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Pastoral Care on Remand and the Role of the Prison Chaplain

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Abstract

How do prisoners experience life on remand in England, and how do prison chaplains offer them pastoral care in this setting? This thesis explores the question of how prison chaplains deliver pastoral care in a remand prison, and how this care is received and experienced by prisoners. With my own experience as a remand prison chaplain as a catalyst, I engage with literature around practical theological approaches to exploring prison experience, criminological studies of remand, and prison chaplaincy. Using a grounded theory methodology, I explore the challenges of being on remand and the role of prison chaplains in meeting the needs of remandees, as well as chaplains' own understandings of their vocation and ministry. Chaplains and prisoners were interviewed at three Local prisons in the North of England, and the major themes from these interviews explored thematically and theologically. I discuss issues of trust building and the precarious nature of the prisoner-chaplain relationship, and the core theme of liminality in the role of the chaplain and the experience of the remand prisoner. Liminality is explored as a key theme linking the limbo-like nature of remand life, the challenges of navigating the prison environment, and the status of the chaplain on the thresholds of prison life and ministry. The liminality of the chaplain is considered as a positive characteristic that enables a flexible ministry in a remand context. This leads to a theological analysis of remand chaplaincy through the lens of Walter Brueggemann's concepts of the disorientation of lament and the notion of prophetic imagination. Remand chaplaincy is explored through the lens of a ministry of presence as 'being with' in conversation with the work of Samuel Wells. The thesis concludes with new understandings of remand chaplaincy in light of the liminality of the role and of the remand prisoner, and considers the challenges of the practical and theological aspects of providing pastoral care in this complex context.

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List of Abbreviations

ACCT – Assessment, Care in Custody and Teamwork – a document opened on prisoners at risk of suicide or self-harm

CM – Custodial Manager - senior officer in overall charge of a prison wing

HDC – Home Detention Curfew – a scheme where a prisoner can be released early and subject to an electronically monitored curfew. Also known as 'tagging'

HMIP – Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons

HMP – Her Majesty's Prison

HMPPS – Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service

IMB – Independent Monitoring Board - volunteer lay observers of prison conditions

MOJ – Ministry of Justice of the United Kingdom

NOMS – The National Offender Management Service - precursor to HMPPS

NRC – The Ministry of Justice National Research Council

PSI – Prison Service Instruction

SO – Senior Officer

STC – Secure Training Centre - secure centre for 12-17 year olds

YOI – Young Offender's Institute

Glossary

Banged up – (slang) imprisoned *or* behind your cell door

Borstal - Former young offender institutions run by HM Prison Service until their abolition in 1982.

Churn - The number of new receptions and transfers in to a prison divided by the number of prisoners in the establishment. Local prisons will have a high churn rate, high-security prisons a low churn rate.

Cut Up – (slang) self-harming behaviour

Jump on the netting– (slang) placing oneself on the safety-netting between wing landings and refusing to move

Local Prison – Prisons that serve the courts and receive remand and sentenced prisoners before their allocation to other prison establishments

Managing Chaplain – Chaplain who line manages the chaplaincy team and sits on the Senior Management Team of the prison; can be of any faith.

Methadone - a green liquid prescribed as a safer opiate substitute for those addicted to opioids such as heroin

PIN credit – Prison phone credit

Private Prison – Prison run by a private company such as G4S, Serco or Sodexo.

Public Prison – Prison run by HMPPS

Recategorised – A prisoner being sent from one security category of prison to another.

Remand – Being remanded into prison custody until court trial

Screw – Prison Officer (*pejorative slang*)

Segregation Unit – A secure unit within the prison where prisoners are kept segregated from each other for breaking prison rules or for the good order of the prison.

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Acknowledgements and Dedication

Chapter 1: Introduction and Research Proposal

> Even though you're in prison, sometimes being around [chaplains] makes you
> feel like you're not in prison.[1]

This thesis explores the question of how prison chaplains deliver pastoral care in a remand setting, and how this care is received and experienced by prisoners on remand. Prisons are out of the public eye, and can be considered as distant from the life of the church. The experiences of remand prisoners are not often aired in public, and the role of the prison chaplain is not widely understood. What do prison chaplains do? What kind of pastoral care do they provide for prisoners, and what theological concepts are behind their practice? What are the experiences of remand prisoners, awaiting trial or sentence whilst in prison, and how do they access and experience chaplaincy support during that critical time? In this thesis I shall explore these questions through the discipline of practical theology, and consider how prison chaplains might learn from this research in order to gain a deeper understanding of their pastoral care and explore new forms of theologically-informed pastoral practice in prisons and beyond.

The topic and focus for this thesis emerged from my own experiences as a prison chaplain, particularly during 2014 - 2021 when I was chaplain to HMP Durham. During this time, the Ministry of Justice determined to reconfigure the prison system and change the roles of a number of prisons to better suit the needs of prisoners in England and Wales. According to a report by the National Audit Office,

> HMPPS launched the Prison Estate Transformation Programme in 2016 to
> address concerns about crowded and unsafe prison conditions. It also sought to
> tackle the surplus of prison places serving local courts and the shortfall of places
> to support prisoners' rehabilitation... The original objectives were to: improve
> prison conditions, reduce crowding and align capacity to demand; and
> reconfigure the HMPPS estate and improve technology in reception prisons. The
> programme ran for almost three years before it was superseded in August 2019

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[1] Prisoner Samuel, interview. All prisoners, chaplains and prisons (apart from my pilot site) have been pseudonymised.

by a government announcement committing to build a further 10,000 prison places…[2]

Accordingly in 2016-2017, HMP Durham was reconfigured from being a Category B 'Local' prison with around 50% remand and 50% sentenced prisoners to becoming the pilot of a new kind of prison – the 'Reception' prison. In these prisons, over 95% of the prisoners would be on remand. Durham was the only pilot site for this reconfiguration, and HMPPS had planned for other Local prisons to follow suit after the pilot reconfiguration had concluded.[3]

During this time of transition, I and my chaplaincy colleagues experienced a huge surge in prisoner pastoral need. During chaplains' statutory visits to prisoners within the first 24 hours of their reception into the prison, almost every prisoner we met was in some form of crisis.[4] Removed from the stability of family life, work and society, prisoners were often profoundly distressed, disoriented and angry at the situation they had found themselves in. Almost all prisoners had practical issues in need of urgent resolution: lack of bedding, clothing or toiletries, lack of contact with family or friends, or acute mental health challenges. Many prisoners suffered from a lack of information about the workings of the criminal justice system that they now found themselves caught within. Recent and historic bereavements regularly came bubbling to the surface with all the raw emotion and distress that such trauma often carries with it.

Most of all, the feeling of unknowing about the future and the uncertainty about how life would pan out for them over the coming weeks and months appeared stifling and frustrating. I and my colleagues (a full-time team of four chaplains, along with a Managing Chaplain) spoke regularly of 'fighting fires', being unable to spend long periods of time with individual prisoners due to the sheer volume of pastoral need that emerged. Referrals from prison staff and prisoners were overwhelming: individuals requesting support, guidance, or the opportunity for an angry diatribe about the

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[2] *Improving the Prison Estate* (National Audit Office, 2020), sec. 3.1.

[3] 'Local' prisons are a Ministry of Justice term describing Category B Prisons that have a remand function. Most of them have a 50/50 remand/sentenced prisoners split. In this study I use the term 'remand prison' to describe any prison that has a significant remand function.

[4] See PSI 5/2016 – 'Faith and Pastoral Care' – lists statutory requirements that chaplains must perform daily; visiting all new receptions within 24 hours, all prisoners under segregation, all prisoners in the Hospital wing, all prisoners expecting discharge from prison, and weekly visits to all prisoners under an ACCT.

perceived injustice of their situation. Deeper conversations about faith and spirituality, though occasional and important, were few and far between.

Prior to working at HMP Durham I had served part-time in a number of prisons around the North East of England: HMP Frankland (High-Secure long-term), HMYOI Deerbolt (Young Offenders), HMP Wealstun (Category C Sentenced) and HMPYOI Low Newton (Women). The experience of working or volunteering in other prisons provided a stark contrast to the comparatively heavy pastoral workload of HMP Durham, specifically the acute nature of the care which remand prisoners seemed to require. This was both in terms of the volume of statutory work and requests for pastoral attention as well as the intense nature of the pastoral and practical needs presented to us. This was alongside the unusually high 'churn rate' of Durham. Most prisons I had served in would consider 10 new prisoners to see on reception rounds to be a busy morning, whereas Durham regularly had over 30 new receptions daily.[5]

One day might vary greatly from the next in prison chaplaincy, but the needs the chaplaincy team attempted to meet were almost always intense in demand or urgent in timescale. Prisoners experiencing suicidal thoughts or self-harming dangerously would spend time expressing their shame, anger and guilt to us. We would regularly make the long walk to a prisoner's cell to inform them of the death of a close relative: a grandparent, a sibling, a parent, or even a child. We would sit with them as they wept and threw items around in their frustration at being unable to properly process their grief in such an austere and confined environment. This would be followed up by visits to light candles in the prison's chapel or to inform them that the Governor had declined their request to attend a loved one's funeral.[6] Prisoners would complain of lack of toilet paper and hygiene essentials, leaving chaplains to go running round the prison wing looking for spares. Walking through one prison wing to another would take huge amounts of time as chaplains would often be swamped with requests as they tried to pass through.

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[5] In the first year of the research phase of the study, there were 50,932 people remanded into custody in England and Wales - 2,838 of those came to HMP Durham, second only to HMP Wandsworth. (https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/796916/receptions-2018.ods), accessed 22 July 2022

[6] PSI 33/2015 - 'Prisoner Escorts' - Section 7 sets out very strict criteria for funeral escorts, and many funeral escort applications are turned down because of this.

It became clear to me as I spent time trying to serve the prisoners under my care that this situation required sustained analysis and theological reflection. Despite my ministerial and theological training, I did not feel I had enough experience or understanding of the kind of pastoral care I was expected to deliver, and that this was ultimately preventing me from giving the prisoners the care they deserved. This problem began to shape the central question of this thesis. Bass and Dykstra suggest that practical theological reflection is essentially a pastoral endeavour, understanding it as the people of God reflecting on practice, paying attention to 'lived expressions' of faith and thereby drawing out rules for better practice.[7] This kind of practical theology focuses on the theologian seeing and takes careful note of complex situations, using theology to first and foremost promote faithful discipleship. This is what Swinton and Mowat call *complexification* – the examination of situations with care, rigour and discernment to go beneath a surface-level understanding of what is going on and to reveal the complexities of a situation. They suggest that it is only when problems arise from our 'everyday' situations that we begin to engage with this process:

> Many of the aspects of our situation are experienced as nothing more than background noise. It is only when problems arise through crisis or our engaging in a process of complexification that the complicated nature of our situation arises.[9]

Swinton and Mowat note the immense value of digging down below the surface of a situation in ministry to reveal what might not be immediately obvious, using contextual and theological analysis to inform and inspire future praxis.[10]

The theological reflection process is designed to evoke 'new and challenging responses' to our situations, and in uncovering deeper layers of each situation can even create new problems or challenges that were previously covered over.[12] My own situation required new understandings and reflection for a model of ministry that was no longer functioning as it once had. I needed an opportunity to theologically reflect on what

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[7] Dorothy C. Bass, 'Ways of Life Abundant', in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. by Craig R. Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids, Mich. ; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008), pp. 32–33.

[9] John Swinton and Harriet Mowat, *Practical Theology and Qualitative Research*, 2nd Revised edition (London: SCM Press, 2016), p. 15.

[10] Swinton and Mowat, pp. 13–16.

[12] Swinton and Mowat, p. 262.

prison chaplaincy was *for* in a remand-centric context where my former practices were no longer effective.

This thesis was born out of a desire to investigate pastoral care on remand and the role of the prison chaplain, not just in my own context but in other similar prisons. My hope for this study was that I would be able to complexify the remand situation and the challenges prisoners and chaplains faced, and from this to create opportunities for theological reflection and response.

From this analysis and reflection I hoped to find a deeper understanding of remand chaplaincy that would benefit both my own context at HMP Durham but also the wider chaplaincy community – that there would be themes, learning points and reflections that would resonate with other chaplains. I wanted to find out more about what prisoners were experiencing whilst on remand that created such a heavy need for pastoral and practical support, and I wished to explore how chaplains were trying to meet these needs. I was keen to find out if other chaplains in similar circumstances shared my feeling of being overwhelmed by need and whether they also felt the lack of theological 'tools' with which to understand and make sense of their contexts. Fraser's article on reflective practice in chaplaincy confirms the importance of this practical theological task that all chaplains should be engaged in:

> The need to wrestle with our identity as a chaplain in its many facets is vital if we are to sustain engagement in this demanding world. To search for answers where there seem to be no answers, and to address themes and issues which are deep and full of significance whilst giving some hope and perspective, is vital: the ongoing work of vigorous thought and sustained reflection is necessary for our survival as individual chaplains.[13]

Aim of the Study

This study aims to investigate and understand the pastoral care of remand prisoners and the role of the prison chaplain through the gathering and analysis of qualitative data concerning the views and experiences of prison chaplains and remand prisoners. I consider the particular challenges of remand chaplaincy and what it means to be a

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[13] David Fraser, 'A Pastoral Heart and a Critical Mind', *Practical Theology*, 3.2 (2010), 179–90.

pastorally effective and theologically reflective prison chaplain. In this thesis I explore the major themes that emerge from the data and reflect on them theologically, considering what aspects of remand chaplaincy might be understood more clearly or carried out differently in the light of God's work in the world and amongst the prisoners that chaplains serve. I discuss the significance of these findings and reflections for chaplains and explore how they might support, challenge and encourage prison chaplains in their ministry. My conclusions aim to shape the future training of prison chaplains and provide an example of reflective practice, working towards a wider understanding of the challenges and opportunities of remand chaplaincy.

Rationale and Wider Context

It has been widely recognised that prison chaplaincy is an under-researched field of study. In 2011, a landmark report funded by the National Offender Management Service was published by Todd and Tipton on the role of chaplaincy in prisons.[14] Several key findings emerged from this study, perhaps the most important of which was that there was a sustained lack of in-depth qualitative research being carried out into prison chaplaincy in the UK. In the years since this publication, there has been a notable yet relatively small increase into research in chaplaincy in the UK. Volumes such as *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies* raised the profile of academic research into chaplaincy whilst sounding the cautionary note that few chaplains are involved in formally researching their own ministerial practice.[15] There have been almost no books published in the UK specifically on prison chaplaincy from an academic perspective. Wider chaplaincy works have included *A Christian Theology of Chaplaincy,[16]* and a number of doctoral theses have been submitted on prison chaplaincy, including on the role of Anglican prison chaplains,[17] on inspiring hope amongst indeterminate-sentence

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[14]Andrew Todd and Lee Tipton, *The Role and Contribution of a Multi-Faith Prison Chaplaincy to the Contemporary Prison Service* (Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies, June 2011).

[15] *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places*, ed. by Christopher Swift, Mark Cobb, and Andrew Todd, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).

[16] *A Christian Theology of Chaplaincy*, ed. by John Caperon, Andrew Todd, and James Walters (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018).

[17] Peter Phillips, 'Roles and Identities of the Anglican Chaplain: A Prison Ethnography' (Cardiff University, 2013).

prisoners,[18] and an autoethnographic account of experiences of chaplaincy in Scottish prisons.[19] Chaplaincy has received some national attention through the think-tank *Theos'* 2015 report *Chaplaincy: A Very Modern Ministry*[20], and in the same year the *Chaplaincy in Action* conference held at York St John University saw hundreds of chaplains from different chaplaincy contexts gathering together to share their research. Chaplains appear to be becoming more aware of the value of practical theological reflection and research for their ministry, but this awareness appears slower in prison chaplaincy than in other areas such as healthcare or education.

Criminological studies around remand are relatively scarce, but HMIP inspections of remand prisons suggest that remand prisoners are more likely to suffer from self-harm or suicidal thoughts, have poor mental health, to be care leavers, have been excluded from school, or be from marginalised backgrounds than the rest of the prison population. Recent HMIP thematic reports into the topics of Remand and Living Conditions, as well as individual establishment reports, single out Local prisons for particular concern. Former Chief Inspector Nick Hardwick suggests in his reviews that remand prisoners have more complex needs than sentenced prisoners but appear to have a poorer regime, less support, and less preparation for release.[21]

I would argue that the role of the chaplain is vital in the remand prison environment. Chaplains have a unique role in which they can explore a wide variety of spiritual, practical, pastoral and emotional issues. However, chaplains need to explore and engage with questions of *why* they do what they do and what place they hold in the institutions they serve in order to remain faithful to their calling and to maintain their professional standards and effectiveness on the ground. This is particularly true in a remand context where some tried-and-tested ways of carrying out pastoral care appear to work less well than in sentenced or long-term contexts. De Roest's work on practical theology notes how important this reflection is for chaplains in delivering their pastoral care:

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[18] David Beedon, 'Hope Deferred, Humanity Diminished?: An ethnographic enquiry into the improvement of pastoral care offered to those serving an indeterminate sentence of Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) (Birmingham University, 2020; DProf Thesis).

[19] Sheena Orr, 'Transforming Liturgies: the autoethnography of a prison chaplain' (Glasgow University, 2021: DPT Thesis)

[20] Ben Ryan, *A Very Modern Ministry: Chaplaincy in the UK* (Theos Think Tank, 2015).

[21] HMIP, *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*, August 2012, p. 7; HMIP, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales - Annual Report 2016-2017*, 2017.

> Spiritual caregivers such as chaplains…in prisons want to improve their competencies and call for practical theological reflection to help them, for example in how they can carry out and conceptualise their interventions.[22]

Victoria Slater notes that there has been little critical theological reflection on the practice of chaplaincy by chaplains themselves or indeed by researchers.[23] Prison funding is often tight, and chaplains need a rationale for their own theological and spiritual integrity and to inform their employers of their value to the institutions they serve. The presence of chaplains in public institutions is not something to be taken for granted in secular society, as shown in recent years by the crisis in NHS chaplaincy.[24] One of the outcomes for healthcare chaplains of the NHS re-engaging with the question of what chaplaincy is for has been a greater emphasis on regular critical and theological reflection on chaplaincy work. This has also lead to a burgeoning research community and healthcare journal that offers evidence-based analyses of chaplaincy care.[25] My observation is that prisoners on remand represent a significant pastoral challenge to chaplains that, if not tackled with a reflexive and self-aware understanding of pastoral care, could lead to substandard care or prisoners not receiving spiritual, practical and emotional support . This could ultimately lead to chaplaincy teams not being trusted by prisoners, not being visible enough in the prison to be sought after or well-known, or chaplains 'burning out' from the mismatch between the care they are seeking to provide and the real needs of those they serve. Chaplains that seek to provide excellent care to the prisoners and staff that they serve cannot be complacent and expect that old models of care will suffice in new and changing contexts.

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[22] Henk de Roest, *Collaborative Practical Theology: Engaging Practitioners in Research on Christian Practices: 8* (Leiden ; Boston: BRILL, 2019), p. 27.

[23] Victoria Slater, *Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church* (London: SCM Press, 2015), p. xii; Fraser.

[24] See 'The Battle of Worcester' Christopher Swift, *Hospital Chaplaincy in the 21st Century: The Crisis of Spiritual Care on the NHS*, Explorations in Practical, Pastoral and Empirical Theology (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2009).

[25] Healthcare chaplaincy groups such as the College of Healthcare Chaplains, the UK Board of Healthcare Chaplains, and the Free Churches Healthcare Group all run regular CPD sessions as well as offer Values-Based Reflective Practice (VBRP©) to their chaplains. In contrast there are very few CPD opportunities for prison chaplains.

Practical Theology – An Emerging Discipline

The question of how best to understand and provide pastoral care on remand lends itself to the task of practical theology, which at its heart seeks to use insights from theology and the social sciences to interpret, inspire and inform the practice of ministry. Richard Osmer's introduction to practical theology states the four key tasks of the practical theologian are to discern what is going on (the descriptive-empirical task), why it is going on (the interpretive task), what ought to be going on (the normative task), and how we might respond (the pragmatic task).[26] Practical theology provides tools which help in our understanding and exploration of the new, the surprising or the undiscovered, offering opportunities for new categories and knowledge, laying the ground for new ways of working or even entire paradigm shifts of understanding.

Practical Theology is a relatively young sub-discipline in theology. Defining practical theology is itself a contested area, and there are a variety of different approaches to the theory and practice of practical theology.

Practical theology traces its roots back to the pastoral theology of the late 1800s and early 1900s, and was mainly focussed around priestly ministry – how to be good 'shepherds, preachers, and teachers', which has been referred to by Farley and others as the 'clerical paradigm'.[27] The central consideration in this model of practical theology is the work of the church and its ministry.[28] Over time this emphasis on ecclesial ministry has been challenged, most notably by Schleiermacher, considered by some to be the 'father' of modern practical theology. He explored both the place of theology within the university setting and the discipline of pastoral or practical theology within the wider task of theology.[29] As one of the founders of the Liberal Protestant movement, Schleiermacher's influence on practical theology is still seen today, with many models of practical theology sharing a similar framework to his own theology. They broadly suggest that theology's starting point should be human experience as opposed to

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[26] Richard Robert Osmer, *Practical Theology: An Introduction* (Grand Rapids, Mich. ; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans, 2008), p. 4.

[27] E Farley, 'Theology and Practice Outside the Clerical Paradigm', in *Practical Theology: The Emerging Field in Theology, Church, and World*, ed. by Don S. Browning, Harper Forum Books, First edition (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1983), p. 26.

[28] Roest, p. 91.

[29] Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Brief Outline on the Study of Theology* (Richmond, Va.: John Knox Press, 1966).

supposed divine revelation. This viewpoint has been historically challenged by Barth and others, and represents one end of a varied spectrum of theological approaches that attempt to connect theology to the practice of lived faith.[30]

There are a number of different paradigms of practical theology, but one way of considering them is as four approaches that sit at different points on a spectrum. I will consider each in turn and then explore the approach I will take for this study.

The first is what can be called the *Pastoral Theology* paradigm, which sees practical theology as the church's reflection on the practice of ministry. This approach was first outlined by CF Rogers and S Hiltner amongst others, and more recently has been explored by Bass and Dykstra.[31] This approach advocates the close observation of practice as a means of drawing theories and principles for explaining how ministry works 'at the coal face'. Bass and Dykstra's term for this is pastoral imagination; ministers' constant attention to seeing lived experience 'through the eyes of faith' providing a compass and a map through pastoral crises. They note,

> Somehow, pastors who really get what the Christian ministry is about and who do it well are able to enter many diverse situations, whether joyous or full of misery and conflict, and see what is going on there through the eyes of faith. This way of seeing and interpreting shapes what the pastor thinks and does and how he or she responds to people in gestures, words and actions. It functions as a kind of internal gyroscope, guiding pastors in and through every crevice of pastoral life and work.[32]

In this paradigm, practical theology cannot be separated from the pastoral and ecclesial imagination, or from the lived experience of the wider church. Ward's recent introduction to practical theology describes this approach as integrating the accumulated pastoral wisdom of faithful ministry; the innate habituated ways that

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[30] See Ryan Glomsrud, 'Barth and Schleiermacher', in *Wiley Blackwell Companion to Karl Barth*, ed. by George Hunsinger and Keith L. Johnson, 1st edition (Wiley-Blackwell, 2022).

[31] See Clement F. Rogers, *An Introduction to the Study of Pastoral Theology* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1912); Seward Hiltner, *Preface to Pastoral Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1958); *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. by Dorothy C. Bass and Craig R. Dykstra (Grand Rapids, Mich. ; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008).

[32] Craig R. Dykstra, 'Pastoral and Ecclesial Imagination', in *For Life Abundant: Practical Theology, Theological Education, and Christian Ministry*, ed. by Craig R. Dykstra and Dorothy C. Bass (Grand Rapids, Mich. ; Cambridge: William B. Eerdmans Pub, 2008), p. 41.

ministers and communities live out the Christian faith, sharing the knowledge of God in a way that creates 'abundant life'.[34]

A second approach is the Correlation paradigm attributed to Paul Tillich that came out of his work on systematic theology.[35] It is sometimes known as the dialectical model, which has more recently been expanded on by Don Browning and Stephen Pattison.[36] In this model, practical theology is described as formulating the questions implied in human existence, and formulating the answers implied in the disclosure of the divine in the world. In other words, there is a dialogue between theory and practice, a constant conversation and correlation between what has been revealed in scripture and tradition and what is really happening on the ground. There is no logical priority here given to either revelation or experience – both are brought to the table as equal partners. Unlike the clerical paradigm approach, it suggests that 'God is not just to be found in churches, Christians, or overtly religious practices.'[37] It draws its background from the mid-20th century theological 'turn to the human' in disciplines such as feminist or liberation theology where lived human experience is the starting point of all theological enquiry and the lens through which it must be viewed. As a former chaplain, Pattinson states this paradigm came out of his own chaplaincy experience:

> Working in chaplaincy, with patients and staff of all faiths and none confirmed for me that God is bigger than the church and theology. There is much goodness and wisdom to be found in non-believers in the face of realities like suffering and death…members of other professions …have much to contribute to the understanding of the human condition.[38]

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[34] Pete Ward, *Introducing Practical Theology: Mission, Ministry, and the Life of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 2017), p. 74.

[35] See Paul Tillich, *The Irrelevance and Relevance of the Christian Message*, ed. by Durwood Foster, Reprint edition (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim Pr, 1996).

[36] Don Browning, *Fundamental Practical Theology* (Fortress Press, 1995); Stephen Pattison, *A Critique of Pastoral Care*, Third edition (London: SCM Press, 2000).

[37] Stephen Pattison, *The Challenge of Practical Theology: Selected Essays* (London ; Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007), p. 13.

[38] S Pattison, 'Introduction: The Making of Practical Theology', in Pattison, *The Challenge of Practical Theology*, p. 17.

This paradigm of critical conversation seeks to correlate Christian revelation with the surrounding culture, creating a synthesis, and provide extra-theological understandings as a corrective influence on the 'shortcomings and distortions of inherited tradition'.[39]

Thirdly, a paradigm of 'interpreting action' sees practical theology as a theological theory of action within a practice-oriented science. One modern practitioner of this approach is Elaine Graham, who suggests that practical theology's task is to transform practice in light of the postmodern turn that has shaken aspects of Western Enlightenment empiricism . Theology is 'enacted and embodied in practice', and the practical theological task brings to bear contemporary theologies of liberation onto the lived actions of those we study. For Graham, praxis is the key hermeneutic, instead of historical tradition or Biblical witness.[40] In this model, experience is the origin of theological formulation, rather than the application. Experience has 'theologically disclosive authority' to provide normative action for the life of the church and its mission.[41]

A fourth model of practical theology might be summarised as 'theology and tradition', and has more theologically conservative roots. It is based in part on the work of Thomas Oden, who pushes back against what he sees as an unnecessary turn to psychology (and other social sciences) within practical theology. Instead, the voices of scripture and tradition are given primacy of position; in this model, practical theology consists of examining the present through the scriptural and theological traditions of the past and examining how they measure up in light of them. More recent practitioners such as Helen Collins explore the frustration felt among some Evangelical theologians at practical theology's use of scripture, exegesis and hermeneutics, as well as its perceived lack of engagement with the work of the Holy Spirit and the place of tradition within the life of the church.[42] She suggests a 'reordering' of practical theology, based on the work of Pete Ward, Mark Cartledge and Richard Osmer, where the perceived 'insertion by stealth' of liberal theological assumptions into practical theological reflection is made explicit. This enables charismatic and evangelical theologians in particular to engage

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[39] *Theological Reflections: Sources: 2*, ed. by Elaine Graham, Heather Walton, and Francis Ward, 1st edition (London: SCM Press, 2007), p. 269.
[40] *Theological Reflection: Methods*, ed. by Elaine L. Graham, Heather Walton, and Frances Ward (London: SCM Press, 2005), p. 361.
[41] Elaine L. Graham, Walton, and Ward, p. 363.
[42] Helen Collins, *Reordering Theological Reflection: Starting with Scripture* (SCM Press, 2020), p. 5.

with practical theology with theological integrity.[43] There is a valued place for the social sciences and humanities within this model, but they are subservient to the voice of scripture and the questions scripture is asking (rather than the other way around). Andrew Root has a similar approach, asserting that in modern practical theology there has been little space made for the possibility of real divine action and God's tangible presence in people's lives, and that there needs to be a turn towards what he calls the 'evangelical experience' in this field.[44]

Swinton and Mowat describe what I would argue is a more integrated and nuanced understanding of practical theology within this 'theology and tradition paradigm, giving more space for the sociological sciences to provide critique and reflection. They note the benefit of a dialogue between experience and scripture and tradition, but suggest that for it to be a truly 'Christological' practical theology, theology must have the logical priority over experience.[45] They sum up this approach:

> Theology does not acquire its ultimate significance from qualitative research
> data…but qualitative data does acquire its significance from theology.[46]

This approach draws upon a Barthian understanding of theology as primarily an activity in the church, the place where the spirit is at work, and is hostile to the idea that 'another science' is needed for a grounding in theology.[47] This being said, Swinton and Mowat are aware that all theology is contextual, and is subject to critical reflection and challenge. At its heart, this approach can be characterised by what they call 'critical faithfulness', which is described as

> …acknowledging the divine givenness of scripture and genuine working of the
> Holy Spirit in the interpretation of what is given, while at the same time taking
> seriously the interpretative dimensions of the process of understanding
> revelation and ensuring the faithful practices of individuals and communities.[48]

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[43] See Ward; Mark J. Cartledge, *Practical Theology: Charismatic and Empirical Perspectives*, Studies in Pentecostal and Charismatic Issues (Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 2003); Osmer.

[44] Andrew Root, *Christopraxis: A Practical Theology of the Cross* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press,U.S., 2014), p. xi.

[45] Swinton and Mowat, p. 81.

[46] Swinton and Mowat, p. 83.

[47] Swinton and Mowat, p. 85.

[48] Swinton and Mowat, p. 89.

Swinton and Mowat's approach to combining scriptural authority with human experience, combined with aspects of Dykstra's model of pastoral imagination, are closest to the way in which I have proceeded with the practical theological task in this project. I come from a Charismatic Evangelical faith with a commitment to both of the authority of scripture and the importance of the work of the Spirit in the life of the church. I also have been formed and theologically influenced by my multi-faith chaplaincy experiences. Ministering with and learning from chaplains of different denominations and faiths has led me to appreciate other 'lenses' of viewing the world. Working alongside marginalised and vulnerable people for over 11 years, I have also become more aware of the need for theology to listen to the lived experiences of those around us and to incorporate them into our theological reflection and practice. Scripture provides a foundation for my understanding of God and the world, but experience and the knowledge gained from other disciplines shines a light on areas where scripture and tradition are unclear or uncertain. Grey areas exist in abundance, particularly within the murky world of prisons.

The gift of the social sciences has been hugely beneficial for my own theological reflection, and has convinced me of a need to go beyond the mere application of scriptural doctrines to ministry experiences. Using Helen Cameron's *Four Voices of Theology* model, I can perceive a gap between my own *espoused* and *operant* theologies, which is a theme mirrored in some of the responses in the project interviews.[49] Prison chaplaincy is a ministry for which no rule book exists, and the practice of which often appears to push theological models and ideas to their limits. Any practical theological reflection that considers prison chaplaincy must take this into account. It must take seriously the experiences of those giving and receiving prison pastoral care, whilst also listening carefully to the voices of scripture and tradition in disclosing the activity of God in the world.

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[49] See *Talking about God in Practice: Theological Action Research and Practical Theology*, ed. by Helen Cameron (London: SCM Press, 2010).

Structure of the Thesis

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In this chapter I review literature concerning prison chaplaincy and pastoral care in prisons, alongside criminological work on the effects of imprisonment and the remand experience. I explore recent research on chaplaincy in the UK and its limitations. I consider the lack of research undertaken in the area of remand prisoner experiences in the UK and of the lack of reflective practice being carried out by prison chaplains. I explore the benefit of qualitative research in other chaplaincy disciplines such as hospital chaplaincy, and consider how this paradigm of research-lead reflection provides a model for this study.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data Collection

This chapter considers my chosen methodology of grounded theory and its history, as well as current literature considering the benefits and drawbacks of such an approach. I explore the chosen qualitative research method of semi-structured interviews and explore the ethical questions and concerns around carrying out research with vulnerable adults. I outline the pilot study and how this shaped the overall research project, and consider my own reflexivity as a practitioner-researcher and the potential opportunities and pitfalls of researching my own context. I explore the suitability of Grounded Theory as a practical theological reflection tool and how this methodology interacts with my own theological approach.

Chapter 4: Thematic Analysis

In this chapter I set out my thematic analysis of the data, exploring the major themes that came from prisoner and chaplaincy interviews. I explore the theme of trust and how chaplains and prisoners build trust between each other. I explore the nature of trust in the prison environment and environmental challenges to its creation, along with the effects of the prison establishment, and how trust affects remand pastoral care. I consider the fragile nature of trust in the prison context, staff-prisoner relationships, and themes of accountability.

I introduce the concept of liminality and how the liminal environment and structures of the remand prison affect both prisoners and chaplains. I consider the instability, unknown nature and complex administration of the prison environment. Remand as a liminal experience is discussed in light of van Gennep's explorations of liminal spaces and times of transition.

I explore the role of the chaplain and their perceived status as a liminal figure within the prison, considering the opportunities and drawbacks of this position. I provide a taxonomy of liminality, considering the different ways chaplains and prisoners described various aspects of liminality. I consider the role of the chaplain as a guide and navigator of the remand space, the concept of the chaplain as a mobile liminal space, and connections between the remand environment and questions of prisoner identity. I also explore the challenges of chaplaincy liminality, as well as the possible benefits of being a liminal figure in a prison setting.

Chapter 5: Theological Reflection and Analysis

This chapter is a practical theological exploration of the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis and the wider study. I discuss Walter Brueggemann's concept of disorientation and reorientation through lament, and explore the parallels found in the interview data. I discuss the concept of remand liminality through the lens of lament, and explore the laments of prisoners and chaplains around loss, the prison system, and perceived injustices. I also consider the limitations of Brueggemann's schema in places where the movement from disorientation to reorientation seems remote or impossible. I also discuss the importance of hearing remand lament in order to give effective pastoral care.

I explore Walter Brueggemann's work on the 'prophetic imagination' and bring this to bear on the chaplains' understanding of the prophetic nature of their role. I explore Brueggemann's consideration of the prophetic imagination in articulating the suffering of the oppressed, offering an alternative perception of reality, and challenging official narratives. I consider how this paradigm interacts with remand chaplaincy, in particular the chaplain's role as a prophetic advocate, challenger of perceived norms, and lamenter of inhumanities in the prison environment. I also consider the 'priestly' nature of chaplaincy as the official face of religion in the prison, the nature of power structures in

the prison system and the chaplain's place within those structures. I discuss how chaplains might respond to the challenges of Brueggemann's theology and how the concept of prophetic imagination challenges certain models of chaplaincy pastoral care.

I consider the ministry of the chaplain in the light of Samuel Wells' theological models of presence, focussing on the overlap between his model of 'being with' as a ministry of presence, considering how his understanding of presence gives insight into some of the prison chaplains' models of pastoral care and presence within the prison environment. I explore whether this approach offers a holistic understanding of incarnational ministry in a prison context, as well as considering Jesus' approach in the Gospels to the tension between meeting physical, spiritual and personal needs.

Chapter 6: Outcomes and Conclusions

In this final chapter I draw conclusions from my research on the most important themes for remand chaplaincy, including the importance of trust, the liminality of the chaplain's role, and how a more detailed exploration of these themes can support chaplains' work and training. I offer areas of learning and avenues for further research. I consider the challenges of transferring the outcomes of the research into changes in chaplaincy praxis, reflecting on the research process and the personal lessons learnt during the research project.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Prisons and Remand Prisoners

Penal policy in England and Wales has varied constantly over the last few decades. With the rapid changes brought in during successive Conservative governments of the 1980s-1990s, the New Labour government of 1997-2010, and the Coalition and subsequent Conservative governments of 2010 to the present, the England and Wales prison estate has seen policy adjustments, new ways of working, staffing changes and ongoing debates about the effectiveness of imprisonment in punishing offenders and reducing reoffending. From Michael Howard's 'Prison Works' of the 1990s to Michael Gove's 'Rehabilitation Revolution' of 2015-2016, the role and perception of prisons is in constant flux.

To begin I examine works concerning the nature and process of being on remand in England and Wales, including legislation, the state of Local prison establishments, and the effects of imprisonment on those remanded into custody.

The Remand Situation in England and Wales [50]

At the end of 2021, there were 12,780 adults remanded in custody in England and Wales.[51] This was out of an average prison population for the year of 79,000. Perhaps because these prisoners are a relatively small proportion of the total, remand prisoners receive relatively little attention in modern criminological study. Government statistics suggest that this percentage has remained relatively unchanged over the last decade, but this 'small' number is masked by the high ratio of people in prison in England and Wales (182 in every 10,000 at the start of the research phase in late 2017) compared to the rest of Europe.[52]

People remanded into custody are those who have been refused bail or who have been convicted and aware awaiting sentence. The Bail Act (1976) was introduced after something of a surge in the number of suspects being remanded threatened to

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[50] HMPPS (Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service) do not run Scottish or Northern Irish prisons, so they are excluded from my research project remit.

[51] Ministry of Justice, 'Offender Management Statistics Bulletin, England and Wales, Q3 2021', 2022 <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1050241/OMSQ_Q3_2021.pdf> [accessed 27 July 2022].

[52] Grahame Allen and Chris Watson, 'UK Prison Population Statistics: April 2017', *House of Commons Library: Briefing Papers*, SN/SG/04334, p. 4.

overcrowd the prison system. The aim of the act was ostensibly to give a presumption in favour of bail. Bail can be granted by the arresting officer, at the police station, at the first appearance at Magistrates Court, or at Crown Court. The authorities are directed to grant bail unless the following conditions apply: the defendant is at risk of absconding before trial, interfering with the process of justice, committing a further offence whilst on bail, or endangering public order.[53] Whilst this Act was intended to give magistrates and others the encouragement to see remand as a last resort, some authors see little change in the bail decisions made by the courts since the Bail Act. Andrew Rutherford suggests that magistrates and judges can be 'localised' to the detriment of potential detainees. The 'usual suspects' regularly appear before the same bench of magistrates, which can easily lead to bias in presumption of denying bail.[54] The Criminal Justice Act (1982) continued to work on the issue of bail, offering alternatives such as Home Detention Curfew (electronic tagging), with custody being seen as a last resort, and gave greater flexibility to courts in terms of sentencing.

Local and Remand Prisons

Around 11% of those seeking bail are unsuccessful and will be remanded into custody. Each court will have a named prison that they remand to. These 'Local' prisons are usually in the centre of large towns or cities and tend to be historic Georgian or Victorian establishments. At the time of the study, my own prison of HMP Durham served the Teesside, Tyneside, County Durham and Cumbria Courts and regularly received 20 to 40 new prisoners every week day.[55] Many Local prisons also hold up to 50% of prisoners serving short sentences or prison recall, excluding the pilot 'Reception' prison reconfiguration at Durham where over 90% of prisoners were on remand. After sentence, prisoners are usually sent to a 'training' prison establishment almost immediately afterwards.

Local prisons are often older buildings, constructed within a small physical footprint. Prison wings or spurs are occasionally refurbished but many show signs of long-term

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[53] Andrew Ashworth and Mike Redmayne, *The Criminal Process*, 4th ed (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 229–30.

[54] Andrew Rutherford, *Prisons and the Process of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), pp. 28–29.

[55] Crown Courts only sit during the working week, Magistrates will often sit on Saturdays, but no prisoners are received on Sundays asides from exceptional circumstances such as emergency transfers from other prisons.

wear and tear from the high churn rate. HMIP have been critical in its assessment of Local prisons over the last decade, with inspectors regularly discovering poor living standards and cells unfit for habitation.[57] Each prison in England and Wales is inspected by HMIP at least every three years. HMIP grades prisons from 1 (Poor) to 4 (Good) on several core 'tests' of a healthy prison: Safety, Respect, Purposeful Activity, and Resettlement. It is rare for a Local prison to score above 2 or 3 for any core area. HMIP reports tend to be a helpful insight into the realities of the prison experience, given the relative lack of research on the prisoner experience in the UK, especially of those on remand. Reports include the results of anonymous prisoner surveys and focus groups, with Chief Inspectors often remarking in critical ways on government prison policy. In 2012, HMIP engaged in a thematic review into Remand in England and Wales, and this report provides a helpful insight into the realities of remand prison life.[58]

The HMIP Remand report casts an eye over their last 33 inspection reports into Local prisons, as well as exploring the results of fieldwork in five Local prisons, including questionnaires and focus groups. Its conclusions are very critical of remand prisoner care and the Local prison environment:

> We found that remand prisoners enter custody with multiple and complex needs that are equally, if not more, pervasive than among sentenced prisoners. However, despite a long-established principle that remand prisoners – who have not been convicted or sentenced by a court – have rights and entitlements not available to sentenced prisoners, we found that many had a poorer regime, less support and less preparation for release. [59]

The report highlights a litany of difficulties faced by remand prisoners. Examples include reports of 60% of new receptions not knowing which prison they were travelling to from court, 23% of feeling suicidal or prone to self-harming upon induction, and 26% feeling victimised by other prisoners or by staff. 45% of remand prisoners reported finding access to legal representation difficult and 40% of remand prisoners with a mental health problem said they had received no healthcare support. Around 40% reported they were not engaged in any meaningful activity such as work or

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[57] See HMIP (2017), *Living Conditions: A Thematic Review*
[58] HMIP, *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*.
[59] HMIP, *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*, p. 7.

education on a regular basis, 31% said they spent less than two hours out of cell a day, and 66% said they had received no support with resettlement concerns.[60]

The picture that emerges is that for remand prisoners, access to the support and safety that sentenced prisoners appear to have is very limited. The report suggests that the humane and decent treatment expected by the HMPPS Prison Rules (1999) is not experienced by many prisoners on remand. Amongst other issues, these rules state that unsentenced prisoners should be in single cells (most Local prisons have a majority of shared cells), should be kept separate from sentenced prisoners, given their own clothes, and have easy access to legal documents and representation. Many Prison Service Instructions around remand issues that HMIP inspected were outdated or even contradicted other policies.[61]

Many prisoners suggested that their induction to the prison, including introduction to how the prison functions, their entitlements and orientation, felt rushed and was often at a time where they were not in the right frame of mind to take on new information. One prisoner states:

> The induction doesn't seem to apply to you on remand. You don't get anything to make sure you still have a life on the outside. I might not have a house when I get out the way things are going. Induction consists of sitting down with three people who ask you about drugs, kids and mental health, and that's about two minutes, and then they just tick a box. [62]

The report suggests many remand prisoners had poor access to healthcare, drugs and alcohol workers, and even to chaplains.

In the years since, it appears little has changed. HMIP's 2017 report into prison living conditions opens in a critical manner:

> Some people may feel a sense of déjà vu or world-weariness when they hear repeated accounts of poor conditions in our prisons. Many reports from HM Inspectorate of Prisons have pointed out that, all too often, prisoners are held in conditions that fall short of what most members of the public would consider as

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[60] HMIP, *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*, pp. 12–17.
[61] HMIP, *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*, p. 26.
[62] HMIP, *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*, p. 48.

reasonable or decent. I would urge readers not to assume this paper is simply another account of some dilapidated prisons, but to look at the details of what we describe, and then ask themselves whether it is acceptable for prisoners to be held in these conditions in the United Kingdom in 2017.[63]

Further, in the annual findings report covering 2016-2017 (the start of the study), HMIP paint a worsening picture of the Local prison estate, judging 21 out of the 29 prisons they visited to be 'poor' or needing significant improvement in the area of safety. The Chief Inspector states:

> Last year I reported that too many of our prisons had become unacceptably violent and dangerous places. The situation has not improved – in fact, it has become worse.[64]

This report highlights several issues that affect prisoners on remand, particularly the provision of 'first-night' care and the lack of induction at some prisons. It appears that HMIP believe that HMPPS is in a state of crisis.

The Effects of Remand

What are the effects of remand on prisoners? Although there are no well-known texts that consider remand separately from general imprisonment, the seminal text concerning the experience of imprisonment itself is considered to be Gresham Sykes' *The Society of Captives*. Although written in a 1950s North American context, it outlines the power structures and societal influences familiar to many institutions. Sykes explores the various 'roles' within the prison and adaptive trends within prison life: whether a prisoner will comply with the regime or not, whether they will break the rules openly or in an underhand manner, whether they will genuinely work towards rehabilitation or have no interest in doing so. He notes that many prisons have their own localised set of 'rigid controls that extend into what seem to be irrelevant areas of

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[63] HMIP (2017): Life in Prison: Living Conditions: *(Introduction)*
[64] HMIP, *HM Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales - Annual Report 2016-2017*, p. 7.

life' that prisoners must adhere to.[65] Sykes suggests that although prison is meant to be a punishment in itself, often the system can feel as if it is punishing prisoners a second time by setting arbitrary limits on their work, hobbies, time out of cell, association and visits.[66] In effect these and other deprivations are systematic to the total institution described by Foucault, an institution that prisoners have to adapt to quickly.[67] Ben Crewe, building on Sykes' work on prisoner society, suggests that different 'characters' or personas have to be adopted in order to survive in a prison environment.[68] He describes a world that cannot be easily be explained but must be lived. Being on remand is to be thrown into an unfamiliar territory where you neither speak the language nor know the customs, and have to adapt quickly to survive.

Erving Goffmann's important study of asylums and institutions in the 1960s states that the effects of imprisonment are more pervasive than just the challenges assimilation to a new culture. He was one of the first to describe what might be called *prisonisation* or *institutionalisation*, where prisoners become 'discultured' from the outside world, eventually losing all ability to cope outside of a prison environment.[69] For Goffmann, this tension between the outside and inside world are a 'strategic leverage' that institutions use to break down the resolve of their inmates, with many of the losses they experience whilst inside irrevocable and therefore all the more painful. [70] The loss of 'civil life' upon return to society compounds their punishment, with many vocations and jobs now barred to them or more complicated to apply for; let along the stigma that inevitably follows a stay in prison.

Liebling and Maruna's criminological study on the effects of imprisonment does not focus primarily on the remand experience, but it does note that for newcomers to the prison system, the pains of prison are more acutely experienced. Most of the settling-in period whilst prisoners arrive is spent 'keeping distress under control', as they become 'dehumanised'; starting to feel that they lack value as a person as their identity

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[65] Gresham M. Sykes, *The Society of Captives: A Study of a Maximum Security Prison* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1956), p. 25.

[66] Sykes, pp. 32–33.

[67] See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1991).

[68] Ben Crewe, *The Prisoner Society: Power, Adaptation, and Social Life in an English Prison*, Clarendon Studies in Criminology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 150.ff

[69] Erving Goffman, *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 23.

[70] Goffman, p. 25.

'disintegrate[s]'.[71] In Liebling and Maruna's opinion, the prisoner's loss of agency, control over their own future and institutionalisation as they adapt to the new culture causes deep and lasting psychological harm.[72]

Even with the privations of prison life, Liebling and Maruna state that personal trauma is avoidable, using practical steps that could be taken by prison staff and management to avoid unnecessary harm to prisoners. These include helping officers see themselves as more than just incarcerators, but giving them roles that 'transcend their job description'. It includes encouraging civilians and volunteers to come into the prison to engage with those held there – and tipping some of the power in the prisoners' favour, giving them a voice that is listened to when they have genuine concerns about their treatment or the prison regime.[73] The authors conclude that change in the penal system is possible, and that the negative effects of imprisonment can be mitigated to a greater or lesser extent.

Rutherford's work on the perceived harm done to prisoners by the prison system takes in his twenty years' experience as a prison clerk and then as a governor. He states that if the effect of imprisonment is merely trying to incapacitate prisoners, this will not work either as a deterrent or as an effective punishment. Rutherford sees the effect of prison as 'quantitatively different' from any other form of punishment – it is irrevocable (cannot be compensated for in hindsight), ruins family life, and risks a life-long stigma that cannot be easily removed.[74] Although an older work, Rutherford's research is in parallel with current criminological ideas that advocate a 'reductionist' approach to prisons, such as a smaller prison estate, legally-enforceable minimum standards of living, higher staff-to-prisoner ratios, and sentencing that views prison as a last resort.[75]

Recent studies on remand highlight the negative effect of remand on people's mental health, especially those experiencing acute mental health issues before they enter prison. Phillipa Tomczak's study of prison suicides and use of prison as a 'place of

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[71] *The Effects of Imprisonment*, ed. by Alison Liebling and Shadd Maruna, Cambridge Criminal Justice Series (Cullompton: Willan, 2005), p. 6.
[72] Liebling and Maruna, p. 97.
[73] Liebling and Maruna, p. 471.
[74] Rutherford, pp. 11–12.
[75] Rutherford, p. 175.ff

safety' for severely unwell prisoners suggests that prisons are entirely unsuitable places to remand people with mental health issues.[76] She notes that 40% of prisoners on remand struggle to gain access to adequate mental health support. Another recent study has suggested there are concerning issues with the speed at which courts will reach bail and remand decisions, with Tom Smith describing patterns of potential remandees struggling to access legal support and information around criminal justice proceedings, as well as poor-quality information being supplied to courts ahead of remand decisions being made.[77] Writing from an Australian perspective, Russell, Carlton and Tyson also consider the psychologically harmful effects of not just the remand environment but the 'churn' effect of moving from the street via the police cells, court and prison transport to remand prisons, and how this can negatively affect prisoner wellbeing.[78]

Asides from the above, little has been written on the subject of prisoners' experiences of imprisonment, particularly on remand. There is also little attention to the voice of prisoners and their experiences. The few first-person narratives written by ex-prisoners that do exist are problematic to use as a primary text, as it is not always clear how much of the detail is dramatized for effect. Examples of this include works such as Jeffrey Archer's *Prison Diaries,* prison chaplains' memoirs such as Richard Atherton's *Summons to Serve* or Sharon Grenham-Toze's *Jailbird,* or 'inspirational' prison conversion stories such as Gram Seed's *One Step Beyond* or Graham Swann's *Prison Without Bars.* Even HMIP reports include very few quotations from prisoners about their experiences.

In conversations with Durham University's Criminology Department, I have confirmed the apparent lack of literature around remand is a real one. Remand, it seems, is not of interest to many academics in comparison with issues around rehabilitation, long-term imprisonment, or prison abolition.

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[76] Philippa Tomczak, 'Highlighting "Risky Remands" Through Prisoner Death Investigations: People With Very Severe Mental Illness Transitioning From Police and Court Custody Into Prison on Remand', *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 13 (2022), 862365–862365 <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyt.2022.862365> Accessed 22 July 2022.

[77] Tom Smith, '"Rushing Remand"? Pretrial Detention and Bail Decision Making in England and Wales', *The Howard Journal of Crime and Justice*, 60.1 (2021), 46–74 <https://doi.org/10.1111/hojo.12392> Accessed 22 July 2022.

[78] Emma K Russell, Bree Carlton, and Danielle Tyson, 'Carceral Churn: A Sensorial Ethnography of the Bail and Remand Court', *Punishment & Society*, 24.2 (2022), 151–69 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474520967566>.

Whilst Inspectorate reports and criminological studies go so far to give us a picture of the state of remand in England and Wales, there remains a large gap in terms of hearing the voices and lived experiences of what Anton Boisen calls the 'living human document'.[80] In my practical research project, hearing this voice and giving opportunities for prisoners to express their experiences of remand aims to be at the forefront of the study.

Prisons and Chaplaincy

In 2010, a report was commissioned by NOMS into the role of chaplaincy in the modern prison estate. This research was carried out by Todd and Tipton of the Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies. Based on qualitative interviews with staff, prisoners and chaplains, the report came to several major conclusions that have suggested a number of avenues of exploration in the field of prison chaplaincy studies.[82] One of the major findings was the noticeable lack of formal research being carried out on prison chaplaincy in the England and Wales:

> There is a distinct paucity of sustained qualitative, ethnographic research, carried out in England and Wales that explores the role and contribution of prison chaplains and chaplaincy services... Most methodologies involve questionnaires and or heavily structured interviews conducted remotely, with few researchers conducting their research in prisons, let alone chaplaincy departments.[83]

The report concluded that further research needed to be carried out into what the authors describe as an 'obscure office'.[84] In Cobb, Swift and Todd's landmark edited volume on chaplaincy studies, they note that in the UK the research picture for chaplaincy contexts, whilst growing slowly, is still threadbare:

> The presence of chaplains in contemporary society is a phenomenon that exists without much systematic inquiry, explanation, or understanding.[85]

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[80] See Anton T. Boisen, *Out Of The Depths: An Autobiographical Study Of Mental Disorder And Religious Experience* (Harper & Brothers, Publishers, 1960) <http://archive.org/details/outofthedepthsan012920mbp> [accessed 22 July 2022].
[82] Todd and Tipton.
[83] Todd and Tipton, p. 48.
[84] Todd and Tipton, p. 43.
[85] Swift, Cobb, and Todd, p. 1.

Historically there have been prison chaplains almost as long as there have been prisons. Few authors have undertaken a systematic history of the English prison chaplain, asides from David Scott's overview that tracks prison chaplaincy back to the late 1700s and the Act of 1773 that appointed chaplains to all prisons in England.[86] Potter notes an interest in the early Christian influence on prisons in the late 18th century, stemming in particular from Quaker and non-conformist traditions that saw the possibilities of repentance (as opposed to punishment) during periods of incarceration.[87] The Penitentiary Act (1779) attempted to encourage solitude and reflection in order to encourage reformation and the eponymous 'penitence' required by the state. Chapel attendance became mandatory, with prisoners screened off from each other so only the chaplain could be seen. This emphasis on re-humanising prisons quickly fell to the wayside and prison conditions began to worsen.

Notable prison reformers such as John Howard (founder of the Howard League, later the Howard League for Penal Reform), Elizabeth Fry, and others campaigned for better conditions and state control over the prison system. Purpose-built state prisons began to be constructed, with the first opening its doors in 1816.[88] Future governments brought in subsequent Acts which changed prisons from being places of simply punishing individuals to places where the aim was rehabilitation and restoration – at least in practice. The Penal Reform Act (1898) forbade long periods of punishment on the treadmill or in solitary confinement, with an expectation that prisoners would be better or reformed characters upon release. Subsequent Acts lead to the prison system becoming more weighted towards reform, with the abolition of hard labour as a punishment, the introduction of probation and community sentences in the 1900s, and the abolition of the death penalty in 1965. The current Prisons Act (1952) states that the principles of incarceration are fundamentally rehabilitative.[89] It introduced regular inspections, an independent monitoring board to keep watch of prison conditions, and severe limits on corporal punishment. It enshrined education and 'corrective training' into law, and systematised the rules by which prisons were governed in England and

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[86] David Scott, '"Priests, Prophets and Pastors: The Historical Role of the Prison Chaplain"', *Justice Reflections*, 31.

[87] H Potter, 'Prisons', in *Chaplaincy: The Church's Sector Ministries*, ed. by Giles Legood (London: Cassell, 1999), p. 100.

[88] See 'The Howard League: History of the Penal System' - https://howardleague.org/history-of-the-penal-system/ - accessed 13th December 2017.

[89] *The Prisons Act*, 1952.

Wales. Much of this Act has been amended since, but despite repeated appeals to reform the Prisons Act, majors changes have failed to materialise.

Early Chaplaincy

Historic memoirs of prison chaplains are scarce, but Rev. John Clay's diaries from the 1840s recall his frustrations with the deprivations of the prison estate: he states 'a criminal came out of prison worse than when they came in'.[90] He suggests that prisons served not as a deterrent but as a 'seminary for sin' and notes his approval that prisons started to separate remand from convicted prisoners. He rails against the separation of prisoners during chapel services, stating that isolation does nothing to prevent bad behaviour.[91] The role of the chaplain in his view was to encourage moral fibre, religious piety, and awaken a dormant sense of morality – he believed an austere environment and religious instruction, complete with extended time in cell for reflection, would do just this. He also was notable for campaigning for better conditions for prisoners, and regularly put pressure on the authorities for prison reform.[92] Similarly, Rev. Baden Ball, in his memoirs of chaplaincy at HMP Dartmoor and HMP Wandsworth, considers the challenges he faced when watching prisoners being whipped or corporally punished and whether his faith demanded he should speak out against such atrocities.[93]

Early documents such as the *Rules and Regulations for the Governance of County Durham Prisons 1867* state that the chaplain's role is to give religious and moral instruction to prisoners, read scripture and preach to them, to lead corporate worship, frequently visit every cell and give prisoners religious literature.[94] The pastoral work of the care of souls was also important; chaplains were encouraged to see every prisoner on admission and discharge, be available for private consultation in confidence, and visit the sick and those in solitary confinement. They were responsible for inspecting the

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[90] WL Clay, 'The Prison Chaplain: Memoirs of Reverend John Clay', in *Prison Readings: A Critical Introduction to Prisons and Imprisonment*, ed. by Yvonne Jewkes and Helen Johnston (Cullompton, Eng: Willan Publishing, 2006), p. 22.

[91] *Prison Readings: A Critical Introduction to Prisons and Imprisonment*, ed. by Yvonne Jewkes and Helen Johnston (Cullompton, Eng: Willan Publishing, 2006), p. 25.

[92] Jewkes and Johnston, p. 27.

[93] Baden P. Ball, *Prison Was My Parish: Twenty Five Years Priest and Chaplain at Dartmoor and Wandsworth Prisons* (William Heinemann Ltd, 1956).

[94] *Rules and Regulations for the Government of the Durham County Prisons under The Prisons' Act of 1865: Approved by the Court of Quarter Sessions for the County of Durham,14th October, 1867; and Sanctioned by the Secretary of State for the Home Department, 20th December, 1867*, ed. by HM Prison Durham (Durham: Printed by T.R. Richardson & Co, 1868), pp. 6–25.

well-being of prisoners and reporting any concerns to the Governor. The chaplain was also ran the educational programme, liaised with the doctor, and kept a general eye over the running of the prison. As Potter suggests, it seems that from an early stage in their history, chaplains have always been an 'indelible and integral part of the prison system…interwoven into the fabric of the institution'.[95]

Chaplaincy: A Changing Role

As both the prison system and its societal context have changed over the years, the role and responsibilities of the chaplain have shifted alongside it. Chaplains have historically come from within the Established Church and been appointed as the sole spiritual guide to the prison, perhaps with an assistant chaplain if the need arose. At their sole discretion they could ask for a visiting minister to see a prisoner of a different denomination or faith, but this would be on a voluntary basis. The Prisons Act (1952) states that the three people who must be employed in every prison are the Governor, the Chaplain, and the Medical Officer.[96] Historically the chaplain was a powerful figure, often having the 'ear' of the Governor and being seen as his right-hand man. However by the late 20th century, there is some indication that chaplaincy has been less well understood by society, by the church, and the institutions they serve. In Todd and Tipton's report, long-serving prison officers describe the 1980s expectation of a chaplain was an aging, semi-retired, somewhat naïve Anglican priest.[97] This stereotype of the bumbling or ineffectual chaplain appears in David Scott's thesis on prison chaplaincy, where chaplains he interviews believe they are seen as rank amateurs and ineffectual do-gooders.[98] Some chaplains see this stereotype as an obstacle to their work. In Todd, Slater and Dunlop's research on Anglican chaplaincy in the UK, they suggest that many chaplains feel misunderstood by the wider church:

> …they felt the church sees chaplains as eccentric or failed parish priests, church ministers who can't hack parish ministry, and people who just annoy people who are trying to go about their daily work. They have felt that the church doesn't see

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[95] Potter, pp. 101–2.
[96] *The Prisons Act* 1952 s.7(1).
[97] Todd and Tipton, p. 22.
[98] David Scott, 'Heavenly Confinement? The Role and Reception of Prison Chaplaincy' (unpublished MA Thesis, Lancaster, 1996), p. 63.

> chaplaincy as real ministry. They even spoke about sensing that people within
> the church think that chaplaincy is a way for a vicar to have a career break...[100]

Although historic expectations of the chaplain's role bear some similarity to the present, the context and structure of modern chaplaincy could not be more different. As prisons tend to be microcosms of wider society, their demographics have changed dramatically over the past 50 years. Slater notes that the modern chaplaincy context is increasingly multicultural and simultaneously secular, where the religious are from increasingly diverse backgrounds.[102] In 2003, the Prison Service Chaplain General inaugurated a Chaplaincy Council, calling in voices from each Christian denomination and most major world faiths. This council oversaw the creation of the multi-faith chaplaincy team that can now be found in each prison establishment. The former role of the Anglican Chaplain as the 'gatekeeper' of prison religion and pastoral care, highlighted and critiqued by Beckford and Gilliat, has been lessened and the Co-ordinating chaplain (now Managing Chaplain) can be of any faith or denomination.[103] Statistics of how many chaplains are in the prison service vary widely, but Todd and Tipton report in 2011 that there were:

> ...currently 357 employed (full- or part-time) prison chaplains from six
> denominations/faiths (at the time of writing: 134 Anglican, 92 Muslim, 77
> Roman Catholic, 50 Free Church, 2 Sikh and 2 Hindu chaplains). Numbers of
> chaplains paid sessionally...are between 700 and 800 ... Chaplains are supported
> in their work by volunteers, estimated through a mapping exercise undertaken
> some years ago to number some 7,000.'[104]

The difficulty in finding exact figures comes from the number of chaplains who are either paid on a sessional basis (per hour, with no formal contract), or who act as volunteers. Both Ben Ryan's 2015 *Theos* report on Chaplaincy in the UK and Todd, Dunlop and Slater's 2014 report into Anglican Chaplaincy noted that Anglicans, amongst others, were poor at keeping records of how many chaplains they had in each 'sector'.[105]

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[100] Andrew Todd, Sarah Dunlop, and Victoria Slater, *The Church of England's Involvement in Chaplaincy* (Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies / OXCePT, March 2014), p. 26.
[102] Slater, *Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church*, pp. 5–7.
[103] James A. Beckford and Sophie Gilliat-Ray, *Religion in Prison: Equal Rites in a Multi-Faith Society* (Cambridge: C.U.P, 1998).
[104] Todd and Tipton, p. 9.
[105] Todd, Dunlop, and Slater, p. 15.

Although contracted prison chaplains (full or part time) are directly employed by HMPPS, sessional chaplains are not contracted and harder to number, not to mention the number of volunteers who may be completely 'off the radar'. [106] Chaplains must have the permission of their faith or denomination's governing body to work in prisons, but it nevertheless appears easy for prison chaplains to keep a low profile within both their denomination and within the prison service more widely.

With the advent of multi-faith teams of chaplains, many faiths and denominations saw a sizeable increase in the number of chaplains employed by HMPPS, especially those for whom chaplaincy has not been part of a historic understanding of their faith.

For example, Beckford and Gilliat-Ray note in their qualitative study of Muslim chaplaincy that there were over 200 Muslim chaplains employed in 2013, and many Muslims had become Managing Chaplains of the prisons they served in.[107] They note that despite 'pastoral care' not being part of standard Islamic seminary education, there is a long tradition of this kind of ministry within Islam, albeit not formalised within institutions in the same way. Likewise within Humanism, there has been a shift in tone away from critiquing chaplaincy towards embracing it within a humanist framework. The UK Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN) provides good quality systematic training in pastoral care to humanist chaplains in various sectors, including prisons, as well offering the first postgraduate course in Existential and Humanist Pastoral Support in the UK.[108]

Chaplaincy teams are a size that is commensurate with the number of prisoners in the establishment, and the make-up of the team will also reflect the religious diversity of the prison population. A busy local prison might have five or six full time chaplains, whereas a smaller Category-D 'Open' prison might only have a few part-time chaplains. Each team will also have a register of chaplains who can be called upon on an ad-hoc basis as the need occurs (such as Jehovah's Witness, Mormon, or Rastafari).

The change from Anglican-lead chaplaincy to Multi-Faith team-based chaplaincy was accompanied by a change in Prison Service guidelines, with the governing document PSO 4550 (Religion) updated to PSI 51/2011 and subsequently to PSI 5/2016 (Faith

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[106] See Todd, Dunlop, and Slater; and Ryan, *A Very Modern Ministry: Chaplaincy in the UK.*
[107] Mansur Ali and Sophie Gilliat-Ray, *Understanding Muslim Chaplaincy* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2013).
[108] *Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network* - https://nrpsn.org.uk/ - Accessed 3rd August 2022

and Pastoral Care), documents that lay out the expectations and statutory duties of a chaplain. Chaplains are expected to provide pastoral care to prisoners and staff 'of all faiths and none'. Duties include visiting every new reception to the prison to introduce them to the role of chaplaincy and to check their religious registration, as well as visiting all those in segregation and all those on the Healthcare inpatients unit.[109] Chaplains must also visit every prisoner subject to ACCT procedures and attempt to see each prisoner prior to release if they wish. Chaplains are responsible for carrying out faith-specific duties such as corporate worship, religious counselling, and activities such as Bible Study groups, meditation classes, or Quranic study. Each prisoner is entitled to see a chaplain of their faith at least once a week for an hour of corporate worship. Those of no faith are entitled to see any chaplain they wish for pastoral support, but no chaplain may see a prisoner against their will or try and proselytise in an inappropriate manner. In short, the lone Anglican chaplain has expanded into a variegated team over the last two decades.

Pastoral Care in Context

Prison Chaplains are expected to spend time giving pastoral care to prisoners and staff, but what this looks like in practice is not well defined. PSI 5/2016 states:

> A chaplain is able to visit all areas of the prison in which prisoners are located.
> This is to offer pastoral care and to contribute to decency and safer custody.[110]

This uncertainty about the kind of care chaplains give is borne out in much of the chaplaincy literature that follows, and appears to reflect a lack of clarity in some areas about what chaplaincy is really for.

Pattison notes that the role of the prison chaplain, amongst others, has a certain 'mystique' attached to it, where those who employ them see chaplains as '…like household pets; vitally important in their essential dispensability, but only if there are not too many of them.'[111] Rather than becoming too measurable and 'professionalised',

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[109] HMPPS: Prison Service Instruction (PSI) 5/2016 – 'Faith and Pastoral Care to Prisoners' – Output 2 (Receptions), Output 5 (Healthcare and Segregation).
[110] PSI 5/2016 : Output 12.1
[111] Stephen Pattison, 'Situating Chaplaincy in the UK – The Acceptable Face of Religion', in *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places*, ed. by Christopher Swift, Mark Cobb, and Andrew Todd, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), p. 26.

he claims that part of the power of chaplaincy is its inability to be defined too clearly, dealing with the 'bits of life that no-one else wants to deal with'.[112] Alan Billings suggest that pastoral care cannot simply be the product of a 'service provider' like any other; becoming too contractual and evidence-based can turn spiritual and pastoral outcomes into a mere measurable commodity.[113]

The theme of pastoral care in prisons has been labelled by some as 'being there' for prisoners, 'incarnational ministry' or a ministry of presence in the middle of difficulty.[114] This builds on the work of Samuel Wells in *The Nazareth Manifesto,* where he argues that the true meaning of incarnational ministry is *being with* people, seeing them as people to be loved and encountered rather than problems to be solved.[115] However as Dunlop has suggested, being 'incarnational' is not always a term that is fully understood by chaplains, and can often be used without chaplains fully comprehending its theological meaning. Dunlop queries whether simply being present is enough – or whether chaplains (and prisoners) should expect more than just a listening ear and a kind demeanour but also a prophetic challenge to the establishment they work within and one who, by their presence, enables Sprit-driven transformation.[116]

In her study of military chaplaincy, Winnifred Sullivan sees the role of chaplain as the one who is present to provide:

> … a minimalist, almost ephemeral form of spiritual care… with religious symbols stripped back but still visible for those who have eyes to see them.[117]

Sullivan touches briefly on chaplaincy as 'suffering with' others, but could go further to elaborate on why the chaplain's presence is so important. Rosie Deedes continues this theme in her case studies on prison chaplaincy, making a case for the middle path

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[112] Pattison, 'Situating Chaplaincy in the UK – The Acceptable Face of Religion', p. 27.
[113] Alan Billings, 'The Role of Chaplaincy in Public Life', in *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places*, ed. by Christopher Swift, Mark Cobb, and Andrew Todd, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), p. 37.
[114] Helen Dearnley, 'Prison Chaplaincy', in *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places*, ed. by Christopher Swift, Mark Cobb, and Andrew Todd, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015).
[115] Samuel Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto: Being with God* (Chichester, West Sussex ; Malden, MA: John Wiley & Sons Inc, 2015).
[116] See Sarah Dunlop, 'Is "Being There" Enough? Explorations of Incarnational Missiology with Chaplains', *Practical Theology*, 10.2 (2017), 174–86.
[117] Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *A Ministry of Presence: Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, and the Law* (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014), p. 174.

between presence and proselytism. She states from her own ministry experience that pastoral care involves both being available for prisoners in crisis alongside practical problem-solving and helping prisoners take control of their own lives.[118]

Naomi Paget provides a helpful theological understanding of prison pastoral care based on Jesus' call to help the 'least of these' in society, along with James's encouragement that caring for the physical needs of others shows the genuine nature of Christian faith.[119] She links the idea of a ministry of presence with Jesus' command to his disciples to 'watch and pray' whilst he is in the middle of his suffering in Gethsemane, affirming that being prayerful and present is at the heart of the task of chaplaincy. Turning to the tasks and competencies of the chaplain, she suggests there are four core roles of Minister, Pastor, Intercessor, and Healer.[120] In her explorations she provides a holistic model of chaplaincy work that covers the broad nature of the ministry. Touching on prison ministry, she uses the model of a ministry of presence in a dark place, helping to support those who face issues of crisis in 'complete isolation':

> '[Prison] chaplains provide the ministry of presence as they enter the world of locked doors…and painful solitude. Enter the suffering of a defeated people who live with anger, depression, loneliness, hostility, even despair. [They] penetrate the darkness of prison…'.[121]

For some, chaplaincy is a role that benefits from being ill-defined and ill-understood. Kevern and McSherry suggest that chaplains themselves may not truly understand their own role, as indeed it is not just a role but a 'series of encounters and events'.[122] The authors also suggest that some forms of researching chaplaincy are better than others, such as grounded theory and action research, as these tend to yield more substantial qualitative data. Slater likewise suggests that case studies can yield useful results,

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[118] R Deedes, 'Prison Chaplaincy: Case Studies', in *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places*, ed. by Christopher Swift, Mark Cobb, and Andrew Todd, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), p. 278.
[119] Naomi K. Paget and Janet R. McCormack, *The Work of the Chaplain* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2006), pp. 8–10.
[120] Paget and McCormack, pp. 14–34.
[121] Paget and McCormack, p. 63.
[122] Peter Kevern and Wilf McSherry, 'The Study of Chaplaincy: Methods and Materials', in *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places*, ed. by Christopher Swift, Mark Cobb, and Andrew Todd, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), p. 55.

although they cannot be replicated easily and so are prone to becoming proof-texts.[123] Both authors state that without further chaplaincy research, secular society may be less inclined to employ chaplains in future, especially if their usefulness cannot be quantified.[124]

Christopher Swift's detailed analysis of modern hospital chaplaincy records a protracted battle in 2006 around the role of chaplains in the NHS, which in turn caused a major re-consideration for chaplains (and their employers) about how they defined their role and how they evidenced their work. It appears that over time this lead to a burgeoning research community, a more integrated understanding of chaplaincy's rationale and remit, and an emphasis on chaplains continually engaging in theological reflection as part of their work.[125] A moment of crisis precipitated a whole-scale re-imagining of hospital chaplaincy in order for it to survive. Perhaps as prison chaplaincy is yet to have its true moment of crisis through which it grows and develops, this may explain why although there are elements of helpful reflection in much of the literature, the paucity of research is continually evident. There appears to be no cohesive body of research that joins the academic dots, more a disparate selection of chaplaincy-related works and case-study examples.

Theologies of Prison Chaplaincy

Prison chaplains are not often involved in researching and theologically reflecting on their own activity. Although this is not universally the case, chaplains are often more involved in the practicalities of ministry than engaging in exploring a theological understanding of their role. In their reflection on the role of the pastor as both theologian and minister, Hiestand and Wilson note the roles of pastor and theologian have become increasingly separate over the last century. They suggest that unless pastors also engage in theology, theology becomes 'ecclesially anaemic' and the church becomes 'theologically anaemic'; lacking energy and focus.[126] Their general point

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[123] Victoria Slater, 'Developing Practice-Based Research', in *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places*, ed. by Christopher Swift, Mark Cobb, and Andrew Todd, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), p. 68.

[124] Kevern and McSherry in Swift, Cobb, and Todd, p. 57.

[125] 'The Battle of Worcester', Christopher Swift, *Hospital Chaplaincy in the Twenty-First Century: The Crisis of Spiritual Care on the NHS*, 2nd edition (Burlington: Routledge, 2014), pp. 85–99.

[126] Gerald Hiestand and Todd Wilson, *The Pastor Theologian: Resurrecting an Ancient Vision* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2015), p. 13.

concerning pastors seems to be particularly relevant in chaplaincy, where often chaplains can be at a distance from their sending faith communities and from the academy.

This lack of connection between action and reflection appears to be shifting with the rise of the practical theological subdiscipline, where right at the heart of the theological task is the endeavour to understand and reflect on practice in light of theology and reflections from other disciplines, leading to more informed and faithful future praxis. This is important not just from a chaplaincy perspective, but from a secular one too. Chaplains need to explore and engage with questions of why they do what they do and what place they hold in the institutions they serve. Fraser in his study of Anglican hospital chaplains suggests that too much emphasis on the practicalities of pastoral care without reflection can make chaplains 'largely reactive and uncritical', lacking the personality traits that tend towards thinking critically and actively engaging theologically about their work, which could raise the profile of chaplaincy within an institution.[130]

Without this reflective attitude, chaplains risk further marginalisation within their institutions. In an era of stretched public finance, chaplains need a *raison d'etre* both for their own theological and spiritual integrity but also to inform their employers and gate-keepers of their value to the institution.

However, academics and practitioners are beginning to recognise the need for further research into theologies of chaplaincy. Some recent works have shown chaplaincy researchers and practitioners attempting to outline a theological rationale for their work.

In a recent edited volume on Christian chaplaincy, James Walters states that the heart of chaplaincy theology is exploring the ways in which the chaplain can reintegrate the relationship between the secular and the sacred.[133] He sees the role of chaplain as a 'bilingual' and liminal. The chaplain is one who straddles the boundary between world and church, even between God and humanity, and 'witnesses to the transforming love of

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[130] Fraser, pp. 186–87.
[133] James Walters, 'Twenty-First Century Chaplaincy: Finding the Church in the Post-Secular', in *A Christian Theology of Chaplaincy*, ed. by John Caperon, Andrew Todd, and James Walters (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018), p. 45.

Christ' in the midst of this.[134] Drawing on the historic creeds, his theology of an authentic Christian chaplain is of a person who embodies being One (an institutional 'glue'), Holy (representing God to people), Catholic (bringing people together as *ekklesia*) and Apostolic (renewing and reminding the institution of their purpose and mission).[135] This is a model that seeks to position the chaplain within the theological history of the church, whilst keeping it relevant for a (post)-secular culture.

In the same volume, Ryan offers a variety of theological understandings of chaplaincy. Although aware that chaplaincy is so disparate that no one model fits all, he builds on Threlfall-Holmes' work in *Being a Chaplain* to explore which models of chaplaincy are the most theologically coherent and which models society can understand.[136] Many models are suggested including that of a missionary, pastor, parish, agent of change, incarnational agent, alongside 'secular' models such as deliverer of pastoral care, spiritual care, encourager of diversity, explorer of tradition and heritage, as well as being a 'specific service provider'.[137]

Ryan explores the above models and sees strengths and weaknesses in all, but suggests that the strongest models are those that understand the need for *personalism;* intentional relationship building. The pastoral and incarnational models fit well with this, though Ryan warns of chaplains becoming merely 'cheap social workers or professional nice guys'.[138] The real value in such ministry is being a physical 'manifestation of God's love' in a place (like a prison) where 'hopelessness can seem to dominate'.[139] Models that Ryan feels work less well are those where the institution is just an extension of the Church's parish, due to its necessarily insular and narrow nature, and that of a Missionary, due to institutional concerns of proselytism or a post-colonial concern of imposing a religion upon a mission field.[140]

In her work on the embeddedness of chaplaincy, Margaret Whipp considers how the institution views the chaplain. She builds on Ballard's theology of 'embedded mission',

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134 Walters, p. 51.
135 Walters, pp. 53–56.
136 See *Being a Chaplain*, ed. by Miranda Threlfall-Holmes and Mark Newitt, SPCK Library of Ministry (London: SPCK, 2011), pp. 116–26.
137 Ben Ryan, 'Theology and Models of Chaplaincy', in *A Christian Theology of Chaplaincy*, ed. by John Caperon, Andrew Todd, and James Walters (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018), pp. 85–86.
138 Ryan, 'Theology and Models of Chaplaincy', pp. 91–94.
139 Ryan, 'Theology and Models of Chaplaincy', p. 91.
140 Ryan, 'Theology and Models of Chaplaincy', pp. 88–89.

suggesting that if chaplains want to remain within institutions such as prisons, they must have an embedded theology of chaplaincy. They must be:

> ...deeply committed to service and acutely sensitive to imperialistic overtones of missional discourse in our...post-Christian society.' [141]

Building on HR Niebuhr's influential work *Christ and Culture,*[142] Whipp cautions chaplains against either identifying too closely with the management of the institution they serve , blunting any prophetic edge, or carrying out ministry that is too marginal to be of any institutional relevance; neither 'cosy assimilation nor crude opposition'.[143]

Whipp writes of the importance of a generosity of spirit (though what this means in practice is not fully explored), with the kenotic edge of chaplaincy being a better theological fit for her than Samuel Wells' ' being there', which for Whipp is 'not subtle enough'. A ministry of presence can never simply be just being present, but a faithful presence that gives opportunity for divine encounter and radical transformation.[144] Whipp builds on the idea of faithfulness as the heart of chaplaincy, in contrast to a 'parachaplaincy' which she critiques as a highly targeted form of missional evangelism that picks low-hanging evangelistic fruit over a short period of time but that has no lasting value.[145]

Whipp suggests a number of models of chaplaincy that can help it '...put down roots, slowly and deeply, into the terroir of the institution, in all its uniqueness and subtlety.'[146] Firstly, evocative presence; the symbolic capacity of the chaplain to remind the institution that God is 'within their midst'; a 'walking sacrament'. The chaplain is a 'thin place', an area where people can meet with something of God in the mundane, ugly, or even hellish environment of the prison, a channel of God's grace through an ordinary 'jar of clay' (2 Cor.4.7). They are the 'liminal figure'; lingering on the edge of things, fraught with ambiguity, the figure who is neither in nor out, neither part of the system or nor entirely separate from it. This model resonates effectively with total institutions

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[141] Margaret Whipp, 'Embedding Chaplaincy', in *A Christian Theology of Chaplaincy*, ed. by John Caperon, Andrew Todd, and James Walters (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2018), p. 103.
[142] H. Richard Niebuhr, *Christ and Culture* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).
[143] Whipp, 'Embedding Chaplaincy', p. 104.
[144] See Dunlop.
[145] Whipp, 'Embedding Chaplaincy', pp. 105–6.
[146] Whipp, 'Embedding Chaplaincy', p. 107.

such as the prison, where the 'outworking of institutional power can be all-pervading'.[147] Liminality is a necessarily messy business that resists definition – Whipp concludes that 'Managerially, chaplaincy is a muddle – [and] ecclesiologically it will be an inevitable mess'.[148] She returns to this theme in *The Grace of Waiting,* where she suggests liminal periods such as spending time in a prison cell or in isolation or loneliness can create spaces for God's grace to appear, and that through these painful times the presence of God can be disclosed:

> The deeply liminal desert [is] where God's grace waits to be discovered.[149]

Other theological themes that arise include moral and spiritual generosity (good listening, authentic compassion), as well as what Whipp calls a 'subtle professionalism' that can act as a great antidote to 'the worst kinds of bumbling amateurism'. This comes with a health warning, however, as it can lapse into over-professionalisation, marked by elitism, functionalism (being 'mere technicians of the spirit') or reductionism (staking out the borders of chaplaincy's mission and mandate too rigidly).[150] Chaplains are regularly called to unusual kinds of ministry that are outside our job description, and to miss an opportunity to serve because it doesn't fit a narrow remit could be destructive.

Are definitions enough?

As with Ryan, what appears to be emerging is a picture of not just *one* theology of chaplaincy but almost a taxonomy of models of chaplaincy, within which we find small points of theological reflection. As Slater suggests, it is not good enough just to define our praxis (as she critiques Legood and Threlfall-Holmes for doing), but what is needed is a deeper understanding of the theological dimensions of chaplaincy for real reflection and change in practice to take place.[151] Theologies of chaplaincy on closer inspection appear to be *models* of chaplaincy instead. Useful as they are, models only describe different ways of carrying out chaplaincy ministries, whereas theologies seek to go deeper into the *why* and the point of origin that drives ministry.

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[147] Whipp, 'Embedding Chaplaincy', p. 109.

[148] *in ibid.*

[149] Margaret Whipp, *The Grace of Waiting: Learning Patience and Embracing Its Gifts* (Canterbury Press, 2017), p. 31.

[150] Whipp, 'Embedding Chaplaincy', pp. 110–11.

[151] Slater, *Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church*, p. 11.

Slater, a practitioner-researcher in chaplaincy, seeks to situate chaplaincy firmly within the mission of the Established church, albeit with a post-Christendom theology. She leans heavily on practical theology as the discipline that allows chaplains to reflect on how they relate theologically to their different contexts, suggesting that one of the difficulties in describing a theology of chaplaincy is the multiple contexts that it inhabits, each with its own language and culture.[152] Expanding on an apophatic theology, Slater concludes that it is becoming increasingly difficult to define what chaplaincy *is*, especially in light of the differences between what chaplains say their theology is, what they actually think, and what their actions suggest they believe, building on Cameron's 'four voices' model.[153] Slater concludes that there can be three 'theological dimensions' of chaplaincy; theological integrity, ministerial identity, and professional integrity. Theological integrity in chaplaincy is not primarily to build up the existing church but to

> …embody and express God's love and grace with and for those who gather in a particular institution/place/network, to express the values of the Kingdom of God and to witness as appropriate to the Christian gospel. This is the incarnational heart of chaplaincy.[154]

This theological description of chaplaincy encompasses an incarnational nature, a liberative nature, and a missional nature, which seems better rounded than narrower definitions of the task of chaplaincy that are context with just taxonomy.

Slater defines ministerial identity as a distinctive, representative, and recognised presence within an institution – publicly recognised, institutionally accountable, and empathetic to the host whilst being a 'critical friend'. Chaplains are rooted within their faith tradition and have a ministry that is theologically grounded but contextually shaped.[155] Slater describes this as 'professional integrity', where the chaplain is skilled and responsive to challenges and opportunities and has a strong ethical compass, whilst being able to be self-directed and well-resourced in what they do. This third dimension is the least well fleshed-out of Slater's points, but as a whole they create a multivalent understanding of chaplaincy theology within an Established church context and beyond.

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[152] Slater, *Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church*, p. 17.
[153] See Cameron, p. 54.
[154] Slater, *Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church*, p. 89.
[155] Slater, *Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church*, pp. 94–95.

Swift's work on hospital chaplaincy is in many ways analogous to the prison environment and has many parallels with prison chaplaincy. Both environments are total institutions, limiting the freedom of their inhabitants and running a strict regime, as well as being liminal places where a person can easily start to lose their identity and become known only by their crime (or illness). Swift notes that chaplains as theologians need to not just articulate theological abstractions, but to use theology to say what the word 'God' means now in our culture and context.[156]

For Swift, the 'Kingdom of God' is the main hermeneutical prism through which we must view the work of chaplaincy. He maintains that through their actions and presence, chaplains can be a 'betokening' of the Kingdom in critical pastoral situations (intensive care, for example, or a death of a relative in a prison), where words about God run short. In this realised eschatology, the Kingdom is 'all about this world and not about the next'.[157] As chaplaincy has moved away from an 'altar-centric' model, a lack of structure and formality in their work, far from being a sign of unprofessionalism, is a 'rich untapped theological seam'.[158] Indeed, being unsystematic and without a clear measurable remit gives room for the seed of the Kingdom to grow. Swift states that chaplains work within *heterotopias:* a word coined by Foucault to describe marginal 'otherplaces' that thrive on liminality.[159] Swift suggests that the very nature of the chaplain's marginality can be a positive one – chaplains should aim to 'fully inhabit the dominant culture of our institutions' as well as realising that we are 'counter-cultural in the nature of our endeavours.' [160]

Swift sees the chaplain as a figure between worlds, one whose marginal nature helps minister to those on the margins. He notes the need for a formal, articulated 'lived theology shaped by [chaplains'] experiences...in relation to the complexities of pastoral care', noting frustration at how chaplaincy is still hugely under-researched, with 'no established body of work focussing on chaplaincy in England.'[161]

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[156] Swift, *Hospital Chaplaincy in the 21st Century*, p. 158.
[157] Swift, *Hospital Chaplaincy in the 21st Century*, p. 158.
[158] Swift, *Hospital Chaplaincy in the 21st Century*, p. 160.
[159] See Michel Foucault, 'Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias', *Architecture / Mouvement / Continuite*, 1984.
[160] Swift, *Hospital Chaplaincy in the 21st Century*, pp. 160–64.
[161] Swift, *Hospital Chaplaincy in the 21st Century*, pp. 168–73.

Marginalisation to Transformation

The theme of liminality and marginality continues in an article by the former Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, who discusses a working theology of prison ministry, beginning with an emphasis on marginality and liminal spaces.[162] Williams notes that chaplaincy is often situated in places of disruption or dislocation, where people are away from their home environment and the context that sustains their identity. Although this dislocation could lead to depersonalisation or disintegration (a charge often levied at prisons), they can instead be places where people will 'readily cast about for *new* identities'.[163] The chaplain is thereby ideally placed to enable transformation through a mixture of support and prophetic witness. Williams suggests chaplains, especially in a prison context, cannot give either solely uncritical affirmation or excoriating prophetic diatribes, but instead to be 'uniquely supportive' whilst being a truth teller to the establishment.[164] He suggests the chaplain must live with a level of kenotic vulnerability before the prisoner, lowering their institutional defences and modelling a vulnerability before God that the prisoner can hope to emulate. Through this, Williams sees the possibility of God working through transforming narratives and reconstructing the stories of prisoners, helping them see 'who they are when they're not a criminal'.[165]

Stephen Hall, a prison chaplain and theologian, believes a theology of prison ministry builds primarily on an understanding of the inherent worth of all humankind.[166] Chaplains seek to instil hope, facilitate healing and model the incarnation. They will also seek to identify with those 'outside the camp' (Heb.13:13), people who have been dislocated and stripped of all identifying markers and possessions. Chaplains will help prisoners to forgive and be forgiven. Hall's theology is action-focussed, seeing the incarnational presence of the chaplain not mere presence but showing the truth of what we believe through embodied actions, helping prisoners understand power differently. This includes modelling non-violent conflict-resolution, egalitarian methods of working,

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[162] Rowan Williams, 'Ministry in Prisons', *Prison Service Journal*, 146 (2003), 54–60.
[163] Williams, p. 55 (Emphasis mine).
[164] Williams, pp. 55–57.
[165] Williams, p. 56.
[166] ST Hall, 'A Working Theology of Prison Ministry', *The Journal of Pastoral Care & Counselling*, 58.3 (2004), 169–79.

and preaching a God who does not dominate but offers himself freely.[167] For Hall the chaplain is a prophetic voice within the establishment, challenging unjust power structures and treatment of prisoners that demeans their valuable humanity.

Andrew Todd, formerly of the *Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies*, notes that chaplains themselves can become a 'safe space' within their establishment, and their value to an institution is in relation to the extent they are seen as such.[168] They must appear 'neutral', not in terms of faith but in terms of approachability, impartiality, and respecting everyone equally. Chaplains offering compassionate non-judgemental pastoral care in a secular context leads to them being seen as without an agenda. In a prison context, they are *in* the prison, but not *of* the prison; separate from the privations of imprisonment and in a unique position.[169] This neutrality forms safe spaces for prisoners to open themselves up to vulnerability (see Williams above) and thus to the possibility of change. This again suggests a theology of liminality – the neutral zone where transformation is possible.

A qualitative research paper by Romeril and Tribe makes a study of the way in which US prison chaplains prioritise the various tasks of chaplaincy, which in turn appears to give us an insight into their theology of prison chaplaincy.[170] By far the most common models that prison chaplains used to describe their ministry was that of being an example to others and that of being available; again, an understanding of a ministry of presence. They note the demanding nature of chaplaincy, and this may well stem from the feeling of being on show, 'ambassadors for Christ' (2 Cor. 5.10) in a difficult institutional situation. This can lead to burnout, and in particular the demands of the prison system and the 'fuzzy' nature of their role can mean their institution misunderstands their presence and purpose. They conclude:

> Chaplaincy is seen as more than a task, but this made it difficult to define…What is it that chaplaincy represents that no other department in any prison system can parallel? [171]

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[167] Hall, p. 175.
[168] Andrew Todd, 'Preventing the Neutral Chaplain?', *Practical Theology*, 6.2 (2013), 144–58.
[169] Todd, p. 149.
[170] Jeannine Romeril and Roy Tribe, 'Prison Pastoral Care: How Chaplains See Their Role', *The Journal of Pastoral Care*, 49.4 (1995), 383–90.
[171] Romeril and Tribe, p. 385.

Given the lack of a defined corpus of prison chaplaincy research, or a large prison chaplaincy research community, can chaplaincy theology be defined clearly, or is it amorphous by nature? It is clear this issue requires further research. This literature review has shown a number of attempts at a chaplaincy theology that are helpful signposts to understanding models of chaplaincy and theological concepts, but there are large gaps. This thesis aims to add to the body of literature around prison chaplaincy and will suggest avenues for further research, plugging some of the gaps that have been found within this review.

Chapter 3: Methodology and Data Collection

In this chapter I consider the methodology behind my practical theological research project into chaplaincy and pastoral care in remand prisons. I explore the opportunities offered by a Grounded Theory Methodology approach and how this method is suitable for my research project. I explore the data-collection process, reflecting on the ethical and practical issues around researching prisoner and chaplaincy experiences in remand prisons, and how my data was coded and analysed.

In Chapter 2 I noted that there is a lack of sustained and serious qualitative research being carried out into prison chaplaincy. There is also little published theological reflection from prison chaplains concerning their ministry experience. I found that there was also a lack of research on the remand process and the lived experiences of remand prisoners.

With this in mind, a methodology is needed that does not rely solely on testing current theories or hypotheses around prison chaplaincy, but instead helps interpret and analyse new data and create theories from the categories that emerge. One such approach is Grounded Theory Methodology (hereafter *GTM*), which has been used in the study of practical theology and qualitative research. In this chapter I explore how GTM fits with my research topic and how it can work as a successful methodology within the discipline of practical theology.

The Advent of Grounded Theory

GTM was first advanced by Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in their seminal work *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*.[173] Glaser and Strauss' work challenges what they saw as a sociological preoccupation with *verification*, the scientific method of confirming a theory by testing it and seeing if the data collected corresponds with that theory. Epistemologically this has its roots in the verificationist movement of philosophers of science such as Ludwig Wittgenstein and Thomas Kühn. Their emphasis was on the discovery of new theories by testing existing ones until they no longer adequately

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[173] Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research* (New Brunswick, N.J: Aldine, 1999).[1st Edition in 1967]

explained the evidence available, necessitating a paradigm shift of current understanding and knowledge.[174]

Glaser and Strauss challenged the empiricist principle of merely 'studying the theories of great men [sic]', instead proposing that sociologists (and others) needed to concentrate on creating new theories of their own.[176] The method by which they suggest this can be achieved is called *Grounded Theory* as the theories that emerge from the researcher's data and analysis are *grounded* firmly within the data. They see this as preferable to a logico-deductive theory; instead of rehashing old hypotheses or attempting to force data to fit extant categories, new theories are allowed to emerge. This expands understanding of the research area and challenges previously-held assumptions within the field.[177] They argue that verification is not always necessary for knowledge of a situation or an area:

> [We are] not looking for a perfect description of an area, but to develop a theory that accounts for much of the relevant behaviour.[178]

Using this process, the authors argue that researchers can produce a 'theoretical guide for the layman's action', which explains some of the theories and principles that are embedded within practice within a particular context.[179]

In my own research area, this methodology offers the possibility of discovering new theories that could help practitioners better understand their work and inform their future practice. Gaining new insight from data to better shape future praxis is a keystone of qualitative practical theological research, as Swinton and Mowat suggest (see Chapter 1).

Swinton and Mowat state that a grounded theory-style approach to practical theology and qualitative research provides critical 'knowledge generation', rather than simply a thick description or critical reflection. They describe this as 'the kind of wisdom that chaplains are required to live out at the [hospital] bedside' – an empirical

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[174] See Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus, Complete and Unabridged* (Blacksburg, VA: Wilder Publications, 2011); Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 3rd ed (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[176] Glaser and Strauss, p. 7.

[177] Glaser and Strauss, p. 29.

[178] Glaser and Strauss, p. 30.

[179] *in ibid.*

understanding of the situation married with a theological understanding and reflection.[180]

Glaser and Strauss suggest that the sociologist who works in 'non-traditional' areas of study can end up 'not merely generating a new theory but also opening a new area for sociological enquiry – virtually initiating a new area of sociology'.[181] As a researcher without major hypotheses to test, this methodology suits my context of the remand prison and prison chaplaincy. The rigour of a grounded approach to practical theology has a 'practical utility' that can not only explore what is going on theologically but has the ability to 'change the world'. It complexifies our understanding of the world by uncovering new themes and patterns that might be hidden from a study that seeks only to confirm pre-existing theories.[182] Putting real experiences and data at the forefront of research helps practical theologians see what is really 'going on' at the coalface of the lives of their participants:

> Each story described and every experience recorded reveals a different perspective on the particular reality that is being examined. Taken together, these stories and experiences lead us closer and closer to a more accurate understanding [of] what reality might look like.[183]

A grounded theory method of research can work alongside a theology that holds in tension objectivity and subjectivity. On one hand, the chaplain may believe in an objective divine truth, but on the other they may be open to a subjective constructivist paradigm that sees reality as inaccessible in a 'pure' form. This models sees truth and knowledge as at least partially constructed by individuals and communities. An 'empirical theology', to use a term explored by van der Ven, takes seriously the possibility of enhancing theological insight and knowledge through empirical study.[184] Reality is not 'just' a social construct, but it is always interpreted through a filter. The practical theologian looks through the filter of theology at their research project for meaning and a deeper theological understanding of situations and people's actions. In

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[180] Swinton and Mowat, pp. vii–ix.
[181] Glaser and Strauss, p. 38.
[182] Swinton and Mowat, p. 29.
[183] Swinton and Mowat, p. 34.
[184] See Chris Hermans, 'When Theology Goes "Practical": From Applied to Empirical Theology', in *Hermeneutics and Empirical Research in Practical Theology: The Contribution of Empirical Theology by Johannes A. van Der Ven*, ed. by Chris Hermans and Mary Moore (Brill, 2021), pp. 22–51.

Pete Ward's thinking, building on Anselm, practical theology is 'faith seeking understanding', with its primary orientation towards who God is and what he may be doing in the universe: 'the reality of God comes before all and is beyond all expression and all knowing.'[185] A theologically-based Grounded Theory approach holds a continuum between naïve and critical realism, and is well suited for producing the kind of research outcomes that are both empirically based and theologically rich.

Particularities of GTM

GTM is characterised by a method of data collection called *theoretical sampling*, a term which has become increasingly well-known in qualitative research. Cathy Urquhart notes that GTM is not just analysing and coding data, but that this is only a method within the wider methodology.[186] Theoretical sampling starts with a basic concept or question – examples from our study could include key questions such as 'How is pastoral care being delivered by chaplains to prisoners held on remand?' or 'What theology of pastoral care is believed and expressed by chaplains working in remand prisons?'. With a central question in mind, the researcher gathers data using whichever qualitative data-collection method they feel is appropriate for the task. Once the researcher begins to collect data, analysis can start immediately. Theoretical sampling allows for analysis to be carried out in tandem with research, as it will yield new categories and questions. This leads to the research question being tweaked and redesigned as the study progresses in order to answer new questions and provide structure to emerging categories.

A positive aspect of GTM for this research project is its approach to sampling sizes. GTM challenges the understanding that unless a very large number of interviews or data collection events are undertaken, the data will not be generalizable or useful in other contexts. GTM uses a helpful rule concerning sample-size called *theoretical saturation*. Glaser and Strauss define this as 'when no more data can be added that adds new instances, categories, or properties of that category.'[187] They give a helpful reminder that we are not '...ethnographers trying to get the fullest data on the group', but are

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[185] Ward, p. 29.
[186] Cathy Urquhart, *Grounded Theory for Qualitative Research: A Practical Guide* (London: SAGE, 2013), p. 4.
[187] Glaser and Strauss, p. 61.

'active samplers of theoretically relevant data'.[188] They expand on this by suggesting that the *assumption of persistence* holds true; a claim that is true for group *x* under conditions *y* will probably hold true for group *z* under similar conditions (until another sociologist studies this and claims otherwise). Glaser and Strauss state that the researcher need not know everything there is to know about their research subject or become too bogged down in ethnographic detail. As long as the researcher is accurate in their data collection, analysis and coding of themes, the results will be of value to the field of research.

Given my two-year practical project timescale it was not feasible to attempt to interview more than 30 chaplains and prisoners. A study of one 'remand' or local prison will yield data and analysis that can be assumed to describe a similar context (such as a roughly approximate Local prison elsewhere in the country) until such is proved otherwise by another researcher. We can compare this with Peter Phillips' study into Anglican Prison Chaplains, where he interviews 30 chaplains as a 'purposive' sample of the whole.[189] One thing that Phillips does not do, however, is look at Glaser and Strauss' suggestion that anecdotal evidence from the researcher's own experience can be relevant and compared with the data that they are analysing. As an Anglican prison chaplain, we hear little from Phillips' of how he understands his role. Glaser and Strauss state that *anecdotal comparison* can be helpful for analysing data, and are seemingly unconcerned with the bias that may be extant in personal anecdote. They suggest instead that ''The data can be trusted if the experience has been lived'.[190] This suggests that my own experiences as a prison chaplain in a remand context can contribute towards comparing and contrasting the data that I analyse. This is especially important as a practitioner-researcher, where the aim of the practical theological research is to inform and enhance my own future practice and understanding of my ministry. This being said, an approach including *anecdotal comparison* does need to be reflexive enough to be aware of the researcher's own biases and assumptions.

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[188] Glaser and Strauss, p. 58.
[189] Phillips, p. 51.
[190] Glaser and Strauss, p. 67.

GTM and Coding

Glaser and Strauss are perhaps most well-known for their coding methods, although later in their work the authors went in separate methodological directions. Glaser's work *Theoretical Sensitivity* (1978) opens by listing many perceived faults and corrections needed in *Discovery,* which his new work seeks to respond to. Strauss responds in 1987 with the publication of *Qualitative Analysis for Social Scientists,* prompting what Urquhart calls a 'cataclysmic dispute' that sees Strauss replacing Glaser with Juliet Corbin.[191] Glaser's *Basics of Grounded Theory Analysis: Emergence vs Forcing* (1992) responds sharply to what he sees as Strauss' straightjacketing the different forms and means of data analysis and coding, suggesting that '[if] the data is tortured too long it will give up!'.[192]

In *Theoretical Sensitivity,* Glaser starts by describing the coding process, beginning with open coding; coding in 'any way that you can'. Glaser states this process can help the researcher to emerge from the sea of empirical data in front of them and begin to corral it into themes and categories. Difference instances may have more than one code or category that they fit into, and each new instance may either fit into an emergent code or require an entirely new one.[193] Glaser is at pains to point out that researchers cannot use pre-existing codes, as this stifles creativity and risks the study trying to shoe-horn the data into a box that does not fit.[194] The researcher must painstakingly assess the data, such as interview transcripts, line by line. Moving from this stage to *selective* coding, the researcher scales up their emergent codes into larger categories. Whilst doing so, the researcher continues to make notes on their thoughts and theories as they go, called *theoretical memos.* These are crucial if the researcher is to avoid GTM being merely a method of coding as opposed to a method of *theory creation*. Strauss and Glaser note that when a new idea, thought or conclusion comes to mind, the researcher must stop coding and write until their thoughts are all on paper. The same can be done

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[191] See Urquhart; Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity*, Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory (Mill Valley, Calif: Sociology Press, 1978); Juliet M. Corbin and Anselm L. Strauss, *Basics of Qualitative Research: Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory*, 4th ed (Los Angeles ; London: SAGE, 2015).

[192] Glaser, p. 123.

[193] Barney G. Glaser, *Theoretical Sensitivity*, Advances in the Methodology of Grounded Theory (Mill Valley, Calif: Sociology Press, 1978), p. 56.

[194] Glaser, p. 58.

for field notes, which then provide a way of linking the notes to the data that is being studied.[195]

Finally the researcher moves to *theoretical coding*, which Glaser primarily defines as looking at the theoretical links between the codes.[196] Both Glaser and Strauss recommend the use of a framework of 'coding families', which can help give a visual guide to the similarities and differences between different codes and categories, comparing them in a different ways on a conceptual level. Glaser names at least 18 coding families such as *causes, contexts, contingencies, consequences, covariances,* and *conditions*, as well as *dimensions*, *degrees*, and *families.*[197] Glaser states these are ways of moving from the empirical to the theoretical level, helping produce more than just analysis of what is present but new theories that can help explain and describe what has been found.

One major departure between the two authors is the flexibility of this final stage. Although Strauss has a vast number of coding families that must be used, Glaser has limited coding families and suggests the researcher can use their own if desired. Urquhart suggests it is against the spirit of GTM to use coding families too religiously.[198] Coding comparisons and contrasts then yields substantive theories that

> '...fit the real world, work in predictions and explanations, are relevant to the people concerned, and are readily modifiable'.[199]

This perhaps is the most important role of GTM, to provide not just a description of what is going on, but a substantive theory and explanation about why things are happening the way they are. This study is interested in exploring not just what is going on in remand chaplaincy but giving a theological account of why it is happening. It seeks to create new theological understandings that may not only help chaplains make sense of their remand pastoral care, but that could also be helpful in other chaplaincy contexts.

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[195] Glaser and Strauss, p. 108.
[196] Glaser, p. 72ff.
[197] Glaser, pp. 72–82.
[198] Urquhart, p. 26.
[199] Glaser, p. 142.

Substantive to Formal Theory

GTM not only attempts to create substantive theory, but suggests that they can become stepping stones to *formal* theories with a wider impact.[200] Without this, Glaser suggests the researcher runs the risk of creating 'little islands of knowledge': useful only to a small subset of practitioners or researchers.[201] An exciting possibility of GTM sees it extending the reach of a research project beyond its limited bounds. It can create opportunities for expanding a project's general relevance to other areas and contexts. For my own research project, this could mean moving from specific theories concerning pastoral care on remand to creating theories concerning pastoral care in any prison.

A common criticism of Glaser's is that despite much discussion of this move from *substantive* to *formal* is that neither *Discovery* nor *Theoretical Sampling* provide a clear model for how this is meant to be carried out. It is almost seen as a mystical process that will happen naturally, without offering many concrete examples. Given the relatively small size of many research projects, it appears too large a jump to expect arena-defining formal theories to emerge from just one qualitative research project.

Criticism of GTM

A study of GTM shows that this methodology has much to offer practical theological researchers, both in providing an opportunity for new substantive theory to be created and by the rigour it provides in grounding the research fully in the data itself and not in pre-conceived ideas. However, as with any methodology, there are a number of criticisms that require careful consideration.

A common criticism is that GTM requires the researcher to come to the data as a 'blank slate', without any preconceived notions or conceptions. For example, Strauss and Corbin suggest not even carrying out a literature review until the data analysis stage.[202] Kathy Charmaz suggests that this can lead to grounded theorists being seen as having a cavalier attitude towards literature reviews. Without adequate surveys of the literature,

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[200] Glaser, p. 146.
[201] Glaser, p. 148.
[202] Corbin and Strauss, p. 371.

a project can end up unnecessarily re-inventing the wheel or 'rediscovering' the work of others.[203]

This is a valid criticism, and perhaps one of the most important critiques of 'Classic' GTM. Every researcher will come with a body of knowledge, unconscious biases and presuppositions. It is impossible to be an entirely objective researcher. Indeed, it is the very values and immersion into their context of the practitioner-researcher that can spur them to research their context. In any qualitative research, the reflexivity of the researcher is of critical importance, and they are just as much 'part of the study' as the research context is. Often a researcher's own story can be intertwined with the research project itself.

Charlotte Davies argues in her work on reflexive ethnography that 'even the most objective of social research methods are clearly reflexive', and that being objective in some contexts – such as hiding one's role as researcher, being completely impassive to the context or one's own understanding of the project – can be detrimental to the research process.[204] For Davies, what is more important is being aware of oneself and to what extent the research results are 'artefacts of my presence.'[205] Reflexivity allows a place for the self within the research process, and expresses the researcher's awareness of their necessary connection to the research situation and their effects on it.[206]

Recent commentary on Glaser and Strauss' classic GTM approach note the variety of ways in which GTM can be used without insisting on the blank-slate approach that would be ill-advised for many research projects. These range on a spectrum from more subjective to more objective approaches. More subjective approaches include Constructivist GTM, where the role of the participant-researcher is to be part of the knowledge-creation process to create a new 'interpretive rendering' of the situation.[207] Similarly, a Critical Realist approaches sees reality as fluid and open to people's interpretation. The latter approach almost always comes with an emancipatory aspect,

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[203] Kathy Charmaz, *Constructing Grounded Theory*, Introducing Qualitative Methods, 2nd ed (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2014), p. 371.

[204] Charlotte Aull Davies, *Reflexive Ethnography: A Guide to Researching Selves and Others* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 4.

[205] Charlotte Aull Davies, p. 3.

[206] Charlotte Aull Davies, p. 7.

[207] Katja Mruck and Gunter Mey, 'Grounded Theory and Reflexivity', in *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory*, ed. by Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz, 1st edition (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010), pp. 516–38.

where the research seeks to enact change, rather than just provide observation and thick description. In both alternatives, reflexive engagement with the researcher's own knowledge and understanding of the context is part of the research process. The suggestion that GTM has to start with a blank slate is a myth; indeed, Glaser and Strauss say as much: 'Of course, the researcher does not approach reality as a *tabula rasa'*.[208] GTM can be used to help deepen existing theoretical insights, even if it does place itself against a hypothesis-testing approach to research. Bryant and Charmaz suggest that such an approach is a hallmark of a now-outmoded scientific approach (naïve empiricism). They state that it is a psychological truth that the construction of theoretical categories cannot start from nothing but instead have to draw on 'stocks of already existing knowledge'.[209]

Another criticism of GTM is that it produces 'low-level theories'. Each research project becoming its own rarely-visited 'island', useful for a few specialists but without wider interest or generalizability. Whilst this is true in one sense, it is only true if Glaser's exhortations to 'scale up' theory are not followed up. The production of substantive theory is one of GTM's hallmarks, and in *Theoretical Sensitivity* Glaser spends a whole chapter tackling the issue of scaling up research, perhaps due to the topic's notable absence in *Discovery.*[210] Holton and Walsh state that lack of generalisability is not just an issue for GTM, but is common to many different methodologies.[211]

Swinton and Mowat tackle this issue when discussing practical theology and qualitative research, as it is particularly important within this discipline to be able to bring the lessons learnt from theological reflection into conversation with continued ministry experience. They suggest that the kind of knowledge produced by qualitative research is different from the kind produced by quantitative scientific study – ideographic, meaning a unique, non-replicable experience.[212] At its heart, GTM offers access to lived human experience and voices that might not otherwise be heard. There is always a degree to which these experiences are shared and can be transferred from one context to another.

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[208] Glaser and Strauss, p. 3.

[209] Antony Bryant and Kathy Charmaz, *The SAGE Handbook of Grounded Theory: Paperback Edition*, 1st edition (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications Ltd, 2010), pp. 196–97.

[210] See Glaser, p. 144ff.

[211] Judith A. Holton and Isabelle Walsh, *Classic Grounded Theory: Applications with Qualitative and Quantitative Data* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2017), pp. 51–52.

[212] Swinton and Mowat, pp. 40–41.

Swinton and Mowat cite a practical theological study into hospital chaplaincy in NHS Scotland that uses GTM to explore chaplaincy care using phone interviews and questionnaires. It suggests that their findings can have further potentially transformative resonance beyond the immediate context 'in so far as it raises issues and offers insights that reach beyond the particularities of the situation'.[213] It is the researcher's role to spot parallels between the research context and other wider contexts, as well as other logical or conceptual comparisons. Swinton and Mowat suggest that research in a concrete specific situation can help understand the broader social processes that structure it and how they are mediated by that specific situation. For our research, this might look like considering how the environmental or theological challenges of remand chaplaincy might have parallels in other areas of ministry, or how remand chaplaincy experience might be reflected in other chaplaincy areas.

So are there other examples of GTM being used in practical theology to good effect? In a recent article, Bruce Stevens describes a perceived lack of GTM used in practical theology and suggests that more needs to be done to prove its worth amongst theologians, calling for a 'community of practice'.[214] He offers one example of his own work that has used GTM as a way of showing this methodology can be used in practical theology.[215] However, Stevens appears to have missed several other projects involving chaplaincy that appear to have used GTM to good effect.

For example, Kevern and McSherry suggest that investigating chaplaincy using GTM can work to create an account of what is going on that is 'intuitively and intellectually persuasive'.[216] Their appraisal of this methodology does have notes of caution, as they state how difficult it is to set aside preconceptions and prejudgement. Kevern and McSherry argue that using GTM can be a cover for doing very little reading or in-depth analysis, and the result can end up being the product of 'a hasty analysis of some shakily-conducted interviews'.[217] They cite several examples of GTM used within

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[213] Swinton and Mowat, p. 45.
[214] Bruce Stevens, 'Grounded Theology? A Call for a Community of Practice', *Practical Theology*, 10.2 (2017), 201–6.
[215] See Bruce Stevens, 'Grounded Theology: A New Method to Explore Luck', *Theology Today*, 73.2 (2016), 117–28.
[216] Kevern and McSherry, p. 56.
[217] Kevern and McSherry, p. 56.

practical theological chaplaincy research, in particular Steve Nolan's work on palliative care chaplaincy, as a good example of how GTM can be used.[218]

Nolan's article describes a research project into palliative hospital chaplaincy, where a GTM approach was used to explore a practical theological question that arose from an 'critical incident' with a palliative patient where he felt caught short by the experience:

> [I] realized that [I] had witnessed Daniel giving up his hope for recovery and staring his death anxiety full in the face; [I] had encountered Daniel at exactly the point he risked falling into despair.[219]

Nolan states that he chose GTM because it would help 'retheorize' his approach to his chaplaincy work, rather than reflect on his current practice. Using this process, he realised early in the data-analysis that his expected theme of how chaplains inspired hope was not what chaplains wanted to discuss in their interviews, rather that they wanted to explore models of presence in the midst of the dying. He was able to use theoretical sampling to explore models of presence in further interviews, and four theological models of presence emerged that participants, when later questioned, found 'fitted' their experience and helped them better understand their own palliative care ministry. GTM provided a 'theory' that helped explain some of what was happening in the context, and helped the author explore their own ministry experience in light of this.

Similarly, a recent practical theological study by Irene Becci into prison chaplaincy in East Germany is of a similar size to my own project, and uses GTM to explore the theological grounding of chaplaincy. Although Becci does not go into great detail about her reasons for using GTM, her work has been praised by Phillips as an example of using semi-structured interviews and questionaries' within a GTM framework.[220] Using grounded theory approaches, she interviews prison governors, chaplains and prisoners, and takes observational notes to triangulate her data, in order to consider what the presence of a religious figure means in a prison, the narrative surrounding it, and how it can be justified in an East German context.[221] Similar to my own approach, she chooses

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[218] Steve Nolan, 'Hope beyond (Redundant) Hope: How Chaplains Work with Dying Patients', *Palliative Medicine*, 25.1 (2011), 21–25.
[219] Nolan, p. 21.
[220] Irene Becci, *Imprisoned Religion* (London: Routledge, 2017).
[221] Becci, p. 20.

grounded theory due to the lack of research previously carried out into prison chaplaincy, and is able to pick out major themes from analysing the qualitative data that might otherwise have been overshadowed by extant theories of prison chaplaincy.

Within criminology, GTM is also beginning to be taken more seriously as a research methodology. Pamela Davies suggests that it can work well in a prison context as it is readily adaptable to a rapidly-changing research environment where the researcher needs to be able to respond quickly to a sudden turn of events or unexpected limitations on the research. She also praises the way in which GTM lends itself to listening carefully to the words and actions of those being interviewed, especially prisoners, which make it more likely to reflect what is really happening 'on the ground'.[222] She suggests that GTM is one of the best ways to collect data first hand from participants in a prison setting, collecting it on their own terms in light of what they feel is significant, and in a way that is grounded in their words and actions.[223]

Mark Pogrebin's study of prison research aligns with the above but sounds a note of caution, stating that prison-based researchers must be careful to stay within their ethical guidelines. Research Ethics committees are rightly wary of interviews that are too far ranging and go into areas that have not previously been discussed and approved by either the committee or the participant.[224] This wariness of research that goes beyond its initial bounds is reflected in King and Liebling's study of the dynamics between the researcher and prison 'gatekeepers', noting that prison managers are often cautious about their leadership or governance being critiqued by an outside eye.[225] Researchers need to be flexible enough to explore where the emerging themes of the project take them without damaging their relationship with the institution they are researching. In my own case, I was aware of a certain reticence to explore themes that emerged from the research that could reflect badly upon HMPPS. As an HMPPS employee at the time, I was aware that writing a thesis that explored more negative aspects of prison experience could be seen as troublemaking, and could have caused

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[222] Pamela Davies, 'Doing Interviews in Prison', in *Doing Criminological Research*, ed. by Pamela Davies, Peter Francis, and Victor Jupp, 2nd ed (London: SAGE, 2011), p. 169.

[223] Pamela Davies, p. 144.

[224] Mark Pogrebin, 'On the Way to the Field', in *Advancing Qualitative Methods in Criminology and Criminal Justice*, ed. by Heith Copes (London ; New York: Routledge, 2012), pp. 159–60.

[225] Roy D. King and Alison Liebling, 'Doing Research in Prisons', in *Doing Research on Crime and Justice*, ed. by Roy D. King and Emma Wincup, 2nd ed (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 44.

issues in my own chaplaincy work if the response of prison management to my findings was negative. This was a careful balancing act that called for constant reflection and self-awareness throughout the research process. The NRC expect a detailed summary of research findings, along with suggestions for how it could influence business policy and procedures, and I was aware that this research might not be welcome, depending on the findings. As shown later in the study, chaplaincy is often trusted at multiple levels of prison governance, and this trust is hard-won. Being involved in a study that showed the service in a negative light could potentially lose some of this hard-won trust.

GTM was chosen as my methodology, as it appeared to be a robust yet flexible method of gathering data within the prison context, in a field that has little previous published research to shape it. By using GTM, not only can themes emerge from the data, but substantive theories concerning remand pastoral care can be formed, tying in to the practical theological task of exploring data to better inform future praxis. Glaser's approach seems to mesh with the practical theological task, moving beyond mere description and instead offering opportunities for new understanding and deeper connection with what is really going on.

With GTM chosen as the methodology for the project, I now turn to the scope of the practical research project and how the data was collected.

Forming the Research Project

In order to submit my Ethical approval form to Durham University and to the Ministry of Justice's NRC, I first had to summarise my intended methodology and aims, consideration of ethical issues and how I would gather my participants and collect my data. I wanted to engage as deeply as possible with the lived experiences, emotions and day-to-day lives of prisoners and chaplains. I was keen to see not just a list of potential participants but Boisen's 'living human documents', capable of offering new understandings of prison chaplaincy on remand and new opportunities for reflecting on my own practice. I recognised that the prison environment would present a number of challenges in terms of recruiting and speaking to serving prisoners, and consulted criminological literature for guidance on qualitative research in prison establishments, particularly around the difficult issue of being a chaplain-researcher exploring my own field of pastoral care on remand.

Lilian Ayete-Nyampong has an insightful approach to practitioner-researcher research. She notes the difficulty of entering into the research field as someone familiar to the prison environment as a practitioner and yet as a researcher who has to be separate from it. She suggests semi-structured interviews with participants are the most helpful way of gathering empirical data from the prison environment, and encourages the practitioner-research to observe with 'both sets of eyes': seeing the research environment both from a researcher perspective and from a practice perspective.[226] She suggests that the power-dynamics of interviewing as a practitioner-researcher can be beneficial for prisoners in particular, as the power-roles are for once reversed; the prisoner has the data and is their own gatekeeper, deciding what to disclose and what information to conceal. The researcher is at their mercy and dependant on them to provide the data. This 'provides rich empirical data from which theoretical and interpretative frameworks emerge…', and offers a balance to possible ethical issues around the power of the chaplain over the prisoner.[227] This being said, ethical considerations in this research process are 'often unpredictable, evolving with time and thereby require constant negotiation; they require everyday practical remedies and considerations.'[228] I was aware that even with the reflexive approach explored by Charlotte Davies, I would likely come across difficult ethical and practical issues during the data-collection that I would need to be aware of and respond to appropriately.

Bill Gilham's work on semi-structured interviews provided a helpful model with which to consider how to shape interviews with prisoners and chaplains.[229] Running a pilot study would be crucial, alongside a process of formulating research questions. Gilham suggests a 'brainstorming' model of interview construction, where all possible interview questions are mapped out, reviewed and reorganised with redundant questions deleted, and then questions re-ordered into a narrative sequence with similar themes grouped together. Gilham reminds researchers that question clarity is key, suggesting 12 words

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[226] Lilian Ayete-Nyampong, 'Changing Hats: Transitioning between Researcher and Practitioner Roles', in *Palgrave Handbook of Prison Ethnography*, ed. by Deborah H. Drake, Rod Earle, and Jennifer Sloan, Palgrave Studies in Prisons and Penology (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 307–25.

[227] Ayete-Nyampong, p. 310.

[228] Ayete-Nyampong, p. 308.

[229] Bill Gillham, *Research Interviewing: The Range Of Techniques* (Maidenhead ; New York: Open University Press, 2005).

as a maximum. This would be particularly important in prison contexts where literacy and comprehension amongst participants might be low.

My main research question centres on how pastoral care to remand prisoners is delivered, experienced, and understood. I decided to interview chaplains and prisoners with similar questions but posed from different perspectives. This allowed me to compare and contrast how chaplains felt they were delivering pastoral care with how prisoners experienced that care. Having brainstormed possible questions around remand experience, I was left with a longlist of interview questions for chaplaincy and prisoner interviews.[230]

The table also provided prompt questions that could be asked to draw out participants' opinions and understanding of remand pastoral care. Prisoners would be asked about their current and past remand experiences, how long they had spent on remand, and what the main challenges and difficulties had been during this time. I would then ask them to consider any interactions they had had with the chaplaincy team and would question them on what made for a good chaplain. Similarly, I would ask chaplains to explore their experiences of chaplaincy ministry in a remand setting, what they believed the most challenging aspects of remand were for prisoners, and to what extent they felt they and their team met the needs of these prisoners. I also would explore the theological or philosophical grounding of their work: *why* they did what they did and if they had a supporting narrative that undergirded their pastoral care. Finally, I would ask both prisoners and chaplains what they might change about the prison service and how it cared for remandees, as well as giving them time to say anything else that they felt was important for me to hear and take into account. Whittling down the questions lead to a final summary of interview questions to take to the pilot study for evaluation.[231]

It was clear from early on in the research proposal process that my own place of ministry, HMP Durham, could not be the site for the main research interviews. Interviews with chaplaincy colleagues could be open to accusations of bias, and interviews with prisoners would have a major power-imbalance and raise problematic ethical issues; asking someone to whom you are giving pastoral care in an enclosed

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[230] See Appendix 1a – Interview Questions Longlist
[231] See Appendix 1b – Final Interview Questions

environment how they would 'rate' your service would not make for robust qualitative research. This issue was also raised as a query by the NRC after my initial research application, who asked how I would use the data from my own work-site. I decided to use HMP Durham as a pilot site instead, testing out my interview questions in order to see if they yielded appropriate and meaningful data in the timescale. In using Durham as a pilot site, I could separate the pilot data from the main research project whilst making use of easy access to the site in formulating and developing my interview questions. The data would then provide help with giving me an idea of the kind of themes to look out for in the main study without giving me too many 'working hypotheses' that might skew my analysis of the main research study.

Pilot Study – HMP Durham

I started my data-collection process at HMP Durham where I served as chaplain, and this was in one sense the easiest data to collect. I had full access to the prison, as well as the opportunity and means to collect data whenever was most appropriate for participants during the working day. Once my research approval was granted by the NRC and the Durham University Theology and Religion Ethics Committee, I sent out participation information sheets to my chaplaincy colleagues at HMP Durham, inviting them to take part in the study. They were made aware of the anonymity of their remarks and of the use of their data as a pilot shaping the final study. Almost all chaplains I approached were willing and able to take part in the study, although I was aware that as my colleagues they might have felt undue pressure to take part.

Inviting prisoners to take part was less straightforward. As the prison was ostensibly 95% remand, it would be easy to find the correct demographic to interview. However, it would be difficult to find prisoners who had not met me for any significant length of time or who were not experiencing pastoral issues that I was involved in.

I started by placing posters and participant information forms on every prison wing, aside from the mental-health inpatients unit and the Segregation unit. There was only one response to this from a prisoner, and so I changed approach by posting an invitation to take part in the study under every prisoner's door on the largest wing in the prison (this covered around 200 men, just under 25% of the prison's population). Prisoners were able to contact me by using the electric information kiosks on each wing, so they

would not be reliant on informing anyone else they were taking part. The response was swift, and over 12 prisoners contacted me within 48 hours, asking to take part. I was able to exclude anyone who was sentenced (unless it had been within the last few weeks), or who I had prior knowledge of, or to whom I had already provided pastoral care. This left me with seven possible participants – five to interview and two in reserve in case someone pulled out or was unable to take part unexpectedly.

Once contacted and spoken to about the interview process, prisoners and chaplains were invited to suggest an interview location of their choice. For prisoners this was particularly important, as I was aware of the power imbalance between the chaplain and the prisoner. Giving them choice of interview venue was one small way of giving them a limited amount of power, making sure they felt safe and able to share openly about their experiences. The majority of prisoners suggested the Chapel, as it was a separate building away from officers and other prisoners where we could speak unsupervised. One prisoner was comfortable with a wing 'interview' room, a somewhat bare location with just enough space for two people. Chaplains likewise were given a choice of location, and these were split between the Chapel and the managing chaplain's office (on a day when it was vacant).

Participants were given participant information sheets, a consent and ethics form, and a debrief sheet thanking them for their time and giving information on follow-up support if any issues they had discussed had adversely affected them.[232] All participants were aware of the confidentiality of their interviews and that they would be anonymised. With prisoners I was unable to promise complete confidentiality if they disclosed a risk to themselves or to others, as expected by the NRC. Although I was concerned that not being able to promise complete confidentiality would mean prisoners would not be honest with me or open up entirely, my fears were ill-founded. Prisoners were particularly candid in almost all interviews. Some prisoners intentionally opened up about difficult pastoral issues that later on required me to pause the interview, such as information concerning the bullying of another prisoner on the wing , which a prisoner asked me to raise with Security after we had finished the interview.

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[232] See Appendix 2 – Participant Information Sheets and Consent Forms

Throughout the data-gathering process, both prisoners and chaplains expressed a real appreciation that their voices were being heard and that HMPPS would take an interest in their views and concerns. Prisoners in particular were very hopeful that their interviews as part of the research project would lead to real and noticeable change.

Pilot Study – Outcomes

The pilot study at my own prison was crucial in establishing that the interview questions yielded useful results and data points, as well as exploring how best to recruit participants and interview them in an environment conducive to open discussion and honest replies. The interview questions needed only slight adjustments for wording; some questions came across as too longwinded or complex, and other questions were naturally covered during the course of the interview conversation without having to ask them directly.

The results were encouraging, and even within the pilot study major themes started to emerge from the data around the difficulty of time spent on remand, the complexity of the role of the chaplain within a remand environment, and the key challenges of pastoral care with remand prisoners.

Reflecting on the pilot process, I was struck by how many participants had such pain, trauma and loss hovering beneath the surface of their lives. Both chaplains and prisoners could be said to wear 'masks' in the prison environment; the pastoral mask of the minister and the 'hard man' mask of the prisoner. As the interviews progressed, some (if not all) of the masks began to slip, and I felt as if we were treading on holy ground as people's lives began to open up before me. There were a number of poignant moments that bear reflection.

Chaplain Ben expressed genuine sadness at the perceived 'straightjacketing' of his role. Throughout the interview he expressed a palpable tension arising from the way his faith and church background inspired him to evangelise, share his faith with people, and be open about how he believed his faith could change prisoners' lives. Instead, he felt he had to keep a lid on his beliefs in order not to be seen as proselytising or placing too much emphasis on his own opinions. Much of his work was reactive, taken up with statutory duties, administration, and meeting prisoners' practical requests. These were all seen as a necessary and important part of chaplaincy, but with a saddened look in his

eye, the chaplain expressed a feeling of being 'exceptionally reeled in', with a sense of resignation about this. After a pause, the chaplain said this job had 'dulled my passion'[233]. As a colleague, I remember the profound experience of hearing something genuinely unexpected from a colleague and being in the challenging position of continuing the research interview whilst fighting the desire to just offer pastoral care to them in the midst of a moment of turmoil.

Moments when I realised the potential value of the research occurred in each prisoner interview. With their guard down, prisoners opened up to me about genuine concerns about their life on the outside of prison, their families and how they were coping without them, and most commonly a sense of desperation at the prison environment. Many remarked at how pleasant the Chapel was to be in: tall ceilings, soft carpets, light and welcoming, in stark contrast to their prison cells and wings. Descriptions piled up on top of each other, painting a harsh picture of daily reality for remandees: 'diabolical',[234] 'overcrowded…the dumping ground for the North East',[235] and 'as grim as you could imagine it'[236] were descriptions that stood out. It was a salutary reminder for me as the chaplain who could go home at the end of the day, who often in their busyness chose not see some of the more grim aspects of the environment, to be confronted with the reality of life in a 200-year-old Georgian jail. In the midst of this, however, were glimpses of light, as prisoner after prisoner described how other chaplains had helped, encouraged, and supported them through their darkest moments. Even those who had had very little contact with chaplains had good things to say about how visible, decent, and available chaplains appeared to be. Prisoners remarked that attending a Sunday service somehow got their heads out of prison for an hour or so; a sacred time to escape the insalubrious confines of the cell. Prisoners stated that chaplains had treated them with decency and as a human being. Reflecting on this afterwards, I was encouraged that something profound and theological was occurring in this remand context, and that this research was worth pursuing.

Perhaps the most poignant moment was during a pilot interview where Prisoner Omar expressed his disgust about an attack on another prisoner during the previous week's

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[233] Chaplain Ben, interview
[234] Prisoner Noah, interview
[235] Prisoner Patrick, interview
[236] Prisoner Quentin, interview

chapel service. The recent violence in the chapel service had made his only 'safe space' feel threatened. 'It knocked me for six', he said, describing how for him a place that represented peace, relaxation and belonging had now come to symbolise fear and distrust.[237] This was mentioned early on in his interview (taking place in the chapel), and yet I noticed that he gradually relaxed as the interview went on. As I offered refreshments, he continued to explore how challenging his remand time had been. At the end, in almost a throwaway remark, the prisoner said that coming back to the chapel to do this interview had somehow re-consecrated it in his eyes, and that he felt welcome in the space again. Years on from this interview, I can still remember the feeling of being overwhelmed by his comment. It struck me then that practical theological research is never just an end in its own sake – that the very act of listening, taking people's experiences seriously, and sharing them with others who may never hear their voice otherwise, is in itself a deeply pastoral act. This event, along with the whole pilot process, served to confirm my theory that this research and the methodology I had chosen – going into the interview without preconceptions about what I might find – was the right path to follow.

Main Prison Sites – Access and Participants

Once my pilot study was completed and I was satisfied that the research process was sound, I was able to begin arranging interviews with chaplains and prisoners at HMP Alpha and HMP Beta.[238] At the time of the interviews, HMP Alpha was a Category B Local Prison serving a wide area, with a large remand population and up to 36 new receptions daily. HMP Beta was a Category A prison that was nevertheless mainly made up of lower-category prisoners held on remand or for short sentences. A year or so after the interviews took place, it was reconfigured to become a Category-B long-term prison, with its remand function being passed over a nearby Contracted-out prison.[239]

In each prison, I had to seek the permission of the Governing Governor to carry out the research as well as the Managing Chaplain; this was crucial in order to gain both access to the prison itself but also to gain permission to bring a Dictaphone in. Emails were sent explaining the remit of the research and sharing my own experience as a prison

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[237] Prisoner Omar, interview
[238] Names of these prisons have been changed to provide anonymity to the participants
[239] Around twenty prisons in England and Wales are privately contracted out to companies such as G4S, Sodexo, and Serco.

chaplain and researcher, in order to gain their trust. The NRC was clear that even with their research consent, Governors retained the right to deny me access to their prisons for any reason. I was pleasantly surprised the Governors and Managing Chaplains were keen to engage in the research process, stating that it would be beneficial both for the establishment and for the chaplaincy teams. I asked Managing Chaplains to circulate the participant information sheets to their teams and to invite them to take part in the process.

Finding prisoners to participate in the research process was more challenging. As with all remand prisons, the population of the prison changes very regularly, and even with good planning I would be unable to come to each site in advance to invite prisoners for interview due to work commitments and the likelihood of prisoners moving elsewhere or leaving the prison. I therefore brought a stack of 200 prisoner invitations me during my initial visits, during which I interviewed the chaplains and then asked the Managing Chaplain to distribute the invitations any new receptions they met over the course of the following weeks. I also provided posters for the prison wings, although from previous experience I was aware this might not gain much attention. The Managing Chaplains were obliging in both cases. I was aware that leaving the chaplaincy team to find prisoners to interview was not ideal, as potentially they could have chosen prisoners who were positive about chaplaincy or were well known to them, however due to the confines of the study and the difficulty of accessing the prison establishments regularly, this was the most expedient way to gain participants. In both cases, I was able to interview five prisoners from each establishment who had been invited personally by chaplaincy during their prison induction or at another time shortly after.

Interview Process

As in every interview process, there were challenges and obstacles along the way. My first visit to HMP Alpha was fraught with nerves; walking in to the gatehouse of the prison, I was struck by how alien the environment felt compared to my own context. Like the prisoners, I would be without keys, at the mercy of another to walk me to and fro around the site. The chaplain who had been sent to collect me (around an hour after I arrived) did not introduce himself and asked some pointed questions about the Dictaphone; fortunately I had printed an extra copy of the authorisation from the Security Governor, as I was taken straight to wait outside the Governor's morning

briefing until his memory could be jogged about having given me authorisation a month or so beforehand. Once in the chaplaincy office, things were much more congenial, with the Managing Chaplain and the team very warm and welcoming, and a relaxed feel was evident amongst the staff. Chapel Orderlies (enhanced-status prisoners with freedom to walk round the site unaccompanied) made me endless cups of tea, and sang the praises of the chaplaincy team, also sharing some of their own life stories informally with me. Chaplains had been asked if they wanted to take part by their Manager but it was clear they had choice in the matter (some of them had declined, others said they could do another date but never got back in touch). All of the chaplains who participated were keen to speak at length about their experiences of remand chaplaincy, and frustrations with the prison system were expressed very openly. One chaplain spoke for over an hour and it was only due to needing to catch a train that I reluctantly brought the interview to a close. What was very clear was that chaplains rarely had the opportunity to stop, pause and think about their ministry – giving them the time and permission to reflect and be honest about their experiences with someone who understood their environment seemed to open up aspects of their experience they had not had the time to consider before.

My second visit was more straight-forward in terms of gaining entry to the prison, and in the intervening weeks the chaplaincy team had managed to find five participants to take part in the study. My posters and stack of invitations had sadly had little response, and so the chaplaincy team had asked prisoners they knew of to take part. This was a little concerning in terms of how the prisoners had been selected, and I was worried to start with that all the prisoners would be unequivocally positive about chaplaincy. I had to place my trust in the chaplaincy team; that they would be honest and had genuinely select a variety of remand prisoners. It is a noted phenomenon in a prison setting that 'refusal rate [to take part in interviews] is low with a captive audience', and that often researchers have to work with whoever is to hand and is in front of them.[241] There was no other method for me to invite prisoners for interview without greater access to the prison wings and to lists of the remand prisoners available. The posters and invitations had not been responded to, and the chaplaincy team had done their best to make sure

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[241] Pamela Davies, p. 161.

my visit was not in vain. Encouragingly, the prisoners taking part covered a wide range of different faith backgrounds, ages and ethnicities.

Once the interviews were underway (again, in the prison chapel – this was the only quiet space in the prison where I could be left unsupervised), prisoners began to relax and open up about their experiences. I was encouraged that although many prisoners were positive about chaplaincy, others had had negative experiences they were keen to share with me; this suggested that chaplains had not just hand-picked the 'right participants' to join the study. As in the pilot study, I was struck by the level of depth and openness about their experiences, particular their negative experiences of the remand process and the dilapidated prison environment. Another 19th Century prison, HMP Alpha was visibly in need of repair and remodelling – despite the number of cleaning orderlies around the site, it was clear that the fabric of the building had been neglected for some time and that this had created an oppressive-feeling environment for many prisoners. What was clear was that some prisoners had taken the many hours spent cooped up in their dilapidated cells to think very deeply and broadly about their prison experience and the difficulties of being on remand. It was striking how many of them had spent much of their lives on remand, not just in prisons but in YOIs, STCs and Borstals. For them, the remand experience was not just a one-off, but part of a cycle of time in and out of prison. All the prisoners at HMP Alpha spoke for extensive periods of time and seemed eager to engage with the research process.

HMP Beta was a quite different experience in many respects. As a research site, both the Governor and the Managing Chaplain were extremely keen on my presence within the prison to be facilitated as easily as possible. No issues were raised around my use of the Dictaphone, and although the interview dates were cancelled on a few occasions, these were all due to legitimate unforeseen events. When I first arrived at the site, the Managing Chaplain handed me a timetable detailing which chaplains had agreed to take part and when I would be interviewing them. Chaplains had even come in on their days off to participate, and there was a good breadth of faiths represented; Church of England, Roman Catholic, Muslim, and Humanist. Undertaking the interviews was exhausting but encouraging as each chaplain engaged fully with the research questions, with some even critiquing or querying the methodology and theological grounding for the project. I saw this as an encouraging sign for the research process, even if at times I

felt I was the one being interrogated or interviewed, rather than the reverse. The chaplaincy team also invited me to share lunch with them, where they regaled each other with stories from their time together (usually centred around unusual prisoners or surprising experiences). They also asked me to join them for midday prayer in the chapel and prayed for my research project – a profound experience that blurred the lines between research and theology, ministry and reflection.

Criticism of the prison establishment and its governance was also more marked at this site – there were very few interviews where chaplains did not critique the way the prison was run. All of the team were keen to hear my research outcomes at the end of the project.

My second visit to the site saw interviews taking place in less salubrious conditions than the HMP Alpha visits; I interviewed five prisoners in a small, dingy office on a wing landing. This made it easy for prisoners to get to me; I was left to my own devices in the office as prisoners joined me one after the other, with the Manging Chaplain bringing them over one at a time, with refreshments provided. One noticeable difference in recruitment at HMP Beta was that participants had more obviously been randomly selected – the chaplaincy team had given invitations to all remand prisoners in the previous week when they had carried out their induction visits, and around five had responded. Many were very new to the prison environment and few had had any time off the prison wing (or even out of their cell) due to staff shortages. One prisoner claimed not to have been outside for exercise for over two days, and two interviews were cut short due to the understandable priority of getting a shower or time associating with other prisoners. Prisoners were perhaps more reserved than at HMP Alpha, but were also more vocal about perceived negative experiences of the chaplaincy team that they had witnessed, most of which centred around requests not being answered in what they perceived to be a timely manner. Some prisoners had very little experience of chaplaincy or had very little to say about what chaplains did or what they were for. Prisoners here were even more negative about the prison environment around them than at HMP Alpha; piles of rubbish were visible in the exercise yard, and broken windows and dirt were everywhere. I was able to view a cell which seemed even more spartan than my own context at HMP Durham. Many prisoners complained they had been on the remand wing for 'far too long' and had had little input or time out of cell

in that time. In particular, it was clear that basic items such as towels or soap were unavailable (an issue that almost all the chaplains raised in their interviews). The environment felt noticeably oppressive and unpleasant, although the officers and Senior officers that I met on the prison wings were ostensibly friendly, and I did see some positive interaction with prisoners during my time in the environment.

As I left the site for the final time, with all my interviews finished, I remember feeling an immense weight lifted from my shoulders, coupled with a the feeling of the new burden of the task ahead. The participants' words and my recordings of their surroundings were carried within a small Dictaphone. At the time it felt as if I was carrying something precious and of great worth that I had been entrusted with, something valuable to be guarded and respected. The voices of those who were struggling, powerless or in pain echoed around my head as the train wound its slow journey back home.

Coding and Data Analysis

The interviews were all carried out in 2019 during the research phase of the study. Pilot study interviews began in January and finished in April, and the main study interviews took place between June and November the same year. These interviews were then uploaded to a secure hard drive and transcribed using Express Scribe software to enable audio playback alongside live transcription. The transcription process took much longer than anticipated, around four months, partly due to the complexity of the conversations and the difficulty of transcribing prison slang and strong regional accents. The Dictaphone's microphone was particularly sensitive and had picked up huge amounts of background noise that made accurate transcription difficult; doors banging, prisoners and officers shouting, alarm bells blaring, and even fireworks from a local Sikh festival. In the pilot study, a pneumatic drill started up ten metres away during one interview. Despite this, I was able to transcribe the interviews accurately and then began the task of coding according to themes that emerged from the data, as per my methodology.

For coding, I used QSR NVIVO, research software designed for coding and annotating qualitative data. Once I had uploaded each transcription, I went through and coded all the interviews several times, taking on board Glaser's method of 'coding any way you can' to start with, and then afterwards collecting the codes into themes and organising

the codes into families. The coding was *inductive,* and based on Glaser's coding framework of *open, selective* and *theoretical* coding. The pilot studies were transcribed but not coded, so that the themes that emerged from the data were solely from the main studies at HMPs Alpha and Beta. I was aware of the limitations on the study set by the MOJ NRC that Durham should remain a pilot site due to the ethical considerations of my involvement there, and I also wanted to make sure the coding themes that emerged came primarily from the main dataset.

The first stage of coding was *open coding*. Each transcription was coded several times, with the second coding being crucial as by this point common themes began to emerge. For example, times where prisoners referred to the chaplain as a good listener were coded to nodes such as 'Chaplain – Listening', or occasions where prisoners referred to mental health issues were coded to the node 'Prisoners – Mental Health'. These themes were then grouped together to form 'families' of codes as part of the *selective* coding phase. The separate answers to each interview question were also coded, e.g. 'Answer to Q1', so they could be compared with each other.

The coding families emerged easily from the selective coding on the basis of shared themes and family resemblances. For this stage, Glaser suggests the researcher keeps the main focus of the research question in mind, allowing it to shape how the codes are arranged. So for chaplains, three major families emerged; *chaplaincy activities, chaplaincy characteristics,* and *chaplaincy theology or reflection.* This was a helpful process as it differentiated answers that spoke about what chaplains *did* from answers that spoke about who chaplains *were* and their character, as well as offering a separate section for chaplains describing their own theological understanding of their ministry. For prisoners, a similar family of *prisoner characteristics* came together, including nodes such as *prisoner self-reliance* and *prisoner institutionalisation.* A separate family was made for *prisoner problems or issues,* which brought together the large number of nodes relating to obstacles or challenges prisoners faced in the prison.

A coding family was created to gather together issues around *remand,* which helped me to see the spread of thematic issues raised in the interviews around the challenges of the remand period for prisoners – these included nodes such as *remand – lack of basics on arrival* and *remand – unknowing.* As issues around the prison environment itself began to emerge regularly in the coding process, another family was created to gather

nodes around the *prison establishment* itself, such as *prison officers (poor attitude)* or *bureaucracy*.

As I began considering my thematic analysis, it occurred that many of the interviews and nodes describing them had links with the theme of liminality. This was *theoretical* coding, whereby I coded all the transcripts again, this time looking for both positive and negative aspects of the liminal experience, alongside existential and environmental factors that contributed towards liminality for prisoners and chaplains. This became the final coding family.

This created what Glaser and Strauss call a *codebook* where the family of codes come together in organised groups, and helps the researcher to see which codes belong together. From the codebook I was able to see how often a particular code or theme was referred to, and in how many interviews this code occurred overall.[242] This gave me a general overview of the categories that were emerging from the data process, and enabled me to see several aspects of the interviews that had not occurred to me beforehand. I started by looking at which nodes had been coded to most often, and by whom, and considered the data within those nodes; whether there were major themes tying these together or repeated ideas that were mentioned by participants. I considered which overarching themes that had appeared had been expected based on literature review and which had occurred unexpectedly. Once I had gathered these themes together, I was able to begin my thematic analysis of the data.

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[242] See Appendix 3 – NVIVO Codebook

Chapter 4: Thematic Analysis

In this chapter I set out an analysis of the main themes that arose from the interviews carried out at my research sites, exploring some of the most prevalent themes that emerged as I coded the interview transcripts. Using a grounded theory methodology, the interview data is the primary location for discovering new themes and theories around prison chaplaincy on remand. I consider in turn which themes were the most prevalent, most surprising and which contained opportunities for theological reflection around remand chaplaincy. Major themes that I will be exploring will be the fragile nature of trust in the remand environment, the uncertain and liminal nature of remand and how this affects prisoner wellbeing, and the liminal nature of the prison environment and how this affects prisoners and chaplains. I also consider the concept of positive and negative liminalities in the role of the prison chaplain, and how their liminal nature can benefit their prison ministry.

Trust

The theme of trust was repeated throughout the interview process. In the majority of interviews with prisoners and chaplains, trust was either alluded to or mentioned directly. Chaplains were seen as one of the few members of staff that prisoners were willing to trust, and were often placed in comparison with officers, who were widely seen as untrustworthy.

Prisoner Umar, when commenting on what chaplaincy was for, crystallised this point:

> Just to be there – not to judge or be judgemental, to be there as someone…you can trust in, someone you can be 'faithful with to yourself' [sic], to be there for…you know, in the bad times as well as the good times, and vice-versa – a lot of people, when they get where they need to get, their doors seem to shut again rather than opening the door to others; why don't other people open the door for you? [243]

For Umar, chaplains were to be trusted and accepted. Chaplains were people who by their non-judgemental presence invited acceptance, where their door would never shut and someone they could be 'faithful (to themselves) with'.

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[243] Prisoner Umar, interview

It is noted in *The Good Prison*, an unofficial guide to English prisons for prisoners and their families, that prisoners have no choice but to put their trust in prison staff, and that if those staff prove themselves to be trustworthy then there are opportunities for rehabilitation and a fresh start:

> As far as offenders are concerned, if they go to prison they will have to trust [a variety of prison staff including] prison officers, chaplains, hosts of people, who, contrary to their previous experience, should be available, reliable, and willing to help. Chances of rehabilitation are significantly enhanced by the capacity to build and benefit from relationships of trust with authority figures that can help, as well as represent role models, advocates, and above all a sense of possibility.[244]

HMIP and the IMB also set out expectations that prison staff should be trustworthy, reliable and carry out the role they have been assigned. Prisoners are sent questionnaires during inspections, asking them how approachable and trustworthy they find prison officers and other staff. Unfortunately it is common for HMIP reports to raise concerns about staff-prisoner relationships, and in my prisoner interviews similar experiences were shared. Many officers were described as lazy or simply untrustworthy, specifically when it came to asking them to carry out reasonable tasks or fetch basic items that prisoners were entitled to:

> The officers are just like...all they do is scream and shout...They haven't got the people-skills to deal with inmates...they're just here for a pay cheque.[245]

> They just give you... they do the minimum they have to do...Like – I asked for a pen to write a letter – no pens. No paper to write a letter, and it took me three days to get a towel![246]

> They just ignore you, they don't really want to talk to prisoners, they just...on one shift, you can see three officers, stick together during social and everything – they don't really fancy dealing with prisoners, they don't want to talk to prisoners, 'we don't want to talk, you know, we're officers, they're prisoners, they're criminals'."[247]

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[244] Gerard Lemos, *The Good Prison: Conscience, Crime and Punishment* (Lemos & Crane, 2014), p. 21.
[245] Prisoner Wes
[246] Prisoner Xavier
[247] Prisoner Bill

There were occasions where prisoners praised officers. In particular, prisoners drew a distinction between more experienced 'old school' officers who had the life-experience and no-nonsense attitude to deal effectively with challenging or complex behaviour, and the younger officers who were described as keen to prove themselves and lacking the maturity to relate well to people:

> …prison's changed. Like I say, I've been coming to prison for over 20 years, and maybe as you know yourself, they paid a lot of the old officers off, and got new officers in on less money, and the new officers who got in seem to be a lot younger… and they've come out of University or come from certain backgrounds and they haven't got the people-skills to deal with inmates.[248]

Many prisoners believed that officers saw them as 'scum' or unworthy of their time or of their trust. Some prisoners suggested this led to a build-up of tension on induction wings, particularly when things that had been asked for weren't sorted out. Occasionally this escalated and gave way to outbreaks of violence, drug use or self-harm, either as a coping mechanism or a way of gaining attention. Prisoners suggested this created a toxic atmosphere of angry officers confronting angry prisoners. This was perhaps more pronounced in a remand setting, where prisoners did not always have prior experience of prison life, and seemed to lead to an atmosphere of mutual distrust. In R.N. Ristad's article on prison violence, institutionalisation and prison ministry, he explores the difficulty in forming trust in the prison environment:

> Prison is a small area where [hundreds of] dysfunctional men live intimately in dehumanizing conditions with little care and respect. These conditions and the closeness of quarters exacerbate tensions, anxieties, fears and prejudices in dysfunctional inmates and staff. Inmates and staff quickly need to learn who is trustworthy and who is not. They quickly learn who is helpful in meeting their needs to survive, and how not to violate the prison ethos or break the rules that will cause them trouble.[249]

Both in my own context and in the research sites, the prison environment appeared harsh and forbidding; not a place where people could easily form relationships where

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[248] Prisoner Wes
[249] RN Ristad, Jr, 'A Stark Examination of Prison Culture and Prison Ministry', *Dialog*, 47.3 (2008), 292–303.

real trust could be nurtured. Sykes' classic sociological study of the life of prisons suggests that prisoners are taught not to trust others from their first days of incarceration. He notes that they are completely at the mercy of the total institution that they are part of – deprived of liberty, choice, and family relationships – and a strict unwritten code tells prisoners to keep officers at arms-length, never trusting them or getting too close for fear or being seen as a 'grass' or 'snitch'.[250]   Trusting others is seen as letting your guard down, allowing others to see and perhaps exploit your vulnerabilities or weaknesses. Although many years have passed since Sykes' publication, this analysis of prison dynamics is still accurate today, and is reflected in the attitudes of prisoners to each other and to staff, both in my own experience and in the interview data.

Trusting Chaplains

Because of this, it was both notable that chaplains were regularly described as trustworthy in our interviews. It appears that even in the harsh prison environment, trust was able to grow in certain circumstances between chaplains and prisoners.

The theme of trust and prison chaplaincy has been previously explored by a number of chaplains and theologians. The former Chaplain-General of the Prison Service, Rev. Michael Kavanagh, states that the building up of relationships and trust amongst prisoners and staff is the heart of a chaplains' work, built upon the intrinsic valuing of the prisoner by chaplains and prison volunteers and by the giving of unhurried, non-judgemental time and presence.[251] Whipp sees chaplaincy as founded on a bedrock of 'reputational integrity and personal trust', coming from a place of putting down deep roots into an institution, being authentic and learning to speak the institutions' language.[252] Becci describes the prison chapel as '…a place of trust, perhaps the only one in the prison', with chaplains as the only people to whom prisoners can express their true feelings.[253] Myriam Braakhuis in her work on professionalisation in chaplaincy notes that building trust as a chaplain comes alongside an emphasis on a ministry of

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[250] Sykes, pp. 76–78.
[251] Michael Kavanagh, 'Contextual Issues - Justice and Redemption', in *A Handbook of Chaplaincy Studies: Understanding Spiritual Care in Public Places*, ed. by Christopher Swift, Mark Cobb, and Andrew Todd, Ashgate Contemporary Ecclesiology (Farnham, Surrey ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2015), p. 261.
[252] Whipp, 'Embedding Chaplaincy', p. 103.
[253] Becci, p. 100.

presence, empathy and attention; 'chaplains are strongly focused on building a relationship of trust with their client'.[254]

The theme of trust has also been explored in criminological research around faith groups working with ex-prisoners in the community. In Ruth Armstrong's study, she suggests that it is the 'bestowal of un-earned trust' that unlocks the possibility of ex-offenders trusting in return and becoming trustworthy themselves.[255] She concludes that this proactive trusting is central to faith-based interventions in prisons and with ex-prisoners, stating that

> '...in some circumstances it could be intelligent to place trust proactively without evidence of trustworthiness, and that trust of this kind could be especially important to people released from prison.'[256]

Interviews with prisoners suggested that there was an innate sense of trustworthiness in the role of chaplain, even if they had never met a chaplain before. Many prisoners spoke of respecting and trusting chaplains, seeing them as authentic or having integrity. They spoke about the perceived neutrality of chaplains, their accountability as people of faith, and their determination to deliver on what they promised. Many prisoners spoke warmly of chaplaincy's input to the prison environment and of how they could share things with a chaplain that they would not share with others, even a chaplain they hadn't met before. A common thread was how the chaplain could be trusted to 'get things done' in the prison, with prisoners approaching chaplaincy for all and every request that officers wouldn't (or couldn't) fulfil:

> Fair enough [an officer] might have other people to deal with but you've got to ... say what you mean and mean what you say... That's my policy....cause you're here to help us ... So that's just the issue we face really, and sometimes if it's not for the chaplaincy, stuff doesn't get done...In my case, I can only speak for me at the minute, I will want something done, I'll ask an officer to do it, and for weeks and days it doesn't happen, and as soon as I say to the guys in the (chaplaincy) office...for

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[254] Myriam Braakhuis, 'Professional Proximity', in *Learning from Case Studies in Chaplaincy: Towards Practice Based Evidence & Professionalism: Towards Practice Based Evidence and Professionalism*, ed. by Renske Kruizinga and others, 1st edition (Delft: Eburon Academic Publishers, 2020), p. 112.
[255] Ruth Armstrong, 'Trusting the Untrustworthy: The Theology, Practice and Implications of Faith-Based Volunteers' Work with Ex-Prisoners', *Studies in Christian Ethics*, 27.3 (2014), 299–309 (p. 299).
[256] Armstrong, p. 299.

instance my glasses, took me five weeks to get here and they were delivered on a
visit by my nephew, and if I didn't get [a chaplain] and the others involved to be
calling around, I wouldn't have got it.'[257]

Prisoner Samuel expanded at length on the saga of his missing glasses, and it was clear that the making of phone calls on his behalf and fetching the glasses from Reception had had a huge impact on his wellbeing. Following up on promises and taking prisoner concerns seriously was seen as a hallmark of chaplaincy for him. Likewise, Prisoner Umar reflected on the positive attributes of the chaplains he had met:

'The chaplaincy team – I've had nothing but...affection, understanding, warmth, love,
patience...' [258]

To hear the term 'love' and 'affection' in a prison environment was surprising, especially in a context where prisoners are encouraged by their peers not to trust members of staff. Trust had been built here due to the compassion and kindness of the chaplains this prisoner had encountered, and their willingness to sit with them for longer periods of time to listen to their concerns and respond with understanding.

Cause they...I think ... they're neutral, like they're not staff. They're not screws
obviously, they can help and contact home and things like that.[259]

Prisoner Xavier had had little contact with chaplaincy during his time on remand, but he nonetheless saw chaplains as somewhat separate from the rest of the prison hierarchy, inhabiting a neutral space. It was unclear whether he believed chaplains were not directly-employed members of staff, or whether he was just comparing them to 'staff' (an informal term for prison officers):

I'll tell you why chaplaincy's like that, yeah – when you call in people from
chaplaincy they're people of faith – people of God – so they're more loving and
they're more understanding. They have more sympathy and empathy – whereas the
prison staff, they are just programmed in one language – and that system is to say
no.'[260]

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[257] Prisoner Samuel
[258] Prisoner Umar
[259] Prisoner Xavier
[260] Prisoner Victor

Prisoner Victor saw the root of chaplaincy's trustworthiness in their faith-background. He believed chaplains were all 'people of faith', who due to their belief in God and background in religion were more likely to be empathetic, compassionate, and trustworthy. This was placed in contrast with the prison officers, who were described in inhuman terms ('programmed') and seen as offering one-word negative answers to all questions and concerns.

Even in interviews where the prisoners were relatively unfamiliar with chaplains themselves, they expressed at least a basic understanding of the concept of chaplaincy, and when asked to describe what characteristics a good chaplain should have, their answers reflected themes of generally being a 'helpful' character who could be trusted to take their concerns seriously and deal with them as a human being. It was not clear where this impulse came from, whether from a historic understanding of the parish priest as a confidant and confessor, or from a word-of-mouth recommendation of the chaplain's trustworthiness by other prisoners. Many prisoners mentioned that they had been visited by a chaplain during their induction period (a statutory duty for all chaplains); even if they couldn't recall the content of the conversation, they remembered that chaplains were available for them.

Chaplains were seen as figures on the margins of the prison, trusted because they appeared to prisoners to have a level of independence from the prison service. Prisoners did not seem aware of the tension of 'serving two masters' that some chaplains expressed, and seemed to believe that chaplaincy possessed a level of true independence from the prison system; as one prisoner put it, 'You do work for the jail…but you don't.' [261] Chaplains Ian and Mohammad summarised this point helpfully:

> '[one of] the strengths of chaplaincy is it's not as institutionalised as everything else that goes on in the prison, and I'm conscious that…how do you maintain liminality, which is its strength, when we are trusted partly because we are not perceived as being part of the institution…' [262]

> 'Yeah we do our best – I think as long as you try your best to make a difference, as long as you're not sitting in the office wasting your time, which can easily be done,

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[261] Prisoner Xavier, interview
[262] Chaplain Ian, interview

because you're not accountable to anyone, you're more accountable to yourself, that's why believing in God and having a faith and accountability is very important' [263]

'...you may do [all the] leg work and all it is is passing a note and saying to an officer here, pass this note onto the prisoner, it's about maintaining links, getting to know the prisoners, gaining trust, ...And it's all about breaking that barrier as well.'... 'I have a great team, you rely and trust your team, and you leave the work to the person left behind or the person who comes at weekends, but you trust your colleagues and at the end of the day, things get done.'[264]

Here we see chaplains expressing the importance of integrity, trustworthiness and accountability in their role. Chaplain Ian expresses the important tension of what Allison Hicks calls 'role fusion', where chaplains learn as part of their work to inhabit a liminal space between their supporting faith body, their prison and their own understanding of ministry.[265] Although chaplains are employed directly by HMPPS, they often appear to prisoners as 'separate' from the prison staff, being able to inhabit what Todd calls a 'neutral space', holding in tension the demands of the prison bureaucracy on one side and the needs of the prisoner on the other. He states in his work on chaplaincy neutrality that

> '...the chaplain is acting as a counter-cultural agent and tool of the contemporary
> prison service – employed by, yet in many ways set in opposition to many of
> its characteristic discourses. This frees the chaplain from being associated
> with the pain and loss of liberty of imprisonment, allowing them to maintain
> a unique...position.' [267]

Chaplain Mohammad develops the theme of accountability, with a suggestion from one chaplain that it is their faith and accountability to a higher power that gives chaplains the extra impetus to 'do the right thing' by prisoners. This approach presupposed a religious aspect to chaplaincy care that would potentially exclude non-religious pastoral

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[263] Chaplain Mohammad, interview
[264] Chaplain Mohammad, interview
[265] Allison M. Hicks, 'Role Fusion: The Occupational Socialization of Prison Chaplains', *Symbolic Interaction*, 31.4 (2008), 400–421.
[267] Todd, p. 138.

carers such as Humanist chaplains, who might argue that it is their belief in the shared humanity of all people and deeply-held philosophical beliefs that gives them integrity and respect for all. Nevertheless, this suggested that chaplains wanted to live up to a high standard of trustworthiness and to take prisoner requests seriously.

Chaplain Mohammad's second quotation suggests that chaplains are trusted because they carry through with what they're requested to do, and that they are the person people go to if they need something doing. This is combined with trust between chaplains, something that is enhanced (and perhaps made more challenging) by working in a multi-faith team, with different faiths working towards a common goal. By relying on each other and knowing chaplains will follow up on each other's requests, a mutual trust develops which then is also expressed towards the prisoners.

This theme of performative trust is explored in Steph Lawler's work on identity and social relationships, where she suggests that postmodern society has a particular interest in authenticity and trustworthiness.[268] In particular, she notes that society has a moral revulsion (which seems even more keenly felt in a prison context) when someone's purported inner self (their 'true' identity) is not seen to match up with their actions (their 'performative' identity). Chaplains seemed critically aware of the burden placed upon them; they were expected to be good and trustworthy people, and were keen to 'perform' this trustworthiness in front of prisoners and amongst themselves. Lawler, building on Erving Goffman's research, suggests that this performative character is not a charade or an unreal self, but an inhabiting of the 'role we are striving to live up to' and trying to inhabit the 'repertoire of behaviours associated with our role'.[269] Chaplains were striving to show their trustworthiness to prisoners and to fully embrace the identity and expectations placed upon them by prisoners.

Another example of trustworthiness was that many chaplains expressed the importance of never making promises they couldn't keep. Chaplains encouraged prisoners to have reasonable expectations of what their team could achieve. This was contrasted with officers who prisoners spoke of as either saying 'no' to all requests or saying 'yes' to

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[268] Steph Lawler, *Identity: Sociological Perspectives*, 2nd edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).
[269] Lawler, p. 106.

some but never following them up. This perceived lack of interest from officers led many prisoners to turn to chaplaincy as a first port-of-call:

> …generally what you'll see with the prisoners, their first point of contact for anything will be 'Let's go to the chaplaincy'…and we've seen that a lot here, with anything that could be … 'Oh I'll speak to the chaplain first.'[270]

However, this was not universally seen as positive amongst chaplains, with some suggesting that they could be seen as a 'soft touch' who would acquiesce to any request, no matter how trivial or unrelated to their role. Chaplain Faisal stated that this could become problematic, despite chaplains' good intentions:

> Because quite often the chaplains are there to support them in a sense that they see the chaplaincy as a team of people who will listen to them more than the wing staff sometimes, and sometimes they approach us because they're desperate, you know, and sometimes they also try to use us to their advantage.[271]

This is similar to Hicks' suggestion that chaplains can end up becoming 'risk managers', weighing up the costs of trusting prisoners enough to listen to their concerns without being duped by manipulative or controlling behaviour.[272] Trusting prisoners is not openly encouraged by HMPPS. For example, a core training module that all new staff have to complete focusses on Corruption Prevention. In this module, staff are shown role-play videos of disingenuous prisoners who to try to coerce, corrupt or intimidate staff: the underlying message is that trusting prisoners is dangerous and a threat to prison security. In this sense, chaplains are pushing against the narrative of the prison by offering and engendering this un-earned trust to prisoners, but were aware of the potential pitfalls and dangers of this approach. From my own experience, I was aware of how some prison Security departments have historically seen chaplaincy as a potential weak link in the chain in terms of procedural and physical security, and how this could negatively impact the perception, reach and impact of chaplains.

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[270] Chaplain Faisal, interview
[271] Chaplain Faisal, interview
[272] Allison M. Hicks, 'Learning to Watch Out: Prison Chaplains as Risk Managers', *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 2012 <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0891241612452139> [accessed 21 July 2020].

When trust goes wrong

Although the majority of prisoners interviewed expressed positive comments about trusting chaplaincy, there were notable exceptions that warrant exploration. Three prisoners expressed issues with chaplains who they believed had not followed up their requests, not responded to applications to see them, or had not spoken to them with what they saw as kindness or compassion. In these instances, what had been a short conversation or even an apparent absence had had a large impact on how they viewed chaplaincy. Prisoners expressed how they expected officers to let them down, but not chaplains:

> Like when I first came in I put in to see the chaplain. The chaplain never came. And when I was at the library I saw him walk past and I said 'Oh I put in to see you' and he said he never received my app…. it's hard to explain, I don't know, I feel like they only have time for certain people. Know what I mean? [273]

> The Imam was on this side of the wing yesterday, I'm banging, saying 'Imam I need to see you', he just walked away. You're meant to be chaplaincy, come on! You're meant to be a decent guy- you're meant to be 'Oh I'm coming', you know, just little things…[274]

> You have some people that get what they want, and stuff goes OK for them. They're quite happy. Then you've got another set – based on stuff which they've asked for which [chaplains] might not do… they say 'Oh you didn't do nothing for me and blah blah blah I'm not coming to church…'[275]

Each interview quotation outlines a different reason why trust broke down or was not able to be engendered. Prisoner Wes had an expectation that chaplains would respond promptly to requests for a visit – but this expectation wasn't realised. When given an answer that put the blame onto the application system itself ('he never received my app'), he found this unconvincing. In this prisoner's mind, this reinforced a belief that

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[273] Prisoner Wes
[274] Prisoner Bill
[275] Prisoner Samuel

chaplains had favourites or certain people who received a better level of pastoral support than others; 'they only have time for certain people'.

Prisoner Bill's complaint was around the character of the chaplain, who in his experience seemed too busy to visit him whilst he walked past, and was ignored. He contrasted this (*viz* Lawler's work on identity above) with the expected character and attitude of the chaplain as a 'decent guy' and one who immediately responds 'Oh I'm coming'. For Prisoner Bill, the tension was between expectation and the reality – the supposed identity and the actual performance of the role. This suggests an idealised understanding of the chaplain, a mental construction of the perfect caregiver, which may explain the disillusionment experienced when the chaplain did not live up to their idealised notions.

Prisoner Samuel is personally trusting of chaplains but reports that this is not universal, citing examples of prisoners who believe their requests or needs have not been met and therefore withdraw from gathered worship services or interaction with chaplains entirely; 'You don't do nothing for me…I'm not going to church'. Chaplaincy is seen as having an expected level of service that, when not fulfilled, leads to a disengagement and a lack of trust. Prisoner Samuel contrasted this with prisoners who are happy with chaplaincy because they 'get what they want'; a transactional model where chaplains are trusted because they delivered the goods expected of them.

What was unexpected was that prisoners did not appear to have an issue with the idea or concept of chaplaincy itself. Many of them spoke positively about the notion of having someone there who was meant to help or provide support. It was the unmet expectations of service, character, and availability that created a lack of trust, leading to some prisoners believing that chaplains were 'only there to get their pay-check and go home'.[276] The depth of anger in many of these interviews was palpable, and suggests that although the entry-level of trust in chaplaincy was high at both prisons, if chaplains did anything that appeared to break that trust, it was difficult for prisoners to trust them again or wish to access their support in future. In an environment where trust was hard to earn, chaplains faced an uphill struggle to prove their trustworthiness. Trust

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[276] Prisoner Bill

was both hard-won and fragile, and chaplains seemed acutely aware of the trust bestowed upon them due to their 'in the prison but not of the prison' identity.

Liminality and Remand

Alongside trust, another theme that emerged very regularly in the interview coding was liminality. Liminality was coded to on over fifty occasions and appeared in 12 of the 18 main site interviews. This theme not only appeared to tie together many aspects of the difficulties of the remand environment, but also seemed to be of particular interest to prisoners and chaplains during their discussions around remand. From our literature review, I was aware of discussions around liminality and chaplaincy, but was surprised to see how pervasive this theme was.

In the interviews, prisoners were asked how being on remand affected them, and the chaplains offering them pastoral care were asked how the remand prison environment affected prisoners and the kinds of challenges it brought to their care. In particular, prisoners were asked what the most difficult part of being on remand had been. There was a wide breadth of answers, but a major theme appearing in 13 of the interviews was that of *unknowing* or *not knowing*. This theme was referred to on 22 occasions.

Many of the answers explored themes of liminality, marginality, life being on hold, or being stuck in a vicious cycle whilst being on remand. These periods were characterised by anxiety, struggling to adapt to the environment, adverse mental states, lack of relational contact, and a sense of disconnection and disorientation from what had come before. This appeared to be exacerbated by prisoners experiencing repeated episodes of remand, where fear about the future, particularly about sentence length, remained even if they were used to the environment and the privations of prison. Some prisoners said they had spent half their adult lives in prison for minor offences: one man had been in and out of prison for 40 years and had spent a combined total of 20 years in prison. A number of prisoners spoke of 'growing up' within institutions, places where their liberty or sense of place in the world was fractured. They had moved from care homes, to Borstals, to STCs, to YOIs and then to HMPs. For them, uncertainty about the future was the only real certainty.

Chaplain Ian spoke passionately about the anxiety that he believed prisoners felt:

> Quite a number of them for whom prison is their first experience,
> they've never been in prison before, so there's the obvious issue about
> quite a number of prisoners who are really quite anxious about the
> whole thing, and don't understand how it works…so there's obviously
> quite a lot of anxiety about just how to cope with this place, the issue
> around waiting for sentence, waiting for trial, certainly creates
> additional levels of anxiety and instability I think for them. Quite a
> number will say once they're sentenced that while getting the sentence
> is very distressing, on the other hand it actually provides stability and
> clarity.

Chaplain Ian suggested that remand time is full of unknowns – an unknown
environment, unknown sentencing, unknown regimes and procedures. Entering a total
institution, new prisoners were completely unaware of how things worked and
completely at the mercy of those around them to explain how to get what they needed
to survive. The description of 'instability' suggested a time where little is resolved or
fixed, where everything around is shifting. Chaplain Ian suggested that sentencing
brought an end to this liminal, uncertain state. Prisoners went through the ritual of the
court appearance, sentencing and moving on to a long-stay prison, and thereby became
stable once again and regained a measure of clarity about the future. However this
chaplain later stated that *unknowing* is one issue chaplains can feel powerless to resolve
during remand as it appeared to be built into both the experience of remand and into
the fabric of the prison, 'built into where they are'. He further admitted that even when
sentencing did take place, unknowing continued for some with 'the mysteries and
confusions and puzzlement of prison and why things are being done to them'. This
suggested that the liminal state may not be just about remand and not knowing the
future, but inherent within the prison environment itself.

Chaplain Julia expressed exasperation at this state of unknowing, suggesting that it was
partly down to a lack of basic essential information given to prisoners by the prison and
the criminal justice system:

> …I think the court cases, I don't know whether it's prisoners not paying
> attention or whether it's poor representation but I'm always shocked about
> how few of them really seem to know what they've been charged with, who

their solicitor is. They've not got addresses, they're not having contact, they
don't have numbers, they don't know future court dates coming up. You
know they say I have a date coming up for next week – "What's that for?" - "I
dunno" - Why don't you know?! Why don't you know exactly what this is
about?! [278]

Chaplain Julia suggests prisoners may not be paying close enough attention to their
situation, but does not solely blame them for this state of unknowing. She states that
they are not well represented in court and that there is poor communication about trial,
court and sentencing, as well as what to expect when they arrive in prison. This was
mirrored in the experiences of many prisoners of the lack of information upon their
arrival into custody:

> … the front of house people…they weren't forthcoming with
> information, they weren't forthcoming with help… they were just
> shouting at me all the time, it was like 'Wow'…[279]

> That's what it actually says on your time table, you should be on
> inductions every day for a week, but that's just …. like a blag… you
> know what I mean?... it's like false…propaganda really… [280]

> The quality [of the food] is OK if you do your menu, but if you don't,
> people don't show you how to do it …unless you ask a prisoner…If you
> first come in here and if you don't know better, no officer will tell you
> about it, so you have to find out for yourself….they don't tell you
> anything about that. [281]

> Nothing ever gets resolved here…it all just goes on pause…Nothing ever
> really gets done. [282]

Prisoners suggested that there was a large gap between what the prison was meant to
provide in terms of induction, basic information about the regime, and equipment, and
what was actually delivered. This added to a sense of unknowing, where prisoners on

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[278] Chaplain Julia
[279] Prisoner Samuel
[280] Prisoner Xavier
[281] Prisoner Zach
[282] Prisoner Victor

remand were not only uncertain about the future, but also about the present. Officers were not seen as quick to provide support, with one prisoner suggesting the expectation of help compared with the reality was like 'propaganda'. Fellow prisoners were seen as a better source of support and reliable information. This added to the sense of liminality of the remand space, where unknowing was compounded into a confusing environment that prisoners struggle to navigate. Prisoner Theo remarked on the anxiety he experienced building up to his sentencing and the relief he felt after his remand experience was over:

> When you're sentenced you know where you're going – there's light at
> the end of the tunnel, isn't there?...When you're on remand it's like what's
> going to happen, it's like, still for me it's still the same for me... it's like
> 'What's going to happen, what's going to happen?', there's still that
> anxiety when you go to court ... it's still all that worry and anxiety ...
> marching you down to the cell in the courts...and there's all that 'Am I
> going to get this, am I going to get that?' So when you're in the court
> you're still worrying in the court ...and if you get a half decent sentence
> or whatever, it's a relief when you go back into the cell, ... The sentenced
> kind of thing's different to the remand...'[283]

These quotations typify what I call the 'liminality of remand', by which I mean the way in which liminality pervades every aspects of remand from the environment to the length of time taken to the state of flux that prisoners on remand find themselves in.

In Victor Turner's work on liminality and pilgrimage, he builds on Arnold van Gennep's well-known identification of three phases in rites of transition in life – *separation, limen,* and *aggregation*. Separation is seen as a detachment from an earlier fixed point; limen (or margin) as an ambiguous state that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state; and aggregation is a reincorporation or consummation to a new, stable state.[284] Although van Gennep used these labels primarily to describe tribal rites of passage, Turner suggests three phrases can be used to describe any transitional stage

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[283] Prisoner Theo
[284] Victor W. Turner and Edith L. B. Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia Univ. P, 1978).

in the life of an individual or community.[285] Prisoner Theo neatly summarised this very transition that moves the remanded prisoner into their new sentenced or 'aggregated' state, a transition that a number of prisoners alluded to when discussing sentencing.

First, there is the stage at the start of remand; 'separation'. The prisoner is separated from their family, their job and livelihood, their home, their freedom, becoming part of the prison system. There is both a physical separation by walls and doors, but also a mental and emotional separation from the rest of society. The remandee is 'othered' as their new identity is formed by the dissolution of their old identity. One prisoner remarked on this early stage:

> …. it's always in the first couple of weeks, they're very long days, locked up 22 hours a day, you don't know what's happening outside, you don't know if you've lost your property or your work, your job, your car, you're not sure…[286]

The long hours of isolation, combined with the disconnection from the outside world, lead progressively to the middle and longest state, the *liminal*. The liminal is characterised by a sense of being in the middle of things, with an end-date either unknown or marked by uncertainty. Prisoners appeared to be strongly affected by their identity being in flux, a lack of knowledge of the future, and an uncertainty about what awaited them when they eventually came to sentencing. Prisoners remarked on how this was a time for them where much of their life was in crisis, and the overwhelming emotional accompanying this liminal period was a sense of anxiety:

> … as I explained about remand, how you go through it, the anxiety with it, and when you're first locked up you think 'oh no not again' because you're on remand. Then you get into the remand process, and the courts, and it's like – how can you put it – like an experience, you start angry and anxious, then you get into it and you get a job, everything's sorted, visits, then it's alright, then court date and you're worried, if you have a relationship or kids or a girlfriend and you're young, you think to

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[285] For van Gennep's exploration of these themes, see Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (London : Chicago: Routledge & Kegan Paul ; Univ. of Chicago P, 1960).
[286] Prisoner Andrew

> yourself, is she going to wait?... And you're plaguing the chaplaincy
> saying 'She won't answer her phone, could you ring her?' [287]

> ... it's like being in limbo, because when you're on remand, even though
> the time's going to come off your sentence, you'd rather be sentenced
> and getting on with it...it's like being caught in purgatory....you don't
> know whether you're getting out or staying in, and that has an effect on
> your mental health... Anxiety yeah... they can be up and down, erratic.
> ...fighting with the staff and stuff.[288]

During this crisis stage, everything in the prisoners' lives is 'in limbo', marked by feelings of fear of the future, anger at the lack of control over their situation, and worry about those outside of the prison. Prisoner Theo notes uncertainty about relationships and sentencing creating a reliance on chaplaincy to connect him with the outside world and some measure of stability arriving when he was finally sentenced. In van Gennep's model, the liminal stage is intended to be short, and for a purpose of positive identity transformation. But Prisoner Victor describes this liminal stage as 'purgatory', or *limbo,* breaking down his sense of belonging, place and relationships with the outside world. He suggested this period had negative affect on prisoners' mental health, bringing unhealthy emotions and actions, constantly feeling 'up and down' and resorting to violence and aggression to relate to others. In contrast, Turner describes how the liminal state is supposed to be place where the 'passenger' becomes

> '....ambiguous, he [sic] passes through the realm or dimension that has few or
> none of the attributes of the past or coming state, he is betwixt and between all
> familiar lines of classification.[289]

The liminal state is designed with an end in mind; a return to a place of stability and the mundane, a 'consummation'. Similarly, prisoners spoke of their wellbeing improving and sense of self being built back up once sentence was passed and they moved out of the remand prison estate. However, this middle liminal period often appeared to be elongated and strained, where the promised consummation of court, sentence and eventual release frustratingly just over the horizon. Prisoners spoke of over-long

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[287] Prisoner Theo
[288] Prisoner Victor
[289] Turner and Turner, p. 2.

remand periods, court cases adjourned, and lack of information about legal procedure. Even after sentence, moving on to a new prison to start afresh was not always a straightforward path. Lack of Category-B spaces for long-term prisoners often meant that some sentenced prisoners remained in this liminal state, with negative results:

> …for the longer-sentenced prisoners who want to be out of here, because this place is simply not suitable at this moment in time for them…they will tend to up the ante, they're the ones who cut up, jump on the netting, create problems, because they want to move on. Because they're frustrated at still being in what's a local prison that isn't suitable for their needs, they want to progress…the guys in the middle who are only here for a few months can tolerate it – they'll put up with it because they'll be out soon. [291]

Chaplain Julia picked up on some of the difficulties of the remand environment – as described above, these environments are often less well-maintained than Category B or C 'Training' prisons or long-term prisons. These prisons are more likely to have single cells, a wide variety of work and education, and opportunities to engage in offence-related psychological or therapeutic courses. Although HMPPS aims to move a prisoner to a Training prison within two weeks of sentencing, in reality this is often subject to delays due to lack of spaces or transport available.

Not only was remand liminal in nature, it was also cyclical. Almost every prisoner I spoke to had been on remand before, some having spent many short sentences in prison over a course of decades. Chaplains spoke of seeing the same faces coming back in to prison on a regular basis, a 'revolving door of prisoners'[292], of prisoners leading liminal lives outside the prison, homeless, unemployed, and struggling with mental health and substance misuse problems. For some, prison had become the only fixed point of stability in their lives, a place for them to 'sort themselves out' in a way that was more difficult in the community. This is echoed in MOJ statistics on reoffending that show that during the research period on average 26% of prisoners went on to reoffend after release, with this rising to almost 60% for those who had served a short sentence (less

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[291] Chaplain Julia
[292] Chaplain Julia

than 12 months).[293] For these people, the cyclical nature of remand and imprisonment had gone on for so long that their external identity had dissolved, and they appeared unable to function in the outside world any longer. Some could only see a future in being prisoner and had become completely institutionalised:

> …in my experience people on remand are recurring visitors to a jail – so there's a culture of you know 'Oh, home from home, here again, I'm used to it' … a lot of them say 'Oh I don't get counselling, I don't get medication, I don't get this that and everything, I [don't] go to church outside in the community'. When they come in here they see it as a chance to get these things sorted… particularly if they're on drugs, they might get put on methadone to bring them down off heroin, and whatever else, whereas out in the community, if they wander round homeless and you know there's basically nothing… [295]

> Over time I have changed – as you get older you learn more, wisdom kicks in more, when you're younger you don't see anything, you plough into things, as you get older you realise you're getting older, the clock's starting to run out, the value – when I say value I mean the cost – I'm missing my son, my mum, anything could happen to them, you know – then you start to appreciate life more as you get older, then you realise is it too late…[296]

In this sense then, not only was being on remand a liminal experience, it could be repeated endlessly without visible progress. Prisoner Victor reflects that by the time prisoners are able to appreciate the situation they are in and the value of life outside of prison, it is often too late. It appeared that the final step of van Gennep's cycle, aggregation, was a step too far for many prisoners, who found themselves stuck in this liminal cycle and without much hope of re-integration in the future.

Chaplaincy in Limbo

Despite these challenges, the interview data suggested that chaplains were aware of many of the challenges faced by prisoners on remand and were attempting to offer as

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[293] *MOJ: Proven Offender Statistics, July-September 2019* (https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/proven-reoffending-statistics-july-to-september-2019/proven-reoffending-statistics-july-to-september-2019) Accessed 3rd August 2022.
[295] Chaplain Henry
[296] Prisoner Victor

much support as they could during this difficult period. Chaplains seemed overwhelmingly aware of the problems prisoners faced on remand and the danger of this time to prisoner wellbeing. Chaplains described the difficulty of navigating the prison environment, especially for first-time prisoners, and many saw part of their primary role as helping prisoners journey through this cloud of unknowing, taking the form of a guide, accompanier, confidante, or advocate. Chaplains wished to guide those unfortunate to be stuck in the 'purgatory' of remand out to the other side, like Virgil in Dante's *Divine Comedy,* helping them not only keep their identities intact, but perhaps also to form new ones. In expressing how they saw their own role and identity within a remand context, chaplains most commonly used terms such as being a non-judgemental listener, faith guides, trustworthy, advocates, problem solvers, moveable 'safe spaces', and providing a visible presence. These themes suggested that chaplains wished to be engaged in accompanying prisoners through difficult times where their identity was fragile or broken, and wanting to help them re-orientate themselves during a time of disorientation. When asked 'to what extent you feel you and your chaplaincy team meet the needs of remand prisoners?', the vast majority of chaplains felt that they did as much as they could in the challenging circumstances they worked in:

> Yeah absolutely, I do think that we fill those gaps that nobody else can …not only for the prisoners but for the staff as well… so when staff have a difficulty – let's go to the chapel, let's get the chaplaincy involved – and I suppose we can allocate that pastoral time to the prisoners where staff might not be able to.[297]

> The phrase I use myself is "I'm trying to humanise an inhumane experience, an inhumane world", I think that's quite successful for some prisoners, they do feel the contact with someone who is not judgemental, who simply has ordinary human conversations, who is hugely important to them, and what is interesting is how that sense of quite small acts of human kindness really have huge impact in a place like this…[298]

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[297] Chaplain Faisal
[298] Chaplain Ian

> I suppose we're one of the first points of call, and I think we have to be a very friendly face really… it's just a sea of confusion and it's not a pretty prison, it's not really a nice space …so some of them are quite shocked…[299]

Chaplains Faisal and Ian emphasised how chaplains acted as 'gap fillers', doing work that no-one else could (or would) get involved in, offering a shared humanity and 'ordinary' conversations. They emphasised the time-rich quality of chaplaincy work – that pastoral work was not rushed and was intentional and involved, and that this work was counteracting some of the more dehumanising aspects of remand life. Likewise, Chaplain Katie noted how chaplains are often the first people prisoners turn to for support or advice – kindness and friendliness were the characteristics seen to draw people to them in the middle of a 'sea of confusion'.

> Yeah I think we do the best what we can, so – there's probably [not] a lot of things chaplaincy don't really do. When you talk about a job description or remit about what a chaplain does, a lot of times we tend to do stuff that isn't in our job description, because sometimes you know if there's a staff saying 'oh if you have an issue speak to a chaplain', they'll come and listen to you or give you the time of day and listen to your issues, and sometimes there's not many jobs we wouldn't do…[300]

> I think we meet most of those needs, I think we do our best, a chaplain is designated a wing to see, to look after every day …, so any issues with that wing that I can deal with, chaplaincy issues, I'll try deal with, but sometimes I'll go beyond the call of duty with some of those things on there, because they're not really chaplaincy issues but because the prisoner's brought it to my attention I'll try and deal with it…[301]

Chaplains Katie and Mohammad reflect on how chaplains are often involved in many things that are 'no-one's' job but that almost automatically get handed to chaplaincy to deal with. Both mention how wide their work is and how varied their daily tasks might be. They point to going beyond the call of duty and the importance of matters that prisoners have brought to their attention being the key drivers behind their work.

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[299] Chaplain Katie
[300] Chaplain Mohammad
[301] Chaplain Gerry

Despite much of their work not being part of their 'job description', Chaplains seemed happy to become involved in almost every aspect of prison life. Indeed, the formal job description for prison chaplains speaks of providing pastoral care to prisoners and help to provide support and bring resolution to crisis situations where required, but this broad description did not even seem to scratch the surface of the many and varied activities chaplains were involved in.

Much of chaplaincy's work seemed to happen on the boundaries of prison life, in what Peter Phillips calls 'pastoralia' – the small or seemingly insignificant tasks and conversations that can fill up a prison chaplains' day. These *pastoralia* nevertheless appear to make a big difference to the prisoners who engage with them.[302] The chaplain's identity was seen as blurred around the edges, where almost any task is inevitably assigned to chaplaincy by either prisoners or prison staff, as they become known for 'getting things done'. The trust built up by their interest in the minutiae of remand life helped chaplains and prisoners form relationships where meaning could be rebuilt into prisoners' lives and they could start to see themselves in a new light. Chaplains spoke of valuing the dignity of individual prisoners and had a strong sense of moral obligation to 'do their best' for each person they came across. This could make them a powerful advocate and guide in a disorientating environment. Chaplains reflected that their own liminal nature (being 'in the prison but not of the prison') gave them the flexibility to engage with pastoralia and remand prison life at a deep level, although some found their marginality frustrating, often feeling powerless to change prison life for the better.

Chaplains expressed frustration at the size of the challenge of remand pastoral care and the lack of remand-specific training they could engage with alongside their work. In comparison to some of their colleagues in long-term or sentenced prisoner establishments, it appeared that much of their workload was more intense, the number of prisoners they were expected to see was higher, the 'churn' and turnover of prisoners was greater, and the issues prisoners faced were more intense than elsewhere. There were also wider issues raised by several chaplains about the standardisation of chaplaincy training nationally; there are no academic courses available in the UK specifically on prison chaplaincy, and the training specifications for different

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[302] See Phillips, pp. 90–91.

denominations and faiths varied widely. Internal chaplaincy training was limited to a three-day course for new starters, a five-day course on pastoral care and counselling , and a five-day course on understanding world faiths. Beckford, Joly and Khosrokhavar note a similar issue in their study of Muslim chaplaincy, comparing the unevenness between the kind of training in pastoral care undertake by Anglican or Roman Catholic priests with the madrassah study undertaken by many Muslim chaplains.[303] There is little standardisation of chaplaincy training, and not much specific training available once in post.

Chaplains appeared to be an anchor for prisoners that engaged with them in a time where almost everything else in their life was unclear and uncertain. Particularly for prisoners who had been in prison many times before, the reliability of the figure of the chaplain was one point they could rely on. Ironically, this meant that on the few occasions chaplains did 'let prisoners down', this was all the more keenly felt, and would often leave a negative impact on prisoners' views of chaplains as a whole or cause real disorientation. But when chaplaincy work was well delivered, prisoners could feel connected to the outside world and re-oriented; by a phone call on their behalf to a family member, support in writing a letter, guidance in how to navigate the prison system, or advocacy when faced with an otherwise unsolvable challenge. The practice of faith to some also provided a link with the outside world, where a connection could be felt between the God they worshipped outside of prison and the faith community they were part of before their imprisonment.

The Liminal Chaplain

I have argued that the chaplain is in a liminal position between the different roles they must play and groups they are accountable to. They are accountable to their own faith and conscience, to the expectations of their denomination or faith group, and to HMPPS. Sitting between three boundaries, the chaplain is pulled in multiple directions. This can lead to a struggle to maintain *role fusion* (see Chapter 2); the challenge of connecting the dots of the chaplaincy role.[304]

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[303] J. Beckford, D. Joly, and F. Khosrokhavar, *Muslims in Prison: Challenge and Change in Britain and France* (Basingstoke England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 232.
[304] Hicks, 'Role Fusion', p. 416.

The question remains as to whether the chaplain is a liminal figure in and of themselves or whether it is the environment and structure around them that is liminal. We have explored the remand setting and how it becomes a place of liminality, where the pathway through liminality described in Turner's work is put on pause. To consider the chaplain's liminality, we need to consider how we are using the term. Is our use of 'liminality' describing the same phenomenon each time, or is it being used in different ways?

Liminality vs Liminalities

I have examined a number of occasions in the interview data when chaplains or prisoners have described their feelings of being 'in the middle of things', 'on the margins', or 'liminal' within remand prisons. It is my suggestion that although all these experiences and descriptions might be classed as liminal, they are not all describing the same issue or the same experience.

In Turner's work on structures and liminality, he notes varieties of what he calls *communitas* within his research. This is a 'relational quality of full unmediated communication…a liminal phenomenon' that describes an essential human bond.[305] During Turner's exploration of ritual, he realised that although many of the bonds he was describing were kinds of *communitas,* they diverged from each other in significant ways. He develops a taxonomy of *communitas,* with three main constituents. Spontaneous *communitas* 'defies construction' and is the opposite to social structures. Normative *communitas* is an attempt to capture *communitas* in a system of ethical precepts and legal rules. And ideological *communitas* is the formulation of remembered attributes of the *communitas* experience in the form of a utopian blueprint for the reform of society.[306]

In the interview data I have come across a number of examples of liminality. As the analysis has gone deeper, it has become apparent that liminality also has multiple facets and that what is being described is not identical each time. *Liminal* can describe a number of different prison situations and experiences. Building on Turner's taxonomy, I have noticed the following different forms of liminality within the remand situation.

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[305] Turner and Turner, p. 250.
[306] Turner and Turner, p. 251.

Environmental and Systemic Liminality

> The walls are the punishment for the crime; the cell confronts the convict
> with himself; he is forced to listen to his conscience.[307]

In the quote above by Michel Foucault, prison is described as a place where the spartan nature of the environment is expected to bring on contrition and self-reflection. Prison is a place that is resided in temporarily, like a hotel (but with bars on the windows) that is designed for short-term occupancy. The prison environment likewise lends itself to being temporary, which in itself can instil a sense of being in between stages; very few prisoners described prison as 'home' apart from those who had spent longer periods of time there over many decades. Local remand prisons are often hundreds of years old and in a relative state of disrepair or dilapidation. A thematic report into remand prisons by HMIP in 2012 confirmed the challenges that this kind of remand environment presented:

> Many of the inner-city local prisons were built in the 19th century (for example
> Liverpool was built in 1855 and many local prisons in London were built in the
> Victorian period), and have undergone extensive refurbishment through the
> years. However, both their architecture and the confined area they occupy (often
> within densely populated urban areas) limit the scope for modernisation and
> expansion. As a result, residential units in local prisons are among some of the
> most difficult to maintain in the prison estate, and security may be compromised
> because of large populations and poor sightlines for staff to observe prisoners.[308]

Prisons are rarely a priority for Government funding, and new prisons that have been built in the last forty years have rarely been constructed for remand purposes. Current prisons under construction in England are almost all designed for long-term prisoners. Prison cells designed for one person often end up holding two prisoners, making a sense of claustrophobia worse. Over the last few years, time spent on remand has become more lengthy, with complex or disputed trials adjourned on multiple occasions for various reasons, or joint enterprise trials tied up with each other's outcomes. This liminal space built for short-term living can create stress and anxiety amongst its

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[307] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 239.
[308] HMIP, *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*, sec. 5.8.

population. Living in this environment with no set end-date in sight appears to cause significant problems for many on remand.

In the interview data, prisoners and chaplains noted how this kind of environmental liminality seemed built into the very structure of the prison – both the physical fabric of the environment and in the systems that made it run. This liminality of structure was also described by the way in which prisoners expressed that 'nothing ever gets done here'. For many prisoners, time on remand was an unfixed and unknown quantity and the systems behind their environment were opaque and inaccessible. The data gives some notable examples of these experiences.

Chaplain Ian notes the difficulty that some prisoners experience accessing the systems and structures that could help them lead constructive prison lives. One prisoner with a disability was described as incapable of accessing key parts of prison life, entitlements, and communication with the outside world. Without the chaplain to help him navigate the structures of the prison, this prisoner was stuck in limbo. Chaplain Ian explored this theme more deeply where he suggested that this was not an isolated incident, but that the prison was complicated to navigate by design:

> To be honest, I think [pastoral care is] pretty *ad hoc* …and often working against the grain. And I think the difficulty we have all the time here I sense is that we're working against the grain. I've come to the view very strongly that prisons just simply don't work, they are just…failed institutions…[310]

Another chaplain remarked on how the prison's administration seemed to be set up to frustrate prisoners' aims rather than help them achieve them, and that some aspects were intentionally obfuscatory:

> …the paperwork systems we have in place for prisoners are not fit for purpose…if they haven't filled in the little box at the top right, a reference number to say it's been logged and been through due process on the wing and all of that, our office …basically bins them and says 'Sorry he's not gone through official channels', someone's just filled it in and handed it to us a bit – sideways

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[310] Chaplain Ian, interview

rather than properly … it makes the culture more frustrated, and obviously…people feel they have to be needier to get stuff done.[311]

Chaplains mentioned that some prisoners regularly 'acted up' or created problems for prison staff in order to bring attention to their unmet needs due to the problems they had experienced with the prison systems. They highlighted cases of prisoners who constantly demanded phone credit or calls home, or those who self-harmed when they didn't receive their canteen or vape cartridges as soon as they wanted. Prisoners likewise said that they felt other prisoners who made a fuss got everything they wanted, whereas good behaviour was not praised or noted by staff. For some prisoners, it seemed the only way to navigate the prison system and cope with the privations of the prison environment was to force small comforts from prison staff by poor behaviour.

One of the defining marks of liminal environments is that they are not easy to navigate – they are unfamiliar and strange to the initiate. In Turner's study of liminality, he notes that a guide is usually present to lead someone through this liminal period and help them make meaning from the liminal space. Chaplain Mohammad remarks on this process of guiding and interpreting the environment for new prisoners:

> If it is someone's first time then obviously the first time and the needs that prisoner needs are a lot more complicated, whether it's for himself or his family, understanding the prison system, how it works, the induction process, and depending on the staffing needs, how induction takes place, which can be quite upsetting as well at times, so you know – the first few days are a tricky period… and it's about making sure the prisoner knows basic process – taking it one day at a time, not making jumps… advising them the basics about you know…[312]

One prisoner who remarked on the difficulty of navigating the prison environment and systems spoke powerfully of the chaplain as someone who could challenge the instability and unfamiliarity of the prison:

> Even though you're in prison sometimes being around [chaplains] makes you feel like you're not in prison.[313]

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[311] Chaplain Henry, interview
[312] Chaplain Mohammad
[313] Prisoner Samuel

This comment suggested that chaplains somehow had the ability to suspend the experience of being in prison, even just by being near them or by their very presence. It suggests that chaplains were working to mitigate the privations of the environment, and that although chaplaincy was in fact part of the structure of the prison system, it worked to alleviate some of the environment's more challenging aspects. Chaplaincy appeared to humanise aspects of the system in a way that was not easily visible elsewhere within the remand environment.

Prisoners appeared to recognise that the chaplaincy were working within the constraints of a challenging environment, and reflected on how chaplains might feel about this. The following exchange between me and Prisoner Victor explored this theme:

> Prisoner Victor: I think they're doing what they can with what they can.
>
> Tim: Do you feel there is more they'd like to do? But they can't?
>
> Prisoner Victor: I feel there's more they'd like to do. I feel like sometimes they'd be able to be let off the lead a little bit more. But…it's prison, there's always rules – this that and the other – you can't build this, you can't do that…
>
> Tim: What kind of things do you think they'd like to do that they can't really?
>
> Prisoner Victor: I think they'd like to have more chaplaincy working in here. And flood the jail with chaplaincy [*we both laugh*] Yeah? They can't, they're limited aren't they?[314]

Chaplains were very aware of the limitations of the environment. Some commented on the run-down fabric of many local remand prisons that added to the sense of 'things breaking down' or that structured were seen as not worth investing in. Chaplains spoke of having to source routine items for prisoners such as towels, toothbrushes and quilts when they were not readily accessible. Another noted that cells were either freezing or overheated. This was combined with the regular frustration of not being able to get hold of the prisoners they wanted to speak to, constantly changing rules and policies, and a system that seemed stacked against their objectives. In a striking contrast to prisoners' expectations of chaplains being able to change the system for the better, Chaplain Julia

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[314] Prisoner Victor, Interview

felt that in at least some aspects, she couldn't change the prison environment despite her best efforts:

> I suppose one of the difficulties is just it's hard to get hold of the guys, but that's just the prison, they're in other places or locked behind doors – I think this place is hard to do pastoral care in anyway, it's a hard place for guys to open up, but this is the environment we've got, we can't change the environment....[315]

A prison environment is not always conducive to helping prisoners speak openly about their concerns, given the lack of private space, unfriendly environment, and inhospitable surroundings. This can lead to prisoners withdrawing into themselves or responding with anger or aggression against an establishment that feels oppressive. Chaplain Henry remarked on this particular challenge, reflecting on how modern living and working environments could be a huge benefit to people's wellbeing, and that older buildings such as HMP Alpha created negative behaviour and emotions:

> Well, you have certain visions of what prison is ... there is an immense amount of suffering in people's lives in here ... [in] workplaces outside of prisons, you've got now things like Google HQ who are all obsessed with sleep pods and making things look inviting, because dreary office buildings are horrible, but by that logic coming to this castle of a building means everything looks a bit [dreadful]...[316]

Prisoners tended to be bolder in their expressions of frustration against the prison establishment, both in its environment and its structures:

> This is a horrible jail. A lot of remand jails are horrible. [Another Local prison] is horrible. ...It's a lot [about] the environment...Prison's not geared towards rehabilitation as much as it should be. Yeah there is courses you can do and stuff, but let's be fair, it's about money now, about containment. So that containment is until your sentence is done and then the gate opens and you walk out.[317]

> ...the windows are smashed out and that, in some of the cells, cold....Yeah – Victorian innit.[318]

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[315] Chaplain Julia, interview
[316] Chaplain Henry, interview
[317] Prisoner Wes, interview
[318] Prisoner Yusuf, interview

> …it's a lot of things, gangs, all sorts of stuff, … yeah, it's not going to change. Because they've got the rules, they're there, and they're not going to change them… So it's pointless crying over it…[you might as well] get on with it.[319]

This suggests that some prisoners believe that the physical environment of the prison and the bureaucratic structure of the prison were intrinsically linked. The dilapidation of the prison environment created a space that was 'horrible' and wasn't 'going to change'; the prison building was itself a liminal space, broken and not expecting immanent repair or rebuilding – a place designed for people to only dwell in briefly, rather than for long periods of time.

Rehabilitation was not seen to be a large part of the remand environment structure, which left some prisoners cynical about the reasons for the prison's existence being about money-making and mere 'containment'. One prisoner felt that prisoners were objects to be warehoused and used for profit-making. And whereas Turner seems the liminal spaces as leading to new understandings and a period of reunification with society afterwards, the lack of emphasis on rehabilitation on remand meant prison was a place without hope of progression for some prisoners. HMPPS describes its role in society as to 'provide safe and supportive environments, where people work through the reasons that caused them to offend and prepare for a more positive future.'[320] But the prisoners I interviewed were bleak in their assessment of the prison system's ability to help people change. Another exchange between me and Prisoner Victor typified this experience:

> Prisoner Victor: There's never going to be help in prison, never.
>
> Tim: Why do you think that is?
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> Prisoner Victor: I'll tell you why…the people that come to prison yeah, right, are what society see as a lost cause. And the people who come to prison, there's not enough staff, there's not enough money pumped into the place to start really making a change – it has to start from the courtrooms if you really want to make a change. You can't just flood all the jails and make it rehabilitation, there's no

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[319] Prisoner Zach, interview

[320] *HMPPS – About Us* - https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/her-majestys-prison-and-probation-service/about - accessed on 13/05/2022

such thing as rehabilitation, they bring you in here and they don't do owt with you … The only help you ever get is with yourself. The change can only take place within the individual himself. If… that person isn't ready to change there'll be no change.[321]

Prisoner Victor offered a particularly bleak picture of the prison system that built on the concept of a cyclical system that is without exit. His philosophy was more individualistic, where the only help you could get in prison is from yourself, and that if the individual isn't ready to change, no amount of intervention would do any good. He suggested this is partly due to the stigma society places on prisoners and the feeling that prisoners are being warehoused rather than cared for.

Despite this negative outlook, there is one point of positivity where Prisoner Victor concedes that change *can* take place, but only if the person wants to change and has the immediate inner resources to do so. For Prisoner Victor, the structure of the prison system and the challenging nature of the prison environment appear stacked against anyone who wants to change.

Environmental liminality, then, could be seen as a form of liminality that is built into structures and systems that can create feelings of hopelessness, being lost, or disillusioned with the possibility of change. It creates places where people are unable to find stability or feelings of security and belonging.

This kind of environmental liminality has parallels in Foucault's exploration of prison environments in *Discipline and Punish,* as he charts the philosophy and history of the penal institution.[322] He notes that this idea of the prison as a 'total institution' has been the blueprint since its inception, and that the way in which they are built lend themselves towards what one could call negative liminal states.[323] He notes that the prison is an 'exhaustive disciplinary apparatus', without space or gap, allowing no dissent and offering 'unceasing discipline' with 'total power over the prisoners [and] despotic discipline'.[324] They become places where the Government can 'dispose of the liberty of the person': opportunities for hope, finding strength or inner power, and

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[321] Prisoner Victor Interview
[322] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*.
[323] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 234ff.
[324] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 236.

kindness are rare. Isolation, powerlessness, and punishment are intended parts of the prison structure.

Foucault notes there are several aspects of the prison environment that have historically been seen as positive. Isolation, because it gives opportunity for prisoners to reflect on and repent of their crimes. Work, because it brings pleasure and satisfaction and helps them become industrious and see that they can make something useful of themselves. And definitive length of sentence, as that it gives sight of an end of punishment to the prisoner and thereby something to 'work towards'.

Foucault suggests the environment and the way it functions are indeed bound up together. Describing the philosophical concept of the prison as a place of penitence (hence *penitentiary*), he states that

> The great carceral machinery was bound up with the very functioning of the prison…The very fact that the prison is required to be 'useful', that the deprivation of liberty…must have a positive technical role, operating transformation on individuals (using isolation, work and normalization).[325]

It is helpful to compare Foucault's analysis of 18th Century penitentiary with the modern reality described above. In the interview data, we see descriptions of isolation as solely a negative and punitive aspect of imprisonment. The idea of solitude leading to repentance is not mentioned, and it was rare for a prisoner to speak about finding any deeper meaning from time spent alone with their own thoughts. Even time in Segregation away from other prisoners is a punishment for breaking rules or a way of containing those who are too violent to live alongside others, rather than time to consider their actions.

Work and normalization to society are both seen as positive in the data, but rarely featured in a remand environment. Many prisoners on remand noted the difficulty in finding jobs and meaningful work, especially within their first few weeks when it would have been of most benefit. There was a large amount of scepticism towards the limited options of reducing reoffending that remand environments offered. HMIP in their remand thematic report similarly reported fewer opportunities for meaningful work in

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[325] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, pp. 247–48.

remand prisons, and normalization to society ('reducing reoffending') is seen as a key weakness in local and remand prisons.[327]

Therefore, under Foucault's schema, the three main purposes for imprisonment are almost entirely abrogated in a remand setting. The latter two are missing, and the first fails to affect conscience or behaviour. It is little surprise that his overall summary of the rise of the modern prison is that it has failed to accomplish what it originally set out to achieve, and may instead have created a negative environment that can do more harm than good:

> Consequently, the notions of institutions of repression, rejection, exclusion, marginalisation are not adequate to describe, at the very heart of the [prison system], the formation of the insidious leniencies, unavowable petty cruelties, small acts of cunning, calculated methods, techniques...that permit the fabrication of the disciplinary individual.[328]

With these privations of imprisonment in mind, is it then possible to mitigate against this environmental and systemic liminality? Foucault notes that there is great power and responsibility given to those who work in caregiving roles within a prison. Caregivers' words and actions can make a huge difference for prisoner. Referring to the chaplain (amongst others), he quotes Charles Lucas in saying

> Just imagine the power of human speech intervening in the midst of the terrible discipline of silence to speak to the heart, to the soul, to the human person. [329]

Going further, he notes that chaplains and others have a central role to play in reducing reoffending and recidivism, and even mitigating aspects of the prison environment:

> A chaplain...[is] more capable of exercising this corrective function than those who hold the penal power. It is their judgement...and not a verdict in the form of an attribution of guilt that must serve as a support for this internal modulation of the penalty – for its mitigation and even interruption.[330]

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[327] HMIP, *Remand Prisoners: A Thematic Review*.
[328] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 380.
[329] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 237.
[330] Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, p. 237.

In the interview data above, there is evidence that chaplains are in some small way able to circumvent, challenge or 'work against the grain' of this kind of environmental and structural liminality. Chaplains appeared to use 'intervening human speech' to provide guidance, support and a fixed point for prisoners to cling on to, even if some of the structural issues of the environment appeared beyond the chaplain's power to remedy fully. The chaplain is bound by the inherent limitations of the prison's structure, but can work within them to mitigate some of the more distressing or dehumanising aspects of the system. It is interesting that many of the chaplains above noted the importance of being a 'friendly face', of helping prisoners navigate a complex system and overcome initial disorientation. In the 'silence' of prison establishments, where voices of support and help are few and far between, the chaplain appeared to speak words of comfort, calm and reassurance to 'speak to the heart, to the soul' of the prisoners they met, thereby mitigating some of the most detrimental aspects of the liminality of that environment.

Role-Based Liminality

Role-based liminality differs from Environmental liminality, as it is less to do with *where* the chaplain is as it is to do with *who* the chaplain is and the role they inhabit. Chaplaincy takes place on the boundaries of competing expectations and obligations: of the prisoners, the prison service, and their faith communities. Chaplains are figures on the margins in each group. They are on the margins of the prison hierarchy, having limited power yet having the ability to circumvent many traditional structures. They are on the margins of their faith communities, where their work often goes unseen and can be misunderstood. They are also the margins of their own faith and belief systems; their theology often has to stretch to accommodate new ways of ministering. They are the inbetweeners, on the interstices. Chaplains themselves may struggle with how to define and understand their role. Role-based liminality appears to have both positive and negative features.

Positive Role-Based Liminality

Chaplains described how sometimes they were able to accomplish more because of their liminal status. Being on the margins of the structures of the prison allowed them to navigate them with greater ease, speaking directly to those with decision-making power

in a way others could not do so easily. If the prison had good working relationships with their chaplains and an understanding of the value of chaplaincy, chaplains' words could carry weight and 'things get done'. They had a clear mandate from the Prison Service but one that could be carried out and fulfilled in many different ways. Within reason, everything was the chaplain's business. In the interviews, chaplains mentioned that prisoners regularly came to them with the phrase 'I know it's not your area but can you help me with *x* situation'. Although rules, policies and expectations changed constantly in prisons, the chaplains described themselves as well-equipped to deal with change. In the pilot study, Chaplain Camille described the chaplain's role as 'squishy' – malleable, able to fit whichever mould it was poured into but able to still retain a coherent shape and purpose.

One liminal role the chaplain played was that of a *prophet*. This term was used even by non-religious chaplains in the interviews. Chaplain Ian spoke about the prophetic nature of his role where due to the malleability and marginality of his position, he could speak truth to power and help the wheels of the prison turn more effectively:

> Tim: You were talking about advocacy against the establishment…

> Chaplain Ian: Yes absolutely, what is interesting is if you think about the theological concepts of having a priestly or a prophetic role, it's very interesting to perceive how chaplaincy perceives itself, we occasionally discuss this as a team, there's a sense in which we have a priestly role, we are here to help the thing work, um, but there's a sense in which we are operating in almost a prophetic role, that we are calling out the institution for its failures…and that's a tense and difficult interplay I think – and I wouldn't use words like priestly and prophetic…

The theological concept of the prophet is of a person who speaks up on God's behalf to warn of future danger unless a course of action is changed, or someone who makes people aware of injustice happening in the present. The prophet calls for the liberation of those who are oppressed. The prophet is on the margin of society, ill-tolerated by those in power due to their difficult and sometimes dangerous words, but also a revered figure for their apparent connection to the divine and their ability to circumvent the usual channels of decision-making and direct influence. Similarly, chaplains spoke of

their ability to speak to Governors or those with authority to get things done. They were able to raise awareness of issues with decency and respect, and were known for taking prisoners' concerns seriously. Chaplains were also aware of the limitations and pitfalls of this role, as they recognised that being too much of a thorn in the side of Governors and staff would make chaplains more isolated and less able to effect positive change.

Some chaplains expressed views about the religious background of chaplaincy and its links to liminality. Chaplain Ian suggested that one could separate and professionalise the pastoral care the chaplain provides from the religious aspect, but that this might run the risk of undermining the liminality of the role, which was in some way inextricably linked to its religious and fluid nature:

> I would secularise [chaplaincy], the problem with that is whether you then undermine its liminality … that is a really really tricky issue, one of the strengths of chaplaincy is it's not as institutionalised as everything else that goes on in the prison, and I'm conscious [of] that…how do you maintain liminality, which is its strength, when we are trusted partly because we are not perceived as being part of the institution… if you institutionalise it, do you then end up with targets, and does it become part of 'the system' as opposed to being in opposition to the system, and perform that prophetic calling out advocacy role, and that's really tricky…I'd like to keep chaplaincy as liminal, but I'd like to secularise it…And how do you detach that liminality from religiosity – that's a real problem – and I recognise that's a problem for us as humanists that in removing the role from its religious context we institutionalise it…[331]

Chaplain Ian's point was a helpful expression of the struggle to decide where chaplaincy should 'sit' within HMPPS. Some would prefer to see it brought into line with other prison departments and have a clearer role to play within the institution; others would prefer to see it as entirely separate from the rest of the prison service, giving it a wider ability to advocate for prisoners. It was clear the role of chaplains varied considerably from prison to prison, commensurate perhaps with the views of the Senior Leadership Team (of which the Managing Chaplain was a member) about where chaplaincy was placed within HMPPS and their particular establishment. Managing Chaplains in

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[331] Chaplain Ian

particular were keen not to lose their pastoral edge and just become administrative 'box tickers'. They were wary of complex administrative duties, conforming to prison protocols and getting bogged down in procedure. Some chaplains likewise expressed their concern about the over-professionalisation of the role at the expense of being free to explore their ministry in their own way.

For some chaplains, making sense of their role came quite firmly from within their faith community context. One Anglican chaplain spoke of how prison was their 'parish' and they had the 'cure of souls' for those they met, whichever background they were from. This allowed them to have a firm understanding of their mission both practically and theologically:

> If you're struggling with something on the outside and then you come in here, that's really hard, and so for me – this is my parish, that's how I view it, this is my parish, I have the cure of souls, for any person who walks into this building, and I want to care for as many people as I can. Because I think [for] anyone who's here it's a tough place to be.[332]

The same chaplain noted their role's limitations. They were not able to solve every problem that prisoners encountered, but saw this as something of a blessing. Active listening was a core component of their work, and even if they were unable to change people's circumstances or the prison system overnight, they believed it was important just to spend time being present with people – a theme I pick up later in Chapter 5:

> [I try to] look after people, to listen, to try to empathise with where they are and what they're feeling, as much as I can, whilst being conscious that obviously, I can't completely put myself in their shoes… and sometimes that pastoral care is very practical, in terms of just making calls or getting them forms, sometimes it's simply listening, as for me as very much an activist, I need to always appreciate that sometimes just listening and letting people offload is a valuable thing…I like be able to think I've helped by doing something and sometimes I can't always do something…and I can't always fix things here, but I just need to listen and give people that time and attention really.[333]

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[332] Chaplain Julia
[333] Chaplain Julia

Chaplain Mohammad mentioned how they were able to ask questions of prisoners that others wouldn't be able to get answers to, as well as give them advice or warnings that might be taken badly if it came from officers or other prisoners. He saw this as part of the relationship built up between the chaplaincy team and the prisoners, and how this mutual respect and trust hinged on being present and getting to know your prison population well:

> … I'm very straightforward, very blunt with my prisoners, if I know them quite well, so – I can say things to them that an officer would never even dream of saying – as a chaplain or an imam, they would listen to it – they may not like what I say but you know - they respect in that sense, whether it's going to a cell, speaking to them, talking to them. .. it's all about trust, all about relationships, all about getting to know your prisoners…[334]

The liminal nature of his role meant that Mohammad could do things other staff members could not. This seemed to be because he was not seen as part of the establishment, and could therefore be trusted as someone prisoners could be honest and open with. Chaplains' roles were fluid enough ('in the prison but not of the prison') that they were given special access to prisoners lives:

> … and it helps them a lot as well, you know like – just like they say it's a macho man environment that we're in, sometimes …they can't be themselves some times while they're on a unit…and when they're in a closed room behind some doors, they can just let things off, they can become themselves, what they want to be.[335]

Chaplain Mohammad reflected on how some prisoners struggled to understand out how his role fitted into the 'chaplain' mould. He suggested that making a difference and being there for prisoners' needs was much more important than the title people called him by or how others perceived his role. He described much of his work as 'generic', but for him this was a positive word. His work was more holistic than ministry outside the prison and encompassed a number of different aspects that could not be easily defined and described:

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[334] Chaplain Mohammad
[335] Chaplain Faisal

I'd say 80% of my work is generic now, whether they call me Father or Imam, you know – I get called many names, at the end of the day it doesn't bother me, end of the day, you're here to help out and make a difference…it's more or less being a social worker, in a way … the needs of the prisoners are, a lot of time religion has nothing to do with it - it's not about forcing or proselytising or preaching, a lot of time they just want to unload or speak to someone about someone, or need advice about a certain relationship, or need to offload what's on their minds, or – if not, maybe they need signposting to a different agency, whether it's counselling or different people. But it's – just being there for them. At the end of the day, you can't force anyone … you get to know the different departments well enough, and a lot of times, it's a good sign that the departments are always phoning and referring to us – because they know things are going to get done.[336]

The fluid nature of this chaplain's role was empowered by their liminal status. It gave them time to spend on seemingly mundane or practical issues and the ability to find time solving basic problems and helping prisoners solve practical problems. Chaplain Faisal described a similar experience:

[A prisoner has] no clothes, how can they get other clothes? So sometimes like the basic needs, filling those gaps in, just to put them at ease. … because you know the churn is like – how can I get my clothes? My property? Just the small things we might not see but for individuals it's a massive thing, you know my tenancy agreement, I need to sign it, I don't know what's going to happen, I could lose my house, I have nobody to get my belongings, my parents don't know, so you know – it's just a different world for them when they come in.[337]

The job of 'filling the gaps' was an important role for the chaplains. Indeed the phrase itself suggests a place on the threshold between things. Chaplains were able to fill the gaps between expectations and reality, the outside world and the prison, and between doubt and faith. They were able to fill practical gaps that others had left due to being too busy or inefficient. Although these gaps might seem small to an outsider, practical issues that had been left undone by others were a constant concern for chaplains as they had a

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[336] Chaplain Mohammad, interview
[337] Chaplain Faisal, interview

big impact on prisoners' lives. This gap-filling was enabled by the chaplain's fluid role which gave them room to engage in activities that were not strictly within their apparent remit.

Chaplains' liminal status meant that they had a seat and a voice at most prison meetings – belonging nowhere in particular meant that they belonged everywhere; they were 'involved in everything' and were able to contribute to almost all aspects of prison life, even if these aspects did not have an obvious spiritual component. This could be partly due to low levels of religious literacy amongst the prison's management, with governors unsure exactly where to place or put chaplaincy. It is perhaps more likely due to chaplains' availability and willingness to be involved in all parts of the prison's day-to-day running; they had an unusual amount of freedom to be wherever they wanted to within the prison.[338] Paradoxically, their marginal nature meant they were better integrated into prison life:

> Yes [the chaplaincy is well integrated] within the prison system, especially at HMP Alpha. For example, I've just come out of a meeting, and a prisoner says '…. I haven't heard about my HDC, can you just look at where it is, have I got it, has the board sat?', so it's about being sure that the chaplaincy's integrated within the prison, and we're out there.[339]

Other chaplains remarked on the freedom chaplains had to do 'what they wanted' and 'be anywhere' – not within a fixed framework but at the edges of all things and able to transcend boundaries and job descriptions. They seemed to enjoy the freedom they experienced at work and how different this was from ministry in other settings:

> Yeah I think that's the unique thing about chaplaincy, and chaplains, is that they can be anywhere in the prison… and it allows them that flexibility.[340]

Prisoners seemed to understand the role of the chaplain was a fluid one. They appeared to believe that chaplaincy came without some of the rigid framework that officers and governors had to abide by. Prisoner Xavier described the chaplain as a 'neutral' figure in

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[338] See *PSI 5/2016: Output 12.1*: - 'A Chaplain is able to visit all areas of the prison in which prisoners are located.'

[339] Chaplain Faisal, interview.

[340] Chaplain Faisal, interview

a way that he found hard to pin down; on the margins of being an employee but not always seeming like one:

> Tim: You said the chaplain is like a 'neutral person', can I just tease that out a little bit? What do you think it means to be that kind of neutral person in this kind of environment?

> Prisoner Xavier: …You do work for the jail, but you don't. You're like – you're like – here to help – like the screws, they're doing a job aren't they? … You're like here to help people cope with prison life.[342]

Chaplains were also seen as living links to the outside world. Prisoners were able to discuss things that really mattered to them from their outside lives, and could forge connections with outside life because of them. The chaplain, on the margins of being inside and outside the prison, was the liminal link between each space:

> Tim: So you like seeing the chaplain because you can talk to them about more interesting and important things.

> Prisoner Andrew: Yes I … talk to people on a slightly different level, know what I mean? I don't really swear, I don't like people around me swearing…. I have my job, very well paid, my degree – I've always described myself as a person on a certain level …[343]

As discussed above, the chaplain was seen as the quintessential person who was able to 'get things done', more than any other person in the prison. Prisoners spoke regularly of how the chaplain had an ability to circumvent or navigate the complexity of the prison administration in order to 'get things done'.

> In my case, I can only speak for me at the minute, I will want something done, I'll ask an officer to do it, and for weeks and days it doesn't happen, and as soon as I say to the guys in the [chaplaincy] office 'Listen…' …And I must commend them on that. They make me feel quite welcome and you know… they're one of the few people in this place that you can have a laugh with really and have a joke with… They make you feel like yes they know you're a prisoner and they're staff, they

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[342] Prisoner Xavier Interview
[343] Prisoner Andrew Interview

> know where the lines are…but on the humanity side of it, you know what I
> mean…[344]

Not only did Prisoner Samuel feel that the chaplaincy team could 'do things for him' but that also in spending time with the chaplain, the walls and bars of the prison seemed to evaporate, even for a moment, and he felt as if he was 'not in prison' any more. This fascinating insight seems to lend weight to the argument that the liminality of the chaplain could brush off on those around them. As people who straddled the space between the inside and the outside of the prison, those who spent time with them felt connected to the outside world in a way that was unavailable elsewhere. Prisoners would often speak of chaplains making phone calls to family members on their behalf and how this was a valuable service that helped them during the difficult early days in custody; a connection to the outside world that helped them a little less incarcerated and a little more human. More praise came from other prisoners:

> The chaplaincy team – I've had nothing but…affection, understanding, warmth,
> love, patience …they're very good at understanding people who are struggling,
> people who have never been in the system before, they understand who have
> been in and out the system, they understand institutionalisation in its
> entirety…[345]

In their very liminality, chaplains were able to do more, be more creative, and be seen differently by prisoners. The malleability of their role gave them opportunities to become more deeply involved in every aspect of prison life. Trust in chaplaincy was enhanced by the quasi-outsider status that they inhabited. It was a matter of real interest that although the liminal nature of the environment chaplains inhabited was quite a negative one, the liminality of their role was by and large as very positive one.

Negative Role-Based Liminality

However, the interviews also revealed that many of the positive aspects of the liminal role of the prison chaplain also came with negative aspects.

Many chaplains expressed concerns about the ill-defined nature of some of their duties. For some this was couched in terms of 'mission slip', where their reason for originally

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[344] Prisoner Samuel
[345] Prisoner Umar

becoming a prison chaplain was eroded over time into becoming a 'tea and sympathy' merchant, a poorly-remunerated social worker, or a mere messenger for prisoners and other prison departments. This form of liminality suggested that if chaplaincy was under-defined, it lost its 'unique selling point' and what made it so important faded into the background.

Chaplains also suggested that if they were too far outside the system they were ignored, not listened to, and had no power to make any change. Chaplains expressed frustration about times they could not raise prisoners' concerns or deal with seemingly straightforward issues because they could not successfully navigate prison bureaucracy or were not well known. Likewise, prisoners who had had negative experiences of chaplaincy spoke of how chaplains were not visible or well-known enough to have any major influence, or appeared to be too busy hurrying from one place to another to listen to their concerns.

One recurring issue with being a liminal figure was the chaplains' own struggle with understanding and defining their role. Chaplaincy was not thought to be well understood within the chaplains' own faith communities. Some felt they had had little opportunity to reflect theologically on what it meant to be a chaplain or to be adequately trained or resourced by their faith communities. Due to this lack of opportunity to explore chaplaincy theologically, few chaplains could articulate a theology of their role, even if they could name certain models of ministry they found helpful, such as that of a priest, a prophet or an advocate. Without a clear theological rationale for their ministry, there was a danger that it could become hard for chaplains to explain their presence in the prison system or what they were meant to achieve. This kind of role-based liminality led to some chaplains feeling they had no ability to change things due to being 'outside the system', or that they were misunderstood due to their ill-defined role. It was suggested that without a clear agenda for ministry, a chaplain could end up having a rationale for their work set for them by others in the prison governance. The chaplain's various allegiances to the prison, to their sending faith community, and to their own theology of ministry sometimes appeared in tension with each other and provided competing expectations to live up to. Some chaplains noted that often prisoners' expectations of chaplains were set far too high because of their

lack of clarity over what the role of the chaplain really compromised, and made them feel 'a nobody' compared to the rest of the prison staff:

> The big thing with me on pastoral care which sometimes – limits the effect of it, have a chat you hear the problems, you tell them you'll help, but – I always tell them – this isn't a guarantee, not like now you've spoken to me it's going to happen*… I'm nobody in the grand scheme of things*, I'm just going to try help you get things moving, but it's possible things don't move…and I guess sometimes I myself when you hit a wall and you feel like 'Oh great' I have to go back to this person and go 'Well I tried!' but sorry I have nothing… I mean the more enlightened ones go 'thanks for trying' and the less ones go *'What! What was the point of you then!'* [346]

Chaplains noted feeling isolated from their faith communities as they were often in the prison on their weekly day of worship. This could often lead to a gap between what was expected of them by their sending faith community, such as fellow ministers, members of their congregation, and denominational leaders, and the realities of prison ministry on the ground:

> Tim: Would your Catholic colleagues see [this issue] in the same way or…?

> Chaplain Katie: I don't necessarily think so as I don't necessarily have those conversations…but I'm not bothered about telling them about what it is to be a Catholic. Unless I can be a real person and be really have – be a person who will really listen to them and take their concerns seriously. That's very important…that's very important to me. … I talk to friends of mine in the community who are in no way linked to prison or chaplaincy or ministry, and both people of Catholic faith and no faith have said to me 'I don't know how you can do that job', like wandering round people you know have done bad things, and obviously they tend to jump to like sex offences and those things, those things people think of as most horrible, but they include muggers and burglars, and all the rest…[347]

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[346] Chaplain Faisal, interview
[347] Chaplain Katie, interview

I don't have close relationships with a lot of the clergy any more.[348]

Chaplains also mentioned how discussions amongst their chaplaincy team about the purpose and rationale of chaplaincy could create tension and lead to heated discussions about the purpose and remit of their role. This again seemed to stem from wider national discussions around the fluid nature of chaplaincy and whose job it was to define what chaplains *should* be doing and what their role was for:

> I like [another chaplain] personally very much and they're great…[The chaplain] works brilliantly hard and they are great with the prisoners, [but] I'm not sure if [the chaplain] fits here personally, and the only time there's ever been any kind of tension or it's been over a situation where [the chaplain] wants to change what I think is fundamental to our function, and so that's caused a bit of [tension]…[349]

> As people of faith you're here to hopefully make a difference, but if you can't even be respectful to each other, in a chaplaincy team then what's going to happen – what are you going to be doing with prisoners? If you're always in conflict with yourself and as a team – then that conflict will always fall out, and people won't be phoning your office because they know that chaplaincy are just troublemakers. You get a bad rep, people find out. It's always been that Governors would always fear being responsible for chaplaincy but a lot of them are complex individuals even if they are qualified and have a degree…[350]

Chaplain Julia and Chaplain Mohammad's comments were reminders that harmony and team working were crucial for chaplains, and that any grievances that were not dealt with quickly ran the risk of affecting their image within the prison, with chaplains ironically being seen as 'troublemakers' rather than peacemakers.

Because chaplains were on the margins within many of their prisons and inhabiting a role that was not clearly defined, it was unusual for chaplaincy departments to be large enough to cope with the demands on their time. Prisoners picked up on this, and some reflected on the changes in the role of the chaplain had expanded a great deal since

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[348] Chaplain Gerry, interview
[349] Chaplain Julia
[350] Chaplain Mohammad

prison chaplaincy was first introduced, and that what was expected of them had increased dramatically:

> Prisoner Wes: But a lot of the time in here, they just don't seem to have time.

> Tim: OK – why do you think that might be?

> Prisoner Wes : Because of the amount of people in the prison? Um...there's only one or two, there's over 1000 prisoners in here, there's only one, well I've seen two Christian chaplains but they never seem to be in on the same day… –

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> Prisoner Theo: ….but now it's a lot harder for them...they have more of a workload, course they have….

> Tim: What other things do you see the chaplaincy team doing around the prison?

> Prisoner Theo: They go round and introduce themselves, don't they, go on the wing – and someone will come up to them and say 'Oh what happens when...can you put my name down for a service, and they might say 'Oh I have a brother on another wing, if you go past could you tell him I were asking after him', that kind of thing.

> Tim: OK, so quite practical?

> Prisoner Theo: It's different now for the chaplaincy.

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Some prisoners had very little understanding of what a chaplain was for, and the chaplain was such a liminal figure that they faded into the background. These prisoners were challenging to interview as they genuinely appeared to have no idea about what a chaplain was or how they might access them. This was despite having had a chaplaincy induction within 24 hours of arrival into the prison. The interaction below was repeated in several prisoner interviews:

> Prisoner Yusuf – Don't know [about chaplains] really, never really dealt with them.

Tim: OK – how did the chaplain find you to talk to you about this [research project] did he just pass you on the wing?

Prisoner Yusuf: Just passed me and asked if I was on remand .

Tim: [So] you've not really met him at all…

Prisoner Yusuf: No.

Tim: Do you know other lads who engage with the chaplaincy much? What kind of things do they provide?

Prisoner Yusuf: Don't know – don't really chat to them you know.

A number of prisoners mentioned that chaplaincy was poorly-advertised and that the initial conversations with chaplains were all too brief and happened at a time when they were detoxing from drugs or half-asleep. If they didn't know anyone who had accessed chaplaincy, they were unlikely to seek them out for support. In this sense then, the chaplaincy were too liminal to make a difference, their role too poorly-understood to have an impact on these prisoners' lives. Their distance was an unhelpful one, their 'fuzziness' of purpose was confusing. This tallied with the difficulties some chaplains faced delineating their role in the prison effectively.

It seemed then that some aspects of role-based liminality could be negative, with issues around access, visibility, clarity of role, isolation from their sending communities and a lack of a coherent vision that the whole chaplaincy team could abide by. Some of these could be overcome – for example by a more structured team model with a coherent vision, better communication and visibility, or better connections with outside communities. But with each of these steps, it appeared that chaplaincy might lose some of the more positive aspects of its liminal nature, which seemed to outweigh the negative aspects encountered in the data.

Liminality then, although it had its pitfalls, seemed to benefit chaplains overall – as long as they were aware of its possible dangers or limitations. It was unclear from the data where chaplains would have opportunities to discuss and navigate these issues of liminality; it would bear further exploration to discover if these challenges were regularly discussed in chaplaincy team meetings, regional training days, or national conferences. Liminality was an overarching theme that seemed particular pervasive in

the remand context, and appeared to be the defining trait of both remand chaplains and remand prisoners.

Chapter 5: Theological Reflection and Analysis

In the prison, but not of the prison

A key theme in Chapter 4 was the liminality of the chaplain. The chaplain sits in the margins of the prison, with a role that is not easily defined, and can often speak and act in a way that can be counter to the established narratives of prison life. Chaplains' countercultural words and actions can further contribute towards their liminal status within the prison but can also put them in a position of being able to speak truth to those in power, and hope to those who are without power.

In this chapter I will consider this theme in the light of several theological voices that can help shape our understanding of prison chaplaincy liminality. Walter Brueggemann's work provides theological depth in two key areas. Considering his study of lament in the Psalms, I argue for chaplaincy liminality as a means to move through stages of disorientation to reorientation, with chaplains as figures who allow and facilitate lament in places of disorientation. I consider Brueggemann's theme of the *prophetic imagination* as a model for chaplaincy that both encourages them to challenge the status quo but that also helps imagine a better future for those they serve. Both areas will help us reflect theologically on the chaplain as a liminal figure and provide a critical conversation partner with which to theologically interrogate our data.

I consider how Jesus balances the difficult tension between meeting physical, spiritual and emotional needs in the gospels, alongside meeting his personal needs and being aware of his human limitations. Through considering Jesus' willingness to be interrupted, I consider the value he places both on the physical and the spiritual wellbeing of those who come to him, and how chaplains might learn from this example and pattern of ministry.

I also explore the work of Samuel Wells around incarnational ministry and the ministry of presence as 'being with' in the middle of challenging circumstances and events. Using Wells' taxonomy of 'being with', I consider the ways in which chaplains understood being with prisoners, and which models of presence that he explores could be most effective and theologically faithful in a remand environment.

Brueggemann and the Reorientation of Lament

> A lot of my crimes and things what I've done after my first few sentences and all
> that were needless… I didn't understand when I was angry and bitter and sad
> and lonely, because I didn't understand why I was in the predicament in the first
> place, I couldn't understand why I wasn't progressing…[351]

During the interviews, both in the words spoken and the physical presentation of those spoken to, prisoners' anger, sadness and frustration at both their current situation and their past traumas was close to the surface. Whether in the animated retelling of wrongs that had been done to them (or by them), or in the arms-folded single-word-answer brusqueness of someone who has learnt not to trust a professional armed with a Dictaphone, prisoners recounted the difficulties of living in the prison environment. As per the quotation above, many prisoners mourned the loss of wasted years, spending ten, twenty or even thirty years in and out of prison, graduating from children's homes to STCs to YOIs to HMPs. Anger and frustration boiled over in the complaints about lack of compassion from prison staff, lack of opportunity to progress and learn new skills, and time spent dwindling away in cramped and dilapidated prison cells. Prisoners railed against the injustice of sentences that seemed too harsh, the difficulty of getting proper legal support, long nights spent worrying about family, finance and relationships. Prisoners appeared to be fighting back the feeling that they were slowly but surely becoming institutionalised, that one day the revolving door would vanish and they would be trapped within the narrow confines of the prison wing for the rest of their existence.

Lament, the open and expressed grieving of that which has been lost or has failed to materialise, is the natural language of the prisoner. Chaplains also reflected feelings of frustration at the prison system, the struggles of offering good pastoral care in a harsh environment, lamenting the lack of power that they sometimes felt to change the prison for the better. Chaplains described sharing in the grief and loss that prisoners experienced, walking alongside them and offering opportunities for lament to be openly expressed. Some chaplains would then publicly express prisoners' frustrations

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[351] Prisoner Umar, interview

(alongside their own) in meetings and with Governors – sometimes to great effect, others with little effect at all.

For Brueggemann, the theme of lament forms the theological backbone of much of his study of the Psalms. In *The Message of The Psalms*, Brueggemann searches for a taxonomy that may help the modern reader understand the structure and meaning of the Psalter.[353] It is hoped that this taxonomy in turn will help those using the psalms in their own spiritual walk and ministries to use them as a way of making meaning from their own experiences of joy and sorrow.

Brueggemann provides three categories to describe psalms: psalms of orientation, disorientation and reorientation. He suggests that the bulk of the Psalter are psalms that move through disorientation to reorientation. Psalms of disorientation are those that describe the feeling of God's abandonment, wretchedness, or sorrow at the current situation; the sense of being 'painfully disoriented', expressed in a lament. Brueggemann suggests that the church has by and large forgotten the use of such disorientation or lament psalms in worship, partly due to cultural pressures of optimism and refusal to look difficult situations squarely in the face:

> It is my judgement that in [not using lament psalms in worship] this action of the church is …a frightened numb denial and deception that does not want to acknowledge or experience the disorientation of life.[354]

This place of disorientation is itself a liminal space. It is not in the realm of the security of the oriented, nor yet in the space of the reoriented. It is betwixt and between, a no-place with no end in sight – not a place in which one may wish to dwell for long. But for Brueggemann, the community of faith that uses these psalms in the life of the church uses them positively to make sense of the liminal space and to help express the full gamut of human emotion. There are no things that cannot be said to God – no areas of life that cannot be spoken about or expressed. In psalms of disorientation, the author brings their feelings of being disoriented to a God who is 'a man of sorrows, acquainted

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[353] Walter Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms: A Theological Commentary* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1984).

[354] Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, p. 51.

with grief' (Isaiah 53). Life in this way becomes a journey through darkness with God alongside us:

> Life is transformed. Now life is understood to be a pilgrimage or process through the darkness that properly belongs to humanness.[355]

Through the expression to God of disorientation, the psalmist is often brought round (though not in every case) to a place of reorientation, or 'surprising new orientation'. Brueggemann suggests that the psalms 'bear witness to the surprising gift of new life just when none had been expected'. Rather than returning to how things were, it is a glimpse of a possible hopeful future that looks different from the past.

This model has been used by others to 'map on' to human experiences in difficult or challenging situations. For example, Swinton uses this model to help understand the movements of faith and doubt during complex mental health challenges.[356] My argument is that Brueggemann's model of moving from disorientation to reorientation through the process of lament has several parallels in the role of the chaplain in helping prisoners make meaning from their period of remand.

The common experience of the prisoner is that of lament. Coming into prison represents a period of disorientation. Many prisoners expressed how difficult the first few weeks of remand were, with limited information and guidance available. Lack of access to the basic necessities of life, family contact, and curtailing of basic freedoms left most in a state of disorientation. As discussed in previous chapters, many prisoners expressed the 'unknown' nature of their future as one of the most challenging aspects of remand. This sense of being caught in limbo without a definite timescale on sentence or release appears to create a spiral of despair and frustration for many.

It is clear from the data that the chaplain presents one of the few people in the prison who offer an uncritical and non-judgmental listening ear to prisoners during this period of disorientation. The lament of the prisoner can often be shrugged off as moaning, griping or whingeing by prison officers – officers 'not listening' to prisoners' concerns was a regular theme of the interviews. In contrast, the chaplain was seen as someone

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[355] Brueggemann, p.52
[356] John Swinton, *Finding Jesus in the Storm: The Spiritual Lives of Christians with Mental Health Challenges* (SCM Press, 2020).

who would spend time listening to angry frustrated prisoners, and would take their concerns seriously. Chaplains sought to help prisoners navigate this time of lament, walking alongside them through darkness and allowing them to give voice to their concerns in a way that would not negatively impact their time in prison. Lamenting to other prisoners was seen as making oneself unacceptably vulnerable – lamenting to officers could backfire if it could lead to being seen as a troublemaker and prison privileges being withdrawn.

Some chaplains expressed feelings of being marginal within their faith communities. Their experiences of ministry, as well as the way in which their theology had to become elasticated to minister within a prison context, meant they often felt dislocated from church or parish ministry. Some chaplains remarked on how they rarely met with or had any links to local clergy for support or encouragement in their ministry, and others said they had stopped talking about their role to people in the church altogether. This to mirrors a point made in Phillips' research, where one of his interviewees stated:

> I felt that I had always had a call to prison ministry and not parish, but
> … in my interview, when I mentioned this, I was actually
> told by the interviewer, "Well don't worry, we will get you to do a
> proper job first."[357]

Although this goes some way to describing the marginality of the prison chaplain, it is only one facet. A more important aspect of their marginality was their ability to acknowledge the real challenges of remand and the pain that many prisoners experienced through this process. This was perhaps linked to their readiness to acknowledge what Brueggemann calls the 'unthinkable thoughts and unutterable words' that come from the minds and hearts of those who are in the middle of remand disorientation. They inhabit the darkness of the prison context alongside the prisoner, helping them find voice to express thoughts that others find dangerous or unacceptable. Brueggemann notes that merely trying to mollify the darkness in others in more acceptable terms is a dangerous modern deception:

> In our modern experience, but probably also in every successful and affluent
> culture, it is believed that enough power and knowledge can tame and eliminate

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[357] Phillips, p. 226.

the darkness…but our honest experience…attests to the resilience of the darkness, in spite of us. [358]

Chaplains were all too aware of their own limitations – many felt that they could do very little to change prisoners' situations. They were able to lament the prisoners' situations and the hopelessness that they felt with them, and yet alongside this not lose hope that change was possible and light might one day shine in the darkness. Often this involved helping them in practical ways to improve their conditions by a small margin and offering them a space in which to be listened to and heard. Chaplain Julia, reflecting on Jesus' ministry, noted poignantly:

> I think in a way what's the point in saving their souls if they're living in horror?[359]

In Brueggemann' model, and in the vast majority of the lament Psalms, disorientation eventually gives way to reorientation or new orientation, where God's presence or the hope of God's healing brings 'surprising reorientation' and a hope for the future. However in the remand environment, many prisoners saw remand as a 'Psalm 88' experience where institutionalisation, the revolving door of prison, and the lack of opportunities and support led to feeling that 'darkness was [their] closest friend'.[360]

The interview process itself produced an apposite example of this very experience. On my way back from interviewing prisoners at HMP Alpha, I hailed an Uber taxi and was about to get in when a prisoner walked through the gates, recently released, and asked if I knew how to get to the station. Sharing a destination, I suggested he could share the taxi, which he was grateful for. During the twenty-minute journey, he asked about my research, and explained how he had been released homeless, but the only night shelter available was in the neighbouring city. He had to be back in the current city the next day for probation appointments, however, and did not have enough money to make both journeys. He expressed his frustration at being stuck in a loop with no way out, lamenting his situation. Both myself and the taxi-driver were frustrated at being unable

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[358] Brueggemann, *The Message of the Psalms*, p. 53.
[359] Chaplain Julia
[360] Psalm 88.18 (NIV)

to help him aside from giving him what little cash we had between us to pay for his train fare.

This scene was played out in the interviews of many prisoners, stuck in a liminal loop, disoriented and unable to find new orientation; their chaplains feeling able to help in small practical ways and offer a listening ear but otherwise expressing frustration at not being able to release them from this unending cycle.

So does the remand context preclude the possibility of new orientation? The confidence of the Psalmist that in their lament they will one day see 'the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living' is hard to find within the remand context.[361] There were some welcome exceptions. Prisoner Umar remarked on how his time on remand on the 'drug free' wing had completely changed his perspective. Sessions he spent exploring his motivations and previous lifestyle helped him find positive reasons to change. His interactions with chaplaincy were positive, and through the re-imagining of his past life, the re-consideration of his behaviours and character, he was able to plan positively ahead for the future. He even hoped he might be a role-model for others in the future:

> So what I now try and purvey is now if I can stop anyone going through all that horrible hate, loneliness, sadness, from what I've gone through, in some kind of mundane sense it makes prison not a waste of life.[362]

To find meaning and purpose within the narrow confines of the prison cell was a pearl of great price, rarely discovered in the data. Although time spent on remand could potentially be taken off their final sentence by the judge, those who had long waits for court hearings or were pleading their innocence could take no comfort from this. But as discussed in the previous chapter, the kindness and decency shown to prisoners by the majority of chaplains interviewed did help some prisoners find hope and meaning within their remand time. For some, it made them feel wanted, appreciated and valued. For others, it made them feel like they were no longer in prison – even if just for a few precious minutes. Chaplain Faisal expressed creating hope as one of the core aspects of his approach to pastoral care:

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[361] Ps.24.13
[362] Prisoner Umar

> Generally what you generally see with the general population that we have is that they want something to give them hope... some inspiration, and sometimes when they see the chaplain, the lightbulb just [goes on]. It's more about the hope aspect actually...inspiring them that they need to get through it.[363]

However, these experiences of creating hope were the exception. Disorientation and lament were the mother-tongue of the majority of the prisoners interviewed, and frustration at the lack of purposeful activity, meaning-making support and practical assistance loomed large. Far from a natural move from disorientation to re-orientation, most remand prisoners could not see a positive road ahead.

Purpose in the Darkness

So had the chaplaincy team failed, despite their efforts, to bring reorientation to disoriented prisoners, stuck in their liminal cycle?

Chaplains by and large felt they met the immediate needs of remand prisoners, but their ministry went deeper than this. Although often embattled, frustrated and weary, the chaplains did not give way to a sense of hopelessness. Even those who had ministered for many long years expressed an attitude geared towards continued service, encouragement, and love. Despite the never-ending churn of faces, chaplains spent time getting to know individuals, showing interest in their families, their lives, and their everyday concerns in a way other members of prison staff often failed to do. Each chaplain brought their own understanding of their ministry to the table, but the resolve undergirding their work remained. Prisoners returning to custody or struggling to cope with prison life were not seen as setbacks or failures, but part of life as it really was and people to be cared for:

> I want to care for as many people as I can. Because I think anyone who's here it's a tough place to be.... I think for me it comes from the fact that everyone is a child of God, everyone is loved by God, everyone is of immense value, worth listening to, everyone has a story, it's never about justifying their behaviour, never about excusing them, but about understanding, not judging, and for me a person is worth more than their worst action. Whatever it is they've done, it's not for me to

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[363] Chaplain Faisal, interview

judge, they've already been judged, our job is to listen and to help, actually that's what Christ did for me.[364]

I suppose the real theological undergirding [of my ministry] is the incarnation – that God has created all people in his image, and he calls us to let that image flourish and grow and I want to play a part in that really for myself and others.[365]

These chaplains drew on the love of God as a critical theme for their work, alongside aspects of *imago Dei* theology, seeing the value, dignity and worth of each person despite the marring effects of sin. They also drew on the *exemplar* model of Christ's work, hoping that their ministry in some way is shaped by Christ's own ministry to them. Chaplain Katie reflected on the importance in their pastoral care of helping prisoners to grow and become more self-reliant:

It's about not keeping people dependant but helping them grow a little into growing into someone who can take care of their own needs as far as possible in a prison. So pastoral care I would say is – you can't tend to someone's spiritual needs - how can you if you've not attended to their pastoral concerns?[366]

Chaplain Katie believed that the pastoral needs of their prisoners came ahead of their spiritual needs, with perhaps some resonance with James 2:14-17, where practical works accompanying spiritual beliefs are the proof of an active and living Christian faith. Similarly, Chaplain Gerry placed a genuine care for prisoners' physical needs at the heart of their ministry:

But if I'm able to help you, I'll help you because first and foremost, that's why I do this job . I do this job because I genuinely care for the needs of the prisoners.[367]

The compassionate nature of pastoral care was clearly at the heart of many chaplain's rationales for their ministry. Chaplains seemed well aware that with remand prisoners, the move from disorientation to reorientation would not be possible in the weeks or months of working alongside them. But listening and helping practically were treasured almost as sacraments within the prison; lamenting alongside those who lamented,

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[364] Chaplain Julia, interview
[365] Chaplain Leon, interview
[366] Chaplain Katie, interview
[367] Chaplain Gerry, interview

listening and paying close attention, even if a way out or a 'solution' to their problems was never going to be forthcoming. Some of the more lofty aims of community ministry and discipleship were not always possible – and so chaplains attempted to carry out whichever small acts of compassion were within their power. In places of darkness, chaplains attempted to act as guides and encouragers to those in places of deep disorientation, despite the magnitude of the task and the complexities of providing pastoral care in such a challenging environment.

This theological reflection reveals something of a tension for chaplains between meeting urgent personal and practical needs and being fully present to listen carefully to prisoner concerns and laments. Too much running around meeting infinite practical needs left chaplains burnt out, feeling like messengers or generic jacks-of-all-trades, running the risk of merely doing things *to* people or *for* people. Conversely, too much time immersed in prisoner lament and being present with people meant that certain tasks might not be carried out, requests might go unnoticed, or feeling as though they were making no practical difference to people's lives. There is also the question of where the space is in the midst of this for chaplains' own spiritual and physical wellbeing in such a challenging context. At this point I will consider if there are Biblical narratives that can be explored to help reflect on this situation.

Jesus and the Gospel of Interruption

In the Gospels, we find a number of stories that can illustrate the liminal tension between practical support, pastoral listening (and lamenting), and self-care. In Mark 5.21-43, Jesus and his disciples are approached by a synagogue leader whose daughter is dangerously ill, who pleads with Jesus to have him come and heal her. Jesus immediately responds with compassion, making his way to the leader's house to meet a practical and critical need. On the way there, a woman is able to grab hold of the edge of his cloak: due to her continuous flow of blood, she has been ostracised by her community and from worship in the Temple, thinking that she may be healed just by touching him; and she is. Jesus notices power has gone out from him, and he stops. Surrounded by a crush of people, on his way to meet a desperate need, he nevertheless pauses, asks the woman to come forward, and gives her time and space to tell her whole story to him. Jesus is not content just to meet needs – but to acknowledge the person in front of him and encourage them. A distinctiveness emerges here; Jesus' willingness to

be interrupted, an ability to temporarily set aside what appears urgent in order to attend to what is important. The crowd around him may well have thought it madness to stall even for a second from a more 'important' duty, but Jesus appeared aware that being interrupted was a natural part of his ministry. He is often described as being 'swamped' by people in dire need, desperate to get to him by any means, so much so that he missed meals and his own physical nourishment to attend to the needs of others.

Jesus was able to switch naturally between the physical and spiritual concerns of those he encountered, portraying a more holistic attitude to healing, embodying not just the physical but also the spiritual aspects of people's needs. An obvious example might include the Feeding of the 5000, where Jesus is aware both of the spiritual needs of his hearers but also of their physical needs – and he meets them both.[368] After the crowd return, Jesus encourages them not to just look for more physical bread to meet their practical needs, but to ask for spiritual bread (his life and teaching) that will give them deeper satisfaction and healing.[369] Although Jesus' actions were also symbolic, signs of the coming of the Kingdom of God, they were also compassionate acts designed to display God's heart towards his suffering people. We regularly see Jesus' willingness to be interrupted throughout the gospels; by blind Bartimaeus along the road to Jerusalem,[370] the demoniac in the Gerasenes,[371] the crowds that follow him even when he is exhausted and seeking a rest.[372]

Conversely, Jesus is also remarkably unavailable on occasions when people are looking for him and trying to get his attention. He often retreats to lonely places to pray,[373] hides himself from crowds,[374] goes about secretly,[375] and delays attending to urgent requests.[376] When he is present, he is fully present and attentive to need – but he will not let the requests of others set all of his agenda or his own priorities for his ministry

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[368] Mark 6.30-44
[369] John 6.26
[370] Mark 10.46-52
[371] Mark 5.1-20
[372] Mark 3.20 – 'Then again Jesus entered a house, and a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat'. (NIV)
[373] Luke 5.16
[374] Mark 1.46
[375] Mark 7.24, John 7.10
[376] John 11.6-7

and his ultimate vocation. In his kenotic, limited human form, he does not set about to meet every single need, acknowledging his limitations and human frailty.

There is perhaps an opportunity here for chaplains to consider the balance in their work between practical support, attentive presence, and indeed withdrawal. Almost everyone Jesus meets is in a place of liminal disorientation and lament, and has multiple practical and spiritual needs. Despite having limited timeframe for his ministry, Jesus is able to balance the calls on his time and attention. To those who ask for practical support, he offers not only support but delves further for their deeper needs. For those who come to be forgiven, listened to or acknowledged, he also meets their physical needs. He is also aware of his physical limitations, not promising to meet every need that comes his way and being willing to withdraw if necessary to rest, invest in his own spiritual life, and restore his own physical needs.

It is perhaps true in the remand prison environment that physical needs will often present as more acute and desperate than spiritual ones. Chaplains most regularly spoke of meeting physical needs, and that these were the most pressing issues that prisoners presented with during their remand period. But considering the interviews more deeply, my impression is that these physical acts of kindness made way for deeper discussion about more important spiritual or emotional issues, even if prisoners were initially unwilling or unable to broach these problems. Trying to meet an infinite amount of need will always leave chaplains letting some people down; overpromising or putting the emphasis on their role as a 'cure all' encourages all kinds of requests and concerns that fundamentally may not be the chaplain's role to fix. Jesus' example in the gospels can provide a model for chaplains to consider when trying to hold together the tension between engaged presence, withdrawal, and meeting practical needs. It encapsulates aspects of liminality; being on the bounds between several competing and contrasting needs, being able somehow to keep them all balanced.

Chaplaincy and Prophetic Imagination

Chaplains regularly spoke about the prophetic nature of their role. One chaplain used the expression 'prophetic as opposed to priestly' from a humanist standpoint, speaking about a perceived tension between performing duties on behalf of the 'state' (a priestly

or pastoral role) and speaking up about injustices done by the state (a prophetic role). This was seen in a number of chaplain's interviews as they vented frustrations about various aspects of how the prison was run. These included issues with prisoners getting access to basic items, and a perceived lack of compassion and empathy amongst some of the officers and governors. Chaplains had a certain level of power within the establishment – they could navigate the various hierarchies of the prison and had easy access to the different departments and functions of prison life. Managing Chaplains were on the senior management team of their prisons, employed at an equivalent grade to an entry-level Governor. This allowed them and their teams by extension to speak into arenas where their voice could carry some weight. Some chaplains described the Governor's door as being 'open to them'. They were aware, however, of being too much a thorn in the Governor's side, and that being obstructive or intractable could lead to reduced access to decision-making fora or make life challenging for the rest of the chaplaincy team.

Some prisoners expected chaplains to take a prophetic or advocate role within the prison. Many prisoners spoke about how they felt many of their concerns were not listened to by anyone apart from the chaplains. Some prisoners suspected that even chaplains might not always listen properly or speak to prison authorities on their behalf. During the interview process, one particular prisoner stopped before answering a question to ask for a second time what would happen with his interview answers and the results of my study. This showed his real interest not just in being heard but in his words making a real difference in the prison:

> Prisoner Bill: Can you change [a particular practical issue], can you put that forward?
>
> Tim: If you would like me to?
>
> Prisoner Bill: Can you solve it or am I just wasting my breath?

After the interview I made sure to pass on his practical issue to the Managing Chaplain at the site, who assured me it would be sorted for him. The undertone of exasperation in Bill's voice at the time, along with his evident frustration, showed an expectation that nothing would be done by those in power and authority; this was a common theme in the some of interviews.

This aspect of the prophetic is documented in other chaplaincy literature, although it is not expanded on in great detail. In Threlfall-Holmes' exploration of models of chaplaincy, she speaks of the 'prophetic or challenging' models, where chaplains challenge the status quo or 'speak prophetically into unjust or ungodly structures'. Threlfall-Holmes comments:

> Most chaplains would feel uncomfortable without some element of this aspect of ministry in their self-understanding…but chaplains for whom the prophetic model is important may spend time feeling frustrated and marginalised.[377]

Similarly, Ryan speaks of the 'Agent of Challenge' model of prophetic ministry, which

> …might involve challenging particular policies or practices within an organisation…this function is about being a voice for justice, rather than care, challenging the practice of organisations, rather than simply working with them.[378]

Ryan notes this role can be easier for those in voluntary or lay chaplaincy than those in full-time employed chaplaincy, as their position within the institution is already more marginal but less precarious. In his work on models of chaplaincy in the UK, Ryan also notes that chaplains were even respected for this prophetic role in some organisations:

> "This may seem like a role which shouldn't appeal to an organisation – tantamount to troublemaking," the report says. "Yet stakeholders time and again subverted that expectation, and praised the chaplain for being able to speak up and keep an organisation honest." An NHS manager, for example, reported that "Sometimes you need someone who isn't too much in the system to tell it like it is, and tell everyone what we're doing isn't the way to do things. It isn't always popular at the time, but you look back and you see why they did it.'"[379]

Although not using the language of the prophetic, there are models of chaplaincy noted in Aune, Guest and Law's report into University Chaplaincy in the UK that overlap with the prophetic model. Chaplains noted how their role could include challenging power

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[377] Miranda Threlfall-Holmes, 'Exploring Models of Chaplaincy', in *Being a Chaplain*, ed. by Miranda Threlfall-Holmes and Mark Newitt, SPCK Library of Ministry (London: SPCK, 2011), p. 122.
[378] Ryan, 'Theology and Models of Chaplaincy', p. 88.
[379] Ryan, *A Very Modern Ministry: Chaplaincy in the UK*, p. 39.

structures within the University hierarchy, speaking up on behalf of students, emphasising decency and respect in their work.[380] One chaplain noted how for them, the incarnation and resurrection of Jesus completely subverted power structures and challenged the authorities of the day, and how this understanding had fundamentally shaped their ministry to those on the margins.

Walter Brueggemann's *Prophetic Imagination* is a helpful theological voice to bring into conversation with this theme of the prophetic that emerges from both our data and the literature. It provides theological reflections concerning the role of the minister who finds themselves in the intersection between faith and state, in the liminal space between loyalty to their values and beliefs on the one hand and loyalty to their employer or institution on the other.[381] Brueggemann offers an account of how a minister such as the chaplain might help those who, much like our remand prisoners, are stuck in a place of numbness, lament and liminality.

In *The Prophetic Imagination,* Brueggemann begins by characterising the Old Testament prophet, with Moses as the archetype, and exploring what makes a ministry prophetic. He describes how Moses and other prophetic characters embody what he calls the 'prophetic imagination', where the prophet helps the oppressed and downtrodden to imagine a different future and find hope for its coming implementation. The prophet embraces the reality of suffering, helps put this suffering into words, and articulates these words of suffering to those in power and authority, alongside offering creative ways of showing compassion to those in desperate situations.

The prophet does not merely critique and criticise or offer abrasive measures of indignation, nor does the prophet enact spectacular deeds of social crusading. Instead, they offer

> '...an alternative perception of reality and in letting people see their own history in the light of God's freedom and his will for justice'.[382]

[380] Kristin Aune, Mathew Guest, and Jeremy Law, *Chaplains on Campus: Understanding Chaplaincy in UK Universities* (Coventry University / Durham University / Canterbury Christ Church University, 2019).
[381] Walter Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination: 40th Anniversary Edition*, Anniversary edition (Fortress Press, 2018).
[382] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, pp. 116–17.

The Embrace of the Inscrutable Darkness

One of the first aspects of the prophetic voice is lament. Building on his work on the Psalms, Brueggemann sees lament as one of the foundational areas of the life of God's people. He states that the prophet's role is to help those who have been numbed by their suffering to give voice to their lament, and to bring this lament to the authorities – not in indignation but in grief. The prophet's grief is in itself a critique against the authority, as in grieving we express that 'things are not right'. Grieving and lament is seen as the beginning of criticism itself; 'bringing hurt to public expression.'[383]

Alongside this grieving and expression of lament on behalf of the oppressed, the prophet's role is to *energise*. The prophet sees reality in all its ugliness and inhumanity, and yet without triteness or offering false hope helps individuals and the wider community imagine and shape a new reality. To borrow Andrew Byers' phrase from his work on Christian discipleship, the prophet is a *hopeful realist* – fully aware of the pains of the present but willing to hope in a better future; they are neither an idealist nor a true cynic.[384] Brueggemann powerfully describes Moses' prophetic descent into the dark of his people's suffering:

> Moses takes sides with the losers and the powerless marginal people. He has not yet grown cynical with the doublespeak of imperial talk …[this] energy comes from the embrace of the inscrutable darkness. … There is new energy in finding one who can be trusted with the darkness.[385]

> The archetypal Moses parallels his mission with that of God; "I have seen their affliction…I know their suffering…I have come down to deliver them".[386]

Brueggemann notes an opposition to this kind of prophetic calling, which he calls the *royal consciousness*, describing how the state can attempt to control the power and authority of God for its own means. Creating affluence, maintaining the status quo, authoring oppressive social policy and gatekeeping the spiritual are all hallmarks of what Brueggemann decries as the 'returning to Egypt' of royal consciousness. Solomon's

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[383] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 11.
[384] See Andrew J. Byers, *Faith without Illusions: Following Jesus as a Cynic-Saint* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Books, 2011).
[385] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, pp. 14–16.
[386] Ex.3.7-8 (RSV)

Kingdom is seen as the archetype of this theological understanding, as Solomon is seen as consolidating an un-mandated kingship that seeks to centre power around the palace and appropriate the presence of God by constructing the Temple right next to it.

The language of 'official' religion is seen as optimism – dissenting voices are not welcomed and those who point out the failings of the state are dismissed. Brueggemann argues that the result of this royal consciousness is numbness: to death, fear, and the future. With this worldview, hope vanishes; there is 'nothing new on the horizon', no prospect for change. Summarising, Brueggemann concludes:

> Short of genuine newness, life becomes a dissatisfied coping, a grudging trust, and a managing that dares never ask too much.[387]

Brueggemann continues to suggest that ministers can often fall into the trap of becoming uncomfortable with the realities of human darkness and grief; often unwittingly, they can become

> ...the good-humour men and women, for who among us does not want to rush in and smooth things out, to reassure, to cover the grief? [388]

Brueggemann's suggestion of Solomon as an archetype of the anti-prophetic is a new and somewhat jarring interpretation of the reign of a King that the Biblical texts place in high regard (at least until the start of his moral and religious downfall from 1 Kings 11 onwards). The construction of the Temple of God's own design and the institution of the priesthood as separate and prior to the monarchy is well attested, as well as the warning from the reign of Saul (1 Kings 13 in particular) that the king should not try and usurp or take over the position of priest to the people. On the other hand the content of 'Royal Psalms' such as Psalm 110 contend that the king can in fact play a priestly role within God's kingdom. It could be argued that Solomon's adjoining of the Temple to his own palace was a mere power-play in order to place God and the King close to each other in his people's minds (see 1 Kings 7), or alternatively an expression of Solomon's desire to be as close as possible to the worship and divine presence of the God of Israel.

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[387] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 63.
[388] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 44.

Is the royal consciousness attitude pervasive amongst chaplains? In the modern prison service, there is perhaps more nuance than there has been historically between the presence of chaplains and the influence of the state. In the Prisons Act (1952), each prison is mandated to have 'an Anglican Chaplain', which under the reforms of the early 21st Century has become a multi-faith team of chaplains commensurate with the religious demographics of the prison. Chaplains are licenced by their sending denomination or faith community, and represent both the denomination they serve and the prison's own interests. Being employed by the Government and the Church (or sending faith community) can be seen on one level to be legitimising the presence of prisons in the community. The work of the chaplain is sanctioned, categorised and encouraged by the state, who limits their work within a confined set of 'statutory duties' and prison rules.

It could be suggested that chaplains are there to 'keep the peace' or as a wielder of 'soft power', keeping prisoners content and peaceful during their time on remand. Pierre Bourdieu remarks in his paper on the structure of faith groups that Max Weber and others have suggested ministers are prized by Government bureaucracies as ways of 'controlling the masses', and in turn are legitimised by the presence of the 'divine' within their walls.[389] Traditional denominations are seen as having levels of structure and hierarchy that similarly encourage laypeople to conform and submit to the status quo.[390]

Bourdieu remarks that much 'priestly' work in such institutions is 'banal' and 'ordinary'.[391] It is expressed as the fulfilling in one sense of a working-class *do ut des* religion, where people consider ministers as magicians who can solve as many practical problems as possible for them 'so that it may go well for them'. This chimes with some of our data's emphasis on the practical aspect of chaplaincy as the (somewhat frantic) fulfilling of practical needs and requests. In turn, it is seen to have a 'middle class'

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[389] Pierre Bourdieu, 'Legitimation and Structured Interests', in *Max Weber, Rationality and Modernity*, ed. by Scott Lash and Sam Whimster (London: Allen & Unwin, 1987).
[390] Pierre Bourdieu, 'Genesis and the Structure of the Religious Field', *Comparative Social Research*, 13 (1991), 1–44.
[391] Bourdieu, 'Legitimation and Structured Interests', p. 127.

aspect, where the minister's role is systematising social norms and power structures. It could be argued this is seen in the way the chaplain conforms to the prison rules and regulations, encouraging remandees to follow their actions and comply with the system they are part of. The presence of the chaplain within the prison sends forth a message for Bourdieu and others that the absolute power of the prison system over the remandee is legitimate and should not be critiqued or challenged.

Ernst Troeltsch carried out a large-scale evaluation of the church's role throughout history in social teaching and interaction with political power.[392] In his conclusions, he argues that in order for the church to exercise any temporal power, it must 'compromise' on its ethical teaching and accept some hierarchical structure in order to effect any change upon the world and bring in the 'Kingdom' of God. Troeltsch critiques faith that seeks to effect change without such boundaries and structures as utopian and ineffective. With an independent organisation, however, there is the distinct need to ally with 'civil power' to maintain permanent, uniform, and undivided.

This being said, Troeltsch suggests that even at the time of writing in the early 20th century, the civil power of faith was waning due to the lack of compulsion within modern religion – and would likely dwindle or disappear as a consequence. Is it possible then from a prison perspective to suggest that the role of the chaplain is merely a 'hangover' from the days of civil religion? It may explain some of the issues with the liminality of a role that has lost some of its innate power to effect change and a position that is no longer a clear expression of the state exercising its power through religious means (or vice-versa).[393] In the end, Troeltsch suggests modern religious power is not exercised through civil status but through the 'dominion over the consciences of men *[sic]*', their last bastion of provenance.[395] This is partly attributed to the way in which some of the wider roles of the church (and other religious groups) have been taken up by society at large as secular causes (e.g. education, writing, administration, charitable activity, care of the sick). But even this moral role is seen by Troeltsch as having a waning power in the modern world.

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[392] Ernst Troeltsch, *The Social Teaching of the Christian Churches (Volume 2)*, Halley Stewart Publications, 1 (London: Allen & Unwin, 1931), II.
[393] Troeltsch, II.
[395] Troeltsch, II, pp. 1007–9.

Similarly, David Martin's work on the sociology of religion sees a constant tension between the powers of society and of religion throughout history, one which has been exacerbated by the modern acceptance of what sociologist Ernest Gellner called 'enlightenment rationalist fundamentalism': that there are no privileged or *a priori* substantive truths.[397] Martin suggests this does not do away with the power of religion, but instead creates a dialectic where faith and society are in constant ebb and flow. Most helpfully for our purposes, Martin suggests that one main function of religious power is through symbols. These are 'vehicles of transcendence', where the minister of faith uses them to express deeper truths that 'cannot be fully grasped, spoken of, or communicated fully.'[398] These symbols set social boundaries, and carry their own power and status. They also have the power to speak against the social powers that be in a way which we might compare with Brueggemann's 'prophetic' power:

> The church is a temporary deposit of the power of the kingdom of the almighty God, which is full of peace, goodness and justice – whereas earthly kingdoms are imperfect bad replicas of it, filled with violence, vice, corruption and injustice. [399]

The very presence of religious (or quasi-religious) symbols within a place of societal power and authority can be seen as critiquing its very existence from within. Through the lens of remand prison chaplaincy, we might imagine the pastoral work of the chaplain as a visual, verbal and enacted symbol or sign against aspects of the prison system that appear to be unjust or corrupt. Considering the objections raised by many chaplains concerning the privations of prison life and the broken nature of some of the systems governing prison life, this suggests another aspect of their liminal status; part of the system, yet critiquing it obliquely from within. In *The Breaking of the Image,* Martin describes religious ideals and symbolism as latent within society as a whole, which give them the ability to act as a force for social change '[like]a time-bomb lodged within an alien structure'.[400] Chaplains could be seen as similarly acting within a foreign structure, working as a force for positive change within the system but also as a prophetic witness against the existence of such a place; by their very presence, it could

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[397] Nikos Kokosalakis, 'Symbolism and Power in David Martin's Sociology of Religion', *Society*, 57 (2020), 173–79 (p. 173).
[398] Kokosalakis, pp. 174–75.
[399] Kokosalakis, p. 175.
[400] David Martin, *The Breaking of the Image* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980), p. 160.

be said that they symbolise the limitations and the privations of the prison environment.

So what is the modern minister's prophetic role? How do those in a ministerial position follow Moses' archetype rather than Solomon's? Brueggemann outlines this role in three distinct moves. [401]

Firstly, the prophet 'offer[s] symbols that are adequate to confront the horror and massiveness of the experience that evokes numbness and requires denial.' These symbols are rituals, reminders and words that help animate and describe the inner experiences of those who are oppressed. Second, the prophet brings 'public expression to those very fears and terrors that have been denied so long and suppressed so deeply that we do not know they are there.' This is speaking truth to power, bringing the unheard voice of the oppressed into the light and making it known. And thirdly, the prophet is called 'to speak metaphorically but concretely about the real deathliness that hovers over us and gnaws within us. To speak neither in rage nor with cheap grace, but with the candour born of anguish and passion.'[402] This is using the language of lament both to decry the death of what is now but also to imagine a future that looks more hopeful and concrete than the one planned by the authorities.

Brueggemann's analysis of the Old Testament prophet and their role seems to overlap in many respects with some of the aspects of chaplaincy that have emerged from our data. A number of chaplains that were interviewed considered a major part of their ministry to be advocacy; speaking up on behalf of prisoner's needs and concerns in a variety of fora, often to those in power and authority over them. In the course of seven interviews there were thirteen references alone to the chaplain as playing an advocacy role, with the following notable examples:

> So very often, we're working against the grain, and act as advocates for the prisoners against the system…here's a person coming to me who is not wanting to see me first and foremost as a [chaplain] but that they can actually ask me to do things for them, which no-one else is doing… And that's to do with the failure

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[401] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 44ff.
[402] *in ibid.*

of prison…so we are often pushed into performing roles which take us beyond pastoral care, um, because the institution we're working in is so dysfunctional… If you institutionalise [chaplaincy] do you then end up with targets, and does it become part of 'the system' as opposed to being in opposition to the system, and perform that prophetic calling out advocacy role, and that's really tricky…[403]

Here the chaplain unpacks the advocate nature of the chaplain as two-fold. It is first the nature of the role to 'speak up on behalf of' whichever group of people they are serving in whatever context; the giving of power and a voice to those without. It is secondly due to the perceived failings of the institution they serve in, most clearly described within its systems of administration, communication, and basic standards of living. The chaplain also contends that this advocate role hinges on being in a liminal position away from the hierarchy of the prison, whilst seeing the dangers that such a perceived lack of professionalism and accountability might entail. Chaplains Julia, Mohammad and Katie have similar sentiments:

I've just been to see a guy through the [application system] who's come here from a Category D prison so he's desperate to get back there so I'm on the phone then to offender management to try find out what's happening and he's not got his property so I've rung reception, and again it's just that chasing up, following up things and going back to the prisoner saying this is what I've found out.[404]

[Officers say] 'Oh if you have an issue speak to a chaplain, they'll come and listen to you or give you the time of day and listen to your issues', and sometimes there's not many jobs we wouldn't do – even if it means chasing up Shelter, Housing, paying rent – if it means phoning different departments and asking them, 'maybe you missed this guy', there's an issue with this guy, whether it's phoning outside agencies, it just depends on the needs of the individual.[405]

Sometimes I'll go beyond the call of duty with some of those things on there, because they're not really chaplaincy issues but because the prisoner's brought it to my attention I'll try and deal with it…[406]

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[403] Chaplain Ian, interview
[404] Chaplain Julia, interview
[405] Chaplain Mohammad, interview
[406] Chaplain Katie, interview

This prophetic or advocacy role of the chaplain is seen by some as standing up 'against' the prison, where the structures of the system are seen as corrupt and uncaring, or at the very least dysfunctional. Chaplains ranged from being more or less prophetic in their role; some saw the very heart of their ministry as calling out the powers that be and demanding progress and justice. Others saw the prophetic nature through the lens of advocacy; making the laments and frustrations of the powerless known to those in power, and speaking up on major and minor issues. Others still saw this role as more of an extension of their general pastoral work; an emphasis on shared humanity and decency, rather than setting themselves against the culture of the prison. Speaking on prisoners' behalf to those in power was a common theme for all, however, which suggested that even chaplains who saw their role through more of a 'religious' or priestly lens still embraced a smaller prophetic aspect to their work.

Prisoners were aware of this prophetic nature of chaplaincy and that chaplains would often speak up for them when they felt they had been treated unjustly or inhumanely. Nevertheless, it was also clear the prophetic nature of chaplaincy could be subverted by prisoners, who could try to use chaplains' willingness to speak up to their own advantage. One particularly candid prisoner remarked:

> Tim: And do [chaplains] liaise with other departments? Say if you were struggling to get in touch with Probation or …would the phone them up for you?
>
> Prisoner Victor: Course they would yeah. Yep. If they think it is genuine, yeah, because don't forget you get a lot people that tell a lot of lies to the chaplaincy…
>
> Tim: Surely not! [*we both laugh*]
>
> Prisoner Victor: Yeah because you get people using the chaplaincy, plying on their goodness because prisoners are professional manipulators…right, *I'm* a professional manipulator! Yeah. I know this! Right – so if I'm having a stressed out day and I can't get a phone call, this that and the other, the dark side of me would say right I'll call the chaplaincy, and see what I can drip out of the chaplaincy, and see how I can bend the chaplaincy. But they – there's consequences for that, from God.

It appeared that in some way the chaplain's presence evoked a level of moral accountability amongst prisoners – and although some prisoners appeared to have no

qualms with attempting to manipulate the chaplain, others baulked at the idea of treating the chaplain with anything less than respect. As mentioned in Chapter 4, the base-level of trust in chaplaincy was very high, which led to some (if not all) prisoners feeling that breaking the relationship of trust that chaplains had sought to engender and model was beyond the pale. Some prisoners believed that there would be consequences (human or divine!) for trying to subvert chaplaincy's work in this way.

Brueggemann's prophet is susceptible to 'mission creep' in a similar way to our chaplains; ending up spending time and energy on a message that has shifted from the original one. Chaplains all receive corruption prevention training (see Chapter 4) upon starting employment that encourages them to disbelieve almost everything prisoners say and to have a healthy scepticism, bordering on cynicism, to prisoners' requests and demands. The administrative and managerial demands of leading a chaplaincy team or the overwhelming demand of a heavy workload could easily subsume chaplains into 'busywork', where prisoner's lives and stories are crowded out by targets, meetings, and keeping in the Governor's good books. Perhaps most revealing is Brueggemann's warning of becoming the 'good humour men and women' of the prison; from the chaplaincy interviews, there was a clear emphasis from some chaplains that their sheer volume of pastoral work and desire to be kind to everyone could easily crowd out their prophetic voice.

It appears that most chaplains had a certain balance between pastoral and prophetic work in their ministry, regardless of how far the scales were tipped either way. Is it necessary that a chaplain embodies either one or the other paradigm, or are both possible? Brueggemann's description of Jesus' pastoral and prophetic ministry is perhaps closest to a holistic synergy of the two models. Noting both Jesus' compassion for the poor and marginalised as well as his fierce critique of those in power and authority, Brueggemann writes:

> Jesus in his solidarity with the marginal ones is moved to compassion. Compassion constitutes a radical form of criticism for it announces that the hurt is to be taken seriously, that the hurt is not to be accepted as normal and natural but is an abnormal and unacceptable condition for human-ness…[407]

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[407] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 88.

Here, both compassion and criticism are combined in one act, and through the pastoral care of those who are suffering, Jesus' actions themselves voice a lament that suffering is not to be accepted but is 'unnatural' and not part of the original good creation or God's plan for humanity. He continues,

> The replacing of numbness with compassion, that is, the end of cynical indifference and the beginning of noticed pain, signals a social revolution.[408]

Perhaps this is what chaplains are doing, then, in their pastoral care. They are one of the few people in the prison who make a business of *noticing* suffering, uncovering it, bringing it to people's attention. Chaplains recalled simple acts of compassion; fetching a towel for a prisoner without one, making sure a prisoner's car did not get towed away from a car park, getting a window fixed for a prisoner who had snow and ice coming through his broken window. All of these showed an act of defiance and critique against a system that appeared to have become numb to the suffering of its inhabitants. By their pastoral actions, chaplains were embodying the prophetic hope that Brueggemann calls 'penetrating dissatisfied coping'.[409]

One chaplain remarked on the centrality of embodying this hope for their ministry:

> Generally what you see with the population that we have is that they want something to give them hope with. They need something – I need some hope, I need some inspiration, and sometimes when they see the chaplain, the lightbulb just [goes] 'I might just have a chat with him actually'. It's more about the hope aspect actually, you know, inspiring him that they need to get through it.[410]

Brueggemann presents a compelling lens through which to view remand pastoral care. His critique of the role of the minister as needing to go beyond the priestly and into the prophetic is a close parallel to our data's emphasis on the necessary liminality of the chaplain and the importance of the role of chaplain as advocate in the remand setting. His understanding too of the Psalms of lament focus our attention on the way in which a ministry of pastoral care amongst the liminal remandees can act as a guide and a salve in times of deep and seemingly endless disorientation.

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[408] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 91.
[409] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 63.
[410] Chaplain Faisal

'Being With' on Remand

A theological theme that permeated the interview data was that of being with and being alongside prisoners. Chaplains regularly dwelt on the importance of being a visible and regular presence throughout the prison establishment. Chaplains were present in almost every aspect of prison life from walking the prison wings, carrying out religious services, making visits to the more isolated parts such as segregation and the hospital wing, as well as visible at a senior level in prison management meetings and in the Governor's office. Traditionally, chaplaincy has been viewed by some as a classic example of a ministry of presence - 'incarnational' ministry, a way of expressing 'being with' people and finding solidarity with them in the institution they live or work in, but this has been understood in a number of different ways. James Walters suggests (Christian) chaplaincy in institutions becomes a ministry of presence by unifying people together (an institutional 'glue'), representing the presence of God, and reminding the institution of its mission.[411]

Slater considers the incarnational 'heart' of chaplaincy to be embodying and express God's love and grace with and for those in their institution, expressing the values of the Kingdom of God and witnessing to the gospel (as appropriate).[412] In her work on military chaplaincy, Sullivan considers all of chaplaincy to be 'a ministry of presence', which she describes as a 'minimalist, almost ephemeral, form of empathic spiritual care' which cannot be easily defined and sometimes looks like doing 'very little'.[413] Threlfall-Holmes and Newitt also note that many of the chaplains contributing to their work described their work as 'incarnational', but on closer inspection few go into detail to explain what this kind of presence actually means. Sarah Dunlop critiques this tendency in chaplaincy when she explores whether describing chaplaincy as 'being there' or 'being present' in an incarnational manner is an adequate theological explanation in and of itself. She suggests that chaplains may often use this phrase without exploring its meaning. For Dunlop, incarnational 'being there' is not a full explanation of chaplaincy ministry, but that instead that there are different ways of being present in institutions, such as revealing a transcendent God to the world, offering redemptive opportunities,

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[411] Walters, pp. 53–56.
[412] Slater, *Chaplaincy Ministry and the Mission of the Church*, p. 89.
[413] Sullivan, p. 174.

having a prophetic role, and most importantly being offering some kind of possible 'transformation'.[414]

Being there or being present is a nuanced term within chaplaincy. Samuel Wells has written extensively on incarnational theology and the concept of presence. In *A Nazareth Manifesto,* Wells suggests a critical tension within the Christian life is wanting to do things *for* people, rather than be there *with* people.[415] Merely doing things for people, for Wells, does not get to the heart of healing humanity's hurts. Starting with the incarnation of Christ as the fundamental reference point, Wells notes that God could have chosen to save us in a transactional manner, merely 'for us' at a distance. Instead, because of Jesus being born in human flesh and living among us,

> ...God...becoming flesh in Jesus Christ, has said there will never again be a for that's not based on a fundamental, unalterable, everlasting, and utterly unswerving with.[416]

For Wells, God being with us as *Immanuel* means that *with* is the most important term in all theology; thereby, restoring relationship between God and humanity and amongst humanity itself becomes the mission of the church. Wells characterises this mission as being marked by a *being with* in all its aspects, rather than a *doing for*, even if there are occasions where acting on behalf of others is necessary and right; God 'hasn't done away with doing for'. Instead, Christians are called to respond to the gospel by presence in the darkest situations and contexts they find themselves in, and resisting the temptation to retreat to a distance and *do for*:

> How do we celebrate the good news? By being with people in poverty and distress even when there's nothing we can do for them. By being with people in grief and sadness and loss even when there's nothing to say. By being with and listening to and walk with those we find more difficult...[417]

In *A Nazareth Manifesto*, Wells begins to explore aspects different aspects of *being with*. Building on this work in his twin books *Incarnational Ministry* and *Incarnational Mission*, he seeks to explore different aspects of 'being with' in a variety of practical

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[414] Dunlop, p. 185.
[415] Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto*.
[416] Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto*, p. 4.
[417] Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto*, p. 5.

contexts. [418] His work provides a helpful theological conversation partner in exploring the experiences of prison chaplains and prisoners on remand as they describe their understanding of what it means to be truly 'present' within a prison environment.

Wells' three books each begin by delineating a ministry of presence as *being with* as opposed to other forms of ministry, such as *working for, working with,* and *being for. Working for* is described as doing things to others to enrich or enhance others' lives, often which can lapse into 'assiduous corrective measures' and a paternalistic attitude towards the 'less fortunate'.[419] In contrast, *working with* is a more collaborative venture, although it is still based on problem-solving and identifying and meeting targets. *Being for* is described as more of a philosophical attitude - having the right ideas, language and attitudes, suggesting that 'something must be done' (usually by other people). In contrast, Wells suggests that the prime responsibility of ministry (such as chaplaincy which he expounds on at length) is *being with.* He describes this fundamentally as rejecting a problem-solving attitude to ministry, instead focussing on 'the predicament that has no solution, the scenario that can't be fixed', which for Wells encompasses the majority of life.[420] It is a method of accompanying people as they make their own choices, modelling 'enjoying people for their own sake' rather than seeing them as problems to be solved.

In this model, Wells suggests eight different ways of *being with* that can be encountered in various contexts. These eight dimensions are modelled on the presence of the persons of the Trinity with each other, and he describes them as follows:[421]

- Presence – quite literally being in the same physical space as the people you are engaging with.
- Attention – turning 'showing up' into a focussed sense of attention, using concentration and alertness to be aware of what is really going on.
- Mystery – being aware of that which cannot be fixed or mended but only explored and appreciated.

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[418] Samuel Wells, *Incarnational Ministry: Being with the Church* (Grand Rapids: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2017); Samuel Wells, *Incarnational Mission: Being with the World* (London: Canterbury Press Norwich, 2018).
[419] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 8.
[420] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 9.
[421] Wells, *A Nazareth Manifesto*, pp. 125–45.

- Delight – an openness to surprise, humour, being glad to take time rather than being pressed by urgency.

- Participation – diverting attention from what is done to who is doing it.

- Partnership – seeing the gifts and strengths of the person we are with, rather than someone to be 'done to'.

- Enjoyment – valuing those we are ministering alongside for their own sake, especially those people whom the world is 'inclined to disregard'.

- Glory – being aware of the purpose of 'all things' – God being 'with us' in Christ.

In *Incarnational Ministry* and *Incarnational Mission,* Wells turns his attention to various forms of *being with* in different contexts both within the church (ministry) and in the world (mission), such as being with the troubled, the hurt, and the afflicted – or being with organisations, institutions, and the excluded. Within each context, Wells considers which of the eight dimensions of being with are the most crucial to real and transformative presence. Many of Wells' contexts overlap with the remand prison environment, being as it is an institution and an organisation, filled with a mixture of the troubled, the hurt, the afflicted and the excluded.

How might Wells' model help us reflect on the *being with* revealed in our data? In this discussion I draw out several of these dimensions of presence in their different contexts and consider if they are present in our dataset, and whether they can help us reflect theologically on the work of chaplains on remand and the pastoral care their prisoners are receiving.

Presence

Wells' first dimension of being with is physical presence. This may seem obvious in discussing *with*, but Wells notes that it is possible to attempt ministry 'at a distance' and not be physically present. This is particularly key in a prison environment where the kind of technological ability to be digitally present at a distance is often non-existent, mainly due to security concerns and budget constraints.[422] In his discussion of chaplaincy, Wells describes it as fundamentally '*showing up* and *hanging about* in places

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[422] During the COVID-19 pandemic (which took place after our data collection), some prisons used iPads to allow remote-viewing of prisoner family funerals, or allowed 'virtual' visits via secure laptops, but these were far and few between and not widely embraced by the prison population nationally.

that transformation happens…'.[423] Presence here is to be visibly present as people's concerns, troubles and adversities surface, 'not flinching from reality', saying that you will be there with them whatever course life takes.[424] Wells suggests it also means not putting those who are challenged by life's struggles 'out of view'. Similar to Brueggemann, he notes that this kind of presence can be 'a prophetic act in itself' as it proclaims the intrinsic value of those one is present with, whilst not flinching from the depths of pain another may be experiencing.[425] Wells notes that the prophetic nature of chaplaincy can cause ructions within institutions and organisations, giving rise to the question of why the chaplain is present *at all,* depending on whether their presence is seen as a priestly or prophetic one. In particular, Wells notes that the most effective kind of presence is seen in

> '…the unfashionable places at the unrewarding events and being willing to name and ask the uncomfortable things…allowing others to say it's awful if it really is'.[426]

Wells suggests that, similar to Jesus' 'dwelling among us' in the incarnation (Jn. 1.14), the chaplain first and foremost remains and dwells among people in the midst of all their joys and sorrows – and that this is the first step of being with people.

In our chaplaincy interviews, almost every chaplain mentioned their physical presence and visibility in the prison as important. There was an admission by many that the busyness of remand life could lead paradoxically to a neglect of the prison wings themselves, spending time instead on events, meetings, making case-notes, or dawdling in the chaplaincy office. Many chaplains had been in their ministry for many years and saw themselves as part of the fabric of their prisons, well-known by staff and prisoners, even if they were part-time or volunteers. Chaplain Katie remarked on the individual nature of this kind of presence – for her, wandering the wings was not enough – it was more the individual 'one on one' conversations in a quiet room that made for true presence:

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[423] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 118. (Emphasis Mine)
[424] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 168.
[425] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 169.
[426] Wells, *Incarnational Mission*, p. 185.

I'd rather sit down in a room with someone, and listen to them, and listen to what's got them here, and listen to their life a little more.[427]

Chaplain Leon, when asked why they had come back into the prisons after their retirement, stated that they felt that prisons were 'just the kind of place the church ought to be ... and where I wanted to be'.[428] This revealed a sense of the necessity of being present in the prison context for their faith community as a whole – the chaplain had a theological sense that it was the 'kind of place' the church should be visible and present. Chaplain Leon remarked on how visible and present the team was, 'they seem to be in touch with so much that goes on here...to know so many prisoners'; that in fact presence was a communal enterprise, rather than just having one well-known face. This suggested that individual chaplains may not be well-known but the chaplaincy team as a whole may be. When describing what it meant to be present in ministry, Chaplain Leon remarked

I think it's trying to meet, hear and understand the person that you've been given to be with. And to minister to that wholeness... the whole person.[429]

Chaplain Mohammad remarked that 'at the end of the day, whatever [title] someone calls me by...it's just being there for them'.[430] Regardless of how people saw him, he viewed his physical presence as more important than any other aspect of his work, including his religious or pastoral care.

Chaplain Henry notes the unhurried nature of true presence. 'Wandering round the wings' without a particular agenda epitomises what Wells calls 'the non-anxious presence of a sympathetic other'. [431] When asked to describe his ministry, Chaplain Henry explains his surprise as a relatively new chaplain about the importance of just being around people for his role:

...just having a chat with people and having a conversation with them that affects their mood and everything else, is work. Not that you'd think of it as work, but it's you taking the time to talk to people, let them chill a bit in that space, have a

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[427] Chaplain Katie, Interview
[428] Chaplain Leon, Interview
[429] Chaplain Leon, interview.
[430] Chaplain Mohammad, interview
[431] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 119.

chat. Whether it's on a wing with a prisoner, whether it's in [a] review, whether it's with the staff about something… making sure people are alright really. That's the basics of it.[432]

Prisoners also noted the importance of the visible presence of chaplaincy – when asked to describe what chaplaincy was for, Prisoner Theo (who admitted that he didn't know many chaplains) stated:

'The chaplain's role is there to help – and *be there* for prisoners when they need them… *make themselves noticed* when they go on the wings'.[433]

Another prisoner, when pressed on what chaplaincy was for, centred on their ministry of presence as the most important part of their role:

Tim: …if someone new were to come to you and said 'What's the role of the chaplain?', what would you say? What do you think the role of the chaplain is in the prison?

Prisoner Umar: To be there.

Tim: 'To be there', tell me about that.

Prisoner Umar: Just to be there.[434]

Umar would not be drawn further on this – for him, the simplicity of the chaplain being a permanent fixture on the prison wings and in the prison environment was enough to justify their purpose and existence. In Wells' model, he focusses on this permanent presence in spaces of pain and formlessness as a parallel to Genesis 1, where the Spirit of God was 'hovering over the void until it [became] creation'.[435] This is tied in with the model of presence as *perseverance*, where the chaplain does not shirk from the presence of pain or suffering in their midst but facing 'the reality of violence' and not flinching from reality.[436] Further, Wells suggests that the very presence of a chaplain can 'proclaim the value' of the people they are spending time with, as something of a prophetic act.[437] This could perhaps explain why for some prisoners, the absence of a

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[432] Chaplain Henry, interview
[433] Prisoner Theo, interview (emphasis mine)
[434] Prisoner Umar, interview
[435] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 143.
[436] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 156.
[437] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 189.

chaplain from the prison wings or not seeing them around caused them deep consternation, bordering on offence, at their lack of perceived presence:

> Tim: Do you see [chaplains] in the a prison a lot, are they on the wings or mainly in their office or…
>
> Prisoner Wes: Not really on the wings no…you see them every blue moon… a lot of the time in here, they just don't seem to have time…[I wish they were] more visible.[438]

Prisoner Wes had had experiences of 'good chaplains' in other prisons. He knew what he was looking for in a chaplain, but for whatever reason did not see it in the chaplains he had met in HMP Beta. There was a danger that a lack of visible presence could lead to prisoners feeling disvalued or forgotten.

Attention

Wells' second aspect of presence is *attention*, and I would argue this one of the most important aspects of *being with* in a remand context. Wells describes attention in a number of ways, primarily in terms of 'noticing absence' – who is present and who is not, and what dynamics are at play in an institution and in individual conversations and actions.[439] It takes an interest in the mundane and the everyday, turning from the general to the specific. Questions that seem innocuous or vacuous can in fact be doorways to deeper conversations (given time and relationship) – it is 'the assurance of incarnational validity', that

> Ordinary life in all its complexity yet quotidian mundanity is the experience of Jesus [too]….and is blessed and honoured by God, and worthy of pursuing for its own sake.[440]

Wells is aware that attention can often wander, and that chaplains may be so keen to solve problems and fix things for people that they may not slow down enough to show true attention to the person in front of them. Gradually as attention lingers, 'listening begins to replace prepared words', and the chaplain begins to abandon the 'narrow task' of merely fixing things and 'enjoying the person as an end in themselves'. Here, the

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[438] Prisoner Wes, interview
[439] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 83.
[440] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, pp. 120–21.

chaplain does not 'rush in with solutions', detract or distract.[441]

Wells' model of *being with as attention* has many parallels with the interview data. Chaplain Julia suggests that a key hallmark of remand prisoners is that they need 'more attention' than sentenced prisoners:

> I think the remand prisoners are more volatile, I think they need more attention, because they are living in that limbo, and not knowing…[442]

For Chaplain Julia, it was the liminal and in-between nature of remand that necessitated the careful attention paid to prisoners. When asked later in the interview about what good pastoral care looked like in a prison context, she responded with words almost identical to Wells', suggesting the importance of listening and acute attention over and above the fixing of problems or being hurried;

> I like be able to think I've helped by doing something and sometimes I can't always do something … I can't always fix things here, but I just need to listen and give people that time and attention really.[443]

Occasionally 'attention' was viewed in a negative way, with chaplains mentioning that some prisoners acted badly in order to 'get attention'[444] – with Prisoner Bill suggesting that he 'wasn't an attention seeker like others'.[445] Trying to attract chaplains' attention by asking for PIN credit was mentioned by chaplains as a constant bugbear, where they felt that their willingness to pay attention to the smaller aspects of prison life was taking up time they could have spent genuinely ministering to people. Some chaplains recognised the importance of listening carefully to prisoners, even if they were 'attention seekers', as the corollaries of being too busy to listen painted a negative picture of chaplaincy as a whole. Chaplain Henry related a conversation he had had with a prisoner who had taken exception to another chaplain's attitude towards him and how it had negatively coloured their perceptions of the service as a whole; he had not felt listened to at a moment of need:

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[441] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 140.
[442] Chaplain Julia, interview
[443] Chaplain Julia, interview
[444] Chaplain Henry, interview
[445] Prisoner Bill, interview

> The prisoner said 'Who's that chaplain who works for you guys? They have a
> proper attitude problem... I called [them] down and said "Can I speak to you?"
> and [the chaplain] instantly said "You're not getting a phone call off me!".'[446]

Chaplains often referred to talking to prisoners about the 'mundanities' of life as an important part of their role. This was seen in contrast to other professionals who were seen as coming only to deliver interventions such as Drug and Alcohol relapse prevention, legal advice, education, or discipline. Chaplains came with a less fixed agenda, allowing them to give careful attention, and were happy to discuss whatever prisoners felt meaningful. These included even the small day-to-day challenges of prison life or what prisoners had been watching or reading that day:

> Often with many of them we discuss what they've been reading, what's been in
> the news, so many of them it's really a bit of human contact, engaging with them
> as human beings... and it can vary from conversations that are about things that
> are concerning them deeply and they want to discuss, through to things they just
> want to talk about because they're interested in them.[447]

Part of giving people attention was treating them with humanity – the 'enjoying a person as an end in themselves' that Wells refers to. Chaplain Julia reflects on this same aspect of paying attention, suggesting that paying attention shows the humanity and value of the person she is speaking to. She is reminded of the story of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the issue of blood (Mk 5.21-43), where Jesus stops in the middle of an essential and pressing task to notice, pay attention and listen carefully to someone oppressed and on the margins of society; to 'acknowledge them as a human being':

> I think for me it comes from the fact that everyone is a child of God, everyone is
> loved by God, everyone is of immense value, worth listening to.[448]

For other chaplains, paying attention was noticing the small issues in prisoners lives, noticing what others had failed to notice. This required long periods of sitting with people who were struggling and picking up on small details. Wells describes this as

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[446] Chaplain Henry, interview
[447] Chaplain Ian, interview
[448] Chaplain Julia, interview

> …laying aside preoccupation and the desire to be noticed…giving a person yourself rather than things.[449]

Chaplain Katie tells the story of sitting in a cell with a new prisoner during the middle of winter – during the time she spent in his cell (most other prison professionals prefer visits to take place in meeting rooms) she noticed that the window glass was missing and the prisoner was shivering, freezing cold. She describes taking him to the chaplaincy office to warm up and continue their conversation, whilst also taking the practical steps of making others aware of his situation. She sums up her attitude of attention by saying her work is 'worthless…unless I can be a real person who will really listen to them and take their concerns seriously.'[450]

Wells calls chaplaincy 'the work of attention', building on his own experience in university chaplaincy. He states that his work ultimately shows people

> … they are not alone…that the unresolved situations [people] were in didn't make me rush in with a solution to fix things or a rapid remedy to settle it or a joke or a story to belittle it. [451]

Prisoners on remand are in an 'unresolved situation' *par excellence* – this liminal stage where nothing can be immediately remedied or sorted. Chaplain Katie affirms Wells' suggestion that making sure people are not alone and their concerns are listened to with close attention is one of the most important works a chaplain can do.

Ultimately, Wells suggests that this kind of being with by attention looks like treating those who are oppressed as an '*us* to be acknowledged' rather than a '*them* to be encountered'; a theme that appeared in many of the interviews.[452] The importance of careful and attentive listening was directly mentioned in almost every chaplaincy interview and in half the prisoners interviews; Chaplain Ian summarised this understanding well when describing what good pastoral care looked like:

> I think you have to be incredibly good, it's about listening, asking non-closed, open questions, to enable people to continue to follow through their own

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[449] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 189.
[450] Chaplain Katie, interview
[451] Wells, *Incarnational Mission*, p. 175.
[452] Wells, *Incarnational Mission*, p. 222.

exploration of whatever it is they're concerning themselves with, it's about trying to provide them with some kind of feedback to help them continue their own journey of making sense of whatever's worrying or concerning them, it's not particularly about giving advice…[453]

Chaplain Julia also speaks about the importance of listening carefully over trying to rush around and fix things, echoing Wells' concern for presence over problem-solving:

I'm always trying to see people and for me I need to be reminded that pastoral care again is as much about the listening as it is about the trying to do things, sorting things and get answers, I need to be reminded because I can just think 'all I've done is just listen', but that might have really helped…[454]

Enjoyment and Delight

Neither enjoyment or delight might be words that could easily be associated with the remand prison context. Wells contends however that both as a pair are a core part of *being with* – delight being a sense of 'abundance' where others only see deficit, 'rejecting the template of how things should be', and perhaps most pertinently, 'to take time where conventional engagement is overshadowed by urgency'.[455] Enjoyment is characterised by enjoying people for their own sake, rather than for what they can do or provide for us: specifically, enjoying people 'for whom the world, having no use for, is inclined to discard'.[456] These dimensions of *being with* place value on the human being in front of us and place importance on the individual stories of each person encountered, as opposed to seeing people as objects to be 'done to' or problems to be solved. For Wells, this kind of *being with* is about 'entering into the lives of the excluded', especially when their situation may have no immediate or foreseeable solution.[457] It is also about finding the small things to rejoice in in the other, the small moments of humanity that connect us together. For Wells, only through such presence and attention to the pockets of joy amidst suffering and exclusion can delight truly be

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[453] Chaplain Ian, interview
[454] Chaplain Julia, interview
[455] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 12.
[456] Wells, *Incarnational Ministry*, p. 13.
[457] Wells, *Incarnational Mission*, p. 221.

perceived: neither lapsing into cynicism nor naivety but enjoying people for who they are in the circumstances they find themselves in.[458]

In almost every chaplaincy interview and the majority of prisoner interviews, a sense of enjoyment and delight in each other's company was clearly present. Despite the great hardships of the remand environment and the privations of the remand experience, the sense that chaplains really enjoyed the presence of prisoners and relished spending time with them shone through the data. Chaplains spoke of feeling a strong sense of personal vocation to spend time with prisoners, being one of the few members of prison staff who were able just to take time to be with prisoners. Chaplain Leon described his understanding of good pastoral care to be

> ...trying to meet, hear and understand the person *that you've been given to be with*. And to minister to that wholeness, of the whole person.[459]

Prisoners were seen as a gift, someone who had been 'given' to them to spend time with, and not just for spiritual discussion but to engage in a holistic way with the entirety of the person as they were. Later, Chaplain Leon described how his theological basis for this was rooted, as with Wells' theology, in the incarnation and the desire to see the image of God present in all people, and to see that image 'flourish and grow'. Chaplain Gerry likewise spoke about the best part of his job as 'being on the wings', just being present with prisoners and enjoying their company for its own sake; 'I do this job because I genuinely care for the needs of the prisoners'.[460] This was tempered however with a sense of frustration about the time-limitations of his role with all the other duties he had to do – often having to shut down conversations before their natural close because he was needed elsewhere in the prison. Gerry stated:

> I see myself like Jesus, on the wings, around the flock, talking to the lads.[461]

Prisoners seemed aware of the heavy workload that often stopped chaplains from just enjoying their time spent with prisoners; one prisoner with decades of remand experience noted that chaplaincy was 'harder' for chaplains now due to their extra duties, which left them less time just to be with people in an unhurried way. Prisoner

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[458] Wells, *Incarnational Mission*, p. 231.
[459] Chaplain Leon, interview, emphasis mine
[460] Chaplain Gerry, interview
[461] Chaplain Gerry, interview

Theo suggested that years ago, chaplains would mainly be wandering the wings talking to people and taking the occasional service, but now had more duties such as ACCT reviews and new receptions that took them away from this more simple ministry of presence.

Prisoners often described a low expectation of staff interactions – which seemed to explain why chaplaincy conversations and time spent with chaplains was so enjoyable and unexpected for them. Prisoner Zach, when asked how he thought staff should speak to prisoners, stated 'with respect…not treating them like garbage!'. Prisoner Andrew spoke about how he could have a 'normal' conversation with a chaplain who was genuinely interested in his family, his life outside of prison; the chaplain was one of the few people he could speak to who didn't want to talk about drugs or crime; 'they speak to you on a different level.'[462] Perhaps the most encouraging quotation came from Prisoner Samuel (see above) who described his time with the chaplains through the lens of enjoyment and delight, having fun and laughing together, sharing food and conversation.

To hear a prisoner speak of laughter and sharing food and conversation with a member of staff was a striking contrast to many of the more challenging aspects of prison existence that had been shared in the interviews. A balance had somehow been maintained between keeping an appropriate professional distance and enjoying the presence of another just for their own sake. During the interview process, I saw this played out in reality - chaplains sharing a joke with prisoners, inviting them into the office for a coffee and a conversation, a real warmth and friendliness pervading their attitude towards prisoners. Mutual respect and trust were evident, and enjoyment and delight were clearly a pervasive attitude modelled by the managing chaplains of both prisons. In a conversation with Chaplain Faisal, he noted that although he had management duties, he often got into work early to complete his administrative tasks first so that he could spend more time with prisoners later in the day;

> The reason I do the early starts is if I don't do an early start, I know I won't be able to do what I enjoy the most, being around people, being around prisoners.[463]

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[462] Prisoner Andrew, interview
[463] Chaplain Faisal, interview

Prisoner Umar, when describing his positive interactions with chaplaincy, spoke about how the time he had spent with chaplains, enjoying each other's company and just being around each other, had given him a sense of 'understanding', both about his own self and the world around him in a way that was hard to describe or commodify, and ultimately a sense of peace and happiness, even in the remand environment:

> The chaplaincy has gave me everything I need, which is happiness... So I'm contented, it's given me contentment, not just in the church but within me and my life, and I can't ask [for more] ... no-one in the world can buy that.[464]

Being with and working for

Wells' theology of presence appears to have multiple intersections with our dataset. Exploring chaplain and prisoner interactions on remand, four of Wells' aspects of 'being with' (presence, attention, enjoyment and delight) seemed evident both in how chaplains described their work and in how prisoners described their experience of chaplains. Their pervasive presence throughout the prison, their keen attention to prisoners' lives, and their surprising enjoyment and delight in spending time with prisoners spoke of chaplaincy teams who understood what it meant to truly *be with* remand prisoners in all the pains and difficulties of their remand liminality.

This theological understanding of presence as *being* as opposed to *doing* stands in some contrast to the previous analysis of trust and relationship on remand, where much of the trust placed in chaplains by prisoners was because they 'did what they were asked'. This suggests that *being with* may not be enough by itself in a remand context – that despite the importance of an attentive presence, there were aspects of chaplaincy that required engaged action and *working for*. As Dunlop suggests, it may be that both kinds of presence are necessary – a being with that discloses the presence of God and his love in the midst of brokenness and hurt, but also a working for that brings help to the oppressed. Brueggemann's theology of the prophetic imagination also suggests that Wells' model of *being for* – an advocacy and prophetic kind of presence – also has its place in chaplaincy. We have discussed how important the model of chaplain as prophetic advocate can be to remand prisoners; speaking up for those without power and helping others imagine a better future – it may be that the work of the remand

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[464] Prisoner Umar, interview

chaplain is one that encompasses many different facets of 'being with' that ultimately are all needed to be truly present in a prison environment.

Chapter 6: Outcomes and Conclusions

In this thesis I have explored the questions of how pastoral care is delivered, received and experienced whilst on remand. Interviewing prisoners and chaplains to gain their first-hand experiences of prison life and ministry on remand, I have been able to complexify the remand situation and considered how we might respond to the challenges faced by remand chaplains. Through the thematic and theological analysis of prisoner and chaplaincy interviews, I have explored the major themes of trust and liminality and how these shape prisoner-chaplain relationships on remand, and I have considered how the themes of disorientation, lament, prophetic ministry and presence can offer theological shape to prison chaplaincy.

Trust is one of the prime characteristics that shapes prisoner-chaplain interactions. Chaplains are seen as inherently trustworthy characters within an environment that does not naturally encourage trust. They build upon this implicit trust by being true to their word, carrying out mundane or time-consuming tasks for prisoners, offering unhurried attention and compassion, and showing respect for the humanity of the individual. They are held in contrast to prisoner officers, many of whom are seen as untrustworthy or unwilling to see the humanity in the prisoner in front of them. The chaplain is a neutral figure, one who is able to appear separate from the structure and the prison system that prisoners find oppressive whilst still remaining part of it in a way that gives them access to almost every aspect of prison life. Chaplains show an acute awareness of the challenges of being on remand for prisoners and seek to meet their pastoral needs by being approachable, visible, and dependable. Chaplains appear to model an authenticity where their true identity matches up with their performative identity, keeping promises as best they can.

Chaplains do not always live up to remand prisoners' expectations, which can lead to a serious breakdown of trust. Claims of favouritism, slowness to act, or lack of visibility on the prison wings can make prisoners angry and frustrated at an apparent lack of integrity from those who they expect to be true to their word. Trust is so fragile in prison that small acts of forgetfulness, poorly-chosen words or a dismissive attitude can cause trust to be completely lost in the prisoner-chaplain relationship.

Liminality is a key concept in understanding the challenges of spending time on remand, especially concerning the theme of unknowing or life being on hold. The liminal nature of remand draws together themes of instability, being in limbo, and a sense of powerlessness. It is an inherent part of the process of remand and the prison system itself, exacerbated by poor communication and information sharing, along with the difficulty of navigating prison's administrative and bureaucratic structures. Liminality is made more acute by the dilapidation of the remand prison environment. This adds to the sense of the remand prison being in a state of disorder, creating further anxiety. Repeated episodes of remand over the course of many years creates a liminal loop for some prisoners that they find difficult to escape from.

Chaplains provide accompaniment and guidance during the liminal phase of remand, and were aware of the dehumanising aspects of liminal spaces. They work to fill gaps in service provision and show humanity to those who feel devalued or dehumanised by their remand experience. They offer both pastoral support to those who struggling with their remand experience and practical care with helping remandees navigate the complexities of the prison's administrative systems. They also serve as a connection and reminder of the outside world, both connecting prisoners with their families and with the communities of faith that they came from. Chaplains are the 'go to' person for any and all issues, and were willing and able to spend time on issues that prison officers seem unable or unwilling to resolve. The fluid nature of the chaplain's role and responsibilities lead to the chaplain's position in the prison being liminal itself, where they are viewed as marginal figures in some senses and key players in others.

I argue that the chaplain's liminal status is in many respects a positive aspect of their role, with chaplains describing the value of having an amorphous remit as giving them the ability to navigate prison hierarchies, become involved in any situation that prisoners might encounter, and advocate in a prophetic way for remandees. Chaplains' liminal status gives them time and permission to actively listen to prisoners concerns, offering a release valve to prisoner's frustrations, and a space for prisoners to be honest with someone. Chaplains are ostensibly part of the prison hierarchy but seen as separate from it, allowing them a level of creativity not often seen elsewhere in the prison.

There are notable negative aspects of chaplains' liminal status, including the danger of losing track of their ministerial or philosophical vocation, losing connection with their outside faith community, and feeling invisible to a prison system that struggles to find a place for them within its hierarchy. Chaplains describe a sense of powerlessness to change some of the more dehumanising aspects of prison life, frustration at the level of their workload, and a sense of mission-slip when they spend more time doing less fundamental duties and less time in long pastoral conversations than they would like. Prisoners are also aware of how busy and hurried many chaplains appear, and some prisoners seem unaware of what chaplaincy is for or its remit.

Reflecting theologically on the data, I have explored the themes of lament, prophetic imagination, and presence as 'being with' through the works of Brueggemann and Wells, alongside considering examples from the Gospels of how Jesus balanced the meeting of practical needs with spiritual or emotional ones. I have considered the Biblical theme of lament, and how the experience encapsulated in the lament psalms have multiple parallels with the experiences of remand prisoners, especially when viewed through a model of disorientation. I have explored how the context of the psalmist in the liminal space of disorientation is echoed in the experiences of remand prisoners and their anxiety over the unknown nature of the future and what it might hold for them. Chaplains are able to hear prisoners' laments and help them to navigate this difficult period through signposting, non-judgemental listening and being present within the darkness around them. Chaplains' liminal nature means they are able to sit on the margins and edges of human experience, giving prisoners space and permission to lament openly. Chaplains are able to endure the possibility of prisoners never escaping this phase of disorientation, despite the frustration and sense of powerlessness this brings. Chaplains' faith or beliefs help them see hope beyond the bleak situations they face, and their compassion for prisoners appears to mitigate some of the harsher aspects of the remand experience without needing to find solutions to every problem.

Through the lens of Brueggemann's *Prophetic Imagination*, I considered the role of the chaplain as a prophetic figure within the prison system and the expectations prisoners placed on them to bring systemic or practical change to perceived issues within the prison. I explored Brueggemann's model of the prophet as the figure who speaks from within the structure of the system both to help express the reality of suffering to those

in power and also to imagine a better future for those who are 'oppressed' by the system. Linking with the theme of lament, I have noted the parallels between the prophet's role in aligning themselves with the marginalised or powerless in society and the role of the chaplain in humanising and spending time with remand prisoners. Chaplains listen to concerns and are willing to sit in the midst of dark experiences and painful realities. I have explored Brueggemann's idea of the royal consciousness, considering the links between the state's co-opting of religion and faith as a form of soft power or control, considering how chaplains face difficult moral choices between being seen as legitimising the power of the prison over the individual and being able to critique the structures of the prison from within. I have considered how the chaplain can act as a sign of God's presence within a seemingly unjust system and an advocate who is able to express and act upon the laments of prisoners. I have considered how the ministry of Jesus as explored by Brueggemann can offer a model of chaplains being with the marginalised that sees compassion as a form of lament against the pain experienced by remand prisoners, offering hope to those who feel unable to cope with their situations.

Using Wells' model of *being with* as an aspect of incarnational ministry, I have explored the presence of the chaplain in the remand context and Wells' assertation that chaplaincy is primarily about *being with* people in various models of presence. I have discussed parallels between his models of being with as a presence, attention, delight and enjoyment and the theological understandings of *being with* that chaplains described in their interviews. Chaplains' presence in remand prisons is a primarily a 'being with' that speaks of the presence of God in the midst of suffering and despair. The visibility of the chaplain throughout the prison is a sign of the importance chaplains place on a ministry of presence amongst prisoners, in tension with a temptation to merely solve problems or find practical issues to fix. In considering being with as attention, chaplains speak of the importance of careful listening, extended periods of time focussing on one prisoner, and the danger of hurry or impatience. Unexpectedly, Wells' model of being with as delight and enjoyment also features as a major aspect of remand chaplaincy. Chaplains describe the importance of being with prisoners for their own sake; prisoners express the love and compassion chaplains show them simply for who they are. Chaplains appear to truly value prisoners' company, and despite the busyness of the remand environment are keen to show compassion by humanising the

prisoners they met by showing them their innate value and worth. There are dangers here, with some prisoners expressing that chaplains have 'favourites' that they spend more time with than others. Chaplains need to be aware of how spending longer periods with particular prisoners is viewed by others, especially if it comes at the expense of other prisoners' requests being answered. This comes back again to the tension within chaplaincy about internal and external perceptions of their roles.

Remand Pastoral Care

Approaching the conclusion of this thesis, I am struck by the emphasis in some models of practical theological reflection of finding outcomes, solid conclusions and opportunities for new ministerial praxis. In the model of the pastoral cycle, the practical theologian is encouraged to consider how to respond in the light of what has been learnt or disclosed through the thematic and theological analysis that has taken place, expecting that there will be ways of ministering differently or operating more in line with Christian scripture and tradition. What has become increasingly clear throughout this research is that the question of how and why pastoral care is delivered and experienced by remand prisoners is not just a ministry situation to be solved or a problem to be overcome. At the start of the process, I hoped that my research would uncover areas of poor practice, insufficient theological reflection, or places where with some relatively straightforward changes I could 'solve' some of the most pressing issues I had encountered during my own remand chaplaincy experience.

Instead, what I encountered has been more in line with the model that Swinton and Mowat argue for, where they state that that qualitative researchers do not first and foremost set out to solve problems, but to *tell the story* as well and as accurately as they can, complexifying the situation under analysis and giving a voice to those being researched.[465] Practical theology does produce knowledge that has the capacity to change the world for the better, but it is primarily an act of understanding. I have been privileged to have been the documenter and custodian of prisoners' and chaplains' experiences, to analyse and reflect upon them, and to have the opportunity to consider their work theologically in a way that the chaplains rarely have the opportunity to do. Very few obvious solutions to the systemic problems of the prison system have

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[465] Swinton and Mowat, p. 29.

emerged, but instead valuable stories have been unearthed and heard, opportunities for greater understanding of ministry have been disclosed, and new areas of exploration for prison chaplaincy research have been uncovered.

Trust, Liminality, and Prophetic Presence

Throughout this research project, the analysis and consideration of my prisoner and chaplaincy interviews has led to three key themes emerging; trust, liminality and prophetic presence. These themes have emerged through a careful exploration of chaplaincy literature, detailed thematic analysis of the subjects arising from the interviews, and from theological reflection on theological texts that found parallels with my findings. I argue that these major concepts encapsulate some of the most important aspects of the delivery of pastoral care on remand, offering ways of understanding chaplaincy ministry from some new perspectives.

Trust and Trustworthiness

Trust has been described in our literature review as an important keystone of chaplaincy, but in this thesis it has been shown that prisoner trust in chaplains can be built on a foundation of carrying out minor or mundane tasks (*pastoralia*), particularly during early days in custody. The willingness of chaplains to engage in issues outside of their specific remit opens metaphorical and literal doors, enabling prisoners to build trust in a fundamentally untrustworthy environment. Although at times chaplains feel these tasks push other more pressing spiritual or pastoral duties to the side, these seemingly insignificant tasks carry inherent meaning: of value, worth and respect. Prisoners feel emboldened to trust, even if the concept of chaplaincy is unknown to them. This inherited memory of chaplains as trustworthy people becomes part of the fabric of the prison, and a chaplaincy team that acts this way over long periods of time see prisoners coming to them first as the 'go to' members of staff. Deeper pastoral care, such as conversations around the big questions of life, faith and hope, are thereby enabled and made safe by these small acts of compassion in a challenging environment. This finding has parallels with Armstrong's research into trust-building between ex-offenders and faith-based volunteers. She notes:

> The power of the volunteers' altruism to broker trust lay not only in their
> willingness to extend trust to prisoners, but in its persistent repetition without

> expectation of reciprocation, thereby demonstrating the giver as trustworthy. Volunteers discovered that the way to gain trust was to practise trust.[466]

Chaplains are not only recipients of trust, but also givers of trust. This is clear from the amount of time and energy they are willing to give in supporting prisoners with their day-to-day lives, fully aware that prisoners could be conditioning or manipulating them. Despite their prison training that the first rule is never to trust a prisoner, they were willing to appropriately offer it to prisoners and be trusted in return.

These findings have been especially helpful in understanding my own experiences with the challenges of remand chaplaincy in my former role that shaped the topic and focus of this thesis. Complexifying the tension between dealing with the 'mundane' prisoner concerns and attending to the acute nature of pastoral and spiritual need, it is clear that the former issue is in fact enabling and reinforcing the latter. Because chaplains offer practical support, they are trusted enough to be sought out when difficult pastoral issues emerge. A chaplaincy team that does little to address prisoners' practical needs is unlikely to be looked for in times of pastoral crisis.

The broader significance of this finding is relevant for HMPPS as it seeks to provide safe and supportive environments for prisoners. It is not clear that they are aware of the work chaplains do 'in the gaps' or behind the scenes, or of the ways in which chaplains are trusted compared to other prison staff. When HMIP inspect prisons, their main interest in chaplaincy teams is often whether they are meeting apparent faith and spirituality needs, holding groups and services, attending to their statutory duties, and whether the team is commensurate with the religious demographics of the prison. MOJ Chaplaincy HQ carries out regular inspections of teams, but it is not clear how much this procedure is able to capture how prisoners feel about chaplaincy support. At HMP Durham, one common complaint about HQ inspections was that the same service delivery was expected in a Local prison as in a long-term, open, or training prison, despite the huge differences in scope and ministry those prisons present. This means some of the important work Local chaplains do is not seen and possibly not valued by HMPPS. How can a week-long inspection effectively measure trust, or respect, or

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[466] Armstrong, p. 307.

characteristics that go beyond a surface-level questionnaire or focus-group? This could be an area for further research.

There is also a wider question around the visibility of chaplaincy support. Prisoners who were aware of chaplaincy tended to be mostly positive about their interactions, but there was a sizeable minority who were very unsure about what chaplaincy did or what its purpose was. What might chaplains be able to do to change this situation? Some prisoners suggest that chaplaincy is essentially a word-of-mouth service. As prisoners see chaplains around the prison and hear from others about their work, they learn to engage with them at their times of need. I am not convinced from the interviews (or personal experience) that the often-brief reception visits to prisoners are particularly effective at engaging prisoners around chaplaincy support. Leaflets and posters are likewise only helpful for the 50% of prisoners who are functionally literate.[467] It may be possible for chaplaincy teams to have regular engagement events, and some prisons (including HMP Alpha) employ chaplaincy orderlies to help chaplains with their work. Speaking to chapel orderlies informally, it appeared that they were proactive in raising awareness about chaplaincy with prisoners that they met. It could be possible to have prisoner chaplaincy 'reps' on each prison wing to help raise awareness, particular on induction wings, although difficulties could arise in finding suitable candidates because of how short a period most prisoners stay on remand for.

Chaplains in Local prisons regularly remark about the heavy workload they have to bear and the busyness of the remand environment, and whilst there are a number of factors leading to this, I would argue that paradoxically they are often victims of their own success. Prisoners are proactive in reaching out to chaplaincy because of their compassion, trusted status, willingness to do what others will not, and pastoral sensitivity around the challenges of remand. A question remains here as to whether a chaplaincy team who did not need to carry out *pastoralia* in the same way would be as visible or trusted, or perhaps whether chaplaincy teams in long-term or sentenced prisons are able to engender trust in different ways. The fragility of trust on remand is also a sobering discovery, providing an important reminder of the value of keeping true to one's word and chaplains keeping clear records of requests and applications.

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[467] The Shannon Trust states that around 50% of prisoners are illiterate or struggle with reading. See *Shannon Trust: Homepage* - https://www.shannontrust.org.uk – Accessed 05/08/2022

Chaplains need to be careful not to appear in a rush or hurry so that prisoners do not feel ignored or brushed off by over-busy teams.

There are implicit dangers here for chaplains working in busy prisons of any category, often with few resources or team members. They run the risk of over-promising and under-delivering due to their willingness to become involved in almost every aspect of prison life. Chaplaincy is a finite service, and in Local prisons chaplains seem to try to be all things to all people. This puts them in danger of letting prisoners down, losing their trust, or becoming burnt out as the demands of those around them swamp their capacity. There is an emotional cost too – chaplains spoke of bringing work home with them 'in their heads' in multiple interviews. The weight of emotionally challenging pastoral conversations does have an effect on chaplains, and without capacity and space to discuss, refresh and decompress during working hours, chaplains are in danger of becoming exhausted, cynical, or disappointed.

What was encouraging to see was the small periods of time that teams did carve out to spend time with each other, have coffee, pray or reflect together. Managing Chaplains did appear to have the wellbeing of their teams at heart and encouraged them to make space for these opportunities. Prison Governors, particularly in Local prisons, need to be aware of the necessity for chaplains, and indeed all prison staff, to have time set aside off the prison wings for reflection, restoration and recharging. Reflecting on the themes discussed concerning liminality and presence within the Gospels, there is a suggestion here that chaplains need to be able to discern when to engage and when to withdraw. There was a definite emphasis within our chaplaincy interviews on *doing,* and a level of reticence concerning just *being* in the chaplaincy office, withdrawing for a while from the prison wings. Engagement with their own spirituality during the working day was rare for individual chaplains, even if short periods of prayer (particularly for Muslim chaplains) punctuated the day. In order to maintain a faithful ministry of presence and be fully attentive to need, chaplains need to prioritise their own wellbeing, as well as those of others.

The tension between practical, spiritual and pastoral support has been raised a number of times throughout the study, and it is unclear whether having larger chaplaincy teams would make a difference to better prisoner care or not. Prison environments appear to contain infinite amounts of need, and even if it were possible to 'flood the jail with

chaplains' (as per Prisoner Victor's remarks), would this change anything for the better? There is opportunity for further research here around the sizes of chaplaincy teams and whether smaller teams necessarily provide a lesser quality of care. Another useful comparative study would be to see whether trust is engendered in different ways in other categories of prison where access to daily items, family contact and other practical issues are less of a concern. In these prisons, is trust formed in different ways? And if there are Local prisons where these basic concerns are well met by prison staff in other ways, does this mean chaplains are at a disadvantage in not having as many opportunities to show their trustworthiness?

Liminality – a Theory of Everything?

The second and perhaps most crucial finding of this thesis was the theme of the liminality of the remand prisoner, the prison chaplain, and the prison environment. The theme of liminality, true to the grounded theory methodology employed, arose from natural connections and emerging themes from the data analysis phase, and became a common denominator between the challenges of the remand experience, the fluidity and flexibility of the role of the chaplain, and the negative impact of the remand environment on prisoners and chaplains alike.

Speaking to remand prisoners, I expected to find isolation from the outside world and their families as one of the most important topics of conversation, and although it ranked highly in the data, the difficulty of the unknown and the marginality of remand life struck was prevalent and pervasive in almost every aspect of prison life. In the literature review, a number of authors had engaged with liminality in a chaplaincy context, but I was surprised at how pervasive this theme was throughout the study.

Remand prisoners are going through an experience of standing on the thresholds of life for prolonged periods of time, and almost every aspect of remand life is liminal for them. Being in the limbo and no-place of remand causes huge problems for prisoner wellbeing and brings great anxiety and uncertainty. Although liminality is not a 'theory of everything', it comes close to explaining why being on remand is so complex and challenging for those who experience it. Sitting in interview after interview, I was struck by the liminality of the remand experience, and now I consider this to be the fundamental marker of remand. It is clear more research could be done into the impacts

of remand upon prisoners, further theological reflection given to other areas of life where liminality plays a key role or accurately describes the situations that people face. Jonathan Best, a theologian who has recently begun to collate theological research around liminality, has suggested liminality is one of the more important and interesting themes for future theological reflection today, particularly in reference to groups on the margins of society:

> Liminal theology is the belief that our most exciting, significant, and profound discoveries await at the margins—the in-between. Therefore, doing liminal theology means learning from those who live within everyday life, especially those who push against injustice and inequality.[468]

Not every stage of life is a liminal one, and not every prisoner experiences this feeling of unknowing and disconnection from both their past and their future. Nevertheless, a greater understanding of the effects of liminality of remand could be of great benefit both to prisoners and the chaplains that serve them, in order perhaps to mitigate some of the more harmful aspects of this stage of their prison journey.

Some aspects of liminality were mitigated by the presence of chaplains, but there are areas where the HMPPS could do more to further mitigate this sense of unknowing. Clearer and more straightforward inductions into prison and swifter responses to prisoner general applications could help prisoners settle into remand contexts more quickly. Easier access to phone calls, visits and education could productively fill up prisoners' time and help them feel connected to the outside world. This would not fundamentally change the inherent nature of prisoners' disconnection from their former lives, but it would soften some of the harsher aspects of remand.

The liminality of the role of the prison chaplain was a theme I had not foreseen. Although I was aware of the different ways the chaplain was perceived by the prison service, prisoners and the wider communities of faith they belong to, I was struck that the chaplain's liminal or marginal status could be a positive characteristic. In the case of the remand prisoner, their liminality is almost solely negative, but the prison chaplain (with some notable exceptions) mainly encounters their own liminality in a positive

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[468] Jonathan Best, 'What is Liminal Theology?' - https://liminaltheology.org/whatisliminaltheology - accessed 05/08/2022.

way. Having created a small taxonomy of liminalities, I am able to see the benefits of chaplains being malleable figures, navigating the prison system with greater ease than other staff, drawing on their flexible nature to be more creative in their ministry. This hallmark is what enables to them fit into to any pastoral or practical situation, no matter how unusual or challenging. Some chaplains recognise their own liminality, but it is important that chaplains throughout HMPPS become aware of this. This theme has multiple avenues for further exploration.

Studies could be undertaken on whether other chaplaincy contexts such as healthcare, education, or the military experience liminality in similar ways. Theological reflection around liminality has begun to appear over the last few years,[469] as well as a recent PhD thesis concerning liminality amongst Anglican NHS Chaplains.[470] Mirabai Galashan also notes in her study on the professionalisation of chaplaincy in the NHS that healthcare chaplains experience what he terms 'jurisdictional' liminality, which 'detaches itself from its origins within the sphere of religious control but has yet to find secure moorings in secular frameworks of organisation'.[471] I would argue that by embracing their liminality and living with the tension this creates, chaplains can remain a unique service within the prison. As part of prison chaplaincy 'Starting Out' induction training, the topic of liminality could be explored in more depth to make new chaplains more aware of this critical characteristic of their role, as it its relevant for chaplains of all faiths and none. Liminality is not a uniquely Christian theological concept, and chaplains from other faith backgrounds can learn from this important concept.

Prison governors and policy makers could also be made more aware of the value of chaplaincy liminality, which might guard against some of the more negative aspects of over-professionalisation, whilst simultaneously ensuring that chaplaincy is embedded enough into the right parts of the prison hierarchy in to effect positive change, or at least have a voice when decisions are being made. There will always be a tension in chaplaincy when working within a highly bureaucratised environment. Chaplains can

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[469] See Timothy Carson, *Crossing Thresholds: A Practical Theology of Liminality* (Lutterworth Press, 2019).
[470] Anthony Kyriakides-Yeldham, 'Identity and Ministry in Healthcare Chaplaincy: The Liminality of the Church of England Priest Who Continues to Sing the Lord's Song in the Strange Land of the National Health Service' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2017).
[471] Mirabai Galashan, 'From Atheists to Zoroastrians', in *Critical Care: Delivering Spiritual Care in Healthcare Contexts*, ed. by Jonathan H. Pye, P. H. Sedgwick, and Andrew Todd (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2015), p. 108.

either become too central, becoming part of the system and lacking the freedom and creativity that enables their ministry to thrive, or they can be pushed to the edges, isolated or disempowered on the margins. Chaplains have to regularly reconsider their role in the light of changing expectations and bureaucratic structures, especially when considering how quickly priorities and policies change within the MOJ. Indeed, there have been no less than eight different Justice Secretaries overseeing the MOJ since 2010. Chaplains must navigate this tension carefully, being 'squishy'[472] and flexible as contexts and expectations change rapidly.

Exploring the liminality of the prison environment was perhaps one of the most unsettling experiences of the research process. Having worked in prisons for many years I was aware of some of the more unpleasant characteristics of the prison environment. But it became evident during the research process how this environment, either by accident or design, brought a sense of liminality into the lives of both prisoners and prison staff alike. This was not only due to the dilapidation of the prison's fabric, which is well-documented, but because of the difficulty of navigating the prisons' administrative and bureaucratic systems, as well as poor communication and information-sharing. Since the conclusion of the research phase, an HMIP inspectorate visit to HMP Beta noted similar findings to my own research, stating in its summary:

> One of the themes of this inspection was the lack of trust that prisoners had in prison staff. For example, they did not believe that complaints would be dealt with robustly, they could not get hold of their stored property, the booking line for visits rang unanswered, there was often no response to applications...[473]

Prison staff, including chaplains, could become more aware of the challenges that the administrative systems of prison cause remand prisoners in particular, and how the prison environment itself can feed into a sense of marginality, isolation and life being 'on hold' for prisoners. The way chaplains were seeking to mitigate some of the more challenging aspects of this environment and helping prisoners navigate the prison system are aspects of their compassionate pastoral care – but also reminders of ways in

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[472] Chaplain Camille, interview
[473] Report on an unannounced inspection of HMP *Beta* by HMIP, 6–7 and 13–17 September 2021

which the prison system is not working as it should. More care could certainly be given by prison administrators in information-giving and communication.

There is scope here to explore how chaplains function as navigators and guides within other prison categories and wider chaplaincy contexts. In some healthcare settings, chaplains have been effectively deployed as 'patient navigators' in a more structured way, helping critical care patients and their families to communicate effectively with medical staff, and acting as intermediaries.[474] This could be one avenue of exploration– could chaplains embed their position as prison guides or navigators, or perhaps create more structure around the role they are already unofficially undertaking? Again, there is a risk here of chaplains being pulled in too many different directions and risking mission slip. Conversely, a more formal role for chaplain as navigators or guides may simply formalise what is already taking place informally.

Prophetic Presence

One of the most interesting findings theologically is the extent to which the role of the character of the prophet and Brueggemann's theme of prophetic imagination found so many parallels with the role of the remand chaplain. Although a few chaplains openly called their ministry prophetic and spoke about aspects of advocacy to their work, almost all chaplains exhibited the aspects of prophetic ministry that Brueggemann describes. Chaplains speak up for those are unable to speak for themselves, communicating the needs of the vulnerable and disenfranchised to the powerful. They act as a sign and a symbol against perceived injustices in the community, giving prisoners opportunities to raise concerns without fear of judgement, trusting their concerns will be taken seriously. Chaplains also extend opportunities for expressing hope, speaking about the future in a way that pushes back against the negativity and cynicism of the prison environment. Brueggemann suggests the prophetic character is able to 'publicly express hope and yearning that have been denied and supressed'.[475]

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[474] Fahid Alghanim and others, 'The Effect of Chaplain Patient Navigators and Multidisciplinary Family Meetings on Patient Outcomes in the ICU: The Critical Care Collaboration and Communication Project', *Critical Care Explorations*, 3.11 (2021) <https://journals.lww.com/ccejournal/Fulltext/2021/11000/The_Effect_of_Chaplain_Patient_Navigators_and.11.aspx> [accessed 5 August 2022].
[475] Brueggemann, *The Prophetic Imagination*, p. 65.

This hopeful attitude sat alongside chaplains giving prisoners space to lament openly without fear of being judged, and how helpful this was for helping them navigate the phase of disorientation mirrored in the Biblical lament psalms.

Emphasis could be placed in chaplaincy training on the importance of allowing prisoners' lament to surface and giving them opportunity to have space and safety to openly express their grievances and frustrations with their lives. Chaplains are not only navigators of the prisons' administrative systems but also of the remand journey itself, helping prisoners find hope and compassion in a place where almost everything else was in flux and likely to change with little notice.

Some chaplains appeared more aware of the prophetic aspects of their role than others. I argue that a greater awareness of this role could help them reflect on the difficult path they walk between being in the prison but not of the prison, identifying as the neutral character who seeks to build bridges between prisoners and the prison establishment. Being prophetic does not necessarily mean taking sides, despite Brueggemann's emphasis on the prophet as the voice of the marginalised. Chaplains do need to be cautious about their prophetic ministry, and to be open to the dangers of being seen to be identifying only with prisoners (or with the prison administration).

This balance will always be challenging. Being too close to prisoners can ultimately undermine chaplaincy's independence; advocacy does not always mean agreeing with message that is being delivered. In order to have a voice that is listened to seriously, chaplains must also cultivate good relationships with the prisons administrators. Merely being a thorn in the Governor's side is not conducive to effecting change or managers paying attention to chaplains' concerns. This is a particular issue for Managing Chaplains, who are even more closely identified with the running of the prison due to their position on the senior leadership team. Chaplains need regular periods of reflection to consider this difficult balance, and close supervision to ensure they can be both faithful and trustworthy employees of HMPPS alongside being trusted prophetic advocates of prisoners' concerns. Rowan Williams notes the difficulty of chaplaincy being seen as 'only' prophetic. If Chaplains only rail against the perceived

injustices of the criminal justice system, this attitude can undermine the very employment of chaplains in prison contexts. He states with caution:

> ...institutions will not readily listen to someone demanding that they constantly produce justifications for why they are there at all (especially if they are paying the 'prophet's' salary).[476]

There could be further research into the extent to which other chaplaincy contexts also require a prophetic presence. In a short theological reflection article, Jonathan Hatgas notes that aspects of hospital chaplaincy also include aspects Brueggemann's theme of prophetic imagination, in part by challenging cultural narratives around death, being in a 'wilderness' space, and offering hope in challenging situations.[477] However there are few studies engaged in researching prophetic ministry in other chaplaincy contexts. Whereas many chaplaincy contexts are centred around places with mostly positive connotations (business, healing, education, leisure, defence), prison has ostensibly to do with punishment and confinement. It is possible that institutions with a more 'negative' role in society lend themselves more to the prophetic challenge and critique, and further research might bear this out.

The prophetic nature of remand chaplaincy also overlapped with the incarnational ministry, or ministry of presence, expressed by many chaplains. There were many parallels between Wells' understanding of the ministry of presence as *being with* in presence, attention, enjoyment and delight and the comments made by prisoners and chaplains in their interviews. At points during the data collection process and even in the transcription, I was struck by the care and compassion that chaplains extended to prisoners, and the importance they placed on the task of being physically present within the prison. So many chaplains had a very strong sense of vocation – it was where they were called to be or 'meant' to be – and it was clear that they genuinely enjoyed spending time with prisoners on remand, despite the high turnover and relentless demand for pastoral support that they encountered. Chaplains appeared to value both

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[476] Williams, p. 58.
[477] Jonathan Hatgas, 'Prophet at the Bedside: A Model for Hospital Chaplaincy', *Lumen et Vita*, 6 (2016) <https://doi.org/10.6017/lv.v6i2.9323>.

the importance of action and activity on the one hand and the importance of unhurried non-anxious presence on the other. For the most part, chaplains appeared to handle this balance well. The attention they showed prisoners was apparent – they knew all about prisoners' lives, stories and difficulties, and the privations of remand were not invisible to them. Chaplains, although they felt powerless to change some aspects of prison life, had for the most part not become cynical or harsh, but instead had drawn closer to the prisoners they served and engaged wholeheartedly with their care. At times, prisoners were let down or forgotten, but even in difficult circumstances chaplains were willing to sit and dwell with prisoners in great darkness, willing to sit with their liminal role in a liminal space with liminal remandees. Amid the pressing practical concerns they dealt with, remand chaplains were already doing so much by simply being present. Many of the problems of remand chaplaincy were not easily solvable by simply having more chaplains available or different training or better resourcing. Instead, chaplains were doing what they could with what they had.

Further research could be made into the fragile balance between *doing* and *being* in chaplaincy contexts, which would have wider implications in other institutions. Particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic, questions around the importance of physical presence in chaplaincy have become particularly acute, and a wider variety of views have surfaced around this difficult question. Some recent studies have suggested that *telechaplaincy* (chaplaincy at a distance) can be supportive in healthcare contexts, and that in some areas such as community mental health chaplaincy, there are real opportunities for exploring what chaplaincy looks like in a digital age. However, this openness and access to technology found within healthcare or other environments is rarely found within the prison service, perhaps due to financial and environmental constraints, or security concerns.[478] I would argue that the prison context does not easily lend itself to chaplaincy at a distance. Prison is fundamentally an exercise in isolation, and the physical presence of another human being is not something that can be easily abstracted to a phone or video call. It may be possible however to consider

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[478] See Petra Sprik and others, 'Feasibility and Acceptability of a Telephone-Based Chaplaincy Intervention in a Large, Outpatient Oncology Center', *Supportive Care in Cancer*, 29.3 (2021), 1275–85; Petra J. Sprik and others, 'Chaplains and Telechaplaincy: Best Practices, Strengths, Weaknesses—a National Study', *Journal of Health Care Chaplaincy*, 2022, 1–23; Graham Peacock, 'Mental Health Chaplaincy in the UK During COVID-19: A Personal Reflection', *Health and Social Care Chaplaincy*, 8.2 (2020), 223–30.

what Wells' concepts of *being with* might look like in a new era where physical presence is not always possible. A chaplain cannot deal with many aspects of *pastoralia* over a phone call, but there may be other ways of building trust and showing the incarnational presence of God within a prison environment without the chaplain's presence. These themes would all bear out further investigation.

Epilogue

In January 2021, I left the chaplaincy team at HMP Durham to begin a new role as chaplain in a secure psychiatric hospital within the NHS. After six years of offering pastoral support in this challenging environment, I knew I was in need of a change and was feeling the effects of pastoral and emotional fatigue, likely made more acute by the experiences of the COVID-19 pandemic. The individual cost of remand chaplaincy was no longer a theoretical aspect of my research, but one that had become lived experience.

Coming out of HMPPS and the remand prison context, whilst still being involved with aspects of care within the remit of the MOJ, threw into sharp relief the contrast in approach and understanding of spiritual and pastoral care within different institutional settings. Moving from a Local prison into a setting where working alongside long-term patients allowed for a slower, less frenetic approach to pastoral care, I was struck once again by the uniqueness of the remand prison environment. I am all the more convinced of the importance of continuing research into the effects of remand on prisoners, and on the chaplains who serve them. Although every context has its unique challenges, remand chaplains are under particular institutional and emotional pressures that they are sometimes only subconsciously aware of. It is my hope the research begun by this thesis concerning the pastoral care of remand prisoners and the role of the prison chaplain may be a benefit in some small way to the chaplains who continue to serve in Local prisons, and just as importantly, a benefit to the prisoners they serve.

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Appendix 1a – Interview Questions Longlist

Chaplaincy Questions (Longlist)	Prompts/Probes	Theme
How long have you been a chaplain for?		Opening
Where have you worked?		Opening
What does an ordinary day look like for you?	Statutory Duties	Opening
	Pastoral conversations	
	Meetings	
	Admin	
	Prayer/Contemplation/Meditation	
	Services / groups + prep for these	
	Pastoralia?	
What are the most pressing needs you see when you meet remand prisoners?	Practical Concerns	Remand - Pastoral Concerns
	Spiritual Concerns	
	Emotional / Mental Concerns	
	Family concerns	
	Most pressing?	
To what extent do you feel you/your team meet remand prisoners needs?	Practical Concerns	Remand - Pastoral Concerns
	Spiritual Concerns	
	Emotional / Mental Concerns	
	Family concerns	
	(Should we just be meeting needs?)	
How do you define pastoral care?	Dictionary definition'	Pastoral Care - Intro
	In your work place	
	Terminology familiar/unfamiliar?	

To what extent has your faith/denomination/theology shaped this?	Background / 'Normative'	Pastoral Care - Theology
	Changing	
	Multiple backgrounds	
To what extent has your understanding of pastoral care changed over time?	Espoused/Operant /Normative	Pastoral Care - Theology
	Environmental factors	
	Theological factors	
	Practical factors	
To what extent is pastoral care different with remand prisoners?	Needs / concerns	Remand - Pastoral Concerns
	Severity	
	Expectations	
	Length of time	
Give an example of good pastoral care you've given in last few months/weeks with remand prisoner	What happened	Remand - Pastoral Concerns
	When, why, how	
	Why was it good?	
	Replicable?	
How do you think the prisoners view the care you give?	Good/Bad/Indifferent	Pastoral Care - Prisoner View
	Known/Unknown	
	Thanked/Ignored/Abused	
	Staff perceptions?	
What would you like to change about the way you do pastoral care, if anything?	Practical changes	Pastoral Care - Theology
	Theological changes	
	Resourcing	
	Prison Policy	
	Power / Authority	
Any other questions or anything you'd like to tell me?		Closing

Prisoner Questions (Longlist)	Prompts/ Probes	Themes
How long have you been at (HMP x) for?	Days/Months/Y ears	Opening - Remand - Length
When is your next court date?	N. of previous appearances	Opening - Remand - Length
Have you been on remand before? If so how many times?	Been in before?	Opening - Remand - Prior Experience
	Which prisons? How long for?	
What do you think the most challenging thing about being on remand is?	Lack of family contact?	Remand - Problems/Concerns
	Community	
	Drugs	
	Noise/mess/env ironment	
	Space to think	
	Access to justice	
	Visits	
When you first came to HMP *x*, what kind of problems or issues were you facing? Did those get resolved?	Practical Concerns	Remand - Problems/Concerns
	Spiritual Concerns	
	Emotional / Mental Concerns	
	Family concerns	
	Most pressing?	
What kind of problems or issues are you facing currently?	Practical Concerns	Remand - Problems/Concerns

	Spiritual Concerns	
	Emotional / Mental Concerns	
	Family concerns	
	Most pressing?	
What kind of interactions have you had with the chaplaincy team since you arrived here?	Induction	Chaplaincy - Interaction
	Seen on wing	
	Chapel groups / services	
	1-2-1 pastoral care	
	Bereavement	
	Applications	
To what extent have the chaplains helped you with your needs and concerns?	Practical support	Chaplaincy - Support
	Self-Harm support	
	Emotional support	
	Signposting to other depts	
	Phone credit	
	Interceding between other depts	
	Prayer	
	Bereavement	
What do you think the chaplains' role in the prison is?	Religion	Chaplaincy - Function
	Listening ear	
	Pastoral support	
	Help with family contact	

	Bereavement support	
What do you think chaplains *should* be doing?	Any needs not addressed already	Chaplaincy - Function
	Provision for non-religious/minor faiths?	
Anything else you'd like to add or speak about?		Closing

Appendix 1b – Final Interview Questions

Questions for Chaplains:

Opening: Firstly, thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this project and giving up your time to speak to me.

Q1. Could you start by telling me how long you've worked as a chaplain? How long have you been at this particular prison?

Q2. What does an 'ordinary' day look like for you as a chaplain?

Q3. What do you think are the most common needs and concerns of remand prisoners at *your prison?*

Q4. To what extent do you feel you and your colleagues meet those needs?

Q5 . To what extent do you feel your work with remand prisoners is different from your work with sentenced prisoners?

Q6. How would you define pastoral care? To what extent has this changed over time?

Q7. If you could change anything about the way you do pastoral care in this prison, what would it be?

Q8. Is there anything you'd like to add to what you've already shared or any questions you'd like to ask?

Closing: Thank you very much for your time.

All participants will be thanked and will be reminded they can pull out of the research process at any time. They will be offered a summary of the research findings when they are completed.

Prisoner Interview Questions

All participants will be welcomed, offered refreshments if appropriate. They will have been sent a copy of the research proforma in advance and will offered the opportunity to ask any questions before starting. They will be given a copy of the consent form, which will include consent for the interview to be recorded. Once consent is given, the recording device will be activated.

Opening: Firstly, thank you very much for agreeing to take part in this project and giving up your time to speak to me.

Q1. Firstly could you start by telling me how long you've been at HMP (x) for? When are you expecting your trial to start?

Q2. Have you been on remand before? (If so, how many times and roughly for how long?)

Q3. If you think back to when you first arrived at HMP (x), what kinds of problems or issues were you facing?

Q4. To what extent have those been resolved? What kinds of issues are you facing currently?

Q5. What kind of interactions have you had with the chaplaincy team since you arrived here?

Q6. To what extent have the chaplains helped you with your needs and concerns?

Q7. What do you think the chaplain's role in the prison is?

Q8. To what extent do you think there are things you think they should be doing that they don't do at the moment?

Q9. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me or talk to me about? Do you have any questions?

Closing: Thank you very much for your time.

All participants will be thanked and will be reminded they can pull out of the research process at any time. They will be offered a summary of the research findings when they are completed.

Appendix 2 – Consent Form and Participant Information Sheets

Consent Form

Project title: Pastoral Care on Remand and the Role of the Prison Chaplain

Researcher(s): Tim Dixon
Department: Theology and Religion
Contact details: timothy.m.dixon@dur.ac.uk or write to Tim Dixon, Dept of Theology and Religion, Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham, DH1 3RS

Supervisor name: Dr Jocelyn Bryan
Supervisor contact details: j.m.bryan@dur.ac.uk or write to Dr Jocelyn Bryan, Etchells House, St John's College, 3 South Bailey, Durham, DH1 3RJ

This form is to confirm that you understand what the purposes of the project, what is involved and that you are happy to take part. Please initial each box to indicate your agreement:

I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet dated 17/07/18 for the above project.	
I have had sufficient time to consider the information and ask any questions I might have, and I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.	
I understand who will have access to personal data provided, how the data will be stored and what will happen to the data at the end of the project.	
I agree to take part in the above project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason.	
I consent to being audio recorded and understand how recordings will be used in research outputs.	
I understand that my words may be quoted in publications, reports, and other research outputs.	

Participant's Signature_____ Date_____

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)_____

Researcher's Signature_____ Date_____

(NAME IN BLOCK LETTERS)_____

Participant Information Sheet

Project title: *Pastoral Care on Remand and the Role of the Prison Chaplain*

Researcher(s): Tim Dixon
Department: Theology and Religion
Contact details: timothy.m.dixon@dur.ac.uk or write to Tim Dixon, Dept of Theology and Religion, Abbey House, Palace Green, Durham, DH1 3RS

Supervisor name: Dr Jocelyn Bryan
Supervisor contact details: j.m.bryan@dur.ac.uk

You are invited to take part in a study that I am conducting as part of my Doctor of Theology and Ministry studies at Durham University. I am also currently a full-time Chaplain at HMP Durham.

This study has received ethical approval from the Dept of Theology and Religion Ethics committee of Durham University and by HMPPS Research Committee.

Before you decide whether to agree to take part it is important for you to understand the purpose of the research and what is involved as a participant. Please read the following information carefully. Please get in contact if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

What is the purpose of the study?
The aim of this study is to investigate and understand the role of the prison chaplain in the pastoral care of prisoners held on remand. Through gathering and considering carefully the views and experiences of chaplains, prison staff, and remand prisoners, I aim to set out a practical understanding and theological foundation for pastoral care in prisons with its significance for chaplains and suggesting forms of chaplaincy work that may better serve prisoners and staff in the future. The project will aim to help the prison service shape future chaplaincy and pastoral care policy.

The research is part-funded by the St Luke's College Foundation, St John's College Free Church Track Fund, and by HMP Durham.

The study will be conducted over the course of three to four years, with the final thesis submitted in August 2022.

Why have I been invited to take part?
You have been invited because …
[CHAPLAIN VERSION] as a member of the chaplaincy team you have a direct insight and working knowledge of the complexity of pastoral care in a prison setting. I am interested in listening to and understanding your experiences and understanding of how you go about your work caring for prisoners held on remand.
[PRISONER VERSION] as a person held on remand you have a valuable insight of what it is really like to be in prison waiting for court and of the kind of issues and problems prisoners face daily. I am interested in understanding and hearing your point of view

about the effects of being on remand and of the care chaplaincy provides during that time and your experiences of that care.

Do I have to take part?
Your participation is voluntary and you do not have to agree to take part. If you do agree to take part, you can withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

What will happen to me if I take part?
If you agree to take part in the study, you will be interviewed one-to-one for around 45 minutes at a time and place that suits you, [either in person [FOR CHAPLAINS] or via phone or Skype/Facetime. This interview will not be formal but will be in a setting of your choosing. We will have a conversation about your views and experiences but you will be free not to answer any questions that you do not wish to speak about. There are no monetary incentives for taking part but I will provide light refreshments if possible. No-one else will have access to your answers. All interviews will be recorded using a voice recorder so that they can be accurately transcribed (written down) unless you opt out of this. Voice recordings will be deleted after the study has been completed and only I or my academic supervisor will have access to them.

[FOR PRISONERS:] If you are interested in follow-up interviews, there will be the possibility of interviewing you again at monthly intervals during your time on remand in order to get a better understanding of the changing issues that prisoners face over time spent in prison. Again these are entirely optional and you can opt-out at any time.

Are there any potential risks involved?
There are no risks in taking part in the study, although speaking about sensitive pastoral issues can be difficult. Chaplaincy and [FOR CHAPLAINS: 'the CARE team or'] other partner agencies can be contacted to assist you if during the process you are upset or unsettled by issues that are discussed.

Will my data be kept confidential?
All information obtained during the study will be kept confidential and if the data is published it will **not** be identifiable as yours. Your name and identifying details will be completely anonymous, and you will be given a pseudonym (false name). If full quotations are used from your interview, identifying details may be changed to protect your anonymity. If you choose to leave the study at any time, all data concerning you will be deleted or securely shredded. All data will be kept on a password encrypted device with one password-encrypted backup. All paper notes will be locked away securely.

[FOR PRISONERS] In order to keep you and others safe, what you say during interview will only be disclosed to another person if you mention that you may harm *yourself* or *someone else* or for important security reasons (eg. if you tell me that you plan to escape or abscond). This will be raised at the time and you may nominate the person who is informed if this is at all possible.

What will happen to the results of the project?
A summary of the results and outcomes of the project will be submitted to HMPPS (the Prison Service) and other interested partner agencies. Project findings may be published as a book, book chapter, or journal article. Your anonymised data will not be shared with any other parties.

Durham University is committed to sharing the results of its world-class research for public benefit. As part of this commitment the University has established an online repository for all Durham University Higher Degree theses which provides access to the full text of freely available theses. The study in which you are invited to participate will be written up as a thesis. On successful submission of the thesis, it will be deposited both in print and online in the University archives, to facilitate its use in future research. The thesis will be published open access (ie. anyone can read it).

Who do I contact if I have any questions or concerns about this study?
If you have any further questions or concerns about this study, please speak to the researcher or their supervisor. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please submit a complaint via the University's Complaints Process.

Thank you for reading this information and considering taking part in this study.

Appendix 3 – NVIVO Codebook

Files: Number of interviews including a reference to this node

References: Number of times interview transcripts were coded to this node

Name	Files	References
Chaplaincy - Activities		
Chaplain - Admin	1	1
Chaplain - Alpha	1	1
Chaplain - Bereavements	8	14
Chaplain - Breaking Down Barriers	1	2
Chaplain - Challenging Situations	3	3
Chaplain - Changing Role Over Time	2	4
Chaplain - Generic Work	2	2
Chaplain - Giving Advice	1	2
Chaplain - Good Communication	1	1
Chaplain - Groups	8	12
Chaplain - Helps me believe	1	1
Chaplain - Making Mistakes	1	1
Chaplain - Negative Perceptions	8	14
Chaplain - Not Sure What They're For	2	6
Chaplain - Not Talking about God	1	1
Chaplain - Offering Prayer	2	2
Chaplain - OPV	1	1
Chaplain - Pastoral Care	12	38

Name	Files	References
Chaplain - 'Pastoralia'	8	16
Chaplain - Practical Support	8	17
Chaplain - Prisoner Wellbeing	5	5
Chaplain - Proselytising	2	3
Chaplain - Rationale for Ministry	5	11
Chaplain - Release Support	2	2
Chaplain - Representing God	2	4
Chaplain - Seeing Prisoners as Human	8	17
Chaplain- Services	9	15
Chaplain - Signposting	3	3
Chaplain - Staff Support	5	9
Chaplain - Statutory Duties	8	16
Chaplain - Stressful	1	1
Chaplain - Team Working	8	26
Chaplain - Theology of Role	4	8
Chaplain - Training	2	4
Chaplain - Understaffed	2	2
Chaplain - Using the Right Words	2	2
Chaplain - Variety of Support	4	5
Chaplain - Visibility and Availability	12	22
Chaplain - Work with ACCTs	9	18
Chaplain - Worship	4	5

Name	Files	References
Chaplain- Encouraging Recidivism	1	1
Chaplaincy-Staff Dynamic	2	2
Chaplaincy - Characteristics		
Chaplain - Able to Challenge	1	1
Chaplain - Acceptance or Non Judgemental	5	15
Chaplain - Advocate	7	13
Chaplain - Against the Grain	1	2
Chaplain - Authenticity	1	1
Chaplain - Being Present	7	11
Chaplain - Cure-All	2	2
Chaplain - Evangelist but not Proselytising	3	4
Chaplain - Family	1	1
Chaplain - Filling in the gaps	1	1
Chaplain - Friendly	3	3
Chaplain - Helpful	4	4
Chaplain - Holistic	2	3
Chaplain - Hospitality	1	1
Chaplain - Inclusivity	2	2
Chaplain - Like a Social Worker	1	1
Chaplain - Listening	12	24
Chaplain - Making you feel like you're not in prison	3	3
Chaplain - Neutral	1	2

Name	Files	References

Name	Files	References
Chaplain - Normal People	1	2
Chaplain - Not responsive	1	4
Chaplain - Patience	2	3
Chaplain - Perceptions of Favouritism	1	2
Chaplain - Pressure Valve	2	2
Chaplain - Priestly Role	1	1
Chaplain - Prison is my Parish	2	2
Chaplain - Prophetic Role	1	2
Chaplain - Respected	5	5
Chaplain - Showing Respect	1	1
Chaplain - Sympathy or Empathy	3	6
Chaplain as Flexible	1	1
Chaplain as Guide	2	2
Chaplain as Integrated	1	1
Chaplain as Problem Solver	3	4
Chaplain as Safe Space	3	4
Chaplain as Trustworthy or Reliable	9	19
Chaplain's disconnection from faith community	3	3
Chaplain's faith	11	22
Chaplaincy - Theology or Reflection		
Biblical Examples	3	4
Busyness	6	14

Name	Files	References
Death	2	2
Faith - Support when things go wrong	1	1
Hope	1	2
Imago Dei	1	1
Incarnational	2	2
Journey	2	3
Liminality	1	1
Pastoral Care and Faith as Separate	5	17
Religion-Religious	6	12
Restorative Justice	1	1
Salvation	1	1
Sin	1	1
Spiritual Battle	1	2
Spiritual Needs	5	8
Suffering	1	2
Theological Reflection	4	10
Vocation or Calling	3	5
Liminalities		
Liminality - Existential	4	4
Liminality - Role Based (Negative)	10	18
Liminality - Role Based (Positive)	12	28
Liminality - Structural	5	8
Prison Establishment		

Name	Files	References
Bureaucracy	5	6
BME Issues	1	2
Care Leaver	2	6
Chapel or MFR Space	3	6
Churn	3	3
Cynicism	1	1
Decency	10	21
Demographics	2	2
Help Readily Available in Prison	1	1
Lack of Information	7	8
Limitations of the Environment or Institution	11	22
Management	2	4
Multi-Faith Environment	13	24
Officers - Burnout or Exhaustion	1	1
Officers - Good Working	5	5
Officers - Lack of Experience or Young	6	6
Officers - Laziness or Poor Attitude	13	21
Officers - Too Busy	6	7
Partner Agencies	6	6
PIN Credit	14	31
Prison Environment	11	20
Prisoner-Staff Dynamics	5	11

Name	Files	References
Private vs Public Prisons	1	1
Safer Custody	2	3
Security Issues	1	2
Visits	3	3
Wider CJS Issues	1	2
Younger Prisoners	1	1
Prisoner - Characteristics		
Prisoner - Faith	12	23
Prisoner - Anger Issues	1	4
Prisoner- Discipling Each Other	1	1
Prisoner - Forgiveness	1	4
Prisoner - Institutionalised	3	6
Prisoner - Loneliness	2	2
Prisoner - Loved by God	1	1
Prisoner - On Hold	1	1
Prisoner - Self-Reliance	4	12
Prisoner - Self-Understanding	2	7
Prisoner - Ungrateful	1	1
Prisoners- Lying	3	7
Prisoner - Issues or Problems		
Family Contact	15	55
Family Problems	1	3
Frustration	5	15
Prisoner - Community Links	4	10

Name	Files	References
Prisoner - Drugs	8	10
Prisoner - Isolation	1	1
Prisoner - Lack of Education	1	2
Prisoner - Lack of Release Support	3	4
Prisoner - Mental Health	8	15
Prisoner - Rehabilitation	4	7
Prisoner - Segregation	2	2
Prisoner - Society Doesn't Care	4	11
Prisoner - Violence	1	1
Prisoner-Prisoner Dynamics	4	6
Recategorisation	5	5
Relationships	2	4
Reoffending	1	1
Restraining Orders or Harassment	1	3
Self-Harm or Suicide	7	14
Sentence Length	9	11
Question Nodes		
PQ1 - How long on remand or in prison	10	11
PQ2 - Remand Concerns or Issues on arrival	10	10
PQ3 - Prisoner-Chaplaincy Interaction	10	11
PQ4 - Role of the Chaplaincy	9	9
CQ1 - Length of service	7	11

Name	Files	References
CQ2 - Ordinary Day	7	7
CQ3 - Remand Needs	7	8
CQ4 - Meeting Prisoners' Needs on Remand	7	9
CQ5 - Remand vs Sentenced	9	11
CQ6 - What is pastoral care	8	9
CQ7 - Pastoral Care - Change over time	3	3
CQ8 - What would you change	7	7
Remand		
Remand - Anxiety	2	2
Remand - Busyness	2	3
Remand - Chaotic	6	7
Remand - Culture	2	8
Remand - Don't have to work	2	2
Remand - First Time in Prison	8	11
Remand - Lack of Basics on Arrival	9	13
Remand - Lack of Food	1	2
Remand - Lack of General Support	6	13
Remand - Lack of Induction	3	4
Remand - Lack of Privacy	1	1
Remand - Lack of Work or Education	5	8
Remand - Limbo	3	4
Remand - Losing Outside Employment	1	1

Name	Files	References
Remand - Medication Issues	1	1
Remand - Neediness	3	9
Remand - Not Guilty	2	3
Remand - Not Knowing	13	22
Remand - Recall to Prison	1	1
Remand - Recurring Prisoners	12	15
Remand - Seeing a Chaplain on Reception	9	13
Remand - Sentencing Brings Calm	9	11
Remand - Survival Instinct	1	2
Remand - Too Much Time in Cell	5	8
Remand - Treated Like You're Guilty	1	2
Remand - Unexpected	5	8