on the reality that chaplaincy moves from its original theological roots to a center point in their ministry. Chaplains recognize that the theology that they bring to the table changes over time. Because of the shift, theology and apologetics

⁴⁹ 42 U.S. Code § 2000cc. Public Law 106-274: Protection of land use as religious exercise. <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/42/chapter-21C>.

⁵⁰ Oxford English Dictionary, s.v. “theology” accessed January 30, 2022, <https://www.lexico.com/en/definition/theology>.

⁵¹ F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 1616.

variations also occur. According to Hansen, “Ecumenically minded chaplains are less likely to be distracted by theological bickering.”⁵² Nevertheless, that can also show difficulties that do exist within chaplaincy. Sometimes, the chaplain recognizes the need to shift to work with the inmates where they are while at the same time discussing views that bring out their theology more on a personal end and level. Certain chaplains agree on specific issues that might create tensions with other chaplains from within their faith group. A more serious difficulty that needs additional and lengthy study focuses on the shift of chaplains in their theology or their willingness to set certain theology limitations.

Chaplains recognize the importance of their ministry and the ministry of others. The daunting work could prevent them from participating in such practices and fully developing a more conducive theological and apologetic proposition. They are passionate about ministry; chaplains want to separate themselves from ministry once they leave their jobs for the day. Several in corrections teach to “leave the job” when they complete their work for the day. Others prefer to retreat to their theological roots, which may differ from the identity they display at work.

An assumption that needs further development focuses on those inmates who identify as Protestant in their theological practice and understanding apologetics. While theological development occurs at multiple points in one’s life, its tenants may involve televangelism and outside volunteers. Even others reinvigorate faith orientation; they abandoned it before their incarceration. Other inmates also develop their theology from other inmates because of their charismatic influence. Others spend time reading Scripture and studying theology through

⁵² Kim Philip Hansen, *Military Chaplains and Religious Diversity*. (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012): 165.

colleges, going with individual institutions because of the affordability. Several institutions have Bible colleges developed and led by multiple ministers and college professors. Such groups and seminaries include New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, which instituted a program in Angola Prison, and the State Correctional Institution in Muncy, PA, which formed the Evangelical Training Association's Bible Institute.⁵³ A few institutions have laypersons that develop similar material to affect the inmates' theology and apologetics. Even former inmates, such as Charles Colson, can effectively influence the theological tenants of the inmates. As a result, doctrines can range from the more liturgical points (Episcopal) to Pentecostal (Church of God, or Assemblies of God) for those who identify as a Protestant prison chaplain in the services of the states and federal government.

Like several of the others identified, chaplains also influence the theology of those imprisoned. Chaplains must remain aware that they have more contact than any other clergies with the inmates. Because of the sermons preached, Bible studies taught, and even counseling offered, theological beliefs create opportunities to further develop the inmate's theology. Chaplains must articulate sound principles of theology during their encounters, embracing and believing in the truths. Just like pastors, the influence of a chaplain can provide positive or negative points in their interactions.

An additional factor that was unforeseeable was the pandemic that affected this country and the world for the past two years. Because of the pandemic, potential candidates may not participate due to the COVID-19 restrictions that are in place and other issues that have transpired; In contrast, the limits imposed by COVID-19 rules and regulations are fully

⁵³ Michael Hallett, Bryon Johnson, Joshua Hays, Sung Joon Jang, & Grant Duwe. "U.S. Prison Seminaries: Structural Charity, Religious Establishment, and Neoliberal Corrections." *The Prison Journal*, 99 no. 2, (March 2019): 1

understood, it did impact many chaplains because of the lockdowns that occurred in the facility. Since the COVID-19 restrictions remained in play throughout this research, the number of chaplains participating in this survey may diminish.

Delimitations

There are several self-imposed constraints for this project. First, while multiple clergy members participate in various formats (Bible studies, services, and counseling) within prison ministry, this focuses strictly on those who serve in the hired role of chaplaincy in the prison ministry. While organizations use volunteer chaplains, it may prove challenging to determine the chaplains' vetting process in entering the facility. Due to these challenges, current COVID-19 restrictions affect multiple facilities. This identification demonstrates the difficulty of identifying and selecting chaplains to participate in this research.⁵⁴ For the most part, chaplains recognized for this thesis are contractual or full-time as most prisons. COVID-19 have restricted many volunteers, to include those who offer their services as chaplains, from their facilities.

An additional delimitation does not examine the theology of those incarcerated and identify as Protestant. This thesis will not question their development and current theological premise. Lastly, whether transformation versus rehabilitation successes occurs with chaplaincy-led programs has no bearing on examining the report. While this project discusses aspects to understand the chaplains' beliefs regarding their duties, this thesis cannot spend too much time focusing on the transformation or rehabilitative programs that the chaplains may offer within the institution's confines.

⁵⁴ Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, "COVID-19 and the Department of Corrections." 2020. accessed on October 17, 2020, <https://www.cor.pa.gov/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>.

As with any research, biases happen if one does not recognize that possibility. This researcher does serve as a prison chaplain and a current supervisor in prison chaplaincy. Parts of this research may become unwitting “recruit” certain chaplains for this project, but the attempt focuses more on recruiting persons that currently or previously served in prison ministry.

Data derived comes from the ten-plus years of involvement in prison ministry based on multiple institutions. Prison chaplains can recognize the different forums discussed in this thesis but still have a different theological premise each belief in when working with inmates. Much of the background and general information concerning worship and the chaplains come from them, and one cannot alter that data. Most ministers do have a set focus on the theology that they bring in teaching new believers (even if it comes from their denomination). This thesis looks at all potential variables because of the topic and limited access to city, county, state, and federal roles for chaplains. The difficulty in accessing such practices forces a more profound study in the number of prisons within the United States and those employed as Protestant prison chaplains.

Thesis Statement

The purpose is to look at the Protestant prison chaplains' differences from their various denominational theology themes to determine if they can return to a cohesive structure and practice within the Protestant faith. In that case, a coherent and healthier ministry will develop for prisoners to mature and transform them into the likeness of Christ.

CHAPTER 2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Literature Review

Chaplains develop multiple skill sets since the examination of chaplaincy involves many points, especially those acting on behalf of a governmental agency. The chaplaincy's role in the various realms remains an essential topic because administrators and others are unsure of their functions outside of religion. The pluralistic and diversification of prison ministry revolves around leading and providing services and guidance to inmates incarcerated at the institutions. Maussen writes "that faith-based civil society organizations are an essential aspect of a "free society," that society is inherently pluralistic, that liberal or secular organization should not be privileged or disadvantaged over religious ones, and, finally, that "neutrality" of the state implies the government acts in an even-handed way towards all different denominations."⁵⁵ Protestant Chaplains come from multiple denominational backgrounds and convey the message of Jesus Christ from their faith traditions. The predominant literature on prison chaplaincy examines it in various roles to define roles and expectations better. While arriving at the needs of chaplaincy, it continues evolving because of the lack of research conducted concerning chaplaincy overall. Most research recognition often looks more at apparent chaplaincy issues rather than getting involved in the intricacies.

Arriving at the chaplaincy roles on the technical side looks at the various roles chaplains perform and the environment. Some research automatically concludes based on their part; specific criteria exist for the position. Flannelly, Galek, Bucchino, Handzo, and Tannenbaum

⁵⁵ Marcel Maussen. "Religious Governance in the Netherlands: Associative Freedoms and Non-discrimination After Pillarization. The example of faith-based schools." *Geopolitics, History, and International Relations* 6 no. 2 (October 2014): 42.

noted that chaplains write concerning their roles and experiences as part of the team.⁵⁶ While chaplaincy does have points of similarity in their various roles, they do differ. Further, chaplains' functions are similar to their counterparts in church ministry. On many levels, one can integrate the parts of chaplaincy. Prison chaplaincy does share many functions and lacks integration elsewhere. Even though there are multiple points for prison chaplaincy, the four examined come from numerous journal articles, books, and dissertations that discussed prison chaplaincy. For the literature review, the chaplaincy role includes how the government influences their positions, the shedding of the denominational cloth, the vocational role and identity of prison chaplaincy, and the chaplaincy's social change agent role. The functions that are not discussed and need clarification and examination involve theology.

Governmental Roles

In the United States, the prison chaplains fall under employment fashion from the government entity.⁵⁷ Private prisons were directly responsible for employing them through contracts, usually the state and federal government. Winnifred Sullivan shows that the Christians ultimately made pastoral care a government instrument throughout the Middle Ages.⁵⁸ The governmental aspect of the role does not necessarily mean that the United States created chaplaincy. Still, establishing the chaplaincy concept in its various parts began in the Middle Age. The governmental influence focused on the clergy's allegiance in the early church. As a

⁵⁶ Kevin J. Flannelly, Kathleen Galek, John Bucchino, George F Handzo, and Helen P Tannenbaum. "Department Directors' Perceptions of the Roles and Functions of Hospital Chaplains: A National Survey." *Hospital Topics* 83, no. 4 (Fall 2005): 22.

⁵⁷ Hicks, "Prison Chaplain." 1.

⁵⁸ Sullivan, *A Ministry of Presence*. 20.

result, governmental powers started to create the role in which the spiritual care of the individual, no matter the circumstances, was provided care and continued into the present day.

The influence of prison chaplaincy has a rich history as penal practice religion is a significant force shaping how offenders deal with both in and outside of the prison. The record reminds the chaplains' work overall within the institution's framework. In the eighteenth century, Sullivan points out that the Church of England provided priests and ministers of various denominations to reform the chaotic prisons.⁵⁹ The reflection of prison chaplains in the government role focuses more on balancing the governmental needs for the freedoms required by the United States Constitution and the chaplains' religious beliefs. As noted by John Palmer in citing the Constitution, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof. . . ."⁶⁰ The tension of the Constitution does play into how prison chaplains operate within the prison system. As Palmer later notes, contradictions and difficulties exist between the clauses between the United States Congress and the prison system and the different application to prisoners of the correctional system."⁶¹

While several authors discussed the Constitution's framework, Stephen Hall expounds on the Constitution's difficulties by pointing to hiring chaplains' focal point. The Constitution's development occurred because of three pivotal moments in history and depended on law sources outside the Constitution.⁶² In his discourse, Hall writes that hiring chaplains facilitates the free exercise of religion for all the persons who fall within their area of responsibility, regardless of

⁵⁹ James A. Beckford, "Religious Diversity in Prisons: Chaplaincy and Contention." 191.

⁶⁰ John W. Palmer, *Constitutional Rights of Prisoners*. 9th Ed. (New York, NY: Routledge Press. 2015), 143.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 143.

⁶² Hui Zhao, "Rethinking Constitutionalism in late 19th and 20th Century China." (Ph.D. diss., Harvard University. 2012). 9.

the chaplain's specific religious affiliation.⁶³ Sullivan notes that irrespective of chaplains' institutions, they are committed to their mission.⁶⁴

The Constitution focuses on the powers of government and its legislative powers. The first amendment looks at everyone's religious freedoms within the context of a government understanding. While tensions exist within the Constitution's framework, governmental influence, and the chaplaincy itself, former President George W. Bush created the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives through Executive Order 13199 early in 2001.⁶⁵ Tensions continue to ensue as to how the government needs to assist in religious practice and remain separate from helping religions. Sundt and Cullen noted that religious programming enjoys a revival because of Bush's strong advocacy for expanding faith-based social services.⁶⁶ Even though separation does exist as dictated by the Supreme Court, outside influences included Chuck Colson and others who converted to Christianity and later entered prisons offering religious programming and faith-based treatment.

The reality does create a continued movement by the United States Government's methods to work within religious freedoms and the Constitution. In working within the structure, prison chaplaincy does have cautions that the federal government defines. Federal law dominates how a chaplain operates within the prison setting.⁶⁷ Even then, federal law filters down to the states, and the rules must focus on their expectations for the prison chaplain. Palmer writes that

⁶³ Stephen T. Hall, "A Working Theology of Prison Ministry." *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling*, 58, no. 3 (September 2004): 178.

⁶⁴ Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence*, 53.

⁶⁵ Kent R. Kerley, *Religious Faith in Correctional Contexts*. (Boulder, CO: FirstForumPress. 2014): 4.

⁶⁶ Sundt and Cullen, "Doing God's Work Behind Bars." 132.

⁶⁷ Mobley, "A Manual for An Evangelical State Prison Chaplaincy," 5.

the United States permits traditionally recognized religions by providing chaplains and allowing worship services.⁶⁸ He shows the tension that also has theological implications when he notes that “The State provides inmates with chaplains “but not with publicists or political consultants” and allows “prisoners to assemble for worship, but not for political rallies.”⁶⁹ The focus remains on the law that the prison chaplain must address the inmates’ concerns and grievances of their religious rights.⁷⁰

While there remains a tension between religion and government, chaplains often find themselves walking the tightrope themselves during their careers. Hall points out the tension between the chaplain’s function, whom the state (government) empowers, and the church itself. He looks out for numerous lawsuits over the “establishment clause” that occurred over the years.⁷¹ The chaplains work through tensions to focus on the inmate’s spiritual needs while at the same time attempting to adhere to the spirit of the law.

Even though they must balance government and ministry focus, chaplains must also remind themselves of the trust they initially get hired. Prison chaplains must tell themselves whom they represent since their ministry focuses on caring for those the government has incarcerated. Outsiders look to the chaplain as a government employee for ministry rather than a sacred calling. Hall points out that the crucial element that the chaplain needs in their ministry is

⁶⁸ Palmer, *Constitutional Rights of Prisoners*, 174.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 663.

⁷⁰ Mobley, “A Manual for An Evangelical State Prison Chaplaincy,” 58.

⁷¹ Hall, “A Working Theology of Prison Ministry.” 178.

establishing a ‘sacred’ identity that evokes a sense of caring, trust, and professionalism as they carry out their roles and responsibilities.⁷²

Shedding the Denominational Cloth

All chaplains have a starting point that brings them the endorsement into prison ministry. At the same time, prison chaplains receive approval from a religious denomination that does not necessarily follow the group’s specific denominational practices that endorsed them in ministry. Prison chaplains see themselves ministering not necessarily to a particular group within the prison population, but as Kent Kerley points out, “as ministers to the whole situation.”⁷³ This specific idea focuses on the reality that prison chaplains, though thoughtfully representing the denominational faith, do not necessarily see themselves as agents of the denomination. Sullivan writes that they see themselves as ministers, not to a specific denomination within the prison population, but “as minister to the whole situation, thereby in danger of becoming captured by institutional self-justification.”⁷⁴ Several prison chaplains shift personal denominational ideology into prison work to an ecumenical position.⁷⁵ Prison work varies from institution to institution, state to state, to even the federal government. The overall objective of prison chaplaincy looks at meeting the inmate’s religious needs while meeting the institutional needs of security and safety.

Certain specific points focus on how much prison chaplains must consider religious practices for themselves. Chaplains also look at volunteers and others because of safety and

⁷² Steven N. Waller, “Chaplain or Sports Chaplain First? Why Identity Formation Should Matter to Sports Chaplains” *Practical Theology* 9 no. 3 (September 2016): 243.

⁷³ Kerley. *Religious Faith in Correctional Contexts*, 82.

⁷⁴ Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence: Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, and the Law*, 82.

⁷⁵ Joshua Dubler. “Seven Days of Penitentiary Life: An Ethnographic Study of the Chapel at Pennsylvania’s Graterford Prison.” (PhD. diss., Princeton University, 2008): 127.

security concerns. Chaplains also recognize that the volunteers bring in their doctrine. Both chaplains and even those that minister stressed that within the prison, volunteers and others should avoid denomination issues when interacting with one another on congregations' debates. Kerley notes that the focus on scriptural versions and interpretations, baptism, communion, style of dress, women in the ministry, and the roles of husbands and wives in the marriage covenant" often create divisiveness these conservative congregations and are minefields elsewhere too.⁷⁶

A few chaplains avoid specific topics (such as women in ministry); chaplains often echo a similar approach in their ministry. In an interview with a prison chaplain, Kerley points out that he did not emphasize a personal theology but represents Christian theology and not denominational theology.⁷⁷ They also pointed out that if the person engaged them at a lower level about the denomination beliefs, they are willing to join them but stressed that "we do not discuss or promote our personal beliefs."⁷⁸ Even Coleman echoes a similar point, focusing on the reality that chaplains want to meet the people (in this case, the inmate) where they were, instead of judging them.⁷⁹

In a classic book, *Chaplains to the Imprisoned*, Richard Dean Shaw points out that mainline denominations are "preferable prison and jail administrators because they work more easily within the system structure, and do not emphasize overt proselytizing."⁸⁰ Even so, various forms of denomination evangelism do exist in prison. According to Dominique Gilliard, in a

⁷⁶ Kerley. *Religious Faith in Correctional Contexts*, 42.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁹ Sylvia Coleman, "Prison Ministry: A Closer Look at Clergy's Beliefs of Correctional Rehabilitation." 39.

⁸⁰ Richard Denis Shaw, *Chaplains to the Imprisoned: Sharing Life with the Incarcerated* (Binghamton, NY: Haworth, 1995): 83.

survey conducted, 73 percent of the state prison chaplain said that incarcerated believers in their facility are actively trying to share the Gospel with their peers.⁸¹

The influences of these faith groups provide ministers with the opportunity to reach out to those imprisoned to bring in the redemptive and restorative message of Christ into the life of those who perceive themselves lost. While chaplains bring neutrality into the discussion that creates the ability to reach out to others, they must also remain cautious. In part, caution must occur when complex issues come forth from the doctrine of their denomination. Several of the problematic issues revolve around the gifts of the Spirit. At the same time, necessary can create conflict between chaplains and the inmates compared to the Christian theological perspectives that a chaplain needs to discuss. Certain prison chaplains bring their denomination perspectives, but others do not emphasize a personal religious stance.

Instead, the chaplain takes the point in representing a form of Christian theology and not denominational theology.⁸² The difficulty does lie in defining Christian theology as modalities of theology increasingly enter into the discussion of theology. Even within the confines of prison, new theologies develop. As noted by Hallett et al., Angola's inmate ministers govern themselves by a personalist ethic of "Relationship Theology."⁸³ Multiple other beliefs exist, and continued studies concerning them still work within the church's context today.

The focus moves towards attempting to provide fused messages revolving around the faith in God but not necessarily taking into account the denominational distinctions within the

⁸¹ Dominique DuBois Gilliard, *Rethinking Incarceration: Advocating for Justice That Restores* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2018): 118.

⁸² Kerley. *Religious Faith in Correctional Contexts*, 45.

⁸³ Hallett. "U.S. Prison Seminaries." 157.

framework of the chaplain's individual beliefs.⁸⁴ Waller takes a similar viewpoint noting that chaplains are religious leaders endorsed by a specific religious community.⁸⁵ The chaplain's expectations remain difficult in finding the careful balance of chaplaincy and the vocational calling supported by the denomination. Waller stresses that the chaplains provide free exercise of religion for all, rather than a specific few.⁸⁶

The reality focuses more on the realism that chaplaincy, in general, and prison chaplaincy more needs closer examination explicitly. Beckner suggests that prison chaplains had far too little written concerning the ministry that they offered to the inmates.⁸⁷ Sadly if this is the case, then other areas of chaplaincy need further examination. According to Sullivan, even in the challenges of searching for an identity, prison chaplains often must meet a more diverse and frequently changing clientele.⁸⁸ Prison chaplains, on the whole, need to address the issues of theological development that many can agree upon so that a unified front does exist to offer inmates a more wholesome theological and apologetic stance, not only in prison but in the community, upon their release.

Based on the literature, a significant gap exists in the arena. However, to develop the theological differences, exploring the prison chaplain's role must occur to understand each chaplain's viewpoint in their ministry. Chaplains and religious congregant volunteers avoid talking about denomination issues because Coleman points out that they want to meet people

⁸⁴ Coleman, "Prison Ministry: A Closer Look at Clergy's Beliefs of Correctional Rehabilitation." 38.

⁸⁵ Waller. "Chaplain or Sports Chaplain First? Why Identity Formation Should Matter to Sports Chaplains," 244.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 244.

⁸⁷ W. Thomas Beckner, *Correctional Chaplains: Keepers of the Cloak*, 2012 ed. (Mount Dora, FL: Cappella Press, 2012): 15.

⁸⁸ Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence*. 53.

where they are at that moment rather than dealing with complex problems found in the church and denominations today.⁸⁹

Several theologies developed among chaplains in the prison ministry revolve around the view of Scripture and the commonality of focusing on “Jesus is Lord” as a starting point to discuss ministering to inmates. As one chaplain notes, “It is good to be open-minded. I do not have to agree, but we can agree to disagree in peace.”⁹⁰ Others, such as Allison Hicks, point out that chaplains’ working personality may also symbolically enhance work’s sacred element.⁹¹ The sacred aspect of work differs and has multiple meanings to different chaplains and even denominations—the holy (can) question a good life and appropriate action according to the community’s structure and rules.⁹² Inmates’ engagement in the theological discourse of fundamental doctrine needs to happen within the Christian faith. Multiple theologies exist today, making it difficult for chaplains to define and move forward appropriately. As de Grunchy points out, a few understand Christianity as socially and politically transformative, not reactionary.⁹³ The missiological perspective observed by Dunlop allows the chaplain to focus on connecting, reconnecting, or even deepening the inmate’s connection with “a loving divine presence,” or at least that which is transcendent or ‘other’ to them.”⁹⁴

⁸⁹ Sylvia Coleman, *Prison Ministry: A Closer Look at Clergy's Beliefs of Correctional Rehabilitation*. 39.

⁹⁰ Kerley. *Religious Faith in Correctional Contexts*, 43.

⁹¹ Allison M. Hicks. “Learning to Watch Out: Prison Chaplains as Risk Managers.” *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 41 no. 6. (December 2012): 660.

⁹² Andreas Wittrahm. “Ethische Bildung in Gensundheitssorge, Seelsorge, Lehre und Sozialer Arbeit.” *European Journal of Mental Health* 10. (June 2015): 6-7.

⁹³ John de Grunchy. “Christian Humanism, Progressive Christianity, and Social Transformation.” *Journal for the Study of Religion*. 31 no 1 (July 2018): 55.

⁹⁴ Sarah Dunlop, “Is ‘Being There Enough? Explorations of Incarnational Missiology with Chaplains,” 180.

Sullivan points out that prison chaplains show that they can meet a more diverse and often constantly changing clientele, freer from strictures to orthodoxy in doctrine and practice than other religious specialists.⁹⁵ A more detailed note of what freedom means has its problems. The discussion of liberty often revolves around a movement away from orthodoxy on multiple levels. Hicks also states that chaplains must trust their faith in God and a divine plan to negotiate the risks taught in the workplace.⁹⁶ A few recognize the reality of religious conversion in prison. Several argue that conversion serves as a coping strategy for those attempting to make sense of their life and seek forgiveness and reparations.⁹⁷ While most chaplains would not say that life purpose, forgiveness, and even reparations are essential elements of the Christian faith, much more exists. Chaplains need to spend time in theological development. The reality exists; several argue that prison chaplaincy should address the problems of shaky religious foundations, a lack of vision, realistic plans for a person's life, and the shame and self-deception prevalent amongst inmates.⁹⁸

The more serious difficulty arises from the many different types of prison ministries on the outside offered to the inmates, which reinforces the Christian chaplain's need to have a sound working knowledge of theology. While volunteers can receive vetting, other ministries can also create additional issues from various sources. These birthing religious focuses serve as a source of higher theological tension between the chaplain inmate in prison. "Mail-order ministry certificates and home-grown mini-sects always present difficult issues with regards to...the

⁹⁵ Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence: Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, and the Law*, 53.

⁹⁶ Hicks, "Learning to Watch Out: Prison Chaplains as Risk Managers." 660.

⁹⁷ Shona Robinson-Edwards and Stephanie Kewley. Faith-Based Intervention: Prison, Prayer, and Perseverance. *Religion*. 9 no. 4 (April 2018): 1.

⁹⁸ Abraham K. Akih and Yolanda Dreyer. "Deficiencies in Pastoral Care with Prisoners in Cameroon." *HTS Theologese Studies/Theological Studies*. 68 no. 1 (August 2012): 3.

minimum standard rules of the prison, which allows for the practice of one's religion as a basic right."⁹⁹

The chaplain's identity informs the profession's sense of calling or movement even within the denominational arena.¹⁰⁰ While focusing on seminary, the reality is that the prison chaplain applies pastoral skills fundamentally different from what one learns in seminary.¹⁰¹ However, Hall writes that more considerable tension exists with prison chaplains holding that Christianity is the one true religion. The question of a person's ultimate salvation is separate from that person's participation in Christianity or the personal confession of Jesus Christ.¹⁰² Hall later notes that prison chaplains function within the "pluralist option in which one believes many religions or ways of salvation are equally true. Salvation is available to all in their respective traditions."¹⁰³

No doubt, in seeking their roles in the denomination and as a chaplain, each chaplain "needs to know the governing principle of his life and profession."¹⁰⁴ The quest often focuses on the differing roles and changing of the viewpoints that one brings from cultural views and the government's ever-changing part. For many, the key focuses on establishing a 'sacred' identity that conjures caring, trust, and professionalism to carry out their roles and responsibilities.¹⁰⁵ The reality challenges chaplains to consider performing a wide range of tasks as they straddle

⁹⁹ Shaw, *Chaplains to the Imprisoned: Sharing Life with the Incarcerated*, 36.

¹⁰⁰ Waller, "Chaplain or Sports Chaplain First," 245.

¹⁰¹ Hicks. "Learning to Watch Out: Prison Chaplains as Risk Managers." 640.

¹⁰² Hall, "A Working Theology of Prison Ministry," 178.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 178.

¹⁰⁴ Mobley, "A Manual for An Evangelical State Prison Chaplaincy." 5

¹⁰⁵ Waller. "Chaplain or Sports Chaplain First?." 243.

between the sacred and secular and the institution and community in treatment and custody.¹⁰⁶ Divisions that abound within the denominational elements involve topics over speaking in tongues, eternal salvation, and even end times prophecy. Even aspects of theology vary between chaplains and even denominations. However, as noted by Hall, theology within the framework of prison chaplaincy does offer points that many can take forward.¹⁰⁷

Prison Chaplaincy Roles and Identity

A common topic in literature is the historical transformation of chaplains' duties from guiding inmates to a spiritual conversation and serving as counselors, organizers, and liaisons.¹⁰⁸ Services offered to inmates are similar to that of the pastors within the church. The tensions between the roles as a government entity and that of a religious leader, chaplains are reinterpreting their work by maintaining that they play an essential role in ensuring inmates' "newfound religious rights."¹⁰⁹

Sundt and Cullen agree that chaplaincy frequently ensures the appropriate accommodations of inmates' constitutional rights.¹¹⁰ Later, they point out that these individuals perform various tasks and balance between the sacred and secular, institution and community, treatment, and custody.¹¹¹ The chaplains' roles remain important because others point out that the historical transformation of the chaplains' duties transformed from just spiritual transformation

¹⁰⁶ Sundt and Cullen, "Doing God's Work Behind Bars:." 133.

¹⁰⁷ Hall, "A Working Theology of Prison Ministry." 170.

¹⁰⁸ Kerley. *Religious Faith in Correctional Contexts*, 43.

¹⁰⁹ Sundt, Dammer, and Cullen. "The Role of the Prison Chaplain in Rehabilitation." 63.

¹¹⁰ Sundt and Cullen, "Doing God's Work Behind Bars." 133.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, 133.

to that of counseling, organization, or providing a liaison to inmates.¹¹² Ministry remains an ever-changing dynamic for prison chaplains because of their identity in reconciling the law, the needs within the prison, and their personal view on ministry.

Whether in the minds of the chaplain, inmates, or even prison officials, chaplains carry a stature entering into the prison. Also, chaplains are staff members; chaplaincy's perspective often uses the "image of a shepherd or the symbol of the shepherd crook" to bear the chaplain's role in the institution.¹¹³ Waller similarly echoes sentiments that the identity of chaplains' rests in the images of caregivers as seen in the Holy Writs across faith traditions."¹¹⁴ Within that role, the idea of the shepherd brings more profound responsibilities for the prison chaplain. The chaplain's model, regardless of faith, focuses on the image of the holy. But even then, the roles of the shepherd and that role of the government blur. Waller suggests that chaplains have multiple identities as caregivers and a self-concept based on beliefs, values, motives, and experiences.¹¹⁵

Sometimes, the approach focuses more on emphasizing not a personal theology but the focus of Christianity as a whole. The prison chaplain often recognizes the reason for the ministry entrance since it revolves around the divinely-inspired vocation that serves "as an important 'shaper' of their identity."¹¹⁶ Chaplains must acknowledge their role because, with one breath, they serve as the administrator for the religious freedom and experience of all but in the next

¹¹² Kerley. *Religious Faith in Correctional Contexts*, 42.

¹¹³ Sullivan, *Ministry of Presence*, 19.

¹¹⁴ Waller. "Chaplain or Sports Chaplain First?" 248

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 242-243.

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 248.

breath, remind themselves always that they carry a “tremendous load as the spiritual leader” of the institution.¹¹⁷

One aspect of administration involves a precise examination of their role within the government agency. While this perspective involves the governmental position, it also serves as part of the chaplain identity. Even though chaplains are ordained or licensed into the ministry, chaplains need additional guidance, mentoring, and training to fulfill the requirements and duties before them. According to Bree Carlton and Marie Segraves, the BOP trains chaplains on policies, and the chaplains use the Program Statements as a guide to resolving issues relating to—religious accommodation through programs, religious use of wine, unauthorized religious practices, supervision of inmates, religious preferences, visits to special housing units, telephone calls, women and special needs offenders, community involvement of volunteers and contractors, religious property, a religious headwear, and clothing.¹¹⁸

Chaplains spend much of their time in two distinct roles: ministry and the more significant administration role. The purpose of the chaplain does create additional problems. A few look at the chaplaincy, only serving in a primarily administrative function, emphasizing managing religious programs and recruiting and supervising volunteers to “do church.”¹¹⁹ Even within the BOP, the Religious Services Branch (RSB) mission charges the chaplain to provide a milieu of religious programming that includes worship, education, counseling, direction, support, and crisis intervention to accommodate inmates’ diverse spiritual needs.¹²⁰ As several point out,

¹¹⁷ Mobley, “A Manual for An Evangelical State Prison Chaplaincy.” 68.

¹¹⁸ Bree Carlton and Marie Segrave, *Routledge Studies in Crime and Society*. vol. 5, *Women Exiting Prison: Critical Essays on Gender, Post-Release Support and Survival* (London: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2013), 52.

¹¹⁹ Sundt and Cullen. “Doing God's Work Behind Bars,” 134.

¹²⁰ Carlton and Segrave, *Routledge Studies in Crime and Society*, 51.

serving as a chaplaincy and serving as a pastor in a local church vary only with whom they minister to in life. Chaplains also work with other faith groups to facilitate their faith, which offers a changing dynamic not otherwise discovered in “doing church.”

Because they carry multiple roles, Chaplains also take on the role of correctional worker. On the part of a correctional worker, the chaplain focuses on the institution’s security and safety needs while ensuring the Constitution’s religious freedoms. As a result, chaplains tailor the inmates’ needs to the institution’s security and safety. Even with the BOP, it provides inmates of all faith groups with reasonable and equitable opportunities to pursue religious beliefs and practices within budgetary limitations and consistent with the institution’s security and orderly running.¹²¹

One goal for many prison chaplains focuses on identifying, recruiting, and equipping those who desire to volunteer in the ministry to carry it out behind the walls.¹²² Often, volunteerism and the realities of prison ministry, for the prison chaplain, focus on the quality of prison ministry and the delivery of such a church. With a “total of approximately 1,400,000 hours of religious and spiritual engagement,” the level of religious and spiritual involvement in prison may be much higher than the participation of people in mainstream society.”¹²³ Even though the prison chaplain spends time recruiting volunteers, one cannot just rely on the possibility that they develop a doctrine similar to theirs upon their entrance into the institution. Volunteers serve as an essential and viable group to assist the chaplain in facilitating studies,

¹²¹ James A. Beckford and Sophie Galliat, *Religion in Prison: Equal Rites in a Multi-faith Society*. 173.

¹²² Bob Ekblad, “Communicating Jesus’s Liberating Love Amidst Hostile Powers,” *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 72, no. 3 (June 2018): 257.

¹²³ Hicks. “Learning to Watch Out: Prison Chaplains as Risk Managers.” 637.

services, and other office areas. While in an unofficial capacity, prison chaplains also minister to other prison staff and volunteers.¹²⁴

The difficulty arises in the overall approach of prison chaplaincy. Sundt and Cullen report that chaplaincy prioritizes conducting religious services, teaching religious doctrine, and ministering to inmates and staff.¹²⁵ Later in the same article, Sundt and Cullen note that the chaplain spends more time on administrative tasks than ministry.¹²⁶ The crucial balance creates conflict for the chaplain and their views on ministry. Like other prison workers, chaplains appear to “feel stigmatized by the nature of their work.”¹²⁷ The prison chaplain must focus on the realities of perception during prison work. Even with their co-workers, stigmas exist, whether intentional or unintentional. According to Todd, the idea of the chaplain remains neutral while working in prison.¹²⁸ The neutrality also creates the perception that they are different from other prison staff by prison staff and the inmates.

Chaplains as Social Change Agents

Several within the government agency look at chaplains away from their ministerial role. Certain institutions look at chaplains within the treatment staff framework who navigate between the inmates and custodial staff, attempting to keep relationships with both.¹²⁹ While this tension exists, prison chaplains are often reminded to check the inmate’s version of events against the

¹²⁴ Sundt and Cullen. “Doing God’s Work Behind Bars,” 132-133.

¹²⁵ Ibid., 134.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 134.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 135.

¹²⁸ Andrew J. Todd. “Preventing the “Neutral” Chaplain: The Potential Impact of “Anti-Extremism” Policy on Prison Chaplaincy.” *Practical Theology* 6 no. 2 (April 2013): 132.

¹²⁹ Allison M. Hicks. *Learning to Watch Out: Prison Chaplains as Risk Managers*, 638.

record even within that context. Not everything the inmate speaks is truthful, and the chaplain needs to maintain a healthy skepticism.¹³⁰

The chaplain's roles can continue to move in directions to offer the inmates the ability to "rehabilitate" themselves in secularism; chaplains want a transformative change for inmates rather than just a rehabilitative formation. While several argue that the transformation occurs because of the Gospel message, others point to multiple points to include the Gospel's response. They would point out that specific programming, topics such as anger management, fear, grief, and a milieu of other issues are brought out for discussion to assist the inmate(s) in moving away from the various problems that may plague them into a positive, prosocial attitude. Prison chaplains support the rehabilitative efforts offered to the inmate. Within their work, they see it also as reformative.¹³¹ The focus of rehabilitation provides an inmate to enter back into the community from prison. Prison chaplains do ministry and chaplaincy in the rehabilitative role to help offenders change their lives.

Change comes from the prison chaplain's investment in the inmates' lives in chaplaincy. In a survey of inmates released, the questions focused on which staff influenced their success upon release. According to Sundt and Cullen, one-sixth cited the chaplain as an influence on their progress, even though the prison chaplain makes up less than one percent of the staff.¹³²

Prison chaplains often struggle with community culture. Communities can direct meaning and the chaplaincy ministry's direction in the denominational context. In rural Mississippi, even though the denominations varied, including theology, political orientation, and worship style,

¹³⁰ Allison M. Hicks. *Learning to Watch Out: Prison Chaplains as Risk Managers*, 653.

¹³¹ Sundt, Dammer, and Cullen. "The Role of the Prison Chaplain in Rehabilitation." 370.

¹³² Sundt and Cullen. "The Correctional Ideology of Chaplains." 370.

they tend to reflect the designation of conservative Protestantism.¹³³ In this framework, the role can also directly retrospect in Illinois or New York areas that indicate the selection of liberal Protestantism. In its relationship to the community, the chaplain must remain aware of their commitment to the faith. While debates can exist over the decisions of chaplains' role in any government setting, the chaplain must understand how to work their roles to benefit both those they minister to and the governmental entity that hired them to perform that role.

The prison chaplain learns their governmental entity skills from training and on-the-job training, which differs from those known in seminary.¹³⁴ Since the governmental entities influence the direction of chaplaincy, the prison chaplain must distinguish between their viewpoints of the biblical mandate to serve and assign assigned tasks to the prison officials' satisfaction.¹³⁵

The roles of chaplaincy go further in the reflection of reintegration. The chaplains' purpose migrated to assisting in the performance of rehabilitation and reentry programs, with 57 percent of the prison chaplains providing programming.¹³⁶ Prison chaplains look at their work, seeing that "religion and their spiritual work as rehabilitative."¹³⁷ The value of change exists in the context of the Christian faith. Relationships occur in the institution and can create the shift often involved in the rehabilitation. In the relationship, the focus of chaplaincy shifts from

¹³³ Sundt and Cullen. "The Correctional Ideology of Chaplains." 26.

¹³⁴ Hicks. "Learning to Watch Out: Prison Chaplains as Risk Managers." 640.

¹³⁵ Sundt and Cullen, "Doing God's Work Behind Bars," 133.

¹³⁶ Gilliard, *Rethinking Incarceration*, 118.

¹³⁷ Sundt, Dammer, and Cullen. "The Role of the Prison Chaplain in Rehabilitation." 72.

preaching to something greater. The chaplain's commissioning revolves around the practice of authentic disciple, loving, listening, equipping, and empowering inmates.¹³⁸

Chaplains need to focus on moving forward in the development of creating a fundamental theology that can bring forth a sound theology and good apologetics. What are the fundamentals of the faith that chaplains are willing to agree upon and bring forth in their ministry? The theology and apologetic message on many of the central doctrines in Christianity should concentrate on the genuineness of Christ, His death, burial, and resurrection. For a few, the extension of theology goes beyond death, burial, and resurrection. Denominationalism and other "works" in the Christian faith focus on topics including tongues and prophecy, which play a big part in the overall discussion.

Prison chaplains need to accentuate the priorities of their ministry. While each chaplain has a theology and apologetic style, chaplains should fashion a cohesive form representing general Christian theology to the inmates. One can often point the direction of tradition in developing theology while continuing to "dig" to get to the roots of what a Christian in practice looks like in totality. Glazner and Alleman noted that Christian tradition emerged by focusing on a particular intellectual outcome that incorporated Christianity.¹³⁹ Chaplain preparation in seminary allows for the discussion and work that must happen to materialize a unified front that involves faith and creates the ability to provide a critical outlook that involves the Christian life.

¹³⁸ Byron R. Johnson. *More God, Less Crime: Why Faith Matters and How It Could Matter More*. (West Conshohocken, PA: Templeton Press. 2011), 110.

¹³⁹ Perry L. Glazner & Nathan F. Alleman. *The Integration of Faith Tradition and Teaching in Christian Higher Education*. ed. William Jeynes. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publications, 2018): 157.

This approach should also serve as a reflective role that respects the denomination, regulations, and the Constitution.

Theological Foundations

In following various aspects, chaplaincy offers a different view of ministry and pastoral care. Chaplaincy has its origins and roots primarily within a Christian, religious, clerical, and theological tradition that has left an enduring legacy and host of associations and connotations.¹⁴⁰ Other faith traditions now work on theology to incorporate their theology and practices in a pluralistic setting while ministering to their congregations. The model of chaplaincy ministry, especially in light of the governmental influence and expectations, present such difficulties as one transition from a pastorate-like ministry. One must look at the allusions of Scripture in conjunction with the pastoral care while at the same time bringing the reality of governmental expectations in providing the necessary ministry to the incarcerated.

First, one needs to look at the allusions to chaplaincy through the lens of Scripture. This concept appears difficult since the word “chaplain” never appears in Scripture. When looking at the Bible, the allusions of chaplain presence existed early. Chaplains minister to those outside the “church,” focusing on those in various locations and settings. As noted earlier, the chaplain represents the “keeper of the cloak” or, in the chaplain’s mindset, the “keeper of the faith.” The reality focuses more on the transition from the standard point of pastoral care from the church’s traditional halls to an extension outside.

Second, the chaplain ministry reflects on ministering to those outside of the context of a local or mobile facility (hospital, prison, military, and even sports). The history of chaplaincy

¹⁴⁰ Jullian Ruffay, “A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places.” *Practical Theology* 9 no. 4 (September 2016): 371.

developed from a military concept to offer ministry beyond the traditional doors of the local ministry to pastors ministering to many different denominations who have no access to their church. John Wesley served as a chaplain early in his ministry to Georgia as an Anglican priest.¹⁴¹ As Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt observe, chaplaincy functions have distinctive features that differ from the parochial ministry they serve but do not vary from church and parish ministry.¹⁴² With that mindset, one can observe the chaplaincy through multiple lenses rather than the traditional focus and misnomers that one usually associates. While traditionally, one looks at many chaplaincies through the military's lens, numerous other points looking to the chaplaincy happen in many different forums.

Old Testament Allusions to Chaplaincy

Melchizedek and the ministry provided thereof represent an early concept of chaplaincy from several different perspectives. In engaging Scripture, the ministry presented to Abram by Melchizedek provides glimpses for those who engage in chaplaincy as they minister to others. Abram had just completed battle, and Melchizedek offered bread and wine while representing the most high God (Gen. 14:18). The view at that time was that Melchizedek, in his capacity as high priest, served the cloak in ministering to Abram. Frazer from many quarters has abundantly illustrated the primitive combination of the kingly and priestly offices. Such priest-kings in Canaan in very early times are credible, though not historically attested.¹⁴³ This representation

¹⁴¹ Chad Meister and J. B. Stump, *Christian Thought: A Historical Introduction*. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2010): 412.

¹⁴² Miranda Threlfall-Holmes and Mark Newitt. *Being a Chaplain*. (London, UK: SPCK Publishing, 2011): 4.

¹⁴³ John Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, International Critical Commentary (New York: Scribner, 1910). 267-268.

of the cloak moves to the adoption of the priestly model of ministry, emphasizing the importance of worship to restore relationships between God and man.¹⁴⁴ Abram moves to look at Melchizedek through the offering is an appropriate recognition of the validity of his priesthood through the paying of a tithe¹⁴⁵

Instead of focusing too much on multiple points in the Old Testament, this project focuses on three issues as allusions to chaplaincy. The Old Testament provides the necessary glimpses from numerous positions to support the ideas of chaplaincy. While Melchizedek served as an excellent point for the thought of chaplaincy, multiple others offer glimpses of the duties of chaplains and their influence. Several argue exclusively for the ministry position or the “church,” chaplains serve as pastors with a different calling. Additionally, ministries can look similar, as one can also point out in various ways, arguing for missions and lifestyle evangelism. The contrast in secularism and priestly duties found in this passage looks at the distinction between Abram’s tithe provided to Melchizedek and his rejection of the king of Sodom’s offering to him. As Sailhamer writes the contrast between the two, “Abraham’s reward would not come from the kings of this world but Yahweh, “the LORD the Creator of heaven and earth” (v.22).”¹⁴⁶ Even then, questions still revolve around the practice exhibited by Melchizedek. Reyburn and Fry suggest that Melchizedek’s priestly role looks at him as “the one who shows the God way,” or “the one who makes sacrifices” may be used. If such descriptive terms are also unsatisfactory, it

¹⁴⁴ Neil E. Allison. "A Free Church Perspective on Military Chaplains Role in its Historical Context." *In Die Skriflig* 50, no. 1 (December 2016): 1-8.

¹⁴⁵ John H. Sailhamer, “Genesis,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1990), 123.

¹⁴⁶ Sailhamer, “Genesis,” 123.

may be necessary to borrow the name from a noteworthy language or combine the borrowed word with a descriptive phrase.¹⁴⁷

Joseph's life is a point to focus on, especially in his ministry as an enslaved person, prisoner, and later a person with great responsibility and leadership. Joseph represented God in his life as he occupied each of those positions in each aspect. While arguably, one could argue for earlier issues of his life, he served in a role by staying true within the context of his faith, representing God to others that did not even necessarily believe. Joseph's ministry extended to the point where others favorably looked at him because of his dedication to God and the willingness to move forward regardless of the circumstances to serve and represent God.

Joseph's ministry extended beyond the circumstances but showed a reflection and outward display of wanting to live for God, wholly and holy. Through it all, Joseph provided church to those who did not necessarily believe the way he thought. Through this, God's reflection moved not only to those directly affected by his ministry but indirectly to where others saw his God reflected in his actions. Even though the Pentateuch mentions little about the changes that happened to the Egyptian populace, determination regarding Joseph's influence focuses on the prison warden not paying attention to Joseph or anything under his care (Gen 39:23). As with chaplains in their roles, the prison governor had confidence that Joseph would competently manage everything.¹⁴⁸ The chaplain's role focuses on representing the holy while addressing the inmates' spiritual needs.

¹⁴⁷ William David Reayburn and Euan McG. Fry, *A Handbook on Genesis*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1998): 323.

¹⁴⁸ Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 16–50*, vol. 2, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1994): 381.

The influence of the chaplain has similarities with Joseph's authority, even with Potiphar. The chaplaincy exemplar focuses on the chaplain's behaviors outside the common worship area's construct in different environments. While the actual worship center would not happen for many years, Joseph experienced the "blessing of the Lord" to the point that "Potiphar left everything he had in Joseph's care; with Joseph in charge." (Gen 39:5-6) Chaplaincy works similarly as many staff, especially those in charge, entrust those in their care's holistic care. Geyer and Geyer write chaplains go to the places "where they are protected—and used to His glory."¹⁴⁹

In other areas of the Old Testament, reflections continue of the various ministries provided that emulate the chaplain's role in multiple places today. Even though many are frequently in ministry functions, the ministry's purpose focuses more on how ministry happens within the community's context. Even though Aaron and his children served in ministry, the lack of any formal religious leader, except through Moses, revealed the issues people needed to deal with as they started to learn. The lack of spiritual direction and commitment often happens, but chaplains help guide and direct those in need. Like those who lost their way, Moses offered and kept attempting to move Israel towards God while caring for them and their souls (e.g., Deut 9:7-29). Prison chaplains similarly provide the guidance and leadership to assist those lost and needing direction in their return to God. Chaplaincy becomes a way to serve those who require God.

The Old Testament continues with many different aspects of how chaplaincy thrived to help its people. The Old Testament refers to the fact that the priest lives outside of the fixed

¹⁴⁹ Richard E. Geyer and Patricia M. Geyer, *Chaplains of the Bible: Inspiration for Those Who Help Others in Crisis* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador International, 2012): 50.

establishment structure to minister to the Jewish people when looking at the big picture. From Solomon's time, the only fixed position for worship was Jerusalem for those who lived in Israel. Even today, all other areas are temporary points for Israel, hoping to rebuild Jerusalem's temple. Even within the kingship of first, David himself and then later with who received his appointment to minister to David, we see chaplaincy.

Was David a chaplain? This question could bring out the discussion, but when one looks at his life, one can see the etchings of his ministering to Saul and even at times to those who followed his lead. His ministry directly affected the king. Though Saul is angered easily because of his presence, the reader could see David's ministry (playing the harp) that soothed Saul's torment for some time (1 Sam 16:14-23). Chaplaincy ministry comes in many forms, and just as music serves as a part of the ministry, chaplains can perform a similar task to soothe the soul. Lewis writes that Army chaplaincy is one of one's religious or religious identities. "Regardless of one's spiritual tradition, spirituality is understood by a large majority of the population as a large and foundational part of the human experience."¹⁵⁰

Isaiah 61:1 expresses the setting free of the prisoner. At the same time, discussions surrounding the meaning offer glimpses of hope for those imprisoned by the wraps of sin. As noted in Lange's work, the setting free of the prisoners indicates that Jehovah ratifies the work of His Servant. by declaring it conformable to justice and that He intends to make an everlasting covenant with Israel, by which all nations shall know the Israelites as the people blessed by Him.¹⁵¹ Chaplaincy offers redemption to those imprisoned; similarly, pastors show redemption to

¹⁵⁰ James R. Lewis, "Spiritual Fitness and Resilience Formation Through Army Chaplains and Religious Support" Ph.D. dissertation, Kent State, 2015, 218.

¹⁵¹ John Peter Lange, Carl Wilhelm Eduard Naegelsbach, Samuel T. Lowrie, and Dunlop Moore A *Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Isaiah* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008): 658.

those imprisoned to sin. Specific commentaries point out that the translations have differed over the meaning of the word “the opening of the prison” or “the opening of blind eyes.”¹⁵²

New Testament Allusions to Chaplaincy

While many areas of the Old Testament demonstrate the role of a chaplain in others' lives, Paul, Peter, and even Jesus create aspects that help validate chaplaincy's role. After John's imprisonment, Jesus sent words to affirm His role. Sometimes prisoners and others question God, redemption, salvation, purpose, and multiple other points in their quest to look towards a more substantial reality that God exists, and they are redeemable. In the response of Jesus, John received affirmation by the reports he heard from his disciples (Matt 11:1-6). The ministry of commitment and words confirm what we seek as Christian motifs for their duties and responsibilities to those they minister to in life. In the passage, John the Baptist becomes demoralized after preaching imminent blessing and judgment. Jesus' answer briefly summarized his miracles and preaching, but in the language of Isa 35:5-6; 61:1, with possible further allusions to 26:19; 29:18-19. The answer was straightforward: Isa 61:1 is an explicit messianic passage. Isa 35:5-6, though it has no messianic figure, describes God's people's return to Zion with accompanying blessings (e.g., restoration of sight).¹⁵³

Jesus said, “I was in prison, and you came to visit me.” (Matt 25:36). Whether in volunteerism or with chaplains themselves, chaplaincy often uses this to cite the premise in which they minister to those imprisoned. Crick and Miller write that “this excerpt from Matthew 25 speaks of God's affirmation and blessing on those who minister to all people in all

¹⁵² John D. W. Watts, *Isaiah 34-66*, Revised Edition., vol. 25, Word Biblical Commentary (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, Inc, 2005): 873.

¹⁵³ D. A. Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984): 262.

conditions.”¹⁵⁴ Garland writes that it does not negate the imperative to attend to the needs of the hungry, naked, and imprisoned that resounds throughout the Scripture (Isa 58:6–7; Ezek 18:7; Tobit 4:16; Sirach 7:35; 4 Ezra 2:20) but argues that the intention of this parable lies elsewhere.¹⁵⁵

It covers the most basic needs of life to represent the meeting of human needs of every kind. Hagner writes works themselves serve as but “parabolic stage props, as it were, used to convey the primary meaning of the parable.”¹⁵⁶ The intricacies of such practices look more in a diverse statement focusing specifically on this passage. Davies and Allison write that prisoners’ visitation was not a standard item in Jewish lists of good works, so one wonders whether early Christian experience or John the Baptist’s memory has not influenced our text.¹⁵⁷ While the direction of practices needs a critical investigation in the study, its influence still affects the roles and callings of those in ministry. As best articulated by Lange and Schaff, Webster and Wilkinson justly observe verse 36 that the assistance to the sick and prisoners here is not healing and release, which only a few could render, but visitation, sympathy, and attention can bestow.¹⁵⁸

The story of the Good Samaritan offers additional realism for the chaplaincy role in respect (Luke 10:25-37). While it acknowledges religious attitudes, it also shows how those in

¹⁵⁴ Robert D. Crick and Brandelan S. Miller, *Outside the Gates: The Need for Theology, History, and Practice of Chaplaincy Ministry*. (Oviedo, FL: HigherLife Development, 2004): 233.

¹⁵⁵ David E. Garland, *Reading Matthew: A Literary and Theological Commentary on the First Gospel*, Reading the New Testament Series (Macon, GA: Smyth & Helwys Publishing, 2001): 249.

¹⁵⁶ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 14–28*, vol. 33B, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 1995): 744.

¹⁵⁷ W. D. Davies and Dale C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel according to Saint Matthew*, vol. 3, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark International, 2004): 428.

¹⁵⁸ John Peter Lange and Philip Schaff, *A Commentary on the Holy Scriptures: Matthew* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2008): 449.

the chaplaincy reach out and offer help to those in the greatest need. Several aspects of chaplaincy appear on pastoral ministry fringes, and various denominations do not take time to provide adequate support. Chaplains willingly lift and help those in need, as with the Good Samaritan. The chaplaincy framework does not mean that the chaplain has to agree with or know the person. It does say that the chaplain willingly notices and values each person, helping them where they hurt to strengthen them holistically.

Serving in chaplaincy means helping those in need where others cannot or will not do it. As with many in Christianity's faith, chaplaincy focuses on meeting people at their needs. Jesus instructs His followers to "love your neighbor" (Mark 12:31). As we continued to examine the Samaritan, one can see that neighbors are those we come in contact with within our daily routine of life; as Vernon Bittner points out, every moment of every day has moments of power, peace, and joy. Bittner also points out that the hopes of sharing this aid are helping one along their way because none of us has "arrived."¹⁵⁹

Peter and Paul emulate examples of prison ministries and, in many ways, further develop a theology that needs further consideration for ministry. With the first look at Paul, one can see the movement of truly embracing God and following Him, even if the circumstances can dictate otherwise (Acts 16:16-40). After receiving a beating and being placed into prison, Paul and Silas went beyond their times by singing hymns unto the Lord. Also, though they were in distress, they still sought the Lord; even during pain and suffering, ministry opportunities happened in the context of imprisonment. According to Patricia and Richard Geyer, "God may open and close

¹⁵⁹ Vernon J. Bittner, *You Can Help with Your Healing: A Guide for Recovering Wholeness in Body, Mind, and Spirit*, Revised Edition. (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2008): 11.

options for us in our ministry—with consequences for us.”¹⁶⁰ While opportunities abound in the chaplaincy, the many roles extend beyond the church’s four walls.

Lastly, one needs to look at how Paul focuses on a pluralistic approach to proclaiming Jesus as Lord (Act 17:23). While often chaplains serving in governmental roles agree not to proselytize, opportunities occur such as Paul’s allow the chaplain to engage others in their faith and other faiths. But, when presented, such occasions should take one back to the constructed model of what Paul preached to those who listened. Sometimes, within the construct, the reality of denomination orientation versus Christ’s supremacy can overtake the discussion. Chaplains need to remain vigilant to the core message of Christianity and allow others to discover the realities of the gracious points that Christ offered in the Gospel message. Particular difficulties result because theology does not override the chaplain’s preferences and beliefs about Christ’s realities. Like Paul and Silas, today’s chaplains may get exhausted and hungry but called on to pray and witness for God.¹⁶¹

Since chaplaincy is a ministry, no doubt integrating religious aspects into chaplaincy’s ideals does drive forth the potential of what one can do within that ministry. The ministry’s theological elements consistently prove difficult since many faith groups receive representation within the chaplaincy, including Protestants who have multiple denominations represented within the construct. The ministry constructs often need to look at the roots of our theology to show Christ’s realities.

¹⁶⁰ Geyer and Geyer, *Chaplains of the Bible*. 96

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 96.

Crick and Miller point out that the church is responsible for serving and tending to the physical and spiritual needs of the imprisoned in discussing chaplaincy.¹⁶² Chaplaincy has multiple roles and pieces that need further examination that included one neglected area focuses on theology. The theological and theoretical discussions often revolve around the debates within denominations. While theology creates general problems because of differing opinions, one cannot just forget that theology needs discussion even in the pluralistic environment. Since debates revolve around theology and prison chaplaincy, exploration of a foundation requires evaluating under the light of Scripture and coordinating with chaplaincy.

Theoretical Foundations

Theology does have a significant influence on all done within the context of our faith. Regardless of our ministry or position as Christian, the existing theology focuses more on moving one in a direction rather than firmly creating a foundation. Castelo writes concerning that Christians, and other religiously-minded individuals assume the sufficiency of generalized theism.¹⁶³ Chaplaincy does have to focus on that. The realization is that unless Protestant chaplains can articulate a grounded theology better, they fail to garner the necessary focus needed to build the body foundationally.

Robert Culver said authentic Christianity is a single thing.¹⁶⁴ In the pluralistic format of multiple denominations pointing to themselves, the foundation can quickly dissolve and, as a result, unrecognizable. Looking at the chaplaincy, Toole writes that the word *Christian* is an

¹⁶² Crick and Miller, *Outside the Gates*, 246.

¹⁶³ Daniel Castelo, *Confessing the Triune God*, In Vol. 3, Wesleyan Doctrine Series Edited by Randy Cooper, Andrew Kinsey, D. Brent Laytham, D. Stephen Long, (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2014), 3.

¹⁶⁴ Robert Duncan Culver, *Systematic Theology: Biblical and Historical* (Ross-shire, UK: Mentor, 2005): 2.

umbrella name for all who believe in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Messiah, who died on the cross to redeem the world and rose to heaven.¹⁶⁵ Certainly, doctrine plays an essential part in any believer's life. Unless one can articulate the faith basics, how can one move forward and grow deeper into the trust? Fundamental questions need to serve as a starting point for the Christian believer, especially those who serve as leaders. In all discussions, chaplains serve as leaders for their congregation and must take on the willingness to lead their community.

Interestingly, Gunton notes that "It is possible to profess Christian doctrine as a discipline ...and yet at the same time fall short of a concern to be systematic in theology."¹⁶⁶ While Abram entered a covenant with God, the theological premise focuses more on the relationship that sometimes gets neglected when discussing theology or Christ's experience. The theology often loses out to tradition and doctrine rather than further incorporating and discussing God's realities. Authority of culture and philosophy outweighs Scripture in certain mindsets. Chaplaincy does get caught in dilemmas that create tensions. According to Leinhard, tensions exist since the canon could expand because doctrine remains open. After all, no human authority can close it.¹⁶⁷ In looking at the process, Leinhard's assessment brings a variety of discussions for theologians and chaplains. Biblical jurisdiction, along with the theological implications, creates difficulties that need further discussion.

¹⁶⁵ Mary M. Toole, *Handbook for Chaplains: Comfort My People* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 2006): 5.

¹⁶⁶ Colin E. Gunton, *Theology through the Theologians: Selected Essays, 1972-1995* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2003): 5.

¹⁶⁷ Joseph T. Leinhard. *The Bible, the Church, and Authority: The Canon of the Christian Bible in History and Theology*. (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1995): 87.

The difficulty of biblical theology as a discipline has recent roots. Lernke writes that the reading of the Bible theologically as a discipline has its origins in the Protestant Reformation.¹⁶⁸ Even at the basics, theology involves studying God, as he has revealed himself in Jesus Christ and Scripture.¹⁶⁹ Just as the church reveals Christ within its settings, Protestant chaplains similarly offer Christ within their environments. Contrary to others, a few faith traditions create tensions that need discussing in the prison halls, just as they do in academia and the churches. Members of the “church” within the walls need to spend time looking and discussing such tensions to arrive at their conclusions through rational discourse.

The tensions within chaplaincy create additional difficulties if the chaplains cannot stand upon any foundations offered. Even basic tenants of the faith are dismissed in the spirit of moving towards “maturity.” Theology in prison ministry diversely affects the incarcerated and the chaplain. Chaplains usually keep a narrow view reflecting a denominational aspect of practical theology but do not engage other theologies. The chaplaincy needs to consistently remind itself that the purpose of theology for its usage in communicating to others remains paramount. Cone notes that the doxological goal is at the center of God’s revelation to man; there is no higher purpose for man but to glorify God—this is indeed man’s chief end.¹⁷⁰ If that is the case and serves as the highest calling for man, chaplains must spend their time having those they encounter in the Christian faith to work that in their own life. The agreement focuses more on the reality that the centerpiece to the faith focuses more on Christ and should remove

¹⁶⁸ Werner E. Lemke, “Theology: Old Testament,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992): 449.

¹⁶⁹ Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: Martin Manser, 2009).

¹⁷⁰ Christopher Cone, *Prolegomena: Introductory Notes on Bible Study & Theological Method* (Ft. Worth, TX: Tyndale Seminary Press, 2009): 7.

the man from the equation. While the chaplain's work involves pluralistic approaches in working with other religions, the chaplain still is responsible for their faith.

Outside influences create additional tension for chaplains working in a pluralistic environment. Many televangelists, pastors, and even home-grown Christian ministries offer prisons various materials, including newsletters, devotionals, DVDs containing sermons and Bible studies, and volunteers from their church to conduct services, workshops, and even conferences. Chaplains do not have time to evaluate all theological points from multiple organizations. Even in the attempt to define theology, multiple aspects enter the discussion. While expressing biblical-theological, Cone also acknowledged others that included systematic, historical, dogmatic, natural, and practical.¹⁷¹ Other theologies are less articulated but still prominent in today's discussion. As systematic theology and others discuss academia, those entrusted with the faith must learn to teach. As House writes, biblical theology has existed since the writing of the Bible.¹⁷²

While the chaplains appreciate the points made, the diverse theologies often create confusion in prisons because faith groups differ from other faith groups. Craaten and Jensen noted in their work *In One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity*, diversity does play an essential piece within the theological discourse. They said:

“It is easy to lose sight of this fundamental Christian truth. We may rightly celebrate diversity and difference. But diversity is easily conscripted to sinful purposes: and it is not easy to separate the diversity that should be valued from the diversity that must be deplored ... The Apostolic message does not affirm diversity for its own sake. It calls men and women of every human origin into a holy community and confers on them a new, shared identity in confession of the crucified and risen Lord. The life of the Church calls for continuous critical sifting and reconstruction of human

¹⁷¹ Christopher Cone, *Prolegomena*. 5-6.

¹⁷² Paul House, “Theology, Biblical,” ed. Chad Brand et al., *Holman Illustrated Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2003): 1581.

identity. Elements that constitute our differences must be questioned, judged, reconciled and reconfigured within the unity of the Body of Christ."¹⁷³

Many inmates come to Christ through multiple methods. Various inmates come to Christ through the chaplains, either in individual counseling sessions or through the services and Bible studies. Many forums often create problems. Sometimes, the theological premise's watershed moment makes a watered-down Gospel or, worse, no Gospel because the theology muddies up to the point that it reflects too many different theologies and nothing orthodoxy. According to Ferguson and Packer, the faiths historically confined themselves to works in defense of a particular doctrine (e.g., the Trinity), and this pattern remained standard until the 13th century.¹⁷⁴

For theology, one must embrace what they understand while at the same time remaining pliable to enter a conversation on contrasting thoughts. However, the theology often gets mired in the church or chaplaincy, even with pastors and chaplains. Instead of moving in a direction that could provide more significant insights and thoughts, ministers shift or do not necessarily embrace because they struggle with the theological mask created by other means. Barker and Carman write that contemporary American evangelicals, fundamentalists, and charismatic Protestants, while not always Calvinist in the strictest sense, share much of the legalism of Calvinism.

Once again, constructs want us to move forward in a direction that we can bring to the discussion of theology, focusing specifically on understanding theology's basics and foundations. Even with the basics, many inmates cannot articulate the Gospel message

¹⁷³ C. E. Braaten and R. W. Jenson (eds), *One Body through the Cross: The Princeton Proposal for Christian Unity* (Grand Rapids MI: Eerdmans, 2003), 27–28.

¹⁷⁴ Sinclair B. Ferguson and J.I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000), 672.

coherently until someone teaches the inmates the necessary information. If they cannot understand the essential information, they will not communicate the Gospel. When they can understand theology, they can perhaps create a helpful construct that allows the inmate to plant themselves in Christ's cause firmly. While Scripture remains vague in certain areas, Persaud points out that the traditional doctrine focuses on (1) Revelation; (2) Triune God; (3) Creation; (4) Humanity; (5) Christology; (6) Reconciliation; (7) Holy Spirit; (8) Salvation; (9) Church; (10) Eschatology—the thrust of the approach, chapter after chapter, is to see what commonalities and differences exist between Christianity and each of those religious faiths.¹⁷⁵

Even within that context, other formations can develop theology. As noted by Coetzee, the Nicene Creed offers the opportunity for the canon of Christianity to combat still the new Gnosticism (and implied other theological aspects).¹⁷⁶ Such creeds also battled Arianism, and other threats posed severe risks to the church's unity.¹⁷⁷ Such formations assist in the overall approach to stopping the New Age movement in today's society. The overarching view allows the transition of such focuses to continue looking towards the orthodoxy while moving forward. According to McGuckin, Gnosticism and Arianism have often been called the proto-heresies of early Christianity. They form two poles around which many of the confessions in this book revolve in explicit opposition.¹⁷⁸

The overarching practice of understanding theology and apologetics does create tension for the inmate. The chaplains need to teach inmates the Christian hope in Christ. For them to

¹⁷⁵ Winston Dwarka Persaud. "Articulating Christian Doctrine in the Pluralistic World of the Twenty-first century." *Dialogue in Dialog*. (2020).

¹⁷⁶ C. F. C. Coetzee, "Gnosticism, church unity and the Nicene Creed" *In die Skriflig/In Luce Verbi*, 42 No 2 (27 July 2008): 215.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, 207.

¹⁷⁸ John Anthony McGuckin, *We Believe in One Lord Jesus Christ*. Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009.xiv.

receive hope and not get tossed around, Christian chaplains must recognize the basics of Christianity and train those followers to understand the basics of the faith. The greatest need for practice is focusing on the faith basics and receiving the necessary instruction from those who can teach it. While a few can articulate doctrine, few can defend the faith and believe in a pluralistic view that combines various doctrines.

Since the focus looks at the Christian faith and Protestant prison chaplaincy to develop a theology to assist the inmates, one needs to look at the Nicene Creed, Apostle Creed, and potentially other early creeds to teach the foundation of the faith. Kelly writes that all significant branches of the Christian Church know the Nicene Creed. It is familiar to people without theological training and trained scholars through its liturgical use at the eucharist.¹⁷⁹ As a result, when looking at theology, teaching, preaching, and other points revolving around the creeds, chaplains might use them for theological instruction.

Since research focuses more on a prison chaplaincy's secular taskings, this proposal looks at Protestant chaplaincy's theology within the context of prison walls. The methods and discussions that need to follow look at the transition and ways of arriving at a common theme to teach inmates a foundational belief to move forward in their walk.

¹⁷⁹ J. N. D. Kelly. "The Nicene Creed: A Turning Point." *Scottish Journal of Theology*. 36 no 1 (January 1983): 29.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The cross-over of denominational concepts and beliefs created theological and apologetic issues because of the diversification of ideas without understanding those beliefs. Unlike churches in the community, prison chaplains recruited various individuals from the district and used literature provided by multiple organizations for inmates to operate within the Chapel context. Sometimes, this creates confusion as it may conflict with theology and apologetics already made. Further, many mainline denominations look at various organizations offering their services as anathema in the denominational context or cultic.

This thesis focused on the necessary theology and apologetics that Protestant prison chaplains need to minister to the prison population. The discussion did not necessarily focus solely on any group's denominational tendencies but instead attempted to develop a harmonious focus on specific practices based on a solid theological foundation. For this document, the Protestant prison chaplain had to look at their belief and perception to ensure that the inmates have a solid foundation for their future. This study looks at the potential theologies that exist within Protestant chaplaincy. The report examines the foundations on which many agree to learn and create a more substantial basis before discussing denominational theology. The research calls on understanding fundamental theology and the Christian perspective of specific theology and apologetics. While denominations vary in their focus on particular doctrines, the core doctrine remains the foundation for this research.

The research focused on developing different potential designs that created the foundation potentials for Protestant prison chaplains. This research established the opportunity to develop a foundational structure of the Christian faith to provide the inmates with the necessary understanding of the Christian worldview. As Scripture appropriately suggests, “But in your

hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect.” (1 Pet 3:15). If one cannot articulate the foundational beliefs in Christ, how can anything else important have a voice in the Christian faith?

Intervention Design

The intervention plan addressed the problem focusing on Protestant prison chaplains' individual beliefs and the ministry. It looked at what they provided the proper foundation of biblical theology and apologetics for their lives. The predominant focus of the plan used qualitative and action research. Hints of quantitative do occur because of specific variances within the study. To address that point, Protestant prison chaplains must look at what they unilaterally believe are the fundamentals of the faith and offer that as their ministry platform. Various forms of Protestantism within chaplaincy included “Oneness theology,” “Calvinist theology,” “Arminian theology,” “Liberation theology,” among many others. Even with the various theologies, the core foundation of Christianity and its doctrines must be contained as a part of discipleship.

Reality focused on the different theologies that conflict with others in subtle and significant ways. The focus looked at the possible consensus that most Protestant prison chaplains agree upon for future discussions. This dialogue did focus more on creating a solid foundation than assuming that the inmates have a solid foundation and know the critical elements of the Christian faith. Instead of dictating agreement between those serving as Protestants in prison chaplaincy, a mutual understanding needed to happen. Ultimately, the focus moved from denomination beliefs to a critical core set of beliefs that could assist all prison chaplains that minister as Protestant to their congregation.

From general appearances, little is written concerning theology or apologetics among prison chaplains to instruct inmates. In a critical analysis of such possibilities, inmates might have derived their theology and apologetics from various sources that sometimes have questionable origins. The focus on historic Christianity may help assist in such understanding. However, for most inmates, the study of history and how theology developed into our fundamental doctrines only happens if chaplains teach them.

The intervention plan's first aspect looked more at the three different segments that the intervention plan took. The three points involved assessing and gathering Protestant prison chaplains from the federal prison system and multiple states. Additionally, contacting those who retired from the federal and state system helped garner additional insights to facilitate deeper discussions that harness more in-depth studies. These individuals understand the system at multiple levels and for greater longevity. Several retirees understand the tensions in chaplaincy and, based on their experience, offer glimpses into strengthening the commitment to theology and apologetics. It was anticipated that approximately 25-50 Protestant prison chaplains could have participated in this research.

Confidentiality and Disclosure

Even though this project looks at some pieces of theology within the Christian framework of Protestant thought, prison chaplains represent the agency they work for, whether the state or the federal government. Each chaplain does have a sense of autonomy but is often reminded that they are workers for the government. The prison chaplain has the right to freedom of speech; they represent the agency they work for throughout the week. The researcher reminded each participant that all material received remains confidential at each research stage.

Since all attempts and aspects of this assessment take place away from their jobs, the initial survey recorded in Microsoft Forms acknowledges that each participant participating in the study will remain anonymous. After entering Microsoft Form and the study itself, the agreement will again remind that all participants in the project will remain anonymous. During the project, anonymity protects them from outside interference from their prison duties. The independent methodology will also move towards interviewing prison chaplains in different states and agencies to participate with other chaplains. This specific methodology precludes accidental unveiling of participants who participate within each state or agency to better obtain the data without cohesion.

While Microsoft Forms does not offer each participant's identity some protection, they will participate autonomously. The data provided from the program allows the researcher to ensure that the data collected includes secrecy for them. Those who wish to provide additional input and discuss the theological rationale can email an account to discuss the religious studies further. Within the context of the email, the chaplain wishing to participate further in the survey announces their state or federal affiliation so that great care can ensure that groups do not have chaplains from the same state. Similarly, exceptional attention to preventing chaplains' intermingling in a group setting will occur for the federal government since many chaplains interact with one another on many occasions.

Pennsylvania maintains strict rules and laws concerning any form of recording without the permission of all parties involved in the discussion. Participants remain anonymous throughout the process, even though specific data maintenance stays confidential even after the procedure. Pseudonyms, or if the participant serves in the military, their Call Sign, will allow each participant to have anonymity in this research project to prevent the participant's

identification throughout the research on theology. To further protect any data obtained during the investigation that may contain any identifiable points remains secured in a zipped file with a password attached. The data gets encrypted on two separate AES 128 encryption thumb drives for storing the records. Written material gets scanned, and the data collected similarly has passwords applied to its content before combining it with all other equipment.

All data from Microsoft Form comes from the web prints into Adobe Acrobat and then received a password to protect all interaction and materials. Each printing will also have a time/date stamp and website address to correlate with the research's data. The data obtained from Microsoft Form at the end of the survey gets recorded and downloaded, which will provide a date/time stamp. Each interaction, several methods of recording all material and information from participants will happen through multiple formats. The calendar offered glimpses into the work and amount of time invested with each participant or group of participants. Further, the debate of whether to record this material meets with several connotations since the State of Pennsylvania laws demand that each person know the reason and purpose of documenting the content. Each chaplain participating in the program verbally affirms and sends an email acknowledging and giving permission by getting recorded through audio or digital means.

Additionally, a composite book with notes outlines and reuses material concerning each meeting. Even though a set of questions articulate a path that the research may take, one must recognize that questions open doors to different ways. As the handbook recommends, any researcher should keep careful notes to include after-action reports during individual or group sessions. In accessing each interaction, questions arising from positive and negative interactions can provide valuable insight into the overall project success. The success also looks at the

possibility that the questions asked need to be restructured to clarify or get additional information.

All data obtained because of this research gets stored safely with only this researcher having access. The storage mechanism used will have encryption that only the researcher will know its password with no other person having access to the data. Additionally, the safe has a drawer with a lock on it. The thumb drive will get stored in this drawer, and the researcher will have the only key to the drawer.

Initial Project Framework

In the initial assessment, the plan involves using a program on the internet called Microsoft Form to gather the necessary data needed for the research and responses. The first part of the project looks at each chaplain, their denominational preferences, and their practices during their ministry. The survey gathered the number of years in the prison system, their involvement in ministries external to prison, and their chosen and predominantly practiced preaching “styles” (expository, topical, or textual). The surveys gathered the chaplain’s ministry’s historical context and showed how their ministry has grown and evolved. Other ministries, such as pulpit, hospital, law enforcement, and even missiological forms of ministry, provided ideas for the chaplain’s growth.

Since denominational preferences often create assumptions by chaplains of their theology participation theological aspect, it does not necessarily mean that the chaplain emphatically embraces that form of theology. Even though the discussion offered insights into a chaplain's track, several theologians and scholars argued that the differences between Calvinism and Arminius are slight in verbiage; others suggested that their theological premise served more as a rationale. Such discussions are needed to further the debate and discussion for chaplains to better

teach inmates about differences. Those who identify as non-denominational, affiliation, and movement will reveal aspects that help understand their overall perspective.

While preaching does not necessarily invoke a denomination or even how one believes, it provides glimpses of how chaplains offer and explain theology to their inmates. Exploring the previous six sermons preached by the chaplain gives insights into how the chaplains express and move their congregation. The investigation of sermons through titles or topics often encourages the congregants to understand God fully. Scott Gibson pointed out that preaching forms the backbone of evangelicalism to fully understand preaching.¹⁸⁰ Whether in person or through televangelism, the importance of preaching does create nuances that chaplains must face in the inmate's quest to learn and study about God.

Even though the challenge for the prison chaplains focuses on the eight most important theological or apologetic points in ministry that inmates need to understand, other positions will ultimately extend to other discourses. Even the eight points will create extra points that might be fraught when engaging others who do not necessarily agree with the facts. While the hopes are that the majority recognizes specific doctrine needs discussed in all aspects, one can realize that all prison chaplains hold a form of allegiance to their doctrinal stances.

Even though earlier questions were discussed, the focus is on how this research perceives focal points on which all stand. Since questions have distinct clear-cut issues, they reflected a continuum that one can attribute as working throughout the prison system. Yet, because some who identify as Episcopal also have a Pentecostal orientation, the Microsoft Form will take great care in identifying such practices and beliefs to interlink theological perspectives. Since a few

¹⁸⁰ Scott M Gibson. "Preaching in American Evangelicalism." *God's Word and Our Words: Preaching from the Prophets to the Present and Beyond* edited by W. Hulitt Gloer, Shawn E. Boyd. (Eugene, OR: Pickwick Publications, 2019): 190.

denominations are now integrating specific perspectives, a great focus to identify significant aspects of each chaplain and their theological modality remains crucial.

An additional focus that each chaplain provided to the discussion involved their educational experiences and work-related education that involved chaplaincy. While the federal government required a minimum of a master's in divinity or equivalent, many states' academic requirements and even private contractors differ from state to state. This focus gave insight into the chaplain's theology and biblical studies education. While education does not necessarily ensure the chaplains understand their theological premise, it indicated how they received their training. Other training such as Clinical Pastoral Education and even agency training in corrections can provide glimpses to the in-depth training necessary to serve as a prison chaplain and challenge each chaplain to look further into the depths of their service to the congregants.

Perhaps, a chaplain's chief factored in developing and promoting discipleship involves their intentionality of articulating their traditional beliefs. The difficulty revolves around the diversity of chaplains that are called Protestants. The diverse nature of Protestant chaplaincy potentially created a predicament of issues that need further examination and not just a cursory glance. To develop something from a diverse pool of people, one must recognize the various chaplains' groupings and create a program that most chaplains can utilize as a discipleship program. The solidity of Protestantism and its doctrine remained as diverse as humankind itself. This thesis looks explicitly at aspects of what may assist in developing the discipleship program. Also, the research will look at the different influences available to inmates that also build their theology and apologetics.

While each external book, external correspondence course, supported biblical institute, and Christian colleges develop and form one's theology and apologetical point of view, it offers

additional insights into creating and articulating a formal discipleship program. While one could argue the necessary attributes of moving forward, even the crucial points expressed in such creeds as the Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed offered a possible direction to better articulate Scripture and potentially direct a discipleship program.

While worship styles did not necessarily describe theology, they offered insights into how one worships. Abbreviating questions concerning the worship style and how the chaplain involves inmates revolves around the existing theology. A greater focus looks at the form of worship to create better movements towards looking at the theology in the prison setting.

The start of this survey asked chaplains if they offered a program similar to that of one offered to "new believers" in outside churches. Another area of initial assessment focuses on the educational process of each chaplain as to their degree(s), places where obtained, and external religious participation within the community. Osmer adequately points out that Protestant Christianity historically viewed the cultivation of church doctrine as an essential part of the teaching ministry.¹⁸¹ If that serves as a starting point, the question for a chaplain looked to developing their congregation that they help every day. If the chaplain offered this type of course, does it serve as a prerequisite for baptism? Additional examination of the new believers' coursework would occur in the follow-up sessions.

If chaplains teach new believers' courses, what do they correctly teach? Fortunately, chaplains created coursework but may also be borrowed from their or other denominations and churches due to the lack of time in their positions. Several chaplains may look to their denomination or obtain books on Catechism from different denominations to assist in their work.

¹⁸¹ Richard Robert Osmer, *The Teaching Ministry of Congregations*. (Westminister, UK: John Knox Publications, 2005), xv.

Still, others may borrow from the history of the church using prayers and other aspects of the councils to develop an understanding of the theology constructs that many use today in their theology.

How do the inmates learn about theology or apologetics if the new believer's coursework does not happen? Of course, the chaplain served much more than just a sermon or new believer's class. What other coursework does the chaplaincy offer to the Protestant Christian within the prison structure? In addition to the new believer's coursework, additional questions about the types of Bible Studies provided by the chaplain and outside organization receive an examination to understand the fullness and standards of the studies provided to the inmates. Multiple organizations, including the Salvation Army and Gospel Express, offer correspondence courses for those new to the faith. Additionally, what other Protestant Christian programs resonate within the confines of the institution?

While the primary focus of the thesis looks at theology and apologetics, other intersections of the examination will give a more robust overview of the chaplains. The entire process looks at the different individuals; the correlation of disparate data serves multiple roles, offering additional thoughts and exploration. Even though many develop a theological perspective because of the denominational focus, development deepens and strengthens over periods. Ministry does grow, and more significant insights will increase the theological aspect of the minister.

Further, this assessment looks at the volunteers who enter the institution, their denominational orientation and the number of times they come into the institution monthly, and the length of time they are at the institution. In part, this looks at diversities for inmates participating in the various activities offered in the Chapel. Each volunteer does bring in their

church to the inmates. The focus seems more on who comes explicitly into the institution. The discussion looks at the volunteers as to whether they are explicitly providing ministry to a specific congregation (Hispanic, Creole), frequency of interaction, types of volunteerism, types of studies involved (Bible studies, Bible conference), and even the length of the survey.

Also, the survey explores the type of incoming literature from the various religious organizations that the department allows and for inmates to take for their personal use. This exploration could include publications from Kenneth Copeland Ministries, Charles Stanley's In Touch Ministries, Joyce Meyers, David Jeremiah's Turning Point Ministries, the Assembly of God, Church of God, and Decision Magazine, in naming a few, to include the number of each publication entering into the institution weekly, monthly, or yearly, along with the number of publications donated to the institution. The wide variety of material offered by each often creates confusion about the theology since a few that enter into the institution come in with denomination perspectives to include Baptist, Southern Baptist, RHEMA and its affiliates, Lutheran, and multiple other organizations. Since this literature potentially drives theological perspectives offered to the inmates, chaplains need to evaluate this material to determine the various types of theology introduced into the institution.

An additional question revolves around accepting donations and who approves the materials overall. At the end of the survey, a further problem focuses on how each chaplain estimates they spend on counseling, administration, volunteer supervision, and work, whether they prepare sermons at work or home. The amount of time they estimate they spend in preparation. As the last portion, the survey will request a home email address to participate further in the study as a means of contact with the participants in the next stage. While laws preclude the stopping of publications, for more profound questions concerning the articles and

ever-shifting thoughts on specific topics on Scripture, are chaplains prepared to adequately from a theological framework to work with inmates when questions or particular suggestions are brought up in discussion?

Part of the examination does focus on the role each chaplain offers within the construct of prison ministry. The difficulty sometimes lies that the reality of administrative duties plays great importance in the day-to-day routine in any position. Many chaplains must do other tasks such as visiting special or restricted housing units and conducting other groups within their duties. Such duties bring out additional discussion on theology and the search for meaning. Further, how does this affect the timing and preparation element for the chaplain when interacting with the inmates. Even though these are additional questions, they can also assist in developing a deeper understanding of the theological needs of the inmate.

Lastly, within the context of Microsoft Forms, to start the discussion, each participant at the end of the survey offers the top eight points that they believe serve as the most important approaches for Christian thought in theology and apologetics. These are individually focused, and this serves as a starting point to talk further regarding issues and theology within prison chaplaincy. Also, the options provide areas for the chaplains to better articulate their positions concerning the viewpoints that they bring to the table.

In examining the top points, the focus did not look at how each chaplain prioritized the eight but rather the number of theological and apologetic issues noted and the frequency. Several possibilities recognize that this specific point of the project might glean many additional problems. Still, the number of participating in the project was slightly less than anticipated. Even though the survey attempts to have chaplains prioritize the importance, the overarching point looks at each chaplain's influence in their theological construct.

Since multiple studies before this study focused more on the duties of prison chaplains, one can reiterate the focus to engage in this process. In the research and specifically the survey, this project utilized Microsoft Form to look at data conducted. Microsoft Form offered several valued points that assisted in preparing and creating quick data points to look for additional research. Various points center on the reality that multiple tasks that are non-religious exist for the prison chaplain to deal with on an everyday basis. The use of this method permitted the participants immediate access to the research.

Further, the data needed interpretation and explanation based on the collected information. Microsoft Form also offered the ability for the researcher to look closer at the data collected to garner some research conclusions. The literature's data provided ideas of how others within their specific denominational viewpoints looked upon particular topics.

The questions posed in the survey through Microsoft Form continued to serve as the hard work of examining the data collection. Microsoft Forms' testing ensured that the program works and detects errors or incomplete data. Microsoft Form also created the ability for participants to contact the researcher about questions or problems they had with the survey. This survey examined and showed the researcher that a participant had completed the survey.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

In a variety of ways, the research for the project started. Developing contact points for both retired prison chaplains and those who oversee the prison chaplaincy at state and federal levels began to establish aspects of communication. The material in this research points to stakeholders who care about the programs for chaplains in each institution that disseminates the material to Protestant prison chaplains. An attempt to reach out through email and telephone contact with at least 15 state prison administrators and the federal administrator allows each

agency to start the process, if any, with each agency. The administrator's readiness to assist with the project and get the materials out to the Protestant prison chaplains remains paramount and, without agency approval, may prove difficult. Also, it is the hope that those who also serve in the position of overseeing the prison chaplaincy program participate if they identify as Protestants who previously served as prison chaplains.

Once the IRB had approved the research, the intentional focus concentrated on getting materials out to garner Protestant prison chaplains to participate in this forum. An abbreviated email or social media connection was sent to potential candidates outlining the project's purpose and a link to the survey. This researcher was hopeful that this project could at least garner between 25 to 50 chaplains from a wide range of denominations and experiences.

The criteria for evaluating this project focused more on the number of participants from a diversified group of chaplains rather than having one or two significant subsets (i.e., Southern Baptist and Assembly of God). One question involves shifting attitude over time from the start of their chaplaincy to the current time. This focus on mentality does not have a comprehensive examination of the project but instead looks at each prison chaplain as they evaluate themselves. Perhaps, other research focusing on this specific point offered glimpses of shifting positions in the future.

Further, since this project does not appear to have any prior research, expectations in the overall evaluation of this course recognized that certain doctrinal stances that many hold close influence the overall project objectives. Some hope in the focus on this project should suggest that the overarching values are constant across the denominational lines. But, to approach this belief, one must remove their prejudices from the project before entering the plan.

While the project focuses on assisting Protestant prison chaplains in presenting a more uniform ideal of theology in general, much of the data developed can also assist in the further development of the diverse viewpoints brought into the discussion. The theological foundation for prison ministry is not precisely the same as the purpose of prison ministry.¹⁸² The difference did exist and was part of the research. While Protestant prison chaplains entered into their ministry with their own denominational beliefs and practices, one question focused on their continuation within the denomination they were ordained under or the movement in a different direction because of the views or practices.

Furthermore, maintaining a relationship with the mentor significantly impacted the researcher and the project. In multiple discussions with pastors obtaining their DMIN degrees, one crucial point cited by most of them involved their relationship with the mentor throughout their thesis/dissertation. This relationship allowed the researcher to work through the study with more clarity as time progressed. The direct relationship with the mentor served as a catalyst for the researcher to share frustrations, surprises, and multiple other emotions that happened during the research.

The data evaluation offered the foundation for additional questions to the prison chaplains. While chaplains considered denominational aspects of their theology, several chaplains' views shifted while serving as a chaplain. It did not change their pursuit's or denominational perspective but gave a more significant factor to their own theological and apologetic practices. In a secondary arena, the researcher interviewed some chaplains who participated in the survey to garner potential thesis possibilities outside the current study realm.

¹⁸² Linda Lee Smith Barkman. "Towards a Missional Theology of Prison Ministry." *International Journal of Pentecostal Missiology* 5 (October 2017): 38-53.

This project remained focused on the topic at hand but created additional thoughts for discussion through some questions.

Since the inception of this project, only certain realizations have happened by looking at this approach. One glaring issue that resulted from the start of this project is the little to no discussion about unifying belief in prison chaplaincy among the Protestant faith denominations in literature. Some prison chaplains would argue that the problematic aspect should also focus on realizing that certain denominations that traditional Protestant religions recognize as cults are also grouped in the category of Protestant in prison chaplaincy. While many unknowns exist and are relatively new to the discussion, it should help forge additional studies and analyses into the future. The debate needs to occur at multiple levels to inject Christ in the discussion from a view that causes one to “work out their salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil 2:12).

Attempts to examine specifics about the faith served as a starting point in the discussion. Other research can encompass external formats to prison chaplaincy and perhaps chaplaincy in general. In finding the data, if it exists, perhaps cursory comparative glimpses between the two can serve as the crux of examination. Other data derived from the material focuses on the material that inmates do use over time while incarcerated. Part of this discussion looks at content types that the institution receives during a month that chaplain places into the hands of the inmate. Another question that might need evaluation focuses on the entire theology of the mailed-in material compared to the acceptance by prison chaplains. These are issues for additional research since this project focuses on the agreement between chaplains on theological and apologetics discourse.

The setup of the overarching program started on the first day of the project. When the IRB approved the researcher to start this project, an email was sent to each known chaplain to

disseminate to the field. Also, this researcher requested that this project be further sent to additional chaplains with the hope of obtaining other chaplains within the denomination to assist in the research and obtain different candidates.

First Data Point: Background of the Chaplain

The first subset focused on the person in the study and garnering the necessary information to gather the permission and information concerning the participant participating in the survey, including their email address, and offer consent to conduct a video or a recorded telephonic interview them later. This subset did not derive more information than permission to complete the survey and hopeful follow-up reviews. The follow-up interview focuses on possible future research topics for others to bring to the table.

Additionally, the second data point examines the roles that the chaplains had involvement in during their ministry. After consent, the apparent focal question looks at whether the chaplain served as a chaplain within the system. Additionally, the survey looks at who endorsed them when they served as a chaplain. Also, the survey will examine the ministerial roles that the chaplains were involved with before entering into prison ministry as a chaplain. Though it could continue today if the chaplain retired, an additional subset focuses on the number of years the chaplain served in prison ministry and the number of years they ministered outside of prison ministry.

The secondary subset focuses on the overarching demographics of the participant. Prison Chaplains ascribed to a specific denominational belief, but as with any organization, Protestants involve many differ denominations, but many chaplaincies desire prior experience in other roles as a pastor. Each denomination provides the necessary “permission” to allow the person who seeks chaplaincy to become a chaplain. Chaplains entered organizations (e.g., Jubilee Ministries)

to provide chaplains to facilities while also providing reentry programs for inmates reintegrating into the community. Entering chaplaincy and any specific areas of chaplaincy presents an idea of their movement into working through to the point that creates the fundamental concepts of how one might arrive at their theology.

Further, the reflection of spiritual maturity involves more than just knowing the Bible but living out the Scripture in their lives. The questions include many common questions, with a few looking further into the practices of the prison chaplain. For the first part, the Microsoft Form questions look at these specific points that examine the participant's overview. A few questions offered to gather the information concerning that participant outside of the email address included

Have you served as a Protestant prison chaplain in the military, the local/state/federal government, or in a government-contracted privately owned facility? The prison chaplaincy operates as a government or within governmental entities. Privately-owned facilities offer many of the same purposes as federal and state facilities. Even though private facilities were designated for a specific purpose (e.g., Immigration Naturalization Services), others also serve as halfway house and juvenile justice facilities. Even though several privately owned facilities, government connections remain vital.

What denomination did you belong to or are currently endorsed with as a chaplain? If you are not presently supported and no longer served as a chaplain, which organization endorsed you when you served as a Protestant prison chaplain? Protestant prison chaplaincy involves multi-denominations and does not solely rely on one denomination or even a set of denominational beliefs. While diversity does exist in Roman Catholicism, Judaism, and Islam, sure tenants allow them to remain unified in the practices of the basics of their faith.

Protestantism remained unified in certain beliefs and diversified in other beliefs and practices. Labels such as progressives, fundamentalism, and evangelicalism connect focuses of the denomination. As Porterfield described, "Protestant" referred to protests for reform within the Roman Catholic Church."¹⁸³ While many scholars and theologians wrote on the focus of Protestantism, arguably the bottom-line practice focuses more now that this group does not relate to likewise to Christian Orthodox, Judaism, Islam, or other faith groups. The general term for most Protestant groups mainly focused on a fundamental faith in Jesus Christ, His Deity, and the death, burial, and resurrection.

Perhaps the more significant reality for prison chaplains needs to focus on the chaplain themselves in their existence before becoming a prison chaplain. The question posed looked at the history of the prison chaplain before becoming a prison chaplain. Even within that context, the real questions revolve around the prison chaplain's formation before entering prison chaplaincy. The question still revolved around how much time they spent in their formation years before prison ministry and how long they were involved in prison ministry. While the length of ministry does not necessitate any expertise, it does offer a glimpse into the possible passion. While this does not explore nor involve itself in this aspect, burn-out occurs in prison ministry just as it occurs in the church setting.

While education itself does not reflect theology, theology does teach through education. Education does not necessarily mean that those who receive instruction in the schools necessarily believe wholly in the theology provided by the school. Several use their schooling as part of the formation to develop their own beliefs. Theology and even apologetics can inform how one lives

¹⁸³ Amanda Porterfield, *The Protestant Experience in America* Greenwood Press, Westport, CT. 2006, xiv.

out their faith. As Packer would eloquently advocate, historic Protestantism finds truth in the teaching of canonical Scripture. He would cite 2 Tim 3:16 as God-breathed, inerrant, and knowing the will of God for salvation while at the same time providing clarity.¹⁸⁴ The clarity of such points has created a more progressive Protestant faith, moving more away from the historical practices of the faith.

Second Datapoint: Available Materials Offered

The second data point focuses more on the activities and available materials offered within the prison context. Checkboxes for each of the possible ministries are made available for each chaplain to check along with areas to include additional materials. Most magazines and booklets are very denominational and include such faith practices from the Baptist perspective to the Pentecostal perspective. Other materials obtained from various organizations can include devotionals (e.g., Daily Bread) and news-related materials.

Because of the diversity of monthly, quarterly, semi-annual, or even annual material, various materials are immediately recognized (e.g., Decision Magazine) because of the person attached to the magazine. In contrast, a few are from lesser-known ministries (e.g., Loaves and Fishes, Footprint Magazine). Even though certain magazines offer particular theological perspectives for others to grasp, one must study and ensure that they fully understand the whole doctrine. The Church of God Evangel, out of Cleveland, TN, offers perspectives from the beliefs developed by the Church of God. Similarly, the Pentecostal Evangel publishers come from the Assembly of God. In both, they provide the necessary doctrinal statements from both faith

¹⁸⁴ James I. Packer. *Concise Theology: A Guide to Historic Christian Beliefs*. Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publisher. 1993, p. 17.

groups. So, theology and apologetics develop from our readings and education in many ways.

Several offered various products to the inmates, including such publications as:

1. Loaves and Fishes by Lighthouse Ministries.
2. Victorious Living – Kenneth Copeland Ministries
3. Victory – Kenneth Copeland Ministries
4. Prison Fellowship Newspaper
5. Footprint Magazine
6. Pentecostal Evangel
7. Church of God Evangel
8. InTouch
9. Turning Point
10. Daily Bread
11. Decision Magazine
12. Everyday Answers (Joyce Meyers)
13. Other

While there are many other magazines and booklets, these materials are encountered in prison ministry. On one website, over 40 different potential resources exist for prison ministry.¹⁸⁵ If one searches through Google or a similar search engine, they may find under “prison ministry materials” approximately 2.8 million results.¹⁸⁶ As noted earlier, many ministries offered prison ministry material. So, even with the other category listed, one can still forget some that could potentially fall within this category.

Further, multiple reference points concerning the types of correspondence courses are made available to the inmates in this section. Again, similarly, numerous forms of correspondence courses exist for the inmates to take part in to understand Scripture from a

¹⁸⁵ The website www.prisonministgryresources.com served as the reference point. There are multiple other sites that also offer links and resources on their website. This serves as only one example.

¹⁸⁶ A web search using Microsoft Bing revealed the necessary details provided for this discussion. The search was conducted on October 23, 2021 utilizing “prison ministry materials.”

specific view. While there are many, Google offered about 6 million results relating to correspondences courses.¹⁸⁷ The correspondence courses offered in many institutions include:

1. Gospel Express (Goshen, IN)
2. The Emmaus Road Prison Curriculum
3. Christian Jail Ministry
4. Crossroads Prison Ministries
5. Exodus Prison Ministry
6. Rock of Ages Ministry
7. Other

Further, because this section focused more on the inmates, the focus also looked at the worship service offered within the confines of the institution. A few questions focused on the following points for worship:

1. How do you describe your regular worship services? (Contemporary, Traditional, Liturgical, Gospel, Holiness, Spirit-Led, or mixed)
2. How many attend your worship service each Sunday?
3. How long does your service last?
4. How much time do you dedicate to music?
5. How much time do you dedicate to the sermon?
6. Do you have Bible Studies before service or somewhere during the week?
7. How many attend your service?
8. How often do you conduct the Lord's Supper?
9. Do you offer a New Believer's course for those who recently came to Christ?

Also, the chaplain's denominational history served as a critical point through this survey and project. It reviewed the personal application of the chaplain does play a more significant role in the focus of theological development and their ministry. Several chaplains did not always have the denominational discussion in their denominational start. Though the Microsoft Form survey will measure this, a general question about multiple denominational experiences happens in later contexts.

¹⁸⁷ A web search using Google revealed the necessary details provided for this discussion. The search was conducted on October 23, 2021 utilizing "prison Bible correspondence courses."

These can start as the launching point for the remainder of the project. While mixed research creates difficulties because of the multiple locations and answers created, research can still garner the issues of importance and give facts and insights as to why chaplains suggest those matters of concern. Before this data point, the data points collected can be translated into different graphs and bars. This research goes beyond the bars and charts found in many surveys; one can also recognize the importance of many future use points.

Many correlations offer glimpses of what one provides overall, recognizing the multi-faceted points to look at all data. Even though theological issues serve in the minority, validation helps build upon the discussion. Depending on the ability of chaplains to discuss such matters, each chaplain should spend no more than three hours per chaplain individually or in a group. Several exceptions may occur, and this coursework does offer a few people the opportunity to examine each point.

Third Data Point: Theological Context

The third data point looks more at what scholars and others researching chaplaincy may examine for future topics. Outside of discussions concerning the broader institutional issues that chaplains face each day, few studies existed external of just prison. This thesis's specific data points explored other problems that may affect the prison chaplaincy but could include other chaplaincies. Even when looking at the chaplaincy, it does present its problems within the denominational structures. Most chaplains operate outside the church setting and are sometimes estranged from the denomination because of the distance between a home denominational church and their work and home. Others are estranged because their denominations are smaller or not operational in their minister area.

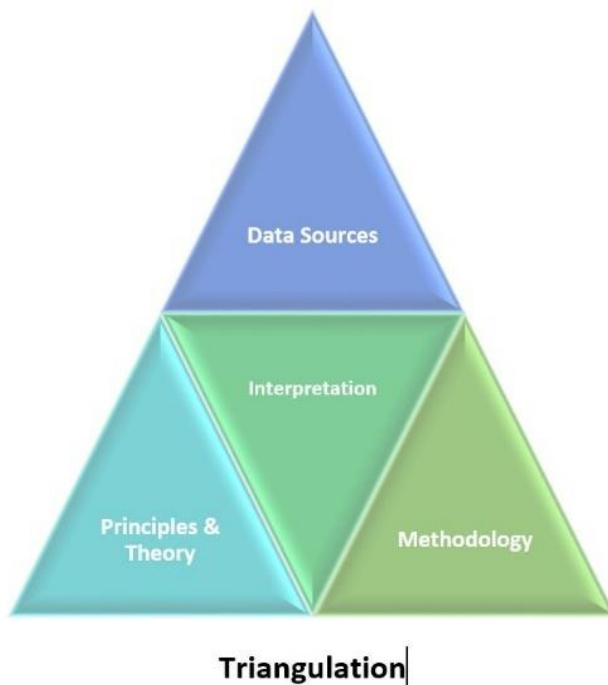
Other areas looked at the accountability of the chaplain within the context of their community while they are off-duty. Further, the fundamental points looked at the need for supporting the Protestant prison chaplains away from the prison grounds to rejuvenate and continue validating their ministry spiritually. The Protestant prison chaplains desired to communicate their passions and continue having more profound relationships with fellow believers outside of the walls. Additional

The point also looked at creating a higher learning atmosphere hoping that the inmates could learn and understand more about their faith. While inmates have a conceptualized idea of their faith because of others, many theologies come from outside influences that assist and drive them in the direction that ultimately moves the person away from a solid foundation and into a dangerous syncretism of religious beliefs. While denominations vary from group to group, many point to a concrete set of ideas that most Protestant churches universally enjoy. Many cite the educational process as an essential part of their integration into society. Does the process offer inmates a more critical move towards theological understanding and practice in the faith?

Data Triangulation

We must also recognize the triangulation that one develops through research and other matters in looking at these materials. The environment that exists in this project involves data triangulation. Even though Figure 1 offers a visual through a healthcare perspective, many similarities exist between this project and the triangulation data developed. While this project surfaces as a new venue for study, the methods and the focuses of principles and data development offer much interpretation. The data sources (Protestant prison chaplains) for this project will provide glimpses through surveys (methodology). Theology clarity or the attempts to

directly relate to theology focuses more on the principles. Chapter five offers the interpretation of the data developed throughout the project.



*Figure 1: Triangulation*¹⁸⁸

Summary

This chapter focused on the overarching approach of looking at the theological points to look at prison chaplains. The data points and sets offered glimpses of the necessary steps to ensure that the overriding focus remains on the concern and causes one to look at multiple other existing issues that move our theology in different directions. How can a discipleship program get established if Protestant chaplains cannot develop a coherent plan that many can agree? Ecumenism and pluralism do not serve as the foundation. Unless chaplains can agree upon a foundational approach for discipleship, theology and apologetics of the inmate(s) might move

¹⁸⁸ Matthew Miles, A. Michael Huberman, and Johnny Saldan “Triangulation” *Qualitative data analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*.

away from Protestant Orthodox understanding, and potential heresy will enter into their thought process. Robust theology needs to create stability for inmates serving sentences within the institution's confines. Each inmate can fully experience Christ on a solid foundation rather than a weak ecumenical point. Unless prison chaplains can work and focus on the essential part of the Christian faith in each believer that comes to Christ in prison, then the secular aspects of the world will win out instead of the transformational power of Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

While many former or current Protestant chaplains responded to the survey, it created angst for one chaplain who declined to participate. The former chaplain who refused to participate in the survey reported that, in fairness, they had not been involved in prison ministry for over 30 years and thus believed that it would not provide valuable data for the ministry on the whole. The former chaplain thought that as a result, she may not remember critical data that might be beneficial to the survey as the ministry performed now is in a local parish and may confuse between the two ministries and provide inaccurate data. The other former or current Protestant chaplains participated in the survey, understanding that this research would facilitate future discussions concerning discipleship, theology, and apologetics. The primary focus of this research focused more on whether prison chaplains teach discipleship to the inmates and what methods they used to disciple them. While the survey hoped for 25-50 Protestant prison chaplains to participate, only 16 responded, with one declining to participate.

First Datapoint: Background of the Chaplain

Of the 15 who responded, three were women, of which two served or currently serve in a supervisory capacity at one point within the prison system during their career. Of the men who responded to the survey, nine served in a supervisory capacity. Seven of those who performed the study currently work, while the other eight have retired from their respective system. Only eight chaplains participated in the second questionnaire that involved looking for additional materials that included chaplains, to include prisons chaplains in future research, one from the state system and four from the federal system. In this research, one served as Chief of Chaplains; another served as Assistant to Chief of Chaplains in the federal system. The highest one surveyed in the state served as a chaplain who supervised programs in the Department of Corrections.

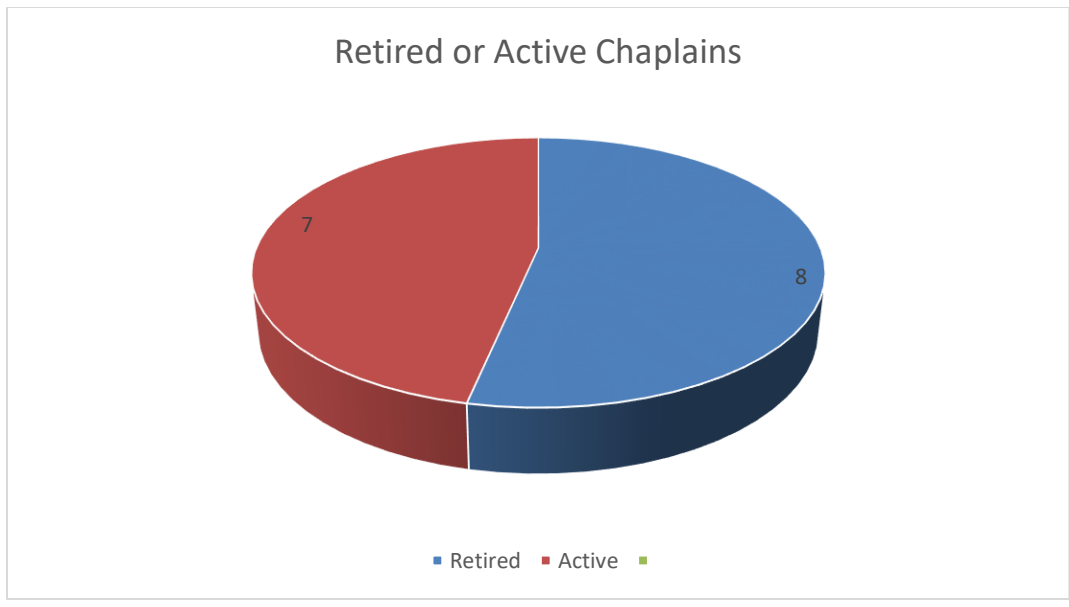


Table 1: Retired or Active Chaplains.

The representation of faith groups potentially needs expansion as some faith groups represented a more significant point in the survey. Of those chaplains surveyed, the minority groups include one from the Apostolic Oneness Church, one from the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Presbyterian Church, and one from the Anchor Bay Evangelistic Association. Several more established denominations such as the Anglican, Episcopal, United Methodist Church, and the Lutheran Church received no representation. The lesser-known Anchor Bay Evangelistic Association does not subscribe to larger denominations but evangelistic doctrines. In the survey, only one chaplain served in a contractual role with the State, while all others served as full-time chaplains at one point and time with the state or the federal government.

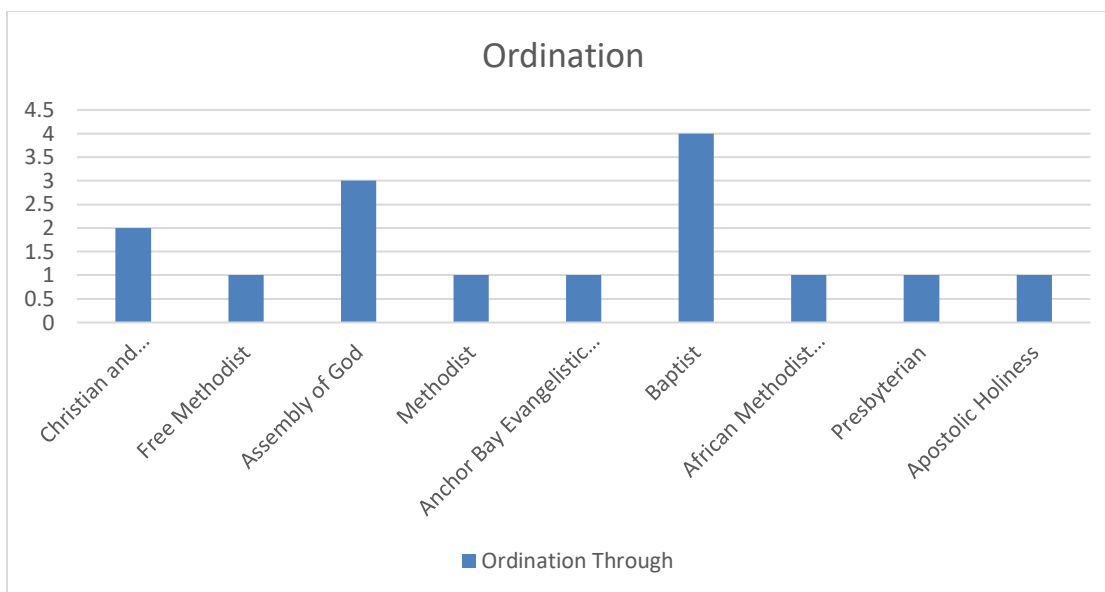


Table 2: Ordination

Within the representation, ministry in prison by those surveyed average 19.9 years, with one serving only four years and two having more than 30 years of experience. The one with the least time in prison ministry currently serves as a chaplain. Another chaplain now serves as the Department Head with only six years of experience. While leadership serves as an essential point in ministry, the crux focuses on multiple factors of why one person is chosen over another person. Program Statement 3939.07 states that the chaplain needs two years of ministry experience, while CPE may substitute for one year.¹⁸⁹ While ministry requirements vary from state to federal government, and even within the federal government from one entity to another, prison chaplains often work in multiple settings within the prison walls.

Outside prison ministry participation, the chaplains averaged 15.5 years of experience. Many who enter prison ministry retire and return to church ministry. Several who served in the federal government must retire at 57 unless they receive a waiver. Most exceptions are generally

¹⁸⁹ Program Statement 3939.07, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons, *Chaplains' Employment, Responsibilities, and Endorsements*, Washington D.C., October 26, 2001, 6.

granted to hard-to-fill positions such as Islamic, Roman Catholic, or Jewish chaplains but can also get extended to a particular Protestant chaplain. Most chaplains must enter into the BOP by 37 to meet the retirement age.¹⁹⁰ Interestingly, each state varies in retirement age and thus creates a problematic issue when discussing the time and endurance of prison chaplaincy.

An exciting dynamic does play out between the average years between the federal and state chaplains. In comparison, the active federal government prison chaplains were 12.75 years. No retired state Protestant prison chaplains participated in the survey for this research. Similarly, outside of prison ministry, the state chaplains served 17.33 years, and the active federal government chaplains served an average of 13.5 years. While the survey did not have any retired state prisons chaplains, more significant shifts could result from the numbers.

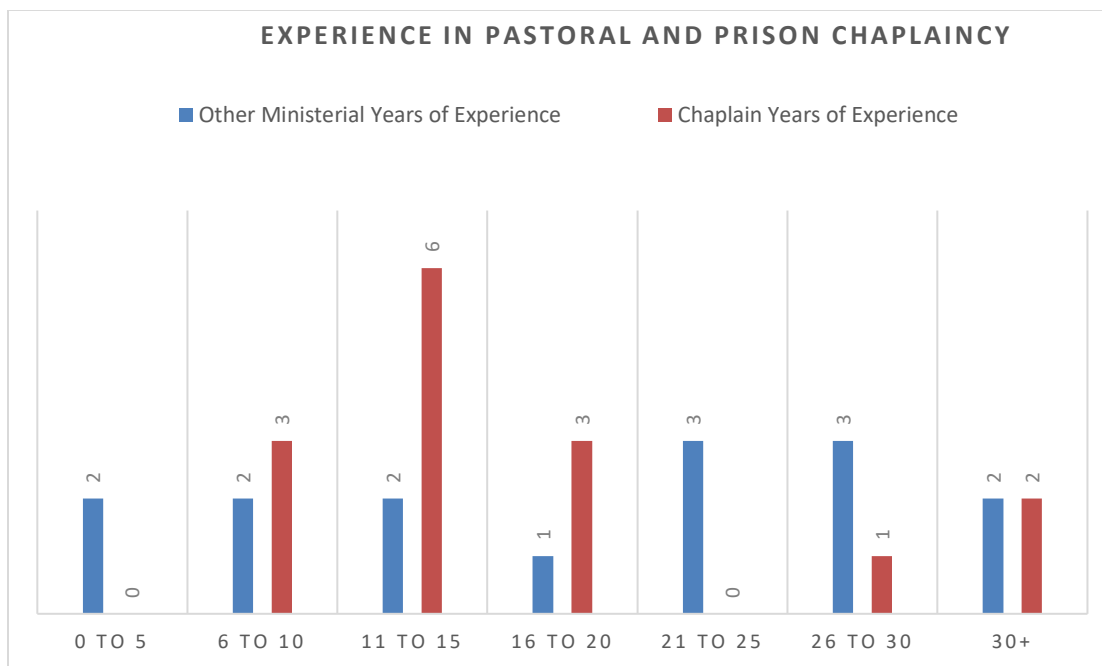


Table 3: Experiences in Pastoral and Prison Ministry

¹⁹⁰ Program Statement 3939.07, 4.

Interestingly, eight stated that they served as lead pastors in a local church before serving as prison chaplains. At the same time, seven noted that they acted in either a military or hospital chaplaincy role. While the survey did not look at the amount of time each chaplain invested in other ministry roles, those roles often play a role in later ministry. Perhaps, another review should focus on the number of prison chaplains who ministered to inmates before entering prison chaplaincy. The respondents' roles included various parts within a pastorate, two as missionaries, and three noted that they acted in different capacities before joining prison ministry.

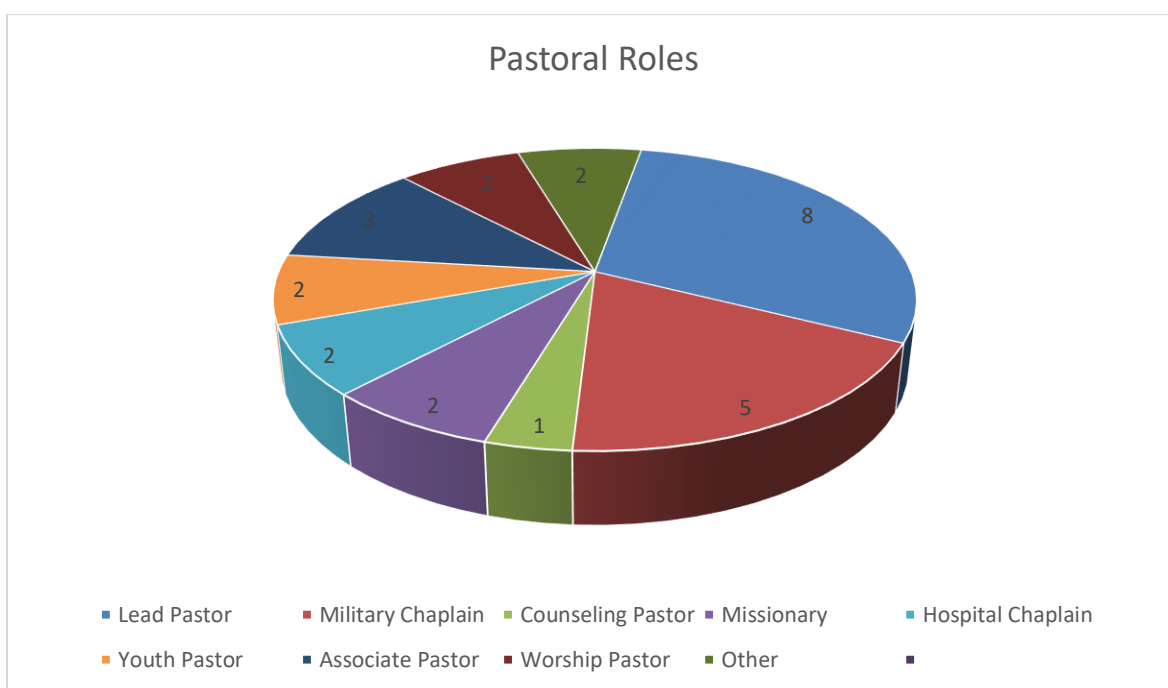


Table 4: Pastoral Roles

As for the federal government, specifically the Bureau of Prisons, other requirements to include an ecclesiastical endorsement from the respective denomination served, in part, as the suitability of the applicant, that the applicant has no legal or moral basis for serving, their support, and the ability of the candidate to minister to all faith groups.¹⁹¹ In a few states, such as

¹⁹¹ Program Statement 3939.07, 6

Oklahoma, little is written in their program statement concerning the complete requirements for the chaplain. The Department of Corrections website for the state of Oklahoma in which they cite Education and Experience requirements at this level consist of a master's degree in divinity, theology, or religious education along with three years of professional-level experience in the clergy, and an endorsement from the individual's respective faith. The substitution to the requirements offers equivalent education and experience by substituting one year of professional-level experience in the clergy for every year of the required education.¹⁹² Even though this inquiry does not focus on the requirements of chaplaincy, it does show the differences between federal and state government concerning requirements. Each state varies as well, but this is not the crux of this project.

The education level of the chaplaincy varied, but most did have at least a bachelor's degree. One chaplain did not have religious education but obtained a certificate through Prison Fellowship in Prison Chaplaincy. Of the chaplains surveyed, all but two chaplains had graduate degrees, with two having Doctors in Ministry degrees. For the Bureau of Prisons, candidates must possess an earned bachelor's degree and a Master of Divinity degree, consisting of 90 hours of graduate study from an Association of Theological Schools (ATS) accredited residential seminary or school of theology, or have earned the equivalent educational credits.¹⁹³ For the states, regulations differ from state to state in their educational requirement. While several had their Masters degrees, one of the chaplains did not have a degree in religious studies but instead had a bachelor's degree in engineering. The one who had their degree in engineering cited that they received certification on pastoral ministries through an external source.

¹⁹² Chaplain II: Programs/Kate Barnard CC, Oklahoma City, Recruitment #170918-Z52B-I06, accessed September 16, 2021, <https://jobapscloud.com/OK/sup/bulpreview.asp?R1=170918&R2=Z52B&R3=I06>.

¹⁹³ Program Statement 3939.07, 5.

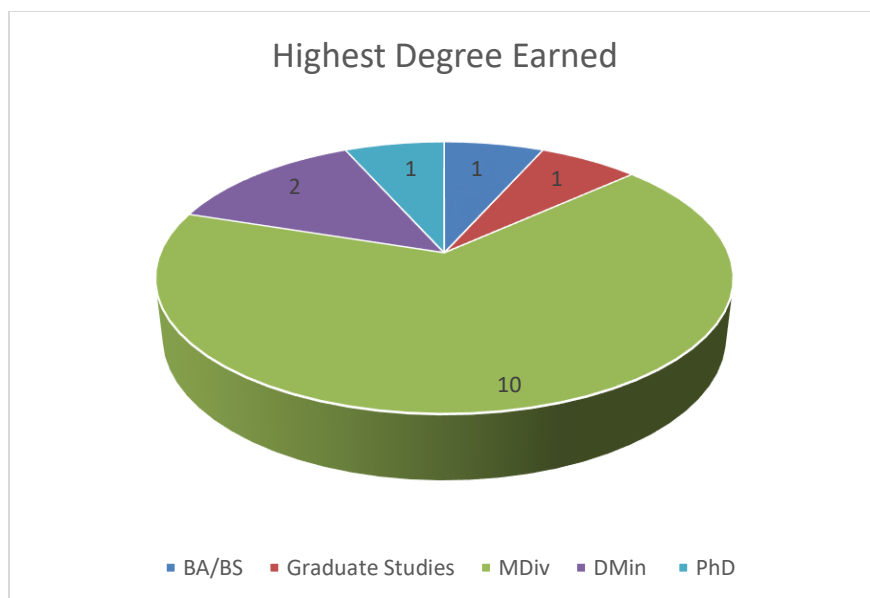


Table 5: Highest Degree Earned

The research of prison chaplains split between the fact that they were currently or retired as prison chaplains. The dynamics of such young retirement ages for numerous federal employees create the opportunity for a more extensive list. Of those surveyed, only 20 percent served in the state system. The remainder of the chaplains served or had served with the federal government. Interestingly, only four chaplains who worked with the federal government were still there while all others were retired. Three serve as supervisory chaplains of the four active chaplains working for the BOP.

In ministerial duties, the majority of the Protestant prison chaplains cite spending most of their time on administrative tasks. The nearest secondary time chaplains note spending time focused on counseling, with approximately 26 percent mentioning that as part of their duties. Other points mentioned include housing unit rounds, worship preparation, volunteer services, and discipleship. This point confirms other researchers' notations about what prison chaplains generally spend their time doing except for discipleship. While counseling appears as a distant second, the real focus should look at everything in the chaplains' duties and the varying roles

chaplains serve within the system. Even breaking down the activities in administration or elsewhere could offer glances into the depth that a chaplain takes during their duties. Outside of the mention of discipleship, very little focused on the reentry practices provided through the chaplaincy.

As previously noted, prison chaplaincy wears several different hats. While numerous mentioned that they spend more time in the administrative process of prison work, churches may believe chaplains often do not respect the original work in their ministry to inmates. At the same time, Protestant prison chaplains accommodate the religious needs of other faith groups without necessarily leading or participating in the respective faith groups' worship service. A reflection of what Protestant prison chaplains offered did show that they were accurately involved in reentry. Still, they also kept with the faith by providing Bible studies worship and even conducting rounds through the special housing units within the facility.

They also cited that they provided counseling which numerous pastors offer within the local church. While it is not understood what each chaplain does, the indicators suggest that chaplains perform similar duties as those serving in the church. What was interesting pointed in the direction of those currently leading worship services? Only 12 positively affirmed that they were involved in worship services in that response. Additionally, only 11 Protestant prison chaplains confirmed that they were involved in Bible studies. Only three chaplains did not conduct the Bible studies, and one did not answer the question.

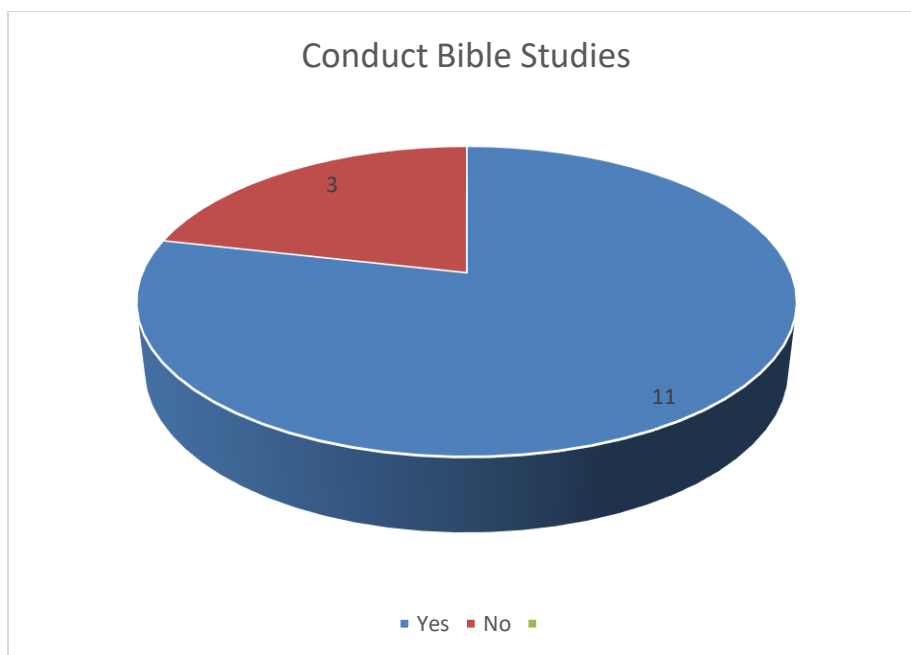


Table 6: Conduct Bible Studies

Second Datapoint: Available Materials

Concerning the literature available to inmates in prison, most chaplains responded that the prison provided *The Daily Bread*, a quarterly devotional. The only chaplain who reacted negatively, thus not permitting the survey to reach a full 100 percent, stated that each chapel had a library. So, this specific devotional could have registered 100 percent, but for this work, consideration must reflect precisely how the respondents responded to the survey. So, in reviewing the remainder of the literature, this one respondent may cause shifts in the numbers. The closest literature mentioned after *The Daily Bread* was *Decision Magazine* and *Prison Fellowship Newsletter*.

While literature remains available to the inmates, other groups offer more than leisurely reading materials. Several organizations provide Bible studies that allow inmates to learn more about theology, doctrine, and Scripture. While there are different types of studies, the most offered Bible study comes from Prison Fellowship. Prison Fellowship provides multiple

programs to the inmate population. Its founder, Chuck Colson, served federal time for offenses stemming from Watergate. It was during his incarceration that Colson surrendered to Christ. When he was released, he started prison programs to help inmates with their current situation and offer studies about the Christian faith. He even extended his ministry to apologetics and provided a counter-message to a secular culture.

While Prison Fellowship actively works with inmates in various ways, other heavily mentioned groups that the chaplains identified with also have correspondence courses that enable inmates to participate. Because Prison Fellowship does have a significant influence in all prison locations with inmates, it does not mean that they are solely used by the prisons or even by the inmates. Several “Bible schools” offer correspondence courses for degrees and certificates of completion. Nine chaplains said their prison offered Bible correspondence courses to the inmate population. Several places offer correspondence courses that can lead to degrees, several accredited and others not accredited. While it remains generic as to the exact courses, 60 percent of the chaplains expressed that they had this specific course offered within their institutions.

While multiple groups offer multiple correspondence courses, inmates remain aware of the different correspondence courses from outside groups. While the survey provided only a sliver of possible correspondence courses, the listing provided only a glimpse of what serves as a diversification of the different Bible correspondence courses available to the inmate population. Various general courses offered received little or no notations in the research as the prison chaplaincy program provided.

As for the types and styles of services offered in prison, the survey provided different styles. Most of the respondents stated that the kind of worship offered within their institution was contemporary. While 73 percent responded that contemporary worship served as their primary

form of worship style, other styles mentioned include Gospel at 33 percent, mixed and traditional as different types offered. One chaplain even differentiated by pointing to they used gospel music for the service but did not extend the discussion further. Another stated that Gospel was used mainly in the services but alluded that they used other forms of music and styles to accommodate all kinds that potentially the inmate would show interest. While shifts occurred in the worship styles of the church, questions revolve around whether the chaplain's style comes into play or whether the worship style existed already in prison before their arrival.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the average inmate service attendance among the chaplains was approximately 129 inmates. Several chaplains reported that they had attendances of 200-220 inmates per service, while one chaplain noted that their attendance consisted of only 50 inmates. A different motion that may prove more complicated, the real question should focus on the percentage of inmates attending compared to the number of Protestant inmates identified at the institution. Another question could have focused on the number of inmates attending compared to its size. While those are other discussions, institution sizes vary due to its mission, size, and responsibility, the diversity of religious beliefs similarly do as well.

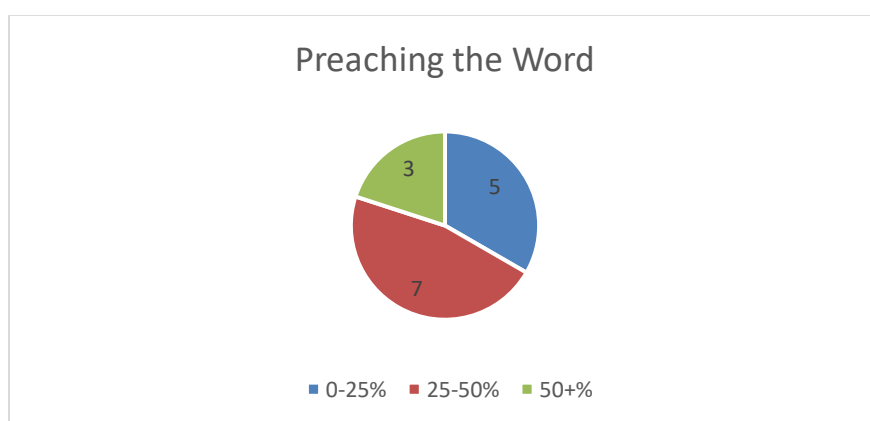


Table 7: Preaching the Word

In citing John Calvin, Horton states that “[I]t is certain that a Church cannot be said to be well-ordered and regulated unless in it the Holy Supper of our Lord is always being celebrated

and frequented....”¹⁹⁴ Protestant prison chaplains serve communion as part of their licensure/ordination requirement. While the celebration of the Lord’s supper varies in frequency from church to church and denomination to denomination, 80 percent of the chaplains stated that they offered communion monthly, with the other 20 percent doing it quarterly. Is weekly, monthly, or even quarterly appropriate? In his examination of the frequency of communion, Peterson perhaps articulated the matter more succinctly than others by stating that it should happen in the church more frequently.¹⁹⁵ Regardless of stance, each chaplain surveyed offered the sacrament of communion for the inmates.

COVID-19 affected the dynamics not only in a variety of countries but also in the prisons. Before COVID-19, Protestant prison chaplains offered two to eight forms of services, Bible studies, and teachings. Yet, numerous prisons went into a “lockdown” that curtailed various activities that included religious programs. As a result, chaplains innovatively constructed other means to deliver services to their best. As noted in multiple articles, COVID-19 case rates are higher and escalating much more rapidly in prisons than in the US population.¹⁹⁶

Most chaplains stated that they offer Bible studies to the inmate population. Bible studies are essential aspects of growing in the faith but do not reflect or challenge the notion of “making disciples.” The types and length of the chaplain's Bible studies did not receive any further

¹⁹⁴ Michael S. Horton, “At Least Weekly: The Reformed Doctrine of the Lord’s Supper and of Its Frequent Celebration,” *Mid-America Journal of Theology*, 11, (2000): 147.

¹⁹⁵ Josh Peterson “Sharing the Lord’s Supper: Finding Fellowship and Love in a Sacramental, Communal Meal.” DMIN thesis, Liberty University, 2020.

¹⁹⁶ Brandon Saloner, Kalind Parish, Julie A. Ward, Grace DiLaura, and Sharon Dolovich. “COVID-19 Cases and Deaths in Federal and State Prisons.” *JAMA*. no. 324(6), (August 11, 2020): 602.

examination. Interestingly, 20 percent of the chaplains did not provide Bible studies for the inmates. That does not mean that they were not interested in offering studies. Either duty precluded them from doing such, or volunteers offered enough studies to prevent additional studies.

Various chaplains cited spending approximately 25-50 percent of the service delivering the word. In a closer examination of the responses, those who expressed that they spent 25-50 percent of their time benefiting the Word cited that there was one to two hours spent in services. Even when looking at the 50 percent or more, one mentioned that they only had an hour for worship which meant that less than 30 minutes focused on music, prayer, and announcements. While it was not further discussed as the type of ministries offered within the context of services, such as Sacred Dance, inspiration readings or statements, and a milieu of other possible pieces introduced and used in services.

No worship lasted more than two hours from those surveyed. Most respondents noted that their services last one to two hours, while 20 percent indicated they offered only an hour. The institution's safety and security typically dictate how, when, where, and what the services will consist of on a typical day. The chaplain's experiences and the chapel's worship style will often remain intact, but that varies from institution to institution.

The crux of understanding and providing future discussion for the research revolved around this question. Do you, or did you offer a "New Believer's Discipleship" study? A total of eight chaplains cited that they did provide a form for this study to the inmates. While 12 offered Bible studies, only eight suggested offering a discipleship program to the new believer. Of the respondents that stated that they did not provide a Bible study to the inmates, two indicated that

they did offer a new believer's study. So, even though two chaplains stated that they did not provide Bible studies, they spent time offering discipleship to the inmates.

In considering the entire process, only 50 percent of the chaplains who offered a Bible study provided a new believer's analysis of some sort to the inmates. Of the respondents, nine answered whether one adopted or created their own "New Believer's" program. One respondent stated that they did not offer such a program but then responded that they adopted the study from others rather than creating their program. Five chaplains responded that they adopted their discipleship program from others rather than creating their program. Perhaps, a good follow-up question focuses more on whether the chaplain that reacted negatively to offering and then responded on adopting a program should get asked whether it was offered for each inmate in a self-study in the adoption of the program. Such questions could generate whether they also utilized correspondence courses of their choosing that allowed the inmates to develop a better program of discipline in their own lives.

Interestingly, those chaplains responded negatively stated that they would not create any curriculum for a discipleship program. While it was not fully discussed or explored, perhaps the chaplains recognize that other studies could benefit discipleship. Rather than "making" disciples, each inmate could already respond and "make" disciples themselves; specific cautions need to remain in place one inmate over another in prison. Perhaps a more excellent question that needs exploring focuses more on the ability to create and carry out discipleship programs within the prison without giving any primary authority to the inmates.

Third Data Point: Theological Context

While this thesis focuses more on the discipleship of those inmates who come to Christ and will continue to do so, one question that often needs more reflection from pastors and

chaplains focuses on shifting theological viewpoints while serving as ministers. The majority of the chaplain responded negatively, while two of the chaplains did not answer the question. So, based on the answers provided by the chaplains, their view of the significant theological essentials did not change. While the responses equaled 100 percent, which suggests no chaplain changed their view of theological essentials, the two who did not respond could ideally ask the fundamental question of whether their views shifted over time.

Even though the essential theological essentials did not change, only 60 percent of the chaplains remained within their original denomination. The next question showed why each chaplain remained in or transferred into their current denomination. The most significant number of chaplains, 33 percent, stated that they were raised in the denomination and continued serving it. After that point, all other chaplains cited various reasons for serving in the denomination they ordained in or their rationale for transferring into the denomination.

One interesting point for transferring into the denomination came in one's response. In the reaction, the transfer focused on the fact that they welcomed women in the ministry. The ordination of women remains a hot topic in various denominations, even extending to the Roman Catholic Church. Various Christian academics point to the continued historicity of the church(es). As written by Cheryl Haskins in her discussion regarding the ordination of women in the Roman Catholic church, "historically the Church has maintained that priestly ordination cannot be validly conferred on women."¹⁹⁷ She would later point out that Paul's writings indicate that women were qualified and capable of holding leadership positions.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁷ Cheryl Haskins "Gender Bias in the Roman Catholic Church: Why Can't Women Be Priests?" *University of Maryland Law Journal of Race, Religion, Gender and Class*.3 no 1, Article 4. (January 2003) 100.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 102.

The denomination's historicity and citing Scriptures such as 2 Timothy to continue the discussion against women ordination remain in the forefront of current ministerial talks. Even within the Southern Baptist denomination and others, the debate continues in scholarship for both sides. This one aspect was very interesting for the chaplaincy since this chaplain ministers to women and quickly falls into the area of Scripture (Titus 2:3-5). While this offers more debates and scholarly determinations, this specific issue continues to exhibit difficulty across the board.

While this was one of the reasons, another reason focuses on the slight doctrinal shifts between the denomination the chaplain was in and the one they served now. None of the chaplains noted any theological changes on the essentials; a few do leave their denomination because of moving theologically on certain aspects to a different modality. In this case, the chaplain also offered their reason for transferring to emphasize biblical preaching and missions.

Other chaplains offered differing viewpoints about their rationale for serving within the denomination. While one cited their relationship with the local church, another stated that it was not a denomination that they chose but instead through a relationship with a church that they decided the denomination. At the same time, it was a minority for a rationale as to the chaplains choosing their denomination; the role of the local church does have influences on how one chooses a potential future calling. While the largest group of respondents cited their upbringing in the church, two responded not necessarily in their upbringing but their relationship with the church and its relationship to them. When 40 percent of the respondents cite their relationship with the local church or their upbringing, the impact does navigate the reality of how the church can play an important role.

One of the respondents even gave a journey of their arrival to the denomination they served. In their experience, they were raised in the Lutheran church, entering into several denominations before finally settling on the denomination that they ultimately served for in chaplaincy. The diversity of chaplaincy also involves a diverse group of ministers who has their story and calling that led them to become Protestant prison chaplains. Most Protestant prison chaplains represent all groups, but within their group, they come from all backgrounds to create a formation that ministers to all Protestant inmates.

What were the chaplains' appreciations for their former denominations? One cited that they appreciated the denomination's drive for missions yet, as they were concerned that in appearance was that missions were only "foreign." We all must attempt to present ourselves as Christ would desire the presentation, even in appearances. In practice, the citation of Matt 28:16-20 offers the most extraordinary insight into the focus of mission work. Another verse used for foreign missions is Acts 1:8. In that passage, it says, "But, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Another chaplain pointed out that there was not much to appreciate about their old denomination. The chaplain pointed out that the denomination was "what I grew up in." When they came to Christ, there was nothing to keep them in the denomination. When several convert and enter their relationship with Christ, they realize that the denomination they are involved with may have various problems. To counter that, one did say that they had an excellent denomination that had biblical worship and their relationships. Their decision to transfer was more about the theological application and their relationship with the local church.

For most, the transfer of denominations did bring about positive points about how the denomination can interact and assist the chaplains transferring into the denomination. One cited that the transfer created a more personal relationship and a deeper understanding of Scripture. Even during one's education, we can develop a deeper understanding and knowledge of Scripture. The chaplain adds that it also increased their view of God's purpose, mission, and His love for us. For several chaplains, the focus was on the study of the Word. One even cited that during COVID19, the transfer of denomination created a new zeal for the Word of God.

The majority of the chaplain surveyed attend services with their denomination at the local church. One did not respond to the question, but 66 percent cited that they do get the opportunity to participate in services at a local church. Of those respondents, 80 percent of the chaplain survey stated that they attend a church of their faith group that they were ordained in as part of their continued practice of the faith. Of the other 20 percent, one ordination comes from an evangelistic organization. Another comes from a congregational group that only meets in certain areas and does not live where the congregation meets. The other chaplain who completed the 20 percent cited services in another church because the local denominational church has multiple problems. The survey did not pursue a discussion on the "problems with the church."

The Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed were used to determine if these specific creeds could get used as part of a "New Believer's Class." In the first question focusing on the Apostle's Creed, 87 percent of the chaplains stated that they hold firm to the Apostle's Creed as part of doctrine and theology. Of the two who responded negatively, one cited that their issue with the Apostle's Creed was Catholic dogma and ultimately involved the Trinity. The others who reacted negatively to the survey did not explain why they believed it could not be used as part of theology and doctrine.

In the second part of the question on the Nicene Creed, most responded in the affirmative of holding firm with two objections and one non-response. In a similar response, one cited the problem with the Trinity and mentioned it as Catholic doctrine. Again, as with the first, the other respondent who stated that they could not respond in the affirmation did not respond. The real question focuses more on their studies' formation for those in ministry.

The next question focused more on the teaching from the Apostles and Nicene Creed. Only 14 chaplains responded; 42 percent answered they taught from the Apostles and Nicene Creeds. Interestingly, while the majority of the chaplains taught the Apostle's Creed and Nicene Creed, they did not instruct from it. Still, several chaplains acknowledged incorporating them into their discipleship class. Again, one did not offer answers regarding any of the questioning, and two that negatively responded remain negative for all aspects of the creeds.

Another question that served as part of the discipleship process looked at the importance of the sacrament (e.g., baptism and communion). In that question, 93 percent of the chaplains cited that they did teach of the importance of such practices, with one chaplain citing that they did not do it. But, the chaplain who stated that they did not do it responded affirmatively that this part was essential to teach.

Lastly, the survey ended with the focus on whether other points outside the creeds and sacraments could be included as part of the theology and apologetics to mature the inmate's faith. Of those surveyed, one-third of chaplains stated that a discipleship program could add more than this project addressed. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents said they needed additional information to develop a theological and apologetic faith program for inmates. Forty percent felt that the materials discussed could offer the inmates enough to start a solid discipleship program. Upon that examination, the survey concluded in the first phase. The

second phase focused on issues that face the prison chaplains, especially those serving as Protestant prison chaplains.

While looking at the percentages, the real question focuses on Protestant prison chaplains' difficulties overall. Because of the diverse groups and theologies that chaplains have within the Protestant faith group, a significant problem still focuses on articulating a general Protestant viewpoint with different Protestant groups involved, even with chaplains. As noted in the survey, several concerns come from the disconnecting with the Roman Catholic Church and its doctrines. While it is essential to articulate a shift from a specific point developed during the reformation in a challenge, it is much more necessary to discover the attitudes critical to focus on the possibility of having the form of unification towards a theology of discipleship.

In the second part of the survey, again voluntary, over half of the Protestant prison chaplains participated. The survey looked at previously noted discussions but extended beyond to note potential research topics for future thesis and dissertations. Prison chaplaincy has little written, but other chaplaincy programs have not received appropriate research or discussion.

Over half of the chaplains surveyed initially participated in the second portion of the survey. While questions provided several expected answers, other answers deserve further discussion, perhaps even beyond prison chaplaincy. While a few questions focus strictly on the prison chaplaincy, others led into a debate that needs to extend to the chaplaincy in general rather than just prison chaplaincy. Further discussion of this topic will occur in the conclusions of this project.

The relationship between education and the potential for inmates' return to prison seems essential for education. The importance of education, not only for the benefit of the inmates but also in understanding Scripture and even functioning in society, remains vital. However, in

prisons, chaplaincy often can only offer non-accredited schools as a part of the inmate's educational process. In the survey, all chaplains who had any form of an educational process in prison offered it through unaccredited resources and correspondence courses. Even one related that the idea of Bible college and the offertory of studies was a great idea, but the idea came up after he retired.

Others reported using non-accredited courses as building blocks that serve as a "New Believer's" coursework. One chaplain said they used The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI), a four-year curriculum program good for a certain number of credit hours at several Christian colleges. The chaplain points out that they average 12-16 students at any given time, and the courses last approximately ten weeks from the appearances of the website, TUMI affiliates with Prison Fellowship too.¹⁹⁹

Another chaplain reported using non-accredited schools affiliated with the Baptist and other non-denominational groups. The chaplain wrote that he also had an accredited course of study offered by the Apostolic Oneness faith group. While the chaplain points out that this coursework offered is accredited, it was not stated by whom, nor did they provide the name for the organization. While these programs are offered, they admitted using other discipleship programs with the inmates. Another chaplain cited an accredited school linked with the Southern Baptist Church. Further, discipleship programs included the Purpose Driven Life series and a series created by Dr. R.C. Sproul.

¹⁹⁹ For those who are interested in this coursework, background information, costs, affiliation, and other aspects of The Urban Ministry Institute, they can find it on the website www.tumi.org.

Another chaplain pointed out that they used Evangelical Training Association (ETA) as a mechanism even though it was not necessarily accredited.²⁰⁰ They noted that they could only go through the entire curriculum once, with five inmates ultimately graduating from the program. According to the website, it serves as a Bible Institute and teaches a variety of programs that can lead to a certificate. According to the website, 18 books serve as the curriculum coursework.²⁰¹ The coursework offered has no accreditation in the sense of collegiate recognition. The chaplain believes that this curriculum strengthened those who participated because it required reading, attending classes, and taking tests. At one point, she showed the completion notices for four of the inmates who participated in the program

Another activity that one chaplain offered to the inmate to participate in utilized books written by Cloud and Townsend, and Les Parrot. Additionally, they found two books by Terry Nance, entitled *God's Armor Bearer*, that they used to work with inmates so that "they could flourish" in their environment. The chaplain acknowledged that they currently explored new programs through the Prison Fellow organization, which COVID-19 delayed.

Several chaplains expressed that they utilized multiple methods and ways to stay accountable in discussing accountability to the respective denomination. Several chaplains reflected on the reality that within their denomination, they are not necessarily asked to perform or assist in doing things within the conferences. Several expressed that they felt like they were second-class citizens within the denomination.

²⁰⁰ Evangelical Training Association's website (www.eta-world.org) affiliates with Wheaton College. The organization resides at 1551 Regency Ct., Calumet City, IL 60509.

²⁰¹ Evangelical Training Association. Accessed at <https://www.eta-world.org>. accessed on November 25, 2021.

Chaplains also acknowledged that they remained accountable to their local church, district, and denomination. One pointed out that they were responsible for their local district leaders, especially their endorsers. Others have also expressed that they have created hosts of authorities, relationships, and support structures to maintain accountability. Interestingly, one reported that a separate endorsing agency within the denomination made an additional layer of accountability. Further, this chaplain also related that they maintain responsibility through their working relationships with their supervisor and professors in their continuing education degree. One even acknowledged that they were accountable to those they ministered to each day they went into work. Another avenue expressed by chaplains was developing networks that allowed them to remain responsible and serve the inmate population. One even pointed out that their accountability started at the institution, in which they were accountable to those who supervised them.

Summary

While much discussion focuses on the experience of the chaplains, the topics and questions revolved around the aspects of discipleship which often do not receive the necessary examination by others that it should for the benefit of developing and maturing one in the faith. The discussion focuses more on the real issue of what might need to happen for more of consensus of chaplains to look at the inmates to develop them holistically and mature them simultaneously in the faith. While education was discussed, other things such as Bible studies and even volunteers assisted in growing the person. The reality focuses on helping the Chaplains, whose time seems precious, work with others to develop a curriculum that all chaplains can use in the prison setting. Yet, this still may prove difficult because of the diversification of such practices.

Additionally, Protestant prison chaplains and perhaps, chaplaincy, on the whole, works within a profession that needs to remain accountable to God, oneself, its constituents, and the denomination and subparts thereof. The relationship with the endorsing body varies from chaplain to chaplain and denomination to denomination. The crux remains that chaplains have developed other methods to stay and stay accountable because the office of chaplaincy (pastor) serves others, not oneself. Relationships form deliberately and do take work throughout their time.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

For this thesis, the focus was not necessarily to create a new discipleship program but on examining the difficulties in Protestant prison chaplaincy and, in general, chaplaincy itself. In Protestantism, issues are difficult to discuss because of the diversity within its confines. While Roman Catholics and Orthodox groups worship very similarly and abide by very similar theology and doctrine. Most Protestant Christians operate with an equal doctrine but disagree in other areas of doctrine. This project started the exploration and framework of looking for the possible truths of Protestantism in a united front among denominations. The project further looked for potential agreements in developing a discipleship program for those who come to Christ in the prison setting.

Along with that, chaplains must fully understand the entire process of doctrine, especially that which they embrace and grasp. As noted by Tom Oden, doctrinal formations employ different conceptualities, thought structures, languages, and symbol systems.²⁰² The purpose initially sought to determine if agreements could offer a possibility of creating discipleship programs with a unified front of theological understanding. Instead, it shows that Protestant remains a term of diverse faith groups that operate from a word etched during the Reformation period.

The first focus starts with looking at the general approach Protestant chaplains take upon entering the prison. In an available library search conducted on October 30, 2021, on the Liberty University library website, only 129 books and 6.728 journal articles appeared under “discipleship programs.” The limitation of information in studies focuses mainly on

²⁰² Thomas C. Oden, *The Living God: Systematic Theology, Vol. I* (San Francisco, CA: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 322.

governmental interests. Even chaplaincy's social good creates a vacuum in understanding the theology, doctrines, and even adaptation to the pluralistic formation of Protestantism. Even though discipleship formation derives from such practices, the Protestant faith needs to develop the approach and work in spiritual formation to develop further those who enter the Christian faith.

Few discussions exist outside of governmental role expectations and inherent roles of prison chaplaincy. Rarely discussed are theologies by Protestants. It does not necessarily mean that the talks have not occurred or been researched. Theology and the terms derived, expectations, concern, and even Scriptural annotations often work within the denominations. The Protestant prison chaplaincy needs to look harder at and more focal discussion on the rationale and belief system of the Protestant prison chaplain's theological belief system. It is expected that differences can and do exist between the various Protestant groups. While reviewing the data from chaplains, even within similar or exacting denominations, differences exist. Experiences translate from other backgrounds.

Though the research focused more on prison chaplaincy, perhaps a more profound study on discipleship programs offered in the local churches needs to be explored. Additionally, the attitude of lead pastors, on the whole, and other pastors and lay ministers in the church on the discipleship program could also receive additional research. The question revolves around the mandates of "making disciples." If the local church did not necessarily implement discipleship programs within the local church, then does that further translate that because those programs were not conducted in the church, they could also not appear in the prisons under their leadership. Perhaps, a fundamental question revolves around "should we return to the basics" in the seminaries and colleges and develop a deeper discussion on such programs.

A larger question, reflective on Dr. Elmer Towns' books, should focus on looking at the church, alluding to the fact that "a growing church can give a well-rounded ministry to the total needs of Christians."²⁰³ Pastors and the church must examine the fullness of ministry and ask what ministry is in the eyes of those pastors. A more significant question still focuses on the attitude one has towards discipleship and its application to the inmates and the general church. This question did not receive adequate attention during this project and is worth future study and evaluation in the church and the prison. Additional discussions need to revolve around the formation of the chaplain from their prior pastoral roles.

Another fundamental question focuses on the chaplain's prior and current spiritual formation. While not pursued further, 40 percent of the Protestant prison chaplains changed denominations. What changed or why did they readily seek a different denomination was not readily clarified. One noted that it was the denominations' acceptance of them into the ministry. One stated that they were raised within one denomination and later jumped through several denominations before finding comfort in their current denomination. Several chaplains discussed slight denominational differences that ultimately jettisoned their departure to a new denomination they were comfortable within the practice. Several articulated they were satisfied with their denomination, with one even saying that they embraced their faith even more now than before the transition. Additional studies surrounding the "whys" of transitions do need examining, along with the dynamics of how changes can create new passions for those in ministry and chaplaincy. The study of denominational transitions by ministers before or after entering ministry would provide additional insights into the church's ever-evolving practices and

²⁰³ Elmer Towns, *Equipping Disciples, Books 91*. Retrieve from https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/towns_book/91. 80.

even chaplaincy. Various pastors believe that their denominational and theological stances promote a larger question. Other questions need to focus on their ministry's fundamental questions and how they reflect on historical and biblical perspectives.

The length of time chaplains are involved in ministry does not necessarily change their offering of discipleship programs. While this specific piece was not a focus for the chaplains in their prior ministries, this topic needs additional exploration for future points. Chaplains are an arm of the denomination as they minister to inmates. Volunteers could lead discipleship programs in the church, not the ministers. For the chaplains, a possibility exists that they can have volunteers lead discipleship programs that they approve of for the inmates. The exploration did not consider the amount of time dedicated to other pieces of the chaplaincy, even though the majority admitted that administrative tasks took a large portion of their time.

Denominations and organizations provide literature free of charge to prisons. Literature from these organizations readily provides inmates provided glimpses of theology and doctrines. The availability of literature shows that the inmates are exposed to a wide variety of doctrines and theologies that allow them to select what they want exposure to in their lives. While devotionals offer glimpses of belief, the diversification of such products was exhibited in the choosing of literature that the chapel offered the inmates. The devotionals' popularity by chaplains showed the need for Bible reading and stories to reference the task. From the appearance, it does point those chaplains extend out the idea of Protestantism to come from different angles to provide materials to the inmates.

A wide variety of literature served the different institutions interviewed. Chaplains appear to have diverse literature available from the Protestant faith groups that donate to the chapel. While it would not have a denominationally focused group specifically, various materials

reflected a little from liturgical-like groups while others were from Pentecostal-style groups. Particular materials are often associated with the “prosperity” Gospel message. While debatable, chaplains remain true to their pluralistic offerings. But even in the offering of diverse literature, literature offered a more specific context of biblical understanding.

Three of the institutions offered Answers in Genesis since they provide a move for a move to moving more to a close look at the Genesis account, especially those from chapters 1-10. Certain materials focused more on prison life and the transformation of those incarcerated (e.g., Yard Out, Prison Fellowship). Chaplains articulated that more publications were offered to inmates but neglected to mention what they provided. The real challenge and focus need to look at what chaplains may appreciate in what chaplains offer the inmates reading material. The real focus needs to look at the inmates to determine how much theology they derive from the readings and what they read. Just how much theology the inmate derives from their readings and understanding of hermeneutics serves as a vital point for future research.

Within the realm of worship, music plays an integral part in the worship service. While it was not surprising that the diversity in "worship styles," classification, music, and the type of worship play an essential part in the overall connection with the inmate population. Ron White writes, “After being in church music for 40 years, I think both sides need to change in worship wars. Contemporary music tends to be theologically and technically simplistic, loud, and selfish. Roughly the same could be said of traditional music: boring, relying on a repertoire of 20 hymns, “we”-centered, and increasingly shallow in theology. For both, the temptation is to entertain rather than point people to the triune God.”²⁰⁴ The focal question looks more at how the different

²⁰⁴ Ron White. *Christianity Today* (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today International, 2009), 54.

music plays a vital role than the traditional part of the music. Further, how does the chaplain view the theology of music regarding the style of worship offered to the inmates?

While it did not surprise the wide variety of worship styles, new questions arise as to whether or not the chaplain continued the traditions from previous chaplains or implemented the worship style themselves. Similarly, those who transition from congregation to congregation in the local church may need to ask that question. Does the chaplain(s) agree or disagree with the formation of worship within their current community? The real question focuses on the stylistic forms of worship as one believes. Even in everyday concepts, the real focus is on the overarching approach to developing the worship style that helps each person worship. Notably, in the response of one chaplain, the description was “hard to say” but alluded to the contemporary worship service. One did offer glimpses of a mixture to reach out to all within the congregation.

Additionally, once normalcy returns to the institutions and their ability to conduct worship services, an additional study regarding worship services, attendance, and even the style of worship could differ. Will worship styles change, continue in the same direction, or have a mixture of other worship styles to serve a more pluralistic environment? While dynamics may suggest a downward trend, a real focus should look at the ratio between attendance and population. Certain institutions could have downward population trends due to less court activity due to the COVID-19 restrictions during the pandemic. If chaplains changed the services, what do they look like, and how did it help or injure the worship?

Interestingly, two chaplains only offered it quarterly within the realms of communion, whereas the remainder offered it monthly. The question for most revolves around how the chaplains see the importance of communion. As noted earlier, some look and say that it should be a weekly reminder of the last supper. While this author believes in communion's essentials,

the focus should look at what was brought by the chaplain into the prison system. Also, how much of it revolves around their training and experience denominational arena. Communion does resonate with great importance through weekly observations in the Catholic, Orthodox, Episcopal, Anglican, and Lutheran groups. While not often reminded of in the practice of communion, denominations must remind themselves that “the Lord’s Supper is related to the past by its link to the Passover.”²⁰⁵

Fundamental questions need additional dialog focusing on ministerial reality. We need to understand how pastoral development develops spiritual formation or discipleship for themselves and their congregation. While prison ministry offers much uniqueness, does the local church translate to the prison ministry? Additionally, can one create a neutral, non-denominational discipleship program that most chaplains can agree with and allow their volunteers to offer something in that effect? It appears that in ways, that might not happen because of even the disagreement within the denominations themselves. Other factors play into how the church interacts with one another, but chaplains need to formulate plans to develop further those professing in Christ as Lord and Savior.

Various discussions looked at the burnout rate of ministers but did the school focus more on the academics rather than the realities of ministry. Questions revolve around whether the college and seminaries genuinely prepare their students for the actual preparation of formal ministry. Perhaps, a more outstanding question focuses on the calling to chaplaincy as a move away from church ministry to enter into chaplaincy. Do several chaplains have the call to prison ministry, or perhaps their escape from local church ministry? For prison ministry, all had a

²⁰⁵ R. C. Sproul, *What Is the Lord’s Supper?*, First edition., The Crucial Questions Series (Orlando, FL: Reformation Trust, 2013), 15.

Bachelor's degree, while others had Masters degrees, along with a few having doctorates. While chaplains are highly educated, we must ask if it translates to the field. While it was not surprising that chaplains receive an excellent education, the real questions should have focused on what they would view as needed learning to become better prison chaplains or just chaplains.

Even concerning chaplaincy, the field of chaplaincy remains diverse. Prison chaplaincy only represents one aspect of ministry offered by pastors outside of the local church. While most chaplains served as lead pastors of the local church, several gained their experiences from military and hospital chaplaincy. Specific additional questions need to revolve around the prospects of seminary and its value to the ministers who attend. Does the college or seminary prepare the pastors to perform their duties realistically, or does "higher education" ill-prepare those entering the profession? This question serves as a continued fluid question of balancing what one learns versus the practicality of academia in focusing on ministry. While it is essential to meet the requirements actively needed for the academic realities of education, the application of such education needs to translate to the occupation. For others, chaplaincy looks more towards the hospitals and military than smaller chaplaincies such as prison and corporate.

Another arena that needs further discussion should look to inmates to fully develop their theology while incarcerated. While this may take time, they are unaware of how one can defend their belief in the faith they have in Christ. How do they believe in Christ, and maybe a larger question focuses on protecting their faith? The reality focuses more on the need to define discipleship as a whole. What exactly is a disciple in Christianity's context, and how do we develop a discipleship program and continue to mature in the faith. If Protestant prison chaplains fail in the prisons, are we forgetting the church? Multiple questions revolve around whether we,

as the church, fail or succeed in doing the task of making disciples or just leading one to salvation and doing nothing further with the individual.

While a few offer the aspects of discipleship, “that discipleship is becoming and being a flourishing follower of Jesus.”²⁰⁶ Questions must reflect as to the direction discipleship should take in teaching followers. The reality in understanding the facts of discipleship goes further than a few are willing to note for their lives. The critical point is that the call is radical; the responding commitment must also be radical.²⁰⁷ As pastors and even more critical Protestant prison chaplains, are we creating that extreme Christian, or have we not become radical for Christ? Discipleship, as will emerge even more clearly as Matthew proceeds (cf. 10:34–39; 16:24–25; 19:29; 20:26–27), involves self-denial, service, suffering, persecution, and perhaps even death.²⁰⁸

The difficulty revolves around the entire word discipleship. The art of discipleship extends beyond having the ability to connect. What are the New Testament discipleship patterns that join us to the “teachings and practices of Jesus and his earliest disciples with the life of the earliest church?”²⁰⁹ The art of the story does cause us to realize that the connection to discipleship remains. Whether in prison, in the hospital, or even in the church, discipleship needs to happen so that one can fully understand the grace provided by God. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ Darrell L. Bock et al., *NT176 The Gospel Message in the Early Church*, Logos Mobile Education (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2016).

²⁰⁷ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, vol. 33A, 218.

²⁰⁸ Donald A. Hagner, *Matthew 1–13*, vol. 33A, 218.

²⁰⁹ Craig Blomberg, “Review of Patterns of Discipleship in the New Testament Edited by Richard L. Longenecker,” *Themelios* 23, no. 2 (1998): 71.

²¹⁰ James Leo Garrett Jr., *Systematic Theology: Biblical, Historical, and Evangelical*, Second Edition., vol. 2 (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2014), 384.

If we cannot work harder at communicating discipleship at all levels of ministry, do we fail in our primary objective?

While this only looks at the Protestant prison chaplaincy, the real question focuses more on the reality concerning the hard work of ministry. The truth needs to focus on the existence of discipleship and the necessity of its need within the church. Discussion concerning the “lordship” and “salvation” discussion of discipleship must contend with issues and intentionality with the people, whether in the local church or elsewhere. Even in the debate, the real question is, “what can we offer that will disciple others for Christ?”

Even in the discussion of creeds, the Nicene creed remains essential for developing the Christian doctrine and practices. Even in the church today, little is discussed within the framework of the church and in discipleship. Misinformation concerning the historical context of the Nicene Creed diminishes the true truths about it. The problematic point was that numerous chaplains might articulate the Nicene creed and understand it in practice but still have difficulty because of its perceived historical understanding. If we can tell the rationale for this council (academic), we will have problems expressing it for the practical (ministry). Part of the rationale in asking this question focused more on how it affects theology and the pursuit of an honest intellectual. Church members often do not understand several of the heresies developing in the church and the direction to ensure that they countered after Constantine legalized the faith in the Holy Roman Empire.

Even extending beyond the possibility that discipleship remains lacking in the churches today, another focus that creates a more significant concern focuses more on the accountability of the chaplain and the support that the chaplains from the denomination. As noted earlier, some cite that they maintain a relationship with their denomination. Real questions on accountability

are needed for pastors, including those in chaplaincy. As suggested by several chaplains in interviews, responsibility came from different sources. A few chaplains reminded themselves that they were accountable and utilized resources, including policies and using others to remain responsible. What does that accountability look like in the context of pastoral care?

While accountability is a big issue in the Protestant prison chaplaincy, how do others maintain accountability? Even on a larger scale, especially within chaplaincy, how does one retain a responsibility to their calling? The larger question that conjointly went with the earlier idea of discipleship also. How can one create a better accounting for the denomination? Further, how can that relationship get created that honors the chaplains just as it honors the pastors in church settings? Additionally, how does each denomination hold that accountability with their ministers?

Perhaps, the real question that focuses on everything focuses on the perceived estrangement between the chaplains and their denominations. Are chaplains utilized by their respective denominations to assist in denominational affairs, preaching, teaching, and providing the necessary instructions? The Protestant prison chaplaincy has much to share and can offer their experiences in research and education. Does the real question focus on the need to bridge the perceived differences between chaplaincy and other forms of ministry? The majority of the Protestant prison chaplains started in local church ministry and moved towards their “call” in ministry. When answering the call, does this shift the relationship with the denomination? These are issues that need to be investigated not only for Protestant prison chaplains but also for other chaplains serving in different roles and even the ministers themselves.

What started as a pursuit of looking to move Protestant prison chaplaincy towards a potential realization for a theological and apologetical approach to discipleship and agreement

turned into one that has more questions about accountability to the denomination, to the church, and God. It also creeps into areas where prison chaplaincy can assist, especially in the significant shifts within the culture that happens in the world. While the context of this project focused on the hopes of looking for commonalities to develop discipleship within the prison context, it created a problematic approach that needs further study and more profound research. The crux of chaplaincy for a Protestant prison chaplain focuses its effort on ministering to multiple denominations within the ministry framework. Looking for the commonality can assist the chaplaincy in moving towards a fluid approach of agreement among the groups that are often generalized as Protestant. The generalization of Protestantism creates the need for chaplains to work through the theological issues within denominations and clarify them with accountability for their own lives. How do denominations maintain the responsibility of their clergy, and does it work?

Additional issues exist for Protestant prison chaplains and perhaps other chaplains who may transfer outside their denomination districts, synods, conferences, or similar areas to other locales, states, and countries. While they serve with other chaplains and have a sense of brotherhood, they often give up some of their natural surroundings and community. When trying to incorporate themselves into new surroundings and community, they may receive personal support at the local church but not necessarily in their ministry or vice versa. Shaw annotates that prison chaplains are “confused and varying expectations.”²¹¹ Those involved in external ministries, such as chaplaincy, and even those early in ministry probably need to be asked questions around expectations of their ministry roles.

²¹¹ Shaw, *Chaplains to the Imprisoned*. 42.

Another focal point for future research was offering educational opportunities from biblical colleges, universities, and seminaries to better prepare them beyond their incarceration and offer courses involving biblical studies. Studies looking at recidivism and continued education for those incarcerated suggest that education is an excellent tool to assist recidivism.²¹² While the debate continues as to its efficacy for those incarcerated, chaplains should attempt to work with Christian undergraduate and graduate schools to provide them with a Christian education. Two chaplains who participated in the second study noted that they started such programs, one through their denomination and the other through an institution that partnered with them to offer such programs.

A few points started to get answered. Yet, more questions now need answering, which did not occur through this research. This research scratched the surface and did need further examination. In one sense, it needs to narrow itself to prison chaplaincy but should also develop to intertwine with other chaplaincies. The common ground starts and continues through Jesus Christ. But questions need further examination and more clarity to formulate such discipleship ideas and even Bible Studies. Even worship styles and reading materials affect our understanding of Scripture, but perhaps a more critical study, how and why. Further, other questions revolve around other influences that need further investigation regarding the lifestyle of the pastor and ministry.

Lastly, attempting to understand how imprisoned people arrive at their theology, one must examine this matter in further study and research. The real questions revolve around the ever-revolving door of volunteerism, competition with media, and even the different

²¹² Lori L. Hall, Correctional Education and Recidivism: Toward a Tool for Recidivism. *The Journal of Correctional Education* 66(2) (May, 2015). 4

chaplains that influenced them during their incarceration. In reality, Liberty University has immersed itself into more of a model for many to embrace within the Protestant framework. In recognizing its Southern Baptist roots, Liberty's students come from a diverse group of students and professors that honor the diversity of the theology that one brings to the table with the common theme of developing students into Christ-centered individuals with the ability to impact the world because of character development.²¹³ For Protestant chaplains, in general, the reflection of such practice in one's life needs to occur to develop those under our charge into Christ-likeness.

²¹³ The mission and doctrinal statements for Liberty University is located on the internet at www.liberty.edu/about.

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Appendix A

Chaplaincy Research in Theological Methods Background Demographics

Section 1

Consent to Participate

1.Full Name (First and Last)

2.Date

3.Title of the Project: Protestant Prison Chaplaincy: Teaching Common Theology to Mature Inmates

Principal Investigator: John J. Caudle, doctoral candidate, Liberty University

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and a current or former Protestant prison chaplain in the military, local/state/federal government, or in a government-contracted privately owned facility. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take the time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about, and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to examine and develop an ordinary theology for prison chaplains in order to mature inmates in the faith. The theology and apologetics found in prisons often involve a mixture of multiple theologies that also may incorporate outside faith and resources. As pastors and chaplains, it is incumbent on them to mature those entrusted with their spiritual care and shared faith.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you meet the requirements and agree to be in this study, I would ask you to do the following things:

1. Completing an online survey through Microsoft Forms. The survey will take around 30

minutes to complete. The survey encompasses multiple-choice, yes/no, and fill-in-the-blank questions.

2. Participate in an audio or video recorded interview. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. The interview will be held either through ZOOM, Skype, or if you reside within a 50-mile radius of the research, in-person.

3. Review the interview transcript for accuracy.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

The benefits to society include developing a theology for prisoners in order to mature them in their faith without developing a form of syncretism or losing their faith because of the apologetic views.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept confidential. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. The interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and a USB drive. The data may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted. Until the electronic records are able to be destroyed, the USB drive will get locked in a combination and key-locked fireproof safe.
- Interviews will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer and a USB drive for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision about whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University. If you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study.

4. Invitation continued

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is John Caudle. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, you are encouraged to contact him at [REDACTED] or at [REDACTED]. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dietmar Schulze, at [REDACTED].

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, you are encouraged to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Your Consent

By signing this online document, you agree to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy of the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the researcher using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

5. The researcher has my permission to audio- or video-record me as part of my participation in this study.

- I agree
- I do not wish to participate

Section 2

Participant Information

6. Email Address

7. Are you 18 years or older?

- Yes
- No

8. Do you or have you served as a Protestant prison chaplain in the military, the local/state/federal government, or in a government-contracted privately owned facility?

- Yes
- No

9. What denomination did you belong to or are currently endorsed with as a Chaplain? If you are not currently endorsed and no longer serve as a Chaplain, which organization were you endorsed with when you served as a Protestant Prison Chaplain?

- Anglican
- Assembly of God
- Baptist - Please specify specific group in other.
- Church of God - Please specify specific group in other.
- Episcopal
- Lutheran – Please specify specific group in other.
- Methodist
- Presbyterian - Please specify specific group in other.
- Seventh Day Adventist
- United Church of Christ
- United Methodist
- The Wesleyan Church
-

10. Before becoming a prison chaplain what ministry roles were you involved with?

- Administrative Pastor
- Associate pastor
- College Chaplain
- Corporate Chaplain
- Counseling Pastor
- Hospital Chaplain

- Law Enforcement Chaplain
- Lead pastor
- Military Chaplain
- Missionary
- Youth Pastor
- Worship Pastor
- Other (Other (if you did not serve in any capacity, reflect it here))

11.How many years have you served in prison ministry?

Select your answer

12.How many years of ministry outside of prison chaplaincy did you serve or currently are serving?

Select your answer

Section 3

Current or Former Chaplain Role

13.Education (include cognates i.e. B.S. in IT with cognate in Security Software)

(If credentialed was external of your degree for ordination, include it in the education)

Section 4

Current or Former Chaplain Role

14.What was the highest role you held in prison chaplaincy?

15.Are you currently in that role?

Select your answer

16.Please select your current relationship in regards to prison ministry?

Select your answer

Section 5

17. While performing in your ministry, what was the biggest portion of your time spent doing (i.e., Administrative tasks, Rounds)

18. What roles were you involved in, or are currently involved with, in your ministry to inmates?

- Bible Studies
- Counseling
- Groups (Psycho-education/Biblical)
- Special Unit Rounds
- Worship

Section 6

Chapel Offerings

19. What does, or did, the Chapel offer in ways of literature?

- Answer in Genesis Magazine
- Church of God Evangel
- Daily Bread
- Decision Magazine
- Everyday Answers
- Footprint Magazine
- InTouch
- Loaves and Fishes
- Pentecostal Evangel
- Prison Fellowship Newsletter
- Turning Point Magazine
- Victorious Living
- Victory

Yard Out

20. What Bible Studies are offered through outside groups at your facility? If you are in a different position or have transitioned to a new position, respond to the last ministerial role you had as a Protestant prison chaplain.

Bible Study Correspondence School

Christian Jail Ministry

CLI Bible Study

Crossroad Prison Ministry

Exodus Prison Ministry

Gospel Express

Prison Fellowship Prison Ministry

Rock of Ages Prison Ministry

Mount Zion Bible Institute

WELS Correspondence Course

Yokefellows Prison Ministry

Section 7

Chapel Worship

21. How do you describe your worship services (Contemporary, Gospel, Liturgical, etc.)? If you are in a different position or have transitioned to a new position, respond to the last ministerial role you had as a Protestant prison chaplain.

22. Prior to COVID restrictions, how many inmates participated in your worship services? If you are in a different position or have transitioned to a new position, respond to the last ministerial role you had as a Protestant prison chaplain.

23. How often do you conduct the Lord's Supper? If you are in a different position or have transitioned to a new position, respond to the last ministerial role you had as a Protestant prison chaplain.

Select your answer

24. Prior to any possible COVID restrictions, how many other opportunities for Bible studies, teachings, and preachings were offered?

Select your answer

25. Are any Bible studies offered by you, the chaplain?

Select your answer

26. Approximately how much time is dedicated to the service of the Word (sermon) for the worship service? If you are in a different position or have transitioned to a new position, respond to the last ministerial role you had as a Protestant prison chaplain.

Select your answer

27. How long does, or did your service last?

Select your answer

28. Do you, or did you offer a "New Believer's Discipleship" study?

Select your answer

29. If yes, do you create your own program or have you adapted programs from others?

Select your answer

30. If no, are you planning to create your own curriculum later on?

Select your answer

Section 8

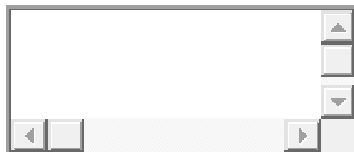
Personal Application in Theology

31. In looking at other individuals (to include chaplains) who have shared their theology, has anything shifted with what you view as essential? If you would answer this yes, explain what has shifted with your theological viewpoints.

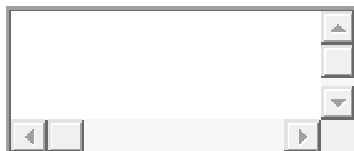
32. If you still consider yourself a member of the denomination that you serve or served in, did you always belong to this denomination or did you convert from another denomination? Have you always served God with the religious group that you currently serve in, or were you in another faith group before coming to this faith group? If you have since left the faith group or transitioned to another position, please answer when you were a chaplain.

Select your answer

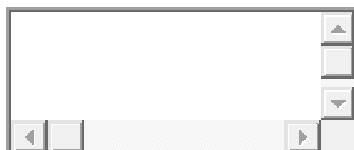
33. Why did you choose this denomination?

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34. What did you appreciate in the former denomination (if applicable)?

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35. How do you see this transition of faith groups influencing your theology now (if applicable)?

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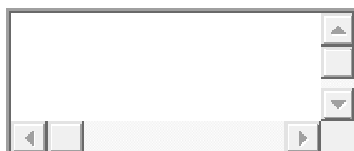
36. Do you get the opportunity to attend services at a local church?

Select your answer

37. Do you attend a church that your faith group that your ordination or its equivalent came through?

Select your answer

38. If not, why not?

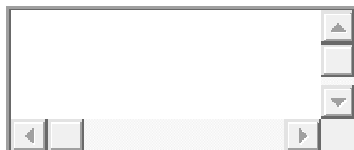
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39. Do you hold firm to the Apostle's Creed as part of doctrine and theology?

Yes

No

40. If no, what do you disagree with?

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41. Do you hold firm to the Nicene Creed?

Yes

No

42.If no, what parts of the Nicene Creed do you disagree with?



43.Do you teach from the Apostle's and Nicene Creed?

Yes

No

44.If no, would you consider incorporating them into a discipleship class?

Select your answer

45.Do you teach about the importance of the sacraments (communion and baptism)?

Select your answer

46.If no, is it an important part to teach such doctrine?

Select your answer

47.Are there other points that we should include outside of these creeds as part of the basic theology and apologetics in the faith that we need to look at to mature the inmate's faith or does either creed suffice?

Appendix B

Follow-up with Former or Current chaplains

1. Does/Did your institution have a “Bible College” that offers courses to the inmates?
 - a. If not, then go to the next set of questions.
 - b. If so, what denomination does the “Bible College” affiliate with and are they accredited.
2. Have you used other “Discipleship” programs with the inmates?
 - a. If so, why did you purchase this specific material or did you create this material?
 - a. If you purchased this material, why did you purchase this material over other available material?
 - b. If you created the material, why did you choose the subjects that are offered within the discipleship program they created?
3. If you are not conducting or have conducted Bible classes or self-help/spirituality programs, do/did your volunteers provide instruction to the inmates?
 - a. If not, how are/were inmates taught the basics of the faith?
4. Do/Did other groups, such as Prison Fellowship, offer courses or are/were they involved in a program assisting inmates in the various aspects of life to include their lifestyle living, preparation for release, and other aspects of life (parenting, etc.)?
5. What other Bible classes or self-help/spirituality programs do/did you offer to the Christian community?
 - a. Why did you choose those specific classes or programs?
6. How are you remaining or did you remain accountable as a Christian, a pastor, and a chaplain?
7. Is there anything additional you believe I missed or you would like to add that would be beneficial to this study?

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

February 24, 2021

John Caudle
Dietmar Schulze

Re: IRB Exemption - IRB-FY20-21-189 Protestant Prison Chaplaincy: Teaching Common Theology to Mature Inmates

Dear John Caudle, Dietmar Schulze:

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed your application in accordance with the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations and finds your study to be exempt from further IRB review. This means you may begin your research with the data safeguarding methods mentioned in your approved application, and no further IRB oversight is required.

Your study falls under the following exemption category, which identifies specific situations in which human participants research is exempt from the policy set forth in 45 CFR 46: 101(b):

Category 2.(iii). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met:

The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Please note that this exemption only applies to your current research application, and any modifications to your protocol must be reported to the Liberty University IRB for verification of continued exemption status. You may report these changes by completing a modification submission through your Cayuse IRB account.

If you have any questions about this exemption or need assistance in determining whether possible modifications to your protocol would change your exemption status, please email us

at irb@liberty.edu.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP

Administrative Chair of Institutional Research

Research Ethics Office